

## Editing *Ulysses* in the Current Debate of Textual Criticism

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This essay examines the approaches to editing *Ulysses* in the context of the controversies in the theory and practice of critical editing which have affected textual criticism since the early 1970s. This crisis originated in the context of larger changes in literary theory (in aspects such as the notions of author and work) under post-structuralist views, but also when editors began to realize that conventional Anglo-American editing, as postulated by W. W. Greg and F. Bowers,<sup>1</sup> was inadequate to particular textual situations, especially in post-Romantic literary texts. This Greg-Bowers school of editing may be summarily characterized by authorial intentionalism, and by eclecticism resulting from a theory of copy-text with a divided authority: for “accidentals” (spelling, punctuation, word-division), the editor is bound to follow his copy-text, but for “substantives” (significant readings of the text) the editor has liberty of choice between variants as determined by his own judgement on different factors.<sup>2</sup> And it is to these principles and procedures that scholars have raised objections for the last twenty-five years.

For instance, Hans Zeller’s “historical-critical” editing rejects eclecticism because it entails mixing textual authorities, a notion which he sees “extending equally to the texture of the text . . . to what makes it a particular version,” and not lying in the individual variants belonging to distinct witnesses; instead he proposes adhering to a selected “textual version” and emending it only when “the reading in question admits of no sense in the wider contextual setting” and is confirmed by “the results of analytical bibliography.”<sup>3</sup> Hershel Parker points out that there are instances where authorial final intentions turn out to be inferior to what authors have originally written, and therefore should not be adopted in an edition.<sup>4</sup> Gaskell and McGann highlight the social and collaborative aspect of the production of literary texts, in which publishers, editors, friends, etc. also intervene.<sup>5</sup> Thus the act of publication legitimates the text, including its non-authorial changes, and consequently the author’s intentions can no longer be the only determining factor in selecting a copy-text. A socio-historical approach, as seen in McGann, McKenzie, McLaverty and Oliphant and Bradford,<sup>6</sup> entails a more comprehensive view of texts not only concerned with the finally intended form but also with the whole history of the text, and not only with the linguistic content but also with the physical or bibliographical context since typography, layout, format and paper also contribute to textual meaning. And finally, genetic editing<sup>7</sup> and multi-textual editing foreground the multiplicity and fluid nature of texts, and dethrone the idea of the final-intention text, since “a single text does not adequately represent the work.”<sup>8</sup>

On tackling the text of *Ulysses*, a critical editor faces a complex textual situation. First, holographic evidence does not exist in a single document

showing a clear final form, but is scattered in notebooks, in incomplete manuscripts (the most important one being the Rosenbach fair copy), in marginal and interlinear notations on typescripts and on proofs of the first edition of 1922, in lists of errata to printed texts, and in Joyce's correspondence. Moreover, the process of composition (very well documented in the evidence) is characterized by continuous revisions and corrections (in specific places there are as many as nine different states of the text observable in eight documents) not always transmitted in a consistent and efficient way (Joyce's sight suffered various attacks when revising typescripts, proofs and supervising printed texts). The printed versions in complete form (apart from the expurgated texts in the serializations in *The Little Review* and *The Egoist*) stem from the 1922 edition, which, as Joyce complained, has numerous errors. Although these were partly corrected in later printings of this first edition, new errors were introduced in every new edition or typesetting. In 1972 Jack Dalton reported that the standard trade edition of *Ulysses*, Random House of 1961, contained over 4,000 errors.<sup>9</sup>

Since then the text of *Ulysses* has been published in the following editions, which may be classified according to their having been explicitly edited or not by a particular scholar or team of scholars:

- editions with no editor responsible for the text include: three editions by the Franklin Library (1976 and 1979), one by the Book of the Month Club (1982), a 1983 edition in the series "Oxford Library of the World's Great Books," one by Random House in 1990 reissuing its 1961 edition, and one by Penguin in 1992 reissuing the Bodley Head edition of 1960;
- scholarly editions signed by a textual editor include: Clive Driver's three-volume facsimile of the Rosenbach manuscript and the 1922 edition published in 1975, Hans Walter Gabler's *Critical and Synoptic Edition* published in 1984<sup>10</sup> and its offspring, the "Corrected Text", published by Random House and Penguin in 1986 (*U*), Jeri Johnson's edition for the World's Classics series in Oxford University Press published in 1993,<sup>11</sup> and finally Danis Rose's "Reader's" edition published in 1997.<sup>12</sup>

Before stating a first observation from this survey, the three last-mentioned editions need to be described in terms of their editing principles and procedures.

