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Premessa

Per la prima volta questo volume di Ecdotica presenta un'ampia antologia degli studi testuali nel mondo anglofono a partire dai decisivi cambiamenti di rotta che essi conobbero negli anni Ottanta. Il lavoro è stato realizzato grazie a due dei massimi specialisti in materia, Peter L. Shillingsburg e Paul Eggert, che ci avevano già onorati con la loro collaborazione nei numeri precedenti. La novità e il valore dei contributi ci hanno indotto a dedicare loro tutto il fascicolo, lasciando per questa occasione da parte le altre sezioni abituali, con l'eccezione di quello che è stato il testo basilare del nostro Foro del 2009, in quanto concerne un tema che giudichiamo di eccezionale interesse per i nostri lettori: "Il diritto d'autore delle edizioni critiche", analizzato qui da due giuristi del calibro di Santiago Muñoz Machado e Alberto Musso.

In un primo momento abbiamo preso in considerazione la possibilità di presentare tradotti in italiano i testi selezionati dai nostri *guest editors*. Dal farlo ci hanno dissuaso non tanto le difficoltà materiali quanto due ragioni di altra natura: da un lato, il timore che il cambiamento di lingua avrebbe fatto perdere loro gran parte della loro singolarità; dall'altro, la convinzione che l'antologia che ora si pubblica è destinata ad avere diffusione e a fornire utili servizi tanto nell'Europa continentale come fuori, perfino tra gli studiosi e gli studenti anglofoni.

In versione italiana, per merito di Annalisa Cipollone e Paola Italia, si offrono però i riassunti che precedono ogni testo: essi costituiscono uno sviluppo organico dell'«Introduzione» e se letti immediatamente dopo di essa e secondo il loro ordine (cronologico) permettono di farsi adeguatamente una prima idea del panorama totale.

Ricordando un celebre articolo di Conor Fahy, la cui perdita recente piangiamo ancora, pensiamo che il contenuto del presente volume supporrà in molti casi uno "sguardo da un altro pianeta", ricco di teorie, pro-

blemi e soluzioni poco o per nulla considerate nelle tradizioni filologiche dei paesi latini. Commentarlo da una prospettiva continentale sarà l'obiettivo del prossimo Foro di Ecdotica, che avrà luogo a Bologna, *Deo volente*, venerdì 14 maggio 2010, sotto la presidenza di Roger Chartier, e che verrà pubblicato nel numero seguente della nostra rivista.

Assolviamo con piacere al dovere di ringraziare tutti gli autori e gli editori che ci hanno permesso di pubblicare questo numero speciale, e in primo luogo Pietro (Shillingsburg) e Paolo (Eggert), che con tanto sapere e fervore hanno voluto esercitare il loro apostolato *in partibus infidelium*.

Ecdotica

Anglo-American Scholarly Editing, 1980-2005

Edited by
PAUL EGGERT and PETER SHILLINGSBURG
With the assistance of KEVIN CALIENDO

INTRODUCTION

PAUL EGGERT AND PETER SHILLINGSBURG

Although editing in every country is as old as literature, it is fair to say that between the 1930s and 1950s the editing of anglophone literary and theatrical works became a scholarly or «scientific» discipline. Focusing first on the Renaissance period, the new editorial methods soon radically influenced editorial practice for literary works of the later periods. Particularly in North America, this revolution in editorial practice became pervasive in the late 1950s and prevailed through the 1970s. The delayed but inevitable reaction has made Anglo-American editorial debates richer in the last thirty years than in any comparable previous period. Because editors within Britain and the United States were often in disagreement about theory and divergent in their practice, the overview of the period 1980-2005 given here cannot be both brief and comprehensive; and our narrative is further complicated by the fact that much editing of British literature was conducted in America and some in other anglophone countries¹.

Selecting twenty-one essays to represent the very recent past has therefore been difficult, leaving discarded on the compilers' floor many important contributions to the debate. Viewing this period from within, we believe the Anglo-American editorial scene was and is more varied than it may appear to European readers, though we could not, of course, watch also from that point of view. Nevertheless, we are aware that what might outwardly have looked like a sudden shift in Anglo-American editorial aims from eclectic editing of authorial final intentions to a recording or archiving of a work's multiple documentary witnesses remains in fact a contentious development. Chief among current and renewed arguments are those over the intentions of the agents of textual change, choice of copy-text, principles of emendation, versional editing, and fundamental redefinitions of what is meant by the terms *text*, *document*, and *work*².

These arguments were, gradually from the 1970s, fuelled by a remarkable increase in the number and variety of editions of post-Renaissance works. Unlike the case with Shakespeare where the original manuscripts are nearly entirely lost (so that editing had to rest mainly on the bibliographical analysis of printed books), the later centuries have yielded literary archives whose textual richness and variety defied easy incorporation into traditional single-text or best-text editorial approaches. Change in Anglo-American editing practice was inevitable, but the speed of change was slowed by the institutional drag of traditionally minded funding agencies and oversight organizations, the expectations of publishers, as well as the conservative effect of still unfinished complete-works editions that had set their editorial policies in the 1960s and 1970s. To deal with the mixed signals produced by this (apparently paradoxical) situation, we have included a representative essay for each of many aspects of the ongoing debate, relying upon the footnote references and a list of additional reading to guide readers in filling out our unavoidably selective sketch.

The contents of this volume must first be seen against its predecessors. Anglo-American editorial theory and practice branched off at the beginning of the twentieth century from editorial traditions usually (but wrongly) associated with Lachmann and based in emphasis on stemmatics³. A. E. Housman's work on classical Latin texts, in particular his edition of the works of Manilius, signalled the change. Objecting to editorial practices arbitrarily tied to «best documents», Housman applied critical intelligence to every aspect of the work to be edited. This involved tracing extant versions in ancient manuscripts but relying more heavily on his trained critical faculties to assess the reliability of their textual witness at points of variation, rather than on a general appeal to their documentary authority⁴. His contemporary and equal in editorial reputation, R. B. McKerrow, followed Housman's lead in the exercise of critical faculties in choosing the most authoritative text, but advocated retaining, except in the case of demonstrable error, all readings from the source finally adopted as copy-text. Both editors were rejecting, but by different means, too simple-minded an adherence to source documents and too cavalier a use of speculative emendation. McKerrow's reasons for rejecting Housman's freedom in the exercise of critical judgement included his distrust of the critical acumen of many earlier editors and his acknowledgement of the unknowns about the agents of change in texts for which few, if any, original documents survived.

The search for a proper balance of these two tendencies underlies nearly all the arguments and developments in Anglo-American editori-

al theory and practice in the twentieth century. At mid-century, the balance tilted toward Housman, when W. W. Greg demurred from McKerrrow's caution, claiming it suffered from the «tyranny of copy-text»⁵. It forced editors into accepting unfortunate readings because they happened to be found in the most authoritative document but did not reach the standard of demonstrable error that would allow their rejection. Instead, Greg advocated separating «substantive» from «accidental» elements for, according to usual practice, substantive aspects of text (words and word order) were more usually controlled by authors, whereas a document's formal aspects (capitalization, spelling, word-division, and punctuation) were more likely to have been controlled by compositors.

To escape the tyranny of copy-text, Greg recommended choosing as copy-text that document for which the accidentals were most likely to represent the author's work, and to emend into that copy those substantive changes in other documents that bore evidence of authorial intervention. An editor, he argued, was usually in a better position to exercise critical discrimination among variant substantives than was possible among variant accidental forms. The result would be an eclectic edition that derived its reading text from two or more sources. It is important to note that Greg invoked the copy-text rule only when the evidence for authorial preferences in matters of form could not be ascertained in detail. His so-called theory of copy-text editing (as later commentators would refer to it) was never, for him, more than a rule of thumb. Richard Bucci's essay in this volume on «editing without a copy-text» demonstrates that the term is a mislabelling, and a sign of carelessness about or of failure to understand Greg's rationale.

With the advocacy of Fredson Bowers and, later, G. Thomas Tanselle, and with the institutional support of governmental funding agencies, Greg's views prevailed in major editorial projects on writers from the Renaissance through the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, especially for works by American authors. By 1975 the Center for Editions of American Authors (CEAA) had overseen and approved 140 scholarly-edition volumes, all adhering to the so-called «Greg-Bowers school» of editing. The late 1970s witnessed the high, triumphant moment of the Housman-Greg-Bowers approach to critical editing and of eclectic texts established on principled grounds.

In 1976 the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) shifted its funding of scholarly editing away from the CEAA, dealing directly with scholarly editors for practical funding purposes, and turning evaluation duties over to the Modern Language Association's Center for Scholarly

Editions (CSE). The result was a broadening of the purview of the CSE to include British and foreign literatures and a more inclusive approach to editorial practice.

By 1980, the start of our period, the increased experience of editors of modern texts for which multiple authorial documents survive was beginning to reconfigure the editorial domain. Instead of the pursuit of a single, truly authorial text, the editorial mindset was gradually shifting to an awareness of textual surplus, making possible the establishment of multiple texts for multiple purposes. Thus, Hershel Parker found ample documentary support for the idea that frequently an author's «final» intentions violated the author's «initial» intentions and that, from a critical point view, the results of old authors editing their own younger selves could be attended by unfortunate results⁶. Likewise, Don Reiman began advocating «versioning» as a richer approach to editing than the homogenizing effect of eclectic editing. This trend toward seeing multiple authorial texts as a legitimate goal of scholarly editing reached crescendo levels at the 1985 Society for Textual Scholarship conference in New York, where Jerome McGann's culturally resonant arguments, advocating a completely different focus on the question of textual authority, began exercising their seductive power.

Beginning with a 1982 conference paper on textual criticism and literary interpretation (published in 1985)⁷, but first making a dramatic splash in the relatively calm waters of authorial editing in 1983 with *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*⁸, McGann began what was in effect a rehabilitation of McKerrow's resistance to eclecticism and to the exercise of individual editorial judgment. He offered, however, a different basic argument – not distrust of editorial judgement but an emphasis on the fact that published literary texts bore the historical evidence of the social, economic, and discursive community's collective influence on what had originally been published. It would distort the history of that social process if editors turned their backs on the texts that previous generations had actually read. Adapting Donald F. McKenzie's arguments about the book as expressive form in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (a chapter of which is reprinted here), McGann's argument took much further the work of James Thorpe in the 1970s and would in turn be further advanced by that of G. E. Bentley Jr. and Jack Stillinger in the 1990s (for William Blake and John Keats, respectively) and by George Bornstein in the 1990s and 2000s (for W. B. Yeats)⁹.

Among other scholars, Bornstein helped us to see the meanings inherent in the various orderings of poems in W. B. Yeats's collections, in their

presentation on the page, and even in their bindings. Bornstein's essay of 1999 is reprinted here, as is Bentley's from 1988: his pioneering exposure of the ways in which the self-illustrating and self-printing poet confounded editorial expectations about the print medium can be seen to have helped open the door to a fuller appreciation of the physical or material meanings of the printed page. The ongoing power of bibliographical investigation to question its own fundamental assumptions is further illustrated in Harold Love's work on the continuance of scribal publication some hundreds of years after the invention of the printing press. His early findings, which stem from archival research from and after the mid-1980s, are reprinted here.

Another major shift in emphasis was occurring more or less simultaneously. Instead of text being seen as a final product – whether of the intentions of an author or the machinations of the social complex of production and distribution – texts began to be described as processes to be understood through the study of manuscripts and, if edited at all, prepared in such a way that the work's progression from composition through revision and production could be plotted. In Anglo-American editorial circles, this focus of attention was not called genetic criticism until the influence of French *critique génétique* began to inflect Anglo-American practice in the 1990s¹⁰. Sally Bushell's essay from 2005, reprinted here, is a good example of anglophone adaptation of the influence.

The increased editorial and analytical interest in the process of textual change, and thus the awareness of instability as an unavoidable textual condition, is registered by Hans Walter Gabler in his essay, reprinted here, from 1987. Over the following several years editorial theory rapidly expanded to absorb the new insights around the phenomenon of textual instability. The situation would be described neatly by Joseph Grigely in 1991 as including:

a moment of writing by the author, the moment of publishing, or the moment of reading – or any point in between. A [...] moment of stasis. [...] a series of moments of inscription, some authorial, some not, some authorized, some not; moments of stasis [...] best characterized not by what they say but what they do not say: they leave us with a disembodied, decontextualized text that does not mean anything unless bound to an agent of meaning – an interpreter¹¹.

The multiple textual instances, produced by the various agents of textual change in the process, are analysed by Peter Shillingsburg as «script acts»¹². This naming – part of a broader theory of text – occurred in 1997, but it was based on an article (excerpted here) that had appeared in *Stud-*

ies in Bibliography in 1991. Marta Werner's work on Emily Dickinson, appearing in the 1990s, and John Bryant's work on Melville, in the 2000s, would offer highly developed and radical expositions of an anglicized text-process theory, commentary, and practice¹³. An implication of the (newfound) textual instability was the need to re-cast received understandings of relationships between the documentary and textual dimensions of the work: Paul Eggert's meditation on this matter, reprinted here, appeared in 1994 in *TEXT*¹⁴. The rise of the Society for Textual Scholarship and of its journal *TEXT* is another measure of the new burst of editorial thinking in the period covered by the present volume¹⁵.

By the late 1980s the new doctrines of textual instability and textual process had begun, fortuitously, to encounter the invention of hypertext and then, around 1991-92, the Internet – access to which was now available on personal computers. A new future for scholarly editing beckoned. Suddenly, the limitations of the codex form of the scholarly edition seemed, potentially at least, no longer to apply, and thus no longer to possess the trump card during discussions of editorial possibilities. The early frustrated hopes, and the more gradual and considered development of this medium for scholarly editing purposes in recent years, point to a continuing narrative whose technical and theoretical complexities lie, however, outside the scope of the present collection¹⁶.

To complete our story instead, the essays here by Trevor H. Howard-Hill and Paul Werstine show that the vigour of earlier debates about Shakespearean editing had returned with force in the fertile 1980s and 1990s. For obvious reasons, Shakespeare editing had traditionally served as the workshop from which most Anglo-American editorial advances in thinking had emanated. But that was arguably not the case in the 1960s and 1970s when institutional and funding pressures saw a great deal of attention devoted to the editing of American literature and then saw it inflect the editing of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century British literature. However, the rise of the so-called «performance Shakespeare» movement from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, as well as the belated recognition that even Shakespeare editors of the older, bibliographic school had not routinely been following the Greg-Bowers approach, revived and clarified editorial argument in our period.

Another rise of interest from the 1980s – a new formation of anglophone book history, no longer seen only as a form of (historical) bibliography – shadowed the revival in editorial theory that we have been tracing. The influence of this more broadly defined book history may be noted throughout the volume, but most self-consciously in Kathryn

Sutherland's book (excerpted here), published in 2005 – the end of our period – on the textual «lives» of Jane Austen's novels.

Like Richard Bucci's essay, mentioned above, David Hoover's essay from 2005, the last one in this volume, is another recuperative gesture. Hoover contests the importance that Jerome McGann's ideas have come to exert during our period and gives warning that the ignoring of authorial intention, as ordinarily understood, artificially impoverishes critical attention to literary works, in whose service scholarly editors finally stand. James McLaverty's essay of 1984 on intention and textual criticism, also reprinted here, is a reminder of the importance of what has become, in recent years, unfortunately neglected.

It is fitting that a collection of essays about editing should declare its own editorial approach to the selected essays, many of which have appeared in revised forms, as well as (typically) having been preceded by a conference presentation. To print the final form in each case would arguably have been of benefit; but it would have also confused the historical record of thinking in the period that the volume traces. Accordingly, we have taken the historical route, choosing the text of first publication – which we hope will produce for readers a sense of the newness of the thinking as it was emerging during 1980-2005.

Where material has been omitted an ellipsis within square brackets [...] has been used, and usually we have introduced a short abstract in a footnote. Footnote numbers have been made consecutive when omission of text has taken some footnotes with them. When needed, full bibliographical references have been supplied. No attempt has been made to standardize bibliographical references. Section numbering has been maintained even when whole sections are omitted.

Notes

¹ The best single guide to twentieth-century scholarly editorial theory and practice in England and America is David Greetham (ed.), *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, New York, Modern Language Association, 1996 (an Italian translation is now announced by Bologna UP). The guide traces scholarly editorial practice in biblical and classical, medieval and early English, Renaissance (especially Shakespearean), and eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century editing; it also has essays on German, French, Italian, and Spanish scholarly editing. An extensive evaluative survey of editorial discussion is to be found in G. Thomas Tanselle, *Textual Criticism Since Greg: A Chronicle, 1950-2000*, Charlottesville (VA), Bibliographical Society, 2005. Tanselle also offers comprehensive bibliographies up through 2002 at <http://www.rarebookschool.org/tanselle>, viewed 25 October 2009. Other summaries of Anglo-American editorial practice include: Ronald

Gottesman, *Art and Error: Modern Textual Editing*, Bloomington (IN), Indiana University Press, 1970; Geert Lernout, «Anglo-American Textual Criticism and the Case of Hans Walter Gabler's Edition of *Ulysses*», *Genesis*, 9 (1996), pp. 45-65 (in French but available in English at <http://www.antwerpjamesjoycecenter.com/genesis.html>, viewed 9 February 2009); Peter Shillingsburg, «Anglo-amerikanische Editionswissenschaft: Ein knapper Überblick», in Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth, Bodo Plachta, H. T. M. van Vliet, Hermann Zwerschina (eds.), *Text und Edition: Positionen und Perspektiven*, Berlin, Erich Schmidt, 2000, pp. 143-64; an updated English version of the latter is «On Being Textually Aware», *Studies in American Naturalism*, 1 (2006), pp. 170-95; Ernst Honigmann, «The New Bibliography and Its Critics», in Lukas Erne, Margaret Jane Kidnie (eds.), *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 77-93; and Paul Eggert, *Securing the Past: Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, chapters 8 and 9 (reviewed by Paola Italia in this issue of *Ecdotica*).

² For an overview and discussion, see Eggert, *Securing the Past*, cit., chapters 7-10.

³ See Giovanni Fiesoli, *La genesi del lachmannismo*, Firenze, SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000, reviewed by L. Castaldi in *Ecdotica*, 1 (2004), pp. 55-65; in English, Peter L. Schmidt, «Lachmann's Method: On the History of a Misunderstanding», in A. C. Dionisotti et al. (eds.), *The Uses of Greek and Latin*, London, Warburg Institute, 1988, pp. 227-36.

⁴ A. E. Housman, «The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism», *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, 18 (1922), pp. 67-84; rpt. in John Carter (ed.), *Selected Prose*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1961, pp. 131-50. See also Ernst Honigmann's discussion of Housman in «The New Bibliography and its Critics», in Erne, Kidnie (eds.), *Textual Performances*, cit., pp. 77-93. See further, D. C. Greetham, «Textual and Literary Theory: Redrawing the Matrix», reprinted here from *Studies in Bibliography*, 42 (1989), pp. 1-24; and Jeremy Lawrance, «Stoppard, Housman and the Mission of Textual Criticism», in *Ecdotica*, 3 (2006), pp. 187-205.

⁵ W. W. Greg, «The Rationale of Copy-Text», *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1951), pp. 19-36; Italian transl. in Pasquale Stoppelli, *Filologia dei testi a stampa*, Nuova edizione aggiornata, Cagliari, CUEC/Centro di Studi Filologici Sardi, 2008, pp. 39-58.

⁶ *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons*, Evanston (IL), Northwestern University Press, 1984, and see his essay here.

⁷ «The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works», in Jerome McGann (ed.), *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, Chicago (IL), University of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 180-99 and reprinted here.

⁸ *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, Chicago (IL), University of Chicago Press, 1983; its chapter 3 is reprinted here.

⁹ Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Panizzi Lectures, 1985), London, British Library, 1986; for translations see *Suggested Additional Readings*, below; James Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism*, San Marino (CA), Huntington Library, 1972; Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991; and George Bornstein, «How to Read a Page: Modernism and Material Textuality», *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 32, 1 (1999), pp. 30-57 (reprinted here) and *Material Modernism: The Poetics of the Page*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

¹⁰ Daniel Ferrer and Hans Walter Gabler offered examples originally at Society for Textual Scholarship conferences (*TEXT*, *passim*) and the Iconic Page conference, memorialized in George Bornstein, Theresa Tinkle (eds.), *The Iconic Page*, Ann Arbor (MI),

University of Michigan Press, 1998. See also Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, Michael Groden (eds.), *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes*, Philadelphia (PA), University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; and Dirk Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics, Joyce's Know-How, Beckett's Nohow*, Tallahassee (FL), University Press of Florida, 2009.

¹¹ Grigely's «The Textual Event» is reprinted in this collection from Philip Cohen (ed.), *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, Charlottesville (VA), University Press of Virginia, 1991, pp. 167-94 [p. 172].

¹² Script acts, like «utterances» in speech acts, are undertaken at specific times and places by authors, production staff, and readers. Meaning for each script act is dependent not only on the agent of textual change and the circumstances that prompted the change, but on the agent and circumstances of reception; see further, Peter L. Shillingsburg, *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (reviewed by Paola Italia in *Ecdotica*, 4, 2007, pp. 299-310), chapter 3 (an Italian translation by D. Fiormonte may be found in *Ecdotica*, 2, 2005, pp. 60-79, under the title «Verso una teoria degli atti di scrittura»). Script act theory is first named in the introduction to Shillingsburg's *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1997. The 1991 article is «Text as Matter, Concept and Action», *Studies in Bibliography*, 44 (1991), pp. 31-82.

¹³ See Marta Werner, *Emily Dickinson's Open Folios: Scenes of Reading, Surfaces of Writing*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1995, and cf. Martha Nell Smith, *Rowing in Eden: Rereading Emily Dickinson*, Austin (TX), University of Texas Press, 1992; and John Bryant, *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 2002, and *Melville Unfolding*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 2008.

¹⁴ «Document and Text: The "Life" of the Literary Work and the Capacities of Editing», *TEXT*, 7 (1994), pp. 1-24.

¹⁵ The Society for Textual Scholarship was founded in 1979 and published *TEXT* annually from 1984 to 2007, when the journal's name and charter were reorganized as *Textual Cultures*.

¹⁶ For an overview, see G. Thomas Tanselle's Foreword to Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, John Unsworth (eds.), *Electronic Textual Editing*, New York, Modern Language Association of America, 2006. See also Paul Eggert, «Those Post-Philological Days...», *Ecdotica*, 2 (2005), pp. 80-98, and David C. Greetham, «Philology Redux?», *Ecdotica*, 3 (2006), pp. 103-28.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL READINGS

General Introductory Books

Greetham, David C., *An Introduction to Textual Scholarship*, New York, Garland, 1992; 1994; an Italian translation is now announced by Bologna University Press.

This detailed work has extensive bibliographies covering each aspect of textual scholarship from bibliography (enumerative and analytical) and codicology to paleography and typography, and from textual criticism to scholarly editing.

Greetham, David C., ed., *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, New York, Modern Language Association, 1995.

This collection of introductions to a full range of editorial periods and problems explains more than any other work in the field what the range of approaches and their consequences are for literary students.

Shillingsburg, Peter L., *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1996.

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Bowers, Fredson, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964.

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THE "NEW SCHOLARSHIP": TEXTUAL EVIDENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CRITICISM, LITERARY THEORY, AND AESTHETICS

HERSHEL PARKER

Using examples from Mark Twain, Herman Melville, William Faulkner, and Stephen Crane, Parker illustrates the ways in which literary criticism, editorial principles, and editorial practice are all enhanced by study of the composition, revision, and publication of literary texts and by attempts to see these actions in the context of the personalities and the production conditions involved in the production of manuscripts, proofs and published editions. The method he calls «New Scholarship» is developed in relationship to bibliography and textual criticism, on the one hand, and literary criticism and literary theory on the other, encompassing the whole in a fuller, richer attempt to engage the work of art critically and interpretively, not merely as an editorial problem. The discussion of Melville's *Pierre* and Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (reproduced in this excerpt) shows that revision is not always beneficial or under artistic control. The implications of this insight to editorial practice lead in some instances to editorial goals favouring early rather than revised texts. EDD.

Attraverso esempi tratti dalle opere di Mark Twain, Herman Melville, William Faulkner e Stephen Crane, Parker mostra come la critica letteraria, l'ecdotica e la pratica editoriale vengano rafforzate dallo studio dell'ideazione, revisione e pubblicazione dei testi letterari e dagli sforzi di inserire tutte queste azioni nei contesti che attengono alla personalità dell'autore e alle condizioni di produzione editoriale di manoscritti, bozze ed edizioni a stampa. Tale metodo, da lui denominato «Nuova filologia», si sviluppa in relazione, da una parte, alla bibliografia testuale e alla critica testuale, dall'altra alla critica letteraria e alla teoria della letteratura, comprendendo tutte queste discipline in un più ampio e profondo tentativo di considerare l'opera d'arte non solo come un problema editoriale, ma da un punto di vista critico e interpretativo. I casi esaminati nel

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saggio, del *Pierre* di Melville e del *Pudd'nhead Wilson* di Mark Twain (qui riprodotti), mostrano che la revisione di un testo non è sempre migliorativa né avviene sotto un rigido controllo artistico. Le implicazioni di questa analisi sulla concreta pratica editoriale portano Parker a privilegiare, in alcuni casi, le prime piuttosto che le ultime edizioni dei testi.

Early in 1981, between the writing and the revising of this essay, the *New York Times* made much of two of my examples;¹ so we've had a flurry of national attention but still no tidy name for an approach to American fiction which employs bibliographical, biographical, textual, and historical research and which raises questions properly discussed by literary theorists and aestheticians. In the "Melville" chapter of *American Literary Scholarship* and, more insistently, in an essay with Brian Higgins, I have tried out "the New Scholarship."² The advantage of this term is that it frankly (if bumptiously) challenges both the old 1930s scholarship, which was limited by lack of money and by primitive technology, and the old New Criticism, which had rejected out of hand precisely the kinds of information which most interest us. The disadvantage of the term is that it seems to exclude literary criticism, even though we think of ourselves as critics, maybe not gallicized but capable of a lot of textual deconstruction, once we get going. "Textual criticism" sounds like the natural term, since it ought to mean literary criticism which arises from study of the growth and subsequent adventures of the text, but it cannot serve: everyone from Fredson Bowers to William Bysshe Stein to J. Hillis Miller seems to think textual criticism is what he writes. So for the moment I'll stretch "New Scholarship" to cover the interpretive implications of textual scholarship and also to cover the implications that scholarship can have for the practice of literary criticism and for our understanding of literary theory; and I'll try to stretch it to cover also the implications that textual scholarship can have for aesthetics in general.

What people using this literary approach do, besides editing, is write a kind of literary criticism which reveals the aesthetic implications of biographical and textual evidence, which shows how facts about composition, revision, and publication can affect interpretation. We tend to start, therefore, earlier than other critics do, not with a printed text (whether a Signet paperback or a CEAA hardbound) but with whatever early documents survive: manuscripts, variant editions, contracts, other publishing records. We often find new facts (surprisingly often—even when we work on American classics) and old facts tend to tell a new story every time they are laid out for fresh scrutiny. One result of this reex-

amination of what is usually taken for granted is that we interpret familiar works differently than anyone has done before. Another is that we raise questions (at least by implication) about the validity of previous literary criticism on particular texts and about the underpinnings of such criticism in literary theory (dead as the New Criticism is supposed to be, it still provides critics with most of their assumptions about literature). If anything warrants my being spokesman for the group, it is that I have deliberately and polemically tried to interest non-textualist critics in our kind of evidence and that I have begun trying to lure literary theorists and aestheticians onto the ambiguous terrain where notions of “built-in intentionality,” “unity,” “completeness,” and “closure” hover over the rubble of false starts, discarded endings, drafts, revisions, and sober second thoughts.

Because we work so often with material unfamiliar to most people (the original *Sanctuary* and the original *Sister Carrie*, to name the two recently celebrated in the *New York Times*, or the manuscript of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the manuscript of *The Red Badge of Courage*, the magazine version of *An American Dream*),³ we are capable of making startling judgments about previous criticism on the works we study (although we have rarely done so in print). We could point out, for instance, all criticism written on *Red Badge* before 1978 is flawed because it was written on the basis of a badly maimed text, that of the 1895 Appleton edition, which was expurgated to remove Henry Fleming's petulant controversies with the Universe and to disguise his final vainglory and cynical self-congratulation. Criticism written in ignorance of textual history is regularly invalid to some degree. The critic who bases an image study of *The Red Badge of Courage* on a text lacking an entire chapter may catch most of the pattern of imagery but cannot perceive its full complexity or full function; the critic who writes about characterization in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* may get things backwards, as in saying that Mark Twain lost interest in Valet de Chambre as he progressed with the story. In looking at criticism lavished upon imperfect texts we can see (beyond such innocent blunders) an overriding compulsion to make sense of the printed text at all costs—a compulsion which drives critics to explicate passages that are quite literally non-sensical. Studies based on maimed or cobbled up texts (e.g., everything written on *Pudd'nhead Wilson* or *Sartoris*) could constitute an invaluable trove of data for anyone interested in understanding and evaluating academic criticism. And the ramifications give one pause: if ninety percent or more of the writing on the novels we have studied turns out to be flawed, more or less, if not wholly off the mark, what should we ex-

pect of the criticism written on works for which no such textual evidence has yet been brought to light?

People who approach American fiction in the way I am describing tend to find out, more or less systematically, all that can be known about the way a writer works—what he does in preparing to write, how he actually writes, what he does between the time he thinks a novel or story is finished and the time it is set in type, or reset in type. We want to know how thoroughly a writer ever plans his works in advance and how often any advance planning is designed to accommodate later insertions. We try to identify any stage or stages at which writers characteristically arrive at what Melville called the pervading thought which impels a book. We want to know how interruptions affect a writer's progress, whether or not he typically discards or drastically recasts large sections of his manuscripts, and how much late backtracking and local tinkering is part of his usual process of tidying up a manuscript. We need to know his attitude toward afterthoughts—whether he regards them as casual elaborations, for instance, or as essential additions. We try to answer general questions, such as how long and how intense an author's work rhythms are. Typically we would also ask other kinds of questions (or other versions of these same questions) which focus upon the literary work rather than the writer; What are the aesthetic effects when an author adds previously unplanned sections to a novel after it is thought of as completed? What are the aesthetic effects when an author excises passages just before publication or in post-publication revision? Or when an author publishes a novel in an order which is significantly different from the order in which the parts were inscribed? Or when an author drastically alters characterization or even invents characters midway during the composition of a novel? Or when an author attempts to give a different cast to a novel by altering the ending? Or when an author attempts to alter any aspect of a work without revising the rest? Or when an author attempts to improve a work by reordering its sections after completion? Recently I have encountered a series of textual situations which involve basic questions in aesthetics: When is intentionality infused into a given passage or a work as a whole? Can an author bestow or alter intentionality retroactively? When can a work of art be said to be complete? What constitutes literary unity?

These three kinds of questions were not likely to be raised by New Critics, but it is fair to say that they were not raised by the CEAA editors either. My own first chance to work seriously on the aesthetic implications of textual evidence came not from work on the CEAA but from under-

graduate teaching: early in 1972 my USC students showed up with the wrong—the Cowley—edition of *Tender is the Night*, the text edited more or less in accordance with Fitzgerald's late notion (one he apparently never tried to bring into reality) of putting the "Rosemary section" in its chronological place rather than at the start of the novel. I improvised for fifty minutes on why the reordered text does not make sense (you lose the suspense about what the characters are really like and what made them that way; you lose the powerful juxtaposition of Dick Diver's early heroic period and the late disastrous period; you lose the marvelous full circle, beach scene to elegiac beach scene), then quickly enlisted Brian Higgins as collaborator on an essay Fitzgerald critics might have written years before had not the New Criticism been dominant.⁴ The Cowley text had been championed by many critics, among them Wayne C. Booth,⁵ but we showed that it destroyed Fitzgerald's purposes in ways he could not have foreseen. The reordering, for instance, makes it impossible for a reader to think well of Dick Diver at the outset and therefore makes it impossible to feel that his final period of collapse is tragic—it is inevitable, but not tragic. The function of so important a character as Abe North seems to shift in the 1951 text. Fitzgerald wrote the story so that the reader would perceive Abe as a failure, in contrast with Dick, then later would come to the poignant realization that Dick is similar to Abe and had been more like him all along than was apparent. In the Cowley version there is no such realization since Abe seems to parallel Dick from the time he enters the novel. Whole scenes cease to fulfill their intended functions and seem to acquire other functions, as when the showing of Rosemary's movie *Daddy's Girl* becomes lurid, given the reader's prior knowledge that Nicole as a girl was driven insane by incest. Absurdities permeate long sections, as when the mystery of what Violet saw in the bathroom at the Villa Diana is retained, built into the Rosemary section, even though any reader of the Cowley edition would already know the kind of thing Nicole had done in the bathroom. Higgins and I groped our way toward observations which ought to have been commonplaces but apparently were not. We insisted that our "arguing that the order of composition affected the substance and style of what was composed is anything but picky theorizing: it takes into account Fitzgerald as a working novelist and the work of art as a thing in progress until it is finished."⁶ Citing John Dewey's *Art as Experience* for the idea that "the artist is controlled in the process of his work by his grasp of the connection between what he has already done and what he is to do next," and that he must "at each point retain and sum up what has gone before as a whole and with reference to a whole to

come," we argued that "in any large-scale rearranging almost any artist will leave telltale signs of the earlier order"—certainly Fitzgerald did. The evidence pointed us toward the perception that a writer can inadvertently cause his words to cease to have the meaning he put in them: "Without unduly praising his craftsmanship, a critic can acknowledge that during his work on the *Dick Diver* drafts Fitzgerald set up an intricate series of verbal echoes which gradually swell into thematic reverberations; re-ordered, echo sometimes becomes original utterance, and thematic reverberations, while undeniably continuing to sound, are not precisely authorial in the new combinations: they come from Fitzgerald's own words still, but not from his own careful patterning." Fitzgerald had been guilty of thinking of his own novel "as if it had been created simultaneously in the form of disparate blocks," as if there had been no organic growth of his manuscript. Authors are not expected to be their best critics, at least years after they have completed a novel, but critics, particularly critics concerned with the reader's responses, as Booth is, ought to have a clearer knowledge of how that process affects the way we regard the relationships of parts, of a work to each other and to the whole.

The *Tender* essay dropped almost soundlessly into the academic void. In *American Literary Scholarship, 1975* Jackson Bryer praised it, but as one of the year's "bibliographical pieces," and he did not include it among the "year's four essays on *Tender Is the Night*."⁷ No matter: I had found the sort of criticism I wanted to write. I had tenure and an indulgent chairman, so I started giving an annual graduate course which mixed biographical and textual scholarship with literary criticism and which included readings from E. D. Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation* and Murray Krieger's *Theory of Criticism* along with Fredson Bowers, James B. Meriwether, and G. Thomas Tanselle (whose "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention" first brought together editorial and non-editorial definitions of intention); today I would build much of the course around a remarkable book on creativity, Albert Rothenberg's *The Emerging Goddess*.⁸ The course title kept being adjusted: "Interpretive Implications of Biographical and Textual Evidence," "Aesthetic Implications of Biographical and Textual Evidence," "Textual Evidence and Literary Theory." I needed raw material, so I began seeking out textual histories (American, for convenience) which might teach me more about editorial theory and practice, might shed light on the interpretation of a novel, might reveal patterns underlying previous literary criticism on a work, and might illustrate aesthetic concepts such as "built-in" intentionality. For several years I had a heady time of it at USC; and in Delaware the reverberations

continue. Alone or in collaboration, or supervising the work of students, I studied *Pierre*, *Maggie*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *The Great Gatsby*, *An American Dream*, and other novels. In this paper I will describe some of these textual situations tersely and then emphasize some of the kinds of things we learned from them or can learn from them now; the importance is more in the implications than the particular examples. And in this paper I will resist the temptation to plunder examples from Meriwether, Noel Polk, James L. W. West, III, and others.

I will use *Pierre* as the first example. In 1974 I called time during work on "The Flawed Grandeur of Melville's *Pierre*" so I could lay out the documentary evidence: why did Melville wreck his book by adding some 160 unanticipated pages in late February or March of 1852? The answer lay in a letter at the Houghton: he had wrecked the book earlier, in January and early February 1852, after coming to terms with the Harpers on a contract which meant he would have to give up writing just as he had become a great writer; he had accepted 20¢ on the dollar after costs instead of 50¢, which had not been enough to support himself and his family.¹⁰ *Pierre* is a disastrously flawed book, however much controlled greatness lies in the pages which were part of the original manuscript and however much uncontrolled greatness lies in the pages which Melville added after the contract was agreed upon. Robert Milder (to cite one of the more responsible critics) is almost wholly wrong in these conclusions: "Melville was in command of his plot, which did not change substantially as he labored on it, and in command of his complex and ironic attitude toward *Pierre*, which also did not change. The book Melville published, 'loathsome' as it seemed to many of its first readers, is the book he set out to write."¹¹ On the contrary, the book Melville published was *not* the book he set out to write, and was *not* the book he actually wrote to the point of thinking it was finished or almost finished. The book he published consists about three-fifths of what he wrote under one impelling purpose and about two-fifths which he wrote under another impulse (or salvaged for use along with what he wrote under this new impulse). In the light of all the evidence, one can no longer talk responsibly about Melville's "intention" in *Pierre* or the "unity" of *Pierre*. To do so is to impose a factitious aesthetic pattern, a false perfection, upon a very great but flawed novel; to do so is to prize one aesthetic pattern or another at the cost of dehumanizing a work of art and despising the anguish of the author.

Mark Twain was shameless about the creation of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, admitting that he was a jack-leg novelist who had salvaged the "tragedy" of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* from a much larger manuscript that also included

what he published as the "comedy" of *Those Extraordinary Twins* (in fact, the manuscript included many pages that did not go into either "book").¹² Here, in outline, is the situation. Mark Twain began with a one-joke plot: into a village on the Mississippi come Siamese twins (Angelo and Luigi) who share two legs and a torso but who share almost no habits or beliefs. He invented Tom Driscoll as a sneak-thief and as a rival to Angelo for Rowena's affections. After elaborating many comic episodes, he had the notion of making Tom a changeling, part black and a slave, and he introduced Roxy, just as if she had been a character all along, and proceeded through Tom's selling Roxy down the river, Tom's murdering his "uncle," the trial of the twins, and Pudd'nhead Wilson's triumphant use of fingerprints to free the twins, convict the murderer, and astound the village. Then he went back and wrote the chapters in which Roxy exchanges the babies, "Tom" and "Chambers" grow up, and Roxy goes away and returns. Mark Twain had a typescript made of this bulky thing (in which the twins were still conjoint) and tried to get it published. Having failed, months later he pulled *Pudd'nhead Wilson* out of the typescript. The first ten chapters of what we know as *Pudd'nhead Wilson* are *part* of the last section Mark Twain wrote (he discarded many late-written pages about Roxy); the middle of the book is *a small part* of what he wrote very early (he made an effort to separate the twins when he retained scenes where they appeared); and the ending stands just about as it did when he wrote it, in the middle of the composition (except that the twins are separated). Upon this "work" critics have lavished much praise, seeing in it unity of theme and organization better than that of *Huckleberry Finn*, finding that the fusion of the themes of slavery, detection, and twinhood make the book a creative triumph, and so on. Even so cautious a critic as James M. Cox thinks that in the book Mark Twain "came to grips with the animating issue of slavery in a sustained effort."¹³

Critics like Cox read the opening, in which the evils of slavery are vividly portrayed in Roxy's decision to kill herself and her baby, then follow the theme through Roxy's revelation in Chapter 9 and the agony of the false Tom in Chapter 10: "A nigger! I am a nigger! Oh, I wish I was dead!" These scenes have undeniable power. But in Chapter 11 Tom Driscoll has almost nothing on his mind beyond guying Wilson and stirring up trouble between Angelo and Luigi; he is a sneak-thief, but he is not greatly worried about being caught at it. His main role in the latter part of the chapter is to get kicked so he can take the dishonorable course of suing Luigi instead of challenging him to a duel. The *reason* Tom does not worry about being part black and a slave is that when Mark Twain wrote Chapter 11 he was

lily-white. Mark Twain never went back to put Tom's blackness into either Chapter II or the rest of what he had salvaged from that section.

When earlier critics had talked about anomalies in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* they were talking about trivialities—spots where Mark Twain had left in references to the twins which make sense only if they are still conjoint. The critics had ignored the real anomalies, and the real aesthetic questions.¹⁴ I raise only the most obvious here. Can an author “will” or “wish” something he has written earlier to acquire a different meaning or function because he has (without backtracking revision) altered the concept of his characters and plot? Or because he has placed the passage after later-written chapters which spring from an altered sense of the characters, plot, and themes? Mark Twain wanted to put together a book with the least possible effort, and did. The evidence of the manuscript is that Mark Twain made no strenuous efforts at reconciling what he had written under such varying notions of character, plot, and theme. He wanted the thing he salvaged to work, of course, in the sense that it would *do*, it would *pass*, so no one would notice any serious problems. But this desire that the book be genuinely coherent must have been extremely vague, a kind of wishful thinking, not an active intention which he tried to infuse throughout the text of what he called *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Brian Higgins and I began our work on *Maggie* as a review of Fredson Bowers's edition to be published in *Proof* 5; the essay did not appear there, but we salvaged a section of it in a special Crane issue I edited for *Studies in the Novel*.¹⁵ Bowers's reprinting of the expurgated Appleton text, further regularized, is far too controversial an example of editing to discuss here. Edwin H. Cady recently summed up the consensus: “Like Donald Pizer, Joseph Katz, and Hershel Parker (and almost everybody else), I thought Bowers was wrong.”¹⁶ Here I want to emphasize only two aspects of this matter.

First, *Maggie* is a good reminder that we all talk too carelessly about “versions” of literary works, in this case the 1893 version which Crane printed privately and the Appleton version of 1896. Crane went through the entire text by himself in 1896, removing “words which hurt” in order to appease his editor, Ripley Hitchcock, and no doubt he went over parts of the text in Hitchcock's presence, making more cuts and toning down more stylistic idiosyncracies. But Bowers's portrait of Crane earnestly working his final artistic revisions into the very text he was bowdlerizing is ludicrous: a writer does not infuse his final artistic intentions into scenes he is systematically weakening. The 1896 edition is an editorial version, not an authorial version.¹⁷

Second, the Appleton text of *Maggie* provides a graphic illustration of the compulsion critics have to make sense of the printed text before them. Higgins and I demonstrate that the 1896 text in the heavily expurgated Chapter 17 literally does not make sense, Hitchcock having forced the deletion of Maggie's encounter with the fat man in a successful effort to avoid a meaning that was all too clear. Someone made a perfunctory attempt to build a bridge over the missing paragraph, but did so at the expense of making the tall buildings move, between one paragraph and the next, from the start of the last block to the edge of the river—a ludicrous bit of conjuring. No one, however, made any effort to create a coherent *new* meaning. The river was still mentioned, but Maggie had not walked there and might not be there; instead the fast-hopping buildings were by the river, having done some strange contortions not only with their feet but their tops (the eyes of the structures seem to look over their lip-like shutters or to look over the other structures). The Appleton edition is incoherent and nonsensical, but for critics the compulsion to make sense has driven them to find authorial purpose in the senseless text. Even for sophisticated readers (perhaps *especially* for readers trained under the sophisticated New Criticism), the appearance of a neatly printed and bound text has near-magical properties. The text of the 1896 *Maggie*, in whatever reprint, is taken as, by definition, a work of art whose unity it is the critic's task to demonstrate.

In 1976 I suggested that readers would be better off with a reconstruction of *The Red Badge of Courage* as Crane wrote it, with surviving manuscript pages (mainly Henry's railings against cosmic forces) put back in and gaps filled whenever possible by surviving passages from the earlier draft.¹⁸ Henry Binder edited the novel that way for Norton and celebrated Crane's achievement in the lead article of the *Studies in the Novel* special Crane issue:¹⁹

In *Red Badge*, as he wrote it in manuscript, Crane tied together Henry's ambivalent conclusions about his place in the universe, his desertion of tattered soldier, his continuing egotism, his failure to change in battle, and the very different matters of Conklin's blindly fated death, the cheery-voiced stranger's courageous optimism and kindness, and Wilson's step toward manhood and understanding. In Crane's original conception, all of these matters worked in close concert. But with the rebellious passages deleted, Henry's extreme rationalizing was no longer the focus of his characterization in the novel. And with the final mention of Jimmie Rogers cut, Wilson's function as Henry's foil was blurred. Also the importance of Henry's promise to remain with the dying Conklin and the significance of his immediately subsequent desertion of the tattered

man was obscured when Henry's justification for the desertion was deleted from the final chapter. Which is to say that, after the cuts were made, the most marked clues to Crane's intentions in the story were gone.

Critics had disagreed so strongly about *Red Badge* because they had been writing about a text not only incomplete but a text cut specifically in order to remove the profoundest of Crane's meanings.

Despite Binder's demonstration, Donald Pizer has referred to the final manuscript of *Red Badge* as "a discarded earlier version" and defended the Appleton text as "an ambivalent and ambiguous" novel.²⁰ Pizer may possibly share with many of us a very natural reluctance to change his mind about stands already taken in public, but I think that his response, rather than being so simply defensive, is based on two axioms not adequately examined: "To Revise is to Improve" and "The Text is Whatever the Author Published." Our compulsion to justify any textual changes is apparent in almost any revision-study I could cite, and apparent in efforts of editors, notably Fredson Bowers, to justify changes, even those which are patently editorial, as artistic revisions. The second axiom is blatantly promulgated by James Thorpe, who claims that any work remains "potential" until an author releases it "into a public domain" by publishing it. Rejecting Lester A. Beaurline's argument that "some writers, because of youth or poverty or lack of experience, are understandably obliged to bow to pressures to alter their work to have it published or produced," Thorpe insists that "editing is the practical task of recovering what the writer wrote and made public—not what he might have written, or was capable of writing, or could have been allowed or induced to write."²¹ Blinded by the tidiness of the printed version of a text, whatever it is, Thorpe collapses two stages which are often distinct: what the writer writes and what the writer gets into print. There will always be historical reasons for reading maimed texts which got into print (we need to know what publishers found objectionable in different periods and we need to know what text earlier critics made their judgments upon), but as critics our first concern should be with what a writer actually wrote not what he managed to get into print. Under strong pressure, Crane had agreed to cut his book in order to get it into print: more precisely, in order to get *most* of it into print. He may never have realized what damage had been done to the original work he had prized so highly; apparently few writers do understand such damage to their own works.

We all know that F. Scott Fitzgerald's manuscript and typescript of *The Great Gatsby* put all of Gatsby's story of his life in Chapter 7 (Chap-

ter 8 in the published book), on the occasion of Gatsby's telling it to Nick Carraway, after the quixotic vigil outside the Buchanan house. Maxwell Perkins, the editor at Scribners, urged Fitzgerald to break up the longish narrative, and after puzzling for some weeks the author moved a little of the story, the part concerning Gatsby's youth and his experiences with Dan Cody, back to Chapter 6 (in the final numbering), making other slight adjustments to his characterization of Gatsby in the process.²² Later critics have uniformly endorsed the break up of Gatsby's story as an example of Fitzgerald's "craft of revision."²³ Without arguing that the published text of *The Great Gatsby* is maimed to anything like the extent of the 1895 *Red Badge*, I nevertheless want to suggest a line of inquiry. Rather than rushing to celebrate Fitzgerald's craftsmanship, we might first study the manuscript in order to see how Gatsby's history functioned when it was all together in what was then Chapter 7.²⁴ The reader of the original version has been waiting since the first page for the narrator to become "privy to the secret griefs" of the wild, unknown title character. The revelation of Gatsby's past comes, in the manuscript, at a time when the reader's excitement about the plot is keenest, after the showdown at the Plaza and the death of Myrtle. The occasion is heightened not only by these dramatic events but also by a new moral awareness, for Nick has just repudiated Tom and Jordan (and Daisy too, by implication) by refusing to go into the Buchanan house, and he has experienced reversals of feeling toward Gatsby that make him, at the start of the chapter, care "too much about him" to disillusion him with the knowledge that Tom and Daisy are reunited. In the manuscript, the reader responds to the history with wry nostalgia, with a surge of affection for Gatsby and for the best of what he embodies, responds yearningly, if ironically, to Gatsby's youthful idealism and his conviction of his own "ineffable destiny." Then in the manuscript Gatsby's death is poignant partly because it comes just after the reader has come to know the full story of his life and his impossible idealism; and Nick's later meditation on his own youthful returns to the regions north and west of Chicago links him closely to Gatsby, whose Minnesota youth has recently been recounted. More arguments could be made. On the score of reader response, especially, one could argue that the reader does not need the Cody pages at the start of Chapter 6, however innocently happy he is to encounter them: the pages offer specific information of the sort we had decided we would do without; we are willing to wait until Nick is ready to tell us, superior as we are to the avid gossipmongers. And the pages do not at that point fulfill the expectations that had been set

up (what would Gatsby and Daisy do after their reunion?) and do not prepare with full cogency for what will follow. Whatever the validity of my tentative conjectures here, one fact is plain: readers habitually assume that “To Revise is to Improve” and just as habitually neglect to look at the functions which parts of a novel had in their original placement.

Norman Mailer’s *An American Dream* is a classic case of an author’s damaging his text by trying to alter a few patterns or parts of patterns.²⁵ The novel as Mailer wrote it and published it in *Esquire* was structured upon a series of confrontations. These are mainly with worthy opponents, with “equals,” although some of the stronger effects derive from deliberate debasement of the pattern, when the hero Rojack confronts someone plainly his inferior. Almost always the confrontation involves eye-to-eye contact—often a stare-down. For the book version Mailer removed two small but crucial passages which establish first Roberts then Shago Martin as Rojack’s equals in power and in psychic complexity. His motive may have been as simple as a dread that he was having Rojack respond too sensitively to eye-contact with other men—think of his anxiety a few years later at a campaign poster’s being “faggy green”!²⁶ Whatever the motive for the excisions, they are disastrous, for when Roberts and Shago are not explicitly stated to be Rojack’s equals their significance is muffled, and minor characters seem to move up in the hierarchy (particularly Romeo, whose psychic dueling takes on undue proportions once the contest with Roberts is reduced). The original pattern partially survives, but not in a way that explains the amount of space still given to Roberts and Shago and not in a way that clarifies the functions of the minor characters.

When Mailer closed up the wounds after the excision of crucial, motivating passages, sometimes the words that remain do not make *any* good sense, as when Rojack speaks out of “that calm” to Shago when the calm referred to has been deleted. More often, the remaining words make sense but not precisely authorial sense, not the sense that Mailer put there during the process of creation. The words that remain in the Dial text are still Mailer’s words, and they have his authorial blessing, but no amount of authorial blessing can endow the ravaged passages with full intentionality. They are as they are because they meant something else at the time they were being composed. Even if nothing anomalous sticks out like a broken bone through skin, whole passages and in some ways the whole book is drained of intentionality, although the original intentionality remains built into scenes where the clues are gone that make it apparent. The damage to the book is so great that anyone who

has written about structure (or theme, characterization, or almost any other aspect) has written more or less wrongly.

I am convinced that some of the more lasting critical work on American fiction is being done by critics who began publishing as biographical and textual scholars, nourished directly or indirectly by that great boondoggle and great boon, the CEAA. We have advantages over the great scholars of the 1930s and 1940s, the heyday of scholarship on American literature: improved technology (was there academic life before Xerox?), vastly increased support for research and travel from universities, and NEH's support of group-effort research. And we have advantages over the critics of the 1980s, the heirs to the New Criticism: we start not with one possibly factitious theoretical approach or another, but with basic information about what the writer did. It is harder to go wrong if you start from the writer at work, from the text as a thing-in-process until completion.

It is easy to go wrong if, starting from some point long after the process of composition and publication, you treat the text (the words of whatever edition you happen to hold in your hand) as an immutable toy that has been waiting for you to play with it. A half-generation of critics from Yale and Johns Hopkins is wasting effort in service to what Jay Martin has memorably called "the new ignorance"—criticism in which no notice is taken of American intellectual history, sociology, anthropology;²⁷ or, I would add, biography, literary history, textual history. Some of the brightest people are saying the most asinine things in the cleverest ways, contemptuous of biographical and textual evidence which ought to fascinate them. As a member of an editorial board (not for this journal), I have had to plead through successive revisions that the writer of an essay on "Author and Audiences" about one of Melville's books stop relying on impressionistic notions of how Melville's early readers responded and make use of the control sample of response—the contemporary reviews. And even more provocative evidence lies in the literary criticism written upon maimed texts. Look at the criticism in the revised Norton Critical Edition of *Red Badge*: there is fascinating documentary evidence of professional readers' responses to a problematical text²⁸. Anyone fashionably interested in closure could do worse than study textual situations like that in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Can the same ending satisfactorily close plots as wildly divergent as those in the full manuscript and the published *Pudd'nhead Wilson*? Did the ending when written close what was already written? Did it close what was not yet written? There is evidence to get your teeth in.²⁹ What could a fine Frenchified

critic do with the whole history of the composition of that out-of-seams thing Mark Twain was calling alternatively *Those Extraordinary Twins* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*? There is deconstructive evidence with a vengeance. Any good post-structuralist Freudian, aware that revision involves disguise and defensiveness,³⁰ ought to scorn the Reading Text of *Billy Budd* and submerge himself in the smarmy convolutions of the Genetic Text. In this realm where bio-textual evidence and creativity theory interplay with critical theory and aesthetic theory (a realm rife with suggestiveness) what you write has a chance of lasting a while.

Notes

¹ See Malcolm Cowley, "Faulkner Was Wrong About 'Sanctuary,'" *New York Times Book Review* (February 22, 1981), pp. 9, 25; thoughtful comments on William Faulkner's *Sanctuary: The Original Text*, edited by Noel Polk (New York: Random House, 1981); and Herbert Mitgang, "After 80 Years, Publisher Plans Uncut 'Sister Carrie,'" *New York Times* (April 17, 1981), pp. A1, A16, a review of the Pennsylvania Edition of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), textual editor James L. W. West III, general editor Neda M. Westlake.

The approach I am describing has close links with the scholarship of the 1930s, before the heyday of the New Criticism. For more than four decades Leon Howard has been discussing American texts in terms of their genesis, and his approach is evident throughout *Herman Melville: A Biography* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1951). Two students of the great Yale scholar of American literature, Stanley T. Williams, have provided the most compelling model for textual research and for guidance toward its aesthetic implications: Merton M. Sealts, Jr., and Harrison Hayford, in their edition of *Billy Budd, Sailor* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962). James B. Meriwether's "The Textual History of *The Sound and the Fury*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (PBSA), 56 (1962), 285-316, revised in his *Studies in "The Sound and the Fury"* (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1970), pp. 1-32, is a classic example of this approach to American fiction. Michael Millgate's *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1966), was, as the author says in the new foreword to the Bison Book reprinting (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. ix, an "attempt to bring scholarship directly to bear upon the processes of criticism, to see the entire range of Faulkner's work within the richest available context of biographical and textual information." Beginning in the 1970s, several former students of Meriwether's have made important contributions to this approach, among them Joseph McElrath, Thomas L. McHaney, Noel Polk, and James L. W. West III. My sense of what I was up to and ought to be up to was clarified during a series of collaborations with former students—Brian Higgins, Bruce Bebb, Steven Mailoux, and Henry Binder. In his capacity as editor of the Mark Twain Papers the late Frederick Anderson employed (or produced) several superb scholar-critics, among them his successor, Robert H. Hirst, the author of a remarkable Berkeley dissertation on "The Making of *The Innocents Abroad*" (1975). Others taking similar approaches to American fiction could be listed. And of course nothing about the approach restricts it to the genre of fiction or to American literature. There are recent comparable studies in British liter-

ature, notably Jane Millgate's "The Limits of Editing: The Problems of Scott's *The Siege of Malta*," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 82 (1979), 190-212.

² Brian Higgins and Hershel Parker, "The Chaotic Legacy of the New Criticism and the Fair Augury of the New Scholarship," in *Ruined Eden of the Present: Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe*, ed. G. R. Thompson and Virgil L. Lokke (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 27-45. This essay was written early in 1977 and only imperfectly updated during the long delay of the volume, a Festschrift for Darrel Abel; in our discussion of *Moby-Dick* we ought to have mentioned Harrison Hayford's "Unnecessary Duplicates," an astonishing example of homegrown deconstructionism, now long available in Faith Pullin's *New Perspectives on Melville* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 128-61.

³ I am editing *Pudd'nhead Wilson* for the California edition of The Works of Mark Twain; Henry Binder has edited *The Red Badge of Courage* for the Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vol. 2, with a separate Norton edition planned for late 1981; my study of "Mailer's Revision of the *Esquire* Version of *An American Dream* and the Aesthetic Problem of 'Built-in' Intentionality," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 84 (Winter 1981), 405-30.

⁴ Brian Higgins and Hershel Parker, "Sober Second Thoughts: Fitzgerald's 'Final Version' of *Tender is the Night*," *Proof*, 4 (1975), 129-52.

⁵ Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 190-95.

⁶ "Sober Second Thoughts," p. 140; subsequent quotations in this paragraph are from pp. 140-41.

⁷ *American Literary Scholarship, 1975*, ed. James Woodress (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 169, 191.

⁸ E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967); Murray Krieger, *Theory of Criticism: A Tradition and Its System* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976); G. Thomas Tanselle, "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention," *Studies in Bibliography (SB)*, 29 (1976), 167-211 (a superb study weakened only by a lack of skepticism about Fredson Bowers's editorial policies and Michael Hancher's classifications of intention); Albert Rothenberg, *The Emerging Goddess: The Creative Process in Art, Science, and Other Fields* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979).

⁹ In *New Perspectives on Melville*, ed. Faith Pullin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 162-96.

¹⁰ Hershel Parker, "Why *Pierre* Went Wrong," *Studies in the Novel (SN)*, 8 (1976), 7-23, and Hershel Parker, "Contract: *Pierre*, by Herman Melville," *Proof*, 5 (1977), 27-44.

¹¹ Robert Milder, "Melville's 'Intentions' in *Pierre*," *SN*, 6 (1974), 186-99; the quotation is from pp. 192-93.

¹² Mark Twain's comments are found in *The Tragedy of "Pudd'nhead Wilson" and the Comedy "Those Extraordinary Twins"* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1894), pp. 309-15 (preceding *Those Extraordinary Twins*) and *passim* throughout *Those Extraordinary Twins*.

¹³ James M. Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), p. 226.

¹⁴ See Philip Cohen, "Aesthetic Anomalies in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*," in *Studies in American Fiction*, 10 (1982), 55-69.

¹⁵ Hershel Parker and Brian Higgins, "Maggie's 'Last Night': Authorial Design and Editorial Patching" in "Special Number on Stephen Crane," *SN*, 10 (1978), 64-75, guest editor Hershel Parker, with James T. Cox; reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, ed. Thomas A. Gullason (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), pp. 234-45.

¹⁶ Edwin H. Cady, *Stephen Crane*, rev. ed. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. 24.

¹⁷ In *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1972), p. 42, James Thorpe attempts to clarify the problem of "versions" by declaring much revised literary texts to be "in fact different works of art," using the analogy of five versions of a bronze head by Matisse or the many self-portraits by Rembrandt. By this argument the 1893 and 1896 editions of *Maggie* might be considered as distinct works of art, except for the fact that the spirit behind the revisions was not the author's. But Thorpe's analogy will not hold up. In such instances the sculptor starts off each time with new wax or new clay and the painter with a new canvas and new paint. Even if the sculptor uses a habitual fingerstroke or the painter uses a habitual brushstroke to create, say, an earlobe, the fact is that their strokes are new. When novels are revised, great hunks are often re-used, unaltered or slightly altered; even in extensive revisions, paragraphs or pages or chapters may go unrevised. In these cases, what goes unrevised to a greater or lesser extent goes unthought, carrying its original intentionality in a new context in which that intentionality is more or less at war with the different intentionality in the newly written pages.

¹⁸ Review of *The Red Badge of Courage: A Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Washington, D.C.: NCR/Microcard Editions, 1972 and 1973), and *The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. II of the University of Virginia Edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1975), in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (NCF), 30 (March 1976), 558-62.

¹⁹ See the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), Vol. II, pp. 802-906, and "The Red Badge of Courage Nobody Knows," SN, 10 (1978), 9-47; this quotation is from pp. 32-33.

²⁰ Donald Pizer, "The Red Badge of Courage Nobody Knows: A Brief Rejoinder," SN, 11 (1979), 77-81; these quotations are from pp. 81, 80. See also Henry Binder's "Donald Pizer, Ripley Hitchcock, and *The Red Badge of Courage*," SN, 11 (1979), 216-23.

²¹ *Principles of Textual Criticism*, p. 38; the response to Beaurline is on p. 38, n. 53.

²² *Dear Scott/Dear Max*, ed. John Kuehl and Jackson Bryer (New York: Scribners, 1971), pp. 84-85, 94.

²³ Kenneth Eble, "The Craft of Revision: *The Great Gatsby*," *American Literature* (AL), 36 (1964), 315-26.

²⁴ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby: A Facsimile of the Manuscript*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions Books, 1973).

²⁵ My essay cited in footnote 3 is based upon a collation Bruce Bebb and I made of the version in *Esquire*, vols. 61 and 62 (Jan. through Aug. 1964), against *An American Dream* (New York: Dial Press, 1965).

²⁶ Joe Flaherty, *Managing Matter* (New York: Berkley Publishing Corp., 1971), p. 71.

²⁷ Martin coins this phrase in a review of Eric J. Sundquist's *Home as Found* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1979) in AL, 52 (1981), 654-55; this quotation is from p. 654.

²⁸ "The Modern Critical Revival" in *The Red Badge of Courage*, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty, and E. Hudson Long; rev. Donald Pizer (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), pp. 195-360.

²⁹ Hershel Parker and Henry Binder, "Exigencies of Composition and Publication: *Billy Budd*, *Sailor* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*," NCF, 33 (1978), 131-43; the issue was reprinted as *Narrative Endings* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979).

³⁰ Rothenberg, *The Emerging Goddess*, p. 353.

THE IDEOLOGY OF FINAL INTENTIONS

JEROME J. MCGANN

The view that «final authorial intention» should determine the decisions in a project of scholarly editing is deeply problematic for a number of reasons. In the first place, it cannot serve as a general criterion for editorial method since different historical circumstances demand different rules and procedures. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century materials are fundamentally different from nineteenth and twentieth. More crucially, the criterion ignores the social character of every textual condition, which is a negotiated process between various authoritative agents. Author's intentions shift and multiply in the process of bringing a literary work to publication, whether print or otherwise. EDD.

Il principio secondo cui l'«ultima volontà dell'autore» dovrebbe orientare le scelte ecdotiche nel progetto di un'edizione critica può, secondo McGann, essere messo in discussione per una serie di ragioni. In primo luogo, tale principio non può servire come criterio ecdotico generale dal momento che differenti circostanze storiche impongono differenti regole e procedure editoriali. Edizioni di testi del XVI e XVII secolo pongono problemi molto diversi da quelle del XIX e del XX secolo. E tale principio, inoltre, non prende in esame la dimensione sociale dello statuto testuale, che risulta da un processo di negoziazione tra diverse e autorevoli istanze. Le «volontà dell'autore» mutano e si moltiplicano nel processo che porta un testo alla sua pubblicazione, sia a stampa che in altre forme editoriali.

Such a critique will only become possible when we are able to see more clearly the ideology which supports the concept of final intentions. We begin by returning briefly to a passage in Greg's famous essay where he summarizes his position.

Chapter 3 from *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, Chicago (IL), University of Chicago Press, 1983, pp. 37-49. By permission of the author. *A Critique* was republished by the University Press of Virginia, 1992.

The thesis I am arguing is that the historical circumstances of the English language make it necessary to adopt in formal matters the guidance of some particular early text. If the several extant texts of a work form an ancestral series, the earliest will naturally be selected since this will not only come nearest to the author's original in accidentals, but also (revision apart) most faithfully preserve the correct readings where substantive variants are in question.¹

This statement shows the special circumstances which Greg's theory was constructed to meet. When he speaks of several texts that "form an ancestral series," the monogenous pattern of Shakespearean texts—as opposed to the problems facing the editors of polygenous texts, such as Chaucer's—shows through very clearly. Furthermore, when Greg speaks of "author's original" we encounter a formulation which his inheritors—for present purposes, we will instance Bowers—will consistently revise and depart from. Bowers's summary of Greg's position is interesting in this context.

Greg distinguished between the authority of the substantives and of the forms, or accidentals, assumed by these substantives. If only the first edition, set from manuscript, has authority, as being the closest in each of these two respects to the author's lost manuscript, then both authorities are combined in one edition. On the other hand, a revised edition may alter the authority of some of the substantives; but the transmission of the author's accidentals through the hands, and mind, of still another compositor destroys the authority of these features of the first edition, set from manuscript.²

This passage comes near the beginning of Bowers's famous essay ["Some Principles for Scholarly Editions of Nineteenth-Century American Authors"]. One notices here that he does not speak of either "original" or "final" intentions. He does not choose either term, in this place, because he is in the midst of a demonstration which will lead him beyond Greg's formulation ("author's original") to his own special variation upon it. Thus, when Bowers does finally come to apply Greg's theory to the editing of modern American authors, where prepublication textual states are commonly extant, he argues the theory of final intentions, as we have seen. In fact, he and others are brought to use this term "final intentions" precisely when the editorial problem shifts from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. In Bowers's essays on seventeenth-century editing problems—for example, in his "Current Theories of Copy-Text, With an illustration from Dryden,"—the concept of final intentions never appears.³ It manifestly has no relevance.

The theory of final intentions is an effort to deal systematically with a

recurrent problem faced by the editors of certain sorts of texts. However, because the theory emerged through the Lachmann-Greg tradition of critical editing, it preserved certain features of earlier textual theories which were irrelevant to the new sets of problems. The theory of final intentions aims to provide a rule for the choice of a text under circumstances where several apparently fully authoritative texts exist. In Greg's terms, the theory attempts to provide a rationale not merely for emendation and correction procedures, but for choosing between "particular substantive editions" as well.⁴ The theory develops because Greg's copy-text of rule—"the earliest" or first edition—becomes a "later" text when the ancestral series is invaded by still earlier, prepublication forms. In such a situation Bowers, Tanselle, and the many inheritors of Greg continue to follow his line of reasoning, and argue that the author's manuscript—because it is earliest in the ancestral series of monogenous texts—assumes the highest authority when the issue of copy-text is being met. We have already heard Bowers speak to this point. Tanselle's statement on the matter is interesting not because he follows Bowers, but because his argument takes the same form of thought, and clearly shows the continuing influence of Greg.

Greg's rationale, pointing out the usual deterioration of a text (particularly its accidentals) from one manuscript or edition to another, leads the editor back to the fair-copy manuscript or the earliest extant text which follows it.⁵

Tanselle concludes in a way that is typical of his critical style, which is generally more cautious and less dismissive than Bowers's: "in the absence of additional evidence, the author's manuscript should be taken as a safer guide than the printed text to his intentions regarding accidentals."⁶ But Tanselle's formulation, like Bowers's, betrays an innovative reading of Greg's famous essay. Tanselle and Bowers both speak of author's intentions when they discuss the rationale of copy-text, whereas Greg's essay never dealt with the problem of authorial intentions at all.

The rationale behind this extension of Greg's theory is not difficult to see. Faced with situations where an editor has to decide between numerous authoritative documents, between numerous textual versions whether in monogenous or polygenous forms, the editor cannot lay aside, as Greg had laid aside, the problem of the choice of a text at every level. Bowers faced this issue squarely, and he appropriated Greg's analysis of early modern typographical problems in order to formulate and argue for a theory of authorial intentions.

Now underlying all such formulations, but particularly those which erect a theory of final intentions out of the theory of copy-text, the concept of the autonomy of the creative artist can be seen to be assumed. Textual critics who had to deal with ancient writings, and especially with classical and biblical authors, came to see through their philological studies how these authors and their works had been isolated from the present by the very process—textual transmission—which delivered them over to the present. The ancient works were alienated from the present not so much in their distance from us as in the interruption of our view caused by the corrupting process of transmission. To be put in touch with these authors and their works, the historical method proposed not an elimination of the distance but a clearing of the view: take away the textual contaminants, remove the interfering scribal and typographical presence, and the autonomous original will appear before us.

This desire to bring into view what has been obscured by historical processes—to repair the wrecks of history by using a historical method—moved into a new and very different phase with the intentionalist interpreters of Greg's rationale. Having learned the lesson that authors who wish to make contact with an audience are fated, by laws of information theory, to have their messages more or less seriously garbled in the process, textual critics proposed to place the reader in an unmediated contact with the author. This project is of course manifestly impossible, a Heisenbergian dilemma, since some form of mediation is always occurring, not least in the editions produced by critical editors of various persuasions. Nevertheless, though everyone today recognizes this inherent limitation on all acts of communication, the idea persists in textual studies that a regression to authorial manuscripts will by itself serve to reduce textual contamination.

Two points must be made. In the first place, such a regression will not necessarily reduce contamination, but it will necessarily situate it differently. Furthermore, if printed forms follow manuscripts in the ancestral series, and if they are thereby fated to introduce fresh contamination in the process of transmission, they equally acquire the potential for decontamination, as the very project of textual criticism demonstrates. Author's works are typically clearer and more accessible when they appear in print. Besides, when an author is himself involved in the printing of his manuscript—when he proofs and edits—then the printed form will necessarily represent what might be called his final intentions, or "the text as the author wished to have it presented to the public." This posi-

tion has been frequently maintained in actual practice, though Bowers heaps contempt upon it. It underlies Gaskell's untheorized rule that "in most cases the editor will choose as copy-text an early printed edition, not the manuscript."⁷

But a second point must be made that is even more fundamental, for it approaches the theory of final intentions via an exposure of its ideological assumptions. Gaskell and Thorpe are prominent among those who argue, as Tanselle puts it, "that the author's intention encompasses the activities which take place in the step from manuscript (or typescript) to print and that the intention is not 'final' until the text conforms to the standards which will make it publishable."⁸ Unlike Bowers, Tanselle feels the force of this argument, but he rejects it in the end because—as he argues elsewhere—"an author's manuscript stands a better chance of reflecting his wishes in accidentals than does a printed text."⁹

One may note in passing that an author's intentions toward his manuscript may be quite different—have special aims and reflect special circumstances—from his intentions toward his published text. Each may represent what Zeller has called a "different version." But this is by the way. What needs to be emphasized is Tanselle's idea that in matters of textual publication the author must be considered an autonomous authority. In this view, the textual critic is urged to produce an edition which most nearly reflects the author's autonomously generated text, and the critical editor will seek this goal even if that text is not one which the author published or could have had published.

This is a theory of textual criticism founded in a Romantic ideology of the relations between an author, his works, his institutional affiliations, and his audience. It stands in the sharpest contrast with the theory implicit in the following statement by James Thorpe.

Various forces are always at work thwarting or modifying the author's intentions. The process of preparing the work for dissemination to a public (whether that process leads to publication in printed form or production in the theatre or preparation of scribal copies) puts the work in the hands of persons who are professionals in the execution of the process. Similarly, the effort to recover a work of the past puts it in the hands of professionals known as textual critics, or editors. In all of these cases, the process must be adapted to the work at hand, and the work to the process. Sometimes through misunderstanding and sometimes through an effort to improve the work, these professionals substitute their own intentions for those of the author, who is frequently ignorant of their craft. Sometimes the author objects and sometimes not, sometimes he is pleased,

sometimes he acquiesces, and sometimes he does not notice what has happened. The work of art is thus always tending toward a collaborative status, and the task of the textual critic is always to recover and preserve its integrity at that point where the authorial intentions seem to have been fulfilled.¹⁰

One must add to this—to keep the factual record clear—that authors sometimes positively seek the collaboration of publishers and their house editors in establishing the verbal format of their works. Byron is an exemplary instance of this case. Indeed, not only did Byron ask his press editor—chiefly William Gifford—for help in the final stages of revision, he even accepted the textual interventions of his chief amanuensis, Mary Shelley. When she copied works like Canto 3 of *Childe Harold* and the various cantos of *Don Juan*, she would regularly introduce alterations—mostly minor—into her copy. When Byron corrected this copy he would sometimes accept her changes and sometimes return to the original reading. Such instances of “collaboration” abound in all periods of literary production, as everyone recognizes, and I shall return to the Mary Shelley-Byron case a bit later.

But the collaboration of the author with the institutions of publishing is an activity which cannot be adequately understood if we focus merely on the textual evidence of such cooperative processes. Because literary works are fundamentally social rather than personal or psychological products, they do not even acquire an artistic form of being until their engagement with an audience has been determined. In order to secure such an engagement, literary works must be produced within some appropriate set of social institutions, even if it should involve but a small coterie of amateurs. Blake perfectly exemplifies this fact about the nature of literary work precisely because he tried to produce his own work in deliberate defiance of his period’s normal avenues of publication. Blake retreated to a method of literary production which antedated even the patronage system of the eighteenth century. And as for the commercial system of his own day, this was an institution from which Blake early sought to gain his independence. His project is implicit in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and explicit in his 1793 “Prospectus.”¹¹

TO THE PUBLIC October 10, 1793

The Labours of the Artist, the Poet, the Musician, have been proverbially attended by poverty and obscurity; this was never the fault of the Public, but was owing to a neglect of means to propagate such works as have wholly absorbed the Man of Genius. Even Milton and Shakespeare could not publish their own works.

This difficulty has been obviated by the Author of the following productions now presented to the Public; who has invented a method of Printing both Letter-press and Engraving in a style more ornamental, uniform, and grand, than any before discovered, while it produces works at less than one fourth of the expense. If a method of Printing which combines the Painter and the Poet is a phenomenon worthy of public attention, provided that it exceeds in elegance all former methods, the Author is sure of his reward.

The following are the Subjects of the several Works now published and on Sale at Mr. Blake's, No. 13, Hercules Buildings, Lambeth.

No Subscriptions for the numerous great works now in hand are asked, for none are wanted; but the Author will produce his works, and offer them to sale at a fair price.

Later—and specifically when he came under the influence of William Hayley—Blake swerved from his early radical project and sought to have his works published and distributed in the normal fashion.

The Profits arising from Publications are immense & I now have it in my power to commence publication with many very formidable works, which I have finish'd & ready. A Book price half a guinea may be got out at the Expense of Ten pounds & its almost certain profits are 500 G. I am only sorry that I did not know the methods of publishing years ago, & this is one of the numerous benefits I have obtain'd by coming here, for I should never have known the nature of Publication unless I had known H. & his connexions & his method of managing. It now would be folly to venture publishing.

New Vanities, or rather new pleasures, occupy my thoughts. New profits seem to arise before me so tempting that I have already involved myself in engagements that preclude all possibility of promising any thing. I have, however, the satisfaction to inform you that I have Myself begun to print an account of my various Inventions in Art, for which I have procured a Publisher.¹²

Blake's interest in working with, rather than apart from, the publishing institution of his period was actively pursued between 1803-8, but in the end withered because of the special character of his works. His letter to Dawson Turner of 9 June 1818 reflects his decision, in the final period of

his life, to accept what was a fatality imposed upon him from the start, and by the very nature of his artistic productions.

Sir,

I send you a List of the different Works you have done me the honour to enquire after—unprofitable enough to me, tho' Expensive to the Buyer. Those I Printed for Mr. Humphry are a selection from the different Books of such as could be Printed without the Writing, tho' to the Loss of some of the things. For they when Printed perfect accompany Poetical Personifications & Acts, without which Poems they never could have been Executed.

	s. d.		
America. . . . 18 Prints folio.....	5	5	0
Europe. . . . 17 do. folio.....	5	5	0
Visions & . . . 8 do. folio.....	3	3	0
Thel. 6 do. Quarto.....	2	2	0
Songs of Innocence 28 do. Octavo.....	3	3	0
Songs of Experience 26 do. Octavo.....	3	3	0
Urizen . . . 28 Prints Quarto.....	5	5	0
Milton . . . 50 do. Quarto.....	10	10	0
12 Large Prints, Size of Each about 2 feet by 1 & 1/2			
Historical & Poetical			
Printed in Colours . . Each	5	5	0

These last 12 prints are unaccompanied by any writing. The few I have Printed & Sold are sufficient to have gained me great reputation as an Artist, which was the chief thing Intended. But I have never been able to produce a Sufficient number for a general Sale by means of a regular Publisher. It is therefore necessary to me that any Person wishing to have any or all of them should send me their Order to Print them on the above terms, & I will take care that they shall be done at least as well as any I have yet Produced.¹³

When Blake assumed the roles of author, editor, illustrator, publisher, printer, and distributor, he was plainly aspiring to become a literary institution unto himself. Unfortunately, he could not also assume the role of one crucial component of that institution as it existed in his period: the reviewer. As a consequence, his work reached only a small circle of his contemporaries. Also, his productive processes were such that he could not mass produce his works, so that his fame, his full appreciation and influence, had to wait upon his death, and the intervention of a number of important persons who never even knew him. The mechanical reproduction of his rare original works was a final, splendid insult to the equally splendid principles of a genius. Had that insult never been

delivered, Blake would have been no more than one of those who “bare of laurel... live, dream, and die.”

When Keats wrote those words in order to distinguish between the poet and the inarticulate visionary (see “The Fall of Hyperion,” lines 1-18), he meant to show that imaginative power needs a medium of communication. In social circumstances, and especially in the modern periods of mechanical reproduction, Keats’s “fine spell of words” is a metaphor only, for words do not by themselves constitute a system of communication. Keats’s “warm scribe my hand,” on which he rested his hopes for fame, is equally a metaphor in such an age, since the authority for the value of literary productions does not rest in the author’s hands alone. Authority is a social nexus, not a personal possession; and if the authority for specific literary works is initiated anew for each new work by some specific artist, its initiation takes place in a necessary and integral historical environment of great complexity. Most immediately—and this is what concerns us here—it takes place within the conventions and enabling limits that are accepted by the prevailing institutions of literary production—conventions and limits which exist for the purpose of generating and supporting literary production. In all periods those institutions adapt to the special needs of individuals, including the needs of authors (some of whom are more comfortable with the institutions than others). But whatever special arrangements are made, the essential fact remains: literary works are not produced without arrangements of some sort.

One final remark on the authority assumed by the institutions of literary production. When we observe literary works from the special and narrowed focus of the textual critic, we tend to think that this issue of authority involves only people like author, amanuensis, publisher, editor, printer. Because of this special focus, textual critics conceive problems like “final intention” in the terms we have been observing, that is, as if the production of literary works—and hence the problem of the authority for various problematical readings—were a struggle between the pen of the author, the pencil of the editor, and the mechanized tools of the printer. But let us reflect for a moment on the case of Tennyson. This was a poet who frequently revised his work on the basis of the responses he received from a small circle of friends (at the trial proof stage) as well as from reviewers and the larger audience (at the publication stage). On whose authority were the changes made in the 1832 *Poems*, or in *The Princess*, or in *Maud*? Clearly, to ask such a question is to misconceive the nature of the problem, for the changes do not spring from a single *fons et origo*.

Notes

¹ Greg, W. W. "The Rationale of Copy-Text," *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950-51), 19-36.

² Brack, O.M. and Warner Barnes, eds. *Bibliography and Textual Criticism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969, 195.

³ "Current Theories of Copy-Text, With an illustration from Dryden," *Modern Philology* 68 (1950), 19-36.

⁴ An interesting critique of the concept of "substantive edition" may be found in Fredson Bowers, "McKerrow, Greg, and 'Substantive Edition,'" *Library* 5th Series 33 (1978), 83-107.

⁵ Tanselle, G. Thomas. *Selected Studies in Bibliography*. Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1979, 330.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 332.

⁷ Gaskell, Philip. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. London: Oxford UP, 1972, 340.

⁸ Tanselle, *Selected Studies*, 330.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 300.

¹⁰ Thorpe, James. *Principles of Textual Criticism*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1972, 48.

¹¹ Keynes, Geoffrey, ed. *Blake. Complete Writings*. London: Oxford UP, 1966, 207-8.

¹² *Ibid.*, 820, 865 (letters of 30 Jan. 1803 and 19 Dec. 1808).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 867.

THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORIAL INTENTION IN TEXTUAL CRITICISM

JAMES McLAVERY

In classical textual criticism there may well be only one text but many extant witnesses to it. In modern textual criticism there are often many different authorial versions of a work, but versions are not witnesses to, or scores of, a single text. This essay examines the concept of authorial intention to argue that each version may be authorially intended and an appropriate choice for reading text.

The concept of intention most relevant to textual criticism is E. D. Hirsch's. Hirsch is concerned with authorial intention because it makes the «verbal meaning» of a work determinate. The reasons we choose the author's meanings are ethical, but if that meaning is to be discussed, it must be determinate, intended.

An editor may ethically emend to restore the text the author intended, but some errors should not be emended because the author (knowing no better) made them part of the text. Final intentions are last intentions, not superintentions. There may be some overall intention covering a series of texts but that is not an intention in the Hirschian sense and it is not determinate. No version is intended more than any other. Attempts to recast versions as new works run counter to respect for the author's intention, and are just an attempt to avoid recognition of the integrity of versions. Authors are social beings and the attempt to free their intentions of the influence of others is tendentious and laden with undisclosed values. J.McL.

Nella critica del testo classica a un solo testo possono corrispondere molti testimoni. Spesso, nella critica del testo moderna, le varie e differenti versioni d'autore di un'opera non corrispondono necessariamente ad altrettante testimonianze o vestigia di un testo unico. Questo saggio, partendo dal concetto di «volontà dell'autore», sostiene che ogni versione del testo è in qualche modo autorizzata dall'autore e può rappresentare una legittima chiave di lettura.

Il più significativo concetto di «volontà», in relazione alla critica del testo, si deve a E. D. Hirsch. Hirsch tratta il problema della volontà dell'autore perché è essa a istituire il «significato verbale» di un'opera. I motivi per cui gli editori critici scelgono «le ragioni» dell'autore sono deontologicamente corretti, ma se devono essere discussi e approfonditi devono di conseguenza essere consapevoli e voluti (dall'autore).

Un editore critico, ad esempio, può correttamente emendare il testo per restaurare la lezione voluta dall'autore, ma alcuni errori non dovrebbero essere emendati perché l'autore (per parte sua inconsapevole) li ha resi parte integrante del testo. Le ultime volontà dell'autore devono essere «ultime volontà» (in senso cronologico), non «super-volontà». Ci può essere una volontà generale che coinvolge una serie di testi, ma anche in questo caso non si può parlare di «volontà» nell'accezione di Hirsch, e non si tratta di una precisa volontà. Non esiste una versione migliore di un'altra. Ogni tentativo di attribuire a singole versioni il valore integrale di un'opera va contro il rispetto della volontà dell'autore e finisce per essere un disconoscimento del carattere unitario che sempre hanno le singole versioni di un testo. Gli autori sono «animali sociali» e ogni tentativo fatto per liberare la loro volontà dal condizionamento degli altri si rivela tendenzioso e condizionato da principi non sufficientemente trasparenti.

No one would deny that the editing of Greek and Roman classical texts is a difficult business, but defining the aims of such editing proves to be surprisingly straightforward, at least for Paul Maas: 'The business of textual criticism is to produce a text as close as possible to the original.'¹ The editor of modern literature, on the other hand, finds it difficult to give a clear statement of his aims precisely because there often is no one original: there may be two or more autograph manuscripts or witnesses to them, or, in the course of the various printings of a work, there may be revisions by the author or corrections from authoritative manuscripts.² One of the startling changes on the literary scene over the last thirty years — a change due chiefly to the labours of textual critics, with Fredson Bowers in the van — has been the increased awareness of multiple authorial versions of works and of the difficulties and exciting possibilities they raise. But just as literary criticism has been slow to exploit the new field of evidence, and literary theory reluctant to consider its implications,³ so textual criticism has found it difficult to enunciate general principles for the editing of works subsisting in different authorial versions. This has not been for want of trying. Bowers himself has written a series of papers, all richly illustrated with examples, in which he wrestles with complex issues, suggests procedures, and outlines general principles; while G. Thomas Tanselle, James Thorpe, and, on this side of the Atlantic, Philip Gaskell have in their different ways led the attempt to set modern editing on a sound theoretical basis.⁴

At the heart of these discussions of textual criticism lie appeals to the author's intentions: 'The ideal of textual criticism is to present the text which the author intended' (Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism*, p. 79); 'the main scholarly demand is for an established critical text embodying the author's full intentions' (Bowers, 'Remarks on Eclectic texts', *Proof*, 4 (1975), 75); 'A critical text exists to present an informed reconstruction of an author's intended text' (Tanselle, 'Greg's Theory of Copy-Text and the Editing of American Literature', *SB* [*Studies in Bibliography*], 28 (1975), 204, n. 57); 'It is desirable that a reproduction of a work of literature should as far as possible conform to its author's intentions' (Gaskell, *From Writer to Reader*, p. 3). Plainly a concept so central to editorial theory merits careful elucidation, and fortunately it has provoked an essay of exceptional distinction and philosophical sophistication from Tanselle in 'The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention' (*SB*, 29 (1976), 167–211), an essay Hershel Parker has justly described as 'awesome'.⁵ This essay might have been expected to settle the issues for good, but it has not, as Tanselle's later contribution to the debate, 'Recent Editorial Discussion and the Central Questions of Editing' (*SB*, 34 (1981), 23–65), shows. I think there are three basic reasons for this: first, the nature of intention has remained unclear and the views of the leading literary theorist in this matter, E. D. Hirsch, misunderstood; second, too large a role has been allotted to intentions because of their connection with meaning, and this has then led to a role being given to motives, which strictly are irrelevant; and third, practices have been endorsed which conflict with recommended principles, particularly with respect to 'final intentions'. My aim in a strictly theoretical, though elementary, discussion which draws heavily on Tanselle's work will be to clarify the concept of intention and suggest what it should and should not be asked to do.

[...]*

Hirsch's work has been in defence of the role of the author, and scholarly editing as it is conceived by Bowers or Tanselle (or, I suspect, readers

* McLaverty presents two definitions and theories of intention. In its most common meaning, intention refers to purpose or intended action. A more technical sense of intention is found in logic and phenomenology where it means «the direction or application of the mind to an object». He argues that those writing on textual criticism use intention in the first sense. E. D. Hirsch, a philosopher often cited by textual critics, uses intention in the second sense. EDD.

of *The Library*) depends on a theory of literary discourse which gives the central role to the author: the author determines the text; variant forms of the text are first interpreted in terms of the author; the editor separates the authorial and non-authorial, rejecting the latter. In attempting to reverse the tendency in modern criticism which he calls 'The Banishment of the Author' (*Validity in Interpretation*, p. 1), Hirsch bases his case on a particular understanding of 'intention', one he draws from Husserl. If the meaning of a text is to be determinate, and hence a possible object of knowledge, he argues, the meaning must be the author's meaning. The interpreter should look for the author's 'verbal meaning', that is, 'that aspect of a speaker's "intention" which, under linguistic conventions, may be shared by others' (*Validity in Interpretation*, p. 218). Hirsch is careful to separate nonverbal aspects of the authors 'intention' (random thoughts or associations) from the 'content' which can be conveyed by linguistic means (pp. 218–19).⁶

The aim of *Validity in Interpretation* is to show that if the reader tries to realize the author's intended meaning, he can in principle succeed. The later collection of essays, *The Aims of Interpretation*, tackles the related question, *should* the reader try to realize the author's meaning. The arguments here are highly relevant to the editor. Hirsch believes the question is properly an ethical one. We should try to realize the author's meaning because our obligations to him are the same as those to any speaker in any discourse, 'To treat an author's words merely as grist for one's own mill is ethically analogous to using another man merely for one's own purposes' (p. 91). If this applies to the critic, it applies even more strongly to the editor. The editor, Hirsch claims, owes, 'professional allegiance to the author's original meaning' (p. 89). This valuable, carefully reasoned endorsement of current scholarly editorial practice is based, it should be noted, not on any argument from intention but on arguments from ethical, social obligation.

Intentions binding and freeing the editor

At first glance the concept of intention seems necessary to give the editor freedom of action, albeit a limited one; it frees him from 'the aim is to recover what the author wrote' and allows him to recover what the author 'intended to write'. However, leading theorists have argued a different position, that the use of the concept of intention is to restrict the editor to authorial readings alone.⁷ This is a central argument in James Thorpe's *Principles of Textual Criticism*. The basic argument in Thorpe's

rich and provocative first essay is that textual criticism deals with works of art and not with other aesthetic objects, those made by nature or by chance. As works of art are, according to Thorpe, to be defined by reference to intention, being 'any objects created by human agency for the purpose of arousing an aesthetic response' (p. 8), intentions are central to the editor's work. The status they have thus gained is retained by them throughout the book. This whole argument is riddled with difficulties and draws the textual critic down perilous paths he would do well to avoid. Even the first stage in it is open to challenge. A plausible story can be told of a monkey chancing to type a 'poem' which is sold to various newspapers (some get photocopies); the typescript and photocopies are then lost. In appropriate conditions techniques of textual criticism could be used to recover the original. It is even a mistake for Thorpe to begin his essay by assuming that textual criticism deals with aesthetic objects (p. 7); it can deal with any human written discourse — philosophical papers, scientific treatises, sermons and so on. While, on the other hand, some works of art, such as paintings and sculpture, are not suitable objects for textual criticism at all. The category 'work of art' is both too large and too small to designate the field of operation for textual criticism. If this first main strand in the argument is weak, the other, which defines a work of art, is hardly more satisfactory. Thorpe's definition, 'objects created by human agency for the purpose of arousing an aesthetic response' runs into the same difficulties as all definitions in terms of an intention to produce effects. Thorpe argues earlier in his essay that anyone can respond to anything as an aesthetic object, and it seems to follow from that that anyone can present or create anything with the purpose of arousing such a response. Moreover, it seems quite possible for someone to create a work of art without having the intention of arousing an aesthetic response; Bunyan would seem a possible example. The whole manoeuvre to involve textual criticism in definitions of works of art and thereby give intentions special status is unpersuasive. The strongest arguments for choosing the author's readings and meanings remain, as Hirsch suggests, ethical ones.

If the concept of intention is not necessary to protect authorial readings in this way, the task remains of discovering how it should be used to delimit editorial freedom. It would be generally accepted, I think, that the editor faces twin dangers: of doing too much and of doing too little. On the one hand, he must not exalt himself to the status of co-author as Bentley effectively did in his edition of Milton, unethically using the author's work for his own purposes, but on the other hand, his work should

not be uncritical: a scholarly editor is not needed for the production of a diplomatic reprint. A good starting point, one chosen by Tanselle, is to note that simple and valuable formulations of editorial objectives such as that once offered by Fredson Bowers, 'The recovery of the initial purity of an author's text',⁸ break down in the face of basic problems of emendation. This is apparent even in circumstances which might be thought ideal: the editor has only one text, the autograph manuscript of a novel, and he is considering two readings, one where the word looks like 'ever' but 'even' makes more sense, and one where 'the the' makes sense as 'to the'.⁹ It would, I think generally be agreed that the editor should print 'even' and 'to the', and the justification for his doing so would be that he thereby fulfilled the author's intentions. We need the concept of intention because the editor changes what the author actually wrote or interprets the marks on the page as he believes the author intended them to be interpreted. The concern with the author's intention is a very narrow and restricted one: we are concerned with what he intended to *write* or what he intended to constitute his text (I use this phrase to cover alternatives such as dictation) — with what he intended to represent his verbal meaning. Both the senses of intention I outlined earlier are applicable here but that associated with Hirsch and Husserl seems to throw the better light: the editor restores the reading the author was aware of; if we had been able to stop him and ask him what he had written, he would have replied 'even' and 'to the'.

Support for this conclusion comes through another approach, one which theorists have employed surprisingly rarely, which is to regard the text as the score of the work. This leads us back again into the area of aesthetics but without any sense that textual criticism is confined to that field, for what is said of a score here is related to the theory of notational systems and schemes in general; explanation is merely simpler in terms of works of art. Whereas some works of art (painting and sculpture, for example) are particulars, instanced by one unreproducible individual, other works of art, most clearly music, are types, instanced by any number of tokens. Those works of art which are types may have scores from which 'performances' of the work can be realized.¹⁰ If we accept that literature should be classed with music as an art in which works can be composed in the mind, can have any number of instances, and can be performed (as plays are and as poems used to be) we can say that the editor's concern is with the score. The score represents the work, it is not identical with it, and the editor is entitled to alter the score to bring it in line with the work. The editor must not,

of course, alter the work in any way (that would make him co-author), but, if the author has made a mistake in the score, the editor may correct it. The reader is not interested in the author's skill in writing a score, so the editor may supplement it; he is, on the other hand, interested in his skill in writing the work. At times, of course, the editor's task will be very complicated because he will have to reconstruct a correct score from many defective ones; at others it will involve simple matters of correction. Another way of stating this duty might be to say that the editor's task is to restore the score according to the author's intentions.

It is important that in generalizing from examples like 'the the' and 'ever' freedom to emend is restricted to cases where the emendation restores the text the author was aware of, restores what he intended to write. Discussion of intentions must be strict about the range of objects of intention involved. The editor cannot be free to emend the text to fulfill the author's intention to be popular, or moving, or elegant, or smooth, because these qualities are not within the author's power as the constitution of the text is. The author has the right and ability to determine the text but he has no such power over its quality. No one would accept a man's description of the quality of his work as *the* description of its quality, because such a description must depend on observation. We might accept a man's word that he had written a prose narrative, even perhaps that he had written a novel, but not that he had written a subtle or perceptive novel — or a masterpiece. Our intentions have only small power in such matters. The editor's concern, therefore, is with *what* not *how* the text is. Tanselle has written well on this issue in his essay on authorial intention. He sees the need for safeguards and he draws on the work of Michael Hancher, distinguishing programmatic intentions (the author's intention to make something or other), active intentions (the author's intention to be (understood as) acting in some way or other), and final intentions (the author's intention to cause something or other to happen). Only active intentions are of interest to the critic or editor.¹¹ Although there may be reservations about the success of this classification of intentions, and even about Quentin Skinner's more strictly philosophical approach to the same issues,¹² the conclusions demand endorsement. The critic's and editor's interest must focus on those cases where the author's characterization of what he is doing (or meaning) is likely to be valid: not on what he planned to do (which he might not have done) or what he intended to achieve by his action (which he might not have achieved), but on what he intended in what he did — what he

'knew' he was doing. In practice the editor's task can be made more specific and can be stated simply: his aim is to restore the text as the author intended to constitute it.

Intention and Error

The editor is always interested in error because it may point to corruption in transmission; but authorial error raises complex problems. In the case of emending 'the the' to 'to the' the editor corrects an error, but that does not mean that he is free to correct all errors. In his article on 'External Fact as an Editorial Problem' Tanselle tells us that the concepts of intention and error are closely bound together, 'Intention and error are inseparable concepts, because errors are by definition unintended deviations' (*SB*, 32 (1979), 2). Unfortunately this statement is potentially misleading. I may intentionally do or say something and yet that something may still be an error. I may say, 'I went to town yesterday', thinking I did but being mistaken; the error was unintended (as, except in special circumstances, errors always are)¹³ but the statement was intended. As Anscombe says, I may intend something under one description and not under another (*Intention*, pp. 11, 28). For the editor, the description of something as an error is not the important one: the question is not, did the author intend this error? But, did the author intend this to constitute the text? Correctness, like mellifluousness, or subtlety, or humorousness, is a quality (the *how* not the *what*) of the text and the author may or may not have been successful in achieving it; the editor should not help him out. The point is simple but important in limiting editorial licence. Unfortunately it is not observed consistently in Tanselle's article. A short example focuses the issue. In Melville's *Billy Budd* the author refers to the execution of 'a midshipman and two petty officers' aboard the ship *Somers*. Two recent editors, Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr, knowing that in fact only one of these men was a petty officer, emend the text to read 'a midshipman and two sailors' on the grounds that Melville intended to be realistic and accurate. Tanselle defends their action (*SB*, 32 (1979), 31–33), but all the principles outlined show it to have been illicit. The intention to be accurate is not a Tanselle-Hancher 'active' intention, and the emendation, therefore, falls foul of all the tests applied to 'to the' and 'even'. Hayford and Sealts have corrected the work of art and not the score, and only a measure of restraint separates them from other 'improving' editors such as Bentley. Many of the other problems raised in this particular essay by Tanselle would, I believe, dissolve if confronted by the

direct question, did the author intend this to constitute his text? The best parts of the essay do depend on precisely this question.

Sometimes the raising of the question, 'did the author intend this to constitute his text?', will have awkward consequences. Most readers would sympathize with Don L. Cook who regularizes 'Minnie-Molly' to consistent 'Minnie' in Howells's *April Hopes*, but his action is difficult to justify on the grounds of authorial intention (*SB*, 32 (1979), 3). It might be argued that Howells intended to write 'Minnie' but wrote 'Molly' by mistake (as in the case of 'the the' for 'to the'), but arguments of the sort 'this is a realistic novel; he cannot have intended to refer to her by the wrong name' are not allowable because they assume the editor should try to help the author out by giving the work certain desirable qualities, whether the author managed to put them there or not. The only real justification for the emendation (one not open to Hayford and Sealts) is that it makes the text conform to the reader's expectations of consistency in a realistic work. The editor has a duty to his reader as well as to his author; sometimes he may put the reader first as long as it is clear what he is doing. In this case the interference with the author is slight and the result undeniably an improvement.

Final intention

It is generally held in Anglo-American textual criticism that, when a work subsists in more than one authorial version, the editor should choose the text of the author's final version, the one which embodies his final intention for the work. (Modifications to this position are introduced by the Greg-Bowers theory of copy-text, but so long as this theory is thought of as aiming at recovering the author's accidentals rather than the compositor's, and is not taken to recommend the mingling of authorial versions, it poses no theoretical problems for this essay and may safely be left to one side.) The editor chooses the final version not merely because he respects the author and wishes to give him the final say, but because he believes there is one overall intention or conception running through the various versions of the work and realized in the final version. This view can command no ready assent, because there is no reason why the intention or conception common to a series of versions should have a special relation to the final version: my final attempt at a cheese soufflé, or explaining an argument, may be worse than the rest. In the case of an author, the number of versions is subject to chance (dead authors write no further versions) and the

relations between them depend on the relative strengths of the author's artistic powers. I shall, therefore, postpone discussion of this approach until I consider Tanselle's refinements upon it. I wish to argue the contrary view, that in editing a work subsisting in more than one authorial version the editor has to choose to provide the text of one of these versions (though the apparatus shows the relations of the versions and the editor is not confined to a diplomatic reprint) and that he is free in editing the work to edit, as the critic is free to criticize, whichever authorial version he chooses. Of course, the editor will need to justify his choice of version to his public, but each version the author decides to publish should be regarded as a separate utterance, embodying a new intention. While the editor is not morally free to alter his author's work or misconstrue it (unless, perhaps, he announces joint authorship), he is free to choose any version he wishes. The act of publication (subject to copyright laws) bestows such freedom on him. The moral argument is the vital one, because the moral argument, and not one based on intention, gives the author his privileged position in the first place. This view, or its conclusions for editing, already has powerful advocates in James Thorpe and Hans Zeller.¹⁴ Zeller's argument is particularly interesting because it comes from outside the Anglo-American tradition and is based on the conception of the text as a system of signs. Each version is 'a specific system of linguistic signs functioning within and without, and authorial revisions transform it into another system' (*SB*, 28 (1975), 240–41). Any change, therefore, brings a new version into existence. My only quarrel with Zeller here would be that, unlike Hirsch, who also draws on structuralist linguistics, he does not give sufficient recognition to the point that the work is not a segment of *langue* (or a *langue* itself) but the author's *parole*. In Saussure's linguistics, *langue* is the system of linguistic possibilities shared by a speech community, *paroles* are uses of language, utterances, which actualize some of the meaning possibilities constituting the *langue*.¹⁵ Each issue of the work by the author should be regarded as a new *parole*. Often the work is 'uttered' in a significantly new context, and the revisions an author makes to his work will often be a response to a new context — social or political changes, developments in literary style or culture. One of the weaknesses of current textual theory is that it gives insufficient weight both to the integrity of versions and the importance of context. However, it is important to remember that it is the utterance of the author which is wanted, not that of the compositor or corrector. The author's *parole* may be obscured by the printed text, and my sympathies are

with Greg and Bowers rather than Zeller to this extent: it is surely better to risk destroying the integrity of a version than risk including non-authorial material.

In rejecting the view that the editor must follow the author's final intention or that there is some overall conception the author is striving to realize through successive versions, I am opposing current orthodoxy in textual criticism, but I believe my position is consistent with the central arguments of E. D. Hirsch, who is so often brought forward as orthodoxy's champion in matters of intention. Hirsch's argument is that the interpreter should look for the author's 'verbal meaning', that aspect of his 'intention' which under linguistic conventions can be shared by others. His account cannot justify talk of some general authorial conception or 'intention' covering a series of versions and being realized in the final one. Such a conception could not be knowable because it could not be communicated by linguistic means; even if it were realized in the final version, it could not be known to have been present in the earlier versions where it was not realized. Hirsch gives a lead to the textual critic by considering the case of pre-publication revision where the author's initial intention seems quite different from the meaning of the final work (it seems the work does not mean what he intended), and he explains that there are different intentions and different meanings (*Validity in Interpretation*, p. 23). The argument works just as well if we begin at the other end of the creative process: if only the final version means what the author intended, then the earlier versions did not; but the whole thrust of Hirsch's argument is that the work does mean what the author intended, so it must be that earlier versions present earlier intentions and earlier meanings. Authors change their texts because they are dissatisfied with their meaning. Of course, none of this shows there cannot be some overall conception or intention which covers various versions of the work — to justify the ways of God to men, or to flatter the king and become Poet Laureate — but these would not be intentions relevant to editing because they in no way define the work; several quite distinct works could be written with these same intentions. Nor are these intentions active intentions; they are not cases where we would necessarily accept the author's description of the work. It is significant that the view I have outlined here is shared by Michael Hancher, whose general approach to literary intention has been endorsed by Tanselle: 'If the author revises his text after publication, the new edition will have the status of a different text, and will thus bear a different active intention' (*MLN*, 87 (1972), 821, n. 10).

None of Hirsch's discussion provides help for those holding the received position on final intention. Indeed the contrary is the case, for it becomes impossible to believe the author intended one version more than any other (given, of course, that he was a free agent). The editor may, nevertheless, and with good reason, choose the author's final version: out of courtesy (especially if the author has 'reformed' the work); because he believes the judgement of the author, as originator of the work will be best; because he believes that the reader will be more interested in the author's judgement of the versions than the editor's own. But these considerations may be overbalanced by others: his considered judgement of the value of the versions; the historical interest of a version; a version's relation to the author's other work. These are legitimate matters for editorial judgement. One of the least pleasing aspects of debate in textual criticism is that at times critical judgement seems valued for its own sake, while at others it is derided as taste. The correct path must be to try to determine the area of its operation by principle.

