On the Restoration of Texts:
The Scholar as "Better Editor"


IT IS A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, that a classic American novel first published in a truncated form must be in want of a scholarly editor. Or so it would seem, given the steady stream of titles that have recently issued from trade publishers and university presses alike that are being re-presented to the public as "restored" or re-edited texts.

In 2001 Harcourt released Noel Polk's restored edition of Robert Penn Warren's well-known tale of democracy and demagoguery, All the King's Men. Polk's edition contains much material that had been changed by the original editors from Warren's typescript, including the name of its famous protagonist, Willie Stark, now presented as Willie Talos. The previous year, the University of South Carolina Press published a new edition by Arlyn and Matthew J. Bruccoli of Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward, Angel, based on the original manuscript, which bears the title, "O Lost." Not exactly a "restored" edition, except in the sense that it restores a lost work to a reading public, is the University Press of Florida's publication in 2002 of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's unpublished first novel, Blood of My Blood, edited from the surviving typescript by Anne Blythe Meriwether.

In the mass of new findings that came out of the CEEA-sponsored projects of the 1960s, scholars of that decade and the following one laid the groundwork for most of this editorial work, publishing in journals like *Proof* and *PSPA* articles that examined variants among pre-publication forms of texts and their published forms and, drawing on biographical scholarship and existing correspondence between author and editor, or author and publisher, argued that some of these texts were originally published in a form that essentially constituted censorship and that, because such changes were imposed on a text against the author's wishes, it was the intellectual, and perhaps moral, responsibility of scholarly editors to restore the work to the form in which the author wanted, or expected, it to be published.

These arguments were particularly important to the Dreiser and Crane editions, but to others as well. In 1984, Hershel Parker, one of the editors of the Northwestern-Newberry Edition of the works of Herman Melville, published *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction*, which discussed other texts that currently existed in what to Parker were patently unintelligible or unreadable forms, either because of censorship, or more often, the author's own inability or unwillingness to straighten out inconsistencies or anomalies that may have been generated by a creative process that was haphazard or somehow impure. Parker argued that authors work under the duress not just of editors impatient for a new book, but of extra-textual matters such as the reception of a previous work, the exigencies of needing money quickly, or even, in one extraordinary case, world events: the November 1963 installment in *Esquire* of a chapter of Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*, which featured John F. Kennedy as a minor character. Parker canvassed a wide variety of American novels that fell into one or the other of these categories. Parker argued that these novels should be reedited to be presented in a form that more nearly accorded with their authors' intentions.
Re-editing these texts and re-presenting them to a reading public composed of both scholars and lay readers raises some interesting questions, as does the similar project of publishing unpublished manuscripts that may exist in an incomplete or unrefined state. If a re-edited version of a novel is supposed to replace the "classic" version of the book, then what are the rights and responsibilities of the publishers and editors who are ushering them into print? What arguments can these editors make for claiming one version to be superior (in whatever context) over the other? For "lost" or unpublished manuscripts, is there a tacit fiduciary responsibility that the editor must assume toward Rawlings or Hemingway to act in the best interests of the posthumous reputation of the author? And finally, what, in general, is to be gained or lost from altering, retouching, or restoring a literary masterpiece?

* * *

Of the three works under review here, Polk's edition of All the King's Men makes the most persuasive case that Warren's unedited typescript is a greater work of art than the first edition. That is because Polk uses what we have learned the past twenty years or more to test the validity of his textual and critical judgments. These findings include what we now know about the aesthetic implications of second- or third-party editorial intervention, about the determinacy of the creative process, and about the emotional or psychological effects that may come over writers because of the peculiarity of the publication process.

The circumstances under which Warren published All the King's Men were not highly unusual, but they weren't without significance, either. The novel had a longish gestation, for one can see the earliest musings on Warren's great theme—how decency and democracy might survive in the face of economic hardship at home and a growing fascist threat from abroad—in the poems he was writing during the winter of 1937-38 as an English professor at Louisiana State University. Such meditations led him to consider in a deeper and more expansive mode the kind of doom that democracy may invite upon itself, and about how a man like the novel's narrator, Jack Burden, an essentially decent person might be destroyed by someone like Stark. Warren imagined Stark as a southern politician whose originally idealistic motives were corrupted by the abuse of power.

