WHAT CRITICAL EDITING TEACHES US ABOUT TEXTS, WORKS AND BOOKS

MASTERCLASS LECTURE, CENTRE FOR TEXTUAL STUDIES

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When Peter Shillingsburg asked me to give today's masterclass I asked him what topic he wanted me to speak about. 'Tell them what you've learned over the last twenty, twenty-five years of editing and thinking about editing,' he said. That seemed easy enough, until my wife said, with one of her typically bracing ironies, 'But will you really need a whole hour to do that?'

The temptation to speak autobiographically has nevertheless proved too alluring, I'm afraid, but, as you'll see, the story I'll tell points directly at wider issues that I hope will be of general interest, and begs a range of questions that can be taken up in the discussion session.

I

Like many a scholarly editor today my education in three universities in the 1970s was entirely devoid of any course in scholarly methods or bibliography. Those courses had become an embarrassment: they had failed to engage with the New Critical and Leavisite trends of the time. They were dropping away one by one. They seemed even more dispensable in the 1980s and early 1990s as literary theory held sway. The notion of the work was sacrificed to that of text seen as a site of inscribed or circulating discourses rather than as authored and stable, as an aesthetic foreground against a contextual, historical background. Yet today we are reviving such courses. Indeed this Centre and its activities are a testimony to that. We are aware that something fundamental in literary studies has been overlooked, if not necessarily in agreement about how to define what exactly it is. It won't be the same as in the past. We may not even use the word bibliography, that late 19th-century formation after which the courses were usually named. I hope that as a result of the discussion session after morning tea when we will take up some of the themes of this lecture we may get some clarity there.

Here's one pointer. As early as 1960 in his study of the Victorian publishing house of Richard Bentley and Son, the publisher synonymous with the three-volume form of the novel, Royal Gettmann memorably defined a truth about texts that it has taken some decades to fully take to heart, and even nowadays many literary critics avert their eyes from the unpleasant truth: 'even an imaginative work like a novel, does not fall from the heavens a complete, crystallised object . . . the existence of a literary work may be precarious and complicated'.[i] . That was in 1960. Doubtless he understood himself to be addressing readers groomed on New Critical assumptions or trained in Empsonian close reading. By pouring over the ledgers of the Bentley firm, its correspondence with authors, its employment of advisers and editors, and studying its publication lists over the years Gettmann realised, although he does not put it quite in the way I am about to do: that there is no such thing as an aesthetic object. You will probably think I am being

provocative in saying that – and in fact I am – but I could put it a little less provocatively and say: there is no such thing as an aesthetic object, pure and simple, or, as Gettmann puts it, 'a complete crystallised object'.

Of course, we have traditionally described and analysed the aesthetic qualities of poems, novels and plays, and we have called them works of art. It suits us to do so because it opens up for us the chance of discussing something, or more precisely an experience of reading something, that we have in common and feel the strong need to discuss. We arrive at protocols of reading, we negotiate them. This is the culture of books, and especially of literature. It is a game we love to play because it makes our dealings with the world, with one another and with the past more richly informed and various.

From time to time the nature of the thing we are talking about gets a fundamental redefinition. This was essentially what poststructuralism and the theories that grew out of it gradually brought about, and I think we have been building towards the next redefinition for some time now. I'll get back to that history in a minute, but this is the point at issue throughout this lecture: how does scholarly editing, and the text-criticism that goes with it, change what we are talking about. What does critical editing teach us about texts, works and books. How does it *matter*?

For me, quite innocent of any traditional bibliographical course and arriving from Australia at the University of Kent in 1976 to undertake doctoral work on D. H. Lawrence, the direction to take was anything but straightforward. I understood myself to be a budding or apprenticed literary critic, not a literary scholar. That latter activity was, in many circles still, almost a dirty word. We tend to forget this now. But PhDs require you to do something new, to think for yourself. So I looked around me. Although Barthes and Foucault had recently both questioned the feasibility of authorship as an explanatory paradigm, Lawrence was relentlessly, unmistakably autobiographical. The French lead didn't seem to fit.

It was becoming possible, however, to see how the priestly Lawrence that F. R Leavis had rediscovered in the 1950s was a creation of that existentialist decade. The *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial in 1960 would be the triumphant and public conclusion. That Lawrence was a man for Leavis's times. He would put his readers in a newly vitalised connection with Life. That was the diction in the literary critical studies.