Equivocation over final intention

I have argued that the editor's duty does not extend to his being bound to print the author's final version of his work and that arguments from intention do not oblige him to do so. I want now to examine the position of those who profess themselves bound by the author's final intentions, and to show that they themselves find their position untenable and look for ways of escaping it. In his 'Recent Editorial Discussion and the Central Questions of Editing' Tanselle rebukes Paul Baender for taking 'final' to mean 'last' and finds F. W. Bateson guilty of the same error (*SB*, 34 (1981), 28 and 57). I confess my sympathies are with them, for 'final' does mean 'last'. *OED* provides definitions such as 'Coming at the end (of a word, a series)' and 'leaving nothing to be looked for or expected; ultimate'; in terms of the distinction between 'latest' and 'last', 'final' belongs with 'last'. Tanselle implies that 'final' applies to a man's own perception rather than that of a disinterested (omniscient) spectator, but I can find no justification for that view. If Professor Tanselle is satisfied that an editor can respect the author's authority without accepting his last version, it would surely be better to promote a fresh statement of principles rather than insist on a narrow and eccentric meaning for 'final'. There has been a similar and connected manoeuvre over 'work'. Some works (*The Prelude* and some of Henry James's novels are good examples) subsist in versions so different that, Bowers and Tanselle agree, they should

be treated as separate 'works'. There are practical considerations involved, for, if it is impossible to record the variants between the versions in the apparatus because they are too numerous, the editor is forced to regard the versions as separate editorial tasks; he cannot combine them in one edition. But Tanselle is anxious to stress the theoretical considerations and argues that we are not simply concerned with a matter of editorial convenience. He admits that it may not be strictly correct to say that there is a new work, but doing so points to the distinction between two sorts of revision: 'vertical' revision, which aims at altering the purpose, direction, or character of a work; 'horizontal' revision, which aims at intensifying, refining or improving. The editor is to treat the two types differently: all 'horizontal' revisions are to be accepted and incorporated; 'vertical' revisions constitute new 'works'.¹⁶

While everyone would agree that there are cases of revision which might painlessly be classed under one or other of these headings, it is evident that the types are not really distinguishable; there is no satisfactory principle of division. Consequently the distinction crumbles before the most straightforward cases. Is *The Prelude* a case of 'horizontal' or 'vertical' revision? Certainly Wordsworth was intensifying, refining, and improving, but he also aimed to make his poem more orthodoxly Christian — not a change in the character of the work, or is it? Are Pope's revisions of *The Rape of the Lock* (which include the addition of three cantos and the Sylphs) a change of direction or just an improvement? The degree of change is very substantial and yet the genre (mock-epic) and the satiric targets (the beau monde, unreason, the battle of the sexes) remain constant. The question has no clear answer. These cases seem promising instances of Tanselle's distinction, but they do not prove so on closer examination because it is not clear what constitutes a change of purpose, conception, or direction. Some versions are more different from one another than other versions are from one another but it is not clear how different they have to be. The result is that the editor is given *carte blanche*. The reason for the confusion is plain when attention is focused on the author once more. Wordsworth and Pope might have decided to write new works, but they did not; they decided on substantially revised versions instead. They thought the new version sufficiently similar to the old one to give it the same name; they doubtless looked on it as an improvement. While their judgement that it was an improvement is open to question, their judgement that it was the same work, that it was another version within the same conception, seems less so. The declaration of some versions to be 'works', therefore, runs counter to respect

for the author's authority. According to Tanselle's theory, the author's final version is always to be accepted but the author is not allowed to know which the final version is: 'Even if Whitman came to think of the earlier editions as preliminary drafts for his final version, each of those editions was published and at the time of its publication represented a final version that he was willing to present to the public and thus his final intention as of that moment' (*SB*, 29 (1976), 201). But if this is true it is true regardless of whether the editor considers the later versions merely improvements. It differs from my position only in its curious insistence on the word 'final'. These unconvincing manoeuvres spring from a refusal to accept that modern editing often involves several authorially approved versions. Rather than face the multiplication of authority which results, some critics are prepared to regard most versions, even when carefully prepared and published, as mere steps towards the 'work', and when they are confronted with versions so different as to forbid combination and demand recognition as separate versions, they evade the problem by calling them 'works'. They radically confuse score and work of art: different scores can be combined to provide a correct score of the work provided they are all scores of that work, but different authorial versions of a work are not scores and when they are combined they produce not *the* work but a new version of the work (not the score) — this version has no authority; it is the editor's rewriting of the work. This is the case against unprincipled eclecticism, and in these marginal instances it becomes the case against Tanselle. Editing would be the better for abandoning this equivocation over 'final' and 'work'.

If editors do abandon this way of thinking and an uncritical dependence on the author's final version, they will be thrown back on their own judgement, but it will be their judgement and not just their taste. The decision on the version to be adopted will draw on their assessment of the author's aims, vision, and style; it will be based on careful evaluation in the context of current literary criticism. I believe factors such as these are already being considered by editors as sophisticated as Tanselle, but that discussion of them is often deceptive. For example, Tanselle says of four late revisions of *Typee* which he wishes to exclude, 'These revisions are different from James's not merely in quantity but in the fact that they are not part of a sustained and coherent reshaping of earlier work. Instead, they are simply instances of sporadic tinkering' (*SB*, 29 (1976), 199). These are good reasons for excluding the readings from the edited text, but they are reasons which are clearly disallowed by Tanselle's own rules. For Tanselle, revisions are to be accepted unless they create a new 'work',

and in this case, in distinguishing it from James's revisions, Tanselle tells us there is not a new 'work' — sporadic tinkering could never make one. He is bound by his own rules to admit them to his text as 'horizontal' revisions. There is a related problem in considering the case where the author simplifies his text, perhaps to make it suitable for children:

The revised version, in such cases, does not represent a refinement of the work as previously 'completed' but a new work conceived for different purposes; if the new version has merit, it is as an independent work to be edited separately. This is not to deny that the author might make in the process some revisions which an editor would adopt as emendations to his copy-text, but in order to qualify for adoption they would have to be revisions unconnected with the aim of condensation or simplification (pp. 192–93).

Tanselle is here advocating substituting the readings of one work for those of another, an action inconceivable by ordinary, accepted standards of editing. It shows that he is not really serious about the status of the revised version as a new 'work'. If Tanselle were to hold to this position and accept Fredson Bower's position on *The Prelude*,¹⁷ it would mean that anyone editing the 1805 *Prelude* on its own would have to treat it as a separate 'work' but would have to include refinements and improvements from the 1850 version while excluding revisions which involved a change of conception. This is an impossible task and no one would want the resulting edition. It highlights the inconsistency and failure of the whole approach.

Internal and external evidence

The editor who is committed to the author's readings and intentions is committed to interest in the author as a real historical being with all the inconvenience and unpredictability that can involve, but there is still a tendency for writers on textual criticism to neglect or compromise that commitment. When, for example, Tanselle quotes Emily Dickinson's editor, R. W. Franklin, on the need for 'compromise between the demands of authorial intention and the demands of the poems' (*SB*, 29 (1976), 207), it ought to be with recognition that although authors do have intentions (often awkward ones), poems as such do not make demands. While it is true in one sense that 'the work has an existence distinct from the wishes (expressed or implied) of its creator' (p. 206), it is important to remember that it is only the author's work the editor is concerned with. Few scholars would object to a work's being published

even though the author did not intend it, but they might reasonably resist a justification for doing so on the grounds that publication was intended in some mysterious way by the work itself.

There is a similar confusion about the relation of internal and external evidence in a qualification Tanselle offers to the views of E. D. Hirsch: 'the work itself provides the best evidence of the author's intended meaning'; 'the most reliable source of information about the author's intention in a given work is that work itself'.¹⁸ But if the work were known, and the author's verbal meaning grasped, there would be no problem at all; the work of interpretation would have been done. Nor is the text one aid to interpretation among others; it is the object of interpretation itself. Of course, if there is a dispute about the meaning of part of the text, it may be settled by reference to parts where interpretation is agreed, but only in the light of what lies beyond the text — the knowledge of language and genre and so on. Problems of interpretation are settled by reference to some context. The insufficiency of the text by itself is even more marked when we are trying to determine what it is, when there is strictly no text, only variations on a text which is yet to be determined. Tanselle surely goes too far when he claims, 'whenever the factual evidence is less than incontrovertible, his [the editor's] judgment about each element will ultimately rest on his interpretation of the author's intended meaning as he discovers it in the whole of the text itself' (*SB*, 29 (1976), 183). There is no whole text itself; the editor is trying to determine it. In *Anthony and Cleopatra*, for example, Cleopatra may say that death rids our dogs of 'languish' or she may say 'anguish'; it depends on whether the 'l' in the folio is a raised space.¹⁹ How, given that the facts are not incontrovertible (though I do not think it is a space), is the whole text to decide the matter? There is, I believe, no such general rule of evidence.

Nevertheless, Tanselle's warning to weigh carefully external evidence, particularly authorial statements, is an important one; authorial statements are subject to interpretation and must not be accepted uncritically. Yet there are counter-balancing dangers of dismissing external evidence too lightly when it conflicts with the editor's own view of the text. This especially applies to consideration of authors' motives. Authors are social beings and are subject to influences and pressures like the rest of us. Some pressures, those which are so strong as to interfere with the author's proper exercise of his freedom — censorship by politicians or publishers is the most obvious example — will have to be taken into account by the editor. If the author was forced to make changes in his text, the editor may safely discard them. But there will always be cases where

the issue is in doubt and the editor has to exercise his judgement. Tanselle describes such a marginal case in his account of *Typee*. Melville actually wrote to his publisher, John Murray, insisting on the beneficial effect of certain excisions, but Tanselle is prepared to dismiss these statements as rationalizations, 'less than completely candid' (SB, 29 (1976), 194), and restore the earlier readings. I do not wish to dispute the particular case but to point to the distinction between the judgement that the author did not freely consent to the changes and the judgement that the author was influenced by others or acted from discreditable motives. The first provides a valid reason for rejecting a reading, but the second does not. All authorial decisions are made in a context and from a variety of motives we cannot hope to recover fully; as long as the author is as free as persons usually are, his decisions must be respected.

One of the reasons for care in discussion of intentions, for leaning on the work of Professors Hirsch, Hancher, or Skinner, is that the editor must avoid basing his decisions on the author's motives. The author may write because he is greedy for popularity or wealth, or because he wants to revenge himself on his enemies, but it does not follow that because these motives can be recast as intentions it is the editor's job to help the author achieve them, or prevent him from doing so. As Skinner puts it, a writer's motives are 'antecedent to, and contingently connected with, the appearance of his works'.²⁰ Tanselle gives an example which makes the point neatly. He begins by quoting Robert Gottlieb on *Great Expectations*:

'Even now', Gottlieb says, 'it irritates me to know that Dickens changed the end of 'Great Expectations' because someone told him to. It's bad enough that the change was a mistake, but it's even worse to know that someone convinced him to make it.' What the scholarly editor must do, as Gottlieb does here, is to consider the motivation underlying textual changes; such an editor must try to disentangle the author's own wishes from the other elements that shaped the published text (SB, 34 (1981), 63–64).

This is an impossible task for the editor and its outcome would be undesirable. Dickens was free to accept Bulwer Lytton's advice or reject it: his wishes are not really clear to us, but his decision, his intention for the constitution of his text, is clear; he adopted a new ending. It cannot be the editor's job to riffle through his texts discarding passages suggested by friends and conjecturing what the author would have written if he had been a hermit. If this were his role, all Pound's excisions from *The Waste Land* would have to be restored and Wordsworth's suggestions for the 'Ancient Mariner' deleted.²¹ Nor are Shakespeare's plays to be edited

with regard to the playwright's motivation, perhaps excluding passages designed to please the groundlings or flatter patrons. An author's motives are his own business. Discussion of motives all too often provides an easy way of introducing evaluation in disguise. This certainly seems to be the case in this discussion of *Great Expectations*: if Gottlieb had liked the new ending, we should have heard nothing of the need to rescue the author from the perils of listening to friends.

This essay recommends a position between that of a continental critic like Zeller and that of the Anglo-American tradition represented by Tanselle. The editor needs to respect the integrity of the different versions of a work, and he should consider himself free of duty to the author's final intention. On the other hand, he must try to establish the author's text, not that of the compositor or house-corrector. The author's intentions are important because of their intimate connection with his meaning, but only a limited range of intentions is relevant to the editor and many of the important issues in editing are left untouched by the concept. Because there are serious dangers of confusing principle with procedure and practice, I have restricted this essay to general arguments. My intention has not been to settle the major questions of textual criticism, but to help clear the ground for future debate.

Notes

¹ *Textual Criticism* translated by Barbara Flower (Oxford, 1958), p. 1. The difficulty for the editor of classical texts is, of course, that no autograph manuscripts survive, and the manuscripts which do survive derive from the originals through a number of intermediaries.

² That is not to say the modern editor will find no cases of versions radiating from one original. The authoritative essay is by Fredson Bowers, 'Multiple Authority: New Problems and Concepts of Copy-Text', *The Library*, v, 27 (1972), 81-115.

³ There is a useful list of work on authorial revision in *A Guide to English and American Literature* edited by F. W. Bateson and Harrison T. Meserole, third edition (London and New York, 1976), p. 261. E. D. Hirsch recognizes the importance of revision for theory in *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London, 1967), pp. 6-10, 19-23, 232-35.

⁴ Fredson Bowers's essays have been collected in *Essays in Bibliography, Text, and Editing* (Charlottesville, 1975) and G. Thomas Tanselle's in *Selected Studies in Bibliography* (Charlottesville, 1979). James Thorpe's leading ideas are found in *Principles of Textual Criticism* (California, 1972) and Philip Gaskell's in *From Writer to Reader* (Oxford, 1978). Particular essays will be noted in the course of this paper.

⁵ 'Aesthetic Implications of Authorial Excisions' in *Editing Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, edited by Jane Millgate (New York and London, 1978), p. 117. My subsequent disagreements with Professor Tanselle should not be taken as qualifying my admiration for this essay.

⁶ Hirsch subsequently developed these ideas in his chapter 'Evaluation as Knowledge' in *The Aims of Interpretation*, pp. 95–109.

⁷ G. Thomas Tanselle holds this position; but his argument depends on the concept of final intention and I shall deal with it later.

⁸ 'Textual Criticism' in *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, second edition, edited by James Thorpe (New York, 1970), p. 30. This essay still provides the best general introduction to textual criticism.

⁹ Both examples are from Tanselle (*Studies in Bibliography* (SB), 29 (1976), 173 and SB, 31 (1978), 52). I think he would still agree to emendation in the second case, but it would be on the basis of the nature of the work.

¹⁰ The best introduction to these ideas is provided by Richard Wollheim's 'On an Alleged Inconsistency in Collingwood's Aesthetic' in *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood*, edited by Michael Krausz (Oxford, 1972), pp. 68–78, and reprinted in his *On Art and the Mind* (London, 1973), pp. 250–60. The seminal study is Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art* (London, 1969). Goodman would not agree that a literary text is a score, but the issues are too complex to be pursued here. I use the term 'instances' loosely, without, I hope, suggesting a confusion of types and universals.

¹¹ SB, 29 (1976), 174–76. Michael Hancher, 'Three Kinds of Intention', *Modern Language Notes* (MLN) 87 (1972), 827–51.

¹² 'Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts' in *On Literary Intention*, edited by David Newton-de-Molina (Edinburgh, 1976), pp. 210–21.

¹³ Tanselle fully recognizes that an author may deliberately distort fact in his fiction; but that is a different point.

¹⁴ 'A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts', SB, 28 (1975), 231–64.

¹⁵ I draw on Hirsch's account, *Validity in Interpretation*, pp. 231–32. There is a persuasive argument on the dangers of treating literary works as *langue* in Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington and London, 1977), pp. 3–37.

¹⁶ The fullest discussion of these ideas is in 'The Editorial Problem of Final Intentions', SB, 29 (1976), 191–207.

¹⁷ *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, p. 47.

¹⁸ SB, 29 (1976), 179. It might be argued that Tanselle is here influenced by H. P. Grice's theory of meaning as the conveyance of intention in 'Meaning', *Philosophical Review*, 66 (1957), 377–88, and 'Utterer's Meaning and Intentions', *Philosophical Review*, 78 (1969), 147–77; but that is not clear from the context.

¹⁹ *The First Folio of Shakespeare*, edited by Charlton Hinman (London, 1968), p. 365.

²⁰ *Literary Intention*, p. 216. The whole essay emphasizes the point.

²¹ It will not do to argue that these are cases of collaboration. They are not: they are cases neither of delegation nor of shared decision. And if they were to count as cases of collaboration, so too would *Great Expectations*.

THE MONKS AND THE GIANTS TEXTUAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES AND THE INTERPRETATION OF LITERARY WORKS

JEROME J. MCGANN

The special discipline of textual studies involves two basic critical functions, one editorial, the other interpretive. During the emergence of modern philology over the past two centuries these symbiotic procedures fell apart from each other and then rose again as two relatively isolated fields of scholarly study, one called «extrinsic» (scholarly editing), the other «intrinsic» (hermeneutics). This historical event weakened and narrowed both procedures and methods. This essay sketches that history, discusses its consequences, and proposes a restored and comprehensive programme for the historical investigation of textual and documentary materials. EDD.

La critica del testo assolve a due funzioni critiche fondamentali, una di tipo editoriale, l'altra di tipo interpretativo. Negli ultimi due secoli, la nascita della moderna filologia ha provocato la rottura dell'unione simbiotica di queste due prospettive, che hanno proliferato poi separatamente negli studi scientifici: la prima, denominata da McGann «estrinseca» (ecdótica), la seconda «intrinseca» (ermeneutica). Tale processo storico ha indebolito e limitato il valore di procedure e metodi consolidati. Questo saggio presenta storicamente il problema, ne discute le conseguenze e propone un rinnovato e più ampio approccio allo studio storico dei materiali testuali e documentari. (Una versione finale di questo testo si legge nel capitolo 8 «Perdere il gioco dell'interpretazione» di McGann, *L'arte della ricerca*, 2006.)

Jerome J. McGann (ed.), *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, Chicago (IL), University of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 180-99. By permission of the author and the University of Chicago Press. Slightly revised as «The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works», in *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985, pp. 69-89. [The schedule of the three «moments» of textual criticism has been slightly but very importantly revised and incorporated in part III, chapter 8 of McGann's *The Scholar's Art*, Chicago (IL), University of Chicago Press, 2006.]

What is the relevance of textual and bibliographical studies to literary interpretation? This is not a question that has been posed in a systematic way very often. Wellek and Warren, in their *Theory of Literature*, saw clearly that “merely bibliographical facts” could often “have a relevance and value,” and they explicitly concluded that textual and bibliographical studies were to be “justified by the uses to which their results are put” in the interpretation and evaluation of literary works.¹ Nevertheless, they made no attempt to set forth a program, or even a schema, of such uses. Indeed, by calling textual and bibliographical studies “preliminary operations” to literary study per se (whether the latter were to be “intrinsic” or “extrinsic”), the *Theory of Literature* effectively placed such work somewhere east of the Eden of literary interpretation and evaluation. The specific question of *how* textual and bibliographical studies were to be used in literary interpretation was set aside.

Still, the discussion of these matters in *Theory of Literature* is perhaps the most thoughtful to be found anywhere in the past fifty years, when we have witnessed, on one hand, a growing divorce between “extrinsic” and “intrinsic” literary work, and, on the other, a notable expansion—particularly in the past fifteen years—of highly idiosyncratic forms of literary appreciation. With the acceptance of “free play” as both an operation and a standard in hermeneutics, the relation between extrinsic and intrinsic forms of criticism is further loosened; and textual/bibliographical studies, already conceived as “preliminary operations,” are all but removed from the program of literary studies. Nor is this merely a theoretical removal: today, courses in textual criticism and bibliography are no longer required in most graduate schools, and often they are not even available to the student.

In the meantime, the academy has ceded a privilege to textual scholars and bibliographers that allows them to live and move and have their being at the periphery of literary studies as such. It is a privilege that has been agreed to by all parties: the scholars have thereby gained considerable freedom and autonomy to pursue their (often highly technical and specialized) work, and the critics have been released from the obligation to develop certain skills that are not easily or quickly acquired. As a result, the angels of hermeneutics have long feared to tread in the fields of textual/bibliographical studies, which are widely regarded, in fact, as a world well lost. Reciprocally, the bibliographers, editors, and textual critics have largely agreed to the bad eminence they have achieved, whence they may hurl defiance at the heavens of the interpreters.

Of course, textual critics and bibliographers can (and do) function quite well in their specializations. The difficulties of collecting and ordering a complex set of manuscripts, or of preparing a complete bibliographical record of a particular work, are often so complex that the operations have to be subdivided and further specialized if they are to be performed correctly. Under such conditions, it is no wonder that “the uses to which their results are put” are often left to the hermeneuts.

In recent years, a few scholars [...] have begun to reconsider the relations that do or might exist between textual/bibliographical studies and literary interpretation. In most cases, these efforts have come from those who are knowledgeable in textual criticism and bibliography and who thereby command the expertise necessary to begin serious inquiries into such matters.² Still, the efforts have been relatively scattered; only a handful of textual/bibliographical scholars have ventured into the field, while the literary critics have all but completely avoided these subjects. The latter indifference is perhaps to be expected: after all, the principal strains of literary criticism in the twentieth century developed in a conscious reaction against the philological and historical traditions that dominated the nineteenth.

It is the assumption of this paper that literary study surrendered some of its most powerful interpretive tools when it allowed textual criticism and bibliography to be regarded as “preliminary” rather than integral to the study of literary work. I shall be arguing that the nonintegral view of textual criticism and bibliography is historically explicable, that it derives from a particular understanding of the nature and goals of textual criticism and bibliography, and that this is an understanding that literary academics of all types now take for granted. Furthermore, in what follows, I shall attempt both an exposition of this view of textual criticism and bibliography as well as a critique of its limits. I take it for granted that specialized studies in these fields—studies that are in fact “preliminary” to critical interpretation—carry the justification that all specialized studies must be allowed, whatever the field. I shall argue, however, that textual criticism and bibliography are conceptually fundamental rather than preliminary to the study of literature, and that, consequently, their operations need to be reconceived along lines that are more comprehensive than the ones currently in force.

II

Fredson Bowers opens his discussion of *Bibliography and Textual Criticism* in the following way.

The general procedures of textual criticism as it deals with manuscript study have been formulated for some years. Differences of opinion may develop from time to time over the precise techniques for constructing a family tree from variant readings, and other matters of technical concern may occasionally come in dispute. But on the whole it is not unduly optimistic to suggest that when the editor of a classical or of a medieval text begins his task he can attack the problems from a position of strength. That is, he will be well aware that much drudgery lies ahead and that the difficult nature of the material may give him some bad hours; but he is seldom in doubt about the textual theories that guide him. Moreover, he can hopefully anticipate that if he follows these traditional methods for sorting out and arranging his texts, he will be left with few cruxes that cannot be solved by linguistic skill and ripe critical judgement.

In the halcyon days before the emergence of bibliography as a force, the textual critic of printed books could approach his task with something of the confidence of the manuscript scholar, fortified also by the comforting thought that, in comparison, the initial preparation of the text would be far less onerous. If he were the first adventurer, the number of early reprint editions to collate would not be large; and if he were a latecomer, he need only exercise his ingenuity in improving the edition of a predecessor, whose pages he could send to the printer with an occasional correction. The choice of copy-text was not a particularly acute question, for what are now called the “accidentals” of a text would all be modernized, and literary judgement could mend the errors in the “substantives.”³

I reproduce the whole of this passage because it fairly represents a number of ideas that remain current in the textual scholarship that focuses on modern national scriptures. Probably Bowers would no longer wish to stand by some of these ideas, and perhaps least of all the idea that textual critics of medieval and classical works “can attack [their problems] from a position of strength.”⁴ Although it is true that classical and medieval scholars are better armed for their tasks than they ever were, greater knowledge has only brought greater circumspection. Bowers speaks as he does here partly because he is a casual observer of the classical field, and partly because he is a methodist in the world of textual criticism.⁵ Bowers’s views about the textual scholarship of classical works reflect an ignorance about the historical development of textual studies widespread among textual critics who work on national scriptures, especially in the modern periods. This lack of attention to the textual criticism of ancient literatures, both biblical and classical, has caused serious damage to the criticism and scholarship of our more recent and national literatures, and I will return to this problem in a moment. For now, I want to concentrate on another, closely related problem, which also ap-

pears in the passage I have quoted: its underlying and fundamental assumption that the disciplines of textual criticism have as their aim, their *raison d'être* even, the editing of texts.

When Bowers conceives textual criticism in editorial terms, he is of course following the common view. Indeed, many—perhaps even most—textual critics would argue that the editorial function of their discipline fairly defines its method and purposes.⁶ Such a view of textual studies appears transparent, and hence goes unexamined, largely because of the actual historical development of textual studies in the early modern period. In point of historical fact, textual criticism as we know it today developed because Renaissance scholars of antiquity felt the need to find ways of establishing reliable texts.

Nevertheless, the historical conditions that initiated the development of modern textual studies could not and, in fact, have not permanently defined the nature of this discipline. Changed historical circumstances may modify or even alter one's conception (and practice) of a discipline. Textual studies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries underwent a radical shift, largely because they were carried out under the influence of the new biblical scholarship on one hand and the widespread development of various historicist studies on the other. This was the period in which the grand conception of a *philologia perennis*, imagined and sought after by men like Petrarch and Politian, finally achieved operational form in what F. A. Wolf called *Alterthumswissenschaft*. With this philological ideal, textual criticism had been so reconceived that the period saw the emergence of a conservative reaction within classical studies. Scholars like Gottfried Hermann, aware of the limits that textual criticism would always have to face when dealing with classical texts, determined to pursue a relatively narrow course of textual work. Others, like August Boeckh, resisted the line of specialization.⁷ To the degree that we think of textual criticism in terms of its editorial function, we are following the line of Hermann's thought rather than Boeckh's.

In all these cases, of course, we are dealing with a textual criticism that is theorized in terms of the works of antiquity. With the advent of *Alterthumswissenschaft*, however, emerged the professional study of national scriptures, or what we sometimes call modern philology, where radical changes of focus have to be made. These changes are most sharply defined in the field of textual criticism. The historical circumstances in which Renaissance and post-Renaissance works are transmitted into our hands differ sharply from those that surround classical and biblical works, and they also differ in crucial ways from the circumstantial field

of medieval works. The textual problems that a scholar of ancient works has to face rarely find close analogues in modern national scriptures. Consequently, when textual critics of modern works assume an editorial function for their discipline, they also take over a methodology and structural focus that are normally not well adapted to the most pressing scholarly problems they should be facing. (I should also say in passing, that this assumption of editorial models drawn from the study of works of antiquity has had important consequences for the theory of editing modern works, as well as for the theory of textual studies in general.)⁸

This larger context helps us to see why the textual and bibliographical study of modern national scriptures, and in particular English and American literary works, took the shape and course that it did. The tools developed for the study of biblical and classical texts from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries were brought to bear upon English and American literatures. This in itself generated certain theoretical problems for students of modern philology. In addition, however, the classical tools were taken over at a particular period in the history of classical philology, that is to say, at a time when classical studies had entered a specialized and even technocratic phase. The broad theoretical issues that had been the preoccupation of men like Wolf, Herder, and Eichhorn were no longer matters of imperative critical inquiry. Textual criticism had entered a phase of its modern life that Thomas Kuhn would later call "ordinary science." Also, because the classicist model presided over the development of the textual criticism of national literatures, our scholarship assumed that fundamental homologies existed between the problems of classical scholars and those of the moderns. This assumption is evident as early as the eighteenth century and is epitomized in Johnson's famous lament over the state of the Shakespearean texts.⁹

This historical context I have been sketching should allow us to see why the textual criticism of our national scriptures became almost completely identified with an editorial function. When Paul Maas opens his classic work with the statement "The business of textual criticism is to produce a text as close as possible to the original," he does so in a special context—the fields of biblical and especially classical scholarship—where the editorial function of textual criticism has to be emphasized. "We have no autograph manuscripts of the Greek and Roman classical writers and no copies which have been collated with the originals," Maas observes; and furthermore, "the manuscripts we possess derive from the originals through an unknown number of intermediate copies . . . of questionable trust-worthiness."¹⁰ In such circumstances, textual criti-

cism will and should concentrate on the task of producing reliable texts. Maas's statement on the business of textual criticism becomes a troubling one, however, when it is assumed as a premise in the textual criticism of modern national scriptures, where the conditions faced by the biblical and classical scholar do not prevail.

Even in the context of classical scholarship, however, the editorial function ought to be seen as only one aspect of the aims of textual and bibliographical criticism. If we reflect upon the larger history of textual criticism, and in particular on the scholarship of men like Wolf, we are forced to remember that textual criticism has not always been identified with an editorial function.¹¹ When Teubner asked M. L. West to write a new book on textual criticism to replace the earlier works of Maas and Stahlin, West approached his task with a more comprehensive view of "the business of textual criticism"—largely, I suspect, because his work had been influenced by the more capacious views of Pasquali's *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* (2d ed., Firenze, 1952). For West, the business of textual criticism is not to produce a text as close as possible to the original; it is much more comprehensive and—ultimately—hermeneutic.

Students have sometimes said to me that they recognize the necessity of textual criticism, but they are content to leave it to the editor of the text they are reading and to trust in his superior knowledge. Unfortunately editors are not always people who can be trusted, and critical apparatuses are provided so that readers are not dependent upon them. Though the reader lacks the editor's long acquaintance with the text and its problems, he may nevertheless surpass him in his feeling for the language or in ordinary common sense, and he should be prepared to consider the facts presented in the apparatus and exercise his own judgment on them. He *must* do so in places where the text is important to him for some further purpose. This book, therefore, is not intended solely for editors, but for anyone who reads Greek and Latin and desires some guidance on how to approach textual questions.¹²

This is a wise set of remarks that students of all literatures ought to bear in mind at all times. The literary criticism of English and American works has ceded to textual and bibliographical specialists almost total authority to pronounce upon matters relating to their fields. In the process, the pursuit of textual studies has been carried out by people whose practical concerns are circumscribed by their editorial aims or by that subset of related, largely technical problems that bear upon editorial method (e.g., the preoccupation in recent years with the problem of copy text). West's view takes it for granted, however, that textual criti-

cism is a field of inquiry that supervenes the narrower issues that concern editors, and that textual criticism is a pursuit incumbent upon anyone who works with and teaches literary products. Textual criticism does not meet its fate in the completion of a text or an edition of some particular work. Rather, it is a special method that students of literature must and should use when they examine, interpret, and reproduce the works we inherit from the past.

When this fundamental conception of textual criticism loses its authority—when it is replaced by the more specialized conception, that textual criticism is an editorial instrument—the schism that characterizes current literary studies gets reified. Whether textual scholars work with actual texts or whether they comment, at a theoretical level, on the field of textual criticism generally, they tend to conceive their operations almost wholly in terms of the editorial functions of their discipline. The interpreters, for their part, either produce their work in the purest state of scholarly innocence, or they agree to accept—quite uncritically—the textual results of editorial scholars. In each instance, the practice of an informed and comprehensive literary criticism is diminished.

Today, the editorial conception of textual studies remains dominant, thanks largely to the profound influence of the work of Fredson Bowers and his followers. Important consequences have resulted from this dominance, for all fields of literary work. Of course, shrewd scholars like Bowers are well aware that textual and bibliographical studies produce results that may be of interest to many people besides editors. G. Thomas Tanselle acknowledges this fact when he speaks of “the effect which the findings of bibliographical and textual research have on the ultimate meaning of the work of literature as evaluated by the [literary] critic.” Tanselle thinks that this relation of textual studies to literary interpretation is so evident that it hardly requires discussion.

That the establishment of texts is the basic task of literary scholarship, a prerequisite to further critical study; that emendations which result from textual research can significantly affect the critical interpretation of a work; and that detailed collation and bibliographical analysis are necessary activities for the establishment of every text, even if only to prove that no variants exist or that the variants are inconsequential—all these propositions are, to the scholarly mind, self-evident, and they have all been buttressed by numerous concrete examples in recent years.¹³

Of this passage, two things must be said, at least initially. First, like Bowers, Tanselle accepts the editorial function of textual studies as fundamental. Indeed, this editorial function is presented as the alpha and the

omega of all literary scholarship. This function appears so obvious to Tanselle that he sees no further need to inquire into the theoretical relation of textual studies and literary criticism; the relation is “self-evident” and “buttressed by numerous concrete examples.” What Tanselle means by this, as his note to the passage shows, is that literary critics can, do, and should turn to textual critics and especially to editors for specific facts of verbal changes in the texts they study.¹⁴ This record of verbal variants, uncovered by the textual scholar and editor, supplies the interpreter with useful information that may affect his “readings.” This is Tanselle’s “self-evident” relation of textual studies to literary criticism.

However, I think that this view of the relation is deeply misconceived and that it springs directly from the assumption of an editorial approach to textual studies. From such an approach, one can draw few connecting lines between a practical literary criticism and (say) a bibliographical record of early printings or the history of a manuscript’s provenance. Textual scholars must labor to elucidate the histories of a work’s production, reproduction, and reception, and all aspects of these labors bear intimately and directly on the “critical interpretation of a work.” To an editorial conception of textual studies, however, the bearing that these large fields of inquiry have upon interpretations of literary works is not merely *not* “self-evident,” it must remain positively invisible.

If we reconceive the projects of textual criticism along lines that are closer to those suggested by M. L. West, however, we will take a different view of this textual research and will probably begin by putting the findings of the editorial textualists to very different uses. An analysis of the editorial history of a particular author’s works may assume different forms, depending on the purposes to which the analysis is being put. If we wish to illuminate the reception history of an author—a matter of some consequence for the interpretation of the works—we shall have to be able to master and use, in a particular macrobibliographical field, various tools of microbibliography. Similarly, to study the verbal text of a particular work for its lexical or syntactic meaning is an operation that must employ the same historical resources of textual criticism that are used by editors when they prepare a critical text. The two operations, however, are conceptually different.

A proper theory of textual criticism ought to make it clear that we may perform a comprehensive textual and bibliographical study of a work with different ends in view: as part of an editorial operation that will result in the production of an edition; as part of a critical operation for studying the character of that edition; as part of an interpretive opera-

tion for incorporating the meaning of the (past) work into a present context. No one of these practical operations is more fundamental than another, and all three depend for their existence on a prior scholarly discipline: textual criticism. The practical direction that textual studies will take, under any given set of circumstances, will of course vary with the immediate requirements of the critic and the situation.

In any case, we might better start from the following ground: that the precise relation of textual scholarship to literary criticism is a good deal less evident than current theory suggests, and furthermore, that we cannot argue the relationship by an appeal to a series of concrete examples. Because the examples are produced out of a misconceived theory of textual criticism and its basic tasks, they do nothing to alter that conception; indeed, they merely reify it, as Tanselle's comment about self-evidence suggests. The examples he cites all go to show how textual emendations and variants may affect the meaning of a certain work or passage. But the examples are congruent with an editorial theory of textual criticism and they are only as good as the theory that supports them.

If textual and bibliographical studies are to have a significant impact on literary interpretation, textual criticism will have to be reconceptualized along lines that transcend an editorial theory. Of course, an editorial perspective on the principles of textual criticism is imperative under certain circumstances. Nevertheless, such a perspective only tends to obscure matters when the central issue is the relation of textual scholarship to literary meaning.

For example, consider again Tanselle's comments in "Textual Study and Literary Judgment." In his view, "the establishment of texts is the basic task of literary scholarship, a prerequisite to further critical study," and he goes on to suggest the following as the model for how textual studies affect literary criticism: "emendations which result from textual research can significantly affect the critical interpretation of a work." But textual criticism does not ground its deepest relation to the "critical interpretation of a [literary] work" on the textual emendations it may produce. Indeed, emendations are probably the least significant product of textual and bibliographical studies, from the point of view of literary criticism. Tanselle takes this position because he sees textual criticism as part of a comprehensive editorial program, rather than as a key element in an even more comprehensive program: the historical elucidation of texts, both ancient and modern.

A text, from an editorial vantage, appears in its ultimate form as a linguistic or verbal event, and the act of interpreting texts consequently

tends to appear as an operation we must perform on a definite and localized set of words. A more comprehensive sociohistorical view of texts, however—for example, a view of texts as books, manuscripts, or otherwise materialized objects—forces us to approach the issues of criticism and interpretation in a very different way, for the language in which texts speak to us is not located merely in the verbal sign system. Texts comprise elaborate arrangements of different and interrelated sign systems. It makes a difference if the poem we read is printed in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books* or *The New Republic*. Textual and bibliographical criticism generates, in relation to the works we read, a great deal more critical information than a calculus of variants or a record of emendations.

The interpretation of literary works, then, does take its ground in textual and bibliographical studies, as Tanselle has said, but not for the reasons or in the way that he has said. It does so because these studies are the only disciplines that can elucidate the complex network of people, materials, and events that have produced and that continue to reproduce the literary works history delivers into our hands. Current interpretations of literary works only acquire a critical edge of significance when they are grounded in an exegesis of texts and meanings generated in the past—in an exegesis of texts and meanings gained, and perhaps also lost, over time. Such an exegesis depends for its existence on the tools and procedures of textual criticism. The current practice of hermeneutics does not ordinarily avail itself of these tools and procedures, largely because literary critics and interpreters have come to accept Hermann's specialized view of textual criticism. Nor is it to be expected that this part of the academic world will be able to rethink the limits of the editorial view of textual studies: literary criticism as currently instituted lacks the technical and historical knowledge to carry out, or even initiate, such a process of reconceptualization.

An immersion in textual and bibliographical studies presupposes and reciprocates an understanding of the entire developing process of a literary work's historical transmission, and this in turn creates, or ought to create, a profound sense of how many factors enter into the production of the literary work. Textual studies do not pursue emendations and corruptions (or their absence) as the justifying end of the discipline. The first obligation of textual studies is to elucidate the meaning of what has taken place, not to adjudicate between these events and their consequences. Of historical method in general, Collingwood once said that it should not begin by asking the question "Is this right

or is this wrong?” but rather, “What does this mean?”¹⁵ Collingwood’s view is as applicable to the work of textual scholarship as it is to any other historically grounded discipline.

III

These general remarks introduce the following methodological schema that I would propose as a model for a procedure in textual criticism. This program is an analytic outline of the subjects and topics essential to textual criticism, whether it is viewed as a program of study or as an operational (a practical) event. The specific subjects and topics placed under each of the general categorical headings call for an elucidation of their circumstantial character, that is, a sociohistorical analysis of each element in the heading. These specific analyses together constitute an analytic presentation of the category, and the character, as well as the adequacy, of any act of textual criticism will be a function of the range of textual material that is critically examined.

My view is that a critical presentation of all the material ranged under categories A and B constitutes a finished program of historicist textual criticism. Such a program gains what I should call a properly historical character when the material ranged under category C begins to be brought into the critical analysis. The material in this category must, of course, be a part of any exercise in textual analysis; it need not be made a part of the *critical* (i.e., self-conscious) analysis, however, and in fact most of the material in this category is not material that is critically studied by textual scholars.

A. The Originary Textual Moment

The originary textual moment comprises the following:

1. Author
2. Other persons or groups involved in the initial process of production (e.g., collaborators, persons who may have commissioned the work, editors or amanuenses, etc.)
3. Phases or stages in the initial productive process (e.g., distinctive personal, textual, or social states along with their defining causes, functions, and characteristics)
4. Materials, means, and modes of the initial productive process (physical, psychological, ideological)

*B. Secondary Moments of Textual Production and Reproduction
(Individual and Related Sequences)*

Secondary moments should be ranged under two subsets: the period of reproduction carried out during the author's lifetime and the periods of production and reproduction that begin with the author's death. The elements to be ranged under each of these subsets are the same as those set out under category A above.

In the critical study of this material, certain shifts of emphasis take place. Most obviously, the author is studied as he or she is a critical and historical reconstruction. The heading "Author," then, will comprise a range of ideas or concepts of the author that have emerged in the minds of various people and the ideologies of different classes, institutions, and groups. Reciprocally, the critic will necessarily bring to the center of attention, not the author himself, but those "other persons or groups" signaled in A.2.

Similarly, the influence of the work's own production history on the work itself grows more important with the passage of time. Works descend to our hands in certain concrete and specific forms and along a series of equally concrete and specific avenues. The textual history of literary works reflects the influence of these factors even as the specific texts give a visible (if unanalyzed) form to the meaning and significance of that history. The critical analysis of texts discovers one of its chief intellectual justifications in that set of circumstances. Certain patterns of history are literalized in complete and finished forms in such texts; consequently, the critical analysis of these forms is an invaluable key to understanding those most elusive types of human phenomena, social and historical patterns.

Categories A and B are chiefly to be studied under the historian's milder (and preliminary) rubric "What does this mean?" rather than under the more severe polemical question "Is this right or is this wrong?"

C. The Immediate Moment of Textual Criticism

The category of the immediate moment calls for an analysis of the critic's own programmatic goals and purposes. This is probably the most demanding of all the tasks, since it involves a critical presentation of events that do not lie in a completed form of pastness but are coincident with the entire act of analysis itself.

This moment appears as a specific act of criticism—as a particular bibliography, edition, set of glosses, or critical commentary of one form

or another. The particular bibliographers, editors, or commentators may approach the subject matter critically (categories A and B) without approaching their own work in a critical spirit. The heuristic model for such a case would perhaps be an edition undertaken by a technically skilled scholar as a set task.

The governing model for a criticism that fulfills the obligations of this categorical imperative might well be either Thucydides and his *History of the Peloponnesian War* or Trotsky and his *History of the Russian Revolution*, depending upon whether one wanted an experimental or a polemical model. In textual studies, I would instance the Kane and Donaldson edition of *Piers Plowman* as a model of an experimental critical edition and Bowers's edition of *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* as a model of a polemical sort; and I would set these beside F. A. Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795) and Joseph Bédier's "La Tradition manuscrite du *Lai de L'Ombre*" as similar models of textual criticism carried out in the form of commentary.¹⁶

Works that exhibit a high degree of critical expertise in this aspect of their analysis will almost necessarily be controversial in their immediate scholarly context. Such works may display more or less serious deficiencies in their critical grasp of their subject matter (categories A and B). Whatever the case, they approach their own projects under the imperative query: "Is this right or is this wrong?"

IV

This schema may be summarized in a brief set of instructions to the student of literary works. The elementary maneuvers for studying, understanding, and finally teaching such works involve, first, an elucidation of the textual history of the work, and second, an explication of the reception history. Neither of these operations can be performed independently of the other because the two historical processes are dialectically related. (This is why no textual criticism, however specialized, can be produced without at least an implicit reference to certain more broadly established social phenomena, which impinge on a work's various textual constitutions.) Nonetheless, in textual criticism the attention will focus, necessarily, on a work's shifting verbal forms on the one hand and on its changing bibliographical states on the other.

The editorial function of textual criticism is to establish the reliability of the received texts and to determine whether a new edition is useful and what sort it might be. As I have argued, however, this is a specialized

use of the method. A thorough study of the textual history of any work does not cease to be a *sine qua non* of literary criticism when readers are provided with good editions, even good critical editions; the contrary, in fact. Furthermore, the analysis of the textual history is crucial for a more broadly considered act of literary criticism not merely because such an analysis may turn up textual mistakes or interesting verbal variants; the analysis establishes its justification at more primitive levels altogether.

Let me give two sets of examples. The text of Byron's *Don Juan*, cantos 1–2, in the first authorized printing is identical in all essential verbal features with the text of the first pirated printings. When one examines authorized and pirated printings in their historical contexts, however, we discover that their “meaning” was radically different. That difference in meaning is not simply a function of differences in verbal content, nor even of the acts of analysis and interpretation performed by later critics. It is an objective and original difference, and one that will only appear in our view if and when Byron's poem is analyzed with the methods of textual criticism. Or consider a poem like Emily Dickinson's “Because I could not stop for Death,” which has an identical verbal text in Johnson's critical edition, in *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*, and in Franklin's recent *Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*.¹⁷ These three apparently “identical” texts are in fact very different, for they exist in bibliographical environments (as it were) that enforce very different reading experiences. The analysis of these environments will only yield to an applied textual criticism.

There is as well the notorious case of Auden's “September 1, 1939.” Its first printing in *The New Republic* established a text that Auden later grew to regret. He reprinted the poem in the 1945 *Collected Poems*, but in a revised text with the penultimate stanza removed. Later still, he decided to suppress the poem altogether, and Auden's present editor, Edward Mendelson, has not printed the work in his posthumous edition of the *Collected Poems*.¹⁸

That history is itself interesting. Equally interesting, however, is another, parallel history of the poem's textual fortunes. For this famous work remained in print—in its original unrevised state—throughout Auden's lifetime, and it continues to be printed to this day in various anthologies of poetry, and especially in anthologies prepared for school use.¹⁹ To read this poem now in one of those anthologies is to read a work very different from the first printed text (though they are verbally identical) as well as from the later revised text. Textual criticism is uniquely prepared to elucidate and explain these matters, to establish the ground

for an advanced literary criticism, for these events will and do impinge upon the experience of Auden's poem in whatever textual state it is read, whether one is aware of the influence or not. The objective reality of these matters, along with their meaning and influence, may be changed by a reader's ignorance of them, but it will not be removed by such ignorance. It will merely assume a specific (and explicable) shape and significance, one that will submit, in its turn, to the elucidation of textual criticism.

The example from Auden illustrates yet another important point: that when verbal changes and variations are revealed through a process of textual criticism, their significance may not lie merely in the (obvious) fact that two verbally different texts may have different meanings. More interesting, in the case of the Auden poem, is the conflict of meanings that the work incorporates in itself. The textual and bibliographical history of the poem from 1939 to the present reveals how and why, when we read any particular verbal text of this work, the other verbal texts are necessary poetic presences. No scholar can read this poem today, in any verbal constitution, without being aware of the conflicts and contradictions built into the poem, which have become part of it as a consequence of the work's peculiar historical life.

All literary works have their own special and peculiar histories, though some are more useful than others for illustrating this fact, and hence for demonstrating the theoretical and methodological point I am trying to make. The example from Auden might be supported by an analogous case from Marianne Moore. In its first printing, her well-known poem "Poetry" appeared as a work of thirty lines, and it was reprinted in this form several times by Moore herself, in the 1935 *Selected Poems* and in the 1951 *Collected Poems* as well. When she published the 1967 *Complete Poems*, however, the original work had disappeared in favor of a text that comprised only the first three lines of the original. This three-line text is now accepted as the authorized version, and it appears alone in Moore's *Complete Poems*. Anthologies and school texts adopt varying approaches to this work, some printing the three-line text, some the original thirty-line version.

Whatever the choice, the significance of this history does not lie merely in the "different meanings" the two texts embody. What textual criticism also shows (and more significantly shows) is that no reading of either text of this work can remain innocent of the significance of the other text (though it may well remain ignorant or unconscious of that other text). To read the work called by Moore "Poetry" entails some-

thing like a close encounter of a third kind: that is to say, an encounter in which the two texts are present to the reader's mind, an encounter in which the interplay of the two texts is at the center of the reading experience.

Examples of the fundamental place that textual and bibliographical analysis occupy in literary interpretation are not difficult to multiply. The problem with such examples, in the current scholarly climate, is that they tend to obscure the essential theoretical point behind a screen of particulars. Many textual critics smile condescendingly on the innocence (or ignorance) of various literary interpreters who do not ground their work in a disciplined textual criticism. But textual criticism and its practitioners seem to me to labor under a corresponding sort of innocence, which has only reinforced the schism that exists between hermeneutics and textual criticism. Bibliographers and textual critics tend to conceive their work today almost exclusively in terms of its editorial functions and application. This we have already seen. Equally significant, however, is the fact that contemporary textual work is dominated by a theory of literary production that is so author-centered that it has increasingly neglected the importance of nonauthorial textual determinants.

Establishing texts for editions too often begins and ends in the pursuit of the so-called author's intentions or author's final intentions (as if these were definitive matters, or as if the author could or even should exercise an exclusive authority over the use of his works). This pursuit has its corresponding consequences in the prevailing views of the relation of hermeneutics to textual studies. Readers look to the resources of textual criticism for emendations, corruptions, and textual variants, as if these were the contributions literary criticism should expect from textual and bibliographical studies. The expectation seems to be shared by most textualists themselves, and the consequence of this state of affairs is only too apparent: the rich analytic resources of textual and bibliographical analysis have hardly begun to be recognized or used in the literary criticism we observe today. That a different and much more fruitful relation might prevail is clear, if only because we know that it has prevailed, in the work of certain critics in the past.

Earlier I mentioned Thucydides as a writer whose critical habits might well serve as a model for literary scholars, though he was himself neither grammarian nor critic nor philologue. But he had a profoundly critical mind—the *ne plus ultra* for textual or any kind of scholarship, as Housman once suggested.²⁰ And it so happens that in his great *History*, he does make occasional forays into the field of textual criticism. These are al-

ways memorable events, and I want to recall one of them here to conclude this paper.

After his narrative of the plague at Athens, Thucydides begins his summary with the following anecdote.

Such was the nature of the calamity which now fell on the Athenians; death raging within the city and devastation without. Among other things which they remembered in their distress was, very naturally, the following verse, which the old men said had been uttered long ago:

“A Dorian war shall come and with it death.”

A dispute arose whether dearth and not death had not been the word in the verse; but at the present juncture it was of course decided in favour of the latter; for the people made their recollection fit in with their sufferings. I fancy, however, that if another Dorian war should ever afterwards come upon us, and a dearth should happen to accompany it, the verse will probably be read accordingly.²¹

The scholarship in this commentary does not lie in the recording of a textual dispute, and it clearly has nothing at all to do with adjudicating between the two received readings of the line, nor even with explaining what each version means. Thucydides’ mordant eye is not directed toward the “original version” of the line but toward the versions produced by later “editors” and interpreters; and his interest lies in the meaning of scholarship and criticism rather than in the meaning of that line of ancient verse. To that extent, the passage illustrates a textual criticism that has raised and answered Collingwood’s historicist question: “What does it mean?” But the passage pushes beyond that question in order to ask the further and more demanding one: “Is this right or is this wrong?” Nor does Thucydides ask this question merely as a matter of technical accuracy, as editors today might perhaps ask such a question of the texts they will study. What is “wrong” here is, not a textual, but a critical deficiency.

I think much the same kind of judgment might be passed on a good deal of the work we produce, whether as textual scholars or as literary interpreters. The weaknesses seem to me critical rather than technical, and they can often be traced to a failure of theory— a failure to begin the inquiry at fundamental levels. To the degree that this is true, to that extent does Thucydides’ scholastic satire remain an important model and resource. It may be that we shall never know whether the original Greek word was *limos* or *loimos* and that we shall fail forever to cross the boundary of the Greek New Testament or to pass beyond the Masoretic wall and the Alexandrian limits; it may be that we shall never hear the uncorrupt-

ed word of God and that we shall not see Homer, or even Shelley, plain. If these are losses, and they are, they are losses that may be filled with meaning, in several senses—losses that bear fruit in a critical intelligence, losses over which we need grieve not but rather find “strength in what remains behind . . . in years that bring the philosophic mind.”

Notes

¹ Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 2d ed. (New York, 1955), 47, 52. See especially pp. 26–34 and part 2 (“Preliminary Operations”), 43–57.

² Besides various works by the scholars herein represented [in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. McGann], see also Randall McLeod’s several essays, including “UnEditing Shakespeare,” *Sub-Stance* 33/34 (1982): 26–55, and “Unemending Shakespeare’s Sonnet III,” *Studies in English Literature* 21 (1981): 75–96; John R. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (Chicago, 1976); and the work on William Blake by Morris Eaves and Robert Essick.

³ Fredson Bowers, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism* (Oxford, 1964), 1–2.

⁴ Perhaps the best indication of Bowers’s scholarly strength is to be seen in his flexibility. In the past ten years, he has seemed anxious to alter and revise his views when the work of others suggested that he should do so. See his “Multiple Authority: New Problems and Concepts of Copy-Text,” *Library*, 5th ser. 27 (1972): 81–115, and “Greg’s ‘Rationale of Copy-Text’ Revisited,” *Studies in Bibliography* (SB) 31 (1978): 90–161.

⁵ The textual problems in the fields of classical and biblical studies remain exceedingly vexed and in many cases insoluble, given the current state of our documentary knowledge. In medieval studies, the problems are often only slightly less difficult.

⁶ The view is commonplace; James Thorpe, for example, speaks of “Textual study—or, to use a more enveloping term, editorial work,” and he states that “the goal of textual criticism is to determine the text of what we are to read as the work of literary art.” See *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino, Cal., 1972), vii; and the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* entry: “Textual Criticism, the technique and art of restoring a text to its original state, as far as possible, in the editing of Greek and Latin authors.”

⁷ Good discussions of these lines of development are available in John E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* (reprint ed., New York, 1958), 3: 89; and Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976), 179–82.

⁸ Some of the problems in specialized textual studies are taken up in my *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago, 1983).

⁹ See Samuel Johnson, *On Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Sherbo (New York, 1968), 1: 51–52.

¹⁰ Paul Maas, *Textual Criticism*, trans. Barbara Flowers (Oxford, 1958), 1.

¹¹ For an excellent discussion of Wolf’s significance, see Anthony Grafton, “Prolegomena to Friedrich August Wolf,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 44 (1981): 101–29.

¹² M. L. West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique* (Stuttgart, 1973), 8–9. West explicitly acknowledges his debt to Pasquali in his preface, and he cites Pasquali’s second edition (Firenze, 1952).

¹³ G. Thomas Tanselle, “Textual Study and Literary Judgment,” reprinted in *Essays in Bibliography*, ed. Vito J. Brenni (Metuchen, N.J., 1975), 355.

¹⁴ Ibid., 363 n. 9.

¹⁵ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946), 260.

¹⁶ George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, eds., *Piers Plowman: The B Version* (London, 1975); Bowers's edition was published by Cambridge University Press (1953–61); Bédier's essay was printed in two parts in *Romania* 54 (1928): 161–96, 321–56.

¹⁷ I have discussed both of these examples at greater length in "The Text, the Poem, and the Problem of Historical Method," *New Literary History* 12 (1981): 269–88; see also a similar discussion of Poe's "Von Kempelen and His Discovery" and Byron's "On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year" in my essay "Shall These Bones Live?" *Text* 1 (1981, publ. 1984): 21–40. The Dickinson editions cited are Thomas H. Johnson's three-volume *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), and R. W. Franklin's recent facsimile text in two volumes (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).

¹⁸ Edward Mendelson, ed., *Collected Poems of W. H. Auden* (New York, 1976). For a discussion of the textual history, see Joseph Warren Beach, *The Making of the Auden Canon* (Minneapolis, 1957), 49–52.

¹⁹ See, for example, *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, ed. G. D. Sanders et al. (London, 1970), 1: 366–68.

²⁰ In Housman's famous essay "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," *Proceedings of the Classical Association* 18 (1921): 67–84.

²¹ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, ed. and trans. Sir Richard Livingstone (Oxford, 1960), 122 (book 2, sec. 54). The crux involves a choice between the Greek words *limos* and *loimos*.

THE BOOK AS AN EXPRESSIVE FORM

D. F. MCKENZIE

D. F. McKenzie proposed a new definition of bibliography in the first of his 1985 Panizzi lectures, reprinted here. W. W. Greg had defined bibliography as concerned solely with the material carriers of text; their printed signs were to be treated as arbitrary marks on paper, thus giving the pursuit a potentially scientific status. McKenzie saw Greg's classic statement as unnecessarily restrictive, a reflection of its own period (the 1930s), and as likely to lead bibliography into a status of increasing irrelevance to contemporary intellectual agendas. «If a medium in any sense effects a message», he argued, «then bibliography cannot exclude from its own proper concerns the relation between form, function and symbolic meaning». If this contention be accepted, then bibliography needs to be understood as «the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission, including their production and reception». In other words, he defines bibliography as «the study of the sociology of texts», thus alerting us to the role of institutions and human agents in their life. McKenzie includes book history within the fold of bibliography, and extends texts to include all recorded forms of text: maps, music, videos, computer-recorded information, etc.

By way of example, he offers a reading of a few lines from William Congreve's prologue to his play *The Way of the World* (1700), misquoted in the numerous printings of Wimsatt and Beardsley's famous essay «The Intentional Fallacy» (1946). McKenzie shows how the misquoting suited their purpose of ruling out author-intentional and other contextual factors as relevant to literary criticism. He shows how full bibliographical attention restores the presence of the author

Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts (Panizzi Lectures, 1985), London, British Library, 1986. By permission of the British Library. *Bibliography* was republished by Cambridge University Press, 1999; this chapter was reprinted in David Finkelstein, Alistair McCleery (eds.), *The Book History Reader*, London, Routledge, 2002, pp. 27-38; for French, Italian, and Spanish translations, with a preface by Roger Chartier, see «Suggested Additional Readings» in this issue of *Ecdotica*.

in the text. Therefore he sees no border needing to be demarcated «between bibliography and textual criticism on the one hand and literary criticism and literary history on the other». EDD.

Nella prima delle sue Panizzi Lectures del 1985, qui riproposta, D. F. McKenzie suggerisce una nuova definizione di bibliografia testuale. W. W. Greg aveva definito l'oggetto della bibliografia testuale come lo studio dei meri supporti materiali dei testi; i caratteri stampati dovevano essere considerati come semplici segni materiali su un foglio di carta, una prospettiva che dava alla ricerca un suo status potenzialmente scientifico. McKenzie considera la classica definizione di Greg come eccessivamente restrittiva, determinata dal particolare contesto storico (gli anni Trenta), e responsabile di avere isolato la bibliografia testuale dai contemporanei dibattiti intellettuali. «Se il mezzo è, in ogni senso, il messaggio», sostiene McKenzie, «allora non è possibile escludere dagli interessi della bibliografia testuale anche la relazione tra forma, funzione e significato simbolico». Se si accetta un tale assunto, allora la bibliografia testuale deve essere considerata come «la disciplina che studia i testi, intesi come documenti, il loro processo di trasmissione, includendo in esso il momento di produzione e quello di ricezione». La bibliografia, in altre parole, è «lo studio della sociologia dei testi», prospettiva che mette gli studiosi in guardia dal non considerare l'importanza delle istituzioni e del fattore umano nella vita dei testi stessi. Per McKenzie anche la storia del libro va inclusa nella bibliografia testuale, anche perché include nella categoria «testi» tutte le possibili forme testuali, dalle mappe ai testi musicali, ai video ai file di testo ecc.

Per esemplificare la sua teoria McKenzie prende spunto da alcuni passi del prologo di *The Way of the World* (1700) di William Congreve, erroneamente citati in molte ristampe del celebre saggio di Wimsatt e Beardsley *L'errore intenzionale* (1946), e mostra che tali erronee citazioni servivano ai due studiosi a escludere la volontà dell'autore e altri fattori contestuali come importanti nell'interpretazione critica del testo, mentre solo la prospettiva della bibliografia testuale permette di riportare l'autore a una presenza attiva all'interno del testo. Tale prospettiva permette a McKenzie di sostenere che non esiste un «confine definito tra bibliografia testuale e critica del testo da una parte, e critica letteraria e storia della letteratura dall'altro».

My purpose in these lectures – one I hope that might be thought fitting for an inaugural occasion – is simply to consider anew what bibliography is and how it relates to other disciplines. To begin that inquiry, I should like to recall a classic statement by Sir Walter Greg. It is this: 'what the bibliographer is concerned with is pieces of paper or parchment covered with certain written or printed signs. With these signs he is concerned merely as arbitrary marks; their meaning is no business of his'.¹ This definition of bibliography, or at least of 'pure' bibliography, is still

widely accepted, and it remains in essence the basis of any claim that the procedures of bibliography are scientific.

A study by Mr Ross Atkinson supports that view by drawing on the work of the American semiotician, C. S. Peirce.² It can be argued, for example, that the signs in a book, as a bibliographer must read them, are simply iconic or indexical. Briefly, iconic signs are those which involve similarity; they represent an object, much as a portrait represents the sitter. In enumerative bibliography, and even more so in descriptive, the entries are iconic. They represent the object they describe. Textual bibliography, too, may be said to be iconic because it seeks, as Mr Atkinson puts it, 'to reproduce the Object with maximum precision in every detail'. In that way, enumerative, descriptive, and textual bibliography may be said to constitute a class of three *referential* sign systems. Analytical bibliography, however, would form a distinct class of indexical signs. Their significance lies only in the physical differences between them as an index to the ways in which a particular document came physically to be what it is. It is their *causal* status that, in Peirce's terms, makes the signs *indexical*. In the words of Professor Fredson Bowers, writing of analytical bibliography, the physical features of a book are 'significant in the order and manner of their shapes but indifferent in symbolic meaning'.³

I must say at once that this account comes closer than any other I know to justifying Greg's definition of the discipline. I am also convinced, however, that the premise informing Greg's classic statement, and therefore this refinement of it, is no longer adequate as a definition of what bibliography is and does.

In an attempt to escape the embarrassment of such a strict definition, it is often said that bibliography is not a subject at all but only, as Mr G. Thomas Tanselle once put it, 'a related group of subjects that happen to be commonly referred to by the same term'.⁴ Professor Bowers virtually conceded as much in dividing it into enumerative or systematic bibliography, and descriptive, analytical, textual, and historical bibliography.⁵ The purity of the discipline which Greg aspired to is to that extent qualified by its particular applications and these in turn imply that his definition does not fully serve its uses.

The problem is, I think, that the moment we are required to explain signs in a book, as distinct from describing or copying them, they assume a symbolic status. If a medium in any sense effects a message, then bibliography cannot exclude from its own proper concerns the relation between form, function, and symbolic meaning. If textual bibliography were merely iconic, it could produce only facsimiles of different versions.

As for bibliographical analysis, that depends absolutely upon antecedent historical knowledge, for it can only function 'with the assistance of previously gathered information on the techniques of book production'.⁶ But the most striking weakness of the definition is precisely its incapacity to accommodate history. Mr Atkinson is quite frank about this. Accepting the bibliographer's presumed lack of concern for the meaning of signs, he writes: 'we are left now only with the problem of historical bibliography'. He cites with approval the comment by Professor Bowers that the numerous fields concerned with the study of printing and its processes both as art and craft are merely 'ancillary to analytical bibliography'.⁷ He is therefore obliged to argue that

historical bibliography is not, properly speaking, bibliography at all. This is because it does not have as its Object material sign systems or documents. Its Object rather consists of certain mechanical techniques and as such it must be considered not part of bibliography but a constituent of such fields as the history of technology or, perhaps, information science.

Such comments, although seeking to accommodate bibliography to semiotics as the science of signs, are oddly out of touch with such developments as, for example, the founding of The Center for the Book by the Library of Congress, the American Antiquarian Society's programme for the History of the Book in American Culture, or proposals for publication of national histories of the book, of which the most notable so far is *L'Histoire de l'Édition Française*.

I am not bold enough to speak of paradigm shifts, but I think I am safe in saying that the vital interests of most of those known to me as bibliographers are no longer fully served by description, or even by editing, but by the historical study of the making and the use of books and other documents. But is it right that in order to accomplish such projects as, for example, a history of the book in Britain, we must cease to be bibliographers and shift to another discipline? It is here, if anywhere, that other disciplines such as history, and especially cultural history, are now making demands of bibliography. Far from accepting that 'historical bibliography is not, properly speaking, bibliography at all', it is tempting to claim, now, that all bibliography, properly speaking, is historical bibliography.

In such a world, Greg's definition of the theoretical basis of bibliography is too limited. As long as we continue to think of it as confined to the study of the non-symbolic functions of signs, the risk it runs is rele-

gation. Rare book rooms will simply become rarer. The politics of survival, if nothing else, require a more comprehensive justification of the discipline's function in promoting new knowledge.

If, by contrast, we were to delineate the field in a merely pragmatic way, take a panoptic view and describe what we severally *do* as bibliographers, we should note, rather, that it is the only discipline which has consistently studied the composition, formal design, and transmission of texts by writers, printers, and publishers; their distribution through different communities by wholesalers, retailers, and teachers; their collection and classification by librarians; their meaning for, and – I must add – their creative regeneration by, readers. However we define it, no part of that series of human and institutional interactions is alien to bibliography as we have, traditionally, practised it.

But, like Panizzi himself, faced with everything printed in a world in change, we reach a point where the accretion of subjects, like the collection of books, demands that we also seek a new principle by which to order them. Recent changes in critical theory, subsuming linguistics, semiotics, and the psychology of reading and writing, in information theory and communications studies, in the status of texts and the forms of their transmission, represent a formidable challenge to traditional practice, but they may also, I believe, give to bibliographical principle a quite new centrality.

The principle I wish to suggest as basic is simply this: bibliography is the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission, including their production and reception. So stated, it will not seem very surprising. What the word 'texts' also allows, however, is the extension of present practice to include all forms of texts, not merely books or Greg's signs on pieces of parchment or paper. It also frankly accepts that bibliographers should be concerned to show that forms effect meaning. Beyond that, it allows us to describe not only the technical but the social processes of their transmission. In those quite specific ways, it accounts for non-book texts, their physical forms, textual versions, technical transmission, institutional control, their perceived meanings, and social effects. It accounts for a history of the book and, indeed, of all printed forms including all textual ephemera as a record of cultural change, whether in mass civilization or minority culture. For any history of the book which excluded study of the social, economic, and political motivations of publishing, the reasons why texts were written and read as they were, why they were rewritten and redesigned, or allowed to die, would degenerate into a feebly degressive book list and never rise to a readable history. But such a phrase also ac-

commodates what in recent critical theory is often called text production, and it therefore opens up the application of the discipline to the service of that field too.

In terms of the range of demands now made of it and of the diverse interests of those who think of themselves as bibliographers, it seems to me that it would now be more useful to describe bibliography as the study of the sociology of texts. If the principle which makes it distinct is its concern with texts in some physical form and their transmission, then I can think of no other phrase which so aptly describes its range. Both the word 'texts' and 'sociology', however, demand further comment.

I define 'texts' to include verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data, in the form of maps, prints, and music, of archives of recorded sound, of films, videos, and any computer-stored information, everything in fact from epigraphy to the latest forms of discography. There is no evading the challenge which those new forms have created.

We can find in the origins of the word 'text' itself some support for extending its meaning from manuscripts and print to other forms. It derives, of course, from the Latin *texere*, 'to weave', and therefore refers, not to any specific material as such, but to its woven state, the web or texture of the materials. Indeed, it was not restricted to the weaving of textiles, but might be applied equally well to the interlacing or entwining of any kind of material. The Oxford Latin Dictionary suggests that it is probably cognate with the Vedic 'tāṣṭi', to 'fashion by carpentry', and consequently with the Greek τέκτων and τέχνη.

The shift from fashioning a material medium to a conceptual system, from the weaving of fabrics to the web of words, is also implicit in the Greek ὕψος 'a web or net', from ὑφαίνω 'to weave'. As with the Latin, it is only by virtue of a metaphoric shift that it applies to language, that the verb 'to weave' serves for the verb 'to write', that the web of words becomes a text. In each case, therefore, the primary sense is one which defines a process of material construction. It creates an object, but it is not peculiar to any one substance or any one form. The idea that texts are written records on parchment or paper derives only from the secondary and metaphoric sense that the writing of words is like the weaving of threads.

As much could now be said of many constructions which are not in written form, but for which the same metaphoric shift would be just as proper. Until our own times, the only textual records created in any quantity were manuscripts and books. A slight extension of the principle – it is, I believe, the same principle – to cope with the new kinds of

material constructions we have in the form of the non-book texts which now surround, inform, and pleasure us, does not seem to me a radical departure from precedent.

In turning briefly now to comment on the word 'sociology', it is not perhaps impertinent to note that its early history parallels Panizzi's. A neologism coined by Auguste Comte in 1830, the year before Panizzi joined the staff of the British Museum, it made a fleeting appearance in Britain in 1843 in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which referred to 'a new Science, to be called Social Ethics, or Sociology'. Eight years later it was still struggling for admission. *Fraser's Magazine* in 1851 acknowledged its function but derided its name in a reference to 'the new science of sociology, as it is barbarously termed'. Only in 1873 did it find a local habitation and a respected name. Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*, published in that year, provides a succinct description of its role: 'Sociology has to recognize truths of social development, structure and function'.

As I see it, that stress on structure and function is important, although I should resist its abstraction to the point where it lost sight of human agency. At one level, a sociology simply reminds us of the full range of social realities which the medium of print had to serve, from receipt blanks to bibles. But it also directs us to consider the human motives and interactions which texts involve at every stage of their production, transmission, and consumption. It alerts us to the roles of institutions, and their own complex structures, in affecting the forms of social discourse, past and present. Those are the realities which bibliographers and textual critics as such have, until very recently, either neglected or, by defining them as strictly non-bibliographical, have felt unable to denominate, logically and coherently, as central to what we do. Historical bibliography, we were told, was not strictly bibliography at all.

A 'sociology of texts', then, contrasts with a bibliography confined to logical inference from printed signs as arbitrary marks on parchment or paper. As I indicated earlier, claims were made for the 'scientific' status of the latter precisely because it worked only from the physical evidence of books themselves. Restricted to the non-symbolic values of the signs, it tried to exclude the distracting complexities of linguistic interpretation and historical explanation.

That orthodox view of bibliography is less compelling, and less surprising, if we note its affinities with other modes of thinking at the time when Greg was writing in the 1920s and 1930s. These include certain formalist theories of art and literature which were concerned to exclude from the discussion of a work of art any intended or referential mean-

ing. They were current not only in the years when Greg was formulating his definitions but were still active in the theory of the New Criticism when Fredson Bowers was developing his. The congruence of bibliography and criticism lay precisely in their shared view of the self-sufficient nature of the work of art or text, and in their agreement on the significance of its every verbal detail, however small. In neither case were precedent or subsequent processes thought to be essential to critical or bibliographical practice. The New Criticism showed great ingenuity in discerning patterns in the poem-on-the-page as a self-contained verbal structure. It is not I think altogether fanciful to find a scholarly analogy in analytical bibliography. Compositor studies, for example, have shown a comparable virtuosity in discerning patterns in evidence which is entirely internal, if not wholly fictional.

I shall return to that analogy with the New Criticism, but I am more concerned for the moment to emphasize the point that this confinement of bibliography to non-symbolic meaning, in an attempt to give it some kind of objective or 'scientific' status, has seriously impeded its development as a discipline. By electing to ignore its inevitable dependence upon interpretative structures, it has obscured the role of human agents, and virtually denied the relevance to bibliography of anything we might now understand as a history of the book. Physical bibliography – the study of the signs which constitute texts and the materials on which they are recorded – is of course the starting point. But it cannot define the discipline because it has no adequate means of accounting for the processes, the technical and social dynamics, of transmission and reception, whether by one reader or a whole market of them.

In speaking of bibliography as the sociology of texts, I am not concerned to invent new names but only to draw attention to its actual nature. Derrida's 'Grammatology', the currently fashionable word 'Textuality', the French 'Textologie', or even 'Hyphologie' (a suggestion made, not altogether seriously, by Roland Barthes) would exclude more than we would wish to lose. Nor is bibliography a sub-field of semiotics, precisely because its functions are not merely synchronically descriptive. Our own word, 'Bibliography', will do. It unites us as collectors, editors, librarians, historians, makers, and readers of books. It even has a new felicity in its literal meaning of 'the writing out of books', of generating new copies and therefore in time new versions. Its traditional concern with texts as recorded forms, and with the processes of their transmission, should make it hospitably open to new forms. No new names, then; but to conceive of the discipline as a sociology of texts is, I think, both to

describe what the bibliography is that we actually do and to allow for its natural evolution.

Nevertheless, I must now turn to consider the special case of printed texts. In doing so, the particular inquiry I wish to pursue is whether or not the material forms of books, the non-verbal elements of the typographic notations within them, the very disposition of space itself, have an expressive function in conveying meaning, and whether or not it is, properly, a bibliographical task to discuss it.

Again, I sense that theory limps behind practice. At one end of the spectrum, we must of course recognize that Erwin Panofsky on perspective as symbolic form has long since made the theme familiar; at the other end, we find that Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* has made it basic to media studies. In our own field, Mr Nicolas Barker, on 'Typography and the Meaning of Words: The Revolution in the Layout of Books in the Eighteenth Century'; Mr David Foxon on Pope's typography; Mr Giles Barber on Voltaire and the typographic presentation of *Candide*; Mr Roger Laufer on 'scripturation' or 'the material emergence of sense' are all distinguished bibliographers demonstrating in one way or another, not the iconic or indexical, but the symbolic function of typographic signs as an interpretative system.⁸ Words like the 'articulation' or 'enunciation' of the book in this sense make similar assumptions. Discussions of the morphology of the book in relation to genre or to special classes of readers and markets assume a complex relation of medium to meaning. Journals like *Visible Language* and *Word & Image* were founded specifically to explore these questions. The persistent example of fine printing and the revival of the calligraphic manuscript, and numerous recent studies of the sophisticated displays of text and illumination in medieval manuscript production, also share a basic assumption that forms effect sense.⁹

Perhaps on this occasion the simplest way of exploring some of these issues as they relate to the expressive function of typography in book forms, as they bear on editing, and as they relate to critical theory, is to offer an exemplary case. I have chosen the four lines which serve as epigraph to 'The Intentional Fallacy', the distinguished essay by W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley which was first published in *The Sewanee Review* in 1946.¹⁰ It would, I think, be hard to name another essay which so influenced critical theory and the teaching of literature in the next forty years or so. Briefly, they argued that it was pointless to use the concept of an author's intentions in trying to decide what a work of literature might mean, or if it was any good. And of course exactly the same objection must apply, if it holds at all, to the interpretation of a writer's or

printer's intentions in presenting a text in a particular form, or a publisher's intentions in issuing it at all.

Let me say at once that my purpose in using an example from this essay is to show that in some cases significantly informative readings may be recovered from typographic signs as well as verbal ones, that these are relevant to editorial decisions about the manner in which one might reproduce a text, and that a reading of such bibliographical signs may seriously shape our judgement of an author's work. I think it is also possible to suggest that their own preconceptions may have led Wimsatt and Beardsley to misread a text, that their misreading may itself have been partly a function of the manner in which it was printed, and that its typographic style was in turn influenced by the culture at large. My argument therefore runs full circle from a defence of authorial meaning, on the grounds that it is in some measure recoverable, to a recognition that, for better or worse, readers inevitably make their own meanings. In other words, each reading is peculiar to its occasion, each can be at least partially recovered from the physical forms of the text, and the differences in readings constitute an informative history. What writers thought they were doing in writing texts, or printers and booksellers in designing and publishing them, or readers in making sense of them are issues which no history of the book can evade.

'The Intentional Fallacy' opens with an epigraph taken from Congreve's prologue to *The Way of the World* (1700). In it, as Wimsatt and Beardsley quote him,

He owns with toil he wrote the following scenes;
But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dullness on mature deliberation.
WILLIAM CONGREVE, Prologue to
The Way of the World

Congreve's authorized version of 1710 reads:

*He owns, with Toil, he wrought the following
Scenes,
But if they're naught ne'er spare him for his Pains:
Damn him the more; have no Commiseration
For Dulness on mature Deliberation.*

It has not, I think, been observed before that, if we include its epigraph, this famous essay on the interpretation of literature opens with a misquotation in its very first line. Wimsatt and Beardsley say that Congreve 'wrote' the following scenes, but Congreve was a deliberate craftsman.

He said he '*wrought*' them. Since the words quoted are ascribed to Congreve, I think we are clearly meant to accept them as his, even if the essay later persuades us that we cannot presume to know what Congreve might have intended them to mean. By adopting that simple change from '*wrought*' to '*wrote*', Wimsatt and Beardsley oblige us to make our meaning from their misreading. The epigraph thereby directs us to weaken the emphasis that Congreve placed on his labour of composition: he writes of the '*Pains*' it cost him to hammer out *his* meaning. The changed wording destroys the carefully created internal rhyme, the resonance between what, in the first line, Congreve said he '*wrought*' and, in the second line, its fate in being reduced to '*naught*' by those who misquote, misconstrue, and misjudge him. Congreve's prologue to *The Way of the World* put, in 1700/1710, a point of view exactly opposite to the one which the lines are cited to support.

Less noticeable perhaps are the implications of the way in which the epigraph is printed. For Congreve's precise notation of spelling, punctuation, and initial capitals, the 1946 version offers a flat, even insidiously open form. Congreve wrote that '*He owns*' – comma – '*with Toil*' – comma – '*he wrought the following Scenes*'. In their performance of the line, Wimsatt and Beardsley drop the commas. By isolating and emphasizing the phrase, Congreve may be read as affirming his seriousness of purpose, the deliberation of his art. Wimsatt and Beardsley speed past it, their eyes perhaps on a phrase more proper to their purpose in the next line. What their reading emphasizes instead, surrounding it with commas where Congreve had none, is the phrase 'if they're naught'. By that slight change they highlight Congreve's ironic concession that an author's intentions have no power to save him if an audience or reader thinks him dull. Congreve, without commas, had preferred to skip quickly past that thought. Wimsatt and Beardsley allow us to dwell on it, for in their reading it would seem to justify their rather different argument.

Those shifts of meaning which result from the variants noted are, I believe, serious, however slight the signs which make them. But there are more. In his second couplet, Congreve writes:

*Damn him the more; have no Commiseration
For Dulness on mature Deliberation.*

Again, it suits the purpose of the epigraph to remove Congreve's irony, but as irony is crucially dependent upon context, the loss is perhaps inevitable. Reading the words literally, Wimsatt and Beardsley must take them to mean: 'If you really think my scenes are dull, don't waste your

pity on their author'. But you will note that Congreve gives upper case 'D's for '*Dulness*' and '*Deliberation*'. Those personified forms allow two readings to emerge which tell us something of Congreve's experience. The first is that these abstractions have human shapes (they were sitting there in the theatre); the second alludes to the age-old combat between Dulness and Deliberation, or Stupidity and Sense. By reducing all his nouns to lower case and thereby destroying the early eighteenth-century convention, the epigraph kills off Congreve's personified forms, and by muting his irony, it reverses his meaning. Where Congreve's irony contrasts his own '*mature Deliberation*' with the '*Dulness*' of his critics, their meaning has him saying the reader knows best.

If we look again at the form and relation of the words '*Toil*', '*Scenes*' and its rhyme-word '*Pains*', we note that they, too, have initial capitals. The convention thereby gives us in print a visual, semantic, and ultimately moral identity between Congreve's own description of his labours ('*Toil . . . Pains*') and their human products who people his plays. The text as printed in the epigraph breaks down those visual links by depriving the words of their capitals. One set of meanings, which stress a writer's presence in his work, is weakened in favour of a preconceived reading which would remove him from it.

Small as it is, this example is so instructive that I should like to explore it further. It bears on the most obvious concerns of textual criticism – getting the right words in the right order; on the semiotics of print and the role of typography in forming meaning; on the critical theories of authorial intention and reader response; on the relation between the past meanings and present uses of verbal texts. It offers an illustration of the transmission of texts as the creation of the new versions which form, in turn, the new books, the products of later printers, and the stuff of subsequent bibliographical control. These are the primary documents for any history of the book. By reading one form of Congreve's text (1700/1710), we may with some authority affirm certain readings as his. By reading other forms of it (1946), we can chart meanings that later readers made from it under different historical imperatives.

I may believe – as I do – that Wimsatt and Beardsley have mistaken Congreve's meaning; that they have misconceived his relation to his tradition; that they have misreported his attitude to his own audience and readers. At the same time, their misreading has become an historical document in its own right. By speaking to what they perceived in 1946 to be the needs of their own time, not Congreve's in 1700/1710, they have left a record of the taste, thought, and values of a critical school which

significantly shaped our own choice of books, the way we read them and, in my own case, the way I taught them. The history of material objects as symbolic forms functions, therefore, in two ways. It can falsify certain readings; and it can demonstrate new ones.

To extend that line of argument, I should like to comment briefly on the word '*Scenes*'. We recall first that Congreve's '*Scenes*' cost him '*Pains*'. Next, we should note that his editors and critics have, almost without exception, replaced his meaning of the word with a commoner one of their own. They have defined them by geography and carpentry, as when a scene shifts from a forest to the palace. For Congreve, by contrast, they were neo-classical scenes: not impersonal places in motion, but distinct groups of human beings in conversation. These made up his scenes. For him, it was the intrusion of another human voice, another mind, or its loss, that most changed the scene. The substance of his scenes, therefore, what '*with Toil, he wrought*', were men and women. Once we recover that context and follow Congreve's quite literal meaning in that sense, his rhyme of '*Scenes*' with '*Pains*' glows with an even subtler force. What he hints at is a serious critical judgement about all his work: beneath the rippling surface of his comedy there flows a sombre undercurrent of human pain. In a more mundane way, that perception may direct an editor to adopt a typography which divides Congreve's plays into neoclassical scenes, as he himself did in his edition of 1710 where we find them restored.

With that last example, it could be argued that we reach the border between bibliography and textual criticism on the one hand and literary criticism and literary history on the other. My own view is that no such border exists. In the pursuit of historical meanings, we move from the most minute feature of the material form of the book to questions of authorial, literary, and social context. These all bear in turn on the ways in which texts are then re-read, re-edited, re-designed, re-printed, and re-published. If a history of readings is made possible only by a comparative history of books, it is equally true that a history of books will have no point if it fails to account for the meanings they later come to make.

Though at times they may pretend otherwise, I suspect that few authors, with the kind of investment in their work that Congreve claims, are indifferent to the ways in which their art is presented and received. There is certainly a cruel irony in the fact that Congreve's own text is re-shaped and misread to support an argument against himself. Far from offering a licence for his audience and readers to discount the author's meaning, Congreve is putting, with an exasperated irony, the case for the right of authors, as he says in another line of the prologue, '*to assert their*

Sense against the taste of the town. When Jeremy Collier wrenched to his own purposes the meaning of Congreve's words, Congreve replied with his *Amendments of Mr Collier's False and Imperfect Citations*. He too had a way with epigraphs and chose for that occasion one from Martial which, translated, reads: 'That book you recite, O Fidentinus, *is* mine. But your vile *re*-citation begins to make it your own'.

With that thought in mind, I should like to pursue one further dimension of the epigraph's meaning which is not in itself a matter of book form. It nevertheless puts Congreve in the tradition of authors who thought about the smallest details of their work as it might be printed, and who directed, collaborated with, or fumed against, their printers and publishers. One such author is Ben Jonson. As it happens, Wimsatt and Beardsley might with equal point have quoted him to epitomize their argument that an author's intentions are irrelevant. This, for example:

*Playes in themselues haue neither hopes, nor feares,
Their fate is only in their hearers eares . . .*¹¹

It chimes in perfectly with the very end of Congreve's prologue although, here, his irony is too heavy to miss:

*In short, our Play shall (with your Leave to shew it),
Give you one Instance of a Passive Poet.
Who to your Judgments yields all Resignation;
So Save or Damn, after your own Discretion.*

To link Congreve with Jonson is to place his prologue and what it says in a developing tradition of the author's presence in his printed works. In that context, Congreve's lines become a form of homage to his mentor, an acceptance of succession, and a reminder that the fight for the author's right not to be mis-read can ultimately break even the best of us. For not only had Jonson inveighed against the usurpation of *his* meanings by those of his asinine critics, but he was a dramatist who for a time virtually quit the public stage to be, as he put it, 'Safe from the wolves black jaw, and the dull Asses hoofe'. Jonson's rejection of free interpretation is venomous:

Let their fastidious, vaine
Commission of the braine
Run on, and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn:
They were not meant for thee, lesse, thou for them.¹²

Congreve's ironies allow him a more tactful, more decorous, farewell. Less tough, more delicate, than Jonson, he did leave the comic stage, sensing himself expelled by the misappropriation of his works, convinced that *his* meanings would rarely survive their reception. The imminence of that decision informs his prologue to *The Way of the World*. It was to be his last play, though not his last major work. On 'mature *Deliberation*', he found he could no longer bear the deadly '*Dulness*' of his critics. By respecting not only the words Congreve uses – a simple courtesy – but also the meanings which their precise notation gives, we can, if we wish, as an act of bibliographical scholarship, recover his irony, and read his pain.

In that long series of Pyrrhic victories which records the triumphs of critics and the deaths of authors, 'The Intentional Fallacy' has earned a distinguished place for the argument which follows its feat of misprision. Its epigraph is no celebration of Congreve's perspicacity in foreseeing a new cause; it is, rather, an epitaph to his own dismembered text. A vast critical literature has been generated by this essay, but I am unaware of any mention of the textual ironies which preface it. With what seems an undue reverence for the tainted text printed by Wimsatt and Beardsley, the epigraph has been reproduced in reprint after reprint with exceptional fidelity, its errors resistant to any further reworking of a classic moment of mis-statement, resistant even to the force of the argument which follows it. It is now incorporate with Congreve's history and with that of our own time.

Yet if the fine detail of typography and layout, the material signs which constitute a text, do signify in the ways I have tried to suggest, it must follow that any history of the book – subject as books are to typographic and material change – must be a history of misreadings. This is not so strange as it might sound. Every society rewrites its past, every reader rewrites its texts, and, if they have any continuing life at all, at some point every printer redesigns them. The changes in the way Congreve's text was printed as an epigraph were themselves designed to correct a late Victorian printing style which had come to seem too fussily expressive. In 1946, 'good printing' had a clean, clear, impersonal surface. It left the text to speak for itself.

This newly preferred form of printing had conspired with shifts in critical opinion. Eliot's theory of the impersonality of the poet affected to dissociate the writer from his text. The words on the page became what Wimsatt called a 'verbal icon', a free-standing artefact with its own inner coherence, what Cleanth Brooks was to call (as it happens) a '*well-*

wrought Urn, a structure complete in itself which had within it all the linguistic signs we needed for the contemplation of its meaning.

The unprecedented rise of English studies and the decline of classics made quite new demands of teachers of literature. At one level, the critical analysis of prescribed texts was an efficient way to teach reading from what was irreducibly common to a class, the text itself laid out on the page in a kind of lapidary state. At another level, it brought into sharper focus than ever before the fact that different readers brought the text to life in different ways. If a poem *is* only what its individual readers make it in their activity of constructing meaning from it, then a good poem will be one which most compels its own destruction in the service of its readers' new constructions. When the specification of meaning is one with its discovery in the critical practice of writing, the generative force of texts is most active. In that context, the misreading of Congreve in 1946 may be seen as almost a matter of historical necessity, an interesting document itself in the nature of reading and the history of the book.

And it *is* a physical document. We can date it; we can read it; we can locate it in the context of *The Sewanee Review* and the interests of its readers; we can interpret it reasonably according to the propositional intentions of the anti-intentionalist essay which lies beneath it. It is, I hope, unnecessary to multiply instances. This scrap of prologue, this fragment of text, raises most of the issues we need to address as we think about books as texts which have been given a particular physical form.

But as a dramatic text, it was originally written to be spoken, and so other questions arise. Can we hear the voice of the actor Thomas Betterton conveying orally the ironies we now read visually? Congreve's autograph letters show no concern for the niceties I suggested in the form of the epigraph. Am I therefore reading an interpretation of Congreve's meaning by his printer, John Watts? Is Watts merely following a general set of conventions imposed at this time, with or without Congreve's assent, by Congreve's publisher, Jacob Tonson? Who, in short, 'authored' Congreve? Whose concept of the reader do these forms of the text imply: the author's, the actor's, the printer's, or the publisher's? And what of the reader? Is a knowledge of Jonson, Betterton, Congreve, Watts, and Tonson a necessary condition of a 'true' reading? Does my own reading betray a personal need to prove that a technical interest in books *and* in the teaching of texts, is not radically disjunctive, that bibliographical scholarship and criticism are in fact one? Visited by such questions, an author disperses into his collaborators, those who produced his texts and their meanings.

If we turn to the 1946 epigraph, similar questions insist on an answer. Does its removal from context entirely free it from irony? Do the slight changes of form alter the substance? Are they no more than a case of careless printing in a new convention? But the crucial questions for a history of reading, and the re-writing of texts, are these: did the intentions of these two authors (something extrinsic to their text) lead them to create from Congreve's lines a pre-text for their own writing; and, if so, did they do it consciously, unconsciously, or accidentally?

To venture into distinctions between conscious and unconscious intentions would be to enter upon troubled waters indeed. The probable answer is, I fear, banal, but as an illustration of the vagaries of textual transmission it should be given. The anthology of plays edited by Nettleton and Case, from which Wimsatt would almost certainly have taught, includes *The Way of the World*, the prologue to which in that edition inexplicably reads 'wrote' for '*wrought*'. We must therefore, I think, relieve Wimsatt and Beardsley of immediate responsibility, and we should certainly free them from any suggestion of deliberate contamination. But I wonder if they would have ventured to choose the lines had they been more carefully edited.¹³

The case, however, is not altered. If we think of the physical construction of Congreve's text in the quarto of 1700 or the octavo edition of 1710, and its physical re-presentation in 1946, then at least we begin by seeing two simple facts. One gives us the historical perspective of an author directing one set of meanings in a transaction with his contemporaries. The other gives us an equally historical perspective of two readers creating a reverse set of meanings for an academic – indeed, a scholarly – readership whose interests in the text were different. Each perspective can be studied distinctively in the signs of the text as printed. Those signs range in significance from the trivial to the serious, but far from importing the author's irrelevance, they take us back to human motive and intention. In Congreve's case, they reveal a man of compassion whose scenes record the human struggle they spring from as the very condition of his writing.

In one sense at least, little has changed in critical theory since 1946. New Critical formalism and structuralism on the one hand, post-structuralism and deconstruction on the other, all share the same scepticism about recovering the past. One of the most impressive objections to this critical self-absorption, to the point of excluding a concern for the complexities of human agency in the production of texts, is Edward Said's *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. I can only agree with his judgement

that 'As it is practised in the American academy today, literary theory has for the most part isolated textuality from the circumstances, the events, the physical senses that made it possible and render it intelligible as the result of human work'.¹⁴ Commenting upon Said in his own book, *Textual Power*, Robert Scholes pursued the point: 'At the present time there are two major positions that can be taken with respect to this problem, and . . . it is extremely difficult to combine them or find any middle ground between them'.¹⁵ Scholes described those two positions as the hermetic and the secular. To return now to my larger theme: Greg's definition of what bibliography is would have it entirely hermetic. By admitting history, we make it secular. The two positions are not entirely opposed, for books themselves are the middle ground. It is one that bibliographers have long since explored, mapped, and tilled. Their descriptive methods far surpass other applications of semiotics as a science of signs. In the ubiquity and variety of its evidence, bibliography as a sociology of texts has an unrivalled power to resurrect authors in their own time, and their readers at any time. It enables what Michel Foucault called 'an insurrection of subjugated knowledges'.¹⁶ One of its greatest strengths is the access it gives to social motives: by dealing with the facts of transmission and the material evidence of reception, it can make discoveries as distinct from inventing meanings. In focussing on the primary object, the text as a recorded form, it defines our common point of departure for any historical or critical enterprise. By abandoning the notion of degressive bibliography and recording *all* subsequent versions, bibliography, simply by its own comprehensive logic, its indiscriminate inclusiveness, testifies to the fact that new readers of course make new texts, and that their new meanings are a function of their new forms. The claim then is no longer for their truth as one might seek to define that by an authorial intention, but for their testimony as defined by their historical use. There was a year 1710 in which Tonson published Congreve's *Works*, and there was a year 1946 in which some lines from the prologue to *The Way of the World* were quoted in *The Sewanee Review*. Wimsatt and Beardsley might be wrong from Congreve's point of view, but, given their published text, they indubitably *are*, and it is a very simple bibliographical function to record and to show their reading – indeed, in the interests of a history of cultural change, to show it up.

Reviewing Scholes in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Tzvetan Todorov gave a blunt appraisal of the relation of the then American literary scene to the traditions of western humanism: 'If we wish to call a spade a spade,

we must conclude that the dominant tendency of American criticism is anti-humanism'.¹⁷ Bibliography has a massive authority with which to correct that tendency. It can, in short, show the human presence in any recorded text.¹⁸

Notes

¹ 'Bibliography – an Apologia', in *Collected Papers*, ed. J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 247; published originally in *The Library*, 4th series, 13 (1932), 113–43.

² Ross Atkinson, 'An Application of Semiotics to the Definition of Bibliography', *Studies in Bibliography* (SB) 33 (1980), 54–73.

³ *Bibliography and Textual Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 41; cited by Atkinson, p. 63.

⁴ 'Bibliography and Science', SB 27 (1974), 88.

⁵ Principally in 'Bibliography, Pure Bibliography, and Literary Studies', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 47 (1952), 186–208; also in 'Bibliography', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), III, 588–92.

⁶ Atkinson, p. 64.

⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, III, 588.

⁸ Nicolas Barker, 'Typography and the Meaning of Words', *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. G. Barber and B. Fabian, *Wolfenbütteler Schriften zur Geschichte des Buchwesens* 4 (Hamburg, 1981), pp. 126–65; D. F. Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Giles Barber, 'Voltaire et la présentation typographique de *Candide*', *Trasmissione dei Testi a Stampa nel Periodo Moderno I* (Seminario Internazionale, Rome 1985), 151–69; Roger Laufer, 'L'Énonciation typographique au dix-huitième siècle', *ibid.*, 113–23; 'L'Espace visuel du livre ancien', *Revue Française d'Histoire du Livre* 16 (1977), 569–81; 'L'Esprit de la lettre', *Le Débat* 22 (November 1982), 147–59; see also Barbara R. Woshinsky, 'La Bruyère's *Caractères*: A Typographical Reading', *TEXT: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 2 (1985), 209–28. Those examples from the past, implying a consciousness of the non-verbal resources of book forms to enhance and convey meaning, may be paralleled with others from current research into text design. A useful summary is James Hartley, 'Current Research on Text Design', *Scholarly Publishing* 16 (1985), 355–68; see also James Hartley and Peter Burnhill, 'Explorations in Space: A Critique of the Typography of BPS Publications', *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society* 29 (1976), 97–107.

⁹ For an excellent example, see Michael Camille, 'The Book of Signs: Writing and Visual Difference in Gothic Manuscript Illumination', *Word & Image* I, no. 2 (April–June 1985), 133–48.

¹⁰ *The Sewanee Review* 54 (Summer, 1946), 468–88; subsequently collected in *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).

¹¹ Ben Jonson, *The New Inne*, epilogue, ll. 1–2.

¹² 'Ode to himselfe', ll. 7–10.

¹³ I am indebted to Professor Albert Braunmuller for suggesting the probable source of the error. In fairness to Wimsatt and Beardsley, whose matching essay, 'The Subjective Fallacy', warns against readings uncontrolled by the formal limits of the words on the

page, it should be said that they might well have welcomed and accepted as constituting a more acceptable text the lines as originally printed.

¹⁴ *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 4.

¹⁵ *Textual Power* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 75.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures: Lecture One: 7 January 1976', in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–77*, ed. Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p. 81.

¹⁷ 'Against all Humanity', *Times Literary Supplement* (4 October 1985), p. 1094.

¹⁸ A variant photo-construction by Nicholas Wade may also be found in his *Visual Al-lusions: Pictures of Perception* (Hove and London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), p. 124, where it forms part of an extended discussion of literal portraits.

FORMS

PETER L. SHILLINGSBURG

In this essay Shillingsburg argues that various desired ends for editorial work, combined with various views of the nature of textual evidence lead to several incompatible methods for editing. Serving one view entails sacrifice of another. Editors may try to justify their particular method as the one right way, but in fact each has an internal logic to support it. A reverence for historical documents might prevent emendation; valuing the author's input over that of other agents of textual change might lead to extensive emendation or restoration; valuing the social interaction or economies of publishing might lead to acceptance of intervention by the original editors but not by the scholarly editor. An editor striving for the best possible version of a work might bring to bear aesthetic standards which neither the author nor original production personnel would recognize. The question of editorial legitimacy boils down to the criteria used to establish what is meant by textual authority. About that there is disagreement in the editorial field. EDD.

In questo saggio Shillingsburg sostiene che l'unione di differenti scopi del lavoro editoriale e di differenti punti di vista sulla natura del testo porta a differenti metodi di critica del testo, incompatibili fra loro. Assecondare la prima prospettiva significa sacrificare la seconda. E, per quanto gli editori critici possano giustificare il loro particolare metodo ecdotico come l'unico corretto, è evidente che *ogni* metodo ha una sua logica interna a sostenerlo. Il rispetto della documentazione storica può inibire un atteggiamento eccessivamente interventista; una sopravvalutazione dell'intervento dell'autore rispetto a quello di altri agenti esterni cui si devono le modifiche testuali può condurre, al contrario, a un eccesso di emendazione o restauro del testo; la considerazione dell'interazione con l'ambiente sociale o delle ragioni economiche editoriali può portare ad accettare gli interventi dei primi curatori delle opere, ma non dei

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moderni editori critici. Il filologo che mira a fornire la migliore versione possibile di un'opera potrebbe finire per operare in base a criteri estetici che né l'autore, né l'editoria coeva avrebbero considerato accettabili. Il problema della legittimità degli interventi editoriali si riduce quindi a quello dei criteri usati per stabilire che cosa si intende per autorità testuale; un concetto intorno al quale non vi è ancora un'opinione comune nel campo della pratica ecdotica.

Editing is, above all else, a matter of forms. The content, the substance, the meaning of the work of art, has been usually thought of as the preserve of authors and of critical interpreters. But the forms, the details of presentation, are often thought to be the responsibility of editors. This distinction is basic to W. W. Greg's influential rationale of copy-text. Greg sees the authority for "accidentals" as existing independently from the authority for "substantives."

Forms are patterns. Violations of form are recognized as such because they break a pattern. Literary works of art exist in language, the patterns of which are extremely complex and allow for tremendous variation. Editors have traditionally recognized the need to train themselves in philology, grammar, orthography, paleography, generic forms, and other areas, in order to be prepared to recognize the difference between a variation and a violation in form. They are also prepared to accept as tolerable apparent violations of recognized forms if they find evidence to indicate that these were deliberate. For example, editors used routinely to alter "Mne" in Blake's *The Book of Thel* to "the" in the phrase "The daughters of Mne Seraphim." But recently editors have argued for the retention of "Mne" on the grounds that it was clearly and deliberately put there by Blake when he engraved the plate from which it was printed.¹ On the other hand, the sentence in *Vanity Fair* describing what the auctioneer at the Sedley auction did, when Dobbin denied having made a bid on Becky Sharp's drawing of Jos on an elephant, contains what everyone would recognize as an error, though no one has provided a really satisfactory correction. The text says that the auctioneer "repeated his discomposure." The best emendation offered is that he "respected his discomposure," but no one tries to justify "repeated" since there is no evidence, as in Blake's case, that it was deliberate.

Critics and editors have been quick to recognize and to try to serve the demands of a great many formal orientations. But when these conflict, priorities emerge whereby some forms are valued over others, some formal orientations prevail over others. Since the tastes and values of the editor help determine these priorities, disagreements among editors and critics over how a text should be edited seem inevitable.

By formal orientation I mean a perspective on forms which leads to the

selection of one set of formal requirements over another. Often this selection derives from value judgments about what the particular edition in question should provide as the material upon which to exercise literary criticism (i.e., what the “authoritative” text is). The major formal orientations are historical, aesthetic, authorial, and sociological. Each of these general orientations has subdivisions which I shall explore only far enough to establish the category and to demonstrate its capacity for internal division. The effect on the readings preserved in an edition will be seen to derive, to a large extent, from the priority given to these orientations by the editor. The formal orientation either reveals where the editor has located “authority” or governs where he will locate it. It is difficult to tell which comes first.

The *historical* orientation, as its name implies, places a high value on the chronology of forms. Without necessarily valuing early forms over later ones, the historical orientation frowns on the mixture of historically discrete texts. The historical orientation is used to support diverse editorial principles. Some editors would insist that the integrity of each historical document be maintained. They tend to support microfilm projects and facsimile editions. Emendations of errors in a document may be tolerated, but attempts to create a text with the best elements from two historically distinct documents is considered unhistorical—a violation by the editor of the historical form. Some editors with a strong historical orientation, however, do not accept this narrow documentary historicism.

Some editors would purge a historical document of forms introduced “nonauthoritatively” and restore the forms that would have existed in the historical document had it not been for the “nonauthoritative” agency. The result is something of a correction of history. The C. S. Peirce edition, for example, while not governed strictly by the historical orientation, adopted the word “reinstate” for emendations that restore forms predating the copy-text.² Similarly, many followers of Greg and Bowers consider that they follow historical principles when they produce an edition of an author’s “final intentions.” Likewise, followers of Thorpe, Gaskell, and McGann appeal to historical integrity when they insist on the “actualizing” agency of publication. Editors consider themselves historians when they trace the history of composition and textual transmission and when they prepare historical collations.

All deliberate violations of documentary historical forms (including those by Bowers and McGann) are supported by appeals to a competing formal orientation which is seen to take priority over the historical, even if only in some limited way. For example, when a text is judged to be inappropriate in its historical form for reproduction, as when Jerome Mc-

Gann opines that a transcript of a Thomas Wolfe novel from the manuscript would not be a novel but would in fact present Wolfe's work "in a light that never was on land or sea,"³ he is invoking a nonhistorical formal orientation. While at first it may appear that he is appealing to a generic formal orientation (they would not be novels), he is in fact appealing to a sociological orientation (all Wolfe's other novels are known as they were produced by the drastic and necessary mediation of an editor and publisher). I remember, too, an editor commenting to me on Peter Shaw's plea for an edition of Emerson's journals "just as he left them."⁴ This editor suggested disdainfully that Shaw simply order up a set of microfilms—indicating that Shaw's request was hopelessly naive. While most scholarly editors have a genuine respect for historical documents, and though all "scholarly editors" appeal to "historical principles," few are strictly governed by the historical orientation.

In fact, most of the other formal orientations used in scholarly editing are appealed to in order to "correct" historical forms. Insofar as editorial work is designed to eliminate errors and "textual corruption," its purpose is to mitigate the "ravages" or the "accidents" of history.

Authority, for the historical orientation, usually resides in the historical document, warts and all.

The *aesthetic* orientation is, in some ways, the least "historical" alternative. This may explain why scholarly editors seldom appeal overtly to it as an editorial principle.⁵ One of the older jokes in editing circles is the definition of the aesthetic principle: to search out those words that the editor either does not understand or does not like and replace them with words which he does. Nonetheless, a great many emendations are made on the basis of an aesthetic orientation. Editors generally appeal to it when they declare their objective to be the preparation of the "best" text of a work. Commercial editors, literary agents, and other merchandisers of literary works unashamedly adopt the aesthetic orientation when they "improve" the work of their authors. Aesthetics being primarily a matter of taste, of course, it is possible to label any editor's aesthetic orientation in any number of ways—some are crassly commercial, some are coterie eccentrics, and so on. The point is merely that an editorial concern for the "best" text is always an appeal to an aesthetic orientation toward forms.

Scholarly editors who appeal to this orientation usually restrict their selection of forms to those already existing in historical documents, though most will provide nonhistorical forms in the place of readings which they consider to be erroneous in all surviving texts. Bowers tried hard to exercise this orientation within respectably defined limits when,

in editing Stephen Crane's works, he produced eclectic texts, selecting from among the alterations the "artistic" revisions but rejecting the "nonartistic" ones imposed by the publisher.

Aesthetic forms or patterns used by scholarly editors can be divided into many categories. Stylistic strategies, generic forms, "accidental" conventions, and "consistency" are a few. Whenever an editor defends his emendation of a historical document by reference to the generic form to which the text belongs (be it sonnet, villanelle, short story, or play), he is giving an aesthetic orientation precedence over the strictly historical. The violation of the generic pattern reveals for him a mistake in the historical document. Likewise, appeals to the needs of modern readers for language that follows the conventions to which those readers are accustomed are a preference for currently aesthetic over historical forms. When an editor makes alterations which he defends as being more consistent than the source text forms, he is imposing an aesthetic over a historical form.

Authority for the aesthetic orientation resides in a concept of *artistic* forms—either the author's, the editor's, or those fashionable at some time. Before proceeding to a discussion of the authorial and sociological orientations, an example here might clarify these general remarks on the historical and aesthetic. W. M. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* survives in various historical forms. There is a manuscript for chapters 1-5 and 8-13; two manuscripts for chapter 6, one of which is augmented by proofslips from a now otherwise lost typesetting of the first manuscript. The first edition, published in monthly installments, represents a second typesetting for number one, but an original typesetting for the rest of the book. The first edition went through six printings which reveal about 350 alterations of text. Editions set from the first edition appeared in New York and Leipzig immediately after the London publication. A revised edition appeared in London five years after the first.

An editor following a historical orientation might decide to reprint the first edition on the grounds that it is the first document to exist in complete form, or he might choose the revised edition on the grounds that it was the source text for the greatest number of editions of the book, hence the most significant historically. He might then provide a facsimile of the manuscripts and fragments of proof as a documentary history of the text. Or these readings might be provided in a historical collation. The historical editor will not care what the author intended or whether one text has more authoritative accidentals while another has more authoritative substantives. He is interested in documents, in relics from the past, and he wishes to treat them as unities.

An editor following an aesthetic orientation might also decide to represent the text of the first edition or the revised edition, but the grounds for his choice would be different. Rather than say it is the first historical document or the most influential one, the aesthetically oriented editor might say that the conventions of punctuation are most consistently carried out in the printed text, or that the manuscript is “unfinished” because its punctuation is incomplete and erratic. Furthermore, the aesthetician might point out, the first edition contains revisions (improvements) not represented by the manuscript. The editor might reinstate manuscript readings that are, in his view, superior to printed forms, on the grounds that the production process was faulty, resulting in the inferior forms. Likewise, he might mine the revised edition for “improved” forms which would have, or at least should have, been incorporated in the earlier text but were not noticed and improved in time. The choice of copy-text and the emendations made can be seen to result from an aesthetic preference for certain forms over historical forms.

Both the *authorial* and the *sociological* orientations are more “historical” than the aesthetic. The authorial orientation usually leads to the selection of authorial forms over nonauthorial forms. The authorial orientation is probably the most important in our time, though it has been under challenge in critical circles for years. Most editorial principles which discuss authorial intentions, whether “original” or “final,” reveal an authorial orientation. Phrases such as “the text the author wanted his readers to have,” “the author’s final intentions,” his “artistic intentions,” “the product of the creative process,” or even “what the author did” reveal an authorial orientation.

Authority for the authorial orientation resides with the author, though editors do not agree on what that means.