Warren first attempted to bring this character to life in a verse drama, "Proud Flesh," which was begun in the summer of 1938 in Italy, and carried through chiefly in Rome the following year. He resumed work on it in the summer of 1940 and again in the winter and spring of 1943. Between times Warren was pushing through on other writing projects, chief among them his second novel, At Heaven's Gate (1943) and an edition of Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner, as well as scattered scholarly essays and an updating of his coauthored text with.
Cleanth Brooks, *Understanding Poetry.* During these years Warren was teaching at the University of Iowa and the University of Minnesota. For Warren, creativity was a nebulous, ever shifting state of mind. "I usually carry several novels around in me," he told the literary journalist Harvey Breit in an interview. "I have to carry things around for so long that they’re all overlapping." (Qtd. in Charles Bohner, *Robert Penn Warren* [Boston: Twayne, 1981], 84.)

The novel was eventually published in August 1946, so its compositional history spans an eight- to nine-year period. Warren started sending sections of the work-in-progress to his editor at Harcourt, Lambert Davis, in 1943 and continued to do so for a period of about three years. Polk describes the resultant batch of pages as a “typescript setting copy” with a “ragged texture and consistency,” which may perhaps be seen as an “objective correlative to the actual labor of composition” (Noel Polk, "The Text of the ‘Restored’ Edition of *All the King’s Men,*" *RWP: An Annual of Robert Penn Warren Studies* 2 [2002]: 28; this is a fuller version of the editorial afterword included in the reedited Harcourt text.) Numerous internal inconsistencies in these batches of typescript (the color of Willie Stark’s hair and matters of that type), further create the image of Warren patching together a novel from stints of writing; thus Warren probably needed a sharp-eyed editor to delete digressive material and smooth out inconsistencies.

Polk argues that Davis and his subeditor, David Clay (both friends of Warren, as it turns out), did do a reasonably good job of finding such anomalies and emending them, but Polk points out that correspondence and internal evidence in the typescript demonstrate that their editorial suggestions and changes were being made while Warren was still writing. "It does not appear," Polk says, "that any of the three read the novel entire until galleys" (28). Thus Warren’s editors had a limited sense of what *All the King’s Men* was about, a partially occluded view of Warren’s whole canvas. Polk writes: "This limited vision of the novel meant that revisions and deletions suggested—and made, for the most part—in one part of the novel didn’t necessarily take into account how a particular revision would impact another part" (29). In other words, aesthetic anomalies resulted from an indeterminate creative process, carried out over a period of some years.

Polk strongly believes that Davis didn’t fully understand what Warren was up to in the book, so that "what Warren wrote is all but demonstrably superior in every instance than what Davis & co. changed it to" (29). Why then did Warren accede to bad judgment? Typically an author is tired after so long a period of composition and may be bored with a novel, tired of it, and ready to move on. But complicating Warren’s situation was the fact that he had a good relationship with Davis and Clay; that he sought their advice eagerly; and that after the novel was published, and for many years thereafter, he publicly praised
Davis as an exceptional editor who did a good job by him. All the King's Men was even dedicated to David Clay and his wife, Justine.

Nonetheless, the major changes from typescript to first edition have great significance for one's understanding of Warren's themes and vision, and like most such changes, they ramify into other areas of the book. The most important was probably the Cass Mastern episode. As a graduate student in history, Jack at one time was working on the papers of this man, whom he believed to be his father's uncle, a Confederate soldier who has an affair with another man's wife, sets out to find and free a wrongly sold female slave, and eventually becomes an abolitionist.

Throughout the text Jack calls Cass and his brother Gilbert Mastern his "great-uncles," "allowing his reader to assume that they are his blood kin through his father, the Scholarly-Attorney" (30). We later learn that the Scholarly Attorney is not Jack's father, and so he has no biological connection to the Mastens. Davis thought this was lying to the reader, so he made plain and obvious passages in which Warren/Jack had deliberately withheld crucial information from the reader. This element of the novel—Jack Burden the character versus Jack Burden the narrator—is central to taking in one of Warren's themes, the overlay of past on present, and the (self)-destructive nature of knowledge. It is the part of the novel that Warren fineses the most admirably: "the Jack Burden who narrates [the novel] knows things that the Jack Burden who acts throughout does not know," Polk notes.

