THE ANATOMY OF AN EARLY ENGLISH-DEPARTMENT RESEARCH METHOD: SOURCES AND PARALLELS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Bir Erken İngiliz Dili Bölümü Araştırma Metodunun Anatomisi: Teoride ve Pratikte Kaynaklar ve Paraleller

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Abstract

After the Civil War, American educational reformers set about transforming the nation's higher educational institutions: to do so, they borrowed extensively from the contemporary German university model, but also introduced several important innovations, including the division of teaching and research into discrete academic departments. English departments, along with many others, were first established in American universities in the 1870s and 1880s. To organize these departments, the new breed of university presidents turned to the young Americans who had traveled to Germany in order to pursue advanced studies in language and literature. Trained in German philological theory and method, these scholars quickly organized departmental teaching and research along philological lines. Around the turn of the century, English-departments shifted from their initial focus on German linguistic philology to a focus on the broader vistas of German cultural philology. This article will briefly examine the theories and methods of cultural philology and will then discuss the ways in which one of its central hermeneutic methods, the investigation of sources and parallels, was used in actual research. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, this hermeneutic served to motivate and justify diverse kinds of investigation and was perhaps the dominant form of English-department research as is evidenced by its prominence both in journal articles and scholarly monographs and in scholarly editions intended for undergraduates and the general public.

Keywords: *The Modern American University; English departments; philology; sources and parallels.*

Özet

Amerikan İç Savaşından sonra, Amerikalı eğitim reformcuları ülkenin yükseköğretim kurumlarını dönüştürme işine koyuldular. Bu amaçla o dönemki Alman üniversitesi modelinden yoğun alarak ödünç almanın yanı sıra öğretim ve araştırmanın farklı akademik bölümlere ayrılması gibi bazı önemli yenilikler de sundular. İngiliz Dili bölümleri Amerikan üniversitelerinde ilk olarak 1870ler ve 1880lerde kuruldu. Bu bölümlerin teşkilatlanmasında yeni nesil üniversite rektörleri, ileri dil ve edebiyat çalışmaları yapmak için Almanya'ya gitmiş olan genç Amerikalılara başvurdu. Alman filoloji teorisi ve metodunda öğrenim görmüş olan bu araştırmacılar da bölümlerindeki öğretim ve araştırmaları filoloji çizgisinde düzenlediler. Yeni yüzyılın başında ise İngiliz Dili bölümleri, yönlerini ilk odak noktaları olan Alman linguistik filolojisinden Alman kültürel filolojisinin daha geniş perspektifine çevirdiler. Bu makale, kültürel filolojinin teori ve metotlarını kısaca inceleyecek ve daha sonra kültürel filolojinin temel hermenötik metotlarından biri olan kaynak ve paralellerin incelenmesinin gerçek araştırmalarda nasıl kullanıldığını tartışacaktır. 20. yüzyılın ilk yirmi yılı boyunca bu hermenötik; farklı tür araştırmaları başlatmaya ve doğrulamaya hizmet etmiş ve üniversite öğrencileri ve halka hitap eden dergi makaleleri, akademik monograf ve akademik edisyonlarda da görüldüğü gibi İngiliz Dili bölümleri araştırmalarının belki de en yaygın şekliydi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Modern Amerikan Üniversitesi; İngiliz Dili bölümleri; filoloji; kaynaklar ve paraleller.*

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Introduction

While the analysis of a still-current theory, such as critical theory and its various offspring, is rather like performing vivisection on a member of one's own species, the analysis of a long-discarded theory, such as nineteenth-century philology, is rather like performing an autopsy on a safely dead cadaver. It can be done dispassionately, without stirring up negative emotions, unhandicapped by the sneaking feeling that one is perhaps committing sacrilege. One can proceed even more calmly when the scholarly theory has been buried and so completely forgotten that even its near relatives have little memory of its existence, as is the case with the philological theory which dominated early English departments. It may objected, however, that it is entirely unnecessarily to disinter such a desiccated cadaver and that analyzing it can do little more than confirm one's morbid suspicion that death is in all things inevitable. Yet, an autopsy of the sort proposed here may well serve as a cautionary tale concerning the enduring validity of our own theoretical preoccupations. After all, since we now congratulate ourselves on having put behind us the simplicities of New Critical theory and on having attained a measure of theoretical profundity, it is all the easier for us to forget that English departments were, in their early decades, even more theory-driven than they have been since the late 1970s and just as confident in the durability of their literary scholarship.

In American universities, philological theory and its methodological apparatus dominated English departments from their inception in the 1870s until the 1920s and, in a modified form (known as literary history), until the late 1940s. Though there have been numerous calls in recent years for the revival of philology, perhaps in response to the interpretative excesses of critical theory, there have been relatively few efforts to investigate how philological theory actually functioned when it was the dominant departmental theory nor to determine what sort of research it actually motivated.[2] The present article aims to examine the origins of early English-department theory, particularly the theory of cultural philology, which served to sanction departmental activities from the turn of the century until the 1920s. The specific aim is to examine in detail one of the various research methods motivated and justified by cultural philology, namely the investigation of sources, which was for a two or three decades the dominant form of English-department research.

The Modern American University and the Early English Department

The modern American university emerged in the post-Civil War period. American educational reformers, such as Harvard's Charles William Eliot, transformed the traditional American college by restructuring it along the lines of the contemporary German university: electives replaced prescribed coursework, lectures replaced in-class recitation of memorized materials, and a vastly expanded curriculum replaced a course of studies that had hitherto focused primarily on classical language, literature, history and philosophy.[3] In addition, the German university's research model, which dictated that all subjects were to be addressed in a rigorous, scientific manner, was made central to every facet of transformed colleges such as Harvard and newly established modern universities

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[2] For a review of recent efforts to resuscitate philology, see Harpham, 2009: 34-56. Harpham, however, like those who call for philology's revival, rather oddly neglects that, for the first forty or fifty years of their existence, English departments were in fact organized around philological principles.