Some representatives of the *sociological* orientation seem to adopt the authorial orientation, for they, too, speak of “the text the author wanted his public to have.” But when they say these words, they mean that authors do not usually want the public to read a manuscript and therefore willingly enter into working agreements with publishers and editors—indeed some employ wives, mistresses, and secretaries to help transform manuscripts into published forms for the public. In his edition of Oliver Goldsmith’s *Poems and Plays*, Tom Davis notes that in the absence of a manuscript the printed copy-text for a Goldsmith poem preserves (1) some of Goldsmith’s light punctuation (which he finds fortunate); (2) some of Goldsmith’s errors not caught and corrected by the compositor of the first edition (which he finds unfortunate); (3) much of the compositor’s heavy

punctuation (which he finds a mixed blessing because it corrects the faults in Goldsmith's punctuation and obscures the finesse of his light punctuation); and (4) all the compositor's errors (which he finds unfortunate).⁶ In short, he wants some of Goldsmith's light punctuation, but he is unwilling to reject all the compositor's work simply because the manuscript forms are inadequate. And so he accepts some of the compositor's work and rejects the rest, but he does not go beyond the simple distinction between light and heavy punctuation to defend or explain his procedure.⁷

The sociological orientation is revealed when the help given the author is noted as a social phenomenon, of interest and importance in itself, which is integral to the creative process. Social institutions, and perhaps the historical fact of collaborative production of literary works, take precedence over the author. Apologists for this orientation cite examples of works by more than one author or by "lost" authors of whom we can know nothing and of works that lie unfinished and for which it can be said the author never expressed or revealed "what he wanted his public to have." These examples are given to illustrate the difficulty of applying an authorial orientation in particular instances. The historical orientation is not a sufficient editorial principle, the sociologist insists, because unfinished works require the "actualizing" agency of publishing that the author would have initiated had the work been finished.

Authority for the sociological orientation resides in the institutional unit of author *and* publisher. To return to the example of *Vanity Fair*, an editor following an aesthetic orientation might draw from all surviving historical documents the best text—perhaps even the text he thinks Thackeray would have thought to be the best text (authorial and aesthetic). A sociological orientation would lead one to choose a published text, perhaps even the revised edition, as copy-text because it has passed through the normal social process of becoming a printed work. An authorial orientation would lead to the choice of the manuscript as copy-text where it exists and of the first edition where there is no manuscript. One of several emendation processes would then be followed to produce a text incorporating some stage of authorial forms but devoid of errors and of unnecessary nonauthorial intervention. The end product would be said to conform to the author's original intentions, to his final intentions, or to some concept of what the author is thought to have wanted or expected.

Another way to look at these orientations, a way that may help us to see why they appeal to some editors but not to others, is to note the way they divide or unify the idea of authority. By locating authority in the documents, the historical orientation allows one to unify texts materially or

physically. A historically interesting document presents a text. An editor may not violate that text's integrity except to correct its nonsignificant or meaningless elements. Historical editors have a range of views about what are nonsignificant textual elements: some respect typographical or scribal errors, some correct spelling, some render punctuation conventionally, or at least consistently, some alter paragraphing. Editors form images of readers whom they wish to serve, and it is the editor's concept of the reader's critical approach which helps him determine what parts of the text are nonsignificant and therefore should be rendered smooth or unobtrusive. Regardless of the extent to which the historical editor "edits" his text, his view of authority for any one text is monolithic. Variant texts have their own historical integrity. Historical editors do not produce eclectic texts. Similarly, sociological editing tends to locate authority in single texts. While recognizing that in the production of a collaborative social phenomenon not all contributions to the work are of equal quality, the sociological editor tends to look for the text representing either the best-coordinated social effort of book production (the author in symbiotic relation with publisher and editor) or the most significant source text for the social impact or reputation of the work—the text that made the work famous. When there is more than one such text for a work, the historical inclinations of the sociological editor will lead him to desire two or more texts, each having its authority in the social event that produced it or in the social event it caused. Sociological editors, like historical editors, will not violate the social event the text represents. In its purest form, this orientation requires texts as produced, warts and all, though like the historians, some sociologists are willing, perhaps for the sake of art, to edit what they consider to be the *nonsignificant* elements of the text. The significant elements, which they will not emend, include not only the words and their order but the forms imposed deliberately by the social contract of book production. Hence, publishers' house-styling of punctuation, for example, may be valued rather than lamented, and the editor may feel impelled to carry out more stringently a styling that was imperfectly imposed by the publishing process. But like historians, sociologists do not produce eclectic texts.

Both the authorial and the aesthetic orientations allow the production of eclectic texts because the concept of authority in each is a divided one—though on different grounds. Editors pursuing authorial forms of the text locate the authority in the author and find his work preserved in holographs and in documents he has proofread. Since what the sociologists call the publishing institution is usually seen by the authorial editor as outside intervention (necessary perhaps, but evil nonetheless),

printed documents have a high probability of containing nonauthorial forms to be edited out. The authorial editor finds evidence of authorial work preserved in various texts, and his duty is to construct a purified authorial text. Greg's rationale for copy-text is founded squarely on splitting authority for accidental forms from authority for substantives.

Because he locates authority in the author rather than in a document, the authorial editor will usually produce an eclectic text when there is more than one authoritative source text. Authorial editors usually conceive of readers as persons wanting to know what the author wrote. The differences among authorial editors about what the text shall be result from the different ways they think of authors exercising their rights over the text, as I explained earlier—some granting the author the right as long as he lives, others seeing the right terminated when the creative impulse cools, others granting partial or qualified authority to the author for all time, still others seeing authority, as I tend to want to, as progressing in defined stages through composition and revision.

Editors appealing to the aesthetic orientation also divide authority in several ways. Usually, they divide it between the author and themselves, but sometimes they will find in the production process another editor or adviser with whom to share the right to influence the text. From the historical texts the aesthetic editor will select the forms he thinks the author wanted and accepted or should have wanted and accepted. Depending on how much the editor respects historical forms, he will adhere to or alter the text, appealing to what he thinks the author's aesthetic principles were, or what he wishes they had been, to correct textual "infelicities." The result is always a critical eclectic text.

The historians and sociologists frown on the authorial and aesthetic editors for violating historical documents, or failing to accept actual social phenomena. The authorial and aesthetic editors fail to see the value of maintaining the integrity of historical or social texts that are corrupt or impure. These editorial positions are all internally coherent and viable, but no single text will satisfy the needs of all four.

I have described these orientations as though they were discrete and mutually exclusive, but in fact many textual editors are influenced by more than one and choose copy-texts and make emendations by reference to a mixture of these influences. Often the particular circumstances surrounding a textual problem will themselves indicate the relative importance of the various orientations. Having chosen the most appropriate orientation for the editing of a particular text, it is possible to prepare an apparatus that will make the edition useful to persons wishing that another orientation had been employed. [...]

It might be worth remarking that fierce editorial debates between partisans of these basic positions have been waged for years outside the ken of the formalists, structuralists, semioticians, poststructuralists, deconstructionists, and reader response theoreticians who seem to wage their own debates with equal intensity over cheap reprints or scholarly editions. But while that may seem to suffice for structuralists busily sweeping away textual surfaces, it is clear that semiotic and reader response critics may profit from knowing what editors, who have traced composition, text transmission, and relations between publishers and authors, can tell us about the context that an author brings to utterance in the act of creating a work of art. Clearly it makes a difference not only what particular text we are responding to but what we know about the creation and provenance of that text. Consequently, it is not enough for any editor or critic, regardless of orientation, to think of the scholarly edition he is using as “the right text” for critical study. He must understand the principles and orientation of the editor producing it. And yet it seems in practice that every editor, regardless of his orientation, is bent on producing the “right” text for scholarly use. As diverse as the aims of each orientation seem to be, all except the historical orientation have in common a basic, questionable, assumption about works of art: that the end product of composition can and should be one text representing what the author wanted or what he should have wanted. There are exceptions, of course, as I have already noted, but they are thought of as exceptions, oddities, out of the normal run of things.

Notes

¹ See *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, David V. Erdman, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 3, 790. Note the lingering disagreement evident in Harold Bloom’s commentary in the same edition, p. 895.

² Max H. Fisch, Lynn Ziegler, et al., eds., *The Writings of C. S. Peirce* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

³ Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 79.

⁴ “The American Heritage and Its Guardians,” *American Scholar* 45 (1975-76): 751.

⁵ See, however, James Thorpe’s “The Aesthetics of Textual Criticism” in his *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1972).

⁶ Tom Davis, ed., Oliver Goldsmith’s *Poems and Plays* (London: Dent, 1975), p. 239.

⁷ Davis does, however, make an extremely useful distinction between routine, house-keeping punctuation and significant, meaning-indicator punctuation in a review of editions formally approved by the Center for Editions of American Authors in *The Library* 32 (1977): 66-68.

THE TEXT AS PROCESS AND THE PROBLEM OF INTENTIONALITY

HANS WALTER GABLER

At a time in the history of scholarly editing in the twentieth century when «authorial intention» was still, under Anglo-American principles of editorial scholarship, a load-star for the realizing of critical editions, this essay set out to critique the implications of the intentional stance. It endeavoured to show that invoking intention, if valid at all for reaching editorial decisions and arriving at critically edited texts, could claim a theoretical foot-hold only in a conception of the closed and determinate text. A stance in theory recognizing and defining texts as open and indeterminate, by contrast, would needs also foreground texts as by nature processual. In the processes of realizing and modifying texts, «intentions» as expressed in variation and revision will form strings of authors' readings of successive validity. If and when scholarly editing takes its guidance from the processual variability of texts, «authorial intention is [seen to be no longer] a metaphysical notion to be fulfilled but a textual force to be studied». How such an approach to the forming of scholarly editions might prove to support their critical function is indicated by sketches of examples from texts by Bertolt Brecht and Ezra Pound. EDD.

Per lungo tempo, nella storia delle edizioni critiche del XX secolo, la «volontà dell'autore» è stata considerata, grazie all'influenza dei principi editoriali della scuola anglo-americana, un punto di riferimento nella realizzazione di edizioni critiche. Questo saggio, al contrario, critica le posizioni fondate sull'intenzionalità e le loro implicazioni cercando di dimostrare come la tanto invocata «volontà», ammesso e non concesso che possa servire a decisioni editoriali per giungere a testi editi criticamente, potrebbe rivendicare una base teorica solo in riferimento a testi «chiusi» e «fermi». Al contrario, il riconoscimento e la definizione di testi aperti e non fissati porterebbe in primo piano il fatto che i testi sono per loro natura elementi in continua trasformazione. Proprio nel processo di realizzazione e modifica dei testi, le «intenzioni» sono rappresentate dal numero di va-

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riazioni e revisioni che formano una serie di lezioni d'autore tutte dotate di una loro validità. Se e quando le edizioni critiche assumono come principio-guida la variabilità dei testi nel loro farsi, «la volontà dell'autore non è più considerata una nozione metafisica cui ottemperare, ma una forza testuale da studiare». Alcuni esempi tratti da testi di Bertolt Brecht ed Ezra Pound mostrano come tale approccio nella realizzazione delle edizioni critiche possa arricchire la loro più generale funzione di interpretazione critica del testo stesso.

For well over a decade now, I believe, we have seen a productive process of critical reorientation of editing. This has been a reorientation towards the foundations of textual studies and editorial practice in criticism, and a critical—or meta-critical—reflection on the definable—or perhaps not always so easily definable—concepts of 'work,' 'author,' 'text' or 'intention' in their implications for the pragmatic operations of our discipline, and their results. Seen as problematical, these concepts have gained in critical contour, although the complexity in which they stand revealed as relevant to textual analysis and editing has not necessarily made them easier to handle—and not at all easy to handle, it would seem, within the framework of the conventional model of the critical edition, hierarchically structured and designed, on a copy-text basis, to establish a stable reading text of unquestioned privilege. Hitherto, this model has been least affected by the process of critical reorientation, understandably so, for its assumed inviolability has provided the heuristic stepping-stone in the restructuring of the conceptual background of critical editing that we have been engaged in. Yet the point may now have been reached when our conceptions of the nature, the aims, and the potential of a critical edition, as well as those of the functional relationship of edition and editor, come into question. In this context, I venture to offer some reflections on the text as process and the problem of authorial intention.

Jerome McGann's *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* of 1983, as we are all aware, is quite specifically a critique of the high functional role assigned to 'authorial intention' and 'final authorial intention' in current Anglo-American textual thinking.¹ Recognising that role as a post-Greg ramification of the methodology erected on the foundations of Sir Walter Greg's "Rationale of Copy-Text," McGann insists on severing again the connection, meanwhile fairly ingrained, between Greg's reasoned recommendations of how, in the face of divergent textual materials, to arrive pragmatically at editorial decisions, and the subsequently-positd ideal of the critical edition as the global fulfillment of an author's intention. Thomas Tanselle, in his 1976 essay in *Studies in Bibliography* entitled "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention," assumes a general agree-

ment on this ideal.² “Scholarly editors may disagree about many things,” he opens his essay, “but they are in general agreement that their goal is to discover exactly what an author wrote and to determine what form of his work he wished the public to have.” The statement falls into two parts. Following McGann’s cue, we may consider that the second part “. . . and to determine what form of his work [the author] wished the public to have,” if it means “to determine what form of his work, *so as to establish it as the critically edited text*, the author wished the public to have,” does not follow inevitably from the first. Observance of the public form of the work and the intentionality implied in the act of publication carry considerable weight with McGann and Tanselle as, perhaps, with most theorists in the field. Implied in my subsequent argument is the contention that the published form of a work need not categorically be an editor’s main, and overriding, point of orientation. Under given conditions, rather, a critical edition *qua* critical edition may legitimately claim the privilege of bringing into focus a form or forms of the work not attained in publication.

My immediate point of departure, however, is the first part of Tanselle’s statement. Holding that the goal of editors is “to discover exactly what the authors wrote,” it addresses the editorial problem of establishing a text in every single and individual detail. Specifically, it would seem, ‘to discover exactly what the author wrote’ involves considering intention when what the author wrote in fact needs to be discovered because it is not evident, that is, when what he wrote is not at all, or at best mediately, documented. This, clearly enough, marks the point of entry of the notion of authorial intention into the methodological rationale of critical editing as we currently know it. To assess and determine the author’s intention is deemed necessary or desirable, basically, in respect of individual readings. Here, in passing, and unless we hold it an axiom that the whole of a text is merely, and nothing but, the sum of its textual parts, we may well concede to McGann’s critique the point that to raise the notion of authorial intention from such basic application to the level of an overriding editorial principle is, at the very least, fraught with theoretical difficulty.

On the basic level of constitution of critical texts, to assess and determine authorial intention in respect of individual readings may be recognised as a rule of editorial procedure analogous to Greg’s rule of following the copy-text for indifferent readings. For indifferent variants encountered in an editorial situation, follow the copy-text; for invariant, yet suspect readings, follow the author. Thus paired, these rules are designed to avoid or eliminate potential or manifest transmissional error when es-

tablishing a stable critical text from documents that, however manifestly or inferrably corrupt, essentially provide only a single substantive basis.

At a further level, authorial intention is invoked in situations where, according to current editorial practice, two or more substantive bases call for procedures of eclectic editing. What defines each basis as substantive is the manifest or inferred fact of authorial revision. The variants relevant to the act or acts of revision stand opposed no longer as 'erroneous' and 'correct'—that is, 'wrong' and 'right'—but as 'invalid' and 'valid.' Thus it is here that the extended notion of 'final authorial intention' properly comes into play. Yet since the editorial concern remains with 'exactly what the author wrote', the 'final authorial intention,' too, is assessed properly only in respect of individual readings in pairs or series of authorial variants.

It should also be noted, however, that the construing of 'authorial intention' as a common point of perspective seems to overshadow the appreciation of a difference in kind between authorial variants and transmissional errors: the common manner of dealing with authorial variants reveals no fundamental change, even hardly a ripple of adjustment, in editorial thinking and procedure. 'Valid' and 'invalid' become subsumed under the categories 'correct' and 'erroneous' (or 'right' and 'wrong'). In establishing a critical text, the final one among revisional variants is admitted as the right reading because it would—obviously—be wrong to retain its antecedent, thereby annihilating the act of revision. What is near-to-annihilated instead in the established critical edition is the superseded authorial variant, relegated as it is to apparatus lists in footnotes or at the back of the book, together with the bulk of rejected transmissional errors. This mode of editorial procedure is naturally furthered by the circumstance that revisional situations to be dealt with in acts of eclectic editing appear always embedded in surroundings from which the critical text must be established against transmissional corruption. The editorial approach levels out the categories of variants that differ in their nature, and the desired result remains the stable critical text.

An edition that, in providing a stable reading text, relegates superseded authorial variants much as it rejects transmissional errors may in a sense claim to be modelled on the result of an author's endeavour to arrive at the form of the work he wishes the public to have, in a text of 'final authorial intention.' That result is always the result of revision, and revision—from the author's point of view—implies rejection. But authorial rejection cannot be equated with editorial rejection. Authorial revision and rejection spring from willed, and essentially free, choice. Editorial rejection, by contrast, results from critical assessment and is

pre-determined by the textual materials on which the critical sense is exercised. What the editor rejects—what it is an important part of his critical business to reject—are extraneous elements of textual corruption. Under this category, however, authorial rejections—that is, superseded authorial variants witnessing to the authorial acts of writing and the text's development—cannot properly be subsumed. Yet they are tendentially so subsumed in a type of edition that emulates a text of final authorial intention in the form of a stable critical text. It appears, therefore, that the underlying edition model does not answer adequately to the process character of the text under the author's revisional hand.

What the edition model implicitly posits is an editor vicariously assuming an authorial role. This shows as much in his trained focus on a stable text (oftentimes termed an 'ideal text') as it does in his claim to be fulfilling the author's intention. To attempt, in search of a viable alternative edition model, to recast the editor not in an authorial, but in a properly editorial role involves therefore trying to define a specifically editorial perspective on the questions of textual stability and of authorial intention.

A work revised in successive stages signals the author's free intentional choices at any given textual stage, and the aggregate of stages may justifiably be considered to embody his final intentions with regard to the work as a whole. Yet, since the author's choices are in principle free, the aggregate of stages is also always in principle open to further modification through continued revision. This means that the text of a work under the author's hand is in principle unstable. Instability is an essential feature of the text in progress. Nevertheless, the author who is always free to continue to revise is also free by an act of will to close the process of revision, which he does by publishing or otherwise leaving the text. This may appear as an achievement of textual stability by a performative act of final intention. However, the stability achieved—barring transmissional corruption by which it remains threatened—is strictly that of a specific textual version. It does not cancel out the instability of the text in process, which the author can at most set aside, but never undo. Nor can the editor undo it, and, regardless of the author's attitude, he may choose—indeed, he has the freedom—not to set it aside. Since the instability of the text in process is not cancelled out by the final or any other authorial textual version, it can and should not be editorially neglected—though this is what happens in a critical edition hierarchically oriented towards a stable critical text.

Yet textual instability that is an expression of free intentional choice from the authorial angle takes on a different aspect under editorial per-

spective. Whereas for the author the text is open and indeterminate, for the editor it is determinate. Its instability is confined within the complex, yet closed system of the words and signs on paper that convey the author's revisionally stratified text. The author's rejections and revisions are in the nature of events. They leave a record when, though only in so far as, committed to paper. As events they are tied up and ramified in contexts, yet as records they appear particularized and localised as variant readings. The variant records thus do not constitute the authorial acts of rejection and revision themselves. Rather, they represent them as written deeds of textual invalidation and validation. It is these localised written deeds that the editor is confronted with and that he—and the critic to whom he ministers in preparing an edition—must in turn analytically read. The text in the determinate record of its instability falls to the editor therefore not for the fulfillment of its real or assumed teleology, but for the description and analysis of its documentary existence. It is because the record is determinate that it becomes amenable to editorial scrutiny and treatment at all. Yet underlying the text recorded are the intention-guided processes that cause its instability. The process-character of the text is thus ultimately due to the process-nature of authorial intention. Hence authorial intention cannot rightly provide a constitutive basis, statically conceived, for editorial performance. Instead, being the constitutive base of the text (as is implied in the record of willed textual changes), authorial intention, as the dynamic mover of textual processes, requires to be editorially set forth for critical analysis. So viewed, authorial intention is not a metaphysical notion to be fulfilled but a textual force to be studied.

It were a task beyond the scope allowed me today to pass at this point from the general to the specific and to develop in all its relevant features of design an edition model that would answer to the theoretical demand. It is likely, indeed, that no single model would answer, but that, with the shifting of 'authorial intention' from an absolute to a relative position in the theory of editing and, hence, within the conceptual design of a critical edition, one would look to different forms of editorial realisation to present, and be capable of presenting, authorial intention as a textual force to be studied.

I will refer only very summarily to the critical edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses* as an edition realised on the theoretical assumptions I have outlined.³ Its innovative synoptic apparatus notation analysing the genetic progression of the work is designed precisely to lay open the records reflecting the operation of the author's intentions in the making of the text. But it also draws editorial critical conclusions from that operation. As a consequence—and this should not be overlooked—the edition pro-

vides a reading text, extrapolated from and, as it were, merely accompanying the synoptically notated edition text, whose shape and apparent stability are explicitly of editorial critical making. What it makes explicit, however, has always been implicit in the acts of editing. The stability of a critical text conceived and presented wholly as a reading text is equally of editorial making. Hence, too, a critically edited text can never claim to be definitive; indeed, the notion of 'definitiveness' would seem logically incongruous with the precepts of scholarly critical editing.

These realisations may appear daunting, and it might be considered 'safer' in their light not to aim at providing reading texts at all, but instead to define apparatus formats only as properly equivalent to the process-character of texts. This is a concept quite seriously entertained by some theoreticians and practitioners of editing, for example, in Germany.⁴ It emphasises the presentation of textual matter over the critical establishment of text, or texts. If ultimately untenable, in my opinion, for the editing of texts from a multi-document basis ("Textedition"), it is arguably justifiable in the specialised field of "Handschriftenedition," i.e., the editing of manuscripts as manuscripts. Here, in specific editorial situations, presentation may well be given precedence over critical editing, and editorial judgement firmly relegated to apparatus sections devised for the purpose. An extremely interesting case in point has been developed by the Brecht scholar and editor Gerhard Seidel, who in a recent article has offered an apparatus model expressly designed for the study and discussion of Brecht's shifting intention in the course of versions of a poem reacting to the implied political stance taken by the poem's addressee, Karl Kraus, toward the coming into power of the Nazi regime. The salient feature in this apparatus model is a discursive apparatus section explicating the contextual implications of the authorial rejections and revisions as displayed in the sequence of discrete versions—each a text to be read, but none the edition's reading text—that make up the textual section itself of the edition.⁵

The devising of a discursive apparatus section is a telling indication that an edition opening up 'authorial intention' as a subject for study is itself situated at the systematic point of intersection of editing and literary criticism. It is a point of intersection that 'critique génétique,' such as it has been developed in France [...], approaches from the critical angle. Critical discourse and editorial presentation always run close, and are often interdependent. In the extended version on my 1981 STS paper recently published in *TEXT I*,⁶ as you may recall, I develop a critical discourse from the synoptic notation of a passage in *Ulysses* for which I might not have found the critical clues had I not first edited the text. To end my paper today, I

wish, on a mainly descriptive level, to sketch out a ‘critique-génétique’-type of approach to some textual materials for which an editorial presentation format has not yet been developed. The work concerned is Ezra Pound’s *Canto LI*, whose preserved manuscript materials I have quite recently happened to encounter. They permit some fascinating glimpses of authorial intentions in progress.

Two or three segments into the published text, we get involved in a section concerned with fly-fishing. It culminates:

12 of March to 2nd of April
Hen pheasant's feather does for a fly,
green tail, the wings flat on the body
Dark fur from a hare's ear for a body
a green shaded partridge feather
grizzled yellow cock's hackle
green wax; harl from a peacock's tail
bright lower body; about the size of pin
the head should be, can be fished from seven a.m.
till eleven; at which time the brown marsh fly comes on.
As long as the brown continues, no fish will take

Granham

Juxtaposed to it is the next segment beginning:

That hath the light of the doer, as it were
a form cleaving to it.
Deo similis quodam modo
hic intellectus adeptus
Grass; nowhere out of place. Thus speaking in
Königsberg
Zwischen die Volkern erzielt wird
a *modus vivendi*.

A quotation in an approximation of German? and Königsberg? Are we to think of Immanuel Kant? A source note reveals a wholly different point of initial reference:

“Es ist die höchste Zeit, das endlich eine wirkliche Verständigung zwischen den Völkern erzielt wird.

Rudolf Hess, Königsberg
8 July 1934”

In the typed note possibly excerpted from a newspaper report, Pound encircles the opening phrase and emphatically repeats in pencil “Yah es die hochste Zeit ist.” In a draft fragment, the excerpt is raised to the tone of incantation and attracts philosophical reflection:

“O Grass, my uncle, that are nowhere out of place!”
 Es ist die hochste
 Die hochste Zeit das endlich
 Endlich eine Verstandigung
 Zwischen den Volkern erzielt wird. Königsberg July 8
 (anno dodici, Rudolf Hess)

light that is the first form of matter
 that hath the light of the doer,

as a form cleaving to it
 from “possibilis et agens” is the intellect adept,
 est intellectus adeptus compositus
 Deus similis modo, and to know what all desire,
 this is felicity contemplativa.

On several separate sheets of typescript, whose temporal relationship is not readily discernible, variations are played on this collocation of ideas, while on other sheets, and independently, as it seems, the fly-fishing motif is elaborated. In the draft fluidities, then, the two complexes at some point merge, most remarkably so perhaps in the amalgamation achieved in these lines from one draft fragment:

Das Endlich, said Hess, a means of understanding
 together
 shd be found between nations. Toiling over the booty
 Fish to be caught with cunning;
 small or fly
 dry hackle, etc

Here the contextual yoke permits us to recognise a significant transposition to metaphor of the fishing image. The explicit directness is transitory, as the printed version shows. But it holds a clue to the background of intentions and meaning governing the wording as well as the juxtaposition of segments in *Canto LI*. A marginal note added in ink to the incantatory (first?) draft would appear to signal the impulse from which the poem’s meanings changed direction. It reads: “Follows lgty murder

of Dollfuss.” The act of *Realpolitik* perpetrated in late July 1934, by which Nazi Germany callously turned the course of neighbouring Austria’s politics to its own ends, dampens the enthusiasm with which the invocation of an understanding between nations was first greeted. The public phrases stand revealed as baits of oratory cunningly held out to the unwary. Implicit in the work, then, is political meaning, and evident from the fragments of the work’s genesis are the dramatic shifts of intention that control the utterance in the recorded endeavours to infuse such meaning into the poetry.

An edition of Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* is nowhere yet in sight. If and when it is undertaken, it cannot merely aim at establishing a text. It can hope to be an adequate response to the work only if it lays open the text in process as moved into multiple directions and dimensions of meaning by force of developing and shifting authorial intentions.⁷

Notes

¹ Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

² G. Thomas Tanselle, “The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention.” *Studies in Bibliography* (SB), 29 (1976), 167–211.

³ James Joyce, *Ulysses. A Critical and Synoptic Edition*. Prepared by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior. 3 vols. New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984.

⁴ See especially Gunter Martens, “Textdynamik und Edition.” In: Gunter Martens und Hans Zeller (eds.), *Texte und Varianten*. München: C. H. Beck, 1971, pp. 165–201.

⁵ Gerhard Seidel, “Intentionswandel in der Entstehungsgeschichte. Ein Gedicht Bertolt Brechts über Karl Kraus historisch-kritisch ediert.” *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 101 (Sonderheft: *Probleme neugermanistischer Edition*), 1982, 163–188.

⁶ Hans Walter Gabler, “The Synchrony and Diachrony of Texts: Practice and Theory of the Critical Edition of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” *TEXT* 1 (1984 for 1981), 305–326.

⁷ Interest in text processes and their exploration through critical theory are beginning to make it possible to think of editing Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*. A preliminary discussion, though not often very close as yet to the hard, if elusive, textual facts, is gathering momentum. A recent installment is the “Coda” to Jerome J. McGann, “*Ulysses* as a Postmodern Text: The Gabler Edition.” *Criticism*, 27 (1984–85), 283–306. Highly stimulating in its theoretic implications is the monograph by Christine Froula, *To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Pound’s Cantos*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984.

BLAKE'S WORKS AS PERFORMANCES: INTENTIONS AND INATTENTIONS

G.E. BENTLEY, JR.

Classical editing theory presumes that a responsible text of a literary work, with reports of variants, will represent the final intention of the author, based on examination of all surviving drafts and editions. This works well with most compositions in manuscript or printed from movable type. But it does not work well for William Blake's poetry in Illuminated Printing, which was etched, printed, coloured, paginated, stabbed, and sold by Blake and his wife.

In the first place, every page has illustrations which vitally extend the meaning of the work. In the second place, the colouring of every copy is different and significant. In the third place, the order of the prints often varies radically. For *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* there are thirty-two different orders created by Blake.

Individual copies of Blake's literary works are perhaps best thought of as performances, for instance of a symphony, conducted by the composer. Each is deliberate and definitive. How is an editor to cope with this variety? EDD.

In filologia, secondo la teoria editoriale classica, il testo critico di un'opera letteraria provvista di varianti deve presentare l'ultima volontà dell'autore, fondata sull'esame di tutte le edizioni e copie di bozze tramandate. Ciò risulta funzionale a gran parte dei testi manoscritti o stampati con caratteri mobili, ma inadeguato nel processo di edizione delle stampe illustrate delle poesie di William Blake, che erano incise, stampate, dipinte, impaginate, rilegate e vendute direttamente da Blake e da sua moglie.

In primo luogo, ogni pagina ha illustrazioni che ampliano decisamente il significato dell'opera, in secondo luogo, i colori di ogni copia sono diversi e hanno un particolare significato. L'ordine delle stampe, infine, può variare radicalmente. Nei *Canti dell'innocenza e dell'esperienza*, ad esempio, vi sono trentadue diverse serie ideate direttamente da Blake.

TEXT, 4 (1988), pp. 319-41. By permission of the author and the Society for Textual Scholarship. Revised for Paul Eggert (ed.), *Editing in Australia*, Canberra, Australia, University College ADFA, 1990, pp. 169-78.

Le copie dell'opera letteraria di Blake vanno pensate come singole rappresentazioni, alla stessa stregua di una sinfonia diretta dal suo compositore. Ognuna di esse è voluta e definitiva. Come può affrontare questa situazione l'editore critico?

Improvent makes straight roads
but the crooked roads without Improvement
are the roads of Genius.

[*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* pl. 9]

Everyone has read Blake's ferocious poem called "The Tyger" which evokes the blood-thirsty beast's "deadly terrors", "the fire of thine eyes", and the "dread hands and . . . dread feet" of the beast's blacksmith creator. The poem concludes with an evocation of the pitiless power of the beast and of his creator:

When the stars threw down their spears
And waterd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?¹

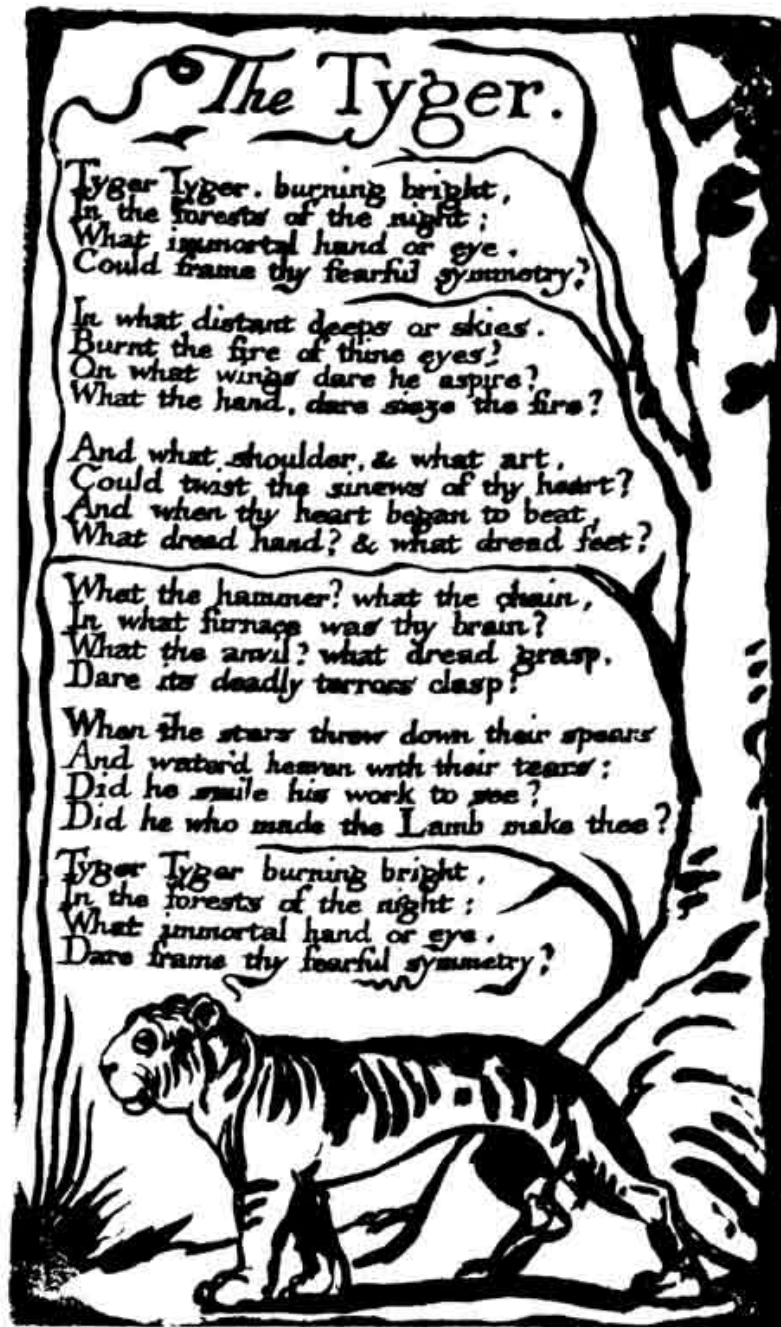
Everyone has heard "The Tyger", but few have seen it (see Plate 1).

Blake's visible tiger is disconcerting to those who know only the "deadly terrors" of the poem. This visible beast has no burning eyes, no sinewy heart, and precious little "fearful symmetry", not to mention no "forests" and no "night". The vision of terror evoked by the poem, the symbiotic relationship between the dreaded creator and the dreadful creature, must be contrasted, complemented, controlled by the smug pussycat of the design, which Blake intended his reader to absorb *before* he has apprehended the poem. The invisibility of Blake's tiger in most texts and to most readers derives from the poverty of modern technology, as compared to the richness of the techniques which Blake invented.

The reader who sees only the words of "The Tyger" is missing a vital element of Blake's creation. Blake is primarily a visual creator, even in his poetry. Indeed, "reading" is an awkward term for the action performed in apprehending Blake's works in Illuminated Printing, for "reading" is

PLATE I

"The Tyger" from *Songs of Experience* (1794) copy (c), Plate 42, 6.3 x 11cm (Mrs. William Drysdale)—notice the deliberate contrast between the "deadly terrors" of the text and the meek beast of the design.



only part of the action required; the reader must also see—and he must see not only the designs which border the poetry but also the shapes of the letters themselves. Blake as an author is unique at least among major English writers in that he performed each part of the work himself. He

conceived both text and design, he etched them on copper which he had prepared himself, he printed the plates, he coloured them with water-colours he had ground himself, he stitched the leaves together, he advertised the books, and he sold them. Each step of the process except the making of the paper was performed by William Blake. For better and for worse, Blake is entirely responsible for the finished work. No compositors or printers or binders or publishers or advertisers affected in any way the form of Blake's original works. If a word is beautiful or misspelled, if it is evocative or ungrammatical, the responsibility is entirely Blake's.

Such an intimate relationship of the author to the finished work would seem to simplify life enormously for his editor. Since Blake printed these works over and over again, a few of them during a period of up to thirty-eight years, we can be confident that he had achieved what he wished. All the editor need do, it would seem, is to reprint Blake's words—and if possible his designs—in the form in which Blake left them.

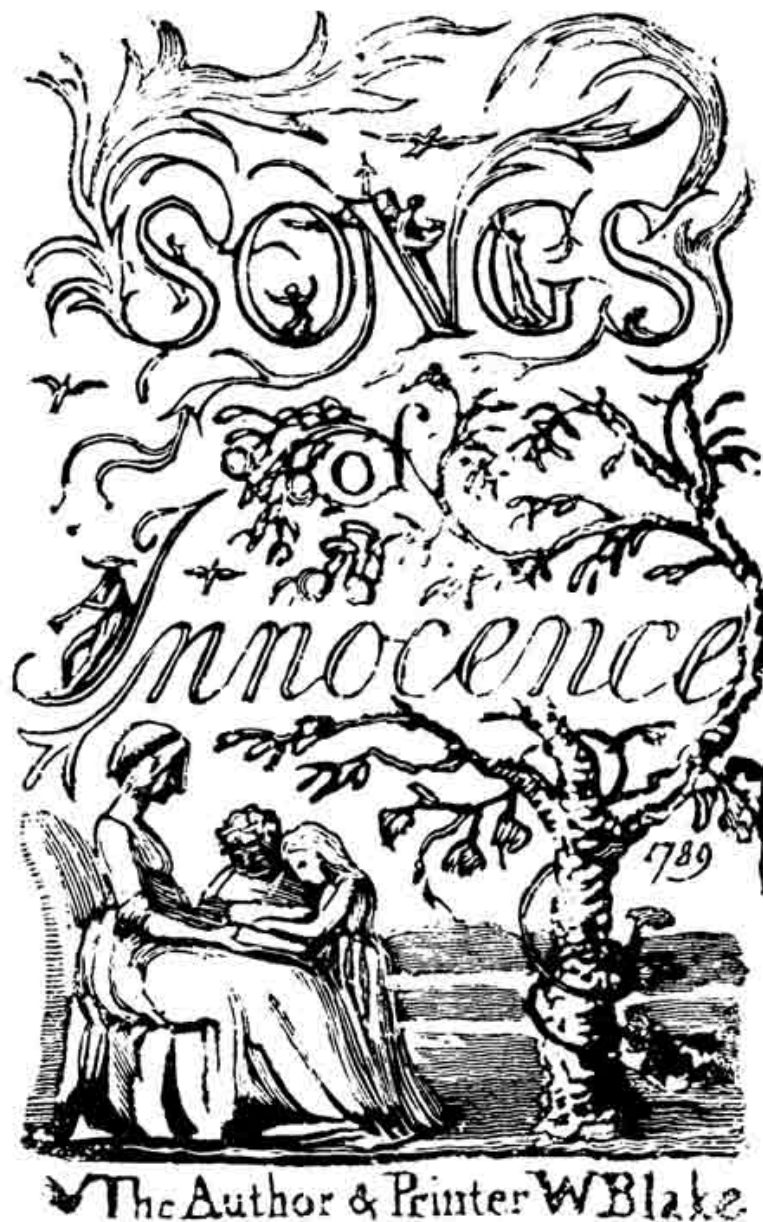
Unfortunately, the situation is not so simple as this. For one thing, when one resets Blake's work in conventional typography, one loses the flavour of the script itself—a loss which may be crippling, as with the titlepage of *Songs of Innocence* (see Plate 2). The letters themselves burst into blossom, a winged angel leans negligently on the "N" in the word "SONGS", his wings go behind the "N" and link it to the preceding "O", and above him flies a bird. Clearly a mere transcription of the letters will lose almost all the exuberance of this blossoming page. The lettering on the titlepage of *Songs of Innocence* is, of course, exceptionally vibrant, but the forms of the letters on every page of Blake's works in Illuminated Printing present analogical problems. Blake's words are not made up of Platonic archetypes of the letters of the alphabet; they are individual and meaningful and exuberant and beautiful in themselves. Any substitution of other forms of letters will significantly alter and falsify Blake's intentions and his meanings.

Thus far we have been building a case for facsimiles of Blake's works in Illuminated Printing rather than transcripts of them. And of course the facsimiles should be faithful imitations of Blake's originals, not merely reproductions. The size must be true, the colour of ink and the quality of paper must be like Blake's, the plates must not only be in the order in which Blake arranged them but they must face one another or be printed on one side only as Blake arranged them, rather than as the convenience of the technology or the penury of the publisher dic-

tates. Fortunately The Blake Trust has for thirty-five years been producing such facsimiles—extraordinarily beautiful, accurate, scarce, and dear. Anyone who wants to see Blake's works in Illuminated Printing in the form he intended and cannot afford several thousand dollars per page may be confident that in using instead the Blake Trust facsimiles he is getting as close as he is likely to get to Blake's intentions.

PLATE 2

Titlepage for *Songs of Innocence* (1789) copy (c), 7 x 11 cm (Mrs. William Drysdale)—the graceful luxuriance of the script is impossible to imitate in type.



But even an accurate facsimile solves only part of the problem, for Blake made changes in different copies. The words themselves may be altered from copy to copy. For instance, in "The Tyger" there is an awkward grammatical difficulty in stanza 3:

And what shoulder, & what art,
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
 And when thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand? & what dread feet?

The second sentence has no verb. If we are ingenious, we may determine that the omission of a verb is purposeful, that Blake is deliberately obscuring the distinction between the dreadful power of the creature and the dreadful daring of the Creator, that we are no longer able to determine whether the "dread feet" are those of the creature or the Creator. All this may be true, but in one copy Blake changed the last line so that it reads "What dread hand forged thy dread feet?" In this copy the ambiguity is destroyed; here it is plainly the dread hand of the Creator which is forming the dread feet of the creature. Whether we think the change an improvement in clarity or a destruction of fruitful ambiguity, there is no doubt that the change is Blake's. A facsimile of only one copy will force us to choose one printed reading over another, and both readings are Blake's.

Elsewhere in his works in Illuminated Printing, Blake occasionally changed whole passages. In his revolutionary Prophecy called *America* (see Plate 3), the Preludium concludes with an extraordinary pessimistic passage:

The stern Bard ceas'd, asham'd of his own song; enrag'd he swung
 His harp aloft sounding, then dash'd its shining frame against
 A ruin'd pillar in glittering fragments; silent he turn'd away,
 And wander'd down the vales of Kent in sick & drear lamentings.

(p. 138)

The "song" of the stern Bard is presumably the poem *America* which this Preludium introduces, and thus the Bard seems to be disowning the Song which he is about to sing, or perhaps the one he has just sung. In either case, the concept is certainly puzzling. But most of Blake's cus-

PLATE 3

America (1793) copy P, Plate 4, 13.6 x 21.5 cm (Fitzwilliam Museum)—the pessimistic last four lines were masked except in late copies like this one (see Plate 4).



tomers who bought his *America* never saw these words. Though these words were etched on the copperplate,² they were masked on all early copies such as that shown in Plate 4. When Blake was printing this copy, he covered the last four lines about the Bard's shame so that they would not print. In only two late copies made by Blake are these lines found (Plate 3); in all the others, the Bard's musical suicide is entirely invisible.

PLATE 4

America copy I, Plate 4 (Huntington)—Blake usually masked the last four lines, and they are only visible in late copies (see Plate 3).



Clearly, therefore, it will make an important difference whether we see an early copy of *America* or a late one.

Blake also erased passages from the paper, as in the conclusion of *The Book of Thel* (Plate 5). At the conclusion of the poem, the innocent Thel sits beside “her own grave plot” and hears a series of terrible questions about the nature of existence:

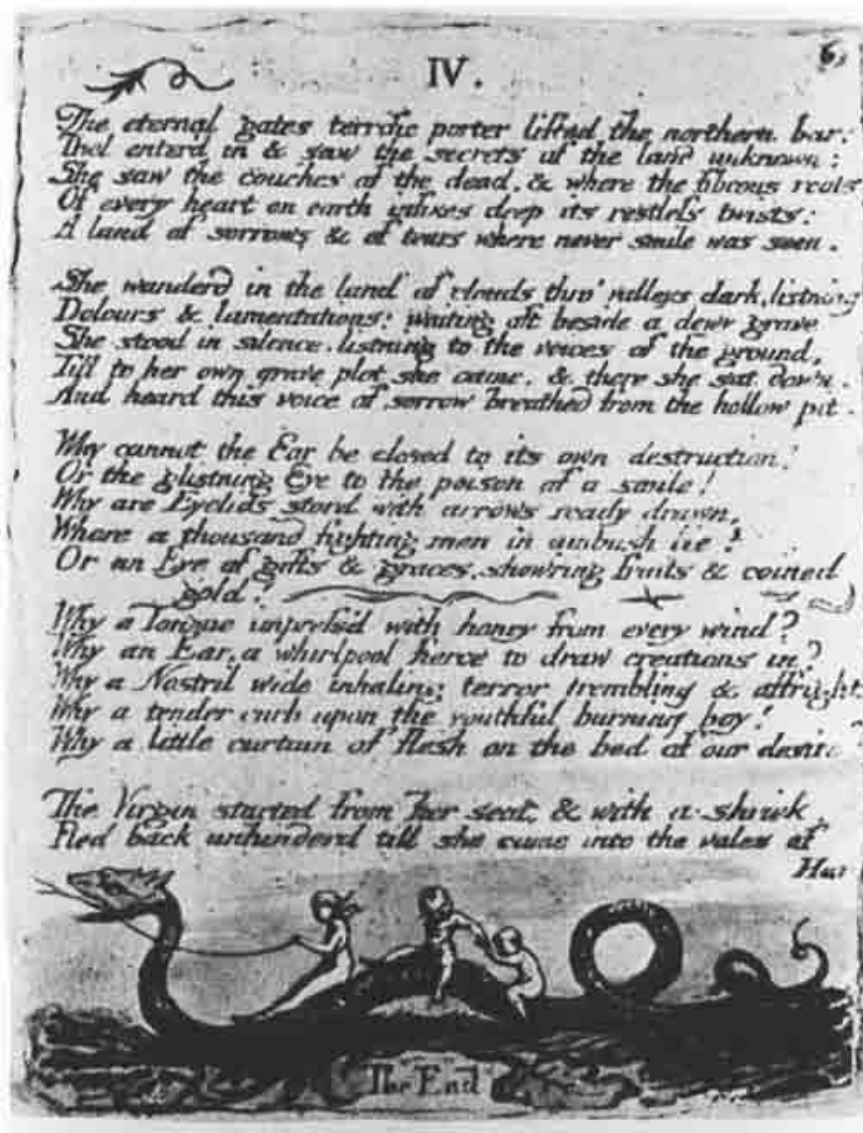
Why an Ear, a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in?
 Why a Nostril wide inhaling terror trembling & affright[?]
 Why a tender curb upon the youthful burning boy!
 Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire?

(p. 72)

The explicit sexuality of the last two lines about “the youthful burning boy” and “the bed of our desire” is so terrifying to Thel that

PLATE 5

The Book of Thel (1789), copy L, Plate 8, 10.9 x 15.3 cm (Library of Congress)—the lines at the bottom about “the bed of our desire” were sometimes removed (see Plate 6).

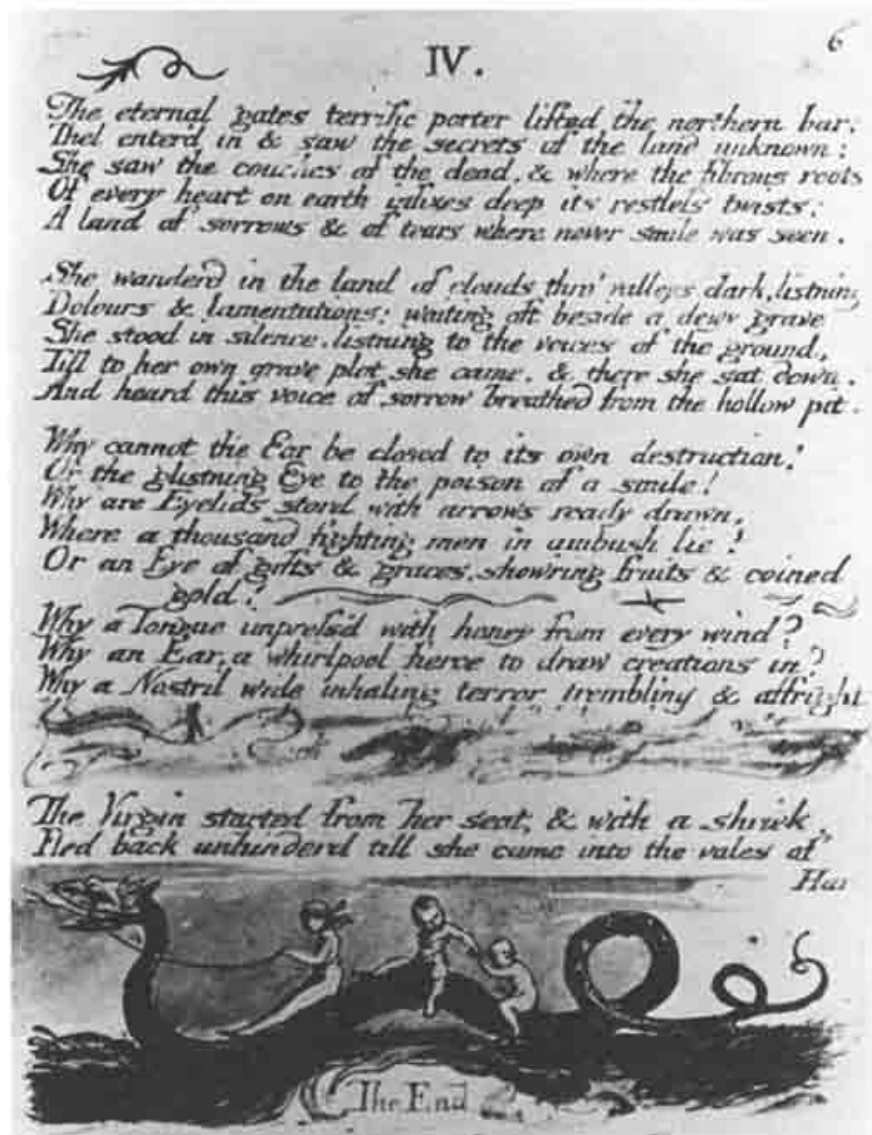


The Virgin started from her seat, & with a shriek
Fled back unhinderd till she came into the vales of Har[.]

And in two copies Blake erased from the paper those two explicit lines about the “little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire” (Plate 6). The sexuality of Thel’s voyage of self-discovery is visually plain on the titlepage, where she watches a naked man embracing a woman, and on this last page as well, where children have harnessed the sexual serpent,

PLATE 6

The Book of Thel copy I, Plate 8 (Bodley)—designs were added to the paper in place of the two sexually explicit lines usually visible there (see Plate 5).



but the visual hints are not so explicit as the verbal ones. Whatever the motive, the sexually explicit lines are missing from two copies, and a single facsimile cannot solve the problem of how to cope with this variability.

Blake altered his works in *Illuminated Printing* by making changes in the copperplate, by the way he printed them, and by erasing from or adding to the printed text. But most of these changes are occasional; only one copy of "The Tyger" has its grammar improved, and only two copies of *The Book of Thel* have those "burning" lines removed. Thus far we are dealing with problems which could be dealt with fairly easily in a facsimile with a table of variants or perhaps reproductions of the variant pages. In most copies of Blake's works in *Illuminated Printing*, the text itself is invariable.

Oddly enough, there are more textual variants in one of his works printed in conventional typography. There are only three books by Blake printed in his lifetime from moveable type, and none of these was published in the ordinary sense. Indeed, they are as rare as his works in *Illuminated Printing*, and one of them, *The French Revolution*, survives in only an uncorrected proof copy. The most curious of them is his first volume of poetry called *Poetical Sketches* which was printed at the expense of his friend John Flaxman and of Flaxman's patron, the Reverend Anthony Stephen Mathew. The purpose was probably to demonstrate the young artist's manifold genius to potential patrons, who might provide him with a scholarship to study in Rome.³ A few copies were sent by John Flaxman to his own friends and patrons whom he hoped would prove sympathetic to the genius whose works were displayed in the *Poetical Sketches*, and Blake was given the rest of the unbound sheets to do with as he liked. And fairly clearly Blake was not very interested in the volume. The Preface had remarked that

The following Sketches were the production of [*an*] untutored youth . . . [*whose*] talents having been wholly directed to the attainment of excellence in his profession, he has been deprived of the leisure requisite to such a revisal of these sheets, as might have rendered them less unfit to meet the public eye.

(p. 749)

As the book has only seventy-six small pages, one might have thought that not much leisure would have been requisite for a satisfactory revisal of these sheets—or even that Flaxman or Mr. Mathew might have done

it for him. At any rate, the work is full of obvious errors: "greeen" is spelled with three consecutive "e"s, the word "philosophic" omits the first "i"; the plural "Exeunt" should clearly be "Exit", since only one person leaves the stage.⁴ Some of these typographical errors have curious implications. In one, Fair Eleanor is said to have "sunk upon the steps / On the cold stone her pale cheeks" (p. 753). Now if Eleanor is lying face-down, she can scarcely have both "cheeks" on the cold stone at once; the alternative grammatical and anatomical possibility is that it is not her superior but her nether "pale cheeks" which are on the cold stone, and this is a possibility entirely out of keeping with this Gothic horror story. Clearly "cheek" should be singular, and Blake corrected the reading in five copies.

Blake kept the sheets of his *Poetical Sketches* by him all his life, and at his death there were still a few which had never been even folded. But a few he gave away casually to friends, and in them he made some corrections. Twenty-one copies of *Poetical Sketches* can be traced today, and, of these, ten were apparently given by Blake to his friends with corrections in them—the other eleven were probably still in their virgin, untouched state when he died. But the copies which he did correct are corrected almost at random. He made a total of seventeen corrections, but only one of these corrections appears in every copy that Blake gave away, and thirteen of the corrections are found in only one, two, or three copies. He seems to have made the corrections at the time he gave away the copy, rather than in all copies at once, and he clearly could not remember the corrections he had found desirable to make in earlier copies. And he never reduced the three "e"s of "greeen" to the more common two. The corrections in each copy of *Poetical Sketches* differ from those in every other copy. Each copy of the work which Blake gave away is, as it were, a separate "performance", though the difference of one performance from another is probably caused more often by chance than by calculation.

We have thus far been omitting one of the most extraordinary features of Blake's works in Illuminated Printing. While some of these works are always found in mere black and white,⁵ some of them are occasionally coloured,⁶ and most are coloured in all known copies.⁷ And each copy is coloured in ways significantly different from all other known copies. For instance, in "Infant Joy", the enormous blossoms are usually shades of red, ochre, or yellow, but sometimes they are blue. In "The Little Girl Lost", the young man embracing the girl is sometimes naked and sometimes he is dressed in red or blue or grey. On *The Book of Urizen* plate 16, the crouching man is normally youthful (Plate 7), but in one copy he has

PLATE 7

The First Book of Urizen (1794), copy B, Plate 16, 10.5 cm x 15.2 cm (Pierpont Morgan Library)—the youthful figure is sometimes shown with a long white beard (see Plate 8).



a long white beard (Plate 8), and in another copy he has tears on his cheeks. Similarly, in *The Book of Urizen* plate 24 there are usually four figures representing the four elements, but in one copy there are only two.⁸

Perhaps the most perplexing kind of variant is in the order of the plates. In *most* of Blake's works in Illuminated Printing, there are important and authoritative variants in the plate-orders.⁹ With two of these, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, the

PLATE 8

The First Book of Urizen copy A1, Plate 16 (Paul Mellon)—the same figure now has a long beard (see Plate 7).



fact that the plates are arranged in at least thirty-four different ways does not greatly affect how we understand the poems, for each poem is usually completed on one plate, and no obvious narrative is disrupted when the order of the poems changes. However, for narrative poems such as *The Book of Urizen* and *Jerusalem* it is wonderfully perplexing to find rearrangements and omissions of some of the plates. With *Jerusalem* there are only two different orders, but with *The Book of Urizen* there is a dif-

ferent plate-order in every copy,¹⁰ including in the one only recently discovered and not yet described in print. It is true that most of the mobile plates are full-page designs containing no text, but even with them the light they throw upon the text, and vice versa, is often vitally related to where they are placed. Each authoritative order makes sense, though some senses are more apparent and satisfying than others. But, unless we are to issue our master-facsimile with loose leaves, we cannot make it imitate more than one of Blake's orders—and Blake ordinarily numbered and sewed his plates so that they could not be moved within one copy. Blake intended to use several orders, and, if we are to imitate him, we must have each copy in its own order.¹¹ Sometimes, as in *Europe* and *The Book of Urizen*, he omitted one or more plates, and sometimes, as in *Milton*, he later added new plates, interspersing them through the text. How are we to indicate such variation, such multiplying forms and significances, without falsifying Blake's intentions—and his inattentions?

It seems to me fairly clear that Blake's works in Illuminated Printing must be considered and described in different editorial and bibliographical ways than are appropriate for any other author I know.¹² In a sense, each copy of, say, *The First Book of Urizen* is part of the same edition, for the copperplates from which it was printed were the same, at least in all major features—and yet every known copy differs significantly and intentionally from every other, in colouring, in number and arrangement of plates, and even in significant features of the designs. Bibliographically they can be described as if there were an ideal, or at least a normal, copy, from which there are many variants, but this will not do as an editorial solution. If we show only one plate, say the last one printed, we do not indicate the variety visible in other versions of the same plate. If we show all variants of that plate side by side, to make it easiest to see the changes in it, we interrupt the literary and apprehended flow of the book. And if we reproduce in an appendix only those plates which differ in large ways we still make obscure the changes in plate-order and continuity.

The only solution appropriate to Blake is to reproduce each variant copy, that is, each coloured copy, in a separate facsimile. Each variant copy produced by Blake should be treated as a separate "performance", with its own integrity, its own beauty, its own *raison d'être*. Blake did not produce a "standard" and invariable literary work. Such standardization is the function of the mere copyist, the mere printer. But Blake was a craftsman, a creator, whose genius said, "I must Create a System, or be enslaved by another Mans".¹³ He was not enslaved even by the tyranny of the printing-press. At the beginning of his great suite of illustrations to

The Book of Job created in the last years of his life, he showed Job surrounded by his family beneath a tree on which are hung the instruments of song (Plate 9). It seems an idyllic scene, but, as Blake said elsewhere, "A Poet a Painter a Musician an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian".¹⁴ This is the lesson which the righteous Job learns after his agonizing struggles with God who is himself,

PLATE 9

Illustrations of The Book of Job Invented & Engraved by William Blake (1825 [i.e., 1826]), Plate I, 16.5 x 21.3 cm (GEB)—Job and his family worship God beneath the instruments of song hung on the tree above them.



and the last of Blake's Job designs shows Job with his family under the same tree but now playing the instruments (Plate 10). It is not the instruments but the performance which matters.¹⁵ Blake's coloured works in Illuminated Printing are all performances. It is only when we apprehend each work as a separate performance, when we can see the colour and order and uniqueness of each performance that we can apprehend it as Blake intended that we should. Though the singer is gone, we can still have the performance if we know how to find it.

PLATE 10

Job (1826) Plate 21, 17.1 x 21.9 cm (GEB)—Job and his family, now enlightened, worship God in song—now they are playing the instruments.



APPENDIX

Facsimiles of Blake's Coloured Works in Illuminated Printing

C													
O													
P													
Y	<i>ARO</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>BL</i>	<i>Thel</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>BU</i>	<i>Jm</i>	<i>MHH</i>	<i>Mn</i>	<i>SL</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>SIE</i>
A	1926 1970	no	1973	no	no	no	1929	unc	no	no	no	no	1926- 1927
B	—	unc	no	—	no	1969 ¹⁶ 1983 ¹⁶	no	1974	unc	1978	no	1954 1971	no
C	—	unc	—	—	no	no	no	unc	no	no	no	no	no
D	—	unc	—	—	1928	no	no	unc	1960	1967	no	no	no
E	—	unc	—	—	no	no	no	1951	no	—	no	no	no
F	—	unc	—	—	no	no	no	unc	no	—	no	no	no
G	—	unc	—	—	no	1969 ¹⁶ 1983 ¹⁶	1958	unc	no	—	—	no	no
H	—	unc	—	—	no	unc	—	unc	1975	—	—	no	no
I	—	unc	—	—	no	unc	—	unc	1927	—	—	1923	no
J	—	—	—	—	no	—	no	unc	—	—	—	no	no
K	—	no	—	—	no	no	—	no	—	—	—	no	no
L	—	unc	—	—	no	unc	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
M	—	1963 1983	—	—	1971	unc	—	—	—	—	—	no	unc
N	—	—	—	—	—	no	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
O	—	unc	—	—	1965	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
P	—	unc	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
Q	—	unc	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
R	—	no	—	—	no	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
S	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
T	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	1923
U	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	1893
V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
Y	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	no	no
Z	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1955 1960 1967 unc
AA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	unc
Copy		<i>NNR</i> ¹⁷				<i>VDA</i>							
A		no				1932							
B		no				no							
C		no				1959							
D		1948				no							
E		no				no							
F		no				no							
G		no				no							
H		no				no							
I		no				no							
J		no				no							
K		no				no							
L		1971				no							

Copy	NNR ¹⁷	VDA
	1/2	
M	no	no
N	—	no
O	—	no
P	—	no
Q	—	no
R	—	no

1926	= A colour facsimile was published in this year
—	= There is no complete copy with this letter
A	= <i>America</i>
ARO	= <i>All Religions are One</i>
BA	= <i>Book of Ahania</i>
BL	= <i>Book of Los</i>
BU	= <i>First Book of Urizen</i>
E	= <i>Europe</i>
Jm	= <i>Jerusalem</i>
MHH	= <i>Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i>
Mn	= <i>Milton</i>
NNR	= <i>There is No Natural Religion</i>
no	= No colour-facsimile of this copy has been published (ignoring the hand-made nineteenth-century reproductions of Hotten, Grigg, and Muir).
SI	= <i>Songs of Innocence</i>
SL	= <i>Song of Los</i>
SIE	= <i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i>
Thel	= <i>Book of Thel</i>
unc	= This copy of the original is not coloured
VDA	= <i>Visions of the Daughters of Albion</i>

Notes

¹ *William Blake's Writings* (1978), 185, the text cited in page references below.

² See "The Printing of Blake's *America*", *Studies in Romanticism*, VI (1966), 46–57.

³ *Blake Records* (1969), 25–28.

⁴ *Blake Books* (1977), 346–347.

⁵ *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* (1793), *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* (?1818), *The Ghost of Abel* (1822), and *On Homer's Poetry and On Virgil* (?1821).

⁶ *America* (1793), 5 of 17 copies coloured; *Europe* (1794), 8 of 13 copies coloured; *Jerusalem* (1804–?20), 1 1/4 of 8 1/4 copies coloured—the fragmentary coloured copy consists of only 25 plates out of 100.

⁷ *All Religions are One* (?1788), the only copy; *There is No Natural Religion* (?1788), all copies; *The Book of Thel* (1789), all 16 copies; *Songs of Innocence* (1789), all 24 copies; *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), all 18 copies; *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (?1790–93), all but 1 of 9 copies; *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794), all but 2 of 27 copies; *The First Book of Urizen* (1794), all 7 copies; *The Book of Ahania* (1795), the only copy; *The Book of Los* (1795), the only copy; *The Song of Los* (1795), all 6 copies; and *Milton* (1804–?8), all 4 copies.

⁸ *Blake Books* (1977), 179.

⁹ The variations are as follows:

Title of Book	Number of plates which move	Number of orders	Number of copies
<i>Book of Thel</i>	1	2	16
<i>Europe</i>	2	3	13
<i>Book of Urizen</i>	?	8	8
<i>For the Sexes</i>	4	4	5
<i>Jerusalem</i>	5	2	5
<i>Marriage</i>	3	3	9
<i>Milton</i>	9	3	4
<i>Song of Los</i>	2	3	5
<i>Songs of Innocence</i>	25	?	24
<i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i>	50	34	27

In all there are 34 different orders of the *Songs*, and only five copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* are in the same order.

¹⁰ Jerome J. McGann, "The Idea of an Indeterminate Text: Blake's Bible of Hell and Dr. Alexander Geddes," *Studies in Romanticism*, XXV (1986), 303–324, argues that "Urizen's unstable text . . . owes its imaginative conception to Blake's discovery, in the early 1790s, of the new scholarly investigations into the state of the biblical texts", especially Alexander Geddes' "Fragment Hypothesis" about the Pentateuch (p. 309).

¹¹ Note that some facsimiles faithfully reproduce the plates but arrange them in an order not found in the copy reproduced.

¹² The closest analogy to Blake's works in Illuminated Printing with extensive text in stereotype, not in moveable type, is with music, which was normally engraved. In non-musical works, the closest analogies known to me are three extensive works entirely engraved: 1) *The Book of Common Prayer And Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church . . . of England Together with the Psalter or Psalms* (London: Engraven and Printed by the Permission of Mr. John Baskett, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty 1717. [Engraved and] Sold by John Sturt Engraver) 2) *The Orthodox Communicant, By Way of Meditation On the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, According to the Liturgy of the Church of England* (London: Engraved by J. Sturt & Sold by R. Ware & J. Tinney, 1721) 3) *Fables Choies Mises en Vers par J. de la Fontaine. Nouvelle Edition Gravée en taille-douce Les Figures, par Sr. Fessard. [Tout] Le Texte par Sr. Montulay. Dédiées aux enfants de France.* [6 vols.] (Paris: Chez l'Auteur Graveur Ordinaire du Cabinet du Roy, 1765, 1766, 1768, 1773, 1774, 1775).

¹³ *Jerusalem*, Plate 10, l. 20 (p. 435).

¹⁴ "Laocoon" (*William Blake's Writings*, p. 666).

¹⁵ Early inscriptions on untraced proofs of Job Plates 1 and 21 are recorded by Robert N. Essick, "Blake's *Job*: Some Unrecorded Proofs and Their Inscriptions", *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, XIX, 3 (Winter 1985–86), 96–102:

Plate 1: Prayer to God is the Study of Imaginative Art

Plate 21: Praise to God is the Exercise of Imaginative Art

and these seem to indicate that at one stage Blake intended Plates 1 and 21 to show Job in similar states of grace. However, he later deleted these inscriptions, and without them Job's late enlightened state, making music, seems to be in contrast to his early state of unmusical righteousness.

¹⁶ The 1969 facsimile of *Europe*, copied in the 1983 facsimile, reproduces about half the plates of copy B and half of copy G.

¹⁷ All known copies of *There is No Natural Religion* are fragmentary.

RECONSTRUCTING THE TEXTS OF WORKS

G. THOMAS TANSELLE

Tanselle makes a distinction between texts of works (intended sequences of words and punctuation) and texts of documents (the sequences that actually appear in surviving physical objects, such as manuscripts and printed books). He further distinguishes among the agents of textual change and the variety of interests that readers may have. The result is an array of legitimate goals and approaches to the editorial reconstruction of texts. Critical reconstruction is a necessary activity (along with the preservation of documentary texts) because every text present in a document is always suspect as a faithful representation of an intended text (whether intended by an author or other persons involved in the production process). The success of an edition, Tanselle argues, is determined by the coherence with which a particular goal for reconstruction is carried out in an editor's rationale and actions. It follows that editors defending their own goals and critical judgments as the only or most important ones are failing to understand the full array of possibilities. Because the documentary and social authority of published texts has received considerable attention in recent years, the essay focuses on the continued legitimacy of pursuing authorial actions, intentions, and expectations. Consideration of eclectic editing involves distinguishing between mixing versions of a work and the use of variant documents to reconstruct particular versions of works. Editors who recognize that their task is not to identify one text of a work that everyone should be interested in will also understand that every responsible reconstruction of a work produces only one of many legitimate texts. EDD.

Tanselle distingue tra testi di opere (sequenze ordinate di parole e punteggiatura) e testi di documenti (le sequenze che effettivamente appaiono negli oggetti fisici sopravvissuti al tempo, come manoscritti o libri stampati). Un'ulteriore distinzione viene fatta tra le ragioni dei mutamenti testuali e la grande varietà di

Chapter 3 *A Rationale of Textual Criticism*, Philadelphia (PA), University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989, pp. 67-93. By permission of the author and the University of Pennsylvania Press. Paperback edition, same press, 1992.

interessi dei lettori. Ne risulta una serie di validi obiettivi e approcci al restauro editoriale dei testi. Il restauro critico di un testo è un'operazione necessaria (così come la conservazione dei testi di documenti) perché ogni testo presente in un documento non è necessariamente fedele rappresentazione di un testo progettato (sia che la progettazione si debba all'autore o ad altre figure coinvolte nel processo di produzione editoriale). Il successo di un'edizione critica, sostiene Tanselle, è determinato da una coerente impostazione teorica e pratica del lavoro. Ne consegue che gli editori critici che considerano i propri obiettivi e giudizi critici come i soli o i più importanti, non colgono la gamma completa delle possibilità testuali a loro disposizione. Muovendo dalla sempre maggiore importanza assunta negli ultimi anni dalla autorità documentaria e sociale dei testi a stampa, il saggio insiste sulla sempre attuale legittimità dell'indagine sulle azioni, le intenzioni e le attese autoriali. Sostenere, come fa Tanselle, la legittimità di criteri editoriali eclettici vuol dire poter distinguere tra le contaminazioni di diverse versioni di un'opera e l'uso di varianti documentarie per ricostruire una particolare versione di un'opera. Gli editori critici che sapranno riconoscere che il loro compito non è quello di stabilire un testo definitivo da cui tutti dovrebbero partire, capiranno anche che ogni restauro responsabile di un'opera produce solo una delle molte possibili e legittime versioni testuali di essa.

The woman walking along the Key West strand, in Wallace Stevens's poem, transmutes the sea into her song; but the two are different, we are told, "Even if what she sang was what she heard, / Since what she sang was uttered word by word." In verbal communication, everything depends on the procession of words, one by one, in sequence. When a word, or the sequence, is altered, the meaning can be expected to change. The text the woman sang may not have been the text she intended—but not because it seemed to her (as no doubt it would have seemed) an inadequate expression of the complexity of her upwelling emotions. The execution of a statement never exhausts the potentiality of the ideas underlying it. Even so, certain words were intended, but through one slip of the tongue or another some of them may have come out differently in the uttering. The assembled listeners were able in any case to recognize that her song was a made reality, a created world: they understood, as they listened, that "there never was a world for her / Except the one she sang and, singing, made." We are not told whether any of the listeners mentally corrected some of the words they heard, in the process of forming their individual interpretations of the singer's world. But what they heard did have an effect on them, altering their perceptions of their own worlds; for as they turned toward the town, the lights in the fishing boats "Mastered the night and portioned out the sea, / Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles, / Arranging, deepening, enchanting night." The exemplary world of her cre-

ation gave direction to the “rage for order” in each of them, helping them to find undreamed-of patterns in the chaos around them and enhancing the vibrancy of their participation in it. Textual criticism was a part of this process—even if Stevens does not say so—because the listeners had to decide whether the words presented to them were the ones that, taking everything into account, they should respond to. Each of the listeners had been presented with a text and was engaged in finding in it a work. The presented text was a historical fact; the text of the work was an imaginative construction based on it, and possibly different for each of them. But it was the work that affected them, for they were trying to understand what was being said, even if the uttered words sometimes subverted it.

Every verbal text, whether spoken or written down, is an attempt to convey a work. The preservation of the documents containing verbal texts, like the preservation of other artifacts, is a vital cultural activity. But the act of preserving such documents, unlike that of preserving paintings, for example, does not preserve works but only evidences of works. If, as readers, we are interested in the verbal works that their producers intended, we must constantly entertain the possibility of altering the texts we have inherited. Those texts, being reports of works, must always be suspect; and, no matter how many of them we have, we never have enough information to enable us to know with certainty what the works consist of. The attempt to move closer to an intended form of a work, whether it occurs mentally in the process of reading or publicly in the production of a scholarly edition, is a historical exercise. Some people, of course, do not wish to bring historical considerations to their appreciation of works of art, preferring instead to respond to works simply as objects existing in the present. When they talk about a painting from this point of view, their comments are nevertheless in response to an artifact surviving from the past; if, however, when they wish to discuss a literary work (or any other piece of verbal communication), they limit themselves to an artifact, they are not discussing the work, but only the text of it that happens to appear in the artifact. Because the medium of literature is abstract and because literary works therefore cannot exist in physical form, any attempt to apprehend such works entails the questioning of surviving texts.

This activity is necessarily a historical enterprise, for the very concept of a “work” implies something pre-existing. It is true that one cannot fully re-enact the responses of members of the original audience of a work, and one’s own response will always be affected, in some degree, by the intervening experience of humanity and the climate of one’s own life; but still one is responding to a creation formed by a human being (or more than one) at a particular time in the past. Persons not interested in tak-

ing any of the historical approaches to literature need not search for the work represented by the text, but they should realize that what they are doing is equating the text of the document before them with the text of a work—just as if the object before them were a painting. What they then say or write is further removed from works of literature than are the comments of similarly inclined art critics from paintings. Even if such art critics seem to be responding more to colors of paint than to works of painting, and even though the colors present at one moment are not exactly those present at another, the colors and the works coexist in the same objects. Nevertheless, both groups of critics are alike in taking the artifacts they encounter as the stimuli for flights of fancy and displays of intellect, for fantasias upon found objects. The results may or may not be works of interest, or of genius, in their own right; but they are not writings about works of art or of literature.

Once we understand that the texts of verbal documents are not the texts of works, and once we decide that we do wish to concern ourselves with works, we are then faced with the question of how to alter the texts of the surviving documents, with the task of determining what standard to aim for in making emendations. For we must have a standard, a guiding principle, in mind: there are an enormous number of ways in which we could alter and conflate the surviving texts, and we must know what stage in the history of the work we wish to reconstruct, or else our emendations will be no more than aimless tamperings. Of course, one could say that making changes according to what pleases us at the moment is itself a principle, and it could result in works that would seem to many people superior to what the original authors were capable of. But it is not a historical approach and will not help us to arrive at the form of a work intended by someone at some time in the past. (If it did, coincidentally, lead us to the same text as one produced by a historically minded editor, it would still not be a historical reconstruction, for we define our locations by the roads we have taken.) In the life story of a work, there are a vast number of moments to choose from, a number that increases as each hour goes by; and at each of those moments there may have been a variety of people affecting the text. The basic question for every reader interested in history—and perforce every scholarly editor—is to decide whose intended wording, and at what time, is to be extracted from the clues provided by the documentary text (or texts).

When A. E. Housman read over the fair copy of his funeral hymn, which contains the line “Through time and place to roam,” he appended a note saying, “The printer will already have altered *place* to *space*.” The sardonic humor of this comment is not unexpected from the author of *A Shropshire Lad* or from the experienced poet who had suffered through

many sets of proofs. But the scholarly editor of Latin poetry is also speaking here, the textual critic who had formed the habit of questioning every text and who knew that scribes and compositors have left their traces in all the texts they have touched. His remark effectively underscores the problematic nature of tangible texts, their uncertain relation to the works that lie behind them. As matters turned out, the printed program for his funeral did include the line as he wished it to be—that is, if one takes his footnote at face value and does not conclude that he wrote it because he was undecided and half wished the printer in fact to print “space,” the word he claimed to castigate the printer for imagining that he had written. If Housman’s annotated manuscript had not survived, we might expect to find a learned editor of an edition of Housman’s verse conjecturing that Housman no doubt meant “time and space,” not “time and place,” and perhaps emending the line accordingly. Printers are not the only ones who make mistakes with texts. But we would have no way of knowing, with any likelihood of certainty, that the emendation was a mistake; and the possibility of mistakes is the price we pay—and should pay willingly—for the opportunity of seeing what wording occurs to someone who has given serious and extended thought to the question.

Suppose the printer had indeed got it wrong, and suppose also that the manuscript had not survived. A number of readers, including—one hopes—an editor or two, might have suggested the right reading; but it would be only a conjecture, with no documentary support, and no one could prove that it was correct. And in what sense, even with the evidence we actually have, is it correct? If the audience at the funeral had listened to, and read, the word “space,” would that word take on some authority by virtue of historical circumstance? And how do we know that the surviving document tells the whole story? Can we be sure that Housman did not later change his mind, perhaps at the urging of a friend, whether or not he wrote his revised opinion down and whether or not it has survived in physical form? And should we take “place” to be the only word that might have been erroneously altered? Might not the attention Housman directed to this word have caused him to overlook his own slip of the pen in another line? However likely or unlikely one regards any of these possibilities to be, there is no denying that the text of this simple poem, like the texts of all other poems, is a tissue of uncertainties—and will remain so regardless of the plenitude of relevant documents that may turn up.

The way one threads a path through these uncertainties—to arrive at a defensible reconstruction of the text of a work of literature—depends on

the position one takes regarding two questions: what agency is responsible for the production of a work, and what point is the most significant in its history. On the former question, one may feel that the author has sole responsibility for a work and that a text reflecting the author's intention (and purged of elements contributed by others) best represents the work; or one may believe that literature is a social art, the collaborative product of a number of people, and that the text resulting from the publishing process (though cleansed of scribes' or typesetters' errors) provides the truest record of the work. On the second matter, one may decide that the form of a work most worth focusing on is the one that existed at the moment when the work was regarded as finished by those responsible for it (whether the author alone or the author in conjunction with others), a moment that may be deemed to have brought to fruition the efforts of a period of creativity; or one may prefer the last version of a work overseen by whoever is considered to have had charge of it, a version that may plausibly be thought to incorporate maturer views and more refined phrasing than earlier versions. An intermediate stand on each of these questions may at times seem in order: one might wish to accept revisions originating with the author's friend but not the publisher's reader, or those appearing in the third, but not the fifth and last, revised edition.

Forceful arguments for these various positions have been made. But many of them come from people who act as if only one approach is correct, as if it—and only it—leads to truth. They do not recognize that, since every verbal work must be reconstructed, no text of any such work is ever definitive. Different individuals may favor different approaches, and even those taking the same approach may make different judgments. None of these approaches and judgments can be automatically ruled out: they all emphasize some stage in the history of a work, and nothing that ever happened is theoretically without interest or unworthy of our attention. What makes one position defensible, and another not, is the coherence of the argument supporting it, the way the argument fashions a whole out of what seem the fragmented facts. There is thus no one valid line: the acceptable answers are limited only by human ingenuity, even while the unacceptable ones measure the breadth of the mind's inadequacies. Arguments that contain internal inconsistencies or lapses of logic, even if they are well-informed, do not help us to find a way through chaos, for they are themselves chaotic. But those that satisfy the intellect by their effective marshaling of the apparently relevant evidence and by the harmony and coherence of their insights create visions of the past that can be accepted—until new discoveries and more trenchant analyses ren-

der them no longer necessary or compelling. With texts, no less than with everything else, we credit, and discredit, our truths in this way.

Over the years the most frequently adopted textual argument has assumed that the goal of scholarly editing is the reconstruction of texts intended by their authors. Because authorial intention can be defined in various ways and because authors frequently shift their own intentions for a work as time passes, this general rationale can support a number of interpretations. What links them all, however, is a biographical interest, a desire to learn as much as possible about the minds in which works originate. Even though verbal texts (and often the works they represent) become the joint products of several people by the time they are published (a situation as true of ancient manuscript books as of modern printed ones), and even though they employ words and rules of syntax that antedate their conception, there is still a single mind that provided the impetus for each work. Folk tales are no exception: neither the social origins of the author's sources and language nor our apparent inability to identify the author invalidates the search for the mind most responsible for shaping a work.

The claim that this view is artificial—because verbal works cannot reach audiences without the intervention of a number of people—carries no weight. As long as there is historical interest in a work, or a series of works by the same author, there must also be a legitimate interest in the author's vision, whether or not we can now uncover it and whether or not the conditions of publishing allowed it to reach an audience unscathed. The works represented by Thomas Wolfe's sprawling manuscripts and by the papers Ernest Hemingway left at his death were considered inappropriate for commercial publication until editors hired by publishers turned them into different works (or versions of works); but even if those publishers were correct in assessing the realities of the world of publishing, there is still good reason to wish to read Wolfe and Hemingway in the forms they envisioned as they wrote. Their desires have just as much historical reality as do the texts that were finally published, though the desires are likely to be harder to locate. If we grant that authors have intentions and therefore that the intentions of past authors are historical facts, we require no further justification for the attempt to recover those intentions and to reconstruct texts reflecting them, whatever our chances of success may be.

Understanding the kind of authorial intention that is relevant to textual decisions is less difficult than determining the practical results of the operation of that intention. An author may intend to write a work that sells well, or one that receives critical acclaim, or one that influences the

thinking of large numbers of people, or one that has various other results. Such hopes regarding what a work will lead to are part of the biographical context out of which any work emerges; but they are not examples of the kind of intention that directly affects the reader's and textual critic's attempt to ascertain the intended text of a work. Authorial intention for this purpose must be the author's wish, in the act of composing, to have a particular word or mark of punctuation at a given place in the text.

A rigorous application of this concept enables one to make decisions in situations that have been considered difficult, and have been much debated, through a lack of clear thinking. For example, when both a final manuscript and a printed edition set from it survive, the question arises as to whether the author's intention is better represented by the oddities of usage and punctuation in the manuscript or the conventional usage and punctuation in the book. If there is a good case for arguing that the normalizing in the book text was performed by a member of the publisher's staff and not by the author, then that text could not be preferred over the manuscript text, as long as one is concerned with the author's intention. Even if the author intended to write a work that would be considered correct in its grammar and punctuation, such an intention involves the expectation that someone else will rectify any flaws of these kinds; it cannot prevent the author from intending at the moment of writing to put down particular words or punctuation marks, possibly not knowing that by the standards of the day they are regarded as unconventional.

Any so-called intention that is actually an expectation about what will be done to the text by others can have no bearing on the reconstruction of an authorially intended text. The first-edition text, often with such alterations incorporated, is naturally of historical interest, because it is the text that was made available to the public. But that is a separate historical interest from the one that causes us to be concerned with authors' intentions. Some people seem to believe that, because authors wished or expected certain things to be done to their texts, we are carrying out their intentions by doing those things or accepting texts in which they have already been done. But to take this view is to confuse two incompatible goals of textual scholarship. Of course, we can define "intention" any way we like, and the word need not be used as I am using it here. The point is not what term we use but how we segregate two distinct concepts. We need to distinguish in some way between the texts of a work as they existed in the mind where it originated and the texts of that work that contain contributions by others (some of which might perhaps have been anticipated—though not necessarily welcomed—by the author). One

shorthand way of referring to this distinction is to say that the former are the texts the author intended and that the latter may in some ways conform to what the author expected.

Authorial intention, so defined, is clearly not the same thing as authorial action: what authors have in mind when they are writing and intend to write down is not necessarily what they do in fact write down, through carelessness, a preoccupation with the next phrase, or any kind of momentary distraction. Distinguishing intention from expectation, therefore, does not involve equating the text of a document with that of a work, since even the text of the author's own finished manuscript may not be the intended text of the work. The scholarly editor must be prepared to make alterations in any documentary text if the goal is to arrive at the author's intended text. Furthermore, defining the intended text as what was in the author's mind at the time of writing does not preclude accepting revisions by the author. Like other people, authors can be expected to change their minds; and whether they write out whole texts when they make revisions or enter the revisions on preexisting documents or hold them in their minds, the intention underlying the altered phrases is of the same order as that underlying the previous version of them. The result is more than one intended text of a work, and the scholarly editor has to decide which one to focus on—at least, which one to focus on first. All are of interest, but the editor, more often than not, aims to produce only one edition of a work; indeed, the publication of one edition may for a time make the publication of others seem an unattractive proposition to publishers, except for works considered at the moment to be of the highest importance. The choosing of one of the intended versions of a work over another may thus be dictated by practical considerations, but the actual choice is likely to reflect, more substantively, the nature of the surviving materials and the editor's literary and historical judgment.

We depend on the survival of documents for the evidence that makes the reconstruction of versions of works feasible, but we must be careful, in thinking about versions of works, to observe the distinction between the texts of documents and the texts of works. Even if scholarly editors could emend the texts of surviving documents perfectly so as to remove all nonauthorial elements, the result would not necessarily be the texts of versions of works that ever existed as versions in their authors' minds. Certain indisputably authorial revisions that first appeared in public in a fourth edition, for instance, may have been present in the author's mind at the time of the third edition and intended for inclusion in that edition, but left out through the publisher's (or even the author's) oversight. If one

were interested in the version represented in general by the third edition, one would have to try to identify such fourth-edition readings and emend the third-edition text with them; although the earliest surviving documents in which those readings happen to appear are copies of the fourth edition, the readings were not part of the new revision undertaken for that edition. Those editors who maintain that they cannot take readings from different editions because they do not wish to mix versions together—and there are such editors—have failed to understand how the texts of documents are different from the texts of works. Editors of ancient works—who of necessity deal with manuscripts written many years or centuries after the authors' deaths—are less likely to make this mistake than editors of more recent works (though they may be more likely to neglect the possibility that variants might reflect authorial revisions). No one whose aim is the study of versions of works as intended by their authors wishes to mix elements of different versions together; but we must remember that versions are what we are setting out to reconstruct, not what we have been handed on the platters that documents provide.

Some stages in the history of a work can be eliminated from consideration more quickly than others. Some, for example, may seem so conjectural, for lack of surviving evidence, that one may feel one's time better employed by concentrating on a stage for which the evidence is more plentiful. And some stages may never have been represented visually or in sound recordings at all: a version of a work—not just the idea for a work—can exist in its author's mind without being written down or recorded, as when an author has thought of a number of revisions for a new edition but dies before making note of them and before the new edition is called for. Such versions had a real historical existence but are now unrecoverable. Of those that seem recoverable, some may be judged less desirable to present as reconstructed texts on the grounds that they appear to us, looking back as historians, to be preparatory to more climactic versions. Although every revision can be regarded as producing a new work, in practice some revisions will seem more transforming than others: some seem to refine the expression of a passage without changing the drift or general effect of the whole, whereas others (not necessarily more extensive) seem to metamorphose a work into what one can only call a different work, despite the many sequences of words it still has in common with the earlier one. When it can be argued that a particular stage of revision, or series of stages, is of the first kind, refining but not transforming the work, one may feel that the version resulting from these revisions should be focused on, out of respect for the author's right to make alterations. But

when a revision is of the second kind, creating what may be thought of as a new work, one may decide not to focus on it, preferring instead—for historical or literary reasons—the prior version. One might choose an early version of Henry James's *The American*, for instance, rather than the revision for the New York Edition thirty years later. Such a decision does not violate the author's intention by failing to emphasize the last revision, for it recognizes that two versions may embody two incompatible intentions and must then be treated independently.

All these decisions obviously depend on the editor's historical interests and literary taste. One sometimes hears complaints about the subjective element in editing, and there is a long tradition, perhaps most often reflected among those editing ancient writings, of searching for a procedure that eliminates human judgments. No such system has been found, of course, nor will it be. But textual criticism is not the only realm of life in which dreams of a certainty independent of our perception have proved hard to resist. We should instead embrace the inevitable and concentrate on defining the role of judgment in each undertaking. One example of confused thinking on this score is the reluctance some editors feel to admit into a text revisions that they cannot regard as improvements. These editors often seem to be taking as their motto Umberto Eco's remark, "The author should die once he has finished writing. So as not to trouble the path of the text." Authors' revisions do complicate those paths—and editors' work. But we should not be troubled by revisions that seem to reflect authors' lapses of taste or their lack of attention to context, if those revisions appear to be the facts of history. As long as our concern is with authors and their intentions, we cannot reject revisions made by authors simply because we consider them misguided, for we are then placing ourselves, not the authors, at the center of attention. It is not a coherent argument to profess to be interested in works as the products of individual authors and then to maintain that editors must come to the rescue of authors and save them from their own bad judgments. The flaw here is not the subjectivity involved, for historical commentary cannot avoid interpretation; the problem is the failure of the argument to reflect an awareness of the historical nature of the judgments required. It is not the editor's own literary preferences that matter but the editor's literary sensitivity channeled to the solution of a historical problem: the determination—to the best of one's informed judgment—of what text of a work the author considered to represent that work most satisfactorily at a given time. Any other focus turns the endeavor in a different direction, away from the author.

One can never, of course, fully isolate the author from all influences. Language itself is an outside influence, a set of inherited conventions shared with a community, and writers can depart from those conventions—in order to achieve special effects—only up to a point if they are to be understood. Writers, like other people, are further influenced by conversations they engage in and by what they read and look at and listen to: influences that are part of the act of living, part of the experience that inspires writing. But there is another kind of influence that occurs when someone reads or hears a text and makes recommendations for revision—sometimes gently, sometimes insistently—to the author. If the author accepts the suggestion of a friend or feels under pressure to follow the demand of a publisher, the result is a text altered through outside influence. This kind of influence, directly affecting an already-formed passage, is the only kind that an editor can try to counteract. There does exist, it is true, such a thing as collaboration, in which two or more people create a work, or a passage, in a process of harmonious give-and-take that resembles the working of a single mind. One must be extremely cautious, however, about interpreting a writer's acquiescence in the proposals of others as instances of true collaboration. Writers have many motives for agreeing to changes that they do not really desire, and their own statements on the matter, which are often attempts at self-persuasion, cannot be accepted uncritically. Even though it may not be easy at times to draw the line between interference and collaboration, or even between the sort of influence that directly alters an existing text (as both interference and collaboration do) and the sort that becomes one of the author's sources for the work, these distinctions are essential if one is to take any kind of historical approach to verbal works.

After the distinctions have been attempted, one obviously need not give preference to an author's intention, for what is done to a text by the author's friends, scribes, printers, and publishers is also a matter of history, and one can decide to reconstruct the version of a work resulting from the ministrations of any of them. Such a goal is as valid as that of recovering the author's intended text: each is valuable and serves a different historical purpose. And they cannot be pursued simultaneously, either, for the textual intentions of authors and publishers are so likely to move in different directions that no single text can accommodate them. Lord Dunsany could think of no higher compliment to pay Elkin Mathews than to say, "I used to forget with him the natural antagonism that the business of publishing necessitates except in rare cases, between author and publisher." The textual situation is not essentially different for theatrical works, though one may be tempted to think that true collaboration more often

exists between playwright and director. But a dramatist may agree during rehearsals to textual alterations, given the actors and director present at the time, without believing the changes to be improvements—just as a novelist may accede to a publisher's request for alterations without losing faith in the unaltered text. Terrence McNally, for instance, once expressed concern about whether he could “guard the vision” of his plays during actors' readings and rehearsals (“I worry,” he said, “that in the process of developing my new play I lose it”). Playwrights have been known to accept revisions in performances of their plays that they do not incorporate into the published texts; but even if a playwright does make a reading text conform with a performance text, there is still reason to be interested in the text as it stood before rehearsals began. The fact that plays as produced are collaborative efforts does not mean that plays as written—plays as they left their authors' desks—are not works of drama, worthy of study as art.

The products of creative individuals, before they are altered by those whose job it is to bring such works to the public, are always of interest. But the form—of a play or of a novel—that reached the public, often not the author's in many respects, is also of interest because it is what was available for people to read and be influenced by. Successive editions of a work, both during its author's lifetime and later, often become the most available texts in their turn. If one wishes to understand the comments made about a work in the past, one needs to know not what text or texts were intended by the author but what texts each of the commentators read. Some of these texts may no longer be extant and can be known only through reconstructions, the evidence for which may be limited to what is found in the commentaries themselves; others may have survived and can be studied with the assurance that one is looking at the same text that some readers of the past also looked at. The textual historian, determining what texts of a work have existed, establishes the range of texts from which a given commentator could have drawn. This brand of textual study is concerned with the public life of texts, with the way texts affect, and are affected by, the stream of history.

Ezra Pound professed to be content with the alterations—not of his own devising—that crept into his *Cantos* as they made their way through the publication, and republication, process, because they were a part of its encompassing of history; he thus appeared to be abolishing textual error by enveloping the marks of the poem's own vicissitudes into its artistic design. But in fact he was only approving what he was powerless to prevent—not that he was powerless to express his intentions when marking proofs but that, like every other author, he could not fully control

what finally appeared in the published text. Every text that leaves its author's hands takes on a life of its own, whether with its author's blessing or not. Pound's incorporation of the accidents of history into his stated aims for his work does not mean that we should lose interest in the work as he created it. Nor does the contrasting view of most writers—that alterations they did not initiate threaten the artistic integrity of their works—provide any justification for our slighting the versions of works containing nonauthorial elements. All versions of a work that once existed are legitimate subjects for historical reconstruction, but each reconstructed text can only be an attempt to bring back one of them.

Determining the stage that one wishes to recapture in the history of a work is a separate matter from deciding how best to accomplish the task. If one has chosen to concentrate on the social product—on the work as it emerged from the collaborative process that leads to publication or distribution—one might well conclude that the most appropriate text need not necessarily entail reconstruction at all but might instead be one of the texts actually published. A published text is of course not quite the same thing as the text intended by the publisher. In the case of a printed edition comprising variant copies as a result of stop-press corrections or the substitution of corrected leaves or sheets, one might indeed wish to reconstruct a text incorporating all the corrections found in different copies. Such a text would be the most correct form of the published text but could still contain what from the publisher's point of view were errors. Nevertheless, each of the variant published texts, however it may have fallen short of the publisher's intention, has the advantage of displaying one form of the text that was in fact offered to the reading public. Naturally one could try to reconstruct a text representing the work as affected only by the author's friend or literary adviser or printer or publisher; but, unless one of those persons were of particular renown and interest, such reconstructed texts would have less practical usefulness than a text showing the cumulative result of all their contributions. Even though the published text might contain readings not intended by any of them, those errors would be part of the text presented to readers, and thus relevant to the concerns of those who see verbal works as collaborative products. Their approach leads inevitably in the direction of favoring the texts of documents, not the reconstructed texts of works, as the material of historical study.

It is for this reason that discussions of scholarly editing often concentrate on authorial intention—not because collaborative texts are necessarily considered inappropriate but because they can frequently be represented by the texts of existing documents, whereas texts reflecting authors' inten-

tions are more likely to be ill represented by any surviving documentary texts and to demand reconstruction. Editors of ancient works sometimes claim that the best they can do in each case is to reconstruct the text of the manuscript that was the common ancestor of all the surviving manuscripts, a text that may be very different from the one intended by the author. This position, however, exaggerates the distinction between assessing the variants present in documents and offering new readings not present in any document. The former carries no greater certainty than the latter, both being the product of informed judgment, which can have the author's intention as its aim just as readily as the scribe's intention. Editors of works written from the late Middle Ages onward—works, that is, generally represented by texts contemporaneous with their authors—have less hesitation to take authorial intention as their goal; but their attention to it is sometimes deflected by the allure of certain documents sanctioned in one way or another by the authors. Thus an editor may be tempted to adopt the conventional punctuation of a first edition text rather than the idiosyncratic punctuation of the author's manuscript, forgetting that to do so would be to elevate authorial expectation or acquiescence over authorial intention, and therefore to shift the focus from the individual author to the collaborative group.

Given the rarity of accurate copying, the best guide to authorial intention is likely to be the author's own final manuscript, or in its absence the manuscript or printed edition derived from it with the smallest number of intermediate steps. Authorial revisions from later texts can of course be incorporated into that early text, depending on what stage in the history of the author's changing intentions one is concentrating on; and there may be instances where an author has so thoroughly worked over a text that—in the absence of a new manuscript—a later edition can become the point of departure for reconstructing the text of a revised version. Determining which variants are revisions intended by the author is the heart of the editing process and requires editors to survey all available evidence—the physical evidence present in each textual document and any other relevant historical evidence outside those documents—and to evaluate it with sensitivity and good judgment. The result is a historical reconstruction, even though it may not correspond with any text that ever existed in tangible form, because the goal is what once existed in the author's mind. The validity of the reconstruction rests entirely on the quality of thought engaged in its preparation.

With this framework for thinking about the reconstruction of texts, one can see how various issues fall into place. Whether, for example, an

editor should enforce consistency in punctuation and spelling depends on the author's intention or the conventions of the time, whichever is being emphasized. More often than not over the centuries consistency in these matters has not been regarded as something particularly worth striving for. Other forms of modernization must also, by definition, be avoided in a historical reconstruction. The alteration of punctuation and spelling to make them conform to a presumed present-day standard should be thought of in the same terms as translation or any other kind of adaptation for a particular audience. Unconscious modernizing is bound to occur, for whatever one does reflects the workings of a mind conditioned by the present; but the pursuit of history, which appears to be one of the distinctive urges of the human mind, requires us to attempt to put ourselves in tune with minds of the past. We may be relatively successful or unsuccessful in reaching this goal (and we shall never know which), but having such a goal is a very different proposition from deciding deliberately to adapt a past statement to present custom.

Modernizing the nontextual elements of the documentary presentation of texts, however, is outside the scope of textual criticism and can only be judged according to one's standards of graphic design. What is nontextual in each instance depends on how one interprets the author's (or someone else's) conception of the work. Some visual features, such as poetic lines and indentations (or even poetic shapes and typographic patterns), may be textual, when others, such as typeface designs, are not. Authors can have firm opinions about book design and play a role in designing their own books but still not think of typography as an element in their works. They may also take for granted a particular form of presentation, but such an expectation does not in itself mean that they consider that form integral to their work. Of course, some do, and their works must then be approached as works of visual as well as verbal art. (They would then be analogous to woodcuts, etchings, lithographs, photographs, and the like, as tangible works that are intended to exist in multiple versions, each of which is a separate physical object inevitably exhibiting individual characteristics.) It is true that every aspect of the design of a document—such as the quality of paper, the dimensions of leaves, the style of letterforms and layout, and the widths of margins—can influence readers' responses to the text it contains; conventions in these matters do become established, and readers learn to read many of the visual attributes of documents in addition to the visual representations of words and pauses. If one is studying readers' responses of the past, therefore, one must take all such characteristics of documents into account; they are all obviously part of the documentary evidence that

scholars must examine. But if one is reconstructing texts intended by their authors, one generally need not preserve these features of documents, for they are not, except in unusual cases, part of the intended texts.

Of all the historical activities of textual study, the effort to reconstruct the texts of works as intended by their creators takes us deepest into the thinking of interesting minds that preceded us. We must respect the documents that make our insights possible, but we cannot rest there if we wish to experience the works created by those minds. The old man in Yeats's poem, who in sailing to Byzantium is voyaging out of nature and into art, understands how human creativity liberates the soul from its bondage to deteriorating flesh. The soul must "clap its hands and sing, and louder sing / For every tatter in its mortal dress"; but it can learn how to sing, Yeats says, only by "studying / Monuments of its own magnificence." Even if one believes that Yeats overstated his case and that there are other kinds of singing schools, one can still recognize the positive values inherent in the attempt to recover the past. One has no obligation to look backward, if one's temperament does not allow the looking to enhance one's sense of human possibilities and of self-fulfillment. But neither should one feel a necessity to try to ignore the past, out of a belief that only by so doing are one's human potentialities freed. What is perhaps most distinctively human is the acceptance of alternatives, the recognition that no single point of view can adequately encompass the attitudes of human beings about their own existence. One of those alternatives is what textual criticism offers, the search for past intentions in all their rich complexity.

Our cultural heritage consists, in Yeats's phrase, of "Monuments of unageing intellect"; but those monuments come to us housed in containers that—far from being unageing—are, like the rest of what we take to be the physical world, constantly changing. Verbal works, being immaterial, cannot be damaged as a painting or a sculpture can; but we shall never know with certainty what their undamaged forms consist of, for in their passage to us they are subjected to the hazards of the physical. Even though our reconstructions become the texts of new documents that will have to be evaluated and altered in their turn by succeeding generations, we have reason to persist in the effort to define the flowerings of previous human thought, which in their inhuman tranquillity have overcome the torture of their birth. Textual criticism cannot enable us to construct final answers to textual questions, but it can teach us how to ask the questions in a way that does justice to the capabilities of mind. It puts us on the trail of one class of our monuments and helps us to see the process by which humanity attempts, sometimes successfully, to step outside itself.

TEXTUAL AND LITERARY THEORY: REDRAWING THE MATRIX

D. C. GREETHAM

This essay was an early attempt (announced as a «prolegomenon») at discerning the philosophical, methodological, and critical «interplay» between the twin disciplines of literary and critical practice: in fact, to demonstrate that the two approaches (and the material they study) should not be regarded as separate but as inevitably interconnected. The essay is thus primarily a staking out of this interconnectedness, and served as an introduction to the more developed analysis in my 1999 *Theories of the Text*. Recognizing that the interplay had been largely ignored by literary theorists, who were for the most part ignorant of the major shifts in textual philosoph(ies) in the last few decades, the essay also tries to alert textual practitioners in all fields and periods that their unchallenged procedures nonetheless rest on certain conceptual/theoretical assumptions that to a large extent determine the sort of questions to be asked and the results to be expected.

Using a tripartite arrangement of writer-, text-, and reader-based theories, the essay then provides both a potted history of critical approaches and an account of current debates, placing the examples, perhaps too schematically, into one or other of these three parts. Thus, the writer-based section concentrates largely on intentionalist, phenomenological, and historical predispositions. The text-based encounters formalist (and especially New Critical), textual-analytical, and structuralist theories. And the third, reader-based, section concentrates on receptional, poststructural/deconstructive, and «readerly play» (*jouissance*) approaches. In each section, literary critics, philosophers, sociologists, linguists, and other workers in the greater field of text are enlisted to support not only the tripartite arrangement but the overlapping concepts and practices that demonstrate the interplay of textual and literary in each area. From the Alexandrian librarians to Derrida & Co., the essay argues that the «matrix» has indeed been redrawn – many times. D.C.G.

Questo saggio rappresenta un primo tentativo (annunciato come un «prolegomenon») di definire i rapporti reciproci – da un punto di vista filosofico, metodolo-

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gico e critico – tra le due discipline gemelle della letteratura e della critica e per dimostrare che i due approcci al testo (e il loro materiale di studio) non devono essere considerati come separati, ma come strettamente interconnessi. Il saggio, che costituisce prima di tutto un'analisi di questa interconnessione, è stato utilizzato come *Introduzione* al volume di Greetham del 1999 *Teorie del testo*. Muovendo dalla constatazione che tale azione reciproca è stata in larga parte trascurata dai teorici della letteratura che hanno semplicemente ignorato i grandi cambiamenti che negli ultimi decenni hanno interessato le filosofie del testo, il saggio mette in guardia tutti coloro che in qualche modo hanno a che fare con problemi testuali, in ogni ambito e periodo storico, sul fatto che ogni procedura, se pure unanimemente accettata, poggia nondimeno su assunti concettuali e teoretici che in larga misura determinano il tipo di domande da porsi e i risultati attesi.

Attraverso la triplice griglia interpretativa delle teorie focalizzate su *scrittore*, *testo* e *lettore*, il saggio fornisce una concisa storia degli approcci critici e una rassegna dei dibattiti contemporanei, cercando di catalogare gli esempi, per quanto in modo forse eccessivamente schematico, all'interno delle tre teorie. Pertanto, la sezione focalizzata sullo «scrittore» si concentra soprattutto sulle predisposizioni di intenzionalità, fenomenologia e storia. La teoria centrata sul «testo» incontra il favore delle teorie formaliste (e in modo particolare di quelle della Nuova critica), delle teorie analitico-testuali e strutturaliste. La terza teoria, infine, basata sul «lettore», prende in esame un approccio che tocca i problemi della ricezione del testo, del post-strutturalismo e del decostruttivismo, e del «readerly play» (*jouissance*). In ognuna di queste sezioni, critici letterari, filosofi, sociologi, linguisti e tutti gli altri operatori nel grande ambito del «testo» sono chiamati in causa per sostenere non solo la predetta triplice divisione, ma la sovrapposizione di concetti e pratiche testuali che mostrano l'interrelazione tra testuale e letterario in ogni area. Dai bibliotecari di Alessandria fino a Derrida e ai suoi allievi, il saggio suggerisce che la «matrice» originaria sia stata molte volte ridisegnata, assai più di quanto si possa pensare.

At a recent conference on “Shakespeare: Text and Deconstruction”¹ I suggested it was no accident that the current “revisionist” textual view of certain Shakespeare plays² had occurred during a period of post-structuralist unease with the fixed, determinate text of literary criticism, or, similarly, that the hegemony of New Criticism—despite its ostensible rejection of intention—had corresponded with the domination of the single, eclectic text reflecting auctorial intentionality.³ I was not supposing that textual and literary critics had been in conscious emulation of each other, but rather that a specific intellectual climate made some critical and textual assumptions more likely or plausible at some times than at others.⁴ In other words, that particular critical and textual practices were promoted and sustained by a general theoretical disposition.

Like it or not, we live in a period of theory. Courses taught in graduate schools, books published by young scholars, sessions held at professional conferences—all reflect the literary concentration on theory as something distinct from, (although perhaps dependent on), the empirical, evaluative, or historical criticism of earlier decades. Inevitably, there is resistance to this movement—from both literary critics and from textual critics. Among the literary folk are those “humanists” who regard structuralism, post-structuralism, marxism and the rest as arid, if not immoral,⁵ and among the textuists Shakespearians who wish to retain the securities of a single text, mediaevalists who seek the one Chaucer among the many, modernists who want their Joyce clear not synoptic. And, equally inevitably, the quiet business of “traditional” literary criticism still goes on, as, of course, does the business of textual criticism and editing.

