

The Unseen Hand: Hidden Intervention in Textual Production

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Introduction:

Since the introduction of printing in England in the late fifteenth century, book production in the English-speaking world has developed into a complex cultural, commercial and industrial process. One powerful but often invisible part of this process is editing, and those who read a text need to be aware of the mediating role of the editor. Editing is a value-laden process and the editor can be seen as a cultural gatekeeper. The editor has multiple responsibilities that at times conflict: to the employing publisher, to the manuscript, to the writer (particularly of autobiographical writing) and to the reader. Editing itself is a process of negotiation between writer and editor, and the editorial role involves negotiation between these sometimes competing responsibilities and aims.

Editing takes place early in the production of a book, and can consist of the addition or deletion of material, emendation, and standardisation and rearrangement of text within a manuscript. Editing practice has evolved over the centuries and today these changes are often couched as suggestions to the author, based on the editor's overall vision for the book, her knowledge of literary styles, genres and conventions and her (perhaps unconscious) assumptions and biases. The commercial aspect of book publishing influences not only how a manuscript is edited, but often which manuscript is edited, how much time is given over to editing, what readership is assumed, what generic category is chosen, and what marketing or promotional plans are developed.

In addition to the context in which the manuscript is edited, and the basis on which an editor makes her decisions, editorial decision making can influence the reading of a text by the material the editor chooses to place around it. This material can include introductions; forewords; prefaces; epigraphs; titles and subtitles; notes about the editing process and collaborations and on

language, spelling or pronunciation; appendices; genealogies; maps, photographs and other illustrations; epilogues; time lines; references of many kinds; and blurbs (publishers' jacket copy). These meta-texts Gerard Genette calls peritext; they are 'liminal devices and conventions [...] that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader [... and] are part of a book's private and public history' (in Genette, back cover blurb). Further, the blurb argues, 'the special pragmatic status of [peritext] requires a carefully calibrated analysis of [its] illocutionary force' (ibid). It is because these peritexts are, for the most part, chosen and inserted by the editor that they are of interest here.

This paper will consider, first, what editing is, and then examine the implications around the assumption of a potential readership, the 'imagined' reader'. Third, it will outline two of the roles of the editor, as 'ideal reader' of the manuscript and 'gatekeeper' of the language, and discuss ways these roles can influence a text. Examples will be given from various sources including my experience of editing Indigenous Australian women's life writing; these examples have, I believe, relevance for other cross-cultural situations.

Definitions:

The term 'editing' covers a multitude of tasks; these can include the commissioning of manuscripts, substantive and copy editing of manuscripts, and project management. This paper deals with the second and third of these tasks: substantive or structural editing, which considers the overall structure of a text, and copy editing, sometimes seen as less influential (and certainly less glamorous), which focuses on the details of grammar, punctuation, spelling and consistency of style.

Other, seemingly minor, areas in which an editor may be involved include the choice of title, the genre that will classify the book for marketing and archival purposes, and the writing of

the blurb and copy for marketing purposes. All these areas - choice of title, genre categorisation and blurbs - have the capacity to influence reader expectation and hence reception of the book.

How editors view what they do is instructive, and will give an indication of the attitudes that editors bring to their work. Definitions by editors range from the mundane: 'the art and craft of shaping and refining a manuscript into a publishable book' (Sharpe and Gunther 1) to the constructive: assisting 'the author to realize the *author's* intention' (Sale 263, emphasis in original) - more useful because it emphasises the centrality of the writer and puts to one side the editor as employee, of writer or of publishing house. Nonetheless, it is also constructive to consider even the seemingly mundane references to a manuscript as 'shaped' and 'refined' in the editing process. Wendy Wolf states that her editorial role: 'isn't to *correct* [the author's] words, but to alert the author to the impact of his or her phrases: "This is how I read this sentence; this is what it says to me. Is this what you *want* it to say?"' (Wolf 239, emphasis in original). Thus, the editor provides feedback to the writer and acts as a sounding board, in some senses giving the writer a responsive reader to write to. Even at this stage of the production process, feedback has the capacity to influence and subtly change aspects of the manuscript in such areas as the inclusion of further explanatory material, the deletion of material judged to be repetitious or irrelevant, or the standardisation of elements such as spelling and dialogue.

