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Journal Title: The papers of the Bibliographical Society of America.

Volume: 99 **Issue:** 2
Month/Year: 2005**Pages:** 197-230

Article Author: Bibliographical Society of America.

Article Title: Hume, Robert; The Aims and Uses of 'Textual Studies'

Imprint: Chicago, Ill. ; University of Chicago Pr

ILL Number: 33542275

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The Aims and Uses of "Textual Studies"

ROBERT D. HUME

WHAT exactly *are* "textual studies" and what are the proper functions of this discipline or set of related disciplines? These may seem peculiarly elementary questions to be asking at this late date after a century of intensive bibliographic scholarship, much of it very distinguished work. In justification of a fresh consideration of some fundamental issues, I would point to the low standing of textual studies enterprises in North American English departments at the outset of the new millennium. Few major institutions emphasize editing or bibliographic scholarship, and bright students are rarely encouraged to take up these lines of work. The bibliography/literary criticism dichotomy has become a chasm over the last twenty or thirty years, with critics increasingly neglectful and even contemptuous of bibliographic scholarship. Textual scholars grumble about lack of appreciation, but have done little to convince their critical brethren of the value of what they do. With "bibliography courses" in radical decline and academic publication in crisis, we have clearly reached a point at which some hard rethinking is in order.

What conceptual framework connects such entities as "bibliography," "scholarly editing," and "history of the book"? To what larger enterprise do these activities belong? How far do they extend into the interpretation of texts? I come to these questions not as a textual scholar

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Robert D. Hume (432 West Shadow Lane, State College, PA 16803) is Evan Pugh Professor of English Literature at Penn State University. He is author, co-author, or editor of fourteen books, notably *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (1976), *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (1999), and *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London* (2 vols., 1995, 2001), all published by Oxford University Press.

PBSA 99:2 (2005): 197–230

but as a theatre historian, a theorist of historical context reconstruction, and co-editor with Harold Love of the forthcoming Oxford edition of Buckingham.[1] Over the years I have read extensively and often bemusedly in bibliographic and textual theory from Greg and Bowers through McKenzie, McGann, and Tanselle to Greetham and other present-day warriors. As an outsider and a nonspecialist, I have found the experience confusing and depressing. Factional wars have been fought with quite unnecessary ferocity, and highly technical disputes have clouded any larger sense of shared purpose. In all honesty, I must admit as a critic/historian to profound dissatisfaction with the standard editions produced in my fields over the last half century. What follows is an attempt by a noncombatant to offer some common-sense observations on the point of bibliographic and textual enterprises and the ways in which they can be most usefully pursued. Far higher reputation within the university is attainable — but only if textual scholars can significantly reinvent their enterprise.

A particular difficulty needs to be made explicit at the outset of this discussion. I am, in essence, attempting simultaneously to address two essentially disjunct audiences — analytic bibliographers, editors, and other "textual studies" people on one side, and interpreters ("literary critics" as some would still call themselves) on the other. A lot of the members of both groups are dismissive of (or flat-out hostile to) the other. Many of the things that need to be said are glaringly obvious to one side but not to the other — and this cuts both ways. I am trying to bridge a gap and promote collegial cooperation, not to argue a partisan case. Seeing the logic of another point of view is a first step towards a fruitful connection.

1. Texts and Their Contexts as a Basis for Interpretation

At the risk of offending those who pursue various bibliographic or textual activities as ends in themselves, I shall start from a contrary assumption. A principal object on the bibliographic side of the lamentable bibliography/criticism dichotomy is to create texts edited in such ways as will open them to sound critical and historical interpretation. In other words, one of the functions of bibliographers is to publish useful editions. My experience, I regret to say, is that many of the editions of the last half century are a lot less useful than they could be. All virtues aside, they do a decidedly spotty job of helping critics. An obvious reason for this is that editors do what they have been trained to do, which is to construct eclectic texts massively buttressed with supporting textual apparatus.[2] Most critics totally ignore such apparatus, but they seem to regard editions as a phenomenon about which complaint is useless. The principles on which editions should be constructed have been hotly contested in Anglo-American literary circles over the last half-century, but almost always from relatively narrowly defined positions. We will do well to remind ourselves that we should resist English department parochialism and Anglophone chauvinism. Historians publish a lot of heavily contextualized editions of documents. European-language literary editing has rarely been carried out with much respect for the Greg-Bowers program. The enormous, ongoing project of editing the Greek New Testament from thousands of manuscripts takes us right into a different textual universe.

Let us return to basics and ask an embarrassingly fundamental question. What does a critic need in order to make a well-founded attempt at interpreting a text? What groundwork needs to be done? We will assume a highly intelligent investigator, widely read in primary and secondary sources and in various sorts of interpretive theory. What gives this person a solid basis on which he or she can legitimately attempt to practice textual interpretation — and ultimately broader kinds of cultural studies? My answer comes in two parts.

Point 1 is that we must have a reliable source for the text itself — *a source whose nature and origins the critic understands*. Whether you are using a manuscript (or a transcription of one), an early printed text, a presentation of a particular "version," or an elaborate modern eclectic edition constructed from multiple sources, you must comprehend its relation to the origins of the work and to other extant versions. For a critic to refer to "Richardson's *Pamela*" is an unacceptable *bêtise*. Does this signify (a) the first edition of 1740 (published with a 1741 date), or (b) one of the flood of hasty revisions culminating in the very different sixth edition of 1742, or (c) the author's final, radical revision (posthumously published in 1801)?[3] Print is a much less fixed and final medium than many critics seem to imagine. A critic not thoroughly aware of which version he or she is using, and why, is not practicing legitimate criticism. Such a person is, rather, an ignoramus committing a public nuisance. Many works survive in only one text with any authority, but if there are textual problems or variant versions, the critic *must* know this and must in any case be clear on what changes, corrections, or regularizations have been imposed by an editor. That the critic should have a reason for choosing a particular edition (whether original or modern and elaborately edited) should not need to be said. Unfortunately, such a rule not only needs to be stated but insisted upon in practice. One hopes, of course, that the text employed will be *accurate*. Thirty years ago I read (in what remains the standard edition) a letter from Vanbrugh to Jacob Tonson in which he observed rather cryptically that the Duchess of Marlborough (who had given him a very bad time over the building of Blenheim Palace) "shou'd be hand'd," a phrase that did not convey a lot to me.[4] Only recently did I come across the original MS, part of the Charnwood Autograph Collection acquired by the British Library in 1994. What Vanbrugh actually wrote was "shou'd be hang'd."[5]

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[1] For my take on the practice of historical scholarship, see Robert D. Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), and "The Aims and Limits of Historical Scholarship," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 53 (2002): 399–422.

[2] The term "eclectic text" having produced enquiries from some of my literary critical readers, perhaps a footnote is in order. The concept is generally related to W. W. Greg's classic essay on "The Rationale of Copy-Text," *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950–51): 19–36. The underlying idea is that substantives (words) and accidentals (spelling and punctuation) may be drawn from different sources — e.g., an authorial manuscript for handling of accidentals, with later states (first and subsequent editions) drawn on for substantive emendation of the text. In other words, no single state of the text is granted full authority and reproduced (with obvious errors corrected).

Point 2 is that unless the critic is practicing a radically anti-historical (and now ludicrous) form of New Criticism, he or she is obliged to investigate four fairly distinct realms connected to the contexts in which our text has come into the world. These are *genesis, production, dissemination*, and *reception*. A reading that ignores any of these factors is defective in procedure and principle, and dangerously liable to serious error or omissions. Let me indicate briefly what falls in each of these territories.

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[3] For a demonstration of the textual mess associated with *Pamela*, see Philip Gaskell, *From Writer to Reader: Studies in Editorial Method* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), Example 3 (63–79).

[4] *The Complete Works of Sir John Vanbrugh*, vol. 4, ed. Geoffrey Webb (Bloomsbury: Nonesuch Press, 1928), 123.

[5] British Library Add. MS 70,948, fols. 95^{r}–6^{v}.

Genesis has to do with the author who generated the text (if the identity is known), with his or her background, education, reading, friends, and circumstances when writing. If authorship is in doubt, then attribution is part of this territory. If the text was written in response to current events (Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, let us say), then exploration of public affairs at precisely the times of composition and publication is in order. If a partner or friends or an editor helped revise and reshape the text, then this must be analyzed as part of genesis (Pound's reworking and retitling of Eliot's *He do the police in different voices*, for instance). If the work is a committee enterprise (Buckingham's *Rehearsal*), then the nature of the collaboration must be investigated, supposing that there is any evidence to be had. The scholar will often be stymied. An anonymous text known in only one scribal copy will probably give little scope for analysis in this realm. *Ulysses* is a different matter.