Gabler's *Critical and Synoptic Edition* is a genetic edition of a special kind with a two-fold presentation. The verso pages contain an edited synoptic text of the novel "in compositional development": all variants that correspond to the different stages of authorial composition and revision observable in pre-1922 documents are "displayed synoptically by a system of diacritics to analyze its layers of growth."<sup>13</sup> The recto pages show a "continuous reading text" resulting from "the extrapolation without diacritics of the edition text, i.e. the emended continuous manuscript text at its ultimate level of compositional development."<sup>14</sup> With a few amendments, this clear-text critical edition of *Ulysses* was issued separately as "The Corrected Text" by Random House and Penguin in 1986.

Johnson's edition is purposely an annotated reproduction of the 1922 edition (in which only "the worst examples of broken type have been repaired for the sake of readability,"<sup>15</sup> accompanied with an edited list of errata assembled from errata lists appended to the second and fourth impression of the first edition, and other autograph evidence of corrections

to printed texts.<sup>16</sup> Strictly speaking, this is not a critical edition since it does not establish a new text either by emending a previous text or by producing an eclectic text from readings present in various documents. Johnson's is an example of that form of scholarly editing (sometimes called non-critical or documentary editing) which simply aims to reproduce a historical text with rigorous fidelity, and in which Clive Driver's facsimile is also comprised.

Danis Rose's "Reader's" *Ulysses* is a clear-text critical edition resulting from a complex process that originates in what he calls an "isotext": an edited transcription of Joyce's words (first thoughts and subsequent variants) as preserved in "all the extant manuscript which are in the main line of transmission", "with their individual diachronic interrelationships defined" by diacritics.<sup>17</sup> It is an *edited* transcription because "non-authorial transmissional variants are eliminated as being corruptions."<sup>18</sup> This error-free isotext, a fragment of which Rose includes in his introduction, resembles Gabler's synoptic text but differs from it in the inclusion of two protodrafts or prototextual versions of the text not consulted by Gabler, and in the personal assessment of the authorial status of some variants. Then Rose converts this isotext into a general-reader-friendly text by removing its diacritics and by copyreading the stripped text, that is, by emending punctuation and what he calls "textual faults," readings that he judges as Joyce's own errors of transcription and detects because they are impossible, say something they should not or break the logic of narrative.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, Rose's *Ulysses* emends a significant number of readings that previous editions have accepted.

Thus only two critical editions of *Ulysses* have been produced so far: Gabler's innovative critical and synoptic edition—together with its "corrected" reading text—and Rose's "Reader's" edition. Now if we take into account that the expected critical edition, following the Greg-Bowers eclectic school, would take the 1922 edition as copy-text and emend it with substantive variants present in holographic evidence or in later printings, it should then be pointed out as a first observation that, surprising as it may be, there is no traditional or conventional critical edition of the so-called "novel of the 20th century."

Gabler's approach constitutes a departure from, and a challenge to, conventional editing in various ways. With the synoptic presentation of variants on the text-page, this edition focuses on the developing process of the text's composition, rather than on fixing an ideal text purged of non-authoritative elements. Its geneticism emphasizes the diversity, instability and dynamism inherent in the text of *Ulysses* over ideas of final and definitive texts implied in traditional Anglo-American editing. And its use of copy-text procedure deviates from convention in that no single textual witness is selected as the basis of the critical text; Gabler reconstructs instead an ideal "continuous manuscript text" from the "autograph notation" spread "over a sequence of actual documents,"<sup>20</sup> and then emends this "continuous manuscript text" that he declares as copy-text. This innovative and challenging character of the "synoptic *Ulysses*" was perceived by Jerome McGann when in 1985 he stated that

[m]ore clearly and practically than any of the recent spate of theoretical work in criticism and hermeneutics, this edition raises up all the central questions that have brought such a fruitful crisis to literary work in the postmodern period.<sup>21</sup>

It is not by chance that the first critical approach to editing *Ulysses*, occurring in the middle of a period of crisis in textual criticism, has

produced a non-conventional critical edition such as Gabler's, although it should be observed that this synoptic edition rests on a tradition of genetic editing in French and German circles that was practically untouched by Anglo-American textual criticism.