A popular definition among editors in Australia is the oft-quoted remark attributed to Beatrice Davis that editing is 'invisible mending' (Foley) - a phrase which could be read as concealing the editor's intervention while at the same time judging the writer's work as flawed prior to the editing process. However, this is too simplistic a reading: an editor's work should not intrude or make its presence discernible; the editor's role is in assisting - not usurping - the author. The editor's work should complement that of the author. Nonetheless, despite invisibility, the unseen editor has mediated the text in some way, and that invisibility ensures that most readers

will never know of the mediation. In many cases this may not matter; however, for a serious reader the editorial intervention could be crucial to a clearer understanding and appreciation of the text.

The thinking behind editorial decision making is influenced by many factors, not all of them stylistic or aesthetic. For example, additional material may be suggested to explain things that may not be familiar to the majority of readers, to expand on an interesting or exciting anecdote, or to make a short manuscript longer for purely commercial reasons (there is a belief that readers will expect to pay less for a slim book, although the cost of its production may be little different to that of a larger book). Deletions may be suggested because the text is thought to be repetitive, uninteresting, irrelevant or, again, for practical reasons of the size of the completed book. Consequently, in making decisions, the editor is thinking not only of the writer, her agenda, the manuscript and the reader, but also of the publisher and the book seller.

In the study of a book, there are two distinct elements under review: the physical object that is the book, and the text that is contained within that book. In studying the text we cannot ignore the influence of the physical manifestations of the book that contains it, the weight and smell of the paper, the white space around the text, the colour and layout of the cover. However, this paper is focused on the influence wrought by the editor, and the decisions made by cover designers, page designer and typesetters - though important - are beyond its scope.

To return to editing, I will now consider the imagined reader for whom the editor is making suggestions and carrying out changes. This task of imagining a reader, and the editorial roles of ideal reader and gatekeeper, are interrelated and mutually dependent.

Imagining a reader:

Because a manuscript is not edited in a vacuum it is necessary for the editor to imagine a reader. We write to communicate, so most writers will have imagined a reader as they wrote. Here, once again, Faith Sale's comment about the writer's intention is important: the writer has some agenda for her manuscript and the editor needs to be aware of and in sympathy with that agenda.

The initial choice of this 'imagined reader' can influence later decisions the editor will make, because an important consideration in editing is how much (if at all) to change the text to make it appealing or palatable to a specific readership.

Choice of reader by, initially, the writer and, later, the editor, will depend on the writer's purpose for her writing. Where author and editor have different agendas very different readings of the same text may result. Such was the case with *The History of Mary Prince*. Gillian Whitlock examines in depth the different readings an editor can produce from a text, using as an example *The History of Mary Prince*, the life story of a freed slave, and the two very different readings produced by editors Thomas Pringle in the original 1831 edition, and Moira Ferguson in the 1987 reprint (Whitlock 8-35). Pringle, as a leading figure in the Anti-Slavery Society, was keen to produce a text which would advance the cause of the Society (15-17), while Ferguson was eager to produce a feminist reading of Mary Prince's life (29-35). Mary Prince herself stated that her intention in dictating her story was 'to let English people know the truth' (in Whitlock 12). This case provides a practical example of the issues around authorial intention and the author's ownership of her story when her editor has a specific agenda. Through readings glossed by particular ideological theories, or cultural misunderstandings, the author's intention may be inadvertently subverted.

It can be argued that it is the reader who apportions meaning to the text. However, it cannot be denied that an author will have some intention in the writing of the text, and the editor will also have intention in the editing of that text. Ideally, those intentions will coincide. Sale is conscious of this need for a shared intention when she writes 'I would be interested in publishing ... [a] writer, presuming my reading of her manuscript does not go against her vision of it' (Sale 273). Alison Ravenscroft points out that '[w]ithin western book culture, a text generally is written for a relatively abstract community: a readership, if not a market' (Ravenscroft 262). She contrasts this with the readership imagined by a particular author whose life story Ravenscroft had edited. This other readership is that of the writer's community: 'based largely in the face-to-face, in

corporeality, and shared life” (263), whereas the relationship with the more abstract readership described above ‘[is] carried by extended communication technologies such as print [...] rather than by embodied communal relations’ (263). It is important for the editor to be aware of this distinction, and ensure that she and the writer have a shared vision that is inclusive of a range of possible readers.

There are particular dangers for editorial intervention in different genres, for example when the manuscript involved is life writing. Many life writers have a very definite agenda, and production of a record of their lives can be seen as a political act. Life writing is more than autobiography, it is rescued history and a statement of identity. Jackie Huggins argues that, for Australian Aboriginal people, ‘[w]riting is a political act [...]’ (in Ferrier 142) while Melissa Lucashenko states: ‘[a]rt attempts to change things and enters the realm of politics almost by definition’ (Lucashenko 10). In the editing of life writing the editor would need some sympathy for the writer’s agenda, as well as some understanding of the context within which the writer is penning her works.

