



"Jones" papers: Envoi

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Jones Papers: Envoi

Hugh Amory

REFLECTING on labors that have unexpectedly extended over four years, appearing in the issues of the HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN for January 1977, April 1978, and July 1979, I cannot, in Johnson's style, dismiss them with tranquil frigidity. Go, little book! My conjectures are not fated to reappear in florilegia of essential articles and twentieth-century views, as is the fashion. I rather hope they will make practical texts more thoughtful and varied than they are wont to be after the publication of a definitive edition; but even if they perish — and the normal survival rate for conjectures is perhaps too cheerfully estimated at between one and five percent — I would submit that something is gained if they nourish a sapient predator. If they torment the mindless with thorny choices, when they looked to graze on heavenly pasture, so much the better.

The reviewers of the Wesleyan *Tom Jones* rightly applauded the mechanical accuracy of the text and did not seriously impugn the reliability of the apparatus, but they had no space or perhaps inclination to comment on the judgment, perception, and resourcefulness of the editor.¹ Since Bowers has devoted much of his distinguished career to asserting, justifying, and extending the editor's responsibility for the smallest details of his copy-text, it is a tribute of a kind — or is it Time's revenge? For the reviewers strangely mistake the basis of a critical edition if they suppose it rests on the compositor's say-so, and

¹ See *Bibliography*, below. Most of the reviewers, whether they dislike "unmodernized" texts, like F. W. Hilles, or cannot imagine any other kind, like Michael Irwin, suppose one attains this desirable or undesirable feature by transcribing an "original," vaguely identified with the first edition; the more conscientious test this assumption by spot collations, to reach conclusions about the "accuracy" of the Wesleyan edition. Only Peter Miles, rightly recognizing that any serious analysis of the fidelity of the Wesleyan text amounts to a new edition, concentrates instead on the inner consistency and reliability of the apparatus. Behind the reviewers' "original," in short, lies an autograph and, for the text of some cancellanda, a mediate compositor, and it is in reference to these unseen realities that the "accuracy" of the edition must ultimately be judged.

not on the editor's judgment and conjecture: even if they were flawlessly reproduced, the "accidentals" would still be the most hypothetical part of the text; and indeed, uncritical accuracy may become a mere instrument of depravation.² Since this possibility is academic in the best sense of the word, though apparently it must be explored outside the learned grove, I feel free to set down some additional conjectures that occurred to me too late to be properly inserted, and to indulge in a brief discussion of some textual difficulties that eluded all my attempts at explanation.

Addenda

The Devil, Fielding remarks, "may sometimes desert those who are only his *Cup Acquaintance*" (933.10, emphasis supplied), the sole authority for this phrase cited in the *OED*. It does not record "cap acquaintance," however, which appears in Fielding's *Ovid's Art of Love Paraphrased* (1747): "And as for Miss *Clio* and her eight Sisters, I never visit them; nor have I even a Cap-Acquaintance with them" (translating *Nec mihi sunt visae Clio Clinsque sorores*). The confusion of Fielding's *a* and *u* is not uncommon, as I have already shown in my second paper, p. 177, n. 9. One may possibly sip (or at least sup) with the Devil, but not, I think, with the Nine Muses: Murphy first made the necessary emendation in 1762, but this, like most other conjectures found in the errata, was never incorporated in later editions.

Western's dialect is as inconsistent as himself, but not entirely lawless. When he asks Sophia, "And *wunt nut* ha un then to-Morrow, nor next Day" (974.35, emphasis supplied), the compositor perhaps understood him to use a dialect variant of *won't*; but that form only appears in third-person constructions in Western's speech, and never without an explicit subject. *Wunt* here rather means *wilt*, elsewhere repre-

² At the 1973 Toronto Conference on Editorial Problems, Battestin might claim that he and his co-editor preferred 'the evidence of the original compositor to the "guesses" (or, to give them a more favourable construction, the "discriminations") of a present-day editor' (*Editing Eighteenth Century Novels*, ed. G. E. Bentley [Toronto, 1975], p. 11). This should be taken with several grains of salt: it sets up a wholly false antithesis between the compositor's "evidence" and the editor's "discriminations," as though the editor's only alternatives, like Hercules', lay between plain truth and easy beauty; it begs the issue of the editor's responsibility for the copy-text, by shifting his decision onto the shoulders of the compositors; and in point of fact, Bowers for one often prefers his own guesses, or the guesses of later compositors who never saw the author's autograph, to the evidence of the original compositor.

sented in his speech as *wot* (799.25), *witt* (976.5), *wout* (838.34) or, with the negative enclitic, *wout unt* (801.39). All these second-person forms, like *shat* (i.e. *shalt*) *unt*, *at* (i.e. *art*) *unt*, *bast unt* (or *nut*) are characteristically subjectless. I suppose Fielding wrote *witt nut*: for the confusion of his *u* and *n*, compare *Tencro* (426.12), *Honour* (355.11), and *Senses* (364.37).

