

# Spectres of Balzac: Stefan Zweig's Collection of Manuscripts and his Rewriting of the Unfinished *Balzac*

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*Abstract.* This article ties together two of Stefan Zweig's (1881–1942) principal creative enterprises — the collection of autograph manuscripts and the writing of biographies — and positions him as a significant figure in the developing appreciation of 'rewriting'. Zweig's collection included working drafts and corrected proofs from many great writers, but central among these was Honoré de Balzac, who is pivotal to both the nineteenth century's turn towards authors' compositional traces and the more modern practice of genetic criticism. Focusing partly on Balzac's bound proofs of the novel *Une ténébreuse affaire*, an early part of Zweig's collection, a conflicting, or perhaps hybrid, conception of creativity can be drawn out. On the cusp of material and textual criticism, yet fixed to a Romantic admiration of the author figure, Zweig's thought represents an interesting negotiation of authorship. His process of writing biography sheds further light on his conception of a creator. Zweig revises his early drafts of *Balzac* to maximise the personal struggle of the protagonist at the expense of contingent factors to creativity. Simultaneously reductive and personal, Zweig's empathetic mode of biography, so often condemned, might also be seen to have a moral foundation in its focus on human exceptionality.

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## Stefan Zweig: Professional Adorer, Schmoozer, Inheritor, Collector<sup>1</sup>

Criticism of Stefan Zweig in his own time and since has been primarily related to his reticence to condemn fascism: he preferred a pacifistic position that rejected the dogma of partisanship, leading him to focus on literary rather than political activity. This was by no means a bid to hide behind the literary framework, but rather evidence of Zweig's genuine belief in the aesthetic response as the best reaction to the contemporary political situation. Zweig's articulation of intellectual, cultural Vienna takes us back to that which critics regularly condemn in this outlook: 'Vienna, as everyone knew, was an epicurean city — however, what does culture mean but taking the raw material

<sup>1</sup> This is a phrase adapted from Michael Hoffmann; see Michael Hoffmann, 'Vermicular Dither', *London Review of Books*, 32.2 (2010), 9–12 (p. 9).

of life and enticing from it its finest, most delicate and subtle aspects by means of art and love?'.<sup>2</sup> To retreat into the aesthetic mode, an act which Zweig viewed as elevating oneself above conflict, was deemed more 'wavering',<sup>3</sup> 'tolerant',<sup>4</sup> and 'dithering'.<sup>5</sup>

Some critical reflective essays on Zweig after his death in 1942 view his manuscript collection as emblematic of his flawed existence. The collection of drafts, fair copies, corrected proofs, and musical scores amongst other items was partly a vehicle for idolising greatness (or great men) at a time when the idea of greatness was being distorted by the destructive rise of Hitler. Meshing the motivations of the collection with Zweig's historical blindness, Hannah Arendt reads Zweig's growing despair as a result of the shame he intrinsically felt at being dismissed from the nostalgic 'paradise' of Zweig's European 'world of yesterday'. Zweig, she writes, was more concerned with the private lives of dead geniuses than with like-minded peers, and that collecting the relics of these geniuses was the single most satisfying engagement in his 'unengaged' life.<sup>6</sup>

Critics more sympathetic to Zweig depict a similarly obsessive relationship with creative figures, noting the ebullient author's frequent evocation of gods, heroes, and genius in relation to his collection. Hilde Spiel shows how this enthusiasm for cultural achievement endowed Zweig with a 'particular empathetic capacity', which was the foundation for his mass appeal.<sup>7</sup> In Spiel's essay, Zweig's weakness for greatness is threaded throughout his attempts to animate those forgotten or undervalued creative and historical figures and moments. The critic cannot deny the sense of renewal, warmth, and 'presence' given to forgotten scenes of the past. What Zweig sought to achieve was to make these achievements 'present' again. Zweig formulates this idea of 'making present' in his many essays that concern his manuscript collection, rendering the power of compositional documents timeless, or ever-present. In 'Sinn und Schönheit der Autographen', he writes,

In such a secretive way, autograph manuscripts have the power to conjure the presence of long disappeared figures, and, like in an art gallery, one can pass by these pages, seized and moved differently by each of them.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, trans. by Anthea Bell, (London: Pushkin, 2009), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Roth, 'An Stefan Zweig, 7.11.1933', in Ulrich Weinzierl, *Stefan Zweig — Triumph Tragik Aufsätze, Tagebuchnotizen, Briefe* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), pp. 97–100 (p. 99).

