1.1.4

The nineteenth century

Textual studies in an age of abundance

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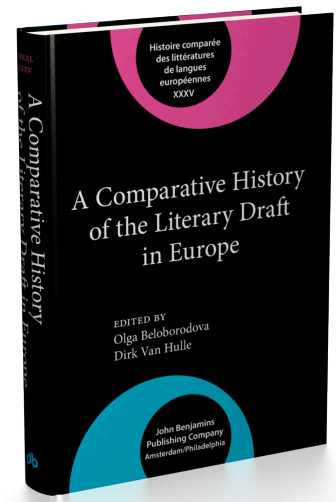

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Textual studies in an age of abundance

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Classical textual theory based itself on the idea of an authorial manuscript which was almost always missing; but textual studies of the modern period, as theorised by McGann, face a different problem: not an insufficiency of data but a surfeit of it. In fact, not all nineteenth-century authors thought to preserve their manuscripts, but many did, and the abundance of material produced by this change in literary culture creates a whole new set of challenges for the textual scholar. Where does textual authority lie in a complex field of multiple texts, both in draft and in successive print editions?

Keywords: drafts, nineteenth century, curation, Jerome McGann, variants, manuscripts

The manuscript plays a central and paradoxical role in classical textual theory: it is at once the true object of study and the one thing that, as it happens, you normally lack. "When an author's manuscript is preserved, this has paramount authority, of course", wrote Fredson Bowers with breezy authority in a much-noted essay: "the editor must choose the manuscript as his major authority" (Bowers 1964a: 226). But in the case of the early modern texts with which classical theory was occupied there almost never *is* such a manuscript: the task of scholarship is, therefore, to try and re-create it, working backwards through the imperfect printed texts that do exist to the implied manuscript that preceded them, what Greg called "the author's original" – "the manuscript that stood immediately behind the print", in Bowers's words, "the text directly underneath the printed copy"; or what G. Thomas Tanselle, Greg's most thoughtful follower, calls "the text as the author wished to have it presented to the public" (Bowers 1964b: 3, 8; Greg 1966: 384; Tanselle 1976: 172). When Jerome McGann took on this tradition of textual theory in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983), one of his major objections to the classical position was purely empirical: by the time you get to the nineteenth century, the predicament which Greg and the others had to address has simply changed. The problem is no longer an absence of manuscript testimony but an abundance of it: a logic of scarcity has been replaced by one of excess. "He was dealing with a period from which relatively few manuscripts have survived", Tanselle conceded in an essay about Greg, "but can the same procedure be applied to texts for which manuscripts do survive?". In response to his question: "Greg's own answer … I think it can be plainly inferred from his essay, would be Yes".[1] (That is Tanselle's answer too; 1975: 181). McGann's response was that having a problem of *too much* rather than *not enough* constitutes a difference in kind, not merely in degree: it is a "special fact about modern texts", as he puts it,

1. For a succinct but cogent dissent from this view, see P. Gaskell 1999: 153, 190–191.

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that they are typically "a work for which we have the author's original manuscript" (1983: 58, 18). That was the state of affairs which classical textual scholarship most desired. Tanselle thought that an edition should base itself on an early text, "one as near to the author's manuscript as possible, if not that manuscript itself"; but it is not always easy to get what you wish for (Tanselle 1981: 65). A Romanticist or Victorianist seeking to return to that primal authority will find, typically, that "that manuscript itself" contains all kinds of complication, even when there is a singular "manuscript itself" in the first place and not a plurality of them, containing different versions, second thoughts, deletions, abandoned versions – everything, in short, that might be gathered under the capacious heading of "draft" material. In McGann's words, "the ancestral series" envisaged by classical theory finds itself "invaded by still earlier, pre-publication forms" (1983: 39).