Production refers to the process by which a manuscript moves into its circulatable form. A holograph or authorially approved copy may be handed to a printer, or an unauthorized copy may find its way to press and into print without authorial permission. Much of what falls under this heading concerns editing (if any), printing house practice, the imposition of house style by the editor or typesetter, and the semiotic impact of formatting. This is the world of analytic bibliography, and quite a lot can sometimes be learned about how a work arrived at what may (or may not) be the only form in which we know it. Swift's *Directions to Servants* is a fine example of a horribly messy case. The work was published posthumously. Two quite contradictory manuscripts survive, and the first edition (1745) was clearly set from another manuscript, now lost. The 1746 edition includes revisions, and the 1751 edition includes further revisions, some of them based on the manuscript more remote from the first printing. The standard modern edition (in the Herbert Davis *Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*) is less than satisfactory.[6]

Dissemination has to do with a lot of what now falls under the heading "print culture." Who published the work? In what format? At what price? Who are the buyers who constitute the market? Are we talking about a serialized text? Are there pirated editions? A cheap reprint? A good example of problematic scribal dissemination is Marvell's "Advice to a Painter" poems (supposing that they really are by Marvell).[7] They are politically touchy in the extreme, not acknowledged, and the reliability of the surviving texts is essentially undeterminable. How they were read at the time must unquestionably have been heavily influenced by their clandestine nature.

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[6] Gaskell lays out the problems very clearly in his Example 4 (80–100).

Reception involves recorded responses. These may include reviews, attacks in print or other media, references in letters and diaries, sequels, memorabilia, and demonstrable influence on works by other writers (*Shamela*, *Joseph Andrews*). *Pamela* makes a felicitous example since criticism and second thoughts led Richardson to make hundreds of changes in short order, both stylistic and conceptual. Reception drove revision, radically changing the work itself. Readers and reviewers may understand a text in radically different (and sometimes misguided) ways, but the record of reception can be a valuable tool for determining how actual people responded to texts we are trying to contextualize. Editions, both popular and scholarly, are themselves of course a part of reception.

Genesis, production, dissemination, and reception need to be understood as crucial components in our attempting to reconstruct and comprehend the circumstances in which our text came into being and reached whatever audience it found.[8] All four realms exist in the immediate vicinity of the original composition and making public of the work at issue. All four potentially exist both later in the author's life and posthumously. The writer of the text may revise it (Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*); the publisher may issue new editions (*Tom Jones*); dissemination may change radically (an obscure niche work can become a revered cultural icon, as with *Paradise Lost* or *Moby Dick*); a prominent and oft-republished writer may virtually disappear from sight (Donne after 1669) or a controversial piece become canonical (*A Tale of a Tub*). An anonymous work of uncertain date may offer few possibilities in the realm of genesis

(*King Leir*, c. 1588–94; pub. 1605). A work with no manuscripts and only one unproblematical printing may need little attention to textual production (Behn's *The Dutch Lover*, 1673). Dissemination and reception may be virtually nonexistent (true of many failed plays) or extremely odd (Blake).

The critic's interest may lie (a) in close analysis of the text; or (b) in analyzing it in relation to its historical context; or (c) in comparing the work to others, possibly in a different period or country; or (d) in analyzing it for its cultural studies implications; or (e) in putting it in a literary history sequence — or in a variety of other enterprises. But whether the interest is essentially textual, historical, comparative, cultural, or anything else, to ignore the basics of genesis, production, dissemination, and reception is simply stupid. In many cases they may be largely unknowable, well known, or not very relevant to one's enterprise, but investigating each of these realms is part of good critical practice at the most basic level. A critic needs to know, for example, that public-theatre plays were rarely regarded as "literary" products in the English Renaissance, that an enormous number of plays were adaptations and/or collaborations, and that no play was advertised for performance in London with its author's name attached until 1699.[9] Someone studying Shakespeare production and criticism must realize that most performances well into the eighteenth century were of adaptations, and that not until the 1740s were "Shakespeare's" plays routinely advertised as his on the playbills.[10] Interpretation need not be bound by contextual facts, but frightful errors of an elementary kind result when interpretation is attempted in ignorance of how the artifact came into being and why it is as it is.[11]

If a critic is going to need both an accurate text and multiple kinds of documented contextualization, where are these desiderata to come from?

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[7] On the authorship of the *Second* and *Third Advices to a Painter*, see Annabel Patterson, "Lady State's First Two Sittings: Marvell's Satiric Canon," *Studies in English Literature* 40 (2000): 395–411. These poems were excluded from the long-standard Margoliouth edition of the *Poems and Letters*, a position maintained even in the Legouis version of 1971.

[8] For a lucid basic survey of such matters as authorial experience, financial pressures, the processes of publication and distribution, reception, and the interaction of these factors, see Robert Escarpit, *Sociologie de la littérature* (1958), translated by Ernest Pick as *Sociology of Literature*, Lake Erie College Studies, 4 (Painesville, Ohio: Lake Erie College Press, 1965).

[9] See Paulina Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660–1710* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).

[10] See Robert D. Hume, "Before the Bard: 'Shakespeare' in Early Eighteenth-Century London," *ELH* 64 (1997): 41–75.

[11] As a single tiny example, I will offer Harley Granville-Barker's scorn for the improbability of Wycherley's numerous "asides." On a nineteenth-century style picture-frame stage, they are indeed an awkward embarrassment, but on the thrust stage for which Wycherley was writing in the 1670s they work quite well. See *On Dramatic Method* (1931; rpt. New York: Hill and Wang, 1956), chap. 4.

The longstanding bibliography/criticism dichotomy presumes that editors from the bibliographical side will spare critics the labor of establishing the texts they wish to analyze. How satisfactory the resulting texts are for critical purposes is one question. Who is to perform the labor of establishing basic contextualization is another.

II. INTENTION, SOCIOLOGY, AND THE BASIS OF TEXT CONSTRUCTION

A generation ago interpreters of texts were often stunningly careless about the editions they used. If anything they are now even more so. To judge from article and book manuscripts I read for learned journals and publishers, a high proportion of critics feel free to use any text that comes their way.[12] When I advise using "the standard edition" (when there is one), I meet the response, "What is a standard edition?" Or "How would I identify such a thing?" Many critics who *do* use a standard edition pay no attention to its textual policy and apparatus and have little idea what they are actually working with or how it was brought into being. The collapse of "bibliography" classes in many graduate programs (my own included) means that a lot of Ph.D.s have little or no concept of differing versions or of the practical problems of arriving at a single edited text. Some celebrated cases notwithstanding (*King Lear*, *The Prelude*), most critics pay little attention to "versions." One recalls, of course, the adage that those who eat sausage do not wish to be privy to the process of its production. But is this good scholarly practice?

Let us go back to a fundamental conceptual issue in textual theory. Is the text we are trying to establish a product of Authorial Agency or of Social Discourse? Classic Greg-Bowers-Tanselle theory held that the ultimate court of appeal was the intention of the composing author. In the course of the 1980s, as everyone working in bibliographic realms well knows, Jerome J. McGann and D. F. McKenzie independently arrived at a still-controversial revisionist position, the essence of which was (a) that what authors say is heavily influenced by the circumstances in which they live and write and (b) that many people affect the particulars of an author's texts — e.g., spouse, friends, editors, and compositors.[13] Their philosophical position amounts to denying the reproducibility of an "essential" text on the grounds that no such thing exists: what comes down to us are particular versions at particular stages of the creation and dissemination of the text.

The ferocity with which Bowersites assailed the more "social" thinking of McKenzie and McGann is more than a little astonishing. One would have thought that only High-Church Doctrine assaulted by Heresy would have generated such fury. The idea that attention ought to be paid to "sociology" and multiple factors in genesis makes excellent sense — but so does concern with what the author was apparently trying to communicate. Either position can quickly be taken to foolish extremes. Insistence on intention can be overdone (intention not always being discoverable), but at the opposite extreme a postmodern determination to ignore the author is even sillier. Texts are not self-generating. A large majority of the literary works we study were thought up and drafted by a single person (i.e., an individual with a biologically unique brain), who gave them their basic shape and design and words. Said author was no doubt affected by his or her contexts in all sorts of ways, and the resultant text may have been quite drastically altered by the intervention of friends, collaborators, editors, and printers. One text may have been written by a hermit and never seen by another human being for a century or more (virtually true of Smart's *Jubilate Agno*). Another may be the product of a committee enterprise, circulated scribally, added to by numerous persons unknown, and extant in twenty radically incommensurable versions whose relationship we are unable to determine with confidence.[14]

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[12] For an intelligent and sophisticated critic to assume that the reader's experience of *Clarissa* can be analyzed with reference to George Sherburn's radical abridgement of its text in the 1962 Houghton Mifflin edition may boggle the mind, but it has been done. See Lennard J. Davis, *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987).

[13] The classic texts are McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983) and McKenzie's Panizzi Lectures of 1985, published as *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London: British Library, 1986) and issued with a new foreword by Cambridge in 1999, the year of McKenzie's death. For two particularly important responses, see John Sutherland, "Publishing History: A Hole at the Centre of Literary Sociology," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (1988): 574–89, and G. Thomas Tanselle's ferocious rebuttal, "Textual Criticism and Literary Sociology," *Studies in Bibliography* 44 (1991): 83–143.

[14] As an instance I offer Buckingham's "A Song on Thomas Earl of Danby" (1679), which whatever its origins appears to have been cut, reshuffled, and promiscuously added to by a large number of unidentifiable contributors. Harold Love and I found 59 stanzas in various sources, and manuscript versions ranging in length from six stanzas to twenty-nine. How many of them derive in any way from Buckingham there is no way to determine.