<sup>4</sup> Erwin Egon Kirsch, 'Über den Tod Stefan Zweigs', in Weinzierl, *Stefan Zweig*, pp. 147–48 (p. 148).

<sup>5</sup> Hofmann, 'Vermicular Dither', p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Arendt, 'Juden in der Welt von gestern' (1948), in Weinzierl, *Stefan Zweig*, pp. 158–61 (p. 159).

<sup>7</sup> Hilde Spiel, 'Ein Ruhn von gestern. Zum 100. Geburtstag von Stefan Zweig', in Weinzierl, *Stefan Zweig*, pp. 175–80 (p. 179).

<sup>8</sup> Stefan Zweig, 'Sinn und Schönheit der Autographen' (1934), in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift: Katalog und Geschichte der Autographensammlung Stefan Zweig*, ed. by Oliver Matuschek (Wien: Inlibris, 2005), pp. 136–40, (p. 138). All translations from the German are my own unless otherwise stated.

What detractors considered nostalgic aestheticism was, naively or not, viewed by the collector as a relevant, timeless, and potentially productive encounter with creativity. The underlying motive for his work may then be articulated in the pithy phrase Zweig uses in his first essay on manuscript collecting: ‘to create something living from dead material’.<sup>9</sup> By enlivening the aesthetic past for present purposes, Zweig offers a more organic and dynamic view of manuscripts.

### The Secret of Creation

The oft repeated single motivation behind Stefan Zweig’s manuscript collection is the search for ‘the secret of artistic creation’.<sup>10</sup> He draws a line between this ‘secret’ and manuscripts in the following example:

Nothing in the world, if not the mystery of earth’s own existence, is as unreachable and impenetrable as the coming-into-being of an artwork [...]. We have no other sign, no other medium, through which to get closer to the creative moment of an artwork, as the autograph manuscript.<sup>11</sup>

The manuscript is the space through which we approach the creative moment precisely because it is a retreat into a work’s formation in a document that materializes that process. To read a manuscript is to experience a ‘retreat of a Being back to its Becoming, a creation back to its emergence’.<sup>12</sup> Zweig’s primary emphasis on the creative document, laying the ground for a potentially analytical approach to the process of a text’s formation, distances his collecting practice from the conventional notion of collecting for rarity or prestige. We begin to see in Zweig’s frequent use of terms such as ‘mode of production’, ‘emergence’, and ‘creative conditions’ that to consider his collection solely as a plain fascination with genius writers would neglect the processual element of his thought on creativity. What is particularly interesting about Zweig’s range of writings on the collection is their potential to be read both as consistent with some of his reductive adulatory artist portraits *and* as a radically different textual approach to creativity.

For all his emphasis on the materiality of the manuscript and the process of re-writing, there remains, for Zweig, something ‘incommensurable’ in this encounter — that is, something immaterial, something without substance. The simultaneity of something physical and something spiritual leads Zweig to describe ‘a feeling of an almost spectral presence’.<sup>13</sup> Zweig flits between emphasising the power of the material traces, their movement and texture, and

<sup>9</sup> Stefan Zweig, ‘Die Autographensammlung als Kunstwerk’ (1914), in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift*, facsimile insert.

<sup>10</sup> Stefan Zweig, ‘Das Geheimnis des künstlerischen Schaffens’ (1938), in *Zeit und Welt: gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge, 1904–1940* (Stockholm: Bemann-Fischer, 1946), pp. 251–74 (p. 251).

<sup>11</sup> Stefan Zweig, ‘Vom Handschriften-Sammeln’, in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift*, pp. 120–21 (p. 120).