Obviously, draft readings can become a subject of enquiry only within a literary culture that preserves evidence of them, which normally means hanging on to manuscripts after a work has gone to press. Pierre-Marc de Biasi observes a general trend: "because of significant cultural and intellectual changes that modified thinking and behaviour in Europe from the latter half of the eighteenth century on, literary drafts have been preserved with some care by the writers themselves throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (1996: 28). George Eliot, for a good example, required the manuscripts of her novels to be returned after the typesetters had done their work – "*Please keep the ms for yours truly!*", wrote her husband on her behalf to Blackwood – which she then had bound and presented to Lewes; and, after his death, she bequeathed them to the British Museum (Eliot 1954–78: iii.250).[2] But such self-curation was far from ubiquitous. In her own copy of McGann's book Marilyn Butler put a sceptical question mark in the margin by the claim that a modern text is one for which we have manuscript material, perhaps mindful that for some of the authors she had herself studied, such as Austen or Peacock, the provision of manuscript evidence is nowhere near as full as it is for, say, Wordsworth or Byron.[3] And it is true of many nineteenth-century authors that they show, by modern standards, a striking lack of interest in the fate of their manuscripts once publication has happened, and sometimes even if it hasn't: when he belatedly got round to collecting his verse, Coleridge had to write to Lady Beaumont to see if she still had the lines addressed to Wordsworth that he had given her years before and of which he had kept no copy (Coleridge 1956–1971: iv.564). That was perhaps an unusual degree of negligence, but many authors do not seem to have made much effort to gather their papers into any sort of archive. "[M]any manuscripts which scholars and collectors would consider precious were simply discarded by printers", writes Allan C. Dooley: "we should be more surprised when they survive than when they do not" (Dooley 1992: 18). That some (not many) of Matthew Arnold's poetical manuscripts are preserved and not others, for instance, appears entirely a matter of contingency: a draft of 22 lines from "Dover Beach" seems to have survived because it was written on the same piece of

2. A note announcing the bequest was also published in *The Athenæum* on 18 July 1891 ("The Manuscripts of Georges Eliot's Works", 97–98).

3. Private collection.

paper as Arnold's notes about Empedocles, which really were worth keeping; and Arnold may even have tried to erase the lines (which are in faint pencil) to prevent their continued existence (Tinker and Lowry 1940: 173). Edward FitzGerald describes Tennyson heedlessly despatching leaves to the fire as they returned from the printers, and using bits of other manuscripts to light his pipe, which hardly implies reverence (H. Tennyson 1897: i.198). Tennyson told one visitor that preserving "all the trifles of a man of genius" was a "diseased craving"; and he professed impatience with editions that presented all the variants of the manuscript record because he found the footnotes so distracting (Knight 1897: 265, 267).

A consideration of draft material often shakes that sense of poetic "inevitability" invoked by a certain kind of aesthetic judgement – such as that voiced by Coleridge when he recalls his bold insistence that it would be "scarcely more difficult to push a stone out from the pyramids with the bare hand than to alter a word, or the position of a word, in Milton or Shakespeare" (Coleridge 1975: 12). That kind of veneration is what is at stake in an often-quoted passage from Lamb, in which he remembers gazing in dismay at the Trinity manuscript of "Lycidas" and realising that the words were, far from merely given, in truth "mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure"; but Andrew Raven is quite right to observe that Lamb actually conveys a deep fascination with what he comically deplores, and such complicated feelings about the draft go on to characterise many nineteenth-century writers (Lamb 1929: 358; Raven 2017: 88).[4] Tennyson, for instance, made his views clear; but at the same time he admitted to liking "those old Variorum Classics – all the Notes make the Text look precious"; and an immense amount of Tennyson manuscript material has come down to us that makes such an edition of his own works possible, so even he was evidently not wholly immune to what de Biasi identifies as the emergent spirit of the age (Knight 1897; Tennyson 1987–93). Caring for manuscripts was not only the practice of the writers themselves: the survival of such a large amount of Tennyson material is due in good part to the loving attentions of his family, especially his elder son Hallam; and much the same is true of the immense collection of Wordsworth papers now cared for by the Wordsworth Trust. It must have been important to Wordsworth's sense of himself as a writer that he lived within reach of the archive of himself, but its curation was quite as much a family business as an individual pursuit. Coleridge, his friend and collaborator, lacked such self-preservative instincts as well as such a supportive circle: where his manuscripts survive it is usually through the actions of admiring collectors, such as his early publisher Joseph Cottle, who gathered together a scrapbook, doubtless as a kind of memorial of his young friend's brilliance, or Elizabeth Smith of Bownham House in Gloucester, who, wanting a sample of his handwriting for her autograph collection, was obligingly sent a copy of "Kubla Khan" by Southey (Stillinger 1994: 28; Kelliher 1994). The "cultural and intellectual changes" that de Biasi mentions are usually associated with shifting conceptions of authorship and notions of "genius", notions which encourage people to regard a writer's manuscripts as a memento of his or her extraordinariness and, at least for more scholarly readers, a record of the mystery of creative process; and such developments naturally foster habits of preservation and curation (Van Hulle

