

Anglophone traditions

Dealing with drafts of modern literary manuscripts

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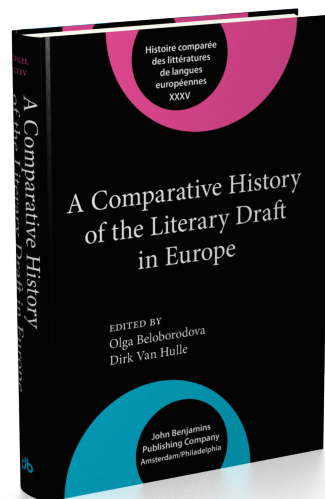
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1.2.4 Anglophone traditions

Dealing with drafts of modern literary manuscripts

Paul Eggert

Spurred on by new editions of works of modern literature in which manuscript materials are often extant, editorial theory since the 1980s has been laying the groundwork for the wider introduction of a genetic perspective on the works of Anglophone authors. Resistance to the idea from the 1940s is traced. The editing of writers' journals during the 1970s–1990s shows a hesitation to follow the brave lead of the Harvard edition of Emerson's *Journals* in recording in-text cancellations and additions. Editors' conceptions of the reader of their editions have evolved since 1950. The advent of the Cornell Wordsworth and Cornell Yeats editions broadened understanding of the editorial-archival function; the method has become accepted as the base-line responsibility of digital editors.

Keywords: draft manuscript, genetic criticism, genetic edition, anglophone scholarly editing, archival reporting, version, Emerson's *Journals*, Cornell Yeats, editorial theory, reading

Post-Second World War editorial dealings with the genesis of modern English literary manuscripts, including the journals and correspondence of literary figures, have been conflicted. Marked by growing recognition by some editors of its necessity and desirability, and then by ever more ingenious attempts to uncover and present the evidence of authorial first and second thoughts, such editions have been followed, often enough, by loud resistance to the whole enterprise. Genetic criticism and even genetic editions are not unknown in English, and there is recent evidence of newfound interest in both; but this has been achieved against a background in which the dominant tradition in scholarly editing until the 1980s, was bibliographical. The condition of the texts of Shakespeare's plays, for which virtually no holograph manuscript evidence has survived, meant that inquiry into the variant texts of the quarto and folio printings during and shortly after his lifetime could only be furthered by reconstruction of the working methods of the printshop – that is to say, by bibliographical enquiry – with the aim of identifying and thereby eliminating the habits of compositors, thus better approximating the text as Shakespeare had written it.

However, in recent decades hope has been waning among practising Shakespeare editors that bibliographical testimony alone would elicit the authorial text. Simultaneously since the 1980s, a new phase of editorial theory has been spurred on by new editorial projects involving works of later centuries in which manuscript, typescript or proof materials were often extant and where, in the case of novels, serial printings often preceded dual first editions in New York and London. These factors have been laying the groundwork – creating an appetite – for the wider introduction of a genetic perspective on the works of Anglophone authors. The forms of

it that may materialise will doubtless be affected not by European models alone but by the ways in which English pre-print literary artefacts have already been studied and edited. The history of such attempts, up until the advent of digital editions, is the subject of the present chapter, in which one main theme unexpectedly emerges: editors' changing imagining of their readerships.

The 1950s–1960s, and barbed-wire editions

Locating the source of the traditional Anglophone resistance to genetic methods of analysis in literary study is not hard. It was encapsulated in F.R. Leavis's memorable dismissal in 1943 of the Twickenham scholarly edition of Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*, edited by James Sutherland and published that same year. Leavis's review-essay, which originally appeared in *Scrutiny*, was reprinted in his influential collection *The Common Pursuit* in 1952. It was very much of its moment:

Yes, one concedes grudgingly, overcoming the inevitable revulsion, as one turns the pages of this new edition (The "Twickenham"), in which the poem trickles thinly through a desert of apparatus, to disappear time and again from sight – yes, there has to be a *Dunciad* annotated, garnished and be-prosed in this way. A very large proportion of the apparatus, after all, comes down from the eighteenth century with the poem, and the whole, though to read it all through will be worth no one's while, is enlightening documentation of the age that produced Pope and of which Pope made poetry [...] [T]hough this new monument of scholarship will have to go into all the libraries for reference, it is not the edition in which the *Dunciad* should be read. The material is one thing, the poetry another [...]. For eighteenth-century readers it must have been hard not to start away continually from the poetry to thinking about the particular historical victim and the grounds of Pope's animus against him; for modern readers it should be much easier to appreciate the poetry as poetry.
(Leavis 1952: 88)

In this passage Leavis was staving off two literary traditions simultaneously: on the one hand, the old tradition of *belles lettres* with its gentlemanly mixture of biography, literary history and assessment, against which his own more strenuous, purely literary-critical approach had been gradually defining itself since the 1920s; and, on the other hand, the modern professionalising stance of the literary historian and editor who, as here, provided the textual commentary, the display of textual variants and the historical annotation that added to and interpreted Pope's own notes.