Any theory and any practical editorial procedure must be designed to cope with both possibilities. From the standpoint of the informed if nonbibliographic critic, what is needed is an edition whose textual policy reflects the realities of the work at issue and serves the particular needs of the investigator.

Long ago in graduate school I learned the then-approved truths and since that time I have "kept up." Do we prefer a holograph or a later scribal manuscript with authorial corrections? Should we adopt the first printed version or the last lifetime edition as copytext? Ought we to take our substantives from one source and correct the accidentals from another? And so forth. But when I have tried to apply such theory to the problems of editing the works of Buckingham, I have not known whether to laugh or to cry. Most (and perhaps all) of his writing appears to have been collaborative, and what part of any play, poem, or squib the Duke was actually responsible for drafting will probably remain permanently unknowable. What was published in his lifetime was almost all printed without authorial ascription, and much of the work was published posthumously. Very likely the Duke never saw anything through press.[15] All arguments about whether a manuscript should be preferred to the first printed version (etc.) are royally irrelevant. No holographs survive. As a rule we have one printed version of indeterminate authority. In the case of *The Rehearsal* (*Ur*-version lost; first performed version pub. 1672) we have a major revision (pub. 1675) that represents an updated performance script, but we have not a scrap of evidence to show that Buckingham wrote it, contributed to it, approved it, or even knew about it. We have some scribally circulated poems in multiple, wildly different versions: supposing the Duke had anything to do with any of them, there is no way to tell what. Bowersites tend to focus on production; sociologically inclined bibliographers are interested in context across the whole span from genesis to reception. Neither party has satisfactory answers for the problems that bedevil the editor of Buckingham. We have, for example, an ugly little personal satire called "A Hue-and-Cry after Beauty and Vertue," occupying about four pages. It was printed without attribution, publisher, or date (probably in the 1680s). A couple of undated and unattributed manuscripts survive. A version of the piece was printed posthumously in the utterly unreliable *Miscellaneous Works* of Buckingham in 1704. The surviving texts have no demonstrable relationship to one another. The 1704 printing may well be the "latest," but could easily derive from a source earlier than any of the others. On what basis do we choose a copytext? The editor is driven back to issues of correctness (are there obvious errors?) and assessment of verbal quality (a dangerously subjective process).

At the rarified heights of theory, one may worry endlessly over hypothetical issues. The noisy conflict between "intentionalist" editing and "sociology of the text" seems to miss the point of what both sides were saying. Intentionalist editing works pretty well if we have a single author, passably reliable sources, and no special complications of transmission and production. The "sociological" position of McKenzie and McGann is not so much an alternative as an admission of complexity and untidiness. The idea of the solitary genius author unaffected by anything is unquestionably silly — and we do indeed need to be attentive to such print-culture issues as dissemination and the forces exerted by the reading public on the creation and production of texts. *Text production* affects *text consumption*, but the reverse is equally true.

We must also remember that editions fulfill different functions, and this is the case not just in terms of old-spelling scholarly editions versus paperback texts aimed at students. Consider, for example, the forthcoming Oxford edition of *The Works of William Congreve*, edited in three volumes by the late D. F. McKenzie. It is a magnificent edition by a major scholar. It takes as copytext the 1710 collected works, revised by Congreve for a reading public and elegantly embodied in print by Tonson in an edition quite deliberately replicated and elaborated in the new version. Congreve was deeply involved in the whole production, and the 1710 edition represents his authorial achievement as he chose to leave it for posterity. From the standpoint of a theatre historian, however, the edition is exceedingly problematical. Congreve cleaned up the texts of his 1690s plays (bowdlerized them, I would say) and he imposed French scene division in place of the original English style of scenes. McKenzie's famous 1981 article about typography and meaning makes a passionate case for Congreve's vision of "works" as he wanted them, and for his conceiving scenes in the French manner (with a new, numbered scene created by each entrance or exit).[16] From my point of view, however, the 1710 edition is a misconceived horror. A theatre historian naturally wants the text as it was spoken in the playhouse, and I find the fragmentation into tiny little separate scenes a terrible distraction from the flow of the stage action. Congreve is certainly entitled to an edition that presents his work as he wanted it available to the reading public. Whether this edition is a legitimate representation of Congreve's vision of theatrical performance is a point on which I entirely disagree with McKenzie. I am delighted to see this long-awaited edition finally coming into print (and have in fact helped contribute annotation on the performers, not written by McKenzie before his death), but I would advise those interested in the theatrical meaning and verbal impact of the plays to use the original quartos or the 1967 Herbert Davis edition based on them.

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[15] On the difficulties posed by the Buckingham corpus, see Robert D. Hume, "Editing a Nebulous Author: The Case of the Duke of Buckingham," *The Library*, 7th ser., 4 (2003): 249–77. For the resulting edition, see *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings Associated with George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham*, 2 vols., ed. Robert D. Hume and Harold Love (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, forthcoming).

We are left with the practical realities of particular cases. Where we have one dubious text (as is generally true with Buckingham), or multiple contradictory texts (as with the Earl of Rochester), or radically incommensurable versions (the *Pamela* dilemma), no theory is going to help us very much.[17] The editor may opt for manuscripts (if any), or first published version, or last lifetime, or whatever, but an informed critic might have excellent reasons for making a different choice — or for a comparison of versions which few editions make convenient (if indeed they make it possible at all). In the last two decades we have seen a welcome move towards "versioning" — refusing to try to reduce a work whose extant texts comprise major verbal or structural differences to a single editorially constructed text.[18] This makes good practical sense: to

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[16] D. F. McKenzie, "Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve," originally published in *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. Giles Barber and Bernhard Fabian (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981), and rpt. in D. F. McKenzie, *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S.J. (Amherst, MA: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2002), chap. 8.

[17] On the incredible textual tangles of Rochester's scribally circulated poems, see *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999).

[18] The virtues of versioning were pointed out long ago by James Thorpe in *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1972), esp. 32–47, and are eloquently argued by Donald H. Reiman in "'Versioning': The Presentation of Multiple Texts," in his *Romantic Texts and Contexts* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1987), 167–80.

try to reduce radically revised works to *one* text produces the monstrous results of the Bowers edition of Stephen Crane's "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets."[19] If there is a moral to this tale, it is that no single formula is going to serve all critics' textual needs.[20]

III. What Should an Edition Provide?

Texts, as people realize nowadays, imply contexts. One cannot make much sense of texts without due attention to their generation, production, dissemination, and reception. The text of a work cannot be treated in sanitized isolation. The job of an editor — if the resulting edition is to be truly useful — is *not* merely to construct an appropriately legitimized corrected or eclectic text with some explanatory notes on historical usage. The editor also needs to show us, insofar as possible, how the text came into being; how it took the form(s) in which we find it; how it was made public; and how it was received. For a CEAA (Center for Editions of American Authors) or CSE (Committee for Scholarly Editions) sort of venture enormous effort will be put into emendation and collation and an elaborate apparatus of variants will be supplied (and used by hardly anyone). Far less thought, let alone effort, is usually devoted to the rest of the enterprise. Overemphasis on the technical side of bibliography has produced a lot of editions overbalanced on the side of establishing the text. Expending enormous labor on textual construction makes sense if one is dealing with what is treated as a sacred canon

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[19] Crane's novella was privately published in 1893, then bowdlerized and drastically reworked stylistically for the Appleton edition of 1896. Bowers prints a text that is "a synthesis of the two editions" as an "ideal" and "definitive" version. See *The University of Virginia Edition of The Works of Stephen Crane*, vol. 1: *Bowery Tales*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1969), esp. xcv. For a scathing analysis of the textual editing, see the review by Donald Pizer in *Modern Philology* 68 (1970): 212–14.

[20] For a vigorously argued case to this effect in the realm of neglected women writers, see Alexander Pettit, "Terrible Texts, 'Marginal' Works, and the Mandate of the Moment: The Case of Eliza Haywood," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 22 (2003): 293–314. Pettit rightly deplores "low-quality transcriptions of texts altered at the whim of the unidentified transcriber, without explanation or justification" (297) while suggesting the inappropriateness of elaborate Greg-Bowers textual procedures and apparatus to hastily written, sloppily printed commercial books by authors who had little control of the publication process and rarely went back to revise or correct their work.

(Shakespeare) or a fiendishly complicated and contested one (Rochester), but for at least 80 percent of what I have ever written interpretive criticism about, a facsimile of the first printing would have given me a perfectly acceptable basis from which to work. There are some spectacular exceptions. The first London printing of *Verses on the Death of Doctor Swift* (381 lines) was drastically altered by Pope, and one must go to the subsequent Dublin edition (484 lines) to get what Swift actually wrote.[21] In most cases, however, I can find out in a matter of minutes whether I am confronting significant problems in the substance of the text.[22] The contextual issues that bear on interpretation are much less easy to deal with — and few editions offer the critic a whole lot of help in these realms.

