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Editorial

Works and Traditions: Early Modern Encounters. The title of the present issue of the *Journal of Early Modern Studies* – its first phrase in particular – would probably bring some Eliotian reminiscences to most readers' minds, even to readers who have not had the opportunity of reading the 'Call for papers' that invited contributions for this volume. At one hundred years since the publication of *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*, the editors intended to stimulate fresh reflections upon the meaning that such baffling terms as 'work' and 'tradition' have acquired from early modern to our times. As it is, the articles that compose this volume represent – *inter alia* – a timely tribute to the two works that more than any other have contributed, in different ways, to define the initial and pivotal contours of the ways in which both terms, 'work' and 'tradition', are now understood.

Since T.S. Eliot confronted these complex issues directly in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), the ideas discussed in his essay have never stopped arousing new insights into an area of speculation that has proved to be of crucial importance in the field of literary and cultural studies. Particularly present in subsequent debates has been Eliot's initial idea that tradition should not be conceived as a stable order of works, an idea that has since evolved into considering that tradition – to state it briefly – has rather to be seen as a dynamic chain of intertextual connections amongst texts.

Moreover, after a century since Eliot's first formulations, to speak about tradition as a stand-alone concept has become virtually impossible. Modern and postmodern considerations of any kind of filiation, and affiliation, in cultural and literary matters – indeed, in any field of humanities – have been keenly aware of the multiplicity of agents involved in the creative process and in the transmission of culture. In addition to the role of social, cultural, and literary agents, the impact of the technological tools necessary to turn a text, for instance, into either a printed or a digital work has gained more and more critical attention.

The same multifarious approach towards the understanding of tradition has been deemed necessary, as a matter of course, to deal with the connected issues of 'authorship' and literary 'influence'. We may say that 'authors' have not 'disappeared' from works, as the case so seemed for a few decades. Or, if they have, it is on account of the plurality of voices that scholars have learned to hear, and listen to, whenever a work of art claims their attention.

However, it was Eliot himself who stated the need to acknowledge the echo of others' works behind those of individual

authors, when he argued, for example, that 'the most individual parts of [a poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously', while at the same time dismissing the claim to find out in a particular poet 'what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man' (1920b, 48). In today's terms, we would perhaps say that intertextual connections could be discovered both along synchronic and diachronic lines, and that such connections run across all kinds of text.

Let us now pay attention, briefly, to the role of *readers*, when dealing with the concepts of tradition, influence, imitation, and appropriation. Once more, we will begin with Eliot: 'Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different' (1920a, 125). The 'good' poets – and artists in general – are for him those that make the establishing of a tradition possible; those that are to be recognised as literary 'monuments', and that, as such, 'generate' their own predecessors, so that their influence as an inspirational source may be perceived not only forward, through different epochs and genres, but also backwards.

The paradoxical logic of Eliot's argument would not hold without the associated concept that the works which compose the Tradition form a simultaneous order, in which past and present coexist at the same time.[1] More importantly, Eliot's ideas about Tradition could not have been conceived at all if the role of *readers* had not been taken, implicitly, into account. Who else, indeed, if not readers, is able to direct their selective and appreciative eyes *backwards*, and perceive both the 'pastness' and the presence of the past at a given moment? Readers, surely, but also authors *as* readers.

It is precisely at this junction that today's readers, in whatever capacity, may 'encounter' early modern works. The articles included in this volume of *JEMS*, considered as a whole, once more highlight the essential role of early modern texts, in their various instantiations, in inducing, and often shaping, our contemporary awareness of cultural and literary works as the outcome of collaborative efforts and this also implies, and demands, a reconsideration of the relationship between works and individual authors. The ideas connected to the construction of Tradition, or to its de-construction, has proved a timely and fruitful starting point.

An Eliotian *touch*, as it were, may indeed be perceived across all the articles. It is there, as a matter of course, when authors debate or recall Eliot's oeuvre directly, or some of his essays and poems, as is the case in the articles of Massimo Bacigalupo, Paul Eggert, Stephen Orgel, and Donatella Pallotti. But the same imprint is perhaps perceptible in the background of the articles whose critical path has led to investigate the ways in which the texts under scrutiny may concur in modifying established procedures of genre attribution, as in Alessandra Petrina's discussion of 'indirect translation'. The same kind of traces are present in the articles that throw light on the creative process behind Shakespeare's and Joyce's texts through perceived experience, both of facts of life and facts of fiction, as in Hans Gabler's discussion of Joyce's narrative poetics.

Likewise, the articles by Ivan Poliakov and Maria Smirnova, and Paola Pugliatti, help reconsider the rationale guiding the attribution of literary status to different types of text connected with the personal life and occupation of their authors, in times – early modernity – when the importance and value of documents related to private spheres were certainly perceived, but not clearly defined.