<sup>12</sup> Zweig, ‘Die Autographensammlung als Kunstwerk’.

<sup>13</sup> Stefan Zweig, ‘Die Welt der Autographen’, in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift*, p. 103.

the atmospheric presence of something less tangible that resides behind these traces, be that some kind of authorial or divine inspiration. This 'paradoxical phenomenality' of presence and absence is encapsulated in Derrida's definition of the spectre.<sup>14</sup> Derrida notes that the spectre 'is doubtless a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and the ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X'.<sup>15</sup> The paradox of the spectral encounter reappears in Zweig's recurring notion of proximity and distance to a presence. He mentions 'a feeling of proximity to immensity', or 'the bringing closer of the figures once pushed away to eternity', or even 'the tangible closeness of great figures',<sup>16</sup> appearing to anticipate Walter Benjamin's understanding of the aura:

The trace is appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. The aura is appearance of a distance, however close the thing that calls it forth. In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us.<sup>17</sup>

Zweig's depiction of the auratic atmosphere of the manuscript encounter dominates much of his attempted translations of this specific reading experience. This does not preclude a focus on the tangible material traces; indeed Zweig's singularity as a collector is just that processual bent to his motivations. Yet this material focus is always accompanied by a magical element to creation, conjured in the world of autograph manuscripts.

Zweig was the key figure, according to Bodo Plachta, in the late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century shift in collecting motivations from a focus on the prominence of a manuscript's creator towards considering it as a creative document. Plachta asserts that the collector begins to move away from the authorial and transcendental creative concept to focus on the textual and material aspects of production. He establishes a significant contrast between *Schriftdenkmal* — manuscripts as memorial objects for their creators — and *Textträger* — manuscripts as primarily textual phenomena — providing a useful spectrum from early collecting practice to contemporary analytical trends in source studies, including philology, textual criticism, and genetic criticism.<sup>18</sup> Zweig lays frequent emphasis on the 'genetic' process of his manuscripts, and it is this terminology that brings him closer to the writings of 'genetic criticism', a critical field that goes back to the compositional sources of works in order to expand the interpretative frame:

<sup>14</sup> On the idea of 'spectral presence' see also Ulrike Vedder, 'Zur Magie der Handschrift. Stefan Zweig als Autographensammler', in *Zweig's England*, ed. by Rüdiger Görner and Klemens Renoldner (Würzburg: Königshausen u. Neumann, 2014), pp. 141–52.

<sup>15</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Zweig, 'Die Welt der Autographen', pp. 104–07.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA; London: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 447.

<sup>18</sup> Bodo Plachta, 'Schriftdenkmal oder Textträger', in *Materialität in der Editionswissenschaft*, ed. by Martin Schubert (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 79–94 (p. 85).

Like old-fashioned philology or textual criticism, it examines tangible documents such as writers' notes, drafts, and proof corrections, but its real object is something much more abstract — not the existing documents but the movement of writing that must be inferred from them. Then, too, it remains concrete, for it never posits an ideal text beyond those documents but rather strives to reconstruct, from all available evidence, the chain of events in a writing process.<sup>19</sup>

Zweig explains, in similar terms, that his collection is comprised of 'documents, which directly materialise the creative moment of a work and both in terms of visuals *and* character, offer an insight into the *genesis* of creation'.<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, he notes that he seeks documents that show 'the genetic process characteristically'.<sup>21</sup> Where Deppman *et al.* stress their research into 'the movement of writing', Zweig also accents the importance, for him, of the becoming of a text, most emphatically denying the very designation of his collection as one of 'autograph' manuscripts, preferring the term *Werkschriftensammlung*,<sup>22</sup> a collection of working drafts. Deppman *et al.* echo Zweig's focus on process since '[o]ne could even say that genetic criticism is not concerned with texts at all but only with the writing processes that engender them'.<sup>23</sup> And yet, Zweig's is a personal, experiential approach to texts that shares the same foundations as genetic analysis but stays at one remove from it. Plachta's tentative positioning of Zweig's conception of manuscripts in between the categories of *Schriftdenkmal* and *Textträger* is derived from Zweig's progressive search for processual creativity within a more nonanalytical, aesthetic, and 'auratic' experience.

