



Unauthorized Mangan

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UNAUTHORIZED MANGAN

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'Mangan is hardly yet a Book. So it is, so perhaps it must be.'

– Louise Imogen Guiney

The only collection of poems that James Clarence Mangan ever saw through the press was a two-volume *Anthologia Germanica* that appeared in June 1845. The volume reprinted, with some revisions, 130 German translations that he had previously published in the *Dublin University Magazine*. At the time of his death four years later, the rest of Mangan's vast output of close to a thousand poems remained scattered in periodicals or in anthologies edited by others. Unlike the two major Irish poets that bookend the nineteenth century – Thomas Moore and W.B. Yeats – it seems that Mangan had neither the will nor the opportunity to 'collect' himself, to present an authorial identity that would be orderly, unified, permanent.¹

Almost two hundred years after Mangan's birth, a multi-volume *Collected Works of James Clarence Mangan* (hereafter *CWJCM*) did appear, edited by a team of seven scholars. In some ways, this might appear to signal an act of completion and of fixity, a resolution of a textual history characterised by dispersed texts, partial editions, uncertain authority, careless editing and unauthorised appropriation. When one of Mangan's nineteenth-century editors, the American poet Louise Imogen Guiney wrote that 'Mangan is hardly yet a Book. So it is, so perhaps it must be' (Guiney 5), she may have been thinking in the first instance of the frustrating condition of Mangan's texts, dispersed across multiple publications, afflicted with chronic pseudonymity, and wildly uneven in quality. In such circumstances, collection might well seem impossible, or even undesirable. The *CWJCM* might at first glance, however, appear to have finally produced that Book to which Guiney alludes; somehow Mangan has at last been comprehensively collected up and bound between covers.

But Guiney's use of the concepts of Author and Book, and her doubts as to whether the two might ever come together in Mangan's case, are more richly suggestive than this: in fact they point to a larger set of theoretical problems and paradoxes that arise for all critical editing. There is no doubt that any major collected edition, including *CWJCM*, is a hugely impressive achievement and an indispensable tool for scholarship. But the more interesting theoretical question is what such collecting activities represent in terms of the meaning of authorship, and how editing and interpretation may coalesce in ways that problematize some widely-held assumptions about both activities.

A 'collected works' in the traditional sense makes an individual poem or text a part of a larger structure centred on the idea of the 'Author'. Some collected editions are chronological – a structure that assumes a controlling authorial mind that passes through history, a subjectivity that reacts and records, moving in a linear way through sequential time. In such a structure, the poems are understood to be representations of the creative moments that occur along the way, abstracted from the flux of actual life onto the pages of the edition itself. Alternatively, some collected editions are organised thematically or generically, like Wordsworth's self-edited *Poetical Works* (1849-50), where the poems are arranged into non-chronological categories ('Poems founded on the Affections', 'Poems of the Imagination', etc.). Here the organising principle is less the poet's 'life' than some notion of the poet's 'mind'; yet both principles are alike in assuming the foundational presence of an authorial subjectivity. Although editors commonly explain their labour in terms of specific objective criteria – for example, the need to fill a gap, to establish a canon, to provide accurate texts, to rescue a neglected writer – the broader function of the edition in all cases is to affirm the figure of the author, not just the author as 'the individual who writes', but more abstractly the 'Author' as a formulation that controls the meaning and value of the literary work, exercising semantic, aesthetic and cultural authority.

¹ Thomas Moore oversaw the publication of his ten-volume *Poetical Works* in the 1840s, and Yeats published the first of several versions of a *Collected Works* in 1908, hoping that such an edition might represent his 'permanent self'; see *Letters of W.B. Yeats* (1954) ed. Allen Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis), p. 576.

The textual history of Mangan's poetry is an interesting case study in the relation between editing and 'authority', in the rich and allusive sense of the latter word. Every edition of an author is another contribution to the history of what Michel Foucault once called the 'author-function'. From an editorial perspective, the work of Mangan has made this especially obvious and problematic, since Mangan's work in many ways resists the usual means by which such authority can be constructed and stabilised.