4. See also Chapters 1.1.2 and 1.4.1 in this volume.

2019: 4). It must have been a sense of the special genius of Byron which inspired Murray to gather such a horde of his papers in Albemarle Street, for instance: the claims of *Emma*, of which no manuscript survives, were evidently less compelling. George Smith seems to have hung on to the manuscripts of the Charlotte Brontë novels that he published for similarly reverential reasons, and, after his widow's death, they were presented to the British Museum as a national treasure: the novels of Charlotte's sisters were brought to press by a less tender-minded publisher and the manuscripts from which he worked seem to have been simply thrown away, the normal thing to do (Bell 1933: 79–80). Dickens's manuscripts (after *Oliver Twist*) were efficiently curated by John Forster, his biographer, who subsequently had all but a few that Dickens himself gifted to friends bound up with the author's working notes and presented them to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Gerard Manley Hopkins had what his editor calls "a priestly lack of solicitude for his artistic creations", but nevertheless came to think he should "keep my verses together in one place": this responsibility he chose to delegate to Robert Bridges, who largely constituted his readership ("You are my public", Hopkins told him) as well as acting as the curator of his archive and eventually as his editor (Hopkins 1990: xxxiv; Hopkins 2013: i.333, i.282). By the end of the century the instinct to preserve was becoming firmly embedded in the literary culture, as witnessed by the example of Thomas Hardy, whose manuscripts were judiciously distributed around the great libraries and museums, a process originally sparked by the enterprising Sydney Cockerell asking him if he might like to donate something to the Fitzwilliam. Hardy duly responded with *Jude the Obscure* and *Times' Laughingstocks*, and then, using Cockerell as both adviser and go-between, went on to present gifts to the British Museum (*The Dynasts* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*), Birmingham Museum (*Wessex Words*), the Bodleian (*Poems of the Past and Present*), as well as the Library of Congress (*A Group of Noble Dames*) and the Royal Library at Windsor (*The Trumpet Major*) (Hardy 1978–2012: iv.178–179, 180–181, 182).[5] Such largesse clearly implies a sense of the importance of the material, though Hardy was old-fashioned enough to admit himself "rather appalled at the temerity of presenting these old MSS", and he was grateful to Cockerell for his intercessions: "It would, I feel, not be quite becoming for a writer to send his MSS to a museum on his own judgment" (iv.181). When to his surprise, in early 1918, the manuscript of *Far From the Madding Crowd* turned up, he was content for it to be auctioned for the Red Cross, though with the gruff caveat "if anybody will buy it" (v.243). Perhaps his sense of the value of such material, both cultural and monetary, had grown by the time he drew up his will, in which the manuscript of *Moments of Vision* was left to Magdalene College, Cambridge, and *Winter Words* to Queen's College, Oxford. His motivation in both cases was gratitude for being elected to an Honorary Fellowship; this was also what lay behind Robert Browning's bequest of his later poetical manuscripts, handsomely bound in brown morocco, to Balliol College, which had elected him an honorary Fellow in 1867. The retention of these papers evidently represented a significant change of heart on Browning's part as few manuscripts of his earlier poems survive: *The Ring and the Book* does, but only because

5. See also the list of "Archives" in Michael Milgate's essay on Hardy in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

it came into George Smith's private collection (Dooley 1992: 19; and, in general, see Millgate 1992).

