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The Writer's Oeuvre and the Scholar's Oeuvre

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Abstract

The general argument is that the oeuvre-concept, along with the work-concept, both suitably refreshed, need to be more deliberately and self-consciously re-introduced into editorial and literary-critical study. A survey of several poets' attitudes to their own body of writings, followed by the cases of some novelists, clears the ground for two sharply contrasting understandings of the oeuvre-concept to emerge: the writer's self-memorialising oeuvre and the scholar's broader oeuvre. They expose the evasiveness of T.S. Eliot's famous appeal to tradition (in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' of 1919). This potentially competing concept of Eliot's depends, it is argued, on an idealism that severs its contact with the material evidence and practices of creative writing. Eliot's shifting attitude towards tradition is traced, and its historical attractions in its time are discussed.

Keywords: *Creative Writing, The Oeuvre, The Work, Tradition, T.S. Eliot*

1. *Introduction*

In T.S. Eliot's essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' of 1919, the truism that the composition of literature has been continuous in Europe since Homer received a daring tweak: the European literary tradition, Eliot claimed, is recognisable, only becomes present, as 'a simultaneous order' and as an 'ideal order' in reception (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 106). Eliot did not use that last phrase ('in reception'), but that is the implication. A highly generalised 'perception' of the inherited tradition (*ibid.*) – something like a transcendence – may occur when the whole is glimpsed or experienced as a single entity as the new work of art is mentally incorporated into it – when, as Eliot puts it, 'the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted' (*ibid.*). For the creative writer producing that new work, the moment of composition

simultaneously involves its own kind of transcendent reception since composition must be, or will constitute, a revision of that order. In Eliot's imaginary laboratory of literary creation the specific gravity of the literary shifts away from the activity and personality of the author-in-composition to that of the sustaining literary culture-in-reception, external to the writer and coming from the past. The 'perception', he argues, is not 'only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence' (*ibid.*).

From a twenty-first century perspective, Eliot's idea of the writer writing 'with his own generation in his bones' (*ibid.*) and also with this wider historical awareness is a forerunner, very idiomatically expressed, to the later post-structuralist model of culture as an interlocking tissue of discourses, which texts instantiate. The obligatory next step – seeing authorship as merely a discursive regime of limited use – is not one that Eliot would have been interested in taking. Neither, equally, was he especially interested in taking the opposite tack of pursuing the implications of the material transmission of texts. Although he occasionally had positive things to say about editorial and other historical scholarship, the two areas were not at the centre of his thinking.

Eliot was no theorist either; but he was a most ambitious thinker with a prose style and an idiomatic palette aimed to appeal more to a literary-magazine readership than an academic one. Along with the literary journalists and essayists of his generation, the attraction, when defining difficult ideas, of so-called common-sense formulations was enough for him. He had a rare gift for simplifying complex ideas, writing essays rather than professional articles. Even the lectures he wrote were essay-like, and he made the approach work very hard indeed. In 1932, in 'The Literary Mind', the redoubtable F.R. Leavis (whose ground-breaking *New Bearings in English Poetry* appeared in the same year) commended 'the quality of intelligence exhibited in [Eliot's] literary criticism … [which also] appears as plainly when he applies it to general questions … he really does something with words' (1933b, 62). Most importantly for Leavis, Eliot's successful attempt to install a serious-minded evaluative regime for literary criticism decisively countered prevailing belles-lettristic, impressionistic approaches.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that this writer, whom we know primarily for his haunting poetry, was probably the most influential literary critic in English of the twentieth century, at least until the 1960s and even later.

Eliot's implicit claim that the moment of composition is also a moment of reception of the Tradition is a satisfyingly symmetrical one: rhetorically, it is brilliant. The cost of the brilliance, however, is that it soars above the action: those actual scenes of writing where material documents (on the page, on screen) are successively produced, discarded, copied and revised. Via these material supports and these acts of writing, fragments of text come into being and, if all goes well, texts of versions of works are slowly developed until either finalised or abandoned. The work-concept is the regulative idea that we use to contain the whole process and its outcomes. Accordingly, the work is not, or need not be, treated as an idealism, as something existing over and apart from the printed and other documents that instantiate it. Only if understood as standing alone, as an ideal thing, can it be imagined as coming face to face with Tradition in some cultural-existential embrace.[2] This shortcut in Eliot's thinking does away with the ongoing intellectual-artistic project

[1] This was despite the fact that Leavis' falling-out with Eliot over the latter's slighting of D.H. Lawrence's importance was already brewing; see Leavis 1955, Introduction. By 1976, Leavis had changed his mind completely on the importance of the essay, dismissing it as 'only speciously distinguished, not merely marked stylistically as it is by affectation, but pretentiously null as thought' (16).

[2] These sentences summarise more extended argument in *The Work and the Reader in Literary Studies* (Eggert 2019a). The implications of incorporating the reader into the work-concept, as well as relying on the material basis of text, are also explored in Eggert 2009 and 2013.

that supports the writing and that the writing expresses. This project I shall call the oeuvre, but its nature depends, as we shall see, on one's perspective on it.

Like the work-concept, the oeuvre was a more or less unproblematic idea, current in Eliot's lifetime, that could simply be invoked. The *Oxford English Dictionary* witnesses the anglicised use of the French borrowing *œuvre* (for *work*) from the late nineteenth century and gives two main contrasting usages: (1) a single *work* (as in *chef d'œuvre*) and (2), the principal meaning, secured by 1917: 'The works produced by an artist, composer, or writer, regarded collectively'. It is the latter usage that is at issue here, and its application rather depends on who is doing the regarding. The two parties I will concentrate on are the writer and the scholar-critic, since their two perspectives on the oeuvre are likely to vary. A survey of several poets' attitudes to their own body of writings, followed by the cases of some novelists, will clear the ground for two sharply contrasting understandings of the oeuvre-concept to emerge. They bring into focus the oddity of Eliot's (alternative) appeal to Tradition, which thereby transfers attention to why he appealed to it *when* he did. My general argument is that the oeuvre-concept, along with the work-concept, both suitably refreshed, need to be more deliberately and self-consciously re-introduced into editorial and literary-critical study. First steps towards a necessary theorising of the oeuvre are taken in the final section, thereby superseding (I argue) Eliot's evasive Tradition-concept.

2. *Poets' Oeuvres: From Jonson to Yeats*

Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio publication of his self-consciously styled 'Works' announced a new attitude towards authorship, and especially his own. It included of course his poems but also his plays, a form normally printed in cheap, pamphlet-style quartos and generally not considered at the time as 'works'. That claim was more familiar in relation to classical authors. The volume itself was 'the culmination of a history of typographical experiment which can be traced through Jonson's early quartos'.[3] Jonson also substantially revised several of the plays for the Folio and added specially written dedicatory letters, none of them from figures connected with the theatre. That was not the place to consolidate one's reputation; the theatre was only to be regarded with contempt, so that Jonson was treading a delicate path.

Publication of such collected editions during the writer's lifetime was unusual at the time. Most of Sidney's, Fulke Greville's and Donne's writings had to wait until after their deaths. Only then could such 'Remains', as they were sometimes titled, be safely published, free from the consequences for the author of the changing favours of the Court. In contrast, Jonson had the rare opportunity of defining what his own oeuvre (as we would now call it) consisted in, and of establishing its texts in one luxury volume. In comparison, Shakespeare's Works did not appear until 1623, seven years after his death.

The affront to convention must have been felt. In his biography of Jonson, Ian Donaldson quotes two epigrams of the time:

To Mr Ben Jonson demanding the reason why he called his plays 'works'
Pray tell me, Ben, where doth the mystery lurk,
What others call a play you call a work.

[3] For this quotation and other information mentioned here, see the unpaginated 'General Introduction', subsection 'Choice of Copy-Texts in Online Edition', in Bevington *et al.* 2013, which is based on (and expands) Bevington *et al.* 2012.

Thus answered by a friend in Mr Jonson's defence
The author's friend thus for the author says,
Ben's plays are works, when others' works are plays.[4]

In its editorial approach, the recent Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson (Bevington *et al.* 2012) departs from the famous Herford and Simpson edition of 1925-1952. Both included works that the Folio omitted; but Herford and Simpson relied on the texts of the Folio on the grounds (that have turned out to be only partly true) that Jonson saw the Works volume through the press himself, attending more or less daily to corrections as the sheets came off the press.

The Cambridge Edition is the first to give full consideration to the manuscript witnesses of the poems, especially of the uncollected poems. More flexibility has also been introduced into the editing when weighing the merits of the plays and masques in their various printed and, in some cases, manuscript forms. With the plays, the edition adopts a more versional approach, providing reading texts based on the quarto editions of the plays *Sejanus* and *Volpone*, partly because of the way they 'attest to the two plays intricate and immediate embedment in their historical moments' (Bevington *et al.* 2013, n.p.). But with *The Alchemist* and *Cataline* they choose the Folio texts because of the minimal but systematic revisions apparent in the Folio. As well as edited texts and textual collations, the Online Edition (2013) contains facsimile images and transcriptions of the quartos and Folio, as well as the major manuscripts – an overview that, even if Herford and Simpson had conceived of it, they would have found impossible to provide. In summary, the editorial conspectus on Jonson – what might be called the scholar's oeuvre – has expanded around but also includes the author's, although, in using that latter term 'oeuvre' in relation to Jonson in his own time, care remains necessary.