Mary Prince was clear about her reasons for telling her story; so too are most Australian Indigenous life writers. They state that they have written for their families and to educate and inform the wider, white community. Of the thirty plus examples of Indigenous Australian women’s life writing published before 2003, many writers are quite explicit about their intentions. Rita Huggins (Huggins and Huggins 1) and Eileen Morgan (Morgan xvii) write of leaving a legacy for their children; Ruth Hegarty (Hegarty 3-4, 141) and Doris Kartinyeri (Kartinyeri ix, 113, 137) want to make a record of their own lives and those of the other children institutionalised with them; while Mamie Kennedy (Kennedy 1), Connie Nungulla McDonald (McDonald xi), Delia Walker (Walker, Acknowledgement np) and Ruby Langford Ginibi (Langford Ginibi 269) express hopes that their writing will lead to greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

These statements by writers make clear their agendas and perceived readerships. Because negotiations involved in the writer-editor relationship remain hidden, it is impossible for the reader to know to what extent editorial decision making has advanced or hindered the writer's purpose. Mary Prince's original editor had a dual agenda, encompassing Prince's desire to expose the English readers' to 'the truth', but primarily using her story as ammunition in the anti-slavery debate. What Prince felt about this we will never know.

Jennifer Jones has explored the influence of ideologically driven editorial intervention in an examination of two manuscripts: Margaret Tucker's 1977 life writing, *If Everyone Cared*, and Monica Clare's 1978 semi-autobiographical novel, *Karobran*. Jones' explorations reveal, in *If Everyone Cared*, the extent of editorial intervention in the distancing of Tucker from the Communist Party of Australia, despite her long and intense involvement with the Party (Jones, 'Communist' 136-38). Similarly, editorial decisions made in the editing of *Karobran* 'to limit overt sentimentality [...] resulted] in the deletion of references to Aboriginal spirituality, which in turn hinder[ed] the development of a symbolic dimension in the novel' (Jones 'Yesterday' 131). Both these manuscripts were edited by amateur editors, friends of the respective writers, Tucker's by a member of 'a religious organisation [with an anti-communist stance] called Moral Re-Armament' ('Communist', 134), and Clare's (after her death) by a fellow member of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders ('Yesterday' 130). Jones' work, which included a careful study of manuscripts and interviews with friends and colleagues of the authors, clearly 'reveals the influence of a conventionally invisible editorial process' ('Communist' 135) in both these texts.

Ideally, the editor will be aware of and sympathetic to the writer's agenda in choosing the imagined reader, and that agenda will fit within the commercial ambitions of the publishing house. Nonetheless, it can be seen that there is a great deal of potential for unseen editorial intervention

that can strongly influence the text. Whatever the editor's implicit or explicit agenda, her choice of imagined reader will affect her own reading of the text and the decisions she makes about it.

Editor as ideal reader:

The editor will be one of the first readers of the manuscript and could be considered the 'ideal reader' (Small 186) because she will be reading with a constructively critical eye. This first read is crucial because the editor's first response to the manuscript will colour the decisions she will make. Editors describe this first reading variously: 'What I try to be for an author is the smartest, most sympathetic reader of the manuscript [...]' (Sale 269) and a '[the first read is] a responsive read' (Abbey in Watson 297). Sale adds, 'in my role of the author's best reader, I will express my reaction to the [...] book and ask, "Is this the way you want your readers to feel?"' (269). Leslie Sharpe and Irene Gunther point out an important practical purpose for this editorial read: to determine the level of editing the manuscript may require and thus determine how much work needs to be done (103) | - that is, how much time and money is required to be spent. Another purpose of this first reading is to find within the manuscript enough to enable the editor to enthuse her colleagues - especially those in marketing - in editorial meetings so that the manuscript is accepted for publication.

As well as being considered an ideal reader, the editor could also be considered a universal reader, standing in for a range of possible imagined readers and giving feedback from their points of view. Nonetheless, the editor cannot anticipate every possible reading. In the same way that the creation of a text is the product of a particular time and place, so too is the editing of the text, the book that contains the text, and the way in which the text is read.