However, the textual-critical business has in recent years confronted some of the issues raised by literary theory, beginning with the pioneering work of Bowers in his *Textual and Literary Criticism* (1966).⁶ To cite just two exemplary cases: Tanselle’s 1979 article on final intention used Wimsatt, Beardsley, Hancher, Hirsch, and T. M. Gang in its analysis of the theoretical problem of intentionality,⁷ and James McLaverty’s 1984 article on intention⁸ employed evidence drawn from literary theorists and critics (Hirsch), behaviorial psychologists (Skinner), structuralist linguists (Saussure), and philosophers (Collingwood). More recent studies by, for example, Peter Shillingsburg, Hershel Parker, Jerome McGann, Louis Hay, and Hans Gabler⁹ have confirmed that practising textual critics are prepared to engage the literary theorists and to make use of some of their concepts. And sessions at textual conventions (indeed, entire conferences)¹⁰ have investigated the interplay between literary and textual dispensations.

As we might have anticipated, the literary theorists have, in general, not returned the favour. Some “theoretical” journals have published articles by textual scholars,¹¹ and the more adventurous literary critics have, on occasion, included textual problems in their consideration of theory¹² or have taken part in the public debate. But for the most part, the literary theorists have continued their work as if there had been no advances in textual-critical theory in the last few decades,¹³ and—on our side of the fence—the *editing* of texts has sometimes continued without a full or articulated investigation of the theoretical *choices* involved in each separate editorial task.¹⁴

But despite the general lack of territorial engagement, it is clear that textuists *need* a theory (or theories) of textuality as a medium for dia-

logue—with each other or with those from different disciplines. A purely empirical approach—a recital of the specific circumstances of specific texts and the story of the editorial resolution of the problems they engender—can perhaps have a useful role in the accountability of editors for what they have done, and will, of course, be cited in the textual introductions for any responsible textual edition. But some synthesis of various individual and exemplary experiences is necessary to make them comprehensive and comprehensible, and Tanselle's occasional encyclopaedic surveys of the field in *Studies in Bibliography* in part fulfill this function,¹⁵ although they also illuminate textual argument at large and frequently tie this argument to the theoretical postures employed in other disciplines (as in the “Final Intentions” article). But local empiricism (“this is what we did and why we did it”) has, because of its concentration upon experience, little to offer those who have not yet had, and are perhaps unlikely to have, the same or a similar experience.¹⁶ What theory does offer is (in the words of W. J. T. Mitchell in the introductory essay to *Against Theory*) “reflection, fundamental principles, models, schemes, systems, large-scale guesswork, metaphysics, speculation, intuition, and abstract thought” in parallel series to an “empiricist” list of “immediate perception, surface phenomena, things in themselves, small-scale certainty, physics, traditional wisdom, discursive reading, and concrete experience.”¹⁷

It is not, of course, that theory is better than empiricism (or vice versa), nor that empiricism (particularly in such items on the list as “small-scale certainty” and “traditional wisdom”) is not necessary to the editorial task (most of the qualities in Mitchell's “empiricist” list are indeed justifiably prized by editors)—but rather that theory provides a matrix for the plotting of the “certainties”, small or otherwise, since it delineates a schema for the measurement of editorial attitudes and “reflections”.

And, of course, textual criticism has not been shy of theory. From Alexandrian “analogy” through to Lachmannian stemmatics, Greg-Bowers intentionalism, and McGann social textual criticism, theories of how authors work, (even of who or what authors *are*), how texts are generated and transmitted, and how they should be represented to an audience, have been used to define, defend, and proselytise a theoretical view of the nature of composition, production and transmission—an ontology of the text, if you will. Thus, when Lachmann declares that the archetype of the Lucretius can be reconstituted and shows how this is to be done by the charting of “truth” and “error” in a genealogical table of witnesses, extant and inferred, he is inevitably privileging that archetype as the major

desideratum of the textual scholar, and incidentally but forcefully invalidating the significance of the *codices descripti* lower down the family tree. Within the matrix of possible privileged positions, he is endorsing the relative chronological “superiority” of the archetype (although, note, not the fair copy, which remains unplottable and therefore without privilege) against inferior “copy”, scribal reinscription etc. This seems obvious enough—and quite proper—to most classically-trained textual scholars, but it needs saying for two reasons: first, because no dictum should be implicitly and permanently accepted without continual demonstration of its validity (and what might have worked as a model in the transmission of classical texts need not be immutably pertinent in other periods), and second, because the *theoretical* grounds for an empirical assertion should be understood as a part of its evidentiary status. In other words, there is no “natural” or “self-evident” ontology of the text, but rather a series of alternative “metaphysics” displaying “fundamental principles” (to return to Mitchell’s terminology) which will involve some degree of “speculation”, some “intuition” and even, as most textual critics are willing to admit, some “large-scale guesswork”. As Tanselle notes, *all* editing requires a measure of critical judgement (or, in Mitchell’s words, speculative “guesswork”) which might have “large-scale” implications.¹⁸

Why belabour all of this if it ought to be obvious to the practitioner? Well, the major reason for raising the issue now, for an audience of bibliographers old and new, is that the matrix I spoke of has been very largely redrawn by our neighbours in literary criticism, in history, philosophy, even sociology and mathematics, and if textual criticism is to remain one of the major intellectual disciplines of our culture, it must at the very least be aware of this redrawing, at those parts of the matrix that bisect the accepted or acceptable notions of “text” and “author”. Developments in, say, structuralist linguistics and anthropology, or in the new science of “chaos”,¹⁹ no longer keep to their neat disciplinary boundaries, but on the contrary, they create new disciplines in the gaps left by the retreating older ones. This tendency (noted in the very recent history of chaos in particular) has broad institutional implications. As the work of legal scholars like Rawls or anthropologists like Clifford Geertz shows, there has been a movement towards finding the centre of the humanist and social science ethic in the “textual variance” of the “texts” studied.²⁰ Philosophers like Richard Rorty (and literary critics like Robert Scholes) have even suggested that the typical research university will eventually reformulate itself to contain “textual departments” (rather than departments of English, history, philosophy, sociology etc.).²¹ Such a possible in-

stitutional redefinition—if it ever happens (and Scholes we should note heads not an English department but a Center for Culture and Media at Brown) will be a direct product of the redrawing of the map of the text and its author and reader, and on this new map textual scholarship—as we have traditionally understood that term—must find a place, indeed a *central* not a marginal place. It would be a lost opportunity, and a major intellectual tragedy, if textual scholarship were not to seek a role in future “departments of texts”, but it cannot achieve this status if its practitioners remain resolutely unaware of, or even hostile to, the disciplinary and institutional changes which have caused the map to be redrawn.

As I have argued elsewhere, literary critics have all too often assumed that in the new textualism (or even in the old evaluative criticism) “any text will do”.²² No reader of *Studies in Bibliography* would accept such a dismissive retreat from textual responsibility, and it is thus our job to know where we stand, almost literally, in the redrawing of the terrain. The rest of this article, after this somewhat polemical introduction to the problem, addresses the question of the new matrix and the new drawing. It attempts to show where textual editors do indeed stand, by their work and their theories, in the intersticial choices that are now available. It is genuinely a prolegomenon, for it offers only the outlines of how our editorial and textual practices share certain natural affiliations with the positions of textuists of a different stamp. It does not *produce* anything, for I doubt that immediate or local editorial decisions will change as a result of the plotting I suggest; but it may give a local habitation and a name (and thereby another level of coherence and identity) to our textual enterprise. One final methodological *caveat*: in order to keep the basic outlines of the new matrix clear, much of the supporting—or conflicting—argument is embedded marginally in explanatory notes, where the curious reader can follow up particular aspects of the critical or literary theories under discussion.

I begin with a (mis)quotation, which can be a brief exercise in critical attribution.

I start then with the postulate that what the [critic] is concerned with is pieces of paper or parchment covered with certain written or printed *signs*. With these signs he is concerned merely as *arbitrary* marks; their *meaning* is no business of his. (emphases mine)

This sounds like one of the “hermeneutical mafia” pontificating again—perhaps Eco or Culler (given the concentration on signs), Derrida, de

Man, Hillis Miller, or Hartman—we may all have our favourite candidates. But the *misquotation* is instructive in this case. The first sentence should read: “the *bibliographer* [not *critic*] is concerned with . . . signs” etc. And the author of this espousal of the arbitrariness of signs and the impropriety of meaning? Not a refugee from the École Normale Supérieure nor even from Geneva, Konstanz, or New Haven, but that stalwart of Anglo-American “strict” bibliography, W. W. Greg. If bibliographers disdain mere meaning, what chance for those toiling in both literary *and* textual fields? But the apparent coincidence of view (culled, I admit, from Greg’s more polemical writings in defence of bibliography as a “science” of “forms”)²³ can be valuable, as I have suggested: literary and textual critics and theorists may not have spoken to each other *directly* in the last half-century or so, but there may be parallel conceptual or methodological issues at stake in their attitudes to that mysterious immanence—the “text”. The following brief survey attempts to construct a few possible models where such parallels may be observed in operation. We may find some strange bedfellows, and some of the supposed paradigms may look strained on first acquaintance, but I would hope that a general loosening of the strict territorial imperatives could be of benefit to both parties.

I would like to use a very familiar structure: the writer-, text- and reader-based theories of both literary and textual dispensations. The familiarity of this tripartite division of the textual spoils may modify the apparent heterodoxy of my other suggestions by framing them in a system that offers comparatively little contention.

From a *critical* point of view, one would expect to encounter, for example, intentionalist theories, phenomenological theories, historical-critical “objectivist” theories in the *first* (writer-based) division; formalist, New-Critical, textual-analytical, structuralist theories in the *second* (text-based) division; and reception, deconstructive, *jouissance* (or “readerly-play”) theories in the *third* (reader-based) division. It is obviously an over-simplification, but it will do to give a rough orientation to the textual and critical dispensations to be covered.

Let us first admit that some of the possible theoretical filiations are more honestly (or perhaps more directly) stated than others. For example, Steven Mailloux’s suggested revision of the Hancher-Tanselle line on intention in his *Interpretive Conventions* (1982)²⁴ acknowledges the presence of Stanley Fish in his title, his method, and his documentation. (Ultimately, I think his argument responds more to Poulet and a phenomenological reading of intention than a Fishian, but that is another question.)²⁵ On the other hand, Jerome McGann’s assault—in his

*Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*²⁶—upon the Greg-Bowers definition of (and apparent need for) intention makes no such attempt to place itself in the general inheritance of critical speculation, and therefore has appeared more contentious (and revolutionary) to other textual critics than it really is. The Geneva and Konstanz schools, Fishian affective stylistics and interpretive communities, even the good old *textus receptus*—one of the hoariest of textual *données*—may all lie behind McGann's position in the *Critique*, but they are not an informing part of his argument as they have been in some of his other historical and critical works. And this is particularly important, given the sweeping political arguments that underlie McGann's book. Some textual critics would simply consign McGann's work to the *demesne* of "literary criticism" and therefore ignore it (interestingly, the *Critique* was reviewed in *TLS*²⁷ under the rubric of "literary theory", not "Textual Criticism" or "Bibliography"), but as the very rationale of this survey suggests, I believe that *all* textual or literary arguments, even the least valuable in practice, rest upon certain theoretical assumptions which must be questioned and made to give an account of themselves.

But on to the first stage: writer-based theories. As already suggested, the dominant phase of an intentionalist *textual* theoretical school in this last half-century has clearly been the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle promotion of "original" intentions for *form* (accidentals) and "final" intentions for *content* (substantives). This distinction between form and content is obviously not perfect or absolute, (and would not be accepted as such by the major proponents of the theory)²⁸ but it shows the relative *direction* of the historical values inherent in the theory (i.e., the "dual" or "divided" authority of two different manifestations of intention, often at two or more different historical moments). The theory is compounded or reinforced by—and draws much of its evidence from—an admixture of history of technology usually shown in a reliance on data drawn from analytical bibliography, with which the school is also associated. As McLaverty has already demonstrated, this general ideology is most closely allied with Hirsch's definition of an auctorially intended "meaning"²⁹—an historically determinable objective context which is yet another resuscitation of supposedly moribund historical criticism. In fact, in his recent survey of Bowers' contributions to textual criticism (*PBSA*³⁰, on the occasion of Bowers' eightieth birthday celebrations), Tanselle makes much of this *historical* rationale for the Greg-Bowers jurisdiction. (Whether Greg could have foreseen that his essay on copy-text would have led to such wide-ranging contention in textual criticism is obviously beside the point: both

his disciples and his apostates seem to agree on the basic *terms* of the debate, and disagree primarily on their specific applicability to fields beyond Renaissance drama.) Thus, I think it was no accident that the related school of *New Bibliography* was pertinently so called as an historical antidote to the *New Criticism* (as well as in reaction to the *old*, belletristic, bibliography), for the *New Criticism* had an avowed ahistorical bias. Parker's and Higgins' "*New Scholarship*", short-lived as a critical and political term, might have been trying to make a similarly reactive and polemical point, but since the term was withdrawn soon after its coinage, it never achieved a coherent body of demonstration.³¹ The more significant observation for our paradigmatic purposes is that such an historical/intentionalist emphasis lies not only within Hirschian auspices but also within phenomenological (and even some aspects of hermeneutical) as well. Thus, Husserl's "intentional" theory of consciousness, whereby the text is seen as an embodiment of auctorial consciousness,³² Gadamer's partial—and early—espousal of the varying relevance of "meaning" to auctorial intention,³³ and most persuasively, Hans Robert Jauss' defining of the literary work within its individual historical "horizon",³⁴ leading to the concept of the cultural and chronological "alterity" or "otherness" of the work³⁵—all of these share a reliance upon historical intention for their definitions and methodologies. Now, there are obvious refinements to be made which mar the paradigms to some extent—so, for example, Gadamer's insistence on the hermeneutical "relativity" of meaning, supportive as it might be initially of historical criticism (and therefore intention), also allows by extension the *continuity* of meaning through time which McGann endorses in the *Critique*.³⁶ But, despite such reservations, I think the basic model holds up clearly enough. One might argue that *any* intentionalist school is ultimately a product of the old Germanic philological dispensation of *Altertumswissenschaft*; in *textual* theory, for example, most of the dissenters from the Greg-Bowers principles of copy-text (one thinks of Thorpe and Gaskell³⁷ as prime instances) would probably still regard themselves as practising a form of intentionalist, historical criticism—it is merely that the historical focus is placed elsewhere, say, on printed editions rather than on auctorial manuscripts.

In this speculative tour of paradigms, we move next to text-based theories, where the mid-century influence of Formalist/New-Critical decontextualisation of the text is well-attested. The orthodox Formalist concentration on defamiliarisation³⁸ (of which more anon) shows a predisposition to respond to particular types of inter-(or perhaps, more correctly, *intra*-) textual relationships (particularly multi-layered ironies),

and this intra-textual layering, albeit under objective bibliographical principles, can be observed in the synoptic text of Gabler's *Ulysses* (and perhaps in any "texte génétique" as well—although that's a more problematical question).³⁹ I am not convinced that genetic editors—despite their generally phenomenological assertions—belong automatically in the intentionalist division; it depends on the use made of the genetically-derived material. Perhaps paradoxically, Gabler's "clear-text" reading page could be seen as a "New-Critical" *resolution* of the structuralist ironies present in the synoptic text (i.e., as the critic/editor's selection of readings which remove or explain or fulfil the layers of meaning in the text, in the manner of a formalist's objective codification of the linguistic tensions in the work); *or*, the clear text might represent *auctorial* "final" intention as well as, or in place of, a merely *critically*-resolved final structure. Stated bluntly, the problem in any joint synoptic/clear text edition is how far does the latter stage correspond to final intention, insofar as that can be delineated in any *single*, eclectic text? But with or without clear text, a synoptic text—where multiple authority exists, of course—is a sort of "scrambled" (but presumably decodable) version of the Lachmannian filiative system, except that the synoptic text may eschew the *hierarchical* format of variants on which the Lachmann method depends. (The distinction is not entirely apt, as I recognise, for even a synoptic text must have a "base" text on which the diacritics can map the dynamic of textual growth, but the *formal* arrangement of a synoptic text is not inevitably genealogical or stemmatic, as the Lachmann system always is.)⁴⁰ This Lachmann system McGann (mistakenly, I believe) regards as the unfortunate progenitor of modern intentionalism⁴¹—as a part of his general case against the intentionalist inheritance of the Greg-Bowers school. On the contrary, I would hold that Lachmann was *primarily* a sort of proto-structuralist, for even the potential embarrassment of the circular logic represented by the definition of "error" does not fundamentally detract from the Lachmannian's insistence on the structuralist descriptiveness of filiation (i.e., the stage identified by *recensio*, not by *emendatio* or *divinatio*). And, of course, the structuralist system of bipolar oppositions⁴² (on/off, night/day, good/bad) is seen most tellingly, and used most compellingly, in the Lachmannian insistence upon the determination of vertical transmission by the opposition of "truth" and "error", a dualism which also surfaced in the bipartite stemmata for which Bédier had such scorn.⁴³ In fact, it was this very putative (and in his view spurious) structuralist "objectivity" which so enraged Housman and led him to claim that the Germans had confused textual criticism with mathematics!⁴⁴

Similarly, it is the social and literary structuralists' reduction of society and literature to a series of positive or negative equations and their resultant denial of subjective evaluation which in these later days has so enraged the humanist critics.⁴⁵

While McGann does acknowledge that there is an intellectual disjunct between Lachmannian stemmatics and twentieth-century intentionalism, it is, I think, a mischaracterisation of the history of textual theory to place the Lachmannian method and its aims (as he does) in a linear relationship with the Greg-Bowers school. The problem with McGann's "schematic history" is that, despite the noted disjunct, he fails properly to recognise the very limited status of the archetype in the Lachmannian system—an acknowledgedly corrupt state of textual transmission which does *not* respond to intention. Housman saw this weakness in the Lachmannian argument, when he accused the school of relying upon hope rather than judgement in their acquiescence to what amounted to a "best-text" theory,⁴⁶ although it was not so called. (There are, of course, several ironies in the *terms* of this conflict.)

A separate, and much fuller, study would be required to argue the problem of whether a filiative theory of textual criticism is analogous to the sort of geneticism practised by so many contemporary European textuists—Hay, Lebrave, Zeller—or whether Soviet textology, with its emphasis on the "unintentional", "non-authorial" remaniment, is similarly structuralist.⁴⁷ As my general tone would indicate, I believe they probably are.

There is one possibly valid *methodological* distinction which might be raised, however. If the concentration is on *the process* of creation as an indication of intention (e.g., Lebrave or Gabler in the assumed *relations* between his synoptic and clear-text phases),⁴⁸ then the textual theory and practice may be deemed phenomenological, as Mailloux has already implicitly recognised.⁴⁹ If, on the other hand, the concentration is seen primarily as a vehicle for the mere mapping of alternatives (auctorial *and* non-auctorial)—i.e., a critical variorum of variant "states"—then the theory and practice is primarily structuralist.⁵⁰ It depends on whether the analogy is what Frye claims to have done for genre in the *Anatomy*⁵¹ (descriptive, non-evaluative criticism) or what Barthes does for Balzac⁵² and advertisements (descriptive, analytical, *and* reader-defined). A charting of the *particles* of a text (Slavic textology and perhaps Zeller and Hay) will be polysemic almost *malgré lui* (and therefore semiotic and therefore structuralist) rather than primarily intentionalist. The difference in emphasis may be significant, for an intentionalist, writer-based theory would attach

no inherent value to these later polysemic structures, except insofar as they could be shown to represent “coded” or “embedded” auctorial intention—at presumably a “post-textual” (or at any rate a “post-auctorial” stage of transmission). But a structuralist or semiotic text-based *or* reader-based theory would obviously find the major interest in the *variety* of structures, whether or not this represented the intentionality of a single consciousness.⁵³ It would be either the interaction of these structures (their *intertextuality*, if you like), or the reader’s play on their polysemic array, which would be the main focus of the activities of such critics.

I would also hold that the *earliest* formal structuralism (even though occasionally intentionalist as well) is Third Century BC Alexandrian *analogy*, whereby an analysis of remaniement structures could be used to determine the nature and content of the phenomenological “gaps” in the documentation of intention. (If the reader will forgive the play, a very convenient modern analogy for analogy would be the non-analog digital method of a CD player, which can be programmed to eradicate transmissional “errors” and to leap over “gaps” in the surface of the CD.) The irony of this ancient Alexandrian system is that it begins to sound rather like the phenomenologist Ingarden’s *schemata*,⁵⁴ used to fill “gaps” in the contextual “frame of reference” of the work, and similar to Wolfgang Iser’s “strategies” or “repertoires” of themes and codes which again form phenomenological structures for the resolution of intentional cruxes.⁵⁵ The Alexandrians’ promotion of an ideology of the “Homeric” (or “non-Homeric”) line could lead either to a subjective play reminiscent of Barthian *jouissance* (under the “creative” textual emendations practised by Zenodotus of Ephesus) or (under the more austere “coding” of variants without implicit status practised by Aristarchus of Samothrace),⁵⁶ to a conservative reticence reminiscent of Zeller or the Slavic textologists. The *principle* is the same; it’s the *practice* that varies. And this principle, made notorious by Bentley’s infamous edition of *Paradise Lost*, is very much alive and well in what I believe to be the equally post-structuralist *jeu* of Kane/Donaldson’s *Piers Plowman*, where the editors, under the guise of intentionality—of constructing what Langland wrote, or *ought* to have written—playfully (and successfully) fabricate a *writerly* (*scriptible*) text which responds to the needs of the reader (and the editor) for “perfectability” in the alliterative line, and not, so David Fowler argues, to the cumulative documentary evidence.⁵⁷

Concluding the triad, we encounter reader-based theories (which, as I have implicitly suggested, can derive very conveniently from apparently text-based theories, as the Kane/Donaldson edition demonstrates). The

clearest statement in recent *textual* theory is, of course, in McGann's *Critique*—the endorsement, in nineteenth-century editing at least, of the so-called “social” school of textual criticism.⁵⁸ Intentionality evaporates in the historical continuum of interpretive communities, for, as in later Fish, there is a shifting of focus from the nature of auctorial consciousness through the nature of the text to the nature of the reading and reconstruction of books. As I have already noted, this position is related to the ancient doctrine of the *textus receptus*, the cumulative history of the text beyond auctorial control, and is nothing terribly new, even on the “textual” front. On the “critical” front, it is even less startling, for Heidegger's insistence on meanings as “situational” (i.e., fluent and relativistic)⁵⁹ and Gadamer's and Jauss' charting of the passage of meaning from one cultural context to another⁶⁰ can both be seen to anticipate McGann's position. Ironically, so could Hirsch's acceptance of the fluctuating “significance” of the work,⁶¹ although I recognise that Hirsch is really talking about other than the formal features of the text in this case. Furthermore, I would hazard that Bakhtin's concept of the linguistic community as a battleground over meaning (where “ideological contention” may achieve resolution through such processional devices as the “carnival” of language)⁶² might also be observed behind McGann's “new” position. Competing views over “continuity” versus “determinism” have been seen recently in our Attorney General's endorsement of “a jurisprudence of original intention”, which Justice Brennan regards as the unfortunate result of minds having “no familiarity with the historical record.”⁶³ Brennan's “relativistic” view of interpretation appears in, for example, Bruce Ackerman's affective theory of constitutionalism, which is frankly based on a Fishian⁶⁴ method. “Relativism” versus “Originalism” was, of course, the focus of the debate over the nomination to the Supreme Court of the historical conservative Robert Bork.

[...]*

Notes

¹ “Shakespeare: Text and Deconstruction” (December, 1985), CUNY Graduate Center. This paper was an attempt to draw together recent developments in Shakespeare stud-

* Greetham identifies poststructuralist theories of text, here represented by Barthean and Derridean arguments for the indeterminacy of texts, as the «death knell» of the structuralist systems, authorial intention, and historically consistent readings. He then explores the role of self-contradictions and defamiliarization as essential components of literary language. EDD.

ies as described in conference papers by both textual critics (Steven Urkowitz and T. H. Howard-Hill), and literary critics (Annabel Patterson and Jean Howard).

² I.e., the growing insistence that the variant states of such plays as *Hamlet* (1603, 1605, 1623), *King Lear* (1608, 1623), *Romeo and Juliet* (1597, 1599), and *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1600, 1623) demonstrate the hand of Shakespeare the “reviser”, rather than a single “authoritative” version with corrupt variant states, created, for example, by “memorial reconstruction” or inept piracy.

³ The influence of the New Criticism and eclectic, single-intention texts is, of course, not perfectly co-terminous, for the principles of the eclectic text were formed over several centuries of experimentation and of a gradual increase in the early twentieth-century knowledge of the technical circumstances of the transmission of Elizabethan drama, whereas New Criticism was a much more recent (and local) phenomenon. However, each achieved a dominant academic position in the first few decades after the Second World War, with New Criticism ceding to structuralism and other theoretical persuasions and eclecticism being challenged by revisionism in the early and mid-1970s.

⁴ There is inevitably some irony in the New Critics’ having rejected intention as a motivating force for their analysis (indeed, in having disdained it as a “Fallacy”), while using the concept of the single, informing, consciousness as a unifying and unitary vehicle for their poetics—the “well-wrought urn” was a single, static, artifact. The point, I think, is that intention identified with a specific, historical, validating individual (and the citing of this intention as a privileged means of “explaining” the poem) was a contextual embarrassment to the New Critics, but that the New-Critical reliance on cohesion arising from a reconciliation of the multiple ironies in a poetic utterance unavoidably rested upon the unacknowledged concept of an intentionalising consciousness. Thus it was necessary that, for political reasons (a rebuttal of both belletristic and historical criticism) the New Critics had to abhor the *ideology* of intention while still relying upon the implied consciousness behind it.

⁵ Perhaps the most unsavoury event (for both sides) in this moral conflict was the recent revelation that one of the founders of deconstruction, Paul de Man, had contributed to a fascist journal during the war years. To the “humanist” critics of post-structuralism, such an historical discovery seemed to vindicate their charge that deconstruction was at best an amoral, anti-humanist enterprise, and at worst, a socially pernicious one. To the deconstructors, this “history” was just another example of the figurative ineluctability of language and perhaps of the basic contradictions that underlie all utterances—including the life of the critic. The debate has not rested, but for a long and measured estimation of the problem, see Jacques Derrida, “Like the Sound of the Sea Deep within a Shell: Paul de Man’s War,” *Critical Inquiry*, 14 (Spring, 1988), 590-652.

⁶ Based on his Sandars lectures at Cambridge University (1958), this collection of essays placed the onus for self-education and change clearly on the shoulders of the literary critics. Noting that “We should be seriously disturbed by the lack of contact between literary critics and textual critics” (p. 4), Bowers cites what have become famous examples (by, for example, Matthiessen and Empson) of textual errors—even outright textual misrepresentations—being used by literary critics to promote aesthetic theories which an accurate text would not support. Unfortunately, Bowers’ assertion (thirty years ago) that “it is still a current oddity that many a literary critic has investigated the past ownership of and mechanical condition of his second-hand automobile, or the pedigree and training of his dog, more thoroughly than he has looked into the qualifications of the text on which

his critical theories rest" (p. 5) is perhaps even more relevant in these post-structuralist days, when an active "misprision" of texts is encouraged by such critics as Harold Bloom.

⁷ G. Thomas Tanselle, "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention," *Studies in Bibliography* (SB), 29 (1976), 167-211, reprinted in his *Selected Studies in Bibliography* (1979), pp. 309-353.

⁸ James McLaverty, "The Concept of Authorial Intention in Textual Criticism," *The Library*, 6th Ser. VI (June 1984), 121-138. Another pertinent essay by McLaverty, again dealing with theoretical matters, even alludes directly to a key document of literary criticism in its title—"The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art," (SB, 37 [1984], 82-105)—referring to chapter 12 of Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* 3rd. ed. (1949, rpt. 1963).

⁹ Peter L. Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Lectures in Theory and Practice* (1984), University of New South Wales Department of English Occasional Papers, No. 3. See especially the chapters on "Ontology", "Intention", and "Expectation". See also his "Key Issues in Editorial Theory," (an attempt to define the major terms—*work*, *version*, *text* etc.—of the debate), *Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography*, 6 (1982), 1, 3-16; Hershel Parker, *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction* (1984), "'The Text Itself'—Whatever That Is," *TEXT*, 3 (1986), 47-54; Jerome J. McGann, "Shall These Bones Live?," *TEXT*, 1 (1981), 21-40, "The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works," in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. McGann (1985), pp. 180-199, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983), and "Interpretation, Meaning, and Textual Criticism," *TEXT*, 3 (1986), 55-62; Louis Hay, "Genetic Editing, Past and Future: A Few Reflections by a User," *TEXT*, 3 (1986), 117-134; "Does 'Text' Exist?," *SB*, 41 (1988), 64-76; Hans Walter Gabler, "The Synchrony and Diachrony of Texts: Practice and Theory of the Critical Edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*," *TEXT*, 1 (1981), 305-326, "The Text as Process and the Problem of Intentionality," *TEXT*, 3 (1986), 107-116.

¹⁰ See, for example, the three-day "Symposium on Textual Scholarship and Literary Theory" (27-29 March, 1987), sponsored by the Society for Critical Exchange, at Miami University, Ohio. The proceedings (with essays by, for example, Shillingsburg, James L. W. West, Steven Mailloux, Gerald Graff, and response by Greetham) will appear in a special issue of *Critical Exchange* (1988) [Ed. note: this collection did not appear]. The 1987 conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship (9-11 April) included a special session on textual and literary theory ("Where Worlds Collide: The Contact Between Literary Theory and Literary Artifacts"). The 1989 conference of STS (April 6-8) includes three sessions on textual and literary theory—a plenary session with McGann and Jonathan Goldberg, and two member-organized special sessions.

¹¹ For example, the "theoretical" journal *Critical Inquiry* first published part of chapter 1 of Parker's *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons* under the title "Lost Authority: Non-Sense, Skewed Meanings, and Intentionless Meanings," reprinted in *Against Theory*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (1985), pp. 72-79. This collection, which is used later in this essay to provide some of the terms for the theory/empiricism debate, included, appropriately enough, contributions by Hirsch, Mailloux, Fish, and Rorty. Another recent article is John Sutherland's account of "Publishing History: A Hole at the Centre of Literary Sociology," *Critical Inquiry*, 14 (Spring, 1988), 574-589, a reading of the careers of Robert Darnton, Jerome McGann, and D. F. McKenzie. While the estimation might be salutary for 'critical' readers unused to confronting 'textual' problems, several of Sutherland's assertions (e.g., that McGann is essentially a Marxist) obviously need a fuller debate than is given. In gener-

al, 'critical' readers seem concerned with textual issues only when they provoke controversy or contention (e.g., John Kidd's attack on the Gabler *Ulysses* in *The New York Review of Books*, 30 June 1988, 32-39).

¹² For example, Steven Mailloux, *Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction* (1982), includes a chapter on "Textual Scholarship and 'Author's Final Intention.'" The example is rare, however, of a critic who is *primarily* a theorist being concerned about "textual" matters (none of the contributors to *Against Theory*, for example—with the exception of Parker—raise textual problems). It was, typically, Mailloux who convened the SAML session on "Editing and Recent Literary Theory" that occasioned the first version of this present article.

¹³ See the previous note and the following anecdotal illustration of the problem. At a 1987 Minnesota conference (sponsored by the Modern Language Association and the Ford Foundation) called to determine "the Future of Doctoral Programs in English", Richard Lanham gave what he considered to be a cautionary paper, warning literature departments that new kinds of texts *not* necessarily reflecting a simple, uniform intention might one day be produced. He (and the other literary theorists on the panel and in the audience—e.g., Wayne Booth, Jonathan Culler) were unaware that such "multiple" texts either already existed or had already been conceived by textual critics. Lanham simply assumed (as Bowers sadly noted of literary critics in 1958) that there had been no advances in textual criticism in the last few decades. During the question period, he conceded that the minatory moment was riper than he had imagined.

¹⁴ In the editing of mediaeval texts, for example, there is often the tacit (or expressed) suggestion that recension is the *first* and major order of business. Alfred Foulet's and Mary B. Speer's *On Editing Old French Texts* (1979) poses the typical situation: "If the text to be edited has been preserved in three or more manuscripts, the editor should attempt to classify these manuscripts and diagram their relationships by means of a stemma (genealogical tree). The purpose of the stemma is to depict, in graphic form, the affinities of the various manuscripts and their kinship with their lost common ancestor, the archetype" (p. 49). This spare statement assumes that the concept (if not the reality) of "archetype" is always theoretically viable in multi-witness works, and that the establishment of a putative or fixable "kinship" is always a desirable editorial endeavour. Even the radical Kane/Donaldson editions of *Piers Plowman* (see below) went through the motions of recension before rejecting it, recognising that mediaevalists would have *expected* the editors to adopt this procedure. (Rarely, indeed, has so much of a textual introduction to a scholarly edition been devoted to describing a process which is *not* to be followed in the actual editing. But Kane and Donaldson were obviously aware that this gesture was necessary.) In his survey of "ancient editing" ("Classical, Biblical, and Medieval Textual Criticism and Modern Editing," *SB*, 36 [1983], 21-68), Tanselle notes that editors of older material almost inevitably turn to "transmission" and "genealogy" as the primary task of editing, rather than such "later phases" as the selection or emendation of readings, or the treatment of accidentals. And, in later periods, the well-known public debates on the validity of modernisation of accidentals (between, for example, the American historians and literary editors) or on the applicability of Greg's copy-text theory to non-Renaissance works edited under the Center for Editions of American Authors (CEAA) or Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE) programs are refreshing in that they have aired disciplinary differences, but illustrative of the tendency of scholars in particular fields of study to make common cause with each other and to institutionalise (the historians through the Association for

Documentary Editing) theoretical issues. The current Franco-German move towards the enshrinement of the “texte génétique” in opposition to the earlier hegemony of the Anglo-American eclectic edition (or, in France, of the “best text” school) displays such ideological entrenchments at the national, rather than the disciplinary, level.

¹⁵ Two particularly striking recent examples of Tanselle’s synthesizing coverage include “Historicism and Critical Editing,” *SB*, 39 (1986), 1-46 (reprinted in his *Textual Criticism Since Greg* [1987], pp. 109-154), and “Bibliographical History as a Field of Study,” *SB*, 41 (1988), 33-63, the first a thematic and historical survey of recent textual scholarship and the second a history of a history; together they exemplify the role of scholiast and commentator which Tanselle has assumed for the discipline.

¹⁶ An exemplary, if anecdotal, illustration of the problem: at the 1987 convention of the Association for Documentary Editing (Boston, 5-7 November), a session on “The Presentation of Manuscript Texts” produced three papers of the “what we did” type (James Buchanan on the Documentary History of the Supreme Court, Peter Drummey on “A Librarian’s Point of View”, and Ralph Carlson on “Manuscript Facsimiles”—the latter from the publisher’s perspective). All were solid, scholarly, and well-documented, and offered in their very variety a series of different professional attitudes to the question of manuscript presentation. But because they had no theoretical underpinning—they were practical “hands-on” accounts—their implications extended only marginally beyond the projects they described. However, Albert von Frank’s paper “Genetic Versus Clear Texts” (subsequently published in *Documentary Editing*, 9, No. 4 [December 1987], 5-9), while it selected its examples from a specific author (Emerson), explored the *principles* at stake in the decision to produce a genetic or clear text, asserting (for example) that literary critics might be better persuaded of the “poetics of editing” from having to confront a genetic text edition. It is, I believe, something like the Frank approach which Tanselle was describing in his call for a discussion of “the basic issues that we should consider from an interdisciplinary perspective” instead of the presentation of “watered-down versions of what we are already doing in our individual fields,” “Presidential Address,” *TEXT*, 1 (1981), 5.

¹⁷ W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *Against Theory* (1985), p. 6.

¹⁸ In his various writings, Tanselle has repeatedly insisted on the role of critical judgment; perhaps the most direct statement occurs in his short essay on “Textual Scholarship” for the MLA’s *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, ed. Joseph Gibaldi (1981), where he argues that [editors’] “work is a critical activity, and a critical *edition*, by virtue of the textual decisions it contains (and any discussions of those decisions), is also a critical *study*” (p. 50). It is sadly true, however, that these words are frequently unacceptable institutionally in our profession, for (except for certain noted textual centres such as Toronto or Virginia), academic departments often assign a lesser inherent “value” (and invariably a lesser “critical” status) to editions and works of textual scholarship than to flashier books on criticism and theory.

¹⁹ The interdisciplinary science of chaos, developing first in mathematics, but then moving into physics, geology, astronomy, sociology, art history, and economics, has begun to predict new types of constant, new patterns of order, beneath the apparent unpredictability of, for example, the weather, the stock market, and the formation of snowflakes. Its applicability to textual problems is potentially enormous (e.g., in stylometrics, auctorial accident, collation and filiation), but, to my knowledge, no textual critics have yet taken advantage of its interdisciplinary implications (see James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* [1987]).

²⁰ Geertz suggests that the function of anthropology is “to unpack the layers of meaning in the conceptual world”. John Rawls regards the entire body of the law—written and unwritten—as a “text” for moral and epistemological interpretation, with “variants” having significant ethical, cultural, and semiotic value. For a discussion of the interdisciplinary importance of such textual establishment, recording, and interpretation, see W. J. Winkler, “Interdisciplinary Research: How Big a Challenge to Traditional Fields?” in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 7 Oct. 1987, 1, 14-15.

²¹ Rorty’s “textualism”—the investigation of any text, legal document, historical paper, or literary work for differential or variant “meaning”—would be one of the studies contained in Scholes’s vision of the new university. “I think that the humanities and some of the social sciences are shrinking into one large department. Divisions between, for example, literature and philosophy are not as great as they used to be. It would be very easy, if you didn’t have all the traditional department names, to put together a single department—call it a textual department” (cited in Winkler, p. 14).

²² This problem—of our academic colleagues being unfamiliar with, and disdainful of, textual scholarship—is addressed briefly in my article “A Suspicion of Texts,” *THESIS*, 2 (Fall, 1987), 18-25.

²³ W. W. Greg, “Bibliography—An Apologia,” *The Library*, 4th. Series, 13 (1932), 121-122. The quotation is, of course, used here as a partial *misrepresentation* of Greg’s position on theories of meaning and the critical interpretation of intention. However, the same article might be instructive to both formalists and deconstructors, for Greg notes that theoretically “the study of textual transmission involves no knowledge of the sense of a document but only of its form; the document may theoretically be devoid of meaning or the critic ignorant of its language” (p. 122), concluding, therefore, that it might be “a very interesting exercise . . . to edit a text that had no meaning” (p. 123). This sounds like the precepts of extreme defamiliarisation and deconstruction having been anticipated by bibliography, and one might note that the algorithmic mapping employed by Vinton A. Dearing, one of Greg’s more ardent “scientific” adherents, uses symbolic logic and a somewhat dense rhetoric in the establishment of the argument for the “principles of parsimony” and “rings” which are to be the vehicles for an essentially non-verbal “textual analysis”, displayed with great mathematical rigour but little substantive content. Dearing’s *Principles and Practice of Textual Analysis* (1974) is highly dependent on Greg’s algebraic argument, especially his *Calculus of Variants*.

²⁴ Mailloux, for example, suggests that Hancher-Tanselle’s definition of “active intentions” (“active intentions characterize the actions that the author, at the time he finishes the text, understands himself to be performing in that text”—Michael Hancher, “Three Kinds of Intention,” *Modern Language Notes*, 87 [1972], 830; Tanselle, “Final Intentions,” 175) should be redefined to “active intentions characterize the actions that the author, *as he writes the text*, understands himself to be performing in that text” (p. 97)—a change of focus from product to process that one might expect in a reader-response critic.

²⁵ While Mailloux aligns himself with the “interpretive community” school (and therefore with a reader-response ethic in the text), his analysis of, for example, the rationale given by the editors of the Northwestern-Newberry Melville for having emended *nations* to *matrons* (Mailloux, pp. 114-115) relies upon the reader-critic’s mind having been subsumed into the consciousness of the author, and is therefore closer to Poulet’s suggestion that the reader *becomes* the author/narrator, than it is to Fish’s insistence that the reader *creates* the author. On Poulet, see below, fn. 49.

²⁶ See especially chapter 3 of the *Critique* ("The Ideology of Final Intentions"), where McGann claims that the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line of final intentions is founded on a "Romantic ideology of the relations between an author, his works, his institutional affiliations, and his audience" (p. 42), and cites, in its stead, the position of James Thorpe (*Principles of Textual Criticism* [1972], p. 48), that "The work of art is . . . always tending toward a collaborative status." McGann extrapolates from this to declare that "literary works are fundamentally social rather than personal or psychological products . . . [they] must be produced within some appropriate set of social institutions" (pp. 43-44).

²⁷ Review by T. Davis, *Times Literary Supplement*, 617 (21 September, 1984), 1058.

²⁸ Indeed, Tanselle ("Textual Scholarship" p. 40 and elsewhere) regards Greg's very choice of terms, especially "accidentals", as "misleading" and "unfortunate" (largely because the division suggests—inaccurately—that accidentals do not contribute to "meaning"). However, the terms have stuck and have, at least in popular usage, come to embody the divided—and differing—authority I cite here.

²⁹ McLaverty, "Intention," esp. p. 124, "Hirsch is much the most important figure [among literary theorists] as far as textual criticism is concerned"—a statement I would question given the wider-ranging compass of my survey. Note, further, that McLaverty suggests that textual critics (who use the word "intention" in its first *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) sense—"a volition which one is minded to carry out") may have misappropriated Hirsch, who generally uses "intention" in the second *OED* sense—"the direction or application of the mind to an object" (122-123).

³⁰ G. Thomas Tanselle, "The Achievement of Fredson Bowers," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (PBSA), 79 (1985), 3-18, esp. p. 13 (of *Bibliography and Textual Criticism*), "One might perhaps take from it (once again) the conclusion that bibliographers are historians, confronting the same problem that all historians face: how to weigh the preserved evidence in order to reconstruct past events."

³¹ See, for example, Hershel Parker, "The 'New Scholarship': Textual Evidence and Its Implications for Criticism, Literary Theory, and Aesthetics," *Studies in American Fiction*, 9 (1981), 181-197.

³² The slogan of Husserl's phenomenology, "Back to the Things Themselves!" suggests the concrete, historical, value of this stage of the theory. As a science of consciousness, early phenomenology seemed to provide for the *mind* the objectivity which historical critics sought in the *event*—hence its importance to the theoretical discussion of textual intentionality and historicism. See Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1964).

³³ While Gadamer uses Heidegger's rejection of Husserl's "objectivist" view in the study of literary theory (*Truth and Method* [1960]), he does allow that the varying levels of intention are just as much a part of the "historical" situation as is interpretation. Different aspects of both Gadamer's and Heidegger's reflexive stance between *Historie* (objective "events") and *Geschichte* (meaning-full narrative) can, of course, be employed to place them on a linear development from "historicity" to "reception".

³⁴ See Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, tr. T. Bahti (1982) and especially "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," in Ralph Cohen, ed., *New Directions in Literary History* (1974), pp. 11-41.

³⁵ Jauss, "The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature," *New Literary History*, 10 (1979), 181-227.

³⁶ For example, in rejecting (*Critique*, p. 112) Tanselle's claim that regularizing and modernizing are "ahistorical" ("Every literary production is ahistorical in the sense of

Tanselle's usage"), McGann asserts that Tanselle's limited view of an *immediate* historicity "does not recognize the historical dimension of all literary productions, including modernized editions, and so forth" (p. 112). Like Gadamer, McGann sees history not as specifically local to the author, but as a continuum on which later (even modernized) editions, even editions showing the collaboration of later hands, can be plotted in a linear extrapolation of "authority" and "meaning". Tanselle and McGann both appeal to history, but their appeal reflects two very different ideological assumptions.

³⁷ See Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (1972), esp. 339-340, for the argument that "[m]ost authors even today expect the printer to normalize their spelling and capitalization", that "the actual writing of the manuscript . . . is a means of composition, not an end", and that, unless the work was not intended for publication at all (e.g., letters, diaries) or unless the editor can prove that the "author disapproved of the printer's normalization", then the first edition will normally best represent "the text the author wanted to . . . be read". Thus, Thorpe, with his support of the "collaborative" nature of literary composition (see fn. 26), and Gaskell, with his removal of intention from manuscript to print, can both be invoked by textual and literary critics desirous of diluting the authority of author and original intention. But Thorpe and Gaskell are still basically historicists.

³⁸ For a wide-ranging consideration of the literary and linguistic nature of defamiliarisation, see R. H. Stacy, *Defamiliarization in Language and Literature* (1977).

³⁹ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior, 3v. (1984). Tanselle ("Historicism and Critical Editing," *SB*, 39 [1986]) argues that there is a methodological distinction to be made between genetic and synoptic texts: "A genetic text aims to show the development of the text or texts present in a single document by providing a running text that indicates cancellations, interlineations, and other alterations. Gabler's synoptic text, on the other hand, aims to bring together in a single running text the authorial readings from all relevant documents. The symbols in the synoptic text, therefore, have to serve two functions: to indicate (as in a genetic text) the status of alterations within documents and also (as the sigla in a list do) to identify the various source documents and show their sequence. Furthermore, the synoptic text contains editorial emendations, for it is concerned only with authorial revisions, not with "corruptions"—which are therefore to be corrected and recorded 'in the type of subsidiary apparatus best suited to the purpose, i.e., an appended lemmatized emendation list'" (fn. 72, 38-39). Tanselle draws an important practical distinction here for the specific problems of the Gabler edition, but it is a distinction which is not automatically inherent to synoptic and genetic texts. For example, it is surely possible to envisage a so-called "genetic" text which *does* cite variants from several documents, and to imagine a "synoptic" text without editorial emendation, or one in which non-auctorial historical collation were also included (this latter question has, indeed, been one of the main contentions between Gabler and some of his critics—see fn. 50). Louis Hay, in his study of genetic texts in general (see fn. 9), describes works (including the Gabler *Ulysses*) which *are* extant in more than one document. The important point for the present discussion is that both synoptic and/or genetic texts represent structural "layers" of text, document, and "meaning": as Hay puts it—"the stress is no longer on the author's intentions but on the structure of the text; the whole set of permutations of variants is taken into account with all its potential for textual filiation and convergence; and synoptic display assumes its position alongside lemmatized listings, or 'steps'" (p. 119).

⁴⁰ For an account of the Lachmann system, see S. Timpanaro, *Die Entstehung der Lachmannschen Methode* (1971), rev. transl. of *La genesi del metodo del Lachmann* (1963). See also the more recent estimations in E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text* (1974), esp. pp. 98–112, and Paul Oskar Kristeller, “The Lachmann Method: Merits and Limitations,” *TEXT*, 1 (1981), 11–20.

⁴¹ McGann’s “schematic history” (chapter 1 of the *Critique*) of modern textual criticism draws a direct line of descent from Lachmannism to Greg-Bowers intentionalism: [of Bowers’ treatment of Hawthorne]—“though the textual problems are far removed from those faced by Lachmann, the influence of the classical approach is clear” (p. 20); [of Bowers’ “theory of a critical edition”]: “Bowers’s views, then, continue to show the influence of the textual criticism developed in the field of classical studies” (p. 21). McGann does note that the usual “monogenous” textual history of, e.g., Shakespeare versus the “polygenous” transmission of classical literature required “some adjustments of the Lachmann Method by Shakespearean scholars” (p. 17), and that the problem of final intention was a “third area” added by modern textual critics to the two “classical” problems of the critical edition and the copy-text (p. 23); but McGann’s enlistment of Lachmannism as a precursor of “Greg-Bowersism” stresses a continuity which is, in my view, chimerical, and does not delineate between classical and modern (Greg-Bowers) textual criticism in the appropriate theoretical terms. The distinction between, on the one hand, the Lachmannians’ (and especially the post-Lachmannians’) acceptance of the corrupt archetype and consequent avoidance of intention as a theoretical issue and, on the other, the Bowers-Tanselle concentration on “intention” as a motivating force for textual criticism is a distinction between a structuralist and a “writer-based” theory. Editors of classical authors may have talked a good deal about “stripping away” the “corruptions” of textual transmission (see Kenney, p. 25 for some account of the prevalent metaphor of *emaculare* in classical textual scholarship), but stemmatic theory—because of its fundamental text-based structuralism—never achieved the relative writer-based certitude of the modern intentionalists. Housman (see fn. 46, and his prefaces to Manilius) saw the conceptual limitations of the post-Lachmannian archetype, which effectively placed him closer to the intentionalists than to the structuralists.

⁴² It is the *difference* which creates the opposition, so that “on” is “on” precisely because it is *not* “off”. This is a directly comparable operation to the Lachmannians’ conceptual—and methodological—distinction of difference between “text” and “variant”, “truth” and “error”, and creates, like structuralist anthropology, linguistics, and poetics, a “grammar” of meaning, all produced by the wide applicability of the relationships discovered as a result of these oppositions. See, e.g., Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957), *Elements of Semiology* (1967), Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (tr. 1974), Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (1975), Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structuralist Anthropology* (tr. 1968).

⁴³ See Joseph Bédier, “La Tradition manuscrite du *Lai de l’Ombre*: réflexions sur l’art d’éditer les anciens textes,” *Romania*, 54 (1928), 161–196, 321–356, repr. as pamphlet, 1970.

⁴⁴ See esp. “textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, nor indeed an exact science at all,” “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism,” in *Selected Prose*, ed. John Carter (1961), 132.

⁴⁵ In addition to the references cited in fn. 42 see Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* (1970).

⁴⁶ Housman, "Preface to Manilius I, 1903", pp. 35-36.

⁴⁷ On textology, see John L. I. Fennell, "Textology as a Key to the Study of Old Russian Literature and History," *TEXT*, 1 (1981), 157-166; on geneticism see Hay (fn. 9 and 39), Jean-Louis Lebrave, "Rough Drafts: A Challenge to Uniformity in Editing," *TEXT*, 3 (1986), 135-142, and Hans Zeller, "A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts," *SB*, 28 (1975), 231-263 and Zeller and Gunter Martens' *Texte und Variationen. Probleme ihrer Edition und Interpretation* (1971).

⁴⁸ That is, a clear text can be thought of as embodying "final intentions" *only*, and the synoptic text similarly looked on as showing the "growth" of an artist's mind. Such a relationship would suggest that phenomenology can lead (methodologically, at least) to intentionalism, rather than vice versa. Tanselle ("Historicism" p. 39) asks the pertinent question (of Gabler's synoptic and clear texts): "But why, one is bound to ask, should there be a separate 'reading' text if all the variants are an essential part of the work? Why should 'the object of scholarly and critical analysis and study' (which is the 'totality of the Work in Progress') be seen as 'opposed' to 'a general public's reading matter'?" I share Tanselle's unease, but I offer in this paper two different theoretical grounds for looking at synoptic and clear texts which might provide an answer to the question.

⁴⁹ That is, Poulet's insistence that the phenomenologist is "thinking the thoughts of another" might seem to be exemplified textually by the reversals, changes of mind, ellipses, and intellectual detours charted by the genetic text. But this is so only if the genetic text is used to recover intention (e.g., in a clear text)—a somewhat problematic assertion, as Hay and Zeller note (see fn. 39). Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority," tr. Catherine Macksey, in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (1980), p. 44.

⁵⁰ That is, the synoptic apparatus becomes the focus of the reading, *not* the clear text, which is seen as a mere "concession" to readability. The function of the synoptic apparatus (and in fact *any* critical apparatus sufficiently dense and clear) is to display a series of "on/off" or "truth/error" switches: each time a variant is cited, it can be cited precisely because it is *not* a different one. The structuralist analysis (i.e., $x \neq y$) of multiple-witness texts would, of course, be an enormously complex enterprise, since each variant would need to be charted independently and in every possible relationship with every other, but it is not dissimilar to the principle of distributional analysis championed by Dom Henri Quentin and others. If the synoptic apparatus does contain *all* variants (with no separate historical collation for non-auctorial variants), then it could indeed represent that "universe of the text" which the structuralists sought. In the case of the Gabler *Ulysses*, there is apparently some question whether the distinction between auctorial and non-auctorial variants, and their respective placing in the synoptic apparatus or the historical collation, has been perfectly observed. John Kidd's *New York Review* article (fn. 11) asserts (as only a part of his general attack on the methodology, scholarship, and ideology of the Gabler edition) that the division of authority between authorial and non-authorial variants is imperfect or blurred in the synoptic edition (and that there is at times a conflation, or a confusion, of intention and structuralism—although he does not use those precise terms). The case awaits further debate, with a fuller account of Kidd's findings in *PBSA*.

⁵¹ I.e., a reduction of literary genre to its inherent structural *form*—a series of relationships deriving from absolute or invariable models *outside* the work. One of the inevitable criticisms of such an approach is that the imposition of a universal system, of-

ten inherited from folklorists like Propp, does not allow for a distinction between, say, Verdi's *Otello*, Shakespeare's *Othello*, or the Italian sources (Cinthio/Ariosto), since they all display similar "syntagms" (narrative segments) yielding similar structural features even though they are in different genres. Despite its concentration on "difference", structuralism is paradoxically often more concerned with similitudes, especially formal ones. For a critique of the major North American proto-structuralist of literary genre, Northrop Frye, and his *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), see Frank Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism* (1980), pp. 3-26.

⁵² See the post-structuralist style of Barthes' work (represented comparatively early by the dissolution of structuralist system in *S/Z* [1970]), where Balzac's novel *Sarrasine* is first reduced (according to structuralist linguistics) into its basic titular phoneme *s/z* (unvoiced/voiced sibilant), and then into 561 *lexias* (or reading units), whereby the realistic novel is dismembered into a series of elemental, ambivalent units, each one susceptible to independent "reading", and each capable of bearing a different and changing relation to the others.

⁵³ Derek Pearsall, for example, grants a particular privilege to this *variety* in composition, when he accords special value to those Chaucerian manuscripts "where scribal editors have participated most fully in the activity of a poem, often at a high level of intellectual and even creative engagement." "Editing Medieval Texts," in Jerome J. McGann, ed., *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation* (1985), p. 105.

⁵⁴ See Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art* (1931), where it is argued that all texts display "indeterminacies" or "gaps" which can be filled, to form a completed "harmony" for the work, by the reader's active employment of "schemata"—the patterns of understanding derived from a careful critical engagement with the authority of the work. The same argument—of a gradually acquired "familiarity" with textual and auctorial usage being the editorial determinant for successful emendation and filling of *lacunae*—has, of course, often sustained a critical, eclectic, edition.

⁵⁵ Wolfgang Iser, *The Art of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978) allows the reader to make use of the "strategies" or "repertoires" redolent but not immediate in a work, and by continuous negotiation with the resultant "networks" or matrixes, to achieve a phenomenological wholeness of understanding. It was just such a wholeness of understanding which the Alexandrians sought, and by roughly similar intellectual processes.

⁵⁶ For an account of analogy and the Alexandrians, see J. E. Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 3v. (1908, repr. 1958), and Rudolph Pfeiffer, *The History of Classical Scholarship*, 2v. (1968-76).

⁵⁷ Kane-Donaldson's desire for a "perfect" line (criticised in David C. Fowler's review-essay "A New Edition of the B Text of *Piers Plowman*," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 7 [1977], 23-42, a review of *Piers Plowman: The B Version. . . . An Edition in the Form of Trinity College MS B. 15. 17. . . .* ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson [1975]) could perhaps be regarded as a phenomenological "completion" of the auctorial consciousness. However, Fowler's strictures (and Kane/Donaldson's clear awareness of the un-documentary license they were taking) lead me to place this important—and highly contentious—edition on a cusp leading into a post-structuralist dispensation, where "meaning" is not simply a matter of the completion, but (where it exists consistently at all) is ephemeral, local, and negotiated most productively in a text which, like *Piers Plowman*, is overtly *scriptible* (that is, a text which is not closed or final or "readerly"—*lisible*—but open-ended, productive, and elusive). In fact, this latter description of the

inherent characteristics of *Piers Plowman* would seem, from its textual history, to have been shared by the extremely creative, and inventive, scribes who participated in its transmission. The ambivalence over the placing of this text and this particular edition in our matrix simply confirms that the divisions of current literary and textual theory are not absolute, and that one dispensation may gradually slide into another. The careers of such protean theorists as J. Hillis Miller and Jonathan Culler exemplify this tendency.

⁵⁸ I am aware that Professor McGann might reject the idea that he founded a “school” of textual criticism with the *Critique* (and he has continually to struggle against literary and textual critics’ having erroneously co-opted or misappropriated his ideas), but there can be little denying the wide influence of his slim book. Like it or not, “social textual criticism”—after McGann’s enunciation of its principles—is now a major focus for debate, some of it contentious.

⁵⁹ See Heidegger, *Being and Time* (tr. 1962) and fn. 33.

⁶⁰ See fns. 33 and 34.

⁶¹ E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (1976). As noted above, Hirsch distinguishes between “significance”, which can vary in history, and “meaning”, which is invariable and is “put” into the work by the author’s intention—it is a *willed* quality in the work. The critic (and reader) discovers this meaning (according to Hirsch) by continually narrowing the “intrinsic genre” of the text, down to units which are apprehensible and absolute. Hirsch’s theory is thus as much an ideology of genre as it is of intention.

⁶² Bakhtin’s insistence on “polyphony”—multiple and subjective voices in the battle over meaning—, together with his rejection of the univocal, organic, and integrated meaning of the Formalists, accords well with McGann’s similar rejection of a monodic intentionalism and an espousal of historical multiplicity. See *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (tr. 1973), and (with P. N. Medvedev) *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (tr. 1978).

⁶³ “Administration Trolling for Constitutional Debate,” *The New York Times* (28 October, 1985), p. A12.

⁶⁴ Ackerman began his investigation of Fish’s method as an analog for constitutional history while a professor in the Yale Law School. Later moving to Columbia (and now back to Yale), his collaboration with Fish was more direct (particularly since Fish himself had begun to publish in law journals, and was beginning to read legal history from an “affective” point of view). Ackerman’s study of constitutional history through reception theory is (I believe) still forthcoming. [Ed. note: see Bruce Ackerman, *We the People*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 1991.]

THE EDITING OF RESTORATION SCRIPTORIAL SATIRE

HAROLD LOVE

The ongoing power of bibliographical investigation to question its own fundamental assumptions is illustrated in Harold Love's work on the continuance of scribal publication two hundred years after the invention of the printing press. His early findings about scribally circulated Restoration satires, reprinted here, stem from archival research from and after the mid-1980s that would lead to his *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* in 1993, his magnificent edition of *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* in 1999, and to *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702* in 2004 (all Oxford University Press).

Love shows that reconstruction of family trees (stemmata) that recover the successive copyings of these often scurrilous or politically dangerous verse-satires often becomes possible once the circumstances of their copying in professional scriptoria is understood. The eighty extant manuscript miscellanies of libertine and state poems dating from about 1675 to 1710 were arranged to suit the individual buyer. Their texts derived from an archive of satires in the scriptorium, either in the form of a large book or as separates. They were mainly linked groups of satires, but the overall contents of the archive were constantly being added to or satires removed. It is best, Love argues, to think of this situation as a «rolling archetype». As the exemplar in any one case would be easily changed in its copying and as there was no guarantee that the exemplar would not itself be replaced by a variant copy, the prospects for stemmatic reconstruction of the archetype had seemed remote to earlier editors of Rochester. They had themselves been trained to distrust stemmatological reasoning about genealogies of variant readings in favour of so-called best texts.

Love shows that this conservatism is unnecessary provided that individual satires are understood as part of the transmissional histories of groups of satires and the reasoning is balanced against bibliographical and historical evidence.

Any edition of them would be most important for its recording of textual variants, which are an index of how the text was conceived, understood, misunderstood and appropriated to serve changing political and other interests around the court. EDD.

L'ininterrotta capacità, da parte della ricerca bibliografica, di discutere e rivedere i propri principi-cardine è illustrata dal recente lavoro di Harold Love sulla persistenza della scrittura manoscritta, due secoli dopo l'invenzione della stampa. Le sue prime ricerche sulla circolazione manoscritta di poesie satiriche nel periodo della Restaurazione, qui ripubblicate, provengono da indagini d'archivio svolte a partire dalla metà degli anni Ottanta e sfociate nel suo *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* del 1993, nella sua esemplare edizione delle opere di John Wilmot del 1999 (*The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*), e nel recente *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702* del 2004 (tutte editate dalla Oxford University Press).

Love mostra come la ricostruzione degli stemmi che presentano le versioni successive di queste satire in versi, spesso scurrili o politicamente pericolose, diventi possibile solo una volta che si siano comprese le condizioni della loro trasmissione attraverso *scriptoria* professionali. L'ottantina di manoscritti miscellanei ancora esistenti di componimenti libertini o politici, databili dal 1675 al 1710 circa, è stata allestita per compiacere il singolo acquirente. I loro testi derivavano da un più ampio archivio di satire presenti negli *scriptoria*, sia in forma di volume rilegato, sia in fogli singoli. Generalmente venivano raccolti gruppi di satire, ma il corpus complessivo dell'archivio veniva costantemente incrementato o decurtato di singole satire. In una situazione come questa, secondo Love, è opportuno parlare di una sorta di «archetipo mobile». Dal momento che l'esemplare originario avrebbe potuto facilmente essere modificato durante la trascrizione, e dal momento che non c'è alcuna garanzia che l'esemplare originario non venga sostituito esso stesso da una copia, la ricostruzione stemmatica dell'archetipo è sembrata ai primi editori di Rochester una prospettiva difficilmente praticabile. Gli editori perciò si sono schierati contro una ricostruzione stemmatica di genealogie di varianti in favore dell'uso editoriale dei cosiddetti *codices optimi*.

Love mostra come questo conservatorismo sia del tutto fuori luogo, purché le singole satire siano intese come parte delle trasmissioni testuali di gruppi di satire, e sempre che il ragionamento sia temperato dall'impiego della documentazione storica e bibliografica. L'edizione di ognuno di questi testi risulta quindi importante come testimonianza, nelle sue varianti testuali, di come i testi venivano ideati, capiti, fraintesi e utilizzati per favorire rivolgimenti politici o per altri interessi che ruotavano intorno al mondo della corte.

My subject is a body of around eighty manuscript miscellanies of libertine and state poems written in London for commercial traders in

such things between roughly 1675 and 1710. They are survivors of a larger group of perhaps four or five hundred – who knows? They include most of the principal sources for the text of Rochester's, Etherege's and the Earl of Dorset's poems and for Marvell's later political verse, as well as for a large part of the contents of the Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* series.¹ I use the term scriptorial loosely to indicate manuscripts copied by professional scribes. Not all will have been produced by scriptoria in the mediaeval sense. These miscellanies survive alongside transcripts of the poems in private commonplace books and a few surreptitiously printed sources; but the printed sources are only of value for what they tell us about lost manuscript sources. There are also numerous manuscript copies of individual poems occupying from a single leaf to a sheet or two, but it can be shown that many of these were also of scriptorial origin. In other words, even two hundred years after the invention of printing, a group of professionals within the book trade, and their authors, still sustained the older practice of publication through manuscript.

My own immediate interest in this material is not currently as an editor, but as part of a socio-bibliographical study of scribal publication in both the earlier and the later seventeenth century. Some of my preliminary findings are available in a paper in the *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* for 1987.² But these findings do have a lot of relevance to the editing of texts from the miscellanies, as well as raising many wider questions about editorial practice. I cannot claim that the kinds of analysis I will be describing have much applicability to Australian literature; but I believe that is a situation that will change as more and more writing is circulated by electronic mail and on disk. The conditions of electronic transfer mimic those of scribal publication very closely.³

There are two topics that I would specially like to address today, though I will not be dealing with either of them exhaustively. My first aim is to record the state of play regarding the use of genealogical reasoning in the editing of scribally transmitted texts in early modern English. There has been much negativism over this matter in recent decades, but it seems to me that this has been overdone, and that the problems are not nearly as severe as is sometimes assumed. My second aim is to look at the challenges posed by composite texts, such as miscellanies and anthologies, which have a structure which is at once particulate, aggregative and progressive. Let me begin by explaining what I mean by these terms.

I

If one wanted to establish the complete transmissional history of a seventeenth-century manuscript miscellany, whether of prose or verse, one would need to collate all the surviving copies of all of its constituent items. There would be no other way. This would yield a series of stemmas – family trees – which might or might not be complete or, indeed, reliable, and which might or might not be consistent with each other. The chances are that they would not be complete, because genealogical analysis, even when done with extreme care, is not a very powerful tool. There are too many situations in which the available evidence simply will not support the procedural requirement. But, assuming these stemmas *were* complete, *and* reliable, they would still almost certainly be inconsistent with each other. The reason is that the compilers of these miscellanies, as well as acting as publishers for writers who brought them new material, were drawing on a body of satires already in circulation. Anyone could write a satire and then publish it themselves by giving copies to friends, leaving them in coffee houses, or posting them in public places, which might be as varied as the king's bedroom door and the Great Jakes at Lincoln's Inn. Even when satires were sent to a scriptorium by their authors, this would have nothing to do with their subsequent history, or with the condition or sequence in which they would be picked up by other scriptoria. So there is theoretically nothing to prevent each individual item from having a different transmissional history from all the others, that is a different set of paths from miscellany to miscellany. It is in this sense that the texts are particulate.

But one would almost certainly find that a certain proportion of the contents of the miscellany had already been circulating as smaller sub-collections prior to their inclusion, that is as 'linked groups' of items, sometimes consisting of several poems on a particular topic, but more often of a poem followed by other poems written in response to it.⁴ It is in this sense that the miscellanies are aggregative. So as well as building stemmas for individual poems, we would need to investigate the transmissional histories of these linked groups. But there is also an important sense in which the overall collection may also be significant as a transmissional unit. We are speaking, remember, of manuscript anthologies which are always one-off affairs. Of course they may be replicated in near-identical copies with regard to their contents, though even here there will always be some alteration of readings. But it is much more common, in seventeenth-century scribal publication, to find that collections issued through the

same scriptorium vary through items being added or removed.⁵ It is in this sense that they can be called progressive. This is not simply the case with collections of poems: it also applies – to take just two examples – to music partbooks and collections of parliamentary papers.⁶ Because each manuscript is a unique product, the scrivener can work in new material the moment it is acquired. There is also the desirability of supplying each customer with a product which is in some respects unique.

To discuss this phenomenon, we will need some terminology. The overall body of materials from which any particular copy is compiled we can call the scriptorial archive. Sometimes this archive would have been entered in a large book: in fact two booksellers who specialised in this kind of trade, John Starkey and Thomas Collins, asked their clients to make their own selections for copying from such a book.⁷ In this case there will have been a tendency for items to remain in the same order in any copy. But in other cases it seems highly likely that the scriptorial archive existed in the form of what historians call separates – that is, of single leaves, folded half-sheets, folded sheets and small, stab-sewn booklets. In these cases, material removed from the archive would be lost permanently, and it would be a very easy matter for the order of items to become disturbed, either accidentally or by design. A scriptorial archive of this kind is in genealogical terms an archetype, but it is not a static archetype: I call it a rolling archetype, and if it rolled long enough and vigorously enough it could even produce offspring that had no actual items in common. Some other aspects of these rolling archetypes should also be kept in mind. One is the possibility of progressive copying, by which I mean a system by which scribes made use of their own or each other's sheets as exemplars, and volumes might be produced which were an indiscriminate mixture of first, second and perhaps third copies.⁸ This is particularly likely to affect the texts of poems that straddle two or more sheets. A second problem is that there is nothing to prevent a scriptorium from possessing two genetically distinct exemplars of the same item.⁹ Moreover, scriptorial exemplars could be altered between copyings – not an easy matter to diagnose but probably common enough. All of these things are likely to complicate the search for scriptorial archives, but they are not insuperable problems within traditions which, in the nature of things, were too rapid in their growth and subsequent disappearance to give rise to the further problems created by radical conflation.

The moral is that when one is editing a poem or a writer from these sources it is never enough simply to analyse the transmissional history of the individual item. If that item has circulated as part of a linked

group, then one must also study the transmissional history of that group through its growth and decay. And if the miscellany exists in a series of evolving recensions one must also try to discover the sequence of those recensions. And then of course one has to see whether the three different histories agree or disagree. If they disagree one has to decide whether this is the result of a mistake in one's own analysis or whether the disagreement points to some undetected complication in the process of transmission. It is needless to say that not all these questions will be answerable, but they are engrossing ones for an editor to ask.

In making such investigations, one is not going to get very far by relying on genealogical analysis alone. As I have already suggested, stemmatology is a tool that has many limitations and can only function well under optimal conditions. But luckily there are many other kinds of evidence we can draw upon, and when these are used in connection with the genealogical method, each set of findings serving as a control on the others, we can reason pretty conclusively. For a start there is documentary evidence about the scriptoria and their directors – quite ample at this period. The best known of these was a man named Robert Julian whose career can be followed in some detail.¹⁰ Next there may well be information about the provenance of the manuscript – even about who its first purchaser was. Thus it seems likely that Yale MS Osborne b. 105, which is the most important manuscript source for the poems of Rochester, was written in September 1680 for a visiting German diplomat, Friedrich Adolphus Hansen, and that another miscellany, now in the Leeds University Library, was bespoken by Captain Charles Robinson of the first foot guards.¹¹ There will also be bibliographical evidence concerning such matters as hands, watermarks, bindings, styles of layout, and the opulence or practicality of presentation. Watermarks and countermarks can also offer evidence for common scriptorial origin. The composition dates of the items will also tell us a lot about a manuscript: seeing the bulk of this material is topical satire, it is usually not hard to determine dates. Most important of all is the evidence given by the content of the miscellany and the order in which items appear; though it is necessary to realise that evidence of this kind is not as conclusive as one might expect. Miscellanies will very probably show strong similarities in content when they derive from the same scriptorial archive; but they also show similarities whenever independent compilers of archives have been acquiring more or less the same items over more or less the same period. This situation may also produce similarities in order, especially when the material is rich in linked groups, or

when the two archives are contained in bound volumes which preserve the original order of compilation. Moreover, some compilers of retrospective miscellanies liked to impose a chronological arrangement on the material.¹² In these cases order may not in itself offer a means of distinguishing the work of individual scriptoria, though mistakes in dating may well do so. To resolve these ambiguities and to verify what is suggested by the physical and historical evidence, we must turn again to the genealogical analysis of variants, using it here not as a primary method of discovery but a way of testing hypotheses arrived at on other grounds. And this brings me back to my first theme – that of the value of the genealogical method in studying texts of this kind.

II

I would like at this point to consider some words from the introduction to Keith Walker's edition of Rochester:

The various versions of Rochester's texts . . . have been chartered with increasing fullness and precision by Johannes Prinz, V. de Sola Pinto, James Thorpe, and David M. Vieth, but much is still to be investigated about their relation to each other. We do not even know the relations that Harvard MS Eng. 636F (which contains the texts of some twenty-seven of Rochester's poems), Nottingham MS Portland Pw V. 40, the recently available Leeds MS Brotherton Lt. 54, Victoria and Albert MS Dyce 43, and the 'Gyldenstolpe MS' (merely to cite some of the largest of such collections) bear to each other. I hope that my tables of variants may stimulate enquiry upon these lines.¹³

The interesting point here is that Walker, although meticulous in his recording of variants, did not himself regard the matter as worth pursuing. Rochester is typical of those seventeenth-century poets who did not for preference publish through the press, but through scribal circulation. (Donne, Carew and Marvell were three others.) Only a few of his poems were printed during his lifetime, and several of those were in pirated texts. Since there are not many holographs, the best surviving texts of his poems are to be found in the manuscript miscellanies I have been describing. The manuscript volumes that Walker mentions, along with Yale Osborn b. 105 and the Dublin manuscript recently discovered by Peter Beal, are the ones on which our texts of Rochester must chiefly depend. But they are far from the only ones. In fact, in preparing his edition, Walker consulted over 100 manuscript sources, including separates and transcripts in private commonplace books.

No Rochester scholar has delved into this question very much, and I think I can claim to be the first person to have published stemmas of individual Rochester poems.¹⁴ The reason why this is the case is that both the major Rochester editions of our time, namely Walker's and that of David M. Vieth, were prepared in an atmosphere of intense institutional suspicion of the genealogical method. Vieth, who published with Yale University Press, was indoctrinated early in his career by E. Talbot Donaldson, and took some years to struggle free from that influence.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Walker was working at University College London, under the long shadows of Kane and Vinaver. Some of you will be very well aware of the significance of these names and others less so. But shall we simply say for the moment that they are three gentlemen who did not believe in stemmas.¹⁶ I suspect both Vieth and Walker felt that the attempt to establish stemmas for individual Rochester poems was not just unlikely to lead to usable results, but was rather disreputable. But there is, of course, another view on this matter and that is the one recently expressed by D. C. Greetham that the Kane and Donaldson editions of the A and B texts of *Piers Plowman* are not prize examples of Bentleyism revived, but should be viewed as irrepressible outpourings of post-structural *jeu*, or, to put it another way, the eclectic method gone completely over the top.¹⁷

The reaction against the genealogical method which we see in Vieth's and Walker's editions of Rochester, but also much earlier in V. de Sola Pinto's, was a pity for at least two reasons. The first is because one of the earliest things any Rochester scholar encounters is one of the great triumphs of genealogical reasoning in modern scholarship. I refer here to James Thorpe's demonstration of the genetic relationship of the editions of the 1680 Rochester *Poems on Several Occasions*.¹⁸ Thorpe not only succeeded in establishing that what had once been regarded as a single edition was in fact no less than thirteen editions with near identical title-pages; but successfully predicted that a mixed copy would be found combining sheets from the British Museum A and Sterling editions – which has since been done.¹⁹

The second reason why this indifference towards genealogical analysis is to be regretted is that William J. Cameron, in an article published in 1963, had presented a convincing account of a scriptorium of the 1690s, showing that a sizeable group of manuscripts could plausibly be linked to a particular scriptorial archive.²⁰ Cameron provides a model of how the kind of enquiry Keith Walker describes might be conducted using a combination of genealogical analysis with historical evidence, content analysis, bibliographical description and comparisons of watermarks. The

only weakness in his presentation is that space did not permit a full listing of the textual evidence, but much of this can be gleaned from the notes to Cameron's volume in the Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* series.²¹ The revolutionary importance of this study has remained unappreciated. It is a classic example of outstanding findings being presented in an unfashionable field at the wrong time.

Yet despite these shining examples, and the equally shining precedent of the Gardner and Milgate editions of Donne, the general conviction among Restoration scholars of the sixties and seventies was that manuscript traditions were simply too hard – too prone to non-genetic agreements, too sketchy and capricious in their documentation of the processes of change. And so, for the most part, editors simply did not try to apply genealogical reasoning. In the pre-Cameron volumes of the Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* series little effort is made to establish transmissional histories, and what there is often leads to wrong results. Variant listings throughout the series are skeletal, and some editors do not even give a full record of changes to the copy-text.

There was also the problem in the 1960s and 1970s that editorial theorists such as Vinton Dearing, Dom Froger and G. P. Zarri who were interested in the genealogical method were also intoxicated by the possibility that otherwise intractable volumes of textual data might be analysed by computer.²² This committed them to a search for ways in which genealogies could be constructed by purely quantitative means using very simple algorithms. This was not a very plausible project at the time, and has since come to appear even less so. Its somewhat sad effects can be followed in the writings of Vinton Dearing who devoted a very great amount of intellectual energy to discovering that gold could not, after all, be made out of sea water.²³

So, for the reasons I have described, three decades of quite intense work on the text of Rochester and the earlier state poems have produced very little understanding of the textual relationship of the primary manuscript sources. The miscellanies of the 1670s and 1680s still await their Cameron. If I were editing Rochester, I would regard this as a question which had to be solved before I could proceed. And if I could not solve it, I would see no point in proceeding: I would prefer to stick with the Walker edition and make my own ad hoc choices on the basis of its generous record of variants. And I will say in support of Walker's position that the methods of analysis currently available are not really adequate for the job. The genealogical method itself needs to be rethought to meet the requirements of the tradition under investigation.

One of the great problems here is that there is at present no adequate, up-to-date book on how to establish transmissional histories. The closest thing to it is Dearing's *Principles and Practice of Textual Analysis* – and while this contains many useful, and even brilliant, insights it also needs, in my view, to be used with caution.²⁴ Some help can be gained from the ample instructive literature on the editing of classical and Biblical texts, but it has been recognised for a long time that the method of Lachmann as it is formulated by classicists does not work for vernacular texts. Classicists *begin* the work of analysis by deciding that certain readings are authentically ancient. They can do this because they are dealing with sources which were copied by scribes who were not native speakers of the tongues in which their texts were written, and whose alterations are therefore often easy to identify. Scribes of vernacular texts, on the other hand, can be assumed to have just as good an understanding of the language as the author, which makes their alterations much harder to identify. It was this problem that W. W. Greg confronted in his insistence that, before any decisions were made about the priority or posteriority of readings, the relationship of the sources should be expressed as a non-directional stemma, that is, one that groups and filiates sources as a synchronic not a diachronic system and that places no reliance on assumptions about the direction of change or the whereabouts of the archetype.

Greg was right in this view, and I am sure that what many editors of mediaeval and Renaissance English texts with manuscript traditions still do is to go back to his *The Calculus of Variants*, which was published in 1927, and try to use it as a manual of editing.²⁵ But unfortunately this is something it was never meant to be. Greg does throw in some helpful hints about the practical problems of editing but his aim in writing the book was a much more specialised one. What the *Calculus* is concerned with is the methods to be used in the formal analysis of variants within an ideal tradition in which all agreements are genetically significant – a tradition in which there is no irregular agreement and no conflation. His acknowledged intellectual influences were not editorial theorists but philosophers particularly Russell and Whitehead, though he also mentions Wittgenstein.²⁶ What we are given is a study in the logic of variant groupings, not a manual of editorial practice. He does not deal systematically with the determination of direction nor with how one is to identify non-genetic agreements. A further important consideration is that Greg's method is basically one of deductive investigation of the consequences which flow from a range of hypothetical stemmas. He is not a

good guide as to how one is to reason inductively from the evidence of agreements, or how hypotheses derived from the textual evidence are to be tested against that same evidence, which is really the crucial issue of editorial procedure in this area.

Certainly the method described in the *Calculus* needs a great deal of development before it can help us with the miscellanies. One particularly testing question is whether we should give positive evidence precedence over negative evidence. A very simple example is the process by which sources are classified as either terminal or intermediary. A terminal text is one that stands at the end of a line on the stemma, rather like the terminus of a railway line, while the intermediary is one of the stops or junctions along the line. (A textual railway line will have a lot of little branch lines going for a stop or two.) The discrimination is made on the basis that a terminal text will possess unique variants which are not found in any other text, while an intermediary will possess no such variants. Now this is all perfectly logical, but the two judgements are being made on the basis of two different, and incommensurate, forms of reasoning. Terminal status is determined by a presence and intermediary status by an absence. The positive argument is satisfied whenever evidence is to hand, irrespective of the length of the text, but the negative argument is much more cogent for a long text than for a short one. The problem here is that when the two modes of argument come into collision it is almost always going to be the positive argument that wins. This is the real basis of Bédier's complaint that editors of mediaeval French texts had an unjustifiably strong tendency to favour two-branched stemmas over multi-branched stemmas.²⁷ What it means is that, in cases where the positive evidence points to the two-branch solution and the negative evidence to a multi-branch solution, editors feel obliged to favour the first of these. They find the argument resting on actual agreements stronger than that based on lack of agreements though theoretically both should receive the same consideration. Any case for radial copying, where numbers of manuscripts have been copied from a single exemplar, will inevitably rest on an argument from absences: one assumes it when a group of terminal texts possesses its own exclusive common ancestor but does not agree in pairs.

These matters are rather technical and not really suitable for an occasion such as this; but they are real problems in the kind of traditions I am describing where there was obviously a great deal of radial copying from scriptorial archetypes. In such traditions one needs to give a special weight to negative evidence. But the problem is how this is to be done. And, in any

case, what is one to do with the text that, as so often, shows two or three easily reversible unique variants – the text that could go either way?

Here we encounter a cognitive problem not covered by Greg, which is the insufficiency of any purely inductive model of textual reasoning. The issue is that the significance of many agreements must remain unclear until it is conferred by the stemma. An apparently clear pattern of agreements, or an equally apparent division between prior and posterior readings, can mean one thing in the light of one proposed stemma and something quite different in the light of another. Until we have a sense of a possible structure, the data is only patterns without significance. And yet it is also the case that the stemma is discovered through an analysis of that very same data. In this as in so many other aspects of historical scholarship it is difficult to escape from the hermeneutic circle.

The best way of dealing with this problem is to divide the record of variations into two groups: one a smaller group containing those classes of variation which one's experience of the particular tradition suggests can usually be relied on as genetically indicative, and a larger group of indifferent or trivial variations which are not considered singly, an adequate basis for textual reasoning.²⁸ The point here is that this larger group, while individually unable to provide a foundation for argument, will still, collectively, tend to align itself with the broad genetic divisions of the tradition. So one can use the smaller group to generate hypotheses (the more of them the better) that can then be tested against the larger group. In cases where there is no smaller group of putatively more reliable variations, or where those that there are contradict each other, one has to work statistically from the whole body of variants, a much more difficult business, and one that is going to keep editors glued to their computer screens. Our search during either process will be for the stemma, or partial stemma, which yields the maximum plenitude of explanation, secured with the minimum need to declare agreements anomalous. The method of procedure will be one of reciprocal adjustments of models and data. Having come so far, we will be as close to certainty as the facts of copying in the real world usually allow. But we will have had to extend the available theories a good deal in order to do so.

In examining the wider question of the interrelationships of whole miscellanies the problems and the process should be essentially the same. We try, by using the more reliable evidence, to generate models and then test those models against the whole body of data. But of course we are not really expecting to find a stemma for whole miscellanies – but rather a series of stemmas for parts of miscellanies, which may or which

may not point towards broader patterns of agreement. Moreover, since our concern is now with agencies rather than texts, we will only be concerned with the selection of patterns which are relevant to that particular enquiry, which is to say those that guide us towards the identification of scriptorial archives. These will include evidence of radial and of progressive copying, and of a tendency for groups of sources to maintain their integrity while appearing in constantly varying intermediary and terminal relationships with regard to each other.

This can give no more than probabilities, but they can become powerful ones when we look at them, interactively, with other classes of evidence – the historical, the bibliographical and considerations of order and content. Moreover, once we are able to link miscellanies with particular scribal agencies, we will possess a powerful tool for evaluating variants in particular satires within those miscellanies in a way which will no longer be circular because it will now be conferred from a higher level of structural understanding.

III

To conclude, I would like to deal briefly with a few issues of editorial policy in creating texts of this material. Most scriptorial satires are anonymous or only dubiously attributed, while for the many hundreds of poems in the miscellanies I would be surprised if we possessed a dozen autographs. So there are virtually no authoritative texts, only derivative ones. One response to this is the one I have just been describing by which the editor tries to reconstruct the lost archetypes from the evidence of their descendants. However, the bulk of scriptorial satire is of interest only to historians, who tend to regard the eclectic text with deep suspicion because it has ceased to be a historical document. In such cases it is probably kindest to provide them with a particular scribal version from as close as possible to the origin of the tradition, presented with only minimal intervention. But this will need to be accompanied by a detailed transmissional history of the entire tradition, since this will also be a history of how the text has been conceived, promulgated, used, misused, understood, misunderstood, and revised to suit new circumstances. Let me give a representative history of such a satire. A state poem normally emerges from within a London political clique which has highly privileged information about circumstances at court or in parliament, but whose aim is not to *share* this information, but to use it as the basis of a sophisticated kind of disinformation which they hope will influence the

future course of circumstances. From the point of view of the clique, the poem will soon be rendered obsolete by their acquiring hotter information and by changing political strategies. But long before this happens, the satire will have moved out into circles which do not possess the privileged information of the writer and who will indulge in various kinds of creative misreading in order to adjust the text to their own understanding of politics and desires to influence the future. They will do this by altering names, by filling in deliberate blanks with their own guesses, and, of course, by rewriting what seems to them to be meaningless so that it makes better sense – to themselves.

I will illustrate this process with just one example from many that would be possible. The Earl of Dorset's 'Colon' is a satire on Charles II and his mistresses, written when the leading royal mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth, was under attack from parliament. The writer imagines that Portsmouth has resigned from her post, and that Charles is holding interviews to select her successor – the poem being a narrative of these interviews. At lines 56-9 we find the following passage:

Next in stepp'd pretty Lady Grey,
Offers her lord should nothing say
'Gainst the next treasurer's accus'd
So her pretense were not refus'd.²⁹

Elias Mengel in Volume II of the Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* cites a variant reading for the third line "Gainst next the Treasurer's accus'd."³⁰ He further suggests that if, as is quite likely, the poem was written between December 1678 and March 1679, the variant would allude very precisely to the plight of the then treasurer, the Earl of Danby, who had already been accused once by parliament and was expected to be accused again. (In fact he was accused again, but not until he had been replaced as treasurer.) Mengel presents this simply as a piece of dating evidence, but the variation in the line can also be seen as marking a shift in the relationship between the text and the events it was both recording and trying to influence. We might refine this further by proposing that the change corresponds to a movement outwards of the satire from an internal court faction, to which Dorset belonged and for whom the poem was an attempt to influence internal court politics, to a wider public who would read it, in Whig terms, as an attack on the court as an institution. So the change reflects both misunderstanding of the precise allusion intended by the writer, and a wresting of the poem by its Whig readers to an altered political function.

Textual change of this kind has to be recorded because it is itself a part of the historical process – the process by which events come to be understood and mythologised by different groups of readers. And, indeed, the real value of such an edition would not lie in its text as such but in its record of textual variation and in the explanatory notes that would allow the historian reader to make sense of that record. The Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* series has good notes which illuminate many issues of this kind; but it is only in the Cameron and Ellis volumes that a real attempt is made to establish transmissional histories.

For the poetry of Rochester we require different policies, and it will be helpful to look at how Rochester's two most distinguished editors, Vieth and Walker, have chosen to proceed.³¹ Once again we have very few holographs of authorised transcripts, and none at all of the major poems. Vieth's edition of 1968 starts from the premise that what readers are primarily interested in is the personality of Rochester. The poems are grouped under sections headed 'Prentice Work,' 'Early Maturity (1672-1673),' 'Tragic Maturity (1674-1675),' and 'Disillusionment and Death (1676-1680).' The more substantial poems are introduced by headnotes relating them in a more particular way to the biography of the poet. For instance, at the beginning of 'Leave this gaudy gilded stage' Vieth has the note: 'It is tempting to imagine that this lyric, which survives in Rochester's own handwriting, was addressed to some actress who was his mistress, perhaps Elizabeth Barry' – which makes it rather difficult not to read the poem in a biographical way, or at least to test the offered proposition as one reads it.³² It seems churlish to criticise an edition which has been such an enormous success, and which has done so much to clarify the text and the canon of Rochester; but it does need to be repeated that Vieth's desire for chronological arrangement led him to much arbitrary assignment of poems to sections. For at least a third of the poems there is no evidence whatsoever for a date of composition. The texts of the edition are constructed on a version of Bédier's 'best manuscript' theory which was proposed to Vieth by Talbot Donaldson, and in line with which the indifferent readings of the copy-text are accepted without demur. Vieth did use genealogical reasoning in ascertaining his copy-texts, but the absence from his edition of either stemmas or of an apparatus criticus means that the precise role this played is not ascertainable. The editor's decisions have to be taken as final.

An inconsistency of the edition, in view of its strong assertion of the authorial rationale, is that it uses modern spelling and heavy, often ac-

tively interpretative, modern punctuation. Vieth's argument for modern spelling is that 'there is virtually no basis for an old-spelling text of Rochester's poems' – an argument which looks rather odd now that Walker has produced such an edition.³³ But clearly what Vieth meant by an old-spelling edition was an edition that preserved the author's own accidentals, rather than simply accidentals from the historical period. Now it is true that only a few poems by Rochester survive in holograph, but we do have holograph manuscripts of his of some of his correspondence, and it would have been perfectly possible, and in keeping with the overriding rationale of the edition, for Vieth to have created a synthetic spelling and punctuation for the edition, based on Rochester's known practice. Perhaps this was just not an acceptable idea in 1968 but it has been successfully put into practice in the Latham and Matthews edition of Pepys, and is defensible when the aim of an edition is to foreground the personality of the author or when the text is so heavily reconstructed that the only other possibility would be modernisation. As it happens, the choice of modern spelling and heavy modern punctuation is one of a number of features of Vieth's edition – the headnotes are another – that tend to submerge the personality of the author under that of the editor.

Walker's edition of 1984, which deserves always to be remembered with gratitude as the first to present a full listing of variants, was based on the alternative assumption, accepted much earlier by Vivian de Sola Pinto, that what is interesting about Rochester is his contribution to the development of the major genres of Augustan poetry. So in this case the text is arranged in sections headed 'Juvenilia,' 'Love Poems,' 'Translations,' 'Prologues and Epilogues,' 'Satires and Lampoons,' 'Poems to Mulgrave and Scroope' (this section might have been called 'poetical flitings') and 'Epigrams, Impromptus, *Jeux d'Esprit* etc.' In Pinto's case the texts were based on the edition of 1691, which was the form in which they were probably read by most later Augustan writers. This is clearly an advantage if one is looking at Rochester as a source of influences. Walker, on the other hand, presents versions which are very faithful to their manuscript copy-texts, even when the accidentals of these are somewhat awkward to a modern reader. This gives his edition a valuable sense of the flavour and variability imparted by scribal publication. In keeping with this documentary tendency Walker's substantive emendations are modest and he has accepted the authority of Vieth's edition as the twentieth-century *textus receptus* by departing from its choice of copy-text only when there were positive reasons to do so. His editorial method must also be classified as a form of 'best manuscript' theory, and, indeed, is more thoroughgoing in this than Vieth

owing to his preservation of copy-text accidentals. Walker has also, very commendably in my view, included whole variant manuscript texts of a number of poems, and also poems by other writers which formed part of linked groups to which Rochester contributed – again emphasising the conditions of the poems' first circulation as scriptorial satire.

So here we have two editions, one of which takes biography as its organising principle and the other genre, but in neither does the actual treatment of the text fully carry through the initial rationale. Vieth feels obliged to modernise and 'comper' his author, whereas Walker presents Rochester in the form in which he was encountered by those who read him in manuscript, not in the form in which the poems actually contributed to the further evolution of their genres. Nonetheless Walker's experiment is a valuable one in that it suggests the possibility of yet another edition which would set out in an even more radical way to confront the twentieth-century reader with the circumstances of textual production within the scribal medium. Such an edition would group its contents as far as possible in the order in which they were grouped in the manuscripts (certainly all of the poems from the one surviving autograph manuscript should appear as one group). It would follow Walker's lead in including variant texts of particular poems and the full forms of linked groups but would be more inclusive in its attitude to the canon and would present full diachronic transmissional histories, with stemmas, for all poems for which this was possible. It might even find room for the replies that were written to some Rochester poems – there are at least three of these to 'Against Reason and Mankind.' Daringly, it might have its text inscribed by a calligrapher rather than set in type, in order to underline Rochester's conscious distancing of himself from the typographic universe.³⁴ However, such an edition would be false to its rationale were it to undertake any radical emendation, whether on genealogical or any other principles, of the substantives of its copy-text. That would be the task of yet another kind of edition which would concentrate its whole attention on the reconstruction of lost archetypes, and which might well for that purpose adopt a synthetic Rochesterian spelling and punctuation as an alternative to a modern one.

Notes

¹ *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714* (hereafter *POAS*), gen. ed. G. de F. Lord, 7 vols. (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1963-75).

² Harold Love, 'Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-century England,' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, ix (1987), 130-54.

³ Particularly because: (1) texts move by private and even surreptitious networks built up through one-to-one contacts, and (2) readers (and their software) can intervene in the text at every stage of transmission.

⁴ For linked groups see David M. Vieth, *Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's 'Poems' of 1680*, Yale Studies in English, no. 153 (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1963).

⁵ For this phenomenon, see Love, 'Scribal Publication,' pp. 144-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-3, 144-5 and notes.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 142 citing Andrew Browning, *Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds 1632-1712* (Glasgow, 1944-51), III. 2-3.

⁸ A mediaeval form of this practice is analysed in Anne Hudson, 'Middle English' in *Editing Mediaeval Texts, English, French, and Latin written in England*, ed. A. G. Rigg (New York, 1977), pp. 45-8.

⁹ An example is the two highly variant texts of the 'Satyr on the Court Ladies' ('Curse on those critics ignorant and vain') in Victoria and Albert Museum MS Dyce 43, pp. 215-19 and 360-4. Both are in the same hand. In the collateral manuscript, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 14090, the first occurrence has been omitted.

¹⁰ For Julian see Harold Love, 'Scribal Texts and Literary Communities: the Rochester Circle and Osborn b. 105,' *Studies in Bibliography (SB)*, XLII (1989), 231-2 and the sources there cited.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-3 and 235, n. 40.

¹² Examples are Bodleian MS Firth c. 15 and British Library Harley MS 7319.

¹³ *The Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. Keith Walker (Oxford: Blackwells, 1984), p. xvi.

¹⁴ See my 'The Text of Rochester's *Timon*,' *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand (BSANZ) Bulletin*, VI (1982), 113-40 and *The Text of Rochester's 'Upon Nothing*,' Centre for Bibliographical and Textual Studies, Monash University, Occasional Paper 1 (Clayton, Vic., 1985).

¹⁵ An influence acknowledged by Professor Veith in correspondence with the author. Vieth's later 'Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*: The Case against Editorial Confusion' (*Harvard Library Bulletin*, XXIV, 1976, 204-44) shows how well he could employ genealogical reasoning when he set his mind to it.

¹⁶ Kane and Donaldson's critique of the genealogical method will be found in the introduction to their present edition of *Piers Plowman: the B Version* (London: Athlone Press, 1975).

¹⁷ D. C. Greetham, 'Textual and Literary Theory: Redrawing the Matrix,' *SB*, XLII (1989), II, 13-14, 23.

¹⁸ *Rochester's Poems on Several Occasions*, ed. James Thorpe (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1950), pp. xiii-xxii.

¹⁹ See Nicholas Fisher and Ken Robinson, 'The Postulated Mixed 1680 Edition of Rochester's Poetry,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LXXV (1981), 313-15.

²⁰ W. J. Cameron, 'A Late Seventeenth-century Scriptorium,' *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, VII (1963), 25-52.

²¹ *POAS*, vol. 5: 1688-1697 (1971).

²² See Vinton A. Dearing, 'Computer Aids to Editing the Text of Dryden' in *Art and Error: Modern Textual Editing*, ed. Ronald Gottesman and Scott Bennet (Bloomington, Ind., 1970), pp. 254-78; Dom J. Froger, *La Critique des Textes et son Automatisation* (Paris, 1968); and G. P. Zarri, 'Algorithms, *stemma codicum* and the Theories of Dom. H.

Quentin' in *The Computer and Literary Studies*, ed. A. J. Aitken, R. W. Bailey and N. Hamilton Smith (Edinburgh, 1973). W. Ott, 'Computer Application in Textual Criticism' in the Edinburgh volume, pp. 199-223, is of more value since it restricts the role of the computer to ordering data for decision-making rather than actually making the decisions. Michael Weitzman, 'The Analysis of Open Traditions,' *SB*, xxxviii (1985), 82-120 includes a critique of several of the methods proposed.

²³ See Michael Weitzman's review of Dearing's *Principles and Practice of Textual Analysis* (Berkeley, 1974) in *Vetus Testamentum* (VT), xxvii (1977), 15-35. Dearing's reply, VT, xxix (1979), 355-9, only partly deals with Weitzman's criticisms.

²⁴ See previous note. Dearing's methods are in any case irrelevant for a study concerned with bibliographical as opposed to analytical stemmas.

²⁵ W.W. Greg, *The Calculus of Variants* (Oxford, 1927).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. v-vi.

²⁷ J. Bédier, 'La Tradition manuscrite du Lai de l'Ombre,' *Romania*, liv (1928), 161-96, 321-56. Paul Maas, *Textual Criticism*, trans. Barbara Flower (Oxford, 1958), pp. 47-8, questions the validity of Bédier's criticism; but it is one with definite bearing on the tradition now under discussion.

²⁸ This method is discussed at greater length in Harold Love, 'The Ranking of Variants in Moderately Contaminated Manuscript Traditions,' *SB*, xxxvii (1984), 39-57.

²⁹ *POAS*, II. 171-2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

³¹ *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. David M. Vieth (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1968); Walker, *Poems*.

³² Vieth, *Poems*, p. 85.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. xlv.

³⁴ An issue discussed in Harold Love, 'Manuscript versus Print in the Transmission of English Literature, 1600-1700,' *BSANZ Bulletin*, ix (1985), 105-6.

TEXT AS MATTER, CONCEPT, AND ACTION

PETER L. SHILLINGSBURG

Shillingsburg surveys the ways in which critics and editors use the word «text» to mean different things, and as a result often appear to agree when in fact they do not and sometimes appear to disagree when in fact they agree. The original essay began considering the way literary theory had confused the notion of «text». Considering the text's relation to the author, the production staff, and readers, Shillingsburg sees the text as having three basic forms for each of these types of people: conceptual (in the minds of authors, production staff, and readers), material (manuscripts, proofs, published books), and actions (writing, editing and composing, reading). It is consequential that each person's relationship to or interaction with the work involves different materials, different texts, different times, different places as well as reflecting the conditions of different people. Agreements about texts may be more likely when allowance is made for these differences. EDD.

Shillingsburg esamina i vari significati in cui critici e filologi utilizzano il termine «testo», usato in accezioni talmente diverse che spesso sembra che essi concordino quando sono di opinione diversa, e viceversa che siano dello stesso parere quando sono in completo disaccordo. Nella sua versione integrale il saggio considera inizialmente come le teorie letterarie abbiano trattato il concetto di «testo» in modo molto confuso. Secondo Shillingsburg, a seconda che si consideri il testo in relazione ai diversi agenti del processo editoriale – l'autore, lo staff editoriale o i lettori –, è possibile dare a esso tre significati particolari: *concettuale* (ciò che esiste nella mente dell'autore, della produzione editoriale e dei lettori), *materiale* (dai manoscritti alle bozze di stampa, ai libri veri e propri) e *d'azione* (scrittura, revisione e composizione editoriale, lettura). Ne consegue che ogni relazione o interazione di questi tre elementi con l'opera letteraria co-

Studies in Bibliography, 44 (1991), pp. 31-82. By permission of the author and the Bibliographical Society of Virginia. The essay was slightly revised for inclusion in *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1997, pp. 49-103.

involge differenti materiali, testi, tempi e luoghi, così come riflette le condizioni dei diversi «agenti» nel processo editoriale. Sarà più facile concordare criteri editoriali comuni quando si accetteranno queste differenze.

[...]

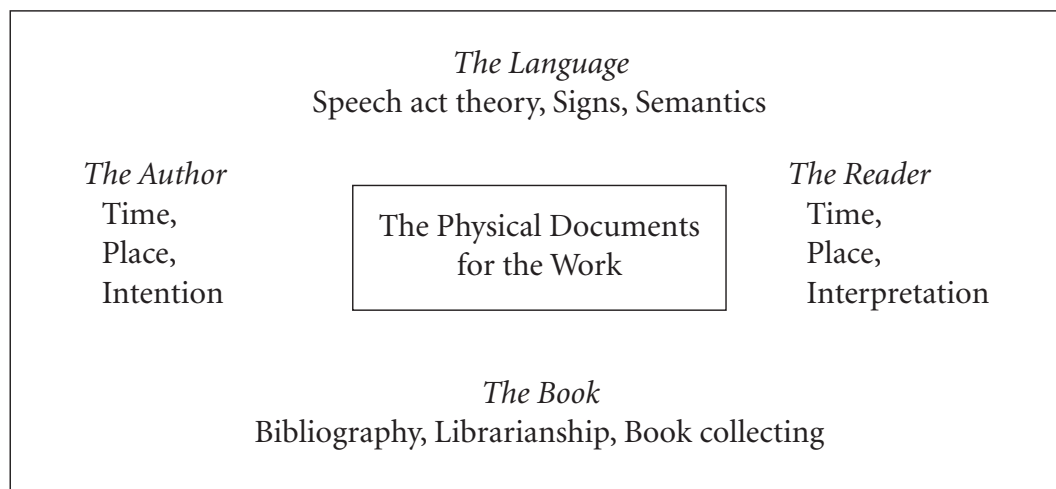
II. The Hole at the Center of Theory: Textual and Literary

The weakness of much literary theory and textual criticism is that practice is based on insights which have not had the advantage of a clear taxonomy of texts. Textual critics have not had a clear enough vision of the varieties of viable answers to questions about who has the ultimate authority (or even the “functional authority”) over what the text becomes, whether it is possible for a work to have a variety of “correct forms,” and the extent to which the editor’s decisions about the “authority” of textual variants is a function of “reader response” rather than evidence. Likewise literary critics have not had a clear enough vision of the problematic nature of physical texts and their assumptions about textual stability (e.g., that a work is a text and a text is a book and the book at hand is, therefore, the work itself).¹

It seems to me from this survey that the “structure of reality of written works” implied by the three propositions with which I began places the writer, the reader, the text, the world, and language in certain relationships and locates the focus of experience of that reality in the reader. This relationship has been mapped by a number of theorists, some of whom I shall discuss presently, but it seems to me that these maps reveal a gaping hole in our thinking around which swirls a number of vague and sloppily used terms that we pretend cover the situation. The lack of clear, focused thinking on this question can be seen graphically if we locate the physical materials of literary works of art in a center around which we visualize scholarly interest in Works of Art. To the West of this physical center we can place the scholarship of interest in creative acts, authorial intentions and production strategies, biography and history as it impinges on and influences authorial activities. To the East of the physical center we can place the scholarship of interest in reading and understanding, interpretation and appropriation, political and emotive uses of literature. To the North of the physical center we can place the scholarship of interest in language and speech acts, signs and semantics. All three of these segments of our map tend to treat the

work of art as mental constructs or meaning units; the physical character of the work is incidental and usually transparent.² To the South we can place the scholarship of interest in physical materials: bibliography, book-collecting, and librarianship. Only in this last area do we detect the appearance of special attention on the Material Text, but because traditionally scholars in these fields have made a sharp distinction between the Material and the Text and because they have focused their attention on the Material as object, their work has seemed tangential to the interests of the West, North, and East.

CHART I



In fact the “Southern” interest has traditionally been looked upon by the others as dull and supportive—we must have libraries and bibliographies—rather than as full-fledged fields of significant interest.³ Textual criticism has tended to occupy itself with the concerns of the West (intention) and the South (documents), but if it took seriously the propositions underlying relativity and structuralism, it could be in the center of the “structure of reality” depicted in this graph, drawing upon all sides and informing all sides. It would not be self-defensive and apparently narrow-minded or subservient, as it has often appeared, clinging to questionable notions of objectivity and stability.⁴

It might be noted, by the way, that this particular “map” of textual concerns leaves out entirely what might be called the “data world” or that which in ordinary usage language is thought to refer to—the objective referents of language. It is because “knowledge” about that part of the

picture has been removed or relativized or made objectively inaccessible by the perception gap and by the notion that knowledge of it is structured by or constructed through language. This “world view” may not be the “true” one, but it is the purpose of this paper to explore its implications to the concept of texts or works as attested by or extant in physical documents.

The specific questions I want now to raise for examination fall within a narrow band at the center of the related and interesting questions implied by this brief survey. I do not wish to be misunderstood as having raised them all or to have attempted answers to any outside that band. I am not, for example, raising any questions about what a particular text means, or what the author or other issuer of the text might have meant by it, or even what a reader might have understood it to mean. I am supposing that the author and other purveyors of texts do mean something or somethings by them, and I am assuming that texts are understood by readers to mean certain things. The fact of these meanings is important but the meanings themselves are not my concern here. The answers to such questions lie to the West and East of my concerns. The questions I ask have to do with the mental and physical acts and the material results of acts attending the processes of composition, publication, and reception of written texts. And the questions I ask are about what these acts and results can be, not what they should be. Further, I assume that whether the author and reader understand the same thing by a text is not ascertainable. Moreover, I am not asking questions about whether an author’s or publisher’s “sense” of the work is individual or culturally determined, nor am I asking if the readers’ reactions are culturally bound. At the moment I believe that, at least to some extent, and mostly unawares, they are. But I am not aware that any specific opinion about this notion bears significantly on the proposed taxonomy. Nor am I asking how the meanings of author and reader are generated and how they either succeed or go astray. The answers to these questions lie North of my concerns. On the other hand, I am not confining my interest to documents and books as items for bibliographical description or cataloguing for shelving.

