

HAND/ARBEIT/BUCH/SCHRIFT:
APPROACHING THE FEMALE HAND

By

Kathryn Elizabeth McEwen

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

German

May, 2013

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Barbara Hahn
Professor Meike Werner
Professor James McFarland
Professor Lisa Guenther

Copyright © 2013 by Kathryn Elizabeth McEwen
All rights reserved

She said, 'There is a point which may interest you. It concerns the torn-out page and the missing notes supposed to authenticate the fingerprint on it.'

He wondered what was coming, but was hardly prepared for it when it came.

Patricia Wentworth, *The Fingerprint*

Abstract

Hand/Arbeit/Buch/Schrift investigates the persistent absence of the female hand from representation. It suggests that the female hand embodies a pernicious blind spot in the humanist discourse, resisting representation precisely because it challenges the accepted and often implicit narrative, which reads the hand as not only uniquely human, but also uniquely superior. This absence is, in fact, a constitutive gesture of the human hand as the triumphant instrument of humanity, in so far as to admit of limitations—for instance, those imposed by culturally determined, asymmetrical relations of gender—would be to concomitantly compromise the narrative of superiority expressed in the hand and its technical accomplishments. Against such a reading, and in contrast to previous assumptions, alternate narratives of the hand suggest that the female hand is in fact of central importance to an understanding of the *human* hand and, consequently, the *human* subject. Through a series of unlikely encounters—Hannah Höch’s early essays on embroidery alongside Sigmund Freud’s work on femininity to explore the working hand and its consequences; the psychology of the hand developed by Charlotte Wolff in dialogue with the many hands of Rainer Maria Rilke; and Rahel Levin Varnhagen and Friedrich Nietzsche meet at the question of the gender, genre, and the authority of the writing hand—this thesis unfolds a peculiar history to find evidence of the female hand in manual accomplishments excluded from most accounts. And it is by first exploring the ways in which the very familiarity of the hand and its capabilities obscure complicity in a complex of socially and historically determined conventions, which would seek to outline and define proper limits, proper actions, and, in turn, proper agents, that the variety of gendered, handed experience becomes intelligible. By offering a more nuanced consideration of the hand as a cultural object, restored to the cultural body, this project finally also suggests to a more general reconsideration of the cultural body as a space of negotiation.

Acknowledgements

It is with the greatest pleasure that I write, and rewrite, these acknowledgements. This is certainly the very least due to all of those who have contributed to this project in one way or another, over the long years of reading and writing: for a project at first out of reach, then let go altogether, and finally picked up once again. It is a dissertation that almost wasn't, about something that almost isn't there to find. Thank you to everyone who helped me to find my way, find the project, find the right words.

The first and profoundest thanks are due to my advisor, Barbara Hahn. Her extraordinary generosity and critical eye saw possibilities where I saw none; her unflagging support continues to give me the wherewithal to tackle each next page. Without her guidance this project would quite simply not exist. She has helped me to breathe life and joy into my work, and for that I am thankful beyond words.

I owe many thanks to the intellectual community at Vanderbilt University for welcoming me so gracefully and openly. My time here has been greatly enriched by conversations, both inside and outside the seminar room, with Derek Bruff, Rory Dicker, Lisa Guenther, John McCarthy, Jim McFarland, Peggy Setje-Eilers, Helmut Smith, Barbara Wahlster, Thomas Wild, and Christoph Zeller. I am indebted to Rose Marie Dudney for her extensive knowledge of administrative details, forms, formats, and university contacts. I owe particular thanks to Meike Werner, who has been an invaluable guide through the process, incomparable in her warmth, honesty, and professionalism.

Countless thanks are due to Sally Poor for getting me started, keeping me going, and sending me on my way; and to Lynn Ratsep for her patience in helping me to navigate those dark waters. To Julianne Vogel I remain grateful for first asking what the female hand might be. To April Alliston and Carol Armstrong I owe endless gratitude for their extraordinary kindness at precisely the right moment. And without more

than a little serendipity, in the form of a chance conversation with Jonathan Foltz, many years ago, I would never have encountered Charlotte Wolff and her curious science.

I am grateful to the Department of German and the Graduate School at Princeton University, and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages, the Graduate School, and the Max Kade Center at Vanderbilt University for providing the support to begin and end the project, even during those times I lost my way. Especial thanks are due to the Wellcome Library, and the staff at the Rare Materials Reading Room, for access to the Charlotte Wolff papers. To the staff of the Kunstbibliothek, Berlin, I owe many thanks for their patience in initiating me into the mysteries of art historical archival research and providing access to the early editions of *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*.

In the end, it has been the great good fortune of friendship that has taught me much of what is truly worth knowing. In Stefanie Hertfelder I found a dear fellow *Schwester des Chaos*; Tanya Doss has been an inexhaustible source of laughter and friendship; Sonia Velázquez and Hall Bjørnstad have extended matchless hospitality and superlative kindness. Thank you to the incomparable Loveless Sisters: Briallen Hopper, Mary Noble, Rebecca Rainof, and Jacky Shin. Thank you to Christine Richter-Nilsson for coffee and conversation; to Elizabeth Weber Edwards; and to Gesa Frömring, who taught me to sail on a calm sea. Beatrix Brockman, Jessica Riviere, and Brett Sterling were heroic in their willingness to read slight variations of the same draft again and again, admirable in their tact for never pointing out a certain lack of forward motion. Thank you to Roger Bellin for his friendship; to Lisa Cerami and Kata Gellen for telling me to keep going; to Jodi Haraldson-Noonan and Amy Kohout, fellow woolgatherers; and to Jana Morimoto: *anassa kata, kalo kale!* Finally, fondly, to J.K. Barret, Ed Muston, Nuria Sanjuan Pastor, Natalia Pérez, Stephen Russell, Sam Steinberg, and everyone else for all those Friday nights.

Without a doubt, I owe the greatest thanks of all to my parents, Randy and Francie McEwen. And to my best friend of all, my sister Emily McEwen. It is with the warmest gratitude that I dedicate this dissertation to my family.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CHAPTER	
Handhabung	
<i>Introduction</i>	1
Wenn du weißt, daß hier eine Hand ist	6
Daß es mir—oder Allen—so <i>scheint</i> , daraus folgt nicht, daß es so <i>ist</i> .	13
“Ich weiß nicht ob da eine Hand ist.”	19
1. Making Hands	
<i>The Handiworks of Hannah Höch and Sigmund Freud</i>	34
Hannah Höch embroiders on Dada.	41
Gathering red threads	55
Freud theorizes the textile.	74
2. Writing Hands	
<i>The Correspondences of Rahel Levin Varnhagen and Friedrich Nietzsche</i>	89
“ <i>Ein Raphael ohne Hände</i> ”	93
“... die Worte zur Hand”	103
3. Reading Hands	
<i>The Curious Cases of Charlotte Wolff and Rainer Maria Rilke</i>	111
“I am a very <i>happy</i> Exile”	116
“Palmistry est mort[e], vive the psychology of the hand!”	134
“Hände leben irgendwo”	151
letzter Handstrich	
<i>Coda</i>	168
BIBLIOGRAPHY	176

Handhabung

Introduction

“He is entirely human,” I replied; “the accepted tests of humanity being, as I understand, the habitual adoption of the erect posture in locomotion, and the relative position of the end of the thumb—”

R. Austin Freeman, “The Stranger’s Latchkey”

“The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe,” so writes John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*. “We only see what we look at,” he continues. “To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach—though not necessarily within arm’s reach.”¹ This study proposes that we turn our attention to the female hand. Thus, from the beginning, we acknowledge that there is, indeed, something to which we might refer as the female hand. Here exists a particular case, deserving of our notice: there is something to see. This study asks us to look at this particular hand, to bring it within reach, and, by doing so, to see in a new way. Although Berger claims Walter Benjamin—specifically Benjamin’s essay on *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*—as his inspiration, what is to stop us from suggesting another possible resonance? For example, Ludwig Wittgenstein’s notes as they appear in *Über Gewissheit*:

1. Wenn du weißt, daß hier eine Hand ist, so geben wir dir alles Übrige zu.

(Sagt man, der und der Satz lasse sich nicht beweisen, so heißt das natürlich nicht, daß er sich nicht aus andern herleiten läßt; jeder Satz läßt sich aus andern herleiten. Aber diese

¹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Penguin, 1972), 8.

mögen nicht sicherer sein, als er selbst.) (Dazu eine komische Bemerkung H. Newman's.)

2. Daß es mir—oder Allen—so *scheint*, daraus folgt nicht, daß es so *ist*.

Wohl aber läßt sich fragen, ob man dies sinnvoll bezweifeln kann.

3. Wenn z. B. jemand sagt “Ich weiß nicht, ob da eine Hand ist”, so könnte man ihm sagen “Schau näher hin”.—Diese Möglichkeit des Sich-überzeugens gehört zum Sprachspiel. Ist einer seiner wesentlichen Züge.²

So let us look more closely.

And the first thing we see? Nothing out of the ordinary, it would seem: the hand itself, the familiar appendage with fingers, thumb, and creased palm; nails, knuckles, wrist. An everyday sight. The hand, male or female, is so strikingly mundane, so commonplace that we forget to look. But certainly, we are not the first to take another look. “And what about our hands?” asks Michel de Montaigne already toward the end of the sixteenth century,

And what about our hands? With them we request, promise, summon, dismiss, menace, pray, supplicate, refuse, questions, show astonishment, count, confess, repent, fear, show shame, doubt, teach, command incite, encourage, make oaths, bear witness, make accusations, condemn, give absolution, insult, despise, defy, provoke, flatter, applaud, bless, humiliate, mock, reconcile, advise, exalt, welcome, rejoice, lament; show sadness, grieve,

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 2. “1. If you do know that *here is one hand*, we'll grant you all the rest. When one says that such and such a proposition can't be proved, of course that does not mean that it can't be derived from other propositions; any proposition can be derived from other ones. But they may be no more certain that it itself. (On this a curious remark by H. Newman.) 2. From its *seeming* to me—or to everyone—to be so, it doesn't follow that it *is* so. What we can do is whether it can make sense to doubt it. 3. If e.g. someone says ‘I don't know if there a hand here’ he might be told ‘Look closer’.—This possibility of satisfying oneself is part of the language-game. Is one of its essential features” (ibid., 2e).

despair; astonish, cry out, keep silent and what not else, with a variety and multiplicity rivaling the tongue.³

If Montaigne may revise and write again, to take a closer look, what shall prevent us from further inquiry? From the magical to the mundane, the hand figures a network of verbs—grasping, catching, holding our attention—from familiar cognates to archaic forms, all of which situate the hand as a thoroughly cultural object, implicated in a series of actions that do not merely appear to delimit the human *qua* homo sapiens, but rather to hold the rights of Renaissance man, a passe-partout to human existence. Indeed, if we follow Montaigne, the hand would appear to manipulate and enact an expressive power no less impressive than that of language itself. And like language, the hand is not merely a useful tool, but a political instrument, capable of both revealing and concealing, mediating between internal states and external representation, enfolding thought and action. The hand thus encompasses a complex range from the practical to the metaphorical, the manifest and the invisible: a handheld compendium of experience that we have come to understand as the particular

³ Michel de Montaigne, *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*, ed. and trans. M. A. Screech (1987; New York: Penguin, repr. 1993), 18. “Quoy des mains? nous requerons, nous promettons, appellons, congedions, menaçons, prions, supplions, nions, refusons, interrogeons, admirons, nombrons, confessons, repentons, craignons, vergoignons, doubtons, instruisons, commandons, incitons, encourageons, jurons, tesmoignons, accusons, condamnons, absolvons, injurions, mesprisons, deffions, despitons, flattons, applaudissons, benissons, humilions, moquons, reconcilions, recommandons, exaltons, festoyons, resjouissons, complaignons, attristons, desconfortons, desesperons, estonnons, escrions, taisons; et quoy non? d'une variation et multiplication à l'envy de la langue.” Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, “Apologie de Raimond Sebond,” in *Les Essais*, eds. P. Villey and Verdun L. Saunier (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965), II:454. From “Apologie de Raimond Sebond,” *The Montaigne Project: Villey edition of the Essais with Corresponding Digital Page Images from the Bordeaux Copy*, accessed 18 October 2012, <http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.0:3:11.montaigne.1301104>.

This paragraph on the hand is part of the additions to Montaigne’s final edition of his *Essais* (first edition, 1580; first major revision, 1588), which he was preparing for press at the time of his death in 1592. This new material was mainly handwritten annotations in Montaigne’s own copy, now in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Bordeaux. See, M. A. Screech, introduction to *An Apology for Raymond Sebond* by Michel de Montaigne, ed. and trans. by M. A. Screech (1987; New York: Penguin, repr. 1993), xxxv.

⁴ See Frank R. Wilson, *The Human Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 10. Wilson points out three perspectives informing his “meditation” on the hand: “1. the anthropological

purview of human being.⁴ And if we begin to look more closely still, the hand reveals itself as a very complex contraption indeed. Not merely an appendage at the end of an arm, a structure of bones, joints, and tendons arranged in a subtly different, if unusually, dextrous manner, the hand would rather appear to exceed anatomy to infiltrate, inform, and shape every aspect of human experience.⁵ Its manipulative flexibility of movement enables precision and power in prehension and apprehension;⁶ its neuro-mechanical dexterity informs processes of cognition and invention;⁷ its

⁴ See Frank R. Wilson, *The Human Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 10. Wilson points out three perspectives informing his “meditation” on the hand: “1. the anthropological and evolutionary perspective [...]; 2. the biomechanical and physiological perspective [...]; the neurobehavioral and developmental perspective” (ibid.). To some degree, this thesis takes all three perspectives as the background for a discussion of the female hand and its curious absence.

⁵ For a general discussion of the physical structure of the hand, see Raymond Tallis, *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human Being* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 21f; John Napier, *Hands*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Frank R. Wilson, *The Hand*. On “the intelligent hand,” see Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New York: Allen Lane, 2008), 149f. The movement of the thumb is often named as the key adaptation between human and primate hands, thus locating difference to a large degree in the construction of the trapezio-metacarpal joint. See Napier, *Hands*, 55-71; Tallis, *The Hand*, 24. However, more surprising is, as Wilson notes, that “[t]he features that distinguish the human hand from the hand of apes are nearly imperceptible and in fact were recognized by anatomists only very recently; while there has been no dispute that human *use* of the hand is unmatched in the animal world, no one thought there was anything special about its design” (Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 127-28).

⁶ Prehension derives from the Latin *to seize*, and encompasses grasping as both a physical action and a mental process. On the origins of prehensility, see Napier, *Hands*, 77-93. For discussions of prehension and apprehension, see also Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 153-155; Tallis, *The Hand*, 21-46; and Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 112-146. The connection between prehension and apprehension is both profound and exemplary, marking a shift in evolutionary thinking—beginning largely with Darwin, if we follow Wilson—which regards structure and function as interdependent. “These issues bring into relief a fundamental premise of Darwinian thought,” according to Wilson, “that structure and function are interdependent and co-evolutionary. The brain keeps giving the hand new things to do and new ways of doing what it already knows how to do. In turn, the hand affords the brain new ways of approaching old tasks and the possibility of undertaking and mastering new tasks. That means the brain, for its part, can acquire new ways of representing and defining the world” (Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 146).

⁷ Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), xiv. Rowe could, in fact, be read as translating Montaigne into the age of cognitive science: “Similarly, the neuromechanical structure of the hand provides the basic somatic units that facilitate and shape social, intellectual, and philosophical invention. We point, grasp or release, cup or spread the fingers, and so on; and these motions vary their meaning situationally, culturally, and over time. Furthermore, the gestures, habits, and practices that incorporate these motions shape the plastic brain as much as the brain controls them. The mutually determining relation between language use and brain development has become a truism of cognitive science” (ibid.). For a general discussion of the connection between language, hands, and brain, see Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 35-60.

gestural arsenal references a veritable dictionary of human emotions, cultural practices, and social interactions.⁸ What of the hand, indeed?

This question is not merely rhetorical. For certainly the hand, in many ways, proves much easier to grasp as metaphor; as a material object, however, it is elusive, refusing—even under the skin—to succumb to efforts of location and definition.⁹ If Georg Simmel argues that the connection between the hand and the material world operates as “eine vermittelnde Brücke,”¹⁰ this analogy speaks not only to the pervasive instrumentality of the hand as a mediating extension of the human mind into the material world, but also to its anatomical extension in the material body. While its

⁸ See, for instance, John Bulwer, *Chirologia; Or, the Natural Language of the Hand, and Chironomia; Or, the Art of Manual Rhetoric*, ed. James W. Cleary (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974). If we are to believe Bulwer, in his 1644 treatise, the hand possesses language: “the Hand, that busie instrument, whose *language* is as easily perceived and understood, as if Man had another mouth or fountaine of discourse in his *Hand*” (ibid., 1; emphasis in original).

See also *Manus Loquens. Medium der Geste - Gesten der Medien*, eds. Matthias Bickenbach, Annina Klappert, and Hedwig Pompe (Cologne: DuMont, 2003). Here, as Pompe argues of the hand in the introduction, “Diesseits ihrer eigenen Sprachfähigkeit zitiert sie sich selbst als ein Werkzeug, das auch in scheinbar ‘rein’ technischen Zusammenhängen immer wieder zum Zuge kommt. Und dass die Hand sprechen, wie sie schreiben, malen, tanzen, fotografieren, schlicht ‘arbeiten’ kann, und wie sie ihre vielfältige, kulturbedingte Technizität in allen diesen Vorgängen selbstbezeichnend mit einschließt, lässt sie in eine sozial und historisch variierende, besondere Konkurrenzbeziehung zu den Sprechwerkzeugen des Gesichts oder auch zu der Sprachlichkeit anders ausgeführter nonverbalen Gestik treten. [...] Stellvertretend für den menschlichen Körper und seine Teile ‘spricht’ besonders sie vom Körper als einer *Übergangszone* für die kulturell erworbene Technizität alles Menschlichen” (Hewig Pompe, introduction to *Manus Loquens*, 8-9).

⁹ See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Here, Grosz’s work is especially instructive. “Body is thus what is not mind, what is distinct from and other than the privileged term. It is what the mind must expel in order to retain its ‘integrity,’” she argues (ibid., 3). Grosz seeks to unsettle precisely this dichotomy, by “refiguring bodies” as always plural, to trace instead “a body as social and discursive object, a body bound up in the order of desire, signification, and power.” Thus, she continues: “That may help explain the enormous investment in definitions of the female body in struggles between patriarchs and feminists: what is at stake is the activity and agency, the mobility and social space, accorded to women. Far from being an inert, passive, noncultural and ahistorical term, the body may be seen as the crucial term, the site of contestation, in a series of economic, political, sexual, and intellectual struggles” (ibid., 18-19). We shall later return to this crucial insight.

¹⁰ Georg Simmel, “Der Henkel” in *Philosophische Kultur*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Kröner, 1919), 119. From “Der Henkel,” *Georg Simmel Online*, accessed 26 October 2012, <http://socio.ch/sim/kul6.htm>. As he continues: “Man hat das Werkzeug schlechthin als die Verlängerung der Hand oder der menschlichen Organe überhaupt charakterisiert. In der Tat: wie für die Seele die Hand ein Werkzeug ist, so ist ihr auch das Werkzeug eine Hand. Dass aber der Werkzeugcharakter Seele und Hand auseinanderschleibt, verhindert nicht die innige Einheit, mit der der Lebensprozess sich durchströmt; dass sie aussereinander und ineinander sind, das eben macht das unzerlegbare Geheimnis des Lebens aus” (ibid., 118).

physical boundaries, as defined by surface anatomy, extend from the wrist to the fingertips—that is, corresponding to the hand we *see*—this border, in fact, bears little on the actual workings of the hand.¹¹ For biomechanical anatomy suggests a quite different system of organization, which understands the hand as integral to the arm, and the body, as a whole.¹² Where precisely does the hand even begin or end? This is hardly a simple question to answer, metaphorically or materially. And it is precisely at this problem of definition that we begin our extended autopsy: where metaphor and material meet, attempting to establish just what the hand might be, where its borders might fall, and what it might mean.

Wenn du weißt, daß hier eine Hand ist

The history of the hand is often written as the history of humanity. Indeed, some have argued, the entire course of human history, and the very possibility of history itself, reside in the hand and its unique technical capabilities, not least of which is writing itself.¹³ Whether read as an allegory, or implicated in a grandiose narrative of origins and evolution, an instrument of Divine design and the

¹¹ Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 8. See also Napier, *Hands*, especially 13-53 and 55-71.

¹² Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 8. The biomechanical view opens a number of issues for isolating one part of the body from the whole, for which the hand provides one example: “Are the nerves controlling the muscles and tendons that cause the hand to move also part of the hand?” (ibid., 8-9). And physiological or functional anatomy, according to Wilson, only further confuses the issue: “Should those parts of the brain that regulate hand function be considered part of the hand?” (ibid., 9).

¹³ Raymond Tallis, *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human Being* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 21. As Tallis argues, “[...] without the human hand, mankind would have had not history at all. The human past would have gone unrecorded and disappeared as completely as the past of other animals into the dark and backward abyss of time; and, deeper than this, humans would have had no history in the sense of a present life distinct from organic existence. There would not only have been no collective story of the human race; there would have been no cultural development separate from biological evolution. The burden of this book is that the special relationship we indubitably enjoy with respect to the material universe—which has for much of history been understood as a special relationship to God, or the gods, or the numinous powers that brought us into being—is to a very great extent the result of the special virtues of our hands” (ibid.).

ordained human assumption of mastery over God’s creation, or examined as an anatomical curiosity inaugurating a series of evolutionary changes from bipedal locomotion to all manner of cognitive developments, the hand has largely come to define the human itself. Which is to say that the hand is already implicated in a discourse of hierarchy, already understood as the manifestation of human difference, vouchsafing the legitimacy of human dominion. It is a story we have come to write ourselves. “We ought to define the hand as belonging exclusively to man—corresponding in sensibility and motion with that ingenuity which converts the being who is the weakest in natural defence [sic], to the ruler over animate and inanimate nature.”¹⁴ Thus begins Charles Bell’s 1833 treatise *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design*, in rather bombastic fashion. A devout Christian, surgeon, and anatomist, it is Bell, according to Richard Sennett, who in this treatise first introduced the notion of the “intelligent hand.”¹⁵ Although that precise formulation appears nowhere in the 1833 edition, nor in the many subsequent editions,¹⁶ it is nonetheless clear that intelligent Bell believed the God-given hand to be: “and we must confess that it is in the human hand

¹⁴ Charles Bell, *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design* (London: William Pickering, 1833), 16. All references, unless otherwise noted, are to the 1833 edition. The book was published as part of the “Bridgewater Treatises on the power, wisdom, and goodness of God.” It is perhaps worth noting, as Frank R. Wilson explains in *The Hand*, that “[i]n keeping with the terms of the Bridgewater endowment, Bell had intended that his book would help to establish biology as a support for religious faith. But this was not the result. His analyses of the behavioral consequences of variation in anatomic structure, and his insights into the relationship between movement, perception, and learning, were revolutionary and seminal. The book, and Bell’s continuing work on the anatomy of the nervous system, had a far greater influence on the development of the science of physiology of the nervous system than on religious thought or polemic” (Wilson, *The Hand*, 7).

¹⁵ Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 149.

¹⁶ The eighth edition of Bell’s *The Hand* was published in London by G. Bell & Sons (of York Street, Covent Garden) in 1877. Publishing data suggests the popularity of Bell’s treatise: in June 1833, the first run was oversubscribed by 300 copies; in September 1833, 2000 additional copies were printed; in April 1834, 3000 were printed; and in October 1834, 2500. Peter Capuano, “Manufacturing Hands in British Industrial Fiction” (paper presented at the Modern Language Association, Boston, Massachusetts, 3 January 2013).

that we have the consummation of all perfection as an instrument.”¹⁷ Bell is, moreover, credited with introducing the modern study of the structures and functions of the hand, among the first to assert the centrality of the hand to human development.¹⁸ “With respect to the superiority of man being in his mind, and not merely in the provisions of his body, it is no doubt true,” Bell writes;

—but as we proceed, we shall find how the Hand supplies all instruments, and by its correspondence with the intellect, gives him universal dominion. It presents the last proof in the order of creation, of that principle of adaptation which evinces design.¹⁹

Reading the hand as not only the exclusive property of humankind, but also as an expression of Divine perfection in design, Bell integrates anatomy into the narrative of Biblical creation as an example and instrument of Divine order. With the hand squarely in the center of the discussion.

Twenty years later, the discourse is strikingly similar—even in German—a testament to the lasting power of Bell’s rhetoric and interpretive model. “Mit diesem Worte,” Carl Gustav Carus, court physician to the King of Saxony and a friend of Goethe, among other things, opens the discussion of the hand in his *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt. Handbuch zur Menschenkenntniß*, first published in 1853.²⁰ And these words? A conjuring of the hand from the arm and forearm, ex-

¹⁷ Bell, *The Hand*, 209. Wilson quotes this passage from the 1840 edition, in Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 128. In the eighth edition of 1877, Bell revises the passage slightly: “[...] yet it is in the human hand that we perceive the consummation of all perfection, as an instrument” (Bell, *The Hand* [1877], 160).

¹⁸ Wilson, *The Human Hand*, 313. Wilson places Bell at the beginning of this particular history of the hand: “The physician who initiated this sequence, Sir Charles Bell, was a Scottish surgeon who wrote his book in 1833, a work specifically commissioned to employ the human hand as proof of the existence of God” (ibid.).

¹⁹ Bell, *The Hand*, 38.

²⁰ Carl Gustav Carus, *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt. Handbuch zur Menschenkenntniß*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig 1858; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962). *Symbolism of the Human Form: Handbook for Insight into Human Nature*. Carus (1789-1869)—physiologist, painter, and friend of Goethe—published several books on psychology and the body.

panding the reach of the hand and returning us, once more, to the question of the hand's proper limits.

In diesem Falle wird, stets nur in zarter und allmöglicher Zunahme, die Form des dann nie zu langen Vorderarms, von der Handwurzel nach dem Armgelenke hinauf, anschwellen, mit feinen Contouren wird sich das Spiel der bewegten Sehnen durch die hinreichend umhüllende Haut hindurch mehr ahnen als wirklich bemerken lassen, und eine feinfühlende, namentlich an der Innenseite des Arms zart organisierte Hautfläche wird die Schönheit einer Bildung vollenden, welche dann nur von dem noch weit feiner und mannichfaltiger gegliederten Gebilde der Hand übertroffen zu werden pflegt, zu welchem nun die Betrachtung sich wendet.²¹

This path to the hand evokes a kind of seamless, fluid movement, not unlike that which it describes as animating and integrating the body: linking, organizing, choreographing each element—whether through connective tissue or connective punctuation—to articulate structural coherence. And it is from this finely calibrated network of sensations and reactions that the hand emerges:

Mit diesem Worte eröffnen wir eins der merkwürdigsten Kapitel der ganzen Symbolik menschlicher Gestalt, denn in diesem wunderbaren Gliede [der Hand] ruht ein solcher architektonischer Tiefsinn, seine Entwicklung gewährt eine solche merkwürdige Geschichte, sein Einfluß auf Erhebung der menschlichen Seele zur Vollendung des Geistes ist ein so ungeheurer, daß es nicht nur dem Forscher von jeher reichlich zu denken gegeben, und daß

²¹ Carus, *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt*, 294. “In this case, the shape of the forearm, up to then not too long, will swell, always only in delicate and gradual increase, from the wrist up to the brachial joints, with subtle contours the play of the moving tendons will allow itself to be more sensed than really perceived through the enveloping skin, and a sensitive, particularly delicate skin surface, namely on the inner side of the arm, will complete the beauty of a creation, which is then accustomed to being outdone only by the still far more delicate and more articulated structure of the hand, to which we now turn our attention.”

sein besonderer Einfluß auf alle Cultur der Menschheit nicht nur ein incommensurabler genannt werden muß, sondern daß es, noch abgesehen von seiner besondern Bedeutung für die Eigenthümlichkeit der Person, längst schon in seiner abstrakten Form ein eigenes Symbol für religiöses und öffentliches Volksleben geworden ist*)." ²²

Here, the hand is anchored in the body—a body to be read, each part a cipher for the individual psyche such that morphology comes to express psychology²³—while also describing a limit: the hand, its particular structure and concomitant capacities are, to risk a pun, the very shorthand method by which the human—as opposed to the ape or the gorilla or any number of other members of the *Hominidae* family—is distinguished from the strictly *non*-human. As we shall see, this is far from a simple proposition, taxonomic or otherwise. For, as Montaigne's list evinces and Carus' list reminds us, the hand holds a particular, and particularly persistent, symbolic character far exceeding its anatomical peculiarity.

²² Ibid. "With these words we open one of the most curious chapters in the entire symbolism of the human form, because in this wonderful limb reposes such an architectonic profundity, its development vouchsafes such a remarkable history, its influence on the elevation of the human soul to consummation of the spirit is so tremendous, that it not only gives ample pause to researchers from time immemorial, and that its particular influence on all human culture must not only be named an incommensurable one, but rather that it, still aside from its particular meaning for the characteristics of the person, already in its abstract form has become a distinct symbol for religious and public national life."

Carus includes the following footnote: "*) Wieder begegnen wir hier einem eigenen tiefsinnigen Ausdruck der deutschen Sprache, den sie vor vielen andern voraus hat, nämlich daß sie die mit Bewußtsein geübte *T h a t* des Menschen eine ‚Handlung‘ nennt, d. h. eine durch Vereinigung sensibeln und motorischen Vermögens, (wie es sich so zusammen am reinsten i n d e r *H a n d* darbietet) ins Werk gesetzte Willensäußerung" (ibid., 294n).

²³ This is, for Carus as for his successors, a *scientific*, not esoteric, practice. "Gegenwärtig, wo die Lehren von der Gestalt-Entwicklung des Organismus (Morphologie) so viel tiefer begründet und weit vollständiger durchgebildet sind," Carus writes in his introduction, "mußte man daher daran denken, jener Zeichensammlung leichfalls diejenige Bedeutung anzuweisen, welche der Fortschritt der Naturwissenschaften überhaupt forderte, und dies ist die Aufgabe, welche gegenwärtiges Buch sich gestellt hat, für welches daher, zum Unterschiede von der ältern durchaus unwissenschaftlichen und unvollkommenen Form, nothwendig auch eine andere Bezeichnung gesucht werden mußte, und ich habe dafür nach reiflicher Ueberlegung den Namen einer 'Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt' gewählt" (ibid., 1).

If, given these examples, the hand appears something of a nineteenth century craze—an attempt to define the human against the tide of industrialization and mechanization, which was rapidly redefining *manual* production²⁴—it should also be noted that the hand has long been an object of anxiety. Indeed, as we have already read, it could be argued that by the nineteenth century, the hand, and doubts about its precise definition, had something of an established, if varied, history.²⁵ The learned reader will, however, nonetheless have already detected in these accounts a certain classical leaning. For Bell is, of course, paraphrasing Aristotle, revising the Aristotelian understanding of the hand for a pious, and industrializing, nineteenth century.²⁶ And Carus, some twenty

²⁴ Obviously, the history of industrialization in Europe, and in Germany, has produced its own vast literature. A full survey of this work is quite outside the scope of this thesis. For a discussion specific to women's work, see John Fout, ed., *German Women in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984); Karin Hausen, *Geschlechterhierarchie und Arbeitsteilung. Zur Geschichte ungleicher Erwerbschancen von Männern und Frauen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Deborah Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work, 1700 to Present* (New York: Routledge, 1998). For a discussion of the hand and the rise of industrialization in Europe, specifically England, see Peter John Capuano, "Novel Hands: Victorian Fiction and the Narrative of Manuals" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2009); on industrialization, domestic craft, and literature in Britain, see Talia Schaffer, *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁵ It is, of course, possible to speak of a shift in metaphor: from the eye in the eighteenth century to the hand in the nineteenth. See, for example, Capuano, "Novel Hands."

But, in fact, these doubts about the hand are no less prevalent in the eighteenth century. If a purely historical argument is unsatisfactory, its narrative too coherent and complete, we should nonetheless note that a renewed interest in bodies in general, and the hand as a literary figure in particular—from Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (1772) and Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand* (1773) to Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und der Menschenliebe* (1775-78) to name but the most well known, and various, German-language examples—seems to manifest in a historical moment in which gender, and specifically gendered identity as it relates to newly emerging socio-economic and familial structures, is also the subject of debate and revision; and, additionally, in a period which saw a dramatic rise in female literary production. For a moment, it seems no longer obvious that bodies have hands, or that they have these hands under control. For a detailed discussion of these changes see, for example, Karin Hausen, "Die Polarisierung der Geschlechtscharaktere – Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben," in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart: Klett, 1976), 363-93.

²⁶ Bell, *The Hand*, 209. He makes oblique reference to this fact by referencing Galen, who, of course, was already paraphrasing Aristotle: "So, we rather say with Galen—that man had hands given to him because he was the wisest creature, than ascribe this superiority and knowledge to the use of his hands." On the emergence of industrial production, see also n23 above.

years later, argues for a continued instrumental correlation between mind, body, and (Holy) spirit, as mediated through the hand, uninterrupted—as yet—by the machine.²⁷

Indeed Aristotle’s understanding of the hand as instrument (later, of God’s creation) proves pervasive. In the fourth book of *On the Parts of Animals*, Aristotle turns his attention to the hand, famously defining it as “an instrument for instruments.”²⁸ Thus multiple and multiplicitous, the hand *is* by nature the human:

Surely it is more fitting to give flutes to the flautist than to provide the ability to play flutes to one who has them; for nature has provided the lesser to the greater and superior, not the more honourable and great to the lesser. So if it is better thus, and nature does, among the possibilities, what is best, it is not because they have hands that human beings are most intelligent, but because they are the most intelligent of animals that they have hands. For the most intelligent animal would use the greatest number of instruments well, and the hand would seem to be not one instrument, but many; indeed it is, as it were, an instrument for instruments. Accordingly, to the one able to acquire the most arts, nature has provided the most useful of instruments, the hand.²⁹

Let us turn our attention toward this vexed conclusion of Aristotle, that it is “the most intelligent of animals” whom the hand serves. Indeed, his account would seem to cast the hand as ultimately—not to say reassuringly—subservient to whatever manifold uses the intelligent animal might re-

²⁷ See also Charlotte Wolff, *The Human Hand* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 10. Indeed, Charlotte Wolff, whom we shall meet later in this story, names Carus as one of her predecessors and lauds him as “a pioneer of research into the body-mind relationship” (*ibid.*). Both are, however, curiously reticent on the impact of industrialization, mechanization, and rationalization on the understanding of the human hand and the human body.

²⁸ Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals I-IV*, trans. James G. Lennox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 99 [687^a].

²⁹ *Ibid.*

quire: “And it is possible to use the hand as one, two, or many.”³⁰ Such is the natural order, according to Aristotle. And in naming his opposition, in the figure of Anaxagoras, Aristotle argues to secure this subservient, instrumental character of the hand. “Now Anaxagoras said it was because they have hands that human beings are the most intelligent of animals,” Aristotle writes; “it is reasonable, however, that it is because they are most intelligent that human beings are given hands. For the hands are instruments and nature, like an intelligent human being, always apportions each instrument to the one able to use it.”³¹ Servant and in service, following the well tread Aristotelian line, the hand appears to function as the handmaiden of intelligence. It seems that the question should rather be, what is there not to see in the hand?

**Daß es mir—oder Allen—so *scheint*,
daraus folgt nicht, daß es so *ist*.**

And yet, in the end, it is Anaxagoras who comes closer to the evolutionary mark. For in the evolutionary paradigm, the God-given perfection of the hand, favored by Bell and his ilk—“the belief that the hand was timeless in form and function,” as Richard Sennett argues in *The Craftsman*³²—, gives way to a different narrative, in which the human hand is seen to emerge from a complex of interdependent developments, encompassing the brain and musculoskeletal systems, and driven, at least in part, by bipedal locomotion and concomitant modifications in the upper limbs. It is these resulting changes in the structure of the hand, which, in turn, enabled greater flexibility and preci-

³⁰ Ibid., 99 [687^b].

³¹ Ibid., 98 [687^a].

³² Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 150.

sion in hand movements, leading to tool production and use.³³ It is thus the structure of the hand itself, according to Sennett, and not merely its uses, that have come to define evolutionary thinking about the hand.³⁴ This is a complicated story, not without its own controversies, which we shall not follow in any detail,³⁵ rather, we will trace one line of inquiry, drawing out this shift, in which the brain is situated as the beneficiary of the hand.

And so we turn to André Leroi-Gourhan and his seminal 1964 study, *Le Geste et La Parole*.³⁶

A landmark paleoanthropological account of bipedalism and its far-reaching consequences for human biocultural development, *Le Geste et la Parole*, in English *Gesture and Speech*, unfolds “a study of the geological relationship between techniques and language.”³⁷ Indeed, Leroi-Gourhan, an an-

³³ See Wilson, *The Hand*, 15-34. Again, for a general discussion of the physical structure of the hand, see also Napier, *Hands* and Tallis, *The Hand*, especially 21-46.

³⁴ Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 150. Here, Sennett cites both Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* and Frederick Wood Jones’ *The Principles of Anatomy as Seen in the Hand*. In reference to Bell, Darwin contends, “But the hands and arms could hardly have become perfect enough to have manufactured weapons, or to have hurled stones and spears with a true aim, as long as they were habitually used for locomotion and for supporting the whole weight of the body, or as long as they were especially well adapted, as previously remarked, for climbing trees.” See Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871) 141.

Wood Jones argues, “It is not the hand that is perfect, but the whole nervous mechanism by which movements of the hand are evoked, coordinated, and controlled” (quoted in Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 150). Against this view, recent science emphasizes the role of structural changes in what Sennett terms “the evolutionary dialogue between the hand and the brain” (ibid., 151).

³⁵ For an alternate view of brain development, see, for example, Wilson, *The Hand*, 318n4 and 319n6.

³⁶ *Le Geste et la Parole* was first translated from the French in 1993; all citations are from this translation. André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).

³⁷ Ibid., 4. See also Randall White, introduction to *Gesture and Speech*, by André Leroi-Gourhan, trans. Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993). In the introduction, Randall White argues that Leroi-Gourhan’s general obscurity in America is due to the small sample of his work available in translation, as well as to his structuralist approach. “It is my premise here that Leroi-Gourhan was neither a formulaic structuralist nor a paradox,” White writes. “These views of Leroi-Gourhan result from a certain hostility in America to structuralism and an almost total ignorance of his preceding landmark works in which he constructed a synthetic model of human thought, communication, and action” (White, introduction, xiv). “Action” is a key term in Leroi-Gourhan’s thought. As White notes, “action” encompasses the concept of “gesture” and is perhaps best understood as “‘material action,’ as it refers explicitly to the manual creation of a material culture that is extracorporeal. Gesture paralleled speech as a form of expression of mind and language” (ibid., xvii-xviii).

thropologist and paleontologist, is particularly interesting for our discussion not because of the unimpeachable empirical truth of his scientific claims—many of which, not surprisingly, have been revised or rejected in the intervening half century³⁸—but rather because of the philosophical trajectory of his work. Leroi-Gourhan, after all, appears already quite cognizant of the processes of obsolescence to which his research was subject: “Nomenclatures always embody traces of the past, sometimes to their detriment. The nomenclature of human paleontology abounds in such traces; it is a fabric of concepts which, in the course of time, have gradually become outmoded.”³⁹ And it is this trace of history that Jacques Derrida takes up in his discussion of Leroi-Gourhan. “The history of writing,” he argues in *Of Grammatology*,

is erected on the base of the history of the *grammè* as an adventure of relationships between the face and the hand. Here, by a precaution whose schema we must constantly repeat, let us specify that the history of writing is not explained by what we believe we know of the face and the hand, of the glance, of the spoken word, and of the gesture. We must, on the contrary, disturb this familiar knowledge, and awaken a meaning of the hand and face in terms of that history. Leroi-Gourhan describes the slow transformation of manual motoricity which frees the audio-phonetic system for speech, and the glance and the hand for writing.⁴⁰

³⁸ For the purposes of this thesis, it is perhaps most important to note the “emerging scholarly consensus that the first graphic representation, personal adornments, and so on, do not directly coincide with the biological emergence of *Homo sapiens sapiens*” (ibid., xxi). To issues of anachronisms in *Gesture and Speech*, see White, introduction to *Gesture and Speech*, xxi-xxii.

³⁹ Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 61.

⁴⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 47-48. Also in Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 24.

But how, exactly?

In *Gesture and Speech*, Leroi-Gourhan foregrounds the importance of the hand in conditioning, situating, and defining the emergence of the human as biologically and culturally unique: “the ever-skillful servant of human technical intelligence.”⁴¹ And, yet, to insist on the language of servitude is to risk obscuring the true complexity of evolutionary processes. So let us pause again and read more closely. “It is possible to regard mobility as the significant feature of evolution toward the human state,” Leroi-Gourhan writes. And, indeed, as he continues, “Paleontologists have not been unaware of this. It came more spontaneously to them to characterize humans by their intelligence than by their mobility, and the first concern of their theories has been with the preeminence of the brain.” As a result,

The “cerebral” view of evolution now appears mistaken, and there would seem to be sufficient documentation to demonstrate that the brain was not the cause of developments in locomotory adaptation but their beneficiary. This is why locomotion will be considered here as the determining factor of biological evolution, just as [later] it will be seen as the determining factor of modern social evolution.⁴²

This paleontological method thus inverts the classical hierarchy—in which human reason rules at the pinnacle of creation—toppling intelligence as the primary organizing force behind human development, which was often implicitly defined as the development towards a supposed inherent (manual) superiority. Quite the opposite, in fact.

⁴¹ Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 255.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 26

Nonetheless, the evolutionary processes described by Leroi-Gourhan are coincident, not independent.⁴³ “Those whose body structure corresponds to the greatest freeing of the hand,” according to Leroi-Gourhan, “are also those whose skull is capable of containing the largest brain, for manual liberation and the reduction of stresses exerted upon the cranial dome are two terms of the same mechanical equation.”⁴⁴ This is not to uncouple brain from body, but rather to assert the interdependence of both terms. Which insight returns us to Derrida’s pairing of face and hand. Indeed, this is one of the operative associations in Leroi-Gourhan’s evolutionary thinking in *Gesture and Speech*. “[T]he bipolar technicity of many vertebrates,” as he argues, “culminated in anthropoids in the forming of two functional pairs (hand/tools, face/language), making the motor function of the hand and of the face the decisive factor in the process of modeling of thought into instruments of material action, on the one hand, and into sound symbols, on the other.”⁴⁵ Locomotion, bipedal and erect, stands at the threshold of a dynamic of adaption, which frees the hand from the purely survivalist functions of mobility and feeding, and, in turn, conditions changes in structural and cognitive organization that encompass the development of language, graphism, and technical tool pro-

⁴³ “[...] Leroi-Gourhan argues that early hominid increase in brain volume must be understood as a critique of those who see brain evolution as an independent prime mover,” according to White. “In essence, bipedalism stimulated an entire suite of evolutionary developments: changes in brain size and organization that had evolutionary implications for language and cognition; release of the face from feeding and manipulative functions, thereby allowing structural specializations for speech; freeing of the forelimbs from locomotor functions, thereby allowing them to be used in tool production” (White, introduction, xvi-xvii).

⁴⁴ Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 60. “Thus the chances of evolutionary development are the greater,” Leroi-Gourhan writes, “the better the body apparatus lends itself to changes in behavior through the action of a more developed brain. In this sense the brain does control evolution, but it remains ineluctably dependent upon the possible range of selective adaptation of the body” (ibid.). In a later chapter, he argues that “[t]o say that the human brain—in other words, human thought—could not have come into being without erect posture is to ignore the fact that ‘human’ erect posture could not have been achieved without the general tendency of the central nervous system to progress by adaption” (ibid., 146).

⁴⁵ Ibid., 187

duction.⁴⁶ As further expressions of bipedal organization, tool production and language, writing and speech, become the external manifestations of internal adaptations in the hominid brain, nervous system, body, and hand. And here, for Leroi-Gourhan, at least, we find the characteristic gesture of human evolution and human achievement, “which expresses itself in the separation between tool and hand, world and object:” expulsion, detachment, and distance. “The whole of our evolution,” in Leroi-Gourhan’s view,

has been oriented toward placing outside ourselves what in the rest of the animal world is achieved *inside* by species adaptation. The most striking material fact is certainly the ‘freeing’ of tools, but the fundamental fact is really the freeing of the word and our unique ability to transfer our memory to a social organism outside ourselves.⁴⁷

Material action and material representation are thus predicated on distance, not only embodying, but rather also recording the gap emerging between human and world, or, perhaps more precisely, between human and (for example, purely zoological) nature, between internal and external. Of course, it is precisely this ability to “transfer,” and the distance it presupposes, which opens the possibility of translation, transformation, and manipulation—of, in short, creation, figuration, and fic-

⁴⁶ Ibid., 187-88. Leroi-Gourhan defines graphism as “the capacity to express thought in material symbols;” this development is “exclusively human,” in that it revises and reorganizes the functional pairs operating in anthropoids: “The emergence of graphic signs at the end of the Palaeoanthropians’ reign presupposes the establishment of a new relationship between the two operating poles—a relationship exclusively characteristic of humanity in the narrow sense, that is to say, one that meets the requirements of mental symbolization to the same extent as today. In this new relationship the sense of vision holds the dominant place in the pairs ‘face/reading’ and ‘hand/graphic sign.’ This relationship is indeed exclusively human: While it can at a pinch be claimed that tools are not unknown to some animal species and that language merely represents the step after the vocal signals of the animal world, nothing comparable to the writing and reading of symbols existed before the dawn of *Homo sapiens*. We can therefore say that while motor function determines expression in the techniques and language of all anthropoids, in the figurative language of the most recent anthropoids reflection determines graphism” (ibid.).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 235.

tion—and thus also the possibility of narrative, whether graphic or oral, rhythmic or symbolic.⁴⁸ And it is this narrativizing gesture of the hand, its ability to document, represent, and grasp outside of the body, which would consequently seem not only to attest to the evolutionary dialogue between body and brain, but also to situate language itself as a kind of paleontological record.⁴⁹

“Ich weiß nicht ob da eine Hand ist.”

And what is the story that we tell ourselves about the hand? For the hand repositioned, as a central mechanism of evolutionary development among *hominidae*, still covers a pernicious blind spot. Still, it would seem that we have not yet looked quite closely enough. Etymologically, the modern *Hand*, in both German and English (through the German), translate from the Latin *manus*.⁵⁰ This seemingly unproblematic consensus, however, also takes over the complex of meanings associated

⁴⁸ Ibid., 365-66. Leroi-Gourhan extends his paleontological method to take in “rhythmic creation,” that is, symbolic or figurative representations. “Given what we know of the apparatus of the higher mammals and humans,” he argues, “theses dominant reference senses (sight and hearing), together with motor function, indicate that figurative behavior forms part of the system of responsiveness. In other words, its instruments are the same as those technics and language: the body and the hand, the eye and the ear. These activities we distinguish as dance, mime, drama, music, and graphic or plastic art all spring from the same source as the activities connected with technics and language. This common origin notwithstanding, the paleontological approach, which enabled us to show the development of the cortical and verbal sequences are integrated, does not seem to be indicated, except perhaps as a means of confirming that language and figurative representation stem from the same human aptitude, the aptitude to abstract elements from reality and from those elements to reconstitute that reality’s symbolic image. [...] Thus we see that tools, language, and rhythmic creation are three contiguous aspects of one and the same process” (ibid.)

