

## CHAPTER 4

### Editing and Annotating Pater

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**IN BRITAIN**, theorizing about texts on the one hand, and the editing of texts on the other, have long been taken to be completely opposed intellectual enterprises. Traditionally theorists have been concerned with the "large" issues: the notion of literature, practices of reading, the constructions of meanings, the ideology of literature, the relationships of discourses, and so forth. And by contrast textual editors have often been held to be the poor relations in literature departments. The collation of texts, the establishing of stemmata, the privileging of one textual variant over another in general these have been taken to be crudely mechanical and naively historicist tasks, which, when set against the more ambitious projects of theorists, seem to be unproblematic. Of late, however, some editors have challenged the implicit separation of literary theory and text-editing and have pointed out ways in which the interests of editors and theorists overlap. So recently G. Thomas Tanselle, for example, has indicated that some of the concerns which editors and deconstructionists have with texts are not, and should not be, mutually exclusive.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that some of the concerns of editors have a direct bearing upon the practices of deconstructionists. The argument that I wish to propose is broadly in keeping with these views; in particular I want to suggest that some of the practical difficulties of text-editing do indeed have profound theoretical implications. An example is provided by the complexity of the editorial problems encountered in the production of the projected *Collected Works* of Walter Pater.

The most immediately pressing question facing any editor, and the editors of Pater's *Collected Works* are no exception, is the choice of copy-text. Ideally every textual editor would like the complete stemma, from first manuscript draft to the last printed edition, for the work in question. But for Pater, there is no possibility of such a reconstruction. Although we know from the evidence that we have, inconclusive and anecdotal as it tends to be, that Pater oversaw the production of his texts from first draft to printed book with a scrupulous enthusiasm, much of the material necessary to construct a stemma of any one of his works has simply not survived. We are best served in this respect by the unpublished elements in the *oeuvre*, as various essays in this volume make clear. But, as I shall suggest, the real problems with the choice of copy-text in Pater present themselves in much more stark terms. In the absence of virtually all manuscript witnesses to the text, of proofs and corrected proofs, Pater's editors have to choose between

the various published texts of the same work. Which text does an editor choose, and on what grounds?

In the case of some texts, the issues are clear-cut. The textual history of *Marius the Epicurean* presents a good example. There are no known surviving manuscripts or proof-copies of the novel. The first edition, published in 1885, is the first text of the work to which an editor has access. Pater revised that edition for a second edition later in the same year. He revised it again, and on a massive scale, for the third edition in 1892. There was a fourth edition of the novel published in 1898, of dubious authority<sup>2</sup> which does not include all of the revisions made for the 1892 edition. Finally there is the 1910 Library edition of the novel which reprints the 1898 text. Further editions have, almost universally, followed the Library edition.<sup>3</sup> The choice facing the editor is thus quite straightforward. A tradition of textual scholars would, in general terms, determine such choices on the basis of the known intentions of the author with regard to the text in question. They allow an editor to choose a text for a variety of critical or historical reasons, but, in Tanselle's words, the task of the editor is "the historical reconstruction" of a text "which reflects the intention of its creator(s) at a particular time."<sup>4</sup> Under such a rubric, and given that the 1892 text is the last evidence which we have for Pater's intentions towards *Marius*, the choices facing the editor are not complicated, despite the fact that, as the brief history of the texts of *Marius* given above indicates, the editions which most readers have encountered are, by this definition, corrupt.