For his part, Leavis stood up for "poetry as poetry". His demand was always for uninterrupted access to the work itself, which was understood to stand alone, concretely or organically. The aim was to elicit the inherent values of literary artworks so as to bring them to bear on the urgent cultural crises of his mid-century Existentialist period. The need was to learn to distinguish what Leavis in later years would call the moral intelligence of great writers from the dross

of second- and third-rate ones. This was the function of criticism; everything else got in the way.¹

The no-nonsense term *concrete* or *the concrete work* was a favourite one of Leavis's. Other critics were using it at the time, and it remained in influential circulation until at least the 1970s when, as an undergraduate, I first heard it used. The concrete work and the so-called Verbal Icon of the American New Critics in the 1950s were cognate ideas.²

Editions that disturbed this set of assumptions were not going to be welcomed by some, especially if they foregrounded evidence of the work's historical setting, its genesis and range of variant texts. The incipient tension between the literary critics and the literary scholars, as witnessed here, bubbled away just below the surface, until in the USA in 1968, it came to the boil. Early that year, Lewis Mumford – primarily a sociologist and social commentator, but also a literary critic – reviewed for the *New York Review of Books* (NYRB) the first six volumes of the Harvard edition of Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*.³ Emerson had left behind 179 journals and notebooks, nearly all preserved at the Houghton Library, Harvard. Most of them are bound in leather and of a usefully portable size. They were his everyday working archive for recording quotations, comments and ideas. He would often go back later to them, adding "afterthoughts, culling out and lining through passages used in lectures or essays, making cross-references, copying from one into another, indexing, or just reading" (Emerson 1960: xxxv). Given Emerson's status in American literature as the most prominent of the mid-nineteenth-century Transcendentalists, famous for his powerful essays, the editorial presentation of the journals was a matter of some moment. The editors announced that:

each journal would be presented intact [...] as units rather than broken up and [the contents] distributed by the date or supposed date of each entry [...] The other major premises were that minimum interference with the text, maximum intelligibility, and maximum feasible honesty with the reader were the proper attributes of a modern scholarly edition [...]. The text, while partially emended, comes as close to a literatim transcription into print as is feasible.
(Emerson 1960: xxxvii–xxxviii)

The genesis of Emerson's thinking that would ultimately take public form in his essays and other writings would be recorded in full in the Harvard edition.

Despite the logic of this position, in his review, entitled "Emerson behind Barbed Wire", Mumford diagnosed the editorial method as a radical departure from "literary values and humanistic aims":

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1. The literary scholars had their counterpart anxiety and duty: "To protect the Wordsworth manuscripts in the Dove Cottage Trustees' possession, in those Cold War days, heavy with the threat of nuclear apocalypse, Helen Darbishire had them microfilmed" (Butler and Green 1997: 96). Editing was itself another guarantee, one that was felt heavily in Germany.
 2. For René Wellek and Austin Warren in 1948, "the object of literary study [is] – the concrete work of art" (147). *The Verbal Icon* was the title of an influential work of New Criticism (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954).
 3. The first volume had appeared in 1960; the last, volume 22, would appear in 1982.

[T]he editors committed two monumental errors of judgment [...] The first one was to print all the available material *seriatim*, mingling the important with the inconsequential, the living and maturing mind of Emerson with the debris of his daily existence; and the other was to magnify this original error by transcribing their accurate notations to the very pages that the potential readers of Emerson might wish to read freely, without stumbling over scholarly roadblocks and barricades. (Mumford 1968: 4)⁴

Mumford was objecting, as we might put it today, to the new edition's being more of a formalised rendering of the archival documents than a digested editorial intervention done for the benefit of the ordinary reader. He did not see a need for an editorial distinction between matter intended for publication as against purely private journal-keeping. So he objected to the system of symbolic notation that the editors used to capture Emerson's first thoughts, and cancellations and added wordings, what the editors called "the hard-headed things written for himself only, the personalia, sometimes even the false starts and unfinished sallies of thought, as well as the things which did go into the essays – all these are real facts to be valued along with the finished works in the study of Emerson, and all are needed for the revision of Emerson's reputation" (Emerson 1960: xxxiv).

Later that same year, 1968, Mumford was joined in his attack in the *NYRB* by the influential man of letters and literary critic, Edmund Wilson, who voiced sentiments of the same generation: like Mumford (and, incidentally, F.R. Leavis), he was born in 1895. Wilson's two-part broadside, "The Fruits of the MLA [Modern Language Association]" (1968), put the scholarly editing fraternity in America onto the back foot. The MLA's new Center for the Editing of American Authors (CEAA) had, in 1966, been awarded generous funding for the preparation of scholarly editions of national authors. Its constituency now had something to lose. Various letters to the editor contested or supported Wilson's arguments, and in due course the MLA published a selection of the letters in a booklet together with some new essays putting its side of the case (Modern Language Association 1969).⁵ Contributors stated that the format of the Emerson edition was not one that the CEAA encouraged new editors to adopt. For literary works, the clear text was the desired format: at least Mumford and those who shared his point of view could have no argument with that. The record of variant readings of other documents, manuscript and printed, in the textual apparatus would be a record of rejected readings, those *not* used by the editor to establish the clear reading text. It was designed primarily to guarantee and test the bona fides of the edition.

It was not a neutral variorum recording in its own right – a form of editing for which Fredson Bowers, the doyen of the critical editing movement in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s, had little time. In 1962 he referred to "the non-selective variorum principle, which should have no place in a critical definitive text and its apparatus" (Bowers 1962: 11). In order to give the move-

4. The account of Mumford and Wilson is partly adapted from Eggert 2009: 162–164.

5. For example, "The MLA Center for Editions has, since its inception in 1962, set as its objective the creation of a clear reading text, ready for popular publication, alongside the collection of variant readings and textual history that will show what lies behind the clear text" (Fisher 1969: 22).

ment he led a firmer footing, Bowers consciously narrowed its scope. The older *variorum* form of edition did not involve the critical establishment of a text: it merely accepted one in order to provide the basis for a collation of the other historical editions. Neither approach was specifically concerned with the literary draft, but at least the *variorum* approach embraced multiplicity, that is, the decisions of earlier editors. While Bowers on the other hand insisted all such editions must be collated for the purpose of possible emendation, there was little point in publishing “this sad record of editorial corruption” (Bowers 1962: 11). So the dispute was gradually defused, but it was at the cost of removing from the agenda for some decades any real challenge to Mumford’s “standpoint of humane letters” (Mumford 1968: 4). In effect, it was a strategic retreat to the already naturalised tenets of American New Criticism and its more pragmatic, less theorised British counterpart, practical criticism.

