THE JOHNS HOPKINS GUIDE TO LITERARY THEORY & CRITICISM

Second Edition

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TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Textual criticism provides the principles for the scholarly editing of the texts of cultural heritage. In the Western world, the tradition and practice of collecting, tending, and preserving records was first instituted in the Hellenistic period. The great library at Alexandria, before it was destroyed by fire, was the foremost treasury of manuscripts in classical antiquity. At that library a school of textual scholarship established itself, with a strict fidelity to the letter in editing, but its systematic principles in the works of the librarian Aristarchus of Samothrace for the most part have not survived. The subsequent Christian ages were long oblivious of the Hellenistic textual discipline. Instead, the scriptoria of the proliferating centers of medieval learning

were ruled by the pragmatics of the copyist. Scribes interpreted texts as they copied them, and as they did so they often compared variant source document exemplars and, in the process, altered texts in transmission.

Such interpretive criticism of variant readings remained the mode of procedure for the humanist philologists (see PHILOLOGY) who laid the early foundations of modern textual scholarship. Their first care was the classical and medieval texts in Latin and Greek, but by the eighteenth century scholarly editing was practiced equally on vernacular texts. In England during this period it was typically men of letters and of the church—from Nicholas Rowe via Alexander Pope, Lewis Theobald, Bishop Warburton, and SAMUEL JOHNSON, among others, to Edward Capell—who turned to the editing of Shakespeare's plays and those of his fellow dramatists.

The epitome of this age of amateur learning was a type of edition designed to assemble the accumulated tradition of editorial opinions on the text—the edition *cum notibus variorum,* or "variorum edition" for short. As a mode of the scholarly edition, the variorum edition was revived in the era of positivism, the era of fact-finding in all sciences, and has, albeit with significant extensions and shifts of emphasis from the textual to the interpretive, survived to this day, as in the instances of the Shakespeare *New Variorum,* inaugurated in the late nineteenth century in the United States, or of the variorum commentary to the works of John Milton, an enterprise of the twentieth century. Edward Capell collected Shakespeare first editions to evaluate them in historical terms, and the type of the variorum edition that Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, and Edward Malone instigated is in a broader sense a sign of the new awareness of historicity at the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. It was in that period in Germany that the modern professionalization of textual criticism began. The seminal innovations in method involved an evaluation of the documents as sources and their arrangement in a family tree, or stemma, of textual descent. Patterns of error were logically analyzed to determine kinship and descent of manuscripts. The assumption behind the analytic procedures was that an archetype, by definition a lost document, could be made out and textually recovered at the root of the lines of descent. Proximity to the archetype defined the relative authority of readings. While removed at a no longer ascertainable distance from the documents of a text's origin, the archetype constituted the closest approximation critically possible to that origin.

Itself derived from cognitive patterns in the natural sciences, the heredity model of the stemma thus evaluated textual authority, and from authority established critical texts. Stemmatology marked the beginnings of textual criticism as an articulation of a series of principles and rules for editing. At first it was manuscript oriented and again the domain of textual criticism in the classics. Deemed equally valid for medieval vernacular texts by Karl Lachmann and his followers, it was also adopted in biblical studies once rationalism had questioned the belief that scripture was literally God-given and thus had opened up ways of understanding the historicity of the words of the Bible through textual scholarship. For medieval textual studies, Joseph Bédier in France early in the twentieth century challenged the validity of textual decisions arrived at by way of logically schematized document relationships. He proposed, instead, a hermeneutics of editing pivoting on the critical evaluation of a "best text" to serve as the basis for a scholarly edition.

Neither stemmatology nor "best-text" editing appeared applicable, however, to texts produced since the invention of the printing press. The earliest orientation here was toward the text of the author's final redaction. The text as last overseen by the author provided the base text of a scholarly edition. Hence, over and above the text and its transmission, the author and authorial intention became important determinants for editorial rationale. A textual scholarship, distinct in methodology and specific to the modern philologies, began to emerge, though it was quite as gradual in forming as modern literary criticism was in gaining independence from the inherited methods of studying the ancients. The principle of the author's final redaction did not as such and by itself carry sufficient strength to oust eclectic editing on the basis of subjective choices grounded in taste and sensibility.

