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## Reviews

NADIA ALTSCHUL, *La literatura, el autor y la crítica textual*. (Pliegos de Ensayo, 186.) Madrid: Pliegos, 2005. Paper. Pp. 216.

The title of this book broaches a crucial subject. It would probably require a different formulation, however, since the mere combination of the three topics—literature, author, textual criticism—does not capture the complexity of the relations between them. I might express the problem this way: how can we study the interrelation, indeed the interference, between theories of authorship and theories of literary work through the historically and methodologically powerful discipline of textual scholarship (textual editing, stemmatics, textual criticism, philology, etc.)? The author introduces yet another subject, although it is not in the title: the importance of new technologies in a new analysis of the problem. We should note the aporetic character of the interference between theories of authorship and theories of the literary work; it was Michel Foucault who, in 1969, demonstrated that as a matter of fact we do not have a theory of authorship. He added that the primary reason for this lack is precisely that we also lack a theory of the literary work. We might say that it is here that textual scholarship surprises us by proposing a system with which we might construct at least a methodology, if not a theory, of the literary work. In my view, Nadia Altschul would have done well to address those theoretical problems, but instead she has written a historical account of the relationships between textual scholarship and the modern, post-Romantic, idea of the author.

Altschul's main thesis is that the new technological changes might, in fact, entail a significant change in the way in which we conceive of textual editing and, above all, in the way in which we conceive of the materiality and manifestations of text changes. Therefore it is necessary to reformulate the discipline in order to break with the dichotomy between the Lachmannian and Bédierist approaches. Whether Altschul succeeds in doing so is a different matter.

The book is divided into six chapters and a bibliographical list. The first chapter (pp. 13–54) is a historical introduction to the relationships between the genealogical method of textual editing and the modern idea of authorship. This history, as is customary in handbooks of the discipline, starts in the Alexandrian philological schools and humanism and comes to treat the dichotomy of the scientific discipline created by the so-called Lachmannian and Bédierist schools. It is certain that neither of these positions started with Lachmann or Bédier, but it is also true that these names have become shorthand for two different modes of understanding textual editing and its consequences. Altschul, following Stephen Nichols, also understands the problem from a critical point of view as a dialectic between those who look for the literary work and its author and those who understand manuscript culture as an unceasing act of textual appropriation.

Chapter 2 (pp. 55–71) tries to clarify, also historically, a problem of terminology: what have been the different terms used to define the discipline, and what are the consequences of such differences in terminology, especially if the various labels themselves incorporate a distinct definition of the discipline? Altschul seems to prefer a more neutral term, such as “scholarly editing,” coined by D. C. Greetham.

Chapter 3 (pp. 72–112), grounded in an analytical project of Elisa Ruiz, examines the complex relationship between the genealogical methodology of textual editing and the concept of authorship. It is important to note that both Altschul and Ruiz work with the concept of the author as it emerged during the Romantic period; we should therefore be allowed to ask why Altschul has treated this problem only perfunctorily and avoids any discussion

of the dialectics of authorship, a concept central to understanding this problem during the Middle Ages and beyond. Moreover, this chapter repeats an analysis of the dichotomy of textual editing methodologies already found in the previous chapter.

Chapter 4 (pp. 113–43) contains a detailed analysis of Ramón Menéndez Pidal's scholarly activity as well as his position in the history and theory of textual editing. Menéndez Pidal does not fit within the dichotomy "Lachmannians versus Bédierists"; instead his traditionalism and his observations on the variation of the traditional texts are in line with the activity and attitude of those who explore what Paul Zumthor called the *mouvance* of medieval texts. Although the bibliography on this subject is enormous, Altschul mentions almost none of it and, in particular, fails to use post-1982 works by Diego Catalán, the works of Georges Martin and Alberto Montaner, and the important intellectual biographies by Ignacio Pérez Pascual and Joaquín Pérez Villanueva.

Chapter 5 (pp. 145–77) had been published before in a scholarly journal; it constitutes the most original part of the book since Altschul promises to break the classical dichotomy between Lachmannians and Bédierists. Following Cesare Segre, Germán Orduna, and José Manuel Lucía Megías, she proposes a diasystemic approach to textual editing, according to which the ancient texts, as they have been preserved, represent a dialogue between the author diasystem and the scribal diasystems (among other possible diasystems, I might add). This theoretical approach comes from historical dialectology and is very useful when dealing with the rules of production of language: an abstract linguistic construct is the abstract product of the opposition among many dialects, so that we can consider language dynamically as a diasystem. Is it equivalent to the problem represented by an ancient text? This should be addressed, particularly in light of Montaner's important criticisms.

The last chapter (pp. 179–89) purports to explore the diasystemic problem of the text of the *Romance de Delfina*, but in fact Altschul simply adapts an analysis already given by Orduna, by placing it in the new context of technological changes.

The bibliographical list is large, but very incomplete and quite old. The number of post-2000 items is no more than six (one of them by the author herself: the article on which chapter 5 is based), whereas the most important part of the bibliography that Altschul uses was already more than ten years old when she published the book in 2005. Listing all the authors she neglected to use would be too lengthy (Johannes Kabatek, Paolo Trovato, Mónica Castillo, Pedro Cátedra, among many others). In addition, it is difficult to understand why a book on textual editing fails to analyze texts at firsthand, not to mention manuscripts or early printings. The only cases that Altschul discusses are those already treated by Alberto Blecuá, Menéndez Pidal, or Orduna.

Nadia Altschul chose to write this book in Spanish. Unfortunately, her command of Spanish is not secure. Grammatical and lexical mistakes abound, making the text frequently ambiguous and the reading somewhat difficult. For all these reasons I would hesitate before recommending this book to my students.

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ANN W. ASTELL, *Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages*.

Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2006. Pp. xv, 296 plus 11 color plates; 1 black-and-white figure. \$39.95.

This book, as deeply felt as it is researched, is no less broad in the range of its intellectual sympathies, which embrace the histories of literature, spirituality, art as well as aesthetics. Its focus and framework are eucharistic piety (more so than theology), not only in the high and late Middle Ages but also, more boldly, in modernity as well. In keeping with its title, which refers to the transformative power of the Eucharist, not only as it is eaten but also