### Balzac in Perpetual Motion

Honoré de Balzac, whose writing ruled the sphere to which Zweig refers as 'the world of society',<sup>24</sup> was a figure who dominated Zweig's understanding of literature and creativity and who has a prime position in Zweig's manuscript collection, his essayistic output, and in his biographical work. There is undoubtedly a thread that ties the Balzac manuscripts in the Zweig collection to Zweig's work on the French author, culminating in his unfinished and posthumously published biography, *Balzac*.<sup>25</sup>

In March 1914, Zweig acquired Balzac's bound corrected proof for his novel *Une ténébreuse affaire*,<sup>26</sup> a document made up of over 1200 pages of corrected

<sup>19</sup> Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, 'Introduction: A Genesis of French Genetic Criticism', in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes*, ed. by Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden (Philadelphia; Great Britain: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).

<sup>20</sup> Stefan Zweig, 'Handschriften als schöpferische Dokumente', in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift*, p. 117.

<sup>21</sup> Stefan Zweig, 'Meine Autographensammlung', in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift*, pp. 128–29 (p. 128).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>23</sup> Deppman, Ferrer and Groden, 'Introduction', p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Drei Meister: Balzac, Dickens, Dostojewski* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1919/1929), p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Balzac*, ed. by Richard Friedenthal (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1946).

<sup>26</sup> London, British Library, Stefan Zweig Collection, Zweig MS 133.

printed pages and manuscript insertions. This proof is by far the largest item in the remaining Zweig Collection donated to the British Library in 1986. Not only is it the most materially substantial manuscript that the collection contains, but its influence on Zweig is distinct. For a collector such as Zweig, whose motivation was much more the process than the work, Balzac's work was the pinnacle and his manuscripts therefore the most insightful materialisation of the writing and correcting process. Zweig writes, in his essay dedicated to Balzac's corrected proofs *Die unterirdischen Bücher Balzacs*, that 'each of these books is not only a personal document of Balzac's creative process, but of the struggle for the epic form from genesis to creation'.<sup>27</sup> Zweig's note on the content of his new manuscript also appears to distinguish it from his collection: 'This precious manuscript of incomparable value demands a particular description and perhaps a whole book, so much does it contain Balzac's creative process, like no other manuscript'.<sup>28</sup> In other words, it is not a distinctive item for its rarity in commercial terms; rather, Zweig considers this corrected proof of *Une ténébreuse affaire* from an analytical perspective borne out of the challenge that its sheer immensity and material change demands.

The universal importance of Balzac's corrected proof is also derived from Balzac's position in the history of manuscript preservation and collection, as well as in a nineteenth-century culture gradually moving towards a materialist perspective from which to understand and represent the world. Anticipating genetic criticism — a field which has always been related to Balzac studies — Balzac would compile versions of his corrected proofs, have them bound and sent to those close to him. In Balzac's short story 'The Unknown Masterpiece', one can begin to understand the value that the author placed on bearing witness to the composition of an artwork. A young painter encounters the protagonist Porbus' art studio:

the neophyte was spellbound by the fascination experienced by the born painters with the appearance of the first studio they have seen in which some of the material methods of art are revealed to them. [...] Plaster écorchés, fragments and torsos of antique goddesses, lovingly polished by kisses over the centuries, were strewn among the tablets and consoles. Numerous sketches, studies in red, white and black crayon, in red chalk or ink, covered the walls from floor to ceiling.<sup>29</sup>

Like Zweig regarding his manuscripts, the young painter Poussin wades through the material mess of the creative artist's 'workshop', bearing witness to the fragments of paintings, sketches, unused casts, and feeling overloaded by the significance of this creative waste. Not only does Balzac then introduce the 'real' into literature, at a time when the 'real' material documents of composition

<sup>27</sup> Stefan Zweig, 'Die unterirdischen Bücher Balzacs' (1917), in *Ich kenne den Zauber der Schrift*, pp. 96–99 (p. 99).