The questions I raise are essentially those of textual criticism, but they involve all of these other fields at their margins, for texts—both as physical and mental constructs—lie at the center of any attempt to record or communicate any knowledge.⁵ I wish to propose corollaries for two of the propositions that I proposed to entertain for their effects on textual theory: first, the perception gap that holds that our “knowledge” of the “real” world is restricted to our mental, inferred constructs, and, second,

the view that language is the structuring tool through which “knowledge” is constructed. The corollaries of these propositions are: first, that the text of a work as found in a document (what I will call the Material Text) is the locus and source of every reader’s experience of a written work of art and that regardless of what concepts of works are inferred from the evidence of the Material Text, there is no channel other than inference by which a reader may “reach out” to the mental forms of works as they may have been experienced by authors or other agents and originators of texts. The second corollary is that the mental construct of the work derived by a reader from the Material Text in the act of reading (what I will call the Reception Text) is the only “thing” that a reader can refer to when making comments about a work.

These two fundamentals—the physical documents and the reading experience of decoding them—are the irreducible core of literary works. Without the reader, the physical documents are inert and inoperative; without the physical documents there is no reading.⁶

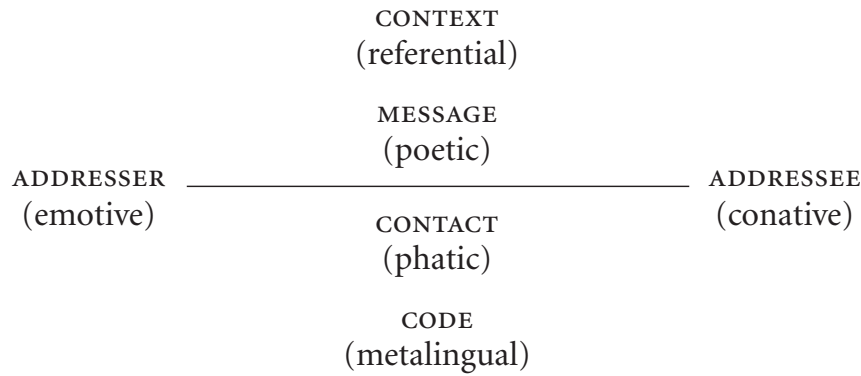
For most practical purposes the words “work of literary art,” “book,” and “text” are thought to be vaguely synonymous. But in fact there is a great deal of confusion about these words; whenever anyone means something specific by them, qualifications become necessary. So we talk about classroom texts, standard texts, established texts, inscriptions, or revised editions; and we add other concepts relative to production economics or reader response theory. It strikes me that even with these qualifications we do not have enough distinct terms for the concepts we use the words “text” and “work” for. Arguments about how to edit works are fueled by our confusions about what are or are not textual corruptions and about what aspects of book production are or are not legitimate “enhancements” of the work. And these confusions and controversies become heated to the extent that one or more parties believe there is a correct or optimum definition of “text” which is a guide to the desired good, correct, standard, or scholarly edition.

It has long seemed to me that the difficulty which we were not handling well was bridging the distance between concepts of works of art that are abstract, ideal, or mental with the material manifestations of or records of these concepts in paper and ink documents and books. One could try to put this in terms familiar to textual critics as an attempt to draw more clearly the relationship between intended texts and achieved texts, but that puts the question too narrowly (and too Westerly on my map). Or one could try to put it in the language of the English philosopher and linguist J. L. Austin as an exploration of the relationship be-

tween perlocution, illocution, and locution, but that tends to emphasize the Westerly and Northerly aspect at the expense of the physical center.⁷ Most of the work upon the mental and abstract aspects of works of art is marred by vague or coarse notions of what the material texts are. And most of the work upon the physical materials of works of art has been marred by a parochial focus of attention or adherence to notions about objective reality.

Ferdinand de Saussure did explore the relation between mental concept and physical sound-image in speech, and a good deal of thought has been applied to that relation in linguistics; so what I am proposing to do for literary works is not entirely new. But confusion arises for at least two reasons when applying Saussure's model of speech to written works. First a speech act takes place in the presence of speaker and listener as a single event in time and in a shared space and physical context. Written works do not. Second, written works, contrary to folk tradition, are not stable, singular, verbal texts. They tend to change in "transmission" (to use one of textual criticism's least elegant terms) either by revision, by editorial intervention, or by accident. I will develop the implications of these two differences between speech acts and "write acts" in due course. For the moment, however, I would like to emphasize that the alleged similarity between the two has led many practitioners of literary and textual criticism and linguistics to treat the physicalness of the written text as unitary and unproblematic.

Theorists are, of course, greatly concerned with the complexities and problematics of "intention" and "interpretation," which precede and succeed the text, but the supposedly stable, unproblematic physical signifier between them, the written text, is simply missing from most diagrams of the problem. Paul Hernadi's adaptation of J. L. Austin's speech act theory is one of the most useful and enlightening of such diagrams. (See Chart 2.) He elaborates both ends of the author-work-reader equation and indicates relevant concerns about language as a communication system and its function in the "world as representable by verbal signs," but the center of Hernadi's chart identifies the "Work as verbal construct and locutionary act." As such it is the work of the author and a field of reader response and is described as *verbal*, not as *physical*. *The paper and ink* Work, as a repository of signs for the verbal construct and locutionary act, untethered from its origins does not exist on the chart.⁸ This physical absence (or transparency) is typical of speech act and literary critical formulations of the communication process. See for example Roman Jakobson's model:



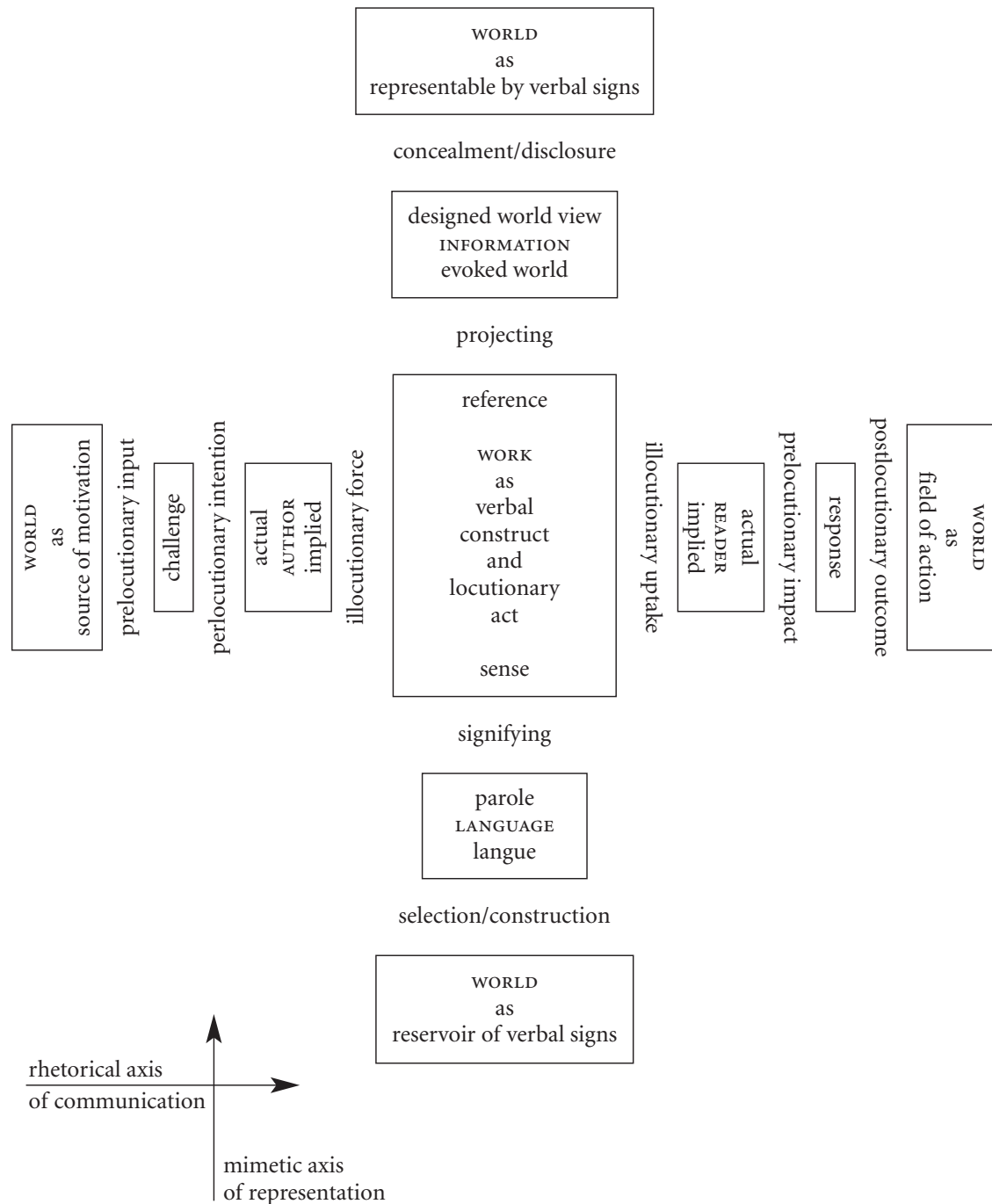
What should, perhaps, be the physical text is apparently a straight line. That line, like Dr. Who's Tardis, may look small and ordinary from outside, but it is spacious and complex inside. From the outside, so to speak, written communication looks like spoken communication, but the differences are so startling as to make conclusions about speech seem simply inapplicable to writing. The problems can be easily demonstrated.

I was spring cleaning the family deepfreeze and came to three jars of frozen grape juice. The labels said: "This year's juice." When the person who canned and labelled the juice wrote the label, it was natural and perfectly unambiguous to say "This is this year's juice." Considered as a "speech act" rooted in time and place, the labelling had a "speaker," a "hearer," a place of utterance (the kitchen), a time (the year and moment of placing the juice in the freezer), a richness of social and physical context that identified the relevant "bundle" (Levi-Strauss's term) or molecule (Caldwell's term⁹) that prevented any misunderstanding or sense of inappropriateness or inadequacy in the phrase, "This year's juice." Only when seen as a written message, a "write act," untethered from speaker, from moment and place of utterance, and from designated hearer, do we find it risible, inadequate, or frustrating to imagine this label as capable of signifying something specific at any time it happens to be read.

Another example: I was reading excerpts from some articles that had been photocopied and bound together for student use. One of the sources photocopied was itself a compilation of essays. At one point a cross-reference said: "See p. 33 of this book." When it was first written and printed "this book" was a phrase probably meant to distinguish the compilation from the original works being excerpted ("those books"). Now, in the photocopy for student use, the reference was inadequate and frustrating. The statement "This office will be closed until tomorrow" is perfectly clear when announced to a waiting crowd, but totally ambiguous when posted on a locked door and read in the early morning.

CHART 2

Reprinted by permission of the Modern Language Association of America from Paul Hernadi, "Literary Theory," *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1981).



The “bundle” or “molecule” changes with reference to written material in ways never experienced in a speech act. The difference and ambiguity can be consciously exploited—as in the pub sign announcing “free

beer all day tomorrow.” Thus, an exploration of the relation between mental concepts (signifieds) and physical texts (signifiers) for literary works leads to problems Saussure never discussed (that I know of) and will lead to descriptions of writing and reading acts in ways that clarify some of our disagreements about what they are and how they are. Perhaps it can also defuse some of the vehemence of our disagreements about what and how they ought to be.

*III. A Taxonomy of Texts*¹⁰

In 1984 I made an attempt to delineate the gradations of concepts from the ideal to the concrete, which I thought clarified the editorial materials and goals sufficiently so that disagreements among scholarly editors about editorial policies could be understood clearly and not result from vagueness or confusion.¹¹ Disagreements could thus be resolved or brought to a truce in which the parties at least knew why they disagreed. I have been gratified by the response to this effort from editors who expressed feelings of relief and release from conflicts between what their common sense inclined them to think was a desirable editorial solution and what standard editorial practice and principles seemed to dictate.

Now it seems profitable to raise the question again because the arguments about what constitutes the work of art rages not merely among textual critics, but among literary critics generally. I have found inspiration to continue my 1984 attempt in the writings of Jerome McGann, D. F. McKenzie, Joseph Grigely and James McLaverty.¹² My discussion will take the form primarily of definitions. The distinctions between concepts, and the relations I will try to show existing between them, are designed first to provide a system for describing the range of materials that are commonly referred to vaguely as books or works of literary art, and second, to provide a ground for discussing the various sorts of acts (often characterized by confusion and conflict) undertaken in response to these materials. My purpose is to enable the conflicts to be focused more clearly on substantive differences of opinion and judgment rather than on confusions about what is being said. Although taxonomies are by definition logocentric and tend to pin down concepts or objects in a conventional way, the result of the taxonomy I propose is to suggest that the drive towards arresting and codifying Works of Art is futile. Instead, it suggests that the work is partially inherent in all “copies” of it. One might say the Work is neither this, nor that, but both and none. The Work is partially in the copy of the work but is not the copy. Works are known through proliferations of texts, not

through their refinement or concentration. Nearly all experiences of works are, therefore, partial. This taxonomy helps reveal what parts remain unknown or unexperienced. I have adopted the convention of capitalizing the terms I have appropriated for definition. Since I use some of these terms before I have had a chance to define them, their capitalization is an indication that I will eventually define them.

A. Methods of Classification

It is customary to speak of a Work of literary art, such as *Moby-Dick* or *Dombey and Son*, as though such titles designated something definite. That they do not is easily demonstrated by asking, “If *the Mona Lisa* is in the Louvre in Paris, where is *Hamlet*?”¹³ The term Work is used to classify certain objects, so that we can say “This is a copy of *Moby-Dick*, but this over here is a copy of *Dombey and Son*.” The term Work and the title *Moby-Dick* do not refer to a thing, an object, but rather to a class of objects. We can see this by saying, “This is a copy of *Moby-Dick*, and this, too, is a copy of *Moby-Dick*.” We might try to push the limits of this insight by defining Work of literary art as that which is implied by and bounded by its physical manifestations.¹⁴ This statement suggests both that a Work can have forms other than that of one of its physical manifestations, and that its potential forms are limited by the forms of its physical manifestations. It suggests, further, that a Work is in important ways both plural and fragmented. These are not simple or comfortable suggestions, and the reaction of some critics and editors is to limit their attention pragmatically to the physical manifestations of works, the book in hand, as if the Book and the Work were coeval and congruent. They are not interested in abstract notions of “intention” or in fragmentary forms of the work, which they would label “pre-utterance forms” or “pre-copy-text forms” or “shavings on the workshop floor.” For them, the work *is* the book in hand. It is simple, it is practical; it is achieved by willfully ignoring certain sets of questions about the work.

But for those who stop to think that not all copies of a work are identical (which is particularly true of well-known, often reprinted, works), and that what person X says is the work (because he holds copy X in his hand) is different from what person Y says is the work (because she holds copy Y), there is a problem worth resolving, because what person X says about the work, referring to copy X, might be nonsense to person Y, checking the references in copy Y.¹⁵ A fruitful approach to this problem is to examine the concept that the work is implied by and limited by its physical manifestations,

rather than being identical with them. This examination requires that we contemplate, if only for argument, the idea that the work is an ideal or mental construct (or constructs) separate from but represented by physical forms. We can do this without arguing that the work is either the mental construct or that it is the physical form, and we need not argue that one or the other has a greater claim. Instead we might pursue the implications of defining the work as a mental construct that can be known only through its physical forms and the effects they create or allow.¹⁶ Note carefully that I do not mean, by this distinction, the difference between a sign and its meaning or referent. I mean instead the difference between the physical sign sequence as recorded in copies of a work and the sign sequence a user of the copy of the work takes to be the work. The latter sign sequence is a mental construction deriving from the former with the added proviso that the user may consider the physical copy of the work to be marred by error or abridgement or to be partial by reason of revisions not recorded in that copy or even by reason of inappropriate packaging.

When two or more of these physical forms of a work disagree, it is patently obvious that, if the Work is a single ideal entity, they cannot both accurately represent it. Two possible explanations for differences between two physical manifestations of the work can be suggested. The first is that one is corrupt and thus misrepresents the Work (or both copies could be corrupt in different ways). The second is that the Work exists in two (or more) Versions each represented more or less well by one of the physical copies.¹⁷ We can think of the Work, then, as existing in more than one Version and yet be one Work. This does not, however, help to resolve the problem of whether the Work or a Version of it is accurately represented by the physical copy held by person X or person Y.

Before pursuing that problem, there are some difficulties with the concept of Version to try to clarify. First, like the term Work, the term Version does not designate an object; it, too, is a means of classifying objects. In the same way that the Work *Dombey and Son* is not *Moby-Dick*, so too a first version is not a second, or a magazine version is not a chapter in a book, or a printed version is not a version for oral presentation. The term Version in these formulations is a means of classifying copies of a Work according to one or more concepts that help account for the variant texts or variant formats that characterize them. Second, it is not just the existence of different texts of the same Work which leads us to imagine multiple Versions of a Work. What we know about composition also suggests Versions. And to help distinguish various concepts relating to version, I would suggest the sub-categories Potential Version, Developing Version,

and Essayed Version. These categories correspond to ideas we have about composition and revision. Potential Version refers to the abstract incipient ideas about the Work as it grows in the consciousness of the author. The Potential Version has no physical manifestation, but we judge from our own experience in composing that such a version exists at least in outline and we imagine this version capable of being developed, abandoned, or changed. The Potential Version is unavailable to us except as an idea. Developing Version refers to a process that does have physical outcomes. The Potential Version processed by thought and inscription produces, in the case of many authors, drafts or notes, which when added to more thought, more inscription, and perhaps some revision results in additional drafts. When the Developing Version has progressed sufficiently and been consolidated into an inscription of the whole, we have a physical representation of what I would call an Essayed Version.

The point at which the developing version reaches sufficient wholeness to be thought of as representing the first Essayed Version is, of course, a matter of opinion and, therefore, of dispute. This problem is another demonstration of the fact that the term “Version” refers to a means of classification, not to an actual stable object. The first Essayed Version can be thought about and revised and used as a basis for producing a second Version, etc. It might also be thought of as a provisional version or a finished version, but it is a version of the work in that it represents the work. Though the Essayed Version has physical embodiment in a text, it is not the physical text. We can imagine the Essayed Version in the author’s imagination as more perfect than his or her ability to record it in signs which require compromise and are liable to inscription error. Even if there is only one physical copy of the Work, one could not say that the Version it embodied was the Work, for as soon as a new Version appeared the distinction between Version and Work would become necessary again.

We should pause for a moment here, suspended in the ethereal realm of ideal forms, to observe that the idea that “a Work is implied by a series of Versions” is based on ideas about composition, revision, and editorial interventions. That is, I have developed these ideas by imagining the processes of composition, not by starting with finished copies of the Work and inferring the processes “backward” from them. To think in this way about a work entails also believing that each new version has integrity or “entity” as an Utterance of the Work. If two copies of a work differ in ways that are explained by “infelicities in transmission” then one does not need a concept of Version to explain the differences. But if each is thought to be desirable or “authoritative” in its own way, then the con-

cept of Version is useful for classification. One could think of a Version, then, as the conception or aim of the Work at a point of Utterance. But Version is a very complex and slippery concept I will define and discuss in detail later. Where there is a well-established convention for using the term Work to distinguish between *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre*, there is not an established convention for distinguishing Versions of *Vanity Fair*.

Of the problems concerning the concept of Versions which must be discussed in detail later there are two which should be mentioned before moving on to definitions of Text and making clearer the connections between ideal concepts of works and their physical manifestations. The first is the problem of determining when the Essayed Version has stopped being the Developing Version so that it can be thought of as coalesced into a Version that can be identified and read as such. The second is the problem of determining if and when a second version has coalesced that should be considered as separate from the first. To discuss these problems we need several related concepts I will develop later: Time, Content, Function, and Material. One should also note that concepts of Intention and Authority are crucial to the idea of Versions; neither of these concepts is simple.¹⁸ Needless to say, I think the idea of Versions is a very useful one, in spite of its problems.

B. Texts: Conceptual, Semiotic, and Physical

Although I have deferred discussion of some of the problems with the term Version, I need here to imagine the writer composing a Version of the Work in order to pursue the taxonomy through various concepts that are too often hidden in the use of terms such as Work or Version. One should note, then, that an Essayed Version is a conceptual entity not a physical entity; it is not equivalent with the physical embodiment of it, because its embodiment can be and usually is an imperfect representation of the Version. The contortions of that last sentence bear witness to the fact that Version is being used in two ways: it is a classification system for those texts that represent Version X as opposed to those that represent Version Y, and it is a Conceptual Text which copies of Version X or Y represent. This latter notion, the Conceptual Text, is not a system of classification but more like an ideal form of the Work. But it is not a Platonic ideal, for it develops and changes, and probably does not “pre-exist” as an ideal, and it probably does not last very long either. The imperfections of physical texts are of various origins, including failures of creative imagination, failures of inscriptional skill or care, use of elisions and abbrevi-

ations to be filled in later, or unhappy interventions by scribal assistants. The Essayed Conceptual Text is always manifested in a physical form, but it is not a physical or Material Text, for the Conceptual Text that is Essayed remains (as the author's mental concept) invisible and probably not stable; but the embodiment of the Conceptual Text is visible and fixed in a material medium. The concept of "fixing" suggests another reason the Material Text may misrepresent or at least only suggest the work: Version (Potential, Developing, and Essayed) is fluid conceptual process, but the material text is physically static, fixed. However, since the Essayed Conceptual Text cannot be known except through a Material Text, people tend to equate them for practical purposes. But the Material Text can misrepresent the Essayed Conceptual Text and hence that equation is not exact. The ways in which the Material Text can misrepresent the Conceptual Text are many and often are indeterminate but some might be revealed in the drafts or by violations of syntax, grammar or orthography that cannot be justified as accurate representations of the ideal Version.¹⁹

It is common, at least among textual critics, to think of a text as consisting of words and punctuation in a particular order. I would like to call this concept of texts the Linguistic Text.²⁰ It refers to the semiotic dimension of Texts—the specific signs for words and word markers that stand for the Work (or the Version of the work). Linguistic Texts have three forms: Conceptual, Semiotic, and Material. The author's Conceptual Linguistic Text consisted of the signs he "intended to inscribe." A Semiotic Text consists of the signs found recorded in a physical form of the work. If a Version represents the conception or aim of the Work at a point of Utterance, the Linguistic Text is the execution or achievement of that Version, first as a Conceptual Text (thought) then as a Semiotic Text (sign), and then as a Material Text (paper and ink or some other physical inscription or production), at that point of Utterance. The Material Text is the evidence that a Conceptual Text was formed and Uttered as a representation of a Version of the Work—in short, if there is no Material Text there is no Linguistic Text and hence no Version available to a reader. The Conceptual Text can be Materialized in spoken or written form, and it can be recorded in a mechanical or electronic way. It follows that the Linguistic Text can have more than one Semiotic form—spoken, written, electronic, and Braille, for instance. The Linguistic Text is not, therefore, physical; it is a sequence of words and word markers, conceived before spoken or written, and taking its semiotic form, when written, from the sign system used to indicate the language in which it is composed. We must also distinguish between the Linguistic Text and the

Documents that preserve them, for as long as the sequence of words and markers is the same, the Linguistic Text is one, regardless of the number of copies or number of forms it is manifested in. All accurate copies, whether facsimiles, transcriptions, or encodings are the same single Linguistic Text. An inaccurate copy, however, is a different Linguistic Text for it is a different sequence of words and word markers, though it might still represent the same Version. The new Linguistic Text might represent the Essayed Conceptual Text more faithfully or less faithfully.

It should be noted that the Linguistic Texts representing an Essayed Version (the ideal aim of Utterance) run the risk of error at each transformation in production both through a failure of articulation (we've heard authors complain that they just couldn't put what they wanted into words) and because the author or a scribe failed to inscribe it accurately or completely. The Linguistic Text, therefore, corresponds to the Essayed Version only to the extent that its production was perfect. Editors (particularly "authorial intention" editors) have understood their job to be the production of a newly edited Linguistic Text that accurately represents the author's intentions for the final Version. Put in the terms defined here, the traditional "intention" of scholarly editing has been to create a new Material Text, the Linguistic Text of which coincides with the Essayed Conceptual Text. But because the author's Essayed Text is available to the editor only through material evidence for it, the editor can do no more than construct a new conceptualization of it (i.e., the editor does not in fact "recover" the author's Conceptual Text). The resulting edition is then a forward construction rather than a "backward" restoration.

To speak of the Linguistic Text as a sequence of words and word markers is to emphasize a distinction already made but that is of primary importance: that the Linguistic Text, being composed of signs, is a representation of the work and is not the work itself. It represents a Version, it is not the Version itself. It is the result of an encoding process undertaken by the author or the author and his assistants. The Linguistic Text is, therefore, a sign and not an object, though it is always manifested in an object. To speak this way about the Linguistic Text is also to emphasize the act of decoding which is necessary before another person can be said to have seen or experienced the work of art. It should be equally evident that such a decoding experience cannot take place without a physical manifestation of the text as a starting point.²¹

The word Document can be used to refer to the physical "container" of the Linguistic Text. It might be paper and ink or a recording of some sort, including for example a Braille transcript which can be just paper.

Records, tape recordings, microforms, and computer disks are also documents, though decoding such documents requires mechanical or electronic equipment. Documents are physical, material objects that can be held in the hand. Each new copy of the Linguistic Text is in a new document. Two documents containing the same Linguistic Text are still two separate entities but only one Linguistic Text. This physical form not only provides a “fixing medium” (to borrow a concept from photography) but it inevitably provides an immediate context and texture for the Linguistic Text. It will be useful therefore to have a term for the union of Linguistic Text and Document. I call it the Material Text. It seems clear that a reader reacts not just to the Linguistic Text when reading but to the Material Text, though it be subconsciously, taking in impressions about paper and ink quality, typographic design, size, weight, and length of document, and style and quality of binding, and perhaps from all these together some sense of authority or integrity (or lack thereof) for the text. These aspects of the Material Text carry indications of date and origin, and social and economic provenance and status, which can influence the reader’s understanding of and reaction to the Linguistic Text.²² (See Chart 3.)

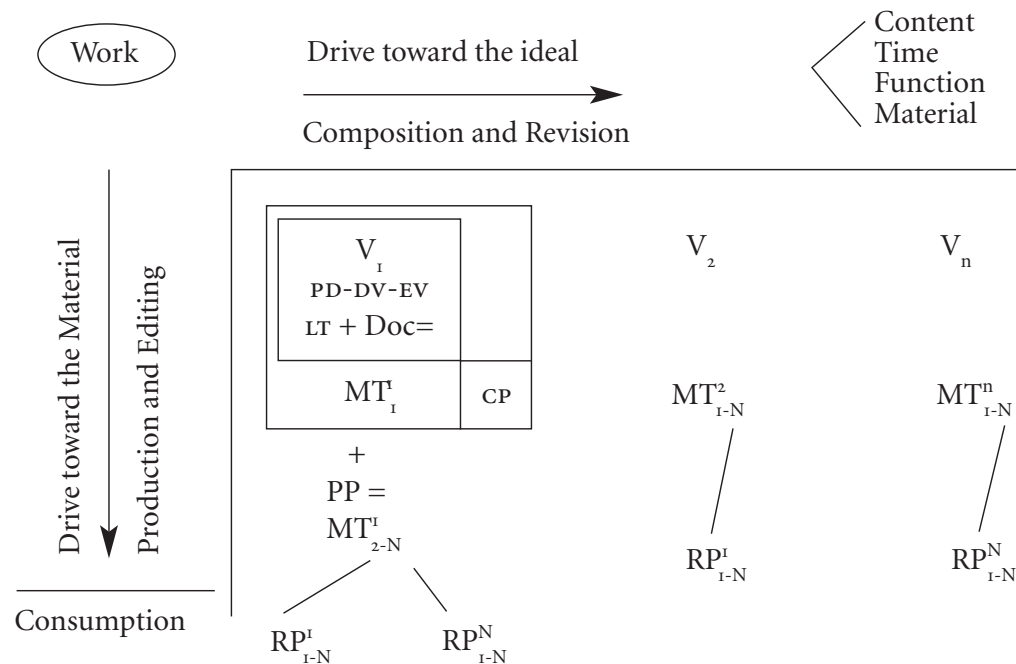
We should pause again for a moment, this time with our feet firmly planted in the material realm. A Material Text, any Material Text, is the reader’s only access route to the Work.

A Linguistic Text cannot exist for anyone (who does not already hold it in memory) without a material medium;²³ the Linguistic Text and its medium are the Material Text with all the implications of that union. Material Texts are the production of Utterance. The first Material Text (say, the manuscript) is the first attempted union of the Essayed Version and a Document. There might be a problem in distinguishing that first Material Text from draft fragments, and it might be possible to “reconstruct” archaeologically a Version buried in drafts in early manuscripts or in the cancelled and altered passages in a manuscript or typescript whose final revisions represent Essayed Version one. Material Texts numbers 2-n are transcriptions made by anyone including the author. These Material Texts might incorporate the results of revisions, editorial interventions, or errors, or they might be accurate transcripts.

It would appear from the concept of Material Texts that when an editor has extracted or edited the Linguistic Text which he believes best represents the Version he is editing, he must embody that Linguistic Text in a new document which will be a new Material Text with implications all its own. He cannot reincorporate a new Linguistic Text into an old Document to present a “restored” Material Text. The force of this idea came

CHART 3

There are as many versions (V) as the Receptor can convince himself were created.
 There are as many Material Texts (MT) as there are copies of the work.
 There are as many Reception Performances (RP) as there are Readings of the work.
 Each Reception Performance is conducted in relation to one Material Text.
 No Material Text is the equivalent of the Work but is one representative of it.



to me while reading Jerome McGann's explanation of the work as a product of social contract in which the production process was described as an integral and inevitable aspect of the concept of the work of art.²⁴

C. Texts Again: Physical, Semiotic, and Conceptual

The terms Version, Text, and Document have brought us in the life of a literary work of art only through the down-swing of the pendulum from the "mind of the author" to the concrete manifestations of the work in Material Texts (i.e., books). And it should perhaps be emphasized once again that a Work may be "implied" by more than one Version and by more than one swing of the pendulum. But now we must face the Material Text in the absence of the Author and with a realization that as we approach the Material Text we are not before a verbal construct and that we cannot see prelocution, perlocution or illocution, or even intention or meaning. What we have before us is molecules compounded in paper and ink. Everything else must be inferred from that, beginning with the recog-

nition of the sign shapes, which the ink shapes materially represent. I have mentioned that the Material Text is the starting point for further processes, the up-swing, necessary before the Work can be perceived, for the Material Text is not equivalent with the Work but is instead merely a coded representation or sign of the Work. Furthermore, the Material Text before us is only a single instance of many possible manifestations of the Work. Not all Material Texts are necessarily representative of the same Version of the Work, nor are they all equally accurate representatives of the Work.

Nevertheless, a Material Text is where the reader begins the process of perceiving or experiencing the work of art. This process is one of decoding or dematerializing the Material Text into some mental construct of it. It is in this decoding process that the Work can be said to function.²⁵

IV. Textual Performances as Write Acts

It seems useful here to add the term Performance to our taxonomy of concepts related to Works of literary art.²⁶ Performance is an act, an event. Performances take place in time and space. They are not material objects, though they might produce results that are material and that can be used as records of the performance. However, these outcomes of performance are not the performances themselves. It will be useful to distinguish between at least three types: Creative Performance, Production Performance, and Reception Performance.

Creative Performance refers primarily to acts of authority over linguistic texts, determining what shall be encoded as the inscription representing a Version.²⁷ Creative Performance includes all that was indicated above by the terms Potential Version, Developing Version, and Essayed Version. Creative Performance is primarily inventive but usually involves some sort of mechanical work to inscribe through writing, typing or dictating. This mechanical aspect should perhaps more properly be called Production Performance, but when the author is inscribing new material it is clearly primarily a creative activity. One might say, however, that when the author makes a mechanical error in inscription, it might be a failure of production rather than of creation. To a casual reader this difference makes no difference, but to the editor who holds production authority over the work, it makes a significant difference, since he will correct a production error but not a creative failure (creative "errors" might, by the way, be creative innovations the editor has failed to understand). Production Performance refers primarily to acts

of authority over Material Texts, determining what material form the Linguistic Text shall have and re-inscribing it in those forms for public distribution. Production Performance can have a variety of methods and outcomes; they can be nurturing or negligent, skillful or clumsy, well-intentioned and wise or well-intentioned but ignorant. Production Performance often affects the Linguistic Text and always affects the Material Text, but it differs from Creative Performance in that its primary purpose is the transmission and preservation and formal (not substantive) improvement of the Linguistic Text. It is a process of transcription, not one of revision. Creative Performance and Production Performance are often carried out simultaneously by the same person, but traditionally Creative Performance has been associated with authoring the Linguistic Text and Production Performance has been associated with manufacture and publishing the Material Text. In practice these two processes are not always easily separable, for authors occasionally perform production acts and publishers, printers, and editors quite often perform “authoring” acts. The results of these crossings are sometimes “happy” and sometimes not—often the judgment depends on who is judging.

Reception Performance refers to acts of decoding Linguistic Texts and “conceptualizing” the Material Text; that is what we do when reading and analyzing. Reception Performance differs from Production Performance in that its primary purpose is not the reproduction of the Linguistic Text in a new material form, but the construction of and interaction with the Linguistic Text in the form of a Conceptual Text. Readers do not normally distinguish consciously between the Material Text and their Conceptualized Text derived from it. They are also often unconscious of the ways in which the Material Text is more than just the Linguistic Text of the Work so that their Conceptual Text is formed under the influence of material contexts that did not attend the process by which the author materialized his Conceptual Text by inscribing it. To put this in a simple model, the author’s Essayed Conceptual Text takes form as a Material Text which the reader uses to construct the Reception Conceptual Text. If we imagine, then, that the specific copy of the Work that reader X is using is Material Text X, that copy with its textual limitations and errors is *what* the reader is reading. It is a Material Text, not the Work, though the Work can only be known through a Material Text. It need not, however, be known through this particular copy; the imperfections of the particular Linguistic Text as well as the implications of the particular Material Text contribute to the uniqueness of this particular representation of the Work. Furthermore, it is not the Work itself

that is known through the Material Text but the reader's reconstruction of the Work that is known, the "reader's Conceptual Linguistic Text as mediated by the Material Text," or, in short, the Reception Text. It should be noted that the Reception Text is still what Saussure calls a "signifier," for it is no more than the Linguistic Text in internalized Semiotic form. It is then reacted to in a variety of ways and according to a variety of principles of interpretation which taken all together can be called the Reception Performance. The point to emphasize and then to elaborate is that these reactions are to the Reception Text not to the Material Text. (See Chart 4, where critics Q and R read the same copy of the Work and may disagree about interpretation because of their different skills in performing the Reception Text, because their experiences of life and reading differ, or because they employ different interpretational principles. Critics S and T, who read two different editions reproducing more or less well the same Version of the Work, may disagree about interpretation for any of the same reasons Q and R disagree, and because the Material Texts in which they encounter the Work differ. They may also, fortuitously, agree with each other if one or both have managed to ignore or "mis-read" the Material Text. Critics X and Y, who read different copies of the work, each representing a different Version, may disagree for any of the same reasons affecting Q, R, S, and T and also because the Linguistic Texts they are reading are different. To the extent that Q, R, S, T, X, and Y think their copy of the work *is* the Work, their disagreements will seem unaccountable, irresolvable, or evidences of inadequacy in the others as critics.)

All that each critic knows of the Works is what finds its way into the Reception Text.

All that each critic can share with another reader is what finds its way into the Protocol.

It might be useful to describe the process of Reception Performance by adapting some terms used by I. A. Richards to describe his experiments in practical criticism in the 1920s. Several "perusals" of a text at one sitting constituted an "attack" on the work of art. Several "attacks" spread over a short period of time, say a week, constituted a "reading." The reader's commentary on the work—the record of his reading and reaction—was called a "protocol." We sometimes call interpretations of works "readings," but the word is vague and overworked; we should call them something else such as protocols or records of the Reception Performance. I think it can be said that Richards was interested in this process as a process of interpretation of meaning, effect, and tone suggested by the

words as grouped into sentences and paragraphs, and that he was not concerned with the problematic nature of the Material Texts he and his students used. Nor was he concerned with the problematic nature of the dematerialization of the text signs for words and punctuation. That is, he

CHART 4

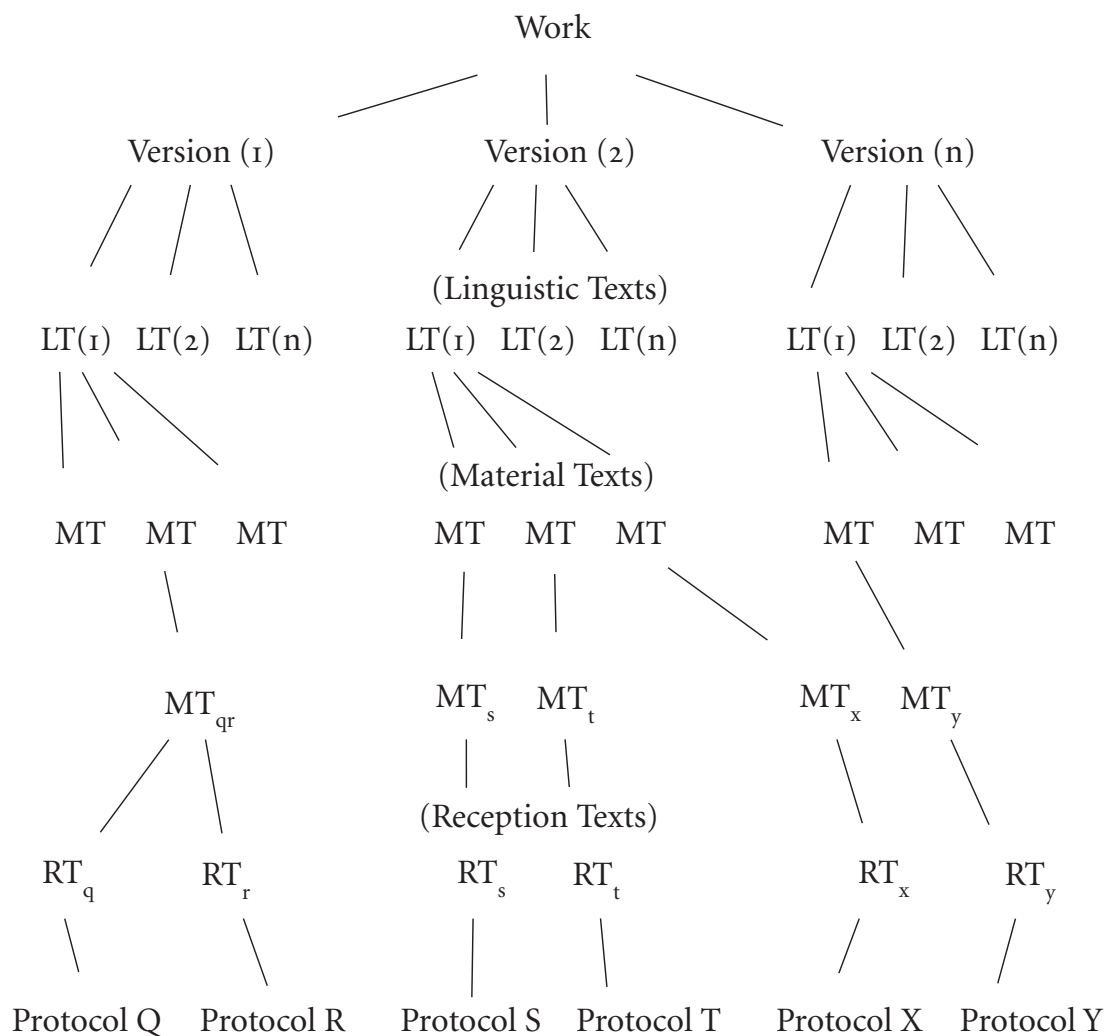
Critics Q and R disagree from the same copy of the Work.

Critics S and T disagree from different editions of a single Version of the Work.

Critics X and Y disagree from different Versions of The Work.

In part this is because Q, S, and X think the Work is Reception Text Q, S, or X
and R, T, and Y think it Reception Text R, T, or Y.
(in a way each is right and wrong)

All that each critic knows of the Work is what finds its way into the Reception Text.
All that each critic can share with another reader is what finds its way into the Protocol.



was interested in what the Text said, not in what the Work was. This is a common strategy of literary critics to avoid the problems of “authorial intentions.” What I have called the Reception Text is in part the reader’s decoding of the Linguistic Text as embodied in the Material Text at hand, but it also includes the reader’s semiotic reconstruction or reading of the Material Text as a totality and to the environment in which the reader has undertaken the Reception Performance. Anything the reader says or writes about his experience of the work is a “protocol.” The rules by which protocols are produced and judged are as numerous as there are games to be played in the Performance Field.

We have in these three performances a key to why observations made about speech acts go awry when applied to writing. A speech act or spoken utterance is one event with three basic elements: the utterer’s mental concept, the physical medium of utterance, and the listener’s mental concept. These three elements always exist together in the context of time and place when and where the utterance is spoken. In written works all three of these elements exist also, but the context of time and place is fragmented, so that the writer’s utterance takes place, so to speak, in the presence of an absent reader, and the reader’s reception or construction of utterance takes place in the presence of an absent writer. Therefore, each utterance takes place in a context of time and place that is unknown to the other party and adventitious meanings are the highly likely result, for the “bundle” or “molecule” has been broken, modified or replaced. Finally, to complicate things even more, the writer’s writing is seldom seen by the reader who usually has instead the printer’s printing. So a written work entails at least three separate events (performances) whereas the spoken work is one event.²⁸ Experienced writers are, of course, aware of this and compensate by a multitude of strategies. That is one reason it is normal to think of writing as more formal and requiring more care than spoken communication. There are also many other reasons that written language must be made clearer, among them the fact that punctuation is a coarse substitute for intonation and gesture.

[...]*

* In sections V-VIII, Shillingsburg outlines the rejection by many textual critics of the abstractions of modern literary theory. This distances the textual critic, invested in the objective and scientific pursuit of texts, from fundamental aspects of modern theory including a suspicion of “knowable” facts, history, and truth. Shillingsburg proposes to reassess textual critical theory by considering methodologies sensitive to modern literary theory. EDD.

IX. Conclusions

This exercise in naming leads, I believe, to a number of conclusions about literary works of art.

One is that the word Work conveys both a singular and a plural meaning. A work is one thing: all the Versions of Henry James's *Roderick Hudson* are subsumed under this one title. Simultaneously a work is a thing of internal diversity. It exists wherever a copy of the work exists. Each copy is a more or less accurate representation of one Version of the Work.²⁹

Another conclusion is that attempts to repair or restore original or pure texts of a work or to revise and improve them tend to proliferate texts rather than to refine them. If one thinks of proliferating refined copies, one must remember not only that the "unrefined" copies have not been changed but that, by the unities of Material, Time, and perhaps Function, the refined copies represent new and therefore different Material Texts, complete with all that that entails.

A further conclusion is that the crucial act in relation to a Work of literary art is not writing, or publishing, or editing it, but reading it. Of course, without the first of these there will be no reading but without reading the first seems incomplete or lacks fulfillment. Several observations about reading arise from this taxonomy. First, to read Material Text X is to decode a Work (i.e., that which is implied by its various Versions) from interaction with only one of its many static forms. Reading, therefore, is almost always a partial interaction with the Work. Second, if Material Text X is taken as a transparent window on the Work, there is no question asked about Versions or about errors. Third, if Material Text X is taken as the result of a single, prolonged production effort, subject only to human error, there is no question asked about Versions, just about accuracy. Fourth, if Material Text X is taken "for what it is"—one of many representations of a version of a work—there are questions of both accuracy and Version. Questions of Version include questions about the agents of change (author, editor, etc.), and about time, function or motive, and material. Material Texts are not, in other words, transparent.

Since editing and publishing tend to increase the number of copies of a work, not just in numbers but in variant forms, it seems useful to devise a graphic system to identify and categorize the Material Texts which represent the work (see Chart 3). Thus when person X reads and remarks upon Material Text X and person Y evaluates those remarks in relation

to Material Text Y, difficulties arise from several false assumptions: that both MT_x and MT_y contain the same Linguistic Text, that both are equivalent Material Texts, that a Linguistic Text as embodied in a document is a full rather than partial representation of the Work, and that the Work is represented adequately and equally well by any Material Text (or at least by MT_x and MT_y).

Persons X and Y may disagree about the Work because they are not discussing a work but two unlike manifestations of the work. However, if X and Y understood the relation between the Material Text in hand and the Work, they might temper their judgments and remarks about it in the light of that understanding. Finally, if X and Y understand how each is developing a sense of Version by applying various mixes of the four unities, they might at least disagree with clarity about the issues in dispute.

For example, in the disputes between those who say the work of art is a social product finding its “true” form in the Material Text and those who consider the production process as unfortunately corrupting—but why be abstract? In the disparate views represented by Jerome McGann and Hershel Parker about the moment of coalescence for a work, McGann placing it in the Material Text and Parker placing it in the Linguistic Text at the moment of greatest creative control by the author, we have, I think, a disagreement that becomes clarified and a bit nonsensical. While many people have a gut feeling that “authorial authority” or Creative Performance is more interesting than “production authority” or Production Performance, the plain facts are that authors do some things badly and production does some things well.³⁰ If we take the view that the inscription which the author is finally satisfied to relinquish to a publisher is the closest representation of a Version, we are likely to take it as the basis for a new edition. But authors often show or relinquish manuscripts they know will be or must be changed. Would we be willing to say that the Essayed Version as embodied in the printer’s copy (author’s fair copy) is a form of the work which the critic can use as the basis for a “reading” of the work? Does the scholarly editor have a Production Performance task parallel to that given the work by its original publisher? It has seemed wise to say that the materials of the editorial project will dictate which answer is the most appropriate, but if that were true there would be no disputes. Disputes arise not only because, for example, McGann worked on Byron (who gratefully left the details of punctuation to those who cared and knew about such things) and Parker worked on Twain (who claimed to have telegraphed instructions to have

a compositor shot for tampering with his punctuation), but because they define Version and Work by differing valuations of authority and of the “unities.” I suppose the final irony is that any edition Parker produced would be, after all, a new production performance and that any edition McGann produced would undoubtedly be read by many as establishing the author’s intentions. In short, the problem is not one of editors’ shillying and shallying over uncertainties in their minds, but, first, of a cacophony of voices “in” written texts to be selected from, and, second, of a world of readers who habitually treat books as if they fully represented the one voice that matters (each reader, of course, identifying that voice as seems right in his own eyes).

Another conclusion that might be drawn, tentatively at least, is that the idea of “conveying meaning” might be a misleading way to think about how texts function. The processes of encoding meaning (by authoring) and repackaging the coding (by publishing) and decoding (by reading) are perhaps too complex and fraught with “noise” to allow for “conveying,” and our experience is rife with instances of meaning being apparently misconveyed (misconstrued is a more accurate and more frequent term, as it should be) either by accident or by deliberate appropriation. This taxonomy suggests that texts influence, rather than control, Reception Performance. All the work of Creative Performance and Production Performance is ostensibly geared toward influencing Reception Performance.³¹ The only chance that an author has to influence the Reception Performance is so to arrange the Linguistic Text that he will have the best chance possible of influencing the reading and thus be said to have been understood rather than to have been misconstrued. The Reception Performance is, however, influenced not only by the Linguistic Text but by a great deal besides, much of which is subconscious and fortuitous. When the Reader has produced a Reception Text, its coherence is usually considered satisfactory proof that the performance has succeeded. Dissatisfaction with that coherence can only come when a second reading or someone else’s description of a reading appears more satisfyingly coherent. There is, of course, no way to verify any correspondence between Reception Performance and Creative Performance.

All of this seems to confirm a conclusion bruited among some literary theorists: that the community of scholarship (or any community of readership—our sense of cultural heritage and values) derives its power and cohesiveness from arbitrary agreements to use certain conventions as standards of behavior regarding the interpretation of works and the

relevance of history and perceived hegemonic structures in commentaries upon literary works. All of these conventions and standards are convenient constructs, not natural truths, and are deemed convenient as long as we agree to find them so. I no longer find it convenient to consider the Material Text an original, stable, or transparent sign source for an entity called the Literary Work of Art.

Notes

¹ I note for example that in "From Work to Text" Roland Barthes wants to talk about the work "at the level of an object" and distinguishes between "Work" (by which he most of the time means "Book") and "Text" (by which he sometimes means an area of play, sometimes the players in that area, sometimes the way the area plays with readers, and sometimes an object located at the intersection of propositions—in short a variety of "things" more or less abstract). But in fact, Barthes does not discuss the physical object in any sophisticated way at all, treating the Book (Work) as a single unproblematic given. He is apparently not interested in Work and does not see its relevance to Text except as a something to be decanted. I should add that I have no quarrel with Barthes's useful exploration of his term Text—though I prefer to use several different terms for the various things he denotes by the term Text.

² This map is adapted most immediately from two models by Paul Hernadi designed to illustrate the questions "What is a Work" and "What is Criticism," (see Chart 1) but the similarity to models of language by Roman Jakobson are apparent (see p. 221).

³ G. Thomas Tanselle surveys a number of approaches to the problem of relating intention to texts in "The Editorial Problem of Final Intention," *Selected Studies in Bibliography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 309-353, esp. 312-319; rptd. from *Studies in Bibliography* (SB), 29 (1976), 167-211.

⁴ The degree to which textual criticism is breaking out of this narrow mold is probably not well known, for many edition users still look for a "standard" or "established" text to use uncritically, but there are new movements afoot. What I see as a problem is that proponents of the breakouts tend, unfortunately to view their new insights as new, replacement orthodoxies—Jerome McGann, for example, bringing in and then overvaluing book production as the milieu of meaning, Hershel Parker bringing in the psychology of creativity and turning it into a determiner of text. The common problem appears to be that though textual critics are very well aware of the distinction between the Work and the Book, they have been obsessed with the notion that the Work should be reducible to a Book. My focus, however, is not upon what is wrong with textual criticism or textual critics but what a taxonomy of texts reveals about the connections between textual criticism and its related fields of interest and what it can show about the nature of Works of Art that might change our view of the aim of textual criticism and the way we treat the copies of works we use in our study regardless of our position, East, West, North or South.

⁵ All communication, that is, must pass through a physical medium as sounds or as signs to be seen, heard, or touched. Communications of any other sort are called telepathy, about which I have nothing to say.

⁶ This is obviously not true of literary works held in the memory and that "live again" as they are remembered or recited without the aid of physical documents. I am perhaps

being a bit literal when I define reading and writing in relation to physical documents, but textual criticism and scholarly editing seldom are able to concern themselves with memories and recitations. (See also note 22.)

⁷ *How to do Things with Words* (1962), pp. 99-130. Illocution, the way an utterance is used—as warning, advice, etc.—and perlocution, the effect aimed at by the utterance—as persuading one to respond appropriately—are just two of a number of possible ways to categorize the “intentions” that might constitute the thoughts and feelings preceding and leading to utterance, locution, or creation of a delivered text. The concept of “intention” is slippery and has been discussed in connection with literary texts by me and others elsewhere; see works cited below by Bowers, Tanselle, McGann, and McLaverty.

⁸ Paul Hernadi, “Literary Theory,” in *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, Joseph Gibaldi, ed. (1981), pp. 103-105.

⁹ Price Cadwell, “Molecular Sememics: A Progress Report,” *Meisei Review*, 4 (1988), 65-86.

¹⁰ This is not really a taxonomy, for I am not classifying kinds of literary works; rather it is an anatomy, but only of a narrow band of what a literary work is. It is more accurately an ontology of texts, but a suggestive and tentative one. Most definitely it is a proposal for a partial nomenclature of textual criticism.

¹¹ *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*, Occasional Paper #3 (Canberra: English Department, Royal Military College, Duntroon, 1984); revised edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986). (An earlier, less developed presentation is in my “Key Issues in Editorial Theory,” *Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography*, 6 (1982), 1-16.) Additional comments focused particularly on what might be called production texts or the sociology of texts are in my “An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts and Modes of Textual Criticism,” *SB*, 40 (1988), 55-79.

¹² Jerome McGann began elaborating his ideas about production versions of works in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1984), but makes a clearer statement of them in “Theory of Texts,” *London Review of Books*, 16 Feb. 1988, pp. 20-21. D. F. McKenzie explains his view of works as cultural artifacts with specific spatial and temporal appropriations and functions in the Panizzi lectures, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (British Library, 1987). In “The Textual Event,” a paper for the Society for Textual Scholarship (STS) conference, New York, April 1989, Joseph Grigely presented his ideas of texts as occupying literal, historical and mental spaces and suggested a distinction between text and performance, which he did not elaborate. James McLaverty published two informative articles in 1984 (“The Concept of Authorial Intention in Textual Criticism,” *The Library*, 6, 121-138; and “The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the *Dunciad Variorum*,” *SB*, 37, 82-105) on concepts of authorial intention, and at the STS conference in New York, 1989, he presented “Identity and Utterance in Textual Criticism,” in which he suggested several concepts that might be used in identifying different forms of a work; these include identity, survival, function, and utterance. I am especially indebted to McLaverty for sparking off the ideas elaborated in this essay. I should add that conversations with my colleagues Paul Eggert and Jeff Doyle (at University College, Australian Defence Force Academy) have been influential in this paper in ways too numerous to point out.

¹³ The question has fascinated me since I first encountered it in James McLaverty’s “The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art.”

¹⁴ This is probably not always true for the author who might consider “the work in his head” to be better than and independent from any of its physical inscriptions. As Mar-

lowe notes of dreams in “Heart of Darkness,” “no relation of a dream can convey the dream’s sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment and a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being corrupted by the incredible. . . .” It might also be untrue of readers who, having appropriated a work, rewrite it according to their own inspiration either as adaptations, abridgements, or retellings with augmentations. Most people would hesitate to include in their concept of the Work either what remains in the author’s head or the lucubrations of others, but it is astonishing where some folks draw the line.

¹⁵ There are, of course, many other reasons why X and Y disagree, many of which are explored quite revealingly in works on reader response. I am here concerned with those disagreements arising from differences in the physical manifestations of works. (See also Chart 4.)

¹⁶ I do not think that textual criticism is a “science” if by that term one implies something objective, but there is a pleasing similarity between the scientist operating as though photons and quarks exist, though he cannot see them, and a textual critic operating as though works exist, though he only has signs for them. I would distinguish in this way the relations between the concept of a work and sign for a work from the relation between Platonic ideals and realities, which seems more whimsical and better represented by, I believe, Christopher Morley’s fiction about a limbo of lost works, a place where works continue to exist after all physical copies have been destroyed and forgotten.

¹⁷ It is theoretically possible with this concept to imagine that a work represented by only one physical copy in the whole world might be misrepresented by that copy. That is an important problem. We can imagine further that other Versions of the Work might have existed, but if we stick to our original proviso—that if the work is a mental construct it can be known only through its physical manifestations—we will spend little time with this possibility.

¹⁸ I have discussed them elsewhere (*Scholarly Editing*, chaps. 1 and 3, and “An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts”), but I will return to these problems below, also.

¹⁹ See Fredson Bowers, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism* (1964) and *Essays in Bibliography, Text and Editing* (1975) for fuller discussions of means to detect and correct textual error.

²⁰ This is Jerome McGann’s term and corresponds to his distinction between Linguistic Texts and Production Texts. I prefer Material Texts to Production Texts, for it identifies an entity without regard to the agency responsible for its production. McGann, if I understand him, defines Production Text as the product of non-authorial book production procedures, but a Material Text is any union of a Linguistic Text with a physical medium which “fixes” it, whether it is a manuscript or a printed book.

²¹ It is interesting to note that the mistake of equating literary art with the printed representation of it is never made in music: a score is never confused with the sounds it signals nor is a record or tape ever thought of as the music; every one knows it “must be played.” However, recordings and scores share nearly all the textual problems which literary works have. The relationship between “playing it” for music and “reading it” for literature is very close.

²² The importance of the Material Text has been the special theme of much of Jerome McGann’s and D. F. McKenzie’s discussions of textual criticism and bibliography. McGann, by calling them “production texts,” emphasizes the agents of production rather than the mere materiality of the texts. I believe he does so to help validate his contention

that nonauthorial agents of textual change and non-authorial creators of textual contexts have a legitimate role in making the Work of Art. The taxonomy presented here remains neutral on this point and is useful as a description of process and phenomenon regardless of what one thinks is “legitimately” the Work.

²³ This is true even if one hears a recitation produced by someone else’s recollection of the text, though the physical medium in such a case is air molecules vibrating in sound waves rather than printed signs. One might add that any recitation, whether from memory or from a written text, is a new production of the text susceptible to “transmission error” or embellishment.

²⁴ See my article “An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts,” p. 74.

²⁵ Barthes says “the Text is not the decomposition of the work” (“From Work to Text,” p. 56), which sounds like a contradiction of what I just said, but in fact we are saying the same thing. Barthes’s “work” (my “Material Text”) cannot be experienced until it becomes Barthes’s “text” (my “Reception Text”). Since Barthes is interested only in the experience or play of Text, he would of course define the “real” aspect of the work of art as the experience of it. That experience of it (Barthes’s Play) begins with decoding or dematerializing the Material Text (Barthes says “decanting the work”).

²⁶ Joseph Grigely in “The Textual Event” uses the word “performance” to apply to those things people do when they engage with a copy or text of the work. He did not elaborate what he meant by the term. I will use the term to apply to authors and production crews, as well as to readers.

²⁷ By the term “creative” I do not mean to imply that authors make something out of nothing. They may be manipulating givens or they may be manipulated by forces over which they have no control. The “nature of creativity” is not the issue here; rather, I am distinguishing acts of authority over linguistic texts (determining what words and punctuation and the order for them that will constitute the linguistic text) from other acts such as determining the format and design of productions or acts of interpretation or appropriation of meanings.

²⁸ This formulation does not apply to letters from one specific writer to one specific reader (addressee) in which, at least for the first reading of the letter, the event of writing and the event of reading are just two events.

²⁹ A single copy might represent a mixture of readings from more than one Version. Such a copy is said to be eclectic or sophisticated, depending on whether one approves or disapproves of the mixture.

³⁰ Actually, these “facts” are no plainer than any other. *The judgment* of many people is that authors do some things badly and therefore need typists, editors and publishers to help them; likewise the judgment of many people is that these helpers do sometimes overstep their functions or perform them badly.

³¹ That statement should be qualified by the possibility that some—and unfortunately perhaps all—production performance is geared toward influencing the *consumer* to *buy* rather than the *reader* to *comprehend*. But the surface intention of copy-editing, type design, proof reading, format and binding design is to “help the reader” apprehend the work. That the covert intention of production actually works is verified in every book purchased and shelved unread.

THE TEXTUAL EVENT

JOSEPH GRIGELY

Grigely's essay is an exploration in «textual philosophy». In an extended and elegant argument with traditional Anglo-American editorial approaches to text, he invokes the writings of Jacques Derrida, Mikhail Bakhtin and Jerome McGann to replace the idea of text as a literary or aesthetic object with text as event. Grigely makes the traditional distinction between *work* and *text*: the text is a particular printing of the work. He then argues that the work should not be seen as the sum of its texts but rather as the «series of its moments of inscription, some authorial, some not». Thus scholarly editions are only «further moments of inscription», and works are necessarily in flux, never finished. They «drift», though they experience stasis each time they are inscribed.

Works are not objective in the sense of being timeless because each text of the work «is of a time». Following Derrida, Grigely sees the language of which texts are composed as «iterable» (repeatable any number of times). But, following Bakhtin, he argues that each moment of iteration must be seen as also a historical utterance bound by its social and other contexts. In this latter sense, no text is repeatable or reproducible: even facsimile editions are bound by this iron law. Thus no text (in a scholarly edition, say) can be considered definitive, since they have their canonising, disciplinary and economic motivations; and no textual apparatus can be fully said to report the texts of other versions since the contexts of iteration of those versions are not susceptible to such synopsis. For Grigely's later thinking, see his *Textualterity: Art, Theory, and Textual Criticism*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1995. EDD.

Il saggio di Grigely presenta un'esplorazione della «filosofia testuale». Partendo dal tradizionale approccio editoriale anglo-americano al problema testuale,

Philip Cohen (ed.), *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, Charlottesville (VA), University Press of Virginia, 1991, pp. 167-94. By permission of the author and the University Press of Virginia. Revised for *Textualterity: Art, Theory, and Textual Criticism*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1995, pp. 89-119.

Grigely si appoggia alle teorie di Jacques Derrida, Mikhail Bakhtin e Jerome McGann per sostituire l'idea del testo come oggetto letterario o estetico con quella del testo inteso come «evento». Grigely parte dalla classica distinzione tra *opera* e *testo*: il *testo* è una specifica forma stampata dell'*opera*. Tuttavia, sostiene, l'opera letteraria non deve essere considerata come la sommatoria di tutti i suoi testi, ma piuttosto come la «serie dei suoi momenti di scrittura, alcuni dei quali riconducibili all'autore, altri no». In quest'ottica, le edizioni critiche sono «ulteriori momenti di scrittura» e le opere letterarie sono quindi in continua evoluzione, mai concluse. Esse procedono indefinitamente e attraversano momenti di stasi solo quando vengono scritte.

Le opere letterarie non possono essere oggettive, ovvero senza tempo, perché ogni realizzazione testuale di un'opera «si colloca in *un* tempo preciso». Sulla scorta di Derrida, Grigely considera la lingua dei testi come «iterativa» (ovvero indefinitamente ripetibile). Ma, seguendo Bakhtin, egli sostiene che ogni momento di tale iterazione deve essere visto anche come un'enunciazione storicamente determinata, dipendente dal contesto sociale ecc. In quest'ultimo significato, nessun testo è ripetibile o riproducibile: persino le edizioni in facsimile sottostanno a questa regola ferrea. Pertanto nessun testo (ad esempio, in un'edizione critica) può essere considerato definitivo, dal momento che il suo statuto dipende da ragioni letterarie ed economiche, e che nessun apparato può riportare i testi delle altre versioni, giacché i contesti dell'«iterazione» di queste versioni non possono essere confrontati fra loro. Una successiva evoluzione del pensiero di Grigely si può leggere in *Textualterity: Art, Theory and Textual Criticism*, Ann Arbor (MI), University of Michigan Press, 1995.

The self-relation that forms identity is necessarily mediated by opposition to otherness.

—Mark Taylor, *Altarity*

One of the most used, abused, and powerful words in our critical vocabularies is the word *text*. As a critical term it is enormously convenient and often seems to do when nothing else will do. If one doesn't know whether to call something a book, a word, a work, or the world, then one calls it a text because it simply sounds right, supplanting a vague uncertainty with a certain vagueness. Yet it is a word with a history (or rather histories), and by unpacking some of this history I want to examine the textual-critical tradition of seeing the text as an object, and redefine the text in an interdisciplinary format utilizing semiotics, deconstruction theory, and philosophy; that is, I want to relocate the tradition of textual studies within the larger nexus of critical theory and the philosophy of art.

The Textual-Critical Tradition

Implicit in this effort is a more general intention of encouraging a theoretical (perhaps even metatheoretical) approach to textual philosophy—a kind of interdisciplinary philosophy of textuality. Until the last decade, textual “theory”—even in the work of Sir Walter Greg and Fredson Bowers—was in effect no more than a defense of textual practices; it was essentially anterior to textual study and the experience gained through what was considered the “success” and “failure” of those practices. James Thorpe, for example, describes his *Principles of Textual Criticism* as being “an effort to present . . . a discussion of the basic principles which underlie the practice of textual criticism” (vii), and this experiential approach is typical of the cautious reserve that characterizes the discipline. Traditionally, textual studies has involved an objective of stability, a way of organizing, stabilizing, or “framing” a work of literature as an ordered set of texts. This is both useful and understandable, perhaps because criticism itself has instituted its own kind of ordering of literature in various sets and subsets that are variously classified by genre, period, author, and so on. Order, in short, seems to make things easier: it allows us to move beyond the act of ordering to other issues that build upon the distinctions we make. This is both tempting and beguiling, since it promises a certain good: it promises to deliver us from the chaos of reality—textual entrapment—and answer our desire for such deliverance.

The ordered and organized literary signifier has thus been the desideratum of textual criticism and bibliography, but actual textual practices have not always acknowledged the implications of semiotic “order”—an order that threatens to deceive us and return to disorder. Such “order” is substantiated by the presence of a physical text, which in turn is a reflection of the Anglo-American textual tradition of seeing the text as a physical object, as a book, manuscript, a holograph, a galley proof.¹ This is partly because bibliography is acknowledged as the study of books as physical objects, but it is also because such texts are what Jerome McGann, in “*Ulysses* as a Postmodern Text,” calls “determinate” representations of a work’s overall instability; they provide us with specific, concrete, historical, and institutional evidence which in turn guides us toward understanding that instability (291). There is a tendency here not toward the humanistic and psychical, but towards the *physicalis* of objectivity. McGann’s point is also suggested by Peter Shillingsburg, when he emphasizes that “a text is contained and stabilized by the physical form [of a document]” (49–50).² But it is even more emphatically

stressed by William Proctor Williams and Craig S. Abbott, who explain in their *Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies* that “the basic commodity for a literary scholar is the text, which is physically embodied in letters written, impressed, or transferred onto a surface” (3). This emphasis on objects, commodities even, like soybeans and pork bellies, is not unusual, particularly if we consider the etymological force of the word *literature*: *littera*, a letter. In another sense, however, if the business of texts and the business of literature is defined by that which gets written and printed, we are also saying—by default—that “oral literature” (which is itself a contradiction in terms) is not literature, nor can it be literature until it has written texts. Even the postmodern oral poetry is, as Jerome Rothenberg observed, mediated by print by appearing in print (*Pre-Faces* 10–11, 36)—a fact undoubtedly true for David Antin’s “talk poetry” and Allen Ginsberg’s tape-recorder poems. This may seem a priggish matter, but it is also a serious matter in cultures with linguistic systems that do not get written down—sign language poetry or Native American literature being good examples of what can be lost or disparaged by being different.

The idea of the text-as-an-object is, I would like to suggest, the legacy of the boundaries of the Anglo-American and German textual tradition. Both Sir Walter Greg and Ronald McKerrow, as well as Fredson Bowers and G. Thomas Tanselle, have all worked within a somewhat narrow range of literature—Anglo-American works between (roughly) 1560 and 1960—and this exposed them to a certain set of writing and publishing conventions. Within this set of conventions they produced an admirable program of admirable approaches to the vicissitudes of textual transmission. Just as Saussure changed linguistic theory by emphasizing the synchronic study of language, the early textual scholars emphasized the synchronic activity of book production, which in turn made diachronic and typological studies more viable. In essence, textual criticism is a metachronic activity, both in time and out of time; its activity retrospective, and in many ways, canonical. We do not, for example, have a postmodern textual theory to deal with postmodern texts and genres—sound poetry, video poetry, and performance art, to cite a few—simply because textual theory is for the most part dependent on an institutional view of that canonical authority (usually for practical reasons that are also, unfortunately, economic reasons: it’s easier to get a grant to edit Hawthorne than it is to get a grant to edit Johnny Rotten). The idea of the text-as-an-object is thus bound to the idea of the text-as-a-*literary*-object, and only insofar as textual theories consider texts outside canon-

ical traditions will we arrive at a less medium-governed idea of textuality.

Such interdisciplinarity might be expanded even beyond the socio-economic conception of text production that characterizes Jerome McGann's work. For McGann a poem is not itself an object, but "a unique order of unique appearances," a network of human actions and human forces that can best be characterized as a historical event (*Beauty of Inflections* 343). Like that of his spiritual mentor, Mikhail Bakhtin, McGann's work calls for a closer look at the human element in poetry, the manner in which poetry (and literature in general) is shaped by the human condition, and the extent to which literature is a part of larger, socio-economic systems. What I have to say in the following pages might be regarded as an attempt to take this notion further by considering how human languages and the modalities of those languages (written? spoken? signed?) affect textual structures in the domain of the creative arts—poetry, painting, or performance, to name but a few.

When we theorize about "textuality" in this broader sense, we begin to realize that although texts manifest themselves as objects, they are also more than objects, and particularly more than literary objects; they are also (to take one position) signifiers, in which case we are confronted with additional questions that are less germane to textual criticism and bibliography than to semiotics and philosophy: What are the semiotic boundaries of a text? Where does a text "begin" or "end"? How is a text of a poem different from—or like—a text of a painting? Do performances have texts, or *are* they texts? Traditionally, semiotics has been understood as a kind of mediating discourse on the relationship between language and art—it informs many of the interartistic comparisons in Wendy Steiner's *Colors of Rhetoric*, for example—but in our case the arguments and answers offered by semiotics or the more nominalistic philosophy of Nelson Goodman lead us toward further questions that are not only germane to "texts" but to the very idea of literature as literature or art as art. This is the point where textual criticism becomes textual philosophy.

Given these considerations, my approach, and my critical sources, are fairly eclectic; were this essay a dinner party, one would find sitting around the table Fredson Bowers, Jerome McGann, Jacques Derrida, Nelson Goodman, and Arthur Danto—not exactly the sort of gathering that makes happy company. At times it may seem that I am unduly harsh in my criticism of textual studies (as a critical school), and at times I am. It is not that I disparage the achievements of the Anglo-American and

German textual tradition; rather, I lament what seems to me the ideological closure of that tradition—a closure that is based on the consequence of decades of editing institutionally qualified, canonized works of literature. The questions I bring up are intentionally provocative; for years textual critics lamented that readers of literature take their texts for granted, and my position now is that those same textual critics might perhaps be taking their conception of textuality for granted.

Iterability

In textual studies, the notion of iterability (from the Latin *iterum*, again) is present at levels that include the iterative function of language and the implied iterability of texts. We might think of “repeatability” as being a universal quality in textual studies, where efforts are made to produce or reproduce a particular text that lends itself toward a kind of scholarly utilitarianism. Even our critical discourse includes the terms *reprint* and *reissue*, although neither can be taken literally: reprints do not always re-print, inasmuch as they may include intentional or unintentional intrinsic changes, or reflect the extrinsic influence of political and economic conditions. What this suggests is that the philosophical foundations that underlie the concept of iterability in textual studies are vulnerable and open to question. Language is iterative to the extent that it is a socially shared code; but are utterances of language or units of utterances (such as texts) iterative also? In the section that follows I shall investigate (briefly) the iterability of language in literary discourse, and what I believe to be the noniterability of texts. The resources for my argument are somewhat diverse and not in a strict sense “textual” or “theoretical,” if only because iterability is—at its barest—an interdisciplinary issue.

The iterability of language is presupposed by being a condition of language: it is a symbolic system comprising learnable and repeatable symbols. This is a typical feature of many semiotic systems and not in itself surprising. Repeatability allows us to formulate utterances that, as part of a shared social code, are understood within the realm of that code’s usage and (if one follows Derrida on the matter in “Signature Event Context”) even beyond the limits of code itself (317). It is important to remember that language is composed of units that signify in an interactive and (both) linear and nonlinear manner: the phoneme, the morpheme, the word, the phrase, the sentence: these are units that do not necessarily signify exclusively at their own level but at recombinant

levels as well. Hence, we might say that the iterability of these units is essentially paradigmatic; yet it is paradigmatic only in theory, only in an ideal vacuum that is free from the actual conditions of articulation (either spoken or signed) and writing. Derrida's position—a controversial position—is that, as he says in “Signature Event Context,” “A writing that was not structurally legible—iterable—beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing” (315). We can “read” an utterance beyond the death (i.e., presence) of the addressee, but what are we reading? Or, as Robert Scholes frames the question: “We would have made a sense *for* the marks, but would we have made sense *of* them?” (280).

What Derrida is suggesting is that although language is conceived as being paradigmatic—like a kind of semantic lego kit—in actual practice, our utterances (constructions, buildings) are more properly syntagmatic. They may survive the death of the addressee, but in a special way: they become desyntagmatized, lifted from the context of articulation, but do not cease to function. What happens is that the utterance—whether written or otherwise recorded—is recontextualized, or, as Derrida says, “grafted” (317), and such grafting is omnipresent: language deceives us as to how its iterable presence (written words, marks, inscriptions) do not translate to an iterable intention, or meaning. The original boundary of an utterance—the moment of its inscription—becomes null, but not void. We merely graft it, decontextualize it, and recontextualize it so that the utterance gives way to its new location: it becomes, so to speak, the resident of a particular (and new) discourse community. And so on.

What Derrida doesn't do in “Signature Event Context” is give us a satisfactory definition of “the moment of inscription” (317); nor, for that matter, does anyone else. “Inscription” can be taken to mean a moment of writing by the author, the moment of publishing, or the moment of reading—or any point in between. A moment like this defines itself rather loosely and metaphorically as a moment of stasis. Such a moment is not the singular representation of a work of literature (or art even), which is instead more of a series of moments of inscription, some authorial, some not, some authorized, some not; yet all of them are realities to the extent that are scripted, (a)scribed, and more particularly, read. Moments like these are best characterized not by what they say but what they do not say: they leave us with a disembodied, decontextualized text that does not mean anything unless bound to an agent of meaning—an interpreter.

Yet in an odd sense Derrida seems to me to be on to something quite germane to the tradition of textual criticism. Historically, textual criticism

has tried to qualify moments of inscription according to their relative authority, and establish a hierarchy of inscriptions according to authorial intent. It does not (from my point of view) matter whether these efforts succeed or not; indeed, there's no way to know. Nor does it matter whether the editions produced are judiciously emended texts, eclectic texts, or facsimile texts, for they constitute (and continue to constitute, as in Gabler's edition of *Ulysses*) further moments of inscription. This is where Derrida's point strikes home: a moment of inscription is no more than a moment of inscription. It may be a significantly reformulated moment, like Bowdler's 1808 edition of Shakespeare, in which case even Bowdler's moment of inscribing Shakespeare is a moment of contextualized presence; in essence, unique, and in its uniqueness, telling. Its "wrongness" is a historical argument about truth values, and such an argument cannot exist except by comparison with other moments of inscription. A play by Shakespeare (or by anyone else) cannot claim final authority because it cannot claim to be finished at any point: just as there is no consensus in editorial theory as to what constitutes the "final intentions" of a work, there is no consensus (as far as I know) in philosophical theory as to what constitutes a "finished" work of literature.³ At one point Nelson Goodman asserts in *Languages of Art* that "the composer's work is done when he has written the score" (114)—but the corollary to this statement—"the poet's work is done when he has written the poem"—will not do because a work at this point is unrealized as a social commodity. Even if we take publication as a moment of completion, then we must also consider the fact that further publication—or even withdrawal from publication—controverts this moment but certainly does not negate it. Here I concur with the general thrust of McGann's work: instead of viewing literature—or artworks—as finished productions, we might instead view them as works of fluxion that experience stasis, as in, say, a particular edition, or a particular exhibition space. This stasis is not so much strictly temporal as it is contextual; that is, "spatial" within a historical context. In other words, we can say there are no final or finished works, but only final or finished texts; no final work of *Hamlet* or Keats's ode "To Autumn," but final (and particular) texts of *Hamlet* and Keats's ode. These texts redefine Derrida's original moment of inscription as a series of moments of inscription: they are utterances, "writing acts," and by the time they reach us—no matter how generous an editor is in explaining those texts—they have already, in varying degrees, broken free from those moments: they drift. A work of literature thus cannot be stabilized any more than a sculpture or a building can be stabilized: the relocation that threatened (and subsequently re-

textualized) Richard Serra's sculpture *Tilted Arc*, or the additions that threaten Marcel Breuer's Whitney Museum or Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum are not in this sense any more threatening than the next editor to face *Ulysses* or *Hamlet*. Timelessness is an illusion to the extent that there is no timeless text: *a* text is of *a* time.

The value of Derrida's argument is that it reminds us although language (*language*) is iterable, this iterability begins to rupture when applied to utterances (*parole*), even when those utterances are written. We move further and further from the moment of inscription and are attached to that moment by a small thread of words that are at once both the residue of that moment and our bond to it. Textual criticism and editorial theory do not help us here; editions imply that texts are not only repeatable but that they can be reconstructed along the lines of authorial intentions, and such reconstruction draws attention to itself as being re:construction. They are texts that are a part of the social institution of professionalized literature (again: a moment of inscription), and these texts serve all kinds of social, economic, and political purposes as much as Galignani's pirated texts ever did. This may seem a harsh thing to say, but I am not trying here to apply value judgments to particular texts. I only wish to say that if two texts are different, they are essentially equal in their differences, if only because those differences—and the interpretations we bring to bear upon them—are individual in their context: one text cannot be more "individual" than another.

One possible objection to this is to say that a facsimile edition is one way to repeat a text. My response is that this too will not do, for a facsimile is at best an illusion of iterability: it draws attention to itself as something *factum simile*, as something *much like* an "original," where $X_1 \rightarrow X_2$ but $X_1 \neq X_2$. However much two texts are like each other physically or perceptually (whether real or apparent), they are not the same. What stands out particularly are the circumstances that illustrate a need or purpose for the facsimile (such as Black Letter texts), for such circumstances are a part of the event that frames the facsimile's moment of inscription. The letters and words of the facsimile may look exactly like that of its parent, but the metatextual distance between the two would be remote. Again the message is that the repeatability of language is not synonymous with the (ir)repeatability of texts.

A more nominalistic approach to literature might suggest otherwise, and Nelson Goodman is one person who might not be swayed by this argument. Goodman is one of our most important philosophers in dealing with interartistic issues, and he has a knack of asking particularly difficult

questions that we otherwise might (and often do) take for granted. One of his questions that bears upon our argument goes like this: Why is it possible to make a forgery of, say, Rembrandt's *Lucretia*, but not Haydn's *London Symphony* or Gray's "Elegy?" Goodman's response is that certain fundamental differences underlie the notion of a literal, or representative iterability in the arts. He explains: "Let us speak of a work as *autographic* if and only if the distinction between original and forgery of it is significant; or better, if and only if even the most exact duplication of it thereby does not count as genuine. If a work of art is autographic, we may also call that art autographic. Thus painting is autographic, music nonautographic, or *allographic*" (*Languages* 113). Like music, literature is described as allographic because it is "amenable to notation" (121, 207–11).⁴ "Notation" in this sense suggests the presence of some kind of semiotic system, whether that system is primarily symbolic (as language), or symbolic and indexical (as music), or symbolic, indexical, and iconic (as dance notation). With the presence of a notation system, each "forgery" is not a forgery but merely another instance of that work. As Goodman puts it, we need only verify the spelling of a work to produce "an instance" of the work (115–16). He emphasizes the business of spelling and punctuation because, I think, he sees the printed or inscribed texts as symbolic representations of oral utterances, and in the process glosses over the gross distinctions that "literature" involves—particularly uninscribed oral genres.⁵

One response to Goodman would be to offer a clarification of the terms *work* and *text* and use the foundation of such clarification to reorient his argument. At times Goodman uses the two terms interchangeably—a habit unnerving, but not in any way unusual, for many of us are inclined to do likewise. As I discussed earlier, texts can be described along the lines of Derrida's "moment of inscription"—and such texts do not always "comply," in a strictly authorial sense, to a conception of correctness or finality. Such moments are singular, and this singularity (over time) becomes sequential. With this in mind Jerome McGann's work again offers us a clarifying perspective. I shall have rather more to say about McGann in a moment, but I would like to address here the temporal organization that McGann's work brings to textual theory. McGann's thesis in *The Beauty of Inflections* is that literature, and the act of producing literature, is a dynamic process in which the literary work is represented by a series of successive texts, each with its own historical, semantic, and aesthetic value—values that explain literature as "a dynamic event in the human experience" (108), and not, as the for-

malists made it, a mere aesthetic object. As McGann explained in his *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, this series of texts can be generically described as “a series of specific acts of production” (52). In this sense a literary work—be it a poem, a play, or a letter to Auntie Em—is an assemblage of texts, a polytext.⁶ This formulation can be expressed by the equation

$$W \rightarrow T_1, T_2, T_3, \dots T_N$$

where W = work and T = text. It is important to note that the work is not equivalent to the *sum* of its texts (which would create some kind of hybridized eclectic text), but instead is an ongoing—and infinite—manifestation of textual appearances, *whether those texts are authorized or not*. Such infinity reinforces my earlier view that a work of literature cannot be “finished,” just as a building is never finished: it evolves into textual states of being, in which case even ruins are an additional text along this line of time. It is thus impossible to say that the work of, say, Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, exists as anything more than a Platonic form or idea; and it is ideal in its implicit acknowledgment of the impossibility of the ideal. It is a concept, but not a concept limit; a class, but not a compliance class, for its boundaries are not prescribed. It is defined by the manifestation of texts, in which case we can say there is no “text” of *The Tempest*, but only a series of texts that comprise *The Tempest*’s polytext. *The Tempest* is a work, and a copy of the First Folio represents one text of that work. Nor is it necessary to exclude performances from this formulation. Where a series of performances is based on a specific text (what Goodman might call a score), and given

$$W \rightarrow T_1, T_2, T_3, \dots T_N$$

then we might say that

$$T_x \rightarrow P_1, P_2, P_3, \dots P_N$$

What is important about such formulas is that they remind us we do not normally conceive a book in terms of itself as a work, but in terms of its texts, or in any case the specific texts with which we have had encounters. We might perhaps speak of a work in terms of its extratextual myth, for works do indeed reach a stage where they are discussed as realities that we have not experienced in a more literal sense; that is, we speak *about* them, but not *of* them. Yet it seems to me that much of our critical discourse (and our “creative” discourse as well) depends upon our encounters with specific texts.

If then we consider a work as a nontangible idea represented by a sequential series of texts—whether these texts are inscribed or performed, whether they are authorized or not—then we might be able to make

more out of Goodman's original question. Is it possible to make a forgery of Gray's "Elegy," or any other work of literature? The question is important because it asks us if the iterability of language is an explanation for (as Goodman sees it) the iterability of texts. Given the above discussion, my response to Goodman is two-tiered: it is not possible to make a forgery of Gray's "Elegy," but it is possible to make a forgery of a particular text of Gray's "Elegy." In this sense "literature" in the broad sense is an allographic art, but literary texts are more properly autographic in their autonomy.⁷

Suppose, for example, I wanted to forge Keats's ode "To a Nightingale" and wrote out the poem, with a pencil, on a piece of greenish paper (as I am doing now). In itself the poem I have inscribed does not purport to be any other text of the poem other than what I have written: it is simply another instance of the work, another text amongst the hundreds or thousands of such texts. In this respect Goodman is right: I cannot forge Keats's "Nightingale" ode.

Suppose, however, I wanted to make a forgery of the fair copy of Keats's poem that is in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Using early nineteenth-century paper and ink that were found locked in a vault beneath St. James Place, I manage to replicate Keats's admirable scrawl and (we will assume my luck is really with me) surreptitiously replace Keats's holograph with my forged transcript. Bingo. Some years later a young D.Phil. candidate at Oxford visits Cambridge and notices one of the *t*'s doesn't look quite right, and, after careful paleographic inspection using infrared photography, earlier photostats, and Robert Gittings's *The Odes of John Keats and Their Earliest Known Manuscripts*, concludes that the manuscript is a forgery. Troubled Fitzwilliam officials review their records and find that another Keats scholar had "consulted" the holograph some years back. They send out a legal posse which of course catches me, and, in court, I stammer the truth: "N-N-Nelson Goodman made me do it."

What we learn from this is that the uniqueness of texts passes for Goodman's condition of something that can be forged (he admits in *Languages of Art* that performances can be forged [113]), which more emphatically says that texts are not iterable. Such a conclusion requires us to maintain our sharp distinction between a work and a text, and this is a distinction that Goodman's otherwise thoughtful analysis overlooks. Even if we grant Goodman this distinction, his argument is caught up in what exactly he means by a "correct copy" of a poem: he would have to impose a standard of correctness, in which case a "deviant" copy—one

with, say, a misplaced comma—would not be another instance of that work, but a completely new work.

Another way of looking at the question of iterability is to examine Jorge Luis Borges's story entitled "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," which runs like this: A friend of Menard, enumerating his publications and manuscripts, notes the inclusion of the ninth and thirty-eighth chapters of the first part of *Don Quixote*, and a fragment of chapter twenty-two. Not Cervantes's *Quixote* (which was written in the seventeenth century), but Menard's (which was written in the twentieth). Menard, says his friend, "did not want to compose another *Quixote*—which is easy—but *the Quixote itself*. Needless to say, he never contemplated a mechanical transcription of the original; he did not propose to copy it. His admirable intention was to produce a few pages which would coincide—word for word and line for line—with those of Miguel de Cervantes" (39). This indeed is exactly what Menard did, and did successfully. The story proceeds:

It is a revelation to compare Menard's *Don Quixote* with Cervantes'. The latter, for example, wrote (part one, chapter nine):

... truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, depository of deeds, witness of the past, exemplar and advisor to the present, and the future's counselor.

Written in the seventeenth century, written by the "lay genius" Cervantes, this enumeration is a mere rhetorical praise of history. Menard, on the other hand, writes:

... truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, depository of deeds, witness of the past, exemplar and advisor to the present, and the future's counselor.

History, the *mother* of truth: the idea is astounding. Menard, a contemporary of William James, does not define history as an inquiry into reality but as its origin. Historical truth, for him, is not what has happened; it is what we have judged to have happened. The final phrases—*exemplar and advisor to the present, and the future's counselor*—are brazenly pragmatic.

The contrast in style is also vivid. The archaic style of Menard—quite foreign, after all—suffers from a certain affectation. Not so that of his forerunner, who handles with ease the current Spanish of his time. (43).

The two *Quixotes* are thus, notwithstanding their identical spelling and punctuation, quite different works—or are they? Pressed to respond to the question by his colleague Richard Wollheim, Goodman is reluctant to concede that two identically spelled inscriptions ought to be considered

instances of different works (*Of Mind and Other Matters*, 140–41). It is a difficult position: for Goodman to say that they are different works, he would also be saying that two iterable inscriptions are ontologically different—and this is as he admits either untenable or an aporia. What is possible here is that the inscription is iterable, but the inscription-as-an-utterance is not. If literature (or in a broad sense human communication) boiled down to mere spellings, we would have to concede agreement with Goodman. But we can't do this because literature is not mere spellings, and Borges's story makes this its central point. The two *Quixotes* are overtly different: Cervantes's is quite at home in its enunciation of the vernacular; Menard's, in contrast, seems strangely archaic. Cervantes's *Quixote* is rhetorically straightforward, while Menard—contemporary of Bertrand Russell and William James—writes with a certain kind of philosophical and pragmatic reserve. Their differences arise not from the moments of our reading (though this may be so), but from the moments of their respective inscriptions, and only later from our investigation of those moments. The works are ontologized—that is to say, contextualized semantically—by the temporal history that surrounds their composition. In an excellent discussion of the story, Arthur Danto adds:

It is not just that the books are written at different times by different authors of different nationalities and literary intentions: these facts are not external ones; they serve to characterize the work(s) and of course to individuate them for all their graphic indiscernibility. That is to say, the works are in part constituted by their location in the history of literature as well as by their relationships to their authors, and as these are often dismissed by critics who urge us to pay attention to the work itself, Borges' contribution to the ontology of art is stupendous: you cannot isolate these factors from the work since they penetrate, so to speak, the *essence* of the work. (35–36).

From the discipline of philosophy, Danto's point of view seems to me informed and right; from the angle of literary criticism he is perhaps more naive, but certainly no less right. The critics he implicates for extolling us to "pay attention to the work itself" are no small lot: they constitute a tradition that began (in its most concerted form) with the New Critics (in America) and the Prague structuralists (in Europe), and gained momentum, as well as an inimical presence, with Euro-American structuralism and poststructuralism. Yet in urging us (as either literary critics or art critics) to locate the ontological "essence" of a work with that work's history, Danto is implicitly (and I suspect unconsciously) guid-

ing us toward New Historicism and the work of one of structuralism's most important antagonists, Mikhail M. Bakhtin.

Bakhtin's name is hardly new to the field of textual criticism; McGann, particularly, has found it purposeful to cite from Bakhtin's work, and behind those citations is a much larger theoretical framework. The insights Bakhtin adds to textual philosophy are not only germane, but germinal as well: they constitute—in their professedly antiformalist stance—one of our first discussions on the text as a discrete social and historical utterance. A collection of Bakhtin's unfinished essays, published in English under the title *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, is particularly useful in that it directly confronts two of the issues I have been dragging along through this essay: the iterability of language and the illusion of iterability of texts. Bakhtin writes: "Behind each text stands a language system. Everything in the text that is repeated and reproduced, everything repeatable and reproducible, everything that can be given outside a given text (the given) conforms to this language system. But at the same time each text (as an utterance) is individual, unique, and unrepeatable, and herein lies its entire significance (its plan, the purpose for which it was created). This is the aspect of it that pertains to honesty, truth, goodness, beauty, history" (105). It seems to me that the two profound truths of this statement (that the language of a text can be repeated, but that the text as an utterance cannot) are marred by Bakhtin's attempt to claim a third truth: that the "entire significance" of a text lies within its uniqueness as a social utterance, as an act of communication. This position is illustrative of Bakhtin's inflexibility towards formalism and structuralism, and the absolutism of his historical hermeneutics also infects McGann's work (I shall have more to say about this in my conclusion). This problem is disconcerting, but not in a manner that turns one away from Bakhtin; it instead pulls us closer to the ideological edge on which his ideas move. A bit further into his essay he takes up (unknowingly) a hypothetical position vis-à-vis Nelson Goodman and the two *Quixotes*:

Two or more sentences can be absolutely identical (when they are superimposed on one another, like two geometrical figures, they coincide); moreover, we must allow that any sentence, even a complex one, in the unlimited speech flow can be repeated an unlimited number of times in completely identical form. But as an utterance (or part of an utterance) no one sentence, even if it has only one word, can ever be repeated: it is always a new utterance (even if it is a quotation) The utterance as a whole is shaped as such by extralinguistic (dialogic) aspects, and it is also related to other utterances. These extralinguistic (and dialogic) aspects also pervade the utterance from within. (108–9).

Given Cervantes's and Menard's *Quixotes*, Bakhtin would, on the basis of this position, unhesitatingly pronounce them different works, and he would do so for similar reasons Danto does: they are separate utterances, tied by "dialogic relations" to their historical circumstances, and different in their relation to those circumstances. The emphasis on the extralinguistic nature of these dialogical relations also serves, to an extent, to delimit the range of those relations: Bakhtin seems perfectly willing to grant that that relationship cannot be closed ("A context," he wrote, "is potentially unfinalized; a code must be finalized" [147]). Bakhtin's inclination here brings him as close to Derrida and Barthes as he can possibly come. Why? Because the deconstructionist conception of the text as a text(ile) composed of weavings is in its own way "dialogic," but not in a manner solely exterior to language: it rather works *in* language, and between language and the world. Derrida's position is that the interweaving (*Verwebung*) of language combines both the discursive and the nondiscursive, both language and "other threads of experience" into a cloth, into a text(ile), that is inextricable and for the most part unweavable.⁸ Such a text is related to social history, but it is not related to social history alone: it is related to other texts as well, and their chaotic system of interrelationships (warp, woof) undergoes (in theory) a kind of semantic fusing and fraying. A text is thus intertextual, "caught up," as Foucault says, "in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 23). In practice the textile is more controlled (Robert Scholes, for example, points out a kind of hermeneutic centering in Derrida's writing); but this does not seem to matter much here. Bakhtin's position is one that suggests that the utterance's singularity is protected by the utterance's volatility: we can never go back to that utterance with complete assurance, can never, literally or conceptually, conceive it in totality. Thus we face a necessity, perhaps a rule, in proclaiming a text (as a textile) is never complete. Bakhtin seems to lean in this direction when he asserts that "dialogic boundaries intersect the entire field of living human thought" (120), and as boundaries go those are pretty big. If the natural boundaries of a text can never be located (as the moment of inscription can never be recalled), by what rule or rubric do we create artificial boundaries for texts in the creative arts?

One answer is that textual boundaries are projections of our social and political identities; that they are in a sense mental conceptualizations of historical spaces. For McGann, for example, there is no such thing as a text without a context, and it is only by a combination of historical evidence and our interpretation of that evidence that this context

is circumscribed. In other words, textual boundaries are not the product of reality, but of our “reading” of reality. In summarizing the work of McGann and D. F. McKenzie, John Sutherland has written: “The force of McKenzie’s critique, like McGann’s is that it specifically controverts the faith of modern bibliography in the reproducibility of the ‘essential’ text, if only institutionally approved procedures are followed. There is, for McKenzie and McGann, no ahistorically essential text to reproduce. The task of McKenzie’s ‘sociology,’ as he sees it, is in any case not reproduction but the reinsertion of the text into the critical moments of its historical and political existence” (586). This is a good basic overview of the situation, but I think it can be taken further. I would venture to say that not only can we not “reproduce” an “essential” text, but we cannot reproduce *any* text. To be able to reproduce a text would suggest, in Goodman’s allographic terms, that a text is composed of an ahistorical, “neutral” language: it suggests that language alone constitutes a text. And it further suggests that speech events or writing events can be replicated in a manner in which a photographic negative can produce several photographs. But this won’t do, either for texts or for photographs as texts, because we would in this case have to say that photographs likewise have no historical contexts, which is obviously false: as for literature, it matters how they are printed, where they are printed, how they are mounted, where they are exhibited, and where they are published.

Sutherland’s use of the term *reproduce* is perhaps unavoidable; yet it is misleading. Each time we “reproduce” a text—whether we do so in an edition or in an apparatus of an edition—we do not reproduce that text at all, but rather print it in another new and different context. By changing the extralinguistic component—e.g., the publication—we change the extratextual community, and hence the interpretative strategies that are brought to bear upon that text. The audience changes; assumptions about it change. Furthermore, this applies to art and photographs as much as it applies to literature, for which reason an Anselm Kiefer painting on the wall of Marian Goodman’s gallery is not the same as the identical painting on the wall of the Podunk town library. The textual-bibliographical dilemma that arises from such situations is a question—posed earlier—of what constitutes the semiotic boundary of a text; i.e., if the text is seen as a signifier, what constitutes the boundary (or boundaries) of this signifier? By arguing that the text extends beyond its physical presence in language to the context of itself as an utterance, we are saying that a text includes what is extralinguistic, even what is supposedly extratextual. In short, we are proposing a model of a text that is as radically unstable as

our interpretations for that text. The free (or floating) signifieds that characterize some models of deconstruction are now matched by equally free (or floating) signifiers; and in concurrence, we find ourselves agreeing with Derrida that the “presence” of a text-as-an-object belies the absence of the text-as-an-utterance-of-another-time-and-place. That is to say, the fixedness of a text is as illusory as the fixedness of an interpretation; neither is “final,” neither is “authorial.” Such a proposition threatens to upset the very foundations upon which the textual-bibliographical tradition is based.

Perhaps it is just as well that this happens. Textual criticism has placed a considerable amount of (undue) faith in the idea of a definitive edition, particularly as much of this faith is placed in the textual apparatus, which is often said to allow us to “reconstruct” authoritative and collaborative versions of a work. What it doesn’t do, of course, is give us the supposedly nonauthoritative, nor does it give us oral texts, nor does it give us the extralinguistic contexts of those very texts it purports to be giving. What it does give us, then, are surrogate texts that appeal to the iterability of language, but not of texts as historical events. My position here might come across to editors as unusually hard, in which case I can only say that we need to be more realistic about what an apparatus can and cannot do. Perhaps its greatest benefit is that the apparatus is indexical in its reference to, and summary of, texts; we still have the onus of chasing after them on our own. But an apparatus, or for that matter an edition, that purports to “reproduce” a text is an apparatus that lies. To reproduce is to reenact. And this won’t work because the word *reenact* is an oxymoron: we can no more print the same text twice than we can step in the same stream twice. To reprint—even in facsimile—Shelley’s *Adonais* merely adds another pearl onto the string of textual enactments. Bowers’s Hawthorne does not reproduce or reenact Hawthorne any more than Menard’s *Quixote* reenacts Cervantes’s. Nor does it matter (as it seems to matter to Goodman) if two texts are alike in all physical respects, whether perceptual or inherent: their difference is instead one that is ontological.

Let me illustrate for a moment how this might be. Suppose that one should stumble upon a press operation locked away in a forgotten warehouse. Still set up in type, with original inks, paper, and binding equipment, is Ernest Hemingway’s *Torrents of Spring*. Suppose now that one were to follow through on this discovery and print and bind several volumes of the book: physically they would be absolutely identical to those distributed from the initial imprint. Are they identical texts, however? My

answer is that they are not. The volumes are transposed ontologically by their historical context: they are *extensions* of their discovery as texts-in-progress. That is, their stasis (or hibernation) as texts-in-progress is unbound (awakened) by their discovery. They become texts only inasmuch as they are discovered and printed. Where this historical truth is hidden, we cannot decide whether the texts are identical or not, in which case one may just as well make a killing selling them at book fairs. To borrow from (and adapt) Arthur Danto's argument in his *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, we cannot vouch that holy water is holy water except by our belief as such (18). Whether the water is actually tap water or Evian water does not seem to matter so much as our belief that the water, having been blessed, is "transfigured" from a substance of quotidian consumption to a substance of religious signification. Chemically it is still the same stuff, just as the Hemingway printed in 1926 is materially the same as the Hemingway printed in 1989. Hence, we cannot reproduce, reprint, or reenact a text: each act of textual production is an act of sequential (even homeostatic) production.

[...]*

Notes

¹ In contrast to the textual-critical tradition, the deconstructionist use of the term *text*, rather than closing itself on a material state of language, opens itself up to the intertextual, even metatextual, loci of language. See Roland Barthes in *Image-Music-Text*: "The text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of an Author-God), but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (9).

² For Shillingsburg a text is more particularly an immaterial representation of words and punctuation inasmuch as that order has some kind of physical representation.

³ Shillingsburg discusses four different conceptions, or "orientations," of completion: the historical ("the work of art is finished when it becomes a material artifact"); the sociological (a work is finished when it is ready to be distributed); the aesthetic (a work of art is never really complete); and the authorial (a work is finished when the author says so) (75–78). Although there are some holes in these orientations (particularly where they overlap), Shillingsburg's distinctions are very useful outlines.

* Grigely wishes to read the tradition of textual studies against a larger dialogue of critical theory and artistic philosophy, expanding the tradition beyond what he argues has largely been to date a defense of textual practices. He then outlines two versions of textuality: the text as object and in a broader sense as a convergence of historical moments and social processes. EDD.

⁴ See also Goodman's *Of Mind and Other Matters*, 139.

⁵ For an illuminating reply to Goodman on this topic, see Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *On the Margins of Discourse*, 3–13.

⁶ A similar, but more finely honed point of view is shared by Shillingsburg (46–7).

⁷ I leave aside for now the theoretical implications of sound poetry, as well as some *Zaum* and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry (which for the most part is intranscribable, but recordable), and some concrete poems (which are not speakable, or in some cases transcribable, but are reproducible by other means). As an oral language, the implications offered by sign language poetry would fall under the rubric posited for sound poetry, i.e., intranscribable, but recordable.

⁸ Derrida, "Form and Meaning: A Note on the Phenomenology of Language," in *Margins of Philosophy* 160–61; see also *Positions* 26–7.

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DOCUMENT AND TEXT: THE “LIFE” OF THE LITERARY WORK AND THE CAPACITIES OF EDITING

PAUL EGGERT

With the poststructuralist movement after 1968 came new understandings of textuality. There was a powerful push to cut the umbilical cord linking author and text, and “inscription” came, by metaphorical extension, to mean social and ideological inscription of the text. The material object (the book) was seen as irrelevant or trivial. This left bibliography sidelined since its study of text had always been channelled through study of the material object. Paul Eggert argues that a powerful counter-clarification can be achieved if the two levels or dimensions of the literary work – the documentary and the textual – are kept notionally distinct. «Text», under this dispensation, requires the socialized reader’s engagement in the raising of meaning from the document; any definition of the literary work that excludes its continuing life, its currency, amongst its readership is necessarily therefore a partial one. Works need to be understood as document-centred: documents are the point of initiation and return for readers’ textual and interpretative dealings. Works therefore have flexible boundary lines, which bibliography, including the practice of scholarly editing, must recognize.

As reception of a work includes what is done by the author in revision, the compositor when setting type and by the publisher’s editor, the editorial assumption that alterations by persons other than the author should be winnowed out of the reading text and that revisions by the author should be incorporated is no longer self-evident. Nevertheless, choices have to be made about what aspects of the life of the work an edition can present. The inscrip-tional acts that initiated the work’s ongoing life will always be of interest and there are established methodologies for dealing with it, which recent Anglo-American sociological approaches to editing have so far failed to match. In a Coda to the original essay (not given here) Eggert argues that Jerome McGann’s social-production approach runs together the separable textual agencies of author, typesetter and publisher, and that his idea of bibliographical “codes” fails to separate the documentary and textual dimensions. For Eggert’s further

thinking, see his *Securing the Past: Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), especially chapter 10. EDD.

Il movimento post-strutturalista sviluppatosi dopo il Sessantotto ha introdotto un nuovo concetto di testualità. In particolare, è stato reciso il cordone ombelicale che legava l'autore al testo, tanto che il termine «scrittura», per estensione metaforica, da un'accezione materiale è passato a significare la «scrittura» sociale e ideologica del testo. L'oggetto materiale (il libro) era divenuto irrilevante o banale. Ciò ha rappresentato un momento di crisi anche per la *bibliografia testuale*, dal momento che lo studio filologico dei testi è sempre stato legato alla dimensione materiale degli stessi. Paul Eggert sostiene potersi addivenire a un momento chiarificatore qualora si tengano i due livelli dell'opera letteraria – quello documentario e quello testuale – distinti in sede teorica. In questo modo lo sforzo del lettore si fa decisivo nel determinare il significato del documento letterario; e qualunque definizione dell'opera letteraria che prescindendo dalla sua vitalità e diffusione presso il pubblico dei lettori è di necessità una definizione parziale. La concezione dell'opera letteraria non può tralasciare la centralità del documento: i documenti sono il punto di partenza e di arrivo delle relazioni testuali e interpretative che i lettori intrattengono con essi. La mancanza di una precisa linea di demarcazione nelle opere letterarie, perciò, è un dato che deve essere riconosciuto, in modo particolare dalla bibliografia testuale e dalla corrente pratica filologica.

Dal momento che nella ricezione di un'opera sono messi in gioco più livelli di revisione – quella effettuata dall'autore, la revisione del tipografo e quella dell'editor della casa editrice –, non è più possibile sostenere che le modifiche introdotte da altri soggetti rispetto all'autore debbano essere eliminate dal testo, e che al contrario vadano incluse soltanto quelle introdotte dall'autore. Ciò nonostante, è necessario compiere scelte precise in relazione a quegli aspetti dell'opera letteraria che si intende accogliere nell'edizione. Gli atti di scrittura materialmente intesi con cui inizia la vita di un'opera avranno sempre un grande interesse, e sono state approntate a riguardo metodologie operative vanamente contrastate dal recente approccio editoriale di taglio sociologico. In un'appendice del saggio, qui non pubblicata, Eggert argomenta che l'approccio sociologico di McGann non può essere disgiunto dalla mediazione testuale di autore, editor e tipografo e che la sua idea di *codici* bibliografici separa erroneamente la dimensione documentaria da quella testuale. Per ulteriori approfondimenti sul pensiero di Eggert, cfr. *Securing the Past: Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), in particolar modo il cap. 10.

I

Sir Walter Greg once remarked that “what the bibliographer is concerned with is pieces of paper or parchment covered with certain writ-

ten or printed signs. With these signs he is concerned merely as arbitrary marks; their meaning is no business of his.”¹ Philip Gaskell remarks on page 1 of his *New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1972) that the discipline is “the study of books as material objects.” What among other things the successive waves of literary theory have alerted us all to, however, is the ever present dimension of textuality. Once begin to perform any bibliographical operation involving marks on the page and one finds they are no longer arbitrary. They have to be raised onto a textual plane, be given a meaning, if only a provisional one, before they can be interpreted, as Lotte Hellenga puts it, “in terms of the time, place and circumstances of [their] origin.”² The job of the editor involves a similar kind of contextualizing: what word is written obscurely here in the manuscript? what could the author possibly have meant to write? could this be a slip of the pen? what could the compositor’s copy have read given that the sense in the printed document is faulty here? Once engaged with, the physical marks on the page inevitably convert into textual signs; even in bibliography there is no getting away from textuality.