Even in more recent times, not all authors, nor even all poets, have seen their works as forming an oeuvre. In his landmark edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Poems, J.C.C. Mays, though keenly aware of the scholar's oeuvre he has just edited, comments:

> Coleridge's poems do not add up to an *oeuvre* in the sense defined by twentieth-century masters. There are indications that he made an effort to shape individual successive collections, in different ways, but the compromises and contradictions he allowed are as evident as the controlling hand … he appears to have had no steady idea of the literary persona he was putting before the world … His relation with individual poems also continued long after their first versions, so that he overwrote his original intentions; or his relation ceased, so that he ignored the mistakes and errors which crept in. Coleridge's approach to the majority of his poems is fluid and opportunistic. (2001, vol. I, xcv)

These considerations left Mays with a dilemma. In what groupings and sequence or sequences should he present the poems? Given the writer's (non-existent) sense of an oeuvre only one conclusion was possible: 'There is no way of arranging the poems, in a way which suggests their different kinds of status and the relation between them, which is not an interference' (vol. I, cxviii). Ultimately he settled on a chronological presentation as 'the most easily understood, the most familiar, and therefore the most neutral … To clarify relationships by arranging the material into ordered groups would be "a case merely of substituting unfamiliar chaos for familiar confusion" ' (*ibid.*, cxxxvi).[5] Thus the presentation of the scholar's oeuvre as limited

[4] Epigrams 269, 270 in *Wit's Recreation*, 1640, but 'probably in circulation much earlier'; quoted in Donaldson 2011, 326-327.

[5] Mays is quoting Potter 1933, xxvii.

by the book form (reading texts plus apparatus of variant readings) emerges in this six-volume edition as an argument or series of arguments about both texts and sequence, and inherently open to counter-argument.

The case was intriguingly different with Wordsworth. Here we see the concept that would become known as the oeuvre taking on a self-conscious and deliberate form at the writer's hands. The title of Wordsworth's second collection of poems, *Lyrical Ballads*, of 1798 (to which Coleridge contributed) implied two generic categories of poem, the lyric and the ballad, but here melded into one. In the next edition of 1800 (in two volumes now), the poems were rearranged but not into distinct groupings. Rather, the 'unbroken arrangements' of the poems were, as Jared Curtis puts it, 'based loosely on contrasting and cumulative effects' (Curtis 1983, 36). Then, in 1807, a further expansion led to *Poems, in Two Volumes*. In the first volume, four categories were employed to group the poems: 'The Orchard Pathway', 'Poems Composed during a Tour, Chiefly on Foot', and 'Sonnets' distributed between 'Dedicated to Liberty' and 'Miscellaneous'. However, the logic or effect of the categories was unclear to some early reviewers.[6] Stung by their criticisms, Wordsworth explained his motivation for the groupings in letters to friends. He wanted to enrich the experience of reading individual, often short, poems by placing them within categories that would sustain each poem so that, as he said, 'if individually they want weight, perhaps, as a Body, they may not be so deficient' (quoted *ibid.*).

In 1814, in his 'Preface' to *The Excursion*, Wordsworth describes his great, autobiographical long poem *The Prelude*, which was still in development, as being like the 'ante-chapel' to a gothic church (i.e. the not-yet-written *Recluse*) and his earlier poems as 'little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses' of that church (Owen and Smyser 1974, vol. III, 5-6). Wim Van Mierlo comments: 'The great edifice that is the work depends on slotting the individual components into their ideal constellation, something which can be achieved only over time and through constantly revisiting what was already written' (2020, 18). If for 'work' in Van Mierlo's formulation we read 'oeuvre' there is further clarification – and, indeed, the 1815 *Poems* would go some way towards embodying it.

That publication was something like an oeuvre-defining moment. Wordsworth had evidently been considering the organisational question since first mentioning it to Coleridge in 1809. The existing category 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty' was divided into two to allow for poems written since 1807. 'Miscellaneous Sonnets' was retained and eleven more categories were added: 'Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood', 'Juvenile Pieces', 'Poems Founded on the Affections', 'Poems of the Fancy', 'Poems of the Imagination', 'Poems Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection', 'Poems on the Naming of Places', 'Inscriptions', 'Poems Referring to the Period of Old Age', 'Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems', 'Ode – Intimations, &c.'. The omnibus category Lyrical Ballads, removed in 1807, was not restored. Mixing and resequencing the poems from earlier selections with newer ones also meant removing indications of original publication dates. Chronology would not therefore be a determinant either.

Finally, Wordsworth wrote a new preface to explain this 'monument of classification', as James Heffernan called it in 1979 (108):

> poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided

[6] See Curtis 1983, 36-37. Categories employed in volume 2 were: 'Poems Written during a Tour in Scotland', 'Moods of my Own Mind' and 'The Blind Highland Boy; With Other Poems' (61-62).

into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. (Owen and Smyser 1974, vol. III, 28)

Wordsworth's new categories of 1815 have been discussed from Foucauldian, editorial and other perspectives.[7] The matter is not straightforward since Wordsworth's categories have overlapping imperatives and conflicting criteria (thematic, generic, chronological, psychological). But what is clear is that they at least involved a curation of their contents on the author's part intended to influence how readers would understand the collection as a whole and thus the relationship of each poem to it. The rough thematic-chronological ordering of poems within each category, from childhood to old age and beyond, betokens or invites a parallel with the poet's own life, something Wordsworth had already expended much energy upon in the successive versions and extensions of *The Prelude*, and would go on doing so until 1839. It was never published in his lifetime partly because Wordsworth could not finish the long philosophical poem to which it was to be a prelude, *The Recluse*. But in 1815, almost as a stepping stone, the writing self would be embodied, figuratively, in the sequence and organisation of the poems across the two volumes.

So it was that the 1815 publication served as a first representation of Wordsworth's poetic oeuvre for readers, but one that was destined (for this long-lived poet) to be superseded over and again in his future collections as more poems and categories were added. Nevertheless, a poet's oeuvre had confidently been cast into the public domain as an authorially curated object. The magnificent Cornell Wordsworth series of scholarly editions (1975-2008) would take its own, more encompassing and versional path in determining and presenting its corresponding scholar's oeuvre.[8]

To jump a century forward to W.B. Yeats is to find the poet's self-memorialising being taken to a new self-conscious height. Each successive Yeats collection witnessed the process both in the textual revision and sequencing of poems, as well as in the physical design of the volumes, especially those from Cuala Press. So, in his edition of the *Early Poetry, Volume II* in the Cornell Yeats series, George Bornstein reproduces 'the orderings of eight different manuscript lists of Yeats differing in important ways from the published orderings' (1994, 523). Each new context, Bornstein argues, exposes 'new meanings (or new fault lines) for any given poem as well as for the entire sequence' (2). Yeats almost never printed volume contents in chronological order of composition; rather, the 'customary role of the opening poem of a Yeats volume' is, Bornstein argues elsewhere, to present 'a parable of escape from this world … which ensuing poems will react against in various ways' (2001, 67).

When, as Warwick Gould has commented, the opportunity for a new seven-volume deluxe Collected Works loomed in the 1930s, Yeats' 'dream of finality, perfectionism, a collected works, an *oeuvre* (which he openly wanted from 1895 onwards), "something intended, complete" '

[7] E.g., James Garrett (2008) compares contemporary schema of classification such as in the first British Census of 1801 as forms of exercising control over erstwhile abstract conceptions or natural entities. For text-critical evidence of Wordsworth's development of the categories, see Ketcham 1989, 26-32; and, for the poet's manuscript and printed category lists, see *ibid.*, 608-631.

[8] See further, Eggert (forthcoming); the Cornell series policy is to give pride of place to 'the earliest provisionally complete text' of any poem (Parrish 1997, 99), to then use it to serve as a base text for the apparatus, recording earlier and later readings in manuscript and print; and to provide facsimile images of a great many draft materials (with transcriptions facing them) recording the genesis and development of poems Wordsworth never brought to finality or which were adapted for use in other poems.

(Gould 2018, 482) began to seem possible.[9] But supervening circumstances meant that Yeats died in 1939 before it could be produced, leaving many editorial cruxes to be determined and a legacy of sharp divisions of editorial opinion.[10] Gould considers that Yeats, in his preparations, 'updated his collected works as a self-image, and his canon-formations involved the relegation of works which did not fit his idea of a *Collected Works* as a "permanent self". "*It is myself that I remake*" was his reply to those who regretted this textual husbandry' (2018, 480).