In the 1969 essay, 'What is an Author?', Foucault argued that the concept of the 'author' ought not be understood merely as a kind of 'autonomous creative subjectivity'; that is, in the terms of post-Renaissance humanist thought. Instead, he argues, the author is better thought of as a set of rhetorical and institutional strategies for the containment of meaning. In other words, rather than posit the author as a subject preceding the work, or the 'figure of genius' whose intentions originate meaning, he argues that

The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning . . . a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. (Foucault 119)

It is important to note that the author Foucault describes here is not identical to 'the person who writes' (whose physical reality is not in question). Foucault's 'author' is a non-personal function in the economy of reading and power. This is 'author' as a rhetorical trope, and a very powerful one, because it sets limits to the way we think about, read and interpret literature. What Foucault describes as the 'author' is in fact an organising principle which is associated culturally and institutionally with certain names in order to empower them, and applied to certain texts to set parameters for their possible meanings. It draws limits around the intertextuality that always threatens to dissolve the coherence and autonomy of any text; it steers the reader towards an assumption that there is a coherent single meaning for the text which is guaranteed by the intentions of an authorial mind. In short, the author-function both enables and limits the possibilities of literary interpretation.

Although it preceded Foucault's formulation by a generation, the so-called Anglo-American tradition of 'critical editing' was a key instrument in the re-production and utilisation of this Foucauldian author-function. This mid-twentieth-century editing tradition, often simply referred to as the Greg-Bowers tradition after two of its major theorists – W. W. Greg and Fredson Bowers – was a companion to the 'New Bibliography' of scholars like R.B. McKerrow and Philip Gaskell.² It was responsible for monumental twentieth-century editions of Renaissance authors like Webster and Nashe, and for the American editions associated with the Centre for the Editing of American Authors (such as those of Hawthorne, Crane and Melville). Most of the modern editions of the Oxford English Texts series are also indebted to it. Speaking generally, this tradition of critical editing has seen its task as the re-presentation, in complete form, of the work of an author, with a critical apparatus to demonstrate the editorial principles and historical materials from which this particular representation was assembled. It tends to understand the 'literary work' as something singular and autonomous, and to distinguish the 'work' conceptually from any actual material texts. It assumes that textual manifestations of a 'work' are usually corrupted to a greater or lesser extent – that is, corruptions of an original work which exists essentially in the non-material realm of the author's 'intention,' or 'genius,' rather than on any physical page. Operating with this assumption, critical editing produces eclectic texts which conflate and emend earlier texts as the editor sees fit, and is readily able to justify its manipulations and reconstructions on the basis that a 'critical edition' may ironically be better able to represent the essence of the 'true' work than the corrupt historical texts which were tasked with representing it during the author's lifetime. These latter texts, the argument goes, would have almost certainly been subject to unauthorised emendations and errors by publishers or printers, or mistakes that have gone unnoticed even in authorial proofreading. With the application of meticulousness, creative sympathy, and a quasi-scientific method, the critical editor in the Greg-Bowers tradition is allegedly in a position to approximate the author's spirit-like intentions at the moment of creation, and bestow a certain (literal) authority upon the edition produced. At least that is the theory.

It is no accident that this influential editorial tradition arose at the same time as the 'New Criticism' within Anglo-American scholarship and pedagogy. Both are clearly formalist – focused on the production and interpretation of 'the text-in-itself', 'the well-wrought urn'—texts, in other words, recovered from the flux of history and contingency, to be approached phenomenologically. They are formalist also in that although this editorial tradition appeals to the importance of 'authorial intention,' thus suggesting some kind of historicisation, the 'intention' itself is thought to be transcendent—outside of the messiness of history. Philip Gaskell, for instance, writes:

² For a useful summary of twentieth-century textual scholarship, see David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship. An Introduction* (New York & London: Garland, 1992), pp. 332ff.

