2.2.1 Metaphors for the writing process

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This chapter discusses various metaphors that have been suggested as conceptual models by numerous authors in the past to try and understand aspects of their creative process and the roles of the literary draft. The question is whether they are all equally apt. By juxtaposing several of them, the aim is to investigate to what extent certain metaphors are forms of writers' self-representation that may not always correspond with the reality of what is left in the drafts. These metaphors are organised in three sections, focusing respectively on questions of "Authorship" (ways of framing what it is to be a maker or creator), "Inspiration" (imagination, invention, discovery as cognitive phenomena) (Clark 1997), and "Perspiration" (writing strategies, tactics and techniques).

Keywords: metaphors, writing process, manuscripts, romantic genius, cognition, writing studies, writing strategies, genetic criticism

> "A field of study being formed or a conceptualization being born is always marked by 'lively metaphors.'" (Grésillon 1997: 107)

As linguistic tools, metaphors help us understand complex and abstract concepts. In 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By* explored the notion of conceptual metaphors, the phenomenon of understanding a concept in terms of another, usually an abstract notion in terms of a less abstract one. It is a form of framing, creating mental structures that shape the way we see the world. In a way, this does not differ that much from what is known as modelling in science. Modelling is a way of consciously reducing the complexity of phenomena in order to understand their workings, to make predictions and to accurately describe them. There is a connection between scientific models and metaphors in terms of the ways they reduce complexity in order to understand a phenomenon. Metaphors work by means of comparison, while scientific models use mathematical or conceptual frameworks, but they are both employed to make complex concepts more understandable or accessible. Thus, writers of all ages have resorted to metaphors to conceptualise the complexity of the creative process and of imagination.

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https://doi.org/10.1075/chlel.xxxv.30van

Authorship

God has been one of the most dominant metaphors and models of authorship for centuries. The Bible starts with the Book of Genesis, according to which God came up with the heaven and the earth, created light, separated it from darkness, imagined and made the land and the seas, plants and trees, the sun, the moon, the stars, sea creatures, birds, land animals and finally humans, male and female. For humans he used apparently only a minimum of imagination, for he created them in his own image. In James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus states somewhat overconfidently in his diary: "The mystery of esthetic like that of material creation is accomplished. The artist, like the god of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (Joyce 2000: 233).

The model of biblical Genesis is also applied by other writers. Paul Valéry, for instance, saw the genesis of a poem as an integral part of it, making a direct reference to biblical, capital-G Genesis: "Nothing is more beautiful than a beautiful manuscript draft […] A complete poem would be the poem *of* a poem starting from its fertilized embryo – and its successive states, unexpected interpolations, and approximations. That's real Genesis" (Valéry 2000: 219; original emphasis).

As a genetic critic, Almuth Grésillon made a strong plea *against* this biblical model of Genesis, for it suggests a linear progression of successful steps, without any dead ends, straight towards completion: God's satisfaction (Grésillon 1994: 138). Most writing processes, however, are marked by numerous moments of hesitation, doubt, writer's block, undoing, and revision. Still, the fantasy of being the God of one's creation is powerful and sometimes the difference between writing a novel and writing, say, a screenplay is defined precisely by this wishful thinking. For instance, Ian McEwan draws attention to the sociology of writing for film, drawing on his experience of turning *On Chesil Beach* into a screenplay: "Well, it's a sort of demotion from God to a little cherub, or General to Corporal. You become part of the process. Writing a novel is to address yourself to a finished literary form. The screenplay is not a finished form, it's part of the recipe, it's not the meal. It's very, very different" (McEwan, qtd in Dhillon 2018).[1]

There is clearly a gendered aspect to the biblical model of Genesis, with its "begat" structure – "And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Genesis 5:3), and Seth "begat Enos" (5:6), and Enos "begat Cainan" (5:10), and so on. Next to this masculinist model, however, it is noteworthy that, also among male writers, the metaphor of "mothering" a work of art is just as common as the notion of the solitary genius playing God.

1. See also Chapter 1.4.3 in this volume.

Pregnancy and childbirth

In 1779, Samuel Johnson regarded the potential of a work in progress as a form of pregnancy, noting that "it is pleasant to see great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual *growth* and expansion, and to observe how they are sometimes suddenly advanced by accidental hints, and sometimes slowly improved by steady meditation" (Johnson 1977: 407; emphasis added). But also the more painful aspects of childbirth are taken into account. The poet Ivor C. Treby donated his papers to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, where he had studied biochemistry as an undergraduate in the 1950s. On one of the folders, full of old notes and drafts, he wrote: "Fetuses and Assorted Stillbirths!" (Bodleian, MS. Treby 15). In her second novel, Stevie Smith compared the writing of it to having a second child while still nursing the first: "I am involved in the proof corrections of my first novel, even while I write these words, so well on now into the second. Perhaps it is a little debilitating to begin a second while the first is on hand? It is as if a nursing mother should at once start another baby – a thing which we advise our readers on no account to do" (Smith 1980: 107). And if a writer is like a mother to their writing, this also involves labour and delivery. T. S. Eliot was grateful to Ezra Pound for his help with the delivery of *The Waste Land*, calling him the better craftsman, *il miglior fabbro*. But Pound saw himself as a male midwife (a "*sage homme*"), while Eliot was the "Mother" of a poem that had been "begot" by the "Uranian Muse". It was not a natural birth, according to Pound, for he claims he "performed the Caesarean Operation" (Pound qtd in Badenhausen 2005: 71).

Among the early theoreticians of genetic criticism, the "birth" metaphor was very frequently employed. Louis Hay compares the transition from *avant-texte* to text as the moment to "cut the umbilical cord" (1988: 72) Similarly, Jean Bellemin-Noël writes: "Thus the work is born like a child. One gives birth to it. It was conceived, carried and nourished. It happens that it is ripped from the gut; that the cord is hard to cut; that the pen spits or pisses out its ink; that the sheet of paper loses its virginity, without even blushing" (qtd in Grésillon 1997: 108). According to Pierre-Marc de Biasi, it is through "rough drafts […] that one concretely glimpses writing in the act of being born" (2004: 39). Bellemin-Noël pushed the metaphor further, comparing the "*avant-texte*" to childhood: "If, for example, texts are adults, old enough to reproduce and participate in public life, then avant-textes are children, youths, or adolescents" (2004: 31).

But not unlike frames and models, as conscious reductions of complexity, "metaphors are seldom neutral" as Elena Semino notes; they "'highlight' some aspects of the target domain and 'hide' others" (2008: 17). Thus, many of the childbirth and growth metaphors highlight the organic nature of the writer's inspired spontaneity and fertile brain, but they tend to hide the constructivist aspect of literary creation.

"Inspiration": Imagination, inception, discovery, invention

In the first issue of the main journal on genetic criticism, *Genesis*, Almuth Grésillon noted that many young disciplines develop by means of metaphors, and that Genetic Criticism was no exception, discerning two main types – organic and constructivist metaphors (Grésillon 1992: 11). This dichotomy characterises the long history of research into the notion of imagination and creation, and writers often have no problem mixing the two types of metaphors (Van Hulle 2006). For instance, in *Hawthorne* (Chapter 1), Henry James combines them in one sentence when he notes, in connection with Hawthorne's works, "that the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion" (1879: 3). Next to the blooming flower, the "machinery" metaphor makes the writing process come across as an assembly line, "set in motion" at a single fixed moment of conception. Samuel Taylor Coleridge similarly mixes organic and constructivist metaphors in his *Treatise on Method*: "Events and images, the lively and spirit-stirring machinery of the external world, are like light, and air, and moisture, to the seed of the Mind, which would else rot and perish" (Coleridge qtd in Abrams 1971 [1953]: 172).

In *The Mirror and the Lamp*, M. H. Abrams dedicates a whole chapter to mechanical and organic theories in "The Psychology of Literary Invention". The constructivist idea that a work of literature could be "manufactured" used to be a commonplace for many centuries. Writing was a craft which you could learn by watching, imitating and eventually emulating the ancient masters, according to the principle of an apprenticeship or internship. But in the middle of the eighteenth century, Edward Young advocated a radically different model, replacing the manufacturing metaphor by that of natural growth – a proto-Romantic notion of imagination and creativity as a marker of "genius". According to Young's "Conjectures on Original Composition", an "Original'" (as opposed to an "Imitator") is "of a vegetable nature" and "rises spontaneously from the vital root of Genius". Imitations, on the contrary, "are often a sort of Manufacture wrought up by those Mechanics, Art, and Labour, out of pre-existent materials not their own" (Young 1759). No matter what Young thought about this "Manufacture", his statement does indicate that it is equally possible to think about literary writing processes in mechanical or constructivist rather than organic terms (see below, in the section "Perspiration"). In the Romantic period, then, Samuel Taylor Coleridge made a distinction between "fancy" and "imagination". Whereas fancy was merely mechanical, imagination was organic, in Coleridge's system (Abrams 1971 [1953]: 167).

Chaos and cosmos

Coleridge's notes ("Gutch Memorandum Book", British Library MS Add 27901) served as a case study in a remarkable book by John Livingston Lowes. In *The Road to Xanadu* (1927), he examines Coleridge's notebook to discover, as he puts it, how "out of chaos the imagination frames a thing of beauty" (xi). His models of imagination are a plethora of metaphors and show how, in Western Europe, the Biblical influence remained a conditioning force in modelling the concept

of creation. Lowes regards imagination in Miltonian terms, starting from chaos as the formless void that existed before creation: "The heav'ns and earth / Rose out of Chaos" (*Paradise Lost*, Book 1, lines 9–10). A notebook (in this case Coleridge's) can play that role of a necessary chaos preceding cosmos; according to Lowes, it represents "the vast, diffused, and amorphous nebula out of which, like asteroids, the poems leaped" (Lowes 1927: 13). "Chaos precedes cosmos", he writes, and this confused jumble of things – a "bewildering gallimaufry" (from archaic French *gallimafrée*, an unappetising dish) – contains "germs that were to come to their development" (12).

Germs, germination, and growth

Lowes's idea of germination and growth was used by several Romantic poets, such as William Wordsworth in *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in his *Treatise on Method*: "From the first, or initiative Idea, as from a seed, successive Ideas germinate" (Wordsworth qtd in Abrams 1971 [1953]: 172). The metaphor of germination frames the act of creation as a natural and organic process of growth and development. Since literary creation presupposes a form of intention, the metaphor also implies a moment of planting the seed. According to Daniel Ferrer, this act can already take place in the margins of a book the author happens to be reading. Writers who write marginalia in their books "plant the seeds of their own creation in the interstices like those insects who lay their eggs inside the living body of their prey so that their offspring may feed on its palpitating substance" (Ferrer 2004: 8). The metaphor of germination does not always have such a gruesome connotation.

When it comes to organic metaphors, a useful categorisation was suggested by M. Jimmie Killingsworth in his study of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. He discerns three approaches to the notion of growth in Whitman criticism: the *genetic*, the *progressive*, and the *cyclic*.

The *genetic*, in Killingsworth's typology, is not so much based on genesis, but on the notion of the gene as an "informing center" of radial growth, the idea that "the work of the poet grows from an essential center of being" (Killingsworth 1993: 1). It is a bit confusing that he uses the term "genetic" for this essentialist view, which is the opposite of what Daniel Ferrer calls the "gradualist model" (see Chapter 2.2.2 in this collection) – a model that almost all genetic critics have in common, because in their experience, works of literature are generally not created by a sudden stroke of genius, but by means of a gradual process in time.

The *progressive* view sees the poem's "growth" in terms of an "ascending narrative" of progress and evolution, not radial but linear and sequential, implying amelioration and teleology, resulting in completion. Jerome McGann draws attention to the potential impact of authors' self-representation on criticism, noting that this is the reason that the 'progressive' view has been so dominant in criticism of English romantic poetry. Conditioned by this self-fashioning, criticism of Romanticism tended to "show (say) Keats's or Byron's progress from certain interesting but undeveloped ideas, through various intermediate states, to conclude in some final wisdom or 'achievement'" (McGann 1983: 135).

The *cyclic* concept is more "modern" according to Killingsworth, "admitting loss as well as gain as a consequence of organic growth" (Killingsworth 1993: 1). A good example of what

Killingsworth characterises as a more "modern" view is Samuel Beckett's essay "Dante…Bruno. Vico..Joyce", in which he uses the notion of germination to describe the style of Joyce's work on his last work, *Finnegans Wake*, but only as part of a cyclic process: "There is an endless verbal germination, maturation, putrefaction, the cyclic dynamism of the intermediate" (Beckett 1984: 29). This is how Beckett framed Joyce's work in progress in a publication that was largely orchestrated by the author himself, so some caution for conditioning is in order. Still, if this is a form of the author's self-representation it means that Joyce's view of the creative process developed considerably. His initial model was that of the epiphany.

Sudden vs gradual: Epiphanies and revelations vs gradual discovery and invention

As a young man, Joyce started from an aesthetic of the epiphany, which he made his character Stephen Daedalus (later: Dedalus) define as a "sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (Joyce 1991: 216). Stephen's definition of the epiphany is immediately followed by an example. He tells his friend Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office in Dublin is "capable of an epiphany", which in most circumstances is just "an item in the catalogue of Dublin's street furniture", but "Then *all at once* I see it and I know *at once* what it is: epiphany." Cranly is understandably puzzled, so Stephen expands: "Imagine my glimpses at that clock as the *gropings* of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanised" (Joyce 1991: 216–17; emphasis added).

Whereas Stephen emphasises the moment of reaching the exact focus (using the phrase "at once" twice in the same sentence), many twenty-first-century writers would rather stress "the gropings" that according to Stephen preceded his epiphany. Ian McEwan, for instance, says about his writing practice: "As the work unfolds, it teaches you its own rules. I write to find where I'm going" (McEwan, qtd in Balley 2020). The philosopher Daniel C. Dennett's gradualist theory of consciousness also stresses all the gropings and all the adjusting this process entails (Dennett 1991: 112–13). Instead of employing a metaphor to explain the creative process, however, Dennett uses the creative process in its turn as a metaphor to explain the cognitive phenomenon of consciousness: his "multiple drafts model" suggests that the brain creates multiple, parallel, and continuously changing "drafts" or versions of reality, rather than a single, unified perception. Based on incoming sensory data, the versions are constantly being revised or edited. Consciousness arises from the interaction between these drafts, according to this model. The epiphany model, in contrast, sees the workings of imagination in terms of these sudden moments of revelation ("at once"). Stephen's "I see it" is presented as a *eureka* moment (from the Greek for "I found it"). The exclamation attributed to Archimedes marks a discovery, which is a metaphor in and of itself.

Discovery and invention

Current research in cognitive writing process research builds on the classical models of the cognitive processes in writing developed in the 1980s (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987; Flower

and Hayes 1980a, 1980b). The basic model (Flower and Hayes 1980b) characterised the writing process as a problem-solving activity directed towards rhetorical goals, involving "planning", "translating" and "reviewing". Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) regarded the difference between novice writers and expert writers as a dichotomy between a knowledge-telling model of writing and a knowledge-transforming model of writing. The knowledge-telling model focuses on the retrieval of content from long-term memory and its "translation" into words, whereas the knowledge-transforming model involves the generation and evaluation of content especially by expert readers, transforming their knowledge *during* the writing process. Galbraith (1999, 2009) added the notion of writing as a "knowledge-constituting" process and, with Veerle Baaijen, he developed a "dual-process model" of writing (Galbraith and Baaijen 2015, 2018): on the one hand, the knowledge-constituting process enables the writer to use the totality of their learning history to synthesise a response to a novel context; on the other hand, the knowledge-transforming process enables the writer to consciously survey and modify their knowledge during text production (Galbraith and Baaijen 2018: 8; Baaijen and Galbraith 2018: 202). Especially the cognitive model suggested by Baaijen and Galbraith in "Discovery through Writing" seems to come close to what Richard Menary (from yet another disciplinary angle: philosophy and 4E cognition) has described as "Writing as Thinking" (2007) and what Daniel Ferrer, in the field of genetic criticism, calls the "gradualist model".

Yet, whereas the notions of knowledge transformation and knowledge constitution through writing accord with the gradualist model that is so dominant in genetic criticism, there is at least one apparent obstacle to the disciplinary convergence: the notion of discovery, which is a central concept in so much work in cognitive writing process research. As early as 1980, in "The Cognition of Discovery", Flower and Hayes already noted the limitations of the discovery metaphor in the study of writing processes. On the one hand, it emphasises the notion of a sudden *eureka* moment, obscuring the fact that writers usually don't "find" but rather "make" meanings; on the other hand, it suggests the existence of "hidden stores of insight and ready-made ideas" that are "buried" in the mind of the writer, just waiting to be discovered (Flower and Hayes 1980:21). But after signalling these limitations, they still continue working with the "discovery" model and it has remained a key concept (and therefore a key metaphor) in cognitive writing process research ever since, as it still takes pride of place in publications such as Baaijen and Galbraith's "Discovery through Writing" (2018). Galbraith refers to statements by writers such as Shirley Hazzard ("I think that one is constantly startled by things that appear before you on the page when you're writing") or E. M. Forster ("How do I know what I think until I see what I say?") who stress the constitutive function of writing: "For these writers, 'writing is discovery' means that what one thinks emerges in the text as it is produced, rather than being something which lies behind the text directing its production" (Galbraith 1999: 138). Perhaps the term "discovery" is therefore a bit infelicitous, since it is precisely the idea of writing as the dis- or un-covering of pre-existing thoughts that is being challenged here.

The metaphor of "discovery" might also have been inspired by modernist writers – a similar phenomenon as what Jerome McGann pinpointed with regard to Romanticism studies. For instance, Virginia Woolf explains her writing method as follows:

> It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be *discovering* what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what might be called a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; *that behind the cotton wool is a hidden pattern*; that we – I mean all of human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art.
>
> (Woolf 2002: 72; emphasis added)

Unlike current studies in cognitive writing process research, genetic criticism works with an alternative: the "invention" model. Daniel Ferrer defines *critique génétique* as "la science de l'invention écrite" (Ferrer 2011: 184). Invention implies creating something that has not existed before. There is a difference with discovery, which implies the pre-existence of the thing discovered. When Newton discovered the law of universal gravitation, he did not invent it. By contrast, Edison invented the phonograph; he did not discover it. When it comes to modelling imagination, it thus appears that "invention" (from Latin *in-venire*) comes closer to the mental ability to form new ideas than "discovery". The word's etymology might be interpreted not so much in the sense of the writer "coming upon" something new, but rather from the other perspective: allowing source texts to "come in" and enter into dialogue with the draft. Instead of implying something that already exists which only needs to be uncovered, the etymological sense of *in-venire* suggests the act of coming into being through writing and *revision*.

Re-vision and dictation

The role of *revision* is a defining element in a distinction made in cognitive psychology (Galbraith 1999) between the "Classical" and the "Romantic" method (a distinction that resembles genetic criticism's distinction between programme writing and process writing): whereas the Classical method starts with a plan that sets the goal, the so-called Romantic method is said to be characterised by many phases of revision (Alamargot and Lebrave 2010: 16). But in *The Work of Revision*, Hannah Sullivan regards revision as characteristic of twentieth-century writing *as opposed to* Romantic writing: "the association of revision and literary value is the legacy of high modernism" (2013: 2). According to Sullivan, revision was a composition method with which modernist writers tried to overcome the nineteenth-century preference for spontaneous writing: "Romantic poetics tended to imagine the text existing in its fullest form in the past, in pre-linguistic shape, and even the first rendition on paper as already a transcription of waning imagination" (3). This view is implied in a letter Charlotte Brontë wrote to her publisher (Smith, Elder and Co.): "were I to retrench, to alter and to add now when I am uninterested and cold, I know I should only further injure what may be already defective" (Brontë 1995: 539). Brontë's suggestion that the original fire of creation gradually fades connects with Percy Bysshe Shelley's metaphor of the fading coal, which captures this Romantic sense of a counterclockwise striving after a state of imagination that preceded any attempt at putting it into words.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and later in *Ulysses*, James Joyce had made his protagonist refer to Shelley's fading coal as a metaphor for "the mind in creation": "In the intense instant of imagination, when the mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal" (Joyce 1986: 9.380). This is how Shelley frames the mind in creation in his *Defence of Poetry*: "the mind in creation

is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed" (1977: 505). The attempt to put together or com-pose in language what comes "from within" is presented by Shelley as a watered-down version of the original conception:

> Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results: but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline; and the most glorious poetry that has been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet. (Shelley 1977: 505)

The moment of inspiration may awaken the coal's brightness, but as soon as the poet starts putting it into words the coal increasingly transforms into the state of embers and ashes. Keats therefore famously said that "if Poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree it had better not come at all" (Keats, qtd in Sullivan 2013: 3). According to Shelley's Romantic aesthetic, the ideal text lay in the past and if there was any teleology in the writing it was past-oriented. This teleology was turned around in the twentieth century by the future-oriented avant-garde "so that the ideal text could be imagined as existing just out of grasp" (3).

Samuel Beckett's work is a thought-provoking case study to investigate the critical confusion between these different ways of looking at revision, and to examine the tension between the concepts of discovery versus invention. It seems self-evident to put Beckett's avant-garde revision process in Sullivan's second category; after all, his final text, "what is the word", seems to thematise exactly this asymptotic teleology of approaching but never reaching the "telos" that is just out of grasp.

But we also need to ask ourselves where this persistent image of "discovery" comes from. Writers often contribute actively to this image, even if the material traces appear to contradict it. Beckett is no exception. His texts often suggest that it is not the author or the narrator who is speaking, but some unidentified voice, as in the novel *Molloy*, or as in *How It Is*, where the narrator constantly insists: "I say it as I hear it". It is not always clear whether Beckett's practice of revision is avant-garde and future-oriented, or rather looking backwards. His undeniably avant-garde, late-Modernist forward-looking revision strategy often appears to compete with another, possibly Romantic tendency in his poetics, especially when both he and his characters keep insisting on the notion of the voice, which is a constant in his works. And not just his. John Farrell notes "how the rhetoric of inspiration has persisted in modernity, based on the common experience of writers that, in their finest moments of creativity, a power not themselves, a voice not their own, seems to take charge – or, alternatively, that language itself is working rather than the conscious ego. […] The theory of inspiration […] has proven to be a remarkably durable resource for validating the authenticity of art" (Farrell 2017: 8).

Sometimes, the voice and its role in the creative process is openly thematised, as in Beckett's radio play *Rough for Radio II*, where the notion of the author is divided into separate roles, one of them being the Stenographer. This image of the writer as a vessel, a medium, or a hand that notes down what is being dictated corresponds with contemporary views by authors such

as Czeslaw Milosz or J. M. Coetzee, who suggest the metaphor of a "dictation secretary", also in their poetry and fiction. Milosz's poem "Secretaries" opens with the lines "I am no more than a secretary of the invisible thing / That is dictated to me and a few others" (1988: 325). Coetzee copied out this poem in his 1994–1997 notebook (HRC, box 53, folder 2), and in his novel *Elizabeth Costello* the eponymous writer is asked to read her statement, which goes as follows:

> I am a writer, and what I write is what I hear. I am a secretary of the invisible, one of many secretaries over the ages. That is my calling: dictation secretary. It is not for me to interrogate, to judge what is given me. I merely write down the words and then test them, test their soundness, to make sure I have heard right. Secretary of the invisible: not my own phrase, I hasten to say. I borrow it from a secretary of higher order, Czeslaw Milosz, a poet, perhaps known to you, to whom it was dictated years ago. (Coetzee 2003: 199)

This metaphor has a long tradition. Dante already compares his writing to taking dictation in *Purgatorio*, Canto 24 (lines 52–59). Or in the Romantic period (on 25 April 1803), William Blake wrote in a letter to Thomas Butts that he had written a poem "from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation, and even against my Will" (Blake, qtd in Ellis 1907: 202). But some scepticism is not unwarranted. Milosz's poem can be read as a critique of Romanticism, demystifying the commonplace notion of the Romantic poet as a sort of divine prophet (Cuda 2007: 81). Still, Milosz may be demoting the prophet to a secretary, but that does not diminish the metaphor's sense of exceptionalism, for the dictation apparently happens only "to me and a few others". Surely, Jerome McGann's caveat that "the scholarship and interpretation of Romantic works is dominated by an uncritical absorption in Romanticism's own self-representations" (1983: 137) can be usefully applied to other periods as well. Writers' metaphors for the writing process are after all a form of self-representation.

"Perspiration": Writing strategies, tactics and techniques

While Edward Young advocated the organic metaphor of the "vital root of Genius", Thomas Edison suggested that "genius" is only one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. As an alternative to the organic metaphors, constructivist metaphors frame the creative act differently and tend to focus on the 99 percent perspiration, suggesting also that it is in the doing that the inspiration comes.

Michelangelo is believed to have said about his David that the sculpture was already complete within the marble block before he started his work; that he just had to chisel away the superfluous material. He makes it seem as if his most famous statue was just waiting to be liberated from a block of marble. He simply needed to extract what was already there in essence. This would imply a rather essentialist and deterministic view, as in the belief that things have a set of characteristics which make them what they are and that the task of the artist is to discover them. In fact, the statement attributed to Michelangelo is a way of moulding the creative invention into a discovery model, implying the pre-existence of the thing discovered.

Jack Stillinger applies Michelangelo's alleged statement to the genesis of *The Waste Land* and Ezra Pound's pruning of the poem:

> The majority view is that the 434 lines of *The Waste Land* as we know it were lying hidden from the beginning in the 1000 lines of draft, rather in the manner of one of Michelangelo's slumbering figures waiting to be rescued from the block of marble. But Michelangelo, in this analogy, was both artist and reviser simultaneously. In the case of *The Waste Land*, it took one poetic genius to create those 434 lines in the first place, and another to get rid of the several hundred inferior lines surrounding and obscuring them.
>
> (Stillinger 1991: 127–128)

So, Eliot may have seen Pound as the better craftsman, implicitly emphasising that he himself was the artist, but Stillinger's analysis suggests that it took just as much genius to do the pruning, and that the perspiration that went into this work was just as inspired as the original composition.

The French poet Francis Ponge gave an important impulse to genetic criticism by publishing his poem "Le Pré" not just as a finished product (in a magazine), but also as part of a long process, among the numerous drafts he had needed to write it. He published this entire process under the title *La Fabrique du pré*, presenting the genesis as a factory ("*Fabrique*") and at the same time hinting at the idea that the drafts preceding the final product have an impact on the poem's fabric. In *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, Stephen King proposes a down-to-earth, constructivist approach to writing and suggests that "to write to your best abilities, it behooves you to construct your own toolbox and then build up enough muscle so you can carry it with you" (King 2000: 114). The tools are a metaphor for techniques, ranging from basic syntax to stream of consciousness techniques. But to apply those tools, artists also develop strategies, and these are often also expressed in terms of metaphors.

From the angle of cognitive writing process research, Daniel Chandler distinguishes four writing strategies:

> The *architectural strategy* involves conscious pre-planning and organization, followed by writing out, with relatively limited revision. The *bricklaying strategy* involves polishing each sentence (or paragraph) before proceeding to the next. The completed text is not subjected to much subsequent revision. The *oil painting strategy* involves minimal preplanning and major revision. Ideas are jotted down as they occur and are organized later. The *watercolour strategy* involves producing a single version of a text relatively rapidly with minimal revision. (Chandler 1995: 86; original emphasis)

From the perspective of psychology, Hanspeter Ortner categorises ten "types" of writers, divided according to two main categories: the first one is the so-called automatic writing (*écriture automatique*), applied by what Ortner calls the type who writes from their guts ("Typ des Aus-dem-Bauch-heraus-Schreibers"). The second category contains all the rest, all involving strategies that require some kind of organisation of labour (Ortner 2000). Ortner discerns nine types in this group, involving respectively writing one text on one idea ("Typ des Einen-Text-zu-einer-Idee-Schreibers"); writing many versions ("Typ des Mehrversionenschreibers");

developing the text from the corrections ("Typ des Text-aus-den-Korrekturen-Entwicklers"); planning ("Typ des Planers"); writing down ("Typ des Niederschreibers"); writing step by step ("Typ des Schritt-für-Schritt-Schreibers"); syncretising ("Typ des Synkretisten"); writing fragments ("Typ des Textteilschreiber"); assembling ("Typ des Produkt-Zusammensetzers").

From the vantage point of editorial theory and scholarly editing, similar attempts have been made to categorise writing strategies. In 1982, Siegfried Scheibe made a distinction between two basic types of writing method ("zwei Grundtypen der schriftstellerischen Arbeitsweise"): on the one hand, writers who largely elaborate "*im Kopf*" what they want to write before they put pen to paper (*Kopfarbeiter*); on the other hand, writers whose writing process takes place mainly on the page (*Papierarbeiter*). If one compares this model with Ortner's, it is striking that Ortner distinguishes only one type that could be regarded as a *Kopfarbeiter*, the "Typ des Niederschreibers", writing down what is already prepared in the head.

In the study of creative processes, Louis Hay introduced the distinction between processual writing (*écriture à processus*) and a more planned approach (*écriture à programme*) (Hay 1984; 1986–87; see also Grésillon 1994: 243). To some extent, this binary division corresponds to Ronald Kellogg's distinction between Beethovian and Mozartian writers. "'Mozartians' delay drafting for lengthy periods of time in order to allow time for extensive reflection and planning [...] that is later recalled and written down as a first polished draft" (393). The other approach involves less planning: "'Beethovians' engage in few prewriting activities and prefer to compose rough drafts immediately to discover what they have to say [...] Their drafting necessarily involves many rounds of revision" (Kellogg 2018: 393). Obviously, these dualistic models are too black-and-white to chart the realities and idiosyncrasies of every individual author's modus operandi. It also assumes that a writer is either this or that, and that their working methods do not change over the course of their career.

Writers have of course suggested similarly generalising categorisations, as in the fable of the spider and the bee in Jonathan Swift's *The Battle of the Books* – the bee representing the Ancients' openness to imitating and emulating their predecessors' works, which they visit like flowers, and the spider standing for the Moderns, claiming that it brings forth its creations wholly out of its own body but conveniently forgetting that it feeds on other insects. Instead of getting caught up in such a *querelle des anciens et des modernes*, most writers tend to focus on smaller-scale tactics and techniques. For instance, writing marginalia in books can be a technique to stimulate creativity. Paul Celan is known to have started writing some of his poems in the margins of the books he was reading (Gellhaus 2004). Whereas George Eliot called each of her notebooks a "quarry" and labelled them as such too, to mine them during the writing of her drafts, Daniel Ferrer compares such a notebook to a "maturing cellar in which the harvested fragments are left to rest, to mellow and ripen together for some time in order to be turned into suitable ingredients" (Ferrer 2004: 7) and to a "decontamination chamber": the reading notes are placed in quarantine and usually only some of them are selected to enter the writer's own creative process. James Joyce's notebooks, for instance, had such a filtering function, which he compared to the process of dialysis, involving "the dialytically separated elements of precedent decomposition for the verypetpurpose of subsequent recombination" (Joyce 1939: 614). Joyce's

chemical metaphor of dialysis denotes the separation of particles in a liquid on the basis of differences in their ability to pass through a membrane. In his notebooks, Joyce "decomposed" other books, as it were, excerpting individual words or phrases that were potentially useful for his own work. He seldom noted down the reference, thus effectively appropriating the words, turning them into his own vocabulary. The lexical items that passed the dialysis were crossed out with a colour crayon to avoid using anything twice in the process of "recombination" when he incorporated them in a draft.

Whereas Stephen Dedalus, as portrayed by Joyce, still saw the (young) artist as the god of his creation, paring his fingernails, the mature artist James Joyce wrote in an explanation of his last work, in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver on 13 May 1927: "Ex nihilo nihil fit [...] Out of nothing comes nothing". But in the same letter, he also coined the neologism "soorcelossness", meaning that "the source is not yet to be found any more than that of the Nile" and that covering his tracks was very much part of the notesnatcher's tactics.[2]

Joyce's method was generally accretive. His drafts (and even his page proofs) – not unlike Marcel Proust's – kept expanding. Many writers, however, follow the advice of William Faulkner and Stephen King to "Kill your darlings" (King 2000: 222). Hermann Ungar once described Thomas Mann's drafts in term of a battlefield ("Was die Manuskripte des Dichters verraten: Ein Blick in die Werkstatt Thomas Manns", 1925: 1–2). The image is similar to that of montage and the cutting room floor in film studies. As Igor Pilshchikov notes (see Chapter 1.2.2 in this volume), the idea of applying the principles of the new discipline of cinematography to literary drafts led Tomashevsky to regard the writing process as a series of "snapshots of an object that is in continuous motion" (Tomashevsky 1928: 133).

The relationship between manuscripts is traditionally (especially in the study of medieval and older manuscripts) presented by means of a stemma, which is itself a metaphor that frames the documents in terms of a family tree according to an ideology that inherits the fixation on the "purity" of the textual bloodline, as it were, and which may not be the most suitable way of visualising the interrelationships between drafts of a literary work (Van Hulle 2020: 521). Born-digital works generate their own set of metaphors. If genetic criticism can be defined as "a method of critical analysis, which, through a thoughtful consideration of the composition and writing processes, is trying to understand the immaterial acts of writing that lie beneath the material traces the writing has left behind on the page" (Van Mierlo 2006: 165), in the digital medium these traces are no longer left behind "on the page", and digital traces may feel like Hansel and Gretel's breadcrumbs. Still, the definition does not change dramatically. On the one hand, there will of course always be gaps in the material record, and on the other hand digital forensics and keystroke logging do offer solutions, as long as we are aware that keystroke logs are not traces but records of the writing process.

An encouraging trend in the history of the literary draft is that it is increasingly being acknowledged as part of a creative ecology – which is also a metaphor, one that emphasises the relationships between aspects of the writing process, including the agency of drafts and of the

2. *James Joyce Digital Archive*, https://jjda.ie/main/JJDA/F/FF/fbiog/fwlett.htm

text-produced-so-far; the physical environment of a notebook as a creative space; the creative concurrence of various projects that are simultaneously lying on a writer's desk and mutually impact on each other; and the writer's interaction with peers, confidants, friends who read the drafts, as well as editors, typists, censors, critics and other agents of textual change.

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