As in Hardy's case and George Eliot's and most of the others I have mentioned, the manuscripts that Browning gave to Balliol were printer's copy which had been returned to the author, though that does not mean they are textually very clean: according to its editor, for example, something like a fifth of the lines of *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day* show revision of some kind (Mynors 1963: 363; Browning 2009: 7). "She would wait patiently, searching for the right term, until it presented itself to her", said Elizabeth Gaskell of Charlotte Brontë: "She never wrote down a sentence until she clearly understood what she wanted to say, had deliberately chosen the words, and arranged them in their right order" (E. Gaskell 2009: 246–247). But even Brontë's unusually tidy manuscripts have changes in them: perhaps one alteration for every two leaves, estimates Margaret Smith, the editor of *Jane Eyre*, mostly local improvements in phrasing but some quite substantial in their implication (Brontë 1980: xxxi). Printing houses clearly did not expect their "fair copy" to be an immaculate presentation of the text as "the author wished to have it presented to the public", though those wishes might be more or less deduced: Dickens, for an extreme example, usually wrote against the clock and consequently sent off immensely complicated copy full of interlineations and erasures, though to judge by the minimal corrections effected in proof the printers seem to have managed pretty well (Butt and Tillotson 1957: 21). Generally speaking, quite a lot of revision is still occurring on the page in printer's copy, so trying to establish a distinction between genuine "rough drafts" and later manuscripts that merely capture a work's "*preparation for publication*" – that is, putting "the finishing touches to a text all but complete and only grooming its appearance by fiddling with a few minor details" – seems not to make much sense, or at least to describe a practical rather than a theoretical difference (de Biasi 1996: 30). Additionally, an author such as Browning, who seems in this respect broadly exemplary, clearly regarded proof stage as an integral part of the writing process: doing the proofs was "a good deal of resolute work", as he said, speaking of the labours on the proofs of *Parleyings* (Browning 2009: 7). Part of McGann's objection to the classical tradition was that the whole theory depended on a conception of lonely authorial integrity undone by the corruption of print – a conception which seemed simply to misrepresent the role that authors have very commonly played, working collaboratively with their printers and publishers and editors and proof-readers and all the rest, to bring their writings before the public. Austen seems quite prepared to have had her text revised by William Gifford at Murray's, for instance; and Clare frequently expressed gratitude for the interventions made by his publishers in his poems (Sutherland 2012: 123–126; Leader 1996: 206–261). The more "social" conception of authorship that arises from such examples was not McGann's invention, as he would be the first to say: in *A Critique* he cites prominently James Thorpe and Philip Gaskell, both of whom saw authorial intention realised within the collaborative process of publication rather than existing in its pristine form at the moment just before that process began (see for example Thorpe 1972; P. Gaskell 1972; both qtd in McGann 1983); and the implication of such a position is that proofs can also be construed as part of the "draft" history of a literary work. Proofs have a kind of double life, existing at once in the

world of print (because they are type-set) and also in the world of manuscript (because they are amended by hand); but since authors often make changes at proof stage that are new additions or re-thinkings, rather than merely the restoration of original manuscript readings that have been misrepresented by fallible printers, the inclusion of corrected proofs in any consideration of the draft seems in principle beyond dispute: such papers are, in Hannah Sullivan's phrase, "*draftier* than they look" (Sullivan 2016: 88).

Every thing, said Bishop Butler, is what it is and not another thing (Butler 1836: 24); and the other thing that every literary work is not is the work that it would have been had the decisions taken in draft not been taken. The great question, says Hans Walter Gabler, is "whether the process of the writing is, or is not, integral to the product of the writing"; but whatever the validity of the proposition in the abstract, the issue naturally remains notional in those many real-life cases in which we don't have a clue what "the process of the writing" might have been: readers of "Tintern Abbey" or *Wuthering Heights* or "My Last Duchess" will most likely remain forever untroubled by a knowledge of the history of their original becoming (Gabler 1999: 62). But in many other cases we do have traces of that history and it has an interest which is, loosely speaking, biographical: the drafts imply something about the development of a writer. There may be changes of addition (new words put in), omission (words struck out), replacement (words re-chosen), or re-arrangement (words swapped about); and from the appearance of the draft one may often infer the sequence of such changes so that the manuscript becomes a static picture that implies a dynamic "process", in Gabler's word. But, as he says elsewhere, the evidence provided by a draft "cannot be reduced to text only": this is perhaps the main principle of genetic criticism, yet even much older traditions of textual scholarship acknowledged the importance of what the Shelley scholar Neville Rogers called "manuscript surroundings" (Gabler 2018: 211; Rogers 1967: 44). For a start, as in Shelley's case, the manuscript may contain many things besides words, such as the curious but suggestive drawings that punctuate the maze of his manuscript writings, images which are in a literal sense unreadable but nevertheless obviously meaningful.[6] In other ways, too, the manuscript may suggest contexts for composition which the printed text does not convey, such as traces of collaboration; or, by the physical proximity of the draft literary work to other sorts of writing, it may imply meaningful but unexpected connections at work in the author's mind. The contents of Shelley's notebooks are often extremely diverse, mingling fragments of verse with discursive prose and other notes, so that, say, "The Cloud" emerges in the company of a discussion of sexual ethics and statistical information about milk production; and the same is true, for example, of the notebook in which Wordsworth wrote the earliest lines of *The Prelude*, which also includes Dorothy's account of their travels in Germany and some notes on German grammar, as well as William's account of meeting Klopstock and a fragment of an essay on morals (Rogers 1967: 7–8; Wordsworth 1977b: 3). One draft of Wordsworth's *Home at Grasmere* is an especially interesting case: it is written in an interleaved copy of Coleridge's *Poems, on Various Subjects*, so that, for example, Wordsworth's broadly pantheistic lines about "Natures kind &