<sup>28</sup> London, British Library, Add MS 73168 (Catalogue cards to the Zweig Collection).

<sup>29</sup> Honoré de Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, trans. by Leon Livingstone (London: Enitharmon Press, 1996), pp. 13–14.

began to gain greater prominence, but this shift in attitude anticipates Zweig's and genetic criticism's introduction of the same 'real' aspects of writing into literary commentary. In Laurent Jenny's words, as

textual theory found itself constrained by the analysis of the immanent structures of the text, caught in the trap of the dogma of closure [...] Critics then questioned if it would not be possible for the 'real' to be reinserted into a literary analysis that seemed to be distancing itself from just such a move.<sup>30</sup>

It is precisely this impulse to stave off interpretative closure by re-imagining the processual variance and contingency through the material traces of a manuscript, which is shared by Balzac, genetic criticism, and Stefan Zweig.

One glance at Balzac's corrected proof in the Zweig collection exposes a similar artist's workshop with the mess of failure strewn across the page in deletions and emendations as well as the continuity of a suspended process of writing and re-writing. For Zweig, there is an 'eruption of eternal excess into the proofs, whose rigid structure he repeatedly tore apart like the feverish tear at their wounds, in order to chase the once again red flowing blood of writing through the once fixed and frozen body'.<sup>31</sup> Zweig's experience is always tactile. He does not read the manuscripts but enters into an experience, in which he only *feels* (*spüren*) process, change, writing. What Zweig recognises in his most-prized manuscript and what the material experience leads him to figure is that with materiality comes process — a movement of writing behind a final work that constantly destabilizes the authority of any printed work through the mass of potential deviations. Balzac's proofs become hybrids of 'half manuscript and half print', which 'are protean and transform themselves, working more and more against any definitive picture'.<sup>32</sup>

The constant undermining of the fixed text through the continuous process of revision — what Stéphane Vachon calls the 'infinite reprisal of the work'<sup>33</sup> — installs a mobility inherent in the work as a whole. As the notes to the Pléiade critical edition of *Une ténébreuse affaire* suggest, a Balzac text first undergoes numerous revisions and might indeed fix itself in various print editions, but even between each print Balzac would continue to revise, rendering each version provisional.<sup>34</sup> Considering the correction phase is effectively a 'second composition',<sup>35</sup> a re-writing rather than just a correction, Balzac sets his works in perpetual motion. This collapses the teleology of creation in the form of

<sup>30</sup> Laurent Jenny and Richard Watts, 'Genetic Criticism and Its Myths', *Yale French Studies*, 89, (1996), 9–25 (p. 11).

<sup>31</sup> Zweig, *Drei Meister*, p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> Zweig, 'Die unterirdischen Bücher Balzacs', p. 96.

<sup>33</sup> Stéphane Vachon, 'Les enseignements des manuscrits. De la Variation contre La Variante', *Genesis*, 11 (1997), 61–80 (p. 76).

<sup>34</sup> Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie Humaine VIII* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1978), p. 1465.

<sup>35</sup> Wells Fenton Chamberlin, *Génèse et Structure d'Une Ténébreuse Affaire de Balzac* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1956), p. 34.

iterated composition, which sees the palimpsestic takeover of printed text by manuscript and the establishment of an open-ended process. Zweig points to this infinite mobility, regarding the *Comédie humaine* project more broadly: 'The *Comédie Humaine* wants to show the eternally transformative world in transformation'.<sup>36</sup> The infinite mutability of life is enacted in the shifting structure of the cycle of novels, and further embodied in the 'protean' system of revision.