But it was also, I have come to believe, a reinforcement of a new understanding of the figure of the reader, one germane to the times. This 1950s–1960s reader could and should stand face to face with the work, without those much-complained-of scholarly impediments getting in the way, to facilitate the urgent task of finding in literature the cultural-moral values and historical understanding that were believed to be needed in this Existentialist period.

In comparison, the reader envisaged by the editors of the earlier, memorialising, turn-of-century complete-works editions was a different creature altogether. The Emerson-Forbes edition of Emerson’s *Journals* of 1909–14 is a good example. The reader was understood to be of a gentlemanly disposition, whose cultural outlook needed to be accommodated. The Harvard editors of the Emerson *Journals* in 1960 were in a good position to identify the shift:

In the first printing of the journals we lost much of Emerson. The Montaigne in him was unduly overshadowed by the Plotinus, the brooding doubter by the cosmic optimist, the private man in his freedom and infinitude by the public man in the confining garments of “the gentleman.” We also lost the full means of knowing his habits of writing, the extent of his sources and his use of them, his knowledge of the classics, and particularly the slow, intricate ways in which his thought grew, fascinating as a banyan tree in all its apparent lawlessness.
(Emerson 1960: xxxiii)

In their Introduction to Volume 1, the Harvard editors substantiate these criticisms by showing in convincing detail how their forebears had selected, clipped, even cut-and-pasted passages from here and there in the original journals, and abridged wherever they deemed it necessary without reporting that they had done so, in order to purify Emerson for the reader of their editorial imagining.

Letters editions

Editors’ expectations of what readers of the 1950s and 1960s wanted from their editions of the collected letters of important literary figures were, in comparison to those of the Harvard editors, conservative, less adventurous and made fewer demands on their reader. The conscious bowdlerising typical of turn-of-century memorial editions was by the 1950s part of a faintly

embarrassing past in the world of letters; editing should be more straightforward in its presentation of the evidence. But to go further and allow the reader to look underneath the surface text was still widely considered *infra dig*. As with the texts of works, so with letters: the reader and the editorially clarified text should stand sturdily apart so that the one could deal with the other, only now with the help of expert historical and biographical annotation.

This seems to have been the spirit in which Gordon Haight's thorough multi-volume edition of George Eliot's letters was prepared. The first volume was published by Yale University Press during 1954–55. No facsimiles of the letters or illustrations of any kind are provided, only edited transcriptions. A reader uninterested in the originals or in checking the accuracy of the transcriptions is thereby assumed.⁶ Haight does the work for them. He expands manuscript abbreviations, retains the writer's spellings, but "With punctuation I have dealt a little more freely [...] to save rereading." "[M]y principal concern," Haight states, "has been the reader's convenience. To reproduce in type all the vagaries of manuscript is neither feasible nor desirable, and though I have tried to provide an accurate text, it is not an exact transcription" (G. Eliot 1954: xxxv).

When Harry T. Moore introduced his two-volume edition of D.H. Lawrence's letters in 1962 he was performing a conscious mid-century modernising. His predecessor as editor had been Aldous Huxley, in 1932 – only two years after Lawrence's death. In this decade, many of Lawrence's friends and admirers were solicitous about establishing his reputation as an artist and were attempting to beat off his detractors, a number of whom were going into print on the matter. In that combative context, Huxley excluded "[t]rivial notes", most business letters and a "certain number of passages that might have given pain to the person mentioned in them, or that deal with personalities which it did not seem right or decent to make public [...] Here and there, for obvious reasons, I have suppressed a name" (Huxley 1932: xxxiv). Enter Moore in 1962, bringing a by-now-established Lawrence more fully under the purview of professional literary critics.

In his essay-review of Moore's edition, F.R. Leavis let rip:

I have tried, but I find it impossible to be grateful to Professor Harry T. Moore for what he has "done for Lawrence". [...] [W]hat standing does he suppose he has in relation to the genius of whom he has taken academic possession ... [Reading the Introduction,] it is borne in on one how lamentably an industrious scholar, specializing in a great creative genius, may be unaware of his own limitations and misconceive his place in the scheme of things. [...] Lawrence has suffered too much from critical naïveté, and when it gets such countenance and alimentionation from an "authority" as Professor Moore gives it, and on a large scale, in the pages of a Lawrence classic, then there is a duty of protest. [...] Unhappily one cannot for long give oneself to the text without some fresh annoyance from the mis-conceived and obtruded editorial authority. (Leavis 1967: 167–169, 172)

6. Although symbols are declared for "Matter supplied by the editor" ([]) and for "Overscored but recoverable" readings (< >) (G. Eliot 1954: xxxvii), cases of the latter are rare, suggesting the record is only selective; but this is not stated in "The Text" (1954: xxxv–xxxvi).

For Leavis, Lawrence's importance to the health of the culture, including for diagnosing its contemporary disease, was too important to be delivered over into the hands of a scholar. Only the testimony of the properly attuned critic could be trusted. This kind of response – if usually expressed more moderately – helps explain the prevailing caution in the exercise of the scholarly editorial role in this period.

