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Textual Criticism and Composition Research

PATRICK SCOTT

It's a commonplace among textual bibliographers that the questions they ask and answer apply across many different disciplines. As Fredson Bowers long ago argued, "No matter what the field of study, the basis lies in the analysis of the records in printed or in manuscript form."¹ Not just in high literature, but in history, philosophy, and the history of science, modern bibliographical editing is widely recognized as indispensable. Yet in bibliography's, and Professor Bowers', own traditional fiefdom, the English graduate program, one area has been almost totally neglected. Whereas twenty-five years ago, it was students of modern literature, especially the novel, who needed persuading that good texts matter, nowadays the relevance of traditional textual scholarship is more likely to be questioned by colleagues and graduate students from the mushrooming subspecialty of composition studies. Bruce Harkness has not yet, so far as I know, given us a modernized apologia, "Bibliography and the Rhetorical Fallacy." What examples can the textual bibliographer offer to meet this new generation of questioning?

One might start, where bibliographers have always started, with the plain fact, and curious fascination, of textual variance. A favorite book for modern compositionists to hate is the supposedly immutable *Harbrace College Handbook*, first published in 1941 and now in its ninth edition. The framework of the book, the numbered sections (though not the lettered subsections), has indeed remained remarkably constant, but much else has changed in the last forty years. Revisions to the exercises reflect, or perhaps over-reflect, recent American social and educational history, as sentences like "This high school has sent more than a hundred of its graduates to Harvard during the past twenty years" are dropped, and others are introduced, such as "During the first period last Monday . . ., we freshmen enjoyed discussing various aspects of civil disobedience."² Moreover, the text itself has not been sacrosanct. Compare, for instance, these four successive versions of what is now subsection 19e (there was no exactly equivalent entry in the first edition):

- (i) *Illiteracies* (also called *vulgarisms*) are the crude expressions of uneducated people (2nd ed., 1946, p. 192; 3rd ed., 1951, p. 201; 4th ed., 1956, p. 204).
- (ii) *Illiteracies* are the *substandard* expressions of uneducated people (5th ed., 1962, p. 206).
- (iii) *Illiteracies* are the *nonstandard* expressions of uneducated people (6th ed., 1967, p. 198).
- (iv) Words and expressions labeled by dictionaries as *Nonstandard* or *Illiterate* should be avoided in most writing and speaking (7th ed., 1972, pp. 201-202; 8th ed., 1977, p. 186; 9th ed., 1982, p. 222).

Behind such variants lies a significant shift of linguistic attitude, and a composition scholar who quotes from the *Harbrace*, even if only for purposes of vilification, clearly needs to know from which *Harbrace* she or he is quoting, and at what date the quoted passage was first introduced or finally excised. This general revision pattern (a stable framework, with substantial changes to specific sections) is probably typical of modern pedagogic texts, and recent complaints about the conservatism of the bestselling textbooks are correspondingly overstated:³ Robert Connors has compared the seven editions of another long-running bestseller, McCrimmon's *Writing with a Purpose*, first published in 1950, and has discovered, not the textual stability he had expected, but a fascinating interplay of stasis and change. He concludes that such basic textual investigation can be an important corrective to the "narrow presentism" of much composition scholarship.⁴

Much more obviously important, however, is textual study of historical rhetorics. A lot of the bibliographical groundwork has been done, especially for the Renaissance period,⁵ and many texts are available in modern reprints, but there seems little sign that modern rhetoricians generally recognize the textual difficulties of the historical field. Let's begin at the beginning, with the very first English rhetoric, Leonard Coxe's *The Art or Crafte of Rhetoryke*: the second edition came out in 1532, but we don't really know the date of the first edition, we have no edition

more recent than 1899, and there appear to be no modern bibliographical studies whatever.⁶ Or consider a slightly later, and much more popular, book, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553): the only modern edition is still G. H. Mair's in 1909, which bore the title *Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique, 1560*, but in fact reprinted the 1585 reprint with minor corrections from 1560 and 1567. Modern photo offset and microform versions of 1553 and its successors are now of course available, but the only specific study of Wilson's text since Mair has been unaccountably omitted from the recent secondary bibliography on historical rhetoric.⁷ Experts can usually find their way through such problems—I've been very impressed by the texts W. S. Howell, for instance, chooses for quotation in his histories of rhetoric—, but students new to such a field need to have their bibliographical wits about them.

For later periods, the situation is probably much worse, because much of the basic research has never been done, even in article-form, and the very availability of photo offset reprints acts as a deterrent to new editorial projects. One might well appropriate from the novel to rhetoric Bruce Harkness' complaint about editors who put "a fancy introduction on a poor text."⁸ The most frequently-cited series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rhetorical texts is the Southern Illinois "Landmarks" series, which provides useful critical introductions and secondary bibliographies, but sometimes chooses for reproduction late and derivative reprints, rather than authoritative early texts. The Blair, Priestley, and Whately volumes make sensible choices, but George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, first published in Edinburgh in 1776, is reproduced from William Tegg's London edition of 1850.⁹ Similarly, Thomas De Quincey's essay on rhetoric, which was originally written as a review for *Blackwood's*, is reproduced in the Southern Illinois edition direct from David Masson's 1889 reprint of De Quincey's revision in the 1850s.¹⁰ This has the advantage of giving the student Masson's helpful explanatory notes, but is textually indefensible. Even if we ignore accidentals (should "rhetoric" modestly take a lower-case *r*, as in the periodical version, or should it get the abstract splendour of capitalization, as in Masson?), the late text loses some of the swashbuckling flavour of the original: for instance, where the later De Quincey merely regretted that the vacuum in modern English grammar had been filled by a "stranger," Lindley Murray, the 1828 text roundly denounces Murray's efforts as the work of an "imbecile Yankee" (p. 906).¹¹ Nor are these Southern Illinois editors alone in their textual innocence. One standard teaching anthology reprints Campbell from the 1850 text in the Southern Illinois series, Blair from a Philadelphia edition of 1862, and Whately from a Boston, Massachusetts,