What sort of introduction is requisite in a "standard edition"? What sort of explanatory notes and apparatus? Late twentieth-century editions of English-language literary texts vary considerably. Generalizing wildly, I would say that "genesis" tends to be treated more biographically than in terms of intellectual background, though the latter is often of greater use to the interpreter. "Production" is frequently analyzed exhaustively in technical ways (compositors, printing process). "Dissemination," if treated at all, is most often handled briefly and indifferently. "Reception" tends to be reduced to summary or given as a mechanical recital. Most full-dress editions avoid offering much in the way of interpretation, though a few review the history of twentieth-century opinion, at least in brief. "Notes" tend to be explanations of obsolete terms and the elucidation of historical references, though by no means all editions bother with any explanatory annotation at all — examples of such

neglect are the Herbert Davis "Shakespeare Head" edition of the *Prose Works* of Swift or the textually elaborate multi-volume Cambridge edition of Beaumont and Fletcher (general editor, Bowers). Exactly who is supposed to be able to read seventeenth-century texts conveniently without annotation? Not I, for one. A scholarly reader might also reasonably ask for notes that point out interpretive cruxes and the grounds of past differences of critical opinion. Exactly where and how we draw a line between notes that "assist" the reader (which most editors feel they should supply) and notes that try to direct or control the reader's understanding (which editors generally deny) remains an awkward problem.

A great many editions seem to have been brought into the world with quite astonishing indifference to the needs of their putative readers. One might imagine that the editor would want the edition to be *useful* and would inquire into what might make it so. Consider, for example, the case of the plays of Wycherley, edited by Arthur Friedman for Oxford (1979). The text is not much of an issue. We would get substantively much the same result from a facsimile of the four original quartos of the 1670s. The editor offers brief sketches of sources, first performance, and publication, plus a smattering of explicative notes. What is missing? Quite a lot. A reader might legitimately hope for an account of the physical staging in terms of the technical capacities of late seventeenth-century changeable scenery theatres. This is not a pro forma matter: these theatres are radically different from either the bare Renaissance public stages or the fourth-wall-missing box-set theatres of the nineteenth century. What is seen by the audience and how the thrust stage is employed in performance are, in my experience, extremely confusing even to seventeenth-century scholars, including quite a few drama scholars.

The reader might also hope for a detailed analysis of the original casts in terms of the original performers' "lines of business," skills, and appearance — and their probable effect on the impact of the first production. Professional dramatists of this period tended to write with a particular cast in mind. Casting was in any case customarily done with the advice and consent of the playwright, and casts often provide acute insights into the writer's conception of his or her play — the concept of the celebrity role did not originate with Broadway. Few editors have bothered even with minibiographies of the actors, let alone any explanation of what kinds of parts they played and how we might utilize knowledge of the performers in reconstructing the concept of early productions. The impact of *The Country-Wife* depends heavily on the casting of Horner, who may be an eighteen-year-old scamp, a hard-core libertine twice that age, or a dirty-old-man friend of the revolting Pinchwife (who is explicitly said to be 49). The casting of Charles Hart strongly suggests the second production concept in the original 1675 production, but one does not learn that from the Friedman edition.[23] No edition of any English playwright in the 1660–1800 period published in the last hundred years has incorporated a genuine attempt to analyze original cast members and their impact on interpretation for the benefit of the reader. Ironically, the McKenzie Congreve will be the first to do so.[24] No doubt one reason editors have shirked this task is that they would need to have read a couple of hundred plays in order to carry it out competently.

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[21] For nearly two centuries the poem was available principally in an abominable 545-line composite text that melded the version constructed by Pope (who believed that Swift had gone senile) and the authorially sanctioned one published by Swift in Dublin. For the tangled textual history, see Arthur H. Scouten and Robert D. Hume, "Pope and Swift: Text and Interpretation of Swift's Verses on His Death," *Philological Quarterly* 52 (1973): 205–31, and Stephen Karian, "The Authorial Strategies of Swift's *Verses on the Death*," in *Representations of Swift*, ed. Brian A. Connery (Newark, DE: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2002), 77–98. The current edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* prints the poem without the author's vital (and scurrilous) footnotes.

[22] "How?" ask some baffled literary critics. Simple enough. I consult a scholarly edition, if one exists. I check reference books to see if there are extant manuscripts and whether there are multiple editions. I may need to do some spot collation.

A third desideratum that a responsible editor might reasonably be expected to provide is at least a routine survey of later productions, using casts and whatever commentary may survive to reconstruct a sense of changing production concepts and impact — and some analysis of textual changes if one or more altered texts survive. From such apparatus we would learn, for example, that parts of Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* were quickly expunged and that the play virtually reversed its "meaning" in the theatre in the course of the eighteenth century. If promptbooks exist, they surely ought to be mined for whatever they can tell us — though this hardly ever seems to be done.

A fourth fundamental need is explanatory notes that help the reader with conceptual comprehension as well as with historical word meanings and topical allusions. An excellent example is the meaning of money. If a woman brings £10,000 in marriage as of 1707 (the date of *The Beaux Stratagem*, whose heroines have such portions), what sort of income would this generate and is it a comfortable living or a fortune? If something costs 5*s*, is this a trivial or a nontrivial sum? Trying to calculate "present day" value is admittedly tricky — and problematical in that the value calculated in an edition of twenty-five or fifty years back needs a new calculation for the present-day reader. (As I write, the economic history website — eh.net — Retail Price Index calculator translates £10,000 in 1707 as approximately £1,200,000 today, though other methods of calculation produce figures 1.5 to 2.5 times higher.) Most editors simply ignore the whole problem, but doing so creates a genuine barrier to comprehension on the part of the reader. Sometimes, to be sure, one wishes that the editor *had* ignored the issue. As an egregious instance, take a recent and putatively respectable student edition of *George Bernard Shaw's Plays*.[25] The hapless editor has simply supplied dollar equivalents to sterling sums at the rate of exchange current at the time the edition went to press, which was roughly $1.50 per pound sterling. The exchange rate was radically different when Shaw was writing plays in the first quarter of the twentieth century, but that is not the point. The seemingly tiny sums of money he specifies still seem negligible even at the then 5:1 exchange rate, but in terms of incomes and prices as of 1905 (*Major Barbara*) or 1913 (*Pygmalion*) the dollar values provided by the editor are ludicrously misleading. Charles Lomax's annual income of £800 (considered pathetically inadequate by Lady Britomart) had a purchasing power in 2002 of some £50,000 — which was then more than $75,000, but the Norton editor's footnote says "Approximately $1,200."[26] The £5,000 given anonymously to charity by Andrew Undershaft had a 2002 value over £313,000 or c. $469,500 ("Approximately $7,500" according to Norton). The "fiver" Henry Higgins is said to be able to spare had a buying power more like £300 or c. $450 (not $7.50). Helpful and conceptually accurate annotation *matters*. Sums of money stated in texts decades or centuries old are almost always either meaningless or wildly misleading without expert assistance. In my view an editor ought

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[23] Here is another such example. Mr. Sullen in Farquhar's *The Beaux Stratagem* is now almost always played as a buffoon, which radically reduces the impact of the author's presentation of marital discord and allusion to Milton's divorce tracts. But in the original 1707 production the part was given to John Verbruggen, who played heavyweight heroes and took Iago against Thomas Betterton's Othello. This matters: cast Sullen with one of the company's popular clowns (Jubilee Dicky Norris or Bullock) and you get an utterly different play. One does not learn this in Shirley Strum Kenny's generally estimable Oxford edition of Farquhar (1988).

[24] What Don McKenzie would have provided under the heading "Early Performers" in his table of contents there is no way to know. Judith Milhous and I were asked to fill the lacuna, and supplied thirty pages in typescript, analyzing the kinds of roles each performer customarily took and reconstructing the logic of the casting.

[25] *George Bernard Shaw's Plays*, ed. Sandie Byrne (New York: Norton, 2002). Following references to pp. 213, 251, and 313. This edition contains more than twenty direly misleading dollar equivalents in the footnotes.

[26] I deeply distrust simple calculations of buying-power equivalencies, though they can be conceptually useful. For the present figures I have relied on the Economic History Services website (eh.net), which employs currency history figures supplied by the generally trustworthy John J. McCusker.

sedulously to avoid calculating "present day" equivalents, but is perfectly free to give prices for a range of common goods, or statistics on average daily or annual income for a range of occupations. Only with such assistance will the reader have any proper notion of the economics of what is happening in the text at issue.

A second realm where annotation help is often needed in both plays and novels is law (for example, what are the legalities of clandestine marriage in late seventeenth-century comedies?). A third is social custom. When the aged nanny in Chekhov's *Three Sisters* is invited to sit down by one character and another bawls her out ferociously for being seated in the presence of her betters, *we need a footnote*. Literary allusions are often well annotated; issues of class, medicine, geography, and politics (for example) are often not. Elaborate annotation sometimes seems more pedantic than designed to assist with comprehension. If I want help with the texts of Dryden's plays, I turn to the eccentric Montague Summers edition of 1931–2 before I try the ponderous, pretentious annotation in the massive and expensive "California" edition.[27] Summers was at least interested in the performers and the theatre, and he had read huge numbers of other plays of the time. To this day, surprisingly little has ever been published on the principles of annotation in either scholarly or student editions.[28] Annotation in a lot of paperback texts meant for student use is either nonexistent or contemptible.