Moreover, Gabler's *Ulysses* generated a clamorous debate, triggered off by John Kidd's criticism of the methods employed by Gabler and of his editorial decisions in particular readings.<sup>22</sup> The controversy went through a conference of Joyceans specially summoned to assess Gabler's edition<sup>23</sup>; a series of letters for and against in the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Review* between July 1988 and June 1989<sup>24</sup>; and a committee set up by Random House to investigate the matter, but to be eventually disbanded without reaching a decision. It is no wonder then that, in his survey of textual criticism, Greetham uses the conflict over the Gabler *Ulysses* as "a particularly pertinent example" of the many issues at stake in the current turmoil affecting the discipline.<sup>25</sup>

Rose's approach differs from the expected conventional critical edition in various ways too. Its copy-text is not a single textual witness either (even less the 1922 printing) but a genetically-oriented "blending together of the members of a series or complex of texts."<sup>26</sup> Thus, Rose carries forward Gabler's strategy of using a compound of manuscript evidence as copy-text. Yet while Gabler set to emend his innovative copy-text in a conventional way by applying the principle of final authorial intentions, Rose proceeds to copyread his isotext by taking, as a starting point, McGann's socio-historical view that published books are social products, not the product of an author alone, and hence by assuming that an editor must replace the original production crew involved in the making of the book, namely in its copy-editing and designing.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Rose prescripts himself emendation procedures that are diametrically opposed to those of Greg's rationale of copy-text: for "substantives" he follows his copy-text, the "isotext," and not later variants if they are demonstrably authorial revisions; for "accidentals" he follows sound practice and not his copy-text.<sup>28</sup>

However it should not be overlooked that the two critical editions of *Ulysses*, unconventional as they are, may ultimately be seen as authorial-intentionalist or author-centred editions. The following quotations are significant. Rose states that his edition is the one that "more closely preserves and represents the author's words (in that it deviates least from the isotext),"<sup>29</sup> an isotext which is "literally *Ulysses* as James Joyce wrote it."<sup>30</sup> Gabler's aim is "to rebuild *Ulysses* as Joyce wrote it" (U-G 649), this principle governs his editing of the synopsis on the verso pages, and its extrapolation on the recto pages constitutes what Gabler believes to be Joyce's final intentions for *Ulysses*. Precisely this attempt to accommodate authorial intentionality with the geneticism of the synopsis, one of the issues raised about this edition,<sup>31</sup> has proved to be problematic, since genetic editing—concerned "to offer readers a 'work in progress,'"<sup>32</sup> a history of the text—is committed to accepting the variant states of the text's composition as historical facts not to be editorially altered.

If historicity is argued for as an editorial principle, the safest approach is a non-critical or documentary edition since any "emended edition would misrepresent the integrity of the historical document."<sup>33</sup> And this is precisely what Johnson has done in her edition of *Ulysses* for Oxford University Press in reprinting the 1922 text. She succinctly adduces three arguments to justify her decision. Two of them may well be considered as socio-historical. On the one hand, she states that the 1922 text "is a historically significant document in its own right."<sup>34</sup> Thus she purposely

departs from the convention of reconstructing the author's intended text, even when there is holographic evidence that would permit such a reconstruction. She even acknowledges that her edition, obviously like the 1922 edition, is "full of errors" and that "those errors have been left to stand 'uncorrected,'" although she seeks comfort in the fact that it is "the least faulty text" in comparison to subsequent editions. On the other hand, she asserts that the 1922 text "though botched and faulty . . . remains Joyce's published *Ulysses*."<sup>35</sup> This approach may seem to endorse the sociological objections to traditional editing raised by Gaskell,<sup>36</sup> McGann and McKenzie—who may be pleased to see that Johnson's edition even preserves the 1922 deliberate pagination, hence extending the text over the significant number of 732 pages, twice the number of days in a year.

Nevertheless, Johnson's editorial decisions are not exempt from author-centrism, as the third argument (in fact her second one) brought up in support of reprinting the 1922 edition and not a later printing is that this "is still the text closest to Joyce in time" — which perhaps should be made more precise by adding "the extant single-document text."<sup>37</sup> In a way, this claim seems to imply that the 1922 edition is "the best text representing the author's creative involvement with the work," as Shillingsburg explains Hershel Parker's objections to the idea of authorial final intentions.<sup>38</sup>

In comparison to Gabler's edition, Johnson gives her readers "*Ulysses* as Joyce allowed it to go before the public" (U-G 649), while Gabler, with his reading text being a "non-corrupted counterpart to the first edition of 1922" (U-G 650), gives them "*Ulysses* as Joyce conceived it and meant it to be read" (a claim written on the back cover of the 1986 Penguin edition). Rose gives *Ulysses* as Joyce hoped to have it: corrected — even by correcting Joyce's own "errors" or faults.<sup>39</sup>