Lawrence had been adamant he wanted nothing to do with aesthetic technique; he did not want to think about it. The principle of Life and its manifold corruptions were far too urgent to be waylaid by aesthetics. Critics in the 1960s and 1970s meekly followed suit in books of literary criticism that normally tracked through his novels or books of poetry, usually ignoring the still-suspect genres of travel writing and the essay. Although Lawrence's dealings with existing genres and forms were granted to be always exploratory, his works were nevertheless analysed as if they were a series of aesthetic mountain peaks. Each snowy eminence glittered in the spring sunlight; each was to be climbed separately by the questing critic; each was to be understood as a separate achievement; and each was to be evaluated separately: some peaks, after all, would prove to be higher than others. This silent incorporation of the common understanding of what literary works are was not really contestable at the time; New Criticism had done its job; Coleridge's notion of the organic whole was still influential; and, for Lawrentians, Life not art was the point of his writings. To stress their

biographical and historical underlay, to dwell on it, would have been an impertinence.

In the late 1970s, I admired Leavis's stirring accounts of Lawrence but felt uneasy, as if I was being roped into someone else's anxieties, as if I was being shown what was really their way forward, not mine. What about the mountain range itself, I wondered, how was it formed?: could the sustaining underlay for those peaks *be* studied? Would, say, a biographical approach pay off? Although I didn't yet fully appreciate the meaning of the term, would a *text-critical* approach pay off? Critics in those days sometimes referred to the early versions of his writings but usually only in order to demonstrate the superiority of the final version, as if that trajectory towards superiority was teleologically preordained. The final version *must* be the best, at least with great writers such as Lawrence. To question this was a tall order, because, after all, where might it not lead? Critics didn't want to go there.

Could the biographical and the text-critical perhaps, I began to wonder, be melded into *one* enquiry? Could the life be read off from the writings, rather than what the New Critics' intentional fallacy had outlawed: reading the meaning of the work from the life? This, for me, was heady stuff.

You can probably guess what I did. The reality was frustrating and mundane at first. The first thing I discovered was that it was, still in the 1970s, quite hard to track the sequence of Lawrence's writings since in any week or month he might be working, say, on an essay, a short story, the next version of the same short story, lots of often intriguing letters that discussed what he was reading and writing and perhaps declaring why and how his next novel was to be different. Many memoirs had been written about Lawrence just after his death in 1930 and collated by Edward Nehls in the late 1950s, and two fairly good selections of his letters had been published, in the 1930s and 1960s. You sensed an intellectual journey. Was all this properly to be considered only as *background* to his published writings, and preferably of those the final versions, which critics automatically preferred? I saw it was really a matter of methodology.

My literary-critical aim became to re-define, re-conceptualise, what was obviously a major change in Lawrence's writings between *Sons and Lovers* of 1912–13 and *Women in Love*, mostly written in 1916–17. Precisely dating the moment of the change became a crucial matter for me, and I discovered to my chagrin that what datings were published were unreliable and sometimes years out. Basically, scholars hadn't thought it an important-enough matter to get right once and for all. Scholarship and criticism were poles apart in those days.

Gathering the early versions of the short stories and essays and poems of this period proved to be a rewarding exercise for the stimulation to my thinking that the revisions usually offered. Revisions nearly always offer literary critical leverage. When they are major revisions the payoff can be substantial. Concentrating as I did on a travel book whose versions nearly spanned the period, *Twilight in Italy* (1916) was even more productive. The Cambridge Works of D. H. Lawrence project had only just then got underway and one of the editors, Mark Kinkead-Weekes who had begun work editing *The Rainbow* was an inspiration at Kent. But for him the literary critical reward – i.e. *understanding* – was the point, the only point, of biographically organised textual criticism of the novel. An edition would flow from it. Editing is only an application, one application, of textual criticism. What I learned with Lawrence before I had had my first brush with scholarly editing was that

textual criticism of versions, their detailed biographical linking, and consequently literary criticism, could be and probably *should* be deeply intertwined. Editions that served that end were good editions. But we were yet to see any editions in the Lawrence Works series. That was 30 years ago: there is a bulging shelf-full of them now.