Special cases call for a bit of imagination on the part of an editor. If there is a source play, one might presume that a bit of space would be devoted to explaining the nature of the changes and that the editor might even supply a full set of textual variants if the texts are close enough to make that feasible. Harold Love and I have done this for Buckingham's adaptations of Fletcher's *Chances* and *Philaster*, putting the readings of the original texts at the bottoms of pages for easy comparison and including deleted passages — something he had helpfully done for the Rochester version of Fletcher's *Valentinian*. This is by no means standard practice. In the Oxford *Farquhar*, Shirley Kenny compares *The Inconstant* with its source (Fletcher's *The Wild-Goose Chase*) in about half a page of the introduction and quotes some passages from the source in explanatory notes. Acts IV and V are admittedly "almost entirely original," and provision of Fletcher's text would therefore not make sense. In *The Chances*, faced with a similar situation, Harold Love and I simply terminated the original readings after Act III. My point is that where the texts stay reasonably close, an editor who does not display the differences and offer some analysis of them is basically shirking responsibility for establishing the relationship between source and adaptation. A critic who wants to see what Farquhar or Buckingham really did will have to get the Fletcher text and start collating. Why must every critic who comes to the text have to perform this labor yet again from scratch?[29]

I would not suggest that an editor can legitimately attempt to control textual interpretation on the part of the reader or that explanatory notes should be tilted significantly towards present-day critical preoccupations. A good edition facilitates reading and comprehension; it does not dictate interpretation or even point of view. The editor does not have to obliterate all evidence of personality: editions need not masquerade as the products of robots. When, however, introduction and explanatory notes systematically pressure the reader towards one kind of reading rather than another, they become excessively partisan. Martin Battestin's learned and helpful introductions and notes to Fielding's novels in the Wesleyan edition seem to me to take so sober and ethics-oriented a view of them as to deprive the novels of their comic bounce.[30] Were an

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27. *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker, H. T. Swedenberg, et al., 20 vols. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1956–2000).

28. See W. Speed Hill, "Commentary upon Commentary upon Commentary: Three Historicisms Annotating Richard Hooker," in *The Margins of the Text*, ed. D. C. Greetham (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1997), 323–52. Hill supplies a long footnote listing such discussions of this problem as he could find and points out the scantiness of the list in comparison with the "embarassing surplus of advice about how to construct a text." Arthur Friedman's "Principles of Historical Annotation in Critical Editions Of Modern Texts," *English Institute Annual, 1941* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1942), 115–28, remains a foundational study in the realm of annotation principles. Friedman's five-volume *Goldsmith* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) and his *Wycherley* (1979), solid though they are in many respects, do not fully bring his principles into practice — and they are very limited principles.

29. If the source play is in another language, the editor ought to feel obliged to supply detailed annotation indicating substantive departures in structure, action, and characters. A good example is Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus* (1678), which concludes with the protagonist committing suicide by throwing himself off a castle tower.

30. In this respect Battestin does not seem to me to meet his own stated principle that an editor "should strive to avoid imposing on the reader his own interpretation." For his generally helpful statement of principles and *modus operandi* in explanatory apparatus, see Martin C. Battestin, "A Rationale of Literary Annotation: The Example of Fielding's Novels," *Studies in Bibliography* 34 (1981): 1–22, quotation at 13.

editor to choose, for example, to festoon *The Tempest* in notes emphasizing the postcolonial preoccupations of present-day critics, I would regard this as an act of critical appropriation rather than good editing. A helpful edition presents textual and contextual facts and lets us see the work through eyes other than our own — though without trying to foreclose the possibility of interpretation from a later perspective.[31]

Good editions do exist. Perhaps because of the obvious barriers to ready comprehension that need to be addressed, Renaissance texts have been particularly fortunate in this respect. The Arden editions of Shakespeare and the Revels editions of some plays by his contemporaries usually do a remarkably good job of assisting both expert and novice readers comprehend complex texts — and of providing enough contextual information to give the reader a basic grasp of the contexts in which the works were originally written and received.[32] Proper reading of poetry can require massive annotation of both literary and historical-political kinds — and it can be found in such models as Roger Lonsdale's *The Poems of Gray, Collins and Goldsmith* and Nigel Smith's *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, both part of the admirable "Longman's Annotated English Poets" series.[33] The widely used "Norton Critical Editions" generally seem to me short on introductions and explanatory apparatus while being overstuffed with scraps of published criticism, many of which date very rapidly.

A question on which editors have long disagreed concerns the level at which annotation is best pitched. Is one trying to serve fellow specialists (a tiny group in many cases) or undergraduate readers? Ought one to omit glosses on all words that can be found in the *OED* (a policy I have encountered, and resent)? What could once be assumed by way of historical knowledge can no longer be safely assumed. My own view is that editors should be generous with glosses and explanations of the obvious, aiming to serve a broad spectrum of readers — and that specialists could afford to refrain from being snooty about such cheerful service to ignoramuses. Students will more willingly read old texts if we do not make the process more laborious than it needs to be.

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[31] One of the things a good edition can do is help us see how earlier readers have understood texts — on which see *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991).

[32] As positive exemplars I would point to Jonathan Bate's Arden *Titus Andronicus* (London: Routledge, 1995) and Andrew Gurr's Revels edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* (1969; rpt. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2003).

[33] Lonsdale's edition was published in 1969, Smith's in 2003.

We may hope that changes in technology will facilitate the provision of editions that improve on the traditional print medium. *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* (announced for publication in 2005) will offer parallel paper and electronic versions giving a readable modernized text but allowing direct access to multiple early print versions in electronic facsimile. The editors propose to supply extensive explanatory annotation, attention to performance and reception history, reproduction of "visual materials," life records, and source materials. With luck, this could be one of the most helpful editions yet published of an important English author. The Cambridge *Richardson* under the general editorship of Tom Keymer and Peter Sabor (literary scholars) promises to be another interpretively helpful enterprise. I do note that the Jonson edition has enjoyed half a million pounds of direct subsidy from the Arts and Humanities Research Board in Britain, and even with that massive assistance I have to wonder how much of the edition will be made available in a form and at a price that would make it usable for students. Economics are a fairly dire issue, especially where student purchase is concerned. Broadview must be commended for its attempt to make its books affordable. Their edition of M. G. Lewis's *The Monk*, for example, provides adequately helpful annotation and a remarkable amount of contextual information to assist the reader — nearly a hundred pages' worth.[34] Their *Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama* makes forty-one plays available at a bargain rate but suffers from very uneven editing, minimal annotation, and inadequate introductions.[35] Unfortunately, it does little to lighten the task of a teacher not already profoundly versed in the material.

This is not the place to venture far into issues of canonicity and their implications for editing. Not all poems, plays, and novels deserve full-dress textual and explanatory editing, though many interesting and historically important works seem to have fallen outside the pale of the economically justifiable.[36] The existence of EEBO and ECCO (and the prospect of more such databases that supply huge numbers of original editions in digital form) seems to imply that in the future, "access" to large numbers of texts will be less of an issue than "assistance" in comprehending a relatively favored few. The question remains: what is a full-dress edition expected to provide? An edition aimed at students? An edition designed for the reading public, if such a beast still exists?

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[34] M. G. Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. D. L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2004).

[35] *Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*, gen. ed. J. Douglas Canfield (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2001).

[36] See Tanya Hagen, "Thinking Outside the Bard: REED, Repertories, and Editing Early English Drama," *REED in Review*, ed. Audrey Douglas and Sally-Beth MacLean (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, forthcoming), for a provocative consideration of canon and repertory issues in relation to editing Renaissance drama.

I am arguing that an ambitiously conceived edition is likely to be at least as valuable for its reconstruction of genesis, production, dissemination, and reception as for its edited text, which nine times out of ten will be substantively very close indeed to whatever is chosen as copytext. This is not to deny the nightmarish difficulties of Rochester or Joyce, or the daunting problems posed by structurally different "versions" of a work, or to say that we should not care about small verbal errors or changes. "Hand'd" and "hang'd" cannot be regarded as interchangeable, or the difference as insignificant. Collation for in-press changes is indeed needed — but I would suggest that it is rarely as important or useful to the would-be interpreter as other parts of the editorial apparatus — *if* they have been seriously conceived and executed.

IV. Texts, Contexts, and Interpretation

Do the realms of "textual studies" comprise "Textual Interpretation"? One can certainly mount a plausible argument that they *should* do so. Most commonly, American academics seem to think of "bibliography and editing" as what produces edited texts, criticism as a separate enterprise that analyzes them. This bifurcation is counterproductive for all parties, but hard to get away from — not because of any inherent incompatibility, but because fact-oriented editors tend to disdain mere opinion while "critics" often take a dim view of mere fact. We are dealing here with oddities in the history of "literary studies" more broadly conceived, with institutional preferences and prejudices, and with the training and talents of individuals, not all of whom are equally adept and enthusiastic about printing history and cultural generalities.