It is desirable that a reproduction of a work of literature should as far as possible conform to its author's intentions. As far as the larger features of a work of literature are concerned, the author is likely to have worked through the various stages of composition towards an end that he purposed and foresaw, although he may not have formulated these intentions precisely, even to himself. (Gaskell 3)

Now although at first glance this privileging of intention might seem at odds with the famous New Critical doctrine of the 'intentional fallacy,' it isn't really—the New Criticism still relied on a notion of a kind of an historical 'controlling imagination', responsible for producing the delicate ironies and paradoxes of a great poem. Thus its dismissal of the role of intention was not as complete as might have at first appeared – it merely projected the concept out of history and into aesthetics. In both these kinds of editing and criticism, meaning and identity are displaced onto a transcendental plane, beyond the impurity of material history, beyond even the faulty and changeable mind of an historical author. It is the editor who perceives and restores the 'original' object which is the true work.

Both the New Bibliography and New Criticism were primarily concerned with the literary work as product rather than process — that is to say, the work constituted as an singular instance, rather than as a series of events over time. Hence even the physical design of the Greg-Bowers type of edition involves the privileging of a single text (eclectically-reconstructed), the relegation of textual variants to small-print footnotes or endnotes, and the minimization of contextual material. Works are interpreted as if their essential nature is to be fixed and finished, not evolving. Textual history is merely a teleological narrative of maturation, directed towards an end which is always the revelation of the essential 'work' (which ironically never actually existed in the precise form the edition presents).

Such editorial practice, determined to produce singularity and authenticity, demands the construction of a series of idealised dichotomies – between editing and criticism, between the pure and the corrupt, between original and variant, between substantive variant and accidental variant, between work and text, between text and footnote – dichotomies which are also arranged in a hierarchy. Clearly this kind of theorisation, when seen in these binary terms, is open for deconstruction, and indeed such deconstructive moves have been undertaken by critics of the Greg-Bowers tradition in recent years – especially of the work of theorists such as D.F. McKenzie, Jerome J. McGann, George Bornstein and David Greetham. McGann, for instance, argues against the textual metaphysics of Greg-Bowers, and for the recognition that editing is always an act of interpretation, and that every text, including an edition, is above all a social text, situated in historical relation to other texts and ideological contexts. He also argues that ontological distinctions in the Greg-Bowers tradition, such as the distinction between form and content, or substance and accident, are in fact better understood as merely differing semiotic codes (e.g. linguistic and bibliographic) which cannot be hierarchised without some violence.³

Since the late twentieth century, alternative editorial practices to the Greg-Bowers method have become more common. These practices provide alternative models of textuality and authorship, sometimes to a radical degree. The German tradition of synoptic editing, whose most famous English-language representative is Hans Walter Gabler's 1984 edition of *Ulysses*, is one example. Whatever about the controversial details of Gabler's transcriptions, and his reconstructed ideal version of Joyce's novel, the 'synoptic apparatus' of the edition is a unique and admirable attempt to show *Ulysses* as a fluid process rather than singular product. So too, J.C.C. Mays's astonishing Bollingen edition of Coleridge's *Poetical Works* (2001) refuses to allow the reader the comfort of a simple rendering of Coleridge's poems – in one volume the reader encounters a readable single text of each poem, but in the multi-volume centrepiece of the edition, the texts are presented as a complex coded matrix of additions, deletions and revisions that display each poem as a history of manuscript and printed forms. Synoptic editing of this sort allows for the presentation of revision and variation without necessarily privileging any one historical version or copy-text.