In the position of ideal reader the editor's presence and responses have the ability to influence the text. The processes of responding to the writer may trigger further reflection, resulting in more material or changes to existing material. During the editing of Ruth Hegarty's life

story. *Is That You, Ruthie?*, my editorial questions to the author prompted her memory and she consulted her mother and friends who had been incarcerated as children in the same institution. This resulted in additional material of several thousand words, and the deletion of an anecdote concerning one woman who found its telling too painful and requested its removal. Another example of a writer's response to the editor occurs in Stephen Muecke's Introduction to *Gularabulu* by Paddy Roe, where Muecke's role undergoes a transformation from that of individual editor. In his Introduction he states:

As a white person, I represented for Paddy Roe a kind of generalised representative of white Australia. Accordingly I came to influence the texts to the extent that Paddy Roe addresses the 'White Reader' as some points; he constructs scenes and characters in ways that show he is aware of European representations of scenes and characters (in Roe v).

Here again, the editor is in a position to influence the text in ways that remain invisible outside the editor-writer relationship. As in the choice of imagined reader, the editor needs an awareness of the writer's purpose, and the time to develop that awareness.

Editor as gatekeeper:

The editor may also take on the role of gatekeeper of the language, deciding what will and will not be allowed. This concept is a general perception of editorial work but is an elitist position that assumes an omniscient editor and one immutable English, a position based on class and privilege. There is no one English; there are multiple Englishes, most of them mutually comprehensible, and each with a flavour of the culture from which it has evolved. For, while English emerged from a particular culture, it has taken root in many diverse cultures, such as those of India and Australia.

An editor who attempts to defend an absolute 'correct' version of English is attempting to defend the indefensible. Language belongs to those who use it: it is a means of communication

and all users make choices about whom they wish to communicate with, and how. The editor's choices - and the writer's - are constrained by institutional considerations and reader expectations. In a sense, when published, the writer's words are broadcast, and need to communicate to a wide range of people; this is where the choice of an imagined reader is so important. It is not possible to make every text equally accessible to every possible reader, but in moving from a 'narrow cast' event where a story is told 'face to face, in corporeality' (Ravenscroft 263) to a particular group of listeners who are present and visible and whose reactions and responses can be gauged, to the dissemination of a story in a book, where the readers and their responses are unknown, the mode of communication must adapt. The fine line between stretching the reader and enriching the language with new expressions on one hand, and communicating in ways that are unreadable or unacceptable on the other, is one of the editor's dilemmas. Parallel to this is the cultural issue of privileging certain forms of communication and denigrating others. When dealing with this dilemma the editor is, in effect, negotiating with the reader to find a common ground, and balancing her multiple responsibilities to publisher, writer and reader.

This is not to deny that knowledge of formal language usage is important: the more modes of English one has at one's disposal, the more easily one will negotiate the world. Knowing which modes are acceptable in certain contexts and marginalising in others, and familiarity with the conventions of language, written and spoken, will afford a writer greater facility in manipulating and distorting those conventions, hence providing her with more tools in her quest to communicate stories and ideas. The editor can play a crucial role here, by emphasising (as both Sale and Wolfe do above) the possible effect of a particular phrase or passage, and suggesting alternative when the writer's purpose is not being achieved. Despite the possibility of this positive educational role, editorial decisions about inclusion and exclusion of material may be based on the editor's preferences and biases rather than on the effectiveness of the writer's communication.

Leaving aside rules about what is grammatically right or wrong, the editor needs to use a finely tuned ear to hear language that is vibrant, alive and communicative - within the constraints of the negotiation between editor and reader. A writer may alienate a reader by her use of language but, if she does, it must be consciously, not through lack of experience or unfamiliarity with the language. Here the editor's role is to ensure that the writer is aware of the effect of her writing and, sometimes, to steer the writer within the boundaries of what is acceptable practice for the publishing house. The possibilities for heavy-handed editorial intervention are obvious.

As well as a defender of 'proper' grammar, the editor is seen as a protector of English spelling, despite its chaos and illogic. An alternate or 'wrong' spelling may be chosen by a writer for political reasons, or to enhance the writer's capacity to express herself; the editor needs to respect such authorial decisions. This is another area where, in negotiating multiple responsibilities, editorial decision making is invisible and can potentially reshape a manuscript.