"Textual studies" are usually taken to comprise such enterprises as descriptive bibliography, analytic bibliography, attribution, *critique génétique*, textual criticism (i.e., analysis of texts for the purpose of constructing an eclectic edition), textual editing, and printing history. Editorial annotation of a text generally seems to fall in this realm *faute de mieux*, without being a particularly conspicuous or privileged member

of the family. Such activities as publishing history of a contextual sort, *l'histoire du livre*, history of reading, and reception history seem only loosely connected with either the manuscript and printing history of a particular work (textual studies) or its interpretation (literary analysis and genre or cultural criticism). How well critics will utilize "book history" and "print culture" scholarship of a relatively theorized kind remains to be seen.[37] As of 2004 "Literary Studies" may be too limited an umbrella term to comprise cultural studies, film, and other related enterprises. But for the purposes of those who deal largely in literary texts (whatever the boundary problems), we are *de facto* considering a spectrum of investigative and analytic activities that run from the highly specific to very broad cultural generalizations. Insofar as we are thinking about particular works, "textual studies" has generally been regarded as the servant and beast of burden for "interpretation."

Thunderous objections to this valuation have been usefully voiced by Jerome J. McGann, who has argued that "literary study surrendered some of its most powerful interpretive tools when it allowed textual criticism and bibliography to be regarded as 'preliminary' rather than integral to the study of literary work."[38] He goes on to insist in the same essay that "textual scholars" should "labor to elucidate the histories of a work's production, reproduction, and reception" because "all aspects of these labors bear intimately and directly on the 'critical interpretation of a work'" (189). Obviously I agree. In a review of McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, McGann expresses enthusiasm for editions with the sort of elaborate editorial apparatus that send one from text to notes or an appendix, and back to the front matter. This kind of reading, he says, "is a process by which the entire socio-history of the work — from its originary moments of production through all its subsequent reproductive adventures — is postulated as the ultimate goal of critical self-consciousness."[39] He admits that "the goal is in fact unreachable," but insists on the desirability of striving towards it.

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[37] Here are two examples of such work, one broad, one extremely specific, both of which richly deserve the attention of critics. *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4: 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), is a synoptic marvel (and so expensive that it will be hard to consult except for those in the vicinity of upper-end academic libraries). Don-John Dugas, in "The London Book Trade in 1709," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 95 (2001): 31–58, 157–72, offers a wonderfully detailed analysis of the state of book publication in the year of Tonson's revolutionary edition of Shakespeare, using computer manipulation of ESTC data to extend an analytic method devised by McKenzie in his foundational analyses of the London book trade in 1644 and 1668.

[38] Jerome J. McGann, "The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works," in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. McGann (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), 182.

Knowledge of the entire socio-history of the work at issue is a fine notion of the ideal for critical practice. What of reality? If interpretation requires a vast amount of work in gathering, attributing, editing, introducing, and annotating texts — and more broadly in reconstructing the contexts in which the texts were drafted, completed, produced, disseminated, and received — then the towers of literary-critical interpretation have often been built on something like quicksand. Few editions are what they might be, and most critics tend to ignore what they have to offer anyway. The political reality of major American universities is that few of them are eager to hire bibliographers and scholarly editors or to heap distinctions and rewards on those they have tenured. Serious scholarly editing actually requires more brains and erudition than some of the fluffier kinds of criticism now in vogue, but editing has fallen badly out of favor in the last generation. There are reasons for this. I remember the era when a weak Ph.D. student would be encouraged to do a dissertation consisting of an edition of a minor play (or whatever). The result was mostly a lot of weak and mechanical dissertations. Today the thesis-edition is pretty much the kiss of death on the American job market, and not for altogether bad reasons. In fact, a proper edition of a difficult work requires more knowledge than an ABD can be expected to have and needs more time than a thesis can be permitted to take.

Regardless of origin, a lot of editions are still intellectually unambitious. The *de facto* intellectual pecking order suggests that the interpreter class can inhabit the Ivy League; pedestrian historical scholarship can be carried out in flagship state universities; and the dull duties of bibliographers and editors can be done by the luckless swots who populate state teachers' colleges. The situation is far less punitively stratified in Britain, where the former polys tend to be hotbeds of theory while Oxbridge still respects and supports textual scholarship. Rather alarmingly, a great deal of the important bibliographic scholarship of the present generation is written by librarians — an increasingly endangered species in a world of libraries that privilege electronic databases.

Literary studies are in a notoriously unhealthy condition. Fewer and fewer people read what we publish, though the world of academic scholars has grown larger and larger. The shelf-life of published scholarship and criticism is shrinking: I have recently bought critical and scholarly books deaccessioned from libraries such as Columbia, Dartmouth, and the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester — and I mean books of the last 40 years by major scholars. Small wonder that textual studies are not much honored if they are perceived as centrally concerned with capitalization, punctuation, and ambiguous hyphens that fall at the ends of lines. To treat the construction of eclectic texts as the ultimate ambition of bibliographers and textual critics is to devalue their enterprise — and yet this view is commonplace even among distinguished specialists. In a perceptive review of Greetham's *Theories of the Text*, Paul Eggert says flatly that "The editor's main work is textual."[40] This is an attitude we need to change. Too few editors carry out the ambitious kinds of historical contextualization a first-rate edition can provide, and critics are neither making full use of what is available nor doing the work for themselves.

Failure to utilize contextual backgrounds in criticism is a dismal commentary on the common sense and competence of critics. To conduct critical arguments without due attention to what underpins them is grossly irresponsible. Such slovenly method leads to books and articles on Defoe that presume he wrote all sorts of things we have no good reason to believe he wrote.[41] It leads to work written without the benefit of access to the letters and documents that would help us construct proper contexts for them — Matthew Prior's letters are *important*, and not just for Prior.[42] It produces work based on texts that must be taken on faith and scholarship written without any real understanding of the complexities of dissemination and reception — as has long been true for Edward Young.[43] Wishing to pretend that a work we want to interpret comes to us in an immaculate text free of all originary baggage is worse than silly. Obviously almost all critics "know better," but that knowledge does not make them operate in more responsible ways. Ignoring reception is likewise foolish because it not only contributes to a historicized sense of how a work was read but helps us see why the author's career track developed as it did. The importance of paying attention to dissemination, a realm often scanted or ignored, is less obvious. Let me therefore offer two examples of what it can do for us.

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[39] Jerome J. McGann, review of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, by D. F. McKenzie, *London Review of Books*, 18 February 1988.

[40] Paul Eggert, "These Post-philological Days…," *Text* 15 (2002): 323–36 at 334. In fairness to Eggert, I will point out that one cannot criticize the excellent Academy Editions of Australian Literature (of which he is general editor) in this respect. The editors go to great lengths to contextualize the texts for present-day readers. See, for example, Marcus Clarke, *His Natural Life*, ed. Lurline Stuart (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 2001), which supplies an admirable introduction, nearly a hundred pages of historical background, explanatory notes, reception history, and transmission history — plus historical collations and other textual apparatus.

[41] The appearance of P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988) provided the impetus for a continuing debate whose ultimate directions remain unknown. At the very least, however, we must admit that fundamental rethinking of the basis of the Defoe canon was long overdue.

Consider a cliché: the Tonson octavo edition of 1709 made Shakespeare's plays available in "modern" format at a reasonable price, and his 1714 duodecimo version made them cheap and widely available. The number of copies involved is unknown, though Tonson did have to do a quick reprint in 1709 — a careful replication that went undetected until 1934.[44] Public response to the edition, however, was surprisingly minimal. Its lack of impact on Shakespeare's reputation makes much more sense if we take note of the price, which was £1 10 shillings in 1709 and £1 7 shillings in 1714. Is this a little or a lot? Back in 1623 the First Folio apparently sold for 15*s.* to £1 (depending on binding), and known folio sale prices over the next 85 years average about £1 per copy. So Tonson was in fact apparently *raising* the price, not making Shakespeare widely and cheaply available. How much was £1 10*s*? Modern equivalencies are extremely dangerous to try to calculate, but Gregory King reports that the average annual income of educated gentlemen in the "Sciences & Lib. arts" was about £60 per annum in 1688.[45] If we accept this calculation, we may say that buying the 1709 edition of Shakespeare would have cost about one-fortieth of the annual net income of one of these educated gentlemen. (The 800 baronets whose annual income averaged £880 could readily afford a Tonson Shakespeare, *if* they wanted one.) How many people then or now could and would spend one-fortieth of their expendable annual income on a book or set of books? For an assistant professor, that might amount to $750 or more these days. Is this possible? Yes. Is it frequently done? Probably not. The wonder is that Tonson was able to sell out two printings of the 1709 edition in just five years and felt that there was enough market left to venture a new one. Had Shakespeare become available to the masses? No. The boom in Shakespeare's popularity comes in the 1740s after publication of "separates" and a price war that brought the cost of a single play down to two or three pennies in the 1730s.[46] Call this dull book-history detail if you like, but without proper attention to price — and the economic meaning of price — scholars have direly misunderstood the nature of the first "modern" edition of Shakespeare, its circulation to the public, and its cultural impact.[47]

As a second example of what "dissemination" has to tell us, let us consider the possibilities of a very old-fashioned kind of resource — first-line indexes. Who now uses first-line indexes, and what might they be good for? Quite a few exist for various realms, overlapping and otherwise. Lists of manuscript locations for poems will often lead the scholar to significantly different versions (and sometimes to attribution information not in print). Poems often take on a second life as song texts, a fact not generally to be discovered from "literary" sources. Titles change kaleidoscopically; first lines tend to be much more stable, helping one locate multiple versions in miscellanies and nonce collections (which often have no attributions, or wildly variant attributions). Whether one is working in a chaotic mess like "Rochester" or is attempting recovery of the work of largely forgotten women (Anne Wharton; Mary, Lady Chudleigh; Jane Barker; Charlotte Smith), first-line indexes can be a godsend in identifying relevant works and multiple versions — though to judge from the investigations of Michael Londry, many recent editors have failed to avail themselves of this resource.[48] The implications of dissemination concern not only multiple texts and their reception but also the broader cultural impact of a writer and his or her work — not something easily documented or that "Cultural Studies" critics are likely to try to document.