edition of 1855.¹²

The examples so far have been concerned with questions of textual authority, but in rhetoric, as in literary studies, one soon gets involved in fascinating questions about a text's genesis, evolution, and revision. Two further examples from nineteenth-century rhetoricians will demonstrate just how significant this under-explored material can be, and how it is still possible to make new discoveries in the field. Richard Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric*, important for its ideas about the psychological "burden of proof" argumentation, first appeared in an authorized book-edition in 1828, and went through six further editions by 1846, all but two with substantial extra material.¹³ But the first book-version had been preceded by two previous stages in the evolution of Whately's theory. In the early 1820s, Whately had drafted, and circulated among his students and friends, a manuscript entitled "Method of Composition"; a copy of this earliest version survived among John Henry Newman's papers, at the Birmingham Oratory, and was published, for the first time, as recently as 1978.¹⁴ Then, in the mid-1820s, Whately published essentially the first draft of his book as the "Rhetoric" article in the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*. Since the encyclopaedia was issued in undated, out-of-sequence, parts, scholars have hazarded very various dates for Whately's article.¹⁵ With the discovery of the "Method" manuscript, we now have a firm *terminus a quo* of 1822, and a casual mention in the new Newman letters edition that an Oxford undergraduate had been assigned to read Whately's rhetoric gives us a firm *terminus ad quem* of December 1826.¹⁶ Three paragraphs in this encyclopaedia version, omitted for book publication, attack Jeremy Bentham's *Book of Fallacies* ("it is a matter of regret that the powers of such a mind as that of Mr. Bentham, should be to so great a degree wasted . . . The work, however, may be read safely, and, perhaps, not without advantage, by those who have sufficient interest in the subject to encounter the obscurity of the style").¹⁷ These paragraphs provide an interesting clue to Whately's political motivation, and it seems a pity that the reprint couldn't have given them in a textual appendix, because the encyclopaedia isn't available outside major research libraries. But even in the successive revisions of the book-text there are still new things to be found. The general pattern of Whately's revisions or rather expansions has long been known,¹⁸ but quite recently Michael Sproule has analyzed in detail the changes Whately made just in the famous section on the burden of proof, and so has been able, through textual study, to resolve a long-standing dispute over the legal and psychological aspects of Whately's theory.¹⁹ Sproule's reasonably-scaled and carefully-targetted textual investigation could be a

model for future work on authors where full-scale re-editing is uneconomic.

My second example from nineteenth-century rhetoric will be briefer, for on Alexander Bain there has been as yet almost no bibliographical investigation. Bain has a place in the demonology of modern composition for two distinct villainies—his systematization of the expository paragraph (and the topic sentence), and his classification of composition into the four forms or modes (narration, description, exposition, and argumentation or persuasion). The indictment is based on his textbook, *English Composition and Rhetoric*, first published in London in 1866.²⁰ Bain himself, in his *Autobiography*, described how the textbook was written, and his account suggests some profitable lines for future bibliographical enquiry.²¹ In particular, Bain reveals that his 1866 book was based on privately-printed materials he prepared for his Aberdeen rhetoric course in 1860-1861, and that those in turn were taken from the article he had written, as early as 1849, for *Chambers's Information for the People*, a popular Scottish encyclopaedia. This earliest version differs significantly from the later textbook in that it classifies composition into three groups by aim (as communication, persuasion, and literary art), before subdividing the first group by mode (into narration, description, and exposition). In the encyclopaedia version, also, Bain explicitly discusses the chief modern complaint against him, the way in which, in actual writing, the modes often overlap.²² I don't know yet how all these bits and pieces fit together—my hunch is that Bain was a better rhetorical theorist in his early writings, before he had adapted his ideas to the needs of an Aberdeen lecture-class—but quite clearly we need some basic bibliographical investigation before we can even date one of the most influential concepts in composition textbooks for a hundred years.

So far, my argument will have seemed very one-sided, all about what compositionists might learn from textual bibliographers. But there is one area where there may be reciprocal benefits. While there have been distinguished exceptions, textual editors of the last thirty years have generally been better at recording textual variants than at interpreting them; we put all our cards on the table face up, but often leave it to the literary-critical clairvoyants to do the divination. There have been very few attempts to study systematically what a full textual collation can tell us about the process of composition and rewriting, line by line and word by word. Though many compositionists have steered away from literary source-materials as being untypical of ordinary writing-patterns, the current interest in the process of revision has encouraged the development of very interesting taxonomies for manuscript alterations.²³ These new taxonomies seem to be

reproducing the long-running bibliographical debate over the substantives/accidentals distinction, and parallel some recent textual theorists in their emphasis on authorial intention in classifying revision. Lester Faigley and Stephen Witte, for instance, distinguish between “revisions that affect the meaning of the text and those that do not,” and wisely note that “such separation is not always easy.”²⁴ The same authors introduce an interesting distinction between micro-structural and macrostructural text-changes, which illuminates the difficulty editors have in developing a textual apparatus for texts with large-scale rewriting. There ought to be, one would think, at least some ground for fruitful dialogue about such questions.