This oeuvre-formation – what Hugh Kenner in 1955 described as Yeats' 'deliberated artistic Testament' (1956, 585) – involved the relegation of various of his writings; he hoped they would fall into oblivion. But of course the later scholar is aware that no such selection and revision carried out within a poet's lifetime can be determinative. Newly written poems are liable to drive out the old; new versions, the result of revision, supersede their predecessors; authorial notes to poems, added or expanded, foreshadow a changed climate of reception and try to guide it; and the sequencing of contents is changed from one manuscript copying to the next in the wait for the oeuvre-defining volume that is delayed or does not arrive.

So it was for the colonial New South Wales poet Charles Harpur (1813-1868). He spent much of the 1860s in just such a state of preparation, as his manuscripts, now preserved in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, attest. The anticipated volume publication in London did not proceed. Fifteen years after the poet's death, his widow's relatives, at her earnest entreaty, financed the selection and editing of a handsome volume to be published locally. With nothing like the poetic prestige that, courtesy of the intervening movements of Aestheticism and Symbolism, Yeats was able to invoke, Harpur's editor in 1883 felt at liberty to impose the standards of taste and decorum of the day, amidst protests, too late to be effective, from Mrs Harpur. The modern scholarly editor has choices to make, and cannot help but face the fact that the author's repeated oeuvre-formation in manuscript was itself a process or performance, to which his death put an arbitrary end. In this elongated purview, the textual adjustments and abridgements for the volume of 1883, *Poems*, fall into place as another performance: but editorial this time. The scholar needs the conspectus: in editorial practice, the author's oeuvre is not the scholar's oeuvre. Nor need it be in literary-critical practice.

3. *Novelists' Oeuvres: From Goethe to Conrad*

There can be no scholar's oeuvre if there is nothing, or relatively little, to study. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe made sure there was. He retained his papers throughout much of his life; and in 1896 they came to the new Goethe and Schiller Archive in Weimar from his family, to whom they had passed after his death in 1832. At the opening of the Archive, the ongoing Weimar Edition of Goethe's Works (1887-1919) was celebrated. The existence of those papers had permitted the editors, in the Edition's ultimately 143 volumes, to include '*everything* that has been left behind of his *personal essence*'.[11]

This included items that Goethe had himself excluded from his famous *Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand* (1827-1831). He had previously been involved in earlier complete-works editions,

[9] Gould is quoting Yeats' 'A General Introduction for my Work': the poet, when he writes, 'never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table … he has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete … he is more type than man, more passion than type' (Yeats 1961, 509).

[10] E.g., Gould 1994, 2018.

[11] Translated in Piper 2006, 125 from Suphan 1887, xvii–xix. Bernard Suphan was director of the project. See further, Piper 2006 and Plachta 2004. I have also drawn from an unpublished conference paper by Plachta (2001), for which I thank him.

for which there was a commercial imperative in the then German states: the print marketplace scanted copyright protection over earlier works and permitted piracy. Revised authorised editions were attempts to channel sales towards them, from which author and publisher would benefit.

The publication of Wieland's *Sämtliche Werke* (1794-1811) had created a taste for the final authorised edition. In his collected edition, Wieland acknowledged the validity of earlier versions of his works by including their variant readings. And then, in the publication of Schiller's complete works by his publisher Cotta after Schiller's death in 1805, the works were organised in chronological order. A certain spirit of editorial scholarship was in the air, and Goethe would employ a philologist, Carl Wilhelm Göttling, to correct the texts of his already published works for his *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, while he, Goethe, got on with revising *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* and his autobiographical writings.

When, in 1826, Goethe had first announced his *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, he pushed back against commentators on an earlier complete edition of his works who had criticised him for not following the chronological ordering carried out for Schiller's works. From Goethe's point of view his works were, rather, the 'creations of a talent' that came from 'a certain centre'. Instead of developing methodically over time, step by step, that creative urge ('something from deep inside') had gone off in all directions, some further pursued, some not.[12] So he settled on an arrangement by traditional literary genres, reined in his assistant who was wanting to collate and analyse the textual transmission of his works on philological principles in order to establish their texts (when all Goethe wanted Göttling to do was to correct egregious misprints), and selected only those writings he wished to be preserved.

The tension between the scholarly desire for completion (as in the Weimar Edition) and the authorial desire to present a coherent whole, a completed creation, would be further heightened when, in the twentieth century, scholarly editors began to realise the effects of uncritically accepting the texts of the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*. It had inevitably incorporated an accretion of unintended errors in the typesettings of the editions that went before it, as one was typeset from the other. First-edition texts began to be preferred, since any interest in tracking textual genesis and development might be hindered by privileging texts the author had expressly authorised in the formation of *his* oeuvre, to use the twentieth-century term. Once again, the scholar's oeuvre could not be identical with the writer's.

Walter Scott's so-called *Magnum Opus* collected edition of his Waverley novels, published in 48 volumes from 1829 to 1833, was typeset from series previously published by Constable in 1822 and 1824, and by Cadell in 1827 and 1833. Into specially prepared copies of each of the works published prior to Scott's death in 1832, blank leaves were inserted, making up the Interleaved Set now preserved at the National Library of Scotland. Scott was thus able to make revisions and corrections, and also add annotations, which were usually of an antiquarian nature. There were both short notes intended to be set as footnotes and lengthy notes for end-of-chapter placement. Scott carried out most of this work probably between 1828 and 1831. Collected editions of his novels had begun to appear in his lifetime from 1819, before the advent of the Magnum Opus edition; but *it* turned out to be the runaway success.

The prospectus for subscriptions was issued in late February 1828. The original idea was to print 4,000 copies of each volume, but the take-up justified initial runs of 10,000, rising for

[12] Translated in Plachta 2001; originally in the daily newspaper *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* (July 1826): Anon. 1985, vol. XXII, 757-765.

the early, more popular titles to 30,000 by the time the last of the 48 volumes had appeared.[13] It eventually appeared in large octavo, duodecimo and 18mo formats, thus catering to popular demand through cheaper prices. In this way, the new, expanded authorised edition would become, by virtue of frequent reprinting, the recognised point of entry into Scott's Waverley novels.

The motivation for undertaking the annotations was originally not scholarly but commercial. Scott was a financial partner in the Constable publishing firm; but their London printer failed in January 1826, throwing Constable and Scott into excessive amounts of debt. An idea that had previously been proposed by Constable was revived. It was for Scott to prepare an annotated collected edition of the Waverley novels so as to create new, potentially profitable and ultimately saleable intellectual property.[14]

Scott's annotations were derived from his own recollections, from letters he received from correspondents from whom he had sought information, and from other independent research, including a visit to the British Library. Acting more like a belles-lettristric scholar than an author, but of course claiming the privilege and special insight of being author, Scott became more and more committed to the job as the long process went on. He rarely missed an opportunity to add information, revise inserted correspondence, correct proofs, and insert new information that had only just come to hand. He strove to avoid loss and repetition of new material and errors of the press. In an open letter of 19 November 1830 to his publisher and all involved in the printing of *Peveril of the Peak*, Scott (now beset by a series of strokes) appealed in frustration for '*running copy* … without delay and not after long intervals so that the whole may be kept in view at the same time' (quoted in Millgate 1987, 9). As he proceeded with the notes he was also revising and correcting the text, generally lightly and unsystematically, and writing new introductions. He must have had the sense that the Magnum Opus edition would be his testament, the nearest thing to a writer's oeuvre that a novelist could achieve.

And so it proved until, that is, a new generation of editorial scholars got to work in the 1980s. They reasoned that, while the texts of the Magnum Opus editions benefited from Scott's corrections, the editions intervening between the first and the Magnum, as well as the Magnum's own typesetting, must have introduced successive rounds of typesetters' regularisation and error, each one incorporated into the next, that cumulatively undermined the authority of the Magnum's texts. A preference for a return to earlier copy-texts emerged in the attempt to establish a readable text that would capture the period of initial creation. Scott's oeuvre-defining moment would assume its place, under the scholar's purview, in the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (30 vols., 1993-2012), but only as a later version far removed from the original one in which the Edition was primarily interested.[15] The joint textual authority of the Interleaved Set and the Magnum Opus edition derives more from reception than initial composition. This is a condition endemic to late or so-called deathbed editions. The upshot is that, once again, the scholar's oeuvre and the writer's oeuvre deviated from one another.

The addition by poets or novelists of annotation to their works is not rare, and Scott's prestige throughout the nineteenth century may have helped it become less so. Charles Harpur

[13] Factual information here is drawn from Millgate 1987 and Brown 1987.

[14] Cadell, who ultimately acquired the entire copyright, described the Interleaved Set used as printer's copy for the annotated edition as the material evidence of a new copyright 'so far as these alterations go' (quoted in Millgate 1987, 5). A. & C. Black purchased the copyright from Cadell in 1851 and the Interleaved Set was used again in preparing their Centenary Edition in 1871 (Scott was born in 1771).