6. Shelley's drawings are discussed in Moore Goslee 2011.

ever present aid" occupy a textual space between and around Coleridge's printed lines about the "strong controlling Love" of God (Wordsworth 1977a: 172). (What the interplay between the two poems might be is certainly less than obvious, but that there was some interplay in Wordsworth's mind seems plausible.) The physical evidence of a manuscript may be enlightening in other ways. That Tennyson wrote *In Memoriam* in a butcher's ledger book does not seem likely to bring much to the table (H. Tennyson 1897: i.297); but a close look at the kinds of paper used in the manuscript of *Middlemarch*, for instance, when considered alongside particular details of its pagination and the spacing of the writing, suggests something interesting: that the novel which we know by that name grew from George Eliot's decision to join together a story called "Miss Brooke" with an abandoned work also called "Middlemarch". As it happens, we knew that already because J. W. Cross mentions it in his *George Eliot's Life* (1885); but a fuller (still admittedly speculative) compositional history can be teased out of the manuscript (Beaty 1960: 3–42).

It is naturally difficult to make any meaningful generalisation about the textual changes that drafts reveal: a range of examples seems the best thing to offer, and Wordsworth is a good place to start as his own twin habits of revision and retentiveness have left one of the fullest draft archives of all nineteenth-century poets: you could say, indeed, that his greatest long poem, universally known as *The Prelude*, a title he did not give it, is nothing but an archive of drafts. The poem evolved through fifty-two years of manuscript and never arrived at a settled version, so any reading text is a matter of more or less principled picking and choosing. "No two editors will come up with the same text of thirteen-book *The Prelude* (or of any *Prelude*, for that matter)", Jonathan Wordsworth was fond of saying, with a kind of morose pleasure at the impossibility of it all: he calculated that seventeen distinct versions could be found, each the result of a phase of thorough-going revision, with much more associated material besides (J. Wordsworth 1992: 105, 88). The manuscripts show changes both within themselves and between them. Here, from MS JJ (in which the first stirrings of *The Prelude* appear – see Figure 1).

W
[?]ith what strange utterance did
wind
~~the loud dry~~
Blow through my ears, ~~what colours~~
~~what motion did~~
~~The co~~ the ~~cloud~~
the colours of the sky
not
Wh The sky was then
no sky
Of earth & with what motion move the cloud,
As on the perilous brink cliff

---

ridge cliff alone
While on the perilous ~~edge~~ I hung
With what strange utterance did the loud
dry wind
Blow through my ears the sky seemed not
a sky
Of earth, and with what motion moved
the clouds