⁴⁹ Ibid., 187. “[W]e shall consider the aesthetic aspects of rhythms and values,” according to Leroi-Gourhan, “but here, as we near the end of a long reflection principally concerned with the material essence of humans, it may be useful to consider how the system that provides human society with the means of permanently preserving the fruits of individual and collective thought cam slowing into being” (ibid.) We must, however, also keep in mind the unavoidable limitations of Leroi-Gourhan’s theories, especially in light of more recent discoveries in paleoanthropology and the subsequent shifts in thinking informed by this evidence. See n37 above.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.vv. “hand” and “manus,” online version December 2011, <http://www.oed.com>.

with the Latin term, as soon enough becomes evident. Thus, Jacob Grimm defines *Hand* in his *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*:

H[and], symbolisch betrachtet, gleicht dem stab in der bedeutung von gewalt, wie schon die redensarten, etwas in der h. halten und aus der h. geben anzeigen. In der ältern sprache drückt daher munt sowohl *manus* als *auctoritas*, *potestas* aus. Die h. ist das natürlichste, nächste, einfachste zeichen.⁵¹

Certainly, the hand—as *manus*—is both a symbolic and a legal entity, caught up in constellations that would seek to define and describe the limits of legal personhood. Here, etymology renders explicit the dual hierarchy already implicit in this model of the hand we have begun to trace: as metaphorical and material power. Which, of course, also includes the possibility, or reality, of violence. And already in the invocation of *manus* as a supposed origin for the modern *Hand*, the matter gains complexity. For, the definition of the hand as originating in *auctoritas* or *potestas*, although usually not found in most modern definitions of the hand—German or otherwise—is evident in the archaic Latin usage, in which *manus*, while literally defined as the organ *hand*, also describes the archaic legal power granted to a husband over his wife in Roman law.⁵² The Latin usage thus expresses that which is buried in the later Germanic incarnations; namely: the organization of power

⁵¹ Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer* 4th ed. (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchh., T. Weicher, 1899), 190. "Hand, considered symbolically, resembles the rod in the significance of authority, as already indicated by the expressions to hold something in the hand and to give out of hand. In earlier language munt therefore expresses both *manus* and *auctoritas*, *potestas*. The hand is the most natural, nearest, simplest sign."

⁵² See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.vv. "authority" and "potestas." Where *auctoritas* is etymologically related to the modern term authority, and *potestas* expresses the legal power of paternal authority, as the head of the household, under Roman law; and *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "manus." This usage still recorded in the *OED*, which defines *manus* as the hand, but also as a legal term: "*Roman Law*. A form of power or authority, principally involving control over property, held in some instances by a husband over his wife; a form of marriage contract giving a husband such authority." Thus it is perhaps not wholly coincidental that *munt* and *manus* are named as cognates.

and hierarchy, as rooted in an ideology of sexual difference and legally enforced asymmetry, inherent in the hand and its uses.

Yet that this ideology is in some way still operative in the hand, if only tacitly, seems clear. Grimm's reference to *gewalt* certainly indicates as much. Yet, whatever the implication of this violence might be, the female hand—one could argue, the other side of the *auctoritas* and *potestas* coin—is nowhere to be seen. J. H. Zedler, for example, presents in his *Universal-Lexicon* (an earlier effort in the encyclopedic endeavor, published between 1731-1754) a comprehensive discussion of the hand, which moves from morphological definitions to metaphorical meanings without, as we might already guess, naming the elided concepts of *auctoritas* or *potestas*. Zedler does, however, include a reference to contemporary beauty and etiquette, which rather seems to give the lie to any thought that ideology and authority, or their legal implications, have disappeared altogether. Here, for the first time, the female hand appears: “Weisse zarte, und kleine Hände gehören mit zur Schönheit eines Frauenzimmers,” he writes. And a fragile beauty, indeed, it appears to be: “Nach der heutigen Höflichkeit darff einem Frauenzimmer die bloße Hand nicht geboten werden.”⁵³ It is the qualified hands—those that are “weiss,” “zart,” klein” and otherwise diminutive—that would appear to belong to the lady. This is an already familiar narrative, captured in her hands. Which, after all, appears not only a matter of aesthetics, but one of etiquette.

Against this detour into social graces and normative feminine beauty, the later Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* provides by far the most extensive entry, beginning with the morphology of *die menschliche Hand*. Certainly, the Grimms would appear, at least initially, to adhere to a quite nar-

⁵³ Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses Vollständiges Universallexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, s.v. “Hand” (Halle and Leipzig: Zedler, 1731-1754), 421. Available at <http://www.zedler-lexikon.de>. “White, delicate and small hands belong to the beauty of a woman. According to contemporary manners a woman ought not be offered a bare hand.”

row definition: “der umfang der hand wird gewöhnlich bestimmt von dem handgelenk bis zu den fingerspitzen, und die finger sind in dem begriffe mit eingeschlossen.”⁵⁴ Only to then expand upon it with four further senses of the hand, each with a more or less extensive catalogue of sub-headings and examples, comprising almost forty pages of print. Yet, despite the exhaustive nature of their entry, the Grimms this time fail to uncover clear traces of *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the *manus*. Only the first definition organized under *II. die manigfache thätigkeit der hand*—which states “*die hand als fassende, greifende, in besitz und gewalt nehmende, betreffend*”—could be said to even touch upon the forgotten elements of this archaic law without attempting to disentangle its significance for contemporary usage.⁵⁵

Nonetheless, that the female hand—as opposed to the *human* hand—is a special case, somehow separate and requiring explanation, would seem to be the conclusion reached by a number of handbooks. Let us take one more definition into consideration. “Die zweite Verschiedenheit gewährt das G e s c h l e c h t ,” so argues Carus in his 1846 lecture *Über Grund und Bedeutung der verschiedenen Formen der Hand in verschiedenen Personen*. “Hände von Männern und Frauen sind nicht minder wesentlich verschieden als Kopfbau, ja als ihre gesammten Körperverhältnisse.” This, ostensibly, is a biological difference:

⁵⁴ Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 10, s.v. “Hand” (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1877), 324-63. Available at <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemma=hand>. “The extent of the hand is usually determined from the wrist to the fingertips, and the fingers are included the term.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* In addition to the etymological development of the word, these main categories of definition include, “I. Die menschliche hand; II. Die manigfache thätigkeit der hand; III. Die reschtssprache verwendet in verschiedenen formeln *hand* stellvertretend für die person; IV. Die hand dient, wie *arm, fusz, haar*, als *masz*, und es entwickelt sich aus dieser bedeutung zugleich die der *art, weise, mode*; V. hand bei personificationen, bei thieren, an geräten.” Notably, the second set of definitions is by far the most extensive.

—Es müsste ein sehr geringer Menschenkenner seyn, dem man nicht zutrauen sollte, so-
gleich und einzig an der dargebotenen Hand zu erkennen, ob sie einem Manne oder einer
Frau angehöre.—Im allgemeinen ist namentlich der Bau der Frauenhand kleiner, zarter,
und besonders schmaler, ausserdem feiner gegliedert, die Gelenke minder stark hervortre-
tend, und die Handfläche weicher; während die Männerhand grösser, derber, verhältniss-
mässiger breiter, und mit stärkeren vorspringenden Gelenken versehen, und mit festerer,
breiterer Handfläche und gewölbtern Ballen des Daumens erscheint.⁵⁶

Biology, however, is almost immediately correlated to psychology, as the expression of a decidedly
cultural consensus around gendered difference.

—Dass also diese festere, breitere, stärkere Hand ebenso ein Zeichen der kräftigern, schär-
fer denkenden, mehr praktisch wirksamen Individualität des Mannes genannt werden muss,
als die schmalere, feinere, weichere Hand, ein Symbol des gemüthvollern, weichern, sinni-
gern Charakters der Frau, ist vollkommen deutlich [...], und wir können wohl denken, dass
eine mehr weibliche Hand bei einem Manne, und eine mehr männliche bei einer Frau eben
so bestimmt auf ungewöhnliche und unerwünschte Eigenthümlichkeit der Person deuten
muss [...].⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Carus, *Über Grund und Bedeutung der verschiedenen Formen der Hand in verschiedenen Personen* (Stuttgart: Ad. Becher, 1846), 5. *On the Reason and Meaning of the Different Forms of the Hand in Different Persons*. “Sex grants the second difference. Hands of men and women are no less significantly varied than the construction of the head, even than their entire bodily proportions.—It has to be a very humble judge of character, whom one should not trust to recognize at once and only through the proffered hand, whether it belongs to a man or a woman.—In general, namely, is the construction of the female hand smaller, more delicate, and particularly narrower, besides more finely articulated, the joints less strongly prominent, and the palm softer; while the male hand appears larger, sturdier, comparatively broader, and furnished with more strongly protruding joints, and with tougher, broader palm and more domed ball of the thumb.”

⁵⁷ Ibid. “—That thus this tougher, broader, stronger hand must be called a sign of the more powerful, more precisely thinking, more practically potent individuality of the man, just as the narrower, finer, softer hand, a symbol of the

By 1853, in Carus' study *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt*, this hand has been given a name. “[D]ie sensible Hand,” according to Carus,

ist vorzugsweise die Hand der Frau, und kommt in ihrer reinsten Ausbildung wesentlich nur bei ihr vor. An der sensibeln Hand ist schon der Knochenbau, und ebenso Muskel- und Sehnenbildung zarter, und das ganze Gebilde nie sehr groß.⁵⁸

And, yet, “Eine männlich sensible Hand (da auch die obigen Figuren männliche Hände darstellen) zeigt Fig. 131” [fig. i.1].⁵⁹ Once defined, this hand—*vorzugsweise die Hand der Frau*—would still seem to elusive in its female guise, however common it might be.

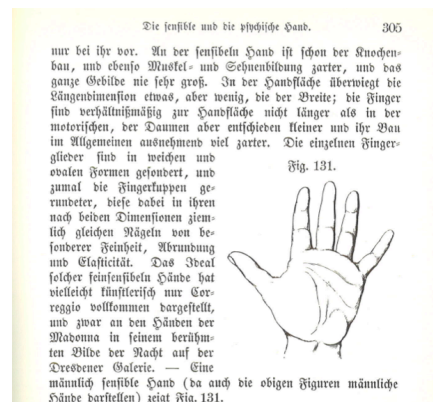


Figure i.1 Carl Gustav Carus, *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt. Handbuch zur Menschenkenntniß*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig 1858).

sentiment, softer, more thoughtful character of the woman, is entirely clear [...] and we could indeed think, that a more feminine hand on a man, and a more masculine hand on a women must likewise indicate unusual and undesirable characteristics of the person.”

⁵⁸ Carus, *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt*, 304-05. “The sensitive hand is mainly the hand of the woman, and occurs in its purest form essentially only in her. In the sensitive hand is already the bone structure, and likewise the muscle and tendon formation more delicate, and the whole structure never very large.”

⁵⁹ Ibid., 305. “Fig. 131 shows a masculine sensitive Hand (since the figures above also show masculine hands).

“Schau näher hin.”

Here, we return to take another, closer, look at Charles Bell, not to examine his science but rather to interrogate his storytelling, as revised in a later edition of his 1833 treatise on *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design*. “In virtue of these provisions, the hand corresponds to the superior mental capacities with which *man* is endowed,” he writes in the eighth edition of 1877. “The instrument is capable of executing whatever *his* ingenuity suggests.”⁶⁰ Let us read carefully. For, as we are beginning to see, these capacities of *man*, after all, are in no way neutral, but—the familiar argument reads—rather always already implicitly gendered as universally, unremarkably and unmarkedly *male*; thus also, the story goes, for Bell, and any number of scholars before and after, universally *human*. Curiously enough, in the first edition, some forty years earlier, gender is less explicitly marked, at least at first: “In these provisions the instrument corresponds with the superior mental capacities, the hand being capable of executing whatever *man’s* ingenuity suggests.”⁶¹ This apparently unremarkable elision of difference, indeed the sharpening of this contraction from *human* to *man* to *his*, is, this thesis suggests, far from accidental, insignificant, or merely an expression of conventional usage. Rather, I propose to read this persistently worrying, chronic and lingering elision—the tubercular effect of traditional, patriarchal humanist discourse⁶²—as a symptomatic and necessary movement of exclusion and erasure.

And here we confront once again the problem of metaphor and material, and the ways in which the hand—and certainly also much of the discourse *about* the hand—would appear to de-

⁶⁰ Bell, *The Hand* [1877], 207; emphasis mine.

⁶¹ Bell, *The Hand*, 207; emphasis mine. Bell then continues, “Nevertheless, the possession of the ready instrument is not the cause of the superiority of man, nor is its aptness the measure of his attainments” (ibid.).

⁶² See Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

scribe, if not outright embody, the familiar Cartesian duality. It is a kind of philosophical expulsion, which would attempt to establish the detachment, and distance, refiguring and re-imagining the earlier paleontological gesture of *Hominidae* development in the creation of narrative. A narrative, however, which would appear, on the one hand and at first glance, to uphold the constitutive binary: that between mind and body. While yet, on the other hand, attempting to reconcile this apparently vexed and obscure coordination of mind and body—expressed and enacted in the hand—within the constitution of the human. For Bell’s treatise could certainly also be read outside of the strictly divine, as attempting to understand the material, extended action of the hand as a consequence and instrument of these “superior mental capacities.” And it is precisely these capacities, the well choreographed dialogue between mind and body, which in turn come to define the human, explicitly, as *man*. But against this narrative, I would suggest an alternate reading, in which the body as metaphor is inseparable from the body as material, perhaps most especially in the workings—whether actual or figurative—of the hand. And particularly in the oddly elided and erased workings of the female hand.

This argument, our argument, relies on the premise that the tradition of humanism, and its long heritage of Cartesian dualism, is, in fact, an effect of patriarchal ideology. And this position, I would suggest is both in no way radical, and yet tellingly, radically absent from the discourse of the hand and its metaphorical status as the *sine qua non* of the human. Perhaps most succinctly articulated by Toril Moi in her classic study *Sexual/Textual Politics*, she reads the “seamlessly unified self” of traditional humanism as a fiction of authority and autonomy expressed in the shorthand *Man*. “At its centre,” Moi writes, “is the seamlessly unified self—either individual or collective—which is

commonly called ‘Man’.” And, we might well argue, his hand as instrument of this seamless self. “As Luce Irigaray or Hélène Cixous would argue,” and we with them, as Moi continues,

this integrated self is in fact a phallic self, constructed on the model of the self-contained, powerful phallus. Gloriously autonomous, it banishes from itself all conflict, contradiction and ambiguity. In this humanist ideology the self is the *sole author* of history and of the literary text: the humanist creator is potent, phallic and male—God in relation to his world, the author in relation to his text. History or the text become nothing but the “expression” of this unique individual: all art becomes autobiography, a mere window on to the self and the world, with no reality of its own. The text is reduced to a passive, “feminine” reflection of an unproblematically “given,” “masculine” world or self.⁶³

Certainly, the hand is implicated in this cultural body of thought. Indeed, here the hand could even be read as a problematically ambiguous tool *qua* text, at once of the body, but not confined to the body, an object of discourse and the instrument of its creation. And if the constitutive fiction of the humanist subject—white, male, European, however qualified, but always already marked by the particular hubris of claiming the unmarked as its own—is something of a critical commonplace, it is for that no less significant to our reading. For this assumption of an easy and transparent subjectivity in the humanist image seems still operative in the discourse of the hand. And as such, the sleight of hand—both literal and metaphorical—which renders *humankind* as *mankind* as *his*, performs a dual purpose. It is both a further instance of the subsuming power of the universal male subject constructed in the humanist image, as well as a constitutive gesture of the triumphant synecdoche, which identifies the hand as the material expression of the presumed mastery of the seamlessly con-

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8.

structed, universal, and male human as such. Which, in turn, comes to construct the female as the other of this *man*, an oppositional binary to organize and hierarchize difference.⁶⁴ We suggest that this is not the whole story. Rather, it instantiates and inscribes a particularly impoverished reading of the hand and its significance as a culturally marked, culturally produced extremity of discourse.

And here, we begin to see what is at stake in the female hand. We turn to Elizabeth Grosz, who does not repudiate Irigaray or Cixous, or their tradition of feminist thought, but rather could be read as repositioning this thought bodily, by underscoring the gendered effects of this opposition on, in and through, material bodies. “Most relevant here,” she argues, “is the correlation and association of the mind/body opposition with the opposition between male and female, where man and mind, woman and body, become representationally aligned.”⁶⁵ Grosz seeks to unsettle precisely this dichotomy, by “refiguring bodies” as always plural, to unfold an understanding of corporality that does not take recourse to “a precultural, presocial, or prelinguistic pure body,” but rather reads the body—or, better, bodies—as a “social and discursive object, a body bound up in the order of desire, signification, and power.”⁶⁶ As Grosz continues,

That may help to explain the enormous investment in definitions of the female body in struggles between patriarchs and feminists: what is at stake is the activity and agency, the mobility and social space, accorded to women. Far from being an inert passive, noncultural

⁶⁴ The otherness of women, and the status of feminist theory as a “philosophy of the Other,” is, of course, one of the foundational insights of feminist thought, in a variety of methodological approaches or philosophical convictions: biologic, Marxist, and psychoanalytic, including the Lacanian. See Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, here 83. For a general introduction to feminist thought, see Rosemarie Putnam Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998).

⁶⁵ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 18. See also Tong, *Feminist Thought*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

and ahistorical term, the body may be seen as the crucial term, the site of contestation, in a series of economic, political, sexual, and intellectual struggles.⁶⁷

And, indeed, Grosz suggests it is not only the representation of bodies that is culturally, historically produced, but rather the body itself. “I hope to show that the body, or rather, bodies, cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way,” she writes;

they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself. It is not simply that the body is represented in a variety of ways according to historical, social, and cultural exigencies while it remains basically the same; these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type.⁶⁸

Thus, “[t]he bodies in which I am interested are culturally, sexually, racially specific bodies, the mobile and changeable terms of cultural production.”⁶⁹ The body, we are to understand, is curiously, determinedly expansive and extensive, always exceeding any and all attempts—cultural, historical, biological, anthropological, ideological, and on and on—at containment. And we are here concerned with exploring the terms of this production, as expressed and embodied in the female hand, or perhaps better, in its absence. The hand would appear to offer a particularly compelling limit case. For, as we have seen, to write about the hand is also to write about the arm, the body, of which it is an integral and integrated extension; it is to write about a body situated in discourse, whether scientific, philosophical, or religious. It is to write about, and so also to produce, the dis-

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, x.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, x-xi.

course of the human. And thus to restore the hand to the cultural body is to necessarily also attend to the variety of handed experience as specific and specifically, for our cases, specifically gendered; that is, to explore the ways in which the very familiarity of the hand, its capabilities, and its discourse obscure precisely this complicity in a complex of culturally, socially, and historically determined gestures, which would seek to outline and define proper limits, proper actions, and, in turn, proper, and properly intelligible, bodies.⁷⁰ To claim a metaphorical equivalence or evolutionary necessity between the hand and material action in the world, to unquestioningly evoke the anatomical or cognitive, paleontological or metaphorical, in short, natural and historical discourses, and the integration of mind and body suggested, is not sufficient. Rather, the question must first be asked: whose hand?

⁷⁰ The introduction of the female hand is not, however, to suggest the replacement of one category with another—“human” with “female”—without also interrogating the categorical collective and locating gender itself as subject to historical change. Here I am defining gender largely in terms already suggested and by those suggested in the work of historian Joan Scott, who reads gender as both a constructed and lived category. See, Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review*, 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-75. “My definition of gender,” according to Scott, “has two parts and several subsets.” They are interrelated but must be analytically distinct. The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Changes in the organization of social relationships always correspond to changes in representations of power, but the direction of change is not necessarily one way” (ibid., 1067). Scott reiterates this definition of gender, and identities in general, in a more recent study, see Scott, “Fantasy Echo: History and the Construction of Identity,” *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (2001): 284-304. To question sexual categorization is not, however, to also reject the political expediency of recognizing bodies as gendered and as such subject to the systems of oppression enacted on these bodies. In a literary critical context, Toril Moi offers a similar interpretation of this double focus, both as responding to Julia Kristeva’s work and as operating with definitions of the “self” and “identity” influenced by psychoanalysis and deconstruction, respectively: “For it still remains *politically* essential for feminists to defend women *as* women in order to counteract the patriarchal oppression that precisely despises women *as* women.” Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 13.

To the question of *Geschlechtscharaktere* and their emergence as a historical phenomenon, see, for example, Karin Hausen, “Die Polarisierung der ‘Geschlechtscharaktere’—Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart: Klett, 1976), 363–93.

Diese Möglichkeit des Sich-überzeugens

The beauty of the hand is precisely its strangeness: it gathers and holds manifold meanings and valences, multiple technical capabilities and expressive potential; it is at once wholly individual and yet always also reaching beyond this limit, always receding into history and into discourse. This thesis proposes three approaches to the female hand, explored in a series of unlikely encounters. Our first chapter reads Hannah Höch's early essays on embroidery alongside Sigmund Freud's work on femininity to investigate the working hand and its consequences. For Höch takes seriously the question of fabrication and ornamentation. In so doing, we suggest, she can also be read as rewriting the politics of concealment and revelation implicit in the Freudian narrative of textile production and sexual differentiation. Indeed, by collapsing text and textile, embroidery is revealed as a mode of expression. And as textual practice implicated in a sophisticated and complex play of signification, representation, and semiotic power, embroidery traces one instance of the myriad material histories, in which the language of cloth has come to shape our textual imagination.

In our next chapter, Rahel Levin Varnhagen and Friedrich Nietzsche meet at the question of genre and the authority of the writing hand: at the fringes of the body, the page, of genre. Indeed, even in meeting, Levin Varnhagen and Nietzsche must first be gathered in from the edges, and brought together onto the page. This chapter, something of an interlude or entr'acte, proposes to read not merely this curious correspondence, but rather to unfold the technical ability of the hand to hold a line, in writing, as composed from both internal and external sensations, a particularly bodily experience that would first appear as disruption. And consequently, we argue here, that writing has to do with the confluence of conditions, as recorded in ink and paper: the letter as the product, and index, of the moment of its composition. While yet still always also eluding that

which the hand could hope to capture in material traces, as lines on a page. For, in the end, we shall suggest, this correspondence, which after all may only be written onto the page, records that which must always already, and always again, escape and exceed the enfolding grasp of the letter: namely, presence.

Finally, our last chapter turns to the question of the hand as text and the limits of intelligibility by setting the psychology of the hand developed by Charlotte Wolff into dialogue with the many hands of Rainer Maria Rilke. Elaborating the promise of chiromancy to “read” the hand, rendering its lines and creases decipherable as the traces of character, disposition, and psychic constitution, Wolff sought to develop a “psycho-physiological” theory of the hand, as a scientific discipline. And yet, more than mere medical theory, we argue that Wolff reads in the hand an instrument of narrative, a collection point of memory and commemoration. Rilke does not explain Wolff or her work, nor does she him, but rather offers an alternate reading of the hand, its role in processes of disintegration and dissolution, and the almost treacherous possibilities it holds for revealing that which would otherwise remain hidden. In both cases, we suggest, the hand is always also an unmasking.

In exploring these less trodden pathways, opened by the slippage between metaphor and material, our project aims to trace the curious two-way traffic that gives significance to the figure of the hand, and its absent body, its missing gender. For it is our hypothesis that buried within the deceptive universal ideology of the *human* hand operates a set of culturally, socially, and historically determined conventions, which would seek to define, and produce, the contours of the *female* hand and its usage. Thus critically questioning the fantasy of unproblematically and unmarkedly “translating” thought into action, and into discourse, under the ideological constraints imposed by patri-

archal humanist ideology and its binary understanding of gendered difference, we seek here to unfold a reading of the female hand as a contested, ideologically significant figure, as a means through which to analyze the complexities of female textual production and textual negotiation. To ask precisely that question, whose hand?

Making Hands

The Handiworks of Hannah Höch and Sigmund Freud

Wer hat überhaupt festgelegt, daß beim Sticken ein Stich wie der andere aussehen muß? Haben wir dazu nicht Maschinen?

Ike Rosen, *Sticken Modern*

“Aber Scherz bei Seite: Eine Handarbeit hat in der Tat persönliche Physiognomie, charakteristische Schrift. Es gibt geniale, pedantische, langweilige, ehrbare und bizarre Schriften. Ein zerfahrener, unlogischer Kopf wird auch in Wolle und Seide eine unsichere, ungenaue Hand führen.”¹ *Scherz bei Seite*, indeed. Entitled “Die Handschrift in der Handarbeit,” this article by Heloise von Beaulieu appeared in the 1921/1922 issue of the prestigious, and popular, needlework journal, *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*.² At first glance Beaulieu’s particular appraisal would seem to embroider the sig-

¹ Heloise von Beaulieu, “Die Handschrift in der Handarbeit,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 22, no. 1-2 (1921/1922): 85. “But joking aside: A piece of handiwork has, in fact, personal physiognomy, characteristic handwriting. There is genial, pedantic, boring, respectable and bizarre handwriting. A scatterbrained, illogical person [head] will also wield in wool and silk an uncertain, imprecise hand.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

² Published by Alexander Koch in Darmstadt—largely recognized as the first publisher of serial publications devoted to interior design in Germany—*Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* was published over four decades, beginning in 1901, under a number of (related) titles. For the years under discussion here, the full title of *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* remained largely unchanged: first, around 1918, *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau. Illustrierte Monatshefte zur Förderung der deutschen Stickerei- und Spitzen-Industrie. Zentral-Organ für die Hebung der künstlerischen Frauen-Handarbeiten*; by 1920, the title reads slightly differently: *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau. Das Blatt der schaffenden Frau. Illustrierte Zeitschrift zur Förderung der deutschen Stickerei- und Spitzen-Kunst. Zentral-Organ für die Hebung der künstlerischen Frauen-Handarbeit*. The change is minimal but significant, suggesting a movement away from the vocabulary of trades and industry to a more domestic, amateur and dilettante idiom.

nificance, and signifying power, of the handiwork. So let us continue reading. “Diese ‚persönliche Handschrift‘ in der Frauenhandarbeit ist eigentlich ihre größte Kostbarkeit,” Beaulieu continues.

Denn die technische Vollkommenheit allein tut es nicht, —sonst wäre ja die Maschinen-Arbeit das Höchste. Die fabrikmäßig gearbeitete Stickerei entbehrt für den Kenner und Liebhaber eines letzten Reizes, eines Duftes, der über den Dingen schwebt: —eben des Persönlichen. Betriebsmäßighergestellte Arbeiten tragen auch eine geschäftliche Handschrift: gewandt, fließend, korrekt—aber eben Schreiberhand.³

Women’s handiwork is read, quite literally, as a form of handwriting, leaving behind a mark of individual peculiarity no less intelligible, and no less inadvertent.⁴ For what Beaulieu suggests in this analogy of handiwork is the transparent identity of head and hand, which invests the rather mundane reality of conventional domestic work—whether stocking, doily, embroidered cushion, cloth, or any manner of domestic ornamentation—with an evidentiary potential: a readable text, if only

³ Ibid., 86. “This ‘personal handwriting’ in women’s handiwork is actually its greatest value. Because technical perfection alone does not do it,—otherwise surely machine-made work would be the highest kind. The embroidery worked as from the factory lacks for the connoisseur and admirer an ultimate charm, an aura, which wafts over things:—lacks precisely the personal. Works produced mechanically also carry a commercial hand[writing]: deft, fluid, correct—but simply copperplate.”

⁴ Often, as we shall later see, *textile* conflates widely different technical skills, practices, and modes of production under a common etymological origin in *text*. So, whether producing fabric or ornamenting fabric, there is a certain semantic slippage at work. Handiwork often operates as shorthand for a variety of needlework techniques, a catchall for women’s domestic craft work, whether preformed in the home or for pay: in the main, knitting, lace, embroidery, darning, seam making. See, for example, Maureen Daly Goggin, “An ‘Essamplaire Essai’ on the Rhetoricity of Needlework Sampler-Making: A Contribution to Theorizing and Historicizing Rhetorical Practice,” *Rhetoric Review* 21, no. 4 (2002): 309-338; Lanto Synge, *Art of Embroidery: History of Style and Technique* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors’ Club, 2001).

Defined as domestic and dilettantish, *Handarbeit*, sometimes further qualified as *Frauenhandarbeit*, is not to be confused with *Handwerk*. Although the distinction is often indistinguishable in English, in German *Handarbeit* and *Handwerk* describe two distinct spheres of work. *Handwerk* is defined largely in terms of public, professional institutions, from which women were traditionally excluded, while *Handarbeit* is understood simply as manual labor. Thus, in the Grimms’ *Wörterbuch*, *Handwerk* is associated with guilds: “In der strengen bedeutung des wortes war das handwerk früher zünftig;” *Handarbeit*, in contrast, was unaffiliated, and thus also presumably less skilled, labor: “arbeit die mit der hand geschieht (gegenatz kopfarbeit [...]).” *Das deutsche Wörterbuch*, vol. 10, s.v.v. “handarbeit” and “handwerk,” accessed 2 October 2012, <http://www.dwb.uni-trier.de>.

we learn to decipher its lines. Handicraft thus also becomes a testament to (or even, as Beaulieu would also suggest, against) its individual author, the material labor of a particular psychology traced in wool and silk. This intimate identification reaches its sentimental apotheosis in Beaulieu's domestic scene:

Wir verstehen den jungen Mann, der von seiner Braut eine Stickerei bekommen hatte, und auf ihren erschrockenen Ausruf: 'Ich habe einen Stich vergessen, den muß ich nachholen!' abwehrte: Laß! Dieser Stich, der fehlt—das bist Du!—⁵

Handiwork would thus seem to operate metonymically as the material expression of a self imagined authentic and present, repudiating the looming specter of manufactured artifice.⁶ And it is this intimate manual particularity of this particular work, which defies forgery through those impersonal methods of industrial production or mechanical reproduction that would promise ease and speed on the condition of anonymity. Indeed, even in 1921, the handiwork would seem to create something of a liminal space, occupying the threshold between the industrial and the traditional, still able to record the traces of individual labor, while simultaneously referencing an "idyllic" tradition.⁷ And,

⁵ Beaulieu, "Die Handschrift," 85. "We understand the young man, who had received a piece of embroidery from his bride, and who at her upset exclamation: 'I've forgotten a stitch, that I have to fix!' parries: 'Leave it! This missing stitch—that is you!—'"

⁶ The handiwork here seems to anticipate a decidedly Benjaminian frame, if more than a decade before the fact. As Benjamin writes in the *Kunstwerk* Essay: "das Hier und Jetzt des Kunstwerks—sein einmaliges Dasein an dem Orte, an dem es sich befindet. An diesem einmaligen Dasein aber und an nichts sonst vollzog sich die Geschichte, der es im Laufe seines Bestehens unterworfen gewesen ist." Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 1.2, *Abhandlungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 475.

⁷ Rebecca Houze, "At the Forefront of a Newly Emerging Profession? Ethnography, Education and the Exhibition of Women's Needlework in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 1 (2008): 20. Although Houze's analysis concentrates on an earlier context and a different national setting—*fin de siècle* Austria-Hungary—her insights would nonetheless appear still relevant to our discussion. "Hand-stitched embroidery was assumed to provide an intimate material record of a woman's labour as she passed the threaded needle in and out of the cloth, making an object that, through its beauty, would serve and elevate her family in its domestic sanctuary,"

yet, the handiwork, in its very imperfect particularity, establishes a curious play of presence and absence: it, like writing, would seem to depend on that which is not there. The bride who exists in the forgotten stitch, only in negative—who, in fact, is made identical with that which is missing; that which cannot be seen is the very condition by which her presence becomes intelligible and meaningful, “—das bist Du!—”. Certainly, there is something missing here, some significance hidden and forgotten, buried in the supposed triviality of handiwork. So what are we looking for?

In many ways, the language of cloth pervades our textual imagination. Perhaps with good reason. Etymology assures us that the history of letters does indeed converge with that of the textile artifact, whether we choose to begin with Greek or Latin. We should not, however, also imagine that a shared classical origin vouchsafes an analogous significance. Organized along an axis that remains stubbornly gendered, text and textile in fact describe widely divergent material possibilities for expression and authority.⁸ It is the poets, for example, who have come to weave in meta-

she argues. “Needlework stood at the border between the present and post-industrial worlds. It represented the vanishing idyllic state of rural peasantry on the one side and the rapidly encroaching apparatus of commercial manufacture on the other” (ibid.). See also Houze, “From *Wiener Kunst im Hause* to the *Wiener Werkstätte*: Marketing Domesticity with Fashionable Interior Design,” *Design Issues* 18, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 2-23.

⁸ A large body of scholarship is devoted to precisely this problem. See, for instance, such reissued classics as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) and Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, 2nd ed. (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010). Recently, Maureen Daly Goggin has done much work to establish needlework as a rhetorical practice, see Goggin, “Stitching a Life in ‘Pen of Steele and Silken Inke’: Elizabeth Parker’s *circa* 1830 Sampler,” in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles, 1750-1950*, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009), 31-49 and Goggin, “An ‘Essai-samplaire Essai’ on the Rhetoricity of Needlework Sampler-Making.” For a more general discussion on the significance of domestic handicraft, see Talia Schaffer, *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). On women and material culture, see *Material Women, 1750-1950: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices*, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009); *Women and Things, 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies*, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009); For further discussions of the myriad conjunctions between texts and textiles, Elaine Showalter, “Piecing and Writing,” in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 222-47; Elizabeth Coatsworth, “Text and Textile,” in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, eds. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 187-207; Maura Tarnoff, “Sewing Authorship in John Skelton’s *Garlande* or *Chapelet* of

phor only, whereas women turn their hand to the literal, and silent, working of cloth.

Beginning with the Greek tradition—Ariadne’s thread or Philomela’s tapestry; Athena’s craft and Arachne’s web; Helen at her loom or the Moirae at their work—the textile is often staged as metaphor. Material artifact and material record, it not only becomes a form of narration or a mark of history, but the very thread of life itself. Poets even “weave” or “sew” their words in Greek, inheriting an Indo-European mode of thinking that links together stitch and script. And both, it would seem, have something to do with the definition of edges. For not unlike the thread that describes the individual measure of life, Anne Carson argues that the Greek alphabet also inscribes a limit, marking beginning and end:

The alphabet they used is a unique instrument. Its uniqueness unfolds directly from its power to mark the edges of sounds. For, as we have seen, the Greek alphabet is a phonetic system uniquely concerned to represent a certain aspect of the act of speech, namely the starting and stopping of each sound.⁹

In the Greek γράμματα (*grammata*) these threads come together. For, *grammata* means “letters,” in the sense of both alphabet and epistle, but also writing and the weaving of pictures.¹⁰ This common

Laurell,” *ELH* 75, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 415-38; and the already mentioned Bergren, *Weaving Truth*. For discussions of the pen and the needle, in particular, see also Cecilia Macheski, “Penelope’s Daughters: Images of Needlework in Eighteenth-Century Literature,” in *Fetter’d or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, eds. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986), 85-101; Kathryn R. King, “Of Needles and Pens and Women’s Work,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 14 (1995): 77-93; Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women’s Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Finally, for discussions specific to the German context, see Marianne Stradal and Ulrike Brommer, *Mit Nadel und Faden. Kulturgeschichte der klassischen Handarbeiten* (Freiburg: Herder, 1990) and Carmen Viktoria Janssen, *Textile in Texture. Lesestrategien und Intertextualität bei Goethe und Bettina von Arnim* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000).

⁹ Anne Carson, *Eros The Bittersweet* (1986; repr., Champaign: Dalkey Archive, 1998), 55.

¹⁰ Ann Bergren, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought” in *Weaving Truth: Essays on Language and the Female in Greek Thought* (Washington, D. C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2008), 17. “And indeed, in Greek culture, where women lack citizenship, where men play all the parts in drama, and from which no

root would seem to articulate a certain tangled likeness, which inheres in the signifying power of the material trace: letter, grapheme, or thread.

And in following Carson a bit further, we begin to see an appreciation of form and line in the “plastic contours” of ancient Greek writing that cannot help but recall the practices of weaving and pictorial representation.¹¹ In fact, according to Carson’s reading, weaving and writing could be said to trace an analogous path not only etymologically, but in their “physical production,”

The Greeks plainly regarded their alphabet as a set of pictorial devices. Through the sixth century B.C. they used for their inscriptions the continuous to-and-fro style of writing known as *boustrophēdon*, so named because it turns at the end of each line and comes back along the furrows as the ox turns with the plow.¹²

Or, as the seamstress sews a seam, or a weaver throws the shuttle, relying upon the same snaking to-and-fro line, the same back-again motion, to organize thread into coherent and continuous fabric. Likewise, the *boustrophēdon* style required characters of alternating lines to be written in the opposite direction, suggesting an attention to outline that verges on the ornamental. Letters are thus “a series of novel, reversible shapes,” Carson writes.

Attentiveness to outline in early Greek writers is apparent not only at the level of individual letters but also in the approach to groups of words and lines of text. It is a notable feature of archaic inscriptions that they frequently mark divisions between word groups with pat-

poetry by women remains except for the lyrics of Sappho and fragments of a few others, the woman’s web would seem to be a ‘metaphorical speech,’ a silent substitute for (her lack of) verbal art” (ibid., 16). See also Karen E. Rowe, “To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale,” in *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*, ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 53-73.

¹¹ Carson, *Eros*, 58.

¹² Ibid., 58-59.

terns of dots set one atop another in small columns of two, three, or six. This practice died out in classical times as writers and readers became blasé about their power to impose or deny edges.¹³

Even after the *boustrophēdon* system had fallen into disuse, superseded by left-to-right script, writers introduced different colors of ink to mark alternating lines. Reading and writing thus became aesthetic processes, defined by line, color, and shape. “But,” as Carson reminds us, “we should take note of the particular mode of the aesthetic. In writing, beauty prefers an edge.”¹⁴

So we return to the edge and the forms of differentiation—the beginnings and ends—it would seem to demarcate and demand. The edge we find ourselves tracing in this thesis leads, however, not back-again, but in another direction altogether. Despite the shared etymological heritage of letters and woven pictures in the Greek tradition, material history tells a quite different story. For the edge separating the actual weaving, and ornamentation, of textiles from the metaphorical weaving of text is not merely or even primarily one of material, but rather of gender. Thus is it perhaps not so surprising, after all, that the image of the plow, and not the needle or the shuttle, came to characterize the ancient system of Greek writing. Yet, poets would persist in metaphorically “sewing” and “weaving” their words, while women turned their hand to the actual needle. And it is this blurry edge—along the seam between silent material and authorial voice—that we propose to trace. Further, we suggest that by attending to the particularly material, and particularly gendered, language of fabric, the female hand mends this divergence of text and textile, instead stitching together the traces of manifold material histories.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Hannah Höch embroiders on Dada.

The first part of our story, at least, is well known. And, indeed, most accounts of Hannah Höch's art begin with this kind of reworking: picking up from a date and place, as if her work begins and ends in the summer of 1920 in Berlin. Certainly, the *Erste Internationale Dada-Messe* stands as a seminal moment in the history of art, specifically, and in the history of the Weimar Republic, generally. This is not untrue. Yet it is not the story our essay is interested in telling.

In fact, Höch and her work, however iconic in hindsight, were present at the *Messe* rather against the wishes of fellow Dadaists, specifically George Grosz and John Heartfield. Raoul Hausmann, her lover since 1915, is said to have insisted and threatened withdrawal of his own pieces.¹⁵ Not, we surmise, that aesthetics were at issue. After all, “[v]or dreißig Jahren war es für eine Frau nicht leicht, sich in Deutschland als moderne Künstlerin durchzusetzen,” Höch explains in her frequently quoted 1959 interview with Eduard Roditi.

Die meisten männlichen Kollegen betrachten uns lange Zeit als reizende, begabte Amateure, ohne uns je einen beruflichen Rang zuerkennen zu wollen. Hans Arp und Kurt Schwitters gehörten meiner Erfahrung nach zu den wenigen Männern, die eine Frau kamerad-

¹⁵ Hanne Bergius, “Dada-Rundschau’: Eine Photomontage,” in *Hannah Höch 1889-1978*, exhibition catalogue, Berlinische Galerie (Berlin: Argon, 1989), 101. “Im Kataloge ist die Photomontage [“Dada-Rundschau”] jedoch nicht erwähnt. Möglicherweise beabsichtigten die Organisatoren der Dada-Messe Grosz und Heartfield, vielleicht auch Hausmann, Hannah Höchs Beteiligung herunterzuspielen, denn ihretwegen kam es zu einem Streit zwischen den Dadaisten. Grosz und Heartfield wünschten nicht, daß Hannah Höch auf der Dada-Messe mit Werken vertreten war. Erst als Hausmann mit einem Rückzug seiner Werke drohte, willigten die Dada-Streiter ein” (ibid.). Hausmann, however, proves fickle; in his memoirs, he excludes Höch from the Dada Club: “Sie war niemals Mitglied [sic] des Club.” In Ruth Hemus, *Dada’s Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 92 and 221n6. To the question of Höch’s relationship with Hausmann, see, for example, the documents in *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, ed. Berlinische Galerie, vol. 1.1, *1889-1918* (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989).

schaftlich behandeln konnten.¹⁶

Held from 30 June to 25 August 1920 at the Berlinische Galerie, Lützowufer 13, then an upscale gallery in Berlin's *Tiergarten* district owned by art dealer Dr. Otto Burchard, the *Dada-Messe* featured the work of twenty-seven German and foreign artists, all more or less associated with the international Dada movement.¹⁷ The catalogue—of dubious reliability and costing one mark seventy, in addition to the rather high three mark thirty price of admission—lists 174 exhibited objects, among them collages, montages, printed posters and slogans, sculpture and object assemblages.¹⁸

“[A]ber,” as Höch writes, “es waren längst nicht alle verzeichnet.”¹⁹ In the end, Höch contributed two handmade Dada puppets, a poster, and several photomontages, including *Schnitt mit dem Kü-*

¹⁶ Edouard Roditi, “Hannah Höch und die Berliner Dadaisten: Ein Gespräch mit der Malerin,” *Der Monat* 12, no. 134 (November 1959): 66. “Thirty years ago, it was not very easy for a woman to impose herself as a modern artist in Germany. Most of our male colleagues continued for a long time to look upon us as charming and gifted amateurs, denying us implicitly any real professional status. Hans Arp and Kurt Schwitters, in my experience, were rare examples of the kind of artist who can really treat a woman as a colleague.” Edouard Roditi, “Interview with Hannah Höch,” *Arts* 34, no. 3 (December 1959): 29. Some fifteen years later, Höch would again take up this question in her interview with Suzanne Pagé: “Ich habe ja nur eine bescheiden Rolle gespielt,” Höch says. “Meine Arbeiten wurden akzeptiert—und das genügte mir. Zu Wort kam ich erst später, in der ‚Kameradschaftszeit‘.” Suzanne Pagé, “Interview avec Hannah Höch / Interview mit Hannah Höch,” in *Hannah Höch. Collages, Peintures, Aquarelles, Gouaches, Dessins / Collagen, Gemälde, Aquarelle, Gouachen, Zeichnungen*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: Nationalgalerie, 1976), 24.

¹⁷ On the *Dada-Messe*, see Helen Adkins, “Erste Internationale Dada-Messe,” in *Stationen der Moderne: Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1988), 157-84; Wieland Herzfelde and Brigid Doherty, “Introduction to the First International Dada Fair,” *October* 105 (Summer 2003): 93-104; and Maria Makela, “By Design: The Early Work of Hannah Höch in Context,” in *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, exhibition catalogue, Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, 1996), 49.

¹⁸ Herzfelde and Doherty, “Introduction to the First International Dada Fair,” 93.

¹⁹ Hannah Höch, “Erinnerungen an DADA: Ein Vortrag 1966,” in *Hannah Höch 1889-1978*, 207. In her “Lebensüberblick 1958,” Höch lists her contributions: “1920, 25.7.-25.8. Die große DADA-Messe bei Dr. Otto Burchard, Lützowufer 13. Ich zeigte da: ‘DADA-Puppe I’, ‘DADA-Puppe II’; ‘Ali-Baba’-Plakat; ‘Collage mit Pfeil’; ‘Menschliches Brautpaar’ (Relief); ‘Diktatur der DADAisten’ (Relief); ‘Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser DADA durch die letzte Kulturepoche Deutschlands’; 2 Plastiken (wie sie später Schwitters konsequent ausbaute); ‘Rundschau’ (Foto-Montage) (wurde—wie diverse andere Arbeiten von mir auch—nicht im Katalog verzeichnet.” Hannah Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” in *Hannah Höch 1889-1978*, 196. See also Adkins, “Erste Internationale Dada-Messe;” Herzfelde and Doherty, “Introduction to the First International Dada Fair,” 93; Makela, “By Design,” 49. Höch provides a slightly different listing of her works included in the Messe in her interview with Suzanne Pagé. See Pagé, “Interview,” 28.

chenmesser DADA durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands, arguably among her most famous photomontages as well as among the most remembered of the *Messe* [fig. 1.11].²⁰ Many of these pieces, however, are now lost.²¹ By Höch's own account this fact is hardly surprising, given the ephemeral nature of the Dadaist medium and moment: "Wir überboten uns in dem, was wir heute Collagen nennen würden—witzig und bissig, geistreich und naiv, politisch und verrückt. Papier, Papier, Papier."²²

"Denn — 'Kunstgewerblerin war immerhin nicht Künstlerin'"²³

And here our story begins in earnest. Paper, paper, paper: yet, in 1920, paper was not Höch's only, or arguably even her primary medium. In fact, it could be suggested that in 1920 Höch was rather better known for her *Handarbeit*, especially her work in textile and needlework design. So we return to the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*, which in September 1920—just a few weeks after the close of the *Messe*—published three of Höch's designs and featured a short article praising her as

²⁰ For a detailed discussion of Höch's *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser DADA*, see, for example, Jula Dech, *Hannah Höch. Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989). Here, Dech positions the very material history and transmission of Höch's photomontage—the path it traces—as representative of its moment. "Die Fotomontage, 1919/20 entstanden, war bei der 'Dada-Messe' in der Kunsthandlung Otto Burchard am Lützowufer zum ersten Mal ausgestellt und hängt heute, wenige hundert Meter entfernt, im Nachkriegs-Neubau der (West-)Berliner Nationalgalerie," Dech argues. "Der kurze Weg des Bildes markiert katastrophale Jahrzehnte deutscher Geschichte" (*ibid.*, 5-6). See also Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

²¹ Makela, "By Design," 74n3.

²² Hannah Höch, "Erinnerungen an DADA," 207. "We surpassed ourselves in that which we today would call collages—witty and biting, spirited and naive, political and mad. Paper, paper, paper."

²³ Hannah Höch, "Lebensüberblick 1958," 195. On the concept of *Kunstgewerbe*, and its significance in various movements, see Barbara Mundt, *Die deutschen Kunstgewerbemuseen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Prestel, 1974) and Stefan Muthesius, "Handwerk/Kunsthandwerk," *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 1 (1998): 85-95; to its implications for women, domesticity, and design, specifically, see Houze, "At the Forefront" and "From *Wiener Kunst im Hause* to the *Wiener Werkstätte*," and n43 below.

“ein neues Talent, das Beachtung verdient,” her work an apt expression of the modern *Zeitgeist* [fig. 1.6]:²⁴

Neugeistige Linienmelodik, aus Ostasien herüberklingende Farbenharmonien, verarbeitete Zeit-Rhythmik, gefestigte frische Gestaltung lustig bewegend, unserem Empfinden erfreulich, unserem Bedürfnis nach Wechsel willkommen.²⁵

Although this enthusiastic review, with its evocation of changing rhythms and forms, takes up a particularly modernist—if subtly feminized—terminology, it is Höch’s fabric design work that is under discussion. And despite the frequent recourse to a contemporary idiom, it appears that the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* took scant notice of the happenings in Berlin that summer, as any mention of the *Messe*, let alone Höch’s participation, is conspicuously absent.

—sie trifft, was die Gewebe-Industrie ihren Geweben, dem leichten Foulard, dem knittrigen Crêpe, dem zarten Voile zum Entzücken schöner Frauen als Gepräge gegeben kann— mit phänomenaler Sicherheit. ... Ornamentale blühen allerorten, aber ach, selten ist unter alle dem Entstandenen das Verwendbare, das dem Zeitgeist angemessene! Hier ist’s vor-

²⁴ On Höch’s work in popular magazines, see Bettina Schaschke, “Schnittmuster der Kunst. Zu Hannah Höchs Prinzipien der Gestaltung,” in *Hannah Höch. Aller Anfang ist DADA!*, ed. Ralf Burmeister (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007), 133n8 and 133n14. For a further discussion of the history of the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*, see Sigrid Randa, *Alexander Koch. Publizist und Verleger in Darmstadt. Reformen der Kunst und des Lebens um 1900* (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), 174-79; for an overview of magazines dedicated to interior design in Germany, including those published by Koch, see Stefan Muthesius, “Communications between Traders, Users and Artists: The Growth of German Language Serial Publications on Domestic Interior Decoration in the Later Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 1 (2005): 7-20, and Jeremy Aynsley, “Graphic Change: Design Change: Magazines for the Domestic Interior, 1890-1930,” *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 1 (2005):43-59.