[15] See general editor David S. Hewitt's account of the editorial rationale (1988); it responds to the many complexities in the transmission of Scott's texts.

often added notes or expanded existing ones when his poems appeared in newspapers or were reprinted in them in the 1850s and 1860s; Yeats added 46 pages of notes to *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899); and T.S. Eliot famously added notes to *The Waste Land* (1922). Long before them all, Ben Jonson had added epistles and other paratextual material to his plays in the Folio, in the hope of guiding reader response and achieving a higher esteem for himself in aristocratic circles. All these examples may be understood as authors performing curatorial duties on behalf of their works, culturing them into what by the twentieth century would be called an oeuvre – a writer's oeuvre, which the later scholarly editor is likely to see very differently.

Although collected editions of writers' novels arose in the eighteenth century, by the concluding decades of the nineteenth century the need for market differentiation on the part of publishers, anxious that their back-titles go on selling, had led to the collected *édition de luxe*. This form typically appealed to the book collector because of its luxury binding, special paper stocks, authorial signatures on the title-page, and limited issues, sometimes hand-numbered. Henry James rose to the bait when offered the chance of such an edition by his American publisher Scribner. As there would necessarily be a new typesetting, the opportunity presented itself for him to revise the texts of his previously published works so as to bring the earlier ones 'into alignment of style, color and general literary presentment with the work of his maturity', as Scribner's advertising would put it. There would be a 'complete unity of effect' in what became known as James' New York Edition (1907-1909).[16] His consistently heavy revisions, together with his newly written prefaces, amounted to a sort of manifesto on the art of the novel (as R.P. Blackmur would entitle James' new prefaces when he gathered them into a book in 1934). The collected edition would usher the revised works into the modern moment: it would make them a product *of* that moment.

The extant corrected proofs confirm that James worked very hard at his self-imposed task, lending a new sophistication to the texts of his earlier works and redefining the *édition de luxe* in so doing. The job once finished, James told a correspondent: 'It has made me ten years older … but it has really made my poor old books, I think, twenty or thirty years younger'.[17] The New York Edition would be a quintessentially authorial final expression, a monumentalising of the form in which James wished his works to be read in the future, including after his death (he would die in 1916). It was also, for the purposes of the present essay, an oeuvre-delimiting moment in that he intended all along that the New York Edition be 'selective as well as collective; I want to quietly disown a few things by not thus supremely adopting them'.[18] In fact, only about half of his shorter fictions made the cut, and several of his novels and novellas, including *Washington Square*, *The Europeans* and *The Bostonians*, were not considered worthy by James to be memorialised in this way, or at least not within the 23 volumes that his publisher allowed him.

There had been an earlier Collective Edition of James' works in 1883, published by Macmillan; but James, then travelling in the USA, had had little to do with it. There is no evidence he corrected proofs, which would have been virtually impossible to organise in any case. In comparison to the New York Edition, this was not a case of a self-defined writer's oeuvre coming into existence. The collected format itself is no guarantee of it but, in default of anything better, for readers the format may come to stand in for it.

[16] From Scribner's December 1907 prospectus 'The Novels and Tales of Henry James' (quoted in Anesko 2009, 193, 197). Anesko's article is the primary source of information here. See further, Nashe 2003 and the Penguin Classics edition of James' *Portrait of a Lady*: 'with text based on the 1882 edition rather than the 1908 New York edition' (Horne 2011, iv); in its Appendix IV (644-682), it conveniently localises and documents the issues broached here.

[17] James to Witter Bynner, 20 [September] 1908; quoted in Anesko 2009, 196.

[18] James to James B. Pinker, 6 June 1905; quoted in Anesko 2009, 194.

This proved to be the case with Joseph Conrad, and for some decades scholars were taken in by the substitution. In a letter of February 1917 Conrad wrote: 'The only edition in which I take interest is the Collected Edition … For the text, it will be exactly the text of the English 1st editions freed from misprints and with, perhaps, a few (very few) verbal alterations.'[19] This declaration was written when the idea of deluxe Collected Editions (American and English) of his works was under discussion, though the fulfilment of the idea, one profoundly welcome to Conrad, would wait until after the War. The Collected Editions came out from 1921 in English (Heinemann) and American (Doubleday) editions. In 1928, his friend the literary critic Richard Curle recalled Conrad's telling him that the Collected Editions – 'that Conrad considered his final text' – would represent him for posterity (Curle 1968, 64). And so, more or less, it turned out. Reprintings derived from Doubleday plates were regularly issued in both countries under different series names by various publishers in the coming decades. The major one for the British marketplace and its commercial territories was that issued by Dent.

Publishers, Conrad critics and some editors of student and general-reader editions were by and large content to take Conrad at his word. The 1960s Penguin editions of Conrad simply reset the Dent Collected texts without further consideration. The more scholarly 1960s Norton editions of *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* used the texts of the Heinemann Collected Edition, by then supposed to be the more authoritative.[20] The idea sorted well with a commitment to the study of the 'concrete' text, that favoured term of the New Critical imagination.[21]

Somewhat as in the case with Scott, the status and reliability of those Collected texts as an indicator of Conrad's wishes – and thus as carriers of his oeuvre – were shot out of the water once the scholar-editors got properly to work in the 1980s. It was gradually established that the Collected texts mainly derive from already copy-edited first-edition texts, themselves usually derived from serial publications edited, sometimes heavily, for magazine audiences. During the production of those original publications the actual line of transmission was re-invented each time, responding to tight deadlines and other practical necessities. Complications inevitably arose. First, Conrad faced the necessity to supply copy for dual first editions on either side of the Atlantic and, similarly, for prior single or double magazine serialisation. Second, there was the need to check proofs expeditiously to meet publishing schedules, or to delegate the job. Often magazine proofs might serve as printer's copy for one or both book publishers. Or book proofs of the one publisher could serve as copy for the other. The net result was that there was no practicable way for Conrad to have kept a close check on his proliferating texts as publication of the first editions approached.

The Collecteds in the 1920s only exacerbated the problem. Conrad read lightly over the proofs of their first few volumes but thereafter seems to have delegated the responsibility to his live-in secretary.[22] This should not be surprising, despite his commitment to this new and welcome publishing project. Conrad was a reluctant and not especially proficient proof corrector. He was usually itching to get on with the new work in hand, not to be interrupted by the old: 'I don't want to correct I want to write', he said with some irritation in a letter of 1908.[23]

[19] Conrad to Reginald Leon (Karl *et al.* 1983-2007, vol. VI, 34).

[20] For an overview of the evidence supporting these conclusions, see Eggert 2021; some of its material is adapted here.

[21] For René Wellek in 1941, 'the object of literary study [is] the concrete work of art' (741). His essay became a recognised theoretical underpinning for New Criticism when republished as a chapter in successive editions of his and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature* from 1949.

[22] See further, Stape 2000.

[23] Conrad to Pinker (Karl *et al.* 1983-2007, vol. IV, 60).

Conrad was a professional author, not a textual critic or student of textual transmission. He made efforts to keep control of his texts. He noticed a percentage of the changes typists and typesetters made, but the independent revisions he made to remedy those errors show that he did not systematically check the new typing or proofs against the preceding document. Although he occasionally voiced outrage at his texts being tampered with, or at the prospect of it, the texts of his works were changed in hundreds, sometimes thousands of ways, mostly minor, as part of the normal business of printing and publishing magazines and books, and then again in new editions – including, importantly, the Collecteds. A gradual drift away from an authorial style was the result.

The Collected volumes were introduced by prefaces. From April 1919, Conrad was hard at work on what would be called, in each case, the 'Author's Note'. He had written ten by the end of the year. The idea he had conceived in 1917 held firm. Rejecting his agent's suggestion at the time that his prefaces might be like Henry James' elaborate technical discussions for his New York edition, Conrad replied: 'I have formed for myself a conception of my public as the sort of people that would accept graciously a few intimate words but would not care for long disquisitions about art'.[24] In practice, the Author's Notes would be basically reminiscent, revealing something of the origins of each tale and Conrad's struggle to resolve it into a narrative form, but with their cordial surfaces sometimes complicated by defensive even combative undertones.

These prefaces – propagated on both sides of the Atlantic in printing after printing – lent the Collecteds an authority and a pride of place in the bookselling marketplace for some decades, one that ultimately called out an independent scholarly assessment. As is frequently the case, it was the editors who did it. The case for relegating the Collected texts was made by Sid Reid in the first volume of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad in 1990. It was a remarkable piece of text-critical argument, and Reid's conclusions have been confirmed and extended in successive volumes.[25] It meant that the scholars' oeuvre would need to be painstakingly reconstructed, novel by novel, story by story, essay by essay at the level of the work and of the version. Only now, as the Cambridge series nears its end, can we begin to say that the two oeuvres have been clarified in their differences from one another.

