

“Space to space, time after time, in various phases of scripture”: Spatiotemporal Issues in the Study and Editing of Modern Literary Manuscripts

Ilaria Natali

In 1803, Goethe wrote to the composer Carl Friedrich Zelter that “one does not get to know nature and works of art when they are finished; they must be grasped as they develop, in order to understand them to some extent” (qtd. in Marholz 60, my trans.).¹ Goethe’s “organicist” approach to artistic creation remained a quite exceptional stance at the time: a similar interest in the historical mode of art can be re-encountered only in 1846, when Edgar Allan Poe discussed the composition of his poem “The Raven.” Goethe’s and Poe’s remarks represent the first expressions of an orientation which would prevail in the following century and culminate in Paul Valéry’s poetics; the latter considered works of art merely “abandoned” and never finished (1497), thus questioning the authority of the published text.

Indeed, from the 1900s writers increasingly regarded literary production as a process meant to explore different possibilities of the text rather than provide established meanings. In particular, Modernism is characterised by an enhanced awareness of literature as an unstable and unfinished process: the dialogue between author, work and reader became transient and opaque. Authorial self-consciousness of the text as “production” concerns, amongst others, Proust’s, Mann’s and Beckett’s writings, but is nowhere more evident than in the case of James Joyce. Not only did Joyce evidently consider his writings to be permanently *in fieri*, stressing the progressive mode of his textualizations, but he also explored the potential of chance in his works; significantly, he was said to accept unplanned deviations as textual enhancements, as is testified by various episodes regarding the composition of *Finnegans Wake* (see Ellmann 649). The reason why Joyce’s texts have often been at the centre of poststructuralist discourse about writing and textual editing is thus easily inferable: the complexity and richness of Joycean corpora guarantee a multi-faceted perspective on the writing process and alert us to the historical contingencies of the act of production.

As a matter of fact, Modernist attitudes such as Joyce’s gradually opened the way to new ideas of writing and also led to a change in the public’s perception of the “text.” This transformation, which involved a conjunction of philosophical, scientific and literary factors, reached its peak at the end of the 1960s, when Julia Kristeva defined the text as a “productivity” endowed with no certainties except that of its continuous evolution. A new conception of literary and historical archives became widespread: at the core of this conception, Terry Cook notes, is “a shift away from viewing records as static physical objects, and towards understanding them as dynamic virtual concepts” (3). The “chain” that goes from the act of composition to the readers has been questioned by sociological, psychological and linguistic research,

deconstructing the monolithic vision of writing as a merely aesthetic or philosophical achievement.

It is not possible to give full reasons for the interdisciplinary transformations which led to recent textual theories; what seems certain is that most of them are rooted in the first decades of the twentieth century, as the work of the psychologist Lev Semënovič Vygotskij (1896-1934) demonstrates. His pioneering ideas were critically analyzed only in the 1980s, bringing about new considerations on the social and historical characteristics of literary production and influencing various research fields. In the same decade, John R. Hayes and Linda Flower proposed new views on cognitive psychology, exploring the mental processes underlying written production, while linguistic studies offered new insights, inscribing language in a process of enunciation, in its act of production.

Different perspectives in various disciplines have therefore contributed to the development of innovative philological approaches; yet, the new interest in manuscripts does not have a distinct biographical, social, psychological or linguistic orientation (see Van Hulle 6-7). Although other disciplines can occasionally help understand the genesis of a work of literature, recent philological studies are self-sufficient, grounded on the available documentation and the material features of the text. The principal aim of these investigations, moreover, is not to try and reconstruct the best possible text, but to explore the possibilities of the text, studying the process of writing itself (Hay, *La Naissance* 14). The shift of focus from production to productivity implied a change not only in the way of conceiving literature, but also of analysing it: iconographic and bibliographical elements have come to be regarded as relevant to meaning.