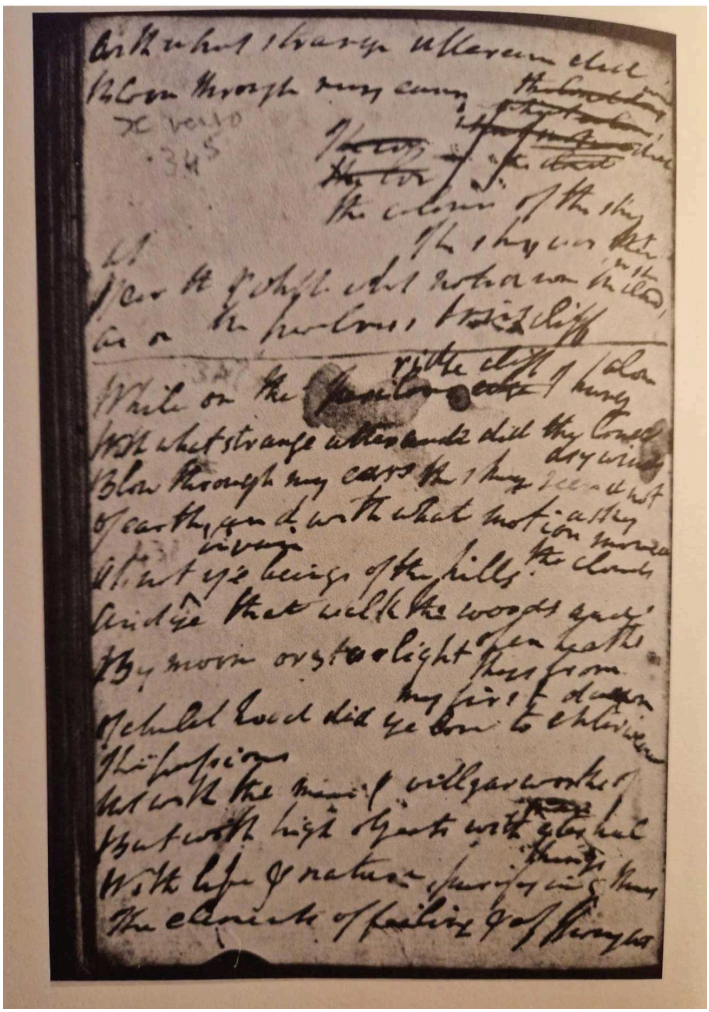

Figure 1. William Wordsworth, Ms. JJ (DC MS 19), X^{v}, The Wordsworth Trust

"The horizontal line marks a fresh start", says Stephen Parrish, its editor (Wordsworth 1977b: 109): the material above the line seems written quickly, even impatiently, with imprecise deletions and misspellings and punctuation missing. Below the deep breath of the line he is gathering his thoughts, though clearly still improvising. The idea of the "colours of the sky" is dropped because, you could speculate, Wordsworth realised that this episode had to be principally sonic if the governing idea of nature's punitive "utterance" was to work. But, as with Bushell's suggestion that "edge" had to go because it was "too unspecific", such a thought can only be speculation (Bushell 2009: 97);[7] and in that case one could, after all, reflect that "edge" is the word for something concrete and topographical in the Lakes (as in "Striding" or "Swirrell") – or that Wordsworth will go on to imagine his Boy of Winander at the moment when "the stars had just begun / To move along the edges of the hills" (V.391–392) and depict the "steep hill's edge" from which poor Lucy Gray descends to her doom. The evidence of draft readings is more often intriguing than conclusive about authorial purpose. For comparison, the text that belatedly appeared in 1850 is this:

> While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
> With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
> Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
> Of earth–and with what motion moved the clouds! (Wordsworth 1850: 17)

Wordsworth's draft of the cliff-hanging boy is able to leave certain decisions unresolved ("ridge" or "cliff"?) that publication needs to see settled one way or the other. The 1850 text is obviously more formally presented: the punctuation is sorted out, and "my ear" has a poetic decorum. The changes are nowhere near as marked as they are elsewhere in Wordsworth's long history of revision, a subject of perennial interest at least to his scholarly readers. To take just one example: the lasting psychological effect of moments such as the one he evokes in his cliff-hanging story is described as "fructifying" in the two-part *Prelude* of 1798–1799, but in later drafts as "vivifying" and, still later, as "renovating", rewordings which are important as they imply rather different ways of thinking about the matter (Wordsworth 1959: 445).

You often get a similar sense of something working itself out in the draft's vivid present tense in Byron. Zachary Leader judiciously singled out this stanza from *Don Juan* about Juan's lovesick woes as an example of Byron at work, displaying a self-referential humour: the young man longs for

> A Bosom on which he his head might lay,
> And hear the heart beat with the love it granted
> ~~And feel the nameless tumult~~

7. Although Bushell also imagines a literary critic thinking the word "too specific and narrow for Wordsworth's desired communication" and replacing it with something with "a more topographical sense of context and scale" (92).

~~An eye for once might~~
~~That heart which~~
~~And feel the joy of loving doubled~~
~~That~~
And–several other things which I forget–
Or which at least I need not mention yet.

(Leader 1996: 88, 89; and see Byron 1980–1993: v.39)

The draft represents a "series of false starts from which Byron turns in comic defeat", as Leader says: the joke ("several things which I forget") still works if you are reading the printed page innocent of any knowledge of its back-history, but it is funnier if you do know it (Leader 1996: 89). *Don Juan* has a special relationship with its draft prehistory because it has a perpetual interest in contingency and the possibility of things being otherwise – "*not* what *was*, / But what *was not*" (VI.437–438: Byron 1980–1993: v.316) – which is what, textually speaking, drafts often represent. The abandoned manuscript chapters of *Persuasion* and *Great Expectations* would be prominent examples on a large scale.[8] On a smaller scale, for an example, Gerard Manley Hopkins writes as the opening line in his first two drafts of "The Windhover": "I caught this morning morning's minion, king / Of daylight's dauphin". But when he revised the transcription of the poem made by Robert Bridges he corrected the text by introducing a very daring line-break: "I caught this morning morning's minion, king– / Dom of daylight's dauphin", doubtless (as Mackenzie suggests) to avoid the unwanted interpretation that the windhover was "king of the dauphin of daylight" when of course *it* is the dauphin itself (Hopkins 1990: 380). Splitting a word over a line like that might look like the sort of stylistic audacity that would come early in the life of a poem, but this one actually arose six years after the original draft. Hopkins made other changes to Bridges's text too, one of the most interesting being the amendment of the poem's climax, "pride, plume, here / Buckle! & the fire that breaks from thee then" to "pride, plume, here / Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then": his emphatic capitals reproduce in a different way the stress that had been signalled in the first two drafts by a *sforzando* sign, the significance of which Bridges had evidently missed (383). The insistence of the revision in draft is really telling you something here: it is when the falcon buckles that the fire breaks out most splendidly, just as Christ is at his most magnificent when most humiliated on the Cross, and this the capitals insist upon by saying, as it were, "AND" and not the word you might have expected to find here, "but" or "yet" or "nevertheless" or whatever else might be used to register simple contradiction.