Predictably, Leavis had nothing to say about Moore's actual editing, other than to point out some errors. Moore was very much an editor of his time when he quoted Robert Halsband, who had observed in 1958: "When we decide to reproduce it [a handwritten letter] by means of typography, we have made a great concession; and once having made it we need not be stingy as to its extent" (Lawrence 1962: xxii; Halsband 1958: 30). Recording Lawrence's hesitations, deletions and second thoughts on the letter-documents was out of the question for this near-contemporary.

In 1979, the next stage of editorial unveiling of Lawrence's correspondence occurred when the first of eight comprehensive volumes of Lawrence's letters appeared from Cambridge University Press. The general editor doggedly stuck to his 1960s guns in defiantly declaring that "[t]he editors provide not a diplomatic transcription of Lawrence's manuscripts but an edited text which is accurate and reliable" (Lawrence 1979: xviii). The editors would deal with their archival-reporting responsibility by listing their silent categories of emendation without recording the individual instances (Lawrence 1979: xviii–xx) and by reporting deleted readings, not in systematic textual apparatus but in foot-of-page notes along with the rest of the annotation. The latter would be (and was) comprehensive, authoritative and brief: scholarship was to underpin everything the editors did, but it should not be allowed to flaunt itself. In comparison, in 1932 Huxley had not provided any annotation; and, in 1962, Moore's annotation was skimpy, although he did provide a glossary of recipients.

Letters projects that took shape in following decades – such as those for Joseph Conrad (1983–2007); Henry James (2006–) and Ernest Hemingway (2011–) have been less self-denying than the Lawrence project in regard to the display of the author's cancellations and additions. The editors have also been less prepared to regularise spelling and punctuation, to the extent that one might now almost say the diplomatic transcriptions from which reading texts used routinely to be distinguished have become common.⁷ Obviously, a different kind of reader had entered the editorial imaginary of letters editors by the 2000s, one professionally interested in authorial hesitations, dissemblings, revisions, and moments of breakthrough as materially manifested. The shift (dealt with below) followed a renewed interest in work-versions, and even drafts: in text-genesis, for short.

7. Interestingly, the Samuel Beckett letters (also a Cambridge University Press project) represented something of a return to 1980s self-denial (Beckett 2009–2016).

Editions of literary works in MS, and of writers' journals

The reception of the Harvard Emerson edition contrasts with that of the Harvard edition in 1955 of Emily Dickinson's late-nineteenth-century poetry, most of it unpublished or, if published, subjected to a thorough stylistic updating by her contemporaries and family. That she was a genius was clear by the 1950s. But that her very private and puzzling poems (if poems they were) should each be reduced to a single version, when she herself had allowed multiple versions to circulate and alternative readings to go unresolved, was not. The editor in 1955, Thomas Johnson, decided on a variorum presentation that would cover the undeniably relevant manuscript (and printed) evidence, which together with his decision to provide a clear-reading "principal representation" for each poem, meant that the edition passed muster with reviewers at the time, despite some ominous murmurings. The Harvard Emerson editors' decision to go that one step further and signal the author's changes of mind in the reading text itself was still five years in the future and was altogether another step.

When other important scholarly editions of writers' journals appeared in the following decades a hesitation to take that extra step was evident. In relation to the editorial presentation of modern literature, British university presses were not prominent innovators, and even less so the trade press. For instance, the Hogarth Press began publishing *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* in 1977; the fifth volume concluded the series in 1984. This, the first edition of what is a remarkable diary was aimed at a broader range of readers than most scholarly editions. In what had rapidly become a tradition (see G. Eliot 1954; Lawrence 1962), the record of Woolf's deletions and additions is selective, and the editor Anne Olivier Bell's regularisation of non-verbal features of the text would have struck her readers at the time as commonplace and sensible.⁸ Reflecting what was now almost another tradition in post-war letters editing, she recorded only the categories that she regularises, not the individual instances of her intervention – for why, she must have reasoned, would the ordinary reader need more? The edition's emphasis is on annotation, and here Bell's edition shines because it hews close to what most non-scholarly readers were believed to want: a clear text and explanation of what they probably wouldn't understand. But the journal's personal and private nature – materially witnessed in the vagaries of the manuscript hand – was always going to be partially misrepresented by its conversion to regularised typography. The refined analytical quest behind the twenty-one volumes of the Cornell Wordsworth (1975–2007), which I describe below, was evidently felt not to be worth

8. The tradition was superseded, if not systematically, in Lawrence (1979): see Eggert (2019: 70–72) for a discussion. Bell states that "[t]here is remarkably little crossed out or altered in these pages, considering the speed at which Virginia wrote; indeed the pace at which she wrote precluded those corrections and additions which are so striking a feature of her more pondered manuscripts. Where she has corrected herself, her corrections are followed. Very occasionally, her first thoughts or hesitations seem of enough interest to repeat, and they appear within angled brackets: < >" (Woolf 1977: x). But the reader can turn very many pages without finding any; and the absence of facsimiles prevents one checking the claim.

pursuing for Virginia Woolf, even though much of the necessary scholarly infrastructure was in place.⁹

Something of the same no-nonsense spirit would inform *The Journals of George Eliot* twenty years later in 1998. This Cambridge University Press one-volume edition brought together for the first time Eliot's diaries, journals and autobiographical travel writings in a comprehensible sequence. The editors Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston state that: "We endeavoured to make the journals accessible in every sense by supplying a diplomatic transcription of the manuscripts supported by unobtrusive editorial apparatus" (G. Eliot 1998:viii). But a facsimile page-image on page 222 shows, when the transcription is compared, that its deletions are *not* recorded: so the text is not strictly "diplomatic". And when the editors spell out their silent categories of emendation, they are very similar to Gordon Haight's in his *George Eliot Letters* (1954) and to Bell's in her *Virginia Woolf Diary*. Most of the editorial effort has gone into the sequencing of the diaries and journals, which required some expert disentangling, into the explanatory notes (which are authoritative but sparing) and into an excellent glossary-index, an innovation that melds the two forms, prevents repetition of notes and eliminates the need for cross-references.