[3] The traditional college system, with its prescribed classical curriculum, did not give way everywhere at the same time or pace to the new academic system, but by the early to mid 1880s it had established itself even at the most recalcitrant institutions.

such as Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, and Chicago (Bledstein, 1976: 325-28). This was evident in the new curriculum which made ample room for the transmission of specialized knowledge on diverse subjects and in the new professional ethos which obliged instructors to transmit the latest research findings in undergraduate lectures and, in less diluted form, in graduate seminars. The influence of the German research model was even more evident in the graduate school, an entirely new academic division added on in direct imitation of the German university. The educational reformers of the 1860s and 1870s did not, however, imitate the German university's division of knowledge into broad disciplines; rather they borrowed, apparently from contemporary American corporations, the departmental system and used it to divide academic knowledge into discrete units of specialized enquiry, each with equal institutional status, a highly practical organization which had the effect of reducing competition between disciplines, but also had the unintended effect of reducing the broader perspectives provided by the German disciplinary organization. English departments, along with numerous other academic departments, came into existence in the 1870s and 1880s. English, like the other vernacular languages, had received scant attention in the traditional American college (Paulsen, 2013: 33-34, 45-47). Now, it had its own department, on par with the newly established classics department, and quite soon to surpass it in importance.

To organize the new English departments, reforming university presidents called on the young American scholars who had gone to Germany in and after the midcentury for the advanced studies in language and literature that were not yet available in the United States (Thwing, 1928: 43-45). These young scholars used the philological theory and methods they had imbibed in German universities to organize undergraduate studies, graduate training, and research publication. German philological theory posited that each culture possessed an inner essence that pervaded all its cultural products and, furthermore, that each period of a culture's history possessed essential traits that pervaded and unified its cultural productions (Herder, 1966: 157; Boeckh, 1968: 39; Sampson, 1985, 14). Early English professors employed this concept to justify the division of departmental inquiry into separate historical periods and subperiods, a series of research fields no less specialized than those in the newly established science departments. Furthermore, whereas the traditional American college had kept science separate and subservient to the humanities and had only offered the most rudimentary education in science, the nineteenth-century German university tied the humanities "to the mainstream of positivism and to the philosophy of progress" and modeled modern philology "in accordance with the structure and procedure of science" (Klein, 1979: 254). Since the early modern American university placed a similar value on scientific inquiry in each branch of knowledge, early English professors found in philology's putatively scientific theory and methods a ready means to combat questions concerning the seriousness of language and literature study and to demonstrate they too possessed a rigorous scientific approach to their subject matter. In order to be taken seriously in the modern university, "culture-subjects" such as "literature, aesthetics, the arts, criticism, and religion" had, as one English-department chair later noted, to be studied through "observation and inductive study" and thus "more and more become scientific" (Bright, 1902: lxi, lix). These strategies worked. Within a short time, American philologists managed to establish a secure position for modern-language departments in the modern American university. By 1883, they had sufficient confidence to form their own professional organization, the Modern Language Association, and to set up a series of specialized professional journals, including *Publications of the Modern Language Association* (founded in 1884), *Modern Language Notes* (1886), *Journal of English and German Philology* (1897) and *Modern Philology* (1903).

American English Departments from the 1870s to 1900: Linguistic Philology

In Germany, in and after the midcentury, young American students of language and literature had received training in two related forms of philology: linguistic philology and cultural philology. Both branches of philology resulted from German scholars' efforts to transform classical philology by changing its focus from the collation and textual criticism of manuscripts to the investigation of the history of entire civilizations and all their cultural products, including their languages and literatures. German linguistic philology, initiated by Johann Herder in the late eighteenth century and further developed Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Franz Bopp and Jakob Grimm in the early nineteenth century, transformed philology by employing linguistic analysis to examine the development of individual languages and to establish the connections between languages (Amsterdamska, 1987: chs. 2-3). Linguistic philologists aimed, first, to recuperate the earlier stages of each language since these were presumed to most clearly reveal the moral, philosophical, and practical spirit of the people who created it, second, to examine the subsequent stages of each language and, third, to establish connections between languages in order to discern the evolution of human culture as a whole.

By the mid nineteenth century, when American language and literature students came into contact with it, linguistic philology's larger aims had mostly given way to minute investigation of grammatical affiliation, morphological affinity and phonological shifts (Dowling, 1986: 74-84; Jankowsky, 1972: 169-172). Upon graduating from advanced philological studies in German universities, the young Americans who established modern-language departments in the transformed traditional colleges and new universities used the theory and methods of linguistic philology to organize the teaching and research in their departments. In their scholarly productions, English and other modern-language professors focused, from the 1870s through to the turn of the century, primarily on the production of linguistic philological research, including grammatical analysis, phonological changes, pronunciation variants, linguistic borrowings, dialect studies, and hybrid constructions. Literary works were examined, if at all, as linguistic monuments. Early volumes of *PMLA* featured the occasional article on the challenge of teaching languages in a nation with scant respect for such studies (see, for example, "What Place has Old English Philology in our Elementary Schools," *PMLA* 1, 1884-85), but the main focus was on matters such as "The Genitive in Old French," "The Factitive in German," "The Collective Singular in Spanish," "Remarks on the Conjugation of the Wallonian Dialect" (*PMLA* 1, 1884-85), "From Franklin to Lowell, A Century of New England Pronunciation," "The Semasiology of Words for 'Smell' and 'See,'" and "Proper Names in Old English Verse" (*PMLA* 14, 1899). Similarly, MLN focused on matters such as "The Silent T in English," "Some Disputed Points in the Pronunciation of German," "The Syntax of the Subjunctive Mood in French," "Speech Mixture in French Canada, Indian and French," "The Etymology of 'inveigle'" (*MLN* 1, 1886), "The Infinitive with Subject Accusative in Marguerite de Navarre," "Tennyson's Use of 'ss' in Blank Verse," "Schlutter's Old-English Etymologies," "Linger und Lungern, Long and Verlangen," and "Anglo-French Words in English" (*MLN* 14, 1899).