The fact that the literary reverence of our times towards such 'monuments' as the *King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer* is largely due to the projection onto the past of present

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[1] 'what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. … The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new' (1920b, 49-50).

cultural and linguistic tastes, and estimation, is brought to light in John Denton's article. Finally, it is also on account of our sophisticated technical instruments that Rosetta Stein guides us to see the *presence* of what is *not* there in a few prestigious early modern texts, and find out how adventurous the print trade could be.

Let us now turn to a concise overview of the single articles, in the order in which they appear in the volume.

The article that opens the volume, ' "The *Present* of things *Past*": Notes on Tradition', by Donatella Pallotti, offers a survey of some of the most recent contributions about the notion of tradition, coming from different disciplinary fields. Pallotti discusses the idea that through communication and transmission, and the mobility and migration of texts, tradition is constantly re-adjusted and re-interpreted to fit different historical conditions. This process of adaptation is 'a necessary step for keeping the past vital: it is the "present" contribution to a larger cultural inheritance which future generations may renew, reinterpret and revise in their turn' (*infra*, XIX).

The first section, 'Texts Become Books', opens with Stephen Orgel's article, 'The Archeology of Texts'. Here, in the process through which texts become books, the Eliotian 'Tradition' appears to have taken the form of a special kind of 'Archaeology'. Once such a process has produced the desired result, it will be possible, in retrospect, to consider the different editions of a single text through time; each one of those editions, in its *material* form, may then be examined as a successive 'archaeological layer' of the same text in the course of its successive development as a book. We are also reminded that 'any new edition necessarily involves a process of translation' (*infra*, 7) so that the new 'work' will render in a new form not only its direct source, but also the texts in the editions that have preceded it. The new edition will bear the marks, therefore, of the entire series of such an 'archaeologic' collection of texts (and books); also, in turn, the new edition itself will compose an additional layer in the history of its successive interpretations.

Unfortunately, as Orgel shows when discussing the history of the editions of Herbert's *The Temple,* even standard scholarly editions may lose contact, in various forms, with the manuscript texts that originated them, if only by slight modifications in the layout. These alterations may interfere, *in primis,* with the possibility of displaying the full range of meanings the manuscript texts conveyed. This kind of faulty rendering, in addition, may result not only in erasing potential sense and significance, but also, more importantly, in dissipating the awareness that something vitally important for interpretation, and its history, has been lost. Orgel also makes it clear that books and readers keep constructing each other: Tradition is never the same in different times, both in terms of its conceptual definition and of the material objects assigned to it.

The second section of the volume, 'Textual Trans-Formations', is opened by Alessandra Petrina's contribution, 'Ariosto in Scotland by way of France: John Stewart of Baldynneis' *Roland Furious'*. The essay deals with the crucial function that early modern French translations of *Orlando Furioso* had for John Stewart of Baldynneis' Scottish translation. Stewart probably composed it in the mid-1580s, before John Harington's translation of 1591, which is today much more familiar to modern scholars. While discussing the role Stewart's French sources had in his translation, Petrina calls upon the notion of 'indirect translation' and its related theoretical issues, and applies it to Renaissance culture. In this context, Stewart's French sources seem to play the role, as it were, of erratic go-betweens between Ariosto and the Scottish author. Equally engaging is Petrina's final plead for a non-linear, 'horizontal' cooperative and 'symbiotic' model to describe, but also analyze, early modern indirect translation.

We seem here to be apparently far from Orgel's 'archaeological' outlook briefly mentioned above. Not so far though, if we recall Orgel's words stating that a process of translation is necessarily involved in any new edition of a text, and if we also try to apply this idea to 'indirect translations'. In the case of Stewart's work, we do not have a 'new edition' of a previous text, but the outcome of a complex process of translation – which Petrina investigates – of an Ital-

ian epic poem through French intermediaries. Stewart's work makes visible, to early twentieth century readers, not simply a translation of a source text, but also the manipulations Ariosto's text underwent in the process. More generally, as readers, we may also consider that what a translation actually translates is not only a text, but also the 'practical' and ideological 'labour' that the translating activity involves in terms of cultural commitment and historical awareness.

' "till death us do part": The Afterlife of Early Modern Religious English', by John Denton, concludes this section. The author considers that the translation of sacred and liturgical texts has always kept a special rank amongst other types of translation. In particular, when it concerns the rendering of God's words, the translated texts, ideally, ought to reflect the truth, the purity and the beauty of God's expressions. Such an impervious task, in the hands of a fallen humanity, involves all sorts of social and political arguments, as the history of the Bible's translation makes especially clear. John Denton's essay recalls the essential passages of the itinerary leading to the *King James Bible*, and also to the first authorized editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Denton highlights the fact that the wide acceptance of the 'authorised text' of both works was due, *in primis*, to their forced imposition on the vast majority of the population, by State and Church. The author then inquires into the 'veneration' paid to the *King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer* by modern scholars and readers, showing that, in fact, such veneration stems from a process of revaluation, initiated in the nineteenth century. Readers have been more and more ravished by the solemnity and the beauty of the language those texts so impressively exhibit. Denton helps us understand that what may now seem an objective description of the perfection and sublimity of an early modern enterprise, is in fact the retrospective admirative tribute to an ancestral quasi-mythical world which is, for us, at the same time, forever lost and yet still with us. The tribute our time pays to Shakespeare's oeuvre may perhaps also be explained by the nostalgia for the same world, even if recreated more by imagination than historical accuracy.

The third section, 'Erasable and Hidden Texts' opens with 'The Genesis and Evolution of the Autobiographical Genre in Russian Early Modern Manuscript Culture' by Ivan Poliakov and Maria Smirnova. The article presents a discussion of some conceptual problems regarding the appearance of different kinds of texts (such as, for example, autobiographical notes, household records, or financial reports), all connected with the commercial, social or private activities of their authors, within early modern Russian history and culture. The essay opportunely starts with exploring the difficulty even to determine the appropriate time boundaries within which a Russian early modern period can be properly identified, and with the germane problem of discerning the emergence of a 'Renaissance person' in Russian culture.

The adequate terminology to be applied to Russian proto-autobiographical texts and notes is also examined, together with the uneasy task of attributing a proper genre or authorship to the disparate corpus of documents under scrutiny. The effort to unravel the many threads of these complex issues leads us to reconsider the critical tools scholars have really at their disposal to deal with texts and documents so distant from us (at least conceptually) in terms of spatial and temporal boundaries.

The awareness of the risk, or necessity, of applying our contemporary (or postmodern) sophisticated tools to 'unkempt' material of early modern times readily surfaces in Paola Pugliatti's article, 'The Text Known as Henslowe's Diary: Document, Book, Work'. We return here to the more familiar territory of English studies, since the time and place boundaries concerning 'The Text Known as Henslowe's Diary' are those of early modern England in its 'canonical' identification. Yet, the problems discussed in Pugliatti's article are as complex as those arising when dealing with texts coming from areas and periods less clearly identified. Pugliatti's object of study is a corpus of manuscript texts variously relating to the commercial or theatrical activities of the two original owners. These documents – both as material objects and textual items – are

considered in the process of being shaped into a bound book, containing John Henslowe's Accounts and Philip Henslowe's Diary. A book that was finally deposited with a mass of other manuscripts in the library of Dulwich College, possibly by Edward Alleyn.

The names of this 'theatrical' trio bespeak the importance of the documents in question, despite the manuscripts' unfortunate history of mutilation, manipulation, and forgery. A history that Pugliatti retraces in its essential stages, while examining the 'mobility' of texts pertaining to forms of *écritures ordinaires* – as Roger Chartier calls them – and therefore also of the critical terms that have defined their genre and value as cultural documents. In particular, the textual content and the material aspect of the documents associated with the term 'diary', receive special attention; all the more so since Pugliatti effectively highlights the collaborative structure of Henslowe's Diary and the authorship problems its scrutiny arises. Pugliatti's essay also reminds us that nothing in the study of 'memory objects' can be taken for granted, starting from the apparently unproblematic definition of 'book', or the complex concept of 'egodocument'.

This section, 'Erasable and Hidden Texts', closes with Rosetta Stein's '*when the poet gives empty leaves*'. The author puts forward a challenging and witty analysis – surely not at the price of neglecting solid scholarship – of how much information, in the form of hidden text, may escape the scrutiny of even skilful readers, when confronted with the trickiness of the outward appearance of early modern printed books. These may contain empty leaves which are, in fact, not blank at all. The technical and detailed discussion about the ways of exposing the 'missing' text may indeed exceed the competence of the non-specialist, but Stein's discussion also involves a 'call for reflection' of a more general order. What is at stake is the weight of conventions and of 'standardized' reading habits upon the practice of literary analysis. As readers, we are challenged to find out if there may be anything significant below the immediately visible surface not only of *texts* but also of *documents*.

Stein reveals, in the objects of her examination, half-hidden traces of text, waiting to be rediscovered by those who have the right eyes and instruments to perceive them. As if texts had a 'shadow zone' of their own, unwittily confronting the readers' automatic response to supposedly blank spaces. On a more general level, we may conclude that what scholars seem to see (or not to see), *in* texts is often what they see *through* them. Also, perhaps, that 'intentions' attributed to authors are often subtle 'inventions' of readers.

The fourth and last section, 'Traditions and Individual Talents' opens with Paul Eggert's 'The Writer's Oeuvre and the Scholar's Oeuvre'. Through his analysis on what distinguishes these two kinds of *oeuvre*, Eggert reverts to T.S. Eliot's long-lived concept of Tradition, challenging its validity and usefulness against the research opportunities scholars now have at their disposal, thanks to ever expanding digital technologies. These technologies make it possible to reconsider and reassess the conceptual validity of established perspectives in the field of literary studies. Eggert's efforts are directed to emancipate Eliot's concept of Tradition from the burden of its idealism, in particular in connection with the alleged continuity of literary 'monuments', which are for Eliot aligned in a synchronous, circular order. Such monuments, in fact, owe their outstanding importance to a cultural selection that leaves all 'secondary' works aside. Eggert invites us to consider that both monumental – i.e., 'canonical', in all effects – and 'secondary' works, have a function in the development (rather than the continuance) of literary tradition. Moreover, in all this, the personal itinerary of single authors through different stages of their art, has certainly to be taken into account. Works, Eggert contends, do develop in time during writers' lives, and bear the marks of cultural growth, as well as the traces of social engagements.

We may perhaps say that works also progress in *space*, a suggestion arising from Eggert's compelling discussion about the writer's self-memorialising oeuvre on the one hand, and the wider outlook of the scholars' oeuvre on the other. Both kinds of oeuvre are considered according

to a 'material' approach, sensitive to the transmission of texts through different documents in distinct times and media, but also responsive to the physical existence of various editions of works, and to the creative personal participation of all agents involved. A call for a 'bio-textual' perspective, 'with the scholar's oeuvre inevitably laying the necessary groundwork' (*infra*, 224): a path which doubtlessly opens to fruitful future developments.

A particular kind of bio-textual perspective may perhaps also be discerned in Hans Gabler's discussion of Joyce's 'dialogue poetics' of narrative, as emerging in his early production. In 'Emergence of James Joyce's Dialogue Poetics', Gabler's genetic approach to literary texts questions Joyce's understanding of Shakespeare's poetics of drama, identified as 'literature in dialogue'. A dialogue, Gabler's proposes, primarily set up and pursued by Shakespeare and Joyce within their respective inner experience, in surprisingly similar ways. Both authors are caught in the act of turning particular real-life experiences into texts to be incorporated – while they happen, or at a later time – in their works. Such experiences include their engagement as readers of their own writing, as well as that of other people. In particular, Joyce's poetics of narrative originates, Gabler argues, as the outcome of significant memory-stored events, registered mentally as 'perception texts'. These would be reused in Joyce's works through a dialogic exchange – which Gabler describes as intrinsically dramatic – between different sides of his literary persona. A creative process that – Gabler argues – Joyce could also find at work in Shakespeare's activity as a playwright and actor.

Particularly cogent appears Gabler's insistence that Joyce's texts 'invite, indeed necessitate reader perception and participation' (*infra*, 240), both when author and reader coincide, and when the reader is only the witness and the interpreter of the author's work. In both instances, present and past facts of life, and facts of memory, interact with one another, reshaping both experiences, those of the past and those of the present.

The volume closes with Massimo Bacigalupo's homage to *The Waste Land* and its author. '*The Waste Land* at 100: Comedy in Hell' also pays a tribute – through Eliot's quotations – to the 'reassessment of the western canon', that his poem contributed to enhancing. Bacigalupo retraces the core of Eliot's poetics, recalling some of the most memorable lines and *dicta* from his oeuvre, an oeuvre that still surprises us for the beauty, complexity, and lucidity of its insight. All the more so since Eliot's poetry, Bacigalupo aptly remarks, often pleases and communicates, in simple and enchanting ways, 'before it is understood'. The capacity to arrive directly at the reader's mind through the music of verse is a quality that Eliot found in Dante's poetry; yet, the same quality, doubtlessly, is a mark of Eliot's verse. Before any kind of thought or argument, the poet speaks through the music of his lines. A moment later the reader will be ready to realize that thought and feeling, mind and sense, have led author and reader, together, gently but steadily, *nel foco che gli affina*.

The closing words on tradition, the transmission of texts and their storage in one's memory, as well as their conscious or unconscious re-use by other writers, are entrusted to Francesco Petrarca. In a letter to his friend Giovanni Boccaccio, he distinguishes different ways of reading and recollecting. Only when you have 'thoroughly absorbed' the texts you read, he says, may you attain an imitation that is not sameness, and 'a resemblance that is not servile'.

In taking leave from this presentation, it is necessary to assume full responsibility for the synthetic account of the arguments discussed in the single articles of the volume, and for the loss of nuance and amplitude that conciseness involves. In begging the authors' pardon, we hope that a glimpse at spare fragments of their critical efforts will lead to the enjoyment of the real thing.

Angelo Deidda

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Part One

Introduction