The argument against proposals such as these is on philosophical grounds: they privilege the author's intentions, and generally last known intentions, towards a text; and they assume a theory of art which is dependent upon a concept of expressivity. These two issues are too complex to be adequately discussed at any length here, but the following qualifications have a bearing for editors of Pater. The concept of intention needs to be characterized very carefully; it has to take account of such different forms of intention as generic intention as well as an author's intended meaning. Such a procedure is still, of course, problematic, because "intention" has become a highly contested concept among literary theorists. On the one hand, a group of critics most famously W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley while not denying the concept of intentionality and authorship, have thrown into question the possibility of access to the intention (or intentions) behind a text; and on the other, more recent theorists, seeing the text produced as much by a common *langue* as an individual *parole*, and questioning the whole concept of authorship, have rendered the relationship of intention to textual understanding a problematic one. These latter qualifications have a great deal in common with the reservations about the concept of expressivity made by some philosophers of art. Both sets of reservations concern the social nature of works of literary art, and when applied to textual editing, concern the *social existence* of a text. So, for example, we now know that the texts of *The Importance of Being Earnest* or *King Lear* which have commonly been held to be authoritative are in fact plays which Wilde and Shakespeare respectively never wrote; they are editorial constructs, made from collating early and late versions of the play in the case of Wilde, or folio and quarto texts in the case of Shakespeare. But the point at issue is, of course, that these "corrupt" texts have some authority in this case, that given by an interpretative community. What may be called the social history of a work, this line of argument holds, is a key consideration in textual scholarship. Jerome McGann, for example, has suggested that the search for the "originary moment" of a text's production should be modified by attention to what he later calls "secondary" elements in text-production to the consideration of the fact that a text may have an existence in and through history.<sup>5</sup> Such

an argument has a considerable relevance for the choice of copy-text for some of Pater's works, in particular *Marius the Epicurean* and *Gaston de Latour*.

It is worth noting at this point that editors of important recent editions of some modern writers have experienced difficulties in the choice of copy-text which may have some lessons for the editors of Pater. Both H. W. Gabler and Michael Black have written about the inappropriateness of the single, simple, and stable text for writers such as Joyce and Lawrence. With these two writers there are of course both constitutional and institutional reasons why the search for a stable and uniquely authorized text will fail. In the case of Lawrence, Black points to the well-known publishing restrictions which Lawrence had to contend with, and he suggests that in the case of what he calls the "constantly-revising author"<sup>6</sup> we should be much more concerned with presenting a text (or texts) which reveals the work in evolution. A principal task for the editor then becomes, as H. W. Gabler has argued *à propos* of *Ulysses*, one of finding an apparatus suitable for the presentation of such an edition.<sup>7</sup> As I have indicated, these observations, if not directly applicable to Pater's entire *oeuvre*, nonetheless have some large implications for some of his works.

*Marius*, for example, underwent virtually constant revision in the years between 1885 and 1892, and so each text *may* have a claim, stronger or weaker, on the editor, as may the 1910 text (although on quite different grounds). But the position is made immensely more complicated with those works in which Pater collected, and substantially revised, material already published in periodical form. In fact, collections of previously published essays or stories represent about half of the works which Pater published in his lifetime, and well over half of the material collected together for the Library edition. The prospective editor has a further claim upon his attention for choice of copy-text in the case of these collections: he or she can go to the original periodical publication. So it is quite possible to argue that the periodical texts of the essays which make up *Appreciations*, or of the stories which make up *Imaginary Portraits*, should be reproduced as part of a collected edition in the manner of R. H. Super's edition of Matthew Arnold. But the resultant text would not be *Appreciations* nor *Imaginary Portraits*; it would be an editorial rather than an authorial construct. The broad justification for editors using procedures such as those proposed by Super exists in the view (and whether or not it is explicitly articulated is irrelevant) that they are engaged in editing documents rather than literary works. Such a proposition immediately runs into, and threatens to fall foul of, a debate about the nature of value, particularly of literary value.<sup>8</sup> So while it might be possible to justify editing, say, Pater's essay on Wordsworth as a document in a debate about that poet, it is difficult to see what the documentary nature of a work such as "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" might be. In the second place, and much more importantly, such an editorial procedure would involve ignoring a whole set of distinctions, all too familiar to textual critics, between texts and works.