Twenty-five years ago, a bibliographical sermon of this kind made its case primarily in negative terms, by lambasting the sins of those poor New Critics who based their ingenious interpretations on a defective text. I believe that such a primary emphasis on textual authority and textual error unnecessarily soured general professional attitudes to textual investigation. This time around, we should do better, I think, to emphasize the positive fascinations of textual study and exact historical scholarship. I don't expect the NEH to fund a Center for Editions of Rhetorical Authors, and I don't expect new editions of any but the most major historical rhetoric texts, but I would hope that both bibliographical and composition journals would begin to make space for serious bibliographical studies on the texts that are currently attracting increased attention. I would hope also that the new professionalization of composition scholars would lead to a wider awareness of textual matters, and that those responsible for the growing number of graduate programs in composition would recognize the continuing need for students to receive adequate bibliographical training. As Richard Altick has written, in another context, “few of us may dedicate our lives to the patient unravelling of the knotty textual history of a work; all of us, however, have an inescapable obligation to base our scholarly and critical activity upon the most authentic text that is available.”²⁵ For many graduate students in any field of English, textual bibliography is a service discipline, not their main concern, but it is a discipline nearly all will need to know about once they begin serious research.

¹Fredson Bowers, “Bibliography and the University,” *University of Pennsylvania Library Chronicle*, 15 (1949): 37; quoted by G. Thomas Tanselle in *SB*, 31 (1978): 55.

²John C. Hodges et al., *Harbrace College Handbook*, 4th ed., 1956, p. 103; 7th ed., 1972, p. 261. I wish to thank Paul Nockleby of HBJ, who checked for me the first and third editions.

³Cf., e.g., Donald Stewart, “The Assault on Tradition,” *College Composition and Communication*, 29 (May 1978): 171-176.

⁴Robert J. Connors, "Current-Traditional Rhetoric: Thirty Years of *Writing with a Purpose*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 11 (Fall 1981): 208-221. For a more sceptical view, emphasizing teacher resistance to textbook revision, cf. Arn and Charlene Tibbetts, "Can Composition Textbooks Use Composition Research?" *College English*, 44 (December 1982): 855-858; and cf. also "Simon O'Toole," *Confessions of an American Scholar* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp. 52-53.

⁵See especially R. C. Alston, *A Bibliography of the English Language from the Invention of Printing to the Year 1800* (Leeds: Arnold, 1965-1972; rev. ed. 1974), esp. vol. 6 on rhetorics; James J. Murphy, *Renaissance Rhetoric: A Short Title Catalogue* (New York: Garland, 1981); Winifred Horner, ed., *Historical Rhetoric: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Sources in English* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980); James A. Berlin, "A Bibliography of Rhetoric in England and America in the Nineteenth Century: the Primary Sources," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 11 (Summer 1981): 193-203. See also Patrick Scott and Bruce Castner, *Selected Reference Sources in Rhetoric and Composition* (Columbia, S.C.: Department of English, University of South Carolina, 1982), section A.

⁶Alston gives the tentative date of ca. 1525?, *S.T.C.* gives 1524, *B.M.C.* gives 1529, and Frederic I. Carpenter, who edited a reprint of the second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899), argues for 1530: see also Carpenter, "Leonard Cox and the First English Rhetoric," *Modern Language Notes*, 13 (1898): 292-294, and Jessie C. Garner, *An Apology for Failure: Erroneous Statements in Two Tudor Vernacular Rhetorics* (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1981), p. 33n10; Garner's thesis includes an interesting argument about religious-political influences on reprinting and textual variants in Coxe and also in Richard Sherry's *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550; rev. ed., 1555).

⁷Russell H. Wagner, "The Text and Editions of Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*," *Modern Language Notes*, 44 (1929): 421-428, not in Horner, pp. 120 or 178-179. One reprint of 1553 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969) has no textual apparatus, and the other, edited by R. H. Bowers (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1962), though it mentions the question of textual authority (briefly, on p. x), gives no reference to the Wagner article.

⁸Bruce Harkness, "Bibliography and the Novelistic Fallacy," *Studies in Bibliography*, 12 (1959): 59-73 (p. 73).

⁹George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, ed. Lloyd F. Bitzer (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963); sadly, Bitzer had made a detailed textual study of the various Campbell editions—he provides (pp. xxxii-xxxv) a list of over 90 substantive errors in the text he reprints (excluding "numerous insignificant variations"), and he also lists (pp. xxxv-xxxvi) corrections and additions Campbell made to the 1776 text, first incorporated in the posthumous 3rd edition of 1808.

¹⁰"Elements of Rhetoric," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 24 (December 1828): 885-908; Thomas De Quincey, *Selected Essays on Rhetoric*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967).

¹¹A special case is the Southern Illinois volume of Adam Smith's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1971); this simply reproduced without re-editing John M. Lothian's then-standard edition, a modernized transcription and synthesis of a student's class-notes (1963). Lothian has now been superseded by the Glasgow collected edition.

¹²James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, and William E. Coleman, eds., *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* (Dubuque, Ia: Kendall/Hunt, 1976), pp. 95-104, 62-79, and 106-110. The standard teaching anthology of Enlightenment rhetoric follows Southern Illinois in reprinting the London 1850 text of Campbell, but strikes out independently by setting aside Southern Illinois' Blair text (the first edition, London, 1783), preferring to reprint Blair from a one-volume Philadelphia edition which the editors coyly identify only by mentioning "at least thirty-seven reprintings" between 1784 and 1853, without ever saying which of the thirty-seven they used as copytext; James L. Golden and Edward P. J. Corbett, eds., *The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately* (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. vii; these editors silently omitted authorial footnotes and replaced Latin illustrative quotations in the text with translations.