That still leaves much interpretation of the scholar's oeuvre to do, since a methodology for studying the intermingled genesis of Conrad's writings, and the effects that chronological overlaps and biographical conditioning have on their meanings, is only now being generally recognised as a literary-critical problem, one that is far from settled, and not only with Conrad. Allied problems – such as the place in the scholar's oeuvre (but usually not in the writer's) of fragments, juvenilia, dubious attributions, erotica, collaborations and non-literary writings – are yet to be properly negotiated on a theoretical basis by a text-critically and book-historically aware literary criticism.

4. *D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot*

D.H. Lawrence evinced very little of Yeats' priestly attention to his own writings. Unlike Yeats, Lawrence rarely re-read them, especially the fiction (*Sons and Lovers* is the only known exception); but with the poetry, he was obliged to do so. There was the necessity of gathering together, selecting, revising and sequencing those poems previously published in magazines into individual collections of poetry; and then, in late 1927 and early 1928, gathering and revising the published collections, together with some uncollected poems, into what would become his two-volume *Collected Poems* of 1928.

[24] Conrad to Pinker [14 July? 1917] (Karl *et al.* 1983-2007, vol. VI, 108).
[25] See Harkness and Reid 1990, 283-293.

As he performed this editing of his earlier poetry he would have been aware that there were twenty years of poetic endeavour on the line: how would it be regarded? In the 'Note' he wrote to accompany *Collected Poems*, he showed himself aware of the disconcerting tonal sharpness and extravagance of idea demonstrated by some of the poems in his 1917 collection *Look! We Have Come Through!* He asked his readers 'to fill in the background of the poems, as far as possible … What was uttered in the cruel spring of 1917 should not be dislocated and heard as if sounding out of the void' (Pollnitz 2013-2018, vol. I, 656).

This statement pushed Lawrence to an intriguing generalisation, which still has application for scholarly editors today:

> It seems to me that no poetry, not even the best, should be judged as if it existed in the absolute, in the vacuum of the absolute. Even the best poetry, when it is at all personal, needs the penumbra of its own time and place and circumstance, to make it full and whole. If we knew a little more of Shakespeare's self and circumstance, how much more complete the sonnets would be to us, how their strange torn edges would be softened and merged into a whole body! (*Ibid.*)

To announce a standard and to live up to it are two different things, and it has to be said that Lawrence proved not to be the most consistent of self-editors. He claimed that he had 'tried to arrange the poems, as far as possible, in chronological order, the order in which they were written … because many of the poems are so personal, that in their fragmentary fashion, they make up a biography of an emotional and inner life' (655). But only in a rough and ready way can it be said that he succeeded. Like any poet, as he prepared his earlier writings for new publication, the tension between respecting the earlier texts as being of their moment and his aesthetic desire to improve them was all too pressing, and Lawrence fudged the issue as best he could. (I return to this below.)

Lawrence was defining his poetic oeuvre via his collecting and editing. But it was a temporary achievement since there were more poems to come – and we don't know what he would have done had he lived long enough to review all of *them*. Before he died in 1930 scores of new poems, mostly short, would flow from his pen, none of which could be included in *Collected Poems*. The only perspective on his oeuvre that can encompass *all* of the poems is the post-mortem one: the scholarly one.

The Cambridge three-volume edition (Pollnitz 2013-2018) respected his final intentions of 1928 in its first two volumes (thus establishing reading texts of his authorially defined oeuvre), and added those poems that, in 1928, were yet to be written. But it broke free in its third volume by printing selected early versions of the same poems as well as those that had been lost sight of in 1927-1928 because they had not been selected for the earlier collections. (Lawrence had worked without his manuscripts or earlier magazine printings to hand.) In effect, two oeuvres, based on conflicting principles, were published, in silent critique of one another: the one in service of the ideal form of the writer's oeuvre and of the work-texts in it; and the other opening up for inspection significant stages in the process of text development over time (see further, Eggert 2020).

Adopting that latter, versional perspective is to glimpse what virtually all of Lawrence's other works (short fiction, novels, plays, essays) have in common with one another and with the poems. With Lawrence, each piece of writing emerges characteristically as a staged encounter with new subject matter. Each one re-engages and localises Lawrence's existing repertoire, only to move beyond it. Each engagement is provisional. The versions produced by this process seem to dissolve into their 'works' (as we traditionally call those regulative containers), and the works dissolve into his oeuvre. All form part, over time, of a single, ongoing intellectual project that the scholar will want to understand. Within that project, Lawrence's poetic self-canonising of

November 1927 to January 1928 appears as only one more moment, once again showing that the poet's self-curated oeuvre on the one hand, and the scholar's contextualising of it within an encompassing, more continuous and intermingled process of writing and revision on the other, are two different things.

T.S. Eliot's modelling of the moment of writing, with the writer addressing the Tradition, is in a different world from the two perspectives on the oeuvre that we have been inspecting so far. They are overleapt at a bound by Eliot's idealist concept. But the overleaping leaves him with the problem of finding a way to mediate between the abstraction and the practical realities of writing, and it leaves him open to the suspicion that his Tradition was less a principle than a historical reflection or symptom, something that made sense at the time, that served its turn, but was doomed to become only a curiosity a century later. I'll deal with the latter problem first.

In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Eliot characterises the literary tradition thus: 'The existing monuments form an ideal order' (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 106). In 'The Function of Criticism' (1923), he went further: the tradition of world literature, of European literature and of national literatures is, in each case, not to be regarded as 'a collection of the writings of individuals but as "organic wholes," as systems in relation to which, and only in relation to which, individual works of literary art, and the works of individual artists, have their significance'. For artists, it is 'a common inheritance and a common cause' (II, 458).

The appeal of looking at the past in this way must have been its restorative effect, its being what David Goldie calls a 'manifestly reintegrative' strategy (1998, 59). Eliot could not but have been affected by the anxieties of his age in the years immediately following the First World War. In Britain, cynicism about politics was rampant. 'Homes fit for heroes', the popular slogan at the end of the war, had become, as the novelist and leftwing commentator Douglas Goldring later recalled, 'a bitter jest' (1945, 6). At the time, in his 1920 novel *The Black Curtain*, Goldring wrote: 'The civilisation of the West might now indeed be refashioned on a nobler and more spiritual basis. And if this were done, then the dead would not have died in vain' (232). Goldring dedicated the novel to D.H. Lawrence, but Lawrence would have had no truck with that 'nobler and more spiritual basis'. Memories harden in retrospect, when at the time opportunity may have been glimpsed or anticipated. Eliot's Tradition must have had something of that hopeful flavour at a moment when the certainties, ideals and sentiments of the Victorian past were under severe questioning. In 1920, John Middleton Murry diagnosed a 'continual disintegration of the consciousness' that had found its way into literature (quoted in Goldie 1998, 48).[26] In comparison, Eliot's concept of Tradition offered a model of integration and renewal.

To make the conceptual gesture was one thing, but to sustain it was another: Eliot would need to find a way to keep the abstraction (Tradition) and the activity of writing in communication. In the next several years in a number of essays Eliot offers various filaments to help connect the two. But they don't add up cumulatively to a coherent case, let alone a theory. For instance, Eliot offers a historical claim about a 'dissociation of sensibility' having occurred since the seventeenth century (this, to explain his disaffection from nineteenth-century poetry, as he would ruefully reflect in 1961) (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 380, vol. VIII, 463). He values a mastery of technique that permits the writer to retain contact with the subject as opposed to cultivating the rhythmic seductiveness of poets such as Swinburne and Tennyson. He counsels the control of excessive subjectivity in the poet, which could be partly managed via reliance on

[26] From Murry, 'Poetry and Criticism', *Athenaeum*, 26 March 1920.

an objective correlative used as the formula for the evoked emotion (vol. II, 125). He stresses the need for 'the historical sense' (106) and thus for 'a very highly developed sense of fact' (as opposed to self-indulgent emotion) in the writer, and for a good education (464).[27] He allowed himself to become committed to what, in an extended dispute with John Middleton Murry from 1923, he accepted as 'Classicism' as opposed to Murry's 'Romanticism'.[28] A deference towards Murry's 'Outside Authority' (462) in each of these cases in turn necessitated, Eliot argued, an impersonality on the part of the writer: 'There is accordingly something outside of the artist to which he owes allegiance, a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself in order to earn and to obtain his unique position' (458). Eliot was, as he himself admitted much later, attracted to positions that laid down fertile soil for his own form of poetry, but he dressed the arguments in a persuasive rhetoric of disinterestedness that seemed to lend them universal application.[29]

So Eliot could criticise both William Blake and Lawrence for the eccentricity of their writing, which he linked to the alleged poverty of their educations and reading, and Lawrence's supposed lack of a sense of humour.[30] In fact, as the Cambridge eight-volume edition of his letters has amply documented, Lawrence was a wide but unorthodox, often distinctively creative reader. He certainly had 'his own generation in his bones'; but, unlike Eliot, he found it an entrapment. In 1916, when asking Ottoline Morrell to send him 'a history of early Egypt, before the Greeks', he specified 'a book not too big, because I like to fill it in myself, and the contentions of learned men are so irritating' (Boulton 1979-2000, vol. II, 529).