A similar instance of Davis's editing occurs in a simple deletion, apparently done in service to the era's sense of decency and taste, in which Jack attempts to make love to Anne years after his first, awkward and unsuccessful attempts to do so. This time, he attempts to do it a little less gallantly, because he believes Anne to be more sexually experienced than she was the first time. The cut passage reads:

Then I assured myself that it wasn't Adam [Anne's brother and Jack's friend] I was afraid of. To hell with Adam, I told myself, did he think he could put lead seals on his sister's drawers. Hell, somebody had probably hosed her already. (384)

These are no mere raunchy musings on the dubious virtue of Anne. Jack the narrator knows that it was Willie Stark who has "hosed" her. Such knowledge has great significance for our understanding of the inner turmoil that besieges Jack throughout the book, for at the end of the novel it is revealed to us that Jack the narrator is married to Anne, that he was married to her while he was narrating this passage. Willie has in fact "hosed them both," Polk wryly points out. Jack Burden is one of the great narrator-protagonists in American fiction, standing right beside Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway and Melville's Ishmael. They are narrators who by dint of their special positions in the stories end up
telling their own stories as well. Much of that sense of reader-narrator
complicity was lost by Davis’s editing.

Two other major changes were crucial. First, Davis changed War-
ren’s original nine-chapter structure to ten chapters by splitting the
long chapter 4, the Cass Mastern story, into two. The single chapter
effectively paired Jack’s research into Mastern’s history with his re-
search into his own father’s past, Judge Irwin’s history, thus making
the section a more unified thematic unit.

Second, Davis disliked Warren’s original name for the hero, Willie
Talos, urging him in a letter of 3 May 1945 to change it to something
more “American” and more easily pronounced: “It presents an am-
biguity in pronunciation, and in addition carries a foreign flavor that
suggests a different background for the man than is actually the case.”
Someone, perhaps Warren, came up with the name Stark. It seems less
American than German—perhaps a fitting name for a dictatorial figure
in 1946. Polk argues, however, that the name “Talos” has metaphorical
overtones and a literary resonance that Stark does not, namely, in
its association with Greek mythology and with The Faerie Queene,
in which Talos is a mechanical man attendant upon the Knight of Justice.

This last change is somewhat difficult to judge, for while there are
passages in the book that speak of talon-like grips and strong bare
hands, the word “stark” is certainly not free of metaphor. This type of
change is probably the most difficult one for readers who are “used to”
the old text to accept. Willie Stark has become synonymous not just
with Huey Long but with the moment in Southern politics that gave
rise to many of the social issues that still exist today. It is rather as if
the opening sentence of Moby-Dick were re-edited to read, “Call me
David.”

Again a seemingly trivial point raises an important question, that
of audience. For whom are such restored texts intended? They must
perform be intended for everyone—not just scholars, but the general
public as well. And one can understand lay readers’ reluctance to be
told that the fictive character from a college reading list who still re-
mains impressed on their consciousness should really be called some-
thing other than what they “know him as.” On the other hand, if new
knowledge is discovered, shouldn’t it be the scholar’s responsibility
to make it public, for better or worse?

Polk’s editorial strategy is to determine, as is the normal process,
which reading in variant texts “more nearly represents what the author
actually wrote and/or actually, consciously, wanted, and then to restore
that reading.” He then emphasizes that the goal is not to select the
better reading, but simply the one that the author wrote.

This strategy is carried out in this restored edition of All the King’s
Men, yet I would argue that in his or her most useful capacity, the
scholarly editor today is functioning as a “better editor” than the
author's original editor—almost always better equipped intellectually, better trained critically, and simply better informed about an author's intentions, because he or she has the fantastic benefit of historical hindsight. That, it seems, to me, is what editors who restore or reedit texts are really about. They are time-travellers, in a way, using to advantage knowledge gained from later years and going backwards, so to speak, to impose it on a work of art. The result can be said to be truer to a writer's ideas, a purer work of art to be analyzed and appreciated.