A revision is often a less ponderous and intrusive solution to the ambiguity of the text than a note. Western's gibe at Parson Supple has baffled at least one commentator: "dost pretend that thee hast never got a Bastard? Pox! more good Luck's thine: for I warrant hast a done *therefore*" (189). He means that Supple has tried and failed (cf. *OED*, s.v. *do*, 16b), but the sense would certainly have been clearer if Fielding had written the word as he pronounced it, *therefor*. Though the following cannot have daunted many readers long, the ambiguity seems unnecessarily distracting: "*Honour* had as much Love for her Mistress as most Servants have, that is to say———" (604). The final "punctuation" looks odd, and even odder in the fourth edition, which shortens the blank from three ems to two. I doubt that either compositor understood what he had set. Finally, when Tom forgives Western, declaring that he is "an utter Stranger" to any offence against himself (963), Western's reply would be more intelligible if he had begun with a question, instead of hiccuping: "'A't,' says *Western*, 'then give me thy Fist, a't as hearty an honest Cock as any in the Kingdom.'" There should be no question of the editor's freedom to revise accidentals that seriously defeat his author's sense: not only Greg, but the more conservative McKerrow are perfectly clear on this point.³ By the same token, he is free to leave his author's nonsense standing, and even, by his silence, to pretend that only dullards could mistake the meaning: so many an edition has sailed between the Scylla of authenticity and the Charybdis of vulgar understanding. Bowers' program of emending accidentals in order to achieve a more authentic texture raises different, and in my opinion more intractable problems, given the extent of our ignorance of Fielding's preferences.

My fondness for my own conjectures does not, however, blind me to the uses of the conservative method "in its easiest, commonest, and most

³ W. W. Greg, "The Rationale of Copy-text," *Studies in Bibliography*, III (1950), 19-36, at p. 30; R. B. McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford, 1939), p. 43.

agreeable form," as A. E. Housman has it,⁴ of defending the tradition against the conjectures of other people:

Fitzpatrick had [who had, *Pollard*; having, *Wesleyan ed.*] been so well satisfied by Mrs. *Waters* concerning the Innocence of his Wife with *Jones* at *Upton*, or perhaps from some other Reasons, was now become so indifferent to that Matter, that he spoke highly in Favour of *Jones*, to Lord *Fellamar* . . . (965.11)

Bowers and Pollard both, I think, misconstrue "or . . . Reasons" with the first clause of the sentence, and thus feel compelled to subordinate Fitzpatrick's satisfaction to his indifference; but a coordinate construction is both possible and elegant. The misconception might be obviated by removing the unnecessary comma after "Reasons".

Discussing the instability of the text at the end of *Tom Jones*, in my third paper, I overlooked a confusion in the identity of Nightingale's cousin Harriet, whom Fielding once describes as his "Sister" (979.11). Like the reference to her as "his Cousin *Harris*" (966.36), this may easily be revised, and some experienced editors would sanction the revision.⁵ The harder question is why Fielding overlooked so many errors.

Desperata

As a legacy of despair, I offer three cruces for some future editor. What on earth is "the great *Dowdy*" doing when he "hum[s] forth the grumbling *Catch* along the Gallery" (301)? To *hum forth* may have the obsolete sense of "to keep on humming" (*OED*, s.v. *forth*, 3b), and a *grumbling Catch* may be a "mumbling song", but I do not have much confidence in either gloss. The combination of humming and grumbling strikes me as somewhat implausible, and the only other account of Dowdy says nothing of songs — which are supposed to be terrifying, and how can a mumbling song be that? Again, describing "two Friends" who are nevertheless trying to cheat each other, Fielding declares that frequently "neither sees nor suspects the Art practised against himself; and thus the Thrust of both (to borrow no improper Metaphor on the Occasion) alike takes Place" (781). What, exactly,

⁴ "Juvenciana (1907)," in *Selected Prose*, ed. John Carter (Cambridge, Eng., 1961), p. 106.