In the twentieth century, it was in England that modern textual criticism was first set upon methodological foundations designed to counteract such subjectivity. The material study of the book—bibliography—was reshaped into a science of editing. As traditionally understood, bibliography was an auxiliary branch of historical study for book collectors, archivists, and librarians. Listing books by authentic date and place required systematic conventions of description. These in turn demanded precise analytic investigations of the physical characteristics of books. Springing from the recognition that the findings of such analytic bibliography not only described books as material objects but also held information about the texts the books contained, the New Bibliography inaugurated by A. W. Pollard, R. B. McKerrow, and W. W. Greg in England was textual bibliography. It became the supreme methodology of textual criticism in England and America for two-thirds of the twentieth century. The claims for its status as a science grew from a conviction that bibliographical analysis was capable of reveal-

ing the patterns of textual transmission entirely through the black marks on paper, in total disregard of the sense that these marks made or the meanings they carried. The goal of determining the history of a text according to the formal patterns of its transmission was to assess textual authority without the intervention of critically interpretive judgment, let alone of subjective taste, and to establish through editing the text of highest authority. Establishing this text meant retrieving it in a pristine state from extant documents in which it had become corrupted in transmission.

Through analytic logic and precision, then, textual criticism based on bibliography aimed at strict objectivity of procedure. Its a priori assumptions, however, were still those of its inherited approaches. It remained a basic tenet that texts commonly survived in documents of transmission and that transmission was corrupt. Healing the corruption was still regarded as the main task of the editorial enterprise. The new patterns of transmission since the invention of printing, however, had altered the conditions under which that task might be fulfilled. Texts no longer proliferated through branching manuscripts but descended in lines of successive reprints. Hence stemmatology, being manuscript oriented, could no longer assess the relative textual quality within transmission. Instead, bibliographical analysis proved capable of retracing transmissions in print back to their real source of origin, or very near it: to the author and the authorial writing itself. "Authority" that stemmatology had been confined to assessing in terms of document genealogies was now redefined in terms of authorial acts: the writing and/or authorization of documents. To assess the relative authority within transmissions, documents were consequently called upon as witnesses, and a distinction was made between authorized and nonauthorized documents. The texts that were deemed substantive for editing resided in the authorized documents, that is, those documents over which the author had exerted direct or indirect control. Where no authorized document survived, the extant derivative witness nearest the lost source was regarded as a substantive document and the carrier of the relevant substantive text. (Substantive texts of this description are all that survive—in early printed editions—for the works of Shakespeare, for example, and it was from the textual problems of Shakespeare's plays that Anglo-American textual criticism in the twentieth century derived its paradigms.) Authorization conferred presumptive authority, a quality assumed by analogy for substantive texts in nonauthorized documents. Yet, since at the same time transmissional corruption was always assumed, it was the duty of the textual critic and editor to isolate and eliminate it. The pure text of unalloyed authority to be retrieved had

its imagined existence before and behind the textual reality in the extant transmission. It was an ideal text.

By inherited conventions, textual criticism in search of the ideal text thus looked backward, upstream against the lines of descent in textual transmission. The logical crunch came when revision carried texts forward and authoritative text changes in derivative documents of transmission had to be dealt with. At this juncture, both historically and systematically, the question of copy-text became a main focus of editorial theory in Anglo-American textual criticism.

A copy-text is a material base as well as a heuristic foundation for certain types of scholarly critical editions. It may be understood as a base text provided in an extant document that editorial labor transforms into an edited text. It follows from this definition that the copy-text is never the text that an edition presents. Its text is an editorial construct and is arrived at by controlled alterations of the copy-text. A copy-text, furthermore, is not an absolute requirement for scholarly editing. In editorial modes that strictly equate document and text, such as the editing of draft manuscripts or the editing, severally, of different versions of a work, or in diplomatic and documentary editing the base text is not treated, and in particular is not altered, in the manner prescribed for copy-text editing. It is specifically when the editing aims to produce an ideal text that a copy-text is chosen, as the text from which to depart, from among the extant document texts.

