

Editing D.H. Lawrence: New versions of a Modern Author, edited by Charles L. Ross and Dennis Jackson, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1995
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The author may have died, but the editor lives on with a vengeance! Just as we thought we no longer had to kow-tow to the authority of the author, here comes a veritable emendation of editors to lead us from the authored text only to ensnare us in the edited text (which was always already there, of course). But this actually confirms poststructuralist theories of textual instability and intertextuality if the emphasis falls not on the authoritative status of editors and their "definitive" editions, but on the interpretative nature of the editing process and on the versional and relative status of any particular edition of a work. And this is indeed where the emphasis of *Editing D.H. Lawrence* falls.

Michael Black sets the tone in the opening essay, where, in reconsidering the Cambridge Lawrence Edition, he admits: "we have not produced a definitive edition, for there is no such thing, and never will be" (22). Variations on the sense of "Editing as Interpretation" (Charles Ross's main contribution) are rehearsed throughout the volume, with specific reference to the Cambridge Edition. Ross, in a second short essay, plainly states the basic point: "There are always rival interpretations by which to establish a text of a work from original sources, interpretations that lead to different choices among variants from texts of a work" (190). Paul Delany, reviewing the Cambridge *Letters*, wryly observes that just as Cambridge "set out to preserve Lawrence's texts in a stable and authoritative format - like some precious object in a museum cabinet", such ambitions were being undermined by new theories of textual production which questioned precisely "that ideal authorial subject who supported the Edition's claim to knowledge and fixity" (176). But it is Paul Eggert who most thoroughly, and most eloquently, explores the theoretical problems and paradoxes of editing in his essay, "Reading a Critical Edition With the Grain and Against". He neatly outlines the whole complex debate when he writes: "Developments in editorial theory since the mid-1980s have ... enforced an awareness of the versional nature of literary works of art and of the importance of documenting textual "process" (in addition to establishing the extractable "product" - the reading text). It is possible to accommodate these trends while simultaneously holding onto the notion of the "work" as singular: in a pluralistic gesture one acknowledges the legitimacy of critically editing versions of the work corresponding to the editor's location of textual authority: whether in the author, in a personal or professional collaboration, or in a specific audience.... However, in countenancing widened grounds of disagreement about the object of critical endeavor, the literary work-behind-the-documents is tacitly acknowledged as multiple in everything but name" (34).

Editing D.H. Lawrence represents a sort of interim report on the progress of the Cambridge Edition so far, as well as an attempt to gather together some of the key critical debates that have sprung up around that project - debates about the aesthetic gains and losses of the new editions, about editorial policy and practice, about copyright implications, and about the extent to which our overall understanding of Lawrence has been altered by the edition. Of particular importance here is Dennis Jackson's typically comprehensive bibliographical essay surveying the editorial scholarship on Lawrence, 1975-1993. Along with his accompanying annotated bibliography, this is the most immediately useful contribution in the collection (and the best point of entry, even though it is placed right at the end of the book). For the general Lawrentian reader, the essays of most interest will be those which consider how new insights into Lawrence's art have emerged from intensive editing experience of his works. Christopher Pollnitz's essay on the late verse, Paul Eggert's second essay, on *Twilight in Italy*, and Helen Baron's essay on *Sons and Lovers*, all stand out here for their "new versions" of the author.

Editing D.H. Lawrence is an important and timely collection of essays, not only because it gives sustained attention to the theory and practice of editing Lawrence, but also because, in doing so, it unexpectedly opens up his works to contemporary critical theory in a way that mainstream criticism has often failed to do. Some readers may find the collection heavy going at times, both for its specialised editing discourse and for its frequently theoretical orientation (and here I felt that the editors could have done more to guide the non-specialist reader through the main lines of debate by providing a fuller and more purposeful introduction) - but this is a book certainly worth persevering with.