In a similar rejection of the Greg-Bowers method, Donald H. Reiman, who edited the facsimile collection of documents entitled *Shelley and his Circle* (1961-2002) argued for what he called 'versioning' as an editorial rationale – meaning a kind of minimalist editing (such as photo-facsimile, or, nowadays, forms of digital archiving and web editions). This procedure can highlight intertextuality in much more graphic way than traditional editing – as in the case of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, for instance, which when reproduced as a typescript facsimile looks clearly like a work of joint authorship; Ezra Pound's contributions are no longer relegated to the footnotes but instead made visible to every reader in prominent crayon marks. Reiman also argues against the Greg-Bowers policy of conflating different versions of a work into eclectic, single texts, and instead makes the case that the uniqueness of each historical version of the text is of intrinsic interest. This move from 'edition' to 'archive' as a model for editing has

³ See for example, Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991).

been greatly encouraged by the emergence of digital technology as a tool. Digital web-based archives like the *Rossetti Archive* and the *Walt Whitman Archive* make for more ‘readerly’ editions that present users with an array of texts, manuscript images and supporting material, and effectively co-opt readers into the editorial process by allowing them to decide how and what texts to extrapolate to best suit their purposes.

In general, of course, these alternative editorial practices merely reinstate the figure of the Author in the Foucauldian sense—their theoretical and technological innovations are more likely to alter our conception of the ‘work’ than of the ‘author’. The new Oxford Shakespeare with its multiple *King Lear*s is still Shakespeare, and Gabler’s *Ulysses* if anything reinforces the canonical status of Joyce.⁴ The investment in terms of time and money that scholarly editions represent, be they critical editions, photo-facsimiles or electronic texts, also ensures their institutionalisation, and in reinforces the Author’s canonical status. In fact, as long as editions continue to organise texts around the figure of the Author, no matter how they may complicate the traditional idea of the literary work, they will remain fundamentally conservative.

So what has all this got to do with Mangan? Well, to put it simply, it could be argued that the editing of Mangan poses more obvious difficulty for the reproduction of the author-function than is usual for modern writers. For example, the dearth of manuscript relics of Mangan’s writing make reconstruction of ‘authorial intention’ more difficult – since we conventionally assume that manuscripts bring us closer to the author’s mind at the moment of creation. In this sense, the editorial problems of Mangan are more akin to those encountered in editing Renaissance drama, where manuscripts are also in short supply. Similarly, Mangan’s use of pseudonymity suggests a wilful refusal of the role of author in the conventional sense, as does the preponderance of translation in the Mangan canon. While some of the pseudonyms – ‘The Man in the Cloak,’ ‘Clarence,’ and so on, -- would presumably have been recognised by many of his readers, and despite the fact that pseudonymity was conventional (and sometimes strategic) in the period, the very fact that he uses pseudonyms so frequently indicates a very deliberate de-stabilising of identity, a reluctance to be ‘identified’. In a idiosyncratic twist to this question of authorship and naming, some poems are what Mangan himself called ‘the antithesis of plagiarism’ – that is, they are poems originated by Mangan but attributed to others, particularly imaginary German and ‘Oriental’ poets like Selber, Drechsler, Ali Baba, and so on.

There is also the obvious problem posed by translation. Are adaptations like ‘Dark Rosaleen’, or ‘The Caramanian Exile’ of the same literary status as an ‘original’ poem like ‘The Nameless One’? In the case of translations, where exactly is ‘Mangan’ to be found? How much of ‘O’Hussey’s Ode to the Maguire’, first published in an anthology of the ‘early native poetry of Ireland’ in 1846, is Mangan’s, and how much is Ó hEoghusa’s? Is Mangan, properly speaking, the sole author of the famous poem ‘And Then No More’, since he announces it as a translation from Rückert, who in turn claims to be translating from the Persian? Translation foregrounds in a very striking way the theoretical problems of originality, a key defining value of the author-function. In translation, originality (the condition of autonomy) collapses into intertextuality, a condition of dependency and dispersal. Critics have argued that Mangan’s translations, like pseudonyms, enable the poet to don masks – masks which both constitute Mangan, but in another way obscure him – or multiply his identities. Considering that translations in a very broad sense account for a huge proportion of Mangan’s total work, the questions raised by translation are central. There’s a very significant passage in the brief autobiography posthumously published in *The Irishman* newspaper (characteristically enough ascribed to ‘E.W.’, Edward Walsh, a real poet – but in fact written by Mangan himself). In this mock biography Mangan punningly alludes to the identity-problems posed by his work. He writes: ‘People have called him [Mangan] a singular man, but he is rather a plural one’ (Chuto, vi, 224).