¹³Richard Whately, *Elements of Rhetoric*, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963); Ehninger quite reasonably chooses to reproduce the fullest text, the Seventh Edition (1846). Berlin (as in n. 5 above) gives the first book-edition as "Dublin: Murray, 1827," but this must be an unauthorized reprint of the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* article.

¹⁴Ray E. McKerrow, "Method of Composition: Whately's Earliest Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 11 (Winter 1978): 43-58.

¹⁵Wilbur S. Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 700n5 and 707n31, discusses the difficulty, and concludes only that it was published "in the middle 1820s"; Parrish (as below, p. 71) considered 1829 the first certain date, but estimated 1822-1825; Ehninger (p. xvii) gives no date; Stewart (in Horner, n.5 above, p. 237) dates it 1822, but gives no evidence.

¹⁶Letter of Thomas Mozley, in Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall, eds., *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. I . . . 1807 to 1826 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 306n.

¹⁷Richard Whately, "Rhetoric," chap. II, sect. 7, in *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, ed. Edward Smedley (London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1829), 1: 265-266.

¹⁸W. M. Parrish, "Whately and his Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 15 (1929): esp. 71-73 (on "The Growth of the Rhetoric").

¹⁹J. Michael Sproule, "The Psychological Burden of

Proof: On the Evolutionary Development of Richard Whately's Theory of Presumption," *Communication Monographs*, 43 (1976): 115-129, esp. 117-122.

²⁰Alexander Bain, *English Composition and Rhetoric: A Manual* (London: Longmans, Green, 1866); I have examined also the second British edition (Longmans, 1869), and though it has been reset, it shows only occasional minor stylistic revisions. Donald Stewart (in Horner, *Historical Rhetoric*, p. 232) worries that the copyright page of the copy he examined had the date 1867, but that was a first American edition, not the British one, and copyright might not have been entered immediately. James Berlin (as in n.5 above, p. 193) lists the American first (New York: D. Appleton, 1866) as being "revised," but there seems no reason to assume that Bain himself made revisions for the American market, or that the American edition was authorized by him. The only substantial revision by Bain himself seems to be the two-volume enlarged edition (London: Longmans, 1887-1888).

²¹Alexander Bain, *Autobiography* (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1904), pp. 276-279, and (on the revision) pp. 386-390; there is a useful checklist of Bain's writings (including periodical articles) on pp. 425-436. For a useful survey of Bain's career, see Paul C. Rodgers, "Alexander Bain and the Rise of the Organic Paragraph," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 51 (December 1965): 399-408. Andrea Lunsford (University of British Columbia) is currently preparing "an edition of some of the work of Alexander Bain."

²²Alexander Bain, "Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres," in William and Robert Chambers, eds., *Chambers's Information for the People*, 5th edition (London and Edinburgh: Chambers, 1875), 2: 737-752 (1st edition, Edinburgh, 1849, 2: 689-704; Berlin, p. 193); the copy I examined was presented

by Bain as a prize to an Aberdeen student in 1878. No earlier editions have yet been available to me, but there is no indication in Bain's *Autobiography* that he revised the article. For a modern perspective on Bain's classification, cf. Robert J. Connors, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse," *College Composition and Communication*, 32 (December 1981): 444-455.

²³See, e.g., Gabriel M. Della-Piana, "Research Strategies for the Study of Revision Processes in Writing Poetry," in *Research on Composing*, ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana, Ill.: N.C.T.E., 1978), pp. 105-134; Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Writers," *College Composition and Communication*, 31 (December 1980): 378-388; and Lester Faigley and Stephen Witte, "Analyzing Revision," *College Composition and Communication*, 32 (December 1981): 400-414. An earlier, but still influential, taxonomy of revision, based on literary materials, was developed by Wallace Hildick, in his *Word for Word: A Study of Authors' Alterations, with Exercises* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), pp. 13-40. The relevance of literary-textual materials to composition studies is briefly pointed out in Janet Emig, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (Urbana, Ill.: N.C.T.E., 1971), pp. 8-15, and cf. the historical survey of revision patterns by Karen Hodges, in *Revising: New Essays for Teachers of Writing*, ed. Ronald A. Sudol (Urbana: N.C.T.E., 1982), pp. 24-42.

²⁴Faigley and Witte, p. 401; cf. Donald Murray, "Internal Revision: a Process of Discovery," in *Research on Composing* (as in n.23), pp. 85-103.

²⁵Richard D. Altick, *The Art of Literary Research*, 3rd ed., revised John J. Fenstermaker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), p. 77.

Realities of the Sermon: Some Considerations for Editors

WILSON H. KIMNACH

The word "sermon" derives from the Latin *sermo*, indicating a talk or discourse. That definition endures, with the historical narrowing of the term to the proselytizing public addresses of representatives of religious faiths. Metaphorically, of course, the term is applied to any exhortation of a more or less formal nature that resembles such homiletical efforts. The important point is that the sermon is an event in time that inevitably terminates when the oral discourse ends. As Richard Weaver has observed, "every speech which is designed to move is directed to a special audience in its unique situation";¹ ultimately, this reality militates against all attempts at preservation or reproduction,

perhaps even in the age of recordings and television.

