

Bootstrapping (DOG EAR)

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 26 October 2017 00:00 -



Now that I've given up jogging and I'm doing quick lunch-time rush-writing (an hour each time, typing with one hand, holding my sandwich with the other) I've begun to notice a thing I do that I've only just identified. In fact, when I wrote *Indigo* years back during lunches, I'd do the same thing.

So, what I'm doing is something I'll call "bootstrapping".

Works like this. When I settle into writing, my mind enters a streaming state where part of it is imagining the moment of the scene. It pictures the characters, their actions and reactions, the pace of the story, even the surroundings and weather.

Another part of my brain is working over this imagery, breaking down the 3D scene into a 1D stream of text. It's one thing to imagine the moon speared by cool mountain pines, it's another thing to process it into text data (like I did using the word "speared", which positions the trees and moon and mood all in a single word).

And yet a third part of my brain is handling logistics and inventory control. How much description have I done in this chapter? Where are we at in this chapter? Should I be scene-setting now (you scene set usually at the beginning of chapter, rather than waste it at the end (where the reader might well walk away at that point, forgetting moon and pines and spears when he returns)).

And that's why I love writing. My brain is suddenly lighting up across all lobes, converting my dreams into a written work. It's very busy and brisk and leaves me with a sloppy smile when it's time to return to the real world.

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Ah, but bootstrapping.

So my brain is racing along, running several different levels of functions as I write. And suddenly it's time to stop, to close the laptop, to return to my desk. But things don't occur that quickly. Like a tractor trailer on an icy road (with a background of pines and speared moon), it takes me a while to stop. Even as I walk to the elevators, watch the indicator, get inside and mutter "howwazlunch?" to the returning drones, I'm still thinking of plot path and word use and phrase construction. I'll even find myself jotting ideas down as I settle at the desk, keeping the ideas I had after the laptop was put away. My mind stills but it remembers that skidding slowdown, those postit notes, the scene I'd just imagined. It stays through my commuting and clubs and meals and minutia. It's there, waiting.

So a day or so later, when lunch falls and I can do back to the far corner of the break room and write, there is that moment where I ponder *Now what the hell was I working on? How do I write? Look at all that empty screen.* And this is when I bootstrap. This is when I remember those pines, that moon. And there is that postit note, the one with *spear* written on it. What was left over from last time kindles what is needed for a startup now. Sometimes I'll drop back a paragraph or two, reading quickly forward, fingers poised. And when I hit that final stop, the keys begin to clatter and I'm off again, writing at full steam.

The human brain is amazing. So versatile. So creative.

Book critics should get one.

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