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[42] The electronic database of letters to and from Prior being created by Deborah Kempf Wright at Miami University, Ohio, will make available a fabulously useful contextual resource for everyone interested in the period of his adult life, c. 1685–1721.

[43] James E. May's *Bibliography of the Works of Edward Young* is eagerly awaited. Young is a perfect example of a vastly popular poet of considerable cultural significance now scorned by critics apparently ignorant of his dissemination and reception.

[44] See R. B. McKerrow, "Rowe's Shakespeare, '1709,'" *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 March 1934, 168.

[45] See "Natural and Politicall Observations and Conclusions upon the State & Condition of England," in *Two Tracts by Gregory King*, ed. George E. Barnett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), 30–1. By King's calculations, only 8 percent of the families in England had as much as £60 per annum total income. He estimates that there were 16,000 families with an average of five persons per household in his "Science & Lib. arts" category, with £12 per annum for the support of each person. The inflationary pressures of Marlborough's wars notwithstanding, relatively little change in the basic price structure seems to have occurred between 1688 and 1714. King's figures have held up astonishingly well under scrutiny by modern economic historians. For a critique of them and some adjustments, see Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Revising England's Social Tables, 1688–1812," *Explorations in Economic History* 19 (1982): 385–408, and "Reinterpreting Britain's Social Tables, 1688–1913," ibid. 20 (1983): 94–109.

[46] See Don-John Dugas and Robert D. Hume, "The Dissemination of Shakespeare's Plays *circa* 1714," *Studies in Bibliography*, forthcoming.

[47] Another way of understanding the true cost of Tonson's *Shakespeare* is to look at the 152 titles advertised in the *Term Catalogues* at about the time of its publication. More than half of them cost no more than 1*s*. Only seven cost more than 6*s*, and only two more than 12*s*. The two were Tonson's *Virgil* (at 15*s*) and *Shakespeare* (at 30*s*).

If, as I am arguing, the proper realm of "textual studies" includes the various contexts in which works were conceived and written, produced, disseminated, and received, then the object of the enterprise merely starts with textual criticism and editing as such and extends far into the territories that have mostly been ceded to critics without much protest. The relationship between "bibliographers" and "critics" is unquestionably a peculiar one, and its history since World War II is odder yet. Few if any bibliographers have actually attempted to disclaim all interest in the meanings of text. McKenzie attacked Greg on this point, targeting Greg's statement to the effect that "what the bibliographer is concerned with is pieces of paper or parchment covered with certain written or printed signs. With these signs he is concerned merely as arbitrary marks; their meaning is no business of his."[49] In a witty review of McKenzie, Hugh Amory remarked that Greg did not really mean this definition, and that "it would have been poetic justice if he had awoke one morning to find that he had unconsciously completed the bibliography of Renaissance Italian drama."[50] A review by T. H. Howard-Hill more soberly corrects the incomplete representation of Greg's views.[51] McKenzie's insistence on the importance of attention to meaning was startling twenty years ago: Howard-Hill refers skeptically to "McKenzie's attempt to appropriate literary criticism" (153). In hindsight, the demands by McKenzie and McGann for the inclusion of "interpretation" in the bailiwick of "bibliography" seem not radical but overdue.

Bibliography and criticism very oddly parted ways half a century ago. At just about the time Wimsatt and Beardsley were issuing their fateful pronunciamento on "The Intentional Fallacy" in *The Sewanee Review* in 1946, Fredson Bowers was starting to erect the massive theoretical structure of intentionalist editing that has dominated Anglo-American practice right to the present day.[52] The ironies are enormous: the bibliographers founded their enterprise on what the critics ruled off limits. At their extremes, the bibliographers preached scientific precision and quantification while the critics committed to hermeticism and deconstruction. Neither extreme has proved enormously profitable. Whatever one may think of McKenzie's notion of the sociology of texts, his classic articles bringing historical fact to bear on pure bibliographic theory will long deserve to be read as examples of how a small dose of reality can demolish gaudy theories.[53] On the other side deconstruction has proved a useful tool, but not one that displaces its predecessors.

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[48] For a helpful survey of first-line indexes, see James Woolley, "First-Line Indexes of English Verse, 1650–1800: A Checklist," *East-Central Intelligencer*, n.s. 17, no. 3 (2003): 1–10. For another such survey, with analysis of what the indexes could do if an editor used them, see Michael Londry, "On the Use of First-Line Indices for Researching English Poetry of the Long Eighteenth Century, *c.* 1660–1830, with Special Reference to Women Poets," *The Library*, 7th ser., 5 (2004): 12–38. For an example of what can be done with both printed and manuscript sources of late seventeenth-century satire, see the 112-page "Appendix" of first lines in contemporary anthologies in Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660–1702* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004).

[49] McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 1, quoting Greg's "Bibliography — an Apologia," rpt. in his *Collected Papers*, ed. J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), 247.

[50] Hugh Amory, review of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, by D. F. McKenzie, *The Book Collector* 36 (1987): 411–18 at 416.

[51] T. H. Howard-Hill, review of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, by D. F. McKenzie, *The Library* 6th ser., 10 (1988): 151–8.

[52] For a sweeping if not perfectly impartial overview of the intentionalism wars, see G. Thomas Tanselle, "Textual Criticism at the Millennium," *Studies in Bibliography* 54 (2001): 1–80.

[53] D. F. McKenzie, "Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices," *Studies in Bibliography* 22 (1969): 1–75, uses day-by-day records from the Cambridge University Press to destroy airy assumptions about rate of work by compositors. Bowers and his followers are the principal target: be it said to Fredson Bowers's everlasting honor, he published the article. "Stretching a Point: Or, The Case of the Spaced-out Comps," *Studies in Bibliography* 37 (1984): 106–21, creates wonderfully convincing quantitative evidence as to compositor

The extreme hostility of most critics between the 1950s and the 1990s towards intentionalist interpretation cannot have encouraged many bibliographers to invite derision or worse by sticking their noses into interpretation.[54] As a student in the 1960s, I was taught that to use the word "intention" was, for all practical purposes, sinful. And that was before the alleged death of the author was widely accepted in America, and before much attention was paid to Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida. All this seemed very natural at the time, but it was in fact not only wrong-headed but insular in the extreme. At the very time in the late sixties and early seventies that the death of the author was being proclaimed in literary circles, one of the major developments in a sister field was a move towards *privileging* authorial intention.

In the realm of "history of ideas" (and in particular the history of political thought), the principles of textual interpretation received little attention until the "Cambridge School" made them the centerpiece of a revisionist methodology. Quentin Skinner's "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" (1969) and J. G. A. Pocock's "Languages and Their Implications: The Transformation of the Study of Political Thought" (1971) take as a fundamental point of method the proposition that texts of all kinds must be interpreted with attention to the context of the utterance and the meaning(s) designed and intended by the contriver of the text.[55] Skinner's "Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts" was first published in *New Literary History* in 1972. His revised version of 2002 stands up remarkably well as a rebuttal of Wimsatt and Beardsley, Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida.[56] Skinner admits that we cannot always be sure of authorial intention, and that it need not always be privileged. But the idea that it ought to be ignored or deliberately excluded from consideration because we cannot always have access to

it or be certain of it is more than a little strange. The Cambridge School was many years ahead of literary scholars in understanding the importance of context for historical interpretation and in allowing for the multiple meanings generated by what we now call reader-response variables. Their concern for particularity of utterance, date, transmission, and reception pushes the scholar towards a precise and deeply grounded contextualism far too seldom encountered in literary scholarship these days.[57] Intentionalism, we discover, is not necessarily a disqualification for interpretation. There is a lesson here about the possible utility of being aware of developments in fields other than one's own. Skinner and Pocock are not to be found in David Greetham's learned and wide-ranging survey of *Theories of the Text*.[58] They are, of course, concerned with *interpretation*, and here as elsewhere the text/interpretation dichotomy proves an intellectual liability. I have to observe, however, that ignoring the "Cambridge School" seems particularly inexcusable, given the distinguished series of editions published in the "Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought" series of which Quentin Skinner is co-editor. About a hundred volumes have already been printed, most of them with excellent introductions and helpful apparatus.[59]

What is to be done? How do we escape a compartmentalization that damages both halves of our field? McGann has loudly demanded attention by critics to the material facts of the work's existence and reception. One suspects that most critics might, in the fashion of Samuel Johnson, be willing to refrain from closing their eyes if the facts were set before them. Whether they would be prepared to participate in seeking them out and analyzing them I am inclined to doubt. McKenzie, coming from the other side, would go yet further. He defines bibliography as "the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission, including their production and reception"[60] (a definition with which I heartily concur), and he is perfectly prepared to extend the Kingdom of Bibliography to encompass interpretation of

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identity from spacing statistics — and then uses the same Cambridge University Press records to demonstrate that there is no truth to the case so elegantly made.