Drafts often expose wordings that feel as though they must always have been thus as the result of having once been something else, though the critical significance of such a discovery will naturally differ from case to case. It is interesting to witness George Eliot reining in her animosity as she compares the education of Rosamond Vincy and Mary Garth: the parenthesis

8. In fact, almost none of the manuscript of the original ending of *Great Expectations* survives, but it was set in type before Dickens abandoned it and the proof is extant (see Dickens 2008: 443).

in "The two girls [...] had been at the same provincial school together (Mary as an articled pupil)" began as "(Mary at the lower price which did not include such finishing touches such as lessons in getting in and out of a carriage)" (Eliot 1986; 1992: 106). A reader familiar with Tennyson's poem "Tithonus" from the best-selling *Enoch Arden* volume might have been no less surprised to learn that the plangent line "And after many a summer dies the swan" had begun in a draft of thirty years before as "And after many summers dies the rose": the revisions were effected in manuscript before Tennyson sent it to Thackeray for its first publication in the *Cornhill* (Tennyson 1987: ii.607). The longevity of the swan obviously makes better sense in the context than the brevity of the rose, and brings in the idea of the swan-song too, appropriate for a dramatic monologue voiced by one who is dying, albeit perpetually. Similarly, it is striking to watch the great line in A. E. Housman's "The Recruit", "And go, and luck go with you", grow from "And luck to all your marching" to "And [?take] good luck from Ludlow" to "And keep your friends in mind, lad" to "And friends and home will mind you" to "You take their hearts to march with" and only belatedly to the final version. Striking, too, that a Housman adjective that looks like it must have been present from the very conception of its poem – "the thymy wold" – actually began as the rather drabber "midland" (Housman 1997: 5, 41). A related sense of concealed comedy is captured in the earliest surviving draft of Arthur Hugh Clough's most famous poem. I imagine most people would have put money on "struggle" being one of the first things that Clough thought of when he sat down to write, but in draft the opening line reads:

> Say not – the nought availeth

Norrington remarked that the poem we know might have been printed from this draft, though his reflection that "[t]he fourth word of the first line would need to have been supplied" rather begs a question (Norrington 1948: 33).

The work of drafting can be discerned in the absence of physical drafts, in circumstances where their existence can only be inferred by observing discrepancies between a surviving manuscript and its published version: we can surmise either a missing later manuscript sent to the printer in which the change was made, or, more plausibly in many cases, second thoughts that were implemented in proof. Some writers proceed, lamented a contemporary (Frederic Saunders, *The Author's Printing and Publishing Assistant*, 1839), "as if they actually considered that they could not satisfactorily Correct their Work, until they saw it in print" (qtd in Dooley 1992: 35). Such things can be small improving tweaks, or tidyings-up: in *Jane Eyre*, for instance, Bertha Rochester has a "dark" visage in the fair copy but a "wild" one in the first edition; "Reason sits on the throne and holds the reins" in manuscript, which is an odd thing to say, but in the printed text "Reason sits firm and holds the reins" (Brontë 1980: xxxiv, xxii, 203). Other changes can be more substantial: George Eliot significantly reworked the resonant closing paragraphs of *Middlemarch*, removing an acerbic reference to "the view that to renounce an advantage to oneself which might be got from the folly or ignorance of others is a sign of mental weakness" (1986; 1992: 824). Byron took the opportunity of proof stage to add two stanzas of contumely about Donna Inez in *Don Juan* (Byron 1980–1993: v.13–14). Other writers can be seen not adding but abandoning parts of their draft once the work moves to publication.