The same is true of ordinary acts of reading, yet the “linguistic text,” as Jerome McGann calls it, is not just there on the page for all to recognize.³ The assumption that it is there is not unreasonable because agreement about how the text on the page “reads” will usually be forthcoming. Obviously enough, the raising of text from a material book is a socialized acquirement. Because we do not tolerate variation in the act of raising the text, we feel at liberty to state that the text is there on the page. But whenever I ask one of my students to read aloud a paragraph of, say, a Dickens novel I am reminded that the conversion of ink on paper into textual meaning is neither inevitable nor unvarying. Due to the authority of teaching and the imperatives of scholarship, material object and text are not separated in ordinary or in bibliographical practice. But there is, I wish to argue, a powerful source of clarification if the two levels are kept notionally distinct: on the one hand, material object—or what I prefer to call document⁴—and, on the other hand, text. “Text,” under this dispensation, requires the socialized reader’s engagement in the raising of meaning from the document.⁵ Most of the time no purpose is served by separating the levels, but, as I hope to show, we need to be able to draw on this distinction when necessary.

The by-now pretty general admission that textuality is, somehow, part of bibliographic practice helps account for the recent reassessments of the object of bibliographic and especially editorial inquiry. What are the boundaries and modes of existence of the literary work which critical

editors profess to edit? What are the capacities and limitations of critical editing? Does it make sense to heed calls for a sociological form of editing? The distinction I have drawn can help provide an answer to these questions as well as going some way towards clarifying the farrago of meanings which the term “text” has accumulated over the last twenty years or so.⁶ Indeed I believe that editors have a special responsibility here. In an era in which there has been a powerful push to cut the umbilical cord linking author and “text,” and in which “inscription” has come, by metaphorical extension, to mean social and ideological inscription of the text, the witness of editors becomes peculiarly important. Working on a day-to-day basis with the documentary traces left by authors, scribes and compositors, editors must, like all readers, operate at the level of text. But they endeavor to account for the document in terms of the agents and moments of its *physical* inscription. Editors postulate semantic intention (the author’s or compositor’s intention to mean), in order to get a better grip on the graphic intention of the author or compositor: the intention to inscribe a particular sequence of linguistic signs. Editors try to get behind text to the level of physically inscribed document (Greg was right so far); but they, being readers, can only proceed via their creation of text.

2

What I would first like to take up is the question of the boundaries of the literary work and editors’ understanding of it. The relative ease of acceptance of the two versions of *King Lear* in the Oxford Shakespeare, published in 1986, has, I suspect masked an underlying anxiety about the notion of multi-versioned works. The sometimes intemperate criticism which Hans Gabler’s edition of Joyce’s *Ulysses* has attracted since 1985 can be partly explained by the typographical and theoretical challenge of its left-hand pages to our culture’s deep-rooted assumption that the literary work will be represented by a single text. Witness the law of copyright: it enshrines the notion of the singular “work.” And in this respect the history of copyright dovetails with the histories of authorship and printing.

Protecting the rights of authors was, as is well known, the last thing on Queen Mary’s mind; but gradually the imperatives of preventing heresy by licensing booksellers and printers, in return for protecting their monopoly, gave way, in the early eighteenth century, to protecting the right of authors to sell their copy. The acts of 1709 and 1730 established a copyright for authors. Unlike the French system of *droit d’auteur* which situ-

ates the right in the person of the author, the British concept was and remained a property right, able to be alienated by sale, gift or inheritance.⁷ In the British case of *Millar v. Taylor* in 1769, Mr. Justice Yates stated:

Property is founded upon occupancy. But how is possession to be taken, or any act of occupancy to be asserted on mere intellectual ideas? All writers agree, that no act of occupancy can be asserted on a bare idea of the mind. Some act of appropriation must be exerted to take the thing out of the state of being common, to denote the accession of a proprietor.⁸

Thus was the notion of the idea as against the expression of it enshrined in law; thus, one might add, did Pope's "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed" gain legal extension. Expression of an idea was deemed to be a form of occupancy. That is, a "being there" in the idea, witnessed by a written form of it, would justify a claim of ownership. The other key legal distinction was between the work—literary works, but also any other kind of writing—and its physical manifestation in paper and print. Property rights existed in both; ownership of the manuscript or of a particular typesetting was not the same as ownership of copyright in the *work*.

Given the amounts of money involved, the case law for stage and screen adaptations of literary works is unsurprisingly substantial, indicating that by now the courts have found ways of dealing with versions in different mediums. However, the courts have not found their job an easy one. Based on a survey of decisions in British, American and Australian courts, the authors of a standard Australian book on the subject, *Writers and the Law*, conclude "that the courts have muddled the already blurred waters of the idea/expression dichotomy through their failure to clearly define and consistently apply the terms 'idea' and 'plot.'"⁹ The law is stubbornly positivistic; principles of consistent application are sought; conflicting dicta from different court cases are reconciled in later judgments, affording some predictability in future cases. This is always the aim; but the way has not become clear with copyright. It seems therefore quixotic to hope that the law will quickly find concepts or distinctions sharp-honed enough to deal with multi-versioned works within the same medium. Yet the matter is of importance to critical editors if only because of its greater importance to publishers and authors' estates wishing to claim a copyright in a newly established text.

The legal definition of the work is an attempt to grasp an elusive entity. By distinguishing between physical property and intellectual, the law has acknowledged the existence of an ideal concept, even if originally defined by means of the metaphor of physical occupancy. This half-ac-

knowledge elision of the idea with its written form—of the intellectual, or ideal, with the physical—while yet insisting on their differentiation for working purposes, has its analogues in the terminology and thinking of literary editors. Witness G. Thomas Tanselle's platonic description of the literary work: it "speaks to us" he writes, "across the generations" but "will forever be a conjecture arising from those time-bound, vulnerable objects," the documents. According to Tanselle then, the work will of necessity be represented imperfectly in documentary forms of it.¹⁰

The history of the book silently but potently invites our subscription to a belief in the singularity of the work. Freed of the vagaries of medieval copying, book technology must gradually have given an air of permanence and therefore singularity to printed works.¹¹ Ben Jonson's appropriation of the format of already-canonized ancient texts for the 1616 folio of his *Works* was, it has been argued, a self-conscious attempt to attach to his name a status and dignity that would subsequently be thought of under the modern rubric of authorship.¹² Shakespeare's Folio, which was claimed to contain his "true and originall copies," came a few years later. A recognizably modern form of textual scholarship was concerning itself with questions of authenticity of certain classical texts by the end of the seventeenth century. And the eighteenth century was strewn with a succession of celebrated forgeries and piracies—Curll, Ossian, Ireland's Shakespeare manuscripts, Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, Chatterton's Rowley—themselves testimony both to a new pressure on authorship and to a belief in the singularity of the thing that could be susceptible of forgery or piracy.¹³

Our own period has been fed by Romantic notions of individual creativity and authorship; but with the celebrated exceptions of Wordsworth's successive *Preludes* and Henry James' revision of his novels for his New York edition, editors have generally shared, or at least felt able to accede to, the common assumption that a single reading text of a work is, in most cases, the best—the proper—representation of it. Editorial decisions to present the work thus are, I suggest, as much limited by pragmatic and commercial constraints as by intellectual commitment. The print technology that helped to generate the cultural assumption about the singularity of the work in the first place conspires to limit the presentation of its multiple versions in critical editions some centuries later. And whereas the traditional editorial goal was the elimination of corruption—i.e., textual alteration by persons other than the author—editors of nineteenth and twentieth century literature have been reporting, for some decades now, the existence of multiple, authorial versions of the one work. Possessed of a range of pre-

publication material, editors are discovering situations in some ways analogous to the medieval one. Medievalists have always known that, by virtue of scribal transmission, literary and legal and other works exist or would have existed in various, textually unstable versions. Renaissance playscripts, available only in scribal copies, were inherently subject to alteration and adaptation by the groups of players staging them. And John Donne and his contemporaries expected to have their poems circulated in scribal copies, thus incurring the inevitable risks.

When satisfactory software for electronic editions is finally written, readers will have the capacity to view simultaneously or near-simultaneously the competing versions at any one point in a text as well as being able to flick to the appropriate commentary and annotation. It is doubtful that a single reading text, established eclectically according to copy-text principles, will seem incumbent in the electronic environment. It will be almost impossible to resist exploiting the capacities of the medium, just as it was with the once-wonderful technology of the printed book—for which the good citizens of Mainz in the 1460s thanked God in every colophon. The inertial authority of the printed book will gradually be eroded, and with it may go the cultural assumption of the singularity of the work. And the law will catch up in due course.

3

Having written elsewhere¹⁴ about the desirability of capturing in a critical edition the processes of writing and revision, rather than assuming that the finalized product—the single reading text—adequately represents the work, I will not dwell on that theme here other than to note, as confirming evidence, the reception of recent “art-in-the-making” exhibitions in European and US galleries. X-radiographs, infra-red photography and the microanalysis of paint chips have made it possible to create images of the early versions of well-known paintings which lurk beneath the visible surface, and to make attributions of sections of a painting in the case of collaborative works. These exhibitions have attracted very considerable interest; “process” editions of major literary works could, I believe, have a similar effect. However that may be, my subject here is the opposite end of what I see as a continuum: the readership’s participation in the work.

Let me say straight out that any definition of the literary work which excludes its continuing life, its currency, amongst its readership is necessarily a partial one. The students in my bibliography class bear this

out every year. I ask them to read a newspaper novel published in the *Melbourne Age* in 1889. Called “A Woman’s Friendship,” it was written by Ada Cambridge, a prolific and talented Anglo-Australian novelist. Half the students read it in the National Library of Australia: the lucky ones, occasionally, from hard copy, the others from microfilm. The novel was not published in book form and thus was not picked up in the standard bibliographies. It lay undiscovered till Elizabeth Morrison came upon it and prepared it for the Colonial Texts Series.¹⁵ The other half of my students read the novel in her critical edition. The experience for the students reading in the library is very significantly different. They say that, unlike a novel in volume format, it is not the sort of thing you would want to take to bed and read; they refer to the distractingly miscellaneous material with which it was surrounded in the *Age*; they say that the newspaper format makes them think of it as a consumable, and that therefore they have difficulty thinking of it as a work of serious literature—as the critical edition most pointedly invites readers to do. For my students, their mode of entry to the novel helps determine its meanings for them. Their reading is historically situated in the present no matter which printing they read. But each year the readers of the critical edition astound the others with their reports of the historical and biographical contexts of the novel’s writing and publication which they have derived from the introduction and explanatory notes. And, in their turn, the readers of the *Age* printing amuse and to some extent illuminate the class by describing the immediate, rag-tag contexts encountered by the novel’s original newspaper readers, a context which must partially have determined, or at the very least influenced, the novel’s meanings.

The participation of readers in scribally published works is even more pronounced. It is witnessed in alterations in the copying. In the case of Restoration scriptorial satire, contemporary readers

will indulge in various kinds of creative *misreading* in order to adjust the text to their own understanding of politics and desires to influence the future. They will do this by altering names, filling in deliberate blanks with their own guesses, and, of course, by rewriting what seems to them to be meaningless so that it makes better sense—to themselves.¹⁶

Dissemination of texts by electronic means may offer a return to this situation; email already offers this opportunity of circulation of a text with changed or additional material. Within a university this means of publication of lampoons and libellous material can become especially lively

at times of high political tension. What it demonstrates silently is the role of reception—i.e., reading—in the life of the satire. The altered electronic document, or the Restoration poem of state, flows from someone's reading of its immediate ancestor. With printed material, that opportunity is denied the reader, although library copies of books all over the world bear readers' marginalia suggesting, often in quite forthright ways, that the desire for textual intervention is not dead. In recent years, there have been exhibitions in rare books rooms of "the art of the inscriber." And for at least the last decade, children have been able to read what are called "choose-your-own-adventure" books. The reader is given multiple choices about which page to turn to next, thus allowing variant plot-lines to be explored while using much the same material.

Other evidence of reception is of course found in contemporary reviews and later discussions. I have shown elsewhere how, upon publication in 1924, *The Boy in the Bush* entered unexpectedly into a political and moral force-field in Australia, spawning some forty-eight reviews, discussions, and mentions in Australian newspapers and magazines—part of the 120-odd around the world.¹⁷ The work done in its name did not stop at publication; yet that is where readers have traditionally drawn the line indicating the boundaries of this and all other literary works.

However, the distinction I posed initially between document and text stresses the role of readers—whether author coming back to revise, compositor to set copy, or reader of printed material—in the raising of text from the physical document. From this point of view, the exclusion of readers' participation in the work from our sense of what the work comprehends, what its boundaries are, can only be a matter of convenience rather than logic. Convenience is no less important for that because it helps in practice to prevent the "work" from shading off into a cloud of post-publication intertextuality: into readers' acquired predispositions, their memories of other works, etc. Nevertheless the work indisputably has a life *in* the reading. Some readings lead to the creation of new documents (reviews, essays) which are new works but are testimony simultaneously to their writer's participation as reader in the prior one. Works are, thus, document-centered: documents are the point of initiation and return for readers' textual and interpretative dealings. But this pragmatic centering does not and need not predict where the flexible boundary lines of the work will fall.

It follows, therefore, that from earliest scribblings, through fair copy and the printed editions and adaptations, to the successive audience's re-

ceptions of them, the documentary traces of all aspects of the life of a work are the concern of bibliography, properly conceived. Textual bibliography, as presently understood and practiced, can deal with some of these traces with a good degree of success. Whether it can or should alter its methods to deal with this expanded conception of the work is the subject of the remainder of the essay.

4

Certainly the gate is thrown open to a variety of editorial approaches. In author-centered editing practice, textual authority is often elided with textual ownership. If an author made revisions two months—or twenty years—after he or she wrote the novel, an editor may feel that they must be incorporated into the copy-text. The text of the work belongs to the author, it can be felt, and *that*, in a very common sense way, is *that*. However if reception of a work is recognized as part of its constitution, or if the alterations made by compositor, printer and publisher's reader are seen as contributions rather than corruptions, the conclusion begins to lose its flavor of inevitability. These recognitions, however, begin to point to the limitations of textual bibliography. Although, as I have argued, it must recognize the literary work as both document and text—and in admitting the implications of its textual dimension grant that the boundaries of the work are indistinct, fuzzy and intertextual—the discipline of textual bibliography is best equipped to deal with the work at the level of documentary inscription.

Deconstructionist and New Historicist attacks on critical editing usually overlook this; in terms of the distinction I proposed, they run text and document together, essentially ignoring the implications of the tangible link between writer and reader which the document represents. There is no need to rehearse the history of Barthes', Foucault's and Derrida's attempts to shift attention from author to text or to disperse the author-function into writing. Their essays have been followed by a prolonged international meditation. Regularly ridiculed is what is sometimes called the expressive image of authorship. The author as originator stands behind the text which is "the transparent and expressive vehicle of the intended or unintended meanings and features of the author's (un)consciousness. The author is thus presented as the human principle of unity for the text and meanings that can legitimately be read from it, the foundation according to which a text with its authorial signature can be recognized as a closed and operative totality."¹⁸ It is further argued

that the author's signature serves to endow singularity of creative inspiration on all copies of the work. Thus, it is implied, is a cultural con-job perpetrated. Editors are felt to be more deluded than most people on this score, allowing Michael Dobson to declare, "The insistence [of Wells and Taylor in the Oxford Shakespeare] on tying the plays to the idea of their author is remarkable."¹⁹

In so far as it subscribed to this expressive idea of authorship, critical editing's understanding of its object of attention has been indeed in need of renewal. A reconceived understanding of the literary work along the lines I have sketched stresses this need. But on the other hand the attack on authorship also needs some scrutiny. The meaning of a work is supposed to be read off the author's biography, more particularly off his or her intentions; the "text" is said to be the vehicle. What is abundantly evident to editors, however, is that the real underlying vehicle is the document. What is read off the document may be adjudged to be, on the metaphorical level, replete with ideological inscription which had no particular source in the author, or at least can be shown to have been circulating more widely. But the actual or inferred existence of the document itself cannot be explained away by Derridean metaphors of writing and inscription or New Historical metaphors of the circulation of meaning. Far from eliminating the question of authorship at the level of physical inscription, New Historicist essays silently presuppose it. Witness the frequent, linked offering of such information as dates of publication and performance as factual. Their every footnote is, to adapt a remark of John Feather's, a recognition of the past and of its embodiment in the physical form in which it is transmitted to us.²⁰

It is the documentary level which editors continuously acknowledge in their work. Neither writing nor publication is, accepting my distinction, a production of *text*; both writing and printing are *documentary* activities—physical translations of mental processes that were going on within the heads of the author or of the compositor.²¹ Although editors, in justifying their approach, often talk in terms of the author's overall or final intention for a work and profess to be respecting that, in my experience what they are actually trying to grasp is the intention behind the inscription of some particular marks on a page. Editors ought to be aware of the danger of making the jump from this level of intention—the intention to inscribe—to the level of an overarching idea which authors can somehow be imagined as having got into their heads and put into practice in every detail. The latter view of intention denies the common experience of finding out as one goes along; the intermittence of

concentration; and it ignores defects of memory—a significant factor in the case of a lengthy novel. The rhetoric of authorial intention has its dangers. But once entertain a view of the literary work such as I have described, and the pressure on such unattainables as final authorial intention lessens considerably.

New Historicist editions which would notate the work as a collaborative endeavor or which would deliberately highlight the inscriptions of people other than the author are also possible. I have speculated elsewhere on such an edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—a novel whose various editions, translations, and piracies, notated in apparatuses, could allow useful sociological and legal comparisons.²² One would be interested in what Lawrence wrote only for what was done to it. I suspect that a New Historicist edition of, say, *King Lear* would also be worthwhile. One could of course restrict one's editing to the printed editions in a traditional variorum format; but it would be more ambitious to try to notate staged adaptations, using extant marked-up copies prepared for actual performances. For the performance copies one would be restricted, prior to the age of film, to documentary inscriptions: marginalia, lists of actors, markings of entrances, exits, sets, lighting perhaps, scenes or lines deleted or added for particular performances. Unfortunately, such editing would not be recording actual performances but merely the surviving notation relating to them.²³ As a form of editing this sociological-historical recording might well be exceeded in its usefulness for the modern period by a filmic apparatus in a video/laser form. Its value would be indexed by its capacity to engender fresh readings—but then that is one standard by which I would judge any critical edition.

Interposition between the modern reader and the original (and later) documents is the very business of editors. Reflective ones realize that what they do is inevitably colored by their historical moment, and in particular is limited—but also enabled—by the equipment and concepts their discipline has available to it. The corollary is twofold. On the one hand, the basic problem for the editor remains what it has been all along: to ascertain who made the successive inscribings, when, and under what circumstances, and then to devise an editorial solution responsive to the unique history of the documentary inscriptions. On the other hand, although restricted by the format of the physical book, the editor ought nevertheless (as I see it) to stay alert to the possibility of formulating new textual arrangements that answer to an expanded idea of the literary work (and of bibliography). Finding ways of documenting the history of the work and of simultaneously providing a textual format which allows the work

to continue to *function* in our culture by being read, inspected and studied—reliably, stimulatingly, intelligently—remains the challenge.

To edit the post-authorial forms of a work may prove valuable; one can hardly tell in advance. But the initiating inscriptional acts which made possible that ongoing life of a richly interesting work will always be of crucial interest. On any theory of the utterance, or speech-act, or communication, the originary moment and agent are of major significance. All of these theories are open to objection of course, but privileging the initiator of the textual work done by subsequent readers and performers remains a reasonable undertaking. The actual or inferred existence of the documents which enabled this work to be done imposes certain obligations on the editor. The editor must account for the documents and what they witness. Even if the metaphors and assumptions of editors have been easy game for the New Historicists and deconstructors, good editions probe beneath the Bardolatry or the Lawrencophilia—the authorial aura—which surrounds the great works. A prime value of the editions lies in their consistency and persistency, in the sheer detailed probing of the textual traces, in the seeking of explanations for minutiae. If the broad brush of rhetoric sometimes betrays them, the refusal to concede a comma unscrutinized at least partially redeems them. There is a wisdom which grows out of practice, and when editors insist on precise bibliographic meanings for terms such as “edition,” “issue,” “state” they bear in mind the physical vehicle of that overused term, “text.” Critics who seek to undermine the aura of authorship are doing valuable work up to a certain point. Authorship as a historical construction has, as I argued before, to be acknowledged. But to continue to ridicule the link between author and work as mystical is making less and less sense.

5

Textual bibliography has traditionally dealt with the documentary traces left by the textual activity of authors, scribes, compositors, and editors. Whether bibliography manages to develop ways of recording the visual and tactile encodings of meaning involved in type, page and volume design remains to be seen. D. F. McKenzie seems to be working towards that end. The study of the dynamics of manuscript, such as is going on at ITEM in Paris, might offer opportunities for another mode of recording the physical traces of the literary work. Probably the electronic medium will offer a way forward. It may become possible for editors to treat separate printings which read identically as different versions of the work

because of their different bibliographic and other contexts over which the author had little or no control. Presented in facsimile within its original contexts (say, amongst its accompanying newspaper or journal articles and advertisements), a printing of a poem or of a novel's installment can be shown to have imparted, intentionally on the part of the editor, or accidentally, meaning-bearing signals to the early readers. Clearly the computer is going to facilitate such archival-contextual editing. Such an outcome would be particularly useful to the approach to editing proposed by Jerome McGann in his *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* in 1983. He argues that editors should be prepared to see as legitimate rather than "corrupt" the alterations of publishers, editors, compositors and friends in the publication of literary works. Authors cannot work in complete isolation; authorship is therefore a social activity which takes place under determinate historical circumstances.

In his essay published recently in these pages, McGann cites Byron's "Fare Thee Well!," which the poet had had privately printed as an act of revenge against his wife. A newspaper turned it around against Byron in its pirated printing by accompanying it with a hostile editorial.²⁴ This linking of production and reception is part of the life of a literary work as I have described it. But whether, as things stand, *textual* bibliography (editing) should attempt to deal with it—or could—is open to question. McGann does not indicate how it might be done. He continues to ask editors to "reconceive the framework" governing "the traditional concepts or tools of editing and textual criticism." Yet, for the moment anyway, his proposals seem to have no practical outcome.²⁵

Indeed I wonder whether the attempts in recent years to clarify editorial principles by polarizing the authorial (Greg/Bowers) as against the sociological (McGannian) approaches have been as helpful as they at first promised to be.²⁶ McGann says that he has been misinterpreted and that he continues to believe that author's intentions should be "one of the criteria for making decisions about copy-text."²⁷ And indeed his multi-volume edition of Byron is an author-intentionalist edition. Yet a rigorous application of the sociological approach (taken further than he would take it, no doubt) would result, it seems to me, in a form of "un-editing" such as Randall McLeod espouses.²⁸ Every act of publication is a social event by definition; what then would be the editor's warrant for revealing some of the textual and physical variations between printings and concealing or failing to record others? Every textual glitch, every documentary crease in every reprint could be relevant; and the author would have been only one player among very many.

McGann may have a theory of textual production, but he does not *yet*, it seems to me, have a theory of editing. What he offered in 1983 was a corrective to conventional thinking about the editorial endeavor, but what he has so far failed to do is to clarify the role of individual intention in his theory of the social production of text. With some justice in 1983, McGann cast authorial intention as a Romantic abstraction we needed to be wary of. He recommended instead a respecting of the concrete, socio-economic relationships which an author, as a professional, typically engaged in. But when it comes to editorial practice, McGann's idea is as mystifying as the one it offers to replace: the term "social production" shoulders aside "individual creation" of text. So far so good. But in thus seeking an unidealizing clarity, McGann's approach runs together what I have argued are the distinguishable levels of text and document. T. H. Howard-Hill has observed that McGann repeatedly confuses the traditional meanings of the terms "text" and "edition."²⁹ I go further. I submit that the problem is fundamental.

Any theory of editing needs to recognize, whether consciously or not, the distinction between text and document. Greg did so, but went so far as to deny the relevance to the bibliographer of text or textual meaning. McGann seems to me to go too far the other way. What his position requires before it can be taken seriously as a theory of editing is a fuller and more conscious recognition of the responsibility of individuals for documentary acts of inscription. To subsume it all under the heading of "textual production," achieved socially, is to afford the editor, working with documents, very little assistance. At the level of document, a notion of individual human intention is inescapable. If a theory of editing is to be developed which deals with a broadened conception of the literary work such as I have outlined above, then it will have to make good this basic deficiency in McGann's approach.

[...]

Notes

¹ "Bibliography—An Apologia," in Greg's *Collected Papers*, ed. J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1966), 247.

² Hellinga, "'Less Than the Whole Truth': False Statements in 15th-Century Colophons," in *Fakes and Frauds: Varieties of Deception in Print and Manuscript*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1989), 4. This essay (pp. 1–27) is also the source of the information below on the Mainz Catholicon.

³ Jerome McGann, "What is Critical Editing?," *TEXT* 5 (1991): 22.

⁴ I mean the term to encompass book, manuscript and all other physical bearers of text.

⁵ For the purposes of the present discussion I am primarily interested in the document considered as the physical inscriptions it bears. I leave aside the other kinds of meaning encoded in the physical nature of the document: typography, binding, paper-type, layout, author's handwriting style, etc., which all tell their story to the attuned reader so that at one level the document itself must be "read" textually.

⁶ Particularly helpful is Peter Shillingsburg's, "Text as Matter, Concept, and Action," *Studies in Bibliography* 44 (1991): 31–82.

⁷ See David Saunders and Ian Hunter, "Lessons from the 'Literary': How to Historicise Authorship," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 479–509, especially pp. 491–500.

⁸ Quoted in Colin Golvan and Michael McDonald, *Writers and the Law* (Sydney: Law Book Company, 1986), 99.

⁹ Golvan and McDonald, *Writers and the Law*, 100.

¹⁰ Tanselle, "Textual Criticism and Deconstruction," *Studies in Bibliography* 43 (1990): 22.

¹¹ See Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1983). The circumstances of early printing, particularly stop-press correction, undermine the factuality of this assumption, but this says nothing about its currency or effect, especially in later times.

¹² David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U P, 1989), 220–38.

¹³ For a recent discussion, see Joseph M. Levine, "'Et Tu Brute?' History and Forgery in 18th-Century England," in *Fakes and Frauds*, ed. Myers and Harris, 71–98.

¹⁴ Paul Eggert, "Textual Product or Textual Process: Procedures and Assumptions of Critical Editing," in *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Charlottesville, VA: U P Virginia, 1991), 57–77.

¹⁵ *A Woman's Friendship*, ed. Elizabeth Morrison (Kensington, New South Wales: NSW U P, 1988).

¹⁶ Harold Love, "The Editing of Restoration Scriptorial Satire," in *Editing in Australia*, ed. Paul Eggert (Canberra: English Dept., University College ADFA, 1990; distr. NSW U P, Kensington, NSW), 78.

¹⁷ Paul Eggert, "The Literary Work of a Readership: *The Boy in the Bush* in Australia, 1924–1926," *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 12 (1988): 149–66.

¹⁸ Peter Williams, "The Rhetoric of Authorship," *Southern Review* (Adelaide) 23 (1990): 310. This is a commentary on Dugald Williamson, *Authorship and Criticism* (Sydney: Local Consumption Pub., 1989).

¹⁹ Michael Dobson, "The Design of the Oxford Shakespeare: An Ever Writer to a Never Reader?" *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography*, n.s. 4 (1990): 95.

²⁰ John Feather, "New Directions in Book History," *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 12 (1988): 51.

²¹ Again (see note 5 above) I exclude the textual dimension of the document's visual and tactile qualities.

²² Eggert, "Textual Product or Process," 67–70. Cf. the essays in Jay A. Gertzman's excellent *Descriptive Bibliography of Lady Chatterley's Lover* (New York: Greenwood P, 1989).

²³ Contemporary reviews and discussions of the performances would be relevant but would need their own editing.

²⁴ McGann, "What is Critical Editing?," 15–30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24. Although McGann has remarked that he would have "editors theorize the wholeness of the textual field of a work before they begin editing it" ("Response to T. H. Howard-Hill," *TEXT* 5 [1991]: 48), it is clear that the generation of a theory based on the new possibilities of the electronic medium will not be done overnight but will develop hand-in-hand with editorial practice.

²⁶ E.g. Peter Shillingsburg, "An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts and Modes of Textual Criticism," *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989): 55–78. My sense is that Shillingsburg, while not subscribing to it, gave the sociological approach a clarity, and by contrasting it with an established approach a logic, that it had hitherto lacked.

²⁷ McGann, "What is Critical Editing?," 24.

²⁸ See, e.g., his "Information on Information," by "Random Clod," *TEXT* 5 (1991): 241–81.

²⁹ T. H. Howard-Hill, "Theory and Praxis in the Social Approach to Editing," *TEXT* 5 (1991): 31–46.

THE DANGERS OF EDITING, OR, THE DEATH OF THE EDITOR

TREVOR H. HOWARD-HILL

Trevor H. Howard-Hill's richly sceptical paper deals with the relationship between editorial theory (by which he means postmodernist theory) and practice. Alert to the paradoxes inherent in the positions taken by such theory where notions of «author», «intention», and «authority» are problematized, he notes a shift on the part of Shakespearian editors from looking at the origins of the text towards a focus on its reception. He criticizes cogently the extreme position according to which it is valid to present only facsimiles of early printings because any further intervention by the editor implies unacceptable intervention. Thus, he sees the consequence of these theories as in fact resulting in the «death» of the editor. For Howard-Hill, editing necessarily entails reading, and to read is to interpret. He adopts G. Thomas Tanselle's statement that «Every act of reading is in fact an act of critical editing: we often call critical essays "readings," and critical editions are also records of readings». He pinpoints the dilemma at the heart of postmodern theories of editing when he says: «If the editorial enterprise is indeed doomed, it will not die from resistance to or from acquiescence in theory, but from the uncertainties of editors themselves». Howard-Hill emphasizes the «essential pragmatism of editing», ending with a challenge to theorists of the type he is criticizing to come forward with editions embodying their theories. EDD.

Questo stimolante e provocatorio saggio di Trevor H. Howard-Hill sviluppa le relazioni tra teoria editoriale (in accezione postmoderna) e pratica editoriale. Stimolato dai paradossi provocati da tali teorie, in cui vengono messi in discussione i concetti di «autore», «volontà dell'autore» e «autorità», egli verifica uno spostamento, negli editori shakespeariani, da una prospettiva focalizzata sulle origini del testo a una incentrata sulla sua ricezione. La sua critica si appunta soprattutto sulla posizione oltranzistica secondo cui è preferibile presen-

Paul Eggert, Margaret Sankey (eds.), *The Editorial Gaze: Mediating Texts in Literature and the Arts*, New York, Garland, 1998, pp. 51-66. By permission of the author and the editors of *Editorial Gaze* and Taylor & Francis.

tare solo facsimili delle prime stampe perché ogni successivo intervento da parte dell'editore costituisce un'arbitrarietà. Howard-Hill identifica le conseguenze di tali teorie nella morte stessa del filologo. La curatela di un testo implica necessariamente un'attenta lettura e ogni lettura è essa stessa un'interpretazione. Come sostiene G. Thomas Tanselle: «Ogni atto di lettura è a tutti gli effetti un atto di edizione critica: gli stessi saggi critici sono chiamati "letture", e le edizioni critiche sono resoconti di molteplici letture». Le sue parole vanno dritte al cuore del problema centrale delle teorie editoriali postmoderne: «Se la critica del testo è una disciplina destinata a scomparire, ciò non accadrà tanto per le resistenze nei confronti delle sue basi teoriche o per l'acquiescenza a metodologie consolidate, quanto per l'incertezza dei filologi». Howard-Hill mette l'accento sul fondamentale pragmatismo dell'atto editoriale, e conclude il suo saggio con una sfida lanciata ai teorici postmoderni, perché diano prova della fondatezza delle proprie posizioni con nuove edizioni basate su quei principi.

Within the context of recent writings on editorial theory, it is instructive to consider the work of a group of bibliographers or editors who have been cited as representing the fresh winds of change now sweeping through the musty mansions of Greg-Bowers editing.¹ When the tendency of their work is examined more closely, however, it is possible to view it less as innovative than reactionary. It is not my purpose to explain how these names came to occupy a special place in the literature of modern editing, especially the editing of Shakespeare, still less to discuss their contributions to bibliographical studies in any detail. Rather, I wish to consider some of the attitudes they share, and the arguments they make to question modern editorial practice.

First, a definition. An edition is a special arrangement of surviving literary materials, that is, inscribed documents. Editors proceed by gathering together documents that are relevant to the unifying principle of the edition. The unifying principle is most commonly an author though it need not be, as the Yale edition of *Poems on Affairs of State* illustrates. After editors have considered the characteristics and relationships of the documents, discarding those that do not appear to be relevant to the establishment of the text (probably because they lack authority, i.e., proximity to the text's origin), editors construct texts. Critical texts are constructed on the basis of analysis of their textual properties, with adherence to commonly-agreed ideas about the responsibilities of editors (e.g., for accuracy and for the presentation of evidence) and about the functions of editions. Many editors consider themselves the servants rather than the masters of their discipline, and they regard the products of their scholarship as foundational to other studies.

This paragraph is very general. Centred on the idea of the scholarly edition, it does not take account of the variety of editions that exist in the twentieth century.² It was written without the direct aid of such authorities as McKerrow, Greg, Bowers and Tanselle, though their influence may be detected. Despite such authorization—or perhaps on account of it—without substantial qualification, few readers would accept the paragraph as a description of the function of modern editions and the role of their editors. There is no need to examine what is objectionable about it. If some cannot see it, their eyes would be opened by consultation of such recent seminal works as Jerome McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* or Peter Shillingsburg's *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*, or the introductions to recent collections or conference proceedings by Paul Eggert, Dave Oliphant and Robin Bradford, George Bornstein, Philip Cohen, and W. Speed Hill, together with important studies of recent scholarship by David Greetham, Michael Groden, Peter Shillingsburg, and the indefatigable G. T. Tanselle.³ The bewildering number and complexity of reasons for dissatisfaction with the Greg-Bowers conception of editing are amply documented. Editorial theorists have established a consensus that they were wrong, although there is little agreement on who is right. Notwithstanding that, in both longstanding multi-volumed editorial projects and editions of single works, editors continue to work on essentially Greg-Bowers principles and employ practices long established in editorial tradition.

Given the preoccupations of much critical theory during the last thirty years there is little need to examine here why, for instance, modern editors recoil from the mention of terms like “author” or “intention” or “authority.” But the general character of the shift from early modern to the post-modern theories of editing needs to be stated before I discuss one part of it. Anyone who views the present proliferation of editorial theories from the apparent security of the mountain of editorial practice built on Greg and Bowers must be struck by the common emphasis that modern theorists give to reading in discussions of the function of editions. Broadly, the notion of an edition as a source of critical readings can be contrasted with the earlier conception of an edition as a record of textual materials and the source of a common text available for a variety of purposes, recognized or yet to be. There is little discussion in the literature with which I am most familiar of such ideas that an edition reified a reading of a text that was peculiar to the editor, or should determine the readings that critics may eventually give it, or should specifically provide for all possible readings.⁴ The paradigmatic shift in modern discus-

sions of editing (well illustrated by the editorial writings of Jerome McGann, for instance) is their reorientation from *ontos* to *telos*, from concern with the sources of texts to their multiple uses. This shift places an intolerable strain on editors because, clearly, whereas they can approach textual materials with agreed principles of scholarship and editorial method, they can never foresee and therefore anticipate the uses to which editions may be put. That many of the legitimate requirements of different readers are inconsistent with those of others and cannot be accommodated in a single edition has complicated the editorial situation to the point that is quite unlikely that an edition can be undertaken in confidence that it will satisfy the generality of its scholarly users. In an essay published after I had designed the topic of this paper, Gary Taylor identifies two attitudes about the editing of Shakespeare which, he says, are “equally hostile to any contemporary re-editing of Shakespeare” even though the “two points of view are, in most respects, diametrically opposed.”⁵ On one hand are those, satisfied with the editions with which they have long been familiar, who “vociferously resist any advance in textual scholarship,” and take refuge in the established textual tradition. On the other hand, there are those who “call for the ‘unediting’ of Shakespeare, for a radical stripping away of editorial encrustation, for a reliance instead upon photographic facsimiles of the earliest extant texts. Technology, they believe, frees us from the need for all modern editors.”

Were it not that Taylor’s observations relate to the editing of Shakespeare, from which most editorial practice in the editing of works in English literatures and much of twentieth-century editorial theory derives, it would be easy to dismiss his comments as being of limited significance. In the event, his observations characterize attitudes to editing that occur even beyond the body of Shakespearean editors and textual critics. Taylor supports his identification of a group of ‘uneditors’ by citing works by Michael Warren and Randall McLeod. To these names can be added Steven Urkowitz who was prominent with Warren in making the case for the two versions of *King Lear*, and Grace Ioppolo whose *Revising Shakespeare* provides a useful overview of the main issue of revision and its recent scholarship while elaborating some of the theoretical predispositions shared by the other critics.⁶

Michael Warren is best known and properly praised for his seminal contributions to the distinction of two versions of Shakespeare’s *Lear*.⁷ His 1990 facsimile edition of the play is the exemplification of an attitude to editing that is stated in clear terms elsewhere.⁸ His “Repunctuation as Interpretation in Editions of Shakespeare”⁹ exposes a fact that few read-

ers, I suspect, might have recognized: editors harmfully change the punctuation of their copy-texts. Worse, these changes reflect editors' readings (interpretations) of the text. Worse still, those readings were not Warren's. He contends that "much modernization of punctuation is undesirable interpretation in the guise of editorial responsibility" and asserts that "Ultimately we must recognize that we have no sound theoretical basis for emendation of substance or accident, that no original author's text can ever be reconstructed, and that we have no choice but to accept each text, however hypothetically reliable or unreliable, on its own terms" (157). After discussing instances of different kinds of punctuation (exclamation marks, colons, semicolons, commas, and hyphenation), he concludes that "Every instance of editorial action that I have cited has modified the text in such a way that a particular interpretation is encouraged . . . , while others both more or equally plausible are discouraged or even excluded" (168).

Warren's complaint about the sins of editors must have received a sympathetic response from Randall McLeod, whose attitude to editing is revealed by the title of a quite early demonstration of editorial culpability, "UnEditing Shak-speare."¹⁰ More accessible is "from Tranceformations in the Text of 'Orlando Furioso,'" published in Oliphant and Bradford's *New Directions in Textual Studies* in 1990.¹¹ Here McLeod makes some acute but copious observations on the treatment of some details in McNulty's 1972 Oxford edition of Sir John Harington's *Orlando Furioso*.¹² McLeod's performances of textual criticism usually in the personas of Random Cloud or Clod, both at conferences and in journals and proceedings, are so brilliantly entertaining as to disarm criticism. The printed papers make strenuous demands on readers. David Greetham sums up the impact of this McLeod essay fairly: "The problem for the reader is that not only does the often dense bibliographical argument have to be followed carefully in order not to miss McLeod's artful demonstrations, but the bibliographer's own prose and display also have to be de-coded. It can be frustrating, but it can also be rewarding."¹³

Greetham also cites some "announcements of the impropriety and imminent demise of editing" (15). Instances are, quoting from McLeod's essay, "photography has killed editing. Period. (*Someone* has to tell the editors.)" (McLeod had told them himself, earlier in a different essay: "Editors have had something of a free hand with *Lear* because they have controlled access to the rare evidence through their collations. But seeing is believing. Photography, by holding the mirror up to the copy-text, has ended their status as an elite, and a more appropriate role for them

now is as commentators on the icon of the text rather than as atomizers of it, and as manipulators of its fragments.”)¹⁴ Continuing, “The more we know about the original documents, the less we find them reflected in the modern, scholarly edition. Harington’s text keeps turning into McNutty’s” (74–5), “The simplest description of Harington’s collaborations with his printer is photographic. *Someone* has to tell the editors that *critical* editions suck” (76), “What rationale can there be for jumbling different features of text cheek by jowl, and pretending that we can control the process and that the results will be anything more than connoisseurvative? Indeed, what rationale can there be for editing? Indeed, what rationale can there be for editing?” (76), “Once we know how the text is struggling to be itself, who will remain enchanted with the single-minded fix of modern editions?” (84). Such fragments read like the convulsions of a critical essay struggling to be born. There is, however, no single statement of McLeod’s theory of editing. From these statements and others we must conclude that, like Warren, he believes editing a worthless activity that merely muddies the evidence of the early documents.

Steven Urkowitz is probably most widely known for his *Shakespeare’s Revision of “King Lear”* which, drawing on Warren’s 1976 essay, pretty well started the current belief that Shakespeare spent a good part of his career revising his plays. A significant achievement was the rehabilitation of the First Quarto (1608) text which in this century had usually been held to be a reported text of one kind or the other and was to an extent depreciated or ignored by editors. Urkowitz’s conclusion that the copy for Q1 was Shakespeare’s manuscript of the first version of the play restored authority to the Quarto text, enabling editors to take it far more seriously than they had done before as a witness to Shakespeare’s text. His determination that the variations between the Quarto and the First Folio texts could not be explained simply as accidents of transmission and must be attributed to the playwright himself led inevitably and correctly to the conclusion that the Quarto and Folio versions should not be conflated, as was the editorial practice since Theobald’s 1733 edition.

His successful demolition of the notion that Quarto *Lear* had been reconstructed from memory led Urkowitz to the study of other texts that were currently believed to belong to the same category of reported texts. Most of these were conventionally referred to as “bad” quartos, a term which expressed bibliographical judgement of their provenance or authority or quality of printing, by comparison with other quartos that appeared to be better printed, had been entered in the Stationers’ Register or

otherwise published under respectable auspices, and showed a better text. Perhaps we should call the “bad” quartos “textually-challenged” quartos: as Random Cloud remarks, fruitfully injecting morality into bibliographical investigation, “The real problem with good and bad quartos is not what the words denote, but why we use terminology that has such overt and prejudicial connotations. Employing moral categories in textual work obliges one to reject Evil once for all, and to strike out towards Goodness (and toward Shakespeare, who is a Good writer).”¹⁵ Urkowitz mounted a sustained attack on the status of texts formerly judged to be of slight value for modern editors.¹⁶ Appealing to his reinterpretations of textual features as evidence of the text’s theatrical viability while castigating Greg’s “disciples,” he nevertheless raised an interesting editorial question: to what extent can the performance (or performability) of a text recuperate its status as a textual witness? Time and again Urkowitz appeals to the performance possibilities of derogated texts as evidence that they were maligned. (In 1985 in London the Q₁ text was performed successfully without correction.¹⁷ One wonders how the actors read the misprints.) A short answer to the question might be that, if literary criticism of any kind of text (poem, play, prose) can rehabilitate it to the point that the text must be recognized as a revised state of the work, then analogously, the theatrical performance of a play should rehabilitate the theatrical text. That answer may be too neat. In theatrical performance, the questionably defective signifiers of the text are overlaid by or incorporated in another semiotic system. To whatever extent that such characteristics of performance as gesture, movement, intonation, emphasis, pace, stage properties, sounds, music and even the physical presence of the actors may be considered implicit in the literary text, they are additions to the text, not properties of it. Why, then, should the literary text be awarded the successes of the theatre? And we might very well ask why it should be thought that texts suspected to have come into being as reports of performances or to have been reconstructed by actors, would not be *essentially* theatrical. Urkowitz represents his revaluations of the status of individual misprised Quarto texts as the triumph of enlightened theatrical criticism over unenlightened literary or New Bibliographical criticism.¹⁸ It might be truer to the facts (for example, the theatrical knowledge and experience of most modern editors of plays) to see the issue as depending on the conflict amongst alternative *theatrical* interpretations.¹⁹

Even if Urkowitz’s conclusions about *King Lear* were acceptable, they did not require the versions represented by Q₁ and the First Folio to be accorded equal literary status. The question remains whether the Quarto

and Folio texts represent early and later stages in the progression of the play to first performance (as Urkowitz believed) or whether they signal two significantly-different separate creative acts, that is, re-vision. Gary Taylor attempted to resolve the question primarily from bibliographical evidence by arguing that, because the revision represented by F1 was written in the margins of a copy of Q1, it must have been a distinct literary event. However, his argument cannot be upheld, for reasons too extensive and complicated to be given here.²⁰

The editorial problem with *Lear* and texts like them is the essentially *critical* question of value: whether variations between texts are so valuable that they should be read separately as distinct stages in the composition of a text or as different creations of it. Conflation is not an error of editorial practice that should be held against Greg, the editor of Jonson's *Masque of Gipsies*, or Bowers, like Greg an editor of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, both works existing in revised forms. The three versions of Jonson's masque survive in five independent texts and four important manuscripts containing extracts from two of the versions.²¹ Like the authors of *The Division of the Kingdom*, Greg regarded his work as "a challenge and a manifesto," pointing out that "Hitherto editors have been content to follow the majority of the early authorities in presenting readers with a composite text." In the course of grappling with the intricacies of attempting "for the first time a detailed reconstruction of the several versions" (v), Greg developed his "Rationale of Copy-text," an editorial theory unusually well grounded in the practicalities of editorial method.

However, to Grace Ioppolo, as she charted the successes of the "revisionists" in *Revising Shakespeare*, the question of value was not significant. Her book, she writes, "is the first to establish in a materially concrete way that William Shakespeare was a deliberate, consistent, and persistent reviser who worked in an infinite variety of ways, and to recognize his career-long practice of revision as he himself recognized and practiced it" (5). She is confident about the importance of her enterprise. The "war in textual study does not merely represent a skirmish among textual critics alone but enlists and threatens the profession and the power of literary critics who find their traditional or their non-traditional theories challenged by the conclusions of the new revisionists" (15–16). In order to achieve her object, however, she allowed all kinds of textual variations to establish the fact of revision and treated all kinds of revision—authorial, censorial, scribal, theatrical, and transmissional—as equal in support of her project. Reviling the New Bibliographers for their preoccupation with the accidents of

transmission, she assumes “that any type of substantive change to any portion of a play-text can be classified as a revision, because the term ‘revision’ can encompass the entire range of terms used in labeling changes: corrections, alterations, additions or insertions, omissions or deletions, cuts, amendments, augmentations, and stop-press variants” (45). The sources of such variations are immaterial. Commenting on Susan Zimmerman’s claim that the Bridgewater-Huntington manuscript of Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* was textually superior, she writes “it is not entirely clear that any of the [six] manuscripts is superior to the others, or that some derive from authoritative copy-texts and others do not. What is clear is that the versions are different; it is not necessary to establish and reconstruct the lost original but to examine the extant versions” (220, note 86). Her view is tenable only on the basis of Hans Zeller’s principle that a single textual variant establishes a version of a work.²² Finally, when she complains that many “modern editors, who insist on reconstructing a copy-text, have ignored critical bibliography, which can point toward revision as a cause of variants, and instead have focused on their own taste and judgment in dismissing variants which they consider inferior or un-Shakespearean” (185), Ioppolo manifests an ignorance of the history of the “New Bibliography” that is common to those who write most critically of it. Pollard, Greg, McKerrow and their successors employed the discipline of bibliographical and textual analysis to curb the license of previous editors who altered texts, governed only by their sense of what the author might have or should have written. In writing those words, Ioppolo completes the circle. Warren, the leader of the revisionists, as I noted earlier, objected to editors’ use of “their own taste and judgment” in the production of editions.

Some general consideration of the attitudes described in the writings of these innovative bibliographers and editors is probably more helpful than detailed criticisms of their particular arguments. The first point to be observed is that only Ioppolo of them has explored the general or theoretical basis of her work at all extensively. If Warren, McLeod and Urkowitz understand the theoretical rationale for their resistance to editing, it does not appear clearly in their works. Therefore, it is not possible to present a consistent or sustained counter-argument. Nor would it be appropriate, considering differences amongst these scholars may be as important as the attitudes they share. Nevertheless, some general characterizations can be offered, that may help towards a clarification of the present state of editorial theory. In offering these remarks I do not intend to reassert the values of the “traditional” editing—which would not benefit from either my support or opposition—or to make a

sustained argument of rebuttal. One cannot respond to a case that has not been made.

The first observation to be made is of the antiquarianism of this school of bibliographers. While the rest of the world is consumed by a lust for novelty or contemporaneity, they assert the pre-eminent value of the earliest textual witnesses. In modern editions the value of what is presented (whatever they might consider it to be) is harmfully mediated. At the least, they claim, the primitive textual witnesses are less-thoroughly mediated than any modern eclectic edition; at the best they are unmediated witnesses to the creative processes and achievements of their originators. Warren and McLeod are explicitly conservative: readers should use only the source documents for their constitution of the text. The vehemence of their objections to critical editions and the arguments that they make in opposition to that kind of edition establishes original or facsimile editions as the only kind of edition that they value. The movement of modern editorial practice is reversed: from the modern eclectic edition back past the “best” text edition to the unmediated thing itself.

Second, they are all hostile to the New Bibliography, usually explicitly and aggressively. For Warren and McLeod, this is biting the hand that fed and continues to feed them. The conceptions and techniques used in the construction of *The Complete “King Lear”* and in McLeod’s meticulous scrutiny of the typographical evidence for editorial decisions are essentially “New Bibliographical.” Since editing does not require a deep knowledge of bibliography, still less of its history, it is worthwhile recalling the foundational manifesto of modern editing, Greg’s review of John Churton Collins’s 1905 Oxford edition of the works of Robert Greene. At thirty years of age, reviewing the work of a prolific and well-established editor, Greg roundly asserted a view of editing that was foreign to Collins and, no doubt, most of his peers: “no competent critic will probably deny that the business of an editor is primarily with his author’s text, that it is in that department that he can do the most valuable and lasting work, and that biographical, critical, and exegetical matter are at once more easily superseded and intrinsically less important.”²³ “It is high time that it should be understood,” he wrote, “that so long as we entrust our old authors to arm-chair editors who are content with second-hand knowledge of textual sources, so long will English scholarship in England afford undesirable amusement to the learned world” (246). From that point, no editor undertaking a scholarly edition of an author’s works could fail to subject textual witnesses to searching scrutiny. “New

Bibliography” is the single most important advance in the development of Anglo-American editing, as the works of Warren and McLeod themselves demonstrate.

Third, as the passages from their writings already quoted illustrate, these scholars reject interpretation as part of the editorial function. I do not mean the provision of critical introductions or explanatory commentary but interpretation in the analysis of the documents and the constitution of the text. Obviously, every act of seeing or hearing or judging occurs in an interpretive context and editors can scarcely refrain from an activity so pervasively human. (“Every act of reading is in fact an act of critical editing: we often call critical essays ‘readings,’ and critical editions are also the records of readings.”)²⁴ One of the minor accomplishments of the textual seminars of the Shakespeare Association of America and other meetings of editors in which I and these scholars frequently participate has been a heightening of consciousness amongst the participants that editing involves literary interpretation, that textual analysis and editorial judgement is not entirely objective or value-free. Yet editors are castigated not only for the incorrectness or unacceptability of their interpretations but for the simple fact that they venture on them at all.

Why this may be considered wrong is simple to establish. It is a fundamental law of Newtonian physics that two ideas cannot occupy one head at the same time. Using Warren’s language, editorial interpretations “encourage” their acceptance by unwary readers “while others both more or equally plausible are discouraged or even excluded.” Because Warren does not include the possibility that *implausible* interpretations may be discouraged or excluded, they must belong on the other side of the equation. So, editorial interpretations are either implausible or merely equally plausible when compared with the plausible interpretations of *other* readers.

But this is not the only vice of modern editions. As Ioppolo exclaims in the context of revisionism, “Basing criticism on a fraudulent text has serious consequences for both the literary and the textual scholar; no significant theoretical mode of discourse, ideology, method or approach can effectively proceed from a fabricated textual foundation or a falsified literary base” (184). This of course is not true: there are ideologies, etc. for which falsified textual foundations and literary bases were prerequisites. “Editors cannot claim that Shakespeare did not revise,” she expostulates, “and revise for him”—(if that is what they do). It could be concluded from these statements and others in the writings of, for instance, Urkowitz, that modern editions are fraudulent because they proceed from assumptions or contain conclusions not endorsed by their scholarly readers. The charge

is more fundamental than this: modern editions are fraudulent because they do not reproduce all the evidence from which the text is constituted or (perhaps more importantly) the evidence that enables a reader to question the text and its editor's judgement or competence. The problem is not merely one of the amplitude of the materials or a sense of parsimony that entails that no scrap of evidence that has a conceivable use be left unrecorded. (Though, it may be objected, data is not evidence at all until it is deployed in argument: however, to some editors all data is intrinsically evidence.) An editor cannot reproduce the so-called "accidental" elements of the text's presentation in a variety of physical forms in the historically-determined modern edition; they are inseparably a part of the original historical physical object. On the other hand, the assertion that they are "meaning-constitutive" (to use McGann's phrase) requires them to be taken account of in an edition. Inescapably from this viewpoint, an edition that does not deal with them (even though it is impossible) is fraudulent. For those who hold these views the only legitimate recourse is to return to the original (not facsimiled) textual witnesses.²⁵

By a different route I have arrived at conclusions similar to those I reached when considering the editorial implications of McGann's "social" theory of editing, in another place.²⁶ To what degree Warren and the others knew of or were influenced by McGann's writings is not clear. They do hold many ideas in common. McGann's theories are reception-oriented, complex, and fluid: they should not be dealt with here even summarily.²⁷ Nevertheless, for the sake of my own discourse, I need to quote one paragraph from my recent essay that examined the implications of his ideas:

Finally, the principle that the social contract authorizes non-authorial interventions essentially subverts the possibility of editorial choice: the text as transmitted—warts and all—must become the received text since it is authorized by multiple authorities. However, if this is true . . . then it is no longer possible to edit works at all. Because every edition is the product of interaction amongst authorial and non-authorial "authorities", there is no basis on which to prefer the non-authorial "authorized" readings of one edition to another's. Further, because every edition represents the historically-determined interaction of the linguistic and the bibliographical text and is itself "meaningful", there is no basis—unless it be convenience or popularity—to prefer one edition to another. All editions are equally authorized; all readings are equally authorized. Editions cannot be subordinated to each other or their meanings will be lost. In the end, all an editor can do is to edit a particular form of text, a historically-defined edition of a work (41).

In brief, my contention is that the strict application of McGann's theories to editing makes it impossible for an editor to do more than reproduce individual witnesses to the text of a work. Just as the good bibliographical work of Warren, McLeod, etc. may not validate their editorial principles, so, good theories may not have acceptable practical outcomes. Or, bad theories.²⁸

The expedient of returning to editions of individual texts is a dead end. A facsimile text is itself mediated and may be as harmfully coercive in its editorial interpretations as any modern critical edition. Warren's own *Complete "King Lear"* tellingly illustrates the point. In a sense appealing to the common reader for confirmation of the belief that *King Lear* exists in two significantly different literary forms, Warren invites scrutiny of the bibliographical milieu by printing appropriately-arranged facsimiles of the uncorrected and corrected formes of the 1608 Quarto edition alongside the equivalent text of the 1623 Folio. The arrangement is very helpful for comparison of the text of the two versions, here preserved in their original typographical forms. Unfortunately, the arrangement is seriously misleading. The very use of "unmediated" facsimiles leads a reader to conclude that a physical copy of Q1 together with a revision (which may or may not have been entered on the copy) are responsible for the physical form of the Folio text. However, parts of the display and presentation of the Folio text can be explained only if a copy of the 1619 Second Quarto reprint of Q1 was used, directly or indirectly, for Folio copy.²⁹ By dismissing Q2 as only a simple reprint of Q1, Warren himself, through his interpretation of the bibliographical and textual situation, has falsified the representation of the relationships amongst the printed witnesses. His object here (although facsimiles of Shakespearean quartos are not rare) was to allow readers access to the only textual witnesses, uncontaminated by modern editorial interpretations, that would give them access to all the meanings of the text. Readers are to become editors, from scrutiny of the original materials, arriving at the only valid interpretations, their own.

The painful truth is that modern readers require mediated texts, just as they require mediated ideas. One cannot account for the enthusiasm with which general readers and critics have received so-called social theories of editing or revisionism by the notion that they have all carefully considered the writings of McKenzie, McGann, Greetham, Shillingsburg, Howard-Hill, etc. or perused Warren's facsimile of *Lear*. Modern editions are consulted most often by readers who require access to a received or acceptable text, who are not competent to assay its editor's textual arguments, and who have no time or desire to sort through the

complexities of conflicting original textual witnesses: worst of all, they want or need to read the text, not the editorial apparatus. Even when modern readers consult earlier printed or manuscript texts, they require information about the character of the individual witnesses and their relationships to each other. While the notion that ignorance facilitates critical interpretations might well describe modern practice, it is not a principle that can be seriously advocated in editing.³⁰

Throughout the writings of the people I have named run notes of anxiety about the precariousness of critical editorial judgement. In the constitution of a text, the acid test of an editor's ability is to observe how he has dealt with issues where certainty of judgement is not possible. Most editors can tell a hawk from a handsaw if they appear before them. However, in many editorial situations—particularly in editing works from the earlier periods of literary history where evidence for the establishment of the text may be scanty—judgement cannot always be confident in its rightness. Nevertheless, usually decisions must be made. Most editors would believe that an editor of *Hamlet* who printed as the first line of Hamlet's second soliloquy, "Oh, that this too too solid/sullied/sallied flesh should melt," would not fulfil his obligations as an editor, if only because an actor does not have the same liberty of offering audiences the possibility of constituting the text they wish to hear. Few circumstances are more conducive to anxiety than the obligation to make decisions from inadequate evidence. Nevertheless, that is the responsibility that most editors undertake.³¹ The scholars I have mentioned, who show a strong concern for correctness, defer editorial judgement to readers who are intrinsically less well equipped to make editorial decisions. They defer decisions on the basis of an article of faith: an open text—that is, one prone to the greatest number of readings—is preferable to a closed text, where readers' interpretations may appear restricted by specific lexicons and arrangements of words. However, because the aim of the originator of the text (the author) was to establish a specific set and arrangement of words (a set that may be called *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, or be the serial or revised single-volume text of a Victorian novel, for instance), open texts essentially frustrate the principle that validates a text or work in the first place—that it is a specific rather than an indefinite arrangement of words. In the upshot, if the editorial enterprise is indeed doomed, it will die not from resistance to or from acquiescence in theory, but from the uncertainties of editors themselves.

This essay has been concerned foremost with the arguments used by a handful of influential scholars whose works have been taken to point

towards a correct post-modernist attitude to editions. My conclusion is that their arguments lead nowhere any editor should wish to follow: not to edit, or exclusively to edit facsimiles of states of works, or to shift editorial burdens on to unprepared readers are not supportable alternatives to a long tradition of editing that comes to us from earliest times and is represented by a large variety of kinds of editions. Greg, McKerrrow, and Bowers, for instance, produced many different editions, for distinct purposes and readers. They were pluralists to an extent that some more modern editors and theorists are not prepared either to acknowledge or to emulate. Despite the modish novelty of many current writers on editing (many of whom are not editors themselves), it remains true that different configurations of documentary testimony to texts or works (whatever terminology is correct) will require different forms of editorial treatment, and that different readerships will benefit from different editorial arrangements of text, apparatus, and commentary. Current discussions of editorial theory unavoidably center on central areas of long-standing concern, underlining the essential pragmatism of editing: what the editorial situation is in particular contexts (textual analysis), and how it may be communicated to the group of readers that is expected to be interested in it (editorial pragmatics). The extent to which editorial theory, that is, the theory of editions abstracted from the textual conditions that make them necessary, has influenced the presentation of texts or works in editions has yet to be demonstrated.³²

Notes

¹ For instance, Jerome McGann cites “a smaller group of scholars (people like Michael Warren, Randall McLeod, Stephen [sic] Urkowitz) who have been exploding our imagination of the Shakespearean texts,” “Beyond the Valley of Production; or, *De factorum natura*: a Dialogue,” *New Historical Literary Study; Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993): 198–199. Their names also figure prominently in Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass’s recent essay, “The Materiality of Shakespeare’s Text,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44:3 (Fall 1993): 255–83, and similar writings directed to non-bibliographical readers.

² “Scholarly edition” contains a characterization of the editor and/or the edition itself, as well as the readership to which it was directed. Many editions prepared by scholars in a scholarly way are intended for general readership and may therefore lack some editorial discussions and elements that are usually required in scholarly editions. And, of course, there are occasionally editions intended for the use of scholars that are not themselves scholarly.

³ These references are not intended to be comprehensive. The collections contain many articles on editorial theory that are not mentioned in this note.—McGann (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983); Shillingsburg (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1986); McGann, ed.: *Textual Crit-*

icism and Literary Interpretation (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985); Eggert: *Editing in Australia* (Canberra: English Department, University College ADFA [distr. U of New South Wales P], 1990); Oliphant and Bradford, ed.: *New Directions in Textual Studies* (Austin: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, 1990); Bornstein, ed.: *Representing Modernist Texts: Editing as Interpretation* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991); Cohen, ed.: *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1991); Hill, ed.: *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society 1985–1991* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies in conjunction with Renaissance English Text Society, 1993); George Bornstein and Ralph G. Williams, ed.: *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993). Note especially Greetham's "Textual and Literary Theory: Redrawing the Matrix." *Studies in Bibliography* (SB) 42 (1989): 1–24; "[Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction." SB 44 (1991): 1–30; Shillingsburg's "An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts and Modes of Textual Criticism." SB 42 (1989): 55–79. "Text as Matter, Concept, and Action." SB 44 (1991): 31–82 and Tanselle's "Historicism and Critical Editing." SB 39 (1986): 1–46, "Textual Criticism and Deconstruction." SB 43 (1990): 1–33, "Textual Criticism and Literary Sociology." SB 44 (1991): 3–143, besides his *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1989).

⁴ The question of an edition's purpose to contain "meanings" is discussed in relation to Jerome J. McGann's theories of editing in Howard-Hill, "Theory and Praxis in the Social Approach to Editing." *Text* 5:31–48 (1991). See also "Variety in Editing and Reading: A Response to McGann and Shillingsburg." Cohen, *Devils and Angels* (1991): 44–56.

⁵ Taylor, "The Renaissance and the End of Editing." *Palimpsest*. Ed. George Bornstein and Ralph G. Williams (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993): 121–49, 123.

⁶ Ioppolo, *Revising Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1991).

⁷ Particularly in his paper delivered to the 1976 International Shakespeare Congress published as "Quarto and Folio *King Lear* and the Interpretation of Albany and Edgar" in *Shakespeare: Pattern of Excelling Nature*. Ed. David Bevington and Jay L. Halio (Newark, Del.: U of Delaware P, 1978): 95–107, and his contributions to *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of "King Lear"*. Ed. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).—In referring to "Shakespeare's *Lear*," I do not wish to imply that any *Lear* text any of us may have read has any necessary or substantial connection with any historical author who may be constructed from works ignorantly associated with his name, or that the *Lear* texts referred to in that manner are in any way superior to any other *Lear* text that may be constructed now or in the future by other readers, or that such *Lear* texts are in any way stable or determinate.

⁸ Warren, *The Complete "King Lear," 1608–1623* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990).

⁹ *English Literary Renaissance* 7 (1977): 155–69.

¹⁰ McLeod, *Sub-Stance* 33/4 (1982): 28–55.

¹¹ See note 3.

¹² *Orlando Furioso*. Ed. with an introduction by Robert McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

¹³ D. C. Greetham, "Enlarging the Text." *Review* 14 (1992): 1–33.

¹⁴ McLeod, "Gon. No more, the text is foolish." Ed. Taylor and Warren, *Division* (1983): 153–93.

¹⁵ [Randall McLeod], "The Marriage of Good and Bad Quartos." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1982): 421–31.

¹⁶ See, for instance, "Reconsidering the Relationship of Quarto and Folio Texts of *Richard III*." *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986): 442–66; "'Well-sayd olde Mole.' Bury-

ing Three *Hamlets* Modern Editions." *Shakespeare Study Today: The Horace Howard Furness Memorial Lectures*. Ed. Georgiana Ziegler. (New York: AMS Press, 1986): 37–70; "Good News about Bad Quartos," *'Bad' Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon*. Ed. Maurice Charney (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1988): 189–206; "If I mistake in those foundations which I build upon: Peter Alexander's Textual Analysis of *Henry VI*, parts 2 and 3," *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988): 230–56; "Back to Basics: Thinking about the *Hamlet* First Quarto." *The "Hamlet" First Published (Q1, 1603): Origins, Form, Intertextualities*. Ed. Thomas Clayton (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1992): 257–91.

¹⁷ See Bryan Loughrey, "Q1 in Recent Performance: An Interview." *The "Hamlet" First Published* (1992): 123–36.

¹⁸ In his essay in *Shakespeare Study Today*, Urkowitz refers to "the contemptuous attitudes held by the New Bibliographers toward those who suggested that Shakespeare revised his own plays" (39), and notes "We have come very far with the rigorous methodologies of the New Bibliography, but today we confuse bibliographical expertise with textual omniscience" (68).

¹⁹ Urkowitz's double-pronged attack (stressing the inadequacies of 'New Bibliography' while emphasizing the virtues of theatrical analysis) on the status of 'bad' quartos, generally regarded to be reports of various kinds, has not persuaded many modern editors. The correctness of his conclusions on particular points is not my concern here, but rather, the kind of arguments he has used to arrive at his conclusions. The success of his work on *Lear*, for instance, depends less on his arguments for the theatrical viability of Q1 than on his prior conclusion that it was printed from Shakespeare's early manuscript.

²⁰ See Gary Taylor, "King Lear. The Date and Authorship of the Folio Version" in Taylor and Warren (1983), *op. cit.*, 351–451, and T. H. Howard-Hill, "The Challenge of *King Lear*." *The Library* 6th series 7 (1985): 161–79.

²¹ W. W. Greg, *Jonson's "Masque of Gipsies" in the Burley, Belvoir, and Windsor Versions: An Attempt at Reconstruction* (London: British Academy, 1952): 11–12.

²² Hans Zeller, "A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts." *SB* 28 (1975): 231–64.—"In the most extreme case a version is constituted by a single variant. A holograph with one alteration which does not simply correct an error thus represents two versions of the text" (236).

²³ W. W. Greg, review of *The Plays & Poems of Robert Greene*. Ed. J. Churton Collins. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905: *Modern Language Review* 1 (1905): 238.

²⁴ G.T. Tanselle, "Editing without a Copy-Text." *SB* 47 (1994): 1–22.

²⁵ The dimensions of the problem for editors of Shakespeare may be seen in the observation that in 1988 the OCLC data base recorded 15,000 editions of his works: see Judith A. Turner, "Shakespeare Is Tops, Computer Says." *Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 1, 1988): A12.

²⁶ Howard-Hill, "Theory and Praxis in the Social Approach to Editing." *Text* 5 (1991): 31–48. See also "Variety in Editing and Reading: A Response to McGann and Shillingsburg." Ed. Cohen, *Devils and Angels* (1991): 44–56.

²⁷ See, for instance, McGann's "A Response to T. H. Howard-Hill." *Text* 5 (1991): 47–8, especially the last paragraph.

²⁸ James L. W. West comments recently: "More threateningly, certain theories—deconstruction foremost among them—have the potential to kill off the entire editorial enterprise, if taken to their logical ends." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (PBSA) 86 (1992): 345.

²⁹ Warren cites the following articles about the influence of Q₂ on F₁ *Lear*. T. H. Howard-Hill, "The Problem of Manuscript Copy for Folio *King Lear*." *The Library* 6th series 1 (1982): 1–24; Gary Taylor, "The Folio Copy for *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34 (1983): 44–61; Gary Taylor, "Folio Compositors and Folio Copy: *King Lear* and Its Contexts." *PBSA* 79 (1985): 17–74; T. H. Howard-Hill, "Q₁ and the Copy for Folio *Lear*." *PBSA* 80 (1986): 419–35.

³⁰ Warren's *The Complete "King Lear"* has an elaborate apparatus designed to allow the user of his edition to read it knowledgeably.

³¹ Since writing these words, I have found a more forceful form of expression: "All historical reconstruction requires judgment to enable one to decide what can be accepted as facts and what can reasonably be inferred from them by an informed imagination. Experiencing verbal works as communications from the past entails this kind of reconstruction not only because they are past events but also because they employ an intangible medium, language. Reading necessarily involves the use of judgment in the extracting of a work from a document. If editors' readings, enshrined in editions, are to be exemplary, they must arise from an active embracing of judgment—which is, after all, the only thing we have to rely on." (G. T. Tanselle, "Editing without a Copy-Text." *SB* 47 (1994): 122.)

³² It is interesting to reflect on the extent to which the editorial theories advocated by different writers depend on the characteristics of the literature with which they are most familiar. As, for instance, the challenge to the importance of authorial intention amongst medievalists whose texts have proliferated and been revised far beyond the (frequently anonymous) author's ambit.—I look forward to being informed about large numbers of radically-distinct editions, the progeny of modern editorial theories.

HOW TO READ A PAGE: MODERNISM AND MATERIAL TEXTUALITY

GEORGE BORNSTEIN

This essay urges the importance of the material form of texts to their reception and interpretation. For the sake of brevity and clarity, it draws its examples from lyric poetry, but the conclusions apply to all texts. The essay first develops a theoretical framework stressing three points. First, the production and existence of multiple authorized versions renders any single instance inadequate for thorough study. Second, material features of the text, which Jerome McGann has called «bibliographic codes», form part of that meaning – issues of layout, cover design, spacing, and other aspects of the physical text encode important aspects of its «meaning». Bibliographic code thus correlates in some ways with Walter Benjamin's concept of the «aura». And thirdly, the essay draws on speech-act theory to argue that material features of the text also correlate with the concept of «utterance» from speech-act theory, as first suggested by Peter Shillingsburg. «How to Read a Page» then proceeds to four extended examples of well-known sonnets: the English Romantic John Keats's «On First Looking into Chapman's Homer», the American Emma Lazarus's «The New Colossus» inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, the Irishman W. B. Yeats's «Leda and the Swan», and the more contemporary African-American Gwendolyn Brooks's «my dreams my works must wait till after hell». In each instance material forms of the text add important layers of meaning and help to anchor the poems in their historical moment. EDD.

Il saggio focalizza l'attenzione sull'importanza che ha la materialità del testo nella sua ricezione e interpretazione. Se gli esempi, per ragioni di sintesi e chiarezza, partono dalla poesia lirica, le conclusioni possono essere estese a tutte le tipologie di testi. Il saggio si sviluppa intorno a una griglia teorica articolata in tre punti principali. Il primo punto afferma che la produzione e la pre-

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senza di molte versioni autorizzate di un testo rendono ogni singola versione del tutto inadeguata a uno studio esaustivo dell'opera. Il secondo punto riguarda gli aspetti materiali di un testo: sono quelli che Jerome McGann ha chiamato «codici bibliografici» e che costituiscono parte di quel significato, così come il layout, i disegni di copertina, la spaziatura e altri aspetti del testo materiale, latori anch'essi di aspetti importanti del suo significato. Il codice bibliografico, in un certo senso, può essere messo in relazione con ciò che Walter Benjamin chiama «aura del testo». Il terzo punto muove dalla teoria degli «speech act» per affermare che gli aspetti materiali del testo sono da mettere in relazione al concetto di enunciazione, esposto per la prima volta da Peter Shillingsburg. *How to Read a Text* procede poi ad analizzare quattro sonetti molto noti: *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* del poeta romantico inglese John Keats, *The New Colossus* dell'americana Emma Lazarus, inciso su una lapide nella Statua della Libertà, la *Leda and the Swan* dell'irlandese W. B. Yeats e *my dreams my works must wait till after hell* della più recente autrice afro-americana Gwendolyn Brooks. In ognuno di questi esempi, le forme materiali del testo aggiungono un importante surplus di significato e aiutano a comprendere le opere poetiche nell'ambito del preciso momento storico in cui sono state composte.

I begin with a question helpful for understanding the radical implications for literary study of recent editorial theory: If the "Mona Lisa" is in Paris at the Louvre, where is *King Lear*?¹ The question opens important issues of what constitutes the (or is it a?) text. We accept that Da Vinci's famous portrait hangs in the French museum, and that reproductions of it are copies that lack one or more features of the original. But no such certitude underlies the reproduction of literary texts; indeed, the opposite condition may apply. That is, to find Shakespeare's *King Lear* we need not turn to the Pied Bull Quarto or to the First Folio; on the contrary, those *originals* of this work of literary art may themselves be inferior copies, either of a lost manuscript or of an ideal print version, and themselves full of deficiencies. Later "copies" may be superior to the originals, and critics may legitimately prefer to work with them. In our age of relentless demystification, the text itself often remains the last mystified object, with critics naively assuming that the paperback texts that they pull from their local bookstore somehow "are" *King Lear*, or *Pride and Prejudice*, or *The Souls of Black Folk*. But our opening question leads us to see that the work of literary art exists in more than one place at the same time. That means that any particular version that we study of a text is always already a construction, one of many possible in a world of constructions.

Besides the notion of the constructedness of all texts, a second important idea of recent editorial theory is that of multiple authorized versions.² We need to know what alternate versions to a text we are studying do or might exist, but we do not need to know that in order to choose just one version for exclusive attention. On the contrary, we might adopt the strategy that Emily Dickinson scholars describe as “choosing not choosing”³ and instead elect to consider multiple versions of the text. We might, for example, prefer the folio version of *King Lear* with its streamlined action, but we might not want to omit the famous Mock Judgment Scene, which exists only in an earlier quarto version. In that case, we might want to consider both the quarto and the folio, perhaps together with a modern eclectic text that blends the two, even though no such text was attempted until nearly a century after Shakespeare’s death. We might want multiple versions of poems created by such notorious revisers as Yeats, who rewrote their texts wholesale. Or we might want to know that the most widely circulated version today of Martin Luther King’s famous essay “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence” (a crucial document for me as for so many others of my generation) omits its critique of Marxist thought. It would not be enough simply to choose any one of the versions in these or other examples: many of the multiple versions were authorized by the authors themselves, and we would want to have them all. Indeed, the literary work might be said to exist not in any one version, but in an archive that brings all the versions put together. In reading a particular page, we would want to know of the other versions of that page, and the first step in reading would then be to discover what other pages exist with claims on our attention. The problematic source of such possibilities is the archive. On the one hand, the archive contains potential alternate versions to the constructs that we ordinarily accept unthinkingly and thus offers liberatory alternatives. On the other hand, any particular archive masquerades as simply a repository of potentiality when more accurately it constitutes another site rather than an ultimate or encyclopedic one for its own contents, just as a computer edition is another rather than an ultimate edition. To activate the archive’s potential we need to activate our imaginations and their historicizing potential.

Such a strategy leads to a third way that recent editorial theory suggests for reading a page, in addition to awareness of its constructedness and of multiple alternatives. That is to recognize that the literary text consists not only of words (its linguistic code) but also of the semantic features of its material instantiations (its bibliographic code). Such

bibliographic codes might include cover design, page layout, or spacing, among other factors. They might also include the other contents of the book or periodical in which the work appears, as well as prefaces, notes, or dedications that affect the reception and interpretation of the work. Such material features correspond to Walter Benjamin's concept of the "aura" in his celebrated essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Largely concerned with film as successor to both fine art and print, that essay posits the aura as the key aspect of a work to disappear under conditions of mechanical reproduction:

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be . . . The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity . . . The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated . . . One might subsume the eliminated element in the term "aura" and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. (220–21)

For Benjamin the "aura" thus indicates particularly the presence of the work of art in time and space (that is, in history) and proves particularly vulnerable in an age of mechanical reproduction. Although Benjamin himself saw the aura as "withering" in the age of mechanical reproduction, we may revise Benjamin by emphasizing that for literary works original mechanical reproductions can create their own aura, and that it is the earlier auras that wither under successive reproductions of the work, particularly if the "work" is thought of as identical merely to its words. The aura emerges in part from the material features of the text. The original sites of incarnation thus carry with them an aura placing the work in space and time, and constituting its authenticity as well as its contingency. Removing that aura removes the iconicity of the page, and thus important aspects of a text's meaning.

What Benjamin thinks of as aura finds its analogy in the concept of bibliographic code put forward by recent editorial theorists such as Jerome McGann. In *The Textual Condition* McGann enlisted the notion of bibliographic code to critique the notion of eclectic editing and to advocate instead a more socialized view of the text. Distinguishing between a work's words, or "linguistic code," and its physical features, or "bibliographic code," McGann argued for

the symbolic and signifying dimensions of the physical medium through which (or rather *as* which) the linguistic text is embodied . . . Meaning is transmitted through bibliographical as well as linguistic codes . . . As the process of textual transmission expands . . . the signifying processes of the work become increasingly collaborative and socialized . . . Correlative with this position is the argument that no single editorial procedure—no single ‘text’ of a particular work—can be imagined or hypothesized as the ‘correct’ one . . . And it must be understood that the archive includes not just original manuscripts, proofs, and editions, but all the subsequent textual constitutions which the work undergoes in its historical passages. (56–62)⁴

Bibliographic code can include features of page layout, book design, ink and paper, and typeface as well as broader issues which D. F. McKenzie might call “the sociology of texts,” like publisher, print run, price, or audience.⁵ McGann deploys the concept in *The Textual Condition* to challenge Greg-Bowers conceptions of eclectic editing based on final authorial intentions, but I would like to emphasize here instead its congruence with Benjamin’s notion of aura. The bibliographic code corresponds to the aura and, like it, points to the work’s “presence in time and space.” Subsequent representations, particularly if they emphasize only the linguistic code, correspond to the withering of the aura. They tend to set the text free from its original time and place, locating it in our own principally as an aesthetic rather than historicized object.

A third notion helpful for exploring material textuality is the concept of utterance from speech-act theory. First in his seminal article “Text as Matter, Concept, and Action” Peter Shillingsburg argued for the pertinence of speech-act theory to concepts of text and editing by insisting that texts involve matter (physical form), concepts (largely ideas in the minds of authors and editors), and actions performed by the readers or audience. In a short paper “Refining the Social Contract” delivered at the Society for Textual Scholarship conference in 1995 and available in expanded form in his recent book *Resisting Texts*, he elaborates the argument:

Authoring, manufacturing, and reading performances are seen more clearly if we keep in mind a distinction between the products of these performances and the uses to which they are put. John Searle insists on this distinction when he explains the difference between *sentence* and *utterance*. Sentence is the formal structure of the words and their relation. Sentence can be recorded as a series of words; sentences are iterable. Utterance, on the other hand, is the intended meaning in the use of sentence. The same sentence can be used on separate oc-

casions to mean different things. The particular use of sentence on occasion in a specific setting is not utterance; utterance is not iterable. . . . Sentence, not utterance, is what is recorded literally in written texts. Utterance is reduced to sentence in written works. . . . In speech, these extra-textual elements include tone of voice, gesture and body language, place and time, and actual audience In writing, the extra-textual clues are less immediate than in speech but include the 'bibliographic code' as a means writers, publishers, and readers use to help construct utterance from sentence. (105–06, 155)⁶

Just as McGann deployed his argument partly to answer Greg-Bowers eclectic editing, so has Shillingsburg pointed his to counter extreme claims of a social-construction argument. I emphasize here the correspondence of speech-acts with our two earlier notions of bibliographic code and aura. In this analysis the bibliographic code is the textual form taken by speech acts. The physical features of the text correspond to the physical features of delivery of a speech-act, to the factors that make it an utterance rather than merely a sentence. And those are the same features that help constitute a textual aura.

I suggest that McGann, Shillingsburg, and I have come to these conclusions through dissatisfaction with traditional theories of editing as applied to nineteenth and twentieth-century authors like Byron, Thackeray, or Yeats, whom we have respectively edited, or to ones like Blake, Dickinson, and Pound whom we have not. Put simply, it is difficult for traditional Anglo-American textual practice to deal adequately with the complex textual situations faced by editors of works from the last two centuries, where a plethora of materials and evidence rather than a paucity is the problem. Seen in that light, Anglo-American copy-text eclectic editing becomes *only one* way among many to deal with the materials, rather than *the only* way. Further, it seems to be a way that ignores important elements in the meaning constructed by the text, whether we compare those features to aura, bibliographic code, or speech-act. Such elements help to *historicize* the work. In contrast, a common thread of both sophisticated eclecticism and naive reductionism is the equation of "text" merely with words or linguistic code, an approach that tends to *de-historicize* the work.

I want to illustrate these ideas with readings of four sonnets by poets of diverse backgrounds from different periods of the last two centuries. I have selected the sonnet form neither to privilege poetry nor to appease any ghosts of New Critics like Brooks and Warren trailing wraithlike through the halls of contemporary academia, but rather for three main reasons.

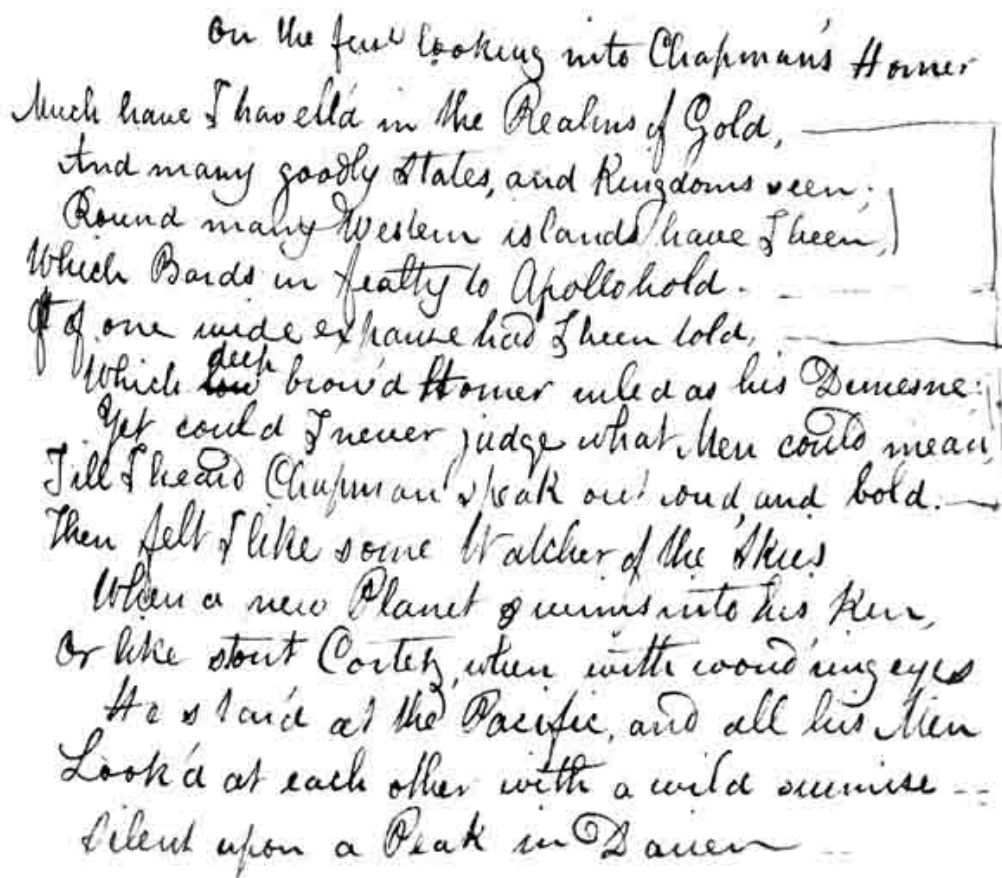
First, sonnets provide short, manageable examples of principles that apply to all forms of textuality. Second, the particular sonnets are ones that we often teach in our classes; all, for example, are in the latest edition of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. And finally, the sonnet strikes most people as one of the most overtly “aesthetic” forms of writing; with the exception of overtly political sonnets like some of Milton’s or Wordsworth’s, sonnets seem to many people as far from involvement in historical contingency as literature is likely to get. And yet, as we shall see, the material textuality of sonnets imbricates them directly in political matrices both of their time and of our own. Let us proceed, then, to sonnets by the English Romantic poet John Keats, the later nineteenth-century Jewish-American writer Emma Lazarus, the Irish modernist W. B. Yeats, and the contemporary African-American author Gwendolyn Brooks.

Our examination begins with four material instantiations of Keats’s sonnet “On First Looking Into Chapman’s Homer,” surely a standard text even in these anti-canonical times. They are the manuscript, first publication in the periodical *The Examiner*, first book publication in Keats’s *Poems* of 1817, and current reproduction in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (fourth edition). The material form of each context highlights a different aspect of the poem, causing us to read each page differently. The manuscript (Figure 1), for example, emphasizes the poem as aesthetic object, a sonnet, with Keats endearingly drawing lines at the right margin to help him keep straight the exigencies of Petrarchan rhyme: gold, seen, been, hold, told, Demesne, mean, bold; and skies, ken, eyes, men, surmise, Darien:

Much have I travell’d in the Realms of Gold
 And many goodly States, and Kingdoms seen;
 Round many Western islands have I been,
 Which Bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,
 Which deep brow’d Homer ruled as his Demesne;
 Yet could I never judge what Men could mean,
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud, and bold.
 Then felt I like some Watcher of the Skies
 When a new Planet swims into his Ken,
 Or like stout Cortez, when with wond’ring eyes
 He star’d at the Pacific, and all his Men
 Look’d at each other with a wild surmise—
 Silent upon a Peak in Darien.⁷

FIGURE 1

"On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" MS Keats 2.4. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.



On the first looking into Chapman's Homer
 Much have I travell'd in the Realms of Gold,
 And many goodly states, and Kingdoms seen;
 Round many Western islands have I been,
 Which Bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Of one wide expanse had I been told,
 Which ~~low~~ ^{deep} brow'd Homer call'd as his Demesne:
 Yet could I never judge what Men could mean,
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.
 Then felt I like some Watcher of the Skies
 When a new Planet swims into his ken,
 Or like stout Cortez, when with wond'ring eyes
 He stood at the Pacific, and all his Men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise --
 Silent upon a Peak in Darien --

The manuscript also contains suggestive variants in its linguistic code, such as line 7 reading "Yet could I never judge what men could mean" rather than the later "Yet never could I breathe its pure serene" or those "wond'ring" rather than the later "eagle" eyes of Cortez in line 11. Besides foregrounding formal elements, it obviously heightens our awareness of the biographical John Keats inscribing the poem.

In contrast, the second bibliographic coding of the text, that of *The Examiner*, emphasizes the social and political aspects of the poem (Figure 2). *The Examiner* was a left-leaning political and literary periodical run by Keats's friend and sometime mentor Leigh Hunt. *The Examiner* supported all the liberal causes of its day, and Hunt had been sent to prison for articles protesting the flogging of British troops during the Napoleonic wars. This particular number of *The Examiner* includes articles on Napoleon, on a mass meeting to demand food for the poor, on the distress of what we might now call the urban underclass, and other

FIGURE 2

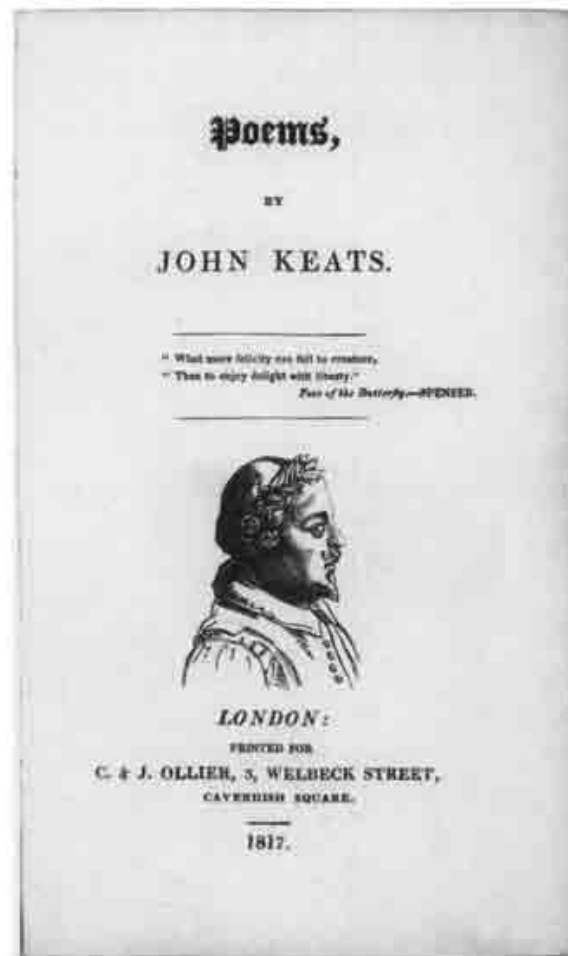
The Examiner, Keats EC8.K2262.LExi5, v.9. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.



items supporting the cause of Reform. What does it mean for the poem to appear first in such a venue? To answer that well, we need to remember that this was the first poem of Keats ever to appear with his name attached, a debut poem so to speak. How might it accord with the politics and social context of *The Examiner*? Remember that the most famous poet of the previous century, Pope, had made a small fortune by himself *translating* Homer. By way of contrast, the first thing that Keats says in this debut poem is that he does not know Greek, not just an admission but almost a flaunting of his class origins as precluding a traditional upper or even middle class education. The sonnet proclaims that he is not a gentleman and yet that he considers himself a poet. In that way his poetic enterprise parallels the liberal politics of *The Examiner* itself, enacting in the poetical sphere the democratic commitment which the journal trumpeted in the political realm. That was the way Romanticism was often

FIGURE 3

Title page of Keats's *Poems*, 1817. By permission of Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.

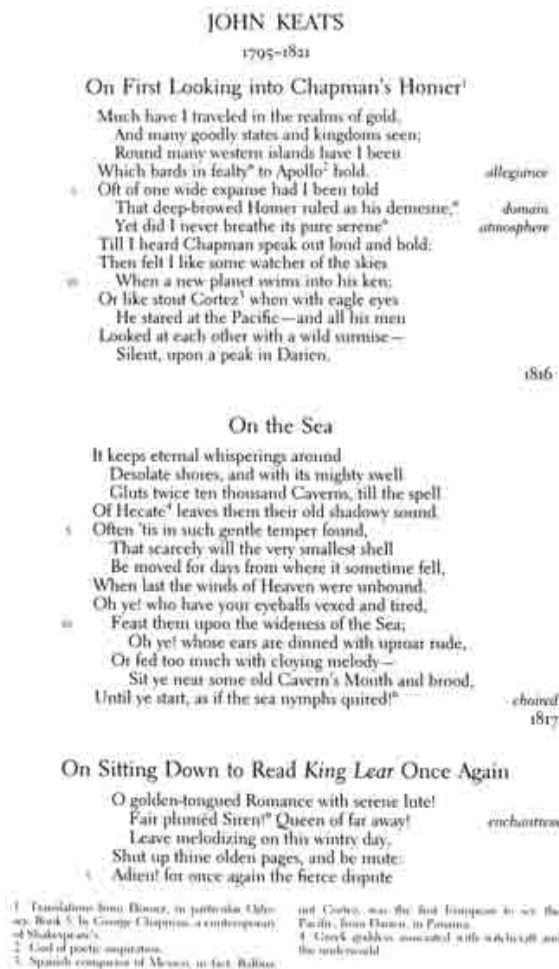


perceived in its own day, as when Hazlitt observed that Wordsworth's poetry "partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age: the political changes of the day were the model on which he formed and conducted his poetical experiments. . . . His Muse is a leveling one" (*Romanticism Reconsidered* 27). So, too, does the appearance of "Chapman's Homer" in *The Examiner* highlight the parallel of Keats's poem to Romantic revolutionary politics, the more so for it appearing in an article joining him with Shelley. That is how to read the poem on a page of *The Examiner*.

The third context of the sonnet, Keats's *Poems* volume of 1817, continues but moderates the political tone even while indicating for the first time that this is a poem by a poet sufficiently skilled and important to merit an entire book of his verse. It thus marks a decisive stage in the growth of Keats's reputation. The title page (Figure 3) continues the po-

FIGURE 4

John Keats, "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer." Reproduced by permission of the publishers, *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 4th edition.



litical aspect through the loaded word “liberty” in its Spenserian epi-
graph and through its publication by C. and J. Ollier, the radical pub-
lishers who would bring Shelley and other liberal writers before the
public. That aspect continues in the dedication, which is to Hunt him-
self, a politicized literary figure for whom the word “poor” in the last line
carries special meaning, as does the notion of what it would mean to be
“a man like thee.” Looking at the table of contents, we see that “On First
Looking Into Chapman’s Homer” is now part of a sequence of sonnets
which includes such political ones as the third—“Written on the Day
That Mr. Leigh Hunt Left Prison”—and the sixteenth—“To Kosciuszko,”
the Polish freedom fighter. And yet the political coding here seems less
dominant than that of *The Examiner*—the notion of Keats the Poet is
emerging ever more strongly.

That is, alas, the only notion remaining in the anthologies in which most students encounter the poem today, such as *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Figure 4). There the linguistic code of the poem appears, stripped of any of its original bibliographic codings. The social, political, and reputational aspects of those codings are reduced here only to a date of first publication, 1816, which is unlikely to mean much to the average sophomore. Such reduction serves to emphasize the chief remaining aspect, the aesthetic, for which the main use of the date seems to be to allow its insertion into an ongoing story of the development of English poetry. In that respect, an anthology does for poems what an art museum does for art objects: it removes them from a social or political setting—whether a church, a palace, a town hall or whatever—and inserts them into a decontextualized realm which emphasizes the aesthetic and stylistic. In this material sense the “ideology of the anthology” means not a selection of poems representing certain points of view but rather the anthology itself as a dehistoricizing field that obscures the social embedding of its own contents. In each of the four material contexts we have considered, then, texts emerge as constructed *objects*, not as mystified transparent lenses giving us the “real” Keats or Shakespeare or Dickinson.

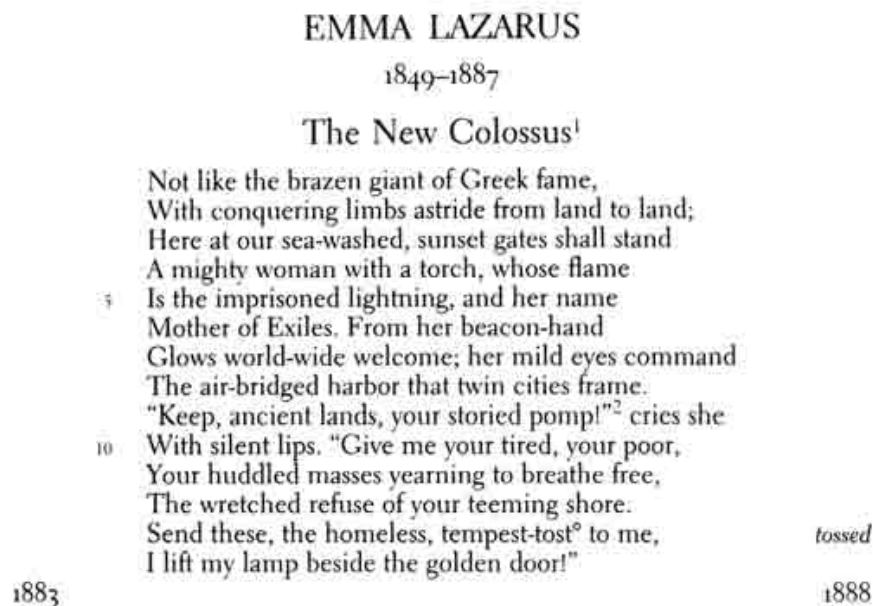
Emma Lazarus’s famous sonnet “The New Colossus” (Figure 5) extends our exploration of material textuality beyond that of Keats’s sonnet:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
 Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
 The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
 ‘Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!’ cries she
 With silent lips. ‘Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!’ (*Norton Anthology of Poetry* 1068)

Like Keats’s, Lazarus’s sonnet uses the Petrarchan form to subvert the usual contents both of that form and of the social formations that it had earlier supported. But whereas Keats’s subversions turn on issues of class

FIGURE 5

Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus." Reproduced by permission of the publishers, *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 4th edition.



1. Written as part of a fundraising campaign for the Statue of Liberty, in New York harbor. The poem was recited in 1866 at the statue's dedication; later its final lines were engraved on the pedestal. Lazarus compares the Statue of Liberty to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of

the World, a statue to the sun god Helios that stood in the harbor at Rhodes, Greece. Contrary to legend that dates from the Middle Ages (see line 2), the statue could not have straddled the harbor entrance.

2. The splendors of your history.

(he is not a gentleman yet practices not only poetry but even this elite genre of it), Lazarus's turn on those of gender. For the Petrarchan sonnet was originally a form invented by men to idealize women, starting with Petrarch and Laura, and presented the male poet as agent and speaker, with the female beloved as object of love and inspiration. In contrast, Lazarus (who herself once translated Petrarch) speaks here as a female rather than male poet, and her female figure of Liberty herself speaks; further, she does so in a political rather than amorous realm, with her words pertaining directly to a major political event of those years, mass immigration to the United States from eastern and southern Europe. The material features of the text support the subversion of traditional views in surprising ways.

To begin with, the poem was not included in the Norton until the new, fourth edition three years ago. Yet the sonnet was and is so well-known that its exclusion presumably derives from its having been judged unworthy of the canon of high poetry. Its inclusion first in 1996 likely stems

more from Lazarus's position as a female writer than from her ethnicity as a Jew, though both her gender and her religion doubtless assisted her in these identity-conscious times. Its overtly political theme, too, doubtless seemed more attractive to the editors of the 1990s than it had to the more New Critical ones of earlier editions, and the accompanying footnote gestures (though inadequately) toward that political context, and towards Lazarus's extraordinary revision of the statue's original meaning.

The Norton's garbled note indicates that the poem was written as part of a fundraising campaign for the Statue of Liberty. Actually, the campaign aimed at raising funds for the large pedestal, the French having contributed the Statue itself.⁸ Lazarus's sonnet was read at the gala opening of the Art Loan Exhibition in Aid of the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund for the Statue of Liberty in 1883, and not (as the Norton mistakenly states) at the dedication of the Statue itself. That dedication took place in 1886 rather than the Norton's 1866—that is, just after the wave of mass immigration started, not just after the Civil War ended, when the idea of a Statue of Liberty would have had a very different political meaning, one that referred to recently liberated slaves rather than to recently arrived immigrants. Further, the Norton note remains silent on Lazarus's remarkable revision of the Statue's original meaning. Originally conceived by the group of moderate Republican intellectuals centered around Edouard-René Lefebvre de Laboulaye, the Statue originally bore the title "Liberty Enlightening the World." Their intention was to erect a major statue in America that would reflect America's absorption of French ideals of Liberty and facilitate the reinjection of those Republican ideals into the France of the Second Empire. That tactic formed part of their eventually successful campaign to establish the Third Republic, which lasted up until the Nazi conquest. The sculptor, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, himself conceptualized the Statue in those terms, with Liberty intended to reflect back to the Old World the participation of the New in a worldwide political movement. In contrast, Lazarus's poem reinterpreted Liberty as a specifically American goddess (the "Mother of Exiles") welcoming refugees from the oppressive Old World to the emancipated new one, a meaning that it continues to hold. In that way Lazarus's inversion of historical politics matches her inversion of gender ones.

The most important thing about the poem's original textual materiality is that Lazarus wrote the sonnet not to have it printed, but to have the manuscript auctioned at a fundraiser for the pedestal fund (Figure 6). Unlike Keats's manuscript, then, written as prelude to print publication, Lazarus's manuscript—like those of Dickinson—*was* the original form

FIGURE 6

Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus." Museum of the City of New York 36.319. Reproduced by permission of the Museum.

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
 Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome, her mild eyes
^{command}
 The air-bridged harbor that twin-cities frame.
 "Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she,
 With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lazarus.

November 2nd 1883.

of publication itself. But unlike Dickinson, Lazarus did not intend her manuscript only for private consumption by herself and her circle. On the contrary, by agreeing to write a sonnet for the manuscript auction, she intended it from the first to be a fetishized object, the price of whose consumption would aid the pedestal fund and thus enable the statue (not the sonnet) to be made permanently public. Hence despite the initial enthusiasm it aroused (James Russell Lowell, for example, wrote to Lazarus that her poem had given the Statue a "raison d'être"), the poem sank into obscurity for fifteen years after that. It appeared in only one newspaper (*The New York World*) and not in any collection of Lazarus's poetry during the brief remainder of her life, though she did inscribe it first in her own notebook collection of her verse.⁹

The period of obscurity ended in 1903, when Lazarus's friend Georgina Schuyler succeeded in having the sonnet inscribed on a bronze tablet

FIGURE 7

Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus" (on plaque). Reproduced courtesy of the Statue of Liberty National Monument.



placed inside the pedestal of the Statue (Figure 7), not "engraved on the pedestal" as the hapless Norton note claims. Again, the material textuality is significant: with its inscription on the tablet, the poem becomes not simply a sonnet *about* a monument, but rather *part* of the monument itself. In this it resembles many paratexts of modernist literature—such as the various prefaces and notes by Yeats, Pound, Woolf, or Eliot—by becoming part of the text whose interpretation it seeks to shape. The block capitals used throughout the inscription heighten this monumental status, just as the devoted inscription evokes the maker of both the statue and the poem: "THIS TABLET, WITH HER SONNET TO THE BARTHOLDI STATUE OF LIBERTY ENGRAVED UPON IT, IS PLACED UPON THESE WALLS IN LOVING MEMORY OF EMMA LAZARUS BORN IN NEW YORK CITY JULY 22ND 1849 DIED NOVEMBER 19TH 1887." The tablet is physically affixed to the statue, just as the poem's revisionary meaning has been for generations of Americans.

I cannot bring myself to forsake the public inscriptions of this poem without mentioning the recent granite plaque in the International Arrivals Building of John Fitzgerald Kennedy Airport in New York, which we might call the "PC Version" of the poem. Now that immigrants arrive

by airplane perhaps even more often than by boat, someone had the good idea of affixing Lazarus's poem to welcome them at the air terminal just as earlier the Statue of Liberty had welcomed immigrants to New York harbor. But a crucial line has been left out, even though its omission destroys the rhythm and rhyme scheme. The large gold letters now proclaim:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . .
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

The omitted line read: "The wretched refuse of your teeming shore." Presumably, the powers that be thought that line would be insulting to new immigrants, perhaps even destructive of their self-esteem. Like most efforts of the Language Police, this one backfires, and to anyone who knows the original, the censored form of the inscription reveals chiefly the extraordinary condescension of the censors toward those whom they think that they are protecting. As the noted naturalist Stephen Jay Gould wrote in an indignant Op-Ed piece in *The New York Times* in 1995, "The language police triumph, and integrity bleeds. . . Did these particular police ever hear of metaphor? Did they consider that Lazarus might have been describing the attitudes of ruling classes in foreign lands toward their potential emigrants? Play it safe and destroy poetry" ("No More 'Wretched Refuse'").

And what of the print translations of this poem first inscribed in manuscript, then delivered orally at the fundraising exhibition, and finally engraved on a tablet on the monument itself? The poem is best known through its endless reproductions for postcards and brochures, anthologies, and history books, but within the context of Lazarus's own works the most significant pages are found in the posthumous two-volume *Poems of Emma Lazarus* (Boston, 1889) and the one volume *Emma Lazarus: Selections from Her Poetry and Prose* edited by Morris Schappes, originally for the International Workers Order and then for the Jewish Publication Society.¹⁰ The Schappes edition may serve as example here, and its odyssey from publication by the Cooperative Book League of the Jewish-American section of the IWO to reissue by the Jewish Publication Society itself indicates the association of Jewish and labor causes in American history. The material text of "The New Colossus" here recontextualizes the poem in terms of Jewish history and so adds another dimension to its

FIGURE 8

Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus" (print version). By permission of Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.

1492

Thou two-faced year, Mother of Change and Fate,
Didst weep when Spain cast forth with flaming sword,
The children of the prophets of the Lord,
Prince, priest, and people, spurned by zealot hate.
Hounded from sea to sea, from state to state,
The West refused them, and the East abhorred.
No anchorage the known world could afford,
Close-locked was every port, barred every gate
Then smiling, thou unveil'dst, O two-faced year,
A virgin world where doors of sunset part,
Saying, "Ho, all who weary, enter here!
There falls each ancient barrier that the art
Of race or creed or rank devised, to rear
Grim bulwarked hatred between heart and heart!"

THE NEW COLOSSUS*

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow'd world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

* Written in aid of Bartholdi Pedestal Fund, November 1883 (now inscribed on a plaque on the Statue of Liberty.-M.U.S.)

reception and interpretation (Figure 8). Schappes places the poem right after another Petrarchan sonnet associating the year 1492 with both the Jews' expulsion from Spain and the European discovery of the New World and right before a quasi-sonnet on the leader of the Bar Kochba Revolt in Roman times, whom Lazarus apostrophizes as "the last Warrior Jew." In this context, then, the specifically Jewish referent of "The New Colossus" comes into focus, for Jews were very much at the forefront of the massive wave of immigration into the United States between the Kishinev pogrom of 1881 and the closing of mass immigration to America in the early 1920s. The material page of the Schappes edition emphasizes the specifically Jewish component of those "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" and also the Jewish birth of the poem's author, even though she came from an affluent and settled Sephardic family rather than an impoverished Ashkenazic immigrant one. And, of course, Schappes's briefer

note records the occasion of composition and site of inscription more accurately than the longer one in the Norton.