*The Renaissance* presents perhaps the best example in the Pater canon of a situation where editorial problems are not accessible to simple prescriptive solutions. The successive editions which the book went through involved two sets of changes. In the first place, there are the major revisions to the contents of individual essays; and secondly there are the changes which Pater made to the contents of the book as a whole. In these senses it is perhaps not really accurate to talk simply of "editions": the various

published versions of the book (in 1873, 1877, 1888 and 1893) have different contents. At what point these different "editions" can be said to be different works is not easy to determine; moreover, it is possible to make a case for each of those separate editions to be taken as copy-text. But in addition, the textual history of each of the essays in the book is complex: in general, the first appearances of the essays were in very different forms, in a very different context (in, that is, periodical publications) and intended for very different markets and readerships. So an argument for publishing the first edition of *The Renaissance* (the book edition, that is) would involve accepting the authority of Pater's changes from the first (that is, periodical) publication of some of the essays, but not accepting the authority of any subsequent revisions to its subsequent editions. Of course, it might well be possible to argue such a case, but the arguments could not be those suggested by Super for Arnold's essays. The social impact of the book that is, of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) was much greater than that of its constituent essays. Thus, for example, if we are to believe Pater, it was the "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*, and *not* the review of William Morris, which threatened to "mislead" the young men who read it. In this case, Super's argument would have to be reversed. The argument for documentary editing would have to reject the claims of the periodical text: the choice of it as copy-text would have now to depend solely upon critical grounds. Such an argument would remove the potential dispute between critics and textual scholars: it gives them a text to agree upon, but for very different reasons.

However, the logic of this argument, when it is applied to other elements of the Pater canon, becomes a handicap. A large proportion of that canon is an editorial construct: the arguments for a documentary edition of the *Collected Works* make no case for reprinting *Miscellaneous Studies*, *Essays from the 'Guardian'*, *Gaston de Latour* or *Greek Studies*. The organization of these texts is of course principally the work of Charles Shadwell. The logic of a decision to take as copy-text the first book-edition produces a Paterian canon of the following works alone: *The Renaissance*, *Marius the Epicurean*, *Imaginary Portraits*, *Appreciations*, and *Plato and Platonism*. These are the only books for which an authorial sanction exists. Such a definition of copy-text problematizes the books published posthumously, not of course because the individual essays in those volumes do not possess authority (they manifestly do so), but because the *organization* of them by Shadwell into their various forms does not. It would be quite possible to consider other principles of organization. A chronological ordering of the texts has at least as much claim upon an editor as a thematic one does; and so does a principle which arranges essays in terms of the periodicals for which they were first intended, a principle used later in *Essays from 'The Guardian'*. However, the problem with such counter-proposals is that they fly in the face of social or cultural history. Many thousands of readers have encountered books entitled *Greek Studies* or *Miscellaneous Studies* despite the absence of any authorial sanction for their existence. Any complete edition can reproduce them; but the grounds for such a decision cannot be authorial Pater sanctioned no such books; but neither can they be based upon some principle of documentary editing, as Super's *Arnold* is. The rationale for their reproduction would have to resort to the arguments (such as those indicated by McGann) about the existence of a text through history and the social construction of texts. The major problem produced thereby is that such an edition would be drawing upon two quite contradictory editorial principles: for the proposals to reproduce the first book editions of Pater's canon, particularly *Marius the Epicurean*, for which no periodical texts exist, explicitly discount the social history of the works in question. However, the arguments for the reproduction of posthumous material of necessity depend upon these considerations.

Now exactly the same sorts of dilemmas seem to exist in the area of annotation. *Marius the Epicurean* is a very difficult text in this respect. I have suggested elsewhere that there might have been several quite distinct and quite different intended audiences for that novel, each with quite different areas of knowledge and of ignorance.<sup>9</sup> If this is true, it makes the practical decisions of an editor or editorial team hazardous in the extreme. Most contemporary editions of the works of major writers have proposed for their contributing authors a set of prescriptions about annotation which are not to mince words intellectually disreputable. So it is not unusual to see general editors requiring from their contributors annotations of allusions which a moderately well-educated non-native speaker of English would not understand. Under such a prescription the phrase "James Stokes, the prefect, his immediate superior" in "Emerald Uthwart"<sup>10</sup> would have to be glossed for three kinds of audience. For a non-European reader the term might simply be meaningless. For a European reader it might have contradictory implications: thus for French readers the term "prefect" is alarmingly similar to current French usage for the head of a police force. And for readers educated in some Catholic institutions the term designates a senior master (a teacher) in a Jesuit school. So for all of these cases some modern general editors would require the elucidation of a term still in fairly wide usage in Britain, particularly among those educated in private or grammar schools. What such editors have done is to assume a degree of ignorance based in the first instance upon assumptions about a limited knowledge of British culture.