²⁵ K. G. v. H. [Kuno Graf von Hardenberg], “Hanna Höchs Muster-Kunst,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 20, no. 12 (September 1920): 224. “[...] a new talent who deserves recognition [...]. Contemporary-minded line melodies, color harmonies sounding across from East Asia, processed time rhythm, stable fresh design playfully affecting, pleasant to our senses, welcoming to our need for change.”

handen.²⁶

Quite unlike the disruptive aesthetic, raucous politics, and poor sales of the *Dada-Messe*,²⁷ Höch's patterns would appear to satisfy demands at once artistic and commercial.²⁸ And if we are to take the word of the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*, Höch was indeed "ein neues Talent." But a talent still decidedly qualified and contained within the applied arts. That the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* ignored the happenings in Berlin—reporting instead on such comparatively prosaic topics as "Spitzen, Stickereien und Frauen," "Das Wesen der echten Spitze," "Der Knopf in alter und neuer Zeit," or, even, "Hanna Höchs Muster-Kunst"—is part and parcel of the exclusionary gesture, which would seek to sequester Höch's design work, and the applied arts, at the margins of art.

"Hanna Höch ist sicher und reich und—nicht zu vergessen—frauenhaft leicht und zart."²⁹

Nicht zu vergessen. Few would appear to, least of all Höch herself.³⁰ Nor should we. For this at first

²⁶ Ibid. "—she strikes on what the textile industry can bestow as cachet upon their fabrics, light Foulard, crinkled crêpe, delicate voile, to delight beautiful women—with phenomenal certainty. . . . Ornamental blooms everywhere, but, alas, seldom among all of that which comes into being, that which is suitable, that which is appropriate to the *Zeitgeist!* Here it is to hand."

²⁷ See Adkins, "Erste Internationale Dada-Messe," 157 and Herzfelde and Doherty, "Introduction to the First International Dada Fair," 93.

²⁸ Indeed, in addition to featuring her work, in 1920 Alexander Koch also attempted to help Höch market these designs to firms in Berlin and Frankfurt. See *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, ed. Berlinische Galerie, vol. 1.2, 1919-1920 (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989), 663-65 (13.23) and 725 (13.70); also in Makela, "By Design," 53 and 75n23.

²⁹ K. G. v. H., "Hanna Höch's Muster-Kunst," 224. Also in Makela, "By Design," 53. "Hanna Höch is sure and rich and—don't forget—womanly light and delicate."

³⁰ See, for example, Hans Richter, *DADA- Kunst und Antikunst*, Cologne: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964. Richter largely dismisses Höch's contributions to the Dada movement, recalling instead her womanly touch: "An den ersten Dada-Veranstaltungen in Berlin hat sie ausser mit ihren Collagen kaum teilgenommen. Ihr Stimmchen wäre sowieso von dem Tosen ihrer männlichen Kommilitonen überdröhnt worden. Aber als Vorsteherin der Atelier-Abende bei Hausmann war sie unentbehrlich, sowohl durch den grellen Kontrast ihrer leicht klösterlichen Grazie zu dem Schwergewichtsanspruch ihres Meisters, als auch durch die belegten Brötchen mit Bier und Kaffee, die sie trotz Geldmangel auf irgendeine Weise hervorzuzaubern verstand. An solchen Abenden durfte sie ihre kleine aber sehr präzise Stimme erheben und, wenn Hausmann die Anti-Kunst proklamierte, für die Kunst und für Hannah Höch in die Bresche springen. Ein tüchtiges Mädchen!" (ibid., 136). Höch would later repudiate this version of events.

glance odd coincidence of seemingly irreconcilable (art) worlds serves to underscore Höch's central position at the intersection of discourses about art and craft, modern and archaic, avant-garde and tradition. And yet the bombast of the Dada moment still looms perhaps slightly too large, threatening to obscure the more subtle craftiness of Höch's own handiwork and the sly radicalism of her engagement with textiles.³¹ Indeed, if, as Maud Lavin argues, there is an exemplary quality to Höch's biography,³² then we, too, take Höch as our example, to argue that this exemplarity pertains not only in her avant-garde work, but also—or perhaps especially—in her more apparently ordinary engagements with the applied arts.³³ So let us begin to work back in a new direction,

“Ach, das war bei Richter auch so vermerkt? Ganz gut, daß es mal angeschnitten wird. Das ist ein Märchen, das mal durch ein Mißverständnis entstand: die Höch, die hat die Dadaisten so schön versorgt bei Zusammenkünften ... Dies bezieht sich offensichtlich auf die Jahre nach 1922” (ibid., 26). Also in Ruth Hemus, *Dada's Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 92 and 221n8. In the last decades, a large body of scholarship has emerged on the feminist and political engagements of Höch and her work. To this question of inclusion and exclusion, especially in the context of Höch's design work, see, for example, Kay Klein Kallos, “A Woman's Revolution: The Relationship between Design and the Avant-garde in the Work of Hannah Höch, 1912-1922” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994); Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*; Peter Boswell, “Hannah Höch: Through the Looking Glass,” in *Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, exhibition catalogue, Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, 1996), 7-8; Makela, “By Design,” 49; for archival documents, see *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, ed. Berlinische Galerie, vols. 1-3 (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989-2001); for Höch's own accounts, see Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958” and “Erinnerungen an DADA.”

³¹ Schaschke, “Schnittmuster der Kunst,” 124. Schaschke's extensive archival work identifies many of Höch's patterns and samples featured in popular magazines, most often published without attribution. For a full discussion of Höch's early work, see also Kallos, “A Woman's Revolution.”

³² “Hers is a unique story, as well as an exemplary narrative about a Weimar professional woman searching for and living out new feminine identities.” Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 10. The story, of course, is slightly more complicated, especially if we are to take Höch's word for it. As she explains in her interview with Pagé, “Auch die Verherrlichung der modernen Frau war in meiner Arbeit nicht angestrebt. Dagegen hat mich öfter die leidende Frau engagiert. Wenn ich aber ein Zeitbild geben will, dann lasse ich natürlich die guten Leistungen von Frauen nicht aus. Und das hat mit der Frauenbewegung nur am Rande zu tun. Ich bejahe die Rechte der Frau natürlich voll und ganz.” Pagé, “Interview,” 27.

³³ Indeed, as Kallos suggests, Lavin, along with many other scholars of Höch's work, fail to “seriously consid[er] the implications of Höch's youth and early training on her life and art. Although recent research acknowledges Höch as a producer of avant-garde art that deals with women's issues, these studies have not examined the historical evolution of her education and experiences.” Kallos, “A Woman's Revolution,” 9-10.

reading, for the moment, away from the Dada tradition.³⁴

Born in 1889 in the provincial town of Gotha, Anna Therese Johanne Höch was the eldest of five children in a proper bourgeois family.³⁵ Her father, Friedrich Höch, was an official the Stuttgarter Insurance with an interest in gardening; her mother, Rose Höch, *née* Sachs, was an amateur painter. Before her marriage she had been housekeeper and reader to two noble ladies.³⁶ “Ich wuchs in sehr geordneten Familienverhältnissen auf. Mein sehnlichster Wunsch, schon als Kind, Malerin zu werden,” remembers Höch.³⁷ Point and counterpoint, she offers this juxtaposition without comment; her mother, after all, also had “bescheidene künstlerische Ambitionen. Sie malte nach Vorlagen (Ölbilder).”³⁸ Indeed, Höch herself demonstrated an early talent for drawing, and although her parents encouraged her interests, especially sketching from nature, it was with no view to a professional career. Quite the contrary. In such “sehr geordnet[en]” circumstances, artis-

³⁴ I would like to gratefully acknowledge my debt to the work done by Kallos, Makela, Schaschke, and Hemus. Kallos’ unpublished dissertation is largely recognized as among the first detailed investigations of Höch’s design training and its impact on her subsequent, more widely known avant-garde work. I am deeply indebted to the painstaking archival research documented in these studies, especially in Kallos, Makela, and Schaschke, each of whom provides insightful analysis of Höch’s design work, uncovering illuminating connections between needlework and (photo)montage and convincingly demonstrating the myriad intersections of these practices in her art.

³⁵ Höch’s modification of her given name to “Hanna” and then “Hannah” has its own rich, if possibly also apocryphal, history. For a brief discussion of Höch’s names, including her Ullstein ID, see, most recently, Peter Chametzky, *Objects as History in Twentieth-Century German Art: Beckmann to Beuys* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 37 and 222n4.

³⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all biographical details are drawn from the archival materials collected in *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, and the detailed chronology by Kristin Makhholm: “Chronology,” in *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, exhibition catalogue (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996), 185-210. For a more extensive narrative account of Höch’s biography, see Götz Adriani, “Biographische Dokumentation” in *Hannah Höch. Fotomontage, Gemälde, Aquarelle*, ed. Götz Adriani, exhibition catalogue (Cologne: DuMont, 1980), 7-52.

³⁷ Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” 195. “I grew up in a very comfortable family. Even as a child my fondest desire was to be a painter.” Hannah Höch, “Lebensüberblick (A Glance over My Life), 1958,” trans. Peter Chametzky, in Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 211.

³⁸ Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” 195. “Mother had modest artistic ambitions. She painted replicas of oil paintings.” Chametzky, in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 211.

tic talent was an appropriate accomplishment for young ladies, imagined in the service of homemaking and domestic ornamentation, not as a means of gaining any measure of independence, financial or otherwise.³⁹ Domesticity took precedence in the Höch household, and in 1904, at the age of fifteen, Höch was taken out of the *Höhere Töchterschule* in Gotha to care for her youngest sibling, the newborn Marianne. “Ich liebte dieses Kind sehr,” writes Höch. And for the next six years, she would look after her sister:

Aber dadurch zögerte sich zu meinem großen Kummer mein Studium beträchtlich hinaus—sehr zu Befriedigung meines Vaters, der ein Mädchen verheiratet wissen, aber nicht Kunst studieren lassen wollte, was übrigens um 1900 noch der allgemein bürgerlichen Ansicht entsprach.⁴⁰

Höch was thus in her early twenties when she applied to the *Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg* in Berlin. “Ich war also fast 22 Jahre alt,” Höch remembers,

als ich mich zwecks Aufnahme an die Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg wandte, indem ich Arbeiten einsandte. Die Akademie, die das Ziel meiner Träume gewesen war, wagte ich gar nicht erst zu fordern. Denn—“Kunstgewerblerin war immerhin nicht Künstlerin.”⁴¹

At least in hindsight, Höch appeared to have few illusions about the practical limits of her practical training.

³⁹ See, for example, Maria Makela, “By Design,” 50; Kallos, “A Woman’s Revolution,” 11-12.

⁴⁰ Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” 195. “I loved her very much, but my studies suffered. This was all to my father’s liking, since he shared the general turn-of-the-century bourgeois opinion that held a girl should get married and forget about studying art.” Chametzky, in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 211.

⁴¹ Hannah Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” 195. “So I was almost twenty-two years old when I sent in works to apply to the Charlottenburg School of Applied Arts. I didn’t even dare to attempt admission to the Art Academy, the object of my dreams, since ‘a craftswoman, after all, was still no artist.’” Chametzky, in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 211.

“Und ich möchte mich lieber in Berlin totarbeiten”⁴²

After all in 1912, it would have been difficult to do otherwise. Still barred from entering the *Kunstakademie*, women had to make do with the opportunities afforded by the more sensible applied arts. Often understood as an extension of innately feminine domestic talents and an expansion of a woman’s proper work in the home, the applied arts were thus deemed a viable profession for women precisely because they appeared not to challenge bourgeois cultural convention, while yet, importantly, providing for some measure of financial independence and security.⁴³ As Höch would have been well aware. “Und ich möchte mich lieber in Berlin totarbeiten, wie in Gotha ein faules Leben führen,” writes Maria Uhden, a childhood friend and fellow artist, in a letter to Höch, dated 20 June 1913. Although in Munich to study painting privately, by 1913 Uhden was also beginning to explore the applied arts:

Am liebsten würde ich mich ja völlig dem Portraitmalen widmen u. darin immer weiter studieren, aber es ist halt so eine völlig brotlose Sache u. ich freue mich, daß ich neulich ganz plötzlich kunstgewerbliche Anwandlungen kriegte. Habe mehrere Ideen ausgeführt zum Kleiderausschmücken, Malerei auf Stoff mit Handarbeit verbunden. Ich will mal so nebenbei hier versuchen ob die Sache anspricht.⁴⁴

⁴² Hannah Höch. *Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 68 (3.1).

⁴³ On the interplay between the professionalization of design, traditionally “feminine” domestic craft work, and the applied arts reform movement, see Houze, “At the Forefront?,” 19-40, here 22. “The later professional success of women [...] was in large part due to the cultural presumption that women’s proper place was in the home, [...] a fact that both helped and hindered their careers” (22).

⁴⁴ Hannah Höch. *Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 68 (3.1). “And I would rather work myself to death in Berlin than lead a indolent life in Gotha. I would prefer to dedicate myself fully to portrait painting and keep on studying it, but it is

Höch left Gotha one year after Uhden, having been accepted into the *Fachklasse* in glass design led by Harold Bengen at the *Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg*.⁴⁵ Although as a designer of mosaics and glass paintings Bengen had made his name with government commissions, his course of study included not only work in glass, but fabric design and nature drawing.⁴⁶ And Bengen's training, somewhat at odds with the conservation approach of the *Kunstgewerbeschule*—which, like many others in Germany, held to the nineteenth-century tradition, which emphasized historicism over innovation and aimed to produce professional designers, commercial artists, and craftsmen to tend to the tastes of wealthy and governmental patrons⁴⁷—focused not on mere historical copy work, but on design, abstraction, and ornamentation: techniques that could be easily translated into the production of commercial goods suitable for domestic life, such as (industrially produced) wallpaper, fabric, and embroidery patterns.⁴⁸ At the *Kunstgewerbeschule* Höch also studied calligraphy under Ludwig Sütterlin. Many examples of her early work have survived—thanks, certainly to Höch's

just such a completely unprofitable business and I'm glad that newly I've quite suddenly gotten arts-and-crafts impulses. Have tried out several ideas for ornamenting clothing, painting on fabric combined with handiwork. I want to see here, on the side, if it suites." Also the eldest of an established bourgeois family in Gotha, Uhden (1892-1918) began her studies in Munich in 1911. Once in Berlin, Uhden made the acquaintance of Herwarth Walden through the author Sophie van Leers; from 1915 onwards Uhden participated in exhibitions at *Der Sturm* gallery. She married fellow artist Georg Schrimpf and died in 1918, shortly after the birth of their son. See, *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 66-73 (3.1-3.6).

⁴⁵ *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 57. For a detailed discussion of Höch's training at the *Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg*, see Kallos, "A Woman's Revolution," 37-63; *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 57-65; and Makhholm, "Chronology," 185.

⁴⁶ Makhholm, "Chronology," 185.

⁴⁷ Kallos, "A Woman's Revolution," 50. For a further discussion of the history of design, including nineteenth-century design, see the classic by Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design* (1936; 4th ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); the anthology by Isabelle Frank, ed., *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European & American Writings, 1750-1940*, trans. David Britt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); or, on the question of the domestic interior, Stefan Muthesius, *The Poetic Home: Designing the 19th-Century Domestic Interior* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009).

⁴⁸ Kallos, "A Woman's Revolution," 42-43.

own efforts⁴⁹—especially calligraphy studies, lettering exercises, and drafts for official documents, along with a copy of *The Studio* (vol. 50/1910, no. 209), the well known British journal for fine and decorative arts, in the Arts and Crafts tradition,⁵⁰ and a number of pieces of embroidery.

Indeed, it was at the *Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg* that Höch first began to focus on embroidery.⁵¹ Her work continued to gain recognition, and in 1914, Höch won a scholarship to visit the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne. However, traveling on 1 September, Höch and her fellow students—“vier Mitschüler und eine Mitschülerin”⁵²—found themselves stopped at the Rhine by the outbreak of the First World War. “Aus den schwerelosen Jugendjahren kommend, und glühend mit meinem Studium beschäftigt, bedeutete diese Katastrophe den Einsturz meines damaligen

⁴⁹ Roditi, “Hannah Höch und die Berliner Dadaisten,” 60. “Selbst Berliner kennen diese nordwestliche Gegend kaum, wenn sie nicht gerade hier wohnen. Aber ich bin gerade wegen der Stille und Unbekanntheit dieses Teils von Berlin hierhergezogen. In Friedenau, wo ich jahrelang gewohnt hatte, war ich zu bekannt; ich fiel zu sehr auf, um während des Naziregimes in Sicherheit zu leben,” Höch remembers. “Ich hatte Glück, dieses kleine Haus zu finden [...]. Ich kaufte es sofort und brachte meinen—damals sehr fragwürdigen—Besitz her, den ich auf diese Weise retten konnte. Wäre ich in Friedenau geblieben, so hätte wahrscheinlich ein Bombenangriff meine Dokumente, meine Bücher und meine Arbeit vernichtet” (ibid., 60).

⁵⁰ *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 61-62 (2.7-2.13). “Auch bei den deutschen Kunstgewerblern weit verbreitete konservative englische Kunstzeitschrift, eine Art Pflichtlektüre,” as the catalogue description notes. Founded in 1893, the journal was “informed by the challenge to the conventional hierarchy brought about by Arts and Crafts thinking,” and, as such, covered both fine and decorative arts. It was an influential model for later magazines of design in England and Central Europe, including the French *Art et Décoration: revue mensuelle d’art moderne* (Librairie Centrale des Beaux Arts: Paris, 1897-1939), and the German *Dekorative Kunst* (F. Bruckmann: Munich, 1897-1929), *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* (Alexander Koch, Darmstadt, 1897-1932), and *Innendekoration* (Alexander Koch: Darmstadt, 1890-1944). For a full discussion, see Aynsley, “Graphic Change,” 43-59, here 45 and 45n10.

⁵¹ Makela, “By Design,” 50 and 74n13-14. Indeed, two of her early designs from Bengen’s course would both appear in a 1916 issue of the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*. See *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 16, no. 5 (February 1916): 126 and 128. Although these designs date from her time at the *Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg*, they were first published at least two years later in 1916. As Makela notes, only one design is identified by name, with the caption “Fachklasse Harold Bengen, Entwurf u. Ausführung: Hanna Höch. Stickerei für einen Wandschirm, Wolle in verschiedenen Stichen;” the other is attributed to “Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg, Fachkl. Harold Bengen” (ibid.).

⁵² Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” 195. “Four male colleagues and one female colleague.”

Weltbildes,” Höch writes.⁵³ The art schools in Berlin closed, Höch returned to the Thuringian provinces to work for the Red Cross.

In the winter of 1915, however, Höch returned to Berlin, where she enrolled in the progressive *Unterrichtsanstalt des königlichen Kunstgewerbemuseums*.⁵⁴ Established in the latter half of the nineteenth-century, the *Unterrichtsanstalt*, like the *Kunstgewerbemuseum* itself, was a product of the thorough-going, government-sponsored reform of design training in Germany, which endeavored both to establish qualitative standards in the applied arts and to ensure the competitiveness of German craft work on the European market.⁵⁵ Under the direction of Bruno Paul, well known for his *Simplicissimus* caricatures, the *Unterrichtsanstalt* encouraged the integration of the applied and fine arts, emphasizing individual creativity over historicism. “Ich hoffte nun meinen eigentlichen Wünschen etwas näher zu kommen,” writes Höch,

wenn ich mich an die Lehranstalt am Staatlichen Kunstgewerbe-Museum meldete. Diese Lehranstalt lag, was die künstlerische Ausbildung betraf, etwa zwischen Akademie und Kunstgewerbeschule. Ich wurde von Prof. Emil Orlik in seine Fachklasse für Graphik aufgenommen.⁵⁶

And as a part of the graphic- and book-art division under Orlik, a celebrated printmaker and teach-

⁵³ Ibid. “Just as I was emerging from the dreamy years of youth and becoming ardently involved with my studies, this catastrophe shattered my world. Surveying the consequences for humanity and for myself, I suffered greatly under my world’s violent collapse.” Chametzky, in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 211.

⁵⁴ According to Makhholm, Höch appears on the “Aufnahmeliste” as a provisory student on 20 January 1915, the middle of the winter semester. Makhholm, “Chronology,” 108n3.

⁵⁵ *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 75.

⁵⁶ Höch, “Lebensüberblick 1958,” 195. “I hoped to come somewhat nearer my true desires by applying to the school of Applied Arts Museum, which had a status in art education somewhere between the Academy and the School of Applied Arts. I was accepted into Professor Emil Orlik’s graphic arts class.” Chametzky, in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 211.

er, Höch began working in various media, including textile and book-jacket design, printed fabric patterns, and embroidery. “Ich glaube, man stellt sich die Situation in den oberen Studienklassen dieser Lehranstalt für Kunst nicht ganz richtig vor,” Höch explains.

Da gab es ja keine unmündigen Schüler mehr und schon die Aufnahme setzte eine gewisse Reife voraus. Wahrscheinlich war Orlik nicht übergücklich darüber, daß wir Dada trieben. Wir, das heißt: Grosz war ja auch sein Schüler, kurz vor mir, gewesen. Wir streiften uns noch.⁵⁷

Certainly, whatever the medium, this applied training appeared neither merely perfunctory nor purely commercial, if not, however, also a purposefully critical or imminently political endeavor. At least, perhaps, not for Orlik.⁵⁸

It was during her time as an Orlik pupil that Höch won several awards and fellowships for her work.⁵⁹ Indeed, she had already begun to establish a reputation of sorts. By 1916, Höch was engaged by Orlik to engrave his sketches for woodblock prints, apparently an especial honor among his students.⁶⁰ That year she also joined the handiwork division at the Ullstein Verlag in Berlin,

⁵⁷ Pagé, “Interview,” 24. “I think one does not quite correctly picture the situation in the upper classes of this school of art. Since there were no more underage students and already being accepted presupposed a certain maturity. Probably Orlik was not overjoyed about the fact that we pursued Dada. We, that means: Grosz was also his student, shortly before me. We still side swipe one another.” From 1915 to 1917 George Grosz also studied with Orlik, competing in many of the same competitions. It is, however, unclear whether Grosz and Höch then knew one another. See Makhholm, “Chronology,” 186 and 208n5.

⁵⁸ “Hierzu möchte ich sagen, daß mir zu allen Zeiten daran lag, meine Aussagen, auch die Kritik, über die Mittel der Kunst zu machen,” Höch notes earlier in her interview with Pagé. “Ich habe als Anlage mitbekommen: zu schauen, zu erleben, einzuordnen, aber auch seit meiner Kindheit schon den Wunsch, ja, den Willen gehabt, das Aufgenommene wieder herauszustellen, mit dem was ich darüber denke und fühle angereichert.” Pagé, “Interview,” 24.

⁵⁹ For a detailed listing of awards and fellowships, see Makela, “By Design,” 74n18.

⁶⁰ Makhholm, “Chronology,” 187 and 208n11. Makhholm dates the beginning of Höch’s woodcutting work to November 1916, citing a letter from Höch to her sister, Grete Höch, on 18 November 1916. “Als neuestes arbeite ich jetzt ständig etwas für Orlik, Holzschneiden, und erhalte dafür monatlich Mk. 40.-” *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1.1, 233 (8.54).

where until 1926 (and her move to The Hague to live with poet Til Brugman) she worked three days a week—from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon⁶¹—principally creating and fabricating lace and embroidery patterns, using a variety of more or less complex needlework and embroidery techniques, as well as designing dress patterns and publication layouts and advertising, for such popular ladies' magazines as *Die Dame* and *Die praktische Berlinerin*.⁶² And in addition to her work at Ullstein, it was in 1916, let us recall, that Höch's handiwork first appeared in the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*: a design in chenille embroidery [fig. 1.2] and a wall screen embroidered in wool [fig. 1.3], both in February 1916, alongside an article on "Dekorative Stickereien," and a colored silk embroidery, accompanying "Farbige Seidenstickerei" in the August 1916 issue [fig. 1.4].⁶³

This is one strand of our story.

⁶¹ Chametzky, *Object as History*, 42.

⁶² Makela, "By Design," 55 and 75n28. On Höch's magazine work, see also Schaschke, "Schnittmuster der Kunst," especially 133n8 and 133n14; and n24 above. Both *Die Dame* and *Die praktische Berlinerin* were Ullstein publications, and according to Herman Ullstein, the son of founder Leopold Ullstein responsible for the magazine division, *Die Dame* was "an ultramodern social magazine of women's fashions." Hermann Ullstein, *The Rise and Fall of the House of Ullstein* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 87. Also in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 53.

For a full discussion of the history of the Ullstein Verlag, see Anne Enderlein, ed., *Ullstein Chronik. 1903-2011* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2011) and Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 51-61. Founded in 1858, by 1916 Ullstein was one of the largest publishing houses in Germany, and, as Maud Lavin argues, "[t]he most emblematic institution of modern German print media [...] with a mass-market book division, nineteen newspapers and magazines, a large advertising department, and a profitable sewing pattern business" (Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 51). By 1914, the popular *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*—from which Höch drew many of the images found in her photomontages—had a circulation of one million. During World War I, however, it was the company's pattern catalogues and magazines, as well as their *Schnittmusterdienst* (sewing pattern service), selling mass-produced patterns to an international market (in twelve languages), that proved most profitable. "In this way," Herman Ullstein writes, "the whole publishing house was not only kept alive, but also safely steered through the storms of the terrible inflation period." Ullstein, *The Rise and Fall*, 186-87.

⁶³ I am extremely grateful to Kristin Makhholm's work for precise issue dates and page numbers, see Makhholm, "Chronology," 208n9. *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 16, no. 5 (February 1916): 126-27 and *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 16, no. 11 (August 1916): 262. See n51 above for a description of the pieces.

Gathering red threads

That the Werkbund exhibition should have punctuated the two halves of Höch's design training is certainly a serendipitous accident of history, neatly bestowing upon Höch's biography an organizing "before and after," however fictional. "Der eigentliche Aufbruch im europäischen Kulturleben begann ja schon um 1910," according to Höch.

Der Jugendstil begann zu zerbröckeln. Er ging dann aber nicht sanft in ein Neues über. Dies war im Anfang meines Studiums und ich erlebte es geradezu dramatisch. Aber dieses erste Aufflammen der ‚Moderne‘ wurde abrupt vom Ersten Weltkrieg wieder gelöscht.⁶⁴

And in fact, the Werkbund ethos and the diverging paths of Höch's study—meeting, as they do, at the question of reform—would seem to even express analogous concerns. To a point, that is.

Nikolaus Pevsner, author of the 1936 study originally titled *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, has himself become pioneer: in the history and historiography of design. Widely acknowledged as a landmark investigation of modern design and architecture, Pevsner here outlines a progressive understanding of history, which, as design historian John Heskett argues, creates a distinct modern lineage extending from John Ruskin and William Morris to the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain to the Werkbund, Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus in Germany.⁶⁵ "Gropius regards himself as a

⁶⁴ Pagé, "Interview," 24. "The actual awakening in european cultural life began already in 1910. The Jugendstil began to crumble. It did not then gently pass into something new. This was in the beginning of my study and I experienced it quite dramatically. But this first flare up of the 'Modern' was abruptly again extinguished by the First World War."

⁶⁵ John Heskett, *German Design: 1870-1918* (New York: Taplinger, 1986), 7. "The purpose of *Pioneers*," according to Heskett, "was to identify the origins and celebrate the existence of the Modern Movement, and to do so the evidence mustered in the original edition of 1936 was highly selective. The most fundamental criticism of Pevsner's methodology relates to his teleological approach, looking to history to justify a particular view of the present. Based essentially on aesthetic premises, without delving into the complexities of contextual influences and relationships, *Pioneers*

follower of Ruskin and Morris, of van de Velde, and of the Werkbund,” Pevsner writes. “So our circle is complete. The history of artistic theory between 1890 and the First World War proves the assertion on which the present work is based, namely, that the phase between Morris and Gropius is an historical unit. Morris laid the foundation of the modern style; with Gropius its character was ultimately determined.”⁶⁶ Pevsner thus locates the Modern Movement, as a coherent movement originating from “the South Kensington trajectory of reform,”⁶⁷ *via* the Werkbund in Germany and culminating in the Bauhaus. And as such, the Werkbund functions as a necessary link in Pevsner’s story. Certainly, this is a problematically teleological view, which, Heskett points out, imposes linearity upon historical events and relationships without adequately accounting for the diversity, plurality, or contextuality of influences.⁶⁸ So let us pause here to look more closely.

At a host of world’s exhibitions—from Paris, in 1855 and 1867, to London, in 1862, and Vienna, in 1873, and, finally, Philadelphia in 1876—the German applied arts had been resoundingly denounced for their “technical backwardness, aesthetic inferiority, and economic worthlessness

imposed a linear interpretation upon an age that was diverse and plural in nature, taking part of a complex picture and representing it as the only significant element” (Ibid.).

⁶⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 27.

⁶⁷ So called by Stefan Muthesius. See Muthesius, “Communications between Traders, User and Artists,” 10. As Muthesius explains, “The most tangible effort of the [*Kunstgewerbe*/applied arts] movement in Continental Europe, however, was the creation of institutions, that is, schools and museums. Initially modelled on the South Kensington Museum and the Schools of Art, the Austrian institutions in particular, from the later 1860s went far beyond London in the thoroughness of their organization, while the strength of the numerous museums and schools in the new German Reich varied considerably” (ibid.). See also Houze, “At the Forefront?”

⁶⁸ John Heskett, *German Design*, 7. In his re-examination of the applied arts and design of the nineteenth century, Heskett proposes a corrective to Pevsner’s study. “What is relevant here,” he writes, “and is a surprising aspect of Pevsner’s work and legacy, is the extent to which developments in nineteenth century German applied art and design were dealt with, at best, cursorily, and in many cases, not at all.” Rather, “when he refers to events in Germany, it is only from around the turn of the century, and in terms of an argument that looks forward to the 1920s. The late nineteenth century in Germany, the culture into which Pevsner was born in 1902,”—and Höch before him, we might add—“was virtually ignored. In nothing else, perhaps, was he more typical of the followers of the German Modern Movement than in rejecting the age which preceded it, and, it can be argued, decisively shaped it” (Ibid., 7-8).

ness’.”⁶⁹ Certainly, these repeated debacles on the world stage were cause for considerable concern, not least of all on the part of the Prussian Commerce Ministry, which eventually came to view schools of applied arts in Germany, and, of course, in Prussia, as “an inseparable part of the national economic policy’,”⁷⁰ and consequently to pursue reform. Indeed, in this, Germany, or rather Prussia, was not unique.⁷¹ For, in the modern movements, from the British Arts and Crafts to the *Deutscher Werkbund* and Bauhaus, and their various projects for cultural reform, design reform is often read as operating largely in reaction to the rapid changes in production and consumption imposed by the conditions of an emerging system of modern industrial capitalism. And this is the line traced by Pevsner. Thus, the Arts and Crafts movement, founded in the late nineteenth century in Britain, is explained as a reaction against an increasingly ubiquitous mass production. “The Movement,” according to Pevsner, “drew on the styles and manners of the medieval period [...] and aimed to redefine the role of art and craftsmanship, restore dignity to labour, elevate and ennoble the artisan, create opportunities for women, and implement social reform.”⁷² Here, the Werkbund intervenes to expand the Arts and Crafts values to accommodate the demands of industrial production and design, sharing “many of the same values as the British Arts and Crafts Move-

⁶⁹ In John V. Maciuka, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and the German State, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21. For a further history of design reform in Germany, see Heskett, *German Design: 1870-1918*.

⁷⁰ In Maciuka, *Before the Bauhaus*, 21.

⁷¹ Heskett, *German Design: 1870-1918*, 7. “By 1900,” Heskett notes, “Germany ranked with Britain and the USA as a leading industrial power in the world, and attempts to define a national style evolved into a broad, many-faceted movement for cultural reform, embodied in a variety of organizations, theories and practice seeking to appropriate expression for experience of contemporary life. Whilst craft influences remained strong, and attempts to conserve or restore elements of traditional life and culture found many adherent, what was remarkable about Germany in the early twentieth century was the range of ideas and practice seeking to reconcile art and industry as an expression of contemporary national culture” (ibid.)

⁷² Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design*, 32.

ment—integrity towards materials and working processes, reverence for the crafts ethic, and the ideal of design—but applied these to machine production in their efforts to reform industrial design.”⁷³ And it is precisely this rejection of the past in favor of an orientation toward the future, in short the rejection of late nineteenth-century historicism, which, for Pevsner, appears to define the central innovation of the Werkbund: to situate and describe a new stance.⁷⁴

Certainly, the conditions of modernity, and modern industrial production, in Germany at the turn of the century would seem to render this new orientation to the machine age already necessary, and require a concomitant shift in such terms as art and industry.⁷⁵ Yet it would do to still keep the terms, and figures, of this discourse in mind. For we are tracing a not unrelated, but nonetheless decidedly different—differently placed, differently worked, and differently gendered—history.⁷⁶ Despite the careful language of historical progress and theoretical sophistication,

⁷³ Ibid., 34. For Pevsner, the Werkbund thus “shared the social vision of the founding members of the Arts and Crafts Movement, but turned their backs on the past, rejecting the *l’art pour l’art* philosophy of the nineteenth century, and setting out to create a new ornament and style appropriate to the machine age” (ibid.).

⁷⁴ Of course, the aesthetic and theoretical shifts from nineteenth-century historicisms to twentieth-century modernisms have generated an extensive literature in, and beyond, the history of design. In addition to Pevsner and Heskett, see also Gillian Naylor, *The Bauhaus Reassessed, Sources and Design Theory* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1985); Mitchell Schwarzer, “The Design Prototype as Artistic Boundary: The Debate on History and Industry in Central European Applied Arts Museums, 1860-1900,” *Design Issues* 9, no. 1 (Autumn 1992): 30-44.

⁷⁵ As Frederic J. Schwartz argues, “[The members of the Werkbund] were aware that they were producing for a capitalist economy, that their products were the result of the division of labor, that they would first be seen after they had made their way through the system of commodity distribution and exchange, and by subjects whose understanding was determined by the simple fact that they were *consumers*.” Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 7.

⁷⁶ See Frank, *The Theory of Decorative Art*, especially the introduction, 1-18. Thus, can Frank argue that “[t]he story of Modernism is the story of the final dismemberment of the concept of decorative art.” And this stance is this turn away from the decorative is also a turn towards industry and technology: an oppositional stance. “Giving themselves up to the enchantment of industrial materials and technological structures, Modernist theorists proclaimed that only purified forms should be used to express function in the most limpid and luminous way,” Frank continues. “By excluding ornament from the ideals of a new, modern design, the proponents of the Modern movement effectively destroyed the notion of decorative art that had emerged over the past two centuries” (ibid., 13-14). On the question of ornament and gender, see also Bridget Elliott and Janice Helland, eds., *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts, 1880-1935: The Gender of Ornament* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2002).

it is difficult to ignore that the “opportunities” promised to women by the Arts and Crafts movement appear to find no place in the new orientation toward machine production.⁷⁷ This is, of course, a simplification of complex and interwoven historical positionings. The absence, however, remains symptomatic of a more problematic, if less visible, inconsistency of the modern design reform movement. “Design history still suffers from its provenance in the Modern Movement,” designer and historian Judy Attfield argues,

where to some extent it remains, sealed in a time lock which still considers form the effect of function, and a concept of design—the product of professional designers, industrial production and the division of labour—which assumes that women’s place is in the home.⁷⁸

This is, then, a problem not merely of design, but also of aesthetics and ornament, operating within a history (always already) marked by sexual difference. It is a question, to read with Naomi Schor, of detail. It is a question, once again, of difference. “To focus on the detail and more particularly on the *detail as negativity* is to become aware, as I discovered,” Schor writes, “of its participation in a larger semantic network, bounded on the one side by the *ornamental*, with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence, and on the other, by the *everyday*, whose ‘prosinness’ is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over by women. In other words, to focus on the space and function of the detail since the mid-eighteenth century is to become aware that the normative aesthetics elaborated and disseminated by the Academy and its members is not sexually neutral; it is an axiology carrying into the field of representation the sexual hierarchies of the phallogocentric cultural order. The detail does not occupy a conceptual space beyond the laws of sexual difference: the detail is gendered and doubly gendered as feminine.” Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 4. The hand, we might argue, shares something essential with this definition of detail. To say nothing of its products.

Space and function are key terms in this debate, specters, even, haunting our essay. Perhaps especially domestic space and domestic function. For as Rebecca Houze argues, at the turn of the century at least, the correspondence of the domestic with both the feminine and the decorative (in space and function) was an institutional commonplace, delimited, as Schor would suggest, by the play of ornament and everyday. In fact, “Viennese designers at the *Kunstgewerbeschule* and *Wiener Werkstätte*,” Houze argues, “sought to infuse modern, urban style with a naïve, feminine, domestic comfort, which was represented by the embroidered cloth traditionally used to decorate peasant homes.” Houze, “From *Wiener Kunst im Hause* to *Wiener Werkstätte*,” 9. Detailed, certainly.

⁷⁷ For further investigations of the intersections between gender, textile, design, and modernism, see Angela Völker, *Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte 1910-1932* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004); Virginia Gardner Troy, *The Modernist Textile: Europe and America 1890-1940* (Burlington, Vermont: Lund Humphries, 2006); Ulrike Müller, *Bauhaus Women: Art - Handicraft - Design*, trans. Emer Lettow and Sarah Kane (Paris: Flammarion, 2009).

⁷⁸ Judy Attfield, “FORM/female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design,” in *Design History and the History of Design*, by John Albert Walker (London: Pluto, 1989), 200. On the intersection of gender and design, see also, for example, Cheryl Buckley, “Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design,” *Design Issues* 3, no. 2 (Autumn 1986): 3-14. And again, in the *fin de siècle* Austrian context, Houze argues along not

Although design reform attempted, in its various guises, to reconcile technique, aesthetics, and economics within the constraints of machine production, it could be said to have done so without also addressing the underlying sociohistorical, political, ideological, and aesthetic categories that still governed the hierarchical relationship between arts “fine” and “applied.”⁷⁹ Here Attfield’s argument is instructive in that she proposes to reread that truism of design reform, which would define form as following from function. Thus, “[t]he dominant conception prioritizes the machine (masculine) over the body (feminine),” according to Attfield. “It assigns men to the determining, functional areas of design—science, technology, industrial production—and women to the private,

dissimilar lines, writing that “[a]s the turn of the twentieth century approached, women occupied a peculiar position in the debates surrounding design reform. On the one hand, women were granted a considerable authority in matters of domestic interior decoration, which enabled them to achieve some degree of professional success, as writers, teachers, practitioners and later as trained designers as well. At the same time, however, they were the focus of masculine efforts to reform the decorative arts industry, which taught women consumers to appreciate tasteful, well-made furnishings, and trained future women practitioners and designers to work in a more thoughtful and artistic manner.” See Houze, “At the Forefront?,” 22. On the question of domesticity and design at the turn of the century, see also Rebecca Houze, “From *Wiener Kunst im Hause* to the *Wiener Werkstätte*.”

⁷⁹ Certainly this distinction has its own long history, spanning classical traditions, medieval distinctions between liberal and mechanical arts, Renaissance notions of the visual arts, and eighteenth-century aesthetic theories. For a selection of key texts informing this history, see Frank, *The Theory of Decorative Art*. As Frank argues, “most writers agreed that the decorative arts (however they referred to them) possessed their own distinctive, artistic nature. Moreover, this artistic nature could be understood and analyzed by focusing on the relations among three principal features: function, material and production, and ornamentation” (ibid., 1-2). To the question of craft, more specifically, see also Howard Risatti, *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), especially 67-149.

For a discussion specific to handiwork, particularly embroidery, see Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, especially 1-16. Here Parker describes an essentially historical argument, which situates hierarchies of the arts as coeval with, and contingent upon, those of gender. “However there is an important connection between the hierarchy of the arts and the sexual categories male/female,” she writes. “The development of an ideology of femininity coincided historically with the emergence of a clearly defined separation of art and craft. This division emerged in the Renaissance at the time when embroidery was increasingly becoming the province of women amateurs, working for the home without pay. Still later the split between art and craft was reflected in the changes in art education from craft-based workshops to academies at precisely the time—the eighteenth century—when an ideology of femininity as natural to women was evolving” (ibid., 5).

To the question of gender and aesthetics, see, for example, Schor, *Reading in Detail*, especially “Part 1: Archaeology,” 11-97. “The unchallenged association of women and the particular spans not only cultures, but centuries, extending from antiquity to the present day,” according to Schor; “along the way, however, it has acquired the trappings of scientific fact, and it is on this semimythical, semiscientific association that modern-day critics have based their assessments of men’s and women’s respective contributions to the arts” (ibid., 17).

domestic realm and to the ‘soft’ decorative fields of design.”⁸⁰ By uncovering the gendered conventions at work in this formulation, Attfield reveals one facet of production, which any number of turn-of-the-century reform movements failed to reform, let alone revolutionize: namely, that of the gendered division of labor, which, in turn and in part, conditioned and perpetuated this hierarchical organization safeguarding the distinction of fine art from its “applied” or “decorative” counterpart.⁸¹ The machine, in some respects, changed very little, after all.

“... und Frauen sticken!”⁸²

Handiwork, especially embroidery, enjoyed a curious popularity in Dada circles, perhaps most famously in Switzerland. Sophie Taeuber-Arp, who taught at the School of Applied Arts in Zürich, is

⁸⁰ Attfield, “FORM/female FOLLOW FUNCTION/male,” 201. Attfield operates from a feminist approach predicated upon binary sexual difference, in which gender would appear to correlate more or less neatly to the biological expression of sex, and then, in turn, mapping this opposition onto that between form and function. This, of course, could not be the whole story. But, first, we shall only attempt to describe this phenomenon, along with its attendant cultural, political, historical ramifications. For now, we will merely make an essay into the territory between. “But so long as the history of the detail was viewed as a footnote to the history of realism and, furthermore, as sexually unmarked, a crucial factor in its current hegemony was overlooked: the breakdown of sexual difference,” to turn once again to Schor. “By revising the terms of the oppositions and the values of the hierarchies,” she continues, “we remain, of course, prisoners of the paradigms, only just barely able to dream a universe where the categories of *general* and *particular*, *mass* and *detail*, and *masculine* and *feminine* would no longer order our thinking and our seeing.” Schor, *Reading in Detail*, 4.

⁸¹ Many critics have read Höch and her work as responding to this problem and its subsequent transformations (political, artistic, or otherwise) in the Weimar Republic. See, for example, Maria Makela, “The Misogynist Machine: Images of Technology in the Work of Hannah Höch,” in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 106-127. “In contrast to John Heartfield and George Grosz,” Makela argues, “whose photcollages, prints, and drawings critiques big business, industry, and the phenomenon of rationalization for exploiting the working class, Höch typically censured technology for its effects on *women*” (ibid., 107). For further discussion of Höch, technology, gender and the Weimar New Woman, see also Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*; Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*; Kallos, “A Woman’s Revolution;” and Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius, “Geschlechterspiel im Dadaismus,” *Kunstforum* 128 (1994): 166-69.

⁸² “Vom Sticken,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 18, no. 12 (September 1918): 220. “... and women stitch!”

said to have introduced the painter Jean Arp, her future husband, to embroidery in 1915.⁸³ Certainly, the apparent archaic simplicity of the form, its distance from modern technology and evocation of a lost age, rendered embroidery especially appealing to certain strands of the Dada movement. “We were seeking an elementary art to cure man of the frenzy of the times and a new order to restore the balance between heaven and hell,” Hans Arp writes, remembering Zürich in 1915. He then continues,

The Renaissance taught men to arrogantly exalt their reason. Modern times with their sciences and technologies have consecrated men to megalomania. The chaos of our era is the result of that over-estimating of reason. We sought an anonymous and collective art. [...]

In 1915 Sophie Taeuber and I painted, embroidered, and did collages; all these works were drawn from the simplest forms and were probably the first examples of “concrete art.”

These works are Realities, pure and independent, with no meaning or cerebral intention.⁸⁴

Arp thus invests embroidery with both an avant-garde trajectory—associating it, as he does, with an emerging “concrete art”—and a reactionary significance, as operating against the tide of modernity to access a mode of creativity and expression understood as removed from processes that would bestow intentionality or impose meaning. Given what we know of the hand, and its manifold interactions with the brain, this would appear a metaphorical gesture, rather than a scientifically sound program. Here again, it is the rhetoric, not the science, at issue. For neither Taeuber-Arp nor Arp were the only Dadaist to experiment with traditional craft forms; Höch frequently

⁸³ For a discussion of Taeuber-Arp, politics, art, and handiwork, see Bibiana Obler, “Taeuber, Arp, and the Politics of Cross-Stitch,” *The Art Bulletin* 91, no. 2 (June 2009): 207–229.

⁸⁴ Jean (Hans) Arp, “Dadaland” in *Jean (Hans) Arp: Selected French Writings*, ed. Marcel Jean, trans. Joachim Neugroschal (London: Calder and Boyars, 1974), 232. Also quoted in Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 191.

integrated needlework patterns, techniques, and fragments of work into her collages and photo-montages [fig. 1.10].⁸⁵ “Sie schneiden noch die Spitzen und die Verwendung von Schnittmusterbögen an,” according to Höch.

Beides ist für mich durchaus ein geeignetes Material für Neuschöpfungen gewesen. Die Zartheit der Spitze, aber mehr noch ihre, aus ihrer spezifischen Technik erwachsene Eigenart reizte mich. Ebenfalls der immer unterschiedlich unterbrochen sein müssende Strich bei dem Schnittmuster.⁸⁶

Against Arp’s oppositional stance, which would appear to seek in embroidery a tonic to modern life and mechanized warfare, Höch offers an approach grounded in a different kind of material history, one quite modern enough.

But let us begin at the beginning. Höch published her first essay on embroidery in the September 1918 issue of the *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau*; three more followed in the course of that year—“Was ist schön?” in the October-November 1918 issue; “Weiss-Stickerei” in December 1918, “Die freie Stick-Kunst” in October-November 1919—the last, a short narrative piece enti-

⁸⁵ For a further discussion of techniques, see Schaschke, “Schnittmuster der Kunst”; for reproductions, see, for example, the plates included in *Hannah Höch 1889-1978*. Makela details the various techniques featured in Höch’s montage work: “Occasionally, Höch cut up her own textile designs, using brightly colored bits of her hand-tinted linocuts to enliven abstract compositions. More often she recycled needlework patterns. Diagrams of filet, a kind of net made of knotted horizontal and vertical threads into which a design is darned, served as the background of many collages, as did patterns for hexagonal net. Höch also cut up and recycled needle-lace patterns and embroidery patterns of abstract or stylized forms from nature. Although there is no evidence that she made sewing patterns for her work at Ullstein, Höch had access to them through her colleagues, and in cut-up form they, too, found their way into her collages” (Makela, “By Design,” 58-59). For one example, see fig. 1.10 below.

⁸⁶ Pagé, “Interview,” 27. “You also bring up lace and the use of pattern sheets. Both were for me absolutely suitable material for new creations. The delicacy of lace, but even more its unique character, which grows out of its specific technique, attracted me. Likewise the line in patterns, which must always be interrupted in different ways.”

tled “Die stickende Frau,” also appeared in the October-November 1919 issue.⁸⁷ “Vom Sticken,” the earliest piece, provides a programmatic opening, a call to arms, or to the needle, begun as if picking up the thread of conversation, already in motion: “. . . und Frauen sticken! Von jeher haben Frauen gestickt; aber jetzt — Kriegszeit — kein Material mehr, aber Frauen sticken — — wie unsinnig wird gestickt!”⁸⁸ And, yet, if the opening appears to follow a familiar enough line, that is soon enough called into question. For Höch continues, making explicit the connection between painting and embroidery, which Arp merely implied through juxtaposition and proximity. Against this reading, Höch advocates an understanding of embroidery, which aligns it unequivocally with the fine arts.

Die Stickerei steht im engsten Zusammenhang mit der Malerei. Sie ändert sich unentwegt, mit jeder Stilepoche. Sie ist eine Kunst und darf beanspruchen, als solche behandelt zu werden, auch wenn tausend und abertausend liebevolle Frauenhände mit wenig Geschick, keinem Geschmack und Farbensinn und nicht einer Spur von Geist viele gute Stoffe so blödsinnig wie möglich verunzieren und diese Produkte ‚Stickereien‘ nennen.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ “Vom Sticken,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 18, no. 12 (September 1918): 220; “Was ist schön?,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 19, no. 1-2 (October-November 1918): 8-16; “Weiss-Stickerei. Mit technischen Erläuterungen zu den preisgekrönten Arbeiten unseres vierten Wettbewerbes,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 19, no. 3 (December 1918): 45-52; “Die freie Stick-Kunst,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 20, no. 1-2 (October-November 1919): 22; “Die stickende Frau,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 20, no. 1-2 (October-November 1919): 26.