In the past the ephemeral nature of the sermon itself was a given, and many famous sermons are only remembered as events or reported with varying attention to literality by auditors. Indeed, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the ancient prophet-preachers seem to have made a point of not leaving any record beyond the sound of their voices evanescent upon the air — a strategy that has clearly proved to be very effective, by the way — and the Bible's account of Christ's Sermon on the Mount pretends to little more than an accurate auditor's summation. Since those early days, the sermon has evolved as has the

profession of the preacher; the talk has become formalized according to the precepts of an astonishing variety of styles, theories, and schools. Still, as late as the 17th century some of the greatest preachers, such as John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, seem to have considered the sermon to be primarily an event and left record-keeping to their auditors.²

Over the past three or four centuries, however, overwhelming evidence has accumulated that the sermon is also a *thing*, i.e., a document or literary text.³ The exact relationship between the sermon document and the sermon event is always problematic, although some factors can be enumerated which may illuminate a range of probability. For instance, the sermon preached in the pulpit has always been delivered in one of three ways: *extempore*, *memoriter*, or *recitare*. In the first case, the preacher simply speaks, although as the sermon form grew more complex he would ordinarily be allowed minimal notes or an outline which would hardly constitute a text. Such preaching was considered to be the “purest” form by American Puritans, and as late as the early 18th century Solomon Stoddard was militantly insisting upon it as essential for good preaching.⁴ Both the *memoriter* and the *recitare* delivery involve a prepared literary text (although the effect of the sermon event in the case of *memoriter* preaching is generally indistinguishable from *extempore*, satisfying Stoddard), a text which presumably parallels the oral discourse very closely. Of course, as auditors’ notes have revealed, there may be significant discrepancies between the written and oral texts, either through lapses of memory in the *memoriter* delivery or through intentional modifications carried out *ad libitum*, even in a read text. Finally, there were many variations, too numerous to catalogue here, such as that of the eminent divine who delivered his oral sermon more or less *extempore* and then wrote out the sermon in its entirety immediately after.⁵

By the eighteenth century in New England — the place and period of my immediate concern — the term *sermon* could apply equally to the event or to the literary document. This might not have mattered if the document had always been at least a general reflection of the event; however, the evolution of a distinctive literary form in the sermon which had no particular relationship to time made the two avatars of the sermon structurally independent. The sermon event was like a football game, conducted in so many minutes; the sermon document was like a baseball game, having so many innings regardless of time. The preacher had his designated period in the pulpit and when the time was up the sermon was done; however, as an author in a distinctive literary form having a fixed structure consisting of a biblical text and its explication, a doctrine and its reasons, and an

application with its uses, the preacher was obligated to work out his thought within the logic of the form regardless of duration. The practical solution for preachers such as Jonathan Edwards was simple enough: they preached their literary sermons in installments like magazine serials.

This duality of the concept of the sermon during the eighteenth century is preserved in contemporary documents. For instance, Edwards’ former student and disciple, the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, edited some of Edwards’ sermons for posthumous publication.⁶ Hopkins transcribed the documents in the approved modern mode of the diplomatic transcription, and except for spelling out shorthand and abbreviations and adding punctuation, he did not intervene editorially as nineteenth-century editors were to do. The result is a volume presenting eighteen numbered sermons; however, the reader who is familiar with the sermon form will note that there are only six complete literary units. One who assumed he was dealing with a volume containing separate sermons or some sermon series and chose one sermon at random to read would likely encounter a “sermon” that begins nowhere and ends up in the air. In preparing his own sermons for the press, as in the case of the lengthy *Pressing into the Kingdom of God*, Edwards simply omitted the divisions and transitional material between the units in which he preached the sermon.⁷ Other preachers of the period sometimes note in the preface to a printed sermon that only a portion of the literary text was preached upon the occasion of the sermon because of time limitations, thus giving primary ontological status to the sermon document, an apparent historical reversal of sorts.⁸

What can be concluded from consideration of these historical factors is that the sermon is both an oral event and a literary text. The first publication of the sermon is clearly the event, whatever the method of the preacher. Yet it is also clear that only the literary work is actually recoverable, whatever the method of the preacher. The sermon event can and should be discussed as a historical context for the sermon document since every sermon is at its inception occasional, but the editor can never be certain that any particular word or words were actually published during pulpit delivery unless they are verified by auditors’ notes (an unlikely recourse for more than a few sermons, and even in such cases the auditor may be rephrasing on his own and should be checked by a second!).

In the case of Jonathan Edwards’ sermon manuscripts which I am editing, the matter of preparing sermons for their first publication as literary documents is complicated by the presence of those factors which are entailed in the sermon event. There are, in fact, two texts superimposed: the literary text, and the notations

and devices required for pulpit delivery. A differentiation of the two avatars of the sermon involves first a recognition of those aspects of the manuscript that are determined by the requirements of the initial oral publication.