The choice of copy-text is basically a practical matter. It did not loom large as a problem where no revision in transmission complicated the picture. The copy-text was simply the primary authorized text, or else the substantive text nearest the lost source. But with authorization being thought of as conferred upon the document, document and text were implicated with one another. R. B. McKerrow, in the course of his preparations for an old-spelling critical Shakespeare edition in the 1930s, encountered revisions in printings after the first editions. Because they were reprints, these were by definition nonsubstantive witnesses. Yet McKerrow saw no choice but to nominate such derivative document texts, on the strength of the revisions, as the copy-texts for his proposed edition. This entailed accepting all readings not manifestly corrupt from the copy-text, and it meant taking unidentifiable accretions of corruption into the bargain. It was only W. W. Greg, after McKerrow's death, who saw a way out of this "tyranny of the copy-text" (Greg 382).

Greg's 1949 lecture "The Rationale of Copy-Text" became the key text for Anglo-American textual criticism at midcentury. Empirically, based on his bibliographical and editorial experience with medieval and Renaissance texts, Greg pleaded for the earliest substantive text as copy-text even

when revisions were found in second or subsequent editions. In his view, these later derived reprints were non-substantive witnesses. He declared them substantive only with regard to, and to the extent of, the revisions they featured. With respect to what he termed the "accidentals" of the text, that is, its orthography and punctuation, an edition based on the earliest surviving substantive text would, he argued, remain as close to the primary authority as the transmissional situation allowed. For only in the extant witness closest to the lost original—deemed to be the one least overlaid with the preferential spellings and punctuation of scribes and compositors—would there be an appreciable chance that the accidentals were the author's own.

The same held true for the substantives, the words of the text themselves. Greg suggested that the copy-text closest to original authority should rule, too, in all instances of indifferent variation in substantives, that is, wherever it was critically undecidable whether a later variant was due to corruption or revision. Revision was conceded only where it was critically identifiable. Admitting that critical recognition was required implied abandoning the erstwhile claim that bibliography-grounded textual criticism could operate on the basis of the black marks on paper alone. Owing to the pragmatic situation with books from the period of hand printing, moreover, when authors could not or did not read proof or otherwise influence the compositors' choice of orthography and punctuation, only verbal variants were considered authorial revisions. A derivative witness thus was admitted as authoritative only in places, or over delimited stretches, where it contained substantive changes likely to be revisions. These were considered as revisions superseding their respective antecedents in the copy-text and were therefore emended into the copy-text as replacements for the corresponding original readings. The procedure amounted to a mode of critical eclecticism governed no longer by taste but by bibliographically controlled methods. The resulting text of composite authority was again an ideal text.

Greg's proposals advanced the practice of editing Renaissance texts. Moreover, they proved seminal beyond their original scope and purpose. In giving new respectability to eclecticism, they acknowledged the pragmatic nature of editing. (Embracing eclecticism, it is true, entails conceiving of a text as a heterogeneity of readings. That this is a theoretically doubtful proposition is a fact slow to be recognized even after 50 years of consideration.) Furthermore, Greg's "Rationale" made an implicit distinction between text and document, and conceptions of logical copy-texts have been derived from this distinction for later non-Renaissance editions, such as editions of Henry Fielding, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Stephen Crane, or James Joyce.

Under the circumstances of transmission for given works of each of these authors, extant but derived documents have permitted the precise textual reconstruction of that lost document which, had it been preserved, might ideally have been selected to provide the copy-text. As copy-text for his edition of Fielding's *Tom Jones* Fredson T. Bowers imagined an exemplar of the novel's second-edition text annotated with Fielding's revisions. And for his editions of a series of Crane's syndicated narratives he reconstructed the lost common syndication copy logically from its several derivations; this reconstructed common ancestor became his copy-text. Hans Walter Gabler, in his turn, assembled Joyce's pre-publication revisions found on fair copies, typescripts, and proofs onto one imaginary continuous manuscript, named the assembled text the "continuous manuscript text," and used it as his copy-text by which to establish a critically edited reading text of *Ulysses*.