⁸⁸ Höch, “Vom Sticken,” 220. “. . . and women stitch! From time immemorial women have stitched; but now — war time — no more material, but women stitch — — like crazy they stitch!” Again, all translations from *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* “Embroidery stands in closest association with painting. It changes steadily with each stylistic era. It is an art and may demand to be treated as such, even if thousand upon thousands of dear lady hands with little skill, no taste and sense for color and not a trace of spirit spoil many good materials as idiotically as possible and call these products ‘embroideries.’”

To be sure, this hardly a new argument.⁹⁰ And, just as surely, Höch is here situating herself within a larger tradition of handiwork, which she, no less unequivocally, defines as primarily female. Reading Höch in this direction, and with this history, provides the necessary context in which to also situate her apparently radical claims for embroidery.⁹¹ Certainly, perhaps the most important rhetorical move of this text is Höch's chastisement of the contemporary moment, which here becomes the occasion for reflection on a skilled, handed practice bereft and neglected.

Indeed, it seems that something has been lost from modern embroidery. And thus Höch takes recourse to tradition: "Gehe man doch in die Völkerkunde- und Kunstgewerbemuseen, um sich dort einmal anzusehen, was Stickereien sein sollten," she counsels her readers.

Diese mit so naiver, aber um so vollkommenerer Sicherheit des Formgefühls in den Raum verteilten Komplexe, von meist unbewußtem zeichnerischen Können sprechenden, seelisch empfundenen und technisch mit leichter, gehorchender Hand durchgeführten Werke.⁹²

Preserved, organized, and on display in the museum—ethnological or applied art, of course, not fine art—it is the forms of the past, the suggestion seems to be, that will provide the necessary cor-

⁹⁰ See, for example, Marianna Margaret Compton Cust Alford, *Needlework as Art* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1886). Already in 1886, to name but one example, Lady Alford in Britain composed a treatise entitled *Needlework as Art*, dedicated to Queen Victoria, wherein she writes, "If I have given too important a position to the art of needlework, I would observe that while I have been writing, decorative embroidery has come to the front, and is at this moment one of the hobbies of the day; and I would point out that it contains in itself all the necessary elements of art; it may exercise the imagination and the fancy; it needs education in form, colour, and composition, as well as the craft of a practised hand, to express its language and perfect its beauty" (ibid., vii-viii).

⁹¹ Here, I would modify Makela's claim that "the idea that embroidery, like painting or sculpture, could express deeply felt emotion was subversive in the extreme" (Makela, "By Design," 58). Although this is undoubtedly true, the tradition of embroidery from which Höch emerges and in which her essays would seem to participate had nonetheless already long invested embroidery with an expressive function—however devalued or dismissed by the discourse of the fine arts.

⁹² Höch, "Vom Sticken," 220. "One should go to the ethnological museums or museums of applied arts in order to see once what embroidery should be. These complexes, arranged into space with such naive, but therefore all the more perfect certainty of the sense of form, those works speaking of mostly unconscious graphic ability, conceived spiritually and accomplished technically with a light, obedient hand."

rective to the scattered consciousness, and unruly hands, of the modern age. This is, after all, a problem to be addressed by hand. “Wenn wir der Frauen früherer Zeiten gedenken, die soviel Herzenruhe hatten, um solche [Weißstickereien] zu schaffen ...,” Höch writes that same year on “Weiss-Stickerei”, discussing the intricate and tedious whitework technique,

so sei uns dies ein Wegweiser für unser heutiges Schaffen. Wir müssen im Leben wieder Zeit finden, ‚einmal am Tage die Hände zu falten‘. Dann wird aus gereimten Herzen auch nur Gereimtes geschaffen werden ... auch im Spiele der Handarbeit.⁹³

Indeed, what Höch laments is the loss of tradition, the cheapening of embroidery as a form to which the modern *Handarbeiterin* no longer devote proper time or sufficient patient concentration. Their hands, she seems to say, are too busy for proper handiwork.

Importantly, though, for Höch the object of this complaint is not an uncritical celebration of outmoded techniques or old-fashioned forms, or the equally uncritical desire for a return to some lost golden age of embroidery. Rather, it is a critique anchored firmly in the present. “Habt ihr keine Augen zu sehen, was in eurer Zeit vor sich geht?” asks Höch in “Vom Sticken” before continuing,

Wie die Kunst jetzt, eben jetzt eine große Revolution erlebt, aus der sie verändert, geläutert und mit einer starken Schwungkraft endlich einmal wieder aufwärtsschießen wird? So wenig wie es in der Malerei heute genügt, daß einer naturalistische Blümchen, Stilleben oder Akte abklatscht, so sicher muß in die künftige Stickerei wieder abstraktes Formgefühl,

⁹³ Höch, “Weiss-Stickerei,” 24. “Whenever we commemorate the women of earlier times, who had so much peace in their hearts in order to create such whitework, let this be a guide for our work today. We must again find time in life ‘to fold our hands once a day.’ Then from a rhyming heart, only rhymes are created ... also in playing handiwork.”

damit Schönheit, Gefühl, Geist, ja Seele kommen.⁹⁴

Höch here expands the revolutionary Dada vocabulary of critique to a most unlikely realm, to encompass embroidery and needlework. Embroidery, then, could be read as an unequivocally contemporary medium. And here, our threads come together, for Höch suggests that the *female* hand (“tausend und abertausend liebliche Frauenhände”) must again learn to channel intuition—as “Gefühl, Geist, ja Seele”—, which is, after all, nothing less than the purview of the true artist, in the modern idiom: “nämlich die wirklich Neues aus innerlichster Intuition [zu schaffen].”⁹⁵ And Höch ends by admonishing her readers “wenigstens i-h-r müßtet wissen, daß ihr mit euern Stickereien eure Zeit dokumentiert!”⁹⁶ Documentary in wool or silk or linen, Höch describes a decidedly unsentimental call to embroider history.

If this seems an odd conjunction, then it would do to remember that embroidery was, at least in 1918, a thoroughly modern occupation, especially when compared with the venerable tradition of lace making. “Die emanzipierte Tochter der Spitze ist die Stickerei,” that, at least is the claim made by Joseph August Lux.⁹⁷ Read almost a century later, this interpretation seems hardly credible. Yet, the opposition that Lux. (his surname published only in abbreviated form) describes

⁹⁴ Ibid. “Do you have no eyes to see what is happening in your time? How art just now experiences a great revolution, from which it changes, refined and with strong momentum finally again shoot upwards? Just as it does not suffice in painting today that one dabs naturalistic little flowers, still lives or nude studies, just as certainly must an abstract sense of form, and with it beauty, feeling, spirit, yes soul enter into the coming embroidery.”

⁹⁵ Höch, “Was ist schön?” 16. “[...] namely, to create the truly new from the most internal intuition.” Certainly, this language of an expressive soul echoes, as Makela notes, “the discourse of the ‘fine’ arts—specifically, of Expressionism, which held that the artwork was a cipher of individual subjectivity” (Makela, “By Design,” 58). Again, I would here suggest that this discourse is not limited to Expressionism, but rather also draws on an older tradition of embroidery, in which the (female) hand was understood as possessing the ability to express the (feminine) soul.

⁹⁶ Ibid. “[...] at least y-o-u must know that you document your era with your stitching!”

⁹⁷ Joseph Aug. Lux., “Zur Psychologie der Spitze und der Stickerei,” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 18 (1917/1918): 146-51. “The emancipated daughter of lace is embroidery.”

in terms of an epochal, temporal shift is, nonetheless, also grounded in a shift in expressive potential conditioned by a particular social-historical moment. “Und die Nadel wird zum Weberschiffchen, nur dass sie vom mechanischen Stuhl losgelöst ist und ausschließlich den Geboten der Hand und der schaffenden Phantasie gehorcht,” Lux. concludes.

Sie ist durchwegs an das Persönliche gebunden, zum Unterschied von der Spitze, die zeitlos ist, unpersönlich, religiös, voll Demut und Hingabe des Lebens. Die Stickerei ist dagegen ein sehr betontes Ich, das dem Bürgertum entspringt und im Bürgerhaus gepflegt wird.⁹⁸

And, indeed, from this reading, embroidery emerges as a modern invention, despite boasting a history no less ancient, nor less ecclesiastical or aristocratic, than lace.⁹⁹ Rather than a product of history, embroidery, the argument seems to be, instead expresses the present and anticipates the future; that is, its legitimacy inheres not in historical lineage, but in the contemporary (and contemporaneous) manifestation of modern style. Thus, “[w]ährend die Spitze technisch gebunden ist und infolge ihrer langsamen, mühevollen Herstellungsweise immer ins Zeitlose oder doch ins Ewiggültige der Überlieferung verwiesen ist,” writes Lux.,

gehört die Stickerei den rascheren Impulsen der Zeit und folgt leicht dem Wandel der künstlerischen Anschauung. Die Spitze gehört der geheiligten Vergangenheit. Die Stickerei

⁹⁸ Ibid., 146-48. “And the needle becomes weaving shuttle, save that it [the needle] is detached from the mechanical stool and exclusively obeys the commands of the hand and the creating fantasy. It [embroidery] is thoroughly bound to the personal, unlike lace, which is timeless, impersonal, religious, full humility and surrender of life. Embroidery is in contrast a very emphatic ego, which originates in the bourgeoisie and is cultivated in the town house.”

⁹⁹ See, for example, Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, especially 17-39, 40-59, and 60-81. As Parker notes, “The Victorian imposition of their feminine ideal on to mediaeval embroidery conceals a complex set of relationships between the art’s patrons—the church and the nobility—and the content of ecclesiastical embroidery; between the church’s denigration of women and women’s central place in society and within mediaeval craft production” (ibid., 40).

ist Gegenwart und Zukunft.¹⁰⁰

Yet, the break is not quite as absolute as Lux. might care to pretend. For Höch unfolds a more nuanced understanding of the tensions between embroidery's history and its contemporary relevance, alongside her perhaps more fastidiously professional reservations about the rapid, inartistic workmanship of modern hands.¹⁰¹ After all, embroidery, perhaps more so than lace, had already long created its own kind of material historiography, fulfilling a certain kind of documentary function and creating a particular evidentiary trace.

How to make femininity in fabric.

Take, for example, this article on "Weibliche Arbeiten" from the 1807 edition of the *Drittes Toiletten=Geschenk. Ein Jahrbuch für Damen*. We are asked to contemplate, "Warum wird unser Auge beim Eintritt in ein Frauengemach unwillkürlich mehr, als zu jedem andern Gegenstand, zuerst zum Stickrahmen und Nähtisch gezogen?"¹⁰² The question, of course, is almost purely rhetorical; the answer, after all, is rooted in nature and natural propensities.

Wahrlich, weder die Laute, noch das geöffnete Fortepiano, weder Manuscripte, noch Bücher in diesem Gemach, vermögen so für die Bewohnerin einzunehmen, als jene Spur eines

¹⁰⁰ Lux., "Zur Psychologie," 150. "[w]hile lace is bound by technique and because of its slow, painstaking method of production always referenced in a timeless manner or at least as an eternally valid tradition, embroidery obeys the rasher impulses of the time and easily follows the vicissitudes of artistic opinion. Lace belongs to the hallowed past. Embroidery is the present and future."

¹⁰¹ To the question of history, see Schaffer, *Novel Craft*, especially 3-25. "One of the central ideas expressed by handicraft is an idea about history," Schaffer writes. "Handicraft stages a tension between historicity and modernity. It thus simultaneously embodies tradition and allows users to complicate their relation to the idea of the past" (ibid., 7).

¹⁰² "Weibliche Arbeiten," *Drittes Toiletten=Geschenk. Ein Jahrbuch für Damen* (Leipzig: Georg Voss, 1807): 174-75. See also Uta-Christian Bergemann, "Berliner Stickereien des Biedermeier. Entwicklung und gesellschaftliche Bedeutung," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 44 (2002):113-14. "Why is our eye, upon entering a lady's chamber, drawn automatically more to the embroidery frame and sewing table than to any other object?"

stillen, friedlichen Wirkens der fleißigen Hände. [...] Es ist so etwas Natürliches, wenn man eine liebe weibliche Hand sieht, zugleich an Schöpfungen zu denken, die daraus hervorgehen.¹⁰³

Neither music nor books capture this quiet, peaceful, yet diligent *Spur* of the inhabitant. Indeed, it is a question of traces and clues: the occupant is absent, what she leaves behind is her handiwork, the mark of industry, the expression of a natural and proper femininity, the production of an ordered, beautiful domesticity. The trace that silences all other domestic entertainments and renders them as insignificant or, at the very least, ever so slightly suspect as less natural, more frivolous occupations for the *liebe weibliche Hand*, that is all that remains.

“Bey einer Blume, die die liebe Hand gestickt, bey einem Streifen, den sie gesäumt, einer Kante, aus welcher der Strumpf hervor wächst, den sie vollendet, ist dem Beschauer, als ob der Antheil des ganzen Wesens noch unmittelbarer sich zeigte. Gedanken der Freude und der Trauer, das ganze Innere sind mit eingewebt. [...] Frauen[: ...] Sie sind einmal die Repräsentantinnen des Schönen und Reinen [...].”¹⁰⁴

The stitch, more than a mere record of the *fleißige Hand*, is read as doubly productive: on the one hand, the stitch contributes to, elaborates, ornaments, and adorns a functional beauty (the list ends, after all, with the rather unglamorous, eminently practical stocking), the fabrication and ornamentation of textile, fully in concert with an emerging bourgeois work ethic of the proper, and proper-

¹⁰³ Ibid. “Truly neither the lute nor the opened fortepiano, neither manuscripts nor books in this chamber enable the inhabitant to charm as does that trace of a quiet, peaceful action of the industrious hand. [...] It is so natural, when one sees a dear female hand to think of the creations that come from it.”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 175. “In the case of a flower, which the dear hand embroidered; in the case of a sash, which she seamed; a heel, from which the stocking grows, as she completes it, it is as if a portion of the entire being shows itself to the [male] on-looker. Thoughts of joy and grief, the entire inner world, are interwoven. [...] Women[: ...] they are the representatives of the beautiful and pure.”

ly feminine, *Hausfrau*;¹⁰⁵ on the other, the stitch functions as the medium through which the feminine finds its *natural* expression and becomes intelligible: *noch unmittelbarer*, as if the thread and needle were not there at all. But it is the woman who disappears, and in her absence, it is the work of her hands that must speak, the traces that must be read. Indeed, the particular woman herself, only ever present in these traces of a *fleißige Hand*, has vanished altogether, covered over by a representative category of woman: the beautiful and pure, and by implication domestic. If embroidery conceals the woman, it concomitantly reveals femininity—as if ideology were stitched onto a cushion.

Let us pause here and attempt to disentangle the threads. In her classic study *The Subversive Stitch*, Rozsika Parker aims to unravel precisely this ideology, which assumes a natural, thus inherent and necessary, connection between femininity and embroidery. By “[...] the nineteenth century, embroidery and femininity were entire[ly] fused, and the connection was deemed to be natural,” she writes. And as a consequence, needlework became an(other) expression of ideology, so that “[w]omen embroidered because they were naturally feminine and were feminine because they naturally embroidered.”¹⁰⁶ The *liebe weibliche Hand* and the *fleißige Hand* thus describe a limit, which

¹⁰⁵ The invocation of the *liebe Hände* as also *fleißige Hände* suggests the connection between industry, beauty, and “weibliche Arbeiten.” As Ute-Christian Bergemann reminds us, “Gleichzeitig mit dieser Glorifizierung weiblicher Handarbeit setzten aber bereits Mahnungen ein, die gemäß dem neuen bürgerlichen Arbeitsethos die Beschäftigung mit den schönen Dingen nicht als eitlen Müßiggang verstanden wissen wollten, sondern es mit dem Ausdruck steten Fleißes verbanden. [...] Im Sinne dieses Arbeitsethos wurde Handarbeiten nicht mehr nur zur beliebigen Freizeitbeschäftigung, die sie der adeligen Damenwelt des Barock noch gewesen war, sondern zum Ausdruck der wohlhabenden und zugleich tüchtigen Hausfrau.” See Bergemann, “Berliner Stickereien des Biedermeier,” 114. For a more general discussion of the emergence *Geschlechtscharaktere* in relation to changes in familial organization, see Karin Hausen, “Die Polarisierung der Geschlechtscharaktere – Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart: Klett, 1976), 363-93.

¹⁰⁶ Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 11. Take, for instance, the nineteenth-century historian of craft Ernst Lefebure, who in his study *Embroidery and Lace*, argues, “She is the sovereign in the domain of art needlework; few men would care to dispute with her the right of using those delicate instruments so intimately associated with the dexterity of her nimble and slender fingers” (quoted in *ibid.*, 81).

anchors the (absent) woman and her *lieben* hands in a domestic space while also endowing her handiwork with the proper moral fiber: as proof of industry, beauty and purity. That is, as evidence of *natural* femininity, or rather, of a femininity *made* natural and intelligible as such (to *dem Beschauer* above all) in, and on, fabric. It is a question of difference, and of difference made visible.

And here we return again to the *liebe weibliche Hand*, the *fleißige Hand* that together work to again and again embroider this *natural* femininity, to make femininity visible, tangible, and contained within the spaces delineated by *Stickrahmen und Nähtisch*: a profusion of fabric to be worked, as if femininity were to be located in textile alone. The historical trajectory traced by Parker's study, however, offers no such easy plot, for the needle—while always also “a signifier of sexual difference”¹⁰⁷—provides a means of expression, however limited, belittled, or discounted, that cannot be merely reduced to a record of diligence, patient attention, and the work of perseverance.¹⁰⁸ There is always something more to be read in the textile, if only we can decipher its particular grammar.¹⁰⁹ And though this praise may be faint, it nonetheless provides an opening through which to read in embroidery more than the (plodding) due diligence of the female hand, a hand able to produce and reproduce nothing more than the inevitable: a mere ornament to natural

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 6. Though it is certainly also that as well, as Parker reminds us: “Embroidery, on the other hand, had always been admired for the hard labour it demanded, the patience and persistence it required” (Ibid., 80). And, of course, there was no end of advocates of this pedagogical method, especially as it applied to the schooling of girls. J. W. H. Ziegenbein, to give one example, concludes in his *Schulschriften über Gegenstände aus dem Gebiete der weiblichen Erziehung und Bildung* (1809) that “[...] daughters should work more than reason, use the hand more than the head.” In James C. Alibisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 21.

¹⁰⁹ Schaffer, *Novel Craft*, 3. “Victorian domestic handicraft was a ubiquitous cultural practice,” she argues, “engaged in by virtually every middle-class woman [...] for the first seventy years of the nineteenth century. Yet we have no grammar for decoding this practice, and there we may well feel baffled when we try to figure out why it was so popular.”

femininity in fabric, confined to limited motifs that both mark its distance from the discourse and forms of fine art, and confirm its status as an out-dated and second-rate *minor* art.¹¹⁰ “Warum weisen unsere europäischen modernen Stickereien nur immer diesen Vorrat von Blumen, Körben, Vögeln und Schnörkeln auf?” asks Höch in her essay on “Die freie Stick-Kunst.”

Was in der abstrakten Kunst der gegenstandlosen Malerei erreicht wurde, sollte dies nicht in analoger Weise auch für die Stickerei möglich sein, ohne die Stickerei zum Surrogat der Malerei werden zu lassen? Die beschwingte Phantasie wird auch auf der Tuchfläche eigene Formgesetzmäßigkeiten der Nadel und des Fadens verwirklichen können.¹¹¹

Certainly, she would appear to write against precisely this tendency to unreflective handiwork. Nonetheless, caution is in order and the case should not be overstated: here the taking up of the needle cannot be read as necessarily demanding nor asserting equality—artistic or otherwise—; neither does it stage a straightforward emancipatory moment.¹¹² Rather, the history of embroidery to which Höch appears to respond, deftly challenges the Humanist illusion of the hand as unmarked by gender and gendered difference. For it seems that to talk about embroidery is also to talk about

¹¹⁰ See Makela, “By Design,” 58. See also Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 189-215. Here, Parker advises caution, as “the effort to overthrow the hegemony of the fine arts by merging them with the applied arts tended to benefit painting rather than embroidery; to modify masculinity rather than to transform femininity. Embroidery was employed as a fine art medium because of its association with femininity and nature. It was to be a disruptive influence on the male dominated fine arts, but this was to be a one-way process. The character of embroidery was assumed to be fixed and unchanging, eternally feminine” (ibid., 191).

¹¹¹ Höch, “Die freie Stick-Kunst,” 22. “Why does our European modern embroidery only ever feature that stock of flowers, baskets, birds, and scrolls? What was achieved in the abstract art of non-representational painting, ought this not analogously also be possible for embroidery, without allowing embroidery to become a substitute for painting? The buoyant fantasy will also be able to realize on the fabric surface the peculiar laws of form of the needle and the thread.”

¹¹² See, for example, Makela, “By Design,” 58.

the hand, but always, of course, a hand marked by difference and threatened with erasure: as the female hand.

Freud theorizes the textile.

And here we again return to the twentieth century. For Höch's rally cry, "... und Frauen sticken! Von jeher haben Frauen gestickt"¹¹³ concerns not just embroidery, but Freud as well. Certainly, Freud, or more precisely a certain turn of Freudian psychology, has been something of a phantom haunting our discussion of embroidery and the textile.¹¹⁴ It remains to ask why. So, let us turn our work toward one starting point, the *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, lectures published in 1933 but never delivered. Here, Sigmund Freud turns back to the question of femininity and attempts, once more, to map the treacherous path "zum normalen Weib."¹¹⁵ The thirty-third lecture takes "Die Weiblichkeit" as its subject, and as Freud claims, has only two things to recommend it:

¹¹³ Höch, "Vom Sticken," 220. "... and women stitch! From time immemorial women have stitched"

¹¹⁴ Interestingly enough, Bertha Pappenheim, a patient of Josef Breuer and the "Anna O." of Breuer and Freud's *Studien über Hysterie*, was also an avid collector of cast iron and lace. Her collections are now housed at the Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK) in Vienna. See *Spitzen und so weiter ... Die Sammlungen Bertha Pappenheims im MAK*, ed. Peter Noever, exhibition catalogue (Vienna: MAK/Schlebrügge Editor, 2007).

¹¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud, et al., vol. 15 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1940). "Des weiteren sagt uns der Vergleich mit den Verhältnissen beim Knaben, daß die Entwicklung des kleinen Mädchens zum normalen Weib die schwierigere und kompliziertere ist," Freud argues, "denn sie umfaßt zwei Aufgaben mehr, zu denen die Entwicklung des Mannes kein Gegenstück zeigt" (Ibid., 124). His lecture, then, attempts to "follow" this path. "Furthermore, a comparison with what happens with boys tells us that the development of a little girl into a normal woman is more difficult and more complicated, since it includes two extra tasks, to which there is nothing corresponding in the development of a man." Translation in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. James Strachey, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. 22 (London: Hogarth, 1964), 117.

Sie bringt nichts als beobachtete Tatsachen, fast ohne Beisatz von Spekulation, und sie beschäftigt sich mit einem Thema, das Anspruch auf Ihr Interesse hat wie kaum ein anderes.¹¹⁶

Then, a curious move. For after stating the empirical foundation of his work and the *almost* absence of speculation, Freud cites poetry. Indeed, Heinrich Heine's *Nordsee* is offered as if it were both evidence of, and an answer to, the riddle of femininity. "Über das Rätsel der Weiblichkeit haben die Menschen zu allen Zeiten gegrübelt," Freud continues, introducing his own attempt in this direction. He places a colon before providing his imagined audience with a veritable smorgasbord of heads from which to choose; heads which certainly could be supposed to have mused over this very riddle:

Häupter in Hieroglyphenmützen,
Häupter in Turban und schwarzem Baret,
Perückenhäupter und tausend andre
Arme, schwitzende Menschenhäupter¹¹⁷

The reference, however, is obscure and almost nonsensical, as neither Freud's allusion, nor for that matter James Strachey's pun—"Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity—", translate easily onto the printed page.¹¹⁸ All that remains is a

¹¹⁶ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 120. "It brings forward nothing but observed facts, almost without any speculative additions, and it deals with a subject which has a claim on your interest second almost to no other. Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity—" Translation Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 113.

¹¹⁷ "Heads in hieroglyphic bonnets, / Heads in turbans and black birettas, / Heads in wigs and thousand other / Wretched, sweating heads of humans ... (Heine, *Nordsee* [Second Cycle, VII, 'Fragen'].)" Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 113.

¹¹⁸ Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 113.

set of strangely decapitated heads, separated from the context which would render their relevance less opaque.

The complete poem is, fittingly enough for ours and Freud's purposes, entitled *Fragen*. It is the seventh in the second cycle of *Nordsee*, first published in Heine's 1827 *Buch der Lieder*, whose earlier section *Die Heimkehr* (1823-1824) is dedicated to a certain Friederike Varnhagen von Ense, perhaps better known as Rahel Levin Varnhagen, to whom "werden die Lieder der Heimkehr, als eine heitere Huldigung, gewidmet vom Verfasser."¹¹⁹ Reading the full citation critically revises Freud's stance, as an authority or expert, and provides a witty commentary on his own project.

Am Meer, am wüsten, nächtlichen Meer
Steht ein Jüngling-Mann,
Die Brust voll Wehmut, das Haupt voll Zweifel,
Und mit düstern Lippen fragt er die Wogen:

"O löst mir das Rätsel des Lebens,
Das qualvoll uralte Rätsel,
Worüber schon manche Häupter gegrübelt,
Häupter in Hieroglyphenmützen,
Häupter in Turban und schwarzem Barett,
Perückenhäupter und tausend andre
Arme, schwitzende Menschenhäupter -
Sagt mir, was bedeutet der Mensch?"

¹¹⁹ Heinrich Heine, *Buch der Lieder* (1827; repr., Munich: Winkler, 1982), 175. "To Friederike Varnhagen von Ense are the Songs of Homecoming dedicated in cheerful homage by the author." The friendship between Levin Varnhagen and Heine is complex, and certainly not wholly unrelated to a discussion of Freud, but decidedly a story for another time. We shall instead allow a quotation from Hannah Arendt to suffice. "She [Rahel] hailed young Heine with enthusiasm and great friendship—'only galley slaves know one another.' (Few of her letters addressed expressly to him have come down to us; the greater part of Heine's letters and early manuscripts were destroyed in a great fire in Hamburg.) Heine's affirmation of Jewishness, the first and last resolute affirmation which was to be heard from an assimilated Jew for a long time, derived from the same reasons and the same feeling for truth as Rahel's negation. Both had never been able to accept their destiny serenely; both had never attempted to hide it behind big words or boastful phrases; both had always demanded an accounting and had never gone in for 'prudent silence and patient Christian suffering' (Heine)." Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, ed. Liliane Weissberg, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 258-59. I would like to thank Barbara Hahn for bringing this connection to my attention.

Woher ist er kommen? Wo geht er hin?
Wer wohnt dort oben auf goldenen Sternen?”

Es murmeln die Wogen ihr ew'ges Gemurmel,
Es wehet der Wind, es fliehen die Wolken,
Es blinken die Sterne, gleichgültig und kalt,
Und ein Narr wartet auf Antwort.¹²⁰

And, indeed, Freud picks up the thread of this concealed conversation without pause. “Auch Sie werden sich von diesem Grübeln nicht ausgeschlossen haben, insoferne Sie Männer sind,” he writes; “von den Frauen unter Ihnen erwartet man es nicht, sie sind selbst dieses Rätsel.”¹²¹ It would seem that in embedding the citation, in however obscured or truncated form, Freud aligns his discussion of femininity with the question posed by the “Jüngling-Mann”—“Sag mir, was bedeutet der Mensch? / Woher ist er kommen? Wo geht er hin? / Wer wohnt dort oben auf goldenen Sternen?”—, and thus also would seem to imply by this tacit juxtaposition that the question of femininity enjoys a similar status to the question of existence: indeed, it could very well be next in line, occupying, as it does, our interest “wie *kaum* ein anderes.” Or, rather, it might be, were we foolish enough to wait for answers. The poem, however obliquely embedded in the text, prepares the way for disappointment, for Freud already knows that he has no answer to offer his audience:

¹²⁰ Heinrich Heine, *Buch der Lieder*, 363-64. “Questions // The sea, the midnight, the desolate sea / Where a young man stands, / His head full of doubts, his breast of sorrows, / And with bitter lips he questions the ocean: // ‘O solve me the riddle of being, / The painful, primordial riddle, / Whereover so many heads have been cudgelled, / Heads in hieroglyphic bonnets, / Heads in turbans and skullcaps of black, / And heads in perukes, a thousand other / Heads of poor men who drudged and sweated— / Tell me, what purpose has man? / From whence does he come here? And whither goes? / Who lives above there, beyond where the stars shine?’ // The billows are murmuring their unending murmur, / The breezes are blowing, the cloudbanks are flying, / The stars are blinking, indifferent and cold, / And a fool awaits his answer.” *Heine’s Poem The North Sea*, trans. Howard Mumford Jones (Chicago: Open Court, 1916), 110-12.

¹²¹ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 120. “Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem—those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply—you are yourselves the problem.” Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 113.

“Nun sind Sie bereits vorbereitet darauf, daß auch die Psychologie das Rätsel der Weiblichkeit nicht lösen wird.”¹²²

Rather, Freud takes recourse to storytelling. “Was ich Ihnen erzählt habe,” Freud explains, “ist sozusagen die Vorgeschichte des Weibes,” he claims.¹²³ That is, he would offer a certain prehistory of femininity, a retelling of that narrative—itsself a rather recent invention¹²⁴—which would attempt to record the obscure origins, and problematic coming-into-being, of the normal woman. Yet, this is not merely paleontology; for Freud rather undertakes a kind of material history. “Verfolgen wir die Parallele von ihrem Anfang an,” as he suggests. “Gewiß ist schon das Material bei Knabe und Mädchen verschieden; um das festzustellen, braucht es keine Psychoanalyse.”¹²⁵ And, certainly, a material history that would appear to leave much still to be told. “Das ist alles, was ich Ihnen über die Weiblichkeit zu sagen habe,” Freud explains. “Es ist gewiß unvollständig und fragmentarisch, klingt auch nicht immer freundlich.”¹²⁶ *Gewiss*, once again. But perhaps more importantly, there remains something still missing. And, indeed, the specter of loss haunts Freud’s

¹²² Freud, *Neue Folge*, 123. “And now you are already prepared to hear that psychology too is unable to solve the riddle of femininity.” Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 116.

And, in the end, Freud counsels patience, or poetry. “Wollen Sie mehr über die Weiblichkeit wissen, so befragen Sie Ihre eigenen Lebenserfahrungen, oder Sie wenden sich an die Dichter, oder Sie warten, bis die Wissenschaft Ihnen tiefere und besser zusammengängende Auskünfte geben kann” (Freud, *Neue Folge*, 145).

¹²³ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 140. “What I have been telling you here may be described as the prehistory of women.” Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 130.

¹²⁴ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 140. As Freud himself appears to recognize. “Es ist eine Erwerbung der allerletzten Jahre, mag Ihnen als Probe analytischer Kleinarbeit interessant gewesen sein” (*ibid.*, 140).

¹²⁵ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 125. “Let us follow the parallel lines from their beginning. Undoubtedly the material is different to start with in boys and girls: it did not need psycho-analysis to establish that.” Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 117.

¹²⁶ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 145. “That is everything that I have to tell you about femininity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary, it also does not always sound friendly.” Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 135.

narrative, much as he has haunted ours. For women, in Freud's prehistory, as is by now well known, are essentially defined by lack: castration, the missing phallus, penis-envy. These are, after all, "nichts als beobachtete Tatsachen," a parallel history that hinges upon a turning away from the mother. A moment, as Freud argues, a twist, specific to the woman's prehistory.

Ich meine, wir haben dies spezifische Moment gefunden, und zwar an erwarteter Stelle, wenn auch in überraschender Form. An erwarteter Stelle, sage ich, denn es liegt im Kastrationskomplex. Der anatomische Unterschied muß sich doch in psychischen Folgen ausprägen. Eine Überraschung war es aber, aus den Analysen zu erfahren, daß das Mädchen die Mutter für seinen Penismangel verantwortlich macht und ihr diese Benachteiligung nicht verzeiht.¹²⁷

It is a question of material, or, rather, material missing. At least, for Freud: "Auch der Kastrationskomplex des Mädchens wird durch den Anblick des anderen Genitales eröffnet. Er merkt sofort den Unterschied und – muß man es zugestehen – auch seine Bedeutung."¹²⁸

If difference is material and can be *seen*, to follow Luce Irigaray's now classic reading, the woman makes visible precisely that which is missing. "Now the little girl, the woman, supposedly has *nothing* you can see," Irigaray argues in *Speculum of the Other Woman*. "She exposes, exhibits the

¹²⁷ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 133. "I believe we have found this specific factor, and indeed where we expected to find it, even though in a surprising form. Where we expected to find it, I say, for it lies in the castration complex. After all, the anatomical distinction [between the sexes] must express itself in physical consequences. It was, however, a surprise to learn from analyses that girls hold their mother responsible for their lack of a penis and do not forgive her for their being thus put at a disadvantage." Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 124.

¹²⁸ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 133. "The castration complex of girls is also started by the sight of the genitals of the other sex. They at once notice the difference and, it must be admitted, its significance too." Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 125.

possibility of a *nothing to see*.”¹²⁹ Visible only in the negative, as the mirror-image of the man, Irigaray situates the woman as outside of representation, out of sight:

Therefore, the feminine must be deciphered as inter-dict: within the signs or between them, between the realized meanings, between the lines ... [...]. Off-stage, off-side, beyond representation, beyond selfhood.¹³⁰

And, therefore, we might assume, out of mind. Invisible, impossible to see, the feminine of the Freudian imagination exists in the negative, as the nothing to show. A *nothing to show* that is, nevertheless, on display, if—*pace* Freud—quickly enough covered over, once correctly read: as shameful, deficient, feminine. For it is, after all, a question of learning to read, correctly: namely, learning to read the presence or absence of anatomy as psychically and culturally significant.¹³¹ And cer-

¹²⁹ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 47.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³¹ Here, we will join yet another thread and return to Grosz. Again, as we earlier read, her work does not reject Irigaray, but rather repositions her bodily. “Freud’s account of the acquisition of masculine and feminine psychological positions can be interpreted plausibly as an account of the ways in which the male and female bodies are given meaning and structured with reference to their relative social positions,” Grosz argues. “While it is clear that Freud himself is not really concerned with the question of anatomy per se, seeking instead the psychological implications of anatomical differences, and while it is also clear that he nevertheless justifies his claims regarding the order of psychological events with recourse to a kind of confrontation the child has with (the meaning of) anatomy, his position can be understood in terms of how meaning, values, and desires construct male and female bodies (and particularly how their differences are represented). His postulation of the Oedipus complex and the castration threat can be read as an analysis and explanation of the social construction of women’s bodies as a lack and the correlative (and dependent) constitution of the male body as phallic.” Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 57-8.

And now we reach the crux of the matter. As Grosz continues, “The notions of phallic and castrated are not simply superimposed on pre-given bodies, an added attribute that could, in other cultural configurations, be removed to leave “natural” sexual differences intact. Rather, the attribution of a phallic or a castrated status to sexually different bodies is an internal condition of the ways those bodies are lived and given meaning right from the start (with or without the child’s knowledge or compliance). There is no natural body to return to, no pure sexual difference one could gain access to if only the distortions and deformations of patriarchy could be removed or transformed. The phallus binarizes the differences between the sexes, dividing up a sexual-corporeal continuum into two mutually exclusive categories which in fact belie the multiplicity of bodies and body types.” Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 58.

What, then, of the hand? Could we speak, similarly, of a multiplicity of hands? Or, rather, of a hand deformed by patriarchy? And the female hand as thus one possible effect, in no way natural, of the patriarchal order?

tainly, if we read the obscured, encrypted citation as the first instance of covering over in Freud's lecture, a play of presence and absence we have seen before, then, the second is perhaps even more curious: his contention that women may very well have invented weaving. "Man meint, daß die Frauen zu den Entdeckungen und Erfindungen der Kulturgeschichte wenig Beiträge geleistet haben," Freud argues,

aber vielleicht haben sie doch eine Technik erfunden, die des Flechtens und Webens. Wenn dem so ist, so wäre man versucht, das unbewußte Motiv dieser Leistung zu erraten. Die Natur selbst hätte das Vorbild für diese Nachahmung gegeben, indem sie mit der Geschlechtsreife die Genitalbehaarung wachsen ließ, die das Genitale verhüllt. Der Schritt, der dann noch zu tun war, bestand darin, die Fasern aneinander haften zu machen, die am Körper in der Haut staken und nur miteinander verfilzt waren.¹³²

The textile is, in the end, only natural, an imitation and elaboration of nature, harnessed through technique. In this iteration, the textile aims at concealment; its origin doubled, a specifically feminine shame, anchored in female biology, that is then transformed through the technical manipulation of natural processes (and, it should also be noted, natural bodies). "Der Scham, die als eine exquisit weibliche Eigenschaft gilt," after all,

¹³² Freud, *Neue Folge*, 142. "It seems that women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilization; there is, however, one technique which they may have invented—that of plaiting or weaving. If that is so, we should be tempted to guess the unconscious motive for the achievement. Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to one another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together." Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 132.

aber weit mehr konventionell ist, als man denken sollte, schreiben wir die ursprüngliche Absicht zu, den Defekt des Genitales zu verdecken. Wir vergessen nicht, daß sie späterhin andere Funktionen übernommen hat.¹³³

And thus, only in concealment—that is, of her lack, the absent penis which is, of course, to be understood as *defect*—does the feminine become visible, by providing something to be seen: the textile.

But, yet, this game of hide and seek is not quite exhausted. For the textile continues, in its many handy guises, to participate in this play of concealment and revelation, this dynamic of presence, absence, and consolation. Or, at the very least, its production would seem to. “Wir wissen nichts Neues darüber zu sagen, worin die disponierenden hypnoiden Zustände begründet sind,” write Freud and Josef Breuer almost forty years before, in their 1895 *Studien über Hysterie*. “Sie entwickeln sich oft, sollten wir meinen, aus dem auch bei Gesunden so häufigen ‚Tagträumen‘, zu dem z. B. die weibliche Handarbeiten so viel Anlaß bieten.”¹³⁴ Freud and Breuer would thus appear to define handiwork as a specifically female problem, its daydream-like automatism preparing a fertile ground for that most feminine of psychic afflictions: hysteria. Or, to turn the piece and read in another direction, excessive devotion to handiwork, and thus also to the day-dreams to which it apparently predisposes, could signal these incipient hypnoid states and hysteria. Therein, of course,

¹³³ Freud, *Neue Folge*, 142. “Shame, which is considered to be a feminine characteristic *par excellence* but is far more a matter of convention than might be supposed, has as its purpose, we believe, concealment of genital deficiency. We are not forgetting that at a later time shame takes on other functions.” Translation by Strachey, in Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 132.

¹³⁴ Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studien über Hysterie*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud, et al., vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1940), 92. Also in Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, 11. “We have nothing new to say on the question of the origin of these dispositional hypnoid states. They often, it would seem, grow out of the day-dreams which are so common even in healthy people and to which needlework and similar occupations render women especially prone.” Translation in Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. James Strachey, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. 2 (London: Hogarth, 1964), 13.

lies the danger. We have, it seems, found another edge. “Unsere Erfahrungen bringen hierüber nichts Neues,” Breuer and Freud reiterate;

sie beleuchten dagegen den Widerspruch zwischen dem Satze: ‚Hysterie ist eine Psychose‘, und der Tatsache, daß man unter den Hysterischen die geistig klarsten, willensstärksten, charaktervollsten und kritischsten Menschen finden kann. In diesen Fällen ist solche Charakteristik richtig für das wache Denken des Menschen; in seinen hypnoiden Zuständen ist er alieniert, wie wir es alle im Traume sind. Aber während unsere Traumpsychosen unseren Wachzustand nicht beeinflussen, ragen die Produkte der hypnoiden Zustände als hysterische Phänomene ins wache Leben hinein.¹³⁵

The thread is difficult to follow, the edge slippery, especially given Strachey’s rather archaic translation of *alieniert* as *insane*. Surely, this overstates their case. And, yet, what we can see: Breuer and Freud would appear to explicitly align women’s handiwork with a certain hypnoid state, as a symptom of hysteria. Are we to read literally? Are we to see the products of women’s handiwork—the stockings, cushions, laces, stitches, tracings, and fabrics—as symptomatic, the material correlates of incipient psychical disturbances. Let us turn our work once more, and read back again. Is women’s handiwork really thus not only one possible impetus to hysteria—giving, as it does in Freud’s reading, a material form to cover her shameful lack of the phallus and its consequences for her psychic life—but also a manifestation of hysteria itself: the material as “Produkte der hypnoiden Zustände,” emerging as disruptive hysterical phenomenon into waking life? Is hyste-

¹³⁵ Breuer and Freud, *Hysterie*, 92. “Our observations contribute nothing fresh on this subject. But they throw a light on the contradiction between the dictum ‘hysteria is a psychosis’ and the fact that among hysterics may be found people of the clearest intellect, strongest will, greatest character and highest critical power. This characterization holds good of their waking thoughts; but in their hypnoid states they are insane, as we all are in dreams. Whereas, however, our dream-psychoses have no effect upon our waking state, the products of hypnoid states intrude into waking life in the form of hysterical symptoms.” Translation by Strachey in Breuer and Freud, *Hysteria*, 13.

ria best worked in wool and silk? Whatever the answer—and Freud, as we know, offers few enough of those—handiwork, it would seem, is curiously symptomatic of the feminine.

Turning back to grammata.

So we again turn our work and read in a new direction. For Höch, too, the textile holds the possibility to reveal much more than it might hope to conceal. And it seems that, in the end, we are never far from the letter. “Man nehme Handarbeiten zur Hand—woher sie auch kommen—,” Höch writes in “Was ist schön?,”

man kann beinahe sicher feststellen, was für ein Mensch dahintersteht. Der individuelle Charakter wird sich nicht nur im Muster der Arbeit äußern und nicht nur in den verwendeten Farben, sondern ich behaupte: in jedem Stich.¹³⁶

Handiwork offers something to *see*, from which the embroidered textile emerges as a site of expression and revelation, not merely the material manifestation of a lack disguised—whether lack is defined as an artistic or biological deficiency. Rather, each stitch records, in the language of embroidery, an individual psyche and disposition. “So, wie die Stiche zur Bewegung des Ganzen stehen,—ob sie geföhlt mit dieser gehen oder widerspenstig sich abrechen vom gewollten Gang,” Höch writes,

ob sie groteske Änderungen innerhalb der gegebenen Bewegung bewußt vornehmen oder ungewandt sich vorwärts quälen—aus allem kann sich das sehenwollende Auge ein Bild der Persönlichkeit der betreffenden Urheberin machen. So wie der gute Graphologe an der

¹³⁶ Höch, “Was ist schön?,” 9. “One picks up a piece of handiwork—wherever it might come from—, one can almost certainly determine what kind of person is behind it. The individual character not only reveals itself in the pattern chosen and the colors used, but rather I suggest: in each stitch.”

Handschrift das Wesen, den Charakter und den Geist, und vieles andre eines Menschen zu sehen imstande ist.¹³⁷

And here, we find ourselves back at the beginning again. For, in this reading, each *Handarbeiterin* stitches her own secret story, between the lines, if only we know how to read. Once again, the hand becomes the passe-partout to a certain hidden knowledge, the instrument through which psychology becomes visible and material. And needlework thus becomes not merely the work of domestic ornamentation, but rather a text to be deciphered: as the trace of an otherwise too often wholly invisible history and labor. Against this pervasive absence, Höch attempts to restore the creator to her work, insisting on making the traces of the female hand legible. She is initiating us into a literacy of the hand.

But, already, we have played our own sleight of hand. Once again, we are caught in a play of presence and absence. The problem, of course, is a certain uneasy slippage between textiles, or, rather, between textile techniques. Etymology, again, provides a common origin in *text*, which, as we have seen, is also a kind of literal and metaphorical weaving. This is where the trouble begins. For weaving and embroidery are distinct practices: the former producing the material surface upon which the latter may work patterns.¹³⁸ Yet, as we have also seen, both weaving and embroidery—along with a host of other needlework techniques assiduously “read” as the material accretion of history in fabric—can be understood as semiotic practices, actual or metaphorical. “And indeed, in

¹³⁷ Ibid., 10. “[...] from all this the eye that wants to see can make for itself an image of the personality of the respective creator. Just as graphology is able to see in handwriting the essence, the character, and *den Geist*, and much more of a person.”

¹³⁸ Embroidery may be generally described as the production of patterns on textile with needle and thread. For a further discussion of these techniques, see Goggin, “An ‘Essamplaire Essai,’” 313-16, here 314; Mary Eirwen Jones, *A History of Western Embroidery* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1969); Synge, *Art of Embroidery*; David Jenkins, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, 2 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Greek culture,” classicist Ann Bergren reminds us, “where women lack citizenship, where men play all the parts in drama, and from which no poetry by women remains except for the lyrics of Sappho and fragments of a few others, the woman’s web would seem to be a ‘metaphorical speech,’ a silent substitute for (her lack of) verbal art.”¹³⁹ This tradition of thought—if not the political reality, as German women were granted a political voice, at least formally, with the right to vote in 1918—and the ideology of difference it implies and perpetuates, could be said to operate still in the discourse of craft. And it is along this edge of semiotic power made material that we propose to seam our pieces together. Or, rather, that we embroider upon the metaphorical fabric first spun and woven, and read, in the Greek tradition. For, we must also bear in mind that weaving and embroidery, like words and letters, also each possess a politics of revelation and concealment. And this, too, we might trace back to the *grammata*. After all, “[l]etters’ (*grammata*),” Anne Carson notes, “can mean ‘letters of the alphabet’ and also ‘epistles’ in Greek as in English.”¹⁴⁰ There is an edge of secrecy, a possibility of privacy and concealment inherent in this definition: “Letters make the absent present, and in an exclusive way, as if they were a private code from writer to reader.”¹⁴¹ Once again, it is a question of literacy. And of a meaning not always transparent, as letters once

¹³⁹ Bergren, “Language and the Female,” 16.

¹⁴⁰ Carson, *Eros*, 91.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 99. Here, Carson cites a riddle attributed to Sappho: “What creature is it (Sappho asks) that is female in nature and hides in its womb unborn children who, although they are voiceless, speak to people far away?” Sappho then provides the answer, “The female creature is a letter (epistle). The unborn children are the letters (of the alphabet) it carries. And the letters, although they have no voices, speak to people far away, whomever they wish. But if some other person happens to be standing right beside the one who is reading, he will not hear” (*ibid.*, 98-99). And in examining the various forms of what she terms “folded meanings,” Carson not only shows the malleability of the material bases upon which letters are inscribed, but reveals the ways in which this material—and its manipulation—operates as a condition of unfolding and deciphering (correct) meaning. See Carson, *Eros*, 98-101.

written “may fold away and disappear.”¹⁴² Read in this direction, weaving becomes the material, the epistle, through which the (embroidered) letters are organized, arranged, and contained.

Certainly, Höch positions embroidery as an expressive medium. And, in doing so, she takes she also attempts to radically revise and rewrite the trajectory of the tradition, to reveal it as a modern form. Indeed, reading Höch’s essays on embroidery through this tradition first reveals their own true, if concealed, craftiness. For this approach would seem to offer a revision to the Freudian paradigm, or better, a correction. Rather than merely concealing Freud’s constitutive feminine lack, embroidery—its bright colors, vibrant patterns, careful composition, and technical variety—emerges as a semiotic practice, ornamenting material with narrative. And if, in Höch’s essays, embroidery remains embedded within a scheme of sexual difference, fabric is not simply an impoverished medium of shame, as Freud would have it, but instead holds the potential to record material histories in each stitch and each pass of the shuttle. Or, as Höch writes in “Die stickende Frau”:

Meine Seele möchte dichten, aber meine Worte sind zu arm. Mein Herz will singen, aber meine Stimme ist nicht beweglich, doch mein Auge will alles wiederstrahlen, den Menschen zur Freude, dir zur Freude—ich kann nur sticken . . .¹⁴³

A too neat celebration of female agency worked in silk or wool would threaten to lose the thread and obscure the pattern of difference that renders the textile one of the only available texts to be written by the *weibliche Hand*. However, given Höch’s own experience with the needle, there is

¹⁴² Ibid., 100. As Carson continues, “Only the spoken word is not sealed, folded, occult or undemocratic” (ibid.).