⁵ G. Thomas Tanselle, "External Fact as an Editorial Problem," *Studies in Bibliography*, XXXII (1979), 1-47. His argument would be clearer if he distinguished between emendation and revision.

is the metaphor? And how can a thrust (in any sense) be said to "take place"? Finally, we learn that Thwackum "had afterwards sufficient Reason to repent" his greedy demand for a second benefice from Allworthy, "as in the Case of those who mistake the highest Degree of Goodness for the lowest Degree of Weakness" (929). The sense seems to be, "as often happens in the Case"; but if so, it is uncharacteristically elliptical.

Bibliography

1. *Hardcover edition*: Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. With an introduction and commentary by Martin C. Battestin, the text edited by Fredson Bowers. The Wesleyan edition of The works of Henry Fielding. Oxford: Clarendon press, 1974 [March, 1975]. 2v. (lxxxiv, 522p.; 5l., [523]–1080p. incl. facsim.) front., 6 plates (2 ports.) on 3l., map.

Apparatus criticus, bibliography, index: p.[983]–1080.

ISBN: 0 19 812472 4. £20.00

Also issued with cancel t.-p.'s having imprint "Wesleyan university press, 1975"; ISBN 0 8195 4068 4. \$44.00

Reviews: (with another work) F. W. Hilles, "Fielding Unmodernized," *Yale Review*, n.s. LXV (Autumn 1975), 128–133; Clive Probyn, "Tomtopia," *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 April 1976, p. 472; (with another work) P. G. Boucé, *Études Anglaises*, XXIX (Janvier–Mars 1976), 97–98; (with another work) Ronald Paulson, *Modern Language Review*, LXXI (October 1976), 888–893 (with corrections); Michael Irwin, *Review of English Studies*, n.s. XXVII (November 1976), 473–475; C. J. Rawson, *Notes and Queries*, n.s. CCLIV (February 1977), 49–52 (with additions and corrections); (with two other works) Pierre Danchin, *English Studies* (Ghent), LVIII (August 1977), 358–360; Eric Rothstein, *The Eighteenth Century, A Current Bibliography*, n.s. I — for 1975 (1978), 289–290 (with corrections); Peter Milcs, *The Library*, 6th ser. I (June 1979), 182–186 (with corrections). *Also noticed in*: *Johnsonian News Letter*, XXXV (March 1975), 1–2; *British Society for 18th Century Studies Newsletter* (not seen); *Choice*, XII (1975), 840 (not seen); & *British Book News* (October 1975), 746–747.

2. *Paperback edition (revised)*: ————. Wesleyan university press [1977]. xxx, 990p., 1l. incl. facsim. map.

The text & notes (p.[1]–982) are printed from corrected plates of

the first edition, with the corrections tabulated on the leaf at end. The notes include some blind references to material found only in the hardcover edition; there is a possibly misleading error in the headline on p. 513.

ISBN: 0 8195 6048 [*i.e.* 4068?] o. \$5.95

Corrigenda

HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, XXV (1977), 101-113.

p. 112, n. 19: for "The Free Library of Philadelphia copies" read "The University of Pennsylvania copies"; & add the New York Public Library, Berg Collection to the locations not listed in the NUC.

HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, XXVI (1978), 172-192.

p. 181, line 8: for "1748" read "1743".

p. 191, line 13: delete "; the variant at 188.34 turned up by accident".

p. 192, line 3: for "Reccipt", read "Receipt IV".

line 5: delete entry.

line 15: for "IV", read "IV (c)".

And add the following corrections to the Wesleyan apparatus:

592.6 pursued] pursed IV (*u*)

592.12 Compassion] Companion IV (*u*)

817.31 every Body] *omit* Body III-IV

Though I thought I had checked the entire list on p. 192 for press-variants, the process was cumbersome and protracted, and one variant eluded me. I can now show that the inner forme of signature E in vol. 3 of the fourth edition is found in two states, of which the uncorrected state appears in the British Library copy collated for the Wesleyan edition.⁶

HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, XXVII (1979), 277-303.

p. 291: transpose notes 23 & 24 at foot of page.

p. 302-303: for "barber-surgeon and Jacobite of Hambrook", read "Gloucestershire barber-surgeon and Jacobite".

⁶ Now press mark Cup 407.bbb.1 (formerly 1206.b.5-8); it is available through the Xerox corporation's *Books on Demand*, no. AG1-OP13668, in microfilm or anastatic reproduction. The Massachusetts Historical Society copy (call no. DA 27) is in the same state; the corrected state is represented by copies at Harvard (call no. *EC7.F460T.1749f); Yale (Dickson collection); University of Illinois, Urbana (x823.F46t.1750, cop. 1 & 2); and the University of Iowa (xPR 3454/.H5/ 1750).

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