Crucially, Greg's "Rationale" provided theoretical support for taking authorial intention systematically into account in scholarly editing. As advanced argumentatively by Bowers, G. Thomas Tanselle, and others, it provided the foundations for the editorial projects of the Center for Editions of American Authors (CEAA) and, subsequently, the advisory principles of the Center for Scholarly Editions (CSE) of the Modern Language Association of America. Greg's pragmatics mutated into a full-scale theory of copy-text editing to support the critical construction of edited texts fulfilling the author's final, or latest, intention. Anglo-American scholarly editing became, as Peter Shillingsburg has maintained, essentially author oriented.

The reformulation of Greg's pragmatics for Renaissance texts as general principles for editing modern literature was a triumph of the movement for grounding Anglo-American textual criticism in bibliography. At the same time, the application of the principles to nineteenth-century texts, as in the CEAA editions of Hawthorne (1963–) or Crane (1969–75), sparked controversies that have led to an intense theoretical debate over models, methods, concepts, and aims of textual criticism and editing that has not abated. Copy-text editing as codified in accordance with Greg's "Rationale," conceived as it was for texts surviving mainly in print, sought to deal with revision—that is, with authentic and generally authorial textual changes—within a methodology designed to eliminate errors that normally occur in copying or reprinting texts. The omnipresence of evidence for authorial composition and revision in manuscripts and prints of recent times necessitates broadening the focus. To organize textual criticism and editing around compositional and revisional processes requires significant reconsiderations of what texts are or may be considered to be. Late twentieth-century literary theory entertained

notions of textuality variously emphasizing the stability, the instability, the indeterminacy, or the social codeterminants of texts. Some models privilege textual fluidity over final stability and may be expected, in particular, to reconsider whether it is valid to grant overriding status to intention among the determinants by which texts (in writing as in editing) take shape. From one position, questionings of these determinants focus on the social factors accompanying the publication and dissemination of the written word, as shown in the writings of Jerome McGann and D. F. McKenzie. From other angles, Hershel Parker has considered the implications for textual criticism of a psychology of the creative act, while John Bryant has endeavored to trace the "fluid text" closely in the materiality of the textual transmissions. Modeling processes of composition and revision, such approaches may also lead back to source documents of transmissions in new ways and correlate theories of textual indeterminacy specifically with the writing processes in draft manuscripts. As yet, none of these theoretical perspectives has had a marked impact on editorial practices within Anglo-American textual scholarship. The situation is different in German and French approaches to textual criticism and editing.

Textual criticism and editing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries owed much of the impetus for its development in thought and method to German scholarship. The exhaustive *historisch-kritische Edition* of an author's complete works is essentially a German concept. Such an edition was realized, for example, for JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE and FRIEDRICH SCHILLER in the late nineteenth century, that is, within decades of their death. This type of edition has continued to command allegiance as a scholarly ideal. German textual scholarship did not experience the urge for scientific objectivity through which bibliography became the focus of the discipline's orientation in England. In editing, the inherited modes of text constitution persisted almost to midcentury in Germany. Yet subjective eclecticism, or *Intuitionsphilologie,* as it came derogatorily to be called, was always tempered, in full-scale scholarly editions at least, by the element *historisch* in the double-barreled adjective. The specific sense of historicity fostered in German textual criticism has provided distinct orientations for the German direction of the discipline.

Innovation of stance and method came with Friedrich Beissner's edition of the works of FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, which began publication in 1943. Endeavoring to present Hölderlin's poems through all their stages of development, from notes to drafts to publication (or abandonment), Beissner devised an apparatus to display what he saw as the organic growth of the poetic texts toward unity and superior aesthetic integrity. His teleological and intention-oriented

assumptions were traditional and indeed recognizably akin to the author orientation of Anglo-American textual criticism. But the edition's focus on composition and revision was unprecedented. In its wake, the German-speaking countries have seen an indigenous debate regarding principles of textual criticism and critical editing. In theoretical terms, its movement has been toward privileging an orientation on the text. Its points of perspective have been the historical integrity of the text version, on the one hand, and the dynamic progression in time of composition and revision, on the other. Under the tenets of STRUCTURALISM, whereby all elements of a text, and hence also its textual variants, stand in a contextual relationship to one another, this double perspective has emphasized that variance resulting from writing and rewriting is fundamentally to be distinguished from variant readings accumulating as errors in the transmission.

The demand for editorial representation of the textual developments of composition and revision has inspired in-depth reflections on the status and functions of the textual apparatus in critical editions and elicited new forms of design of the apparatus. The traditional editorial task of eliminating textual corruption, by contrast, though still obligatory, has become a side issue. Paradoxically, where textual criticism and editing engage less in healing corruption than in laying open processes of writing and revision, a traditional concept such as that of the textual error *(Textfehler)* has been found to be in need of sharpening. Only restrictively allowed, it has been redefined in terms of both quality (as narrowed, e.g., to the "obvious misprint") and duration, the latter aspect admitting of the possibility that a textual error became incorporated in acts of revision; that is, a reading may have originated in the transmission as a corruption of an authentic original word or phrase but ended up as itself authenticated in the authorized text. The definition of the textual error, in other words, has become intimately bound up with the concept of authorization. In terms of a theorizing of principles, it may be said that modern German textual criticism has replaced the operations of stemmatology on foundations of logic of error patternings with an interdependent assessment of authorization and textual error. While external criteria alone class a document, and thus by implication its text, as authorized, the textual error, cautiously adjudicated, provides the one internal counterindication and signals the moment when authorization, assumed as absolute, is nonetheless interrupted for a time or permanently. Such definitional reasoning with regard to the textual error in relation to authorization may be seen as a special instance of the overall extent to which the textual critic's and editor's interaction with the text requires, and depends on, critical interpretation.

Critical interpretation, moreover, is recognized to interact with the text rather than with the author. Present-day German textual criticism, focusing as it does on the integrity of the textual history and on the structural contextuality of texts and their variants, relies also on critical interpretation to balance and neutralize, if not to eliminate outright, authorial intention as a principle to guide editorial procedures.

Text-critical thought in Germany today is characterized throughout by complementarities of opposites. Thus, the version, one of its central concepts, is both extrinsically and intrinsically defined. Its extrinsic determinants guide editorial pragmatics, while its intrinsic determinants govern text-critical theory. The extrinsic determinants are mainly historical. Versions of a work are historical states of the text, such as, for example, the finished draft or any given published text, with all the social ramifications of its collaborative production or contemporary reception. In the extrinsic realm an editor chooses which version to edit. The choice is as pragmatic in its way as is that of a copy-text. Yet the editorial treatment of a version differs from that of a copy-text. With a version as base text, editing is strictly confined to emending precisely and narrowly defined textual error. The edited text establishes not an ideality but the essential historicity of the version text.

The crucial task of German version editing then lies in correlating the history of the writing, revision, and transmission of the text to the version established as the edition text. The correlation arises from the intrinsic definition of the version in terms of textual variance. As authorial variants of composition and revision, superseded and superseding readings stand in a relational context, and every antecedent text of a given work, like every succeeding text, is regarded as a structural system of language for that work: a version. These versions are successive synchronic structures, and the work as a whole appears structured as a diachronic succession of synchronic versions. The invariance of the versions provides the structural base, while their variance indicates the relational complexity in time of the work's texts. From a structuralist understanding of text, Hans Zeller has declared a single variant to be sufficient to differentiate versions, since by a single variant a text attains a new interrelationship of its elements. For all its editorial impracticability, this is a sound enough theoretical proposition. Anglo-American respondents have voiced empirical objections. In German editorial theory, one may say that it has been balanced from within the system through a reconception of the complementarity of text and apparatus reached by way of a critique of the role of interpretation in textual criticism and editing.

Critical interpretation has, in the German debate, been recognized as relevant again in two senses. First, text-critical

and editorial activity begins from the given—documents, the black marks of ink on paper—but the moment it engages with that given, it enters upon interpretation. By accepting the implications of subjectivity, critical editions may attain a controlled objectivity. The interpretive demands of the very data that a textual critic and editor encounters make editorial judgment integral to a critical edition. Signaling through the apparatus the conditions of its controlled objectivity, a critical edition in turn calls upon the critical judgment of its readers and users. In the second sense, then, the reader's and user's interpretation engages with the critical edition to unlock the text. Critical editions in their specific formatting—established texts correlated to a multi-level system of editorial discourses such as introduction, textual notes, apparatus, annotations, and commentary— are seen to have a key function for interpretive discourse. The most innovative of the scholarly edition's discourses that contribute to interpretation is the integral apparatus.

Transforming textual genesis and textual history into apparatus, the integral apparatus displays variance in context and is thus categorically opposed to the conventional apparatus, which isolates the edition's individual reading from its variants in footnotes or appendixes keyed to the edited text by lemma with page and line reference. The integral apparatus lays out works to be read in the diachronic depth of their texts. In a sense, the acts of reading thus made possible for the user of a critical edition reenact the author's acts of reading in the writing process that shaped the text under his or her pen. While the author in writing is seen to be the originator of the text, it is the text itself that, for the author as reader, becomes the originator of its own continued revision. By such dynamic interplay of forces, again, authorial intention as a viable factor in the assessments of textual criticism, as indeed of literary criticism, is effectively neutralized. The text is not so much what the author intends to achieve as it is what he or she does, or fails to, achieve. The integral apparatus is the logical answer to the dynamism of the text. Consequently, the dynamic text in the shape of an integral apparatus, incorporating every act and stage of composition and revision in one continuous presentation, has been theoretically proposed as the ultimate object of editing.

This proposition entails the notion that an edited clear, or reading, text might be dispensed with as being no more than a concession to the general reader. For unachieved texts, such as unfinished or unpublished drafts, a presentation in integral apparatus form would indeed seem to constitute the adequate editorial response. Clear texts abstracted from their given textual materials may in this case be considered not merely concessions but actual falsifications of their textual state. For works that have attained achieved,

that is, completed and as a rule published, versions, on the other hand, the pragmatic choice of a version as the text to be edited prevents the relentless realization of apparatus-only editions. Nevertheless, it follows from the functional nature of the apparatus that it is not the clear text but the apparatus of critical editions that provides the foundations for critical interpretive reading. This recognition, moreover, paves the way to reconceiving the scholarly edition throughout as a system of peer discourses interrelated through the edited text, to which they are not subservient but which itself is interdependently positioned among them.

Essentially, the theories and practices reflected and developed in German textual scholarship over the past decades have persisted in conceiving of textual criticism as a hermeneutical discipline. At this point, German textual criticism encounters French *critique génétique,* or GENETIC CRITICISM, as does Anglo-American textual criticism in pursuit of its incipient concern with the creative acts of writing. *Critique génétique* is, properly speaking, not a mode of textual criticism. Developing a critical discourse directly from the materials of authorial writing, it defines itself rather as a tributary to literary criticism. It is true that it engages with notes, sketches, drafts, proofs—what it calls the *dossier génétique* and *avant-texte*—of a given work or endeavor of writing. Where it does so by technically making the *avant-texte* readable, it overlaps with the editorial concerns of traditional textual scholarship. The end of even its technical methodology, however, is not the formal presentation but the critical reading of a text in the entirety of its writing. (See also de Biasi; and Deppman, Ferrer, and Groden.)

Critique génétique reads writing and texts in, and directly from, the medium in which they manifest themselves, that is, their manuscript leaves and pages. It sharpens our awareness that texts move through their material manifestations as objects of writing as well as of reading. What provides the incentive for reading and interpreting them is their *mouvance,* as one might call it, except that the term has already been preempted by the reformed views of a "new philology" on the transmission and reception of medieval texts and writings.

Medieval textual criticism has in recent years taken a fresh look at the actual performance of transmission, and the achievement of scribes, in vernacular and secular literature and writing of the Middle Ages. It has questioned the conventional notions of textual as well as literary criticism that center works and texts on their authors, take for granted an authorial authentication of texts by word and letter, and regard script and writing as the normative and inevitable mode of textual transmission.

In truth, such assumptions were not indigenous to the Middle Ages. They were fostered in the romantic era of the medieval revival and were nourished, moreover—since this was also the early seminal era for modern historical and textual scholarship—by the traditions of classicist textual criticism. Stripping their veil from the nineteenth-century editions of medieval texts and authors promises new insights from the medieval manuscripts that have come down to us. Through the rekindled interest of the medievalists in a "material philology," it has been brought to fresh attention, for instance, that it is often the exemplars disqualified under stemmatological premises as derivative, textually unreliable, and corrupt that, in the high variability of their texts, hold immediate information about the cultural life and afterlife of works. Such dynamic *mouvance* of the medieval text characterizes its reception and dissemination. Nonetheless, it does not divorce the work from the name of its author. Instead, that name lends it authority, though, in a manner foreign to modern sensibilities, this is an authority that does not authenticate the text or guarantee its stability. It emanates from the work as an aura that establishes a cultural identity for the author reciprocal to that of the work.

