

Editorial:

## **A Digital Genetic Infrastructure for ‘Work in Progress’: A Collaborative Enterprise**

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Today, Bloomsday 2017, it is more than fifty years ago that A. Walton Litz noted: ‘the published texts of *Finnegans Wake* are *corrupt* in many places’, and concluded: ‘Of course, any editor must be cautious when he goes beyond Joyce’s own corrections and emends from the manuscripts; Joyce’s “love of accidentals” is well known, and some of the apparent errors may have received his silent sanction. But there is no reason why a good critical text of *Finnegans Wake* should not ultimately be produced, based upon judicious use of the manuscripts’ (Litz 1966, 100). But this was before the digital age. In the meantime, what Litz called ‘judicious use of the manuscripts’ has taken many different shapes in the digital medium. For instance, fifteen years ago, at the Trieste Joyce symposium in 2002, Vincent Neyt and I presented a digital infrastructure for the edition of the red-backed ‘Guiltless’ copybook (BL MS 47471b, named after the first word on its first page). The reason why we chose this notebook is that it was written relatively early in the genesis of *Finnegans Wake*: it contains drafts of chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. Because of its early composition, Joyce used only 8 Buffalo notebooks to compose these drafts, which made it a suitable, slender corpus to design a digital infrastructure and visualize the interconnections between external source texts, the reading notes, the drafts and the published text of *Finnegans Wake*.

From the start of this project, we have been working in XML (eXtensible Markup Language) according to the guidelines of the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative), and it is reassuring to see that other researchers, such as Mikio Fuse (see his contribution to this issue of GJS), are working with the same markup language. In the meantime, the Centre for Manuscript Genetics at the University of Antwerp has also developed the digital infrastructure for a Digital James Joyce Library (Van Hulle 2016, presented at the 25<sup>th</sup> Joyce Symposium in London) and a relational database to visualize the links between the various stages of ‘Work in Progress’ (De Keyser 2016).

My suggestion is that we – as a community of ‘genetic Joyceans’ – work together and join forces to eventually map the genesis of *Finnegans Wake* in a digital environment. One of the biggest challenges is to reconcile two different approaches: a document-oriented and a more teleological, text-oriented approach. As Mikio Fuse indicates in his contribution to this issue of *Genetic Joyce Studies*, his *Finnegans Wake* Genetic Research Archive is text-oriented, not document-oriented: ‘The archive prioritizes the analysis of the genetic process at the expense of the physical description of Manuscript pages *per se*.’ This is a choice, or a ‘policy’ as Mikio Fuse calls it, that has consequences for the markup: for instance, the line break element <lb> in the transcription of a manuscript does not indicate the line breaks of the handwritten lines on the manuscript page, but the line breaks of the published text of *Finnegans Wake*.

In conjunction with this approach – which is teleological in the sense that it is geared towards the final product (the ‘telos’ being the published text of *Finnegans Wake*) – I would like to advocate the application of a dysteleological approach. Not unlike dysteleology in biology (a term coined by Ernst Haeckel) there are many vestigial elements of the writing process that did not make it into the published text. Nonetheless, they did contribute to its genesis at some point. Even if a sentence was struck out and thus constitutes a sort of ‘side path’ or cul-de-sac on the journey towards the published text – to use a teleological metaphor – this vestigial sentence did have a function at some point in the process. For the purposes of scholarly editing the teleological approach has proven its usefulness. For instance, in the tradition of textual scholarship, a ‘complete works’ edition is typically organized according to the canon: the author’s published works are arranged in a series of volumes.

In the case of *Finnegans Wake*, even the facsimile edition (the James Joyce Archive) is arranged according to the book’s final structure. As a consequence a pivotal document in the creative process, the red-backed ‘Guiltless’ copybook, has been published in separate volumes. It is not possible to take one volume of the *JJA* to study the document that is preserved at the British Library under catalogue number MS 47471b. Since it contains drafts of various sections of chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 the facsimiles have been arranged in four different volumes (*JJA* 45, 46, 47, 48). And because sometimes a page contains parts of different sections, this page had to be reproduced twice or even three times, as in the case of page 30r. This teleological arrangement has proven to be very useful, since genetic Joyce critics have benefited from this invaluable edition for almost forty years now. But in the digital age, it may be complemented with a document-oriented approach. Ted Nelson’s concept of ‘transclusion’, coined in his book *Literary Machines* (1980), is almost as old<sup>1</sup> as the *James Joyce Archive* and it still serves as a key concept to make teleologically and dysteleologically organized digital projects mutually compatible, in a concerted effort to map the genesis of one of the most complex writing processes of twentieth-century literature. The way we envision this at the Centre for Manuscript Genetics is an XML framework using eXist-db and the IIF API to develop an image/text (side-by-side) viewer, juxtaposing digital facsimiles and transcriptions to facilitate comparison. The macrogenesis (the genesis across all the textual versions) functions as a relational database divided into four basic categories:

1. sources (including the extant and virtual libraries)
2. notes (including the Buffalo notebooks and the notesheets)
3. drafts (including manuscripts, typescripts, proofs)
4. editions (including the ‘unbound’ copy at Buffalo)

For each portmanteau word, it is possible to follow a genetic path through these four categories of documents. But it is also possible to study it microgenetically in the immediate material context of the physical document in which it is written. With a transclusive editorial model, the textual and the documentary orientations can interact. This way the digital infrastructure will facilitate genetic research and help us understand the dynamics of the creative process. I hope we will be able to join forces to collaboratively make such a digital genetic infrastructure that will do justice to

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<sup>1</sup> The idea behind transclusion was already part of Nelson’s 1965 description of hypertext (in Theodor H. Nelson, ‘A File Structure for the Complex, the Changing and the Indeterminate.’ *Proceedings of the ACM 20th National Conference* (1965), pp. 84-100). In this context, he defined the concept of transclusion as ‘the same content knowably in more than one place’ (see also Theodor Holm Nelson and Robert Adamson Smith, ‘Back to the Future: Hypertext the Way It Used to Be’, <http://xanadu.com/XanaduSpace/btf.htm>).

what James S. Atherton has called the book's 'awareness of itself as a "work in progress"' (Atherton 1959, 59).

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