### Reductive Revision Or The Moral Lesson

Zweig ultimately suggests that 'only he who has seen such a corrected proof example of one of Balzac's works, can truly appreciate his craft and his process'.<sup>37</sup> From this position of privileged insight, Zweig undertook the biography of Balzac that he thought would be his *magnum opus*. Left unfinished and published posthumously, it underwent a tortuous composition, affected ultimately by exile, the author's depression and reluctance to complete such an ambitious project. The prolonged efforts and revisions, as his editor Richard Friedenthal suggests, almost too perfectly mirror the creative process of his subject. Friedenthal writes, 'something of the Balzacian unrest seems to have been swept up into the work and documents [...] the already written was constantly re-worked'.<sup>38</sup> He continues to suggest that the incessant corrections of the Balzac manuscript, which Zweig experienced first-hand, ultimately 'infected' Zweig's biography. There are plain similarities between the manners in which the authors worked, each leaving a significant margin, each covering the page back and front with revisions.<sup>39</sup> In material terms, their manuscripts are of a piece and yet, if it is possible for critics to see the indeterminacy of the Balzacian process inherent in the complexity and ambiguity of the content,<sup>40</sup> the same cannot be said of Zweig.

The general flow of revision in Zweig's *Balzac* adapts events, which often highlight outside influence on Balzac's actions, in a way that allows the protagonist to take them over, creating a linguistic strategy to match the overt emphasis on the creator's self-determination. Changes which appear minor redress the whole tone of paragraphs in the later versions. A modest revision to a passage in the second chapter — addressing the author's attempt at writing his first work, a dramatization of the life of Oliver Cromwell — shifts Balzac from passive to active agent. The first version is followed by its revision below:

<sup>36</sup> Zweig, *Drei Meister*, p. 45.

<sup>37</sup> Zweig, 'Die unterirdischen Bücher Balzacs', p. 98.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Friedenthal, 'Afterword', in Stefan Zweig, *Balzac*, pp. 535–41 (p. 537).

<sup>39</sup> The manuscript of Zweig's *Balzac* is kept in The Stefan Zweig Collection, Daniel A. Reed Library Archives and Special Collections, State University of New York at Fredonia. Content cited with permission.

<sup>40</sup> See Michael Tilby, 'Plotting and the Novel', *The Modern Language Review*, 110.2 (2015), 422–37 (p. 428).

- (a) The work had seized him, for the first time Balzac felt he was placed before a task [...]. Finally the dice were thrown and Balzac began to work. For the first time in his life, he truly worked and for the first time with that devotion, which is comparable to nothing in all of literature.<sup>41</sup>
- (b) For the first time, Balzac placed himself before a task and threw his unconquerable Will into the game. Where there is this Will, there is no resistance. Balzac knows he will finish *Cromwell* because he wants to finish it and because he must finish it [...] Balzac throws himself into work with such monomaniacal energy [...].<sup>42</sup>

In the first attempt, it is the work, the task, which has imposed itself on the fateful writer. Balzac feels as if he has been given the task. In the second version, Balzac sets himself the task, he is the active person in the sentence. Again, Zweig switches the subjects in his use of 'werfen' [the verb 'to throw']. Originally the dice *are thrown*, the passive structure signifying the lack of control over the external circumstances thrown onto the protagonist. In the revised passage, Balzac, as the continuing active subject at the start of the sentence, is the one throwing his 'Will' into the game, thereby taking charge of his own destiny.

Linguistic modification is complemented by structural change, which sees the beginning and end of chapters re-shaped to show a protagonist, who, rather than falling and rising against adversity, comes to possess a consistent power which elevates him through the book in a more harmonious image. The two endings to the second chapter read as follows:

- (a) No one would see them and even in the times of his most desperate poverty, when he exploited every old manuscript page from his desk, he never showed anyone this first work, which had been the desperation, the hope, the pride and the deepest disappointment of his youth.<sup>43</sup>
- (b) Unbent and unrelenting like after every one of the hundreds of disappointments, and even more determined than before to make himself independent from drudgery and family, he returns to his chosen prison cell on Rue Lesdignières.<sup>44</sup>

In the draft, Balzac's disappointment at the underwhelming response to his first play, *Cromwell*, is allowed to end the chapter. In the correction phase, this ending is cleaned up to deny any chance of the reader mistaking this as a sign of weakness or self-doubt in the heroic artist. Zweig retouches the final lines to make Balzac show defiant independence *in spite of* his disappointment. The chapter therefore leaves the reader with a sense of Balzac's unshakeable will, rather than leave lingering any notion of fragility in the young writer. The revision process suggests that Zweig has a type of Balzac, a rounded figure,