In fact all of these characteristics signify a certain disabling, if not indeed ‘death’ of the author, making, one would think, Mangan an uncongenial subject for conventional critical editing that is dedicated to the reinforcement of the author-function. At the time of Mangan’s death in June 1849, the vast bulk of his poetry remained in the condition of the ‘unauthorised’ and uncollected. The earliest texts date back to the puzzle-poem sections of two Dublin almanacs in 1818; later poems appear in periodicals as ideologically diverse as the anti-tithe newspaper *The Comet*, the unionist *Dublin University Magazine*, Davis and Gavan Duffy’s *The Nation*, Mitchel’s more radical *United Irishman*, and James Duffy’s *Irish Catholic Magazine*. We know little about how actively various editors intervened between the receipt of Mangan’s manuscripts and the printing of the periodicals. Many poems would be published posthumously, including his Irish translations for O’Daly’s *Poets and Poetry of Munster* and *The Tribes of Ireland*. Now this is not to say that Mangan did not take an editorial interest in the publication of some individual poems—in fact one of the few surviving letters in Mangan’s hand is addressed to Charles Gavan Duffy and includes typesetting instructions for one of his *Nation* poems of 1846. Nor is it the case that Mangan did not actively revise and re-

⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, 2nd ed., ed. S. Wells, et al. (Oxford: OUP, 2005); James Joyce, *Ulysses: A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler et al. (London & New York: Garland, 1984).’

publish his poems—particularly his German translations. But in contrast to many others, Mangan did not engage in the sort of conventional retrospection and re-assembly necessary to the collection of one's work; to put it another way, he did not engage in the sort of self-fashioning which constructs the self (the author), as singular, definitive, whole—all the attributes, in fact, produced by the traditional 'collected edition.'

The plurality, or heterogeneity, which characterises Mangan is not only manifest at the level of production during Mangan's own lifetime—but is also apparent at the level of re-production, in the several main editions of Mangan's work that have appeared since his death. Each of these editions represents an attempt to 'collect' or 'select' Mangan's work—to gather at least some of it into a homogenising order which it does not appear to possess of itself. They also each represent particular interventions in the construction of Mangan the author-figure – the patriot, the genius, the drunkard, the penitent, the poete maudit.

The first significant gathering of Mangan's poetry, as already mentioned, was the *Anthologia Germanica*, published in 1845. It is a two-volume collection of German translations, chiefly from the Romantic period, gathered in the main from Mangan's articles in the *Dublin University Magazine*, but with most of Mangan's original surrounding commentary and notes excised, and a few textual changes. It is a useful reminder that the Mangan that came to be canonised as an Irish translator and nationalist poet, was known to his own contemporaries, at least up to the last four years of his life, chiefly as a translator from the German. Mangan's own motivation for the publication is unclear. It is likely that Charles Gavan Duffy played a significant role in organizing the project; in fact the book was only published because of a £50 subvention from him.⁵

The Poets and Poetry of Munster, edited by John O'Daly, included 55 of Mangan's translations of 18th-century Irish poets, and was published five months after his death. The volume's memoir (xiii-xvi) is an early biography: O'Daly notes that Mangan was a selfless supporter of his family, but drank too heavily. As a writer he 'never required revision', and was an 'unrivalled' translator, but 'totally unacquainted with the original language [Irish]'. The poet's manners and conversation are, according to O'Daly, 'best described by an extract from his favourite Schiller . . . "Not knowing whether it were craziness or a god that spake in him"'. Mangan, in conclusion, is one of the 'sad catalogue of the many men of exalted genius who asked for bread and received a stone.' This is Mangan as martyr to genius, a familiar construction.

In 1859, John Mitchel edited and published an selection of Mangan's poetry in New York explicitly for American readers. Mitchel's edition remained the largest collection of Mangan's poems until *CWJCM*, with a mere 178 poems, which according to Mitchel represented 'about 2/3 of total' (Mitchel 31) – a wildly inaccurate figure. Mitchel simply reprints all of *Anthologia Germanica*, with four additional German translations, which amount to three quarters of the edition. The remainder is made up from a selection of Irish translations, and twenty notable miscellaneous poems like 'The Caramanian Exile', 'Siberia', 'The Nameless One', 'A Vision of Connaught in the Thirteenth Century', and so on. In general Mitchel's transcriptions are accurate, but he drops stanzas occasionally and mis-assigns lines. His long biographical preface is enormously important for its construction of Mangan as the 'type' of Ireland, a rebel crushed and demoralised by history:

his history and fate were indeed the type and shadow of the land he loved so well . . . Like Ireland's, his light flickered upward for a moment, and went out in the blackness of darkness. (Mitchel 15)

One of Mangan's closest friends during the last years of his life was the priest and poet C.P. Meehan, at whose suggestion Mangan drafted an autobiography in 1848. Meehan was responsible for issuing three editions of Mangan during the years 1883 to 1884: The first was a revised edition of *Poets and Poetry of Munster*, which does not alter Mangan's translations, but adds one poem not in the first edition, omits another, and adds two translations not by Mangan at all. More importantly, it contains a memoir of Mangan's life by Meehan himself, and reprints Mangan unfinished manuscript autobiography. Meehan's memoir, like O'Daly's, stresses the poet's paradoxical character and martyr-like qualities, but gives them a stronger religious colouring – 'The Pentecost Fire does not fall on many heads; but assuredly, some of its lingering sparks fell on his' (xiii). He describes Mangan's education by priests, his bouts of abstinence, and devotional practice, and his death-bed piety.

Meehan also republished Mangan's *Anthologia Germanica* in 1884, with the addition of twenty poems (from Mitchel, judging from the fact that both make the same transcription errors), and with the omission of Mangan's original preface and notes. And in the same year, Meehan gathered together six of Mangan's prose pieces and sixty miscellaneous poems, publishing them as *Essays in Prose and Verse*. Half of these are German translations yet

⁵ See Ellen Shannon-Mangan, *James Clarence Mangan, A Biography* (Blackrock & Portland, Or.: Irish Academic Press, 1996), p. 251.

again. The volume includes Mangan's recipe for tar-water, and a report of a phrenological examination of his head made in 1835—the stress is on Mangan's whimsicality.

Louise Imogen Guiney's selected edition appeared in Boston, New York and London in 1897. Guiney appears to derive many of her texts from Mitchel's edition, but mangles the transcription severely in places, and insists on left-aligning every line of every poem. More importantly, she punctuates the poetry to her own liking, omits most of Mangan's notes, and even composes several additional lines. The edition contains 104 poems, from what Guiney alleges is a total of '2000.' Her long preface explains that the edition presents only the best of Mangan's poetry, since a full collection would amount to 'a sin of detraction,' most of the poetry being decidedly sub-standard. She explicates the work in terms of the idealistic, but undisciplined nature of Mangan's genius, and, contrary to Mitchel, Guiney argues that Mangan's character was fundamentally apolitical. For the first time in the editorial tradition, the Guiney edition contains an almost equal number of German and Irish translations, with a large body of oriental translations also included.

A very similar edition to Guiney's, D.J. O'Donoghue's 'Centenary Edition' was published in Dublin and London in 1903, and was frequently reprinted. It is similar to Guiney in terms of its proportions of Irish and German translations and Irish political poems, but contains many more oriental translations and humorous verse. It is also similar in respect of its inclination to emend, to re-punctuate and to re-title the original publications, and to silently drop or re-arrange stanzas. O'Donoghue admits to selecting only 'characteristic' poems (177 in total) arguing that 'the complete writings of Mangan should not be collected' (xii). An 'enormous proportion', he writes 'consists of mere escapades . . . and perverse torturings of sound and sense.' O'Donoghue argues that because many Irish poems have been better translated, most of Mangan's should 'rest in obscurity' (xv).

Later twentieth-century editions such as the 1973 Gallery Press's *Selected Poems* tend to rely on O'Donoghue, and thus merely perpetuate his textual distortions, as do twentieth-century anthologies like the Oxford and Faber books of Irish poetry. Christopher Morash's anthology of Famine poetry (*The Hungry Voice*, 1989) very usefully reprints a small selection of lesser-known Mangan poems from the late 1840s, but has some textual inaccuracies. The *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (1991) reprints 18 Mangan poems. In an interesting reversal of the balance in the earliest editions, two-thirds of the Field Day selection is comprised of Irish poems, with only one German translation. Brendan Clifford's *The Dubliner: The Life, Times and Writings of James Clarence Mangan* (1988) presented 96 poems, and reprinted for first time the substantial commentaries in which Mangan originally embedded his German and oriental translations in the *Dublin University Magazine*. Unfortunately, the actual texts of the poems seem to be often derived from O'Donoghue and Mitchel, and contain the same errors.

The early twentieth-century was marked by the magisterial multi-volume *CWJCM* which came to completion in 2002. Its great achievement was to present an accurate text of every piece of Mangan's writing that has been identified or recovered, with reliable bibliographical information and comprehensive explanatory annotations. As if to signal an ambition to at last supply that Mangan 'Book' that Guiney believed impossible, the edition was co-published with an admirable bibliography of Mangan's work by Jacques Chuto and a biography by Ellen Shannon-Mangan.

From an editorial and theoretical point of view, there are some interesting issues. The edition articulates its editorial principles only sketchily:

The poems are given in their chronological order. Where several versions of the same poem are extant, the editors have printed that which appeared last, except when it was suspected that someone other than Mangan had a hand in the revising. Thus, one hundred and thirty German translations which Mangan had published periodicals reappeared in the two-volume *German Anthology* in 1845; these later versions have not been retained because some of the changes they contain look so odd that Mangan is unlikely to have been responsible for them. (i, xv)

Although the *CWJCM* is visually and structurally designed to match the conventions of the Greg-Bowers collected edition, Greg and Bowers would certainly have balked at the use of 'oddness' as a sufficient justification for 'de-authorising' some substantive variants. The point, however, is not just a lack of rigour, it is that this brief explanatory passage does not feel it necessary to address some of the truly perplexing editorial issues that Mangan's work poses, and that ultimately bring us back to the author-function.

The *CWJCM* proposes to base itself on Mangan's final intentions for the wording of the texts. But even apart from the already-sketched practical and theoretical difficulties that arise with the concept of intention, there are further editorial problems. For example, this approach relies on an assumption that Mangan intended his poems to be read

as individual discrete items, an questionable assumption given that very many of them were framed by extensive prose articles in which Mangan offered running commentary on the poems themselves, with significant effects on the ways in which the poems might be interpreted. For example, a fragment of Freiligrath's anti-monarchist 'Guten Morgen' is translated by Mangan as part of an 'Anthologia Germanica' article in the *Dublin University Magazine* in January 1845, but the patriotic sentiments expressed in the poem are immediately undercut by Mangan's amusing commentary, which uses the poem to accuse Freiligrath of political and artistic hypocrisy, and thus invites us to read the translation against the grain of the original. In the apparatus of a modern collected edition these effects are likely to be lost; instead of a complex act of translation and interpretation, the poem is likely to be detached and surrounded by white space and line numbers, while the prose commentary disappears or is relegated to small-print at the end of the volume. Or, for example, in the case of the material first published in *Poets and Poetry of Munster* in 1849, it is a reasonable editorial question to ask whether a modern edition of Mangan should reproduce the Irish originals and anonymous musical arrangements that appear on the verso sides of each of the book's openings, facing Mangan's translations on the recto. Are they not crucial to a full understanding of Mangan's contribution to this volume, even though to reprint them would be to complicate the author function, dispersing it among several identities? Paratext in general is problematic to the author-function. In the case of the often-anthologised 'Siberia', for example, with its evocation of political exile, blight, hunger and death, it might be possible to argue that a good deal of the meaning of that poem for its first readers in April 1846 was its proximity on the pages of the *Nation* newspaper to reports of food riots in Tipperary and arguments for the repeal of an oppressive political Union. In such a case, what an editor might be interested in reconstructing would be less the original intentions of the author than the original conditions of reception.