The fortunate thing about editing texts, of course, as opposed to other art forms, is that the books as originally published will always exist in physical form. There is no danger that the restoration will mask or take the place of the original work of art, as is sometimes the case in controversial retouchings or restorations of Renaissance paintings, or in choosing a later or earlier form of an orchestral composition for recording.1

* * *

One may make the same case for the Brucollis' restored edition of Look Homeward, Angel, although the editors adopt a different strategy than Folk does. They provide only small bits of evidence to demonstrate the superiority of the original text to its published version. Actually, they seem mostly to leave it alone, to let it stand on its own merits. This is an admirable approach. However, in Wolfe's case, this is an especially important matter, since readers familiar with the standard lore concerning the author's verbosity (and unrestrained appetite for life) may question whether in this instance, more is better than less.

The story goes that legendary Scribners' editor Max Perkins took the young unpublished genius's rough-hewn manuscript and quarried from it a story that focused on the adolescent longings of Wolfe's central character and alter-ego, Eugene Gant. Thus was born a masterpiece, as well as a reverence for Perkins, who went down in history as one of the great editors of all time, a father-figure not just to Wolfe but to Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and others as well.

The story of Thomas Wolfe's boyhood, his education as an artist, and the development of his relationship with Perkins is well known.

---

1 The re-editing of orchestral pieces is commonplace. Famous examples include multiple versions of Brahms's piano trios and Liszt's "Transcendental Studies," the early versions of which most performers today consider unplayable. The classic example, perhaps, is the composer Rimsky-Korsakov in 1872 "re-editing" Mussorgsky's opera, Boris Godunov (1869). The rimsky-Korsakov version of the work reigned supreme for decades as the preferred version until recently, when there has been a strong movement afoot to return to the original.
Too well-known, say the Brucollis, for they argue that many misconceptions about Wolfe arose from this episode of American literary history—about his compositional habits, for example, and about the size of the original manuscript of *Look Homeward, Angel*. There is some inconsistency in their arguments. For one, they deflect the notion that they are criticizing Perkins's skills as an editor, yet in a de facto sense they are doing just that. They see Perkins as much less the "Editor of Genius" than his biographer, as A. Scott Berg called him, and more a person who overlooked the most marvelously Wolfean passages in the book, axing the richest satire and the lustiest humor from a masterpiece. How is this, one must ask, a great editor? Can one have it both ways? Like Polk, the Brucollis seem to be presenting themselves as "better editors" than Perkins.

The Brucollis also emphasize the mythology that over time has arisen about the author-editor relationship. They claim that "No American novel has accumulated more myths than *Look Homeward, Angel*. Generations of English majors have been assured that Wolfe delivered the typescript of *O Lost* by truck and that [Perkins] cut, restructured, revised, and rewrote an unpublishable formless outpouring into *Look Homeward, Angel*" (xi). They also say that in popular apocrypha the typescript was 350,000 words long and five feet high. In fact, they correctly note, the typescript had 1100 double-spaced pages and was 294,000 words long. It was six inches, they say, not five feet, high.

In his biography of Perkins, Berg does describe the typescript as "some 330,000 words" but also as "five inches high." Berg also says that it is 1114 pages, not 1100. (A. Scott Berg, *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius* [NY: Dutton, 1978], 166). Elizabeth Nowell, Wolfe's agent and first biographer, does not give any statistics on the size of the manuscript, but she does quote at length from the Perkins-Wolfe correspondence in which the latter frankly admits that he needs the editor's help in downsizing the manuscript because in his judgment it is too wordy:

I have no right to expect others to do for me what I should do for myself; but, although I am able to criticize wordiness and over-abundance in others, I am not able practically to criticize it in myself. The business of selection and of revision is simply hell for me—my efforts to cut out 50,000 words may sometimes result in my adding 75,000 (Qtd. in Elizabeth Nowell, *Thomas Wolfe* [Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1960], 128.)

Wolfe later jotted down in a pocket notebook a schedule of work "for Mr. Perkins" in which, at the top of the list, he proposes to "cut out of every page every word that is not essential to the meaning or emphasis of the writing"; and "to cut out the introductory part and write a new beginning," in addition to other sections (Nowell 133).
These notes and letters indicate that Wolfe sought help from Perkins and regarded Perkins's judgment as superior to his own. What exactly did Perkins cut? Many passages of arresting, vital writing. Yet they are also clearly digressive in their relation to the main narrative: the history of Eliza's brother Henry Pentland; scenes in Pulpit Hill that recount Eugene's college years; a parody of T. S. Eliot; a song about Canadian whores and a bestiality episode involving a chicken. In other words, a mixed bag.