A reader somewhere between the general reader and the scholarly one seems to have been envisaged for this edition and doubtless for many others – but who was doing the envisaging? Inevitably, publishers were complicit in the prevailing conservatism. Bowers's undermining the prominence that had been accorded the variorum edition and his embracing the ideal of the critically established clear reading text preserved the same post-war conception of the reader that the editors of writers' letters and journals were respecting – even while works' editors smuggled in the scholarly detail at the rear of the volume. With some notable exceptions including Harvard University Press and Cornell University Press, publishers had, through their dictation of volume design, a conservative effect on editorial methodology. Print could only contain so much detail, volumes could only run to so many pages, and the publishers were the ones who had to sell the editions. They needed to stay attuned to their markets by conceptualising the likely readers and purchasers of their products. Who would buy them: specialist academic libraries and professional literary critics and scholars? Or so-called general or common readers?

This broader readership was aimed at in 1975, as we have seen, for Virginia Woolf's *Diary*; and even at the beginning of the 1980s the expectation remained alive for the new Works of D.H. Lawrence series at Cambridge University Press. The early print runs were 5,000 copies, but this ambitious number would not long continue (Eggert 2019: 193). The climate of literary theory and editorial theory was shifting rapidly in the 1980s. The publishers' and the editors' conception of readership would gradually have to change with it.

9. Woolf's complete works were already available in collected form, as were her letters (2 vols., 1975, 1976), a biography by Quentin Bell of 1972, Leonard Woolf's 5-volume *Autobiography*, as well as the large archival collection of Woolf materials in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library: for citations, see Woolf 1977: 328.

Genesis on the table

At about the same time – from the mid 1970s, but with stirrings as early as the later 1960s – literary critics started taking a renewed interest in the relevance of versional study to their interpretations. This would surely break the Verbal Icon; but the evidence of the need to do so was mounting. The problem of the two endings of Dickens's *Great Expectations* and of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, the long-debated merits of Wordsworth's *Prelude* in its final 1850 form as against that of 1805, as well as new scholarly editions that rejected received texts in favour of newly established earlier ones (such as the controversial Pennsylvania edition of Theodor Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie* in 1981), were gradually stirring interest in a form of analysis that got in below the level of the work. It wasn't only bibliographical disputes about Shakespeare's quarto and folio texts any more.

So, for instance, in my PhD studies in the late 1970s I became interested in a debate that had recently sprung up about the different versions of the short stories that D.H. Lawrence gathered for his 1914 collection *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.¹⁰ The stakes for Lawrence criticism were high because the stories' earlier printed forms in magazines as well as, in some cases, the extant manuscripts behind them, constituted distinctly different versions. How could they be explained? And how accommodated within literary-critical discourse? Consideration of the biographical (or bio-bibliographical) context was especially appealing since Lawrence's personal life was undergoing renewal at the same time as his fiction; and the revised short stories of 1914 provided a strongly predictive link to the revolutionary change evident in his great novels *The Rainbow*, published in September 1915, and *Women in Love*, when he wrote its first version in 1916. This versional study helped to clarify the mystery of how these remarkable novels, so very different from the previous, mainly realist novel *Sons and Lovers*, had so suddenly, almost miraculously, emerged.¹¹

Other author-specialisms in English would have a similar story to tell, although the timing might vary from case to case. I am aware of a number of books that appeared from the mid-1970s to the mid 1990s (and which were doubtless preceded by many relevant articles) that mixed textual criticism and literary criticism in their study of versions. Although they might now be labelled genetic criticism, they travelled under different names in those decades and often with broader remits.¹²

The role of new scholarly editions, and indeed the preceding work done in preparation, must have sparked some of this activity, although some complete works editions were long

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10. The principal examples were: Littlewood 1976, partly based on Littlewood 1966; Kalnins 1976a and 1976b; and Cushman 1978, incorporating versions of three earlier articles in *D.H. Lawrence Review*.
 11. Mark Kinkead-Weekes (1968) had laid the groundwork for explaining the mystery via a study of archival materials.
 12. See for example Laird 1975; Lawrence 1977; Gatrell 1988; McWhirter 1995; Carabine 1996; and, later, Eggert 2013.

delayed.¹³ Despite a prevailing commitment on the part of scholarly editors to clear reading texts based on final intentions, each edition brought new evidence to the table. The genesis of the work was routinely discussed in an introduction or separate essay on the texts, and some recorded early versions in textual apparatus. Novels set on university courses (especially those from Norton as early as the late 1970s and, later, the Penguin Classics) began including appendices listing the more significant variants between major early editions, permitting versional study in classes – although I suspect the pedagogical practice was relatively rare.

As poststructuralist perspectives, on loan from France, began to sweep through the Anglophone countries in the 1980s they did so with a puritan sense of mission that left final-intentions editions looking suddenly even more out of touch with intellectual fashion than they had under the previous New Critical regime. In France, genetic critics who had spent time with literary manuscripts and draft materials, and knew how to prize them, could – knowing the cultural background better – more elegantly adjust the theoretical defence of their empirical pursuit to their native context. Roland Barthes's account of text as tissue – “the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving” (Barthes 1975: 64) – could be shaped to fit genetic interest nicely, without the necessity of appeal, as in the Anglophone tradition, to authorial intention.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the failure of French modes of genetic criticism (and self-consciously genetic editing) to take firm hold in the Anglophone countries was noticeable in the 1990s and after, even as the homegrown varieties made headway against the poststructuralist tide – though not as a movement-with-a-label.