The writer's choices about grammar, spelling, and syntax are all part of her individual voice, that quality of writing which the editor is at pains to preserve. The gatekeeping role can work in two ways: in an exclusive way by the editor's refusal to admit new or irregular words, or in an inclusive way by admitting new additions to the vocabulary, enriching the language and rooting it in a particular time and place. Such inclusions by an editor may have further implications: the words may later be included in dictionaries, giving them a status that had not previously possessed. On the other hand, inclusion or addition of material by an editor can cast the writer's words in a different light, as is dramatically illustrated by the example of the (unnamed) editor of the story of Englishwoman Eliza Frazer's capture by and subsequent rescue from a group of Aboriginal people in north eastern Australia during the nineteenth century.

The other area in which the gatekeeping role is exercised concerns what is 'good' writing or a 'good' book. In making judgements about the value of a particular piece of writing it is important to consider its purpose. Some writers are more concerned with the content of their text

than with (possibly eurocentric) notions of 'good' writing; the standards or criteria that are often applied have developed over centuries in particular environments and may serve the dominant culture. They can be used as a means of exclusion. As gatekeeper the editor is making constant judgements about what will be allowed to pass, and her decisions should be tempered by the need to help the writer achieve her intention.

Peritexts:

Although visible in a way that much editorial intervention is not, peritext has considerable influence on a way a book is read. Generally not the work of the putative author, it has many forms and serves many functions, yet is often overlooked. It can be seen as a form of editorial arrogance with the assumption by the editor of the first word and the last, or conversely as the visible mark of collaboration on the page, especially when it concerns the process by which the text came to be written. This meta-writing is important not only because it can subvert and deconstruct notions of authorship and unmask both editor and the collaborative process.

To examine the potential of peritexts to influence the writer's text it is useful to consider first why it is included. It can privilege or authorise a text or its author; it may explain matters that are considered unclear; put the writing into a political, geographical, temporal or social context; or attempt to give the writing or the author some authority or credibility. However, peritext can also disempower the author and is often a site of anxiety for both writer and collaborator where unease and disquiet are revealed and played out. It reflects the cultural politics that shaped the book, and the anxieties and preoccupations of the collaborator over time. Because most peritext is chosen by the editor, and most is not written by the putative author of the book, a consideration of its role and influence is important. The main reasons for peritext are to provide explanation (such as glossaries and maps), endorsement (such as forewords or prefaces by famous people), verification (such as certificates, licences, bills of sale), acknowledgement of collaboration (in notes, acknowledgements and prefaces) and authorisation (such as the writer's biographical details).

In the context of explanatory annotation Philip Gaskell states: 'linguistic usage and local reference which will be plain to a reader of a particular nationality, age, education, and social class will be obscure to one of a different background; and it is obviously impossible to give an explanation sufficient for one that is not too much or too little for the other' (Gaskell 7). It is often for reasons of 'linguistic usage and local reference' that an editor will want to include explanatory material, such as glossaries of non-standard English. Gaskell assumes that the editor/annotator *will* understand the usages and references, and so be in a position to offer explanations to the less well-informed. In a situation where the author, editor and reader share similar backgrounds and education this may be so but where they do not this all-knowing editor/annotator can make dangerous and erroneous assumptions that may subvert the author's intentions. Jackie Huggins, discussing the problems faced by Australian Indigenous writers, has pointed out the dangers of the 'general white audience [who] can't read or hear a lot [of what writers are communicating] so the white [...] editor is in the situation of trying to [...] interpret it' (in Ferrier 142-43).

Even the seemingly innocuous inclusion of a glossary can be problematic. On the one hand the glossary can enable those unfamiliar with regional or colloquial words, or words from different languages, to understand their meaning. On the other, the glossing of words makes them exotic and 'other'. There are other ways of dealing with unusual or non-standard English words; for example, the author could be asked to put them in a context that would elucidate their meaning. The manuscript of Hegarty's *Is That You, Ruthie?* contained the word 'guindian'. I could not find its meaning and realised that neither would most readers. After we discussed the issue the author added the words 'a clever man', so that the sentence read: 'Her brother Willie was a Guindian man, a "clever man"' (6). Some other words were dealt with by adding- an explanation in brackets, for example 'she called me Munya (first grandchild)' (6). Both 'guindian' and 'munya' are from the Gunggari, the author's mother's traditional language.