These cuts were of an entirely different sort from those made by Davis in the text of All the King's Men. Cutting superfluous passages is not the same as cutting those that have a meaning that bears on other parts of the book and, one may argue, on the author's most central thematic concerns. We know that intention may be reflected in the ways in which a work is revised. G. Thomas Tanselle some time ago classified revisions by two useful categories: "vertical" revisions, which "change the purpose, direction, and character of the work; which, in other words, alter the work in kind"; and "horizontal" revisions, which "intensify or refine the work as then conceived; they alter the work in degree, but not in kind." (Tanselle, "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention," Studies in Bibliography 29 (1976): 175.)

In spatial terms, vertical revisions move the work to a different plane. "Horizontal" revisions are those which, to use a spatial metaphor, change the work within the same plane.

One could argue then in editing O Lost Perkins performed tasks which would be characterized as horizontal: condensation and clarification, directness of approach, unraveling of tangled situations, and elimination of repetitious passages. Put another way, take away these passages and do you still have a book that fulfills the author's vision, his so-called "active intentions?" Probably so. The book may be robbed of some wonderful writing, some superb self-contained episodes (which Perkins suggested be pulled out and published as stories), but the trade editor's job is to find a book an audience, often under difficult conditions. Length is always a consideration. The scholarly editor, on the other hand, is free of bottom-line pressures, squeamishness dictated by the market or by personal taste, and other circumstances. He or she has no bosses to answer to.

If the Bruccolis are functioning as "better editors," then how would one rate their skills? This is an interpretive question, of course, so readers' assessments of which version is more splendidly Wolfean will vary, just as Warren scholars will individually decide which version better represents their conception of Warren's achievement. With O Lost, however, the editors are not quite as clear as one would wish on the matter of who this book is intended for. It may be intended solely for the Wolfe scholar or aficionado; its publication, then, makes available for study a manuscript that scholars would normally have to
go to the Houghton to examine. Its being brought out by a university press would seem to argue thus. *O Lost*, therefore, is a kind of non-trade-house version of Wolfe's novel, one not intended for the masses.

Yet the Bruccoli's say in their front matter that they want a general audience: "This overdue edition is not a sentimental exercise for the enjoyment of Thomas Wolfe buffs. It is an act of resurrection and preservation that intends to position *O Lost* safely among the masterpieces of American fiction" (xvi). The sections entitled "Introduction," "Manuscript and Typescript," and "Editorial Policy," however, seem to have been written with a specialized audience in mind. The editors refer to Aline Bernstein, for instance, without identifying who she is (Wolfe’s lover and confidante, a successful set and costume designer in the New York theatre whom he met on his return voyage from Europe in 1929). Neither the dust jacket copy nor the encomiastic statements on the back flap from Pat Conroy and Kurt Vonnegut ever mention what the novel concerns, why it’s important, or why anyone would want to read it. Although this is probably the result of the University of South Carolina Press’s marketing department efforts and not that of the editors, there is very little material of an appreciative or critical nature about the book and its author. Instead, there are passages like the following, in which the editor assumes an importance to the work almost equal to that of the protagonist: "Discussion of a handwriting necessarily concentrates on its idiosyncrasies and on problems with reading it, exaggerating an impression of its difficulty" (xxx). Not the sort of sentence with which to introduce a classic to a new generation of readers.

There is lastly the question of what Perkins cut and what resulted from it. The Bruccoli want to quash the image of Wolfe as some audacious hillbilly novelist who needed the donnish Perkins to make him look sophisticated. Wolfe himself always complained about being stereotyped as an idiot savant from the mountains. Yet *O Lost* seems in some ways to promote this inaccurate image rather than dispel it. One might argue in fact, that Perkins gave the story—and, by extension, gave Wolfe—an elegance that Wolfe could not bring about by himself (as witness Wolfe’s remarks about the cutting of the book above). Moreover, some memorable passages are not much different in the reedited version than they are in the first edition, like Eugene Gant’s famous visit to Elia Corpening in "Niggertown," in which the black woman takes off her clothes and dances before him as she chants "Jelly Roll."

* * *

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’s "lost" first novel, *Blood of My Blood*, represents an editorial project of another sort, yet it also belongs to the critical discussion of how scholarly editors should be representing the
authors they study. The narrative itself is not very well executed—not surprising for a first book by an unknown writer—but the story of how it came to be edited and published by Anne Blythe Meriwether is one that, for sheer drama and human interest, could easily take its place beside the stories recounted in Altick's *Scholar Adventures* and similar accounts of literary detective work.