The Cornell Wordsworth and the Cornell Yeats

Some innovative scholarly editions were explicitly aiming to open up the textual development of works to view. The Cornell Wordsworth published its first volume in 1975 and the Cornell Yeats in 1982. Their volumes are, to differing degrees, more document-facing than reader-facing, more archival in their report than editorial in their service of the reader. Especially in the Cornell Yeats, the envisaged reader has become, indeed, a user: an interpreter in need of facsimile images and diplomatic transcriptions of those manuscript materials that the author would characteristically generate in his pursuit of the wording of a publishable text of each of his works.

The slightly earlier Cornell Wordsworth, which still had one foot planted in the Anglophone editorial tradition, paved the road to the Cornell Yeats.¹⁵ The Wordsworth is versional in orientation and organisation; versions of a poem are presented in reading texts “as it stood at

13. Hampered by permissions issues, new scholarly editions of T. S. Eliot's writings did not get going until the 2010s (T. S. Eliot 2014–2019), and similarly some other new series of Modernist writers had to wait until copyright expired: for details, see Eggert 2019: 70; 193.

14. See also Greetham 1999: 313.

15. A variorum edition, which recorded the variants in the Yeats printed volumes, already existed (Yeats 1966). This fact must have lightened the load and given the series greater freedom to chart its own course than the Wordsworth project enjoyed.

successive stages of its completion" (Parrish 1997: 98). Wordsworth had long been a problem for literary critics because he was an inveterate reviser. Some of the best poems of this very long-lived poet appeared many years, even decades, after they were first written (and, in the interim, were continually revised). The psychological distance Wordsworth had travelled between writing and publication led naturally enough to the question of whether his works should be edited as if there were two Wordsworths that happened to share the same name.

This paradox was a shocking idea at the time, but its logic was hard to deny. Ernst de Selincourt's edition in 1926 of the thirteen-book version of 1805 of Wordsworth's great long poem *The Prelude*, with the existing 1850 version on facing pages, put the question on the table; and it was reiterated in a changed critical climate in 1959 when Helen Darbishire's revised and heavily corrected edition of de Selincourt's appeared. *The Prelude* had first appeared upon Wordsworth's death in 1850 in the version that it had reached by that stage. His last significant revisions were carried out in 1839, but the early drafts dated back to 1798–99. By the 1960s and 1970s there was a felt need for editorial intervention to retrieve the early versions of all the poems, especially those written in what were considered his peak years before 1805 or (in a more relaxed view) 1815. So, the publication in 1992 of the volume called *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797–1800*, edited by James Butler and Karen Green, was an important moment in Wordsworth editorial scholarship.

In line with series policy of giving pride of place to "the earliest provisionally complete" text of any poem (Parrish 1997: 99), in this volume – whether or not poems had authorial versions later than 1800 – reading texts of poems that appeared in *Lyrical Ballads* in its various editions are taken from the first edition of 1798 (whose production Wordsworth supervised); or, if they were subsequently added to the contents, from the extant printer's copy of the 1800 edition. Both sources give the poems their sequence. Poems of the same period that did not appear in *Lyrical Ballads* have their reading texts established from manuscript; these are arranged chronologically. As in a variorum edition, these reading texts also serve as a base text for the apparatus, recording earlier and later readings in manuscript and print.

Some of Coleridge's poems originally appeared in *Lyrical Ballads* alongside Wordsworth's. They are removed from the 1798 or 1800 sequence and presented at the end of the volume: the logic of the edition is authorial throughout. Poems with versions that "differ significantly from what was later published in *Lyrical Ballads*" are edited separately (Wordsworth 1992: 36). But the most striking innovation was the provision of facsimile images of a great many draft materials (with transcriptions facing them) recording the genesis and development of poems Wordsworth never brought to finality or which were adapted for use in other poems. Here, the manuscript evidence is too interesting to omit but, say the editors, too complex to record without facsimiles to carry some of the load.

So, it can be argued that the Cornell Wordsworth had, since its first volume in 1975, gradually been cultivating a *genetic* interest in Wordsworth's writing processes – for editions are always an intervention in the literary-critical scene. As is often the case, however, not everyone was grateful. An influential review article by Jack Stillinger of earlier volumes in the series, "Textual Primitivism and the Editing of Wordsworth" of 1989, argued that privileging the ear-

lier Wordsworth in the Cornell manner alienated the rest of his work as a poet by reducing the later versions to apparatus recordings. The edition thereby made it difficult or even impossible in some cases to locate the reader's favourite poems in anything like the later canonical versions in which they had been commonly available. Stillinger also remained sceptical that retrieving the text of manuscript versions superseded by subsequent revision on the same manuscript – which Wordsworth therefore had not himself authorised for publication – was a legitimate editorial undertaking. Stillinger's position was a conservative one that flew in the face of much of the editorial theory that was developing in the late 1980s, even though his call for all versions to be published cloaked this fact.¹⁶

Editorial theory was changing, predominantly in favour of editors' obligation to expose the textual process that literary works typically undergo. The shift was later nicely encapsulated in the title of John Bryant's book of 2002 *The Fluid Text*. Editorial practice typically lags well behind changes in editorial theory, for there is never unanimity; and big series of scholarly editions, like great ocean liners, take time to change course. However, the relaxation of editorial goals in the 1990s helped more immediately to naturalise the aims of the new digital projects that were springing up and the logic of whose medium demanded a new approach. Providing facsimile images and transcriptions of all relevant text-bearing documents rapidly came to be accepted as the base-line responsibility of the digital editor-archivist. This was the necessary archival exposure on which editions could subsequently be based.