¹⁴³ Höch, “Die stickende Frau,” 26. “My soul would like to write, but my words are too poor. My heart wants to sing, but my voice is not nimble, but my eyes will again shine everything back to the delight of mankind, to your delight—I can only embroider . . .”

surely an ironic edge to this apparently straightforward lament. After all, as she notes, “Ironie—ja—ich kann es nicht leugnen, ist mir manchmal eigen.”¹⁴⁴ For bound within a tradition of text, in which material, like the letter, could be read as folding, enfolding, and unfolding meaning, stitching—in all of its many textile workings—is certainly also a mode of expression no less politic, no less practically revelatory and no less skilled at concealment, than written words.

¹⁴⁴ Pagé, “Interview,” 27. “Irony—yes—I cannot deny it, is sometimes my own.”

Writing Hands

The Correspondences of Rahel Levin Varnhagen and Friedrich Nietzsche

The paper remained blank, the pen executed a series of neat but meaningless squiggles round the edges of the blotting-pad, and Roger's brain buzzed busily.

It was not the difficulty of the job which prevented him from forming even the initial "Dear Sir" of the letter; it was something quite different.

Anthony Berkeley, *The Silk Stocking Murders*

On a Wednesday afternoon in December 1824, at around twelve noon in Berlin, Rahel Levin Varnhagen composed herself to write.¹ Though we cannot be certain, it was likely December fifteenth.² Yet, if the precise date is lost to us in the vagaries of her vast correspondence—and its curious afterlife in transmission, in the various migrations of manuscript, archive, and edition—we still find much to read. Just as Levin Varnhagen finds much to write, beginning as she does with a precise record of conditions. “Berlin, Mittwoch Vormittag 12 Uhr. Dezember 1824. Trübes,

¹ The question of the name is here problematic, and, indeed, there are few elegant solutions. Born Rahel Levin, she later adopted the surname Robert; on 27 September 1814 she was baptized under the Christian names Antonie Friederike. That day she also married Karl August Varnhagen von Ense. She died on 7 March 1833, and was buried under the name Rahel Antonie Friederike Varnhagen von Ense. Given this profusion of possible names, I have followed the convention set by Barbara Hahn and have chosen, instead, an “impossible” name. “Der ‚falsche Name‘ soll vielmehr zum Ausgangspunkt eines Bündels von Fragen nach den Statuten von Autorschaft werden. Dabei läßt sich eine gewisse Sperrigkeit bei der Beziehung schreibender Frauen nicht vermeiden; auch Kunstnamen wie zum Beispiel ‚Rahel Levin Varnhagen‘ werden benutzt. Auch dies ist ein ‚falscher‘ Name, den die so Bezeichnete selbst nie benutzte, aber er ist so falsch, daß er zum Nachdenken zwingt. Ein Name, der zu lesen aufgibt, was er bedeuten könnte.” Barbara Hahn, *Unter falschem Namen. Von der schwierigen Autorschaft der Frauen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 18.

² Rahel Levin Varnhagen to Sophie von Grotthuß, 15 December 1824, Nr. 1183, in *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde. Nach dem Manuskript der Sammlung Varnhagen*, vol. 4, ed. Barbara Hahn (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011), 505. Unless otherwise noted, all references to *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde* are from this edition.

graues, nasses *Herbstwetter*; wärmliche, unbestimmte Temperatur. Sehr schwarze Straßen.”³ These curiously vague meteorological notations situate their author within a particular environment, a particular moment and place, while yet still eluding the kinds of familiar organizing principles, which would appear to locate the past, especially in the archive or the catalogue: namely, those details which may be plotted on a calendar, preferably Gregorian.⁴ Meteorology, after all, is most usually of little practical use to chronology. Even, indeed, for Levin Varnhagen herself. “Seit vorgestern, oder vielmehr vorgestern Abend,” writes Levin Varnhagen to Sophie von Grotthuß, *née* Sara Meyer,⁵ on this grey Wednesday,

als ich deinen Brief erhielt, theure Grotta, will ich dir antworten, und—ist’s glaublich—bin ich daran verhindert! Ein großer Bestandtheil aller Verhinderung ist meine possirliche Gesundheit. Mit kürzesten Worten: nicht zweimal die Woche mehr—so wechseln bizarre Übel, Krisen, Nerven- und Rheuma-*Tollheit* in mir ab—hab’ ich drei- bis vierminutenweise ein Erinnerungsgefühl—und gleich, und mir alsdann nicht gleich erklärliche *Munterkeit*—von Gesundheitsgefühl! Auf Ehre und Gewissen, leider! buchstäblich wahr!⁶

³ Ibid.

⁴ Yet dates, however specific, can sometimes present a rather problematic record of chronology in the correspondences of Levin Varnhagen. “Weit komplizierter war es, einen angemessenen Umgang mit den Datierung der Briefe und Tagebucheintragungen zu finden,” writes Barbara Hahn, describing the editorial practice guiding the first complete edition of *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*. “Auf den ersten Blick ist das *Buch des Andenkens* streng chronologisch geordnet. Da in den beiden ersten Ausgaben die Briefe in lockerer Folgen stehen, fiel nicht weiter ins Gewicht, daß die Daten oft nicht stimmen konnte. Je dichter die Brieffolge durch Hinzufügen neuer Briefe wurde, desto weniger ließen sich falsche Datierungen übersehen.” Barbara Hahn, “Rahel. Ein Buch des Denkens für die Nachwelt,” afterword to *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*, vol. 6, ed. Barbara Hahn (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011), 16-17.

⁵ *Buch des Andenkens*, 6:251-53. A childhood friend of Levin Varnhagen, though much of their early correspondence is now lost, Grotthuß also corresponded with Goethe and, later, was herself a prolific author. Again, much of this work appears to have been lost. For a further discussion, see Barbara Hahn, “Mit Goethe im Bad. Begegnungen im Exterritorialen: Rahel Levin, Sara und Marianne Meyer,” *Monatshefte* 92, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 336-50.

⁶ Levin Varnhagen to Grotthuß, 15 December 1824, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 4:505.

Thus it is not primarily conditions meteorological at issue, after all, but rather, perhaps a decidedly individual meteorology. A bodily interference in the processes of writing, true to the letter. “Das Abgeschmackte ist aber, daß ich die Feder ohne höchstes Echauffement nicht führen kann,” she then continues.

Welches mich in meinem ganzen geistigen Wirken und Treiben stört, meine Korrespondenzen so gut wie aufhebt; alles, was ich sonst zu Papier brächte, so gut wie getödtet hat; und schlimmstens, das, was ich dennoch schreibe, komplet entstellt.⁷

So not merely a question of weather or health, nor of writing, nor even one of correspondence, after all. Rather, it seems to become, in the writing, a question composed from both internal and external sensations, a particularly bodily experience within the compositional ecosystem, a precarious balanced. “Da ich nur zu schreiben vermag,” we continue reading,

wenn eine gewisse Entzündung in mir Statt hat, die Geist, Erinnerung, Kombination und Einfälle hervorbringt, in Licht und Bewegung setzt; so stört ein körperliches Hinderniß vollkommen diese ganze Operationen; ich habe keine fertige Gedankenpläne zur Ausarbeitung in mir vorliegen: sondern Einfall, Anregung, Gedanke, Ausdruck, ist alles eine und dieselbe Explosion und ein Fluß.⁸

Writing has to do with excitation and combustion, with the confluence of conditions, as recorded in ink and paper: a document inextricable from the influence of each possible annoyance, fleeting mood, or passing discomfort, such that the letter is the product, and index, of the moment of composition. Indeed, it is an almost natural process.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Hab' ich nun eine schlechte Feder—die mich noch mehr irritirt—oder bin nervenzitternd bis zur Bläue—welches nach der ersten Seite Statt hat—erhitzt, so wird Phrase, Wort, Ausdruck, Form und Reihe der Gedanken, Periode, Ton des Ganzen, davon affiziert; kurz, holprig, fließend, gelinde, streng, scherzhaft, ruhig; je nachdem! Und beinah immer brech' ich mitten im Erguß, ihn selbst, oder seinen Ausdruck ab.⁹

Yet a disruptive interference that, it would seem, is nonetheless the very condition by which the letter may be first begun—or finally abandoned. A decidedly material process—bound to feather and body, letters and animating nerves—the curious rhythm of the moment composes that which appears on the page. “Dieses für mich große Übel hat auch dir oft die schönsten Briefe vorenthalten: und *Einmal*, Freundin! wollte ich dir es doch vorskizziren,” she writes to Grotthuß. “So hätte ich dir vorgestern gewiß sehr gut geschrieben, dann ich war ganz voll von deinem Brief.”¹⁰ While yet thus still eluding that which the hand could hope to put to paper, trace out with ink, transform into letters. For Levin Varnhagen here records something of a vexed protocol, inscribing both the precise moment, and minutes, of writing, as well as that which must always already, and always again, escape the letter, that which always must only exist as an approximation within the enfolding capacity of the *grammata*: namely, presence.¹¹ Contained in the letter—as alphabet or epistle—is thus also a correspondence about the medium and possibility of transmission itself. Indeed, on that

⁹ Ibid., 4:505-06.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4:506.

¹¹ The Greek *grammata* is said to mean not only letters—both alphabet and epistle—but also writing and the weaving of pictures. On *grammata*, see above, Chapter 1, especially 37-41. Here, we are drawing discussions by Ann Bergren, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought” in *Weaving Truth: Essays on Language and the Female in Greek Thought* (Washington, D. C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2008), 13-40; and Anne Carson, *Eros The Bittersweet* (1986; repr., Champaign: Dalkey Archive, 1998).

afternoon in December 1824, we might argue that Levin Varnhagen is not so much writing about a certain state of mind or body, but rather drafting a pathos of the material and the material record, of obsolescence and absence. A state of affairs, which this particular letter would seem to instantiate, quite *avant la lettre*, in its truncated afterlife: “[Der Schluß fehlt.]”¹² And yet here, at the very edge of legibility and material history, we might still attempt to decipher that which persists at the fringes—of the body, of the page, of the letter—in the correspondences of lines and strokes, as a curiously poignant testimony to the bodily work of composition and transmission.

“Ein Raphael ohne Hände”¹³

Not unlike that of the *grammata*, this is a story begun long before. Perhaps, even, told in a kind of epistolary *boustrophēdon*, creating a network of to-and-fro correspondences, snaking across the confines of the page.¹⁴ Thus our chapter begins not in December 1824, but rather some thirty years before, with a curious exchange in the early correspondence between David Veit and Rahel Levin Varnhagen, here, at twenty-two years old, still Rahel Levin. Or, rather, we begin with a conversation already underway. “Ihre Anmerkungen beweisen, vielmehr ‚bestätigen‘ mir eine große Menge großer Sachen,” writes Veit on 24 October 1793;

¹² Levin Varnhagen to Grotthuß, 15 December 1824, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 4:507

¹³ David Veit to Rahel, 24 October 1793, in Rahel Varnhagen, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7, ed. Konrad Feilchenfeldt, Uwe Schweikert, and Rahel E. Steiner (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1983), 36.

¹⁴ As we know from the manuscript archive, Levin Varnhagen’s script was far from orderly or particularly easy to read. “Alle Blätter sind vollgeschrieben, egal wie groß sie sind, und immer diktiert der Text das Ende, nicht aber das Papier,” Barbara Hahn argues. “Fehlt auf den Innenseiten der Blätter der Platz, dann wird der Umschlag mit immer kleinerer Schrift beschrieben.” Indeed, as Hahn notes, this is not merely a problem of reading or deciphering an archaic script, but also a problem of transmission and transmissibility: “Welche Texte leicht zu überliefern sind und welche nicht, läßt sich schon an der Handschrift ablesen.” Barbara Hahn, *Antworten Sie mir! Rahel Levin Varnhagens Briefwechsel* (Basel/Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990), 15-16.

unter andern, das Sie in der Kunst des Homer und Goethe ein *Raphael* (klingt komisch) *ohne Hände* geboren sind; denn was ist dem Dichter die Sprachkenntniß, oder vielmehr, die Sprachfertigkeit, denn diese mangelt Ihnen eigentlich, anders als dem Mahler die Hand? [...] Ausführen kann ich die Idee noch nicht; vielleicht kann ich es gar nicht. Bisher hat mich Ihr Brief daran verhindert. So oft ich anfangen wollte, waren mir Ihre Anmerkungen zu lebhaft im Gedächtniß, und eben weil ich gar nicht zerstreut bin, muß ich mit großer Sammlung, ohne alle Nebenideen arbeiten.¹⁵

A curious place to start surely. The analogy itself a strange formulation, likening a facility with language to the facility of the painterly hand, as if the hand were (already) absent from the act of composition, in the implied genial lineage of Homer and Goethe and Raphael. It is as if to suggest that only the brush requires manual intervention, as if words could write themselves. For we notice, both pen and brush—the intervening technology at hand—remain elided terms in this particular equation, as if words could write themselves.

So how are we to read this passage? The reference—*ein Raphael ohne Hände*—can be traced to the first act of G. E. Lessing’s 1772 reworking of the well known Virginia legend, *Emilia Galotti*.¹⁶ Here, we encounter Emilia Galotti’s painted image, and its creator: the painter Conti, who laments the long journey from inspiration to realization, and proclaims the possibility of artistic creation uncoupled from the necessity of material translation and the intervention of the body.

¹⁵ Veit to Rahel, 24 October 1793, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 7:36-37.

¹⁶ The drama premièred on 13 March 1772 at the Braunschweiger Hoftheater. For a comprehensive discussion of the text history, structure, and reception, see annotations in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*, in *Werke und Briefe* vol. 7, 1770-1773, ed. Klaus Bohnen (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker), 828-927. Indeed, “Lessing schreibt sich mit seiner *Emilia Galotti* in die lange Tradition der literarischen Bearbeitungen des Virginia-Stoffes ein, dessen Attraktivität als tragisches Sujet vom Mittelalter bis ins 18. Jahrhundert (und darüber hinaus) ungeschwächt geblieben war” (ibid., 7:837).

CONTI [...] Oder meinen Sie, Prinz, daß Raphael nicht das größte malerische Genie gewesen wäre, wenn er unglücklicher Weise ohne Hände wäre geboren worden? Meinen Sie, Prinz?¹⁷

The importance of this citation for Veit, however, resides not so much in the bibliographical details of the allusion itself, or in the beauty of Emilia Galotti, as in the analogy he reads there, such that the writer's ability to manipulate language (*Sprachfertigkeit*) is likened to the ability of the painter—Raphael, at that—to manipulate color and line with his hand. Veit would appear to be here writing not only about the medium of creation, but also about tools and their curious extension into the world. Yet, Veit's analogy seems to hinge, nonetheless, on a certain dexterity, such that words and hands are equated as means for expression, the vehicles through which thought becomes manifest, whether in script or image. This is, however, a rather negative correlation. For Rahel Levin Varnhagen lacks precisely this instrumental, masterful touch presumably vouchsafed to her classical antecedents: her hands are missing. And what, then, of her words?

Here it is perhaps important to read, after all, that which Veit does not include in his citation: Conti's preceding lines, which position the hand as an imperfect instrument, the tool of an always inadequate approximation and manifestation of thought. Or, indeed, even the first revelation of the portrait, which would seem to provoke a momentary confusion of fantasy and representation. At least, that is, on the part of the Prince.

DER PRINZ [...] *indem der Maler das Bild umwendet*: Was seh' ich? Ihr Werk, Conti? oder das Werk meiner Phantasie?—Emilia Galotti!¹⁸

¹⁷ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*, in *Werke und Briefe* vol. 7, 1770-1773, ed. Klaus Bohnen (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag), 298.

And, yet, it is the hand, as we read, which would appear to belie this fealty between fantasy's beloved object and portraiture.

DER PRINZ Bei Gott! wie aus dem Spiegel gestohlen! *noch immer die Augen auf das Bild geheftet*: O, Sie wisse es ja wohl, Conti, daß man den Künstler dann erst recht lobt, wenn man über sein Werk sein Lob vergißt.¹⁹

CONTI Gleichwohl hat mich dieses noch sehr unzufrieden mit mir gelassen.—Und doch bin ich wiederum sehr zufrieden mit meiner Unzufriedenheit mit mir selbst.—Ha! daß wir nicht unmittelbar mit den Augen malen! Auf dem langen Wege, aus dem Auge durch den Arm in den Pinsel, wie viel geht da nicht verloren!—Aber, wie ich sage, daß ich es weiß, was hier verloren gegangen, und wie es verloren gegangen, und warum es verloren gehen müssen: darauf bin ich eben so stolz, und stolzer, als ich auf alles das bin, was ich nicht verloren gehen lassen. Denn aus jenem erkenne ich, mehr als aus diesem, daß ich wirklich ein großer Maler bin; daß es aber meine Hand nur nicht immer ist.—Oder meinen Sie, Prinz, daß Raphael nicht das größte malerische Genie gewesen wäre, wenn er unglücklicher Weise ohne Hände wäre geboren worden? Meinen Sie, Prinz?²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 7:297.

¹⁹ Just as Veit's letter—and, indeed, the entire correspondence with Levin Varnhagen—is composed of myriad citations, more or less disguised, so too is Lessing's discourse on art and representation. We should, of course, bear in mind that it plays out on the stage. And this passage, as the commentary indicates, is in fact a reference to the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, in which Lessing writes: "Das wahre Meisterwerk, dünkt mich, erfüllet uns so ganz mit sich selbst, daß wir des Urhebers darüber vergessen; daß wir es nicht als Produkt eines einzeln Wesens, sondern der allgemeinen Natur betrachten." Stellenkommentar, in Lessing, *Werke*, 7:931.

²⁰ Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*, 7:297.

That the historical Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino most certainly did possess hands is hardly the point at issue.²¹ For in Conti's discourse, genius does not inhere in manual talent or embodied skill. But rather, is removed from corporeal interference, realized precisely beyond this bodily limit as an inspired and pure ideal of creation. The very possibility of the *Raphael ohne Hände* depends, after all, upon this very definition of genius as ideal creator of an aesthetic harmony, unity, and totality unsullied by base materiality: the words that could write themselves.

And, yet, this certainly cannot be the whole story. For Levin Varnhagen soon enough takes up the pen to parry this imagined amputation. And in her response, composed one week later on 1 November 1793, she unambiguously refuses Veit's curious compliment, if compliment it was. "Sie haben eine eigene Art mich zu demüthigen," she writes. Yet, Levin Varnhagen begins her answer, already embedded in the middle of this particular letter,²² with a reference to the contemporary comic opera, *Doktor und Apotheke*.²³ Thus, from Enlightenment drama to *Singspiel*, we remain on the stage.

Machen Sie unterdessen andre Versuche, ,es steht Ihnen so gut frei zu probiren, als jedem Arzt'; (aus dem Doktor und Apotheker). Sie haben eine eigene Art mich zu demüthigen. Sie befolgen nicht einmal das milde Sprichwort, und geben mir mit der einen Hand, was Sie mir mit der andern nehmen; Sie nehmen mir mit ,beiden Händen', was Sie nur noch

²¹ The Italian Renaissance painter, better known as Raphael (1483-1520). On the importance of Raphael in German Romanticism, see Cordula Grewe, "Re-enchantment as Artistic Practice: Strategies of Emulation in German Romantic Art and Theory," *New German Critique*, no. 94 (Winter 2005): 36-71.

²² A brief montage of this letter appears in *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde* (2011). See, Rahel Levin Varnhagen to David Veit, 1 November 1793, Nr. 14, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:35-36. For a discussion of Varnhagen's editorial practice, see Hahn, "Rahel. Ein Buch des Denkens für die Nachwelt," 6:11-39. To the question of transmission, also see Hahn, *Antworten Sie mir!*, especially 11-26 and 27-52.

²³ Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Doktor und Apotheke. Ein komisches Singspiel in 2 Aufzügen*, libretto by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie. Première on 11 July 1786 at the K. u. K. National-Theater in Vienna.

können; denn Sie sagen ich verhindere Sie zu mahlen und geben mir (denn was ist er ohne Hände) den häßlichen Namen Raphael. Das haben Sie gut gemacht, so als ohnhändige Mißgeburt wollen Sie mich nun laufen lassen, und ich soll's noch als Kompliment nehmen; nein; darauf können Sie sich gefaßt machen. Sagen Sie mir ein andres.²⁴

The question, once again, would appear to be: how are we to read this passage? Where are we to begin? For this is a very strange excerpt, indeed, its movement taking in the popular stage and folk wisdom, Renaissance and monstrosity. A profusion of reference and citation, exploding the boundaries of the page to speak in a condensed private language of shared allusion, written, as it were, in shorthand. It is, indeed, almost a kind of code, and we must first find the correct key, if we hope to access and decipher the idiosyncratic play of meaning. Or so it might appear at first glance, especially if we were attempting to follow the peculiar hand preserved in manuscript.²⁵ So let us read again, and more closely. For this letter stages something of a *Knotenpunkt*—a nodal point—from which we might begin to disentangle various threads of this correspondence. Certainly, Levin Varnhagen reads in Veit's citation not genius, but rather monstrosity. Her recourse to the vocabulary of the inhuman refuses the analogy and rewrites it as insult, an ugly comparison contained in the genial name, and drawn from a perceived parallel in deformation: corporeal (without

²⁴ Rahel to David Veit, 1 November 1793, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 7:42.

²⁵ Levin Varnhagen's handwriting and the work of reading, see Hahn, *Antworten Sie mir!*, especially 11-26. "Bei der Lektüre von Handschriften wird das Lesen selbst zum Problem," according to Hahn. As she continues, "Will man diese Texte entziffern, dann beginnt man zu stolpern wie beim Lesenlernen am Anfang der Alphabetisierung. Mühsames Buchstabieren liegt vor der Emphase, die das Sinnverstehen signalisiert. Das fliegende Lesen, das sofort auf den Sinn schließt, wird in seinem Lauf gestoppt, denn ein handschriftlicher Text zerfällt nicht nur in einzelne Worte, sondern in Buchstaben und oft sogar zunächst in rätselhafte Linien" (ibid., 14). We might also posit a similar process of discovery to operate in the decoding of citations, buried and unattributed.

hands) and linguistic (without eloquence, *Sprachfertigkeit*). Levin Varnhagen is indeed doubly bereft, robbed with both hands.

*“Ein ohnmächtiges Wesen”*²⁶

This is, as we shall read, a profound wounding. And one, which traces out the border-line of precisely this cultural and linguistic edge, this dual exclusion, this dual excision.²⁷ For Levin Varnhagen’s curious characterization of the “ohnhändige Mißgeburt” echoes—in sound and form, to say nothing of content—an earlier formulation of her marginalized position and circumscribed reach, as a Jew and a woman. A position surely too easily obscured and transformed, rendered apparently innocuous and conventional by the name of Raphael, the missing hands becoming then the (absent) bearers of difference. The eldest daughter of Levin Markus, a banker and jewel merchant, and his wife, Chaie, *née* Moses, Rahel Levin was born, on 19 May 1771, into a relatively secure and privileged progressive Jewish family in Berlin.²⁸ She spoke and wrote Yiddish at home, in the Hebrew script; she also learned German and French, along with music and the piano, as well as sewing, embroidery, and other work of housekeeping.²⁹ Yet, unlike her brothers or her male counterparts,

²⁶ Rahel Levin Varnhagen to David Veit, 1 and 2 April 1793, Nr. 4, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:24.

²⁷ Marianne Schuller, “‘Unsere Sprache ist unser gelebtes Leben.’ Randbemerkungen zur Schreibweise Rahel Varnhagens,” in Rahel Varnhagen, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 10, *Studien - Materialien - Register*, ed. Konrad Feilchenfeldt, Uwe Schweikert and Rahel E. Steiner (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1983), 43–59. “Die Figur der Ambivalenz von Mangel und Produktivität kehrt wieder,” Schuller writes: “den Briefen der Rahel ist die Spur der Verletzung durch die Macht der kulturellen Normen eingetragen und zugleich überschreiten sie diese, indem sie ihrerseits eine Verletzung der kodierten Redenormen, der ‚fertigen Phrasen‘ vollziehen” (ibid., 49).

²⁸ Heidi Thomann Tewarson, *Rahel Levin Varnhagen: The Life and Work of a German Jewish Intellectual* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 17-22. See also the *Zeittafel*, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 6: 365-68.

²⁹ Tewarson, *Rahel Levin Varnhagen*, 26-33. “Education for Rahel was, of course, a lifelong endeavor, an attitude consistent with Jewish and Enlightenment thinking,” Tewarson argues. “Her letters suggest, however, that the most important intellectually formative period occurred when she was in her early to mid-twenties. At the same time as she

education vouchsafed her neither a physical nor financial independence. As becomes clear, in the spring of 1793, when Levin Varnhagen composes her first letter to Veit in Göttingen, describing a rather different state of affairs. “Wie können Sie aber nur so grausam sein, und mich ermahnen, ich solle oder müsse das alles sehen!” she exclaims.

Wissen Sie denn nicht, daß ich vergehe, ganz vergehen, wie etwas, das aufhört: ist es einem ordentlichen Menschen möglich, Berlines Pflaster sich für die Welt ausgeben zu lassen (dies abscheuliche, windige Klima nur! seit vorgestern hat’s zum erstenmale geregnet, und heut’ ist gut Wetter) und kann ein Frauenzimmer dafür, wenn es auch ein Mensch ist? Wenn meine Mutter gutmüthig und hart genug gewesen wäre, und sie hätte nur ahnden können, wie ich werden würde, so hätte sie mich bei meinem ersten Schrei in hiesigem Staub ersticken sollen. Ein *ohnmächtiges* Wesen, dem es *für nichts* gerechnet wird, nun *so* zu Hause zu sitzen, und das Himmel und Erde, Menschen und Vieh wider sich hätte, wenn es weg wollte, (und das Gedanken hat, wie ein anderer Mensch) und richtig zu Hause bleiben muß, das, wenn’s *mouvements* macht, die merklich sind, Vorwürfe aller Art verschlucken muß, die man ihm mit *raison* macht; weil es wirklich nicht *raison* ist zu schütteln, denn fallen *die* Gläser, die Spinnrocken, die Flore, die Nähzeuge weg, so haut alles ein.³⁰

That which we read in this earliest extant letter from Levin Varnhagen to Veit is a profound and complex response to his visit to Goethe in Weimar—undertaken as he moved from Berlin to Göt-

established herself as a salonnière and epistolary writer, she also made her most sustained efforts at self-education. Her letters inform us that she took up the study of Italian and English while continuing to improve her command of German and, as already mentioned, the principles of composition. The letters reveal furthermore that already as a young woman Rahel was unusually widely read in classical and European literature and in recent and contemporary German literature” (ibid., 28-29).

³⁰ Levin Varnhagen to Veit, 1 and 2 April 1793, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:23-24.

tingen to begin his medical studies—sketching out the limits that would describe this carefully composed correspondence, the placement of its two protagonists, and their shared, reciprocal project.³¹

A programmatic beginning, in which we read two distinct worlds: one large and one small.³² The further allusion to Lessing—his later *Nathan der Weise* and its meditation on religious tolerance—however, rather underscores the operative terms of difference, in this case, as not only those of religion, but also those of gender. Both Veit and Levin Varnhagen are Jews; only one is *also* a woman, located within a circumscribed space and defined through a circumscribed repertoire of familiar, and familiarly domestic, chores. Her hand, a domestic one. “Es ist mir als sähe ich das doch alles noch einmal, es wird mir nie einkommen, daß ich ein Schlemihl und eine Jüdin bin,” she writes later in that same April 1793 letter to Veit,

da es mir nach den langen Jahren und dem vielen Denken darüber nicht bekannt wird, so werd’ ich’s auch nie recht wissen. Darum ,nascht auch der Klang der Mordaxt nicht an meiner *Wurzel*‘, darum leb’ ich noch. Das hab’ ich Ihnen noch alles nicht gesagt, darum

³¹ David Veit to Rahel, 20 March 1793, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 7:1-9. Certainly, as Hahn argues, this compositional quality was fully intentional. “In kürzester Zeit entstand eine dichte Folge von Briefen, ein gemeinsam geschriebenes Buch, ein Publikationsprojekt avant la lettre: Zwei junge Juden, eine Frau und ein Mann, erkunden schreibend die Welt.” Hahn, “Rahel. Ein Buch des Denkens für die Nachwelt,” in *Buch des Andenkens*, 6:24. Published in 1861, their correspondence comprises over 500 pages.

Veit (1771-1814) was the same age as Levin Varnhagen, and the nephew-by-marriage of her girlhood friend Brendel Mendelssohn-Veit, later Dorothea Schlegel. He died in 1814. For further biographical details, see *Buch des Andenkens*, 6:348-53; to the relationship between Veit and Levin Varnhagen, see also Tewardson, *Rahel Levin Varnhagen*, especially 53-69.

³² Thus argues Hahn in her afterword to *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*. “Gleich im ersten Brief lotet Rahel Levin ihren Schreibort aus. Sie ist ein ,Frauenzimmer‘, eingesperrt in ein Leben, das ihr zu klein ist. David Veit dagegen kann sich bewegen; ihm öffnen sich die Häuser von Schriftstellern und Gelehrten. In der Welt des Denkens und des Lesens dagegen sind die Korrespondenten gleich; beide üben sich in Lektüren, die sie in kleinen Essays, eingeflochten in die Briefe, ausarbeiten.” Hahn, “Rahel. Ein Buch des Denkens für die Nachwelt,” in *Buch des Andenkens*, 6:24.

schreib' ich's Ihnen, daß Sie Vergnügen daran haben sollen. Lieber Veit, schicken Sie mir doch Ihre Adresse, ich möcht' Ihnen gern auf meine eigene Hand schreiben, das Einlegen ist mir fatal.³³

Schlemihl and *Jüdin* name the specific contours of this *eigene Hand*, a double exclusion in parallel with her imagined double disfigurement: linguistic and corporeal. Yet, Veit, in the name of Raphael, would remove Levin Varnhagen's hand from this milieu, as a symbolic figure of artistic dexterity, nonetheless rendered superfluous in an idealized vision of genius and ideal creation. Once removed from the familiar, traditional sphere of the Jewess, it is as if her hand must disappear altogether. Out of place and disoriented, even disfigured, in the Pantheon of Homer, Goethe, and Raphael, we might again read her plea to Veit: "Hören Sie aber nur um Gottes willen nicht auf, mir besonders von der Schönheit der Örter zu schreiben, und bleiben Sie (überhaupt) sich gleich, wo möglich!"³⁴ *Schlemihl* and *Jüdin* thus emerge as the telling details of difference and affiliation in this narrative, categories in marked contrast to the name of Raphael. That is, the distance separating the unmarried daughter of a progressive Jewish household in Berlin, at this moment still housebound in the bosom of her family,³⁵ and the Jewish son able to negotiate access to the institutions of German culture and education. And it is precisely this attention, access and fidelity, to the telling

³³ Levin Varnhagen to Veit, 1 and 2 April 1793, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:24-25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:24.

³⁵ Levin Varnhagen would leave her parents' house in 1808, to live independently in Charlottenstraße in Berlin. For a discussion of the separation from her mother and the letter to her mother, see Hahn, *Antworten Sie mir!*, 62-67. "Rahels Brief hat den Übergang von der Tochter zur allein lebenden Frau nicht nur zum Thema, sonder vollzieht diesen Übergang von Satz zu Satz," Hahn argues: "Als stetigen Wechsel von der Position einer unverheirateten Tochter im Gefüge einer Familie, hin zum Versuch ‚Rahel‘, ein Individuum mit einer besonderen Geschichte zu sein" (*ibid.*, 64).

details of a wider world at hand, which renders Veit such a valuable foreign correspondent.³⁶ Thus their shared project, which is not merely dependent upon Veit as point-of-access, but rather upon the reciprocity of dialogue across this distance. After all, we must read this letter to its end. “A-propos, lieber Veit,” she concludes, “ich habe mir für vier Groschen ein halb Buch fein Papier gekauft, und schneide mir mit Ihrem Federmesser die Feder selbst. Imaginez.”³⁷ This is then the literal correlate, the common pages, binding together this peculiar co-production in the shared materials of composition and the shared possibility of writing in the *eigene Hand*.

“... die Worte zur Hand”³⁸

And it is here at the fringes—again, at the edges of the body and the page—that we might turn to Friedrich Nietzsche, on the hinterlands of genre. For surely an encounter between Rahel and Friedrich is beyond the fringe of historical possibility, and so we must bring them together, from the edges, onto the page. And, that, indeed, is the material of their only meeting: in Nietzsche’s notebooks from June to July 1885, more than fifty years after Levin Varnhagen’s death in 1833. “Die Frauen in Europa, ganz abgesehen von ihrem eigentlichen Geschäfte (,Kinder zu legen‘) sind zu vielen guten Dingen nütze,” Nietzsche begins, before enumerating the various talents and pleasantries

³⁶ See also Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, ed. Liliane Weissberg, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press). “She prized his accurate, reliable reports, always remembered him for having suppressed not a word, not a detail, in describing his visit with Goethe,” Arendt writes. “The world was unknown and hostile to her; she had no education, tradition or convention with which to make order out of it; and hence orientation was impossible to her” (ibid., 95).

³⁷ Levin Varnhagen to Veit, 1 and 2 April 1793, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:25.

³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Morgenröthe*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 3, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: dtv, 1980), 208.

of the nations: of the Frenchwoman, the Viennese lady, the Italian and German. “Unter den Jüdinnen giebt es allerliebste Schwätzel-Weiber: das Muster davon, ganz in Goethesche Spitzen und Selbstgefälligkeiten gewickelt, war die Rahel.”³⁹ An unflattering portrait, to be sure. But surely also a rather strange context in which to hold up *die Rahel* as exemplary: a *Jüdin*, but certainly also a German.⁴⁰ Indeed, Nietzsche would appear to turn her own words against her, her own well documented, much written and revisited *Goetheverehrung*.⁴¹

But certainly also we might cast this as a question of material. Or, perhaps more accurately, as a question not only of material—as ink and pen and paper—but also of the inexhaustible material of the correspondence network itself: a certain prolixity of material set in a postal rhythm, and otherwise impossible to contain within a single, closed volume: as a completed project, a unified *Werk*. For certainly Levin Varnhagen’s correspondences present something of an organizational, archival conundrum, once their circulation has come to rest.⁴² That is to say, once the sheaves

³⁹ Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 36[5], in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 11, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: dtv, 1980), 551.

⁴⁰ To this question, and its relation to models of reading and writing around Goethe, see Hahn, *Unter falschem Namen*, 47-70. Certainly, this relationship between Goethe and his readers—female, Jewish, German—is not merely parasitic, nor characterized by a stable separation of writing and reading. Rather, Hahn argues, “Jüdinnen‘—diese Bezeichnung durchkreuzt in Nietzsches Text polare Konstellationen: Die Männerwelt der Produktivität, die Welt der Künstler und Genies, der ‚ewigen Juden‘, zu denen auch Goethe gehört, ist nicht völlig von der Welt der Rezeption, der Welt der Weiber zu trennen. Denn neben den Frauen, die die Künstler durch ihre parasitäre Liebe binden und lähmen, gibt es auch andere, ‚Jüdinnen‘, die diese Bindung ausschlagen, weil sie auch teilhaben an der anderen Seite. Wenn sich Judesein und Weibsein berühren, wird Goethe in dieser Berührung anders lesbar, als ihn sowohl ‚die Weiber‘ als auch ‚die Deutschen‘ lasen” (ibid., 48).

⁴¹ Goethe is also the subject, or rather organizing principle, of her first publication: G. [Rahel Varnhagen], “Ueber Goethe. Bruckstücke aus Briefen, herausgegeben von K. A. Varnhagen von Ense,” in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* (1812) no. 161, 162, 164, 169, and 176. For a detailed discussion of Rahel Levin Varnhagen’s publication history during her lifetime, see Rahel Varnhagen von Ense, *Ich will noch leben, wenn man’s liest. ‘Journalistische Beiträge aus den Jahren 1812-1829*, ed. Lieselotte Kinskofer (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001).

⁴² To the question of circulation and collection, see Hahn, *Antworten Sie mir!*, especially 16-19. “Schon vor dem ersten Transport sind Briefe von dieser Spaltung durchzogen: Sie haben einen Ort des Schreibens und einen des Empfangens; ihr Schicksal ist die Zirkelbewegung einer Schickung. Damit sie in die erweiterte Zirkulation des Druckens

of paper collect and age, turn brittle and fragile and perhaps yellowed with time: the lacework transparency of delicate material, painstakingly worked threads, which build their own fantastic constellations. Levin Varnhagen already has the materials to hand. And, has from the very beginning of her correspondences, as we have already read in that first *Ouverture*, written to Veit in 1793.

Ein *ohnmächtiges* Wesen, dem es *für nichts* gerechnet wird, nun *so* zu Hause zu sitzen, und das Himmel und Erde, Menschen und Vieh wider sich hätte, wenn es weg wollte, (und das Gedanken hat, wie ein anderer Mensch) und richtig zu Hause bleiben muß, das, wenn's *mouvements* macht, die merklich sind, Vorwürfe aller Art verschlucken muß, die man ihm mit *raison* macht; weil es wirklich nicht *raison* ist zu schütteln, denn fallen *die* Gläser, die Spinnrocken, die Flore, die Nähzeuge weg, so haut alles ein.⁴³

But also, of course, the nameless of work of “Schwätzel-Weiber” or their many cousins: anonymous gossips and storytellers, speaking—as we have read—in their own no less encrypted and complex material alphabet.⁴⁴

Perlentaucher

But what of these words to hand? Let us return here to the moment of writing, to the scene with which we began. For Nietzsche, it would seem, shares something of Levin Varnhagen's excitation,

eingehen können, bedarf es einer Sammelstelle für Briefe—einer Post, sozusagen—, die das Weiterschicken in die Öffentlichkeit organisiert” (ibid., 16).

⁴³ Levin Varnhagen to Veit, 1 and 2 April 1793, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:23-24

⁴⁴ Here, we might read with Friedrich Kittler, a veiled reference to *grammata* and Mallarmé: “Écrire— [...] Ce pli de sombre dentelle, qui retient l'infini, tissé par mille, chacun selon le fil ou prolongement ignoré son secret, assemble des entrelacs distants où dort un luxe à inventorier, stryge, noeud, feuillages et présenter.” Which Kittler then rewrites, “Als ‚Faltung dunkler Spitzengewebe‘, ‚die abständige Verschlingungen sammelt‘, sind Lettern von ihrem Zwischenraum bestimmt.” Friedrich Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme. 1800/1900* (Munich: Fink, 1985), 232-33.

and her bodily composure in writing. “Worte in uns gegenwärtig.—Wir drücken unsere Gedanken immer mit den Worten aus, die uns zur Hand sind,” Nietzsche writes in *Morgenröte*.

Oder um meinen ganzen Verdacht auszudrücken: wir haben in jedem Momente eben nur den Gedanken, für welchen uns die Worte zur Hand sind, die ihn ungefähr auszudrücken vermögen.⁴⁵

Hands, words, and thoughts are brought together in a specific moment, such that thought becomes a process contingent on words to hand. Or, to read in another direction, the words in hand condition the possibility of thought; only through the facility of the hand—to catch, grasp, hold, reach for meaning—does thought arise.

But, here, the problem of material would seem to be displaced by that of presence to hand. For where, and how, and by what means are we to record these words? And to what end? Indeed, it is at this point of the materials that the metaphorical chain risks overplaying the hand, for it appears that the hand alone does not suffice: technology must intervene. And thus also for Nietzsche, intervene in thought. But what of our location? Does institution also determine our hand? “Ein redender Mund und sehr viele Ohren, mit halb so viel schreibenden Händen,” claims Nietzsche in his fifth lecture *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*, held on 23 March 1872 in Basel,

—das ist der äußerliche akademische Apparat, das ist die in Thätigkeit gesetzte Bildungsmaschine der Universität. Im Übrigen ist der Inhaber dieses Mundes von den Besitzern der vielen Ohren getrennt und unabhängig: und diese doppelte Selbständigkeit preist man mit Hochgefühl als ‚akademische Freiheit‘. Übrigens kann der Eine—um diese Freiheit noch zu erhöhen—ungefähr reden, was er will, der Andre ungefähr hören, was er will: nur daß hin-

⁴⁵ Nietzsche, *Morgenröthe*, 3:208.

ter beiden Gruppen in bescheidener Entfernung der Staat mit einer gewissen gespannten Aufsehermiene steht, um von Zeit zu Zeit daran zu erinnern, daß er Zweck, Ziel und Inbegriff der sonderbaren Sprech- und Hörprozedur sei.⁴⁶

One speaking mouth, many ears (but are they listening?), half as many writing hands (after all, one usually require both ears to hear and only one hand to write): writing with no destination, no correspondent, no purpose besides taking dictation. The transcribing hand fails to excite or generate thought, as it depends on words entirely out of hand—and must rely, instead, on word of mouth. Indeed, the hand disappears entirely: “akademische Freiheit” is negotiated only between those with mouths and those with ears; writing hands would seem to potentially disrupt this neat separation of powers, should anyone bother to pay attention. But it remains to ask: whose hands are writing?

So, then it is a question not only of material, but of genre—of a shared lineage—as well. And Levin Varnhagen would appear to reject the very model of institutionalized *akademische Freiheit* before it had even been fully invested with the mantel of the modern University, created in the image of Humboldt. Already in 1809, she describes a poignant contrast and suggests a chronology in which the territories of old and new are already known. “Es war buchstäblich wahr,” Levin Varnhagen writes to Wilhelm von Humboldt on 28 June 1809, a Wednesday afternoon in Berlin. Humboldt was, at that moment, in Königsberg. Certainly, a long way for a letter to travel.

Wie können Sie mir nur etwas schicken, was ich tragen soll, und so wenig dabei schreiben; darum nun schreib’ ich so geschwätzig! Sie sind dort in der Dürre: möge dieser plauderhafte Brief Ihnen ein Repräsentant eines plauderhaften, vertraulichen, altberlinischen Abends

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten, Vortrag 5,” in *Werke*, vol. 3.2, *Nachgelassene Schriften, 1870-1873*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (New York: de Gruyter, 1973), 232.

sein! Deßhalb gebe ich mich so preiß mit Schreiben.⁴⁷

And with that, Levin Varnhagen deftly sketches the world of sociability, which the university would exclude.⁴⁸ Certainly, Nietzsche's Basel lectures, to say nothing of his failed career as an academic, would seem demonstrate one version of the failures of the university, still in the last decades of the nineteenth century. At its beginnings, however, Levin Varnhagen takes up a rather different approach. For the distance traced in this letter from 1809 is not merely that of time or space, but rather also that of methodology and identity: as a woman and a Jew, the new university would have been quite literally inaccessible; her method, similarly barred. "Ewig wird es in Ihrer Menschenkunde und Jagd, und in Ihrem Leben ein Brachfeld bleiben," she declares,

daß sie mein Wesen so übergehen konnten; von Äußerlichkeiten wie von kleinen Wällen und Thürmchen zurückgeführt, weit weg, zu leeren flachen Gebäuden in nachahmenden Umriß der gewöhnlichen Regelmäßigkeit!

Her conversational letter thus demonstrates a precise hand, and the insight vouchsafed to this particular "*ohnmächtiges* Wesen," invisible in the institutional model of thinking and writing.

Rather, we might venture, her research lies in more turbulent waters, and in the uncertain territory of correspondence and material traces. "Als die Sprüche und Auszüge nun gesammelt waren," Levin Varnhagen writes to Antonie von Horn in Berlin on 11 October 1829,

⁴⁷ Rahel Levin Varnhagen to Wilhelm von Humboldt, 28 June 1809, Nr. 429, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 2:130.

⁴⁸ "Auf der einen Seite klagt sie darüber, daß weibliches Urteil keinen Raum im Aufklärungsdiskurs findet, auf der andern nutzt sie Zwischenräume, um praktikable eigenständige Ausdrucksformen zu finden," Ursula Isselstein writes. "Immer handelt es sich dabei um Formen, die zwischen dem Leben und den etablierten Bereichen der Kunst angesiedelt sind, Formen, in denen Leben Kunststoff wird." Ursula Isselstein, *Studien zu Rahel Levin Varnhagen: Der Text aus meinem beleidigten Herzen* (Torino: Tirrenia Stampatori, 1993), 151.

For a more recent discussion of the Humboldt and its place in the city, see Sean Franzel, "Branding Berlin: The Humboldt University Celebrates Its Founding," *The Germanic Review* 85, no. 3 (September 2010): 250-56.

freute es mich, daß doch etwas Sichtbares, Faßbares, zur Mittheilung Taugliches, außer ich selbst, von so reicher, einträglicher Zeit übrig geblieben sei; ich ermaß die Freude, den Genuß, den es schaffen kann, an dem, den mir Ähnliches gewährt, wenn *ich's* finde. Das sind die Brüder, die wir auf der Erde haben und hatten [...].⁴⁹

Writing, in this account, is both the possibility of producing “etwas Sichtbares, Faßbares, zur Mittheilung Taugliches, außer ich selbst,” and the possibility of creating reciprocal correspondence and recognition. This, then, is the lineage into which Levin Varnhagen finally writes herself, not as *Schlemihl* and *Jüdin*, but as *Mensch*.

Und Sie geben mir nun auch das Glück, bei meinem Leben, zu erkennen, *und zu sagen*: ,Hier hat ein Mensch gesprochen, und gelebt: *ich Mensch* erkenne da, und sage dir es gern und freudig.‘ Das freut *meine* Seele: und ich sage es Ihnen gerne; *darum* dankbar.⁵⁰

And, indeed, by thus writing against the “*gemachte* Fabrikwesen,”⁵¹ Levin Varnhagen advocates a mode of correspondence sharply in contrast with institutionalized knowledge: she instead dives for pearls. “Kurz, ich machte die Universität durch,” she writes;

und diese Sprüche, aus einer *Unzahl* Briefen genommen, und aus wenig Merkbüchern—von Varnh. gesammelt—sind der Eintrag von stummen langjährigen, ignorierten Schmerzen, Thränen, Leiden, Denken; Freuden der Einsamkeit, und Langeweile der Störung. Perlen, die ein halbes Jahrhundert aus einer sturmbewegten Menschenseele warf, Schätze, die *sie* wie das große Meer enthält: wenn sie sich nicht zu affektirten Gartenteich einsperrt, wo ihr

⁴⁹ Rahel Levin Varnhagen to Antonie von Horn, 11 October 1829, Nr. 1421, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 5:291.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Schicksal *Stagnieren* wird: *unfehlbar*: wenn auch nicht bald bemerkt, und von Unkundigen bewundert, (wie so viele *Figura* zeigen!) Das Meer ist oft stürmisch, graulich, häßlich; besonders fügt sich's nicht.—⁵²

Writing is not merely a process of composition and accretion—as pearls are made over years or facts gathered, collated, and recorded—but rather becomes, instead, a collection culled from the profusion of material correspondences and material traces, left behind; the marks of irritation and excitation as creative, productive processes. For, after all, if the words remain unwritten, marked only on the nervous agitation of the body or the recalcitrant material, there is nothing to collect, organize, or bring back into circulation.⁵³ The work of correspondence, after all, depends upon the capacity of *grammata* to remain in transit: always arriving, always departing. “Adieu!—,” writes Levin Varnhagen to Wilhelmine von Boye, already in 1800 taking up the work of departure, once again,

—und sterb' ich—such' *alle* meine Briefe—durch List etwa—von *allen* meinen Freunden und Bekannten zu bekommen (und Finck'en sag', ich *befehl'* es ihm als eine Todte und Getödtete—nicht just von ihm—daß er sie gebe)—und ordne sie mit Brinckmann. Es wird eine Original-Geschichte und poetisch. Adieu!⁵⁴

And thus, correspondence presupposes not merely in the end, but always already also the work of collection. For when these letters finally arrive, where do they come to rest? And, once found, how are we to read their histories and their particular dispersed poetics of the distance to hand?

⁵² *Ibid.*, 290-91. For a more extensive reading of this letter, see Hahn, “Writing with/to Friends: *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*,” lecture given at Rutgers University (New Brunswick, New Jersey, n.d.).

⁵³ On circulation, see n42.

⁵⁴ Levin Varnhagen to Wilhelmine von Boye, 1 July 1800, Nr. 87, in *Buch des Andenkens*, 1:213

Reading Hands

The Curious Cases of Charlotte Wolff and Rainer Maria Rilke

Nur wahre Hände schreiben wahre Gedichte.
Ich sehe keinen prinzipiellen Unterschied zwischen Händedruck und Gedicht.

Paul Celan

Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge, Rainer Maria Rilke's only work of prose fiction, was published in 1910. It opens with a gesture of precision: the first line situates, locates, anchors the text, recording time and place, "11. September, rue Toullier." The writing of *Die Aufzeichnungen* itself bears a similar mark of precise placement, as scholarship has traced the beginning of Rilke's work to 8 February 1904 in Rome. Or, rather, this is the date Rilke claims for his work, belatedly recorded in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé some months later, on 15 April 1904. "Es war lauter Störung in der letzten Zeit," he writes from Rome that Friday,

und daß Störung um Störung kommen würde, das habe ich auch vorgefühlt als ich am achten Februar meine neue Arbeit begann; da zeigte es sich, daß meine Arbeitsweise (ebenso wie mein vielaufnehmenderes Schauen) sich geändert hat, so daß ich wohl nie mehr dazu kommen werde, ein Buch in zehn Tagen (oder Abenden) zu schreiben, vielmehr für ein jedes lange und ungezählte Zeit brauchen werde; das ist gut, es ist ein Fortschritt nach dem Immerarbeiten hin, das ich um jeden Preis mir erringen will; vielleicht eine erste Vorstufe

dazu. Aber es liegt in dieser Veränderung auch eine neue Gefahr; acht oder zehn Tage alle äußere Störung fernzuhalten, das ist möglich—; aber für Wochen, für Monate? Diese Angst drängte mich, und vielleicht ist sie selbst die erste Schuld, das meine Arbeit schwankte und mit dem Beginn des März abbrach. Und was ich für eine kleine Ausschaltung und Pause hielt, das sind, über mich fort, schwere Ferien geworden, die immer noch dauern.¹

So we begin with a disturbance, and a deferral. But as Rilke indicates, this is not the beginning of the story, merely a difficult, prolonged interlude. Already, nearly one month earlier on 17 March 1904, a Thursday, Rilke had written to Andreas-Salomé about this troublesome work.

Das *СЛОВО* ist fertig übersetzt. Dann fing ich im Februar eine größere Arbeit an, eine Art 2. Theil vom *Lieben-Gott-Buch*; nun stecke ich irgendwie mittendrin, ohne zu wissen, ob es weitergeht, wann und wohin. Allerhand Sorgen kamen, Störungen, Zufälle, und das nimmt mich alles immer gleich weit weg, so sehr ich auch an dem Meinen hänge. Aber ich muß nun wieder dazu zurück; gerade weil es schwer ist, vertraue ich, daß es doch noch eines Ta-

¹ Rainer Maria Rilke to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 15 April 1904, in *Briefwechsel, 1897-1926* by Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas-Salomé, ed. Ernst Pfeiffer (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1975), 145. Also excerpted in August Stahl, Kommentar in *Rainer Maria Rilke. Werke*, vol. 3, *Prosa und Dramen*, ed. August Stahl (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996), 867. “There has been a lot of disturbance lately, and I had a presentiment too that disturbance after disturbance would come when I began my new work on the eighth of February; it became apparent then that my mode of working (as well as my much more receptive observation) had altered, so that I shall probably never again manage to write a book in ten days (or evenings), shall rather need for each a long and uncounted time; that is good, it is an advance toward the always-working that I want to achieve at any price; perhaps a first preliminary step in it. But in this change lies also a new danger; to hold off all external disturbances for eight or ten days is possible—: but for weeks, for months? This fear oppressed me, and perhaps that in itself was primarily to blame for my work faltering and early in March breaking of. And what I took for a little disconnection and pause has, in spite of me, become a burdensome vacation that is still going on.” Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 15 April 1904, in *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1892-1910*, trans. Jane Bannard Greene and M. D. Herter Norton (New York: Norton, 1972), 146-47. The placement of the colon (—:), in place of the semi-colon (—;) would seem to posit a continuity absent in the original, punctuated there by a kind of separate and tentative break.

ges etwas wird, etwas Gutes.²

We are now on our way. Yet the moment of apparent precision is soon revised in the process of writing, as precise coordinates dissolve into the nebulous, uncharted situation of “mittendrin.” Indeed, what emerges— “11. September, rue Toullier.”—provides only a dubiously reliable instance of fixity and orientation, which just as readily dissolves to trace instead the process of navigation, of approximation and transformation: Rilke rewrites his Paris address—a room at 11, rue Toullier, which he rented upon arrival in Paris on 28 August 1902—as a temporal and spatial marker.³ With this rewriting, and the path of transformation so obviously recorded in the correspondence, Rilke undermines the very suggestion of authenticity that such a line should appear to secure.

It is a line not always easy to see. Especially not in the midst of this, “[e]ine Novemberlandschaft,” as Ellen Key writes in October 1910. “Für viele Leser wird dies Leiden vielleicht von der

² Rilke and Andreas-Salomé, 17 March 1904, *Briefwechsel*, 139. Again, see Stahl, *Kommentar*, 867. “The СЛОВО is translated. Then I began in February a larger work, a kind of second part of the *Stories of God*; now I’m stuck somehow in the thick of it, without knowing if it moves forward, when and in what direction. All sorts of worries came, disturbances, accidents, and always the same that takes everything far away from me, as much as I try to cling to that which is mine. But I must now come back to it again; precisely because it is difficult I trust that it yet still will become something, something good.” Unless otherwise noted, translations are mine.

³ William H. Gass, introduction to *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* by Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Vintage, 1985), vii. See, for instance, letters from Rilke to Clara Rilke on 2 September 1902, 5 September 1902, 11 September 1902; letter from Rilke to Auguste Rodin on 11 September 1902 in Rainer Maria Rilke, *Briefe*, ed. Rilke-Archiv, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1950). To the relationship between Rilke and Rodin, including this time in Paris, see Horst Nalewski, *Kommentar in Rainer Maria Rilke. Werke*, vol. 4, *Schriften*, ed. Horst Nalewski (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996), 928-36.

The question of placement, displacement, and fragmentation in *Die Aufzeichnungen* has been widely and variously discussed in the Rilke scholarship. A full review of the literature is not our purpose in this essay. See, for example, Friedrich Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme. 1800/1900* 4th ed. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003), 380-405; Andreas Huyssen, “Paris/Childhood: The Fragmented Body in Rilke’s Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge,” in *Modernity and Text: Revisions of German Modernism*, eds. Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 113-41; David Kleinbard, *The Beginning of Terror: A Psychological Study of Rainer Maria Rilke’s Life and Work* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Ulrich Baer, *Das Rilke-Alphabet* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2006); Huyssen, “*The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, eds. Karen Leeder and Robert Vilain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 74-79. For Rilke’s *Selbstdeutung*, see his correspondence with Witold Hulewicz, the Polish translator of *Die Aufzeichnungen*, specifically Rilke to Hulewicz, 10 November 1925.

wunderbaren Kunst aufgewogen, mit der die Seelenschilderung ausgeführt ist, eine Kunst, so vollkommen, daß man ganz vergißt, daß man nicht ein wirkliches Tagebuch liest, nicht ein wirkliches Lebensschicksal miterlebt.”⁴ Rilke attempts to remedy this forgetfulness and refuses the elision of author and protagonist, insisting instead on *Malte*’s difference. He takes up this thread from the Schloß Duino, writing to Andreas-Salomé on 28 December 1911,

[...] —dann ist ein Anhaltspunkt da: der *Malte Laurids Brigge*. Ich brauch keine Antworten auf meine Bücher, das weißt Du,—aber nun hab ichs herzlich nötig zu wissen, welchen Eindruck dieses Buch auf Dich gemacht hat. Die gute Ellen Key hat mich natürlich umgehend mit dem *Malte* verwechselt und aufgegeben; aber niemand als Du, liebe Lou, kann unterscheiden und nachweisen, ob und wie weit er mir ähnlich sieht. Ob er, der ja zum Theil aus meinen Gefahren gemacht ist, darin untergeht, gewissermaßen, um mir den Untergang zu ersparen, oder ob ich erst recht mit diesen Aufzeichnungen in die Strömung gerathen bin, die mich wegrißt und hinübertreibt. Kannst Dus begreifen, daß ich hinter diesem Buch recht wie ein Überlebender zurückgeblieben bin, im Innersten rathlos, unbeschäftigt, nicht mehr zu beschäftigen?⁵

⁴ Ellen Key, “Ein Gottsucher (Rainer Maria Rilke)” in *Seelen und Werk* (Berlin: Fischer, 1911), 231-32. “For many readers this suffering is perhaps offset from the marvelous art, with which the account of a soul is performed, an art so complete that one completely forgets that one is not reading an actual diary, is not experiencing an actual living fate.” And as she then later concludes, “Aber man kann auch hoffen, daß die Schilderung des Seelenzustandes eine Befreiung daraus wird, so wie Goethe sich von einem anderen Seelenleid dadurch befreite, daß er den Werther dichtete. Nur die Zukunft kann zeigen, ob Rilkes letztes Buch ein Wendepunkt oder ein Endziel ist” (ibid., 232). See also Hartmut Engelhardt, ed., *Rilkes Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 151.

⁵ Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 28 December 1911, *Briefwechsel*, 237-38. “An Titeln wie *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* ist kein Wort von ungefähr,” as Kittler argues, “Sie bezeichnen eine gezählte Buchstabenmenge in ihrer Materialität und einen zufälligen Schreiber—,diesen jungen, belanglosen Ausländer, Brigge—‘in seiner Einzelheit” (ibid., 406). “—in that case is a reference point there: the *Malte Laurids Brigge*. I need no responses to my books, that you know,—but now I sincerely need to know what kind of impression this book made on you. The good Ellen Key naturally promptly confused me with and relinquished me to the *Malte*; but no one but you, dear Lou, is able to dis-

In the end, the narrative sleight of hand that threatens to push the reader—and perhaps even the author himself—into forgetfulness, shipwrecked on foreign shores, nonetheless remains the result of Rilke’s accomplished, exhausting artistry. For, as has already been well established, the apparent immediacy of the “wirkliches Tagebuch” is, instead, a carefully orchestrated composition of rewritings and transcriptions. This is the almost visible tracery of revision that informs the text, a process of situating prose anew in time and place, so elegantly described by William Gass.

It is here [at Worpswede], with Paris safely over several hills on the calendar, that he is finally able to find a voice for his fears; and he begins to send to Lou Andreas-Salomé, his former lover and now a faithful and most valued friend, those stupendous letters which are the actual origin and part of the early text of *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. These long letters to Lou could not have been dashed off. They clearly come from notes, from prose trial and errors, so that when Rilke revises sections of them for inclusion in the novel, they are already in their third kind of existence.⁶

From notes and drafts about his time in Paris, and his time with Rodin, into letters, and then again into *Die Aufzeichnungen* as prose: it is a painstaking piece of handiwork, so neatly accomplished that the seams all but disappear into the lines of the final fiction. And it is precisely here—along this almost invisible piece of stitchery—that the figure of the hand intervenes, providing a means through which to piece together once more this history of revision and rewriting, and to read anew the tracery left behind by textual life lines.

tinguish and verify whether and to what extent he looks like me. Whether he, who is certainly in part made from my perils, therein perishes, after a fashion, in order to spare me the downfall, or whether I only certainly fell with these notebooks into the current, which wrenches me away and drives me over. Can you grasp that I am left behind this book quite as a survivor, at heart all at sea, idle, no longer employable.”

⁶ Gass, introduction, xiii.

“I am a very *happy Exile*”⁷

Let us be precise: this is a chapter about two poets, one of whom happens to have been a medical doctor. “For me poetry is blue,” as Charlotte Wolff says in a 1978 interview, “Science is yellow and sex is red. Only a poet is a good scientist.”⁸ It should perhaps be noted that by a coincidence of publishing the 1937 American edition of her first book, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, is bound in blue, the 1936 British edition in red.⁹ As she notes in the introduction, “Palmistry is both a methodical science and an interpretive art; it may be compared to medicine, which can be described in the same way.”¹⁰ Or perhaps her publishers, American and British, knew more than they realized, for according to Wolff’s calculations, passion, poetry, and science had long since come together in the hand. After all, the little finger—the finger of Mercury—not only represents “le talent diplomatique et l’habileté manuelle,”¹¹ but also the seat of “the imaginative and subconscious life, which,” she argues some years later, “depends so much on the sexual instinct.”¹² Only just beginning, the story Wolff traces of the hand and its scientific study is already tinged with the colors of romance.

⁷ James D. Steakley, “Love Between Women and Love Between Men: Interview with Charlotte Wolff,” *New German Critique* 23 (Spring-Summer 1981): 74.

⁸ Erika Duncan, “Portrait of Charlotte Wolff,” *Book Forum* 4 (1978): 291. The portrait was published on the occasion of the release of Wolff’s 1978 book *Bisexuality: A Study*.

⁹ Charlotte Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936; New York: Knopf, 1937).

¹⁰ Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 1. Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from the American edition, which appears to be an identical reprint of the earlier British edition. Except, of course, for its red cloth cover, and pagination.

¹¹ Docteur Lotte Wolff, “Les Révélations psychiques de la main,” *Minotaure* 6 (Winter 1935): 38.

¹² Charlotte Wolff, “Character and Mentality as Related to Hand-Markings,” *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1941): 370.

Yet more than a mere academic passion or intellectual fancy, palmistry¹³ was also—perhaps in the end, primarily—a means of survival. “In fact, I had no choice,” Wolff writes;¹⁴ “Thus I had to earn my living,” she continues, “not in my profession as a physician, but in a capacity which strictly eschewed medicine. I felt squeezed and twisted, a condition not at all conducive to peace of mind, the only possession worth having.”¹⁵ She published extensively, always in translation, most often into English. For it will not do to forget that Wolff spent most of her life in exile, at first only precariously secure, financially or otherwise; for many years she could neither call herself a physician nor practice medicine, and was often dependent upon the capricious good favor and generosity of friends, benefactors, and fashionable society.

Nonetheless “a very *happy Exile*,”¹⁶ Wolff—or, rather, the portrait that emerges from what remains: her autobiographies, correspondence and interviews; her research work on the hand, later on bisexuality, lesbianism, and the sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld; her poetry and fiction—appears to have lived a life quite in line with her persistent conviction, recorded in London just a few weeks before her death on 12 September 1986: “Und [ich] denke heute dasselbe, dass Emanzipation von

¹³ To do justice to Wolff and the seriousness of her work on the hand, it should be noted that she abandoned popular terminology quite early in her career—and certainly in her first scientific study *The Human Hand* (London: Methuen, 1942; New York: Knopf, 1943)—in favor of the more precise terms: “psycho-physiological” theory of the hand, “hand psychology,” or simply “hand interpretation.” I use “palmistry” here only in reference to her first book, which itself employs the term; Wolff, however, frequently excludes *Studies in Hand-Reading* from the inventory of her later, more rigorously scientific work published by Methuen in London: *The Human Hand, A Psychology of Gesture* (London: Methuen, 1945; 2nd ed., London: Methuen, 1948; New York: Arno, 1948), and *The Hand in Psychological Diagnosis* (London: Methuen, 1951; New York: Philosophical Library, 1952).

¹⁴ Charlotte Wolff, *On the Way to Myself: Communications to a Friend* (London: Methuen, 1969), 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 141-42.

¹⁶ Steakley, “Love Between Women,” 73.

sich selber kommt.”¹⁷ Wolff indeed appears to have lived very much free from constraint, if not—inevitably—from the accidents of history. And it is precisely this guiding line between creativity and coincidence that Wolff explores in her first autobiography *On the Way to Myself: Communications to a Friend*, a diary of sorts: “For a number of years I sought a form in which to organize the material of this book, which is an autobiography of a mind and not a chronicle of a life,” she writes in the preface,

After a number of false starts and much shaping and reshaping, I suddenly perceived, while on a holiday in France, the thread or pattern running through my life: the interaction of creativity with external events. It was while writing each morning of my holiday a mental diary that I became conscious that I was already writing the long-meditated autobiography. I felt I was actually *living* the form I needed. Yet the diary had not been undertaken with any deeper intention than that of escape. It was thus accidental that this escape should have provided the condition in which my creative urge could apply itself, thus substantiating my belief that creativity and outward events are interdependent.¹⁸

She had indeed always been living her writing, it seems, always escaping. Iconoclastic enthusiasms and serendipitous friendships, sometimes pioneering creativity, often striking unconventionality, and frequent hardship describe the lines taken by Wolff’s particular mode of emancipation. It is

¹⁷ Charlotte Wolff, interview by BBC World (German), 26 August 1986, audiocassette, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 11, Wellcome Library (London, UK). My transcription from the audiocassette; any errors are my own. In this interview, conducted in German, Wolff, then almost 89 years old, also mentions that she is planning her third novel.

Unless otherwise noted, all archival material relating to Wolff is from the collection at the Wellcome Library, deposited there by the British Psychological Society in September 2008.

¹⁸ Wolff, *On the Way*, 9; italics in the original.

difficult to resist Wolff's charms, or to mistake her acid tongue.¹⁹ She was, as Kadi (Stéphane) Hessel, the son of her close friend Helen Hessel, wrote from his post at the French Embassy in Algeria on 12 October 1965, a much admired sovereign: "Liebe, liebe Lotte, die Zeit ist breit und die Inseln des Lebens reiten auf ihrem Rücken. Always think of you as Queen Lotte I, the amazon founder of Wulfiland".²⁰

*"It happened like this."*²¹

So we begin again. This time not with the curious case of *Malte Laurids Brigge*, or even that of Rilke himself—not with a step backwards to the *Rodin* essay of 1903—, but rather with a step forward, towards a case even more curious: namely, that of Charlotte Wolff, M.D., Fellow of the British Psychological Society (F. B. Ps. S.).²² Born into a middle-class Jewish family on the cusp of the

¹⁹ Wolff to Mr. Funnell, 24 November 1957, TS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 1. Her correspondence contains several letters of complaint; those to noisy neighbors in London, including the unfortunate Mr. Funnell, are especially pointed.

²⁰ Kadi Hessel to Wolff, 12 October 1965, MS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 2.

²¹ Wolff, *On the Way*, 71. See also Charlotte Wolff, M.D., *Hindsight* (New York: Quartet Books, 1980). In her lifetime, Wolff wrote two autobiographies. The first, *On the Way to Myself* was published in 1969 and is, as Wolff writes, an "autobiography of the mind": "I have done it in a different way from the usual method of writing an autobiography, starting at the end, and travelling in a zig-zag journey through time. This documentary of the development of my mind is, broadly speaking, written as Hebrew is written, from back to front" (*On the Way*, 14). The second, *Hindsight*, was published 11 years later in 1980 and "is a completely different proposition," according to Wolff, "It is the history of my life from birth to the present day, and is told chronologically" (*Hindsight*, vii). The various *Lebensläufe* written by Wolff, and preserved in her papers, provide some documentation and corroboration, especially of her professional qualifications and career. C.V., Charlotte Wolff papers, box 13. See fig. 3.1.

²² Medical Diploma, Charlotte Wolff papers. Wolff was awarded her medical degree at Berlin in 1928 with a dissertation on "Die Fürsorge für die Familie in der Schwangerenfürsorge des Berliner Krankenkassenverbandes." After her emigration to London, in 1941 she was made a fellow of the British Psychological Society. See, Wolff, *Hindsight*, 170. "As I had already the publication of several papers in scientific journals to my credit, I was well on the way to being recognized as a pioneer research worker," Wolff writes of her early work in London. "On account of my work at University College, London, and at various hospitals, I was made a fellow of the British Psychological Society in 1941. Two years before, I had started to organize the results of my findings into a comprehensive whole, to be published in my book, *The Human Hand*." See also Wolff's various *Lebensläufe* [fig. 3.1]. C.V., Charlotte Wolff papers, box 13.

twentieth century, Wolff entered this world in the small town of Riesenburg, West Prussia—two hours from Danzig—on 30 September 1897, “a camouflaged boy.”²³ In fact, she was the younger daughter of Hans Wolff, a modestly successful if indifferent corn merchant, and his wife, Irene Wolff, née Engel. By her own accounts, indeed the only available to us, Wolff’s childhood in Riesenburg was a happy one; it was followed by a somewhat less happy adolescence in Danzig. At the age of nine, Charlotte and Thea, her older sister then aged twelve, moved to Danzig to stay with their *Tante* Auguste. Anxious to give their only two children every advantage of health and education, Irene and Hans Wolff sent both girls *en pension* to the capital city for orthopedic treatment to correct curvature of the spine, from which, according to Wolff, she and her sister suffered, and to attend school: first at Scherler’s *Höhere Töchtereschule* and then, for Wolff at least, the Viktoria Schule, a *Realgymnasium* for girls. When Wolff was thirteen, her father—who “loved beauty, had a thirst for education and travel, and looked on money as a means to an end,” much to the dismay of his more ambitious wife²⁴—sold the business and moved his family to Danzig. This move seemed to mark, for Wolff, more than just a break with her beloved Riesenburg, but the end of childhood itself.

These happy excursions and diversions came to an end when my parents moved from Riesenburg to settle in Danzig. I didn’t take long to realize that the loss of my home town was greater than the gain made through our reunion. The first setting of my life had gone, a set-

²³ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 3. In Wolff’s retelling of the “comedy of errors surrounding” her birth, her father first “announced the happy event to his only brother by telephone with the words: ‘My little boy has arrived.’ Perhaps he was drugged by wishful thinking, as the midwife had declared me to be female. I shall never know the truth about it. I heard the story only when I was in my teens. My uncle Josef told me about it with a wistful look and the words: ‘You have always been a camouflaged boy’” (*ibid.*, 2-3).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 22. See also Wolff’s account of her early childhood in *On the Way to Myself*, 50f.

ting intrinsically linked with the idealized image of my parents and a happy childhood. The impressions and experiences in the town of my birth had made my life. To be uprooted from one's beginnings is a shock, the effects of which can be immediate, but are, as a rule, delayed by circumstances which have a time table of their own.²⁵

Such shocks would, however, continue to mark the discontinuous line of destiny Wolff retraced throughout her life. "Yes, I made progress in my new life through the blessing of shock—because blessing it was."²⁶ Perhaps, however, intelligible only as a blessing in hindsight, this first loss of place seems to have demanded instead a strong line of defense: Wolff retreated from her life in Danzig, into the limited quarter offered by her room and the consolation to be found between the lines in verse and philosophy. While still at school, "[...] in the solitude of my own world in my own room, which was perfumed by the scent of Turkish cigarettes," Wolff began to write poems and sonnets, discovered Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Spinoza, and devoted herself to poetry, above all the German Romantics and the modern poets Trakl, Rilke, George, and Lichtenstein; or, as she remembers, "A small bed and a large table were the poles of my existence."²⁷

Out of this German hinterland, from the space between bed and table in *Westpreußen*, Wolff first discovered the wide world, in the guise of love and Berlin. Initially, having found her "dream love" in a photograph was but a further instance of retreat: "I lived mechanically as a schoolgirl in Danzig, while my real life was in my imagination. [...] I sought solitude more than ever because I

²⁵ Ibid., 20-21.

²⁶ Wolff, *On the Way*, 94.

²⁷ Wolff, *On the Way*, 38. See also, Verse, TS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 19. At least some of Wolff's early verse has been preserved, predominantly as unsigned typescripts with a very few manuscript or signed copies, in the Wellcome Library collection.

wanted to be alone with my dream love.”²⁸ Then, in the middle of the First World War, in the year 1917, Wolff—still a schoolgirl, it bears repeating— travelled three times to Berlin, the last without her parents’ permission or knowledge; here, she first encountered her “great love” Lisa in the flesh. Wolff’s love for women had always been as unremarkably self-evident to her family as to herself: “Love for women has been my natural inclination ever since I can remember. [...] It was taken for granted by my parents, relatives and the circle in which I moved. There was no need for me to pretend, hide or seek subterfuge.”²⁹ And although Lisa and her mother returned to Russia in 1918,³⁰ in these few visits to Berlin, Wolff had (almost without subterfuge) fallen in love. And

²⁸ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 27. In *On the Way to Myself*, Wolff describes Lisa as “a Russian Jewess with a ‘South Seas’ appeal” (53); little evidence of Lisa exists in Wolff’s papers. One photograph of a dark-haired young woman, presumably taken in 1915, is labeled on the back in Wolff’s handwriting: “sie ruhe sanft’ / 12/J. 15 / Lisa my great love / recovered in 1917.” Photographs, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 13.

It is possible that the unknown correspondent of one letter, signed “L”, could have been Lisa. See L to Wolff, 17 July 1934, MS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 1.

²⁹ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 73.

³⁰ Wolff, *On the Way*, 59. “Why they went I did not know, and I shall never be able to solve the mystery of their existence in Berlin and their departure into what had become the Soviet Union. From then on I went through my school days like a sleep-walker, only waking up during lessons in German literature and Latin” (ibid.). It appears that Wolff kept in contact with Lisa’s brother Grischa, a cellist, and Lisa’s Russian friends in Berlin; through them she learned of Lisa’s marriage to a Russian lawyer in Kharkov and the birth of a daughter, Irina. Lisa returned, with her daughter, to Berlin for three months in 1923, apparently under somewhat mysterious circumstances. “Lisa had some tasks to fulfill in Berlin,” Wolff reports, “which I think she was forced to do although she disliked them” (ibid., 196).

Here, the story begins to veer into the fantastic, tinged with melodrama and elements of the now familiar Cold War spy thriller; it is almost as if Hitchcock were to narrate this strange entanglement. Determined to see Lisa again, Wolff and her lover, Katherine, travelled to Russia in 1924. Under the pretense of giving a series of lectures at Russian universities on her essay “Eidodynamics,” about the film *Symphonie Diagonle* by the Swedish painter Viking Eggeling, Wolff and Katherine obtained visas—with the help of Käthe Kollwitz: “I told Käthe Kollwitz the truth about my desire to go to Russia” (ibid., 198)—and made the journey together to the Crimea in June. Their visit was apparently met with hostility and jealousy by Lisa’s somewhat sinister husband: “I had no doubt he was a privileged person, but what was his service to the state, I wondered. The Secret Service was the only answer to that rhetorical question” (*Hindsight*, 92). The trip was not a success; Lisa begged Wolff to cut off all contact. On the return journey, Wolff became gravely ill with dysentery, and was forced to recuperate at Lisa’s home in Khartov. By the autumn she and Katherine had returned to Berlin: “My youth had received the *coup de grâce*” (*On the Way*, 216). Wolff devotes the final chapter of *On the Way to Myself* to this episode, see 192-229.

through Lisa, a sculptress, and her wealthy, well connected if eccentric, family —“like people out of novel”³¹— had also made the acquaintance of certain artists and their circles, including such figures as Walter Mehring and Willi Jaeckel, who painted Lisa’s portrait:

He showed me some of his paintings, never turning his small blue eyes away from Lisa. He was obsessed with her. [...] When I saw the portrait Jäckel had painted of my friend, I became a fan of his. I thought it one of the finest examples of his art. He had painted her as an oriental version of the Mona Lisa, with a large red mouth, a dark-coloured face, and a white forehead which stood out through its height and contrasting colour. The picture was acquired by the Kunsthalle of Hamburg. I wonder if it has survived the autos-da-fé of the thirties.³²

The story, of course, does not end there.

That same year, in the summer of 1917, Wolff first encountered Else Lasker-Schüler in the Café des Westens. “I cannot remember how I made the acquaintance of this amazing woman,”

In an almost predictable twist, I have been as yet unable to locate any further references to, let alone a manuscript of, Wolff’s essay “Eidodynamics,” and have found no trace of the essay in Wolff’s papers at the Wellcome Library. It is, of course, possible that the essay is a part of the collection still closed to access.

Despite the curious absence of her essay in an otherwise extensive collection of papers, documents, letters, postcards, carbon copies, and all manner of drafts, Wolff does appear to be a recognized, if peripheral, figure in the study of Vicking Eggeling. “In 1979,” Wolff writes, “Eggeling’s film was one of the major exhibits in an exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London, from 3 May to 17 June, organized by the Arts Council of Great Britain. In the biographical note on Vicking Eggeling his friend and devotee, Ré Soupault (formerly Richter), wrote the following: ‘Amongst his closest friends belonged Dr Charlotte Wolff, friend of Dora and Walter Benjamin, who in her book *On the Way to Myself* gave a detailed account of the trip through Russia where she lectured at the University of Charkow on Eggeling’s film. It is she who thought up the name for this new art form: “Eydodynamics”—a name which was also accepted by Eggeling himself.’ As in many other instances, the past had returned to me with the showing of Eggeling’s film, which had been instrumental in one of the greatest events of my life—my journey into Russia.” Wolff, *Hindsight*, 94. See, most recently, Lutz Robbers, “Modern Architecture in the Age of Cinema: Mies van der Rohe and The Moving Image,” (PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2012), 317n239.

³¹ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 41.

³² *Ibid.*, 41. Although a number of Jaeckel portraits from this period would appear to potentially correspond with Wolff’s description, it is unclear whether Lisa’s (here, untitled) portrait in particular did indeed survive.

Wolff reports, “but I found myself sitting at her table many a time.”³³ Lasker-Schüler was certainly a striking figure; perhaps more importantly, however, she was an impressive conquest for Wolff, a smitten schoolgirl from the eastern provinces eager to capture Lisa’s affections.

I had seen her face, drawn by herself, inside her book of poems. She was Else Lasker-Schüler. I found her glamorous and strange, and though I was flattered that she spoke to me, I felt no shyness with her. I told her how much I liked her poetry. Had she heard what I said, I wondered? [...] My acquaintance with Else Lasker-Schüler broke some ice with Lisa. After a week or so, we spent most of the day together, and used to walk arm in arm up the Kurfürstendamm to the local police station, where, as an enemy alien, she had to report daily. And many a time she took me to Willy Jäckel’s studio.³⁴

In those four weeks of summer holiday, Lasker-Schüler did not confine their acquaintance to the Café des Westens or Jäckel’s studio, but rather accompanied Wolff into the avant-garde of war-time Berlin, through the work of Franz Marc and Herwarth Walden’s *Galerie Der Sturm*, and beyond.

Four weeks had passed and I had to go home and back to school. Four weeks, a lifetime in my life, had given me the unexpected opportunity to enter in reality a world I had vaguely dreamt of. It was a reality so manifold and composite that I found it hard to believe it was

³³ Wolff, *On the Way*, 56. “Her conversation was quite *terre à terre*: about food, which was a problem in 1917, and about her son, her constant preoccupation and worry,” according to Wolff. Nonetheless, she remained for Wolff an exotic figure. As she continues, “She might have walked into the twentieth century right from one of the Egyptian tombs in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, the treasures of which I had been admiring. This *garçonne* with the looks of an ancient Egyptian lived and wrote as if the world of the day did not exist. She called herself ‘Prince of Thebes’, and this was neither a pose nor a mental aberration. The self-styled elevation, together with a transfer to the other sex, had been her conscious decision at a difficult time in order to make life possible” (*ibid.*).

³⁴ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 40-41. In *On the Way to Myself*, the sentiment is much the same: “I was proud of her [Lasker-Schüler’s] sympathy and interest in me, particularly as I had found her on my own” (*On the Way*, 57).

real. My friendship with Lisa as well as my meetings with the finest exponents of cultural and artistic life were too powerful an experience to be absorbed without a shadow.

[...] I went back to my old life and pursued my promenades through Danzig, my reading and my writing of poetry. A thread of continuity with Berlin was maintained by a vivid and enlarged correspondence.³⁵

A correspondence, which, for a time at least, included Lasker-Schüler, who “signed ‘Prince of Thebes’, with the star of David as a full stop.”³⁶

It is an odd, almost fantastic history Wolff narrates. Already at an early age, she herself is almost rendered insignificant by this illustrious acquaintance; it offers, on the one hand, only a dubious legitimacy, and would seem, on the other, to threaten to relegate Wolff to, and contain her within, the margins of a more famous history. Indeed, Wolff’s presence, however fortuitous, in the company of modernism’s canonical masters remains a striking line of influence throughout her life. “Time and time again,” she writes,

I had been miraculously linked at the right moment with the most significant exponents of contemporary culture. It had happened through chance, through a whim of fate which released my own powers for what they were worth. Without any effort on my part, I was given unusual opportunities to thrive and to develop.³⁷

And more than ten years later, the story is very little changed. As Wolff remembers in *Hindsight*, “The events in Nazi Germany made the past in the Weimar Republic look like a fool’s paradise.

³⁵ Wolff, *On the Way*, 57-58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 56. No letters from Lasker-Schüler appear in Wolff’s papers at the Wellcome Library.

³⁷ Wolff, *On the Way*, 87.

[...] But fate dealt me a good card. It gave me a chance in a million through the people I met.”³⁸

Foolhardy it might have been, but her luck held even in those volatile Weimar years: she studied with Husserl and Heidegger in Freiburg, met Jula Cohn in Heidelberg, and made the acquaintance first of Dora and Walter Benjamin, then Helen and Franz Hessel in Berlin. Later, but not much, her work was admired by both the Surrealists in France and the high society—and the high modernists—in pre-war London.

Yet this peculiar “pattern of destiny”³⁹ often obscures, rather than illuminates. As she herself notes, the first encounter with London, in 1935 as the guest of Maria and Aldous Huxley, was something of a fairy tale.

Yes, in 1935 the same miracle happened again, in London, and for the fourth time in my life. Destiny is in ourselves, but we have to go out into the world to meet it. Time and time again I had been miraculously linked at the right moment with the most significant exponents of contemporary culture. It had happened through chance, through a whim of fate which released my own powers for what they were worth. Without any effort on my part, I was given unusual opportunities to thrive and develop. [...]

As a refugee I had landed on the wrong side of the fence, in a marvellous fairy tale which could never be my reality. Luckily, I knew this and could accept the wonders and experiences of the stolen goods bestowed on me. I enjoyed every minute of my exhausting

³⁸ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 132.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 171. Wolff comments on this curious pattern in both autobiographies. Indeed, the image of the “pattern” appears particularly compelling. “I experienced the same pattern of events as I had done since my school days,” she writes in *On the Way to Myself*, “indeed every time I had moved out into the world” (*On the Way*, 87). Or, later in *Hindsight*: “A pattern of destiny similar to that of the early twenties repeated itself—in a fashion. [...] With the terror of bombs close to my abode, abandoned by my protectors, I had reached a professional height, while my personal life limped sadly behind, a discrepancy only too familiar to artists and scientists of all time” (*Hindsight*, 171).

stay in London with its unforgettable encounters, three of which I shall now relate.⁴⁰

A fairy tale that nonetheless demanded of its heroine a certain kind of obscurity and obfuscation, a certain restraint:

I became aware, however, of an invisible obstacle, invisible to others but not to me. I could blind myself to the fact that I owed popularity and esteem in the world of the elect to some sensational appeal which left my own Self in suspense, or worse, hidden in a corner. [...] How differently had my pattern affected me when I lived in Germany! There I had met artists and writers on my own ground, for my real merits and my true vocation, namely as a poet and a person of perception.⁴¹

For no merely curious acquaintance or tiresome palm-reading toady, Wolff herself wrote and published poetry [fig. 3.2], translated Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* in collaboration with Benjamin,⁴² and enjoyed the permissiveness of fashionable gay nightlife in the Weimar Republic—while also occasionally attending medical lectures.⁴³ As a young doctor, she settled in Berlin and worked for

⁴⁰ Wolff, *On the Way*, 87-88. Wolff first visited London, before emigrating in 1936, to give consultations in hand-reading on the invitation of Maria Huxley, who also arranged many of the necessary introductions. These readings formed the basis of her first book, *Studies in Hand-Reading*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴² On Wolff's relationship with Dora and Walter Benjamin, see Wolff, *Hindsight*, 65-72. In *Hindsight* Wolff writes, "He [Benjamin] had written poems and translated Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*. In 1924 his translations were printed side by side with my own in *Vers und Prosa*, a monthly magazine published by Rowohlt. The two years I knew Benjamin belong to the most important of my life" (67). The 1924 edition of *Vers und Prosa* (Heft 6) found in the Wolff papers contains poems—apparently original work, not translations—credited to Lotte Wolff, and none attributed to Benjamin. Verse, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 19; cf. *Vers und Prosa* 6 (15 June 1924), 198-200. See fig. 3.2.

⁴³ Medical Diploma, Charlotte Wolff papers. See also n22 above. Indeed, according to Wolff, her studies were soon integrated into a familiar pattern, becoming something of a therapeutic refuge after her strange journey to Russia to visit Lisa. "I still had to complete my clinical studies and get through the final examination," Wolff writes. "The old pattern repeated itself. Work became a therapy for the trauma of loss. In between short periods of rest, I finished the set courses, and succeeded in all examinations except that in psychiatry, which I managed to pass a few months later. I was now a physician, but had to spend one year in hospitals to get practical experience in different branches of medicine. To start with, I was appointed to the well know *Virchow Krankenhaus*. I was provided with board and lodg-

the *Allgemeine Krankenkassen*, specializing first in antenatal care, then later in contraception and family planning. In response to escalating political tensions, Wolff was transferred in 1931 to the less controversial field of electro-physical therapy, becoming the Director of the Electro-Physical Institute in Neukölln in 1932.⁴⁴ After dismissal from this post in the spring of 1933 and, shortly thereafter, interrogation by the Gestapo—who declared Wolff both “a woman dressed as a man and a spy”—Wolff emigrated to Paris on 26 May 1933; it seems her family elected to remain in Danzig [figs. 3.3 and 3.4].⁴⁵ In Paris, she set up house with Helen Hessel and her son, Kadi. On 26 October 1936, with the help of Maria and Aldous Huxley, Wolff left Paris, landing in London once again, “with my bed made for me,”⁴⁶ this time for good. Indeed, soon prohibited to leave the city, Wolff lived out the war in London, “a prisoner at large,”⁴⁷ and, to pass the hours spent in cellars and bomb shelters, she set about translating Keat’s *Ode to a Nightingale* into German [fig. 3.5]. De-

ing and could regard myself as a self-supporting person and—a doctor.” Wolff, *Hindsight*, 94. For a more detailed account of Wolff’s trip to Russia, see n30 above.

⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion of Wolff’s career as a physician in Berlin, see Wolff, *Hindsight*, 95-111. She writes that “[t]he happiness in my service lasted until the beginning of 1931.” And here, she reads her transfer to electro-physical therapy as a sign of an impending crisis. Even in Berlin, in Wolff’s account, “[o]ne could no longer escape the warnings of an approaching crisis. I began to feel uneasy when, in the spring of 1931, the Physician-in-Chief of the *Krankenkassen* told me that it was dangerous for me to continue my job in the antenatal service and family planning for political reasons. He wished to transfer me to a more ‘neutral’ occupation, and suggested an apprenticeship in an institute for electro-physical therapy” (ibid., 108).

⁴⁵ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 110. In *On the Way to Myself*, Wolff records her date of departure as 24 May 1933 (69). In both autobiographies, as well as in later interviews and in her collected papers, Wolff is curiously silent on the fate of her family. She mentions only one uncle—“he looked and behaved like an old-fashioned German rather than a Jew”—who was incarcerated at Auschwitz (*Hindsight*, 22), although she does not note if he survived. Her sister died suddenly in 1928 during an operation; no mention is made of the death of her father, but it seems that her mother died in 1943, the date recorded on the back of a photograph of Wolff in her rooms in London: “At 9 Tregunter Road / deeply depressed in 1943(?) after hearing of death of my mother through a rescue organisation.” Photographs, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 13.

⁴⁶ Wolff, *On the Way*, 86. Or, as Wolff reports, “In the upshot, I was admitted to the *Promised Land* with about £30 and many letters of recommendation” (ibid., 119).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 142. Indeed, the beginning of Britain’s war with Germany marks another of the shocks punctuating Wolff’s life. As she writes of the 3rd September 1939, “This date put a full stop to a sentence of my life and I had to give up all my cherished activities for a time” (ibid., 141).

spite becoming a permanent resident in 1937, soon after her arrival, and a naturalized British citizen some ten years later in May 1947, Wolff remained always an exile: “I remain outside, a citizen of the world, an international Jew with a British passport.”⁴⁸

“... *into abracadabra of flesh ...*”⁴⁹

Always outside and out of place, this detour into biography is far from accidental, but rather of central importance for Wolff, as she reads her life, and the line followed by her scientific work. “I am an Exile!” Wolff exclaims,

The world where I was born, and even the world which gave me language, is not my world. I would be an Exile wherever I live. I am delighted to be one, because, [...] anyone who has to do either with the arts or with the sciences, as I do, lives in another world. We have to look at the world from a different angle. We are always an outsider. Therefore I want to underline just one word: I am a very *happy* Exile.⁵⁰

Emigration was “the greatest blessing,” she continues, “I became a pioneer, so to speak, and out of the necessity to survive in exile I wrote my first study *The Human Hand*.”⁵¹ Borders and their transgression, whether literal or metaphorical, would certainly seem to enjoy a privileged space in her history, an affinity happily—if only in hindsight—consonant with the exigencies that would compel a Jewish schoolgirl from Germany’s eastern frontier always farther from home.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 130.

⁴⁹ “Publisher’s Note,” *The Human Hand*, xv.

⁵⁰ Steakley, “Love Between Women,” 73.

⁵¹ Ibid., 73-74.

I have always loved border-lands, be they geographical, national or scientific. They represent the small field where the unknown hits the familiar with an equal impact on the mind and on the emotions. The regions of discovery in everything have always been the goal of my aspirations and desires.⁵²

The necessity of exile, in Wolff's particular historical situation, is rewritten as the condition of possibility for discovery and desire. And out of this necessity, Wolff creates not a tragedy, but a kind of cartography,⁵³ a narrative mapping in which she explicitly aligns the course of her life and her research, plotting them along complementary lines, contingent upon shared crossings and contested border-lands.

"[I]t is a voyage of discovery into the province of the Science of Human Nature," Wolff writes of hand reading, "from the first my curiosity was excited by this borderland of psychology."⁵⁴ The first leg of this particular voyage—Wolff's "long journey around the human hand"—began in 1931 in Berlin, where Wolff was first introduced to chiromancy by the well known psychologist Julius Spier.⁵⁵ "Everyone admired his pioneer spirit and his talent," Wolff writes, "He taught us a great deal because he had made some order out of chaos, although he had not been able to produce a scientifically valid method."⁵⁶ Wolff was surely not only referring to the hand. For, as she was

⁵² Wolff, *On the Way*, 63.

⁵³ Indeed, both of her autobiographies are largely organized around a series of places, and the movements between them. Thus the chapter titles of *On the Way to Myself* provide points of orientation for a journey then repeated, with slightly different coordinates, in *Hindsight*. Curiously enough, Berlin plays a markedly prominent role in *Hindsight*, after its equally marked absence from the *Fahrplan* of the earlier narrative.

⁵⁴ Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 1 and 4.

⁵⁵ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 109.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

well aware, the Berlin of the early thirties was itself a treacherous territory to navigate: “1932 was a year of doom for me.”⁵⁷ Chirolology, deriving as it did from the Greek χειρο- hand + -λογία discourse,⁵⁸ offered something of an antidote to this history, figuring the potential to discern order and create meaning. For against an otherwise unintelligible chaos, his intuitive, self-taught method read in the hand a diagnostic index “where a person’s character and certain conditions of health could be diagnosed.”⁵⁹ Intrigued by his manual insights, Wolff endeavored to further illuminate this “somewhat obscure surface,” lifting “chirolology out of the terrain of chance into a methodical, statistical study.”⁶⁰ Marked by just such borders and lines that defined Wolff’s exile, caught between geography and sovereignty, poetry and science, the hand becomes a “map” of personality—a text to read, decipher, and delineate, the trace of a territory to be explored, an unknown but nonetheless navigable, intelligible space. Or, as Wolff reads in “The Hand of the Director of a Large Fashion House” in her *Studies in Hand-Reading*: “Beneath a seeming wild confusion of lines this woman’s astonishingly small hands reveal a deep sense of order.”⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid. It is interesting to note that in *Hindsight*, this first mention of Wolff’s chirolological training is followed by an abrupt, change of scene: “1932 was a year of doom for me. Katherine [Wolff’s lover] left in the autumn of that year. Her father had impressed upon here that she courted danger for herself if she continued to share her life with a Jew-ess. I had to face my last months in Germany alone” (Ibid.).

⁵⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “chirolology,” online version December 2011, <http://www.oed.com>. According to the *OED*, chirolology derives from the French *chirologie* and the Greek χειρο- hand + -λογία discourse. In its earlier, now obsolete, usage chirolology referred to “the art of speaking by signs made with the hand or fingers;” in modern usage it refers to “the study of the hand.” Cf. *Duden*, s.v. “die Chirolologie,” accessed 18 October 2011, <http://www.duden.de/zitieren/10048525/1.7>. No entry for *die Chirolologie*, or related terms, exists in the Grimms’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. However, in line with the *OED*, *Duden* defines two senses of the word, both hinging on the expressive potential (whether conscious or unconscious) of the hand: “1. Lehre von der Deutung der Handlinien, die Ausdruck innerer Wesenseigenschaften sein sollen; 2. die Hand- und Fingersprache der Taubstummen.”

⁵⁹ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 109.

⁶⁰ Wolff, *On the Way*, 71.

⁶¹ Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 21.

It is unclear precisely how long Wolff studied with Spier or when, exactly, she struck out on her own, methodically studying the hands and illnesses of her patients with the *Allgemeine Krankenkassen* [fig. 3.6].⁶² Yet, it seems nonetheless clear that Wolff, at least in her own account, soon seized the opportunity to relocate chirology—“stuck in a border-land of guess work and experience”⁶³—along another border-land, one she had already often traversed, between poetry and medicine.

In gaining more and more practical experience I found myself working to find a rational basis and method of hand-interpretation which should make chirology a new branch of psychological knowledge, as chemistry once developed from the obscurities of alchemy. Slowly I got to grips with my problem and the creative process of finding a new path of knowledge affected me with an uplift such as I had experienced when I was writing poetry. The ‘German’ shock had destroyed the German language for me; I could hardly bear to hear it spoken and refused to speak it myself. Any thought of writing poems in my native language had become abhorrent. I realized that I had to translate my creative gift into my new profession.⁶⁴

For rather more than the vector of Wolff’s creative life, chirology becomes also a mode of translation, transition, and consolation against the shock of exile and the catastrophic loss of place and lan-

⁶² Spier to Wolff, 9 March 1932, MS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 1. This letter from Spier, the only one preserved in Wolff’s papers, indicates that Wolff had not attended his classes in some time. See fig. 3.6.

⁶³ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 109. Here Wolff is describing Julius Spier’s “intuitive” chirological method: “Spier was more than an intuitive person; he had a certain method of recognizing health and personality traits by means of the hand, but he had not medical or psychological training and remained, in my view, in spite of his great merit as a pioneer, stuck in a border-land of guess work and experience” (ibid.).

⁶⁴ Wolff, *On the Way*, 75-76.

guage. “The evidence of continuity of interest in my research built the best possible bridge between past and present,” Wolff remembers,

We all crave for continuity of contact and I knew myself to be particularly dependent on it, because of the loss of my native roots. I had always wanted everything to last, the moments of enjoyment as well as my bonds with people.⁶⁵

And in this displacement of poetry into medicine—which could be read rather, with Wolff, as a move from one kind of poetry to another—from Danzig to Berlin, then onward to Paris and London, the map of the hand would indeed seem to be the only map Wolff followed. Given Wolff’s particularly circuitous path, her work on the hand could be read as sharing a similarly peripatetic career, assembling a compelling travelogue as the bio-bibliographical trace of one story of German-Jewish exile in the twentieth century: an exiled poet’s Grand Tour into science and medicine. Or, as she writes (and rewrites) in a unpublished poem, preserved in at least two typescript copies, neither signed nor dated:

Senken die Hände
Langsam Erblassen
Lang lebt die Spende

Was wir erfassen
Geht rötlich zu Ende

Dunkeln die Zeichen
Am Himmel gemalte
Langsam Erbleichen—⁶⁶

Poetry, even in the writing, would seem to shift from paper to flesh, to be found now in the lines

⁶⁵ Ibid., 156.

⁶⁶ Verse, TS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 19. This particular poem appears at least twice in the collection of verse preserved in her papers.

written on, rather than those written by, the hand. “The years of research had been years of many discoveries. [...] Such moments were a illuminating and gratifying as the birth of a poem.”⁶⁷ *The Human Hand* itself, however, does not appear until the end of this particular story.

“Palmistry est mort[e], vive the psychology of the hand”⁶⁸

Published in 1942 by Methuen & Co. Ltd.—whose list included *Tintin*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and Oscar Wilde, in addition to Einstein’s *Relativity* and a number of famous initials: G. K. Chesterton, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, A. A. Milne, H. G. Wells, and P. G. Wodehouse, among many others⁶⁹—*The Human Hand*, Wolff’s first, definitive work on the hand and its scientific interpretation, arrived in Britain, much like its author, already in glamorous company.⁷⁰ “I already had a reputation of a sort, and I found people waiting to consult me,” she writes, “The old strange luck attended my endeavours.”⁷¹ And luck it was: in those war years, working under paper shortages and printing regulations, Methuen had rejected manuscripts by William Golding, Josephine Tey, and Evelyn Waugh.⁷² Upon publication, Wolff remembers that she herself “became a ‘somebody’ almost

⁶⁷ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 170.

⁶⁸ J. S., *Punch* (2 June 1943). Scrapbook, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 15.

⁶⁹ For a history of the Methuen List, see Maureen Duffy, *A Thousand Capricious Chances: A History of the Methuen List, 1889-1989* (London: Methuen, 1989).

⁷⁰ Charlotte Wolff, *The Human Hand* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943). Again, all citations are from the American edition. Although the typesetting and pagination is altered, the text appears identical to the earlier British edition, which had been produced under wartime printing regulations.

⁷¹ Wolff, *On the Way*, 120. This luck included her friendship with Alan White, then a director at Methuen, who not only offered to publish her book, but also assisted in correcting the English text.

⁷² Duffy, 120. “Manuscripts continued to pour in, though in decreased numbers,” Duffy reports, “The ledgers had recorded over 75,000 received since they were started in 1925 to 1944” (ibid.).

overnight,” carrying her research work beyond the hospital and onto a new stage.⁷³

Yet, like any sovereign uneasy in his grave, palmistry refused to remain dead. Or so it would seem. “And so Dr. Wolff was led into a room in which hung a heavy curtain,” reports The Editor of *Prediction* in 1943, “Behind this screen, obscured from view, sat the people whose characters were to be delineated.”⁷⁴ If we were to take the word of *Prediction*, it would seem that nothing more—nor less—than fantastic feats of prestidigitation were at hand and at issue; as if a certain kind of spectacular scientific *legerdemain* were to be put on display. If we were to read between the lines, however, Dr. Wolff, despite her credentials,⁷⁵ would appear to have only a tenuous hold on the legitimacy bestowed by scientific method. Indeed, the American edition of *The Human Hand*, published one year later in 1943 [figs. 3.7 and 3.8], opens with just such a gesture of dubious praise, in a backwards glance to Wolff’s earlier *Studies in Hand-Reading*, in which sixty-one readings provide compelling, not to say compellingly sensational, portraits of an astonishing collection of celebrated hands from the heyday Surrealism and High Modernism,⁷⁶ if not a textbook study:

⁷³ Wolff, *On the Way*, 151.

⁷⁴ The Editor [James Leigh], “Review of *The Human Hand*,” *Prediction* (March 1943). Scrapbook, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 15.

⁷⁵ See Wolff, *Hindsight*, 157. Credentials, which in any case were not sufficient for Wolff to practice medicine outside of Germany. A Fellow of the British Psychological Society since 1941, it was not until 1952, when she was granted her British medical license, that Wolff again became a recognized physician. “Whether we like it or not, patterns in our lives repeat themselves, and I found myself in a situation in England similar to the one I had experienced in France. [...] I became a permanent resident in England in November 1937, with an adjustment to my professional permit. I was granted permission to practise as a psychotherapist, but was still forbidden to do any medical work” (ibid.).

⁷⁶ Or, as Osbert Sitwell writes in *Harpers Bazaar* [undated], “Her collection of studies of hands includes many celebrated names, though I notice that they are all lumped together in the strange category of ‘Artists.’ She gives us, for example, readings of the hands of Daisy Fellowes, Bernard Shaw, Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Ravel, Cecil Beaton, John Gielgud and Anna May Wong. [...] I can thoroughly recommend this book to anyone interested in those discoveries that are certainly going to be made between the world as we see it and the world as it is sometimes felt.” Scrapbook, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 15.

Dr. Charlotte Wolff ... is so scientific, so modern, so brilliant, that one cannot help wondering in these analyses, where, perhaps 'chirology' ends and other aids to insight begin....

The meeting of Wolff and Virginia Woolf appears especially well documented, not only in Wolff's own autobiographies, but also in Woolf's letters and diaries. See Woolf's account in Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4, 1931-1935, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 357 and 358; and Virginia Woolf to Julian Bell, 17 December 1935, letter no. 3088, in *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 5, 1932-1935, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks (London: Hogarth, 1979), 452-53. "Dinner last night with the [Aldous] Huxleys: not altogether a sparkler," Woolf writes in her diary on Saturday 14 December 1935. "But Maria [Huxley] & I talked after dinner, about Lotte Wolff—did I say I'd spent 2 hours over their Dutch writing table under the black lamp being analysed?" (Woolf, *Diary*, 4:357). A footnote, however, records an incorrect date of birth for Wolff: "Dr Charlotte Wolff (b. 1902), a psychologist and a refugee from Nazi Germany, had been encouraged by Maria Huxley to come to London from Paris to pursue her studies of the human hand and its relation to personality and futurity; she saw VW at the Huxley's apartment in Albany on 11 December [1935]" (ibid., 4:357n). Woolf remained skeptical of Wolff's hand-reading method, writing a few days later on Tuesday 17 December 1935: "How terrified I'm getting of Ethel[Sands']s dressed dinner tomorrow! It makes a kind of ring around my mind. What I'm to wear: my velvet or chiffon: then my hair. When I'm there it'll be as easy as shelling peas—why this apprehension? Wolff never touched on *that* by the way" (ibid., 4:358).

In the letter to her nephew, Julian Bell, also dated 17 December 1935, Woolf again takes up the thread. "This week end Quentin [Bell] was up," Woolf writes; "and we had a crack on Sunday at Nessas [sic]. I was glad to find that we could still argue with some heat the question of palmistry. Aldous Huxley asked me to have my hand told by his friend—Maria's rather—Lotte Wolff; so I did; with the result that some things she got hopelessly wrong; others she guessed amazingly right. And for two hours poured forth a flood of connected and intense discourse. Leonard said it was all humbug; disgusting humbug; Clive said That's not the scientific spirit; you must try things. Nessa was on L's side. I kept my distance, having the idea that after all some kind of communion is possible between beings, that cant [sic] be accounted for; or what about my dive into them in fiction? By why marks on the hand? Why should deaths and other events indent the palm of the hand?" Woolf to Julian Bell, 17 December 1935, *Letters*, 5:452.

See also, Wolff, *Hindsight*, 144-48. "Up to the last minute before she was due to arrive, we both [Maria Huxley and Wolff] feared that she might cancel the appointment. But Virginia Woolf came punctually at the allotted time. She wore a black overcoat and a brown hat in the shape of a boat. Her manner was reserved and somewhat suspicious" (ibid., 144). Nonetheless, Woolf allowed her hands to be studied. And, as Wolff remembers, "[t]he interview ended apparently to Virginia Woolf's satisfaction. she asked me to come to tea the following Sunday at her house in Tavistock Square. I was only too pleased to accept. Maria [Huxley] was delighted and couldn't wait for me to tell her about my personal impression, and what I had seen in her hands. I cannot recall the answer I gave, but Sybille Bedford remembered that I told Maria: 'I think that Virginia Woolf is mad.' If so, I would have blatantly offended against medical ethics" (ibid., 145). At tea, their talk of hands turns to more practical applications of the hand to soothe anxiety. "Have you thought of doing things with your hands, like crocheting or knitting?" [Wolff] asked. No, she would be too impatient, was the answer. "What about typing? Just let the energy flow out mechanically, which is a possible help against cramping one's postures and stiffening one's limbs." "Yes, it makes sense," she replied. Pause. The silence lasted for about a minute, or maybe two" (ibid., 146).

The results of these meetings are recorded in *Studies in Hand-Reading*. Here Wolff describes Woolf's hands in terms of poetics: "To Virginia Woolf language is something more than a poetical problem. By means of words alone she establishes a contact between the visible and imaginative world; they enable her to bridge the gap which divides her from reality and to unite all contradictory elements." She then concludes, "Virginia Woolf has a natural talent for acting which is turned inward upon her own imagination. She is able to identify herself to such an extent with the situations and figures of her imagination that her ego no longer exists. It is as though it has vanished." Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 90.

But about the fascinating quality of the analyses there is not the slightest doubt.⁷⁷

Although made a Fellow of the British Psychological Society in 1941, her work—its curious methodology and apparently uncanny insights—would nonetheless continue to cast a suspiciously sensational shadow.⁷⁸ “Your risk,” warns the *Washington, D. C. Star* in 1943; or, as Elsa Maxwell’s *Party Line* presciently noted earlier that same year, “I’m keeping my hands in my pockets these days—or at least wearing my gloves.”⁷⁹

This is a curious turn of events. Here we must pause and read again—at our own risk, of course. For the set piece produced by *Prediction*, paraphrases an earlier account, quite differently situated, of Wolff’s “so scientific, so modern, so brilliant” method. William Stevenson, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D., then Assistant Director at the Institute of Experimental Psychology at Oxford University and Wolff’s supervisor and colleague, had, after all, already carefully described a similar scene in his preface to *The Human Hand*:

All she was given was a pair of hands, thrust by the owner through a heavy curtain which hid all else from view, so that every clue or hint that might give the person away, of voice, facial expression, gait, figure, demeanour, manner, was controlled. The readings still tallied, and not only with the subject’s own views of his own personality, but also with estimates made quite independently about him by others.⁸⁰

And, perhaps not surprisingly, had reached quite different conclusions.

⁷⁷ *The New York Times* (undated), quoted in *The Human Hand*. Only included in the American edition of the book, it bears noting that both *The Human Hand* and *Studies in Hand-Reading* were published by Knopf in the United States.

⁷⁸ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 170.

⁷⁹ *Washington, D. C. Star*, 27 June 1943; *New York Post*, 17 May 1943. Scrapbook, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 15.

⁸⁰ William Stevenson, preface to *The Human Hand* by Charlotte Wolff (New York: Knopf, 1943), ix.

It was clear that Dr. Wolff really did “read” hands, and that her assessments of personality came from such readings and not, as might have been the case, surreptitiously from the speech and other forms of expression.⁸¹

Whatever hocus-pocus the popular press might conjure, in this iteration, validated by the conventions of experimental method, scrupulous documentation, and unimpeachable institutional legitimation, Wolff’s readings become no mere parlor trick.⁸² Yet the metaphor is stubbornly persistent. Even Dr. Stevenson finds himself carried away, naming Dr. Wolff “a *natural* psychologist, a born soul-finder,” her book, “an artist’s impression, insightful, stimulating”—in contrast, Stevenson argues, to her more conventional (British, it goes without saying) colleagues.

Some of us become psychologists, but we are synthetic products, put together bit by bit, and there is always something detached and unfinished and all too scientific about us. Not so Dr. Wolff, who simply grew up into psychology as completely as a seed grows into a flower.⁸³

For even in all seriousness the project of Wolff’s study, her scientific method, could be read as itself a kind of sleight, though of a very different nature: the conjuring into existence of a medical phenomenon, from a state of nature. Wolff makes the hand appear, a conjuring in—and into—text. “And if you knew, girls, just what the hands reveal,” as Elsa Maxwell would have it,

you’d go back to wearing long evening gloves or mitts—or, preferably, mittens—for even

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² [Leigh], *Prediction* (March 1943). Bond Street and the seaside would seem to demarcate palmistry’s traditional territories: “Of course a great deal of superstitious dross has, over a period of centuries, become quaintly-mixed-up [sic] with the real thing. There was a time, indeed, when it seemed that palmistry would never be rescued alive from the seaside fortune-telling booth, or the Bond Street parlour” (ibid.)

⁸³ Stevenson, preface, x.

the length of your fingers can tell worlds about you. You're wearing your heart on your hand these days—at least for anyone who has read and absorbed Dr. Wolff's treatise.⁸⁴

Where before only the supernatural was to be seen, both Wolff and the hand emerge into scientific discourse and lay claim to scientific intelligibility. That is to say, the hand does not exist, at least not as a scientific text, until Wolff learns to read it anew. Ms. Maxwell would do well to be cautious.

“The romance of the hand is told by Charlotte Wolff”⁸⁵

This was, however, no conjuring from the ether. “From the very earliest times,” opens the first chapter of *The Human Hand*, “the study of the hand as excited man's curiosity and stimulated his imagination. Into the pattern of the lines on his palm he has projected the course of his destiny.”⁸⁶

Begun in 1939, *The Human Hand* followed a not dissimilar course as it was, in fact, already largely written, and rewritten, long before its publication.⁸⁷

This was a friendship with a decisive impact on my professional career, but little did I know this when I prepared, with considerable doubts and pains, the mongrel text of my book. I felt inadequate to express myself in a language of which I knew so little, and I settled for

⁸⁴ Elsa Maxwell, Party Line, *New York Post*, 17 May 1943. Scrapbook, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 15.

⁸⁵ *Grand Rapids Herald*, 11 July 1943. Scrapbook, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 15.

⁸⁶ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 3.

⁸⁷ Wolff, *Hindsight*, 170. “As I had already the publication of several papers in scientific journals to my credit, I was well on the way to being recognized as a pioneer research worker. On account of my work at University College, London, and at various hospitals, I was made a Fellow of the British Psychological Society in 1941. Two years before, I had started to organize the results of my findings into a comprehensive whole, to be published in my book, *The Human Hand*” (ibid.).

writing a ragout of French, German and English.⁸⁸

For rather than a new beginning, Wolff instead conceived of her book as expanding and elaborating a theory of hand interpretation that she had already put into practice and into print. It is indeed an “artist’s impression,” retracing once again Wolff’s well-trodden transit between art and medicine.

The psychology of the hand is, like medicine, an art as well as a science; and accordingly intuition plays a part in it. But intuition must not be confused with clairvoyance. [...] There is nothing supernatural about it. [...] Those who do possess it are the real artists, the good doctors, the most profound psychologists.⁸⁹

And here emerges a curious overlap, from handbook to hand, or manual to *manus*, and back again: both would seem to be shaped by material traces, the accretion of time as recorded in patterns of lines, folds, and creases; traces, furthermore, decipherable only by those with a certain knack for piecing together meaning. For *The Human Hand* is in all senses a handbook, a compendium of techniques, experimental data, and quantitative statistics, in the pedagogical line: “The aim of this book is to propound a method of interpreting the hand which every educated person can understand.”⁹⁰ That it is a scientific method goes *almost* without saying.

But not quite. “Science has rigorously ignored the study of the hand, regardless of the facts that occultism formed the basis of scientific discovery,” as Wolff argues, “The taboo which impelled scientists to exclude chiromancy from their researches has caused the study to fall almost entirely into

⁸⁸ Wolff, *On the Way*, 146. Here Wolff is referring to her friendship with Alan White, then a director at Methuen; he became the managing director in 1946, upon the death of C. W. Chamberlain. Again, for a more complete history of Methuen, see Duffy.

⁸⁹ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 6.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

the hands of charlatans and quacks.”⁹¹ Indeed, Wolff had long since taken matters into her own hands. By 1942, and the appearance of *The Human Hand*, she had published extensively on the hand, her work appearing in a variety of journals, scientific or otherwise.⁹² Bridging not only her time in Paris and her beginnings in London, but also the rift precipitated by this move into new territories—between vocation and avocation, poetry and medicine—, Wolff’s early research work, and its culminating, enfolding text, evinces a certain, sometimes strong, family resemblance. If Wolff did in fact set her course by the hand—from the *Allgemeine Krankenkassen* in Berlin to the clinic of Professor Wallon in Paris through the study of primates at the London Zoo under Julian Huxley and research at University College, London, to work at various hospitals with “mental defectives,” “delinquents,” “backward, nervous, and difficult children,” and “schizophrenics”⁹³—, then these early articles could be read as the material markers of the stations along the way, perilously crossing a war-torn Europe and carefully delineating the border constituting normal and abnormal, within and without.

I have elected to investigate mainly the hands of those with psychological abnormalities of some

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 3. In Wolff’s view, the same would seem to hold true for psychology: “But psychology itself has steadfastly ignored the hand, fearing to be associated with those who put their faith in the unscientific investigations of fortune-tellers and pseudo-psychologists” (*ibid.*, 5).

⁹² See, “Les Révélations psychiques de la main,” *Minotaure*, no. 6 (Winter 1935); “The Form and Dermatoglyphs of the Hands and Feet of Certain Anthropoid Apes,” *Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of London* (1937); “Les Principes de la Chirologie,” *Encyclopédie Française*, vol. 8, *La Vie mentale* (1938); “A Comparative Study of the Form and Dermatoglyphs of the Extremities of Primates,” *Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of London* (1938); “Character and Mentality as Related to Hand-Markings,” *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1941); and with Henry R. Rollin, “The Hands of Mongolian Imbeciles in Relation to Their Three Personality Groups,” *Journal of Mental Science* 88, no. 372 (1942).

⁹³ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 7f. Wolff is certainly bound by the medical discourses of her time; yet, as the Wellcome Library notes, these classifications, so self-evident to Wolff, should give us pause: “The arrangement of her personal papers also produces some uncomfortable juxtapositions. Her 1938-1940 series of handprints, for example, is grouped into Boxers, Chimpanzees, Children with Down’s Syndrome, and Primates.” Wellcome Library, “Our identity at our fingertips?,” *Wellcome Library* (blog), 26 November 2009, <http://wellcomelibrary.blogspot.com/2009/11/our-identity-at-our-fingertips.html>.

kind, for it is an axiom of traditional psychology that the abnormal provides the best evidence of the nature of the normal.⁹⁴

Often referring back to one or another of her earlier, often obscure, studies or previously published articles, Wolff's work on the hand weaves a dense fabric of shared formulation, allusion, and argument, each drawing on a promising line of quantitative evidence and research. Even the curiously un-theoretical, popular-minded *Studies in Hand-Reading* deploys this recursive gesture, pointing out that "[a] detailed account of my methods can, however, be found in the above-mentioned article in *Minotaure*."⁹⁵ A gesture, in turn, again repeated in *The Human Hand*: "From these various researches and a psycho-physiological theory I have built up a method of interpreting the hand."⁹⁶ The hereditary line of influence becomes more or less evident in the reading.

But just when did Dr. Wolff learn to read? Certainly by 1935, when "Les Révélations de la main," Wolff's first study of the hand and its scientific interpretation, appeared in the Surrealist journal *Minotaure*, the cover of which was "spécialement composée par Marcel Duchamp."⁹⁷ Here, Wolff begins her first essay along already familiar lines, carefully negotiating the border-land between science and spectacle, delimiting the new territory she would claim as her own.

La chiromnie est la connaissance méthodique des formes de la main, des doigts, des monts, du réseau de lignes et des signes accidentels. La chiromnie traditionnelle se sert

⁹⁴ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 7.

⁹⁵ Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 7.

⁹⁶ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 8.

⁹⁷ *Minotaure*, no. 6 (Winter 1935).

d'une terminologie symbolique empruntée à l'astrologie.⁹⁸

Signed by a diminutive Dr. Lotte Wolff, who is—let us not forget—already 38 years old, and published alongside texts by Brassai, Paul Eluard, Paul Valéry, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Stéphane Mallarmé, Salvador Dali, and André Breton, among others, these revelations were translated from the German by Pierre Klossowski.⁹⁹ Once again, Wolff's fantastic story strains credulity: this short text appears “[a]vec seize reproductions en fac-similé des empreintes de mains d'écrivains et d'artistes contemporains,”¹⁰⁰ many of whom had already found a place in the table of contents. An incredible compilation of prints, it was augmented by a handful of personages no less extravagant than André Gide—one of the first to translate Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen* into French—, Maurice Ravel, André Derain, Aldous Huxley, and Marcel Duchamp.¹⁰¹ And it is precisely this collection of bold, inky-black handprints, striking in their manifold forms and stark white lines, that captures the eye, reducing Wolff, and her analysis, once more to an almost inconsequence in the space between [fig. 3.9].

Yet only *almost*. For this now forgotten article—a scant seven pages—is a programmatic opening. Unlike other traditions, already well placed and well read, Wolff's chirolological meth-

⁹⁸ Wolff, “Les Révélations psychiques de la main,” 38.

⁹⁹ See Wolff, *Hindsight*, 124. Throughout this first project, according to Wolff, “Pierre Klossowski stood by my side as protector and interpreter when my French failed me” (ibid.). She had first encountered Klossowski, along with his brother, the painter Balthus, through his mother, Baladine Klossowska, a friend of Helen Hessel. And it was through Klossowska that Wolff found her way back home: “She fed me with Rilke's poetry on one hand and Jewish homeliness on the other, as well as being an echo of a cherished past” (ibid., 122).

¹⁰⁰ *Minotaure*, no. 6 (Winter 1935). This was another variation on a well established pattern, as Wolff remembers: “A publication in such a luxurious Revue as the *Minotaure* meant an immediate admission to a circle of sophisticated readers and the Surrealists themselves. The wind of chance had blown me again into the company of the élite—the creative artists. Was it chance alone, or was it the interaction of my own creativity with accidental events, that I found myself meeting the prominent Surrealists and their patrons?” (Wolff, *On the Way*, 76-77).

¹⁰¹ Many of these handprints, although catalogued and archived as a part of the Charlotte Wolff papers at the Wellcome Library, are currently inaccessible under the conditions of the Data Protection Act.

od—notice the early use of “chirognomy,” the occult cousin of “chirology”¹⁰²—requires introduction and explication: “Nous nous sommes écartés de la tradition chirognomique en élaborant notre terminologie propre d’après les notions de la psychologie de C. G. Jung et de W. James.”¹⁰³ Here, the first attempt of a gambit destined to be oft repeated, Wolff gestures toward the traditions of an occult past (l’astrologie), only to retreat and instead unfold a more reliably, and recognizably, modern terminology and methodology (la psychologie, *sans* Freud). In the end, however diminished on the page, Wolff’s text thus operates as the graphically central mechanism translating handprint, hand-reading, and meaning. Or, “[e]n considérant la main, comme projection de la personnalité,”¹⁰⁴ as the line mediating between psyche and body.

Indeed, already, lines have been crossed. And, curiously enough, in this opening salvo Wolff’s terminology remains firmly behind the enemy line. Let us read again—and read to the end—her opening lines.

La chirognomie est la connaissance méthodique des formes de la main, des doigts, des monts, du réseau de lignes et des signes accidentels. La chirognomie traditionnelle se sert d’une terminologie symbolique empruntée à l’astrologie. Elle caractérise les doigts par le nom et les attributs des divinités mythologiques. C’est ainsi que Jupiter (l’index) représente le pouvoir, la réputation, le talent organisateur et le sens familial; Saturne (le médius)

¹⁰² *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “chirognomy,” online version December 2011, <http://www.oed.com>. According to the *OED*, chirognomy derives from the Greek χειρο- hand- + γνώμη knowing, judgement, after *physiognomy*. In contrast to chirology, chirognomy is defined in much more overtly circumspect terms as the “alleged art or science of estimating character by inspection of the hand.” Its first use is recorded as occurring in 1868, over 200 years after chirology entered the lexicon (in 1644 as the title of John Bulwer’s *Chirologia, or the naturall Language of the Hand*).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 38. It is perhaps interesting to note that Wolff’s bibliographical index file system—notations written on index cards and book request slips from the British Library, organized alphabetically—contains no references to Freud. Index System, MS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 12.

¹⁰⁴ Wolff, “Les Révélations psychiques de la main,” 38.

la connaissance objective du monde et la conscience; Apollon (l'annulaire) la chance et le talent artistique; Mercure (l'auriculaire) le talent diplomatique et l'habileté manuelle. La pouce symbolise la personnalité et le niveau spirituel et moral du sujet.¹⁰⁵

A rather straightforward definition is quickly followed by a modification (“la chiromnie traditionnelle”) and its elaboration: “une terminologie symbolique empruntée à l’astrologie.” If each finger conceals a God, then the hand itself contains strange territories, chaotic border-lines, and invisible kingdoms: its latitude and longitude marking out the measure of each individual psyche, as surely, so the implication could be read, as the stars divide the heavens and provide points of navigation for those lost at sea [fig. 3.10]. Yet if Wolff begins with tradition, she quickly abandons this line of attack to develop, as we know, her own “terminologie propre.” And here precisely the translation becomes tricky to read, for what is proper to hand—and to science—proves decidedly difficult to disentangle.

In 1935, Wolff’s hand would still appear to bear a curious—perhaps even suspicious—resemblance to the hand of traditional chiromny. Three years later, in the *Encyclopédie Française*, her contribution on “Les principes de la chiologie” once again inhabits the margins of science: “En marge de la caractérologie: Sciences en formation,” chiology is the first of a somewhat scientifically dubious series comprising *Chiologie - Graphologie - Physiognomie*. Importantly, however questionable the company in which she finds herself, Wolff here abandons the last vestiges of occult tradition and deploys a strictly scientific, anatomically correct terminology.

La première transversale (comme je propose de nommer cette ligne, connue dans la chiologie traditionnelle sous le nom de ligne de tête) jaillit de la même source, sinon tout près de la

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

demi-circulaire; elle s'étend dans la paume, du bord médian vers le bord latéral.¹⁰⁶

And if by 1942 the publisher's note accompanying *The Human Hand* could proclaim—with legitimizing fervor—that “[a] clear distinction should be drawn at the outset between the activities of the author of this book, a professional psychologist and physician who interprets hands with a scientific aim, and the activities of people who read hands and dabble in psychology,”¹⁰⁷ then it must be remembered that this distinction was, at the beginning of Wolff's career, anything but self-evident. Rather, this scientific voice was some seven years in the making.

So let us begin yet again. *The Human Hand* is surely the beneficiary of this shift; or, to state the case more clearly, such a handbook could have been written only once *palmistry* had been invested with the vocabulary of science, to assume the mantle of *chirology*. Thus the slippage between an earlier “chirognomy” and the slightly later assumption of “chirology” is part and parcel of Wolff's methodological program: the founding of the hand as a new territory of legitimate scientific investigation. Which is not to say that *The Human Hand* does not also acknowledge its occult beginnings, disentangling its plot—much like “Les Révélations” before it—from the narratives of charlatanism. Indeed, it begins with an already familiar opening.

From the very earliest times the study of the hand has excited man's curiosity and stimulated his imagination. Into the pattern of the lines on his palm he has projected the course of

¹⁰⁶ Wolff, “Les principes de la chiologie,” 8'58-7. See also Henri Wallon, introduction to “Sciences en formation,” *Encyclopédie Française*, vol. 8, *La Vie mentale* (1938). Here, Wallon argues for a kind of waiting game, the legitimacy bestowed by arriving at the propitious moment: “D'âge en âge, en présence d'une instance encore mystérieuse, un occultisme larvé fait appel des limitations qu'imposent à la pensée les catégories existantes. Il n'y a pas de sciences définitivement occultes. Dans une gangue de rapports souvent chimériques, elles transmettent quelques parcelles d'expérience authentique et l'intuition de corrélations à déchiffrer jusqu'à ce que vienne l'époque favorable. Epoque qui paraît poindre aujourd'hui pour la graphologie, la chiologie, la physiognomonie” (ibid., 8'58-3).

¹⁰⁷ Publisher's note to *The Human Hand* by Charlotte Wolff (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), xv.

his destiny. Even the scientific rationalism of the last century did not succeed in defeating this credulity. One has only to mention the word “palmistry,” with the picture it calls up of gypsies at country fairs, to realize how exclusively the interpretation of the hand has become associated with charlatanism.¹⁰⁸

Wolff recounts, in this beginning—which is, after all, a rewriting of earlier beginnings, of stories already told—a parallel history, which must first reject its own marginal origins before claiming a place in *l'époque favorable* of twentieth-century science. And in the place of mythological Gods and occult practices, Wolff names an alternate origin for her work, situating it within a classical, medical tradition: Plato, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle stand at the beginning of this history, followed by “only two precedents”:¹⁰⁹ Dr. Carl Gustav Carus, court physician to the King of Saxony in the mid-nineteenth century, and Dr. Nicolae Vaschide, Assistant Director of the Laboratory of Pathological Psychology at the *École des hautes études* upon his death in 1907.¹¹⁰ In this history, the hand hardly

¹⁰⁸ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁰ As we have already read in the Introduction, Carl Gustav Carus published several books on psychology and the body, including *Die Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt* and *Über Grund und Bedeutung der verschiedenen Formen der Hand*, both of which Wolff references. See Carl Gustav Carus, *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt. Handbuch zur Menschenkenntnis*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig 1858; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962); Carus, *Über Grund und Bedeutung der verschiedenen Formen der Hand in verschiedenen Personen* (Stuttgart: Ad. Becher, 1846). Nicolae Vaschide (1873-1907) completed only one book, published posthumously by his wife, *Essai sur une psychologie de la main*. See Nicolae Vaschide, *Essai Sur La Psychologie De La Main* (Paris: Rivière Marcel Bibliothèque de Philosophie Expérimentale, 1909).

In *Studies in Hand-Reading*, Wolff names another source in M. Mangin-Balthasar and his application of modern psychology to chiromancy, as well as his method for dividing the hand into various zones. This division is central to Wolff's own practice: “My method of hand-reading rests, therefore, upon the determination of the basic form and the division of the hand into the various zones,” she writes. “The clarity of insight which this method gave me spurred me on to greater efforts, and I finally invented an even more detailed scheme of hand-reading, which I still follow to this day.” Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 7.

And here I would like to add my own unlikely encounter to this already unlikely story. Visiting Indiana in the spring of 2012, quite by coincidence I met Balthasar's granddaughter, the French scholar Hélène Merlin-Kajman, at the home of friends.

qualifies as unexplored territory, even (or perhaps especially) among scientists. And, in fact, in Wolff's account, the scientific study of the hand can be dated to Jan Evangelista Purkinje (also Purkyně), an anatomist working in Breslau, who in 1823 published his *Commentatio de examine physiologico organi visus et systematis cutanei*.¹¹¹ Yet, Wolff's re-mapping must nonetheless first clear this path, plotting her narrative along alternate coordinates, as the language of palmistry is carefully rewritten in the language of scientific heritage and scientific necessity.

"Dr. Wolff's work, on the contrary," the publisher is careful to remind us, "has all been directed, very precisely, to the discovery of just those physiological and psychological correlations which *are* necessarily so. But the discovery of things which are necessarily so—what is that but science?"¹¹² This is certainly the question at issue. And, indeed, Wolff holds to the scientific line, delineating the hand with respect not only to its place in science, but to its theory, form, and parts; its physical qualities, nails, and lines; as well as its differences between right and left; before closing

¹¹¹ Charlotte Wolff, "Character and Mentality." Here again, a now familiar gesture: Wolff creates a scientific genealogy into which she would then seek to read her own study of the hand as an "indicator of personality characteristics" (ibid., 365). And once again, she begins with a careful delimiting of the scientific terrain at issue. "Psychologists," Wolff claims in her opening sentence, "have made little use of the study of the hand, although a great deal of attention has been devoted to physiological, morphological and similar investigations of it and considerable speculation has centred round the respective parts played by the hand and the brain in the development of the human race (Wood Jones, 1920)" (ibid., 364). Wolff thus begins securely on the side of orthodoxy, referencing Frederick Wood Jones, *The Principles of Anatomy as seen in the Hand* (London: Churchill, 1920), especially chapter XXI, "The Hand and the Brain."

But, we could argue, she does not remain there long. For, her object in this essay is the study of the hand as an indicator of personality. "Instead, however, of beginning from an analytical standpoint, in which the various indicators are separately investigated and compared with the personality," Wolff writes, "it seemed best to begin with an investigation of a synthetic kind by asking how far, from the depth of his experience (and paying regard to the hand only), the hand-reader can provide a description of the personality which tallies with an account of it arrived at independently, either by other psychological means, such as the interview, or from case notes written from intimate knowledge of the individual. The hand-reader's claim to read personality may be assessed from material of this kind, and if positive results ensue it should be possible to examine their nature, and thereby arrive at conclusions which should indicate the line that future analytical work might most profitably pursue." Remapping occult traditions within the scientific idiom, Wolff again rewrites the hand as a quantifiable text. Wolff, "Character and Mentality," 365-66.

¹¹² Publisher's note to *The Human Hand*, xvi.

with the “Practical Methods of Hand-Interpretation.” For, in the main, Wolff’s method depends not upon the hand print, but rather upon the encounter with the hand itself. “Temperature, humidity, colour, and flexibility, the four physical qualities of the hand,” she writes, “are closely inter-related and their significance is as much psychological as indicative of physical health.”¹¹³ The goal, as we read, is not merely diagnostic, but rather prognostic.¹¹⁴ Wolff reads in the hand a classificatory tool—as has perhaps already been indicated by her persistent language of normal and abnormal subjects, states, and psyches—the index of temperament and constitution as written on the body. If Wolff’s hand reading attempts to decipher the hand as symptom, her method vouchsafes a more profoundly revelatory line: “My method of interpretation through the hand is,” she argues, “in the main designed to comprehend the constitution of man, the structure of personality.”¹¹⁵

For, in the end, the hand is created almost as if by accident. And it precisely this lack of control that lends the hand its uniquely impartial imprint of individuality. “Most people instinctively use the face as the principal guide to character,” Wolff writes,

and it is not unreasonable that they should experience doubt when it is suggested that the hand is a more reliable dial of personality. The form, texture, lines, and subconsciously executed gestures of the hand are, however, unlike facial expression, beyond our control, and therefore possess the valuable attribute of being impartial. That they are also deeper, more subtle, and more comprehensive marks of personality I shall try to show.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 97. For a more detailed outline of Wolff’s particular method, which takes into account the form, physical qualities, parts, and lines of the hand, see Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 155-92.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 155-92.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

No mere coincidence of heredity, genetics, gender, and habitual practice, the hand—at least in Wolff’s formulation—is a plastic force, continuously recreated and ever changing, a record of experience that holds the terrifying potential to reveal that which could otherwise remain hidden. Even gender, for Wolff, would appear to recede in significance, as her method accounts only for temperament, mentality, and vocation, and thereby purports to uncouple biology and culture. If imperfectly. “I have observed that the line,” that is, the long longitudinal line—the Line of Destiny, the most variable line—which runs down the middle of the palm, Wolff writes, “is found more often and with more striking depth and continuity among women than among men.”¹¹⁷ Which, in turn, leads Wolff to a rather specious reading of the hand as instrument of evolutionary psychological convention.

This seems to tally with the widely accepted generalizations about the differences between women and men, such as that which credits women with greater and more rapid sympathetic understanding of environment and a higher sense of duty than men, owing probably to their ego being relatively less developed.¹¹⁸

Or perhaps, to read in another direction, rather as the embodiment of this cultural reading, inscribed on the body. Thus can Wolff claim of Julien Green that “[p]sychically his hand is that of a woman and it discovers a series of reverse characteristics.”¹¹⁹

Which is also to say that hands are objects made, and remade in the reading. As Wolff notes of the poet René Crevel, “These peculiarities make of him a revolutionary nature. Early in

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 29-30.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 30.

¹¹⁹ Wolff, *Studies in Hand-Reading*, 82.

life he separated from his family and shaped his destiny according to his own nature, and so he was really the creator of his own hand.”¹²⁰ The lines Wolff reads in the hand are not those harmless manifestations of the palmist’s tradition—measuring out one’s portion of the head, heart, life, fate, or luck—but rather the prognostic traces of a concealed history, read between the lines. After all, “[c]rease-lines can be regarded as marks of individuality, of difference,” according to Wolff. “But how can one catch the more hidden features of character in these simple furrows of the palm?” And, indeed, not unlike the border-lines that defined the sovereignties, the shifting national and scientific territories of Wolff’s history.

The difficult task is to distinguish the characteristics of average men and women. It requires long experience and training to detect and interpret small deviations from the “normal” which reveal the essence of these colourless personalities.¹²¹

Indeed, it is only in the reading that this chaos of otherwise almost invisibly minute differences and deviations resolve into intelligibility, as the narrative trace of an individual psyche.

“Hände leben irgendwo”¹²²

We are speaking here then about the lines inscribed by a certain hand-held fate, read scientifically as the measure and expression of quantifiably legible psychic dispositions. Not only a text to read, but rather a text to be made: the hand provides the material onto which a curiously intimate and deeply etched (residing as it does in the body) history may be written. Written, and of course, in turn,

¹²⁰ Ibid., 74.

¹²¹ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 128-29.

¹²² Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 08 August 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 98.

also deciphered. And indeed, hand-reading is for Wolff a decidedly textual practice, just as it is writing itself, which would appear to vouchsafe this peculiar unity of expression between mind and body.¹²³ “Writing, which is one of the most remarkable means of expressing thought,” Wolff argues, “depends entirely on the hand and gives the most direct of all proofs of the co-operation between hand and brain”.¹²⁴ The technical achievement of the hand in concert with the mind, the material trace of this collaboration, is the promise of legibility informing Wolff’s hand. It is, in many ways, also the promise of history and the transparent integrity of representation: that signs might lead us back to meaning. That there exists also a politics of revelation and classification at work—the scientific encoding and decoding of the hand-as-text, and the consequent diagnosis of “normal” and “abnormal” states along these lines—does little to alter the essentially classical, that is to say integrative, understanding of the hand and its relationship to the organic structures of mind and body inherent in Wolff’s work. Only thus could Wolff claim to measure the hand as a medium through which psychic processes—shocks, displacements, desires, deviations, and diseases—might find expression.

So we might begin to read yet again. And it is here, at this intersection of classical unity and implicit bodily coherence, that we turn back to Rilke. Although his engagement with the hand was hardly less impressive than Wolff’s own,¹²⁵ he is not so sure of his material, or his means. And

¹²³ This is certainly a vexed connection, as many across disciplines have theorized. In the introduction we sketched one line of thought. For another, see, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Was heißt denken?* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1954).

¹²⁴ Wolff, *The Human Hand*, 13.

¹²⁵ Indeed, as a short article by Frederic Tubach makes clear, Rilke’s engagement with the hand was, purely quantitatively, hardly less extensive than Wolff’s own. According to Tubach’s calculations, hand images appear in various forms 276 times across Rilke’s work: the nominal form (*die Hand*) alone appears 120 times between 1895 and 1902, 109 from 1902 to 1908, and 47 after 1908. Frederic C. Tubach, “The Image of the Hand in Rilke’s Poetry,” *PMLA*

reading in this direction, it is precisely the unravelling of psychic and bodily coherence, which his work could be read as struggling to record.¹²⁶ This, certainly, for Rilke at least, is a story centered around Paris, in his time with Rodin and his later rewritings from correspondence into notebooks, specifically *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. But before we come to trace the line of fate guiding Brigge's account of disintegration in urban space, let us begin with Rilke's initial encounter with the sculptor. Or rather, with his record. "Irgendwie muß auch ich dazu kommen, Dinge zu machen; nicht plastische, geschriebene Dinge,—Wirklichkeiten, die aus dem Handwerk hervorgehen," writes Rilke to Andreas-Salomé on 10 August 1903, that is, a little more than a month after his return from Paris and the encounter with Rodin.¹²⁷ As he continues, we see that it is rather also a question of work, in the "artisanal mode."

Irgendwie muß auch ich das kleinste Grundelement, die Zelle m e i n e r Kunst entdecken, das greifbare unstoffliche Darstellungsmittel für Alles: Dann würde das klare starke Bewußtsein der ungeheuern Arbeit, die vor mir läge, mich zwingen und beugen zu ihr; dann

76:3 (June 1961), 246n13. On the role of the senses in Rilke's work, see also Silke Pasewalck, *„Die fünffingrige Hand“: Die Bedeutung der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung beim Späten Rilke* (New York: de Gruyter, 2002).

¹²⁶ We are not deaf to the polyphonic resonances of "recording" in Rilke's work, especially his 1919 *Ur-Geräusch*. For Rilke had also studied anatomy at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. See Rilke, *Tagebuch Westerwede und Paris, 1902*, ed. Hella Sieber-Rilke, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 200). "Die Bezauberung, die dieses besondere, gegen einen durchaus weltischen Raum abgeschlossene Gehäus auf mich ausübte, ging schließlich so weit, daß ich mir einen Schädel anschaffte, um nun auch so manche Nachtstunde mit ihm zuzubringen," Rilke writes. And what does he see? A sound, it would seem. "Die Kronen-Naht des Schädels (was nun zunächst zu untersuchen wäre) hat—nehmen wirs an—eine gewisse Ähnlichkeit mit der dicht gewundenen Linie, die der Stift eines Phonographen in den empfangenden rotierenden Zylinder des Apparates eingräbt. Wie nun, wenn man diesen Stift täuschte und ihn, wo er zurückzuleiten hat, über eine Spur lenkte, die nicht aus der graphischen Übersetzung eines Tones stammten, sondern ein an sich und natürlich Bestehendes—, gut: sprechen wirs nur aus: eben (z. B.) die Kronen-Naht wäre—: Was würde geschehen? Ein Ton müßte entstehen, eine Ton-Folge, eine Musik ..." Rainer Maria Rilke, *Ur-Geräusch in Rainer Maria Rilke. Werke*, vol. 4, *Schriften*, ed. Horst Nalewski (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996), 702. See also Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme*, 380f.

¹²⁷ Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 10 August 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 105. "Somehow I too must manage to make things; write, not plastic things,—realities that proceed from handwork." *Letters*, 124.

hätte ich so unendlich viel zu thun, daß ein Werktag dem anderen gliche und hätte Arbeit, die immer gelänge, weil sie beim Erfüllbaren und Geringen begänne und doch schon im Großen wäre von Anfang an. Dann wäre alles auf einmal fern, Störung und Stimmen, und auch das Feindsälige würde sich in die Arbeit einfügen, wie Geräusche eingehen in den Traum ihn leise lenkend zum Unerwarteten.¹²⁸

It is a question of working with the hands, of a particular type of manual labor observed, and practiced, in Rodin.

Yet, this, too, is a story already underway, a work long since undertaken. For, by that summer of 1903, Rilke had completed a version of his *Rodin* essay, and, in fact, had sent a manuscript to Andreas-Salomé.¹²⁹ And there, he begins the essay with an invocation of duration, of an almost geologic vastness of time. And of the hand, too, of course. “Dieses Werk, von dem hier zu reden ist, ist gewachsen seit Jahren und wächst an jedem Tage wie ein Wald und verliert keine Stunde,” he writes of Rodin.

Man geht unter seinen tausend Dingen umher, überwältigt von der Fülle der Funde und Entdeckungen, die es umfaßt, und man sieht sich unwillkürlich nach den zwei Händen um, aus denen diese Welt erwachsen ist. Man erinnert sich, wie klein Menschenhände sind, wie

¹²⁸ Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 10 August 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 105. “Somehow I too must discover the smallest basic element, the cell of *my* art, the tangible medium of presentation for everything, irrespective of subject matter: then the clear strong consciousness of the tremendous work that lay before me would coerce and bend me to it: then I would have so infinitely much to do that one workday would resemble another, and I would have work that would always be successful because it would begin with the attainable and small and yet from the beginning would be in the great. Then everything would suddenly be distant, disturbances and voices, and even what is hostile would fit in with the work as sounds pass into a dream, gently guiding it to the unexpected.” *Letters*, 124-25. Also excerpted in Eric L. Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People’s Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 190. Here Santner identifies Rodin’s “artisanal mode of production” (*ibid.*, 189). I would like to here gratefully acknowledge Santner’s book as an exceedingly valuable orientation into the correspondence of Rilke and Andreas-Salomé, particularly as it relates to their discussion of Rodin.

¹²⁹ See Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 11 August 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 107.

bald sie müde werden und wie wenig Zeit ihnen gegeben ist, sich zu regen. Und man verlangt die Hände zu sehen, die gelebt haben wie hundert Hände, wie ein Volk von Händen, das vor Sonnenaufgang sich erhob zum weiten Wege dieses Werkes. Man fragt nach dem, der diese Hände beherrscht. Wer ist dieser Mann?¹³⁰

Who is this man, indeed? This is a curious question, which at first glance would appear to describe a particular mode of production and precise practice of attention, the materiality of creation anchored in an artisanal tradition.¹³¹ Yet there flows through this passage—even between this essay and the correspondence around Rodin—a metonymic movement in the approximation waded between world into hand, as not only the familiar shorthand of creation, but also the converse possibility of the world in hand. Which is, after all, to some degree not only the purview of the sculpture, but of the poet as well. Though by different means. “Doch schon bei einer andern Kunst,—nimm den Dichter,—trifft es nicht zu; das ‚Artistische‘ bei ihm deckt sich nicht mit dem Handwerklichen beim Bildhauer,” Andreas-Salomé writes to Rilke, also on 10 August 1903;

der Punkt, wo Kunst und Leben sich einen, ist darüber weit hinausgerückt, in die Seele, aus

¹³⁰ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Auguste Rodin* in *Rainer Maria Rilke. Werke*, 4:405. “The work of which we speak here has been growing for years. It grows every day like a forest, never losing an hour. Passing among its countless manifestations, we are overcome by the richness of discovery and invention, and we can’t help but marvel at the pair of hands from which this world has grown. We remember how small human hands are, how quickly they tire and how little time is given them to create. We long to see these hands, which have lived the life of hundreds of hands, of a nation of hands that rose before dawn to brave the long path of this work. We wonder whose hands these are. Who is this man?” Rainer Maria Rilke, *Auguste Rodin*, trans. Daniel Slager (New York: Archipelago Books, 2004), 31.

¹³¹ See Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 189. Here, indeed, we could read with Santner, who argues it was precisely this encounter with Rodin “that Rilke’s awareness of the problem of materiality and craftsmanship become acute.” And, moreover, it was in this correspondence with Lou Andreas-Salomé, this exchange of letters composed after his return from Paris, that “Rilke struggled to clarify what he understood to be his central task as a writer, namely to adapt in some fashion what he had observed about Rodin’s way of being and working as an artist, one grounded in a profound relationship to *things*.” Which, for Santner, and for us, would also include his “artisanal mode of production” (ibid.)

der er s e i n ¹³² Material holt. Denn Worte bauen doch nicht wie Steine, thatsächlich und unmittelbar, vielmehr sind sie Zeichen für indirekt vermittelte Suggestionen, und an sich allein weit ärmer, stoffloser, als ein Stein.¹³³

The question of medium and material remains not unimportant, as Wolff well knew, to both the craftsman and the poet. And this is a line Rilke would likewise seem to trace, through his essay and these letters to Andreas-Salomé attempting to work out precisely the slippage between world and hand, material and word, life and art.

For already, in 1903 things, or more precisely organic life, would seem to be falling apart. “O was ist das für eine Welt,” Rilke writes to Andreas-Salomé on 18 July 1903, from Worpswede, recalling a scene from his time in Paris.

Stücke, Stücke von Menschen, Theile von Thieren, Überreste von gewesenen Dingen und alles noch bewegt, wie in einem unheimlichen Winde durcheinandertreibend, getragen und tragend, fallend und sich überholend im Fall.¹³⁴

¹³² According to the editor, this word is underlined in pencil, probably by Rilke. See Lou Andreas-Salomé to Rilke, 10 August 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 100n1.

¹³³ Lou Andreas-Salomé to Rilke, 10 August 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 100. “But already in another art,—take the poet,—it does not apply; the ‘artistic’ for him does not correspond with the artisanal handwork of the sculptor; the point where art and life unite, is furthermore shifted into the soul, from which he gathers *his* material. Because words do not build like stones, actually and directly, rather they are signs for indirectly mediated suggestions, and in themselves alone for poorer, more immaterial, than a stone.”

¹³⁴ Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 18 July 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 67. “Oh what kind of world is that! Pieces, pieces of people, parts of animals, leftovers of things that have been, and everything still agitated, as through driven about helter-skelter in an eerie wind, carried and carrying, falling and overtaking each other as they fall.” *Letters*, 109. Also in Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 191. “This surreal physiology,” Santner argues, “in which, by way of a series of chiasmic reversals, body parts become ‘partial objects’ manifesting an uncanny, semiautonomous vitality of their own, or in which bodily expressions of human aliveness—say, laughter—mutate into semimechanical objects that break into so many lifeless parts, is elaborated in detail in a passage of the letter that formed one of the longer Parisian ‘set pieces’ of the novel” (ibid. 192-93). The “set piece” is, of course, the well-known encounter with the pedestrian with the apparent tick.

The image appears to disquiet Rilke, and it is one to which he returns in variations, throughout the letter, rewriting in manifold permutations of fragmentation. A fragmentation somehow realized and perfected, it would seem, in the work of Rodin. “Es ist nicht zu beschreiben,” Rilke writes to his wife Clara Westhoff on 2 September 1902, from 11 rue Toullier, Paris. He, of course, makes an attempt a description:

Da liegt es meterweit nur Bruchstücke, eines neben dem andern. Akte in der Größe meiner Hand und größer ... aber nur Stücke, kaum einer ganz: oft nur ein Stück Arm, ein Stück Bein, wie sie so nebeneinanderhergehen, und das Stück Leib, das ganz nahe dazu gehört. Einmal der Torso einer Figur mit dem Kopf einer anderen an sich angepreßt, mit dem Arm einer dritten ... als wäre ein unsäglicher Sturm, eine Zerstörung ohnegleichen über dieses Werk gegangen. Und doch, je näher man zusieht, desto tiefer fühlt man, daß alles das weniger ganz wäre, wenn die einzelnen Körper ganz wären. Jeder dieser Brocken ist von einer so eminenten ergreifenden Einheit, so allein möglich, so gar nicht der Ergänzung bedürftig, daß man vergißt, daß es nur *Teile* und oft *Teile* von verschiedenen Körpern sind, die da so leidenschaftlich aneinanderhängen. Man fühlt plötzlich, daß es mehr Sache des

See also a letter to Clara Rilke on 2 September 1902, in which Rilke describes Rodin's atelier: “Es ist nicht zu beschreiben. Da liegt es meterweit nur Bruchstücke, eines neben dem andern. Akte in der Größe meiner Hand und größer ... aber nur Stücke, kaum einer ganz: oft nur ein Stück Arm, ein Stück Bein, wie sie so nebeneinanderhergehen, und das Stück Leib, das ganz nahe dazu gehört. Einmal der Torso einer Figur mit dem Kopf einer anderen an sich angepreßt, mit dem Arm einer dritten ... als wäre ein unsäglicher Sturm, eine Zerstörung ohnegleichen über dieses Werk gegangen. Und doch, je näher man zusieht, desto tiefer fühlt man, daß alles das weniger ganz wäre, wenn die einzelnen Körper ganz wären. Jeder dieser Brocken ist von einer so eminenten ergreifenden Einheit, so allein möglich, so gar nicht der Ergänzung bedürftig, daß man vergißt, daß es nur *Teile* und oft *Teile* von verschiedenen Körpern sind, die da so leidenschaftlich aneinanderhängen. Man fühlt plötzlich, daß es mehr Sache des Gelehrten ist, den Körper als Ganzes zu fassen - und vielmehr des Künstlers, aus den Teilen neue Verbindungen zu schaffen, neue, größere, gesetzmäßigere Einheiten ... ewigere ...” See Rilke, *Briefe*; see also n3 above.

Gelehrten ist, den Körper als Ganzes zu fassen - und vielmehr des Künstlers, aus den Teilen neue Verbindungen zu schaffen, neue, größere, gesetzmäßigere Einheiten ... ewigere ...¹³⁵

A curious coming-life of the fragment, not precisely described but rather enacted—in the materials at hand to the poet— through a kind of narrative approximation. Measured by the hand. For certainly, in Rilke's fragmentary ecology, the hand that would come to most tellingly evoke the curiously disturbing disintegration of corporeal life into disarticulated yet strangely animate, vibrant, and sovereign parts. "Da gab es alte Frauen, die einen schweren Korb absetzten an irgend einem Mauervorsprung," Rilke writes to Andreas-Salomé in that July 1903 letter, describing a catalogue of uncanny, strangely independent, hands,

(ganz kleine Frauen, deren Augen wie Pfützen austrockneten) und als sie ihn wieder greifen wollten, da schob sich langsam und umständlich ein langer rostiger Haken aus ihrem Ärmel hervor, statt einer Hand, und ging gerade und sicher auf den Henkel des Korbes los.¹³⁶

Certainly, this prosthetic hand, rusty yet precise and sure—seemingly rendering explicit the terrible apotheosis of an Aristotelian instrumentality—not only introduces the mechanical to the material body, at its most human extremity, but also further disrupts the organic unity, which could

¹³⁵ Rilke to Clara Rilke, 2 September 1902, *Briefe*, vol. 1, 1897-1914, 34. "It is indescribable. There it lies, yard upon yard, only fragments, one beside the other. Figures the size of my hand and larger ... but only pieces, hardly one that is whole: often only a piece of arm, a piece of leg, as they happen to go along beside each other, and the piece of body that belongs right near them. Once the torso of a figure with the head of another pressed against it, with the arm of a third ... as if an unspeakable storm, an unparalleled destruction had passed over this work. And yet, the more closely one looks, the more deeply one feels that all this would be less of a whole if the individual bodies were whole. Each of these bits is of such an eminent, striking unity, so possible by itself, so not at all needing completion, that one forgets they are only *parts*, and often *parts of different* bodies that cling to each other so passionately there." *Letters*, 79.

¹³⁶ Rilke to Andreas-Salomé, 18 July 1903, *Briefwechsel*, 67. "There were old women who set down a heavy basket on the ledge of some wall (very little women whose eyes were drying up like puddles), and when they wanted to grasp it again, out of their sleeves shoved forth slowly and ceremoniously a long, rusty hook instead of a hand, and it went straight and surely out to the handle of the basket." *Letters*, 109-10.

otherwise be supposed to condition bodily integration and cognitive coherence through this shocking substitution. A “surreal physiology,” indeed,¹³⁷ contesting the very possibility of harmonious cohesion.

Certainly the hand would appear to function as an entity apart. Let us return here, once again, to the *Rodin* essay in which a curious manual tension soon emerges. “Es giebt im Werke Rodins Hände, selbständige, kleine Hände, die, ohne zu irgend einem Körper zu gehören, lebendig sind,” Rilke writes.

Hände, die sich aufrichten, gereizt und böse, Hände, deren fünf gesträubte Finger zu bellen scheinen wie die fünf Häse eines Höllenhundes. Hände, die gehen, schlafende Hände, und Hände, welche erwachen; verbrecherische, erblich belastete Hände und solche, die müde sind, die nichts mehr wollen, die sich niedergelegt haben in irgend einen Winkel, wie kranke Tiere, welche wissen, daß ihnen niemand helfen kann.¹³⁸

Separate and self-sufficient, yet imbued with a vibrant life—emotions, instincts, desires—all their own, these hands of Rodin would appear to exist quite apart from the human body. And this dissolution of a coherent organic structure, the body in which the hand would function as a part secure, and secured, creates an uncanny world of independent appendages. “Aber Hände sind schon ein komplizierter Organismus, ein Delta, in dem viel fernherkommendes Leben zusammenfließt, um sich in den großen Strom der Tat zu ergießen,” according to Rilke. The hand describes its own

¹³⁷ Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 191.

¹³⁸ Rilke, *Rodin*, 4:421-22. “In Rodin’s work there are hands, independent little hands, which are alive without belonging to any single body. There are hands that rise up, irritable and angry, and hands whose five bristling fingers seem to bark like the five false heads of Cerberus. There are hands that walk, hands that sleep and hands that wake; criminal hands weighted with the past, and hands that are tired and want nothing more, hands that lie down in a corner like sick animals who know no one can help them.” Rilke, *Rodin*, trans. Slager, 45.

course, the tidal rhythms of its own particular physiology and geography. And, indeed, its own history.

Es giebt eine Geschichte der Hände, sie haben tatsächlich ihre eigene Kultur, ihre besondere Schönheit; man gesteht ihnen das Recht zu, eine eigene Entwicklung [sic] zu haben, eigene Wünsche, Gefühle, Launen und Liebhabereien.¹³⁹

Almost monstrous in its overdetermined humanity, the hand approaches a sinister sovereignty, which could here be read as the other side of the creative coin. The hand, which creates without a subject.¹⁴⁰

A hand, perhaps also preparing the way, however accidentally, for *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. For two years after the *Rodin* essay, in 1904 as we have already learned, Rilke would begin work on *Die Aufzeichnungen*, its form registering a certain diffusion and dispersion of the novel to something more akin to a collection of fictional notebooks, in which disintegration becomes quite literally figured in the hand. “Aber die Frau, die Frau: sie war ganz in sich hineingefallen, vornüber in ihre Hände,” Rilke writes seven years later, picking up the many faces—“Es gibt eine Menge Menschen, aber noch viel mehr Gesichter, denn jeder hat mehrere”¹⁴¹—Brigge has be-

¹³⁹ Rilke, *Rodin*, 4:422. “But then hands are a complicated organism, a delta in which life from the most distant sources flows together, surging into the great current of action. Hands have a history; they even have their own culture and their own particular beauty. We grant them the right to have their own development, their own wishes, feelings, moods, and occupations.” Sweeping us into the tide of action. Rilke, *Rodin*, trans. Slager, 45 (translation modified). On the “haptic gesture” in Rilke, see Pasewalck, ‘*Die fünffingrige Hand*’, 110.

¹⁴⁰ We turn again to Kittler, who argues “Simmels objektive Interpretation, Freuds analytische Konstruktion, Rilkes Apparat—sie alle können Spuren ohne Subjekt sichern. Eine Schrift ohne Schreiber also, die denn auch nichts anderes archiviert als das unmögliche Reale am Grund aller Medien: weißes Rauschen, Ur-Geräusch.” Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme*, 382.

¹⁴¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* in *Rainer Maria Rilke. Werke*, vol. 3, *Prosa und Dramen*, ed. August Stahl (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996), 457. “There are multitudes of people, but there are many more faces, because each person has several of them.” Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Vintage, 1990), 6.

gun to see.

Die Frau erschrak und hob sich aus sich ab, zu schnell, zu heftig, so daß das Gesicht in den zwei Händen blieb. Ich konnte es darin liegen sehen, seine hohle Form. Es kostete mich unbeschreibliche Anstrengung, bei diesen Händen zu bleiben und nicht zu schauen, was sich aus ihnen abgerissen hatte. Mir graute, ein Gesicht von innen zu sehen, aber ich fürchtete mich doch noch viel mehr vor dem bloßen wunden Kopf ohne Gesicht.¹⁴²

Let us remain a while longer with the hand, let us dare to look again. Here, far from conforming to any notion of physiological coherence and cooperation, the hand describes a different movement: one of emptiness, detachment, and withdrawal. The independent little hand of the *Rodin* essay, rewritten as the effect of a dissolute body, the site of a creative force that almost threatens to tip into its opposite. The hand recedes and with it, so too the ability to grasp or to transcribe the experience of reality as the coordinated work of prehension and apprehension. A threat then realized in writing.

Noch eine Weile kann ich das alles aufschreiben und sagen. Aber es wird ein Tag kommen, da meine Hand weit von mir sein wird, und wenn ich sie schreiben heißen werde, wird sie Worte schreiben, die ich nicht meine.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen*, 3:457-58. "But the woman, the woman: she had completely fallen into herself, forward into her hands. [...] The woman sat up, frightened, she pulled out of herself, too quickly, too violently, so that her face was left in her two hands. I could see it lying there: its hollow form. It cost me an indescribably effort to stay with those two hands, not to look at what had been torn our of them. I shuddered to see a face from the inside, but I was much more afraid of that bare flayed head waiting there, faceless." *Notebooks*, 7.

¹⁴³ Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen*, 3:490. "For the time being, I can still write all this down, can still say it. But the day will come when my hand will be distant, and if I tell it to write, it will write words that are not mine." *Notebooks*, 52.

On the problem of writing and words in Rilke, see, for example, Ulrich Baer, *Das Rilke-Alphabet* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 164. "Rilke schreibt hier nicht von Worten, die aus vergessenen Erfahrungen stammen. Der Dichter wird passiv, empfängt und gibt sich hin," writes Baer. "Es sind Worte, die nicht er, sondern sein Körper und

Rather, any vestige of classical unity dissolves and the hand usurps control over manuscript, over words no longer reliable. So that Brigge writes, “[d]ie Zeit der anderen Auslegung wird anbrechen, und es wird kein Wort auf dem anderen bleiben, und jeder Sinn wird wie Wolken sich auflösen und wie Wasser niedergehen.”¹⁴⁴ A return to the fluid ecology contained in the hand. But surely, a disintegrating self could not expect the hand to remain steady on the page.

The failure of language, of the impossibility of narration, which we should note is also a failure of the hand, returns in the later story of *die Hand*. “Ich schluckte ein paarmal; denn nun wollte ich es erzählen. Aber wie?”¹⁴⁵ The narrative, which Brigge fails to tell—at least twice in the retelling, only to later record in his notebooks—is a curious and frightening childhood memory, a story of disembodiment organized around the detached hand. It is a doubled image of detachment, for having first lost a red pencil under the desk upon which he was drawing a knight, young Brigge begins his search with a still familiar hand. “[I]ch erkannte vor allem meine eigene, ausgespreizte Hand,” Brigge writes, before returning this hand to another kingdom altogether,

„seine Hand“ schreiben” (ibid.). Indeed, Rilke could be said to enact this passage into text, writing these hand in Brigge’s narrative, finally told.

¹⁴⁴ Rilke, *Aufzeichnungen*, 3:490. “The time of that other interpretation will dawn, when there shall not be left one word upon another, and every meaning will dissolve like could and fall down like rain.” *Notebooks*, 52-53.

For Kittler the correspondence of brain and language is a central problem informing the discourse network around 1900. “Genug der Belege. Die gemeinsame Rätsselfrage von Nervenärzten und Irren, Psychoanalytikern und Schriftstellern um 1900 lautet *Gehirn und Sprache*. Die Ärzte (weshalb ihnen auch beim Formulieren der Vortritt zusteht) stellen das Thema, die Schriftsteller bearbeiten es. Ihr Schreiben steht exakt an der Stelle oder anstelle jener Hirnvisektion, die all Psychophysik erträumen und versäumen muß. Aus einem einzigen Grund flieht Rilke möglichen Psychoanalyse: die eigene ‚Arbeit‘ schon ist ihm ‚eigentlich nichts anderes als eine derartige Selbstbehandlung‘. Er flieht also nicht bloß, weil Freud oder Gebattel in seinem Hirn herumstochern würden, sondern um selber den Vivisektoren Konkurrenz zu machen. Gerade die abgründige Gemeinsamkeit der zwei Diskurse schließt ihren Zusammenfall aus. Schriftsteller im Aufschreibesystem von 1900 sind Leute, die bei der Analyse und d. h. Zergliederung ihres psychischen Apparats den Alleingang vorziehen.” Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme*, 380.

¹⁴⁵ Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen*, 3:520. “I swallowed once or twice; for now I wanted to tell her. But how?” *Notebooks*, 95.

die sich ganz allein, ein bißchen wie ein Wassertier, da unten bewegte und den Grund untersuchte. Ich sah ihr, weiß ich noch, fast neugierig zu; es kam mir vor, als könnte sie Dinge, die ich sie nicht gelehrt hatte, wie sie da unten so eigenmächtig herumtastete mit Bewegungen, die ich nie an ihr beobachtet hatte. Ich verfolgte sie, wie sie vordrang, es interessierte mich, ich war auf allerhand vorbereitet.¹⁴⁶

Brigge observes his own hand and in its seemingly independent movements senses something of the later withdrawal, the sleeping life within it. And this latent promise of detachment is then given form, as a foreign hand, quite alone, appears from the wall, out of sight of the governess calming reading above.

Aber wie hätte ich darauf gefaßt sein sollen, daß ihr mit einem Male aus der Wand eine andere Hand entgegenkam, eine größere, ungewöhnlich magere Hand, wie ich noch nie eine gesehen hatte. Sie suchte in ähnlicher Weise von der anderen Seite her, und die beiden gespreizten Hände bewegten sich blind aufeinander zu. Meine Neugierde war noch nicht aufgebracht, aber plötzlich war sie zu Ende, und es war nur Grauen da. Ich fühlte, daß die eine von den Händen mir gehörte und daß sie sich da in etwas einließ, was nicht wieder gutzumachen war. Mit allem Recht, das ich auf sie hatte, hielt ich sie an und zog sie flach und langsam zurück, indem ich die andere nicht aus den Augen ließ, die weitersuchte.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen*, 3:520. “[...] above all I recognized my own outspread hand moving down there all alone, like some strange crab, exploring the ground. I watched it, I remember, almost with curiosity; it seemed to know things I had never taught it, as it groped down there so completely on its own, with movements I had never noticed in it before. I followed it as it crept forward; it interested me; I was ready for all kinds of adventures.” *Notebooks*, 94.

¹⁴⁷ Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen*, 3:520. “But how could I have been prepared to see, all at once, out of the wall, another hand coming to meet it—a larger, extraordinarily thin hand, such as I had never seen before. It came groping in a similar fashion from the other side, and the two outspread hands blindly moved toward each other. My curiosity was not yet satisfied, but suddenly it was gone and there was only horror. I felt that one of the hands belonged to me and

A sinister version of the independent little hand here returns and in its sudden appearance precipitates a moment of recognition and affinity, between two hands, awakening dread. Yet there could also be read in this moment an indication of the terror of revelation and exposure inherent in the hand, and the possibility of reading, itself.¹⁴⁸ In this moment—a recounting, we must remember, of that which could not be told—Rilke and Wolff seem to approach a curious consensus in which the hand becomes a mode of access, however retreating, to that which should otherwise remain hidden. And yet the persistent question remains. Could we learn to read the traces and tell the story, even as it escapes our grasp and eludes capture?

*“How is it done and why should the doing of it be possible?”*¹⁴⁹

This the question posed by Aldous Huxley in his introduction to Wolff’s earlier *Studies in Hand-Reading*. Although his answer is far from definitive, he does nonetheless suggest a tentative appraisal. “Meanwhile,” he notes, “the odd and rather disquieting fact remains that accomplished chirologists, like Dr. Wolff, do succeed in finding out a great deal about the health, character and history of the people whose hands they examine.”¹⁵⁰ Perhaps even unto death. And this is the somewhat terrible promise of the hand and its revelations, the particularly Rilkean terror of carrying death everywhere with us. “Früher wußte man (oder vielleicht man ahnte es),” according to Brigge, “daß

that it was about to enter into something it could never return from. With all the authority I had over it, I stopped it, held it flat, and slowly pulled it back to me, without taking my eyes off the other one, which kept on groping.” *Notebooks*, 94.

¹⁴⁸ “Der Bleistift,” according to Kittler, “einst im zeichenlosen Schwarz des Teppichdschungels verschwunden, kehrt wie ‚das Große‘ wieder, um Schrift überhaupt auf einen Code unter anderen zu reduzieren.” Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme*, 389.

¹⁴⁹ Aldous Huxley, preface to *Studies in Hand-Reading*, xiv.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

man den Tod *in sich* hatte wie die Frucht den Kern.”¹⁵¹ A handheld death, uniquely ours: a death already present.

If *Studies in Hand-Reading* provides the first examples of Wolff’s craft, divorced from scientific discourse, then *The Human Hand* traces the theoretical and methodological work that make such portraits in flesh possible at all. Read in this direction, it is a profoundly moving project. And not inconsequentially a project pursued by Wolff throughout her life in exile, across her research and writing, across each profound shock of translation, displacement, and loss. For unlike Rilke, Wolff’s hand remains a part of the body, such that its power as a revelatory text is conditioned by precisely this integration. “Ich glaube nicht, dass wir einander kennen können. Ich glaube, dass alles menschliche Kennen eine subjektive Interpretation von uns ist,” Wolff explains in her last radio interview.

Und darum glaube ich nicht, dass eine photographische Ansicht eines Menschen überhaupt möglich ist. Sie können ihn nicht wiedergeben, wie er wirklich ist. Sie geben ihn wieder durch ihr Bild, das Sie von ihm haben. Ich glaube auch nicht, dass die Menschen selber wissen, wer sie selber wirklich sind. [...] Darum Photographien, was eine Biographie sein sollte, eine objektive Darstellung des Lebens, wie es war, halte ich für unmöglich. Und halte ich auch nicht für das Wichtige. [...] Plötzlich, wenn ich mich als Maler sah, der ein enormes Kanevas haben etwa malen wollte, dann wollte ich solche Augenblicke festlegen, wo man vielleicht aus dem Subjektiven heraus oder durch das Subjektive hinein, in diese kleinen Momente von Realität, von wirklichem Dasein, von wirklicher Gestalt—das ist ein

¹⁵¹ Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen*, 3:459. “Then, you knew (or perhaps you sensed it) that you had your death *inside* you as a fruit has it core.” *Notebooks*, 10.

wunderbares Wort in Deutsch—von der wirklichen Gestalt des Menschen etwas weiß.¹⁵²

Here she is discussing what would be her last project, *Magnus Hirschfeld: A Portrait of a Pioneer in Sexology*, on the eminent Weimar sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. Yet, this last study could also be read as taking up a line of argument Wolff had already sketched out on the hand more than forty years before. After all, chiology is—in the beginning, at least—a skill akin to portraiture, a theory of the hand that would offer the promise of continuity and coherence, an intelligible sketch of personality, creating a narrative that reads the lines between mind and body, life and hand, experience and expression.¹⁵³ For, as we have seen, Wolff was always already writing about exile, about loss, and about that which one must carry along, under the skin. And this too is an act of translation.

Inhibited expression is comparable to a river blocked by a dam; it floods the surrounding country and seeks numerous more or less torturous outlets. When direct expression is barred the inner dynamism discovers other outlets, less obvious and more bizarre.¹⁵⁴

The story she reads is, in the end, the story of that which persists in the body, of that which offers the promise—however illusory—of remaining somehow intact. We would not argue against Rilke's contention that there exists a history of the hand. Nor, indeed, that there are many histories to be written and read.

Senken die Hände
Langsam Erblassen

¹⁵² Charlotte Wolff, interview by BBC World (German), 26 August 1986, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 11.

¹⁵³ Or, as Huxley explains, "We cannot in the nature of things ever discover why there should be a correlation (I am assuming for the moment that such a correlation really exists) between the spatial configuration, at any given moment, of a pair of hands and the configuration in space and time of an individual life. Huxley, preface to *Studies in Hand-Reading*, vii.

¹⁵⁴ Wolff, *A Psychology of Gesture* (1948; repr., New York: Arno, 1972), 3. Also quoted in Duncan, "Portrait of Charlotte Wolff," 288.

Lang lebt die Spende

Was wir erfassen
Geht rötlich zu Ende

Dunkeln die Zeichen
Am Himmel gemalte
Langsam Erbleichen—¹⁵⁵

Certainly, Wolff reads and writes a theory of the hand. But she also—and perhaps more fundamentally—writes a poetics of the hand, archiving the history of a life in the narrative play of lines, fissures, and furrows, reading the scattered, tattered lines of that which remains behind, and that which we cannot escape.

¹⁵⁵ Verse, TS, Charlotte Wolff papers, box 19.

letzter Handstrich

Coda

“So you must take the pen in hand, and start the story.”

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*

In its own way, our thesis has been an unfolding of the esoteric in one form or another: whether embodied in the practical, the scientific, the psychic, or the generic. We have deciphered traces of a curious physiognomy, following not one edge, but rather tracing many border-lines, which not only converge in the hand, but serve also to inform the reach of its peculiar cultural body. And far from absent, as we have seen, the female hand is rather a central text from which to read the myriad transformations, negotiations, and instantiations of this corpus. So let us end as we began, with another unlikely encounter.

“Wer zu sehen versteht wie sie, für den ist jeder Fetzen beschriebenen Papiers ein Freibillet für das große Welttheater,” claims Walter Benjamin in 1928. “Ihm zeigt er die Pantomime des ganzen Menschenwesens und Menschenlebens in hunderttausendfacher Verkleinerung.”¹ Thus Benjamin concludes his review of *Der Mensch in der Handschrift*, a short book first published by Anja

¹ Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, *Kritiken und Rezensionen*, ed. Hella Tiedemann-Bartels (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 139. “Anyone able to share their way of seeing would be able to take any scrap of paper covered with writing and discover in it a free ticket to the great *theatrum mundi*. It would reveal to him the pantomime of the entire nature and existence of mankind, in microscopic form.” Walter Benjamin, “Review of the Mendelssohns’ *Der Mensch in der Handschrift*,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, 1927-1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 1999), 134.

Mendelssohn and her brother Georg Mendelssohn in 1928,² with a gesture towards the strangely ineffable and elusive—and allusive—physiognomy of script. And, indeed, we might even speak of the physiognomic character of language itself as the graphic mark of handwriting: of the crossings between body and language, between hand and mind, traced on the page. “Die Sprache hat einen Leib und der Leib hat eine Sprache,” Benjamin writes earlier in the same review.

Dennoch—die Welt gründet auf dem, was am Leib nicht Sprache ist (dem Moralische) und an der Sprache nicht Leib (dem Ausdruckslosen). Dahingegen hat freilich die Graphologie durchaus es mit dem zu tun, was an der Sprache der Handschrift das Leibhafte, am Leibe der Handschrift das Sprechende ist.³

² Anja and Georg Mendelssohn, *Der Mensch in der Handschrift* (Leipzig: E. A. Seeman, 1928). Benjamin’s review of the book appeared in *Die literarische Welt* 4, no. 31 (3 August 1928): 5. The authors explicitly address the question of kinship in the first sentences of the book. “Nun, es sind Geschwister, und zwei, weil ein einzelner dieses Buch nicht hätte schreiben können. Die Zusammenarbeit einer intuitiven Frau und eines systematisch denkenden Mannes ist übrigens in der Geschichte der Graphologie nichts Ungewöhnliches” (ibid.).

³ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:138. “Language has a body and the body has a language. Nevertheless, the world is founded on that part of the body which is not language (the moral sphere), and on that part of language which is not body (the expressionless). In contrast, graphology is concerned with the bodily aspect of the language of handwriting and with the expressive aspect of the body of handwriting.” Benjamin, “Review,” in *Selected Writings*, 2:133.

On Benjamin’s “materialist physiognomics,” see Rolf Tiedemann, “Dialectics at a Standstill,” in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. R. Tiedemann, trans Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 1999), especially 939-41. “Physiognomics infers the interior from the exterior; it decodes the whole from the detail; it represents the general in the particular,” according to Tiedemann. “Nominalistically speaking, it proceeds from the tangible object; inductively it commences in the realm of the intuitive. The *Passagen-Werk* ‘deals fundamentally with the expressive character of the earliest industrial projects, the earlier industrial architecture, the earlier machines, but also the earliest department stores, advertisements, and so on’ (N1a,7). In that expressive character, Benjamin hoped to locate what eluded the immediate grasp: the *Signatur*, the mark, of the nineteenth century” (ibid., 940). Also in Frederic J. Schwartz, *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 194-204. Here, Schwartz situates Benjamin as a connoisseur of marginalia, arguing that “Benjamin was convinced of the possibility of experience of a kind that the institutionally sanctioned, codified knowledge of the academy could not analyse, account for, or even conceive. Benjamin’s ‘speculative concept of experience’ quite naturally took him to the less respectable areas of knowledge, to its outer borders. He was, of course, notoriously comfortable in these disreputable zones—in the restricted sections of libraries, with his collection of children’s books, talking to charlatans, gathering kitsch in the flea markets of the modern city and of the modern mind” (Schwartz, *Blind Spots*, 197).

This is, in many respects, the crux of Benjamin's argument. After all, Benjamin was himself an amateur graphologist, clearly cognizant of the odd graphic chiasmus between the terms of body and mind.⁴ And we might argue that the Mendelssohns describe a quite literal history of the body of the letter, beginning with Kabbalah and the alphabet. "Unser Erstaunen wächst," they write,

wenn wir eine moderne wissenschaftliche Schriftgeschichte nachschlagen und dort finden, daß mindestens für fünf Buchstaben eine Übereinstimmung der modernen wissenschaftlichen Ansicht von ihrer Entstehung mit den alten kabbalistischen Deutung zu finden ist. Es sind dies die Zeichen fürs Haus, Hand, Auge, Mund und Kopf.⁵

Certainly graphology could be read as expanding upon this visual and bodily analogy of the letter. Benjamin, however, chooses a more recent point of origin, in which the graphological sciences emerge as part of a curiously German history. "Die wissenschaftliche Graphologie ist heute gute dreißig Jahre alt," he writes only two years later in 1930.

Sie kann, mit gewissen Vorbehalten, durchaus als eine deutsche Schöpfung und 1897, da die Deutsche Graphologische Gesellschaft in München gegründet wurde, als ihr Geburtsjahr bezeichnet werden. Auffallend genug, daß die akademische Wissenschaft dieser Technik, die nun schon drei Jahrzehnte lang Beweise von der Exaktheit ihrer Prinzipien gegeben hat, immer noch abwertend gegenüber steht.⁶

⁴ For a detailed discussion of Benjamin and graphology, see annotations in Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, *Fragmente, Autobiographische Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 747.

⁵ Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn, *Handschrift*, 10.

⁶ Walter Benjamin, "Alte und neue Graphologie," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4.1, *Kleine Prosa, Baudelaire-Übertragungen*, ed. Tillman Rexroth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 596. The piece first appeared in *Südwestdeutsche Rundfunkzeitung* 6, no. 47 (23 November 1930): 4. "Today scientific graphology is a good thirty years old. With certain reservations, it can undoubtedly be described as a German achievement; and 1897, when the Ger-

If this lament is by now familiar to us, we should nonetheless note that Benjamin deploys the status of graphology as scientific marginalia to situate a history still, in 1930, dialectically dynamic and decidedly contemporary.

It is thus not merely a question of handwriting, but rather of the image character buried within the mundane everyday appearance of writing itself. “Alle unsere Buchstaben waren Bilder,” according to the Mendelssohns, “und bei einigen von ihnen ist das zugrundeliegende Bild noch ohne weiteres erkennbar.”⁷ Indeed, we might read a parallel history: namely, that of script and its unfolding in Benjamin’s work on the Baroque tradition of allegory.⁸ “Äußerlich und stilistisch—in der Drastik des Schriftsatzes wie in der überladenen Metapher—drängt das Geschriebene zum Bilde,” Benjamin writes in his *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*.

man Graphological Society was founded in Munich, can be deemed the year of its birth. It is a striking fact that academic science still withholds recognition, even though this technique has been providing proofs of the precision of its principles for the past three decades.” Water Benjamin, “Graphology Old and New,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, 1927-1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap/Harvard, 1999), 398.

⁷ Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn, *Handschrift*, 10.

⁸ Indeed, more recent work on Benjamin reads his graphology in terms of script and script-image, informed by his earlier work on the Baroque *Trauerspiel* and allegory. Indeed, script—in Benjaminian terms—emerges from this allegorical power of language. “And what was true of such material systems as the allegorical props on a stage was all the more true of human language,” according to Michael W. Jennings and Brigid Doherty: ‘In the anagrams, the onomatopoeic phrases, and many other examples of linguistic virtuosity [of the Baroque], word, syllable, and sound are emancipated from all traditional associations of meaning and flaunt themselves as a thing that can be exploited allegorically.’ This ‘emancipation’ of the elements of language from larger, meaning-producing structures was simultaneously language’s ‘shattering’ or ‘dismemberment.’ The disjointed, arbitrary elements achieve a ‘charged and intensified expressiveness. . . . The decimated language had, in its individual parts, ceased to serve mere communication; it places, as a newborn object, its dignity alongside that of the gods, rivers, virtues, and other similar natural forms that shimmer into the allegorical’.” Michael W. Jennings and Brigid Doherty, “Script, Image, Script-Image,” in Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap/Harvard, 2008), 168.

Kein härterer Gegensatz zum Kunstsymbol, dem plastischen Symbol, dem Bilde der organischen Totalität ist denkbar als dies amorphe Bruchstück, als welches das allegorische Schriftbild sich zeigt.⁹

Such that, in the end, “da verwandelt mit einem Schlage der allegorische Tiefblick Dinge und Werke in erregende Schrift.”¹⁰ Certainly, handwriting would certainly appear, read in the graphological tradition, to partake in this allegorical transformation and fragmentation of language. Or, as the Mendelssohns argue, “daß unsere Buchstabenschrift aus einer Bilderschrift entstanden ist.”¹¹ But not in the work of analogy and metaphor, the more typical approximations posited by the graphological method: handwriting as an individual expressive gesture, as read in the strokes and lines of each letter. “Aber darinnen,” Benjamin argues, “geisterte immer noch ein vager Rest von Analogie und Metapher.” Analogies and metaphor that remain expressive of individual character and temperament.

Wenn es bei einer engen Schrift hieß: ‚Der hält das Seine zusammen, d. h. er ist sparsam‘, so war das zwar richtig, aber die Sprache hatte die Kosten der graphologischen Einsicht zu tragen. Auch die ‚seelische Schaukraft‘, die Klages aufruft, um sie zum Richter über das Formniveau, über das Mehr oder Minder von Reichtum, Fülle, Schwere, Wärme, Dichtig-

⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.1, *Abhandlungen*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 351-52. “Both externally and stylistically—in the extreme character of the typographical arrangement and in the use of highly charged metaphors—the written word tends toward the visual. It is not possible to conceive of a starker opposite to the artistic symbol, the plastic symbol, the image of organic totality, than this amorphous fragment which is seen in the form of allegorical script.” Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1998), 175-76.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.1:352. “[...] at one stroke the profound vision of allegory transforms things and works into stirring writing.”

¹¹ Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn, *Handschrift*, 10.

keit oder Tiefe der Schrift zu machen, wird an entscheidenden Stellen auf das Bild stoßen, das wir schreibend in unsere Handschrift wickeln.¹²

For, as Benjamin makes clear, it is the pictorial dimension of script that is truly at issue: “Klages geht von der Sprache aus: will sagen vom Ausdruck, Mendelssohn vom Leibe: will sagen vom Bild.”¹³ The opposition of body and language is thus not resolved in script; rather script would appear to describe in its image a certain constitutive aporia between body and language, to be read in the script-image, the hieroglyphic “Bilderschrift” of handwriting.¹⁴ And thus the Mendelssohns conclude,

Was Wunder, wenn der Mensch in diese einzige Ausdrucksmöglichkeit alles hineinpreßt, was von Bildern in ihm lebt. Der größte Teil des Inhalts unseres Unterbewußtseins besteht ja aus Bildern und nicht aus Worten.¹⁵

Yet, after all, it is the hand that leaves the mark of this separation in each grapheme, on each page: to create the manifold miniatures, which reveal a bodily image of script to the letter.¹⁶ “Ebenso

¹² Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:136-37. “People have always regarded the distinction between strokes—right and left, top and bottom, straight and sloping, heaving and light—as crucial. But these qualities always contained a vague remnant of analogy and metaphor. In the case of a person with cramped handwriting, it would be said that ‘he keeping his possessions close together—that is to say, he is parsimonious.’ This was doubtless accurate, but it was the language that had to bear the cost of this graphological insight. The same holds true for the ‘spiritual vision’ that Klages invokes as judge of the general formal level of someone’s handwriting, of the greater or lesser amount of wealth, plentitude, weightiness, warmth, density, or depth.” Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 2:132.

¹³ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:138. “Klages’ starting point is language, expression. The Mendelssohns’ is the body—that is to say, the image.” Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 2:133.

¹⁴ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:136. For a further discussion of language and the body in Benjamin, see Gerhard Richter, *Walter Benjamin and the Corpus of Autobiography* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000). “The grounding force, then,” Richter argues, “is a double displacement that simultaneously connects and forever separates language and the body. This grounding is predicated upon what remains an elusive, aporetic other within each of the poles of the binarism of body and language” (*ibid.*, 72). Again, to the script-image, see Jennings and Doherty, “Script, Image, Script-Image.”

¹⁵ Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn, *Handschrift*, 9.

bedeutungsvoll sind die skizzierten Umriss einer kubischen Graphologie. Die Handschrift ist nur scheinbar ein flächenhaftes Gebilde,” Benjamin reminds us.

Die Druckgebung zeigt an, daß eine plastische Tiefe, ein Raum hinter der Schriftebene für den Schreibenden existiert, und auf der anderen Seite verraten Unterbrechungen in den Schriftzügen die wenigen Stellen, an denen die Feder in den Raum vor der Schriftebene zurücktritt, um ihre ‘immateriellen Kurven’ darin zu beschreiben. Ob der kubische Bildraum der Schrift ein mikrokosmisches Abbild des Erscheinungsraumes der Hellsicht ist? Ob in ihm die telepathischen Schriftdeuter wie Rafael Scherman ihre Aufschlüsse holten? Jedenfalls eröffnet die Theorie vom kubischen Schriftbild die Aussicht, eines Tages die Handschriftendeutung der Erforschung telepathischer Vorgänge dienstbar zu machen.¹⁷

Hidden depths, indeed. This is precisely the model proposed by Anja and Georg Mendelssohn: the movement from depth to surface, from unconscious to conscious, as a process akin the work of the dream. “Was ist der Unterschied?,” they ask.

¹⁶ Here, I would like to draw our attention, however briefly, to the discussion of the miniature and micrographia, minute writing, in Susan Stewart’s *On Longing*. “The labor was the labor of the hand, of the body,” Stewart writes of micrographia, “and the product, in its uniqueness, was a stay against repetition and inauthenticity. The appearance of minute writing at the end of the manuscript era characterizes the transformation of writing to print: the end of writing’s particular discursive movement; its errors made by the body; its mimesis of memory, fading and, thus, in micrographia, diminishing through time as well as in space.” Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993), 39.

¹⁷ Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:139. “Just as revealing are the sketchy outlines of a cubic graphology. Handwriting is only apparently a surface phenomenon. We can see from the impression made in the paper during printing that there is a sculptural depth, a space behind the writing plane for the writer; on the other hand, interruptions in the flow of writing reveal the few points at which the pen is drawn back into the space in front of the writing plane, so as to describe its ‘immaterial curves.’ Could the cubic pictorial space of writing be a copy in microcosm of a clairvoyant space? Is this the source of the insights of telepathic graphologists like Rafael Scherman? Whatever the answer, the cubic theory of writing opens up the prospect that one day it may be possible to exploit graphology to investigate telepathic events.” Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 2:134.

Die Buchgelehrsamkeit hat gewisse Verbindungen von Schriftzeichen und Symptomgruppen hergestellt, die man auswendig lernen kann, ohne die Zusammenhänge in der Tiefe kennen zu lernen. Der Intuitive macht diesen Weg jedesmal neu. Man könnte sagen, er taucht von dem einen Schriftmerkmal in die Tiefe bis zum Komplex und steigt von dort wieder empor zu dem einzelnen Symptom. Ein Graphologe, der aus der Schrift die Träume eines Menschen zu erkennen vermag, würde gewiß berechtigtes Aufsehen erregen.¹⁸

And here we have reached another edge, at the very border-line where the body and mind would reach into the world, where psyche, material, and image converge at the limits of intelligibility. We are at the edge, once again, grappling with the hand, its manifold traces of a narrative, always escaping beyond its limits, a narrative we can neither fully grasp nor fully contain.

¹⁸ Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn, *Handschrift*, 8.

Bibliography

- Ades, Dawn. *Photomontage*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.
- , ed. *The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Adkins, Helen. “Erste Internationale Dada-Messe.” In *Stationen der Moderne. Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, edited by Michael Bollé and Eva Züchner, 157–84. 2nd ed. Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1988. Exhibition catalogue.
- Adriani, Götz. *Hannah Höch. Fotomontagen, Gemälde, Aquarelle*. Cologne: DuMont, 1980. Exhibition catalogue.
- Alford, Marianna Margaret Compton Cust (Viscountess). *Needlework as Art*. London: S. Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1886.
- Alibisetti, James C. *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Anscombe, Isabelle. *A Woman’s Touch: Women in Design from 1860 to the Present Day*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1984.
- Araujo, Ana. “Repetition, Pattern, and the Domestic: Notes on the Relationship Between Pattern and Home-making.” *Textile* 8, no. 2 (2010): 180–201. doi:10.2752/175183510X12791B96965574.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*. Edited by Liliane Weissberg. Translated by Richard Winston and Clara Winston. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Aristotle. *On the Parts of Animals*. Translated by James G. Lennox. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001.
- Attfield, Judy. “FORM/female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design.” In *Design History and the History of Design*, 199–225. London: Pluto, 1989.
- Aynsley, Jeremy. “Graphic Change: Design Change: Magazines for the Domestic Interior, 1890-1930.” *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 1 (2005): 43–59. doi: 10.1093/jdh/epi005
- Baer, Ulrich. *Das Rilke-Alphabet*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006.
- Bailly, Jean-Christophe. *The Hand: Sketch Book*. Translated by Valérie Donnat and Ian Monk. Paris: Bibliothèque de l’Image, 2000.
- Beaulieu, Heloise von. “Die Handschrift in der Handarbeit.” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 22, no. 1–2 (1921/1922): 85.

- Bell, Sir Charles. *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design*. London: William Pickering, 1833.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Gesammelte Schriften*. Edited by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser. 7 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972-1989.
- . *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Translated by John Osborne. New York: Verso, 1998.
- . *Selected Writings*. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. 4 vols. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996.
- . *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, And Other Writings on Media*. Edited by Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin. Translated by Edmund Jephcott, et al. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Bergemann, Uta-Christian. "Berliner Stickereien des Biedermeier. Entwicklung und gesellschaftliche Bedeutung." *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 44 (2002): 93–128. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4130008>.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. New York: Penguin, 1972.
- Bickenbach, Matthias, Annina Klappert, and Hedwig Pompe, eds. *Manus Loquens. Medium Der Geste—Geste Der Medien*. Cologne: DuMont, 2003.
- Biro, Matthew. *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Blackwell, Jeannine. "Fractured Fairy Tales: German Women Authors and the Grimm Tradition." *Germanic Review* 62, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 162–74.
- Blisniewski, Thomas. "'... und Schafft mit emsigen Händen'. Weibliche Handarbeiten in Werken von R. Schadow, C.J. Begas und J.A. Ramboux im Wallraf-Richartz-Museum-Fondation Corboud." *Kölner Museums-Bulletin*, no. 3 (2001): 4–18.
- Bottigheimer, Ruth B. "Tale Spinners: Submerged Voices in Grimms' Fairy Tales." *New German Critique* 27 (Fall 1982): 141–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/487989>.
- Bovenschen, Silvia. *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979.
- Bregren, Ann. "Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought." In *Weaving Truth: Essays on Language and the Female in Greek Thought*, 13–40. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2008.
- Brennan, Toni. "A Phoenix Rises from the Nazi Book Burning." *The Psychologist* 21, no. 4 (April 2008): 366–67.
- . "Charlotte Wolff's Contribution to Bisexual History and to (Sexuality) Theory and Research: A Re-appraisal for Queer Times." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 21, no. 1 (January 2012): 141–61. doi: 10.1353/sex.2012.0010.

- Brennan, Toni and Peter Hegarty. "Charlotte Wolff and Lesbian History: Reconfiguring Liminality in Exile." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 14, no. 4 (December 2010): 338–358. doi: 10.1080/10894161003677232
- Buckley, Cheryl. "Made in the Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design" 3, no. 2 (Autumn 1986): 3–14.
- Bulwer, John. *Chirologia: Or, the Natural Language of the Hand, and Chironomia: Or, the Art of Manual Rhetoric*. 1684. Edited by James W. Cleary. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974.
- Burckhardt, Lucius, ed. *The Werkbund: History and Ideology, 1907-1933*. Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1980.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Rev. ed. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Canning, Kathleen. "Social Policy, Body Politics: Recasting the Social Question in Germany, 1875-1900." In *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, edited by Laura L. Frader and Sonya O. Rose, 211–37. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Capuano, Peter. "Manufacturing Hands in British Industrial Fiction." Paper presented at the Modern Language Association, Boston, Massachusetts, January 3, 2013.
- . "Novel Hands: Victorian Fiction and the Narrative of Manuals". Unpublished Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2009.
- Carson, Anne. *Eros the Bittersweet*. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998. First published 1986 by Princeton University Press.
- Carus, Carl Gustav. *Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt. Ein Handbuch zur Menschenkenntniß*. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1853.
- . *Ueber Grund und Bedeutung der verschiedenen Formen der Hand in verschiedenen Personen. Eine Vorlesung*. Stuttgart: Becher, 1846.
- Chametzky, Peter. *Objects As History in Twentieth-Century German Art: Beckmann to Beuys*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Coatsworth, Elizabeth. "Text and Textile." In *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, edited by Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts, 187–207. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- Conboy, Katie, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanburg, eds. *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. Gender and Culture Reader. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. London: John Murray, 1871.
- . *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Dech, Jula. *Hannah Höch. Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989.
- Derrida, Jacques. *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*. Edited by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- . “Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hand.” In *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, edited by John Sallis, translated by John P. Leavey, Jr., 161–96. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- . *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*. Translated by Barbara Harlow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Dickerman, Lean, and Brigid Doherty, eds. *Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, Paris*. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2005. Exhibition catalogue.
- Dillmont, Thérèse de. *Encyclopedia of Needlework*. 1884. Translated. Rev. ed. Mulhouse: Editions Th. de Dillmont, [1900-1978?].
- Doherty, Brigid. “Fashionable Ladies, Dada Dandies.” *Art Journal* 54, no. 1 (April 1, 1995): 46–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/777506>.
- . “Figures of the Pseudorevolution.” *October* 84 (Spring 1998): 64–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/779209>.
- . “The Work of Art and the Problem of Politics in Berlin Dada.” *October* 105 (July 1, 2003): 73–92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3397682>.
- Duffy, Maureen. *A Thousand Capricious Chances: A History of the Methuen List 1889-1989*. London: Methuen, 1989.
- Duncan, Erika. “Portrait of Charlotte Wolff.” *Book Forum* 4 (1978): 284–94.
- Enderlein, Anne, ed. *Ullstein Chronik 1903-2011*. Berlin: Ullstein, 2011.
- Engelhardt, Helmut, ed. *Materialien Zu Rainer Maria Rilkes Aufzeichnungen Des Malte Laurids Brigge*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984.
- Frank, Isabelle, ed. *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750-1940*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Franzel, Sean. “Branding Berlin: The Humboldt University Celebrates Its Founding.” *The Germanic Review* 85, no. 3 (September 2010): 250–256.
- Franzoi, Barbara. “Domestic Industry: Work Options and Women’s Choices.” In *German Women in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History*, edited by John C. Fout, 256–69. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Anna Freud, et al. 18 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1941-1973.

- Frye, Susan. *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England*. Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Galen. *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*. Translated by Margaret Tallmadge May. 2 vols. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968.
- Gass, William. "Introduction." In *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, vii–xxiv. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Giloi, Eva. *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany 1750-1950*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive*. Translated by Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Goggin, Maureen Daly. "An 'Essamplaire Essai' on the Rhetoricity of Needlework Sampler-Making: A Contribution to Theorizing and Historicizing Rhetorical Praxis." *Rhetoric Review* 21, no. 4 (2002): 309–338.
- . "Stitching a Life in 'Pen of Steele and Silken Inke': Elizabeth Parker's Circa 1830 Sampler." In *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles, 1750-1950*, edited by Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, 31–49. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009.
- Goggin, Maureen Daly, and Beth Fowkes Tobin, eds. *Material Women, 1750-1950: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009.
- , eds. *Women and Things, 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. "Hamlet's Hand." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 307–27.
- . *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Grewe, Cordula. "Re-enchantment as Artistic Practice: Strategies of Emulation in German Romantic Art and Theory." *New German Critique*, no. 94 (Winter 2005): 36–71.
- Grimm, Jacob. *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*. 4th ed. Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchh., T. Weicher, 1899.
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. "Hand." In *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. 33 vols. (1854-1971), vol. 10. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1877. <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemma=hand>.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Gunn, Joshua. *Modern Occult Rhetoric: Mass Media and the Drama of Secrecy in the Twentieth Century*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005.
- Hahn, Barbara. "Antworten Sie mir!": *Rahel Levin Varnhagens Briefwechsel*. Frankfurt am Main/Basel: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990.

- . “Mit Goethe Im Bad. Begegnungen im Exterritorialen: Rahel Levin, Sara Und Marianne Meyer.” *Monatshefte* 92, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 336–50.
- . “Rahel. Ein Buch des Denkens für die Nachwelt.” In *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*, 6:11–39. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011.
- . “,Still und bewegt.‘ Rahel Levins Konstellationen.” *MLN* 126 (2011): 486–94.
- . *Unter falschem Namen. Von der schwierigen Autorschaft der Frauen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991.
- . “Writing with/to Friends: *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*”. Lecture given at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, n.d.
- Hahn, Barbara, and Marianne Schuller. “Kann man einen Nachlaß edieren? Zum Konzept der ‘Edition Rahel Levin Varnhagen’.” *Editio: Internationales Jahrbuch Für Editions-wissenschaft* 7 (1993): 235–41.
- Hannah Höch 1889-1978. Ihr Werk, ihr Leben, ihre Freunde*. Edited by the Berlinische Galerie. Berlin: Argon, 1989. Exhibition catalogue.
- Hannah Höch. Collages, Peintures, Aquarelles, Gouaches, Dessins / Collagen, Gemälde, Aquarelle, Gouachen, Zeichnungen*. Paris and Berlin: Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Nationalgalerie Berlin, 1976. Exhibition catalogue.
- Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*. Edited by the Berlinische Galerie. 3 vols. