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Before: The avant-textes of “From Man to Man” and Olive Schreiner’s writing practices

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Abstract

The “warts and all” transcriptions of two early Olive Schreiner draft manuscripts of parts of what was later published as *From Man to Man* are examined in detail. They are analysed by treating them as avant-textes and using a genetic criticism approach. Doing so, different aspects of her writing practices come into view around the distinction she made between her “ordinary writing”, which encompassed “in the moment” additions, deletions, and amendments, and what she described as “overworking”, the after the event activities usually termed editing. Although coexisting on the manuscript pages, these are shown to be distinct sets of practices exerting different pressures. Some problems of emplotment and narrative continuity arose through attempting to combine both, so she contemplated having recourse to an earlier version of the manuscript, with hints in letters raising the possibility that this had a different narrative structure.

Keywords

avant-textes, editorial practices, *From Man to Man*, genetic transcription, Olive Schreiner, writing practices

31 January 1921

On 31 January 1921 in London, around six weeks after her death, some of Olive Schreiner’s manuscripts were examined by her estranged husband, S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner (SCCS), and erstwhile best friend, Havelock Ellis. Schreiner had left these with Ellis many years before, when she returned to South Africa from Europe in October 1889. They went through the contents, some of which were left with Ellis and others

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were removed by SCCS. Ellis was assisting SCCS in preparing *The Life of Olive Schreiner*, an edited *The Letters of Olive Schreiner*, and publishing any remaining manuscripts they considered would be worth making public. The contents included two fairly substantial items, one around 26 pages, and another around 168 pages, both relating to Schreiner's *From Man to Man* (*FMtM*). The longer manuscript has a 31 January 1921 date and "Written at Alassio, 1886-7" on it in SCCS's writing.

These manuscripts are in Olive Schreiner's difficult handwriting. They are now in the Harry Ransom Center (HRC), University of Texas at Austin. They have been closely edited by Schreiner. Or rather, they are heavily marked by Schreiner's writing process, because they feature many amendments, deletions, and additions made as part of the writing itself. What happened to them after this is unknown except that they eventually arrived at the HRC. They were not among the papers sold from Ellis's effects in the 1960s by his unofficial stepson François Lafitte (personal communication, 3 July 2002). They also contain another interpolation in SCCS's writing, so it is likely they were among the papers he took. However, as Dorothy Driver's new edition of *FMtM* details, what SCCS worked from was not these, but a 1911 typescript of the opening chapters and a manuscript of the remaining chapters, while the HRC manuscripts are earlier drafts and fragmented in character (Driver, 2015a, 2015b).

Analysis of the HRC manuscripts opens up the details of the writing process that Schreiner engaged in, its relationship to how she edited, and also to the relationship between these examples of her writing-in-process and the novel as it was eventually published. It is her writing process as shown in these manuscripts and its significance for understanding the completed *FMtM* that is the focus here. The two manuscripts are now part of the HRC's "Olive Schreiner, Works" collection (HRC MS-3734). Together with Schreiner manuscripts in a range of other archives, detailed work on them was carried out, with the results discussed here. Full variorum "warts and all" transcriptions are available on the *Olive Schreiner Letters Online* (OSLO) website (<https://www.oliveschreiner.org>).

The OSLO transcriptions differ somewhat from the transcripts of these HRC manuscripts made by Driver (2015b; see also UCT Digital Schreiner Collection). As can be expected with complicated much-amended manuscripts, there are some, generally minor, differences in interpretation. Other differences are that the OSLO transcripts provide greater detail about the different types of writing paper used, changes in how pages are interleaved, the different kinds of deletions and excisions, and differences in page numbering. These as well as content inform the interpretations made here; however, as UCT Digital includes images of the manuscripts, these sources are helpfully used in combination.

The analytical approach taken engages with these manuscripts as *avant-textes* in a genetic criticism framework (Deppman et al., 2004; Kindermann and Jones, 2009). Genetic criticism is concerned with the development of a published work through analysing any remaining notebooks, drafts, and earlier manuscripts. The patent instability of the pre-text (because, by definition, it has a successor or successors) in turn destabilizes a published text by exploring its compositional antecedents. In the case of *FMtM*, the novel is finished for all practical purposes. But for the purpose of furthering understanding of the creative process Schreiner engaged in, it can be seen to have a "for now" character as a point along a route still being travelled. That is, Schreiner did not herself

sign off on what was published posthumously in 1926, and as the following discussion shows, she had worked on the manuscripts left with Ellis, but could not have done so after late-1889.

Then

The hesitant journey of *FMtM* to publication began when a manuscript, presumably as Schreiner brought it from South Africa but perhaps worked on when she first arrived in Britain (Ravilious, 1977), was submitted in 1882 or early 1883 to two well-known London publishers in turn, Chapman and Hall and Macmillan (Stanley, 2002). It was rejected with the advice that it needed revising. What happened then is much mythologized, with the account by SCCS in *The Life, The Letters* and *FMtM* taken on board by many subsequent commentators. The influential biography of Schreiner by First and Scott, for instance, has her working “more or less continuously” on it from 1881 to 1889, being “compelled to return to it again and again” thereafter, with it symbolizing “everything that was unfinished about Olive’s life”, and its contents dismissed as “melodramatic and derivative” (First and Scott, 1980: 172). Times change, information increases. What actually happened was more ordinary, relating to Schreiner’s preferred writing practices and what happened when these were disrupted, as detailed later. However, before turning to this detail, which shows her writing practices at practical work, it should be noted that such assessments have until recently relied on SCCS’s work and the extensive editorializing he carried out regarding not just *FMtM*, but also all the other sources in his possession, and this was done on a scale from mistaken to near-fabrication to wholesale destruction (Driver, 2015c; Stanley, 2015; Stanley and Salter, 2009).

When preparing the published *FMtM*, SCCS used, firstly, a typescript of some chapters (“The Prelude” and Chapters I to VI) that Schreiner had had made in 1911 and then worked on sporadically up to when she left South Africa for Europe at the end of 1913; and, secondly, an undated manuscript of the remaining Chapters VII to XIII (as discussed in Driver, 2015b: xlvi–xlvi). This undated manuscript was either among those SCCS obtained from Ellis in January 1921 or else had been found among her other papers, consisting of those already in Cape Town and those SCCS had brought there from De Aar (where he and Schreiner had earlier lived), after he arrived back in South Africa in late February. After his editorial work was completed, the 1911 typescript was lodged with the Johannesburg Public Library (Harold Strange Library of African Studies), and the manuscripts and proof copies of some others of Schreiner’s writings were deposited in the Cape Town Public Library (NLSA MSC 26-1; MSC 26 nd, Provenance File). In his introduction to the 1926 first edition, SCCS states:

the manuscript of the novel, in whatever confusion, was in one bundle (as was, I think, each of her other sets of manuscripts) [...] [I]n dealing with the unrevised original text of the novel all I could do legitimately was, as far as possible, to give it to the world in the form in which Olive left it. I have striven to present it exactly as she might have presented it, if she herself, without further re-writing, had reduced to its final word-form the revised manuscript that came into my hands (Cronwright-Schreiner, 2015: lvi, lvii–lviii)

However, thanks to Driver's (2015a) meticulous work in preparing the new edition, it is clear SCCS's editorial work was more extensive than his comment might imply. The many confusions and misreadings he produced are now insofar as possible surmounted, with the new Driver edition representing the novel in a form close to Schreiner's intentions at the point she ceased work on the text (Driver, 2015b).

Regarding what happened to the bundles of Schreiner manuscripts after SCCS had finished with them, a few are now in the South African Public Libraries in Cape Town and Johannesburg, while SCCS comments in his 1921–1925 diaries and his letters to Ellis that others were destroyed (NELM 30 1a, SCCS Diaries; NELM 97.12.3.6, SCCS Letters). However, some eventually arrived in salerooms and thence to various archives. It now seems certain that the Schreiner manuscript that SCCS worked on, described as "revised", no longer exists. Why he preserved the typescript but not the manuscript is not known, but was perhaps connected with the extent of the work he did, to be discussed later. But what of the two HRC manuscripts? What is their relationship to such matters? Their exact provenance cannot be pinned down, although SCCS's hand has written the Alassio statement on the longer one. However, a comparison shows that the contents of these manuscripts differ in many respects from the published novel. This suggests that SCCS went through them to understand their organization and content, but then made no further use of the manuscripts.

Regarding the papers left after Schreiner's death, SCCS comments on something that everyone who works on her manuscripts has to reckon with. She kept: "not only her first rapid drafts, but also any manuscript she had gone over and revised... And so it was with this uncompleted novel; there were a considerable number of drafts of parts; there were fragments, revisions, etc." (Cronwright-Schreiner, 2015: lvi). When he worked through the material from Ellis, including the HRC manuscripts, it is likely that SCCS knew about the existence of a cleaner and fuller manuscript, since he had previously seen a more complete manuscript which Schreiner had produced as a preliminary to the 1911 typescript being made. He had been involved in her making this, both in De Aar and their previous home in Hanover. That is, the 1911 typescript was made in Woodstock, using the front part of a cleaner manuscript Schreiner had prepared for this purpose and taken to Cape Town. It is possible that the last part had remained in De Aar waiting to be finalized, but that this could not be done because when Schreiner returned her heart condition severely worsened and incapacitated her, and then she went to Europe for medical treatment in 1913.

The HRC manuscripts are demonstrably "before" what SCCS used. They had in a sense been in hibernation since 1889, unavailable to Schreiner to do further work on them. Ellis's letters, for instance, track that in the 1880s she often sent him pieces of manuscript, gave him whole manuscripts, later asked him to destroy her papers, and never looked at these things again (HRC MS-1306). As well as close examination demonstrating that these draft chapters were not those used by SCCS for the first edition of *FMtM*, their pages also show that Schreiner had identified a problem, discussed in the rest of this article. Her attempts to resolve this after the manuscript was returned in 1882–1883 with recommendations for revising it can be glimpsed via the HRC manuscripts, and the changes were carried out from then up until some point before she returned to South Africa in 1889. Her later periods of working on a *FMtM* manuscript

when back in South Africa (1901–1902, 1906–1907, 1911; see Stanley, 2002: 95–98) are mentioned in a very different way in letters of the time when compared with what the 1880s letters convey, which is more like someone grappling with Leviathan. But what was the problem? Before discussing this, it is important to point out that although much of the detail following is minute, cumulatively it adds up to something major, which is the insight it gives into the writing practices that produced *FMtM*, and with similar practices underpinning all Schreiner’s other work too.

At the time: Yours sincerely, Olive Schreiner

Full accurate transcriptions of Schreiner’s extant letters enable some flesh to be added to the bones of the discussion (these will be found in “Manuscripts” at <https://www.olive-schreiner.org>). By the mid-1880s, she had a long-standing writing practice. This was to rehearse things in her mind until an idea for a piece of writing reached the point where it had a kind of abstract completion, with then writing it down being a process of shaping it into material form. Through deleting, adding, and otherwise amending as she wrote, she endeavoured to make what she was writing better accord with what she had envisaged. This is a combined “writing-and-editing” method that characterizes both Schreiner’s letter-writing and her remaining manuscripts. It gives rise to texts that are messy because they bear these traces, but they are also surprisingly legible, so the process she engaged in can be discerned.

Regarding the multiplicity of drafts that SCCS mentions, these can be made good sense of by seeing Schreiner as someone who could not resist further developing her work to make it come closer to what she envisaged, so each time she sat down to finalize something, she also amended and added to make it more as it should be. In a January 1889 letter to Edward Carpenter, when Schreiner wrote about not re-touching or overworking (31 January 1889, OSLO/Sheffield), what she meant was that the concept was formed in her mind and her work was to actualize this on paper. Writing in her terms encompassed “in the moment” amendments, deletions, and additions; but editing in the sense of revising or overworking was a different and “after the moment” matter.

What had happened to the version of *FMtM* given to publishers in the early 1880s? In a letter to Ellis in April 1885, when she was busy revising, Schreiner commented:

Long ago I used to think that [it] was quite a discovery of mine that there is as much structure in prose as in verse... With regard to my work, I feel what I must, and what I must not, do; I know perfectly when a line or a word or a sentence breaks the law... But what law it breaks I don’t know (11 April 1885, OSLO/HRC)

Her letters show that by early 1884 she had started using the word “revising”, rather than writing, when she discussed her work on *FMtM*. Then in a July 1884 letter, she wrote miserably to Ellis that

I am so depressed thinking of my work... I have so cut up & changed the thing that there is hardly anything left & I don’t know how to put it together... This afternoon I nearly... burnt the whole MS. I would give hundreds of pounds if I had never touched it, & published it just as it was... I think it was the devil made me unpick it (11 July 1884, OSLO/HRC)

When the work was going well, she was “getting on splendidly” (21 July 1884, OSLO/HRC); but more often it was the case that “I am not adding to... my book. I[t] grows smaller & smaller... Condense, condense, condense. But it’s the most mentally wearing work...” (21 November 1884, OSLO/HRC). A lengthy letter of 10 July 1886 to Karl Pearson further complicates the situation. It describes an imagined ideal ending to *FMiM* which she parodies Pearson disapproving of, because he is concerned with “Emotions, unmixed, unmitigated emotions!” (10 July 1886, OSLO/UCL). Whether the account in the letter is to be taken as a realistic description of how she was editing it at that moment, or whether it was written in a way that enabled her to re-establish contact with Pearson, is a matter for interpretation. What is not open to conjecture is that the letter shows that by mid-1886 Schreiner had the manuscript much in mind. It is also the case that the version that was published does not contain the account in the letter, so either it was never used in editing, or else was later discarded at some point between July 1886 and when she left the manuscript with Ellis. That it was most likely never used is implied by the letter’s final sentence, where she parodies Pearson, asserting that if she “would spend time writing her book instead of writing pamphlets to me” then it might actually get done. In this light, Schreiner’s already mentioned January 1889 letter to Carpenter further illuminates how she saw the problems:

[H]ow people have got the idea that I re-touch & overwork my work I can’t make out! My great fault as writer is that I cannot bear to re-touch, even to reread anything when once I have written it... My fault is that I shall go on producing producing producing, & finishing off nothing (31 January 1889, OSLO/Sheffield, her underline)

Revising the manuscript that the publishers had returned involved Schreiner in, as she puts it, “condensing, condensing, condensing”, while her inclination is for “producing, producing, producing”, because in doing this she is working under the force of her need to perfect every line, word and sentence. Succinctly, the condensing and the producing were different ways of engaging but which she found difficult to keep separate. What resulted were clashes that could lead her not only to wish she had never revised the manuscript, but to think she might destroy it because it was so “cut up & changed” from how she had envisaged it.

Regarding the complicated relationship of the HRC manuscripts, both to what Schreiner had originally produced, and to what SCCS worked with, they are *after* the version seen by the London publishers, but *before* what he drew on in preparing the first edition of *FMiM* in 1926. They are, then, *avant-textes* to anything later published, but also come after the earlier text given to the publishers, although produced in the shadow of what came earlier and which indeed has in significant part been incorporated within them, as the ensuing discussion demonstrates.

Before

The discussion here focuses on small details. This is because the writing practices Schreiner engaged in are a matter of writing, along with small details of amending, extending, and deleting. Attending to these matters opens up for consideration what kind of a writer she was and how she achieved the effects she sought.

The focus is the two HRC manuscripts. These two manuscripts look different from each other, because of their relative size and length, and what they are written on. The shorter one is handwritten on lined quarto paper, in ink. The paper is ordinary white lined paper with a watermark (specialist HRC conservator advice indicates it cannot be identified with a known producer, suggesting it was mass-produced and cheap). There is a title page and “From man to Man” [*sic*] and “by Ralph Iron”, then page 1 is headed, “Chapter 1. Showing what Baby-Bertie thought of her new tutor; and why Rebekah got married”. The first 10 pages are separate sheets, while the remainder are double sheets folded into quarto that form a linked set. The start of the content of this manuscript seems close to what is in Chapter 1 of the published novel, although there are things in each that are not in the other. Notably, the HRC manuscript has more interaction between Rebekah and Frank on the night before their marriage, conveying his physicality and her attraction to him.

The longer HRC manuscript is handwritten in ink with many shorter and longer amendments and other changes. It is predominantly though not exclusively on “continental squares” paper, with these pages interspersed with pages of the same ordinary lined paper as the shorter manuscript. The continental squares paper is of an undistinguished kind and has no watermark (specialist HRC conservator advice is that a producer cannot be identified, suggesting it was inexpensive and from the same source as the paper used for Schreiner’s letters after her January 1887 arrival in Clarens, written on similar continental squares paper).

This longer manuscript is largely written on one side of the paper, with minor exceptions. The pages are numbered in Schreiner’s hand, although there are gaps in numbering, and there are also overlaps where the same page number is repeated twice or even three times. It starts on page 1 with the heading “Chapter 6. The Diary of a prig”. On the same page and in the hand of SCCS is “31.1.21” and “Written in Alassio 1886–7”. On the page numbered 97, “Chap 4” has been inserted in SCCS’s writing. On page numbered 112 is the heading “Chapter 5. Showing how the cicadas sing in the bush on a hot Sunday”. Other information appears on the reverse side or upside down on the bottom of a few sheets, including the start of a letter written from Gore Road in London, and a return address for Schreiner in Alassio.

On three pages in this manuscript, then, chapter headings are given and for two of these titles are provided. However, neither titles, numbers, nor contents easily map onto chapters in the published novel. They appear in it in non-consecutive order, associated with somewhat different versions of the small world of the farm with the little mother and the father and Rebekah’s house near Cape Town. The first heading, of “Chapter 6. The Diary of a prig”, signals Schreiner’s ironic purpose. In it, Baby-Bertie has “fallen” and is living with Rebecca — but with no one yet knowing about this and with the just married John Ferdinand and Veronica about to arrive for their honeymoon. The second and third headings are “Chap 4”, followed by “Chapter 5. Showing how the cicadas sing in the bush on a hot Sunday”, and they have content closer to the published novel. Here Rebekah, unaware of circumstances, recommends to Bertie that a person should be honest about any shameful secret to someone they love, who will forgive them. Then Rebekah — the prig of the Chapter 6 title — writes numerous sententious diary-entries (rather than “little books” as in the published *FMtM*). In doing so she is oblivious of the

drama playing out as John Ferdinand, about to propose, is stopped in his tracks by Bertie's revelation about her sexual "fall" with her tutor, with the watchful and designing Veronica hovering. The event that will lead to Bertie being cast out is put in motion by Rebekah, who remains immersed in solipsistic moralizing.

But what is the relationship between the two HRC manuscripts, and what do they show about the interrelationship of writing and revising? And relatedly, what to make of the mis-ordering of chapters but the consecutive ordering of pages in the longer of these manuscripts? Regarding the first question, there are many signs that they were written and revised at approximately the same point in time, and they appear now as separate because this is an artefact of the writing/editing that Schreiner was engaged in, with the paper shifts indicating her different interventions. This is discussed in more detail later, while a response to the other questions now follows.

Across her manuscripts and letters, Schreiner used many kinds of paper, most often cheap and undistinguished. It is unusual for her to use the same paper over a lengthy time. For instance, regarding her weekly budgets of letters, generally these show that, while the same paper may be used for a few items, soon it changes. However, an ordinary lined notepaper of the same size and with the same watermark has been used for all of the shorter and for parts of the longer HRC manuscripts. While ink pens (Schreiner used a dip pen until later in her writing life) produce somewhat different writing depending on whether the nib has just been dipped or is nearly empty, the ink used in both manuscripts is of the same colour and the pen appears to be the same (according to specialist HRC conservator advice). The evidence, circumstantial but strongly so, suggests that the shorter manuscript on ordinary lined paper, and the parts of the longer manuscript on the same ordinary lined paper, were written at approximately the same time using the same pen and ink.

However, the large majority of the pages in the longer manuscript are not of this ordinary lined paper but continental squares. A comparison with Schreiner's letters shows that, from early January 1887 and her arrival in Clarens, she used the same continental squares for letters, although of a smaller size and lighter paper-weight (specialist HRC conservator advice). Schreiner had never used continental squares notepaper or letterpaper previously, but then did so for a lengthy time, suggesting she bought a supply when first in Clarens, which was replenished on subsequent journeys to and from France and Italy.

What the mixtures of paper in the longer manuscript suggests is this. What was written on the plain lined watermarked paper came before, and it produced both draft sets of chapters now archived as separate manuscripts. What was written on the continental squares paper came after and was used to change, expand, and stitch together the much revised remaining sections on ordinary lined paper. The ordinary lined paper also shows signs of having once been in a sequence with now excised pages, with these excisions "covered" by what is on the continental squares paper. In this connection, there are many paper changes through to the end of this manuscript; sometimes the text follows, but often it does not really, or does not at all; and it is the continental squares paper that features the new supplanting editorial-writerly interventions.

Using her letters, the chronology of Schreiner's movements regarding work on *FMtM* can be pieced together. From July to the end of September 1884 she was at Bole Hill in

Derbyshire. She left Britain in late 1886 and lived in various places in France, Switzerland, and Italy. From January to mid-March 1887 she was in Clarens. She then moved to Alassio, Italy, until June 1887. She returned to Britain until early to mid-October 1887, when she lived in Gore Road, London, then returned to Italy. She remained in Alassio from October 1887 to May 1888, and then lived in Kent, Hertfordshire, London and Surrey before returning to Italy in October 1888. She moved to Mentone in December 1888, where she stayed until March or April 1889, visiting Paris in early April en route to England. She then lived in London, the Home Counties, and London again from June to July. These later periods were packed with friends and meetings, the tragedy of a friend, Amy Levy, killing herself, and political events around the great Dock Strike. On 11 October 1889, Schreiner sailed for South Africa.

In the longer HRC manuscript, the start of a letter, upside down on the bottom of a squared sheet, is addressed “Gore Road”, where Schreiner was resident from June to September/October 1887. Elsewhere within the manuscript is another opening of a letter to Frank Harris mentioning an enjoyable meeting, most likely occurring in or about August 1888, also on a squares sheet. On the back of another squares sheet, her return address is given as the Grand Hotel in Alassio, where she variously stayed, but particularly from June to October 1887 and December 1888 to March 1889.

A reasonable assessment from this is that the HRC manuscripts are partly the result of what Schreiner was doing in 1884 when she commented to Ellis she wished she had never started revising, and partly of her work on them while in France and Italy, then London, then France and Italy again. Then Schreiner was in London for shorter periods, and while there she left various possessions in Ellis’s safekeeping before leaving for South Africa in October 1889, for at that point she expected to return after a few months to live in Britain more permanently. While the changes to the shorter manuscript on their own cannot be dated, those on the continental squares paper can be pinned down as having been made between January 1887 and approximately March 1889 (that is, after her July 1886 letter to Pearson). As the longer manuscript encompasses some of the earlier text and paper, it too can be seen as last worked between those dates. Succinctly, the continental square parts date to 1887–1889, and the lined paper parts date to 1884 and earlier, and where some of the lined paper has been incorporated in the squared paper version this must have been done in 1887–1889. While SCCS has confidently written “1886–7” and “Alassio”, then, internal evidence indicates that it is far more complicated. It also shows why her letter to Pearson in July 1886 cannot be seen as providing “the facts” about the whys and wherefores of what she was doing to the manuscripts.

Within

What do the HRC manuscripts indicate about the relationship between writing and revising as it unfolds on their sheets? Three aspects are important and both separately and together illuminate Schreiner’s writing practices. They concern Schreiner’s “ordinary writing-in-process” with its deletions, insertions, and amendments; larger excisions of a condensing kind; and stitching together and making joins to cover mismatches because of excisions. While these can occur separately, more often there are mixtures. On numbered page 4 of the shorter manuscript, for example, a long amended sentence concerning fruit

and an orchard is followed by an excision of a condensing kind with strong vertical lines through it (Extract 1). This is the first such example in the shorter manuscript, and in the longer one there are many of these. They give rise to continuity issues because they disrupt earlier coherence, with an example being the treatment of Frank, whose style of speech undergoes a sea-change from drawling affectation to becoming threatening, and what he is smoking shifts from cigarettes to cigars to a pipe, suggesting that although the paper and ink are consistent, still some time had passed between Schreiner working on different sections of the manuscript.

Also the cumulative effect of small amendments can be considerable with regards to character and plot. A consequential example in the shorter manuscript concerns amendments on numbered page 6 regarding how the appearance (big eyes, low forehead) and character (naive simplicity) of Bertie are made to intertwine (Extract 2). A comparable process also occurs in the longer manuscript, when the servant-woman that Frank has been having sex with, Clartje, is more stereotypically racialized through the amendments made, showing Schreiner was doing this deliberately, as confirmed by the heavy vertical excision marks over her earlier attempt in this passage (Extract 3).

The longer HRC manuscript bears many signs of condensing activity in which passages are heavily excised to shorten, and then different pieces of writing are stitched together. Thus numbered page 19 has text which follows page 18, but its contents are heavily excised with vertical pen strokes, leaving a partial join with the two lines that appear on numbered page 20. However, it is followed by a second numbered page 19, which does not smoothly follow on from any of the previous few pages (but it is followed by a second numbered page 20, which does run on from the previous second page 19). Not only is there a repetition of page numbers here but also a paper change, which comes at the second numbered page 19. Numbered pages 11 to 20 are one folded set of paper, while the next folded set is separate from the first, and the numbers on it start with the second 19. The result is that two pieces of writing have been stitched together, occasioned by a condensing excision that removes part of a long moralizing passage from Rebekah's diary. There are over 30 larger excisions with similar condensing effects, too many to discuss individually. However, suffice it to say that taken together they demonstrate the magnitude of the task Schreiner was engaged in.

Earlier it was noted that signs of two versions of the plot can be discerned in the longer HRC manuscript, and my discussion now turns to this. This is clearly important, for in one Schreiner has a problem of emplotment, but not in the other. In the first, "Chapter 6. The Diary of a prig", key characters are assembling in Rebekah's house, but no one except Bertie herself knows about her "fall" in having had sex with the tutor Percy Laurie, Bertie's romance with John Ferdinand seems never to have happened, and he and Veronica are arriving already married. As a result, things which move the plot forward in the published *FMM* — telling, moralistic rejection, a designing other woman — are not there. However, in the second version, starting with the interpolated "Chap 4" on numbered page 97 and continuing with Chapter 5 starting on numbered page 112, the characters move on familiar ground. Bertie tells John Ferdinand, he rejects her, Veronica silently pads about, Bertie dramatically decides to go to Cape Town with Rebekah. And Bertie leaves her secret behind, in the mind of John Ferdinand, who will later reveal it to the designing Veronica, who will tell the gossiping Mrs Drummond.

Plot and paper

In continuing the discussion of issues regarding emplotment, detailed attention to the content and paper used in the longer HRC manuscript is helpful. This starts with “Chapter 6. The diary of a prig” on numbered page 1. There is a halt at the bottom of numbered page 94 with a three-point note from Schreiner to herself of things she needs to write, then the content continues to numbered page 97. From paper breaks, there are interleaved sections on the same ordinary lined paper as the shorter manuscript, with both likely to come from the manuscript Schreiner worked on in Bole Hill after a publisher turned it down.

The first break can be seen at numbered pages 53 to 56. These pages are actually a fold of continental squares paper and have within them a separate folded sheet numbered pages 54 and 55. However, there are two pages numbered 54, and two numbered 55. The preceding pages 48 to 53 are of ordinary lined paper, while what follows is on continental squares. The writing on numbered page 56 is similar and the sense of the content follows on from page 53. Also within the folds of these pages there are signs of at least one major excision of pages. In both pages numbered 53, Rebekah is in the midst of long diary entry. In the first page numbered 54, she hears a noise and Bertie returns in the early hours from a party at Mrs Drummond’s. However, the first line — “~~have to be married you know~~” — is excised and does not follow on from the end of either the first or the second page 53 (although, confusingly, the second page 53 *does* follow on from the first 53).

The second break occurs after Schreiner’s three-point note to herself on numbered page 94. The pages immediately before this are single sheets of interspersed continental squares and ordinary lined paper. Pages 95 and 96 are missing. The numbered pages that follow, 97 to 114, are on a folded wedge of ordinary lined paper. In pencil in the margin of numbered page 97, “Chap 4” has been written, but this is not in Schreiner’s hand even though everything else on the page is, including a return address in Alassio on its reverse. Regarding content, what is on page 97 starts with Veronica and John Ferdinand talking, then Rebekah gives her advice to Bertie, and continues through to page 111 and Veronica in John Ferdinand’s room breaking his Daguerre heliotype of Bertie. Chapter 5, with its “Showing how the cicadas sing in the bush on a hot Sunday” heading, begins on numbered page 112, and relates to things that are part of Chapter IV in the published novel, when Rebekah prepares to leave the farm and Bertie demands to go with her.

Numbered page 97 and its “Chap 4” not in Schreiner’s hand starts in the middle of a sentence — “& the father was at the kraals counting in the sheep, then John Ferdinand sat with Veronica on the front stoep”[^].[^] to talk”. It is “the same but different” as elements in Chapter VI “How Baby Bertie went a-hunting” and in Chapter III “The dam wall” in the published *FMtM*. And Chapter 5, “Showing how the cicadas sing in the bush on a hot Sunday”, is also the same but different from the published version. However, and unfortunately, there is then a notable gap in the numbered pages and also the unfolding narrative, when the section of folded paper ends at page 114. Pages 115 to 121 are missing, presumed destroyed. As page 114 ends, John Ferdinand asks Veronica where Bertie is and then goes into the orchard. As page 122 starts, they are together and Bertie is part way through telling her secret. How oddly fitting that this most resounding of moments

should be absent, but it makes interpreting the sense of what is happening to the plot rather difficult.

The HRC manuscript poses something of a problem in discerning Schreiner's editorial intentions here. The page numbers are complicated but are largely consecutive and in Schreiner's writing. Ignoring the interjected "Chap 4", Chapter 6 and Chapter 5 are out of sync in terms of their content, not just in their numbers. Is this perhaps what Schreiner in a July 1884 letter to Ellis was commenting on when she wrote that "I have so cut up & changed the thing ... & I don't know how to put it together" (11 July 1884, OSLO/HRC); that is, in bald terms, is it that she was dealing with a mess? Or is it perhaps what she was conveying in an April 1885 letter to him, that "I have gone back to the original thing" (5 April 1885, OSLO/HRC)?

What a consideration of the detail here opens up for discussion is the interesting possibility that an antecedent version of the text existed, an "original thing" that the publishers had seen, in which the cast of characters were all assembled in Cape Town, but the crucial emplotment device of Bertie's "telling" had not happened. Was there a different, earlier *From Man to Man*?

And perhaps?

Taken together, the two HRC manuscripts provide a fascinating window onto Schreiner's working practices in writing and revising. The devil is in the detail in the sense that it is this that reveals the complications of how she worked as a writer. They show her endeavouring to stitch together earlier passages and chapters with her later work. This was to repair changes she lamented having made. At the same time, she was also excising in order to condense passages, connecting resulting ill-fitting elements together, and engaging in her ordinary practice of writing with its unfolding amendments, deletions, and additions. Moreover, she was grappling with issues in emplotment, which were either a product of earlier revisions or perhaps a feature of the first, and to use her word, "original", version of the novel. The excisions, condensations, stitchings together, and ordinary writing seem to have occasioned different pressures and procedures. If there was a structural problem with the plot, by no means a certainty, it reached a solution; but how remains opaque, for as the earlier discussion has indicated the most relevant part of the longer manuscript is missing.