In retrospect, the Cornell Yeats, which followed the Wordsworth, can be seen as an important precursor of this digital turn. Yeats's late poem, "The Circus Animals' Desertion", is an illuminating example. The poet in old age reflects on what he has achieved while simultaneously realising his predicament: the images and ideas he has generated over a lifetime have been like circus animals that he had under his poetic whip; but they are now deserting him as he nears death and his powers attenuate. Presented in the Cornell volume, *Last Poems: Manuscript Materials*, edited by James Pethica (1997), the poem's development through its material forms occupies 34 pages in 17 openings: facsimiles on versos with facing transcriptions. Most of these documents concern the last stanza, with which Yeats had particular trouble.

Towards the end of the process after several manuscript attempts and three typescripts – when it looked as if the poem's text had reached stasis and when Yeats had already achieved a powerful form of the last stanza ("Why brood upon old triumph, prepare to die"; Yeats 1997: 391) – he began, restlessly, to experiment yet again, beginning on the last typescript he was correcting (see Figure 1) and then continuing twice more in manuscript, before finally arriving at the poem's famous, devastating conclusion:

... Now that my ladder's gone
I must lie down where all the ladders start
In the foul rag & bone shop of the heart. (Yeats 1997: 394–5)

16. See further Eggert 1995.

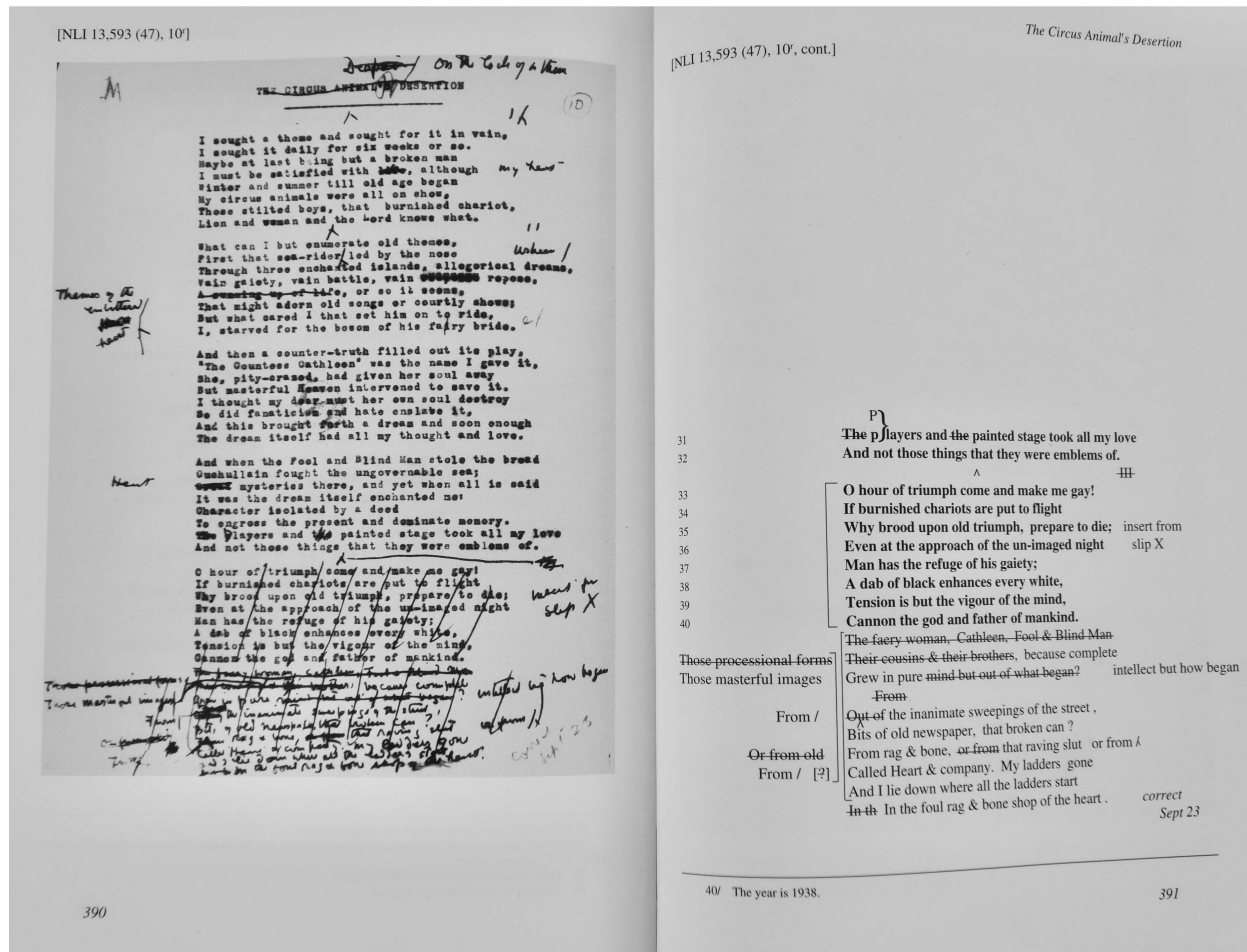


Figure 1. Last Poems: Manuscript Materials, ed. by James Pethica (1997: 390-391)