Cultural Philology and its Hermeneutic Methods

The young American scholars who travelled to Germany in and after the mid nineteenth century were also exposed to another, more expansive, version of language and literature study, namely cultural philology. At the turn of the century, when English-department professors shifted their focus away from linguistic philology, though without altogether abandoning it, they turned to broader vistas of cultural philology. While German

linguistic philology had, already by the mid-nineteenth century, been significantly narrowed down in its focus, German cultural philology provided a complementary theory that aimed not simply to study the history of language but to reconstruct the history of entire cultures in all their aspects. The founders of cultural philology shared with the founders of linguistic philology the notion that each culture was, during each period of its history, pervaded by a central essence that unified all its products. Yet, cultural philology, as elaborated by Friedrich Wolf (1759-1824) and his student August Boeckh (1785-1867), drew on all possible sources, from coins and engravings to inscriptions and written documents, in its effort to reconstruct the entire life of a people. Wolf, like Boeckh after him, aimed to make cultural philology into a professionalized discipline, to remove it from realm of educated amateurism and put it into the hands of diverse academic specialists who could, in imitation of the aims (if not the methods) of physical scientists, develop the theories and the methodological tools necessary to produce a kind of knowledge "no less convincing than those of which the exact sciences are so justly proud" (Wolf, 1807, qtd. in Bolter, 1980: 86). Wolf, however, primarily focused on employing cultural knowledge to determine the proper reconstruction of ancient texts. Basing his work in part on the methods of contemporary German biblical scholarship, Wolf systematized the theory and methods of textual criticism and, in works such *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795), demonstrated precisely how philological methods for analyzing historical, biographical, and other evidence should be brought to bear when attempting to restore the author's original text (Grafton, 1981: 103-126).

Boeckh imagined even broader horizons for cultural philology. Like Wolf, he proposed that philology should take within its purview the entirety of a people's cultural products and should aim, ultimately, to comprehend a people's philosophical, spiritual and practical orientations. Boeckh, however, divided cultural philology into two parts, textual criticism and hermeneutics, and while not ignoring the study of textual transmission, focused his attention on hermeneutics. In his influential lecture series, which he offered some twenty five times during his fifty year career at Berlin, Boeckh argued that the philologist's overriding task was "to present in every people its entire mental development, the history of all aspects of its culture" in order to understand each people's "inner essence" or "national spirit," that is, "its universal characteristic, as an organism complete in itself according to its own nonphysical existence, growth, and decay" (Boeckh, 1968: 39). In order to achieve such a goal, the philologist must aim to recuperate "the knowledge of what is known. Within the phrase 'what is known' are comprehended all conceivable ideas" (9). Thus, to comprehend the evolution of a nation's culture, philologists were required to address a vast array of subjects, including the history of its civil and military institutions, the history of its legal systems and its enacted laws, the history of its business affairs, the history of its private relations, the history of its religion and of its speculations on moral and philosophical matters and on the physical universe, and the history of its language and its various literary and nonliterary arts. As Boeckh put it, the "objects of philology, and consequently its subdivisions," were "as manifold as knowledge and its sections" and not merely confined to the study of "speech and literature" (38). Nevertheless, within this vast enterprise, a prominent place was given to hermeneutic engagements with literary texts since such texts were often central to a culture's self-conception and therefore central to any reconstruction of that culture's intellectual, spiritual and practical orientations. For scholars of language and literature, in German philological disciplines as in American modern-language departments, Boeckh's theory of cultural philology provided the conceptual grounding both for the systematic reconstruction and interpretation of a nation's literary history and for the

proper interpretation of individual literary works.[4]   By engaging in philological hermeneutics, literary scholars could contribute their part to the establishment, piece by piece, of a total science of civilization.

To facilitate a wide-ranging but systematic study of literary and nonliterary texts, Boeckh subdivided philological hermeneutics into four interrelated parts: grammatical, historical, individual and generic. Grammatical or lexical interpretation the involved explication of "the literal meaning of the words" and passages. It could not, however, "be completed without the other kinds of interpretation" for "one must first gain a preliminary meaning from overall knowledge of the language" (Boeckh, 1968: 51). The second hermeneutic, historical interpretation, involved understanding "the meaning of the words in reference to the material relations and context of the work" and was necessary because the meaning of a passage "consists partly in ideas which...are bound up with their objective sense by their references to actual conditions" (51, 77). The third hermeneutic, individual interpretation, involved the examination of a writer's specific use of language in order to ascertain to what extent the words of a text were "invested with additional, peculiar meanings" (51) and was necessary in order to establish the writer's "special manner of thinking and point of view,... This is his individuality. It manifests itself in every aspect of his being; it abides equally in word and deed and every feeling" (90). The fourth hermeneutic, generic interpretation, involved the understanding of the "relations which lie in the aim and direction of the work," that is, the understanding of the extent to which the meaning of words were affected by the writer's desire to conform to the rules of a specific genre (51). While it was "not possible to establish a canon of applicability for...generic interpretation" (107), it was nevertheless vital to comprehend the writer's goal or "end," which invariably "imprints the character of the genre upon the unity of the work itself" (111). Clearly, philologists needed to possess a stupendous amount of detailed knowledge since, as Boeckh noted, it was necessary even when engaging in grammatical interpretation to "fill out any lack from a complete observation of the author as an individual and from the historical circumstances and the characteristics of the genre" (61).