Some fifteen years ago, when Meriwether was a graduate student at the University of South Carolina working on a dissertation about women writers of the South, a rare book dealer in New York who knew of her interests sent her a box of manuscripts that he thought she could perhaps use in her research. In the box were a series of letters from Rawlings to Julia Scribner (later Julia Scribner Bingham), the young daughter of Rawlings's publisher who had earlier brought out *South Moon Under* (1933), *The Yearling* (1938), and *Cross Creek* (1942). Rawlings was writing to the teenager to encourage her to buckle down to her studies, ride out rough moments of her late adolescence, and understand that a brighter future awaited her. Bingham aspired to be a writer.

Apparently as some sort of first-hand support for her views, Rawlings enclosed a 183-page typescript of the first novel she had written but not completed. It was an autobiographical work, a budding writer's way of working through some family demons before finding a true subject for art. In Rawlings's case, that turned out to be the people of North Florida and their way of life. *Blood of My Blood* deals with one Ida Traphagen, whose "physical ugliness was the bitter drop that tainted the fluid of her life" (xxi). The rest of the plot uses a familiar paradigm: the mother living out her thwarted ambitions through her daughter and nearly wrecking the daughter's life in the process. The manuscript was sent to Bingham in hopes it would liberate her from the overbearing pressures of her own family. Rawlings told Bingham: "It is possible that in your case, as it was in mine, only your mother's death will liberate you, and that is a price one would wish not to pay for liberation" (xx).

Sending the manuscript to Julia Scribner Bingham ensured its preservation. Rawlings died in 1953 at age fifty-seven, rather embittered, as she had labored for ten years on what she hoped would be her masterpiece, *The Sojourner*. But that novel received poor reviews, and depression and alcoholism finally conquered her when she died of a stroke. Bingham served as Rawlings's executrix until Bingham's own death in 1961. The manuscript remained, apparently known to the rest of her family, in a box in the family home until 1988 when it was willed to the SeaJay Society, a nonprofit organization in Columbia, South Carolina, dedicated to enhancing public awareness of and interest in southern culture.
A few years later Meriwether gave a paper on the book at a scholarly conference. Word of it got back to Norton Baskin, Rawlings's second husband and executor of her estate. He sued the Seajay Society to regain possession of the manuscript, but an appeals court in 1998 upheld an earlier ruling that the Society could keep it, and that therefore the University Press of Florida could publish it.

It is a little difficult to understand what all the fuss was about. Reading the book presents no surprises about Rawlings. We know that she was a relatively unhappy person and that she laid much of the blame for her depression on her overbearing mother. The book is, in essence, not a novel at all, but nonfiction. It even has about it something of the unfortunate aspect of a tell-all book, an exhibition of dirty family laundry.

All of this raises the crucial question of scholarly editors' fiduciary responsibilities to the authors that they study and in various ways bring into print. Blood of My Blood was written in 1928 and submitted the following year for a competition by the Atlantic Monthly Press. The manuscript was rejected, and Rawlings never again offered it for publication, nor apparently ever told anyone of its existence, except for Bingham. Is Meriwether, like Polk and the Brucolls, acting here as a "better editor?" Would Rawlings have wanted this book published?

Of course, publication of a "new" or reedited work by a minor writer like Rawlings—or even major ones like Wolfe, Fitzgerald, Crane, and Dreiser—with a university press is also likely to have little impact on the general reading public. Such presses, with their small print runs, small advertising budgets, and relatively limited distribution systems, are in effect operating as mediums for circulating academic materials. In that sense it is highly beneficial for Warren, Wolfe, and Rawlings scholars to now have in accessible form materials that will enable them to understand their authors' lives and thinking more fully and deeply.

When T. S. Eliot dedicated "The Waste Land" to Ezra Pound in thanks for editing the original draft, Eliot called his friend "il miglior fabbro"—the better craftsman. In editing these three texts, these scholars are taking the place of their books' original editors. They are acting as "better editors." That is a highly useful service to scholarship and to the culture at large, and their efforts should be applauded. Critical interpretations of the results of scholarly editing will always vary.

James M. Hutchisson