Edwards' earliest sermons are written in octavo booklets consisting of an eight-leaf quire. This apparently coincided roughly with the duration of the sermon in the pulpit, although some booklets contain an additional leaf or two suggesting a degree of flexibility in the pulpit period. Most of Edwards' early sermons are fully developed as literary texts within the single booklet. However, very early in his career — indeed, at the very start — Edwards began producing some two-booklet sermons which required two pulpit sermons to deliver in their entirety. Perhaps the most obvious appurtenance of the sermon event in these manuscripts is the transitional summary which occurs at the juncture of the preaching units without regard to the literary structure of the sermon. A typical one is as follows:

Matt. 16:26

Doctrine: That the salvation of the soul is of vastly more worth and value than the whole world. 1st, by showing the world in general should come to an end at the conflagration of the world; and 2d, that it should come to an end with respect to every particular person at death. 3rdly, by showing the uncertainty, fodeyness and vanity of the world, whereby it is liable to come to an end before death. 4thly, by showing that the soul was immortal. 5thly, that if all the world could be enjoyed forever, it would be little worth. 1stly, we showed that riches were little worth; 2dly, that honors were little worth; 3rdly, that worldly pleasure is so likewise; 4thly, that earthly [friends] are in comparison but little worth. 6thly, we showed in the sixth place that the salvation of the soul was more worth than all the world because it is of inestimable worth and value. And that, 1st because it is deliverance from so great misery, and we showed that the misery from which a saved soul was delivered was very great because in it the soul was deprived of all good. 2dly, all evil was brought upon it. [3rdly,] this misery would be eternal and mixed with despair. We shall now proceed to show that

And here he begins the next head, as it happens about halfway through the development of the doctrine division. The summary has no particular relation to a reader's progress through the sermon text, however, and is significant only to auditors who need to be caught up on a subsequent occasion. Realistically, the summary is not part of the literary sermon although it is in the manuscript.⁹

Particularly in his early sermons, Edwards experimented with a variety of devices specifically intended to enhance the pulpit sermon. He had a very real problem: he could not preach either *extempore* or *memoriter*, but had to read from a rather complete literary text, although there is some evidence that he could amplify *ad libitum*.¹⁰ What may have been a source of uneasiness was certainly compounded when his first permanent settlement turned out to be in the church in which his revered grandfather, the outspoken Solomon Stoddard, was senior pastor. Stoddard, you remember, had published against those half-baked preachers who had to read sermons. At any rate, Edwards changed his octavo booklet for duodecimo, which could be palmed more unobtrusively, after arriving in Northampton. But he had used, from the first, horizontal lines to separate major heads. These lines he continued throughout his career, and in the third decade he even divided the page (four inches square) vertically, the result being units resembling postage stamps. Also in the early sermons are diagonals with slightly curled ends which at first glance seem to separate sentences or perhaps paragraphs — and sometimes they do — but further searching will reveal some that divide only phrases or even words. These “pick up lines,” as I have christened them, are not unorthodox punctuation, but rather so many grab-irons, usually between three and a half-dozen per page, that mark major points or concepts to which Edwards could return after some *ad lib.* amplification, or simply points he would not want to miss as he looked up and down from the page. In a few early sermons, Edwards seems to begin each new sentence as a paragraph. Since at the same time he developed normal paragraphs in notebooks, letters, and other documents, it seems evident that these indentations are not paragraphs but attempts to make the sentences more readily visible and the structure of the page more apparent when reading the sermon in the pulpit. There are a few other devices of this sort that occur only once, such as placing opposed terms in pairs vertically or using boxes or inserting curved lines above key concepts. These devices are all part of the manuscript, but they are meaningful only as a dimension of the preached sermon — a text that is essentially unrecoverable.

Another group of devices might be categorized generally as abbreviation. Of course this includes various abbreviations of words that would be familiar enough to anyone today, but it also includes symbols such as a circled dot for “world,” ampersands that resemble the mathematical symbol for infinity, and so forth. One of the most interesting of these abbreviations is employed in Scripture quotations where Edwards often gives the first few words of a quotation and then draws a line which stands for the remainder of the quotation. This line is not a dash, incidentally, or a

mere equivalent of “etc.,” but an indication of the words to be quoted. Thus, if the quotation is lengthy, the line may run on for several lines down the page. In the pulpit Edwards could give the entire quotation pretty accurately from memory, since there are many indications that he routinely cited and quoted from memory where the passages are written out. In any event, the length of the line told him just how much of a verse should be quoted. While these abbreviations may have saved some time in the writing of the manuscript, it is clear that their primary function was to save space, not space in the sense of the paper of the booklets because Edwards could always add more and in his notebooks he is less prone to abbreviation than in the sermons, but to save space in the sense of bringing more of his text before his eyes at a glance when reading from his manuscript in the pulpit. Edwards did not want to flip pages any more than he had to.

Thus even abbreviations emerge, along with the aforementioned devices, as so many traces of the oral sermon imposed upon the literary sermon. My point is not that one of these sermons is more important or authentic than the other, but merely that they are independently present within the manuscript and may be differentiated.

When things relating to the sermon event are removed from the manuscript, what is left? Essentially, it is a full text in the sermons preached during the first twenty years of Edwards’ career and in all of the really important ones thereafter.¹¹ This does not mean that there are no underdeveloped heads or sketchy passages, but it does mean that, if only because he never could fully compensate for the absence of carefully written words in the pulpit, Edwards’ manuscripts contain true literary texts rather than sermon notes. This is not unusual, incidentally, for a number of late seventeenth and eighteenth century preachers whose sermon manuscripts I have examined — including Jonathan Edwards’ father and Solomon Stoddard — also wrote out literary texts even when they were known as *extempore* or *memoriter* preachers.

The recovery of the literary document from the manuscript involves recognition of several conditions. First, perhaps, is the fact that the oral discourse is a matter of sound and the literary document a matter of letters. The letters presented to the reader should, it would seem, at least be the equivalent of the sounds we have evidence were pronounced. To be specific, we should remember that Edwards said “world” and not “circled dot” when he spoke. Likewise, when quoting Scripture, he did not say “three lines’ worth of the text,” but I trust you have my point.