[54] For a good brief account of these tangles, see Annabel Patterson, "Intention," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990), 135–46.

[55] Skinner's essay was first published in *History and Theory* 8 (1969): 3–53. Pocock's piece was published as the first chapter of his *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971).

[56] Published as chapter 5 of Skinner's *Regarding Method*, the first volume of his three volume *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002).

[57] I have commented on Pocock and the methodology of the Cambridge School at some length in "Pocock's Contextual Historicism," *J. G. A. Pocock in Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. D. N. DeLuna and Steven N. Zwicker, forthcoming.

[58] David Greetham, *Theories of the Text* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999).

[59] A recent exemplar is Margaret Cavendish, *Political Writings*, ed. Susan James (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003).

[60] McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 4.

meaning. As Amory observes, "McKenzie's bibliography is McGann's literary criticism."[61] So far I see few signs that we can solve our problems by declaring that there is only one discipline and that we all ought to be happy and cooperative campers within it (which seems to be McGann's position). A more aggressive solution is proffered by Greetham, who suggests that the Barons of Textual Theory "coopt" the ideas, terminology, and practice of "literature, anthropology, sociology, gender studies, history, political science, linguistics, psychology, philosophy" and any other territory that might be profitably grabbed and pillaged.[62] This sort of *coup d'État* seems neither intellectually desirable nor feasible in practice.

The idea of cooptation is essentially frivolous. Greetham loves intellectual jousting and performs the exercise with verve, but as Eggert gloomily concludes the review cited above, "one looks for practical direction in vain." Similar criticism has been levelled against McKenzie's Panizzi lectures, but with less legitimacy. McKenzie was offering a conceptual vision, not an operational blueprint.[63] The implication I would draw from his visionary generalities is that textual studies needs aggressively to claim responsibility for the construction and analysis of the whole of the material context of any work of literature. "Bibliography" is not a term I want to expand into universal application.[64] The proper realms of textual studies comprise genesis, production, dissemination, and reception — and consequently they legitimately include textual interpretation. We may certainly agree that "There is no room in editions for editors to exhaust the meanings of their texts and no obligation on them to do so."[65] This is not to say that an editor cannot address issues of meaning, or ought to be debarred from taking them up in a critical book or essay. As W. Speed Hill rather plaintively inquires, "why should the

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[61] Amory, review of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, by D. F. McKenzie, 413.

[62] Greetham, *Theories of the Text*, 5–6.

[63] Analysis of McKenzie's work and its theoretical implications remains urgently needed. A good start has been made by Harold Love in "The Intellectual Heritage of Donald Francis McKenzie," *The Library*, 7th ser., 2 (2001): 266–80.

[64] Howard-Hill caustically summarizes McKenzie's usage: "bibliography involves texts within history; texts involve meanings within history; bibliography involves all meanings within history. In short, all knowledge is one and its name is bibliography" (review of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*).

[65] T. H. Howard-Hill, "Theory and Praxis in the Social Approach to Editing," *Text* 5 (1991): 31–46 at 37–8.

person who knows the text so intimately be inhibited from commenting upon what he or she takes that text to mean?"[66]

The dividing point between "textual studies" and "criticism" has usually been conceived as coming before one reaches "interpretation" in the spectrum that stretches from descriptive and textual bibliography to literary history and cultural criticism. The decision a generation ago by the MLA's CEAA committee to build a Maginot Line well south of interpretation has been a strategic fiasco: hoping to set editing on virtually scientific foundations, all they succeeded in doing was rendering it trivial and mechanical in the eyes of the rest of the profession. Sensibly conceived, textual studies and literary criticism are distinct enterprises, but they share some common ground in the realm of what M. H. Abrams sensibly calls *construing a text*.[67] Textual studies should no more affect indifference to textual meaning than bibliography should regard print on pages "merely as arbitrary marks." The distinction between textual studies and literary criticism should not be understood as an impenetrable wall built just beyond the point at which a text is edited. Rather, we can best see the transitional area of textual explication as a commons in which members of both groups can mingle with mutual profit.

The point of McKenzie's "sociology" is crisply expressed by John Sutherland. The object of the textual scholar is not merely the production of a text, "but the reinsertion of the text into the critical moments of its historical and political existence.... And this calls less for 'editing' than commentary, or a bibliographically informed criticism."[68] Far from being hazy or pie-in-the-sky stuff, this is not only highly desirable but eminently feasible. In their own terms, McKenzie and McGann are asking for almost exactly the same things that constitute the methodology and practice of the Cambridge School historians of political thought.

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[66] Hill, "Commentary upon Commentary upon Commentary," 325.

[67] "Construing and Deconstructing" (1986), rpt. in Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory*, ed. Michael Fischer (New York: Norton, 1989), 297–332. By "construing" Abrams basically means explicating the explicit authorially designed meaning — in contrast to "deconstruction" (which teases out meanings unintended or concealed by the author). More broadly, we may think of "explanation" (which gets into the realm that E. D. Hirsch, Jr., calls "significance") and more general kinds of theory-based, comparative, and cultural interpretation. I am suggesting that "textual studies" legitimately extends *at least* to "construing."

[68] Sutherland, "Publishing History," 586.

They want to construe and analyze texts in the immediate vicinity of their complex origins, printing, dissemination, and readership.

If some of the practitioners of a more sociological form of textual studies choose to concern themselves with historical contexts as well as with descriptive bibliography and the construction of texts, the results could be extremely beneficial. Probably rather few literary critics will be prepared to accept greater responsibility for rigorous historical investigation of the contexts in which the texts they study came into being and public notice. If, however, someone else will provide such investigations and editions that facilitate critical use of the results, then we may hope that an increasing number of those who define themselves as literary critics will choose to grapple with the kinds of evidence that historical contextualization can provide. A book such as Harold Love's *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (1993) radically alters our understanding of the composition and dissemination of a large number of important texts. It is a critically sophisticated book, not written by a theorist but rather by a hard-core historical scholar who has edited *The Works of Thomas Southerne* and *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*. We need a lot more historicization of the multiple contexts that are part of the territory belonging to textual studies. Literary critics will ignore the results at the risk of looking like fools. Practitioners of textual studies have long been far too meek, muttering and grumbling but rarely stepping forward to question literary critics in the realm of interpretation. By all means let the critics profit from the labors of their textual studies brethren — but let them understand that if they fail to do so they will be sharply challenged on those textual and contextual grounds where scholarly and critical enterprises converge.[69]

[69] An oral form of this essay was delivered at a bibliography and textual studies session at ASECS, Boston MA, 26 March 2004. I am grateful to the other contributors, Linda Merians, Irving N. Rothman, Rakesh Verma, Thomas M. Woodell, Deborah Kempf Wright, and James E. May, for stimulating my thinking on the problems considered here. A very different oral version was delivered at the University of Glasgow on 23 November 2004. For advice and criticism of various sorts I wish to thank Eve Tavor Bannet, Don-John Dugas, Stuart Gillespie, Clement Hawes, Kathryn Hume, Paulina Kewes, Harold Love, Ashley Marshall, Judith Milhous, C. A. Prettiman, David J. Twombly, and Nicholas Repsher.

The Phenomenon of the *Gros Canon*

KAY AMERT

IN the history of typography, the emergence of the earliest display roman, known by its size as a *gros canon*, was a "phenomenon" in most of the senses of that word. Looking like a text roman writ large, it blended harmoniously with other fonts at the same time it was distinguished by its size. First used in Paris in 1530 by the young printer, Robert Estienne, it rapidly became a hallmark of the Parisian printing of the period. It can be found in the Latin of the scholarly books published by Simon de Colines and in the French of the popular works put out by Denys Janot. Publishers outside Paris wanted it, too: within a short time, copies of the font were in the hands of printers working in Lyons and Poitiers. International dissemination began with a version cut by Guillaume Le Bé in the late 1540s for use in Italy. And matrices for a better-known version cut by Claude Garamond later were sold by Christopher Plantin to printers of diverse nations at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Its widespread use ultimately "canonized" the *gros canon*, making it part of an international idiom for typographic communication.

Despite its significance in the history of typography, relatively little has been written about this font. While the date of its introduction is firmly established, the identity of its punchcutter remains unresolved. Its graphic features have never been systematically assessed, nor has its relation to subsequent display romans been firmly established. Certainly there are some good reasons for this. While he spoke in his prefaces about other aspects of his work as a publisher, Robert Estienne was

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Kay Amert (School of Journalism and Mass Communication, E342 Adler Journalism Building, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242) is Professor and Director of the Typography Laboratory at the University of Iowa.

PBSA 99:2 (2005): 231–63