Meanwhile in the USA the keeping of criticism and editing in close relationship had gone wrong, a function not only of the legacy of New Criticism but also of the sheer scale of the funding base for scholarly endeavour that could tolerate these activities remaining insulated from one another – as Edmund Wilson famously pointed out. Here is an example of the result. At the 1988 MLA conference in New Orleans I took part in a session run by the D H Lawrence Society of North America devoted to the Cambridge Lawrence series. Nearly everyone in the audience would have thought of themselves as Lawrentians, as literary critics, not editors. The question was asked: Do the Cambridge editions affect the way we think about Lawrence's works? If a wording is changed here or there, does it matter?

That's always a potentially embarrassing question for a scholarly editor since you usually don't know in advance, at least for modern works where you are the first tiller of the field, what the results of your editorial labours are going to be. But the real problem with the question, I remember feeling at the time, is that it was the wrong question. It assumes that there is no dispute possible about what literary works are. What the text-critical work with Lawrence had already shown me was that a far more flexible notion of what constitutes a work was called for once you attended closely to the documents that recorded its genesis, revisions, various productions and receptions. It no longer made sense, I felt, to assume that a work was constituted solely by the published form of it that you happened to have on your book shelves, that it was in any sense a self-sufficient verbal icon, purely and simply an aesthetic object in need only of sensitive reading.

What I had realised by the late 1980s was that for Lawrence, when understood text-critically and biographically, the publication of one of his novels was not the triumphant culmination and finalising of a work of art that therefore needed to be understood on its own terms, as an isolated mountain peak of achievement. In fact, just the opposite was the case; or, at least, the opposite was equally true. In Lawrence's case, publication was more an arbitrary cut-off of a vigorous process of reading and writing and thinking that preceded publication and would go on after publication in deeply related though slightly different directions.

It was for this reason that I was never attracted by the poststructuralist dismantling of works into texts understood as the temporary stabilisings of wider social discourses. This way of thinking became dominant during the 1980s. But some new and many longer established editing projects, and the more reflective forms of thinking about the evidence they were producing, were happening in parallel. I began to attend biennial meetings of the Society for Textual Scholarship in New York and to hear the term *editorial theory* used unblushingly for the first time. Both movements were reactions against more limiting modes of thinking about literary works. By the end of the 1980s we had started to talk of them as processes, or as always being in process, rather than as products: in fact at a conference in 1989 in Canberra that I organised Hans Gabler, Peter Shillingsburg and a Johnnie-come-lately Paul Eggert gave papers that all rather remarkably came to closely related conclusions about the functioning of works, whether by Joyce, Thackeray or Lawrence, and

therefore about the responsibility of editors to capture more of that functioning than had been the norm.

Jerome McGann had already repudiated his own editing of Byron and had been arguing since 1983 for the relevance of the readership, of received texts, in establishing editorially the texts of literary works. Bibliography was seen to have a sociological dimension that Don McKenzie would go on to clarify in his pathbreaking Panizzi lectures in 1985. Simultaneously Peter Shillingsburg was organising and clarifying the traditional directions in relation to these new ones in his series of lectures originally given in Canberra in 1984, that would be published as *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*.

By then I was hard at work on an edition of *The Boy in the Bush* for the Cambridge Works of Lawrence. Although this novel dates from the 1920s the same evolving pattern of thinking and writing, punctuated by publication that Lawrence aimed at but was also arbitrarily restricted by, which I had observed in the Lawrence of the 1910s, was repeated. The novel is set in Western Australia. It is a rewriting of a now lost typescript written by a woman Lawrence met there in 1922. The hero is a young new chum. Jack Grant. He gradually grows into a profound disillusionment with civilised society, represented in the novel by Perth. In some ways, this movement reflects Lawrence's own sentiments as he rewrote the novel in California and then Mexico, after Frieda had left him and returned to England. After Jack nearly dies in the outback, he establishes a dimly understood but yearned-for connection with dark gods, rather than the Christian one he was brought up with. Maybe an Old Testament-type settlement in the nearly unpopulated North-West, based on male authority and polygamy will be the answer. But – and this was typical of Lawrence's honesty about provocative proposals such as this one – Jack finds the women are *not* agreeing with him. The novel in manuscript ends bitterly with Jack riding off on his own to the North West, cursing the young women in his life.