<sup>41</sup> Fredonia, State University of New York at Fredonia, Daniel A. Reed Library Archives and Special Collections, The Stefan Zweig Collection, G23 *Balzac*, Folder 7, Chapter 2, page marked 'e'.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Folder 6, Chapter 2, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Folder 7, Chapter 2, page marked 'k'.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Folder 6, Chapter 2, p. 18.

which needs to be reflected coherently in the biography. To an extent, the historical knowledge only complements a pre-conceived ideal portrait, rather than informing it at every turn.

For an explanation of Zweig's harmonizing corrective process we need to return to his essays on manuscripts and his suspended position between the processual and the authorial. Unlike genetic criticism's ostensible objective to seek a process — movement itself — Zweig only ever seeks either a 'secret' or a 'moment' of creation. In other words, the manuscript is ultimately more conceivable as the distillation of a single moment of inspiration, and therefore, although *accessible* through the processual analysis of material traces, creativity is often portrayed as an occurrence beyond it. Where genetic criticism claims to *follow* the movement of writing, Zweig frequently refers to his seizure before the manuscript. He is transfixed, spellbound like Balzac's young artist, unable to move analytically with the genesis of the artwork, while yet still capable of re-animating the process he observes. This is a pre-hermeneutic (if not a non-hermeneutic) experience, a kind of nonanalytical response to textual phenomena, akin to what Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht describes as the 'oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects'.<sup>45</sup> Zweig resists deep interpretation of the creative processes he experiences in favour of re-animating the inexplicable spectral presence he senses.

In these short passages of the corrected *Balzac*, it is evident how creativity — so materially understood in his other essays as process — is, for Zweig, equally, if not more, connected to the realm of psychology and the person of the author. The inability and unwillingness to 'follow', analyse, and interpret the processes he experiences result in the static search for the secret, the moment, the incommensurable, which leave Balzac in a struggle with fate and demonic inspiration more than in a network of familial, literary, material contingencies that may also determine his creativity.

Yet, to shift between a conception of textual materiality and the physical humanity of its creator is crucial to Zweig's understanding of the *moral lesson* of drafts. He writes:

The moral lesson — that the works, which we marvel at as perfection, are not simply gifts of genius bestowed upon artists, rather the fruits of painstaking, hard, sacrificial work. They show us the battlefields of the spiritual struggle of man with material, Jacob's eternal battle with the angel, they lead us down into the inner realm of creation and for the sake of their sacred efforts, they make us revere and love the human within the artist doubly.<sup>46</sup>

The collector reconciles the processual mobility of the manuscript, the precarious encounter with an auratic presence, and the notion of an originating

<sup>45</sup> Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Production of Presence* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 107.

<sup>46</sup> Zweig, 'Sinn und Schönheit der Autographen', p. 139.

author. He does not practise immanent textual criticism precisely because it is the human aspect of creativity that is ultimately transformative. Not only does he experience the creator as an extraordinary artist, beyond terrestrial possibility, but also as a human like us, whose efforts, struggles, hard work astound us. This awestruck disposition before manuscripts, the submission to presence ahead of meaning, and the general openness to textual experience may be interpreted as an example of what Derek Attridge calls a kind of 'ethics of literary reading [...] a disposition, a habit, a way of being in the world of words'<sup>47</sup>, or perhaps in the world of autograph manuscripts.

By deriving the energy of a compositional text in part from the craft of the author, there is a move to return the author to a position of influence in literary criticism. It is then in fact the emphasis on the author-figure — what Zweig experiences as a spectral presence in the encounter with the manuscript — which moves him to consider the act and event of writing in its most modern, 'genetic' sense. With creativity in some form restricted by the body and physical work of a creating figure, Zweig is able to be led to the material process of creation. That the collector views such a process as ultimately the tangible manifestation of some momentary and mystical inspiration moderates the role of process in creativity for Zweig, without, however, undermining the novelty and significance of his early genetic perspective on manuscripts.

<sup>47</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 130.