In the last ten years, manuscript studies have been concerned with both theoretical and methodological questions, which can help understand and analyse the genesis of a work; in particular, philological discourse is often centred on the definition of temporal parameters, such as different phases of elaboration, or on discussion of the spatial characteristics of the manuscript. Debate on spatiotemporal issues regarding manuscripts does not seem to be exhausted yet; in this study, I propose to enter two primary aspects of such debate, trying to cope with the question of synchronic and diachronic concepts of writing and commenting on the influence of the writing medium on the creative process. I intend to proceed in the theoretical discussion by providing ‘practical’ examples from the writing processes of James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Giacomo Joyce*, *Finnegans Wake* and *Pomes Penyeach*, which offer wide and multi-faceted perspectives on the mechanisms of composition.²

“One’s Upon a Thyme”

New orientations in manuscript analysis have hitherto yielded two essential results: they have enriched the understanding of literary works through study of their creative processes and, above all, they have succeeded in proposing a new conception of writing itself. Indeed, if writing is to be understood as dynamic, virtually unfinished

and unfinish-able, the compositional documentation and the delivered text have the same status: the so-called final text is nothing more than the provisional and accidental termination of a process that could in theory be continued endlessly. The status of the last stage of elaboration is demystified: the “definite text” is seen as an arbitrary pause, or a mere formal difference. The various stages of elaboration of a work, as well as textual micro-modifications are therefore important in themselves and not in relation to the published text: reworking cannot be interpreted in terms of betterment, but of “meaningful variation” (Deppman *et al.* 11).

Whereas the diachronic dimension of writing is a fundamental principle in the new philological currents, it is necessary to note that it can only be understood in light of the synchronic dimension. Paola Pugliatti was the first to reveal an implicit *aporia* in the conception of writing: the scholar remarks that, precisely because it has passed through a process of elaboration, each text has *also* “product” characteristics (121, emphasis in the original). The idea that any phase of composition can be regarded as an independent textualization implies that it also constitutes a complete structure, an immanent and a-historical entity. Cesare Segre observes, regarding such dichotomy,

When a manuscript has been modified several times at different stages it would be correct to consider it as a superimposition of synchronies and of texts . . . Considering every text as a system, subsequent texts can appear as an effect of the drives included in the preceding ones, while, in their turn, they contain drives that will result in later texts. Thus, analysis of the editorial history and of the variants lets us know part of the dynamism of the creative activity. (79)³

According to Segre, thus, different phases of elaboration are interrelated synchronies, which concur in creating a whole and composite process. In other words, the concept of “writing production” encounters a contradiction in the transition from structure to process: the notion of text as system is implicitly acknowledged, but it coexists with the opposite concept of the text as “journey,” which can only yield incomplete textual configurations.

The theoretical *aporia* between synchronic and diachronic aspects of composition also implies “concrete” methodological problems. Especially in the 1980-90s, various studies proposed systematic cataloguing of textual modifications and procedural schemes of analysis: some of these categories indeed appear as unifying elements in the multiplicity of extant philological approaches. Most methodological schemes define three basic stages of textual elaboration, which roughly consist of planning, composition and revision (see also Hayes and Flowers). The fact is that often these schemes do not envisage the possibility of returns or cyclicity in the tripartite process; in addition, overlapping of these categories is frequent, since the writer might well be engaged in two or more activities simultaneously, for example, revising while composing.

Pierre-Marc De Biasi proposed a more detailed and flexible five-category system or “typological tool” (31), which has largely been adopted in later studies. The idea at the basis of this scheme is that each manuscript can be located in a specific writing phase according to both the nature of the text and the graphic signifiers on the page. According to De Biasi, manuscripts can be subdivided into pre-compositional material, which includes annotations, outlines and all that is preliminary to the first drafting; compositional material, mainly consisting of handwritten drafts and fair copies, pre-publication material, which comprises typescripts and page proofs, publication and post-publication material, which is essentially printed documentation (34-35). This classification provides an effective starting point for manuscript analysis, yet De Biasi himself is aware of the artificiality of this subdivision and alerts scholars to the fact that the writing process is not always structured as an order of successions, or easily reduced to a chronological frame. The problem is that the concept of “order” can hardly be recognizable in any documentation: the process of elaboration often evades linearity and acquires complex configurations. For example, Paul Auster provides a testimony of what Contat defines a “kinetic manuscript”:

The late George Oppen . . . told me that the way he wrote was to type out a draft of the poem, and then, as he revised and changed it, he would take lines and paste them on top of the old lines, so that each manuscript was a palimpsest, and he could peel back the layers . . . and rearrange the lines and sometimes combine bits of different drafts . . . (162-63)

Oppen’s manuscript is a physical superimposition of synchronies where the diachronic dimension of writing could be progression or retrogression; textual movement is not unidirectional but multidirectional and often a step forward is also a step back. In this case, the text(s) could probably be classified in pre-compositional, compositional and pre-publication phases at the same time. The procedure of textual modification Auster refers to obviously constitutes an extreme example of the protean and composite relationships that the synchronic and diachronic dimension can establish in a writing process: nonetheless, even less “experimental” documentations can pose similar problems of classification.

The manuscript material of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* provides an example of how documents can be simultaneously assigned to more categories and demonstrates that general subdivisions of the writing process in different phases are always partially incomplete. The *Portrait* writing process is characterized by a noticeable “fluidity”: far from being limited to a succession of chronologically linear texts, it proceeds as a network of connections, derivations and reversals. The manuscripts which were used for the composition of *Portrait* date back from 1900-1902 to 1914-15:⁴ they include a variety of materials which range from annotations (notebooks, copybooks)⁵ to whole works (*Epiphanies*, “A Portrait of the Artist” and *Stephen Hero*).⁶ The compositional path of the novel is dotted by a

stream of impasses and new beginnings, where interrupted or “abandoned” creative processes often became the first move for different projects: Joyce never published the collection *Epiphanies*, but reworked the sketches in *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait*; his essay “A Portrait of the Artist” was refused by the editors of the Irish periodical *Dana*, thus it was abandoned and subsequently reworked in *Stephen Hero*. The composition of *Stephen Hero* itself was probably interrupted around 1906, and parts of the novel were re-employed in *Portrait*. In other words, at a certain stage of their writing process, independent works changed their function and became sources of material for different texts.

The brief prose sketches commonly known as *Epiphanies*⁷ represent the first extant documentation of James Joyce’s creative activity, besides being one of the main sources of material re-employed in the “major works.” Joyce also reworked a number of the known epiphanies in *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait*; the collection was therefore re-used as some sort of annotation. Yet various testimonies suggest that, at first, *Epiphanies* was not meant for inclusion in other works. Significantly, in 1902 Joyce asked both George Russell and W. B. Yeats to read some of his sketches (Ellmann 102): it is hardly imaginable that mere annotations might have been so important for Joyce as to be shown to other writers. The function of the texts had probably changed after 1902, when the epiphanies started being re-read as compositional materials for the novels. This assumption is further supported by a passage from *Ulysses*, where Joyce establishes a relationship between his artistic experience and that of his character Stephen Dedalus, also author of a collection of epiphanies (34.140-43). In the “Proteus” chapter, Stephen ridicules the value he used to bestow on his epiphanies; although these considerations are included in a fictional work, *Ulysses* can offer hints on the author’s attitude towards his juvenile production.

The mutation in the function of the sketches also involves a change in the nature of the texts and poses a problem regarding the methodological classification of the material. If considered in the light of the entire creative process of *Portrait*, *Epiphanies* could constitute pre-compositional documentation for the novel. Nonetheless, the collection can also acquire a compositional function, if seen from the immanent perspective of the single document, or independent work.

The *aporia* between synchronic and diachronic aspects of writing which emerges in the study of *Epiphanies* appears even more blatant in the case of “A Portrait of the Artist.” This essay, dated 1904, is drafted on a copybook which belonged to Joyce’s sister Mabel (MS Buffalo II.A 1-15).⁸ In 1904, when Joyce presented “A Portrait of the Artist” to the editors of *Dana*, Magee refused to publish it, as he considered the text “incomprehensible” (qtd. in Scholes and Kain 56). A short time afterwards, Joyce “decided to turn his paper into a novel” (S. Joyce 13), and re-employed “A Portrait of the Artist” as annotations for subsequent drafts; the short story became one of the sources for the composition of *Stephen Hero*. In re-reading the essay, he even crossed out various textual portions with the same method he usually adopted in for the pre-compositional annotations in his notebooks. “A Portrait of the Artist”

changed its function: first Joyce considered it ready for publication and then he used the manuscript as pre-compositional documentation. For this reason, the text can be classified both as pre-compositional and as compositional (or pre-publication) material, since its function in the writing process has varied.

Such change in the function of the text can be seen from a twofold perspective: the writing process undergoes a fracture at the level of the single structure, that of the abandoned composition of “A Portrait of the Artist”; at the same time its continuity is preserved, since in the whole compositional macrotext of *Portrait* the essay can be said to represent one “step” of the creation of the novel. In other words, the *aporia* between synchronic and diachronic dimensions of writing does not allow any definite categorization of manuscript material: the writing process can be seen from different angles, as in Joyce’s well-known reference to “the parallax or parallaxic drift of so-called fixed stars, in reality evermoving wanderers . . .” (*Ulysses* 17.1052-56).

The question is also that our concept of the writing process is often categorical and based on “material” parameters that can be employed to recognize particular phases of elaboration: study of the “physical characteristics” of the manuscript helps us achieve a sense of “concreteness” and scientificity that is quite illusory. We are also accustomed to assume any process to be a development, a movement forward: the documentation of *Portrait* shows that the time of the composition can be also iterative, stages of elaboration often renew or begin in conjunction with other stages of elaboration, producing manifold times. Seen in this perspective, the writing process is inconstant: it can either fold back on itself or tend toward successive distinct realizations.

Emphasis on either the synchronic or the diachronic dimension of writing might be substituted with cooperation between the two aspects, since the study of the writing process and the single structures, or documents, are interrelated: as a matter of fact, the only way we can know of the individual manuscript is by means of its presence in a macrostructure and *vice versa*. It might be added that acknowledging a wider range of conditions, possibilities and interpretations of the compositional process could open the way to a more complete understanding of writing, since rigid sequential conceptions do not answer for slippages in the system. In short, it seems that integrative frameworks are needed, systems which could take into account the flexibility of the passage from one compositional phase to another: moving from one stage of textual composition to the following one(s) might well imply moving to a wholly different work, as in Joyce’s case. Portraying the full complexities of the writing process requires attention to different levels of considerations, such as an enhanced consciousness of the iterative and manifold times of writing and of possible meso-structural textualizations: effective models are integrated and interactive rather than sequential.

“Eins within a space”

Several scholars have tried to metaphorically illustrate the creative process: Almuth Grésillon compares the text to a road full of crossing paths, where the journey proceeds without a specific destination (11-12). Writing appears a casual fact, dotted with a stream of potential choices; the journey metaphor shifts a temporal problem to the spatial level: analysis of a documentary corpus implies taking into account convergent and parallel times, that is to say, various possible texts. The result of the writing process is thus essentially unstable, an uncertainty emphasized in Hay’s well-known statement in the title of his essay “Le texte n’existe pas” (“The text does not exist”). The simultaneity of various texts in one spatial unit has raised several theoretical discussions regarding, in particular, the multidimensional nature of the manuscript and its lack of linearity. The draft is often thought as “other” to the printed text, since the latter is assumed to grant a linear reading; as a consequence, some scholars have questioned the possibility of using the same criteria of analysis on both manuscript and published text. In their view, the documentary material would acquire a different status from the “text” because of its multidimensionality (see Grésillon 16, 34, 108).

Leaving alone the fact that the concept of linearity of the published text could be controversial *a priori*, the focal point of the debate seems to concern the spatial and temporal characteristics of manuscripts. While the published text generally presents a correspondence between the unity of space (sheet, page) and the unity of time (drafting, or reading), the manuscript displays multiple temporal layers, that is to say, a number of distinct textualizations on the same page. Each modification corresponds to a new text: the fact that several texts can coexist in the same spatial unit does not change their status. The manuscript can therefore be said to offer a number of immanent readings, since order and unity are lost in favour of diversity and parallelism, as to a certain extent can happen in the published text.

From the audience’s viewpoint, reading manuscripts requires an overlapping of roles, since the reader also becomes a viewer and activates different strategies of perception and interpretation: the visual entity precedes the semantic impact and is essential to understanding. Consequently, every philological study should contain a copy of the documentation, or indications on how to find the original manuscripts: lack of such indications would imply the impossibility of picking relevant signals. The fact that the visual element is pivotal to manuscript analysis appears particularly evident in Paul Valéry’s documentation, where writing and drawing are interdependent and, in some cases, the text has both linguistic and pictorial connotations (see Pickering). If Valéry’s manuscripts can represent a peculiar case, it is also true that the page layout can reveal key features of the writing process in any manuscript.

The centrality of vision in manuscript reading is emphasized in Joyce’s *Giacomo Joyce*, only posthumously published in 1968.⁹ The text consists of 51 textual fragments separated by blank spaces of varying length, which originate eye-catching alternations of voids and spaces filled with writing. *Giacomo Joyce* seems

to appeal to the reader's sensory response at various levels; the text's network of phonetic effects (especially alliterations in "s" and "w") is accompanied by a careful spatial arrangement of the pages, which Donatella Pallotti defines as a "visual encounter" ("Everintermutuomergent" 339). Pallotti effectively demonstrates how spatial relationships between the various fragments are pivotal to the understanding of the whole text; therefore, the voids can be interpreted as semantic units. In the manuscript of *Giacomo Joyce*, the semantization of blank spaces is also a result of Joyce's experiments with the interrelations of perceptual and conceptual aspects of the text; yet, these experiments are based on a key concept of the manuscript as *locus* of higher semantization of all signs. In a sense, manuscripts show partial analogies with the poetic text, since even their layout or structure is meaningful.

For the philologist, the structure of the manuscript is also methodologically relevant; for instance, Jacques Neefs illustrates how presence, or absence, as well as different uses of, the page margins can provide information about the creative process. It is worth mentioning that the page layout is crucial in order to identify different phases of re-elaboration: the position of the modifications on the page can offer important indications on their "chronology." Despite all clues offered by spatial signs, the succession of textual changes is often difficult to interpret: we do not always have enough evidence to establish whether the author has transformed the text while composing it or, during successive re-readings, how many stages of revision occurred and which modifications they involved. Use of different writing tools (pen, pencil, crayon . . .) and changes in handwriting (different speed of the hand, varying inclinations or dimensions of the letters) can be indicative but offer no certainties. From this point of view, the philologist's work is inevitably speculative, based on hypotheses and "subject to the material, empirical and historical limits imposed by [the] object" (Grésillon 24, my trans.).

Today, word processors offer writing a new space, where the procedures of modification are concealed: for instance, elimination results in mere cancellation. The text is apparently more malleable, but the medium imposes other limitations: word processors undoubtedly reduce the options in using margins, or evading a pre-established linearity. Every word is automatically placed in an ordered sequence, so that unusual typographic patterns require more planning and effort than in handwriting. From the writer's viewpoint, the fact that modifications are automatically "merged" into the text could have an effect on the creative process: since the historicity of the work is concealed, the writer could perceive his or her text as always new and "clean," uncorrupted by changes. Instead, manuscripts keep track of each modification, enhancing the writer's awareness of all deviations in the creative process; after all, in the manuscript the time of writing is spatially marked. Previously eliminated textual portions could be easily recovered, a procedure which occurs, for example, in the manuscripts of Wilfred Owen's "The Send-off," characterized by constant returns to abandoned readings.¹⁰

Different spaces of writing, therefore, can profoundly influence the writing process. Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong analysed the impact that writing technologies exercise on the individual's mental processes and on the cultural formation of society. In particular, McLuhan opened the way to productive debates in media scholarship with his famous aphorism "the medium is the message" (1967); Ong hypothesized that human beings unknowingly interiorise writing technologies to such an extent as to mould their thoughts on such bases. Ong and McLuhan's theories can therefore constitute a valid complement to manuscript studies: they can shed new light on the modalities and the characteristics of the creative process, emphasizing how writing can be partially determined by its technological boundaries.

In particular, support from media studies might prove fruitful in order to investigate the concept of the manuscript page as a writing/reading unit. For example, Grésillon points out that the lower part of the sheet generally presents a more compressed writing, or a reduction of the space between the lines, as if writers were trying not to leave the page (62-63). It can be inferred that shifting to a new page is often perceived as a break in the continuity of the text; the writing/reading unit of the page can also acquire the value of semantic unit. Grésillon implicitly suggests that the writing space can unknowingly influence the creative process, and that the act of 'material production' of the text can be related to its semantic characteristics.

The fact that the space of writing can have an effect on the writing process and the semantics of the text is clearly demonstrated in the compositional material of Joyce's *Pomes Penyeach*. The collection was written between 1904 and 1927: this implies that Joyce composed and re-elaborated his poems while he was also working on his novels. The available documentation of *Pomes Penyeach* testifies to this simultaneity: Joyce often wrote annotations for different works on the same sheets, which acted as occasional meeting-points of texts. This coexistence, in fact, usually implies cases of (mutual) semantic, syntactic and lexical influence between independent writing processes. For example, for different reasons "Alone," "Tutto è Sciolto," and "Nightpiece" were written among *Finnegans Wake* annotations, with the result that the published texts carry "a memory" of each other; "A Memory of the Players in a Mirror at Midnight" is similarly linked to *Ulysses*.

One of the most interesting cases of this "genetic interrelation" or "contact" between different writing processes is included in the documentation of the poem "A Prayer," which demonstrates that the margins of the spatial or semantic unit can exceed those of the single page. The first available manuscript of "A Prayer," dated 1924, is contained in notebook Buffalo VI.B.5, which essentially consists of materials for the composition of *Finnegans Wake*.¹¹ The poem is drafted on the recto of three consecutive pages numbered 11, 13 and 15 and is immediately preceded and followed by annotations for the novel. At this stage of elaboration, the text has no title; however, the phrase "A Prayer" appears in spatial proximity to the poem, amid the annotations for *Finnegans Wake*. Indeed, on page 17 of the notebook (that is, the recto which

immediately follows the draft of the poem) Joyce wrote the textual portion “A Prayer = S.P. Breastplate” (*The James Joyce Archive* 10, vol. 30).¹²

This annotation was undoubtedly conceived for *Finnegans Wake* and not for *Pomes Penyeach*, as is demonstrated by the fact that it was reworked and included in the published text of the novel: “But, by Jove Chronides, Seed of Summ, after at he had bate his *breastplates* for, forforget, forforgetting his birdsplace, it was soon that, that he, that he rehad himself. By a *prayer*? No, that comes later” (*Finnegans Wake* 231.23-27, emphasis added).

Finnegans Wake annotations might have inspired Joyce a title for the poem, or he could have unconsciously connected different texts because they were drafted on consecutive pages of the same notebook. Interestingly, though, the relationships between “A Prayer” and *Finnegans Wake* do not seem limited to this textual portion: to some extent, the proximity of the poem and the annotations might have caused further cross-influences. For instance, the *Finnegans Wake* context where the annotation “A Prayer = S.P. Breastplate” is re-elaborated abounds in references to poetry, including a parody of Joyce’s first poem, “Et tu, Healy” (231.5-8), references to Shelley and various Irish poets (231.12-13), the phrase “have recourse of course to poetry” (230.24) and the words “pumme” and “petty” (231.3), which also mean “pome” and “penny” (as in the title *Pomes Penyeach*).

Given the well-known complexity of the Wakean text, any specific connection can hardly be demonstrated or verified; only the title of the poem is clearly identifiable in the text of *Finnegans Wake*. The possible influence of the novel on “A Prayer,” instead, is more perceptible: the poem presents some stylistic and structural patterns that closely resemble those of *Finnegans Wake*, such as repetitions of groups of three or four elements. For example, line 18, “Take me, save me, soothe me, o spare me!” can be related to typical *Finnegans Wake* formulas such as “Harry me, marry me, bury me, bind me” (414.31-2), which are associated to the three Viconian *cicli* and *ricorso*. The structure of the poem itself is tripartite and each of the three stanzas contains groups of three or four elements: the first stanza includes three imperatives; the second comprises three verbs, while the last stanza, apart from the above quoted formula in line 18, presents three verbal forms.

“A Prayer” and *Finnegans Wake* are therefore linked at different levels: their processes of composition are testified on the same notebook and the published texts present both lexical and structural relationships. Notebook Buffalo VI.B.5, the “spatial unit” in this case, determined a “contact” between different writing processes, contact that might have opened the way to other kinds of connection. This phenomenon of mutual genetic interference between texts might be compared to internal intertextuality: the manuscript is not only the place where new meanings are generated, but also the place where different meanings can simultaneously integrate.

The documentations of “A Prayer” and *Finnegans Wake* also emphasizes that textual composition passes through several channels and involves not only writer and recipient, but also an intermediate figure, that of the writer as reader; intersemiotic

relations can occur precisely because the writer re-reads his own texts and, consciously or not, his mental processes create multi-level connections.

Tentative conclusions

Analysis of the spatiotemporal characteristics of the manuscript leads to two main orders of considerations. For one thing, all borders have proved flexible: in particular, the idea that the documentation of a single work has definite limits can be questioned, since, as we have seen in Joyce's documentations, different writing processes can show interferences and intersections, in a sort of genetic intertextuality. This implies that writing proceeds through multiple deviations, following both a "vertical" and a "horizontal" movement of the text. Therefore, the compositional materials of a work cannot be conceived as a diachronic row of documents: sometimes it is impossible to chronologize even the most complete documentations, since the writing process might stray through returns, impasses and radical variations. For example, as in the case of the *Portrait* dossier, each text can produce more than one re-elaboration, or rewriting: connections and mutual derivations are not necessarily in a linear development, and they can assume the dynamics of the rhizome.

The idea of rhizome is not employed here in direct relation to Deleuze's notion, where it is attributed five specific properties that can only partially be applied to the writing process. However, in a wider sense, Deleuze conceives the rhizome as opposite to the root in order to express two different kinds of movement: the root progresses vertically, while the rhizome undergoes constant variations that are not necessarily linear, it is an "acentered system, non hierarchic . . . uniquely defined by the circulation of states" (Deleuze and Guattari 64). On this point it is possible to articulate a relationship between rhizomatic movement and the writing process, which can proceed in a multidirectional way, as we have seen in Joyce's works and, marginally, in Oppen's and Owen's. Yet the compositional history of a work should not be seen as a formless entity, deprived of any organization; the problem in conceptualizing the system of the text is precisely that we are not used to understanding the text as a system and we still try and structure it according to pre-existing principles. The text is not a fixed entity, nor a purely historical one, but could be thought of as a dialogic space where different possibilities intersect.

The second order of considerations which emerged from the study of spatiotemporal characteristics of the manuscript concerns a key parameter of any documentation, the role of the writer. As we have seen, the "sequentiality of improbable possibles" (*Finnegans Wake* 110.11) of the text originates when the writer also becomes reader. The creator of the text assumes at least two different functions and, as claimed by Grésillon and Lebrave: he or she is writer, reader-writer and reader (Grésillon and Lebrave 99); one might add that these functions can be acquired recursively and in such a close connection as to almost overlap. The compositional process is therefore managed by two entities in the same person, who becomes producer, receiver and

can also ‘fuse’ these two instances in a sort of active dialogism (see Ferrer 15). The commonly perceived barrier between the ideas of writer and reader is another border transcended by manuscript theorization.

In light of all the previous discussion, it is worth adding a conclusive remark on the future of both manuscript studies and critical editing. The new wave of poststructuralist theories and the notion of the unfinishable text have clearly provoked a crisis in editing; the question is how writing can be reproduced and diffused, or better, how the audience can read not only the text and its variants, but also writing itself. A possible solution is proposed by ITEM:¹³ computers allow instant visualization of different readings of the work and represent a dynamics of the text that, Bernard Cerquiglini says, reproduces the work in its variation (119). Lebrave encourages a digital creative reading, which might uncover the “mysteries of textual creation” displaying the “genesis” itself in front of the reader (207). The advantage of digital documents and electronic texts lies in the opportunity of following the history of the work with a medium which is virtually consistent with the dynamic and multidirectional nature of the writing process.

As a further advantage, digital and published documents do not pose particular problems of status distinctions: computers can also provide a print output, functioning “between manuscript and print” (Deegan and Sutherland 5). Moreover, computer reading can acknowledge the centrality of vision in manuscript documentation through scanned images, enhancing details through the numerous available image processing operations. Digital quality of manuscript reproduction is nowadays rapidly progressing through innovative techniques, although “preservation copies” are more likely to be transmittable than “preservation-quality images”: the latter are high-quality digital images which are meant to “serve as reasonable substitutes in the event that the original item is lost or deteriorates” (*Library of Congress* website) but might be difficult to handle over a computer because of their size. Even if they are less accurate, access-quality images are widely preferred by researchers: they grant easier network manageability and they are reliable, since they usually derive from preservation-quality images.

The main direction in new critical editing might be then considered the hypertextual presentation of the material, where the term hypertext refers to the digital structure “composed of blocks of words (or images) linked electronically by multiple paths, chains or trails in an open-ended, perpetually unfinished textuality described by the terms *link*, *node*, *network*, *web* and *path*” (Landow 2). This kind of arrangement of the material has obvious advantages, but also downsides which often go unnoticed; in the first place, digitalized images do not render the “physical” characteristics of the documentation. No matter how accurate and high-quality the reproduction is, a copy by definition cannot preserve characteristics such as the kind of paper, or watermarks, elements which can be decisive in philological studies when it comes to interconnecting manuscripts or dating the material. In the second place, it should be remembered that the hypertext is only apparently unmediated: at the basis

of the hypertextual presentation there is always a preliminary study and the “product” which the reader accesses is the result of various “filtering” processes. Although Lebrave seems to suggest that hypertexts allow exclusion of the editor’s mediations or “deteriorations” from the communicative process (207), in actual fact even electronic presentations pass through some kind of “editorial intervention,” which includes research and *inventio* of the material, procedures of digital reproduction, transcriptions and final re-organization of the whole documentation in a network. In other words, it seems some “material limits” of the philological work cannot be fully transcended.

The question of the hypertext, of course, does not only account for future editorial and reading perspectives, but also represents a new horizon for writers. The writing process has radically changed in the last few decades, as authors have started working predominantly on word processors. Annalisa Volpone offers an in-depth view on the implications of this change:

Computers will bring the process of transcending the page to its height, further eradicating the text from its support and emphasizing the de-synchronizing and de-locating aspects of writing. The screen allows the disconnection of messages from the spatiotemporal restrictions of the source and the reconfiguration of them in a variety of different contexts. The fact that the page is the primary constituent of an instrument, the book-casket, where knowledge crystallizes in both a visible and inviolable way . . . is also suggested by the etymological origin of the term. . . . The screen, instead, appears as an ‘enormous and de-territorialized semiotic level’ where author and reader interweave in a reading/writing continuum. (13)

The writer and reader’s roles are therefore changing in line with relatively new technological instruments for creating and representing the text. The potential of these technologies has only recently been explored in its various aspects, partially revealing the implications of non-sequential writing and reading. Forthcoming frontiers of philological studies necessarily involve coming to terms with different concepts of space-time in both writing and reading; we might expect this encounter to yield novel conceptions of “text” and “writing process” in the near future.

Notes

- 1 The title of this study and its subsections are quotes from James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* (254.27, 20.23-4 and 152.18). My heartfelt thanks go to Prof. Donatella Pallotti for her precious guidance and to Prof. Paola Pugliatti for her unremitting support. I am also in debt to experts such as Michael Groden, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout and Dirk Van Hulle.
- 2 All examples from James Joyce’s writing processes are based on research I have carried out in “*That submerged doughdoughty doubleface*”: Pomes Penyeach *di*

James Joyce and Stephen Hero e il processo di creazione artistica in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

- 3 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from other languages are mine.
- 4 The available documentation is reproduced in the facsimiles of *The James Joyce Archive* vols. 7-10.
- 5 See *The James Joyce Archive* vol. 7.
- 6 *Epiphanies* is a collection of brief prose sketches (which Joyce never published) presumably written between 1900 and 1904; the extant manuscripts, now preserved at the Lockwood Buffalo Collection and Cornell University Joyce Collection, are reproduced in *The James Joyce Archive* vol. 7. "A Portrait of the Artist" is a brief and complex text, which Joyce defines as an essay (*The James Joyce Archive* 93, vol.7). Written in 1904, as the title suggests, it is connected to *Portrait*: after Joyce unsuccessfully tried to publish it, it was re-elaborated into a novel. The manuscripts are now at Buffalo (See *The James Joyce Archive* vol. 7). Finally, as is well known, *Stephen Hero* is the first novel Joyce ever wrote and represents the main available source of the material developed in *Portrait*. Only part of its manuscript is now extant, and is preserved at the Harvard College Library, the Yale University Library and the Cornell Joyce Collection; this material is reproduced in *The James Joyce Archive* vol. 8. *Stephen Hero* was presumably written between 1904 and 1906; unpublished, it was printed only in 1944.
- 7 The title of the collection is not specified in the available manuscripts; it was posthumously reconstructed according to external documents and testimonies.
- 8 See *The James Joyce Archive* vol. 7.
- 9 The original document is not available for consultation; scholars can rely on the photographic reproductions in *The James Joyce Archive* vol. 2.
- 10 I have analyzed Owen's manuscripts in "Founded, broken and reformed: the writing process of Wilfred Owen's 'The Send-off,'" now undergoing publication.
- 11 The manuscripts of "A Prayer" are reproduced in *The James Joyce Archive* 198-200, vol. 1.
- 12 "S. P." is commonly understood as an abbreviation of "Saint Patrick."
- 13 Institut Des Textes Et Manuscrits Modernes (ITEM), directed by Pierre-Marc De Biasi (<http://www.item.ens.fr/>).

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