In returning to the Norton's material page, then, we may add several lessons. In so doing I use the Norton not as an object of obloquy but rather as example of the characteristics of even the finest anthologies aimed at the high end of the market. First, even when anthologies add notes gesturing toward historical contingencies, they often get them wrong, sometimes badly so. Second, for "The New Colossus" the printed nature of the anthology page belies the poem's earlier existence first as fetishized manuscript commodity, then as oral delivery, and finally as public inscription on the plaques at the Statue or airport. This reminds us that much poetry originated in non-print form, most often as manuscript or oral performance, and that the material page is always already a translation of that act, one whose constructedness we should remember. And finally, the earlier material contexts remind us of the original political meaning of the poem in a way that is hard to recover merely from the linguistic code but that is very apparent from the bibliographic or material codes instead.

So far, my argument has assumed a stable verbal text, and has shown how changing bibliographic codes can alter the meaning of poems even if their linguistic codes remain the same. W. B. Yeats's sonnet "Leda and the Swan" provides an example of changes in both verbal and material textuality. Here is the opening quatrain as it appeared in its first three printings, in the American periodical *The Dial*, the Irish one *To-morrow*, and (the one reproduced here) his *The Cat and the Moon* volume of 1924 (Figure 9):

A rush, a sudden wheel, and hovering still
The bird descends, and her frail thighs are pressed
By the webbed toes, and that all-powerful bill
Has laid her helpless face upon his breast.¹¹

By the publication the following year in *A Vision*, Yeats had revised the quatrain to intensify its violence, in the version that we still read most often today:

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast. (179)

Especially in the first line, the revisions all heighten the violence of Zeus's approach to Leda, a violence foregrounded in the first three words of the

FIGURE 9

W. B. Yeats, "Leda and the Swan." From *The Cat in the Moon* (1924).

LEDA AND THE SWAN

A rush, a sudden wheel and hovering still
The bird descends, and her frail thighs are pressed
By the webbed toes, and that all powerful bill
Has laid her helpless face upon his breast.
How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs!
All the stretched body's laid on the white rush
And feels the strange heart beating where it lies;
A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?
1923.

MEDITATIONS IN TIME OF CIVIL WAR I—ANCESTRAL HOUSES

Surely among a rich man's flowering lawns,
Amid the rustle of his planted hills,
Life overflows without ambitious pains;
And rains down life until the basin spills,
And mounts more dizzy high the more it rains
As though to choose whatever shape it wills
And never stoop to a mechanical,
Or servile shape, at others beck and call.

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Mere dreams, mere dreams! Yet Homer had not sung
Had he not found it certain beyond dreams
That out of life's own self-delight had sprung
The abounding glittering jet; though now it seems
As if some marvellous empty sea-shell flung
Out of the obscure dark of the rich streams,
And not a fountain, were the symbol which
Shadows the inherited glory of the rich.

Some violent bitter man, some powerful man
Called architect and artist in that they,
Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone
The sweetness that all longed for night and day,
The gentleness none there had ever known;
But when the master's buried mice can play,
And maybe the great-grandson of that house
For all its bronze and marble's but a mouse,

Oh what if gardens where the peacock strays
With delicate feet upon old terraces,
Or else all Juno from an urn displays
Before the indifferent garden deities;
Oh what if levelled lawns and gravelled ways
Where slipped Contemplation finds his case
And Childhood a delight for every sense,
But take our greatness with our violence!

d

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revised version—"A sudden blow"—and in phrases like "the great wings beating" and "the staggering girl." Foregrounding that violence in a manner that changes the encounter from amorous dalliance to rape ("helpless") was Yeats's foremost innovation in the tradition of representing Zeus and Leda. More typically, as in the paintings by Correggio, Leonardo, Tintoretto, or Michelangelo, the scene appears as one of erotic pleasure, with a self-possessed Leda usually larger than the swan and in control of the action. Nor did the traditional representations result only from the male gaze. The same treatment of the myth as representing amorous dalliance informs its staging by Yeats's contemporary H. D. in her own poem "Leda," published only a few years before Yeats's. Rather than follow that tradition, Yeats instead chose a counter-representation from a Greek frieze in the British Museum as visual foundation of his revisionary rendering. Part of the bite of Yeats's poem is its use of sonnet form—originally invented to idealize women—for this more violent interpretation of the Leda story, a violence accentuated by the verbal revisions of the opening quatrain and that matches the overall themes of the *Tower* volume in which it found its eventual place.

Like most of Yeats's poetry written in the twentieth century, "Leda and the Swan" appeared earlier in a book with the customary feminist

gender coding of Cuala Press. We might begin our exploration of that with its colophon, all the more conspicuous because printed in red. Like all Cuala colophons, it specifies the book, the number of copies printed, the manager of the enterprise, the paper used, and the date. The one from the volume containing “Leda and the Swan” reads: “Here ends ‘The Cat and the Moon and Certain Poems’ by William Butler Yeats. Five hundred copies of this book have been printed and published by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats on paper made in Ireland, at the Cuala Press, Merrion Square, Dublin, Ireland. Finished on the first of May in the year nineteen hundred and twenty-four.” The colophon stresses both the nationalist and the feminist orientation of the press. Originally part of the Dun Emer Industries founded by Evelyn Gleeson with help from both Susan (Lily) and especially Elizabeth (Lolly) Yeats, as well as technical advice from William Morris’s collaborator Emery Walker and literary advice from W. B. Yeats, the Press like the other Industries aimed at training young Irish women to earn an independent living.¹² The managers and workers at the Press were all women, and governance evolved toward a more collective pattern of decision-making, especially after the enterprise split off from the other Industries and renamed itself as Cuala. The original name, Dun Emer, indicated both a feminist orientation and a nationalist one as well in Ireland (Dun means fort in Gaelic, and Emer was a legendary Irish queen, wife of Cuchulain). Both impulses survive in the colophons, which call attention both to the female manager Elizabeth Yeats and to the insistent use of Irish paper by this self-consciously Irish press. Publication by Cuala does not, of course, mark a work as univocally feminist or nationalist, but it does indicate both an orientation of an author willing to be published by such an enterprise and the approval of a group of strong nationalist women who were unlikely to publish work they saw as oppressive in either its national or its gender politics. That same approval would have animated Yeats’s longtime friend and ally Lady Gregory, to whom the volume is dedicated.

Coming between the elaborate opening dedication to Lady Gregory and the closing colophon by Elizabeth Yeats, the material display of the poem itself deepens its political and historical implications (see Figure 9 again). The typeface is Caslon, the only one that Cuala owned, and Yeats explained the genesis of the poem in a note added to it for this edition. Displayed in the same font and size as the poetic text, as though coequal in importance, the note explains:

I wrote Leda and the Swan because the editor of a political review asked me for a poem. I thought 'After the individualistic, demagogic movement, founded by Hobbes and popularised by the Encyclopaedists and the French Revolution, we have a soil so exhausted that it cannot grow that crop again for centuries.' Then I thought 'Nothing is now possible but some movement, or birth from above, preceded by some violent annunciation.' My fancy began to play with Leda and the Swan for metaphor . . . (*The Cat and the Moon* 37)

On the *Cat and the Moon* page, the chief context for the poem is Irish politics, followed as it is immediately by the long sequence "Meditations in Time of Civil War." The context emphasizes that the poem was published two years after proclamation of the Irish Free State, which Yeats was serving as senator at the time of composition, and one year after the end of the brutal Civil War that immediately followed independence.

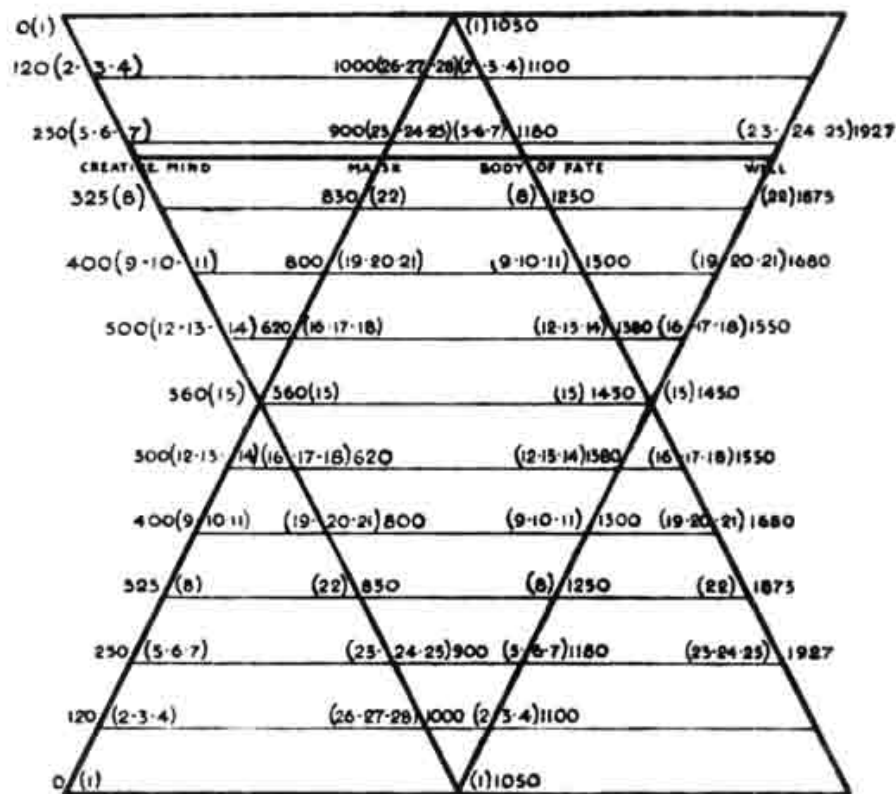
The material page itself suggests an even broader context of historical development. Like all Cuala books, this one is designed in terms of "openings" or facing pages, in which the type sits high on the page in a block with larger external than internal margins.¹³ That display echoes the layout of books by William Morris, whose disciple William Butler Yeats had been and whose associate Emery Walker had tutored Elizabeth Corbet Yeats in the art of fine printing. It was intended to suggest the layout of medieval books, and thus to protest against conditions of production under the Victorian capitalism of Morris's England; so, too, was the use of red ink amid the black, which Cuala also followed. The physical layout of the page, then, carries a critique of conditions of production under turn-of-the-century capitalism, and invokes alternate social formations such as medieval ones as part of that critique. The material page thus extends the political meaning of the poem into an ongoing line of historical development which mimics its theme: the poem invokes the end of one era and beginning of another, just as its physical display invokes other eras than the present one. That extension reaches its apotheosis in Yeats's book of mystical philosophy, history, and psychology, *A Vision*, first published a year later, in 1925. Here the sonnet faces a schematic diagram of Yeats's famous interlocking gyres, which divide history into two thousand year cycles (Figure 10) (*A Vision* 178). The numbers in the diagram not in parentheses refer to chronological dates, while those within parentheses refer to Yeats's equally well-known division of psychological types into the twenty-eight phases of the moon. Ezra Pound once described the latter as "very, very bughouse" (look who was talking!). Rather than plunge into Yeats's esoteric thought here, I re-

FIGURE 10

From Yeats's *A Vision*. By permission of Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.

THE HISTORICAL CONES.

The numbers in brackets refer to phases, and the other numbers to dates A.D. The line cutting the cones a little below 250, 900, 1180 and 1927 shows four historical *Faculties* related to the present moment.



mark only that the diagram maps the poem onto all of western history, and pass on to the *Norton Anthology* page. Again, the anthology omits all the material and linguistic coding that we have been examining, giving only a general note enabling the student to understand the Greek mythology behind the Leda myth. There is no sign of the political and historical meanings carried by other pages displaying the poem, nor any sign that the opening quatrain had been printed three times in different wording. Such inadequacies are less an indictment of the Norton than an inherent characteristic of all anthologies, which seek to reproduce merely the linguistic text, usually as economically as possible.

FIGURE II

Gwendolyn Brooks, “my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell.” *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 4th edition. Reproduced by permission of the author.

my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell

I hold my honey and I store my bread
 In little jars and cabinets of my will.
 I label clearly, and each latch and lid
 I bid, Be firm till I return from hell.
 5 I am very hungry. I am incomplete.
 And none can tell when I may dine again.
 No man can give me any word but Wait,
 The puny light. I keep eyes pointed in;
 Hoping that, when the devil days of my hurt
 10 Drag out to their last dregs and I resume
 On such legs as are left me, in such heart
 As I can manage, remember to go home,
 My taste will not have turned insensitive
 To honey and bread old purity could love.

1945

My final example comes from the work of the contemporary African-American poet Gwendolyn Brooks, and particularly her well-known sonnet “my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell” (Figure II):

I hold my honey and I store my bread
 In little jars and cabinets of my will.
 I label clearly, and each latch and lid
 I bid, Be firm till I return from hell.
 I am very hungry. I am incomplete.
 And none can tell when I may dine again.
 No man can give me any word but Wait,
 The puny light. I keep eyes pointed in;
 Hoping that, when the devil days of my hurt
 Drag out to their last dregs and I resume
 On such legs as are left me, in such heart
 As I can manage, remember to go home,
 My taste will not have turned insensitive
 To honey and bread old purity could love.¹⁴

Students often find the poem puzzling in its anthology display as an isolated sonnet. The poem appears to be about someone undergoing or about to undergo a traumatic psychological experience and imagining a

future return from that experience. The invocation of African-American culture in the language (“we real cool”) and references (for example, to the slain Civil Rights worker Medgar Evers) in the surrounding poems encourage the notion that race may play an important role here, too. And although the poem is gender-neutral, most students assume from the fact that the poet is black and female that the speaker likely is, too. That enables some interesting discussion of Brooks’s subversion of sonnet conventions here, where the reproduction of Shakespearean form in off-rhyme matches what we might call the “off-content” of the poem.

Yet the material page of the anthology eliminates major historical and political meanings explicit in the poem’s earlier physical incarnations. The most important of those emerges on the material page of Brooks’s *Selected Poems* of 1963 (22–23). The text there reveals that the poem is the third of twelve sonnets in the sequence “Gay Chaps at the Bar” dealing with the experience of black soldiers in World War Two. The context emerges first from the content and even titles of the poems (most glaringly in the one called “the white troops had their orders but the Negroes looked like men”). It also emerges from the epigraph which provided the title both for the first poem and for the entire sequence: “. . . and guys I knew in the States, young officers, return from the front crying and trembling. Gay chaps at the bar in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York.” Read in this material site, the traumatic experience invoked by the poem reveals a specific historical contingency: it refers to the experience of African-American soldiers during the war. The phrases about storing up honey “till I return from hell,” about “Wait,” about resuming life “on such legs as are left me,” and “remember to go home” refer initially and specifically to the disruptive experience of war. Further, the sequence explores the experience of African Americans not only in the war, but in life generally, with the segregated units of the armed forces leading to thoughts of other forms of segregation and racism in American society.

Yet the interpretive vistas opened up by the “Gay Chaps at the Bar” sequence in *Selected Poems* do not exhaust what we can learn from material pages. If we go back farther still, to the sequence’s first publication in Brooks’s first book, *A Street in Bronzeville* (46), we find yet another dimension (Figure 12). For there the entire sequence carried a dedication dropped from both the *Selected Poems* and the anthology printings: “souvenir for Staff Sergeant Raymond Brooks and every other soldier.” Staff Sergeant Raymond Brooks was the poet’s brother. Dedication of the sequence to him gives “my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell” a personal dimension made all the more urgent by the volume’s date—it

FIGURE 12

From Brooks's *A Street in Bronzeville*. By permission of Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.

GAY CHAPS AT THE BAR
souvenir for Staff Sergeant Raymond Brooks and every other
soldier

gay chaps at the bar
... and guys I knew in the States, young officers, return
from the front crying and trembling. Gay chaps at the
bar in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York. . . .
LIEUTENANT WILLIAM COUCH
in the South Pacific

WE KNEW how to order. Just the dash
Necessary. The length of gaiety in good taste.
Whether the raillery should be slightly iced
And given green, or served up hot and lush.
And we knew beautifully how to give to women
The summer spread, the tropics, of our love.
When to persist, or hold a hunger off.
Knew white speech. How to make a look an omen.
But nothing ever taught us to be islands.
And smart, athletic language for this hour
Was not in the curriculum. No stout
Lesson showed how to chat with death. We brought
No brass fortissimo, among our talents,
To holler down the lions in this air.

came out in 1945 while the war was still going on. Brooks saw that both the sequence itself and its epigraph and dedication were included in the reprinting of the poem in the collection of her own work *Blacks*, first issued in 1986 by The David Company in Chicago and, starting with the fifth printing in 1991, by Third World Press there. The shift from a mainstream, “white” publisher to a more countercultural one associated even by its name with people of color itself maps Brooks’s odyssey from the world of Harper and Row and of her Guggenheim fellowships to the more self-consciously African-American one that she came to under the influence of the Black Arts movement and the Fisk writers’ conferences in the 1960s. Tracking the poem to its earlier sites, then, allows personal, racial, and historical meanings to emerge that would otherwise be lost in transfer of the words of the isolated sonnet to an anthology.

What, then, can we conclude about textuality from this examination of these four sonnets? The first and most important thing is that any material page on which we read any poem is a constructed object that will encode certain meanings even while placing others under erasure. In the case of poetry anthologies, the meanings foregrounded are “aesthetic”

and those erased tend to be historical and political (although Keats's sonnet reminds us that poets' manuscripts often foreground the aesthetic). The class politics of "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer," the historical revisionism of "The New Colossus," the nationalist and gender interventions of "Leda and the Swan," and the racial undergirding of "my dreams, my works" become readily apparent in their original sites but obscure or invisible in reprintings of our own day. Tracking the poem back through its earlier sites reveals alternate material components of meaning. Those meanings are carried by bibliographic codes as well as by linguistic ones, which is why paying attention only to the words in reprintings erases other meanings.¹⁵ Further, studying texts only in our contemporary reprintings erases the original historicized meanings of the poems and renders even readings that aspire toward the historic or political only a back-projection of an illusory politics fantasized in the present. As opposed to such single-text notions, studying any one material page should remind us of the other material pages that might have been presented instead. The poem, then, exists in multiple versions, several of which can claim authenticity or authorization and can modify contemporary constructions of meaning. If we ask, which is the poem, we can only answer with William Blake, "Less than all cannot satisfy the heart of man." If the "Mona Lisa" is in the Louvre, *King Lear* is on pages all over the world.

Notes

¹ My question adapts the speculation of F. W. Bateson about the "Mona Lisa" and *Hamlet* in his *Essays in Critical Dissent* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 7–10, though my conclusions differ considerably from his. I first encountered the Bateson remark in paraphrase at the start of James MacLaverty's often-cited article "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art," *Studies in Bibliography* (SB) 37 (1984): 82–105.

² For a review of recent theories of versions and an application of them to Yeats, see my article "What is the Text of a Poem by Yeats?" in *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities*, eds. George Bornstein and Ralph Williams (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993), pp. 167–193.

³ See Sharon Cameron, *Choosing Not Choosing: Dickinson's Fascicles* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1992).

⁴ Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), pp. 56–62. For a more detailed evaluation of McGann's views on bibliographic code, see my review article "Beyond Words," *Text* 8 (1995): 387–396.

⁵ D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London: British Library, 1986).

⁶ Peter Shillingsburg, "Text as Matter, Concept, and Action," SB 44 (1991): 31–82; *Resisting Texts* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997), pp. 105–106 and 155.

⁷ The original manuscript is in the Houghton Library at Harvard. See John Keats, *Poetry Manuscripts at Harvard: A Facsimile Edition*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1990), p. 12.

⁸ This paragraph is based on information in Marvin Trachtenberg, *The Statue of Liberty* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), chapter one and *passim*, and in Oscar Handlin, *The Statue of Liberty* (New York: Newsweek Book Division, 1977).

⁹ See Bette Roth Young's *Emma Lazarus in Her World* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), chapter one.

¹⁰ *Emma Lazarus: Selections from Her Poetry and Prose*, ed. Morris U. Schappes (New York: Cooperative Book League, Jewish-American Section, International Workers Order, 1944). Revised and enlarged editions were published in New York first by the Book League, Jewish People's Fraternal Order of the International Workers Order, 1947, and then by the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs in 1967 and again in 1978. The reproduction in this article is from the 1967 edition.

¹¹ *The Dial* (June, 1924), 495. The only difference in the next two printings is that the version in *The Cat and the Moon* lacks the comma after "wheel" in line 1.

¹² The standard account of Cuala Press is Liam Miller, *The Dun Emer Press, Later the Cuala Press* (Dublin: Dolmen P, 1973). See also William M. Murphy, *Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and his Relatives* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1995), and Gifford Lewis, *The Yeats Sisters and the Cuala* (Dublin: Irish Academic P, 1994).

¹³ On the significance of the design of Dun Emer and Cuala Books, especially in relation to Morris, see Jerome J. McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), and David Holdeman, *Much Labouring: The Texts and Authors of Yeats's First Modernist Books* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997).

¹⁴ The verbal text of this poem has remained constant since first publication. For the anthology page, see *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, p. 1479.

¹⁵ For application of these ideas to a wide variety of materials over a long chronological span, see the essays in George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle, eds., *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998).

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COPY-TEXT EDITING THE AUTHOR-IZING OF SHAKESPEARE

PAUL WERSTINE

Werstine's essay calls attention to accounts of play writing and publication from seventeenth-century London that raise difficulties for the application of W. W. Greg's author-centred theory of copy-text to Shakespeare and Renaissance English drama – the very texts Greg designed his theory to address. These accounts suggest that play writing may have been collaborative from the outset, with playwrights in the early stages of composition consulting with the acting companies that were paying them, rather than writing in isolation. Other accounts indicate how little care both seventeenth-century acting companies and publishers exercised in identifying precisely which playwrights wrote which plays. Such possibly collaborative authorship of plays and such indifference to correct attribution of authorship in the publication of plays stand in the way of our locating authors today in the drama of this period, which generally comes down to us only in mediated printed form. It may well be the case then that some of today's Shakespeare editors are departing from Greg's author-centred theory not because of the influence of poststructuralism's deconstruction of the author, but because of an appreciation of surviving documentary evidence. Such present-day scepticism among editors about presenting playwrights' final intentions is, in the long history of Shakespeare editing, the rule, rather than the exception. It can be found in the writing of R. B. McKerrow and Samuel Johnson. The anomaly in this history is Greg's author-centred editorial theory. However, no matter how far removed from the editorial establishment of the text of a play its author may become, no editor is likely to be able to write commentary on a play without the aid of an author function. EDD.

Il saggio di Werstine richiama l'attenzione sui casi di scrittura e pubblicazione di opere teatrali nella Londra del XVII secolo, per le quali è oltremodo difficile applicare la teoria del testo-base autoriale di W. W. Greg, il cui campo d'indagi-

ne privilegiato è proprio il dramma shakespeariano e rinascimentale inglese. I casi esaminati da Werstine portano a ritenere che le scritture drammaturgiche possano essere state il risultato di molteplici collaborazioni a partire dalle prime stesure, e che i drammaturghi operassero in stretto contatto con le compagnie teatrali che li avevano assoldati, piuttosto che lavorare isolatamente. Altri elementi documentano la scarsa attenzione che le compagnie teatrali e gli editori del XVII secolo prestavano nell'identificare con precisione chi fossero gli autori dei testi rappresentati. La probabile composizione a più mani, unitamente alla scarsa importanza attribuita all'epoca all'individuazione degli autori nelle edizioni a stampa, ostacolano oggi la nostra possibilità di collocare gli autori nell'ambito della produzione teatrale del periodo, di cui generalmente si conosce solo ciò che è possibile ricavare dalle coeve edizioni a stampa. È ben possibile, quindi, che gli odierni editori di Shakespeare si allontanino dalla teoria «autorale» di Greg non già per influsso della teoria post-strutturalista della decostruzione dell'autore, quanto in virtù della rivalutazione dei documenti storici sopravvissuti. Nella lunga storia delle edizioni shakespeariane, lo scetticismo diffuso tra gli odierni curatori di opere teatrali riguardo le ultime volontà del drammaturgo costituisce la regola, non l'eccezione, potendosi già riscontrare negli scritti di R. B. McKerrow e Samuel Johnson. È semmai la teoria «autorale» di Greg, in quest'ottica, a costituire un'anomalia. In ogni caso, per quanto si possa esautorare l'autore dalla costituzione editoriale del testo di un'opera teatrale, nessun editor potrà mai scrivere il commento di un'opera senza l'ausilio di una quale che sia «funzione autore».

Steven Mailloux's chapter in *Devils and Angels* begins with this anecdote: "After seeing an ad for the [...] film version of *Phantom of the Opera*, my ten-year-old daughter asked if she could see the movie. I told her no; it's a horror film rated R. She then declared in her most earnest voice, 'But Dad, I love the Phantom of the Author' " (124). Insofar as my essay deals with the topic of copy-text editing, it also inevitably conjures up on the editorial scene the author of authors — Shakespeare. The method of copy-text editing was devised by W. W. Greg in order to resolve the problem — note that it was, for Greg, a singular problem¹ — of editing English Renaissance drama, in particular, Shakespeare.² As an editorial method, copy-text editing centers entirely upon the author. According to Greg's famous and still remarkably familiar presentation of the method in "The Rationale of Copy-Text," the editor is to choose as the basis of an edition the witness to or document of the work that stands in most immediate relation to the author. Having determined which document fills this role, the editor is to preserve its accidentals — usually consisting principally of spelling and punctuation — because these, while not presumably authorial in themselves, especially if the document is a printed

one, are nonetheless of value because they are the nearest thing to the author's spelling and pointing preferences that we can get. But, according to Greg's method, the editor is not mechanically to follow the selected copy-text, but is to choose individual readings from documents that stand at further removes (of transcription or reprinting) from the author than the copy-text — provided that these readings, each judged, in part, on its own merits, can be regarded as authorial in origin — presumably authorial revisions.³ Greg's method thus would, at least theoretically, yield an edition containing as much of what the author finally intended as the surviving documents of the work permit.

Although, as I have said, Greg devised the method of copy-text editing for the purpose of editing Shakespeare and other Renaissance English dramatists, there has never been a copy-text edition of the Shakespeare canon, however that canon is defined. While there are now a good many more editions of Shakespeare in progress — the Oxford, New Cambridge, third Arden, and New Folger, among them — none of their editors is following Greg's method.⁴ If there are any copy-text editions of other English Renaissance dramatists now on the go, I do not know of them, but there have been copy-text editions of Dekker, Marlowe, and the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. I do not want to speculate about why there has been no copy-text edition of Shakespeare even though Greg outlined his method fifty years ago. Instead I want to note the remarkable consensus that is emerging about why there will not now be such an edition — a consensus that includes scholars of widely different stripes, hardly a bunch anyone would expect to find on the same side of any dispute in today's culture wars. Then I want to attempt to disturb this consensus.

When a number of today's Shakespeare textual critics set out to account for why the author's final intentions need not and should not be the object of reasonable inquiry, their narratives predictably feature French poststructuralist interrogations of the author category. In *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (2000), the explicit project of which is to join in the slaying of what he calls the author-monster nurtured by New Bibliographers such as Greg, Douglas A. Brooks locates as his earliest allies Roland Barthes, for the 1968 essay "The Death of the Author," and Michel Foucault, for his now equally famous reply to Barthes the next year in the essay "What is an Author?." Or take "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text" by Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass — the essay that is perhaps the most controversial and most widely and vigorously attacked of poststruc-

turalist forays into Shakespeare textual criticism for its deconstruction of the category not only of “author” but also of “character,” “work,” and “word” (257).⁵ According to de Grazia and Stallybrass, Shakespeareans began to experience a quintessentially poststructural awareness of the indeterminacy of these concepts only with the publication in 1986 of two independent texts of *King Lear* in Oxford’s *The Complete Works*, whose editors believed that the two texts should not be conflated with each other as had been editorial practice since the 1700s. Among those members of the editorial community who are trained in copy-text editing and who have engaged poststructuralism from this author-centered editorial position, there is nonetheless a large measure of agreement that, but for the stir caused by poststructuralism, author-centered methods of editing might still enjoy the currency that was theirs in most national literatures written in English, outside of Shakespeare, a couple of decades ago. Paul Eggert, who has repeatedly contested the views of de Grazia and Stallybrass on the “‘material Shakespeare’” (88), goes a step further in a recent essay entitled “Where Are We Now with Authorship and the Work?”⁶ There Eggert observes that despite the ascendancy that poststructuralism held for a considerable period, and may or may not still hold, nonetheless there is a vast array of evidence in both the lay and academic worlds to show that, at least as a condition of reading, the author category has not, as poststructuralists had predicted, simply withered away. Therefore, he argues, the author is not likely to disappear from the editorial scene in the future, with the result that poststructuralist authorlessness will have to negotiate with author-centered editing and criticism. There is a substantial list of fine scholars on both sides of the debate who agree that it is to the credit or the blame of poststructuralism that author-centered copy-text editing has been in distress.⁷

When contending scholars agree about something, they are not likely to be wrong, but I want to argue that their shared position has its limitations and that their shared perspective is needlessly foreshortened. There are a number of other grounds for calling into question author-centered methods of editing Shakespeare and other Early Modern English dramatists besides the highly generalized and theoretical interrogations of the author category by poststructuralists. It may be objected that I would not be advancing these grounds at this time had not poststructuralism induced a critical climate in which they might be received, and this objection, I am willing to grant, may be valid, but its validity does nothing to compromise the validity of the grounds that I am advancing. Some of these grounds have been available for

scholarly examination for centuries but have only recently come to be appreciated; some have been advanced before and those who advanced them are being ignored in current debates.

To begin to investigate these grounds, I want to go to the south of London, England — but not so far to the south, of course, as the Paris of Barthes and Foucault, only as far south as Dulwich College, where are housed the papers and diary of Philip Henslowe, first edited, in part, by Greg himself. Henslowe has recently become better known than ever before because he is the character who is being tortured in the first scene of the film *Shakespeare in Love*. Among Henslowe's papers we can learn a great deal about how drama was written in Shakespeare's day, and little of what we learn encourages us to conceive of these plays as the productions of single minds or pens working independently — that is, as the productions of what we think of as "authors." Henslowe owned theatres, and he also bankrolled the companies who played in his buildings by advancing them money for their expenses. His records of these expenses include the companies' payments to dramatists for plays and often detail the circumstances under which these payments were made. Of the correspondence from dramatists that Henslowe kept among his papers, Robert Daborne's has proved most revealing. Daborne's letters indicate that it was the custom for dramatists to write under the close direction and supervision of the companies, so much so that when Daborne is reluctant to submit his work in progress on a particular play to a company until the play is finished, he must offer to read his work to Henslowe himself and to Edward Alleyn, Henslowe's brother-in-law:

yu shall see one Tuesday night J have not bin Jdle, J thank god moste of my trubles ar ended [...]. J will now after munday intend yr busines carefully yt the company shall acknowledg themselves bound to yu[.] J doubt not one Tuesday night if yu will appoynt J will meet yu & mr Allin & read some for J am vnwill-ing to read to ye generall company till all be finisht. (*Henslowe Papers* 70)

Page after page of Henslowe's papers noting partial payments for such work in progress provide a reason for companies' participation in playwrights' creative labors.⁸ Playwrights often could not wait to be paid until they had finished a play. Thus the companies, or, more specifically, Henslowe, had to pay for pieces, sometimes, for sheets of a play, to fuel playwrights to finish their work. When such circumstances obtained, companies could not afford to allow playwrights to complete plays only according to their own lights because, by the time a play was complete,

the company would already own it, whether it was then wanted or not, having paid for it bit by bit as it was being written. So, instead of working as independent authors, these playwrights worked in collaboration not only with each other but also with the acting companies, of which they themselves were often members. Thus Greg's method of copy-text editing with its requirements that editors identify the documentary witness to the playtext that stands in closest relation to the author and that the editor also identify whether the author is responsible for readings in other documentary witnesses to the playtext simply does not bite on the process of play writing as this process is documented in the archive, which instead reveals playwrights in collaboration with others from very early stages in the composition of plays.

What further disqualifies copy-text editing as a method to be applied to early modern drama are the publishers' customs then in place for the attribution of plays to playwrights — attributions upon which an author-centered method would now be forced, at least to some extent, to rely. Consider some of the circumstances surrounding the publication of the *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and Iohn Fletcher Gentlemen. Never printed before, and now published by the Authors Originall Copies*, the so-called Beaumont and Fletcher First Folio, in 1647 — circumstances that in many ways are analogous to those surrounding the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio.⁹ According to "To my Cousin, Mr. Charles Cotton," a poem written by Aston Cokain published in 1658, one of the people active in securing play manuscripts for Humphrey Moseley, publisher of the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher First Folio, was Cokain's cousin Charles Cotton. Cokain expresses some impatience with Cotton because, according to Cokain, Cotton knew full well that almost none of the plays included in the 1647 Folio had been written by Beaumont and that Fletcher's collaborator for a number of them was Cokain's good friend Philip Massinger:

I wonder (Cousin) that you would permit
 So great an Injury to *Fletcher's* wit,
 Your friend and old Companion, that his fame
 Should be divided to anothers name.
 If *Beaumont* had writ those Plays, it had been
 Against his merits a detracting Sin,
 Had they been attributed also to
Fletcher. They were two wits, and friends, and who
 Robs from the one to glorifie the other,
 Of these great memories is a partial Lover.

Had *Beaumont* liv'd when this Edition came
 Forth, and beheld his ever living name
 Before Plays that he never writ, how he
 Had frown'd and blush'd at such Impiety?
 His own Renown no such Addition needs
 To have a Fame sprung from anothers deedes.
 And my good friend Old *Philip Massinger*
 With *Fletcher* writ in some that we see there.
 But you may blame the Printers; yet you might
 Perhaps have won them to do *Fletcher* right,
 Would you have took the pains: For what a foul
 And unexcusable fault it is (that whole
 Volume of plays being almost every one
 After the death of *Beaumont* writ) that none
 Would certifie them so much? I wish as free
 Y'had told the Printers this, as you did me.
 Surely you was to blame. (91–92)¹⁰

As Cokain writes, Cotton could have taken “pains” to prevent what Cokain called the “foul And unexcusable fault” of the volume’s misattribution of authorship of its plays to Beaumont and Fletcher, rather than to Fletcher and Massinger. Yet because Cokain did not share our modern standards of precision in the attribution of plays to authors, he did not then go on to identify for us the plays on which Massinger collaborated or the parts of these plays that Massinger wrote, nor did he point out by name the few plays to which Beaumont contributed. The modern scholars, led by Fredson Bowers, who wished to produce copy-text, author-centered editions of the plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher First Folio were obliged to depend upon Cyrus Hoy’s close analysis of verbal patterns in them for the identification of the plays’ various authors and those authors’ contributions to plays’ texts.¹¹ But now John Burrows and Harold Love have rejected one of Hoy’s key attribution tests as “wholly uncritical” (153); it would seem then that modern-day author-centered editors of the still-misnamed Beaumont and Fletcher canon have not been as successful as they once believed in transcending Cotton’s indifference to their concern with authorship and that the success of their decades-long work editing the so-called Beaumont and Fletcher canon is now being called into question.

There are implications here for Shakespeareans, although Shakespeareans as a group have been notoriously reluctant to face them. Shakespeareans have often taken the actors John Heminges and Henry

Condell's association with the publishers of the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623 as a guarantee for the authenticity of the volume's attribution of its plays to the Bard.¹² The names of these colleagues of Shakespeare in the acting company first called the Lord Chamberlain's Men and then the King's Men are subscribed to the Folio's "Epistle Dedicatorie" and to its preface "To the great Variety of Readers," in which these actors are represented as having "collected" the plays in the volume (sig. A2^v, A3^r). On the basis of this evidence alone, Heminges and Condell used to be regarded as the Folio's editors, but the extent of their involvement in the book's publication is now recognized as indeterminable; even their authorship of the prefatory matter that appears over their names is open to question. Humphrey Moseley and Humphrey Robinson, the publishers of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio that contains such glaring misattribution, were just as closely associated with actors from the King's Men (for whom a great many of that volume's plays were also written) as were the publishers of the Shakespeare First Folio. The names of no fewer than ten of the King's Men were subscribed to the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio's "Epistle Dedicatorie," in which these actors are represented as having "preserved as *Trustees* to the *Ashes* of the Authors, what wee exhibit" in the volume (sig. A2^r). At the head of this list of actors' names appear "John Lowin" and "Joseph Taylor" (sig. A2^v). Lowin had been a member of the King's Men since 1603, before any of the plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio had been written, and he, together with Taylor, succeeded Heminges as managers of the company. In 1647 these two men were in every bit as good a position to know the authorship of the company's plays as Heminges and Condell had been in 1623. But Lowin, Taylor, and their eight fellow actors were no help to Moseley in identifying the authors of plays that he misattributed to "Beaumont and Fletcher." We are then left to wonder how much use Shakespeare's former colleagues Heminges and Condell may really have been to the publishers of the Shakespeare First Folio in correctly identifying authorship of the plays included in that book.

Even if we could maintain an air of confidence that everything in the Shakespeare First Folio was Shakespeare's, this Folio does not contain all the plays that Shakespeare is now thought to have written or at least contributed to as a collaborator — insofar as there is agreement on these issues among Shakespeareans. It is not just that the Folio omits plays like *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, not to mention *Edward III*; rather the output of a dramatist associated with the same acting company for twenty or so years of this period, as Shakespeare was, is likely far to ex-

ceed the thirty-some plays now in the Shakespeare canon. Thomas Heywood, who like Shakespeare served the same company for a couple of decades, tells us that he had, in his words, “either an entire hand, or at the least a maine finger” in some 220 plays (Bentley 4: 555).¹³ An author-centered editor of Shakespeare may then well be in the position of someone putting together a jigsaw puzzle, namely the author, when more than three quarters of the pieces are missing and when some of the pieces available just possibly may belong to other puzzles.¹⁴

The fact that the archival materials I have just adduced were available for scholarly inspection for much of the twentieth century but were only at its end being employed to question the use of the author function in editing Shakespeare may be testimony to the enduring strength of the author function throughout the century as well as to the success of poststructuralists in deconstructing the author into the author function in the later part of the century. But there are reasons for doubt on both counts. In believing that poststructuralism in Shakespeare textual studies marks a decisive break with a long tradition, advocates of poststructuralism may have been too credulous in accepting narratives of the history of twentieth-century editing told by their opponents, the advocates of copy-text, author-centered editing. According to the view expressed this decade by the greatest living advocate of copy-text editing, G. Thomas Tanselle, this editorial theory was long in the making, and its gradual development, “growing [as it did] out of [R. B.] McKerrow’s” earlier principles, was the work of more than the single man, Greg, who finally gave it full articulation (*Textual Criticism* 303). To quote Tanselle, “Greg’s position derived [. . .] from the attitudes that were evolving among the leading textual scholars of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama” (“Varieties” 22). Tanselle’s account of the genesis of copy-text editing is grounded in Greg’s own representation of his thinking, which Greg rhetorically casts, both in the 1942 book *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* and later in the 1949 essay “The Rationale of Copy-Text,” as simply a modification of positions taken by McKerrow in the 1939 *Prolegomena to the Oxford Shakespeare*. If Tanselle and Greg are right to present copy-text editing as growing out of an enduring consensus among leading scholars, then poststructuralists’ break with copy-text editing is an event of great moment.

Yet Tanselle’s representation of a chronological and logical continuum from McKerrow to Greg obscures the fact that Greg and McKerrow were engaged in debate and that McKerrow, who died before he could respond to Greg’s *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, was concerned to differentiate his own thinking, sometimes rather sharply, from Greg’s on a num-

ber of issues crucial to copy-text editing. Tanselle's attempt to backdate a consensus on issues essential to the theory of copy-text editing (especially for Shakespeare) cannot be sustained. Instead, the attitudes that were evolving among the leading textual scholars of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama were every bit as diverse in the early part of the twentieth century as they are now. There may well be more in common between McKerrow's position in his *Prolegomena* and that of Shakespeare editors who today dissent from Greg's theory than there ever was between McKerrow's *Prolegomena* and Greg's "Rationale of Copy-Text," which therefore cannot be said to have grown out of McKerrow's principles. McKerrow refused to accept Greg's belief, crucial to copy-text editing, that the editor can establish the relation of the extant documentary witnesses to a putatively authorial manuscript. To quote McKerrow:

Shakespeare as an active member of a theatrical company would, at any rate in his younger days, have been concerned with producing, not plays for the study, but material for his company to perform on the stage, and there can be little doubt that his lines would be subject to modification in the light of actual performance, as well as to later revision when, for example, a change in the constitution of the company necessitated a redistribution of the roles, or a desire was felt to introduce some topical allusion or to parody or improve upon some rival show. Such alterations may have been made by the author himself or, if he was not available, they may have been made by others. He may, or may not, have regarded them as improvements: he probably merely accepted them as necessary changes, and it is quite likely that he never bothered about whether they introduced inconsistencies into what was originally conceived as a consistent whole. We must not expect to find a definitive text in the sense in which the published version of the plays of a modern dramatist is definitive.

And even in those plays which do seem to us to be finished wholes, written at one time with a single impulse of the creative spirit, and which show no signs of tampering or revision whether by the original author or by another, we cannot be certain of any close approach to the author's manuscript. (*Prolegomena* 6–7)

McKerrow's words indicate how keenly he understood from the non-Shakespearean dramatic manuscripts he had studied that Shakespeare's fellow actors would probably not have left unannotated and unaltered the playwright's manuscripts in their possession, even though McKerrow failed to anticipate today's scholars who register the possibility that the writing of plays may have been collaborative from the outset.

Viewed in the longer perspective of twentieth-century editing of early modern drama, the period during which there was a consensus

around copy-text, author-centered editing is distinctly anomalous; post-structuralist critique of this editorial method does not then so much open up editorial practice to new opportunities as it returns editorial practice to long familiar ground. Indeed the more elongated our perspective, the more anomalous becomes the comparatively brief hegemony of copy-text editing. For most of the history of Shakespeare editing, editors more or less subscribed to the famous description of the transmission of Shakespeare's texts offered by Samuel Johnson in his 1756 "Proposals for Printing [. . .] the Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare":

[Shakespeare] sold [his "works"], not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the authour, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre: and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press in that age will readily conceive.

It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate a text. No other authour ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care: no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously reunited; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands. (*Johnson on Shakespeare* 7:52)

Not even Foucault himself could accuse Johnson as an editor of receiving Shakespeare's works according to an author function. But when Johnson offered readings of Shakespeare's plays, whether as putative wholes or at the level of the passage, he certainly, like any other editor reading Shakespeare, employed the author function. Johnson is justly famous for his ability to assign clear and elegantly phrased meaning to the most obscure Shakespeare passages. Perhaps we might entertain an at least provisional distinction between editorial practice, in which the author remains an elusive phantom in spite of Greg's attempt to conjure up Shakespeare through the method of copy-text editing, and

reading practice (by editors and others), in which, as Eggert has noted, the author function continues to flourish despite poststructuralist critique.¹⁵

Notes

I am most grateful to Barbara A. Mowat and to Paul Eggert for kindly reading drafts of this paper and for making valuable suggestions.

¹ Greg's first sustained discussion of the issues that he later resolved in "The Rationale of Copy-Text" appeared in his book *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (emphasis mine) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1942).

² "The Rationale of Copy-Text," Greg's final articulation of the theory of copy-text editing, contains examples from only four writers — Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe, and William Shakespeare.

³ [C]hoose whatever extant text may be supposed to represent most nearly what the author wrote. [...] [A]lthough it will [...] be necessary [...] to follow it in accidentals, this copy-text can be allowed no over-riding or even preponderant authority so far as substantive readings are concerned. The choice between these, in cases of variation, will be determined partly by the opinion the editor may form respecting the nature of the copy from which each substantive edition was printed, which is a matter of external authority; partly by the intrinsic authority of the several texts as judged by the relative frequency of manifest errors therein; and partly by the editor's judgement of the intrinsic claims of individual readings to originality — in other words their intrinsic merit, so long as by 'merit' we mean the likelihood of their being what the author wrote rather than their appeal to the individual taste of the editor. ("Rationale" 21, 29).

⁴ David J. Nordloh has privately offered a useful distinction between two different kinds of Shakespeare editors at work today. In the first group would fall those editors who construe the texts' relations to each other according to Greg's method, but who then depart from Greg either by modernizing their texts or by choosing other texts than Greg's method would dictate as the basis for editions. To this group would belong, in my view, most, but not all, of the editors of the New Cambridge and Oxford editions. In a second group would fall those editors who refuse to follow Greg's method even in construing the texts' relations to each other, and then, of course, also depart from Greg in the choice of texts to be the basis of their editions and in the presentation of the texts. The New Folger editors belong to this group, as do a number (but not all) of the third Arden editors.

⁵ Among those who have attacked the essay are Michael D. Bristol, "How Good Does Evidence Have to Be?" *Textual and Theatrical Shakespeare: Questions of Evidence* (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1996) 22–43; Stanley Cavell, "Skepticism as Iconoclasm: The Saturation of the Shakespearean Text," *Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Los Angeles, 1996*, ed. Jonathan Bate, Jill L. Levenson, and Dieter Mehl (London: Associated University Presses, 1998) 231–47; and G. Holderness, B. Loughrey, and A. Murphy, "'What's the Matter?' Shakespeare and Textual Theory," *Textual Practice* 9 (1995): 93–119.

⁶ Eggert previously attacked Margreta de Grazia's "The Essential Shakespeare and the Material Book," *Textual Practice* 2 (1988): 69–86 in "Textual Product or Textual Process:

Procedures and Assumptions of Critical Editing,” *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1991) 57–77, and the de Grazia and Stallybrass essay in “Reconfiguring the Work: Or, the Way of All Text: The Materialist Shakespeare,” *Voice, Text, Hypertext: Emerging Practices in Textual Studies*, ed. Raimonda Modiano, Leroy Searle and Peter Shillingsburg (Seattle: U of Washington P, 2004) 155–68.

⁷ See, among others, “Editing the Text: The Deuteronomic Reconstruction of Authority,” *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare*, by Michael D. Bristol (London: Routledge, 1990) 91–119; David Greetham, “The Manifestation and Accommodation of Theory in Textual Editing,” *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1991) 78–102; Michael Groden, “Contemporary Textual and Literary Theory,” *Representing Modernist Texts: Editing as Interpretation*, ed. George Bornstein (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991) 259–86; W. Speed Hill, “Where We Are and How We Got Here: Editing after Poststructuralism,” *Shakespeare Studies* 24 (1996): 38–46; T. H. Howard-Hill, “Theory and Praxis in the Social Approach to Editing,” *TEXT* 5 (1991): 31–46; Maurice Hunt, “New Variorum Shakespeares in the Twenty-First Century,” *Yearbook of English Studies* 29 (1999): 57–68; Jerome McGann, “Presidential Address, The Society for Textual Scholarship, April 11, 1997: Hideous Progeny, Rough Beasts: Editing as a Theoretical Pursuit,” *TEXT* 11 (1998): 1–16; Gary Taylor, “The Renaissance and the End of Editing,” *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities*, ed. George Bornstein and Ralph G. Williams (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993) 121–49; and Susan Zimmerman, “Introduction [to a] Forum: Editing Early Modern Texts,” *Shakespeare Studies* 24 (1996): 21–22.

⁸ For a tabular analysis of Henslowe’s payments, partial and full, to and for playwrights, see Neil Carson, *A Companion to Henslowe’s Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 101–16.

⁹ Margreta de Grazia drew an analogy between the Shakespeare First Folio and that of Beaumont and Fletcher in her *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 46–47, but she did not discuss, as I do, the Cokain poem or, as I am about to do, the analogous roles played by actors in the production of both volumes.

¹⁰ Cokain’s poem is well known to “Beaumont and Fletcher” editors, who have never disputed its major assertions: the marginal role of Beaumont in making the First Folio plays, and the major role of Massinger.

¹¹ See Francis Beaumont, and John Fletcher, *The dramatic works in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon*, 10 vols., gen. ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966–1996) and Cyrus Hoy, “The Shares of Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (I),” *Studies in Bibliography* 8 (1956): 129–46; II 9 (1957): 143–62; III 11 (1958): 85–106; IV 12 (1959): 91–116; V 13 (1960): 77–108; VI 14 (1961): 45–68; VII 15 (1962): 71–90.

¹² One of the more enthusiastic endorsements of Heminges and Condell as guarantors of the Shakespearean authenticity of the Folio plays is that of Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor; they attempt to construct an association of Heminges and Condell with Shakespeare that stretches across Shakespeare’s whole career as a playwright, and they assume that Shakespeare’s associates were as careful and concerned about precision and correctness of attribution as many modern editors (See *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, et al. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1987] 69–70). Wells and Taylor are aware of Cokain’s poem (quoted above) and take the absence of any such extant protest

concerning the 1623 Shakespeare Folio to be evidence of the correctness of the attribution to Shakespeare of all the Folio plays. There is a counter-argument to their position. If misattribution can be assumed to have provoked objection that is still extant today, then when Thomas Pavier brought out a series of "Shakespeare" quartos in 1619 that included *A Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Sir John Oldcastle Lord Cobham*, both now regarded as spurious, there must have been a protest, some evidence of which must have come down to us. There is no such evidence. Wells and Taylor do not show any awareness of the involvement of actors from the King's Men in the publication of the Beaumont and Fletcher volume that aroused Cokain's objection. For awareness of possible limitations to the knowledge of Heminges and Condell, see W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) 76.

¹³ Heywood was a member of the company successively called the Earl of Worcester's Men and Queen Anne's Men from the turn of the seventeenth century until at least 1619. Heywood also returned to dramatic writing in the 1620s and in 1633 made the boast that I have quoted.

¹⁴ This discussion about the difference between modern scholarly standards for attribution of authorship and seventeenth-century publishing practices that impede scholars from meeting such standards in identifying authorship of that century's dramatic output should not be confused with two other more traditional concerns about Shakespearean authorship with which this discussion has nothing in common: Oxfordianism and disintegrationism. The first of these, represented fully in Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* (1984), is a project to reassign authorship of Shakespeare to some titled lord. The second is an effort to discover Shakespeare plays or passages in or parts of Shakespeare plays that show evidence of the styles of other dramatists of name (Thomas Nashe, George Peele, etc.) and to disintegrate the authorship of the Shakespeare plays by assigning different plays or parts of them to different writers. As Hugh Grady indicates in *The Modernist Shakespeare: Critical Texts in a Material World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 47–51, this is largely a nineteenth-century practice. Some scholars, however, still attempt it today, as does Gary Taylor in "Shakespeare and Others: The Authorship of *Henry the Sixth, Part One*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 7 (1995): 145–205.

¹⁵ On the persistence of the author function in editorial commentary on texts, see Ian Small, "The editor as annotator as ideal reader," *The Theory and Practice of Text-editing*, ed. Ian Small and Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 186–209.

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TANSELLE'S "EDITING WITHOUT A COPY-TEXT": GENESIS, ISSUES, PROSPECTS

RICHARD BUCCI

The following pages present two-thirds of an article by Richard Bucci of the Mark Twain Project, exploring the tension between method and judgment in editing as revealed in the history of the Anglo-American editorial concept of copy-text. The general idea of following, except where it is obviously wrong, a particular early text when creating a new edition has a long prehistory in English letters. By the late nineteenth century however, a venturesome eclecticism characterized some Shakespeare editing. Inspired by the legacy of Latinist A. E. Housman, a new group of scholars, including R. B. McKerrow and W. W. Greg, introduced more rigorous approaches to the problems of English literature. The traditional concept of copy-text was named and defined by McKerrow, simply, as the single early text on which an editor bases a critical edition. Greg came to regard this definition as too narrow, arguing that in certain situations only the punctuation and spelling of the early text should automatically prevail in cases of doubt, but variant wording in authoritative texts must always be reasonably decided.

Fredson Bowers introduced these considerations to the editing of American literature, but there encountered some multi-partite stemmas to which even Greg's subtle definition of copy-text could not be applied. G. Thomas Tanselle helped Bowers understand the dimensions of this encounter and eventually theorized, in «Editing without a Copy-Text», a judgment-based framework within which the insights that had motivated the copy-text discussion could be comprehended without resort to a judgment-sapping «best-text» mechanism.

Omitted sections discuss Housman and the unity of judgment and method, and criticize perceived missteps by scholars favoring a «socialized text» over an author-focused approach. An anthology of Tanselle essays, including «Fare a meno del "testo base"», has been lovingly translated for Italian readers by Luigi Crocetti (*Letteratura e manufatti*, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2004). EDD.

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Le seguenti pagine presentano la sezione più consistente di un articolo di Richard Bucci, uno dei partecipanti al «Progetto Mark Twain», in cui l'autore analizza il rapporto dialettico tra metodo editoriale e giudizio individuale, quale emerge nella storia del concetto di «testo base» diffusi in ambito anglo-americano. Per l'allestimento di un'edizione critica, la preferenza nel seguire – tranne casi in cui sia palesemente scorretto – il testo originario ha una lunga tradizione nell'ambito della letteratura inglese. Dal tardo XIX secolo, tuttavia, le edizioni dei testi shakespeariani sono state caratterizzate da un avventuroso eclettismo, tanto che un gruppo di studiosi americani – tra cui R. B. McKerrow e W. W. Greg –, ispirati dal magistero del latinista A. E. Housman, aveva cercato di introdurre un approccio più rigoroso ai problemi editoriali della letteratura inglese. Il concetto tradizionale di «testo base» fu creato da McKerrow, che introdusse la definizione di «singolo testo originario sulla base del quale un editore basa l'edizione critica di un testo». Greg considerò tale definizione come troppo angusta, sostenendo che il testo base dovesse essere adottato automaticamente soltanto per quanto riguardava la punteggiatura e le forme grafiche dei testi originari, mentre le varianti, in caso di testi particolarmente autorevoli, dovevano essere ragionevolmente discusse.

Fredson Bowers estese tali pratiche editoriali alla letteratura americana, ma si imbatté in stemmi pluripartiti, cui neppure la peraltro sottile definizione di Greg di «testo base» poteva essere applicata. Fu G. Thomas Tanselle ad aiutare Bowers a comprendere l'entità di questa scoperta, teorizzando finalmente – nello studio «Editing without a Copy-Text» – una pratica editoriale basata sul *iudicium* individuale, entro la quale le ragioni che avevano alimentato la discussione sul «testo base» potevano essere assorbite senza ricorrere alla procedura meccanica del *codex optimus*, che indebolisce il ruolo del *iudicium*.

Le sezioni non antologizzate del saggio prendono in esame Housman e l'unità di metodo e *iudicium* e criticano certi evidenti passi falsi da parte di quegli studiosi che sostengono la superiorità di un testo vulgato rispetto a un testo che metta in primo piano la volontà dell'autore. Un'antologia dei saggi di Tanselle, tra i quali compare «Fare a meno del "testo base"», è stata ottimamente tradotta, per i lettori italiani, da Luigi Crocetti (*Letteratura e manufatti*, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2004).

At the opening panel of the 2001 Conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship, some interesting remarks about copy-text were delivered by John Unsworth, a member of the Modern Language Association's Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE). Unsworth said that he had originally planned to tell his audience that "the Greg-Bowers theory of editing" or "copy-text theory" had once enjoyed "hegemony within the CSE," but no longer did, owing to challenges from outside the Greg-Bowers school, where the focus was on other "periods, languages, and editorial circum-

stances.” Unsworth submitted this thesis to Robert H. Hirst, the chair of the CSE at the time, for his thoughts, and reported receiving the following reply:

You seem to imply that all this change is coming from outside the hunkered down group of copy-text editors! . . . it has been chiefly copy-text editors over the decades who have insisted on refining and changing the application of copy-text theory. After all, Tom Tanselle is the only editor I know who’s actually published an essay advocating “Editing without a Copy-Text.” And long before that, Bowers published his essay on “Radiating Texts,” that is, texts for which the very idea of a copy-text was inapplicable. So from my point of view, the hegemony of copy-text theory (both inside and outside the CSE) is mainly in the eye of the beholder, as opposed to the everyday practitioner. Practitioners have always sought to broaden or change everything from the “final intention” goal to (in Tanselle’s case) the very idea that any one text should be automatically preferred in cases of doubt.¹

Unsworth was kind to pass on this private communication, since it contains many points worthy of deeper consideration. Hirst’s phrase “hunkered down group of copy-text editors” appropriately summons the false image some critics have projected of adherents of the editorial approach inspired by W. W. Greg’s 1949 essay, “The Rationale of Copy-Text,” and developed by Fredson Bowers—the better to dismiss them as relics of a by-gone age. This criticism ignores the rich practical experience of “copy-text editing” and the satisfying—one could even say exciting—theoretical developments it has engendered over the years. Hirst also names two outstanding moments in this experience when he mentions Bowers’s encounter with what he called “radiating texts,” and, most importantly, G. Thomas Tanselle’s essay “Editing without a Copy-Text,” which appeared in the pages of this journal in 1994.² This essay, which is indeed one of the most important writings on editing to appear in recent times, is concise and not intended to be exhaustive of its subject in and of itself. It stands, however, upon a great body of knowledge, having arrived on the morrow of a long period during which many literary scholars were deeply engaged both practically and theoretically with the Greg-Bowers-inspired idea of copy-text. Tanselle has been the most insightful and far-seeing participant in this collective engagement, and so his recommendation to “move beyond” Greg’s “often useful but nevertheless inherently restrictive concept” (p. 2), so that editorial problems may be understood more immediately and with less technical prejudice, should arouse intense interest.

I

Tanselle's essay focuses our attention on the point where Greg explicitly limits the role of editorial judgment, and then demonstrates that this seemingly modest restriction has had unexpected adverse consequences. We are reminded that Greg's "strong endorsement of editorial freedom" extends only to the text's substantives (Greg's term for the wording); the copy-text "accidentals" (his term for the spelling, punctuation, word division, and emphasis) are accepted almost automatically (p. 8). While Greg also insisted that the editor be free to emend either the substantives or the accidentals whenever there was cause to do so, his assumption that a copy-text was needed at all was, in Tanselle's words, "founded on a belief that there was usually insufficient evidence for reasoning about accidentals" (p. 9). The copy-text, according to Greg, is to supply the accidentals when variant accidentals from other authoritative texts are not clearly superior—that is, obviously authorial or having more recent authority. Tanselle argues that if the copy-text is used as the "fall-back" text to decide among variant accidentals, and if copy-text accidentals and substantives are to be altered by the editor whenever there is cause to do so, then it stands to reason that the copy-text will tend to be treated as the fall-back text for the substantives as well. This amounts to the "tyranny of the copy-text" which Greg sought to avoid (p. 9)—that is, the copy-text as monolith, unyielding of any word or mark of punctuation that has not been decisively disestablished by the editor.

Greg's rationale presumes an ancestrally linear series of texts, from author's manuscript to printed editions. Other kinds of textual traditions exist, and in the late 1960s Fredson Bowers encountered the most common of these in some of the stories of Stephen Crane. The stories were printed more than once, but each time from different, now-lost documents of equal authority. Some appeared in one American and one British periodical, with one printing based on a ribbon and the other on a carbon copy of a typescript made from Crane's manuscript. Other stories were syndicated in American newspapers: the syndicate received a manuscript or a typescript of the MS from Crane, made a proofsheets of it, and sent copies to subscribing newspapers, which used them as printer's copy. The prepublication documents are all lost, so the extant tradition for each story consists of multiple newspaper or periodical printings. Each printing was independently derived of the author's manuscript and therefore all have equal authority. An interesting variation occurred when, surmised Bowers, second typescripts (also now lost) were made of

the manuscripts of some of the stories that had appeared in periodicals, in order to furnish printer's copy for book collections. For these stories, all printings have equal authority, but the periodical printings descend from one typescript, and the book versions from the other.³

Bowers gave the term "radiating texts" to the tradition he encountered because the multiple printings of each story "radiate" independently from their lost manuscript. Though Bowers recognized that each printing was therefore of equal authority, he still attempted, apparently, to base each critical text on a copy-text as defined by Greg—"apparently," because, as Tanselle pointed out, he chose his copy-texts "not for their authority but for the extent of their agreement with what he had already decided the text should contain."⁴ That is, after comparing the texts of each printing, Bowers chose as copy-text the printing that departed least from what he believed were the readings of the lost source. He usually settled on the printing that was most often with the majority wherever there was a variant. Bowers's apparatus reported all substantive variants but only those accidental variants which had required him to emend his "copy-text." Generally, according to Greg's rationale, accidental variants in later editions in a linear series are assumed to be more corrupt than those of an early copy-text, so excluding them from an apparatus could possibly be justified. Radiating texts, however, are not ancestrally linear, and the excluded accidental variants came from documents of no less authority than those Bowers had chosen as copy-texts.

Bowers discussed radiating texts in a group of essays, the first of which, called "Multiple Authority: New Problems and Concepts of Copy-Text," was published in 1972. As the title indicates, Bowers maintained that editing a group of radiating texts involves choosing a copy-text, even if the choice is a "theoretically indifferent" one, made only for the sake of "convenience," after the editor "has reconstructed the lost, common printer's copy. . . ."⁵ Since Bowers chose his copy-text after he had established his critical text, the copy-text was completely outside his purposes, and imposed out of mere habit. His insights about radiating texts recalled the way editors of ancient and medieval works reconstruct a lost source when multiple manuscripts descending from it survive—as Tanselle suggested in "Classical, Biblical, and Medieval Textual Criticism and Modern Editing," an essay from 1983 containing many forward-looking discussions on the relationship between judgment and method in editing in all literary periods.⁶ Bowers, it may be added, even hit upon a simple guideline loosely applied in the editing of ancient texts, known in that field by its Latin name, "*difficilior lectio potior*" (the difficult reading is preferable).

Bowers did not explicitly cite this guideline, but he caught its gist when he observed that a less common variant might be the authorial reading, since "a majority of compositors faced with an unconventional accidental may sometimes opt for normality, leaving the true authorial reading preserved only by the dogged or indifferent few."⁷

Had Bowers pursued the relationship between modern radiating texts and situations faced by editors of older texts, instead of attempting to impose Greg's rationale on his problem, he might have felt comfortable enough to allow his practical insights to shape his theoretical overview. It was Tanselle who recognized the true implications of Bowers's insights, which he revealed in his 1974 article, "Editorial Apparatus for Radiating Texts." Here he recommended editing without a copy-text, explaining that the critical text might be constructed of all the independently derived printings, and supported by an apparatus recording all variants, substantive and accidental.⁸ In 1979, Robert H. Hirst became the first editor to follow Tanselle's recommendations, in his treatment of radiating texts in *Early Tales & Sketches*, an edition of some of Mark Twain's early writings. Both volumes in this edition contain critical texts reconstructed from contemporary, independently derived reprints of passages that first appeared in letters in now-lost issues of the Virginia City (Nevada) *Territorial Enterprise*. In his commentary in the first volume, Hirst cited Tanselle's 1974 essay, and stressed that for the radiating texts, "no copy-text is designated because none of the authoritative texts is genetically closer to the original than the other."⁹ Following his own inclinations as much as Tanselle's recommendations, Hirst also reported in the editorial apparatuses of the radiating texts all substantive and accidental variants from all his sources.

When in 1990 Tanselle reprinted "Editorial Apparatus for Radiating Texts," he remarked provocatively that "the idea of editing without a copy-text, set forth briefly here in relation to one particular kind of situation, has further applications that ought to be explored."¹⁰ That Tanselle himself undertook the exploration was to be expected. In "Editing without a Copy-Text" he reminds readers of Greg's warning concerning the "tyranny of the copy-text," in which Greg maintained that the failure to understand that accidentals are more often subject to casual alteration, and substantives to purposeful—and therefore, more potentially authorial—change

has naturally led to too close and too general a reliance upon the text chosen as basis for an edition, and there has arisen what may be called the tyranny of the copy-text, a tyranny that has, in my opinion, vitiated much of the best editorial work of the past generation.¹¹

Tanselle points out in his essay that like Bowers in his encounter with radiating texts, Greg too was “somewhat tyrannized by the *idea* of copy-text,” since he also recommended choosing a copy-text in a situation where two or more texts are of equal authority—that is, when there would be no justification for presuming the accidentals in one document to be more authoritative than those in the other (p. 10). What clearly concerns Tanselle most, however, is that in situations where a copy-text is warranted according to Greg’s rationale, it tends to interfere with good judgment, by extending its influence, despite Greg’s wishes, over the wording of a text as well as the accidentals. The “role of the copy-text,” Tanselle remarked, “turns out to be that of supplying readings (of both substantives and accidentals) whenever there seems no other basis for deciding” (p. 9).

[...]^{*}

“Editing without a Copy-Text” appeared at a time when the ideas of [D. F.] McKenzie and [Jerome] McGann had already become popular, if not yet with many practicing editors, then with many who write about editing. In these writings, the emphasis on the social nature of texts is often accompanied by a rejection of the author-centered editorial past and Tanselle’s role in shaping that past. The time at which “Editing without a Copy-Text” appeared, then, was not the most opportune for a widespread positive reception. Inevitable is the comparison with the essay it is meant to replace, “The Rationale of Copy-Text,” which Bowers used to signal the dawn of a new age in American literary scholarship. Every age has its moods, and presently most editors in this field have the sense of a setting rather than a rising sun. But if an “age” of editions of American authors has entered into a decline, valuable knowledge and experience of the editorial problems of modern literature has accrued. Greg’s essay presented the wisdom of a half-century of thinking about English Renaissance texts, which Bowers energetically applied to his astonishing array of editions, including works from each of five centuries. “Editing without a Copy-Text” comprehends both the wisdom of Greg’s considerations and another forty-five years of editorial practice and thought. While Greg was tentative about the reach of his recommendations, Tanselle—relying on further history and experience—can confidently advance an “overarching framework” (p. 21) for ap-

^{*} In section 11, Bucci explores the editorial binaries of method and judgment as aspects of the history of editing, as oppositional forces, and as potentially complementary frames of mind in a unitary editorial approach. EDD.

proaching all editorial goals, in all literary periods. He helpfully calls what takes place within this framework "constructive critical editing," emphasizing that editing is a form of "historical reconstruction," wherein each word, each mark of punctuation, is critically determined by the editor, according to his or her knowledge of the author and the author's associates, the physical evidence, and the purpose of the editorial project (p. 22). Constructive critical editing is therefore not an editorial method, but rather a highly informed state of mind, which, according to the design of each project, draws to its attention all the relevant evidence and applicable supporting methodologies. Greg's rationale, Tanselle points out, may be one of those methodologies, but used to its original, restricted purpose—as an aid, that is, to judge the authority of the accidentals, and not as a base text for relieving the editor of the responsibility for making editorial decisions.

III

Genuinely important discoveries of ways to evaluate physical evidence systematically generate enthusiasms which can sometimes temporarily obscure the abiding importance of judgment in editing. So it was with the discoveries of the "New Bibliography," and so it was with stemmatics. The discoveries of Lachmann and his predecessors certainly put an end to some bad editorial practices, such as the one which favored majority readings blindly, without considering whether the majority was constituted of derivative repetitions of the same error. So much basic confusion and so many worthless manuscripts did stemmatics clear away that some less restrained practitioners applied it in pseudo-scientific fashion, thus achieving insupportable results. On the one hand, it was claimed that the method produced correct readings whenever it did not produce impossible ones; on the other, *eliminatio*—that part of *recensio* in which codices wholly derivative of others surviving are eliminated from editorial consideration—was practiced falsely and with a vengeance, so that all that remained afterwards was a sole source. By these errors, described by E. J. Kenney as the "brutal simplification of the textual evidence," errant Lachmannians came close to anticipating by several decades that agnostic rejection of Lachmannism known as the "best text" approach.¹² Housman, who ranked Lachmann as high as Scaligero and Bentley in his editorial pantheon, did not think so much of Lachmann's mistaken followers, whether they mindlessly believed that stemmatics could extract correct readings from any number of manuscripts automatically, or pretended that it was a just means of elim-

inating troublesome evidence. Of the motives of those who labored under either misconception, Housman reported, "They must have a rule, a machine to do their thinking for them. If the rule is true, so much the better; if false, that cannot be helped: but one thing is necessary, a rule."¹³

The term "best text" is usually associated with the anti-Lachmannian approach to medieval literature introduced by Joseph Bédier some years after Housman made these remarks. It nonetheless accurately describes a commonly recurring approach to editing literature of any period. Housman was certainly familiar with earlier generations of it, for in the same preface quoted above he criticized the "precious precept of following one MS. wherever possible."¹⁴ Housman's bold advocacy of critical judgment would have an important if not immediate effect on the editing of literature from the printed age. The founders of the New Bibliography were at first not averse to the best-text approach. Ronald B. McKerrow did not believe that the documentary evidence could sufficiently support much critical emendation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literary texts. A response to the presence of unreasoned eclecticism in the Shakespearean editorial heritage, as well as to some contemporary scholarship which he regarded as overly speculative, McKerrow's skepticism, while understandable, led him generally to discount the role of judgment in editing. Hence, as Greg made known, McKerrow, in his edition of Thomas Nashe (1567–1601), held that an editor of a work existing in more than one edition, each deriving from the one preceding, had no choice but to base himself on the latest edition known to contain the author's modifications. This text McKerrow called the "copy-text," and he recommended retaining it more or less whole, even though he knew well that, but for those late modifications, it was probably less reliable than the earlier text.

McKerrow's edition of Nashe appeared in the first years of the 1900s. In later years McKerrow reversed the direction of his practical recommendations, though even then, when he seems to have turned his own theory of copy-text upside-down, he persisted in an agnostic outlook:

It might, indeed, be better if in the domain of literary research the words 'proof' and 'prove' were banished altogether from statements of results obtained, for they can seldom be appropriate. . . . Nothing can be gained, and much may be lost, by a pretence of deriving results of scientific accuracy from data which are admittedly uncertain and incomplete.¹⁵

McKerrow may have held agnostic views generally, but here and elsewhere in his *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare* (1939) he seemed il-

logically to suggest that knowledge of the literary past is especially unobtainable. Paul Werstine lately argued that McKerrow's skepticism was provoked by the high-flown conjectures of J. Dover Wilson, and by Greg's (early and selective) endorsement of them.¹⁶ Yet the *Prolegomena* also expressed a more positive outlook, in its formulation of a new view of copy-text:

Even if, however, we were to assure ourselves on what seemed quite satisfactory evidence that certain corrections found in a later edition of a play were of Shakespearean authority, it would not by any means follow that that edition should be used as the copy-text of a reprint. It would undoubtedly be necessary to incorporate these corrections in our text, but unless we could show that the edition in question (or the copy from which it had been printed) had been gone over and corrected throughout by Shakespeare, a thing in the highest degree unlikely, it seems evident that, allowing for the usual continuous degeneration customary in reprinted texts, this later edition will (except for the corrections) deviate more widely than the earliest print from the author's original manuscript. This deviation is likely to be mainly apparent in spelling and punctuation. . . . We may indeed, I think, take it as certain that in all ordinary circumstances the nearest approach to our ideal of an author's fair copy of his work in its final state will be produced by using the earliest 'good' print as copy-text and inserting into it, from the first edition which contains them, such corrections as appear to us to be derived from the author. (pp. 17–18)

By these remarks McKerrow seems to have opened the way to editorial judgment that he had previously barred. His death in the year following the appearance of the *Prolegomena* left his edition of Shakespeare unrealized, but here he seemingly signaled an intention to edit with an awareness of the problem Greg addressed more directly in "The Rationale of Copy-Text." Greg defined the dimensions of the problem with greater clarity and precision, especially by drawing the operative distinction between accidentals and substantives. By identifying and segregating these two categories of the problem of authority, Greg was able decisively to release editorial judgment from the constraints of McKerrow's early view. Among the examples Greg used to demonstrate what he was getting at was McKerrow's critical text of Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*.¹⁷ McKerrow based his text on the second edition, since evidence indicated that it had been revised by the author. But the editor also believed that Nashe was not responsible for all the changes, and that the accidentals of the second edition were less reliable. Unable to see his way clear to a rational eclecticism—which might have allowed his text to reflect what he knew about

the author—he surrendered the better part of his judgment to the confines of what amounted to a “best text.”¹⁸

Worth noting is that *The Unfortunate Traveller* is a romance in prose, and by using it as one of his central illustrations, Greg demonstrated that he was not focusing his analysis on a particular literary genre—that is, dramatic works—as is often assumed. Greg was also aware that the “underlying principles of textual criticism” were held in common across literary periods and languages.¹⁹ He especially recognized the relation of the problems he was facing in the literature of the English Renaissance to those faced by editors of classical literature, and he introduced his discussion with an illuminating sketch of editorial trends in the classics, concentrating on the tension between method and judgment. Of course Greg recognized the differences also, mainly noting that editors of early modern literature concerned themselves with their authors’ spelling, whereas editors of classical literature usually normalize spelling, since their source texts were at too great a remove from the original manuscripts to do anything else. But when Greg warned that “the classical theory of the ‘best’ or ‘most authoritative’ manuscript . . . has really nothing to do with the English theory of copy-text,”²⁰ he did not mean to discourage readers from seeing connections between the two editorial fields. Rather, this warning had the special purpose of preparing scholars of early modern literature to accept what for some would be difficult propositions: that textual authority relevant to the reconstruction of a particular moment in the history of a literary work might be preserved in more than one document; that for the reconstruction to be credible, the editor must be free to draw upon all the authoritative documents, as well as upon his or her own thinking; and that governing power over the editorial process is the mind of the critic focused on this historical problem. Greg’s copy-text is not a “best text” or a base text, since it is not meant to decide the wording.

It is fair also to say that Greg intended for his copy-text to decide even less than the wording, since he expected an editor to think about spelling and punctuation too, and alter copy-text forms whenever there was reason to do so. While Greg’s rationale has a methodological appearance, it is reasonably conceived, since chances are that the earliest surviving document in a series is the one which will preserve the most authorial details. Greg did not believe, however, that the manuscript details of the Renaissance works he was concerned with could be generally restored by his rationale. Few manuscripts, of course, survive. Collateral holographic evidence is usually scarce, and so an author’s customary spelling and

punctuation patterns cannot often be identified. Overall norms for such details, furthermore, had not yet emerged, and one need not doubt the technical competence of Renaissance scribes, compositors, and proof-readers, nor their disposition to follow copy faithfully, to suspect that they would not hesitate to alter manuscript spelling and punctuation which they believed were deficient or erratic. In view of these factors Greg noted:

Since the adoption of a copy-text is a matter of convenience rather than of principle—being imposed on us either by linguistic circumstances or our own philological ignorance—it follows that there is no reason for treating it as sacrosanct, even apart from the question of substantive variation. . . . I see no reason why [an editor] should not alter misleading or eccentric spellings which he is satisfied emanate from the scribe or compositor and not from the author. If the punctuation is persistently erroneous or defective an editor may prefer to discard it altogether to make way for one of his own. He is, I think, at liberty to do so, provided that he gives due weight to the original in deciding on his own. . . .²¹

By his eloquent restatement in the *Prolegomena* of the idea of copy-text, McKerrow revealed that he had been uncomfortable with his earlier conception of it. The new conception that Greg took up, with its reasonable eclecticism and emphasis on informed judgment, was bound to make another kind of editor uncomfortable, one who, unlike McKerrow, was at ease only when hunting in a single text for obvious errors. Greg's rationale challenged editors to face the difficult editorial choices. Aware of the extremes to which classical stemmatics had been taken, the author hedged his recommendations against misuse, by emphasizing that his intention was to clear the way for the intellectual resolution of textual problems, and by his warning about the "tyranny of the copy-text." When the subtlety of Greg's thinking is taken into account, especially his pronounced distrust of even the copy-text accidentals, then the warning seems to have more to do with the original conception of copy-text than with his redefinition of it. The experience of Lachmannism, however, showed that methodological approaches can lose some of their theoretical subtleties in the course of a widely-based practical application. The very presence of a method can entice some editors to focus their energies on questions of its application (in the case of Greg's theory, the choice of copy-text, whether to emend it, etc.), rather than directly on the work being edited.

Owing to Fredson Bowers's strong personality and his unique interdisciplinary expertise, Greg's rationale was widely applied, as everyone knows,

to the editing of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature. In this field, published works had not received much critical editorial attention, and so it was inevitable that the literary scholars who assembled to prepare the texts of the many editions coordinated by the CEAA beginning in the early 1960s would have had little or no experience with textual problems. Some early efforts were not surprisingly marked by a conservatism characteristic of inexperience, and provide ample evidence of the tyrannizing influence of a designated copy-text. Such a beginning could have been predicted, and over time—just as predictably—better results were achieved more often, as editors gained experience. It must be said, however, that the granting of undue influence to the copy-text continued and continues, in editorial endeavors that stick to copy-text readings rigidly, or select a copy-text with the disguised or half-disguised purpose of excluding other evidence from editorial consideration altogether. Of the two transgressions, the former is the less troubling, provided that the rejected variants are recorded in the apparatus; the second is the more harmful, since the copy-text is chosen in order to withhold evidence from the reader. Either way, however, adherence to Greg's rationale is often proclaimed in the textual essay, while the ostensibly critical text more truly reflects a best-text approach. The failure to recognize radiating multiple authority remains a persistent problem. More than once in the field of American literature, for example, critical editions have adopted as copy-text a first book edition of a work that was also printed serially in a magazine, with both printings deriving from the same typescript copy of the author's manuscript. While the first book edition's accidentals may be followed carefully, with as small a detail as a broken comma reported in the apparatus, the accidentals of the magazine printing are simply ignored, owing to the mistaken notion that scholarly editing means never having to report accidental variants. Bowers, as we have seen, was partly responsible for fostering this notion, which, like the kind of copy-text choice described above, compounds the ill effects of misconceived editorial choices with a deceptively spare apparatus. The main thrust of Bowers's recommendations on apparatus, however, went in the other direction. Here he followed McKerrow's good example, laid out in the *Prolegomena*, and improved upon it over the years. In 1962 he revealed his plan for the informative apparatus criticus now familiar to scholars of American literature. The plan advised editors to report many textual details, including what came to be called "pre-copy-text variants"—variants or evidence of revision found in documents preceding the selected copy-text.²² It should further be remembered that Bowers was also responsible for those deeply penetrating writings on radi-

ating multiple authority, which should convince modern editors of what is more commonly understood by editors of earlier texts—that the existence of multiple independent witnesses of a lost original is an editorial blessing and not a curse. From multiple independent authorities the substantives may be established more securely than from a single line of descent, while at the same time informed choice about the accidentals becomes possible.

With his bibliographical experience and familiarity with English Renaissance studies, Bowers was well prepared to direct the attentions of American literary scholars to textual matters, and introduce critical editing into their field. Taking stock of the better preserved historical record of modern literature, Bowers did not simply transfer the lessons of editing English Renaissance texts to the new period. He rather extended the logic of Greg's and McKerrow's recommendations, guided quite naturally by the same overriding interest in what the author wrote. This interest, Bowers understood, could be pursued further in modern works than in works from more remote periods. He also developed the concept of the "author's final intentions," first named by McKerrow,²³ in recognition of the ample documentary record of many modern works, which often preserves more than one moment in the development of an author's intentions. The "ancestral series" on which Greg based his rationale was a series of printed texts containing at least two "substantive" texts—that is, texts carrying authority, such as the earliest, or a later one bearing an author's revisions.²⁴ For editors of modern literature, the series may include early draft manuscripts, a fair copy manuscript, typed or handwritten amanuensis copies, galley and page proof-sheets, prospectuses, periodical printings, and first and subsequent book editions (and possibly separate series of these in different countries). Any of these documents might contain the handwritten revisions of the author or an associate; its genetic development may be linear to a point and then radiate from there. Several extant "substantive" texts may predate the first book edition of the work. Bowers created a scholarly edition that made use of this evidence, in a critical text ordinarily (not always) reflecting the author's final intentions for the work at the time of his or her last revision of it, and an apparatus recording much of the history of the text to that point. The author's earlier intentions—whether expressed in a draft manuscript, or a first edition (when there was a later revised edition also)—would therefore be recoverable in the apparatus.

Like any good historian—for scholarly editors are historians of the written word—Bowers suited his approach to the evidence. The history of editing is defined not only by advances made within a particular sub-

ject period, but also by the belated movement of scholarship through literary time. With each succeeding chronological period coming in for editorial attention, the level of documentary evidence rises, improving in both quantity and quality. Speaking very generally, the evidence available to editors of ancient texts is the most compromised; the situation improves, slowly at first, and then more dramatically, for editors of Medieval, Renaissance and early modern, and modern texts. As Greg noted, editors of ancient texts tend to normalize spelling and punctuation, since the evidence rarely permits them to know anything at all about their authors' preferences. Some authorial details may survive in Renaissance books, and preserving these in a critical text is the purpose of Greg's rationale. Obviously editors of modern literature can recover much more textual history, since they may be able to call upon multiple surviving "substantive" documents, including authors' manuscripts, and possibly external evidence as well (such as letters and other collateral documentation). The intentions of the author might now be understood in their development—how they changed over time, on the author's own initiative, or through a collaborative interaction, with a reader whose opinion the author valued, for example. The degree to which these intentions were respected in the publication process might also be discoverable, and where they were not respected, a cause might be revealed, such as careless typesetting, the application of a publishing-house style, or factors more deeply related to the substance of the work in question. The author's text, for example, might have displeased the publisher, an agent, or even a government censor, for reasons ranging from the commercial to the political. Many editors who have focused on authorial intention are familiar with these relationships and factors, having recorded the evidence of them in their editions and analyzed their significance. Their interest in the author helps them understand that in such situations, authors have sometimes had no recourse but to alter their works, or allow them to be altered by others, according to the demands of those with the power.

The essence of editing is in the treatment of the historical evidence. Unfortunately, the vitally important historical aspect of author-centered editing has not always been recognized by its contemporary critics. Those lately emphasizing the social nature of texts have thus negatively evaluated eclectic texts as things unto themselves, without referring to the scholarship—which ought to be published in the apparatus—on which they depend. Of course some editions are more competently edited and therefore more informative than others, but the unevenness in

quality has not been an essential target of these criticisms. A well-edited work, however, should contain the evidence of how the author's text was "socialized."

IV

An unintended consequence of the recent disputes over editorial aims and methods has been the uncovering of a great deal of confusion about the meaning of copy-text and what constitutes the "Greg-Bowers approach." This development is potentially promising, since latent misunderstandings are the more damaging. The shift in editorial focus, from preconceived method to immediate thought, suggested by Tanselle in "Editing without a Copy-Text," provides the logical grounds for clearing the confusion away. Thoughtful Greg-Bowers practitioners, social textual theorists, or adherents of any other editorial approach ought to find in this essay the intellectual inspiration to achieve their particular aims to a high standard of scholarship.

While "Editing without a Copy-Text" attempts to move editing beyond the limits of the particular methodological preconception of the Greg-Bowers approach, it also preserves and proceeds from the approach's universal advantages. Among these are, first of all, a great body of practical editorial experience, from which emerge the other advantages—the intense focus on textual history, the high scholarly and technical standards, and the tradition among its best practitioners of the free exercise of informed judgment. Sustaining this common editorial heritage, it may even be said, is the better part of Tanselle's aim. Today's editorial climate, however, is clouded in places with barely qualified rejections of the entire Greg-Bowers experience. While the critics have made many valid points, they have also fallen too often into fundamental misunderstandings. If these are allowed to stand, then little advantage will be taken of Tanselle's essay, and so any assessment of the essay's prospects must engage the criticisms. The most convenient way to do this involves considering the social text as advanced in Jerome McGann's writings, since here the criticisms are reasonably conceived.

Jerome McGann has been the most conscientious in attempting to give the sociological approach to editing a theoretical foundation, and in his writings one finds many fair assessments and criticisms of the Greg-Bowers editorial approach. These are marred, however, by some less informed remarks, indicating that McGann has absorbed a few tired misconceptions about author-centered editing. Despite Tanselle's many

painstaking demonstrations of their illogic, these misconceptions have appeared year after year as straw-men, set up and knocked down by the opponents of author-centered editing, and sometimes mistakenly defended by those in favor of it. From these misconceptions a reductive shadow of the Greg-Bowers approach is cast, devoid of the approach's defining nuances and flexibility of application. The emphasis on the exercise of sound editorial judgment is especially absent, as is an awareness of the theoretical and practical growth the approach has gone through in recent decades. In place of variegated thought and rich editorial experience come the impoverished notions of the copy-text as a "best text," and of the critical text created according to the Greg-Bowers approach as a timeless, ahistorical, and therefore ideal representation of the author's intentions for his or her work—or, in McGann's words, "a pure abstraction."²⁵ This second notion is openly proclaimed; the first tends to steal into discussions or take hold of editions semi-surreptitiously.

Indicative of the problem is a passage in McGann's 1991 collection *The Textual Condition* in which two editorial outcomes are falsely set in opposition to each other—"the production of an eclectic text" and "the production of an edition which displays and analyzes the historical descent of the work."²⁶ The former idea is identified with the Greg-Bowers approach, and the latter is represented as being foreign to it. Yet the two outcomes are not logically opposed, and a scholarly edition of a work taking the Greg-Bowers approach should contain both an eclectic critical text reflecting a particular moment in that work's history, and a critical apparatus with the evidence necessary to reconstruct other historical moments. Bowers has been much criticized by McGann and other editors on subjects ranging from his overall interest in reconstructing authorially intended texts, to the particular choices he made in the works he edited. What is interesting about a great deal of this criticism is that it is based, at least in good part, on the evidence that Bowers published in his editions. One may go as far as to say that the second of McGann's two editorial outcomes—"the production of an edition which displays and analyzes the historical descent of the work"—owes more to Bowers than to any other editor of anglophonic literature. Early on in his project of transferring to the field of American literature the more exacting standards of English Renaissance bibliography and editing, Bowers declared it the duty of editors to place all their "textual cards on the table—face up."²⁷ He demonstrated what he meant in his series of editions, beginning with the Centenary Hawthorne, which presented literary

works as they had rarely been presented before. A critical reconstruction of an author-focused text which aimed at what Bowers called an "inferential authorial fair copy"²⁸ was accompanied—indeed, inextricably linked with—an unusually full apparatus criticus, containing not only editorial reasoning (textual notes), but the history of the work in its variants from document to document. Bowers even reported authorial alterations in the manuscripts he preferred as his copy-texts. Along with these illuminating innovations, however, Bowers's editions, as was subsequently shown, also contained not a few errors (great and small), needless inconsistencies, and even some apparent sloppiness of form. That Bowers did not always practically fulfill the promise of his pioneering editorial outlook, however, should not be allowed to obscure his achievements. His editions left a good deal of room for improvement, but much of this could be (and was) made on Bowers's own terms—with more careful historical collations, clearer presentations of the relevant textual evidence, a better understanding of the relationship between the critical text and the apparatus, and a greater appreciation of pertinent biographical and historical evidence relating to the author and the work being edited.

Since Bowers presented his critical text within the larger context of a scholarly edition, his editorial choices were by and large open to general scrutiny—that is, the alternatives which might be argued over were published in the apparatus. The regular exception, of course, was the accidental variants, which Bowers for the most part did not report. The guidelines of the Center for Editions of American Authors (CEAA), which attempted to codify Bowers's approach to editing, did not, as a practical matter, require scholarly editions to report them. In his own editions, Bowers cast this practical compromise in more theoretical terms—citing in the Centenary Hawthorne, for example, not only the "copiousness" of the accidental variants as cause for omitting them, but "their basic lack of significance" as well.²⁹ The unfortunate appearance of this claim—that accidentals are basically insignificant—in the edition to which many apprentice editors looked for guidance had the predictable effect of routinizing the omission from scholarly editions of a class of evidence which at least sometimes was important. Bowers preferred to take an author's manuscript as his copy-text when this was possible, and so generally it was the accidental variants of the first edition that went unreported. The many critics of Bowers's preference for manuscript copy-texts—most prominently, James Thorpe, Donald Pizer, Philip Gaskell, and Donald McKenzie—would not, however, have been

satisfied with mere lists of the missing variants. While they disagreed among themselves on a variety of issues, they all believed strongly that the critical text itself ought to reflect the process by which an author's manuscript accidentals were subject to printing-house modifications. Yet given that the alternative accidentals would not be reported in the apparatus, Bowers's choice was, from a scholarly standpoint, the less inconvenient one. First-edition accidentals are, after all, in first editions, copies of which are usually easier to consult than authors' manuscripts. Harder to investigate would be variant manuscript accidentals left unreported in an edition using a first-edition copy-text. McGann endorsed the argument in favor of first-edition copy-texts in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, holding that it is "clearly more sound than Tanselle's and Bowers's, for it takes better account of the social dimension which surrounds the process of literary production."³⁰ McGann's statement shifts the definition of copy-text, if Greg's rationale is at all being taken into consideration, since that was designed not to emphasize the social dimension of texts, but to keep as close as possible to the author's manuscript accidentals. We hardly need wonder what Greg's recommendations would have been if authors' manuscripts of the works that he studied had survived.

Despite his overall emphasis on the socialized text, McGann does favor fairly heavy editorial intervention in certain circumstances—though his reasons for doing so are not obvious. He defends, for example, a regularized and modernized "reading text" for early modern works, "to preserve the continuity of a . . . cultural resource."³¹ While arguments for modernization have long been made, McGann's is peculiar in its aggressively negative assertions against those who eschew modernization. Tanselle, as McGann notes, has made the obvious point that casting a work of literature in the wording and spelling of a different time period is an "ahistorical" practice; for this McGann accuses him of failing to "recognize the historical dimension of all literary productions," and failing to understand that "[e]very literary production is 'ahistorical.'" As if it were not hard enough to understand how the same person could be guilty of both these transgressions at once, McGann goes on to chastise scholarly editors who seek to conserve Shakespearean spelling and vocabulary, for burying "the factor of the intended audience" under their "social and institutional ideology."³² Whatever may be McGann's precise meaning here, what comes through generally is, on the one hand, the belief that an editor's prejudice against the competence of modern readers to understand old texts is a sufficient basis for

radically altering them, and, on the other, the denial of scholarly legitimacy to attempts to move closer, by following the evidence, to what might have been the text of the author's final manuscript. According to McGann such efforts are deceptive and reveal a "hypnotic fascination with the isolated author."³³

Or so it would seem. In "Textual Criticism and Literary Sociology," Tanselle appraised McGann's initially keen appreciation of Hans Walter Gabler's edition of *Ulysses*.³⁴ Tanselle pointed out that despite its use of some counterproductive novelties—including a confused redefinition of the term "copytext" (without the hyphen), to mean both the constructed critical text and a stage in its construction—Gabler's method of editing was essentially author-focused. Tanselle further showed that McGann's endorsement of Gabler's edition as textually innovative was misplaced. While the mode Gabler chose for presenting the textual history of Joyce's work may have been unusual, the same kind of history is also present in any good scholarly edition with a substantial apparatus. McGann once believed that Gabler's arrangement of this history was a fundamental improvement on Bowers's, while Tanselle explained that such arrangements may reasonably differ as long as the history of the text is expressed adequately. McGann eventually underscored Tanselle's point, by backing away from his earlier appraisal. In his essay on Gabler's *Ulysses*, McGann praised the editor's "synoptic continuous manuscript text" as a "brilliant editorial reconstruction" that allowed "seriatim reading" of Joyce's work as it had developed.³⁵ A few years later, however, he questioned whether Gabler's edition could "illuminate" issues of textual variation, and ironically asked, "Would anyone think that Hans Gabler's edition of *Ulysses* is a work to be *read*?"³⁶

Tanselle noted that Gabler's understanding of "copytext," the term he attempted to redefine, was problematic to begin with, reporting Gabler's belief that "By common consent, an editor chooses as the copy-text for a critical edition a document text of highest overall authority."³⁷ McGann expressed a similar understanding of the concept of copy-text in his essay:

In the post-Greg context, the term signifies what an editor chooses to take as the text of the highest presumptive authority in the preparation of an eclectic, or critical, edition. . . . The copytext serves as the basis of the critical edition that is to be produced. The theory is that the readings of the copytext will be taken over in the critical edition unless other readings . . . are positively shown to carry a higher authority. In this theory, copytext is practically equivalent to some document or set of documents.³⁸

This definition of copy-text is not McGann's own, of course, but it illustrates well enough the difficulty that even the most astute scholars have had with Greg's conception of divided authority. McGann has also written subsequently of "establishing" a copy-text, and of the copy-text becoming "eclectic."³⁹ This difficulty caused mischief in the interesting appendix of *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Here, under the title "A Possible Objection" (pp. 125–128), McGann discusses exceptions to his overall recommendation of an editorial focus on the socialized text. He concludes that in situations of textual "expurgation, suppression, and mutilation," editors had better focus on recovering and presenting the text of the author. The inconsistency of this position remains quite striking. One could expect an interest in texts as social products to sharpen when dramatic differences separate authors' texts from the versions permitted by publishers or governments or some other controlling social factor. The examples McGann used to illustrate the need for author-centered rather than social editing include the published works of John Cowper Powys, which, according to McGann, were ill-affected by the author's fear of lawsuits and a post-war paper shortage. These are social factors, of course, as surely as others whose effects McGann wants editors to respect, such as the imposition of printing-house styles or publishers' wording changes on authors' texts. In his 1986 study "Historicism and Critical Editing," Tanselle well expressed the dilemma McGann faced by selectively advocating a socialized text: either, he argued, McGann is recommending a socialized text only when the editor finds it preferable—which amounts to a call for aesthetics-based editing—or he is recommending it only when the author preferred it—which shifts the overall editorial focus back to the author, where McGann supposedly does not want it.⁴⁰

The dilemma is complicated by a tangled discussion involving copy-text, which turns on the apparently needless question of whether the expurgated, published version of Powys's novel *Porius*—the version that, we are told, was "drastically cut back" because of the paper shortage—or the unpublished, unexpurgated typescript text, should be used as the copy-text of a critical edition of the unpublished text. In 1983, when McGann's discussion appeared and most scholarly editors were concerned with representing an author's final intentions, it was generally thought that some works exist in versions too different to be adequately presented in an edition containing a critical text of but one of the versions.⁴¹ Editions had already appeared, however, that ran counter to this supposition, or at least demonstrated that scholarly editions could present a great deal of textual history, including the details necessary to reconstruct more than one

version of a work. One of these editions, *Early Tales & Sketches*, the previously mentioned collection of some of Mark Twain's early writings edited by Robert Hirst, presented critical texts of the early versions of magazine and newspaper stories that Mark Twain later revised—sometimes extensively and sometimes more than once—for a series of book collections. The variants from the later versions were recorded in the apparatus. An editorial precedent for treating a situation even more closely related to the one McGann describes, in which an author's work was grossly altered for clearly practical reasons, had also been set by that time. The Northwestern-Newberry *Typee*, edited by Tanselle, Harrison Hayford, and Hershel Parker, appeared in 1968, and presented a critical text reflecting Melville's original intentions for his work, as expressed in the first British edition, before he acceded to the demands of his American publisher to soften his criticisms of missionaries. In line with these examples of author-centered editing (though without reference to them), McGann favors presenting readers with an unexpurgated *Porius*; once this view is taken, it would seem no choice remains concerning a copy-text, since we have been told that there are but two significant documents—the author's original typescript and the expurgated book version. By "copy-text," however, McGann has McKerrow's meaning in mind, since Greg's rationale is only a tool for preserving in a later, revised text, an earlier and presumably less corrupt level of accidentals. McGann does mention accidentals, but the meaning of his discussion about copy-text obviously turns on the widely differing wording of the two versions of the novel.

Mix-ups like these have plagued Greg's conception of copy-text for most of its history, partly because its adherents have employed the term as loosely as its critics. Greg recognized two meanings for the term, corresponding respectively to textual situations defined by a single authoritative document, and those involving multiple authorities whose texts relate to each other in linear fashion. His unique contribution—his "rationale"—addressed only the second type of situation. Bowers, with Tanselle's help, came to understand that it could not address situations defined by multiple authorities which descend independently from a common ancestor—that is, a nonlinear tradition. For clarity, he might have added that neither can Greg's rationale be applied to works surviving in a single authoritative source—a situation which, logically speaking, is also nonlinear. Yet when creating critical texts of such works (as Hawthorne's *Fanshawe*, for instance), Bowers and most CEAA-CSE editors have called the single authorities their copy-texts. Greg also en-

dorsed this wholly different use of the term copy-text, meaning the document whose text the editor “copies” out and then corrects:

If the several extant texts of a work form an ancestral series, the earliest will naturally be selected, and since this will not only come nearest to the author’s original in accidentals, but also (revision apart) most faithfully preserve the correct readings where substantive variants are in question, everything is straight-forward, and the conservative treatment of the copy-text is justified.

Here the “copy-text” is the only “substantive” text. Greg then reemphasized his special rationale for situations defined by “more than one substantive text”—where the copy-text is followed “in accidentals,” but “allowed no over-riding or even preponderant authority so far as substantive readings are concerned.”⁴²

Terminology is sometimes regarded as a secondary question by innovative thinkers such as Greg, but one need not subscribe to the views of Derrida to see that the labels by which ideas are known can sometimes decide whether they are understood rightly or not. As Greg noted, McKerrow “invented the term ‘copy-text’” in his edition of Nashe, “giving a name to a conception already familiar,” being “that early text of a work which an editor selected as the basis of his own” (p. 19). The precedence of this definition of copy-text, its simplicity, and its compatibility with the sound of the term itself probably explains why it continues to be used in the way McKerrow defined it. Had Greg labeled his innovation “the rationale of multiple authority editing” or even “the rationale for an accidentals text,” some confusion might have been avoided. As it was, Greg’s modified definition of copy-text never took full hold in the minds of many professed adherents, and so it is not really surprising that its critics also should have found the concept difficult to grasp. McGann, for example, cites “An Introductory Statement,” issued in 1977 by the CSE (the successor of the CEAA), in which it is asserted that a “primary requirement for any responsible edition is that it include a statement identifying the document which supplies the copy-text—that is, the text which the editor is following as the basic text.”⁴³ The ancestor of this document, the CEAA’s 1972 “Statement of Editorial Principles and Procedures,” similarly defined copy-text as “that individual manuscript or proof or state of an impression which forms the basis for the edited text; in other words, it is the text which the editor follows at all points except those where he believes emendation to be justified.”⁴⁴ Both definitions were augmented with extended discussions of how the copy-text should be chosen and treated, especially

in the 1977 document, and generally presented thoughtful and clear guidelines for constructing accurate, informative editions.

As official statements, both documents were aimed at imparting vital bibliographic and editorial wisdom to scholars engaged in editorial projects who may not have had much experience in scholarly editing. In line with their educative purposes, the statements may also have deliberately emphasized that aspect of "The Rationale of Copy-Text" in which Greg seems to reduce the importance of the distinction he himself drew between accidentals and substantives, in order to encourage editors to alter either whenever there was reason to do so. Tanselle, a creator of the CEAA and CSE statements, would likely have been responsible for this emphasis. In his influential essay of 1975, "Greg's Theory of Copy-Text and the Editing of American Literature," he stressed the "pragmatic"—and therefore provisional—nature of Greg's distinction, reminding editors to follow the accidentals of the copy-text only when they had no reason to do otherwise. He noted that resorting to the procedural part of Greg's rationale in such circumstances "is more satisfying than tossing a coin"—an endorsement whose obvious meagerness was meant to illustrate the relative positions of procedure and judgment in Greg's essay. Later in the 1975 essay, Tanselle reasserted that "nothing in Greg's theory . . . prohibits the emendation of accidentals in the copy-text when one has grounds for doing so."⁴⁵ This remark was part of a brief response to Paul Baender, who, in his article "The Meaning of Copy-Text," had suggested that the retention of the concept of a copy-text was out of keeping with Greg's main observation, that textual authority might reside in more than one document. Baender was a CEAA editor and inspector, and in this published form of a paper he first read in 1967, he endorsed the use of Greg's rationale for certain situations, while describing other situations for which he believed it was not suited. One of these involved the presence of multiple independently descended witnesses of a lost original—exactly the problem that Bowers would encounter a few years later and acknowledge as insusceptible to Greg's rationale. In hindsight, Baender's early identification of what Bowers later called "radiating texts" is eye-catching, as is his further questioning of whether the concept of a copy-text was ever appropriate, now that editorial "principles have become eclectic." Baender suggested, for example, that McKerrow in his *Prolegomena*, Greg, and Bowers "may not have realized the full implication of their eclecticism, which in the long run rules out the designation of a single text, basic text, or copy-text when there is more than one text of substantive authority." In an at-

tempt to understand why the concept was retained even though McKerrrow's early single-text rationale for which the term was invented had been discarded, Baender guessed that perhaps it was because "with respect to accidentals there still remained a single-text criterion."⁴⁶ This was the remark that elicited Tanselle's objection, quoted above; in saying this, however, Baender was not quite expressing his own belief, but rather giving his estimate of the belief of others, and the remark by itself does not indicate an aversion to the reasonable alteration of copy-text accidentals. In "The Meaning of Copy-Text: A Further Note," an earlier and more expansive answer to Baender, Tanselle upheld "Greg's theory of copy-text" as applicable "to all situations," while attempting to dispossess Baender of his eccentric insistence on the interchangeability of the terms "copy-text" and "printer's copy."⁴⁷ This obvious misconception certainly harmed the reception of Baender's other observations, which were also expressed too briefly, perhaps, to encourage exploration of their potential implications. Baender, furthermore, seems never to have pursued these matters, even in his own editorial practices. Instead, in those early days before much editorial experience had accrued in the field of American literature, Bowers and Tanselle sought to foster a position according to which the copy-text of Greg supplied "fall-back" authority for substantives as well as accidentals, while stressing the importance of subjecting the whole copy-text to a thorough critical examination. The plain intention of taking this approach was to maximize editorial judgment, but the approach also risked obscuring Greg's special contribution to copy-text theory; potentially elusive, in other words, especially for newer editors, was Greg's notion that for certain situations, the copy-text is only and at most an accidentals text: "The true theory is, I contend, that the copy-text should govern (generally) in the matter of accidentals, but that the choice between substantive readings belongs to the general theory of textual criticism and lies altogether beyond the narrow principle of the copy-text."⁴⁸

In the CEAA and CSE statements quoted earlier, the copy-text is represented first as the overall authority for the substantives and accidentals (unless emendation is warranted), whereas in the situations Greg wanted to emphasize, the copy-text would be at most ("generally") the authority for the accidentals. Logically, according to Greg's rationale, no direct causal relationship should exist between the wording of the copy-text and the wording of the critical text. If the two texts agree, it should not be because the wording of the copy-text has simply been followed in the critical edition; rather, the wording of all "substantive" (authoritative) texts in

a series collectively establish the wording of the critical edition—where they agree and there is no other contradictory authoritative evidence. Assuming, for example, the goal of a critical text reflecting an author's later final intentions, it might even be said that the wording of the later, revised text is more relevant, even in those places where it agrees with the earlier copy-text, since a revising author who allows some wording to stand might be conferring upon the unchanged passages the fresh authority of his or her new intentions. Where the earlier and later authoritative texts do not agree, the editor chooses from among the variants, according to the chronologically limited set of authorial purposes from which the critical text is being derived. In this example, an editor would favor the later variants (minus errors and changes not ascribed to the author) for the critical text, and report the earlier ones in the apparatus.

Those editors of American literature who have understood the meaning of Greg's rationale may not realize that the term "copy-text," in its wider contemporary use—in fields such as Chaucer and Shakespeare criticism, for example—usually carries its original meaning. Editing with a copy-text, furthermore, ordinarily means following the text of a particular document wherever possible, as this typical editorial statement, taken from a (modernized) edition of Shakespeare intended for the college classroom, indicates:

Every effort consistent with critical sense has been made to adhere to the declared copy-text . . . , and unnecessary emendation, that pricking devil, has been carefully eschewed. When the copy-text, however, resisted all reasonable attempts to make sense of it, readings from another early printed text or from other editions have, of course, been admitted, but in all such cases the emendation has been placed in square brackets to warn the reader that the text at this point is open to question.⁴⁹

The copy-text is followed conservatively in all matters, that is, for each and every play, whether it survives in a single substantive text or several. The explanation of the use of the brackets invites readers to trust only copy-text readings, and regard what has not come from there with suspicion. Similar statements can be found in other editions of Shakespeare, and also in modern editions of Chaucer's works, where the existence of multiple independently descended manuscript witnesses of all the tales would seem to discourage the assigning of preponderant authority to any one.