Dickens would often drop passages if he had inadvertently produced too much copy for the latest instalment: according to Butt and Tillotson it was normally the jokes that went (Butt and Tillotson 1957: 22, 97). There might be a good case for appealing to the authority of the draft in such circumstances and re-instating the cancelled passages in a modern edition, as there would for passages excised from a work by some external agency such a censor or a timid editor; but, to argue the other side, Dickens's decision not to retain them in the volume publication of the novel in question implies his final endorsement of the emergent text. Christina Rossetti, a very different case, also removed rather than added things as she moved from the privacy of manuscript to the publicity of print: McGann observes that she "not infrequently established her final texts by cutting away the original openings and conclusions" (McGann 1988: 210). So, for instance, the draft of "The Bourne", a cryptic two-stanza lyric, initially had a dozen verses which make clear that the enigmatic "we" of the published poem, beautifully haunted by the possibility of intimate address, was originally the clearly generalised "we" of a theological perspective. The loveliness of the tiny "Song" from *Goblin Market* lies in the enigma of its reference, but its manuscript version began with three stanzas that sketched in an explanatory frame narrative ("They told me that she would not live" … "And so I sit and sing her song, / And muse upon the past"): the omission, which presumably occurred in a lost fair copy or in a strike-through on proof, makes for the much greater poem (Rossetti 1979–1990: i.142, 280, 40, 242–243).

Attending to draft material is of great value for the appreciation of nineteenth-century writers; but two caveats suggest themselves. One important fact that is difficult to keep fully to mind throughout is the inevitable incompleteness of the archive with which the critic is dealing: even in the case of Wordsworth or Tennyson, where the manuscript record that has survived seems extremely full, it is unlikely to be *complete* (and we have no way of knowing how incomplete it is) – so the stories we tell about composition are always likely to be full of holes in a way which is naturally difficult to theorise. And of course many poets write before they have ever got to paper: "*No one knows* what the poets have done with their verses, as they revise them in their mind before they are written down", said Tennyson, not unreasonably (Knight 1897: 267). A second point is that an emphasis on drafts (I am thinking here of early "genetic criticism") can work to diminish attention to what happens to works once they have been published: in an odd way, such an emphasis on the catastrophe of publication replicates the insistence of classical textual scholars on the priority of manuscript, but finds a different virtue in it – not straightforward authority but a new kind of pluralistic authority in which the unreadable pre-text dissolves into all its interesting possibilities. More recent practitioners of genetic criticism have properly recognised the significance of "réécriture après publication" (Mahrer 2017: 24). Van Hulle has theorised this textual phenomenon in terms of "epigenetics", a concept borrowed from biology where it nominates the effect that changing environmental factors have on the expression of an organism's unchanging genetic code (Van Hulle 2014: 20–21): publication is envisaged as a kind of exposure to an ecosystem of reception and response which naturally modifies the organism of the text. It is indeed difficult to see why the changes that authors make in successive editions of their writings should be conceptually distinguishable from those they made before those writings appeared before the world set in type – insisting

on their difference would, as Hannah Sullivan puts it, "invest the moment of publication with almost alchemical significance" (Sullivan 2016: 82). For instance, Hardy's bleakly lovely line in "During Wind and Rain", "Down their carved names the rain-drop ploughs", was the fruit of a protracted labour which wasn't all restricted to the covert life of manuscript: the first draft has "On their chiselled names the lichen grows", which changed in its first printed appearances into "Down their chiselled names the rain-drop ploughs", before finally becoming the line we recognise in the *Collected Poems* of 1923 (Hardy 1982–95: ii.240). Hardy is far from unusual in regarding his printed texts as, in a manner, perpetually draft-like: Whitman would be only an extreme example. "Aux yeux de ces amateurs d'inquiétude et de perfection, un ouvrage n'est jamais *achevé*, – mot qui pour eux n'a aucun sens, – mais *abandonné*", Valéry said, thinking of his own *Cimetière Marin*, a sentiment popularised in the English-speaking world by Auden's succinct version of it: "A poem is never finished, only abandoned" (Valéry 1957–1960: i.1497; Auden 2015: v.79). Sometimes the condition of the drafts and the publication history have a kind of reciprocity. Wordsworth had second thoughts about his poem "Old Man Travelling" once it was published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): there, it ended with six lines in which the enigmatic and emblematic old man spoke for himself, revealing the point of his painful journey; but the lines were cut in the edition of 1800 and subsequently as though Wordsworth thought them, on reflection, extraneous to the poem. The lines consequently have an odd half-life within the oeuvre, part of the poem and not part of it; and that sense of both belonging and yet not belonging is, you could say, already discernible in the fair copy manuscript, where the six lines are written in a different ink and appear to be a later addition to the first version of the poem (Wordsworth 1940–1949: iv.247). In ways such as these, the study of drafts and the study of post-publication revision enjoy a natural collaboration and may prove mutually illuminating.

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