We discern affinities, then, between *critique génétique* and "new philology," or a significant complementarity of "material philology" and "new philology" in reassessing the medieval textual condition. This indicates trajectories of rethinking textual criticism at the onset of the twenty-first century and exemplifies impulses received in that process from the theoretical orientations of the late twentieth century, whether they are those of NEW HISTORICISM or poststructuralism and DECONSTRUCTION, Foucauldian historical philosophy, or gender or CULTURAL STUDIES (see Greetham, *Theories*). Textual criticism, it appears, is undergoing a transformation from a positivist to a hermeneutical discipline. But it appears by the same token that scholarly editing, traditionally the empiricist arm of textual criticism, has in the processes of change become unsure of its bearings. Admittedly, the traditional modes of editing have not been invalidated. The copy-text edition, the version edition, and the facsimile, the diplomatic, or the documentary edition remain pragmatic options for handling the most variegated situations of text and transmission. But the theorizing of textual criticism, while it has not discredited the material groundedness of age-old editorial practice, has nevertheless sharpened our sense that traditional scholarly editing shows a fundamental lack of awareness as to its own implications and therefore its heuristic, hermeneutical, and cognitive potential.

To lead scholarly editing out of the confines—and safeties—of positivism is likely to prove an endeavor of greater complexity and risk than entertaining stances of theory in textual criticism. Future models of editing await

conception and development. They should respond with a thrust of innovation to the deepening awareness that textual criticism has developed of its historical and cultural role. That thrust should be double—conceptual and medial.

Conceptually, first, there is a need to rethink the several discourses that make up an edition: the decisional discourse of establishing an edited text, for example, or the argumentative correlation of established text and apparatus; or, just as importantly, and with larger implications, the discourses of annotation and commentary. The commentary, properly considered, has always vied with the text for priority in the scholarly edition. A repository of cultural memory, it was the cradle for historical and literary criticism. In modern times the proliferating discourses of criticism have been largely separated from textual criticism and editing. The editorial discipline, narrowed down and formalized in its progressively exclusive focus on the text and the text-witnessing documents, has been impoverished in consequence. It may be that in a future countermovement the commentary will reclaim territory within the realm of the scholarly edition, even to the extent of developing into its leading discourse.

To enable and to justify such a realignment of its several discourses, however, the scholarly edition thus envisaged will need to energize its second, that is, its medial, thrust. Already scholarly editing has taken the electronic medium into its service to significant effect. It utilizes computer processing to store and retrieve large quantities of data, to organize editorial labor, and to present the objects and results of its endeavors flexibly in manifold display. But for all the advantages that computing offers in terms of storage, organization, and presentation, computer-assisted editing remains as yet largely book oriented. The electronic edition, by contrast, will come into its own when it learns to reconceptualize the editorial enterprise in terms of the electronic medium itself.

The constitutive feature of computer virtuality is its relationality. From it, the notion of the scholarly edition as a site for the exploration of knowledge may be derived. Such a conception would from the outset define the edition text, not as a sequential string of words and tokens, but as a relational network. Networks of notes would mesh with it. The text-and-notes network would in turn provide the basic exploration ground for the commentary. This commentary, in an electronic edition, would in itself be relationally designed. Structured thus, it would shape its receptional—that is, its commentatory—response to the text-and-notes network into a multilinked networked discourse of its own. The meshed text-and-notes and commentary networks in conjunction would constitute, for their users, the scholarly edition. As a site for the exploration of knowledge, this edition would be conceived so as to realize the age-old idea of testifying to the heritage of imagination and learning through the traditions of texts that kindle and carry it. It is the idea that originally engendered textual criticism as a cultural technique. From it, textual criticism in the twenty-first century might reclaim its societal role and scholarly and critical function, through which the written heritage lives and is continually reappropriated from its own foundations.

Hans Walter Gabler