Perhaps one of the most noticeable facts about Edwards’ sermon manuscripts is that, once the markings pertaining to the oral event are discounted,

there is virtually no punctuation. Edwards punctuated completely and competently in sent letters and documents he saw through the press; however, although there is some sporadic punctuation in the earliest sermon manuscripts, this soon virtually disappears. There are henceforth no commas, periods, colons, semi-colons; no quotation marks, question marks or even proper dashes. Occasional periods after numbers and abbreviations account for just about all of it. The place of punctuation is minimally taken by spacing between sentence units. Because he attempted punctuation at first, it seems likely that he found it difficult to punctuate rhetorically, though he may just not have wanted any more markings on an already crowded page. That Edwards nevertheless considered meticulous punctuation to be an essential part of the literary sermon is attested by the fact that the only known galley sheet with his corrections contains a corrected comma;¹² moreover, although there are several legends about his pulpit performances, such as that he stared above the heads of his auditors or that he never raised his voice, I have never heard a trace of a rumor that he ever delivered an unpunctuated sermon.

Because they are frequently long, convoluted, repetitive, and not infrequently contain unmarked parentheses, not to mention a plethora of ambiguously situated pronouns, Edwards’ sentences are not to be negotiated without pondered punctuation. Similarly, the formal structure which defines the literary sermon is composed of intricately-articulated heads, numbered and frequently titled to indicate their place in the sermon. In sermons Edwards prepared for the press, these heads receive typographical clarification; however, in the sermon manuscripts the numbers are generally simple arabic numerals except for the two or three major heads which usually get roman numerals. The result is that the reader sometimes experiences the “one-two-two-five-three” effect wherein heads become a confused jumble. Here again, the resources of typography must aid the reader in perceiving the essential structure. Edwards’ auditors were highly trained in the form, but modern readers are not, and I have observed more than one anthology editor who was apparently quite ignorant of the fact that a sermon cannot be sliced like a loaf of bread. But with typographically-distinguished heads the modern reader can follow where Edwards’ auditors, perhaps with a little coaching now and then, noted the structural intricacies of philosophical theology.

A final aspect of the sermon has to do with the uniqueness of the sermon event and the enduring manuscript. It is a paradox that the sermon manuscript often embodies both a unique event and a class of events. For Edwards and for most other great

preachers regardless of period, each sermon is a work of art, the result of days or perhaps weeks of labor. As such, it is a permanent resource in his library of his own compositions, and at least until publication in the print medium, it is likely to be retooled for another pulpit occasion which, though also unique, bears analogy to the first. Thus, many sermon manuscripts contain not merely the two original avatars of the sermon, but successive layers of texts. There are some true corrections or revisions in Edwards' manuscripts where his intent is merely to fill in an omitted word or to enhance the quality of his expression, but most of the revisions in his sermon manuscripts represent transformation rather than improvement. Such changes may involve a stratum of alterations running throughout the original manuscript, the insertion or deletion of heads numbering hundreds of words, or even the substitution of new versions of major divisions comprising forty to sixty percent of the sermon's totality. All of these changes can be identified through Edwards' own notes, internal evidence of the literary text, and through analysis of hand, ink, and paper. The real problem is how to consider the multiple texts present — sometimes as many as a half dozen, though usually two or three — when preparing the literary text for publication. The author of a poem or novel may revise or even make several drafts, but in most cases he is clearly working on a single text and his editor simply decides to publish the final revision, or perhaps the first version. However, in the case of the multiple-occasion sermon there is no single text: Edwards has already published in the pulpit two or three sermons on this text or this doctrine, all of which happen to reside in the same manuscript; but the editorial issue has to do with what he wrote before the Great Awakening or after; what he wrote in 1726, in 1732, and again in 1748 on this subject. Are all the texts equal, or is one to be paramount and the variants to be assigned to footnotes and appendices? Whatever the technical solution, one indissoluble fact remains: these variants are not strivings toward a single culmination, but so many discrete ends, the oral equivalents of which have already been published.

It has not been my intention during these remarks to suggest that the sermon is that which cannot be edited, but rather to share some of the considerations that the complexity of sermon manuscripts has forced me to ponder over the past several years. For some of these problems there may never be a consensus solution, but I believe that most of them are real enough and must be decided one way or another. Certainly, for instance, the sermon manuscript looks two ways: to the oral event which is permanently just out of view, and to the literary work which is usually insufficient as it stands in manuscript to give the

literary correlative of the oratorical event. Clearly, an editor must consider the purpose of his edition. For instance, is he editing a *paper* — that marvellously evasive word! — or is he editing a *work*, something that is expected to make a statement to a literate reader? Finally, what can he do to clarify the context, inescapable and yet ambiguous, within the practical limits of his edition so that the essential occasional dimensions of the literary sermon are not lost?

NOTES

¹Richard M. Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," in *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric*, ed. R.L. Johannesen, R. Strickland and R.T. Eubanks (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), p. 206.

²See, for instance, Larzer Ziff, *The Career of John Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 158-59; or Winfried Herget, "The Transcription and Transmission of the Hooker Corpus," in *Thomas Hooker: Writings in England and Holland, 1626-1633*, ed. G.H. Williams, N. Pettit, W. Herget and S. Bush, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 253-70.

³Consultation of the standard bibliographies will reveal that the literature of the sermon, sometimes in treatise format, constitutes nearly half the output of the presses in England and America well into the nineteenth century. Curiously, although it preponderates even more in American culture, English scholars have done more in the way of literary evaluation and modern editions of this distinctive literary heritage.

⁴Solomon Stoddard, *The Defects of Preachers Reproved* (New London, 1724), p. 23.