Each of these four related divisions of inquiry was supplied with specific hermeneutic methods. Grammatical interpretation required the compilation of source passages and parallel passages, for certainty could only be arrived at by establishing "the usage for every case through analogous cases" and thus "the interpretation of every passage of a literary work must be based as much as possible upon parallel passages" (Boeckh, 1968: 66). Historical interpretation required, in addition to a thorough knowledge of general history and of the historical period in which a work was written, the compilation of sources and parallels, together with the creation of "general and special factual lexica" (86-87).   Individual interpretation required a comprehensive knowledge of the writer's work and life and, more specifically, the compilation of sources and parallels to determine the extent to which the writer was influenced by other writers or by historical events, and the compilation of lists that classified the diverse aspects of the writer's style so that it could be determined, for example, "whether he chooses strong or weak, delicate or violent, images and expressions, whether he proceeds dialectically or dogmatically" (101-102). Generic interpretation required classifying aspects of a given work, in part by

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[4] Boeckh's *Encyclopaedie* remained, as university catalogs testify, the standard American graduate-school guide to philological theory and method from around the turn of the century until the early 1920s. At some institutions, it continued to be used as the graduate manual until the mid 1930s (see *Cornell University Official Publication, Announcement of the Graduate School for 1935-36*, 32). Boeckh's text was studied in German; with the exception of excerpts in Lane Cooper's *Methods and Aims in the Study of Literature* (1915), it remained untranslated until the late 1960s.

analyzing sources and compiling parallel passages, in order to establish the relation between a writer's text and "the history of his literary genre through all the ages of his nation" (108). Naturally, individual scholars could not expect to proceed very far on their own; yet they could be certain, or so it seemed, that by applying these methods to literary and other texts, they would be adding bit by bit to the total understanding of individual texts, of literary historical periods and, eventually, of the entirety of a nation's cultural production. In practice, even German philologists, despite being housed in an overarching philological discipline and thus subject to a degree of pressure to relate their research to the theory that motivated it, did not often proceed beyond the accumulation of pre-interpretive data. In American universities, where philologists were housed in separate departments, the pressures to connect research to the theory that sanctioned it were even weaker. As will be shown below, few American literary scholars proceeded from the accumulation of data to the actual interpretation of texts.

Of all the methods generated by the four hermeneutics, the investigation of sources and parallels was perhaps the most fundamental since it was necessary to establish certainty not only of grammatical, but also of historical, individual, and generic interpretation. In theory, the investigation of sources and parallels was a scientific method as useful in the analysis of literary texts as in the analysis of language. In the hands of scholars such as Jacob Grimm, Franz Bopp, Rudolf Hildebrand or August Schleicher, tracing linguistic elements back to their earliest roots and tracing their parallel development in related languages could at times help to clarify if not the whole history of a nation, as linguistic philologists sometimes imagined, then at least part of that history, albeit in miniature. Yet, the method was also essential for the recovery of knowledge about literary history and about individual texts and to make possible their proper interpretation. As the Harvard's André Morize noted, it was impossible "to reason in a discriminating manner about an author's thought or art or to make a sound estimate of his originality unless in advance we have discovered and explained whence his ideas have come; by what influences he has been affected; what writers have stimulated or nourished his thought; what books he has imitated, adapted, sometimes calmly copied" (Morize, 1922: 82).[5] Sources research enabled scholars to determine the exact meanings that words and phrases possessed at a specific time, which was fundamental to grammatical interpretation but also necessary for well-grounded historical interpretation since "it attract[ed] attention to certain works and certain writers, little known and oftentimes forgotten, who in their day were the vehicles for ideas, or the 'exciters' for producing the thought of more renowned writers" (83). Furthermore, it was "only by a careful inventory of the sources" that the scholar could assess the individuality of writers, that is, "what new ideas they contributed, and how much they availed themselves of traditions, of preexisting thought and learning" (83).

American English Departments from 1900 to the 1920s: Cultural Philology

Around the turn of the century, cultural philology moved from being a complementary though subordinate departmental theory, used to generate the occasional article or monograph, to being the dominant one. Though the professional journals still made room for articles focused on linguistic minutiae, such articles became increasingly rare during the first two decades of the century and by the 1920s had largely disappeared. Just as the methods supplied by linguistic philology had enabled rapid production of

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[5] Morize's *Problems and Methods of Literary History* (1922), one of various graduate-school manuals that began replacing Boeckh's in and after the 1920s, devotes its longest chapter to "The Investigation and Interpretation of Sources."

research for the first twenty or thirty years of English departments, after the turn of the century the methods supplied by cultural philology enabled the production of some twenty or thirty further years of research. The shift in focus does not appear to have been a cause for disagreement nor did it produce any disruption in departmental activities. In part this was because both linguistic and cultural philology posited that each national culture possessed an inner spirit or essence which evolved through history and effectively unified the cultural productions of each successive period of a people's historical development. Thus, cultural philology continued to serve, as linguistic philology had, to motivate and justify the division of departmental research and teaching activities into specialized periods and subperiods. Furthermore, cultural philology provided a theoretical apparatus and methodology which, like those supplied by linguistic philology, claimed to offer scientific means for reconstructing knowledge of the past.