Of course, the deeper point is that every edition is a construct – even an exact facsimile is not identical to the 'original' – even facsimiles are conditioned by their very form as 'modern' printed books, or images in a computer screen. The fantasy of 'getting back to the original' is absurd in a fundamental sense, and cannot be the rationale for critical editions. But what a critical edition can and does do is to provide a reconsideration of the work and of the author (not just an instrument for that reconsideration – as I hope I have been indicating, the edition itself is an act of interpretation and construction). Each Mangan edition, rather than 're-presenting' Mangan's original work in a straightforward fashion, constructs a version of Mangan as Author, recontextualises his writing, alters the relationships of texts with each other and with a myriad of contexts. The effects of editing are always to construct limits, to impose distinctions that are historically and ideologically and critically motivated.

Thus every edition becomes not so much an end-point or solution as a gesture towards a new or different understanding. As it is for critical analysis, so too is it for critical editing: in the end the gap between these two activities is not as large as is often supposed. Interpretive fashions and new directions go hand in hand with developments in the literary critical and theoretical sphere. It is no accident that concepts of the socially-embedded text arise at the same time in the realms of both literary criticism and editorial practice (for example, in 'New Historicist' criticism and the 'versioning' editorial method). Similarly, it may be that the renewed interest in book history and textual materiality is partially related to the recent proliferation of digital editing, since electronic surrogates alert the reader very quickly to the physical details of original manuscripts, books, paper, magazines and so on, and make profound questions about the relation between text and medium unavoidable.

Each edition of James Clarence Mangan, rather than straightforwardly 're-presenting' Mangan's original work, inevitably constructs a particular Mangan. Referring to Mangan's biographies, David Lloyd argues that all share 'the attempt to redeem the wretched and errant Mangan, reconstituting him as an ethical subject by identifying him with an aesthetic or political type' (Lloyd 47). The editorial history I've briefly described here similarly collects, selects, and reconstitutes, often in conjunction with biographical prefaces, producing different versions of Mangan as Author and Mangan as Book. My own *Selected Writings* edition (UCD Press, 2004) was an experiment with the reintegration of Mangan's poems with various paratexts, including musical scores and the prose articles in which many poems had been first embedded. It represents one more option for the scholar of Mangan, one that deliberately tries to draw attention to the limits of previous editorial practice and at the same time foregrounds real but interesting problems with the notion of Mangan's originals. At the same time, the edition still follows a conventional structure with a critical-biographical introduction, notes in small print, and a clear investment in the figure of Mangan the Author (and authority).

The more fundamental point is that from an editorial perspective Mangan represents a fascinating and challenging case study. Every new Mangan edition – print or electronic, collected or selected – must wrestle with important practical and theoretical problems that are not always as visible in the work of other writers. Rather than chase the impossible chimera of a definitive edition, it would be much more fruitful to hope that future editorial work will be undertaken in full consciousness of the complexities and paradoxes of 'author-ising' Mangan. In fact, the most interesting editorial experiment and reading strategy might well be one that consciously attempts the task of 'un-

authorising' him, detaching all that writing from the more conservative conventions that still accrue to the author-function in literary criticism.

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