Having finished the manuscript and sent it off for typing, Lawrence left Mexico for London, arriving in a bleak mid-winter. Inevitably, he was soon writing about the condition of England in an essay, morosely and bitterly. John Middleton Murry refused to publish it in the magazine he had set up to serve as a mouthpiece for Lawrence. Waiting for the arrival of the typescript copies of the novel, Lawrence read the latest issue of the New Mexican magazine *The Laughing Horse*, which a friend had sent him. The Navaho legend of the laughing horse, the legendary sun figure that daily renews life on his journey across the heavens, reinvigorated Lawrence's interest in what he had thought was his finished novel. He wrote a new last chapter in which a previously very minor female character rides out to Jack as he is leaving Perth and gives him to understand that she will follow him to the North West and be his second or third wife, if he wants her. Jack's newfound communion with his horse in a Centaur-like bond gives a triumphant mood to the new ending of the novel. This meant that Lawrence had to go back and revise the typescript in light of it.

Essentially what I had to deal with as an editor, once the biographical and text-critical evidence was assembled, was two versions. Cambridge wanted only one, and the text was to be established on the principle of final authorial intention. I produced it, but on condition that the copy-text be Lawrence's manuscript, thereby ensuring that all variant readings would be available in the textual apparatus. The two versions would be retrievable. That was actually the point, in the mid-late 1980s when the Lawrence Editorial

Board accepted the argument that the nature of the editions generally had to shift. I had a part in that shift in thinking. It was my edition that brought the matter to a head. Let me explain what this shift was.

If you assumed that a scholarly edition's main job was to establish the most authoritative reading text, one that would be available for paperback reprintings without repaging or resetting, then you were really serving the traditional understanding of what a work is and how readers wanted to approach it. But if you began to think that the function of an edition was to capture its successive versions as fully as possible then you were acknowledging a more expansive understanding of the work and therefore seeing the role of the edition as being more historical than aesthetic in *its* functioning. It would, in a sense, though we had not yet articulated this, be a *reference* book rather then a reading text whose establishment is supported by textual apparatus.

At a Lawrence conference in Bristol in 1985 I only narrowly convinced John Worthen, who subsequently become the foremost Lawrence scholar, not to repudiate his own Cambridge edition of Lawrence's *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories* that had appeared only a year or two previously. He was now fully in agreement with the new argument about how the editions ought to function and was dismayed that he had meekly followed the existing trend in the Lawrence series and effectively ignored early versions of some of the stories. He now realised that an editorial opportunity to document and thus help to understand the radical changes in Lawrence's thinking and style, in the years leading up to the publication of the collection in 1914 had been lost. For he had had to choose as copy-text the first edition of 1914, whereas the really important material was in the earlier versions that preceded them. The Cambridge apparatuses only record *post*-copy-text variants. It makes for cheaper production costs, but I think you can see the problem. A reliable reading text of an aesthetic object had been established, but at the expense of understanding what it was.

By the time, several years later, that I was finishing my next edition in the same series, Lawrence's travel book *Twilight in Italy*, there was simply no question about procedure: the early versions had to be separately edited and not be accorded subsidiary status in any way. Documenting the writing and revision process was now the aim for the apparatuses, even as the texts continued to be established on final-intentions principles.

II

Final-intentions editing can lead to remarkable clarifications. I suspect that you might want to discuss their application in the seminar after morning tea, particularly in contrast to German historical approaches. Editors who adopt final-intentions principles sometimes confuse textual ownership with textual authority. When an author works hard within a quite restricted timeframe to finish writing, revise and then not long after to correct proofs, it makes sense to grant the resulting text a special status, once stripped of changes made by others such as typists or typesetters. If the author was wanting to perfect her or his text and was only frustrated from doing so by the exigencies of production then it is not an unwarrantable liberty to enable that clearly expressed wish to materialise. The newly established text, drawn eclectically from various documents, will never have existed before in this precise form and thus is ahistorical up to that moment. But it enters history *in the critical edition itself.*

Once you realise *that*, you appreciate why each critical edition has to be seen as an embodied argument, in textual form, about the extant documents. The argument will have been based on textual criticism, biographical study and bibliographical analysis. It is an argument that *this* is the form of the text the author would have wanted published if she or he had had control over the production process. This position most emphatically does not imply that the edition is the *only* edition possible, or even necessarily the best one. The intellectual marketplace will decide *that* question.

I am going to say some good things about German historical approaches later on, but for now I want you to think about my characterising of final-intentions editions. But do note also that the final-intentions approach usually tends to reinforce the traditional assumption of literary critics that works can be adequately and unproblematically represented by one reading text. This is particularly the case when a publisher mandates a clear reading text with no foot-of-page textual apparatus. Page design is a significant matter. As I see it, it is the site of materialisation of the editorial argument and the principal site of transmission of the argument to the reader.