Given that this edition contains 463 pages of facsimile images of manuscript and revised typescripts corresponding to the mere 22 poems that were to go into *Last Poems* (which Yeats did not live to see into production), its claim to constitute a genetic edition is hard to dispute.¹⁷ It makes accessible the documentary and textual materials needed for genetic criticism: description of the plenitude of archival sources (mainly at the National Library of Ireland); arrangement of facsimiles of those sources into a chronological and textual sequence; and fully diplomatic transcription and commentary. The sequencing is the result of analysis and interpretation, and the transcription and commentary are interpretative, to greater or lesser degrees. All the editorial work explicitly or implicitly appeals to authorial intention: what words Yeats intended by these scribbled inscriptions (his drafting hand is an elusive one); in which order he inscribed this or that bundle of revisions; whether he intended this fragment to be inserted here or there; whether this document came before that one in the sequence of composition and revision; and so on.

The transcription employs an intuitive notation system for deletions, insertions and transpositions, which, when considered in synch with the visual evidence of the facsimile, is far simpler in principle than employing the underlying TEI encoding used for digital editions nowadays. Here, the eye does the computing, slowly making the necessary inferences about the movement of Yeats's restlessly revising hand. A discreet explanatory note at foot of page (see Figure 1) explains line 40's odd wording ("Cannon the god and father of mankind"): "The year is 1938" (Yeats 1997: 391). This concession to the reader is atypical: nearly all of the notes explain oddities in the inscription or sequencing of inscription, not the meaning. This is because the volume is more document-facing than reader-facing. On the slider between the archival expression and the editorial expression that *digital* editions typically inhabit, this print volume sits closer to the former than the latter.¹⁸

Conclusion

The dynamic of verbal invention that manuscripts typically reveal under analysis is flattened by the critical edition, which looks to establish a final text of the work. This latter methodology is often criticised as teleological – as heading in one more or less pre-ordained direction – despite the observable fact that text on the manuscript page is often more experimental than that. Yet critical editions may equally establish the text of versions: versional editing, especially but not only as applied to poetry, has been gaining traction since the 1990s.¹⁹ Later versions are not necessarily superior to earlier; and the felicities of some earlier fragments may be lost sight of when the passages of which they are a part are replaced by later ones. The challenge

17. Pethica sometimes adds a textual apparatus to the transcriptions to cover textual transmission through proofs and printed sources. For a definition of genetic editions, see Shillingsburg and Van Hulle 2015.

18. The slider is postulated in Eggert 2019: 83–92.

19. See for example the *Academy Editions of Australian Literature* (Eggert 1996–2007) and for resistance to its versional approach, see Eggert 2001.

then becomes how to keep the genetic process intelligible to the user-reader while tracing the journey of a work through manuscript and printed instantiations. Editorially revealing and critically describing the contours of the intellectual or creative journey that the writer was undertaking is to adopt a bio-textual perspective. It ideally needs to be complemented by an editorial one: that is, the capacity to look backwards at the emerging text from the knowledge of where the textual journey would ultimately arrive.

This tension between perspectives will likely be a productive one in the future, and I suspect it is where Anglophone genetic criticism and editing, as they develop further hand-in-hand, will ultimately settle. They will fashion themselves, in newly configured ways, around those vectors that have always been central to bibliographical analysis: the material object, textual agency (which brings intention with it), and chronology.²⁰ In this way editor-archivists will keep one eye on their readers: those literary critics who know instinctively how to deal with versions – the concept is not a challenge – and can readily appreciate that there might be rewards in taking the interest further.

Without this two-way conceptual support, currying interest in literary drafts at the sub-version level will be a harder sell. Structuralist definitions of text that would support such interest have never been naturalised into English textual criticism: neither the German historical-critical approach nor the French genetic-text approach. This is by no means a catastrophe. In 2001, in his multi-volume Princeton University Press edition of Coleridge's poetry, Jim Mays showed that an adaptation of German historical-critical apparatus that actively acknowledges authorial intention is perfectly possible without importing a philosophical position with it.²¹ The same may prove to be true of genetic editions and genetic criticism when fully absorbed into the Anglophone tradition.²²

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20. Hans Walter Gabler (2012: 31–32) has argued that, from the purview of editorial scholarship, intention is strictly “exogenous” to text. I replied that it is endogenous to the work, understood as unfolding over time both in composition and in reception (Eggert 2019: 171–177).
 21. What Mays calls his Variorum Text is a historical-critical apparatus of variant manuscript and printed texts, which “enable[s] the reader to hold in mind a sense of the way the poems move [...] I can promise a reader that the mechanics are simpler than most German and French counterparts, and that when they are understood and can be used without strain they communicate a sense of the fluid reality as it exists” (Coleridge 2001: I.cxxiii). In effect, the apparatus is what Gabler called a continuous manuscript text (Joyce 1984). Mays's apparatus captures all stages of authorial involvement as the poem moved from draft stages to fair copy to corrected transcript, and from print to print. The reading text is “[that] version of the poem which reflects Coleridge's concern, up to the time he lost interest (as he so often did). [...] In other cases the choice depends on recognising Coleridge's meaning before it was modified by second thoughts or other circumstances” (Coleridge 2001: I.cXLVI).
 22. In the opening chapters of *The Many Drafts of D.H. Lawrence*, Elliott Morsia (2020) provides a useful account of the theoretical positions behind French genetic criticism. Morsia's book, and Bloom and Rovera (2020), are signs of a new wave of Anglophone interest in genetic approaches.

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