In practical terms, this means that Johnson's readers of the "Oxen of the Sun" episode at the hospital read: "anon full privily he [Bloom] voided the more part in his [Dixon's] neighbour glass and his neighbour nist not of his wile."<sup>40</sup> They therefore visualize that Dixon did notice Bloom's discreet trick of emptying his glass of ale into his ("nist" in the sense of "knew not" as Johnson glosses, hence Dixon did *not unnotice* Bloom). Readers of Gabler's *Ulysses* have a similar picture except that "his neighbour nist not of *this* wile" (U 14.165-65, emphasis added). And more contrastingly, Rose's readers figure out a totally different action in "his neighbour wist not of this wile,"<sup>41</sup> so that Dixon did not notice Bloom's stratagem. "[W]ist" is Rose's emendation of the textual fault "nist" based on manuscript evidence that shows the discarded alternative conveying the same idea: "[he nothing of that wile perceiving]."<sup>42</sup> In other words, "nist not of his wile" is what Joyce allowed to be made public inasmuch as he had proofread the text and approved it assuming that he apparently failed to mark that his reading "this" (present in the Rosenbach manuscript) was copied as "his" in the extant typescript later used by the printers; "nist not of this wile" is what Joyce intended to make public, as assumed by a critical editor such as Gabler that corrects the typist's error "his" and restore Joyce's intention "this"; while "wist not of this wile" is what Rose assumes Joyce would have agreed to read, assuming that he imperfectly wrote "nist" for "wist".

The fact that these three non-conventional scholarly editions of *Ulysses* have had to resort to some kind of author-centrism leads one to wonder whether the notion of author's intentions is still valid despite social, historical and cultural objections raised in recent theoretical proposals.

These three editions, each one trying to justify its niche in the editorial panormana, together with the other versions published by Random House,

Penguin and less important firms, provide the reading market with different texts or versions of *Ulysses* for readers to choose from (if they are really aware of such a possibility). In these times of indeterminacy (a paradigmatic idea which Rose begins his introduction with), and in the present crisis in textual editing which is a reflection of these times, this multiplicity of *Ulysseses* is not surprising. Moreover, it is to be regretted, in my opinion, that this "fruitful crisis" in theoretical work has not produced other approaches to editing *Ulysses*, alternative editions nurtured by alternative theories of text and textual criticism.

In 1978 Gaskell suggested that "*Ulysses* might be edited in a number of ways, but three particular approaches would be especially rewarding." The first was "to produce a plain, accurate text of the final form of the book," "based on the first edition"—this is the approach of conventional textual criticism which has not been carried out on *Ulysses* yet. The second one was "to edit the first half of *Ulysses* . . . in its first-draft form," "based on the *Little Review* instalments . . . amended by reference to the surviving typescripts and the Rosenbach MS."<sup>43</sup> Gaskell also suggests a parallel presentation "with reduced facsimiles of the *Little Review* and [the 1922] texts . . . with footnote corrections to the *Little Review* pages and rings drawn round the major changes in [the 1922 edition]."<sup>44</sup> The third approach, consisting of two options, was "to illustrate the development of the text by making available the earlier drafts and versions"<sup>45</sup>: one option was eventually carried out by Gabler's synoptic *Ulysses*: and the other one was to create a "critical text (produced . . . by using . . . the first edition as copy-text and emending it) which would be marked to show which of its constituent parts came from where."<sup>46</sup>

Further alternatives may well be proposed and, in my opinion, result in perfectly acceptable editions of *Ulysses*. For instance, Zeller's "historical-critical" editing above defined might be applied to the 1922 text, thus rendering a *Ulysses* without those nonsensical readings in the first edition (and hence retained by Johnson) that would be confirmed by the bibliographical demonstration (errata lists, correspondence). In practical terms, such a "historical-critical" edition would either retain "nist not his wile" if the editor believes that this reading makes sense, or perhaps emend to "wist" on the grounds of manuscript evidence. Another approach may consist of a synoptic display that, instead of showing all variants belonging to successive states of composition, only includes those variants whose authority the editor cannot be certain about (for example, whether they were revised or left unnoticed and uncorrected by the author). A possibility of such a synoptic display could be: "and his neighbour [wist] nist not of {this} his wile" (square brackets indicating genuine emendation, and curly brackets significant variants previous to the basic 1922 text, for instance).

To sum up, there have been two kinds of response to the crisis in textual criticism as far as the editing of *Ulysses* is concerned: one, a fairly innovative response as seen in Gabler's and Rose's unexpected use of copy-text and mixture of geneticism and author-centrism; secondly, a conservative response that simply reproduces a previously established text, as seen in Johnson's edition, and in the other non-scholarly editions of Random House and Penguin which, in view of the contention over Gabler's edition whose clear final text they had published as "The Corrected Text," decided to return to the standard printed versions of the 1960s. This shows, on the one hand, that publishing houses, which also play an important part in the editing of literary works, retreat to the apparently secure position of reprinting previous editions of the novel, however loaded with errors they

may be. On the other hand, the lack of various innovative editions generated in a period of crisis shows that theoretical proposals are always ahead of practical solutions.

#### Notes

1. Walter W. Greg, "The Rationale of the Copy-Text," *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950): 19-36; Fredson Bowers, *Textual and Literary Criticism* 1959 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966); Fredson Bowers, *Essays in Bibliography, Text, and Editing* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1975).
2. Greg 22, 29.
3. Hans Zeller, "A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts," *Studies in Bibliography* 28 (1975): 237, 260.
4. Hershel Parker, *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1984).
5. Philip Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1972); Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983); Jerome McGann, "The Monks and the Giants," *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. J. McGann (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P) 180-99; Jerome McGann, "What is Critical Editing?" *Text* 5 (1991): 15-30.
6. Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London: British Library, 1986); James McLaverty, "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the Dunciad Variorum," *Studies in Bibliography* 37 (1984): 82-105; Dave Oliphant and Robin Bradford, eds., *New Directions in Textual Studies* (Austin: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, U of Texas at Austin, 1990).
7. Louis Hay, "Genetic Editing, Past and Future," *Text* 3 (1987): 117-34.
8. Peter L. Shillingsburg, "An Inquiry Into the Social Status of Texts and Modes of Textual Criticism," *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989): 59.
9. Jack P. Dalton, "The Text of *Ulysses*," *New Light on Joyce from the Dublin Symposium*, ed. Fritz Senn (Bloomington and London: Indiana UP, 1972) 213n1.
10. Hans Walter Gabler, with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior, eds., *Ulysses: A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, 3 vols. (New York and London: Garland, 1984).
11. Jeri Johnson, ed., *Ulysses*, by James Joyce (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993).
12. Danis Rose, ed., *Ulysses: A Reader's Edition*, by James Joyce (London: Picador, 1997).
13. Gabler, *Critical and Synoptic* 1901.
14. Gabler, *Critical and Synoptic* 1903.
15. Johnson lvi.
16. Johnson 746-61.
17. Rose xii.
18. Rose xvi.
19. Rose xvii.
20. Gabler, *Critical and Synoptic* 1895.
21. Jerome McGann, "Ulysses as a Postmodern Text: The Gabler Edition," *Criticism* 27.3 (1985): 284.
22. John Kidd, "An Inquiry into *Ulysses*: The Corrected Text," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 82.4 (1988): 411-584; John Kidd, "Errors of Execution in the 1984 *Ulysses*," *Studies in the Novel* 22 (1990): 243-49.
23. George Sandulescu and Clive Hart, eds., *Assessing the 1984 Ulysses* (London: Colin Smyth, 1986).
24. For details, see Johnson liii.
25. David C. Greetham, "Textual Scholarship," *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, ed. Joseph Gibaldi (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1991) 127-28.
26. Rose xii.
27. Rose xiv-xv.
28. Rose xvi.
29. Rose xvi.
30. Rose xiii.

31. D. C. Greetham summarizes these criticisms of Gabler's *Ulysses* as "its failure to consult originals of primary documents, its ambivalent emendations policy, and the problematic status of some of the readings recorded only in historical collation" (*Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities vol. 1417 [New York and London: Garland, 1992] 354). See also Johnson (liii-lv) for a narrative of the Kidd-Gabler debate, and the 1990 special issue of *Studies in the Novel* edited by Charles Rossman.

32. Hay 117.

33. Shillingsburg 62.

34. Johnson lv.

35. Johnson lv.

36. Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography* 339-42.

37. Johnson lvi.

38. Shillingsburg 58.

39. Rose quotes several fragments from Joyce's letters in which the author denounces many errors in the printed versions and begs and demands that they be corrected (xxiii-xxiv).

40. Johnson 370, ll. 19-21.

41. Rose 369, emphasis added.

42. Rose lxxi.

43. Philip Gaskell, *From Writer to Reader: Studies in Editorial Method* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978) 21-222.

44. Gaskell *From Writer* 222.

45. Gaskell *From Writer* 217.

46. Gaskell *From Writer* 235.