Eliot, on the other hand, sought to maintain a position or rhetoric of cultural authority that he could share with his audience, could exemplify in his own essays and reviews, and, in his editing of the *Criterion* from 1922, could encourage in contributors (see, e.g., Heywood Thomas 1930). In this atmosphere, unorthodox outsiders were apt to be regarded with suspicion. Yet again and again, and more especially as he grew more self-reflective with age, Eliot evinces in his prose a disarming honesty and even a modesty that belie his rhetoric, and he deploys an understated ironic wit that lightens it. He never wrote a serious essay on Lawrence and may not have read many of his works.[31] He made many comments about Lawrence but equivocated in his judgements, as he himself recognised in 'To Criticize the Critic' in 1961 (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. VIII, 467); probably he was influenced by those essays on Lawrence that he published in the *Criterion* and by Murry's biography of Lawrence*, Son of Woman*, which he himself reviewed in 1931 (vol. IV, 313-319).

The equivocation about Lawrence was not something Eliot ever became at ease with. Encountering Lawrence's personally direct and serious, sometimes reverential renderings of sexual feelings and sexual intercourse in whatever of his writings that Eliot read in the 1910s and 1920s brought out in him, in 1927, a display of witty condescension, which – in the need for it – is itself revealing, but not about Lawrence:

[27] For Eliot's conceptualising 'the historical sense' from 1918, see vol. II, 112 n. 4.

[28] As part of another dispute, Murry had been forced to defend 'the inner voice', and to claim that 'the writer achieves impersonality through personality', so that 'romanticism … is itself the English tradition', thus neatly turning the tables on Eliot's established position; quoted in Goldie 1998, 101 (from Murry, 'On Fear and on Romanticism', *Adelphi*, September 1923), and see further 96-118.

[29] 'I was implicitly defending the sort of poetry that I and my friends wrote' (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. VIII, 460).

[30] See, e.g., 'William Blake' in Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 190-191; and (re Lawrence), 'To Criticize the Critic', vol. VIII, 467.

[31] This is the conclusion of Crick and DiSanto (2009, 141); but cf. Eliot's 'Introduction' to the 1937 collection *Revelation* (in Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. V, 472-496, see 485-488).

When his characters make love – or perform Mr. Lawrence's equivalent for love-making − and they do nothing else – they not only lose all the amenities, refinements and graces which many centuries have built up in order to make love-making tolerable; they seem to reascend the metamorphoses of evolution, passing backward beyond ape and fish to some hideous coition of protoplasm. (vol. III, 90)

A line could be drawn from this defensive ironic display to the less showy Eliot that wrote those feeble erotic poems to his second wife Valerie, whom he married in 1957.[32]

As Eliot grew older he began to entertain another model that cut across the one based on the writer's address to Tradition. In his 1932 essay 'John Ford' he makes some remarks on Shakespeare. Although he refuses to generalise them, believing Shakespeare to be a special case, they are closer in spirit to what I have been calling the scholar's oeuvre and to the editorial and literary-critical methodology it would potentially generate:

The standard set by Shakespeare is that of a continuous development from first to last: a development in which the choice both of theme and of dramatic and verse technique in each play seems to be determined increasingly by Shakespeare's state of feeling, by the particular stage of his emotional maturity at the time. What is 'the whole man' is not simply his greatest or maturest achievement, but the whole pattern formed by the sequence of plays; so that we may say confidently that the full meaning of any one of his plays is not in itself alone, but in that play in the order in which it was written, in its relation to all of Shakespeare's other plays, earlier and later: we must know all of Shakespeare's work in order to know any of it. No other dramatist of the time approaches anywhere near to this perfection of pattern. (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. IV, 474)

Even if the heavy emphasis on evaluative judgement remains, particularly the enduring criterion of 'maturity' that goes back to Eliot's essays of the 1910s, and even if Eliot forces the synchronic ('perfection of pattern') upon the diachronic ('earlier and later'), there is nevertheless a noticeable shift from the Tradition of 1919 to oeuvre in 1932. Perhaps Eliot had sensed the overreach, or wooliness, in his model of tradition-and-the-writer, and had begun to see the need for a complementary model that would recognise the perspective of the reader-interpreter as being different from that of the writer. But he did not force the issue to a decisive clarification. He remained in two minds. In 1964 he wrote, in a preface to a new edition of his Charles Eliot Norton lectures of 1932-1933, that he wished 'some anthologist of the future' would choose one of those lectures rather than continue to prefer 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' – which was 'perhaps the most juvenile [of my literary-critical essays] and certainly the first to appear in print' – though, he added, 'I do not repudiate it' (575-576).[33]

Curiously, in that same year 1932, Eliot ensured that the essays he chose for his own *Selected Essays* would all, on the Contents page, be dated by their first appearance (vol. VIII, 459).[34] He had evidently seen, in relation to his own writings, that chronology was essential for

[32] See Ricks and McCue 2015, vol. I, 316-319; e.g. 'And our middle parts are busy with each other' in 'How the Tall Girl and I Play Together', 316.

[33] The Tradition, or at least its implications, retained currency in Eliot's thinking. In 1937, on the issue of fact and education, he commented: 'Lawrence, even had he acquired a great deal more knowledge and information than he ever came to possess, would always have remained uneducated. By being "educated" I mean having such an apprehension of the contours of the map of what had been written in the past, as to see instinctively where everything belongs … it means some understanding of one's own ignorance' (Introduction to *Revelation*: Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. V, 486).

[34] Eliot misdated 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' to 1917: it had in fact first appeared in two parts in *Egoist* in September-October and November-December 1919. The correct date appeared in the second American edition of *Selected Essays* in 1950 and the third English edition of 1951. Eliot told bibliographer Donald Gallup in 1948 he had done the datings in 1932 'by guesswork' (Gallup 1952, 18). He got several dates wrong.

understanding the oeuvre. Works should not be treated as if they inhabited an eternal aesthetic present. The marriage of past and present in his model of Tradition and the writer could therefore not stand – or, at least, not stand alone. In his essay of 1961, 'To Criticize the Critic', he looks back over his own prose writings and ironically notes the drift in his opinions. He drives home the observation that 'we shall appreciate that value [of literary criticism that survives and has value 'out of its historical context'] all the more precisely if we also attempt to put ourselves at the point of view of the writer and his first readers' (vol. VIII, 461).

Later in the 'John Ford' essay, Eliot partially abandons or heavily qualifies one more dimension of his model: his signature call for the impersonality of the writer, which in 1919 he had illustrated by appeal to the chemical analogy of the catalyst.[35] There is room for legitimate disagreement about what he meant in 1919 by the term *impersonality*, and what he defined it against; and it is likely that he was still struggling to come to grips with it as a principle. But his new preparedness in 1932 to name and value the expression of its opposite is telling:

> in all these [early seventeenth-century] dramatists there is the essential, as well as the superficies, of poetry; they give the pattern, or we may say the undertone, of the personal emotion, the personal drama and struggle, which no biography, however full and intimate, could give us; which nothing can give us but our experience of the plays themselves. (vol. IV, 482)

He manages here to keep at bay what the New Critics would soon be calling the biographical fallacy, and in that last clause, by shifting the literary-critical scene to one of reception, he retracts a little of what he has just granted – the relevance of 'the personal emotion' to the poetry. But he has granted it all the same, and now centrally rather than only as something to be overcome.[36]

In 1919 Eliot had understood Tradition as alive in the moment of writing: the writer writes with 'a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order' (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 106). His formulation means more than the writer's needing simply to be imbued with the Tradition (so that the new piece of writing will be permeated by prior reading). But Eliot does not go so far as to imply the writer is seized by it (as if the Tradition came down from above and led to the creation of the poem, as in a moment of Romantic inspiration). Rather, the writing condition means to be seized *of* it.

But to accept this special condition, strengthened by Eliot's emphasis on impersonality, as the basis of an analytical method is to sideline and thus overlook the prior, less elevating middle ground: in Eliot's case, his strained first marriage, his evident disdain of sex, his sense of alienation, his own and his first wife Vivienne's depression, and his nervous breakdown while writing *The Waste Land*.[37] It is an illusion to think that the personal can be overleaped without cost in favour of an aesthetic of impersonality and disinterestedness. Many years later Eliot commented that the 'personal emotion' is also transferred to the reader (he had Donne in mind but could equally have been thinking about himself); and that 'the personality' of the poet was 'the only thing that holds his poems, or any one poem, together'.[38] It would have a conditioning effect on the developing

[35] In fact he mixed up the analogy: see Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 113 n. 16.

[36] Cf. from 1919: 'Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things' (111).

[37] For a stimulating reading of the poem in relation to Eliot's life in the period of its genesis, see Worthen 2009, 90-113.

[38] Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 696. I owe this point to Worthen 2009, 95.

oeuvre, which must consequently be understood as agented, personal and taking shape on the page day-by-day. At this practical level, Eliot's Tradition emerges as an idealism that collapses once you look at the archival remains of the writing process, where there is so much going on: the existence of documents witnessing stages of revision and multiple versions; their links to other writings of around the same time; the roles of the collaborator or of the publisher's reader in shaping the text as first published;[39] and sometimes the effects of a bowdlerising publisher.

5. *A Shifting Sense of Tradition, and F.R. Leavis*

The historical crisis which Eliot's Tradition-concept implicitly addressed may have been resolving itself for Eliot but not so for others. F.R. Leavis, now in his mid thirties, addressed it in an essay of 1930, 'Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture', which is seized of a sense of alarming cultural decline – of 'a breach in continuity' (1933a, 17). This phrase gave the title for the collection in which the essay would be reprinted in 1933: *For Continuity*. Although partly influenced by Eliot in this, Leavis' prognosis was different: 'the need to work very actively for cultural continuity' (4) would not be satisfied by Marxist cultural initiatives or by welcoming the fake economic progress indicated by the present machine age, but only, as he puts it in the 1930 essay, by the educated minority's 'keep[ing] alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition. Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age … In their keeping … is the language, the changing idiom, upon which fine living depends' (15). A 'strong current of criticism is needed as never before' (31-32): literary criticism therefore had an immensely serious role to play if the decline was to be reversed.

The inverse of the decline was the supposed existence of a golden age, an organic community, before the coming of the industrial machine, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Like many others of his generation of writers and intellectuals, Leavis (born in 1895) was profoundly attracted by the idea (see Leavis and Thompson 1933, 87-98). Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Irving Babbitt, R.G. Collingwood, John Dover Wilson: all had their versions of it; and of course Eliot's famous 'dissociation of sensibility', which he announced in 1921, implied a previous halcyon, more integrated period. Georgian poetry anthologies, before, during and after the War, had the effect of endowing the English countryside with a glow, understood as a heritage beyond compare. David Goldie interprets the combination as an 'anxious concern with psychic integrity and cultural continuity' in a period of national crisis (1998, 51).

At around the same time, R.W. Chambers was speaking to the same concern about continuity, except it was coming from a different source. In 1932, exactly a century after the initiation of a new period of edition-making of works of Old and Middle English, and almost seventy years after the formation of the Early English Text Society by Frederick James Furnivall in 1864, Chambers reflected on the influence of the editions on the question of whether there was a continuity in English prose, from the eighth century right through to the early Modern period. He argued that the *Oxford English Dictionary* (which had recently been completed in 1928) had shown irrefutably that the language itself was continuous, and that the newly acquired knowledge from the editions and elsewhere proved the broader continuity in prose. Furnivall is said to have been in no doubt about this from the start, believing that 'all these were monuments of one and the same tongue' (Chambers, 1932, vi).

[39] E.g., Pound in the case of *The Waste Land*; Edward Garnett reshaping Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Thomas Mark editing Yeats' collections, Maxwell Perkins with F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels, and, latterly, Gary Fisketjon at Knopf with Peter Carey's novels.

Some ten years later in 1942, in a lecture entitled 'The Classics and the Man of Letters', Eliot's views were shifting, and Chambers was part of the reason. Although Eliot would remain critical of the method of 'look[ing] at one writer after another, without balancing this point of view by the imaginative grasp of a national literature as a whole' (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. VIII, 296), his idea of Tradition was morphing into the plainer and less abstract one of 'continuity', which embraced not just the literary 'monuments' of 1919 but also now the second-rate:

> The continuity of a literature is essential to its greatness; it is very largely the function of secondary writers to preserve this continuity, and to provide a body of writing which is not necessarily read by posterity, but which plays a great part in forming the link between those writers who continue to be read. This continuity is largely unconscious, and only visible in historical retrospect: I need only refer you for evidence to the monumental, though brief, essay by Professor R.W. Chambers on *The Continuity of English Prose*. And it is within this continuity, and within this environment, that, for my present purpose, individual authors have to be considered. (vol. VI, 297)

Chambers' essay, separately published in 1932 as *On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School*, was in fact an extract from his introduction to an edition of Nicholas Harpsfield's *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Moore, Knight, Sometymes Lord High Chanceller of England: Written in the Tyme of Queene Marie and Now Edited from 8 MSS,* edited by Chambers and E.V. Hitchcock for the Early English Text Society.

The fact that the extract was separately published shows that the matter was, or was felt to be, a current concern in 1932. It was evidently a moment, for some at least, of cultural self-congratulation at what had been achieved since the Romantic-nationalist spirit had swept across European countries in the nineteenth century, recuperating folk traditions and gathering up the recovery of Old and Middle English texts along the way. The 1942 lecture came along suavely in Chambers' wake, reducing the young Eliot's claims of 1919 and 1923 while hanging on, if less insistently now, to a model that attached the work to the literary continuity, itself now 'largely unconscious, and only visible in historical retrospect', but with education or 'knowledge' still being the key: 'We can say of Shakespeare, that never has a man turned so little knowledge to such great account' (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. VI, 298).[40] The middle of another world war was an apposite moment to take up the national-culture question once again.

In 1942, as Eliot was dialing down his response to cultural crisis and finding a counterbalance in his acquired Anglo-Catholicism, Leavis was dialing his up, and would go on doing so until his death in 1978, engaging all the while in a sporadic warfare with Eliot over the latter's treatment of D.H. Lawrence. This was not fertile soil for the growth of a text-critical and interpretative scholarship of the oeuvre that got down to the level of the version and even to text genesis – not when, on one side of the Atlantic, the New Critical commitment to the professional study of poems as verbal icons, as concrete works, was soon to dictate the terms of literary study and when, on the other side, the narrative of cultural decline gave literary criticism its distinctive mission. The advent of new post-structuralist forms of literary theory overturned the field during the 1980s but added their own impediment to a form of study of modern literature that editions and digital archives have – since then and partly in response – slowly been making possible.

[40] According to Chambers, '[T]he case for continuity in the history of English poetry was put by Furnivall's successor in the directorship of the Early English Text Society, Sir Israel Gollancz, in an address which he gave to the Philological Society in 1920 … he subsequently printed this address in pamphlet form' (1932, viii).

The irony for an article about the writer's oeuvre and the scholar's oeuvre is that Eliot's own self-curated prose oeuvre – his *Selected Essays*, which went through three, successively enlarged editions from 1932 to 1951, enjoyed many intervening and subsequent reprintings and left a great many of his prose writings, lectures and reviews by the wayside – has recently been complemented, or superseded, by a near-complete scholar's oeuvre of the prose. This followed a long scholar-adventurer's campaign by Ronald Schuchard to convince Eliot's second wife Valerie Eliot to override Eliot's express wish that she not commission editions of his prose. He was 68 when they married and she only 30; he died eight years later in 1965. But, before she died in 2012, she finally found the courage to insist that everything be published.[41]

It was a natural conclusion to reach for the person who had edited *The Waste Land*: *A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* in 1971. The title says it all. This book opened the lid on Eliot's working methods, gradually creating an appetite among Modernist scholars for the authorial materials – the scholar's oeuvre – that then, for decades, never seemed to come. When with Valerie Eliot's blessing they did, the resulting scholarly editions of the prose (2014-2019), general-edited by Schuchard, occupied eight annotated volumes. Their appearance ran in parallel with a similar opening-up of Eliot's poetic oeuvre, edited in two large, heavily annotated volumes by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (2015), together with textual apparatus and commentary, and with nine volumes of Eliot's correspondence (2009-2021), edited by Valerie Eliot, John Haffenden and Hugh Haughton.[42]

6. *A Theory of the Oeuvre*

The question that led me to write this article was: does Eliot's Tradition need to be theorised, along with the work and the oeuvre concepts? The scholar's oeuvre and the writer's oeuvre necessarily look backwards in time, but Eliot's model is forever located in an existential present as the writer reaches out to the Tradition, itself located in the past but re-forming itself in the moment of writing. But since that Tradition, if we are to grant its existence as other than an abstraction, must be composed of countless bodies of writing, each one more or less differently propelled, the new writer, in the moment of writing, can only be cognisant of a tiny subset familiar through reading or report. The changing membership of the Tradition – who's in, who's out, and thus whom the new writer is most likely to have engaged with – is in fact the subject of many of the younger Eliot's essays, where he often shows himself more interested in the writers' innovations in expression or in metre than in their subject matter. This is not to criticise his angle of reception: he took what he needed, and, as he himself famously said, 'Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal' (Schuchard 2014-2019, vol. II, 245).

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the writer's address to the Tradition was always, and could only be, partial. Even the polymath Ezra Pound's reading must have had its limits. And if *The Waste Land* is held to be the exemplar for the presence of the past in Eliot's poetry, which in turn evidences his own engagement with the Tradition, then we see immediately that that past has been reduced to a series of verbal shards evocative of a present that is incapable of generating meaning.