⁵This interesting practice of Bishop Bedell, a Calvinistic admirer of William Perkins, is mentioned along with numerous other such variations in W. Fraser Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson: A Study of its Literary Aspects* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1932), p. 19.

⁶[Samuel Hopkins, ed.], *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards . . . Together with a Number of his Sermons on Various Important Subjects* (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland, 1765).

⁷This sermon was first printed in Edwards' *Discourses on Various Important Subjects, Nearly Concerning the Great Affair of the Soul's Eternal Salvation* (Boston: Printed by Kneeland and Green, 1738), pp. 131-72. The manuscript sermon is divided into four preaching units (or oral sermons), though the printed sermon is continuous.

⁸For instance, see the Advertisement in Peter Clark, *The Advantages and Obligations arising from the Oracles of God committed to the Church and its Ministry* (Boston: Printed by J. Draper, 1745).

⁹This summary is transcribed from the manuscript sermon on Matt. 16:26, leaf 1r. of the second booklet.

¹⁰Samuel Hopkins, in his *Life and Character*, p. 48, avers that though Edwards had to preach from a written-out text, some of his *ad lib.* amplifications were of better quality than what he had written. Even in the earliest sermons that seem to be fully written out, there is an occasional "etc." in the midst of Edwards' argument, apparently indicating that he should complete the argument at that point *ad lib.*

¹¹After 1742, Edwards' sermon manuscripts become increasingly outlinish, though some passages are more

developed. But he seems to have written out rather fully some, presumably more important, sermons, a fact corroborated this past year when the manuscript of the Farewell Sermon (1750) was discovered and found to be virtually fully written out.

¹²This proof containing a page from *Discourses on Various Important Subjects* (1738) is now bound into the manuscript sermon on Luke 12:35-36 where its blank verso is utilized. In the first edition the comma has been deleted as directed.

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F. B. Sanborn and the Editing of Thoreau

JOEL MYERSON

One of the most rapacious editors of nineteenth-century American literary figures was Franklin Benjamin Sanborn (1831-1917). When he moved to Concord in the mid-1850s, Sanborn began making friends with all the major Transcendentalists. As Theodore Parker's literary executor (though Parker's widow prevented him from editing anything) and a friend of Bronson Alcott and Henry David Thoreau, he had access to their journals and manuscripts. But, as an editor, Sanborn left much to be desired: he often transcribed incorrectly, left out much material, and invented new material to suit his purposes. Perhaps the most famous example of Sanborn's editorial technique is his two-volume edition of *Walden*, published by the Bibliophile Society in 1909, in which he cheerfully re-arranged the book to accommodate the insertion of 12,000 words of manuscript material that Thoreau had discarded from various stages of the book while writing it. Sanborn's editorial policies reflected his individuality — he was a member of John Brown's "Secret Six" and at age eighty-three was in court defending his right to use his own sewage to fertilize his garden — as well as his experience as a professional author — he published over a dozen books and served variously as editor and correspondent of the *Boston Commonwealth* and *Springfield Republican* — but surely seem cavalier by today's standards.

Perhaps the best statement on Sanborn's editorial policy came in 1917, when his *The Life of Henry David Thoreau* was published posthumously by Houghton Mifflin. Following the "Preface" to the book, which was dated by Sanborn six weeks before his death, is an anonymous note, pointing out that Sanborn had "expressed the intention of making somewhere in the book a brief statement of his method of dealing with quoted matter. This statement had apparently been left for insertion in the revised proof of the Preface, which, unfortunately, was dispatched to him only on the very day of his death. It remains for the Publishers, therefore, to carry out the author's intention." The publisher's note reads as follows:

Mr. Sanborn was not a slavish quoter, and in dealing with Thoreau's Journals and those other of his writings which Thoreau himself had not prepared for publication, he used the privilege of

an editor who is thoroughly familiar with his author's subjects and habits of thought to rearrange paragraphs, to omit here, to make slight interpolations there, and otherwise to treat the rough and unpolished sentences of the Journals, letters, etc., much as it may be supposed the author himself would have treated them had he prepared them for the press. If, therefore, the reader finds occasional discrepancies between the extracts from Thoreau's Journals as here given and the forms in which the same passages appear in the scrupulously exact transcript contained in the published *Journal*, he is not to set them down to carelessness, but is rather to thank Mr. Sanborn for making these passages more orderly and more readable.

(pp. xiv-xv)

In 1944, the author of the above note, Francis H. Allen, who had earlier helped edit Thoreau's *Journal* for Houghton Mifflin, gave an address to the Thoreau Society which helps to explain the publisher's apparent condoning of Sanborn's "improvements." (Houghton Mifflin was, as a rule, quite good about editing texts such as the journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thoreau, usually eliminating or changing materials only for reasons of space or to prevent embarrassment to persons and their families still alive.) Writing in *Thoreau's Editors: History and Reminiscence* (Monroe, N.C.: Nocalore Press, 1950), Allen ends our little tale by recalling that when Sanborn died before writing his own statement of editorial policy, the publisher was left

in a hole. My loyalty to Thoreau and my conscience as an editor wouldn't allow me to let things to go as they stood, but it was Mr. Sanborn's book and it seemed to me that his publishers owed it to him to carry out his expressed intentions in regard to this statement in such a way as to present the matter entirely from his point of view. So I added below the author's signature to the preface a brief statement of the situation and then the following [both of which are quoted above]: . . . Poppycock, you say, I quite agree with you. In fact, I consider it my masterpiece in that field.

(pp. 16-17)

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