All aspects were engaged in actively, with clear signs of Schreiner's deliberations translating into activities on paper. Important examples concern the infantilizing of Bertie, racializing of Clartje, worsening of Frank's character, and unsignalling of Rebekah's priggishness. The many smaller changes, not just the larger excisions and stitchings, also produced consequential effects, as with Frank's shift from a fop to a threatening cad. The HRC manuscripts provide many such clues about writing, editing, and developments in appearance, character, and plot, including the possibility that at some point around her letter to Ellis, Schreiner was contemplating returning to an antecedent "original" version.

The HRC manuscripts are very messy, and any conclusions need to be cautious. Their messiness is likely to be why SCCS did not use them. A nearly pristine copy of the manuscript of *Undine* in Schreiner's hand exists (NELM 97.12.1.1.4), which he used and described as requiring much work. Faced with the HRC manuscripts, it is not surprising

he ignored them. It is probable that the manuscript he did use and described as “revised” was cleaner, but still presented interpretational issues, and so the work he did may have been on a significant scale. His form of words, looked at closely, suggests this: “I have striven to present it exactly as she might have presented it, *if she herself*, without further re-writing, *had reduced to its final word-form the unrevised manuscripts that came into my hands*” (Cronwright-Schreiner, 2015: lviii; emphasis added). It is perhaps his “reductions” that the manuscript’s survival would have revealed.

There are implications here for how the published *FMtM* might be read in light of the HRC manuscripts. *FMtM* is the tip of the iceberg of a creative process unfolding in these manuscripts, and it is exciting to gain sight of this. A focus on Schreiner’s avant-textes is essential here and shows the process she was engaged in. In this, there were many important changes, achieved through sometimes major excisions or insertions, but more often as the accumulation of many small amendments. These involved Schreiner remaking her fictional world, and they indicate that in the earlier version, before she first unpicked it following publishers’ comments, it might have been a different kind of novel from what exists now. Through apparently small, but cumulatively significant changes, Bertie, Clartje, and Frank each become more themselves, morphing from babyish to infantile, racialized to a stereotype, a fop, to a villain. Rebekah, however, becomes less than she was — the silent removal of the “prig” title sets a trap for readers, for as with the sententious moralizing preacher in *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*, Schreiner’s writing is always double-edged when moralizing comes into the frame.

However, at this point it is important to emphasize that the HRC manuscripts are important in their own right, not just as adjuncts to what has been published. Olive Schreiner is not only a significant but also an interesting writer who took risks in playing with and traversing the conventions of the day, something that comes through in looking closely at the details of her writing practices as shown by these manuscripts. They not only provide a glimpse of the creative process engaged in, but they do so concerning Schreiner’s most difficult task as a writer, because they are concerned with producing a novel that was in advance of the then-prevailing conventions of the genre.

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Extracts

For full versions of extracted pages, see the OSLO website (www.oliveschreiner.org). The transcriptions are “warts and all” and the conventions used are:

^Sometimes^: indicates Schreiner’s insertion

Spring: indicates Schreiner’s deletion

Down: indicates a passage heavily excised with downward pen strokes

?Land: indicates an uncertain reading

[unreadable]: indicates a word that is unreadable

Extract 1

^Sometimes there^ was the scent of the blossoms ~~in the spring~~ from the long rows ^orchard^ of fruit trees; & in autumn the faint lus-cious smell of falling figs & peaches, which the ~~the little~~ ^little^ Kaffirs & the ^small^ pigs came over the low sod wall to eat ^?revel among^ ~~Down below the house was the “flat”.~~ In the “flat” below the house grew the thorn-trees ^in spring time when^ When you looked out at the windows at the end of the ?house you saw then all the ?land.

(Shorter manuscript, p. 4)

Extract 2

On^e^ this afternoon Bertie Baby-Bertie stood at the gable window i^o^f the ?open ?spare spare room arran putting flowers ^dalias & lilies^ into a black glass; ... Bertie put her head out now & then to look. ^at the window again & again.^ She was ^a very^ velvety & round every [unreadable] ^& had^ ^with^ ?her eyelashes ^that^ curled back till ^&^ they touching her eyebrows, & large round brown eyes, & a sticking out chin, very small & round. Her face was round, & her forehead very low & broad with the hair hanging over it.

(Shorter manuscript, p. 6)

Extract 3

The girl looked at Rebekah. ^The girl had a red silk handkerchief in her hand. She was going to tie across her wool.^ with her heavy dark face, the chin ^jaw^ protruding far beyond the ^flat^ nose, her ^the^ small dark eyes glittering. Rebekah came a step nearer her. The girl had a red silk handkerchief on her knee^, ^which^ she was going to tie across her wool. Her heavy jaw protruded beyond the rest of her face; her little black eyes were deep set. Her arms were a lighter yellow, but her face was dark brown.

(Longer manuscript, p. 90)