For my purposes here, the more important problem with Eliot's invocation of a Tradition as a 'simultaneous order' is its synchronicity, whereas traditions are normally understood as

[41] I take these details from an unpublished conference paper (Schuchard 2017), for which I thank him.

[42] In 1988 the first volume of Eliot's letters (edited by Valerie Eliot alone) appeared, but then there was nothing until 2009 when that volume was revised, followed by the appearance of the next eight volumes covering the period 1898-1941, with more to come.

operating across time. So too do text-genesis, revision and production. They take place diachronically, each in its own 'time and place and circumstance'. Each work is gradually articulated along the vertebrae of the oeuvre, the writing of each one stimulated by the nerves that connect it to those that precede it.

Because the work and oeuvre concepts embrace sufficiently well the writer's reading (whether it consisted of the first-raters or the second-raters, whether orthodox or eccentric) as a stimulus to writing, I conclude that there is no need to chase down an idealist abstraction such as the young Eliot's Tradition and then to try to subject it to theorising. Both trajectories – work and oeuvre, and work and Tradition – are concerned with the relationship of the part to the whole; but Eliot's whole is a will o' the wisp. Helplessly dependent as it is on an idealism and with poor translation into actual practice, his Tradition-concept is mainly a distraction. We need instead a theory that captures the life of the work in composition, production and reception, and which thereby exposes for study its overlaps with other works within the oeuvre in *their* respective and overlapping phases. The version-concept then nests into the same dynamic.

The oeuvre-concept covers a multitude of contingencies in creative practice. Some writers cannot help themselves: given the commercial opportunity, they *have* to make improvements in their text; and they will select this piece, but not that one, for republication. The instinct for improvement is entirely understandable. 'One changes for the sake of new readers, not for the sake of old ones', said Yeats in 1901 (Kelly 1986-2005, vol. III, 102), showing, as Warwick Gould puts it,

> that audience was to the forefront in that constant reconstruction of books and texts consequent upon Yeats' continual self-construction. "Whatever changes I have made are but an attempt to express better what I thought and felt when I was a very young man" he said in 1925, fully aware of the attendant paradoxes. … "One is always cutting out the dead wood." (Gould 2018, 485: quoting Allt and Alspach 1957, 842, 848)

Similarly with Lawrence. If he was to observe his editorial criterion of 1927-28 when preparing his *Collected Poems* – to respect the poems in their own 'time and place and circumstance' – strictly, he would have left their texts as he found them in the already published collections. This is because to revise them actively once again was to puncture their 'penumbra', to forfeit their synchronicity with their original moment of volume publication and, in his editorial capacity, to treat them instead diachronically by pulling them, via their new revisions, into the 1927-28 present.

Like Yeats, Lawrence was alert to this objection and bizarrely defended his practice by distancing himself as a young man from the young man's demon [or *daimon*] so as to 'let the demon say his say'. As a result he writes, 'many poems are changed, some entirely re-written, re-cast' – because, he says, 'the young man interfered with his demon' (Pollnitz 2013-2018, vol. I, 656). This defence of self-contradictory editorial practice is tricksy; but of course, as author, Lawrence was perfectly entitled to make whatever revisions he wished, as was Yeats. The question for modern scholars editing works in such situations is: are they bound to follow suit or does the writer's improving instinct in the oeuvre-defining moment simply become one more moment to be made available for study in the *scholar's* oeuvre, as we watch the creative instinct re-engage fascinatingly with the publishing environment once again?

The oeuvre-concept runs parallel with the work-concept in that there is no ideal form of either available to us. But both are available to us as regulative ideas. Writers may settle on their oeuvres via their choices for a collected edition, say; but there can be little prospect of definitiveness (and thus of an ideal oeuvre). If the writer keeps writing after the collection is published, the given oeuvre is immediately thrown into question; or, should a second such collection come

into prospect, the writer may well make different decisions as to the inclusions and exclusions, and may also enter into another round of textual revision. And the realities of textual transmission over time usually mean that the writer's detailed control over the texts of the works chosen for the would-be oeuvre-defining publication or set of publications stands at a remove from the writer's own preferences, mixed-in with those of publishers' editors and typesetters. Editorial efforts to render static such a memorialisation are doomed to failure, to succumb to one compromise after another.

Equally, the scholar's oeuvre can never be definitive since there will always be work documents that have been lost along the road to publication, or, say, oral agreements between writer and publisher's editor, or instructions from writer to typist that have not been recorded. And even though, one might object, all changes to born-digital documents are in theory retrievable, their ongoing accessibility is subject to the changing regimes of software and hardware environments. And finally there is that ontological gap between proposal and disposal: text in the writer's mind and text on the page, the one stimulating the other in a closed loop, about which creative process only informed guesses are available, at best.

Only when we realise the need for such regulative conceptual structures as the version, the work, and the oeuvre can the malleability and changeableness be accommodated and make sense: the work-concept embraces versional variability; the oeuvre-concept embraces work-variability and interrelatedness. More than that, the oeuvre-concept underwrites the scholar's or critic's orderings: for example, the works as agented, as chronological in their development, as multi-documented and versioned, or as variable instantiations of discourse.

The overlap and the interconnections among works and versions, especially contemporaneous ones, point to a methodology for understanding the genetic process of the writing and therefore the 'personal emotion' of the writer, as Eliot succinctly put it. The editorial platform that would support this pursuit has been largely restricted so far to book formats and online PDFs. Yet it is becoming technically possible now to begin to put such a theoretical position into practical operation. Online critical archives are gradually assembling the materials and writing the tools to make this sort of examination possible.

The disruptive function of the digital scholarly edition (DSE) and the archival expectations it has brought with it (i.e. potentially to contain all of the scholar's oeuvre: every document witnessing every version of every work) are beginning to naturalise what might be called the keyhole view on the oeuvre: the synchronic slice of a single chronological moment through the documents then active, a view that pans out to encompass the adjacent writings on the timeline, in whatever stage of genesis or production they may happen to be. Understanding the authorial intertextuality of the oeuvre is or would be the goal. But to achieve it, we have to be prepared to relegate the *writer's* oeuvre to its performative place within the broader scholarly one.

Revealing and critically describing the contours of the intellectual or creative journey that the writer undertook is to adopt a bio-textual perspective. I believe this can be done under the signs of the work and the oeuvre, with the scholar's oeuvre inevitably laying the necessary groundwork by respecting the vectors of materiality, chronology and agency.

Assembling the scholar's oeuvre might be described as archival in intent. I regularly use the term 'critical archive' to refer to the digital-technical environment in which the gathering and interpreting can take place.[43] Yet the term 'archive', which we have been using for DSEs for nearly thirty years now, is problematic. Professional archivists object to the usage.[44] A digital 'archive'

[43] The Charles Harpur Critical Archive offers an example (Eggert 2019b).
[44] See Galey 2021, Eggert 2019a, 195-196 n. 1 and Tyacke 2007.

in this sense is, from the archivist's point of view, only a special-purpose collection. Its image files may be derived from documents in several archives. Such a collection may gather the documents witnessing a single work (and all its extant versions), a group of works, or all the works in the oeuvre. In other words, the scholar's oeuvre (or some selected part of it), I am now saying, is the content of the critical archive: this proposed relationship of environment and content sufficiently resolves the archivists' objection. For literary studies, the writer's oeuvre is understood as the (attempted or would-be) static achievement, the self-memorialisation, and the scholar's oeuvre as the more or less fluid activity witnessed by the gathered documents and by the texts of those that can be reconstructed.

The two oeuvre-concepts are not fully separable since, during the author's lifetime, textual change is, in practice, inevitable: new versions of a poem may come about in response to editorial demand; fragmentary text may be experimented with and left behind but later incorporated in some other work; the opportunity to revise a novel in typescript or proof, or two versions of it for different readerships, will lead to changed text on a minor or on a major scale; and new editions may provide further opportunities. In the case of long forms such as the novel, the monumentalising urge is typically brought out by collected editions. But even they represent, for the scholar's oeuvre, simply one more stage in the long line of responses to revisional opportunity. The scholarly editor may decide to privilege that collected form as copy-text, or only to take emendations from it, or to reject it altogether as unauthoritative (as we saw with Scott and Conrad). But the editor nevertheless requires the conspectus of the scholar's oeuvre, and the requisite text-critical analysis, before doing so. The Selected Verse or the Collected Verse is the parallel case for poetry.

New opportunities for interpretative and evaluative literary criticism, as well as for discursive critique, open up when the author-centred scholar's oeuvre is admitted back into the literary-critical arena and recognised as the expanded object of attention. Literary criticism will change if agency, chronology and text-bearing material documents are brought more consciously and deliberately into focus. This is why a theory of the work that gets back to basics is necessary – as is, I now believe, a theory of the oeuvre. This essay is offered as a start in addressing the latter need.[45]

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