In large part, the shift in departmental focus appears to have resulted from literary scholars' attraction to the broader vistas provided by cultural philology and their sense of its nearly limitless potential for motivating diverse sorts of research. It is well to remember that even though publication demands were not as intense as today, professors in modern-language departments, as in other departments, were even at this early date increasingly subject to strong publication pressures, all the more so since American graduate schools were turning out greater and greater numbers of trained professionals in search of positions. When scholars failed to publish early in their careers, this usually led to termination of their contracts or, at lesser institutions, to tenuous maintenance of their positions. As Wisconsin's Frank Hubbard noted, since "publication is the indispensable condition of promotion," professors were all too often tempted to produce "frenzied research" (Hubbard, 1908: 264).

When literature professors shifted their focus to cultural philology, it is perhaps not surprising, given the strong theoretical justifications for the study of sources, that such investigation quickly became the dominant form of English-department research and remained so for two or three decades. The shift was particularly noticeable in *PMLA*. Only the occasional article on sources appeared before 1900 but shortly after that date numerous pages were devoted to matters such as "The Relation of Shakespeare to Montaigne," "The Relations of *Hamlet* to Contemporary Revenge Plays," "The Literary Influence of Sterne in France," "Contributions to the History of the Legend of Saint George, with Special Reference to the Sources of the French, German and Anglo-Saxon Versions" (*PMLA* 17, 1902). In the teens, this emphasis remained with articles such as "Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in the Light of some other Versions," "On the Sources of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de l'Ame*," "Observations on the Origin of the Medieval Passion-Play," "Some Early Italian Parallels to the Locution *The Sick Man of the East*," "Spenser's *Muioptomos* in Relation to Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*" (*PMLA* 25, 1910), "The Influence of *Piers Plowman* on the Macra Play of *Mankind*," "Influence des Récits de Voyages sur la Philosophie de J.J. Rousseau," "French Influence on the Beginnings of English Classicism" (*PMLA* 26, 1911), "The Sources of Jonson's *The Staple of News*," and "A Possible Forerunner of the National Epic of France" (*PMLA* 30, 1915). In the 1920s, slightly fewer articles on sources were published but such research remained a common theme even into the 1930s.

Sources-and-Parallels Research in the Professional Journals

What remains now is to examine how the investigation of sources and parallels worked in actual practice, that is, to analyze precisely what sort of research it generated. To achieve a balanced assessment of source research, examples have been chosen, first, from

journal publications, second, from scholarly editions intended for undergraduates and the general public and, third, from scholarly monographs. One of the earliest source studies published in the professional journals is Robert Elkin Dodge's "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto" (*PMLA* 12, 1895). Over the course of fifty-three pages, Dodge categorizes Spenser's borrowing from Ariosto and offers a lengthy analysis of each kind of borrowing. All this leads to the rather mundane conclusion that, when Spenser "copies Ariosto, it is almost without a change" (196). And, when Spenser does make changes in the characters, scenes or situations that he borrows from Ariosto, it is principally because he had a more staid personality than Ariosto had: "Ariosto is humorous, ironical, worldly-wise—serious chiefly by artistic mood; Spenser is 'sage and serious' by fundamental constitution. Ariosto's attitude towards chivalry is that of the urbane sceptic, or of the impressionable artist; to Spenser chivalry is an inspiring ideal, the highest expression of human nobility and earnestness" (195). What Dodge apparently fails to recognize is that much the same conclusion could have been reached without engaging in the tiresome, but no doubt scientific, compilation of parallel passages, that is, simply by a cursory reading of the two writers' works. Some thirty years later, Dodge contributed "The Text of *Gerusalemme Liberata* in the Versions of Carew and Fairfax" (*PMLA* 44, 1929). Once again, he compiles numerous parallel texts, this time from several Italian editions of *Gerusalemme Liberata* and from the English translations, all in order to demonstrate that both Carew and Fairfax used more than one edition of the Italian original when making their translations. Having established that, Dodge proceeds to compile further parallels and comes to the conclusion that "it is safest to assume that [Carew and Fairfax] were aware of textual differences [between the various Italian editions] and that they found in these the means of facilitating or enriching their translation" (694). No further conclusion is added. All this is to no particular end, as far as I can discern, other than to record the facts, to set down another little building stone in the great edifice of philology.[6]

Another typical example of stone-laying is Clarence Andrews' "The Authorship of The Late Lancashire Witches" (*MLN* 28, 1913). Andrews starts by repeating an earlier scholar's contention that *The Late Lancashire Witches* "is an old play of Heywood's, revised by Brome to make it timely in its contemporary allusions, for a revival in 1634" (163). Since no one had as yet provided "a very accurate determination of the parts attributable to the two authors" (163), Andrews set out to correct this omission by drawing parallels between *The Late Lancashire Witches* and works known to be written by Heywood and Brome. Based on this evidence, he argues that the main plot, the central characters, and the comic situation must all be attributed to Heywood and that this "leaves very little part in the play to Brome" (165). Though Andrews presents no evidence that the earlier play had in fact ever existed, this did not prevent him from concluding, rather memorably, that Brome's remaking of the earlier play "has resulted in making a worse play out of a very poor one merely to be up-to-date" (166). Given this, one might be forgiven for wondering why he bothered to pay attention to the play and its possible parallels. Andrews' fellow philologists did, however, not entertain any such qualms, for his arguments were soon taken up and contested by R.G. Martin in "Is 'The Late Lancashire Witches' a Revision?" (*Modern Philology* 13.5, 1915). Martin questions whether the play uses any "material older than 1633 which would give ground for assuming that we have a 1634 revision of an older play" (255). After examining court documents of the Lancashire witch trials,

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[6] Dodge's main life work was his well-received critical edition of *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser* (Houghton Mifflin's Cambridge Poets Series, 1908) which, with its impeccably scholarly apparatus, runs to about 850 close-typed pages. Dodge and philology in general were on somewhat more solid grounds here: with textual criticism, the mechanical application of methodological tools could at least yield moderately useful results.

along with contemporary accounts of them, he concludes with conviction that the play is *not* a reworking of an older, no-longer extant play (257). Martin then proceeds to assess Andrews' arguments concerning parallels between plays known to be written by Heywood or Brome and *The Late Lancashire Witches*. In particular, he focuses on Andrews' contention that, based on differences in the authors' use of north-country dialects, the greater part of the play should be attributed to an earlier play by Heywood. Martin, however, employs Eckhardt's *Die Dialekt- und Ausldndertypen des älteren Englischen Dramas* to arrive at alternate explanations for the differences between the two authors' use of dialect and demonstrates, via parallel passages, that both Heywood and Brome were equally conversant with north-country dialects. He concludes that, far from being a revision of a supposedly earlier play by Heywood, *The Late Lancashire Witches* is "a straight piece of collaboration by the two men, done in the summer of 1634" (265). No attempt is made, in either Andrews' or Martin's article, to do more than accumulate pre-interpretive data, nor does either scholar appear to recognize that sources-and-parallels research was in fact designed to aid in the actual interpretation of texts.

Frank Gaylord Hubbard's "Repetition and Parallelism in the Earlier Elizabethan Drama" (*PMLA* 20, 1905) provides a further example of standard sources-and-parallels research. Hubbard aims "to call attention to certain characteristics of style that may serve as evidence in determining questions of authorship and relation of plays within the period treated" (360). To achieve this end, he establishes ten admirably scientific categories of repetition and parallelism, including "Simple repetition of a word or two," "Repetition of a word or words with an added epithet," "The first half of a line is parallel to the second half of the same line," "Two or more successive lines begin with the same word or two, or with the same word followed by one in parallel construction," "Two or more successive lines end with the same word or two, or with the same word preceded by one in parallel construction," "The first half of a line is parallel to the first half of one or more succeeding lines," "The second half of a line is parallel to the second half of one or more succeeding lines," "Whole lines are parallel in groups of two or more," "Alternate lines are parallel," and finally "Progressive repetition and parallelism" (362-68). After filling out each category with parallel passages from Elizabethan Senecan plays, Hubbard provides a handy chart which enumerates how frequently the various kinds of repetition and parallel occur in *Gorboduc, The Misfortunes of Arthur, Tancred and Gismonda, Locrine, The Spanish Tragedy, Soliman and Perseda,* and *Titus Andronicus*.

Summarizing the data thus compiled, Hubbard concludes that the study "of the English plays [such as *Gorboduc*] that copy and imitate Seneca shows in most cases a large amount of repetition and parallelism. A few of these plays have but a comparatively small amount, but most of them have an amount much larger than that found in other plays of the same period [such as those by Marlowe and Shakespeare]. Generally speaking, the nearer the play is to Seneca the more repetition and parallelism it has" (369). That this might be expected of plays modeled on Senecan tragedies seems to have escaped Hubbard. Undeterred, he then proceeds to a close examination of parallel texts in Marlowe and Shakespeare, after which he concludes that Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part II*, *Henry III, Part III* and *Richard III*, the plays

> which are held to show evidence of Marlowe's influence or collaboration, have in a marked degree these same Senecan characteristics that are absent from Marlowe's work. This fact will have to be taken into account in the discussion of Marlowe's influence upon these plays or his part in their composition. This fact, too, in connection with others too remote to be discussed here, will warrant the

general statement that Marlowe is more free from the influence of the English
Senecan drama than Shakespeare is. (377)

Hubbard further adds that "The great abundance of repetition and parallelism in the play
is an additional Senecan feature of Richard III not noted before; it may help to define
further the character of the pre-Shakespearian play upon which Richard III is based"
(379).

What Hubbard does not do is establish the relevance of this research to the interpretation
of literary history, except in its most pedantic details, much less to the interpretation of
individual texts. The methodological tool of tracing sources and compiling parallels was
intended by Boeckh and other cultural philologists to illuminate whence certain cultural
phenomena came and how they were transformed over time. Thus, Hubbard's
examination of parallels in the works of Kyd, Peel, Greene, Marlowe and Shakespeare
could presumably have helped clarify how certain cultural ideas spread through
Elizabethan society (or failed to spread) and also how these ideas were employed by an
individual writer. But Hubbard does not in fact aim quite so high: mostly what he does is
define, classify and tabulate. In this work, as in many other such works, it is difficult to
see much connection between the methods employed to yield research findings and the
ideas that originally motivated the application of these methods. It seems almost
uncharitable to add that Hubbard hardly gives any hint, other than in his use of quotes
from plays, that he is talking about literary works.

Sources-and-Parallels Research in Editions Intended for Undergraduates

The same tendency to give prominence to source documentation can be found in
scholarly editions intended for undergraduates and the general public. Herbert Eveleth
Greene's edition of *The Tempest* sports an introduction which, like the other volumes in
the Macmillan Tudor Shakespeare series (which were edited in the main by prominent
American philologists), covers all the standard philological bases, from evidence
concerning the composition date to brief summaries of materials Shakespeare may have
used for plot and character ideas (source materials). It continues with the play's relation
to other contemporary dramas (one kind of parallel) and to later adaptations and
imitations (another kind of parallel), then follows up with a few biographical forays and a
couple of lines of critical analysis, such as "*The Tempest* is undramatic...the opposing
forces are too unequal; the spectator feels no anxiety for Prospero, who is all-powerful"
(xix). Then we are given a careful listing and description of some deservedly forgotten
pieces which were inspired by (but did not exactly imitate) *The Tempest* and a final few
comments on the structure of the play to the effect that "all the unities of time and place
are closely observed" (xxii), a statement not perhaps untrue but perhaps a little deficient
as an interpretation.

William Strunk's edition of *All For Love and The Spanish Fryar,* published by D.C. Heath
in its Belles-Lettres Series, provides a more balanced approach and includes endnotes
that are actually explanatory and not simply an excuse, as was often the case, for a
display of expertise on linguistic derivations and textual variants. The first half of
Strunk's introduction, which focuses on *All for Love*, uses philological method in a
refreshingly sensitive fashion and reveals philology capable, in the proper hands, of
explaining at least some of the power of an artistic work. Strunk begins in time-honored
philological style by tracing Dryden's play back to its source in Shakespeare's *Antony and
Cleopatra.* He does so by convincingly demonstrating that, at all the points where
Shakespeare decisively deviates from Plutarch's version of the story, Dryden follows
Shakespeare's plot, not Plutarch's. Here the standard methodological emphasis on

sources and parallels seems quite justifiable. In the first place, Dryden appears to have borrowed consciously and deliberately from *Antony and Cleopatra*. Secondly, he appears to have used Shakespeare's play not simply as a source for random passages, but as a general source; consequently, the ways in which Dryden's play differs from Shakespeare's in tone and substance might actually illustrate significant differences between the two authors and between their two historical periods. Fortunately, instead of merely citing the passages that are parallel, an activity which would have contented most philologists, Strunk uses the contrasts between these passages to hint at the changes which had occurred between Shakespeare's time and Dryden's:

> To the vivid chronicle-play of Shakespeare, crowded with striking scenes and picturesque figures, an epic rather than a drama, succeeds the orderly tragedy of Dryden, in which sentiment has largely replaced passion, eloquence has often replaced poetry, and the complex and insoluble characters that Shakespeare accepted from Plutarch have made way for a perfectly intelligible pair of almost conventional tragic lovers....Dryden has simplified his material by beginning after the battle of Actium, by limiting the scene to Alexandria, and by cutting two thirds of Shakespeare's characters....This simplification reduces *All For Love* to a story of individuals, a personal romance, where Antony and Cleopatra is the picture of an age, a vast spectacle presenting the fate of an empire as well as the fortunes of single actors....With Cleopatra made over into an ideal heroine, compounded of queenly pride and true love, Dryden's play is superficially more decorous that *Antony and Cleopatra*, but essentially less moral. (Strunk, 1911: xxii-xxiii)

Presumably, it was precisely to promote analyses of this sort that the methodological focus on origins, which had been found so useful to the study of language, had been adopted by Boeckh for the study of literature.

By contrast, the second half of Strunk's introduction, which focuses on *The Spanish Fryar*, exhibits the typical weaknesses of source-tracing. Strunk proceeds, again in standard philological fashion, to examine a list of possible source plays and tales and to examine their plots at great length—only to arrive at the conclusion that Dryden might well have drawn his plot turns and characters from any number of sources. All this merely leads the reader to wonder why Strunk thought it necessary in the first place to rehearse the list of possible sources. Here it seems that philology, as the sanctioned professional research model, has simply become a methodological grid through which works must be extruded whether or not extrusion through the grid actually helps make sense of the specific work under study or of its place in history. What Strunk's introductory essay illustrates is that when philological methods worked (that is, when they helped make sense of a work and to explain at least some of the reasons why it should be read), it was perhaps because these methods were, largely by accident, appropriate for examining the text at hand. Sometimes, as in the case of *The Spanish Fryar*, they were not, but they were applied all the same. While philologists saw their larger aim as that of reconstructing social, cultural and artistic evolutions, it would appear that their methodological focus on matters such as sources and parallels usually did little to help them to achieve their aim. Often, their task of reconstructing literary history might have been far better served by making direct comparisons between earlier and later social, political, historical and cultural phenomena, instead of simply analyzing those phenomena which happened, willy nilly, to be inscribed in literary texts and whose inscription there was, after all, not merely automatic but mediated through, even distorted by, the authors' personalities.

Fortunately, Strunk's sensitivity to literary structure and style was not completely dulled by his adherence to what was by now a rather sterile and formulaic form of philology, for he does manage before the end of his introduction to Dryden's plays to raise some interesting questions:

> Dryden has duly linked together two stories at the proper points, but for a man who had already written twenty plays, this was hardly a remarkable feat. Is the junction of the two plots any better managed in *The Spanish Fryar* than in *The Spanish Curate*? And what of *Twelfth Night*, of *Much Ado About Nothing*, of *King Henry IV*? Indeed, one "beauty," as Dryden would have called it, is missing in this play: its two actions have only an artificial connection; there is no hidden congruity or contrast between them, like that which Shakespeare presents between the story of Hamlet and the stories of Laertes and Fortinbras. (xxxvii)

Strunk does not, however, pursue these matters any further, largely one suspects, because philological propriety did not encourage efforts to examine literary texts as works of art.

Sources-and-Parallels Research in Scholarly Monographs

Numerous scholarly monographs during the first two or three decades of the century were also devoted to the investigation of sources and parallels. A case in point is George Bosworth Churchill's *Richard III Up To Shakespeare* (1900). In this work, Churchill analyzes, and offers extended paraphrases of and quotes from, all extant versions of the Richard III story up to Shakespeare's version. Over the course of some five hundred pages, he covers seventeen chronicles starting with *Historie of the Arrival of Edward IV*, eleven poems starting with "The Song of Lady Bessie," and a number of plays starting with *Richardus Tertius*. The sources for each chronicle, poem and play are examined in detail. After this, Churchill finally moves on to an examination of the sources for various characters, incidents and phrases used by Shakespeare. Based on the evidence supplied by parallel passages, he proposes that Shakespeare drew the elements of his play from a variety of sources (539-42) but most especially from a play entitled *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* (497-528). What exactly this proves is unclear.

In theory, the investigation of sources and parallels was a scientific method as useful in the analysis of literary texts as in the analysis of language. Yet, unfortunately for Churchill and other literary philologists, tracing a writer's stories, plot details, characters, metaphors or images back to their earliest literary sources and tracing the parallel development of these elements in later literary works did not, despite the claims made by philological theory, necessarily reveal much about the social and historical trends that influenced a writer. In the first place, the changes in a story, character, metaphor or image might be motivated by historically trivial matters or might be purely accidental. Secondly, even when the changes seem to be clearly motivated by historically important issues or events, it does not logically follow that investigating such changes will necessarily, as literary philologists imagined, reveal *important* information about the literary work or about the historical and cultural trends that influenced its author. Thus, while Churchill clarifies which versions of the Richard story are Yorkist, which are Lancastrian and which are neutral (and delineates the changes that occurred when the story was told by one side or the other), the data thus accumulated merely reveals predictable shifts in focus and can hardly be said to elucidate the historical matrix of Shakespeare's play as satisfactorily as could a direct discussion of Shakespeare's social and political contexts. In addition to being of limited value for analyzing a literary work

as a historical document, sources-and-parallels research had absolutely no value at all for determining whether a work was actually interesting as a piece of literature. Not surprisingly, there is no hint given anywhere in Churchill's work as to why someone might actually want to read Shakespeare's version of the Richard story.[7] Churchill's contemporaries were, however, less harsh: Frederic Carpenter, a philologist at Chicago, concluded, in his MLN review, that the book was "done wholly and well" and was "an important contribution to Shakespeare scholarship" (Carpenter, 1900: 502).

The final sources-and-parallels monograph to be examined here is by Harvard's George Lyman Kittredge (1860-1941), who was perhaps the most influential American philologist between the 1890s and his death in the 1940s. Kittredge's much-imitated *Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* (1916), a product of some twenty years of research, offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the connections between the *Gawain* text and the texts on which it was based, as well as the subsequent texts which appear to have been based on it. Kittredge's main argument is that the distant sources of the poem were Irish texts, whereas the most probable "immediate source *Gawain and the Green Knight* was a [lost] French poem" (3). In order to prove his contentions, Kittredge analyzes, and provides paraphrases or quotes from, the versions of the story (or portions of the story) up to and after the *Gawain* text. Through comparison of numerous parallel passages and the examination of historical references, Kittredge convincingly demonstrates that a number of earlier works provided sources for various phrases, incidents and characters in the *Gawain* text. What he does not do, however, is demonstrate how his findings concerning the poem's sources can be used to interpret anything beyond the occasional brief passage, nor how these findings might produce significant insights into literary or cultural evolutions. In short, however interesting his data is in and of itself, Kittredge does not prove that it is actually relevant for interpreting *Gawain* either as a literary work or even as a significant social or historical document. As in works by lesser philologists, here again, the hermeneutic method has taken over from the hermeneutic end which presumably justifies the research in the first place.

Conclusion: Assessing the Successes and Failures of Sources-and-Parallels Scholarship

Research into sources and parallels could and at times did lead to a more accurate dating of texts, to a clearer understanding of an author's debts to other authors, and even to an understanding of an author's response to ideas generally current during his or her times. Still, such minor successes hardly seem to justify the enormous energy expended on the enterprise nor the amount of space devoted to such matters in the professional journals, in undergraduate editions and in scholarly monographs. Though the hermeneutic method of source investigation was clearly intended to provide the data deemed necessary for the grammatical, historical, individual and generic interpretation of literary works, few

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[7] Churchill's introduction to the Macmillan Tudor edition of *The Tragedy of Richard the Third* (1914) does provide some scanty gesture in this direction in its final section entitled "Interpretation." Here, he asserts that "Richard III, if it is to be read with understanding *cannot* be read alone," for "it is part of that greater story, the struggle of York and Lancaster to the throne of England" (xxi, emphasis added). He then adds that, since eight of Shakespeare's ten history plays involve the struggle of York and Lancaster, his audience was prepared to see this work as a grand culmination. This may be so, but one can sense why the New Critics were so frustrated by this sort of analysis, which, though useful for elucidating some aspects of the text and of its background, is nevertheless all that is offered as interpretation. Once again, it is hard to see from Churchill's Tudor introduction why one might actually want to read Shakespeare's play instead of, say, a more full-blown historical account of the York-Lancaster conflict.

philologists actually proceeded to the interpretation of texts, except for the occasional short passage. Rather, for the most part, they contented themselves with the mechanical application of method and with the amassing of minor facts. They simply took it for granted that the continued accumulation of philological data would somehow make it possible for later scholars to build up scientific interpretations of individual texts, of historical periods and of entire cultures. That this did not happen or seem likely to happen, even after several decades of philological inquiry, does not seem to have caused significant doubts concerning the validity of the philological theory or the methods it motivated. Though philology gradually modulated in the 1920s and 1930s into literary history, its less theoretically rigorous offspring, this new shift for the most part simply represented a scaling down of philology's grand ambition of erecting a scientific edifice of knowledge about culture.

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