Some texts contain a foreword, a short quote on the cover, or other introductory material written by a famous or respected person, as a way of endorsing the book, the writer, or both. Some examples among Australian Indigenous women's life writing includes the four-page Preface written by noted Australian poet, Les Murray, for the second edition of Simon's *Through My Eyes*. Both Eileen Morgan's *The Calling of the Spirits* and Connie Nungulla McDonald's *When You Grow Up* contain forewords by religious officials who commend the books to readers. In the former, the Reverend Gail Tabor also provides authorisation for the writer when she states '[a]s an elder of her people [Morgan] is well qualified to tell us her story' and she is 'a living parable of Aboriginal culture' (E. Morgan, viii).

Verification of the facts of the text and authentication of its author are sometimes dual purposes of peritext. For example, slave narratives from North America contain peritext, such as bills of sale, to 'prove' the authenticity of the narrative subject (Whitlock 13). In some Australian Indigenous women's life writing material such as licences of exemption, permits to visit Aboriginal missions, and application forms for permission to marry are included; for example, in Hegarty a Certificate of Exemption and a Permit form are included (facing p. 60), as are officials letters concerning the young Ruthie's employment (108, 111, 123-24).

There is extensive peritext in Australian Indigenous women's life writing that acknowledges, explains, and comments on the various collaborative efforts that brought the book to publication. Often the collaborators are friends or colleagues of the writer with no specific experience or training in the roles they take on (such as interviewing, recording and transcribing of oral history, ghost or collaborative writing, research, and dealing with publishers and funding bodies), and are prompted by friendship or a desire to see the writer's story achieve publication. Many of these collaborators carry out aspects of editing, and are making countless decisions that will influence the finished text.

In its acknowledgement of collaboration role the choice and type of peritext can also be revealing of the collaborative process. Peritext can, for example, describe the process by which the book came to be written. Some examples, written by collaborators include the 'Note' by Memmott and Horsman, editors of Elsie Roughsey's *An Aboriginal Mother Tells of the Old and the New*, and part of the introduction by co-writer Jill Finnane in Connie Nungulla McDonald's *When You Grow Up* (the first part written by McDonald). This peritext takes many forms and is of varying length; Memmott and Horsman's 'Note' runs to two pages; researcher and co-writer Terry Fox's Preface to Eileen Morgan's *The Calling of the Spirits* runs to almost four pages, while Finnane's contribution runs to one page. Co-writer Tina Coutts contributes three and a half pages of Foreword to Delia Walker's *You and Me*. The extent of the marginalia in *Through My Eyes* is detailed below. All of this peritext, with the exception of Memmott and Horsman's 'Note', appears before the author's text. While the positioning of such peritext before the main text is a matter of convention it could be argued that its position can colour the reader's perception of the text; an alternative argument is that the placement of such peritext after the text gives the collaborator the last word. The effect that this material has on a reader is impossible to gauge; it is not possible to deduce how many readers include it in their reading of the book, although its presence and sheer bulk will have some influence on the way the reader approaches the text.

Whitlock notes that peritext is used often when the author is 'other: not male, not white, is working class or from a different culture to the dominant one' (Whitlock 21). She cites as examples black women's autobiographic writing, such as that of Mary Prince. In the case of Australian Indigenous women's life writing the quantity of peritext has changed over time. Early texts such as *Karobran* were 'framed by a publisher's note, foreword, acknowledgements, preface and introduction' (Jones 'Yesterday' 130), the second edition of Ella Simon's *Through My Eyes* (1987, originally published 1978) contains a plethora of marginalia about the writing of the book. A foreword by noted Australian poet, Les Murray was included in the second edition, where the

peritext runs to 26 pages in a book of 187 pages; this could also be interpreted as a struggle to authorise the writer.

However, its effect may be the reverse of what the editor intends. Shari Benstock remarks that peritext 'of all kinds reflect[s] on the text, engage[s] in dialogue with it, perform[s] an interpretive and critical act on it and break down the semblance of a carefully controlled textual voice' (in Whitlock 21-22). Whitlock goes further, highlighting the fact that '[the] proliferation [of peritext] means that the challenge to the narrator's authority is re-enacted in every reading' (21). Therefore, in choosing to include peritext, the editor can elicit a specific reading or cast a specific light on the text that follows, influencing the reader in multiple ways.

Conclusion:

It can be seen from the brief, summary above that there is ample opportunity for editorial practice to influence a text, mostly in ways that are invisible to the reader. It can also be seen that the decisions made by an editor are influenced by many factors: commercial, practical, aesthetic, cultural and personal - the editor's own biases, preferences and assumptions. For some books, a close reading of the peritext will alert readers to aspects of this intervention. Nonetheless, for most books, much of it will remain hidden, and the possibility of such intervention must be considered when a text is studied.

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