With the Cambridge Lawrence, the decision was made to go for clear reading texts. This would facilitate reprinting in popular paperback series. The result with *The Boy in the Bush* was this. Pretty clearly Lawrence had wanted his revised version with the new last chapter and the revisions he made in typescript to prepare for it to be published. That intention was respected and embodied in the reading text. But this decision meant that the earlier version, which, remember, he had originally thought was finished, was relegated to the textual apparatus. My decision to choose the manuscript as copy-text meant that at least everything would be recorded. The Lawrence Edition had progressed in its thinking, so I wasn't ever in the position of feeling tempted to repudiate my edition. But presenting an alternative text and recording it are two different things. Reconstructing readings from apparatus placed at the end of a volume, as in the Lawrence case, is harder than when it is placed at the foot of the page. Readers wanting to understand the continuities of his writing life were not helped as much as they might have been.

Before I get off *The Boy in the Bush* entirely let me tell you of a problem that emerged in implementing final-intentions principles. I mentioned that Lawrence sent off his manuscript from Mexico and waited in London to receive the typescript to revise and correct. When he came to revise he needed two copies, one for his London publisher and one for New York. The accession of the USA to the international copyright arrangements in the 1890s meant that it was necessary to have separate typesettings in London and New York and for them to appear more or less simultaneously if the full benefits of copyright were to be secured. In turn this obligated authors to prepare typesetter's copy in duplicate. This is where the problem started, and it is a problem that in one form or another most scholarly editors of modern works find themselves nowadays having to face. The problem in a nutshell is this. Lawrence found it hard to copy a revision without changing its wording. He was a creator, not a clerk.

It happened like this. He received two big piles of typescript. The two copies are still both extant. But both are a mixture of ribbon copy and carbon copy. They were evidently shuffled in the process of Lawrence's revising.

This would not have been a problem if Lawrence's revisions on the two copies were identical. I would simply have incorporated into the manuscript copy-text all those revisions that were in Lawrence's hand on the typescripts.

But in fact they are not identical in many places. Lawrence often made a revision and then inscribed it, but with some improvement, onto the other copy. In most cases he had gone back to the first, revision copy to change its revised wording for the now improved one. In a few cases he didn't stop there but improved or changed *its* wording once again. Some cases were long passages.

So if I was to determine the final reading in each case I had to reconstruct the zig-zag trail of this revising as he went back and forth between the typescript copies. I had to make up my mind as to which readings were the final ones and which had only been temporary. So I had to reconstruct how he handled the copies *as* he revised. I looked for clues for a couple of years with increasing frustration, since I didn't want arbitrarily to deem one or the other to be the source of emendations of the copy-text. I certainly could not contemplate a mix-and-match process where *I* chose the reading. I finally realised that the evidence about which copy was the initial revision copy was in the tiny changes where, say, he might have been making good a partially inked keystroke or capitalising a lowercase letter. It was nearly always the case that he did this attentively on one copy but managed to transfer only a proportion of these tiny alterations onto the other copy, while he almost never missed transferring a changed word that was clearly visible. So it became possible in nearly all cases to determine which copy of a chapter was the initial revision copy and which was the transfer copy. The more obvious evidence of his changed wordings where he had inscribed, crossed-out and reinscribed was the control for these deductions.

It became clear from this too that while he picked up from his two piles one chapter at a time to revise he transferred his revisions one page at a time. In only a few cases did he mix up ribbon and carbon pages *within* a chapter. But when he finished revising a chapter he frequently must have dropped the two revised copies onto the wrong pile, thus explaining their current mixed condition. For the purposes of final intentions editing, the two typescript documents witnessed a single, nearly continuous process of revision. Their documentary difference was overshadowed by this crucial fact.

Just to be provocative – because I have friends amongst us today whom I am sure will take up the challenge later – let me say that defenders of German historical-critical editions are *narrow*-minded when they claim that Anglo-American critical editions are of necessity wrongly based because they incorporate readings eclectically from different documents. In the present case, eclectic combination was necessary if the process was to be represented in the reading text. Any form of editing that only recorded the different readings in the two typescripts, that respected them as the two separate documents that they soon became, would have misrepresented the process that was actually happening.

An editor in the German tradition faced with the situation I have described would very likely reject what I did on the grounds that the revised text never existed in a single document and that the editing method involved interpreting what was in the author's mind as he revised. That would be the ground of our disagreement. The historical impulse is utterly fundamental to German editing: my argument with it is that its historicity is sometimes too circumscribing.

(It is possible, I should say in passing, that a German editor *might* treat the situation rather as would be done to reconstruct the text of a poem whose text was written and later continued in whatever physical documents

happened to be at hand as the poet wrote and revised: multiple documents but one text. But the different intended destinations of the two typescripts in Lawrence's case, as well as their separate later collection by manuscript libraries, might warn against this more flexible impulse.)

At the moment I am co-editing Conrad's novel of 1911, *Under Western Eyes*, again on final-intentions principles. It exhibits even tougher problems than *The Boy in the Bush.* Once again, the reason is international copyright. Much the same is true of Virginia Woolf, and we may hear something of her this afternoon. But think about *this*. If you were a novelist in the early twentieth century and you wanted to maximise your income from your writing, and especially if you were a slow perfectionist such as Conrad was and *had* to maximise it, then it would be in your interest for your literary agent to place your novel for simultaneous serialisation in New York and London with both serialisations to end just as the two first editions appeared also simultaneously in the two cities. The practical problem that this entailed was the provision of sets of copy for the four printers.

Think about how creative writers might go about doing that, of keeping them textually identical with one another. Think about Conrad's doing this when the agony of dragging out of himself this too-personal *Under Western Eyes* about a brilliant, deeply divided young man who betrays his own country actually brought on the author's mental breakdown. And then, when only half-recovered, slashing the text, gouging out large scenes and passages. Conrad's now very heavily revised typescript was retyped in duplicates that, without his checking them, were sent for monthly serialisation to the *English Review* and *North American Review.* Then, even as he was writing his next novel, there were the intervening complications of having to correct galley proofs of the serialisation in the *English Review* that wandered in monthly but amounted only to successive instalments of the novel.

About half-way through this process Conrad realised that, in London, Methuen could set up the English first edition from published instalments of the *English Review* and he hit on the idea of having a friend who was staying with him at the time transfer his revisions from the published instalments that had so far appeared, onto a spare copy of the proofs with which Conrad had been provided to serve as a working copy. Collation of the extant typescript that Conrad heavily revised – the one I described, not the retyped one he never saw – with the four published typesettings show that his American publisher Harper Brothers used corrected *English Review* proofs to set up from. Collation also shows that those proofs that Conrad's friend prepared more reliably transmitted his revisions than the ones of the later instalments Conrad himself subsequently prepared. He was probably working in much the same kind of way as Lawrence would with *The Boy in the Bush*, except Conrad was working on duplicate proofs rather than duplicate typescripts.

Methuen's edition was, as I have said, set up from the published instalments in the *English Review*. But at the end of the process there was not enough time for Methuen's Edinburgh printer to wait for the final double instalment to appear in the *English Review*. Conrad must have prepared triplicate revises of this instalment, the most urgent of which were for Methuen and for Harper, and the least urgent for the *English Review* itself whose deadlines fell into the normal monthly cycle of revision that Conrad had been respecting for the previous eleven months. Probably because Conrad felt so pushed for time he evidently corrected only very lightly the set for Harpers, sent it off and then returned to proofread and transcribe the set for Methuen.

He seems to have felt less than the expected anxiety for the correct transcription of revisions of this set because he knew that he would shortly receive Methuen proofs and could attend to the revision and correction once again then. The proof set to be returned to the *English Review* was the least urgent, and so he could afford to spend some time on it. There are in fact thirty cases in Part IV chapters 3 and 4 (the bulk of the October 1911 instalment) where the *English Review* alone deletes or varies wordings.

I found this scenario a difficult one to get straight. It was a matter of sorting out in what patterns the variants among the four printed states agreed and disagreed, to determine provisionally what state was set from what, and then to map this evidence against the timing of the two serialisations. I hadn't done that before and it shows yet again that every edition is a new set of problems. Most of the scenario I have described is a reconstruction, and so the edition will inevitably be an argument about the evidence. The argument will be embodied in the reading text and the apparatus and discussed in detail in the textual introduction. In this Conrad edition there will be a reporting of pre-copy-text variants as well as post-copy-text. That's an interesting move.

The revised typescript is to be the copy-text and the main source of emendation for substantives is E1 whose proofs were set from the *English Review* and were the ones last corrected by Conrad. Why did we not choose the manuscript as copy-text I hear you ask?

The answer is an interesting one and reinforces what I was saying about the typescript copies of *The Boy in the Bush* witnessing a single process of revision despite their being two separate documents. Documents are said to stabilise text; these texts can be treated as historical or authorised, and they can be recorded in one or other form of apparatus. But to grant them this status automatically and design your edition around them can mean missing what they also and perhaps more importantly witness: textual process. Let me explain.

Conrad's habit of writing a short section of holograph manuscript and then having one typed copy made immediately had the effect, in practice, that composition and revision would proceed in lockstep with one another. This is because Conrad, upon receipt of the typed pages, would typically revise them *before* proceeding with his writing of the next batch of manuscript. Considered as a document, the manuscript does not – at least in the first 670 of its 1,351 pages – witness an integral state of the text of the novel. MS and TS are in effect composite witnesses of the same text: later parts of MS were not yet written when some earlier parts of TS were already in existence. Conrad proceeded in batches, writing perhaps a dozen pages and then immediately having them typed. When Conrad received typescript it evidently spurred him to a new effort of concentration. There is much less evidence of this in the second half of the typescript however, once Conrad had got properly into his stride and was more confidently in charge of the narrative progression.

In this way, then, a typescript emerged from the ruptures and the counteracting continuities of composition, typing and revision; the accumulated composite document, TS, which he finished in January 1910 would enable him to review the novel as a whole for the first time in April–May 1910 immediately he recovered from the mental breakdown that the agonies of finishing the novel had brought to a head.

He shortened the novel originally for the purposes of serialisation only in April–May 1910 but gradually he became committed to this new shortened form and this is the one he drove forward towards publication in book form. So

the breakdown was a watershed, which we have respected in the edition while recording the variants both pre- and post-copy-text. Another volume is planned for the series, which may be called 'Razumov', the novel's title in manuscript. It will present the text of the novel in January 1910, which is reconstructable from the extant revised typescript even though the bulk of the changed holograph readings date from the major April–May revision.

III

One fact of general interest emerges from this account of these two editions. Achieved texts – texts that have been physically recorded – are usually of mixed textual authority, that is they embody readings that are the responsibility of different people, typically the author, a friend, a typesetter, a typist or two typists. In the German tradition the editor has to find out which texts the author believed, whether temporarily or permanently, represented the work. This would include texts that were actually published with the author's participation or even only approval. Such texts are said to be authorised. German editing does not recognise the Anglo-American principle of textual authority and so cannot in their establishment of a reading text readily discriminate between the various agents of the text where the textual authority is a mixed one. The German doctrine of authorisation can do nothing about this mixed authority other than accept it as historical fact. The Anglo-American approach empowers the editor to act; the German requires the editor to record. The choice of reading text becomes in effect only a convenience for the apparatus, which becomes the real centre of the historical-critical edition.

Them is fightin' words that I hope will stir up some debate in the seminar to follow. But having uttered them I have in fairness to acknowledge that when we were setting up the Academy Editions of Australian Literature series and searching out examples of textual transmission to test various editorial approaches we actually hit upon one that lies somewhere between final-intentions editing and the German kind, and, if anything, is closer to the German. I hope to show you some results later. I've brought some examples along. But it's worth saying now that even though we knew very little at the time about the German tradition – that would come subsequently after the Michigan collection of translations of the major manifestos and articles appeared in 1997 and things got clearer – even though, I say, we knew little of German editing Australia was the first country, as far as I know, to get a major series of editions going with the full benefit and insights of the 1980s editorial movement behind it. This was only an accident of history, but it is a salient fact.

There is one other general observation that I want to make. Editions have been changing slowly, but they are changing in recognition at some level of the shift in understanding of what a literary work is: the sort of shift that I was talking about before. In fact it is probably better nowadays to think of scholarly editions as mainly reference books about the work rather than thinking of them as authoritative expressions *of* the aesthetic work. If you make this shift in your thinking then the contents of the edition, what you should include or exclude, become a little clearer.

I remember surprising my Canadian counterpart Mary Jane Edwards in saying that editions are reference books. Her series was earlier conceived than the Australian ones I am involved with and is very much in a

Bowersonian final-intentions mould. She had introduced explanatory notes routinely into her series and in the earlier of the two Australian series, the Colonial Texts Series, we did too. In the Academy Editions series we have gone further, sometimes with maps, and essays about relevant historical or biographical backgrounds. In one case there is an extensive glossary of slang and Australianisms and an essay devoted to that work's very delayed, bowdlerised and politicised serialisations in Montreal. There is a large section of music in our colonial plays volume. But no literary criticism as such in any volume. The emphasis has remained historical as we always have to consider the very extended shelf life that the Academy Editions are supposed to have. The inclusion of any form of commentary that will quickly go out of date is difficult to defend. We avoid it.

IV

So, to answer the question I started with: what have I learnt about editing and editions? Some of what I will say now flows directly from the case studies I have described. Some is implied. But I think my wife was probably right: I *can* get it into five minutes and then I'll stop.

1. The first thing editing teaches you is to attend to the evidence, and to distinguish the evidence from the trash, the signal from the noise. It's not easy to attend to evidence. You've got to do the bibliographical searching to begin with. You've got to collate. You've got to pour over the collations dreaming up scenario after scenario to see which best fits the evidence. In fact, to *have* evidence you have to hit on at least a provisional argument to test it against.

2. Textual criticism is quite simply the best or simplest or most elegant story you can tell about the surviving evidence: the story that explains the evidence and that has survived your systematic and prolonged attempts to discredit it. It will be a distant cousin to the story you started off by telling; in fact when you look back you'll be embarrassed by that one. Why couldn't I see the real chain of events? you'll ask yourself. It was staring me in the face and I couldn't see it. But, if you keep attending, in the end you will see it, and you'll know that you are a storyteller. Your story will be a powerful argument about what happened.

3. You have to learn to think for yourself. Especially with modern works, it will be often be virgin territory. Often no one will have gone there before. You need to learn to question most of the assumptions you started off with: e.g. that scholarly editions are definitive. Arguments are never definitive, so why should editions be?, although they *should* be very persuasive in order to justify the money and time invested in them. Second example. If you started off believing that literary works are aesthetic things, think again. They have much richer lives than what that term encompasses. In fact, works that become classics invariably show gradually altering texts and repackagings for new audiences as publishers sniff the shifting cultural winds and reprint the work in new clothing. I'll show you an example later.

4. If editions are arguments then they have a rhetoric of persuasion: they are not purely impersonal. They function best when the editor's language is clear, as simple as possible in syntax and expression, is moderate in tone (and it must be moderate, mustn't it?, since you as editor will always be more acutely aware than anyone of how much you have inferred, how much you don't positively *know*. In other words you'll know the depth of your ignorance about the work more precisely than anyone else.) Avoid intensifying adverbs

and adjectives. Don't get friendly with your reader: because you can't imagine that reader in 2050 can you?

5. Another lesson is that editing in print form enforces a decision about how much of the evidence you are going to reveal. If you go for a clear reading text because it helps your reader, and your publisher smiles on you seeing future commercial exploitation of the text abeckoning, you are nevertheless going to know that you are presenting a stable text that will have actually been unstable. Do you want to conceal or at least partially reveal that instability on the reading page?

I believe that most readers are lazy and don't want to work hard. But if the scholarly edition is indeed a reference book then it's a good idea to disturb your readers sufficiently to get them curious about all that stuff at the foot of the page. *What* does it mean? What is going on down there? If you choose the categories of variant you record there with skill you might have won a reader over to understanding texts and works as you do. You may peel off the shades from their eyes. You have a responsibility to teach readers how to use the edition. Page design is an important aspect of this. You may reveal to readers the importance of agency and chronology. But beware: once you admit agency onto the editorial stage there is no escaping intention. Historical approaches finally do not shield you from it, though they may delay its entry for a time.

6. Editors create texts that have never existed before. You will know that you are intervening between the extant documents and readers. That fall into experience is a salutary thing, and oddly it is a position of power. Exercise it with your eyes wide open and lay your cards on the table. Know that bibliography is not a dirty word and that, with a print edition, unlike an electronic edition, there is a good chance that with persistence, care and imagination you will actually finish it.

7. Lastly, don't think of the literary work or works you are editing or studying as existing in a cultural vacuum. Readers need books. Books are physical commodities, objects with exchange value in commercial markets. Writers pour their emotional and imaginative lives into their writings. Publishers invest their money. But all this comes to naught if the books are not sold. Literary works are written, produced and read in such contexts, which change over time in concert with broader cultural changes. The best editions expose this. They are like geological cross-sections of the book-historical forces of their time.

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[i] Gettmann, *A Victorian Publisher*, pp. 202, 229–30.