In "Editing without a Copy-Text" Tanselle acknowledges that the "basic meaning of the term 'copy-text' has remained stable from McKerrow's time onward—that is, the documentary text used as the basis for a schol-

arly edition" (p. 11). On the other hand, he also notes that the term "copy-text editing" is often used by Greg's critics to refer to the editorial practices of his adherents—to the use, in other words, of Greg's rationale. The term therefore signals, after all these years, either of an old pair of opposites—a best-text approach, or an eclectic one based on historical textual analysis. Greg was originator of this duality, and was comfortable using the same term to describe the counterposed approaches, since he felt each had its place. Many of those who took notice of Greg's altered meaning of copy-text, however—whether to adopt it or criticize it—had trouble keeping it apart from the earlier meaning, while editors who were unaware of Greg's considerations (or McKerrow's second thoughts) gave the term in its original sense a wide currency. Whether because the term was too well suited to the meaning McKerrow first gave it, or because the CEAA/CSE upheld an interpretation of Greg's rationale that allowed the copy-text to be used as the fall-back authority for the substantives as well as the accidentals, or simply because easy-to-use "best-text" approaches will tend to drive out more nuanced eclectic ones—whatever the cause or causes, that is—the further existence of Greg's special sense of the term copy-text, as an accidentals text, is in question. In "Editing without a Copy-Text" Tanselle recommends that in constructing critical texts scholarly editors abandon Greg's copy-text (while, of course, preserving his rationale concerning accidentals), so that it will not be held up falsely, as a truth-giving mechanism, nor used to disguise virtually noncritical reprints of previously published texts as eclectic, critical texts. Should Tanselle's recommendation gain wide acceptance, especially among Greg's followers, the meaning of the term copy-text would, paradoxically, cease its sixty- or fifty-year internal struggle, and resume its original and untroubled one-dimensional appearance.

[...]**

Notes

** Bucci criticizes the notion that the author-focused approach hunts for platonic forms. Key is the recognition of writing as an artistic conveyance, rather than the work of art itself, which must be reconstituted by the reader as thought. Discernment of errors and variants and an account of the textual history are basic scholarly responsibilities, whatever editorial approach is taken. In this respect, social textual editors can follow the example of their author-focused counterparts. Tanselle's «Editing without a Copy-Text» provides room for both approaches, emphasizing the role of judgment, while retaining high standards in the treatment of the evidence. EDD.

¹ "Reconsidering and Revising the MLA Committee on Scholarly Editions' Guidelines for Scholarly Editions," address by John Unsworth from the panel on "New Directions for Digital Textuality," Eleventh International Interdisciplinary Conference of The Society for Textual Scholarship, 18–21 April, 2001, Graduate Center of the City University of New York; quotations taken from printed handout.

² *Studies in Bibliography* (SB) 47 (1994): 1–22, repr. in G. Thomas Tanselle, *Literature and Artifacts* (Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the Univ. of Virginia, 1998), pp. 236–257. Tanselle notes that he first presented this paper on 12 July 1993, "as a Book Arts Press lecture during Rare Book School at the University of Virginia" (p. 1); the citations in this paper refer to the SB printing.

³ A typical example is "An Indiana Campaign," a story that was syndicated by Bacheller, Johnson and Bacheller, and printed in the *Kansas City Star*, the *Buffalo Commercial*, the *Nebraska State Journal*, the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Bowers demonstrated that these six newspaper printings, as well as subsequent printings in the *English Illustrated Magazine* and in Crane's book, *The Little Regiment and Other Episodes of the American Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton, 1896), were all based on separate copies of a master proof, and therefore of equal authority. This proof was made, Bowers surmised, of a typescript of Crane's manuscript. The typescript (either the ribbon or carbon copy) was, furthermore, probably the source of another printing, in Bacheller's own *Pocket Magazine*. Thus, in all, nine printings radiated from the lost typescript, independently transmitting its authority. A variant example is "The Revenge of the *Adolphus*," which appeared in *Collier's Weekly*, *Strand Magazine*, and Crane's book, *Wounds in the Rain: War Stories* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1900). Here, Bowers believed that the two periodical printings were based on a single typescript made from the manuscript, one on the ribbon and the other on the carbon copy, while the book printing was based on a second MS-based typescript; see *Tales of War*, The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane, Volume VI, ed. Fredson Bowers, with an introduction by James B. Colvert (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1970), pp. lxix–lxxv, cxxix–cxl.

⁴ "Editing without a Copy-Text," p. 15.

⁵ *Library* 5th ser., 27 (June 1972): 81–115, quotations from pp. 101–102. Bowers's later considerations of radiating texts appear in "Remarks on Eclectic Texts," *Proof* 4 (1975): 31–76, and "Mixed Texts and Multiple Authority," *Text* 3 (1987): 63–90.

⁶ SB 36 (1983): 21–68, see pp. 65–66.

⁷ Bowers, "Multiple Authority: New Problems and Concepts of Copy-Text," p. 99; for the customary version of this insight, see L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 221–222; and Paul Maas, *Textual Criticism*, translated from the German by Barbara Flower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 13 (C § 16 (a)). On this subject, Sebastiano Timpanaro has explained (through the English translation of Kate Soper): "anyone who has anything to do with the written or oral transmission of texts (including quotations learnt by heart) knows that they are exposed to the constant danger of banalization. Forms which have a more archaic, more high-flown, more unusual stylistic expression, and which are therefore more removed from the cultural-linguistic heritage of the person who is transcribing or reciting, tend to be replaced by forms in more common use." (*The Freudian Slip: Psychoanalysis and Textual Criticism*, London: NLB; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1976, p. 30 [English translation of *Il lapsus freudiano: psicanalisi e critica testuale*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1974].)

⁸ *Library* 5th ser., 29 (September 1974): 330–337; Bowers took note of this article in both “Remarks on Eclectic Texts” and “Mixed Texts and Multiple Authority” (see note 5), but viewed Tanselle’s discussion as an intriguing practical suggestion, without recognizing its theoretical significance. Some years earlier, on the other hand, Paul Baender had recognized that a copy-text would be out of place in textual situations defined by multiple independent witnesses of a lost original: see the discussion toward the end of section IV of this essay.

⁹ *Early Tales & Sketches, Volume I (1851–1864)*, ed. Edgar Marquess Branch and Robert H. Hirst, with the assistance of Harriet Elinor Smith, *The Works of Mark Twain* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press, 1979), pp. 658, 659 n. 236.

¹⁰ G. Thomas Tanselle, *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing* (Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the Univ. of Virginia, 1990), pp. 167–176, quotation from p. xiii of the preface.

¹¹ “The Rationale of Copy-Text,” *SB* 3 (1950–1951): 19–36, quotations from p. 26. Greg’s now-famous essay was delivered for him in 1949 at that year’s conference of the English Institute; it was also reprinted posthumously, with a few revisions and corrections he left in manuscript, in W. W. Greg, *Collected Papers*, ed. J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 374–391. References in this paper are to the first, *SB* printing.

¹² Kenney, *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of the Printed Book* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 138.

¹³ Preface to *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturae [Satires of Juvenal]*, ed. A. E. Housman (London: E. Grant Richards, 1905; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1956); quotation taken from extract in A. E. Housman, *Selected Prose*, ed. John Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1961), p. 58.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁵ McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. vii.

¹⁶ Werstine, “Editing Shakespeare and Editing Without Shakespeare: Wilson, McKerrow, Greg, Bowers, Tanselle, and Copy-Text Editing,” *Text* 13 (2000): 27–53. In a 1930 appraisal, Greg drew attention to the allure and the dangers of Wilson’s talents (“The Present Position of Bibliography,” Bibliographical Society address printed in *Library*, 3rd ser., 11 [December 1930]: 241–262, repr. in *Collected Papers*, ed. J. C. Maxwell [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966], see pp. 217–218 of *Collected Papers*). Fredson Bowers discussed Wilson’s scholarship as a point of tension between McKerrow and Greg in *On Editing Shakespeare*, a collection of lectures and articles (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1966), see nn. 2–3, pp. 181–186.

¹⁷ McKerrow repeatedly referred to his critical editions as “reprints”—though he emended his copy-texts. Greg called this peculiarity “symptomatic,” though he did not say of what; later, Tanselle offered clarification: “‘symptomatic’—that is, of McKerrow’s pervasive reluctance to give rein to individual judgment” (“The Rationale of Copy-Text,” p. 24 n. 9; Tanselle, “Greg’s Theory of Copy-Text and the Editing of American Literature,” *SB* 28 [1975]: 176 n. 9).

¹⁸ That McKerrow was a reluctant conservative has been lately and sensitively demonstrated by Marcel De Smedt in his engaging review, “R. B. McKerrow’s Pre-1914 Editions” (*SB* 55 [2002]: 171–183); obviously aware of the issues on which the copy-text debate turned, De Smedt focuses some attention on works within McKerrow’s edition of Nashe that survive in more than one authoritative text. One need not accept De Smedt’s view

that Greg "misleadingly" applied the "best text" (p. 179) label to McKerrow's choice of late copy-texts to agree with him that McKerrow (not, in this respect, unlike Bédier) was a thoughtful editor and did not treat these copy-texts with undue reverence.

¹⁹ "The Rationale of Copy-Text," p. 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

²² Bowers, "Some Principles for Scholarly Editions of Nineteenth-Century American Authors," paper read on 22 November 1962 at a meeting of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, published in *SB* 17 (1964): 223–228, see p. 228.

²³ Bowers, *ibid.*, 227; cf. McKerrow, *Prolegomena*, p. 6: "For scholarly purposes, the ideal text of the works of an early dramatist would be one which . . . should approach as closely as the extant material allows to a fair copy, made by the author himself, of his plays in the form which he intended finally to give them."

²⁴ The term "substantive text" was ordinarily used in this way; Greg's use of the word "substantives" to mean the wording of any document was thus doubly unhappy: it could suggest to readers that punctuation was insignificant, and also that wording, by virtue of its being wording, was authoritative.

²⁵ McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983; repr. with a foreword by D. C. Greetham and preface by the author, Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1992), p. 57 (all citations to reprint edition).

²⁶ McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), p. 50.

²⁷ Bowers, "Textual Criticism," in *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, ed. James Thorpe (New York: Modern Language Association, 1963), pp. 23–42; 2nd ed., 1970, pp. 29–54, quotation from 2nd ed., p. 54; Bowers made similar statements in his 1962 paper, "Some Principles for Scholarly Editions of Nineteenth-Century American Authors" (p. 228), and in "A Preface to the Text" in *The Scarlet Letter*, The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Volume I, ed. William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, Claude M. Simpson, Fredson Bowers, and Matthew J. Bruccoli (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1962), p. xlvii.

²⁸ Bowers, "Textual Criticism," in Thorpe 1970, p. 33.

²⁹ *The Scarlet Letter*, The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Volume I, p. xli; the assertion about the insignificance of accidentals was repeated in volumes II–IV of the edition (in "The Centenary Texts: Editorial Principles," the revised version of the essay which appeared in Volume I as "A Preface to the Text").

³⁰ McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, 1992, p. 113.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 113.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³⁴ *SB* 44 (1991): 83–143, see pp. 103–113.

³⁵ "Ulysses as a Postmodern Work," in McGann's *Social Values and Poetic Acts: The Historical Judgment of Literary Work* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 173–194, quotations from pp. 175, 181; McGann's reason for not typographically emphasizing "Ulysses" in his title is not explained.

³⁶ McGann, *The Textual Condition*, pp. 52, 96.

³⁷ Tanselle, "Textual Criticism and Literary Sociology," p. 106 n. 30.

³⁸ "Ulysses as a Postmodern Work," p. 177.

³⁹ *The Textual Condition*, pp. 72, 73.

⁴⁰ *SB* 39 (1986): 1–46, see p. 23.

⁴¹ For these works it was assumed that an apparatus record of the variants necessary to re-create the other versions would be too complex to use easily. Such assumptions—another holds that accidental variants are always too numerous to print—are easily made, and rarely tested; see Tanselle's study, "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention," in *SB* 29 (1976): 167–211, especially the discussion in section III, pp. 191–207.

⁴² "The Rationale of Copy-Text," p. 29.

⁴³ McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, 1992, pp. 6–7; McGann quotes a lengthier passage, and refers to his source as "CEAA/CSE *Introductory Statement*, 3" (p. 131 n. 9). His quotation and citation vary in some details from the version studied for this article, which is: "The Center for Scholarly Editions: An Introductory Statement" (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1977); in this version the relevant passage appears on p. 2.

⁴⁴ "Statement of Editorial Principles and Procedures: A Working Manual for Editing Nineteenth-Century American Texts", rev. ed., Center for Editions of American Authors (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1972), p. 4.

⁴⁵ *SB* 28 (1975): 167–229, quotations from pp. 174, 180, 201.

⁴⁶ "The Meaning of Copy-Text," *SB* 22 (1969): 311–318, quotations from p. 314.

⁴⁷ *SB* 23 (1970): 191–196, quotation from p. 195.

⁴⁸ Greg, "The Rationale of Copy-Text," p. 26.

⁴⁹ *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans *et al.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p. 67.

'TO AN EDITOR NOTHING IS A TRIFLE
BY WHICH HIS AUTHOUR IS OBSCURED'

KATHRYN SUTHERLAND

What is the contribution of the textual critic and editor to the enjoyment and interpretation of literary texts? More particularly, how does editorial emendation determine the literary work for the reader? This essay considers these questions in light of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of emendation to the text of Jane Austen's novels. What becomes clear in examining a range of editorial interventions into her texts is that her editors were motivated by diverse interests not wholly deducible from the texts themselves. These included the proprietary investment of family members, who felt they shared a privileged intimacy with the texts, and the professional expertise of scholars whose skills were honed on far different, Classical texts of Greek and Roman literature. The consequences of their improvements have been far reaching, culminating in the 1923 Clarendon Press edition of *The Novels of Jane Austen* edited by R. W. Chapman. Chapman's Austen text held the field for the rest of the twentieth century doing massive ideological work in the subsequent intensive critical industry that marked Austen's fortunes in the second half of the twentieth century. Chapman built upon the work of Classical editors and their heavyweight engagement with the Austen text to recalibrate her critical reputation. In particular, he employed Classical editorial assumptions about textual corruption in order to impose syntactic and grammatical regularity missing from early textual witnesses. He did this out of a deep respect for Austen as a perfect stylist; but his method looks seriously flawed when we realize that, on occasion, it led him to question the actual substance of her texts. It is possible to argue that Chapman's interference with Austen's text actively and misguidedly promoted her twentieth-century reputation as a conformant and prim stylistician rather than as the experimental conversational novelist recoverable from their unedited forms. EDD.

Qual è il contributo della critica testuale e dell'ecdotica alla fruizione del testo e alla sua interpretazione? E più in particolare, come può il lavoro filologico di

Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 283-96. By permission of the author and Oxford University Press.

restauro del testo condurre alla definizione dell'opera letteraria per il lettore? Questo saggio prende in esame tutti questi problemi, alla luce della storia editoriale del XIX e XX secolo dei racconti di Jane Austen. Ciò che appare evidente dall'esame di una serie di interventi editoriali, è che i suoi editori erano mossi da ragioni che non sempre ricevevano la loro autorizzazione dai testi stessi. Le ragioni furono, ad esempio, quelle dei suoi familiari, che sentivano di poter vantare un rapporto privilegiato con le sue opere; oppure furono le ragioni di quegli studiosi la cui esperienza professionale si era esercitata su testi di letteratura classica, greca e romana, di natura assai diversa rispetto a quelli della Austen. Questi interventi di restauro hanno avuto conseguenze significative, culminate nell'edizione Chapman del 1923 dei romanzi di Jane Austen per i tipi della Clarendon Press (*The Novels of Jane Austen*). Il testo di Chapman è stato un punto di riferimento per tutto il XX secolo, e ha fortemente influenzato tutta la critica su Jane Austen nella seconda metà del secolo. Per i testi della Austen, Chapman si rifecce al lavoro dei filologi classici e al loro "interventismo", ottenendole così una rivalutazione della reputazione in ambito critico. In particolare, seguì l'impostazione dei filologi classici riguardo la corruzione dei testi per giustificare il restauro di una regolarità grammaticale e sintattica assente dai primi testimoni. Egli muoveva da un profondo rispetto per la Austen come maestra di stile; ma il metodo di Chapman mostra innegabili pecche quando si osserva che ciò lo ha portato, in diverse occasioni, a mettere in discussione la vera natura del testo sul quale lavorava. Le manipolazioni di Chapman sul testo della Austen hanno di fatto promosso la falsa reputazione invalsa nel XX secolo di un'autrice stilisticamente rigida e conformista, così lontana dalla narratrice sperimentale (specie nelle parti dialogiche) che possiamo ritrovare nei suoi testi non ancora passati al vaglio ecdotico.

[...]

*'To an editor nothing is a trifle by which his authour is obscured'*²¹

Chapman's chief authority in the practice of textual criticism from the margins, Samuel Johnson, is uncommonly frank about the limited value of the kind of critical reading that engages the editor. As he acknowledges in his 'Preface' to Shakespeare, 'It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this authour's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood.'²² For Johnson there is normally a disjunction between the enjoyment of reading and the anxiety which characterizes the possessive and protective regard of the elucidating critic; and as he points

out time and again, the editor's textual reverence is not without its element of coercion towards both author and reader. Shakespeare's terrifying carelessness ('So careless was this great poet of future fame, that . . . he made no collection of his works') is matched only by the carelessness of the late-coming reader who, without benefit of annotation, reads 'without any other reason than the desire of pleasure'.³

In this candid description of how we read, where 'the mind is refrigerated' by the interruption that annotation occasions, the critic, and especially the textual critic, is presented as managing and continuing a tradition of commentary and preservation which is at one and the same time instructive, redundant, and antithetical to pleasure: it is literally mind-numbing! The textual critic's acknowledged labour is, as Johnson is at pains to show, precisely marginal to the encounter of reader with work:

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day increases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.⁴

There is a strong ethical sense at work throughout the 'Preface', nowhere clearer than in Johnson's confrontation of the problem that because literature and its criticisms inhabit the same medium—language and print—all criticism, but especially textual criticism, threatens to confuse itself with its object of study, absorbing and recycling it to its own purposes. Maintaining the spatial distinction between text and commentary is both an ethical choice not to identify the two and a caution against stabilizing that element which is bound to change—interpretation. Operating within his properly marginal realm, the textual critic can risk all his imaginative potential in dialogue with the text uninhibited by demands of exactness and untainted by the charge of imposture.

But in distinguishing the enjoyment of the careless text from the anxious instruction of its careful other, Johnson was also honest enough to recognize the convergence of the two kinds of reading in the risky business of emendation. Emendation is a dangerous pleasure because the rewards are puny and the risks immense. The scholar hazards his repu-

tation for what can always be proved worthless, and that is precisely why, to a profession congenitally cautious and pedantic, the practice is, in Johnson's admission, irresistible. Emendation threatens to erase the critic's superiority to the careless reader, to humiliate and abase the expert. The sexual thrill is barely concealed: 'His chance of error is renewed at every attempt . . . sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously . . . It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible.'⁵ For Johnson there is no possibility of submitting such risk to science, of operating according to a calculus of variants, as Walter Greg later would propose.⁶ There is only danger and pleasure.

Jane Austen early acquired heavyweight readers who, with the exaggerated attention of solicitous lovers, pored over her wording and punctuation, anxious to detect and root out minor blemishes. The historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, unkindly described by Henry James as her 'first slightly ponderous amoroso',⁷ is presented by his biographer, his nephew George Otto Trevelyan, as 'never for a moment waver[ing] in his allegiance to Miss Austen'. Ten years before Austen-Leigh, he was contemplating writing a short life as well as raising a monument to her in Winchester Cathedral. In particular, 'he prided himself on a correction of his own in the first page of *Persuasion*, which he maintained to be worthy of Bentley'. Macaulay's emendation has been generally adopted as a good one and is included in Chapman's text. It was simply effected by removing a full stop from the first, posthumous edition of 1818 and substituting a comma (*contempt. As he turned over. . . 1818; contempt, as he turned over. . . Macaulay*),⁸ thereby liberating the rhythmic sweep, dependent on phrasal repetition, of Austen's long paratactic sentence. As it stands after correction, the sentence fills the whole first paragraph of the novel, announcing in its fluidity and the mounting crescendo of its repetitions what will be the mood and leitmotiv of the narrative as a whole—repetition and return, where lives like sentences revisit, reinhabit, their earlier shapes.

Yet the invocation of Richard Bentley as editorial authority should set alarm bells ringing. The eighteenth-century scholarly editor of Horace, Bentley controversially brought assumptions about the corruption of ancient documentary witnesses to bear on his editing of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a poem at the time of his 1732 edition with a publication history of only sixty-five years. As Marcus Walsh has recently argued, of the '800 conjectural emendations, and around 70 conjectural deletions' proposed by Bentley to the text of *Paradise Lost*, 'just two, both of them ap-

parently errors of the press, have proved convincing to later editors.' Walsh concludes that in some instances at least, 'the criterion of authorial meaning is under pressure from the criterion of significance to the editor, Miltonic sense giving way to the Bentleian.'⁹

It is undoubtedly the case that the Austenian text was threatened with the same kind of editorial improvement by its Classically trained late-nineteenth-century emendators, for all of whom the recensions of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Catullus were more of a living reality than habits of modern authorial composition and printing-house practice of only three-quarters of a century before. Arthur Verrall, for most of his career Classics fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, and briefly the first King Edward VII Professor of English, provides the most important case in point because his suggestions, even where unadopted, were so influential upon Chapman's general thinking about the obscurity and possible attrition of the Austen text. Through his influence not only on Chapman but on Geoffrey Keynes, Edward Marsh, E. M. Forster, and a generation of Oxbridge-trained readers Verrall was a key figure in extracting Austen from the general into the specialist domain, and in making her 'difficult', the prerequisite of her classic status. As late as 1941 Chapman was still lamenting the 'rudimentary' state of editorial method as applied to English texts and maintaining the usefulness of the techniques of Classical scholarship in elucidating modern authors.¹⁰

But it was in rejecting rather than inserting emendations that Verrall displayed the full extent of his ingenuity. In arguing the removal of two apparently simple typographical corrections, both established in the Victorian reprint history of *Mansfield Park* (*Mrs Grant* for the non-existent *Miss Grant* and *his cousin* for *her cousin*, both in Volume 1, Chapter 8), Verrall decisively proclaimed Austen's unavailability for anything other than the most strained kind of editorial decompression. According to his argument, put forward in two brief notes published in 1893, the text as it stands in the unemended lifetime editions is in both cases correct, though in each case its meaning would be clearer from the insertion of inverted commas or the use of italics ('Miss' Grant, *her* cousin). If Austen is to be found at fault here, he claimed, it is in her lack of 'professional skill' in marking up her text for those specific formal features, like italics, which would highlight the full complexity of her stylistic concision. According to Verrall, the non-existent Miss Grant, invited by Mrs Rushworth to visit Sotherton, is to be read as a piece of authorial witticism at Mrs Rushworth's confusion; on similar grounds Edmund Bertram's reference to Miss Price as *her* cousin (and not *his* cousin) is ev-

idence that Mrs Rushworth believes Fanny to have another cousin also known as Miss Price. Rather than see the text as incorrect at these points (easily attributable to the compositor's misreading of the manuscript or a minor authorial slip), as all modern editors, including Chapman, have done, Verrall preferred to read the author as 'fastidious', 'scarcely allo[wing] herself words enough for her meaning'. By this way of arguing, neither text nor author is at fault; what was mistakenly thought to be an error is presented as a vital aspect of the portrayal of the fictional character of Mrs Rushworth, a woman now revealed to be as muddle-headed as her son. (Here, presumably, is the precedent for Chapman's own equally implausible claim that Miss Bates, and not the author or compositor, may be the source of the Mrs Suckling/Mrs Smallridge error in *Emma*.) The fact that the text in each case had been corrected so persistently over the years was itself sufficient proof to Verrall of a Rushworthian dimness in previous readers.

For Verrall, less generous than Johnson, corrections such as these are 'among many frequent proofs, how little activity of the mind may go to the amusement which we dignify by the name of reading'. Verrall's own style as editor has been described as imaginative and intuitive. His purpose in textual reconstruction seems to have been to discover meaning from within, by simulating the workings of an author's mind, whether Euripides at work on *Medea* or Jane Austen writing *Mansfield Park*. But practised with such over-refinement, it is hard to distinguish its results from imposture. Why Verrall's display of scholarly pretension is at the same time so brilliant¹¹ and so instructive in these examples from *Mansfield Park* is because it proposes no change; but in restoring the uncorrected text to the reader it chastises her with her incompetence to probe its authoritative inaccessibility. Verrall removes emendation and thereby makes the text unavailable for non-specialist reading.¹²

Between Verrall and Chapman there stands the sixteen-page textual survey of the publication history to date of all six novels that William and Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh appended to their authoritative *Life and Letters* of 1913. The son and grandson of James Edward, author of the *Memoir*, the Austen-Leighs provide something important—a charting of textual authority and degeneration in the context of the fullest record to date of the family circumstances of Austen's artistic personality. It is surprising, given the use he obviously made of their insights, that Chapman expresses no debt to their textual researches and no acknowledgement of the timeliness of their critical intervention into the spate of reprints. While editions and reprints from Bentley, who had bought the

Austen copyrights in the 1830s, dominated the market for most of the nineteenth century, they had sporadic competition from Routledge and a few other firms. But in 1892 Dent issued a ten-volume set edited by Reginald Brimley Johnson, whose attention to differences between the original and early editions provided the first attempt at a serious consideration of the text. It was in response to Brimley Johnson that Verrall took up the textual challenge and, in Geoffrey Keynes's opinion, inaugurated 'true Austen scholarship'.¹³ The Austen-Leighs in their turn provided a conspectus of the first hundred years of Austenian textual history, incorporating into their study points of difference between the original editions, the various Bentley editions, the Dent, and the subsequent 'Hampshire' and 'Winchester' editions; and in the process they efficiently dispatched Verrall's suggestions.

What they offer is a series of sympathetic and intelligent amateur interventions into the Austen text based on a proprietary intimacy with it. They declare familiarity with its grain and with what they sense is its proper intonation, its capacity for performance, features which persistently characterize the Victorian family inheritance. They range comfortably among the various nineteenth-century editions and reprints, picking readings with a confident eclecticism; and they contribute to the mounting sense that the Austen text as reprinted through the nineteenth century is not correct, and that getting it correct matters. Unfortunately, their own careless presentation of passages, into which they introduce plenty of fresh typos, does not help their case. But on the positive side, they resist the unexamined rule that Brimley Johnson had already adopted and that Chapman would soon adopt, that the latest lifetime edition overseen by the author is likely to be more correct than the earliest. On the contrary, they boldly reject the second (and by then standard) edition of *Mansfield Park* as containing 'more misprints than any of the other novels, including one or two that do not appear in the first edition', their criticisms of its textual history often hanging on what they perceive to be the author's own carelessness over proofing. They are sensitive to punctuation, to the difference that a transposed comma and semi-colon can make to meaning, and to the importance in *Pride and Prejudice*, a novel in which even intimate conversation has so much the appearance of public declamation, of attributing speeches correctly to their distinct speakers. Such distinctions are not only more difficult but also less desirable in the later novels. In the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, to whose texts they pay most attention, they noticeably attach no greater authority, in matters of variant readings, to the first edition than to ei-

ther of the two other unauthorized lifetime editions; on two occasions, they prefer Bentley's adopted readings over the lifetime editions and over Brimley Johnson's systematic reconsideration of the text.¹⁴

In several places it seems likely that the Austen-Leighs are the conduit for an emendation which finds its way into the Chapman text. In *Emma*, for example, at Volume 2, Chapter 7, we discover Emma modifying her opinion of Frank Churchill as a consequence of his going to London, as she believes, 'merely to have his hair cut'. In the first edition (the only lifetime edition and therefore Chapman's copy-text) the passage in question reads:

Vanity, extravagance, love of change, restlessness of temper, which must be doing something, good or bad; heedlessness as to the pleasure of his father and Mrs. Weston, indifferent as to how his conduct might appear in general; he became liable to all these changes.

In the Bentley editions 'indifferent' is replaced by the grammatically consonant 'indifference', while in Brimley Johnson's Dent edition and in the Winchester edition (1898) 'indifferent' is retained but 'changes' is corrected to 'charges' (which makes better sense and perhaps corrects what was a manuscript or compositorial slip caused by the eye recollecting 'change' a few lines earlier). The Hampshire edition is alone in emending in both cases to 'indifference' and 'charges'. And it is the reading of the Hampshire edition, published but not edited by Brimley Johnson in 1902, that receives approval from the Austen-Leighs. Recording none of this history, Chapman simply takes over the Hampshire emendations inserting them into his text as if his own.¹⁵ Similarly, at Volume 2, Chapter 10 of *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot is described in the first, posthumously printed edition of 1818, as so exhausted by her recent mental and emotional exertions that 'at present she felt unequal to move, and fit only for home'. The Bentley editions retain 'move' but the Hampshire and Winchester editions read 'more' ('at present she felt unequal to more'), which the Austen-Leighs approve. Again, Chapman takes over the correction as his own.¹⁶

Chapman's declared editorial stance was conservative—mainly a matter of restoration. And a good case might be made for arguing that restoration remained the agreed Oxford policy for all aspects of Clarendon editions, not just their texts, throughout the twentieth century. As late as 1982, Ian Jack, considering the Clarendon edition of the Brontë novels, defined the duty of an annotator in terms precisely applicable to

Chapman annotating Austen sixty years earlier. According to Jack, this duty is 'to attempt to enable his contemporaries to read a book as its original audience read it.'¹⁷ By the same rule, of course, the editorial labour involved will grow (as will the quantity of editorial matter) as the distance between a work's historical point of origin and its readership itself grows greater. At some stage, if only for the sake of manageability (not to mention Johnsonian pleasure), the definition will need to be reconsidered. The contemporary reviewers of Chapman's edition took its textual (and implied authorial) assessments at face value, quick to agree that, though only a hundred years old, Austen's text was undoubtedly in need of urgent scholarly recovery. The *Times Literary Supplement* of 1 November 1923 commented, '[t]he real importance of the edition is its treatment of the text, which matters in Jane Austen for two reasons: first because the condensed precision of her style requires the *ipsissima verba*, and secondly because for most of their existence her novels have been current in a "vulgate" which deformed the originals.' The *London Mercury* in December 1923 praised 'Mr Chapman's labours' as 'immense', 'even if one ignores the work in the text of an author whose text has been considerably corrupted.'¹⁸

In the case of *Mansfield Park*, Chapman claimed to present 'in the main' a 'reprint' of the second, 1816, edition, the text which he knew had the benefit of Austen's second thoughts, which she herself had declared 'as ready for a 2^d Edit:' as she could make it, and which he also felt sure showed evidence of expert brotherly intervention.¹⁹ His statement repays attention since the edition he produced in 1923 is both overtly and covertly more eclectic than this implies. He picked over the first edition, the 1814 text, for preferred substitutions—of words, spellings, and punctuation—even when a reading in the 1816 text might stand; and he did not feel required to acknowledge these substitutions in all cases, especially in matters of punctuation and spelling. Sometimes his method can be inferred, but not always. For example, he noted that the form 'teize' in the 1814 text is 'certainly Miss Austen's own', as against 'tease' in the 1816 text, but he properly refrained from the amendment; yet 'cloathe' (1814) is silently substituted for 'clothe' (1816).²⁰ In justification, one might turn to Chapman's own distinction, in his 'Introductory Note', between changes in the second edition which are 'due to accident or design', where designed change is change having its likely origin in the author, whether advised by others or not, and where the changes though generally 'slight' by 'their very slightness [show] some "particularity" of revision'.²¹ As the measure of authorial intention, however, designed slight change is prob-

lematic, taking insufficient account of the advertent and customary interventions of printers to regularize the text, particularly in matters of spelling and punctuation. There is also a potential contradiction in an editorial method which chastises the irregularities and rawness of the uncounselled 1814 text as possible authorial blemishes yet distinguishes subsequent surface changes as ‘too good for the printer’.²²

But what the contradiction also signals is something of the prescriptiveness of Chapman’s own method in arriving at the Austen text of 1923 by means of a law of harmonization deduced from what he believed to be the author’s own best practice. It is a law under which he operates tactfully and, on occasion, brilliantly. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of acknowledged and unacknowledged substitutions from the 1814 into the 1923 text is to further the work of grammatical and syntactic regularization which is a feature not of 1814 but of 1816, and to continue this in his own silent repunctuation of the 1923 text. In this sense, Chapman appears to regard the repudiated 1814 text as the fitful and irregular representation of a work more continuously (but still not fully) manifested in the 1816 text. Discreetly implied in his practice is the intended status of his own 1923 text. He does not question the then prevailing wisdom that an author’s second thoughts or final intentions are to be preferred, that they are in some sense indicative of a general maturing and improvement of the whole work, in which all the changed particulars of the later version are in some way authorially sanctioned. This view has recently been labelled the Whig interpretation of textual variants, whereby versions of a work are organically or teleologically related . . . [and] the work . . . is always aiming at the final version’.²³ It is a seductively optimistic view of texts as of life, which ignores the practical issue that changes are not necessarily planned with the larger structure in mind, but are usually made locally (by author, printer, publisher’s corrector) without recourse to the whole composition and on occasion to the detriment of its earlier coherence. As often as not in these circumstances, change represents not an organic growth but a change in direction that the surrounding text does not support. Evidently, too, the law of textual improvement is at odds with a commitment to recovery and restoration, the basis of Chapman’s declared policy. On the other hand, the Whig interpretation does give honourable and seemingly legitimate place to the editor as he continues the author’s work of amelioration—something impossible to ignore in explaining its attractiveness.

The following examples of the shift to syntactic punctuation through the texts from 1814 to 1816 to 1923 suggest something of Chapman’s Whig-

gish method and his authority for it. In each case I have keyed the passage to its page appearance in Chapman's edition:

It is felt that distinctness and energy, may have weight in recommending the most solid truths; (1814)

It is felt that distinctness and energy may have weight in recommending the most solid truths; (1816, 1923), 340.

though Mansfield Park, might have some pains, Portsmouth could have no pleasures. (1814)

though Mansfield Park might have some pains, Portsmouth could have no pleasures. (1816, 1923), 392.

He was going—and if not voluntarily going, voluntarily intending to stay away, for excepting what might be due to his uncle, his engagements were all self-imposed. (1814)

He was going—and if not voluntarily going, voluntarily intending to stay away; for, excepting what might be due to his uncle, his engagements were all self-imposed. (1816, 1923), 193.

Mrs. Norris being not at all inclined to question its sufficiency, began (1814, 1923), 305 [a silent substitution from 1814 into Chapman's text].

Mrs. Norris, being not at all inclined to question its sufficiency, began (1816)

Edmund was in town, had been in town he understood, a few days, (1814)

Edmund was in town, had been in town, he understood, a few days; (1816)

Edmund was in town, had been in town he understood, a few days; (1923), 401 [a silent substitution from 1814 into Chapman's text].

I . . . earnestly hoped that she might . . . not owe the most valuable knowledge we could any of us acquire—the knowledge of ourselves and of our duty to the lessons of affliction—and immediately left the room. (1814, 1816)

I . . . earnestly hoped that she might . . . not owe the most valuable knowledge we could any of us acquire—the knowledge of ourselves and of our duty, to the lessons of affliction—and immediately left the room. (1923) 459 [Chapman's acknowledged emendation deduced from Austen's 'normal punctuation of a parenthesis' using a dash followed by a comma (note at 551); and see the appendix on 'Punctuation' attached to *Emma*, 518].

Miss Crawford knew Mrs. Norris too well to think of gratifying *her* by commendation of Fanny; to her it was as the occasion offered,—“Ah! Ma'am . . .” (1814, 1816)

Miss Crawford knew Mrs. Norris too well to think of gratifying *her* by commendation of Fanny; to her it was, as the occasion offered,—“Ah! Ma’am . . .” (1923), 277 [Chapman’s acknowledged emendation].

But I have long thought Mr. Bertram one of the worst subjects to work on, in any little manoeuvre against common sense that a woman could be plagued with. (1814, 1816)

But I have long thought Mr. Bertram one of the worst subjects to work on, in any little manoeuvre against common sense, that a woman could be plagued with. (1923), 212 [Chapman’s acknowledged emendation].

I have laboured this point because punctuation holds a key to *Mansfield Park*, and I think Chapman both understood this and wholly missed its implications. The appendix ‘Miss Austen’s English’, in *Sense and Sensibility*, is the longest of his many appendixes but is taken up mainly with matters of lexis. A separate and far briefer piece on punctuation (three pages as against thirty-four) is merely a defensive listing of a few ‘irregular’ and ‘illogical’ uses with little attempt to discover what they contribute to meaning.²⁴ The working notes and correspondence for the Austen edition in the Bodleian Library reveal a general concern to respect early punctuation which was evidently severely tested by the particular challenges of *Mansfield Park*. In an early draft for the ‘Introductory Note’, Chapman wrote that the ‘most serious fault’ in the presentation of the 1814 edition is ‘its meagre punctuation; but it abounds in such minor evils as unnecessary capitals, misplaced or omitted quotation-marks, misplaced apostrophes, and faulty paragraphing. There are a good many obvious verbal errors’ and, he repeats, ‘It is under-punctuated.’ He concludes, ‘All modern editions that we have seen are based upon the second; and there can be no doubt of its superiority over the first.’²⁵

Working from Brimley Johnson’s edition, Verrall had earlier summed up the punctuation of *Mansfield Park* as ‘always irregular, frequently embarrassing, sometimes grotesque’, and capable of destroying the meaning ‘as effectively as a wrong word’.²⁶ But the charge of under-punctuation was partly challenged by Henry Bradley, to whom Chapman regularly turned for linguistic advice and who as regularly cautioned against correcting what only appeared faulty to the modern eye. To Chapman’s query about how he should repunctuate the phrase ‘a quick looking girl’ (describing Susan Price, Volume 3, Chapter 10), Bradley replied that he should leave it alone:

I should be inclined to follow the early edition (i.e. to insert *neither* comma nor hyphen), and leave the reader to interpret. A century ago people used to write

'a tall handsome woman', and their printers allowed them to do so. The printer of today, I believe, usually insists on putting a comma after 'tall'. Your alternatives of comma and hyphen imply different constructions, and I am not quite sure which is right, or whether the author may not have felt the collocation as something between the two . . . is it not possible that if we demand that it *must* be either comma or hyphen, we shall be insisting on a precision of grammatical analysis which punctuation has rendered instructive to readers of today, but which c 1800 only a grammarian would be capable of?²⁷

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of Bradley's good sense and the intelligence of his warning against fixing too rigidly the text and its play of meaning. He was of course largely ignored: by Chapman and afterwards inevitably by the critical reader of Chapman's texts. Guided by Bradley, Chapman did allow the phrase to stand, here and in other similar instances (for example, where Mary Crawford is described as 'a talking pretty young woman', in Volume 1, Chapter 5); but he resisted the wider implications of the advice against insisting on punctuation as a guide to grammatical precision. In so doing it is not inappropriate to argue that he prepared a text which actively and misguidedly promoted Austen's twentieth-century reputation as a conformant and prim stylistician.

Because his principled concern 'To restore, and maintain [textual] integrity'²⁸ is entailed to a Classically derived model of the corrupt material witness, the emphasis of Chapman's textual intervention, on discovering and restoring meaning through syntactical punctuation, is continually at odds with the non-grammatical punctuation which dominates the 1814, the rawer, first-edition text, and which retains more than a vestigial presence in his 1816 copy-text. The distinction is not mere scholarly preference for one form of pointing over another; for it is the older punctuation which, as it turns out, represents the essential and meaningful trace of the texts origins. Against this, Chapman's editorial consciousness was determined according to specific assumptions (a mixture of Johnsonian and late-nineteenth century preferences) about linguistic and grammatical propriety. The cultural freight (the perfection of a bygone era) which the deduced elegance of the authoritative Austen text must carry for Chapman eventually demanded its verbal emendation as a consequence of its grammatical recovery, its recovery into syntactically confined meaning, that is. It is at this point that his editorial method begins to look seriously flawed.

[...]

Notes

¹ 'Preface' (1765), in *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Sherbo, Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Vol. 7 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 104.

² Ibid., III.

³ Ibid., 92 and 61.

⁴ Ibid., 108.

⁵ Ibid. 109. Compare Chapman, 'The Textual Criticism of English Classics', *The Portrait of a Scholar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), 76: 'The practice of conjecture is pleasant, but like other pleasant things is dangerous'; and *Persuasion*, ed. Chapman, Vol. 5 of *The Novels of Jane Austen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 240, line 30, and note at 273. Chapman has adopted into his text A. C. Bradley's suggested emendation replacing *it for* (1818) with *for it*. Chapman writes: 'This elegant correction is perhaps not absolutely certain, but I have not been able to resist it.' He would have done well to attend to his own warning. The change is wholly unwarranted, constricting the expressive potential implied in the unexpectedness of the original construction. As D. W. Harding sharply counters in restoring the original reading in his Penguin edition, 'this is more like Bradley's elegance than Jane Austen's' (*Persuasion*, ed. Harding, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1965, 395).

⁶ W. W. Greg, *The Calculus of Variants: An Essay on Textual Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

⁷ Henry James, in 'The Lesson of Balzac' (1905), in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, ed. B. C. Southam, 2 Vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968 and 1987), ii. 230.

⁸ The story of the emendation which gave Macaulay such pleasure is told in Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, 2 Vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), ii. 466–7.

⁹ Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing: The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 67–71.

¹⁰ R. W. Chapman, 'A Problem in Editorial Method', *Essays and Studies By Members of the English Association*, 27 (1941), 43. In response to Chapman's edition, Edward Marsh, a former pupil of Verrall's, went into print with 'Some Notes on Miss Austen's Novels', *London Mercury*, 10 (1924), 189–93, suggesting further emendations to the texts of all six novels. Chapman incorporated some of Marsh's conjectures in the notes of subsequent printings of the novels. For example, *Persuasion*, ed. Chapman (1926 and 1933), 92, line 23, and note at 271. Of the reading at this point in the first-edition text ('I wish Frederick would . . . bring us home one of these young ladies to Kellynch. Then, there would always be company for them.') Edward Marsh, 'Some Notes on Miss Austen's Novels', *London Mercury*, 10 (1924), 192–3, observed, 'This remark of the Admiral's seems quite meaningless . . . All would be well if we could read "company for us," i.e., for himself and Mrs. Croft, who were alone at Kellynch; and the words "bring us home" seem to make this correction almost certain.' James Kinsley incorporated Marsh's emendation into his 1971 Oxford text. The Norton, ed. Patricia Meyer Spacks (1995), and new Penguin, ed. Gillian Beer (1998), editions retain 'for them'.

¹¹ Clarified to: brilliantly perverse [K. S.].

¹² For an appreciation of Verrall's intuitive scholarship, see the 'Memoir', in his *Collected and Literary Essays, Classical and Modern*, ed. M. A. Bayfield and J. D. Duff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), xx–xxii; and for his 'remarkable power of re-

constructing for himself [Austen's] mind', see the proposed emendation at *Mansfield Park*, Vol. 2, Ch. 6 (Ch. 24), of *derelict* to replace *his direct*, in the phrase 'his direct holidays', referring to William Price's navy leave (xcii). Verrall elucidates the two passages from *Mansfield Park* in 'On Some Passages in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*', *Cambridge Review*, 15 (1893-4), 126-7 and 145-6. I quote from both short pieces.

¹³ 'The Text of Jane Austen's Novels', in W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh, *Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1913), 405-20. Verrall addressed the Brimley Johnson Dent edition in his short article 'On the Printing of Jane Austen's Novels', *Cambridge Observer*, 1 (1892), 2-4; Geoffrey Keynes delivered his verdict on Verrall's Austenian scholarship in his *Jane Austen: A Bibliography* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1929), xxii. See n. 20 [p. 215 of Sutherland's *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, from which this essay is excerpted] above for further details of Austen's nineteenth-century textual history.

¹⁴ 'The Text of Jane Austen's Novels', esp. 405 and 408-11.

¹⁵ 'The Text of Jane Austen's Novels', 415; and *Emma*, ed. Chapman, Vol. 4 of *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 205 and 491 (Chapman's note on the emendation). Other modern editors have been divided in endorsing these emendations. James Kinsley's reconsidered Oxford text keeps both, but Stephen Parrish for the Norton edition and Fiona Stafford for Penguin both restore the first edition reading 'indifferent' and retain the emendation 'charges', the effect being to restore, against grammatical propriety, the irregular processes of Emma's inward, reflective voice.

¹⁶ 'The Text of Jane Austen's Novels', 420; and *Persuasion*, ed. Chapman, 227 and 273 (Chapman's note on the emendation)

¹⁷ Ian Jack, 'Novels and those "Necessary Evils": Annotating the Brontës', *Essays in Criticism*, 32 (1982), 323. In passing, Jack makes some useful comments on Chapman's 'quirky' style of annotation.

¹⁸ *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 November 1923, 725; and *London Mercury*, 9 (December 1923), 223.

¹⁹ *Mansfield Park*, ed. Chapman, Vol. 3 of *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 541; *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 305.

²⁰ *Mansfield Park*, ed. Chapman, xii. The spelling 'teize' occurs in the 1814 text at Vol. 1, Chs. 1 and 16, and Vol. 3, Ch. 9 (Ch. 40). In the 1816 text all three appear as 'tease', which is reproduced in Chapman's edition at 10, 157, and 394. A further spelling 'tease' occurs in both 1814 and 1816 texts at Vol. 3, Ch. 5 (Ch. 36), and Chapman retains this (362). The spelling 'cloathe' occurs in the 1814 text at Vol. 3, Ch. 17 (Ch. 48), and is silently substituted by Chapman at 471 against the authority of 'clothe' in the 1816 text.

²¹ *Ibid.*, xii.

²² *Mansfield Park*, ed. Chapman, 543, referring to a change at Vol. 1, Ch. 8 ('civility, especially' 1814; 'civility especially,' 1816). Chapman remarks of the altered position of the comma, 'This is one of the improvements in punctuation by B [1816] that seems too good for the printer.'

²³ James McLaverty, 'Issues of Identity and Utterance: An Intentionalist Response to "Textual Instability"', in *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1991), 146. Compare the argument offered by Stephen Parrish, 'The Whig Interpretation of Literature', *TEXT*, 4 (1988), 343-50.

²⁴ The appendix 'Miss Austen's English' appears at the end of *Sense and Sensibility*, Vol. 1 of Chapman's collected edition, while that on 'Punctuation' is appended to *Em-*

ma, Vol. 4. In noting the 'illogical use of semi-colon and comma' in *Mansfield Park*, where the heavier pause of the semi-colon precedes the lighter break of the comma in a series of three clauses, Chapman observes that this 'may represent correctly the natural pauses of the voice'. But he does not follow up this crucial insight or appear to act on it in his own elucidation of counter-grammatical passages in the text. (*Emma*, ed. Chapman, 518.)

²⁵ R. W. Chapman, 'Jane Austen Files', Bodleian MS. Eng. Misc. c. 924, f. 252. ff. 257–61 list and comment on spelling and punctuation changes between 1814 and 1816. A set of notes in Frank MacKinnon's hand begins, 'I gather you aim at reproducing J. A.'s punctuation. *Query* if in all cases she really intended some of it? I should prefer to treat many instances as eccentricities of compositors left uncorrected' (f. 187).

²⁶ A. W. Verrall, 'On the Printing of Jane Austen's Novels', *Cambridge Observer*, 1 (1892), 3.

²⁷ Bodleian MSS. Eng. Letters c. 759, f. 44, a communication dated 14 February 1922.

²⁸ Chapman, *The Portrait of a Scholar*, 79.

INTENTION REVISITED: TOWARDS AN ANGLO-AMERICAN “GENETIC CRITICISM”

SALLY BUSHELL

In the full version of this essay, Bushell contextualized Anglo-American definitions of authorial intention in relation to theories with French and German definitions. She addressed the concept of intention in three ways: its authority in relation to editing practices and the concept of «final intention»; literary-critical understanding of it; and a philosophical account of intention and intentional acts. The extract opens just before Bushell's account of philosophical intention.

She distinguishes literary from philosophical definitions of intention, ordinary acts of intention from phenomenological Intentionality, and an anticipated intentional state (intention of doing) from intention in action (intention in doing). The latter is understood to correspond to John Searle's distinction between «prior intention» and «intention in action». This distinction usefully relocates intention from the mind of the author into acts on the page, allowing for the reading of creative acts on the page as a kind of embodied speech act. However, the complex and temporally-extended nature of much creative composition demands a larger model than Searle provides. The argument moves on to articulate different kinds of intentional states co-existent or even potentially in conflict with each other. Drawing on Michael Hancher's definition of «three kinds of intention» (programmatic; active; final), it offers an enlarged account, involving programmatic and contingent intention and levels of micro-intentionality as well as unfulfilled and revised intention. Bushell emphasizes the unique nature of intention within composition as a fluid state constantly being redefined. The extract concludes by reminding the reader of the importance of non-authorial influences upon a developing work. The full version concluded with a «typology of composition» which outlined different phases of creative process in intentional terms. EDD.

Nella versione integrale del testo, Sally Bushell mette in relazione le definizioni anglo-americane relative alla «volontà dell'autore» con le teorie editoriali e le

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relative definizioni francesi e tedesche. Il concetto di «volontà» viene affrontato secondo tre accezioni: la sua accezione in relazione alla pratica editoriale e al concetto dell'«ultima volontà dell'autore», la sua interpretazione critico-letteraria, e l'accezione filosofica in relazione al concetto di «intenzione» e di «atti intenzionali». Tema, quest'ultimo, su cui si apre l'estratto qui pubblicato.

Bushell distingue tra due definizioni di volontà, quella letteraria e quella filosofica, ovvero tra gli ordinari «atti di volontà» e la loro accezione fenomenologica. Tra la volontà, ovvero uno stato intenzionale che precede l'azione (*volontà di fare*), e la volontà che si esplica nell'azione (*volontà nel fare*). Quest'ultima corrisponde alla distinzione operata da John Searle tra «intenzione in potenza» e «intenzione in atto», una distinzione che sposta efficacemente la volontà dalla mente dell'autore all'azione concreta esplicita sulla pagina scritta e permette di interpretare l'atto creativo sulla pagina come una sorta di «speech act» personificato. Il modello proposto da Searle, tuttavia, deve essere ampliato, proprio per la natura complessa e articolata nel tempo di gran parte delle composizioni creative. Il testo prosegue analizzando vari stati intenzionali coesistenti e addirittura potenzialmente in conflitto tra loro. Sviluppando la definizione di Michael Hancher di «triplice volontà» (*preventiva, attiva e finale*), Bushell ne presenta una serie più ampia che include anche la *volontà programmatica, contingente*, e vari livelli di microintenzionalità o di volontà incompleta o coatta. Particolare importanza viene riconosciuta alla speciale natura del concetto di «volontà» nell'ambito di una composizione letteraria, visto il suo stato fluido e in continuo mutamento. Il saggio si conclude sottolineando l'importanza delle influenze non autoriali, ovvero non dipendenti dalla volontà dell'autore, su un'opera *in fieri*. La versione integrale del testo sviluppa poi una «tipologia della composizione» che articola le differenti fasi del processo creativo in termini di intenzionalità.

[...]

The Anglo-American literary-critical debate over authorial intention—when also considered in the light of German and French principles—serves to clarify that the focus of interpretation for any compositional method must be the process of composition itself. This includes a concern with the text in a chronological sense (How does it come into being? How does it develop and advance?) and a concern with analysis of particular strategies and acts that are unique to composition, or to the composition of a particular form. We need to ask questions as to what kind of critical acts can be performed with this kind of material (When we analyse it, what are we analysing it for?) and we need to be constantly asking the core question that must underlie this whole area of study: How does the exploration of compositional material enlarge or advance

our understanding of the literary work? How does it problematise our understanding of what is meant by “the literary work”?

Intention Revisited: iii. Philosophical Intention

In order to go on to define the kinds of intention at work in compositional material, it is necessary at this point to distinguish clearly between a philosophical sense of intention and an “authorial” or “literary” sense.¹ Wimsatt and Beardsley define intention simply as “design or plan in the author’s mind” (4) whilst Hirsch distinguishes between the two kinds of understanding in a footnote:

As used by literary critics the term refers to a purpose which may or may not be realized by a writer. As used by Husserl the term refers to a process of consciousness.

(*Validity in Interpretation* 218n.)

Annabel Patterson, in an excellent article on “Intention” in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, resists offering any real definition, concluding instead that:

much of the heat generated by the intentionalist controversy could have been avoided if the participants had observed the semantic distinctions between different uses of “intention” as a term. (146)

Undoubtedly a significant part of the problem in achieving any higher literary understanding of the term is the common assumption that we all know what we mean by “authorial intention” and that it can be easily recognised, understood (and thereby dismissed).

In thinking about intention philosophically we need to be clear about the distinction between ordinary everyday intentions, (thoughts or states which result in events or acts), and a highly specialised concept of phenomenological Intentionality. The latter, in a Husserlian sense, concerns a theory of knowledge and purely mental intentions so that consciousness itself is defined in terms of “consciousness of . . .”. Using Brentano’s idea that consciousness is directed at a real or ideal object, Husserl argues that consciousness is intentional. However, for him there is a strong distinction between everyday perception of ordinary objects and the phenomenologist’s perception of consciousness itself from a heightened vantage point. Somewhere between these two positions there emerges a philosophical exploration of intention in relation to speech

and action—an “action-oriented account of intention” (Patterson, 137)—in the work of G. E. M. Anscombe and others, and later in speech act theory and the writings of John Searle.²

In philosophical accounts of intention and action a core division between two fundamental kinds of philosophical intention emerges, one of which involves conscious anticipation of the action, the other the performance of it. G. E. M. Anscombe, in her early work on intention, defines it primarily as a mental state “connected with ‘interpretative’ motive, or intention *with which*” (25). However, a distinction exists between the intention *with which* a man does something and what he actually does: “in general we are interested, not just in a man’s intention *of* doing what he does, but in his intention *in* doing it” (9).³ John Kemp in an article on “The Work of Art and the Artist’s Intentions” distinguishes between “Immediate Intention” and “Ulterior Intention” and states (of questions asked to a hypothetical man striking middle C): “The first question asked what his immediate intention was: the second is one way (though not the only way) of asking why he formed the intention that he did” (147–148). In each case there seems to be a distinction between a pre-planned and internally anticipated event and the more immediate putting of that aim or purpose into practice through action. The ulterior intention is thus more distanced from action than the immediate intention which either directly precedes, or somehow partakes of, the action.

Searle’s book, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*, is interested in exploring “the relation between Intentional states and the objects and states of affairs that they are in some sense about or directed at” (4). Searle provides an explanation for the translation of a state into an act which is extremely useful for our understanding of intention in the creative process. As with the previous accounts of intention and action Searle makes an important distinction between “prior intention” and “intention in action”. The first of these occurs “where the agent has the intention to perform the action prior to the performance of the action itself” (*Intentionality* 84). Prior intention causes intention in action which in turn causes, and is bound up with, a bodily movement which will result in the satisfaction of the intention. Searle states:

We say of a prior intention that the agent acts on his intention, or that he carries out his intention, or that he tries to carry it out; but in general we can’t say such things of intentions in action, because the intention in action just is the Intentional content of the action; the action and the intention are inseparable . . .

(*Intentionality* 84)

Searle considers carefully the means by which intention is bestowed upon action. It operates through the need to satisfy the intention, “by intentionally conferring the conditions of satisfaction of the expressed psychological state upon the external physical entity” (27). Such an explanation of the means by which the internal state is externalised is very useful for any literary consideration of intention in relation to composition, not least because it overcomes the need for any absolute division between meaning “in the author” and meaning “in the text”. It allows us to apply a philosophical sense of intention directly to the literary act and thus to release the study of compositional material from an apparently necessarily author-centred model.⁴

Comparing Searle’s account with the previous philosophical discussions of intention and action we can see that two clear elements emerge: a holistic aim, anticipated in advance and constituting a sense of purpose (which may or may not be achieved); and an immediate aim inseparable from direct action. These two positions have a clear temporal dimension, the first being concerned with a kind of long term, foreseeing concept of intention, consciously experienced by the agent, and the second with an immediate, directly-experienced, acting-out of intention. As a consequence of this too, we can conclude with Searle that “the intention in action will be much more determinate than the prior intention” (93). That is, the prior intention will always exist at a more general level, whilst the intention in action will always be more specific to a particular task (the object of intention).

Searle’s work on Intentionality directly connects his ideas on the philosophy of mind back to earlier work on speech acts and the philosophy of language. In speech act theory, J. L. Austin and, after him, Searle, argue that a speech act consists of both what we say (utterance) and what we do (performance). Thus the entire speech act involves a locutionary act in the context of understood conventions and rules which are illocutionary. The locution bears with it the “force” of an illocution. The nature of an Intentional state as a “representative content in a certain psychological mode” (11) is thus seen to correspond to the nature of speech acts which contain a propositional content and illocutionary force. Searle himself makes this comparison explicit, in order to consider the ways in which the intentional state finds externalisation in meaningful acts: “How does the mind impose Intentionality on entities that are not intrinsically Intentional, entities such as sounds and marks?” (27). Such a question clearly has bearing upon the understanding of the creative process. Still comparing Intentionality with speech acts, Searle tells us:

There is a double level of Intentionality in the performance of the speech act. There is first of all the Intentional state expressed, but then secondly there is the intention, in the ordinary and not technical sense of that word, with which the utterance is made. Now it is this second Intentional state, that is the intention with which the act is performed, that bestows the Intentionality on the physical phenomena. (27)

There is, then, always a doubled nature for intention in Searle's account: it combines a state in the mind with the embodiment of that state as an event. This leads him to state that "every Intentional state consists of a representative content in a certain psychological mode" (11).

Such doubleness becomes particularly relevant to understanding literary texts when Searle discusses "meaning intentions" (163). Just as there is a doubled level for the speech act—in the performance of the act and in the intention to perform the act—so there is a doubled level of meaning in the externalisation of intention through meaning. Searle argues that:

There are therefore two aspects to meaning intentions, the intention to represent and the intention to communicate. The traditional discussion of these . . . suffers from a failure to distinguish between them and from the assumption that the whole account of meaning can be given in terms of communication intentions. (165–166)

In relation to authorial intention this seems to suggest that not only are there prior (conscious) and immediate (action-embedded) intentions for the writer of the work, but also there is a distinction *between* those action-based intentions themselves and what results from them (the embodiment of those acts in meaning within a text). The distinction can be understood in Searle's terms of "intention to represent" and "intention to communicate". The first kind of intention concerns an emphasis on getting what is within, out (for the author), and the second works in terms of an emphasis on getting what is out, understood (by the reader). The first term would thus seem to relate more to the creative agent's initial urge to externalise (and thus to the early stages of creative process) whilst the second might relate more to later re-workings of a text in preparation for a specific readership (although this is, of course, to simplify the distinction between two positions which might well be intertwined in complex ways). I think this is also what Greetham is referring to when he proposes that "the *direction* of mind toward the textual object as well as the volitional act of that mind within the object must both be considered in the elucidation of intention" (183).

Following Searle's account of two levels of intention in the speech act we can see that it suggests two primary kinds of authorial intention: the translation of cognitive activity into a physical action (entering words upon a page) and the "Intentional state expressed" (a resulting manuscript page or poem). It seems to me that for the most part general discussions of authorial intention are concerned with the second of these in a way that suggests authorial intention is simpler than it is, and not at all with the first (which we might think of as the process of intention).

Following Searle, authorial intention must involve "complex intentions" in which "the conditions of satisfaction of our intentions go beyond the bodily movements" (99). This relates to the nature of meaning in the creative writing process—because whilst a meaning will exist in the first act of externalised, satisfied intention, intention is not *fully* satisfied by that act (except at a level of intention-in-action). Instead, the work will be returned to over time and, in the case of a long poem or novel, one section forms part of a larger developing structure which must bear upon it. We can see, then, that whilst Searle's account usefully distinguishes between a kind of localised physical intention and a larger embodied textual meaning, the nature of written composition, with its extension of process over time, demands a more complex and larger Intentional structure. This enables us to see the necessity of defining different kinds of intention in compositional material.⁵

In an excellent paper, which aims to show that the author's active intentions do have a bearing on the meaning of a text, Michael Hancher offers a definition of "Three Kinds of Intention": *programmatic intention*—"the author's intention to make something or other" (829); *active intention*—"the author's intention to be (understood as) acting in some way"; and *final intention*—"the author's intention to cause something or other to happen" (829).⁶ Hancher convincingly argues that the first and the third kinds of intention have often been confused with the second, and that in fact these only bear upon the meaning of a text when they are part of active intention. We can see that Hancher's first and second "Kinds" loosely correspond to the two principal divisions of intention in philosophical terms, as outlined above: programmatic intention Hancher defines as being "more or less approximate and generic" (829), as we would expect, whilst active intentions have "immediate bearing on the text" (830). Hancher tries to clarify the nature of active intentions in literary terms, stating that they "characterize the actions that the author, at the time he finishes his text, understands himself to be performing in that text" (830). He also draws attention to a temporal dimension, defin-

ing programmatic intention as having “a diachronic and hence mediate bearing on the text” (830) and active intentions as having “a present ‘synchronic’ and hence immediate bearing on the text” (830). In this, he seems to treat active intention as a single (if repeated) event, concerned with the author’s anticipated communication of meaning, as opposed to programmatic intention which is more self-centred. He defines the difference between them as:

the difference between an intention to *do* something *oneself* . . . and an intention that the *thing* one has made *mean* (and be taken to mean) something or other. (831)

In *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons* Hershel Parker engages with Michael Hancher’s article and criticises it on the basis that it does not allow for any kind of fully “active” intention:

Hancher can accommodate the period before the composition, the moment of completion, and the indefinite period afterwards; but *during*—the ongoing creative process itself—has no place in his theory. (22)

As Hershel Parker makes clear, Hancher’s “active intention” does not directly correspond to Searle’s “intention in action”—which *does* allow for the creative process to operate in a fully active way. I would agree with Parker’s definition here (as opposed to Hancher’s). However, there are other intentional states around the core action which do exist before and after active composition and, in considering the relations between these states, we can usefully break intention down a little further than Parker seeks to do.

Intention as the Basis for a Compositional Method

I want to reconsider, and enlarge upon, Hancher’s three kinds of intention in order to develop an Anglo-American compositional method. The model suggested here, as a way of thinking about compositional material as it develops over time, is intended to have universal application in so far as all writers must work with, and through, such intentional states in order to create. It is emphatically *not* intended to be prescriptive or to be used as a rigid, regulatory structure. Rather it is offered as an adaptable framework allowing for complex exploration of the work of different authors, and for the possibility of comparison between them. I will also be defining the method from a specific perspective in terms of a form

which is of particular interest to me; the long poetic structure. This may limit the definition in some ways, but it will help to give a grounded focus to it. The model should still be capable of adaptation to the study of compositional material in other literary forms.

We can begin by acknowledging the need for some kind of holistic aim, corresponding to Hancher's *programmatic intention*. This concerns the author's plans for a work, which may go so far as to divide it up into key parts and elements, and will, in a long poetic work, be concerned with the way in which the text is to accumulate, and the use of a generic model. Such intentions may be partly internal (involving pre-textual composition) or they may be formulated in notes or letters as some kind of plan. There are different possible models of programmatic intention for the long poem. One model might be along the lines of "epic": a development in which the overall aim is clear, material may even be divided up into "books", but the detail is shifting and overall shape is being re-defined throughout. Another possibility would be a looser "serial" model in which each part might be distinctly defined as a single whole unit but the whole poem and the order of parts within that poem remains undecided to a very late stage. Programmatic intention is only ever going to provide the broad framework for the work, but it also probably represents the poet's wider ambitions (particularly for a long work) and could be viewed in terms of a "challenge" which the poet sets him or herself (but, of course, may fail to live up to).

Secondly, then, we have Hancher's more problematic *active intention*, for which we will substitute instead Searle's "intention in action". I would redefine this intentional state in relation to a compositional method in terms of a doubled form of *contingent intention* which includes within it the localised acts of *intention as process*.⁷ Where Hancher seemed to view active intention as relating to a particular moment in time (synchronic) I would view contingent intention as combining a series of discrete intentional acts (intention as process) with a sense of those acts as part of a sequence or section of work (either of a single work across drafts or of a section within a larger work). Intention is contingent in the sense that, although a short term intention may have been satisfied, its fulfilment and its value within the whole work remains dependent on other parts of the process and the wider context of the developing work, and cannot be known until later. It thus represents an intention that is content to exist only as a stage on the way to something else. This is a state in which issues of priority, of which version to privilege, are not yet active; a "holding" state. It consists of blocks of writing which are brought to states of tem-

porary completion but which, even at the point of such “completion”, are known to be likely to be readjusted in the light of later ideas. Stopping points are needed within the compositional process for a long work but they are only provisional, and are known to be so by the mind which creates them. The fact that the author does not fully understand the “overall” meaning, and is still groping towards it, is partly what creates the momentum for continued composition and creativity. This is important because it makes clear that when one is studying *compositional* intention the very nature and idea of “authorial intention” as we have historically understood it must be redefined. It is not fixed or absolute: all meaning is fluid within the process and subject to change, including authorial meaning.

If we follow Searle, in believing that “every action has an intention in action as one of its components” (107) then we can also designate a kind of micro-intentionality (intention as process) within contingent intention. There must exist descending levels of intentional activity—from the writer’s intentions for a particular day, or hour, down to his intentions in relation to a line, or phrase, or word, and finally to the moment (or moments) at which he puts pen to paper and the physical translation of thought, through immediate pre-compositional intention, into word. This intention as process involves both the physical act of lifting a pen and applying it to paper, and the mental intentions involved at a word-by-word level. In a sense every act of revision, every element of composition, is an act of changing intention. This also reminds us that what we call textual process is in fact already a “product” of a sort—the concrete realisation of an internal process.

In terms of *final intention* I would question whether such a concept really exists for the creative agent, particularly in works of length. One question which the study of the text from a pre-publication direction allows us to ask is, how “final” is the published text? There is of course the first presentation of a work to the public, which means that an endpoint of some kind is achieved here as a sense of fixedness and finality attaches itself to the work by virtue of its material form and the fact that it is being read by numbers of others. Without question, this brings into play a whole train of specific activities and anxieties for the author which are embodied in the compositional material in different ways. However, the finality represented by the moment of publication is, in effect, imposed externally. The poet might have gone on changing things but now time constraints, the fixing of type on the page, and other physical and practical needs determine the text in one form, the “final” form of the first published text.

It is always the case that writers could have burnt previous draft material upon publication if they wished, if the text alone were what mattered and the concept of finality were absolute. That they kept such material suggests a valuing not only of product but also of process. It suggests, too, that for the writer a sense of finality may be far more tenuous than for the publisher, printer, critic and reader. Compositional material contains the potential and possibility for many different kinds of poem, not just the one which the world knows. Of course various decisions led the poet to create *this* text and not *that* one, and those decisions were unlikely to be arbitrary, but the poem is something more than the final product—as the very survival of compositional material illustrates. For the poet, I would suggest that this representation of the text is really only one possible stopping point in the continual process of contingent intention through which the material evolves. Potentially, such a process is endless, and for this reason the poet may well go on changing the text after publication and right up to the end of his, or her, life. Rather than retaining the concept of final intention, then, it is perhaps more helpful to acknowledge the existence of points of completion within the creative process when the author feels able to leave a text in a certain state for a certain length of time. One (or more) such points may also constitute an act of publication.

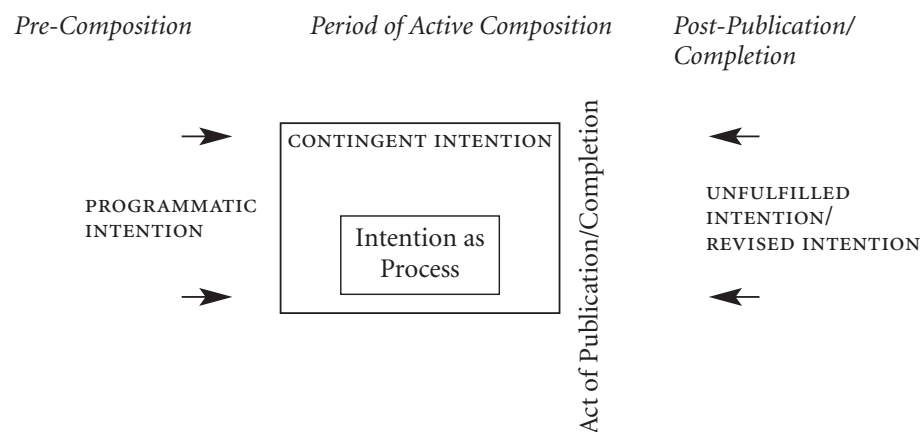
Finally we should briefly consider the concepts of *unfulfilled intention* and *revised intention*. The first is a similar state to that of programmatic intention, existing at a distance from the period of core creative activity, but occurring at a different moment in time within the compositional process. At some later point—possibly after the publication and reception of a work—the writer is forced to acknowledge that his original ambitions cannot be met because of the way the material itself has emerged. This may well result in future action, through revision or rewriting, in a further attempt to fulfil the original holistic aim.⁸ Arguably, contingent intention also partakes of unfulfilled intention but the lack of fulfillment is still an active part of the process and subject to further change. The boundary between unfulfilled and contingent intention is a flexible one.

Revised intention is also situated in the time frame after publication or initial completion of a text. This is similar to unfulfilled intention but implies that the author, rather than still trying to meet his original objectives, returns to the work with changed objectives.⁹ Such a change may occur as the result of a considerable time delay between first finishing the work and returning to it, so that the author has lost sight of, or forgotten, his original intentions, or the changed context of his life and

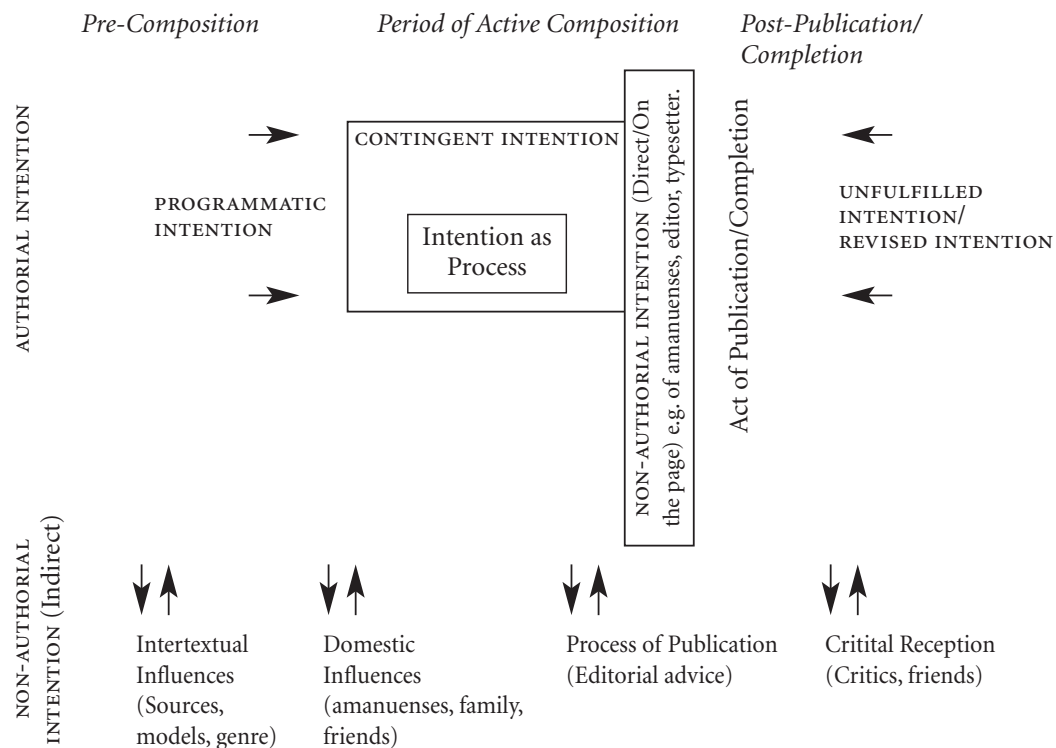
other works makes him dissatisfied with those original intentions. Revised intention will result in material which is effectively defined as a separate work from the original and which differs from it intellectually as well as textually.¹⁰

FIGURE I
Models A and B.

MODEL A: Authorial Intention over Time in the Compositional Process



MODEL B: Authorial and Non-Authorial Intention over Time in the Compositional Process



When we consider the compositional process in this way, we can also develop Hancher's connection between time and intention further. It might be argued that developing any kind of time structure for intention simply takes us back to the old authorial model of linear progress towards a "final ideal" text. However, although the model is teleological in its overall structure, (assuming a forward motivation towards an end) what I am postulating here is a structure within which different kinds of time perspective upon a work compete or co-exist.¹¹ (See *Figure 1 for Model A*.) At one level, of course, the text comes into being chronologically, but different kinds of intention relate to different points within, or perspectives upon, that chronological timespan. Contingent intention and intention-as-process involve a sense of fluid time in which intention is being acted out directly, or being rapidly overwritten.¹² The other intentional states are either anticipatory of this core state (programmatic), or look back retrospectively upon it across the divide created by the act of publication/completion (unfulfilled intention, revised intention).¹³ Intention itself changes according to whether it relates to a fixed point in time from which process is considered, or to a fluid, changing process in action. These two kinds of time perspective upon the text are essential for a full critical response to the compositional material of any work.

I would also suggest that in long poetic composition a drive towards intention in any particular block of work is often being counterbalanced by an almost deliberate "resistance to intention" at a creative level through the piling up of indeterminate material and the creation of multiple possible creative paths (one of which may be fixed by the act of publication, but which is not the only possible shaping of the text). Michael Hancher makes an interesting observation in passing within his essay, which is relevant to such issues:

There are cases—most obviously, certain long works—in which the author never does face and reconcile his *conflicting* tentative intentions_A for different parts of his text . . .

("Three Kinds of Intention" 83in.)

Intention implies in itself a forward dynamic, a sense of purpose, an objective to be attempted or attained. But the creative artist may not want to be thinking in this way about the *whole* text at the point of writing one *part* of the text. It is possible then that programmatic intention might be at odds with contingent intention, or that there will be conflict within

contingent intentional material.¹⁴ At certain points the writer may want simply to produce a mass of material with no particular shape or order which he can then draw upon later. At this point he may not want to be writing within an actively shaping mass of material but to write with a *deliberate lack of shape* (within the whole—there will still probably be clear intentions for what he is writing locally). There may then need to be a denial of any sense of wider intention in the short term in order for programmatic intention to be achievable in the long term.

There is, however, one problem with the model of intention and time that I have just outlined in that, as it stands, it is purely authorial in focus, even though it places emphasis on creative process as much as on the individual creator. As such it places the method in danger of reverting to an idealist position. A compositional method must not assume a whole-hearted return to the Romantic concept of the autonomous artist which more recent editorial and literary theorists have so strongly sought to deny.¹⁵ But it is dangerously easy to slide towards such a position when studying composition. If we return to the model, then, alongside the authorial compositional process we do need to place a secondary structure of external (non-authorial) influence and involvement in that process, which may occur at each stage. The nature and weight given to such influence is likely to increase as the work draws closer to completion and others become involved in its preparation for dissemination.¹⁶ The model ultimately needs to be that of Model B, rather than Model A (*see illustration*).¹⁷

[...]

Notes

¹ See also D. C. Greetham, "Intention in the Text," *Theories of the Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 183.

² Unfortunately, Searle himself does not clearly situate his concept of Intentionality in relation to phenomenology although it is clear that it draws upon ideas in Brentano and Husserl. For two attempts to establish a context for Searle see pp. 220–225 of Wilhelm Baumgartner and Jörg Klawitters' paper, "Intentionality of Perception: An Inquiry Concerning John Searle's Conception of Intentionality with Special Reference to Husserl," *Speech Acts, Meaning and Intentions: Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle*, ed. Armin Burckhardt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990) and Barry Smith, "Towards a History of Speech Act Theory," (29–61) in the same book.

³ See also Jack Meiland who distinguishes between "He intends to" and "it is his intention to" on the grounds of non-purposive and purposive intention. Non-purposive intention cannot be changed by the agent or consciously carried out, purposive inten-

tion expresses the agent's purpose (intention *with which*). See *The Nature of Intention* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1970) 7–11.

⁴ In his work, Hershel Parker also makes some use of Searle's model and adopts Searle's two kinds of intention in quite a broad sense—allowing prior intention to apply to actions “long prior to or momentarily prior to the act of writing” (*Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons* [Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1989], 23)—and viewing “intentions-in-action” as applying to “The actual composing process” (23).

⁵ See also Tanselle for a description of different literary and philosophical classifications of intention: “The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention,” *Studies in Bibliography* (SB) 29 (1976): 173–174.

⁶ Hancher's 1972 article acknowledges John Kemp as well as an article by Geoffrey Payzant “Intention and the Achievement of the Artist,” *Dialogue* 3 (September 1964): 154–156, and as his notes make clear he is fully familiar with the other major philosophical contributors to the debate. Searle's book post-dates Hancher's work (which it does not acknowledge), but there is clearly strong sympathy between them as a result of their shared use of speech act theory in relation to intention.

⁷ My thanks to Michael Sanders for suggesting the use of the term “contingent intention” here. The idea of contingency—which is central to my model—could also be compared to Louis Hay's concept of the pre-text as representative of textual possibility: “the perspective of genesis shows us that this first, distinct work was one of the possibilities of the text. . . . the writing is not simply consummated in the written work.” (“Does ‘Text’ Exist?” SB 41 [1988]) 75.

⁸ Although the extent of such changes is limited by the existence of the first version of the published text. Post-publication revision is thus of a different order from pre-publication revision.

⁹ The relationship between Keats' *The Fall of Hyperion* and *Hyperion*, for example, might fall into this category.

¹⁰ The existence of revised intention is debatable, and bound up with editorial debates over the distinction between a “variant” and a “version” of a text. For discussion of such ideas (and rejection of the concept of revised intention) see Hans Zeller, “A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts,” SB 28 (1975): 231–264.

¹¹ James McLaverty's work, as mentioned in the discussion of textual versions, is again relevant here since he makes good use of the temporal dimension in order to retain an intentionist element whilst releasing a text (or editorial presentation of it) from absolute linear organisation. See “Issues of Identity and Utterance: An Intentionalist Response to ‘Textual Instability,’” *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1991) 134–151.

¹² In the model given here contingent intention is shown as a single block of work, with a single act of completion at its end, but there could also be multiple blocks and multiple acts of completion occurring over time. Wordsworth's three principal versions of *The Prelude* would correspond to such a model. The relationship between contingent intention and revised intention might be debatable in some cases when a work is returned to after considerable time.

¹³ Programmatic intention anticipates contingent intention but also clearly overlaps with it, and continues to be present behind it. Contingent intention is in a sense also “unfulfilled” at the time of writing, and may only be seen as contingent retrospectively.

¹⁴ In terms of the relationship between the whole structure of the poem and its parts see also Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's account of the poet's creative process: "he develops his sense of the whole, the anticipation of the finished poem, as he works with the parts, and moves from one part to another. Then, as the sense of the whole develops, it modifies the process by which the poet selects and relates the parts" (*Understanding Poetry*, 3rd ed. [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960]) 527.

¹⁵ In her piece on "Intention" Annabel Patterson sums up the tensions between intention and literary theory well in her description of Foucault as a writer who "devoted much of his *Archaeology of Knowledge* to outlawing all approaches to texts that were ordered by any notion of an author, of an origin, of an oeuvre" (143). She concludes that, "Between them, Foucault and Derrida gave anti-intentionalism a philosophical prestige that the literary-critical version never acquired" ("Intention," *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995]) 144.

¹⁶ At the same time, the nature of influence changes according to when it occurs within the process. The earlier the influence, the more likely it is to have a significant effect on the development of a work.

¹⁷ The model only attempts to represent the main kinds of intention but there are others of course that might be sub-categories or stand alone. Greetham, for example, mentions "collaborative intention, censored intention and author's death-bed intentions" (190).

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HOT-AIR TEXTUALITY: LITERATURE AFTER JEROME MCGANN

DAVID L. HOOVER

I argue that McGann's *Radiant Textuality* (2001), shaped by postmodern literary theory and the nature of electronic texts, is wrong-headed—that McGann's valorization of the instability of texts and interpretation leads to poor results. It concentrates on three examples: a scanner experiment that leads to the dictum that "no text is self-identical," a "deformance" of Stevens's *The Snowman* that results in the claim that the poem is noun-heavy, and a discussion of Joyce Kilmer's *Trees* that suggests it is a good modernist poem about sex. I claim that, on the contrary, texts are remarkably stable, Stevens uses only an average number of nouns, and *Trees* can be better understood by focusing more closely upon and altering its language. In all three cases, McGann's approach, because it so consistently points away from the text, provides little insight into the nature of text and interpretation, while a text-centered, language-centered approach is much more illuminating. D.L.H.

Nel suo contributo David Hoover confuta le tesi esposte da McGann nel 2001 nel libro *Radiant Textuality*, modellato sulle teorie letterarie postmoderne con particolare attenzione ai testi elettronici; Hoover sostiene infatti che la valorizzazione della mobilità dei testi e della loro interpretazione, promossa da McGann, porta a ben scarsi risultati. La sua argomentazione poggia su tre esempi principali: un esperimento di scansione elettronica da cui risulterebbe che «nessun testo è identico a se stesso», la «*deformance*» di *The Snowman* di Stevens, che porta McGann a dichiarare il carattere ipersostantivato della lingua del poema stevensiano, e una discussione su *Trees* di Joyce Kilmer, proclamato un buon testo «modernista» sul sesso. Hoover sostiene, al contrario, che i testi sono per lo più fissi, che Stevens utilizza solo un ristretto numero di sostantivi, e che *Trees* può essere meglio inteso concentrandosi maggiormente sulla lingua, arrivando anche ad alterarne il significato. In tutti e tre i casi, l'analisi di McGann, proprio perché basata su un'interpretazione così lontana dal

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testo, permette di comprendere solo in minima parte la natura del testo stesso e la sua interpretazione, mentre un approccio incentrato sul testo e sulla lingua risulta molto più produttivo.

[...]

I begin with McGann's scanning experiment, in which an advertizement page from a Victorian periodical is scanned and subjected to OCR repeatedly. The document is first scanned and processed, then reprocessed without rescanning, then rescanned and processed again. It is also rescanned as black and white rather than greyscale, and is lifted and replaced on the scanner before being rescanned and processed. Not surprisingly, given the complexity of the document (part of the page is in two columns, there are several different fonts of different sizes, some of them very small, and the contrast is not very good), these operations yield documents with different numbers of zones and with some variation in the alphanumeric text, though McGann does not tell us how much variation (144-46).¹

The scanning experiment leads McGann explicitly to a series of propositions, including the following:

1. That what we call "a text" should be understood as a document composed of both semantical and graphical signifying parts . . .
2. That there is no such thing as an unmarked text . . .
3. a) That marked text, a document, is interpreted text . . .
b) That text documents, while *coded* bibliographically and semantically, are all *marked* graphically . . .
4. a) That texted documents are not containers of meaning or data but sets of rules (algorithms) for generating themselves: for discovering, organizing, and utilizing meanings and data. . . .
b) That these rules—the rationale of the texted document—are necessarily ambiguous because the rules are being repeatedly reread (i.e., executed), whether the reader is conscious of this or not. . . .
c) That the rules of marked text—the descriptive/performative protocols—can be made apparent (rendered visible) *as such* through another marking program. (But many of these rules, now so historically remote, will have become too obscure to recover.)
5. That a certain class of texts—poetical texts, so called—are normative for all textual documents because their generic rationale is to maximize attention to the structure and interplay of the textual orders. (138)²

These propositions are both important and reasonable: some facts about written texts are easy to forget because written texts are so familiar that our

own processing of them is mostly automatic and goes largely unnoticed. But McGann goes on to make a further and more radical observation:

Several important consequences flowed from these experiments. First, we now possessed a powerful physical argument for a key principle of “textual deformation” and its founding premise: that no text is self-identical. Whatever the physical “causes” of the variant readings, and however severely one sought to maintain the integrity of the physical operation, it appeared that variance would remain a possibility. (145)

Like many skeptical arguments, this one is finally irrefutable except by kicking a text down a hill. As ineffective as such a refutation is logically or philosophically, however, its practical appeal is undeniable. We may be convinced by a philosophical argument that external objects cannot be proven to exist, but such an argument does not make us trip over large stones. Our own experience of the world provides cognitively-grounded physical and bodily arguments that are far more powerful than rhetoric. In some important ways, even gravity may be a social construct, but the critic who believes this is in greater danger of falling victim to a physicist’s hoax than in becoming a falling victim (for a thorough recent discussion of the famous hoax, see Guillory). In a similar way, we may agree that no text is ever identical to itself, that no text exists except in and as an act of reading, an act of interpreting the rules (graphic, semantic, phonetic, rhetorical, ideological, cultural) of the text. Indeed, according to the standard current view of the nature of the physical world, even the book as a physical object (rather than a linguistic/mental/cultural object) changes over time at the atomic level, and so is never self-identical. But it is also important to remember the relative solidity of the text, and to keep its instability—like the book’s, like gravity’s—in perspective.

[...]*

Augmented by much more information about genre norms and comparative information about other poems, McGann’s provocative deformativ move can point the way toward a more fruitful examination of the language of poetry. But there is no space here to pursue the relation-

* Hoover applies McGann’s Victorian advertisement experiment, which he uses to determine noun frequency in the American poetic corpus, on a graphically straightforward piece of prose rather than a “graphically complex text with poor contrast” as McGann did. EDD.

ship between style and noun frequency, between noun frequency and other syntactic and stylistic characteristics, or between the nouns of a poem and the creation of its fictional world.³ Rather, it is time to turn to one final example of wrong-headedness: “The Alice Fallacy; or, Only God Can Make a Tree,” the first chapter of *Radiant Textuality*. Richly entertaining, provocative, thoughtful, and informative, but also finally perverse, this chapter is constructed as a dialogue between Pleasure and Instruction, with observations by Footnote and Printer’s Devil. It examines some crucial questions of interpretation, esthetics, and criticism in a playful way. So far, so good. Unfortunately, it finally goes too far, and the lessons it teaches are not so good.

Instruction recounts a pseudo-Socratic class discussion of Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” in which he tries to guide his students to a reasonable understanding of the poem. (How interesting that Instruction is male and Pleasure female!) When a student misinterprets “O Attic shape!” as referring to a ghostly shape in an attic, Instruction tries to pull the interpretive process back to the word’s meaning in the poem. The students revolt, arguing that the “garret” associations of *attic* (really *Attic*), are relevant, and that “This reading opens up the poem in lots of new and interesting ways” (39). Instruction is at a loss as to how to answer this argument, and resorts to calling it the “Humpty Dumpty School of Criticism,” after an exchange between Humpty Dumpty and Alice, in which Alice questions “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things,” and Humpty Dumpty responds that the real question is “which is to be master.” Unable to answer his students effectively, Instruction is thrown into a tail-spin. He starts “trying to imagine new kinds of critical thinking” (40), like a homoerotic reading of Wordsworth’s

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Yes, the earth sucks and the wind blows, but sometimes a cigar is just a cigar.⁴ And why gender the flower as male? Flowers are prototypically female: Daisy, Flora, Iris, Jasmine, Lily, Petunia, Rose, Violet.

Instruction then produces a full-fledged, though not bird-brained, travesty interpretation. He misquotes and reverses the critique of Joyce Kilmer’s “Trees” that appears in *Understanding Poetry*, where Brooks and Warren call it a “bad poem.”⁵ He points out that the poem is contemporaneous with Gertrude Stein’s *Tender Buttons* and appeared only a few years before Wallace Stevens’s *Harmonium*. He argues that it is actually a

good modernist poem that shifts its perspective on trees in a way similar to Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." He also argues that the poem's dedication, "For Mrs. Henry Mills Alden," a dedication that Brooks and Warren omit, subtly prepares for a coarse sexual pun on the verb 'to make' in the final lines (42-49):

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

(No, I am not making this up.) Worse yet, if "Trees" really was "written out of a certain kind of male eroticism" (48), it is an incestuous kind of eroticism: according to Instruction, Mrs. Alden was Kilmer's mother-in-law.⁶

Printer's Devil and Footnote debate whether Instruction's travesty performance is cynically trivial or serious, and Footnote asks, "But what if that's the point? What if the question isn't '*how* could he take himself or his ideas seriously' but '*why should* he take himself or his ideas seriously'?" (50). Footnote, apparently speaking for McGann, argues as follows:

It's Pleasure's ideal of an erotics of reading, a move "against interpretation." And the move is important because of the implicit challenge he's laying down. His criticism of "Trees" emphasizes the *rhetoric* of interpretation, so his studied triviality signals that he appreciates the difficulty of the reciprocal demand his challenge puts on us. He comes forward not as a master but as just another player. Or if he seems a master, his behavior emphasizes the mortal limits of mastery. Second, the dialogue argues that meaning comes as acts of thinking (which may get reified into sets of ideas), and thinking comes as exchange of thought. All sorts of uncommon critical possibilities might flow from that view of things. (51)

Undeniably, an interpretation of "Trees" as a good modernist poem about God having sex with trees (or the poet having sex with poems, or with his mother-in-law) qualifies as an "uncommon critical possibility." On the other hand, as Bertrand Russell once remarked,

Some "advanced thinkers" are of the opinion that any one who differs from the conventional opinion must be in the right. This is a delusion; if it were not, truth would be easier to come by than it is. There are infinite possibilities of error, and more cranks take up unfashionable errors than unfashionable truths (96).

Even if "The Alice Phallusy" is merely ludic/rouse, it is a costume more honored in the breech than in the observance. It tells us very little about "Trees" or "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

One of the reasons that Instruction has so much trouble is that he seems unable to defeat the suggestion that the word *attic* could have meant to Keats what it means to the student, a meaning that allows the student to link “attic shape” with *haunts* and (a pun on) *overwrought* in the ode. Perhaps this is technically true; the *OED*’s first citation of the word in its modern sense comes from Byron’s *Beppo* (1817), four years before Keats’s death (“attic”) and Keats never uses the word elsewhere in his poetry, according to a web concordance to his poetical works (Watt), so that we cannot appeal to his “normal” usage. But in the context of the rest of this poem about a Grecian/Attic urn, with its densely archaic diction (*who canst thus express; What maidens loth?; ye soft pipes; Lead’st thou that heifer; thy streets for evermore / Will silent be; etc.*), it is not necessary or advisable to take the “garret” meaning seriously, or to apologize for teaching students that they should not take it seriously.

One thing all interpreters of literature (and life) need to learn is the importance of discarding inappropriate interpretations—those that result from private associations, adventitious connections, and changes in the meanings of words over time. A classic example is Yeats’s use of *gay* in “Lapis Lazuli”:

I have heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow,
Of poets that are always gay. . . . (891)

I have used these lines subversively in several English usage exercises to test the reactions of graduate students to Yeats’s use of *that* for people. When I ask them to comment on it without attribution in the sentence, “Some hysterical women say that they are sick of poets that are always gay,” many of them correct the sentence to “sick of poets who are always gay” or to “sick of gay poets.” Many also object to what they perceive as the homophobia of the sentence. Perhaps Instruction would find this reading liberating. Perhaps it suggests a new understanding of Yeats’s relationship with Maude Gonne. Perhaps Kilmer was really having sex with his father-in-law and was using the dedication to “Trees” as a blind. Many of his poems are dedicated to men, after all. And why did he call himself “Joyce”? Take a look at a picture of Kilmer and imagine a wig and lipstick. This game (The Ivan Ho game?) is just too easy to play.

The problem with interpretation is not that literature needs to be opened up “in lots of new and interesting ways.” On the contrary, inter-

pretation requires new, interesting, and *reasonable* ways of constraining the wide array of possible meanings that literary texts typically make at least marginally possible. Instruction instead uses the bare possibility that in 1820 *attic* could have meant ‘garret’ to embark on a wild orgy of subjectivity and self-indulgence. But he was already of Humpty Dumpty’s company without knowing it, for the exchange between Humpty Dumpty and Alice that he discusses does not (quite) come from *Alice in Wonderland*, as he claims, but rather from *Through the Looking Glass*. And having the student argue, apparently successfully, that “Humpty Dumpty is not talking foolishness” (38) when he tells Alice that glory means ‘a nice knock-down argument’ goes to the heart of the problem. If that is not foolishness (wickedly pregnant foolishness, with its philosophical aside on nominalism), then perhaps God *is* having sex with trees (or the poet with “Trees”?).⁷

By overemphasizing and valorizing the undeniable subjectivity of interpretation, Instruction seems to invite and even encourage sloppy thinking and careless argument. If flashy rhetoric leading to uncommon critical possibilities is the goal, there is no need to pay much attention to the poem itself. And this has been all too much the story of the criticism of recent decades. Perhaps “The Alice Fallacy” is intended to force readers to reexamine the problems of interpretation, validity, triviality, seriousness, pleasure, and instruction, but this lesson, unlike the ludic one, is itself easy to miss or misinterpret, and Wimsatt and Beardsley are spinning in their graves. Another passage from *Through the Looking Glass* can be adapted to make my point:

“I’m sure I didn’t mean—” Instruction was beginning, but Neo-Formalism interrupted him impatiently.

“That’s just what I complain of! You *should* have meant! What do you suppose is the use of interpretation without any meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning—and an interpretation’s more important than a joke, I hope. You couldn’t deny that, even if you tried with both hands.” (319)

I want to conclude with a different kind of text alteration, a focused alteration of Kilmer’s “Trees” that is not intended to free the poem up for “uncommon new critical possibilities,” but rather to investigate how the poem works, and does not work. We should begin with “the poem itself,” but this is not as easy as might be expected: “Trees” really does not seem to be self-identical. Given that only the 1938 edition of Brooks and Warren appears in McGann’s bibliography, one might expect the poem he

prints to come from that book, except that he indicates that he is reinserting the dedication that Brooks and Warren omit. No edition of Kilmer's poems is specifically mentioned in the text, but McGann's reference to its publication at the same time as *Tender Buttons*, and the presence in his bibliography of the 1914 editions of both *Tender Buttons* and Kilmer's *Trees and Other Poems* strongly suggests the latter as the source of the epigraph. But this little poem is remarkably unstable in lines three, four, five, and seven. The version McGann prints is as follows:

Trees

(For Mrs. Henry Mills Alden)

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Kilmer's 1914 version has *earth's sweet* rather than *sweet earth's* in line four, and has the title as *TREES*, and *THINK* and a drop capital for *I* in line one (19).⁸ McGann's (mis)reading is also found in the 1938 edition of Brooks and Warren (387); the 1950 edition (274) and the 1960 edition (287-88) have *earth's sweet*. However, all three editions of Brooks and Warren have the title and *think* as in McGann's version, *pressed* rather than *prest* in line three, and all print *summer* in lowercase in line seven (all three also list Kilmer's 1914 edition of the poem in their acknowledgments). In addition, the second and third editions print *to God* rather than *at God* in line five. McGann's text matches the one printed

in Untermeyer's well known *Modern American Poetry*, except that Untermeyer has *summer* in lowercase (391).⁹ A further complication is that, despite McGann's alteration of Brooks and Warren, the content and wording of the critique show that he is quoting from the 1960 edition, in which the discussion of the poem is shorter than and quite different from the one in the 1938 edition (the discussion in the 1950 edition is different again, but is also longer than the one in the 1960 edition). These instabilities seem much more interesting and puzzling than any arising from the scanning experiment: McGann's text matches no printed version I have seen, and matches neither the edition of Brooks and Warren that he cites, nor the one from which he quotes, nor the edition of Kilmer's poem that he cites. The instabilities in the poem do not significantly alter its interpretation, but they do suggest that the self-identity of texts is always under pressure, if not necessarily for the reasons McGann claims.

Now to the focused alteration. As insufferable as the critique of this poem by Brooks and Warren sometimes is, their central charge of incoherence seems well founded. Yet the incoherence is not limited to the inconsistency of Kilmer's TREE = WOMAN metaphor throughout the poem. The initial praise of trees as "lovely" also has very little to do with the rest of the poem. The stanza about the tree wearing a nest of robins in her hair is the only one that is more than vaguely related to the appearance of trees, and the more generic meaning of "excellent, delightful" for *lovely* does not seem obviously appropriate either, especially because of the emphasis on vision in line one, an emphasis that seems more likely to be accidental than intentional (are poems visually lovely?). Furthermore, the inability of poets to create trees, with which the poem ends, also seems to have nothing to do with loveliness, and seems undercut by the poetic, artificial nature of the various metaphoric characterizations of trees, which are, after all, created by the poet (the 1950 edition of Brooks and Warren has the fullest discussion of these issues).

One way to address the problems in the poem is to praise trees not for their loveliness, but for their variety (as McGann suggests in facetiously comparing the poem to "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"), and this can be accomplished simply by changing "as lovely as a tree" to "as various as a tree." The adjective is not very attractive, however, and the change creates some fault lines because the variety suggested by the images is difficult to attach to a single tree. The two alterations below go progressively farther:

Trees

(For Mr. Joyce Kilmer)

I think no poem will ever be
As multifarious as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth seems pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

Might also look at God all day,
Or lift her leafy arms to pray.

A tree who may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair,

Though on her bosom snow has lain,
May intimately live with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Trees

(For Mr. Joyce Kilmer)

I think that poems will never please
In half so many ways as trees.

If one tree's hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

Another looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.

If one tree may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair,

On one tree's bosom snow has lain;
One intimately lives with rain.

Poets may write such lines as these,
But God alone created trees.

The original has been made coherent by changing the characteristic of trees that is praised from loveliness to variety while leaving as much of the language and structure intact as possible. As always happens, one change in a poem prompts others, and the disruptions of the original reveal structures, sounds, and meanings that might otherwise be overlooked. (In general, the better the poem, the more pronounced the effects.) One difficulty with the two versions above is that euphonious adjectives meaning “various” are not easy to find. Another is that mere variety does not seem particularly praiseworthy, and what variety there is seems to lie more in the poetic perceptions of trees than in the trees themselves. About the actual differences among trees the poem is silent. This means that the final stanza continues to be problematic, for the various views of trees are now even more obviously those created by a poet.

In the hands of a great poet, the praise of variety involves meticulous attention to things like “a brinded cow” and the “stippling” of the “rose moles” on trout. Although “Trees” is no “Pied Beauty,” it seems fitting to mention Hopkins’s poem, given the comment by Miriam A. Kilmer (Joyce Kilmer’s granddaughter) that “It is as an editor that his most important contributions to poetry were made; my father particularly credited him with the literary recognition of Gerard Manley Hopkins in the United States.” Presumably this is a reference to Kilmer’s 1917 *Dreams and Images: An Anthology of Catholic Poets*, which contains Hopkins’s “Spring,” “The Habit of Perfection,” and “The Starlight Night.”¹⁰ Another tantalizing fact is that Kilmer wrote a poem to Hopkins, “Father Gerard Hopkins, S. J.” (Holliday).

A different kind of alteration reinterprets the poem backward from the final couplet:

Trees

(For Mr. Joyce Kilmer)

Though poems may inspire us,
A tree is far more marvelous.

One poet’s tree in Summer wears
A nest of robins in her hair;

Another’s hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

Another looks at God all day,
 And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
 On one tree's bosom snow has lain;
 One intimately lives with rain;

We poets sing such poems as these,
 But God's command created trees.

Here, though the creative acts of poets may inspire by producing poetic descriptions of trees, the poet's achievement pales in comparison with God's achievement in creating the trees themselves. The adjective *marvelous* is still rather vague, but at least it avoids any inappropriate suggestion of visual beauty. This version emphasizes the relationship between speech and creation, and the lack of concrete detail heightens the contrast between the solid reality of trees and the mere verbal nature of "Trees." The poem becomes self-consciously self-referential.

Another way of approaching the incoherence of the poem is to remove the explicitly pious religious sentiment and choose characteristics of trees to praise that are more concrete and specific and less metaphorical and anthropomorphic, characteristics that the next version sums up as marvelous and wondrous:

Trees

(For Mr. Joyce Kilmer)

Though poems may inspire us,
 A tree is far more marvelous.

A tree whose mouthless leaves drink rain,
 And breathe the foul air clean again;

A tree that towering massive there
 Is captured sunlight, earth, and air;

A tree whose roots break rocks apart;
 Who pumps its blood without a heart;
 Within whose living trunk are rings
 That saw the births of Egypt's kings.

Poems may sing, and mean, and *be*,
 But none's as wondrous as a tree.

Here palpable facts about the respiration, size, physical structure, growth, and age of trees make them seem marvelous and wondrous, rather than poetic descriptions of them. Because the basic contrast between poems and trees of the original has been retained, this version remains self-referential, but here the focus has shifted toward the trees and away from poetry. The contrast between this version and Kilmer's original reinforces the primary nature of the religious impulse behind his poem, in which the loveliness of the tree is asserted as a reason to praise God as a creator of trees, and to emphasize man's humbler powers of creation. As Kilmer comments in the introduction to his anthology of Catholic verse, "The poet sees things hidden from other men, but he sees them only in dreams. A poet is (by the very origin of the word) a maker, but a maker of images, not a creator of life" (n.p.). Further alterations are possible in almost any direction. Despite the similarity in structure between this version and the original, however, we have almost left interpretation behind. It is time to return.

In the 1950 "Postscript" to their "Letter to the Teacher," Brooks and Warren sound more like McGann than one might expect. Indeed, the postscript and letter are valuable documents for any student of literature, and they are especially valuable for anyone who has grown up among claims that New Criticism consciously rejected historical context and biographical study. Like McGann, Brooks and Warren reject "official" readings and insist that the reader and the poem exist in

a perpetual dialectic. For this reason the process of criticism is a never-ending process. It cannot exhaust the good poem or the good poet. This means more criticism, not less. But it ought to mean a criticism constantly returning to the object and constantly refining itself by fresh appeals to intuition and perception. (*Understanding Poetry* [1950] xxiii)

I endorse these words, which remind me of Leo Spitzer's philological circle (30), but I would add that when critics return to the poem to refine their interpretations, they would be wise to bring along some tools that can aid perception and sharpen and correct intuition. Some of the most useful tools have been mentioned above [in the article from which this essay is excerpted]: text analysis, corpora, linguistic stylistics, empirical studies of reader response, and focused text alteration. And still others, such as computer-assisted thematic analysis and statistical stylistics, are increasingly being used to good effect.

I conclude with an interpretive travesty of my own:

Trees

(For Mr. Joyce Kilmer)

He thinks that he will never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

But poems charm and poems please,
And many are lovelier than "Trees."

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast,

Can hardly look at God all day,
While lifting leafy arms to pray.

Where are her eyes, mouth, arms, and head?
Perhaps she lifts her legs instead.

Can that same tree in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair?

Perhaps her arms (or legs?) are hairy.
A tree like that should make one wary.

That bosom on which snow has lain?
You'll search a tree for it in vain.

Unless . . . a hairy bosom too?
That tree belongs inside a zoo.
One line is good. I can't complain
Of "intimately lives with rain."
Bad poems persist; they sadden me.
Not even God could make *that* tree.

Notes

¹ An electronic form of McGann's discussion with images of the periodical page that was scanned and images of the various results appears on the web as "Rethinking Textuality".

² Following my normal practice and without intentional irony, I collected this quotation and most of the others in this article by scanning and OCR—to avoid typing errors.

³ On text-world creation, see Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*; Werth, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*; Semino, *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts*; and Stockwell, *The Poetics of Science Fiction*.

⁴ The crude ‘fellate’ meaning of *blow* dates only from 1933, but it seems unlikely that Instruction would consider that relevant (“blow”).

⁵ McGann does not explicitly cite Kilmer or Brooks and Warren, but his bibliography includes the 1914 edition of Kilmer’s *Trees and other Poems* and the 1938 edition of Brooks and Warren.

⁶ The “seduce” meaning of *make*, first cited from 1910, is barely possible historically, though none of the citations from before Kilmer’s death in 1918 seem to suggest actual sexual acts (“make”).

⁷ Lewis Carroll, like Humpty Dumpty, was a nominalist in logical matters, holding that the stipulation of meaning for words to be used is perfectly reasonable. However, as Martin Gardner points out in his notes, “[I]f we wish to communicate accurately we are under a kind of moral obligation to avoid Humpty’s practice of giving private meanings to commonly used words” (270). He also quotes Roger Holmes, who asks, “May we . . . make our words mean whatever we choose them to mean? . . . Do we have an obligation to past usage? In one sense words are our masters, or communication would be impossible. In another we are the masters; otherwise there could be no poetry” (270).

⁸ The 1914 edition differs slightly from the poem’s original 1913 publication in *Poetry*, where the title appears uppercase, there is no special typography for *I think* in line one, and, most importantly, there is no dedication.

⁹ I have seen only the 1936 edition; however, *THINK* appears as in the original but the title has only an initial capital in the 1919 edition, available at www.bartleby.com/104/119.html.

¹⁰ I have seen only a later edition (Kilmer, *Joyce Kilmer’s Anthology of Catholic Poets*), but its preface states that “No omissions from or additions to Kilmer’s original selections have been made in reprinting the first unit; here are his friends and favorites as he noted them in 1917” (n.p.).

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