Other, more thoughtful prescriptions for annotation have made demands at a rather more abstract level. Martin C. Battestin has written what is perhaps the best-known attempt to determine a rationale for annotation.<sup>11</sup> He suggests that any annotator has to be aware of the character of his (modern) audience, of his own (subjective) interests, and of the precise nature of the text to be annotated. While he concedes that there can be no "single rationale for literary annotation," and that an editor should distinguish between what he calls "notes of recovery" and "explanatory" notes, he also finally suggests that a work may be perfectly understood:

The purpose of literary annotation, whether of "explanatory notes" or "notes of recovery," is to recover for the reader, as briefly and objectively as possible all essential information (and *only* essential information) necessary to render the author's meaning wholly intelligible, the "author's meaning" being understood as not only the primary denotative significance of a passage but also, when appropriate, its full range of implicit associations, whether biographical, historical, or literary.<sup>12</sup>

As I hope I have indicated, the definitions of many items are begged here; so the difficulties of ascertaining what constitutes the real import of terms such as "essential information," "the author's meaning," "intelligibility," the "full range of implicit associations," are never adequately addressed, let alone explained. More importantly, Battestin's prescriptive programme gives too many hostages to fortune. In particular it lays the annotator open to the charge that he is required to take on the role of an *ideal, perfectly knowledgeable and perfectly competent reader*, a reader for whom all textual allusions and all possible reactions are available. Of course, no such beast exists.

Other programmes for annotation have been more modest; they have simply required the modern editor and annotator to make explicit the cultural and literary knowledge which was implicit for contemporary readers or to make explicit the cultural knowledge which a writer believed was implicit in the cultural assumptions of his contemporary readers:<sup>13</sup> to define, that is, in the language of Hans-Robert Jauss and German reception-theorists, the "horizon of expectations" of a work.<sup>14</sup> Now definitions of a readership in terms such as these are, of course, quite different, and in their turn beg further questions which are equally difficult to answer. What, for example, are "contemporary" or "original" readers? Do they form an homogenous group? Are their "horizon of expectations" thus capable of a simple characterization (granted, of course, that such information could both be practically and theoretically retrieved by an editor). Under general prescriptions such as these and they are the best-theorized accounts of annotation yet available all that the conscientious editor can do is to be aware that he or she is producing an edition for a modern audience, and make informed guesses about both that audience and about a writer's original audience. And any editor must be aware too that one can make only informed guesses about *any* audience's cultural knowledge and cultural assumptions.

However all these decisions about contemporary and modern audiences are seriously jeopardized by the possible choices of copy-texts which I have outlined above. The readership of periodicals in the 1860s and 1870s were, as Laurel Brake indicates in the essay that follows, quite different: each established a readership with different tastes, political and artistic affiliations, and so forth. But these readerships, taken together, were vastly different again from the readership of a book such as the 1873 edition of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. The first difference is one of size, with the periodical readership being many tens of times larger than the readership of most books, particularly for a work such as *The Renaissance*. The second difference would be one of geography and class, with the periodical readership being much less homogenous, much less metropolitan. And the third difference would be one of education, for readers of mid-century periodicals would certainly have been less academic than the readers of Pater's books. If the rationale for annotation depends upon the expectations of an original readership, and if the original readership of each of Pater's works was quite distinct, then a consequence would be an edition with very uneven annotation, even if the annotation for each volume were based on precisely the same editorial principles.

But perhaps these qualifications are not the deterrent which they at first sight appear to be. It is quite possible that each text within an *oeuvre* produces a set of problems which are unique and have therefore to be treated in an *ad hoc* manner. In other words, perhaps the search for uniformity of treatment in both the rationale for copy-text and for the provision of annotation is little more than an administrative convenience. It may well be that there is no simple theory of text-editing which can encompass the generic diversity of early modernist texts, and no theory of annotation which will allow an editor to accommodate the heterogeneity of contemporary or modern audiences. If this indeed turns out to be the case, then editors of Pater may have to take account of the fact that both their editorial practices and their principles for annotation will inevitably have at least in part to be unsystematic.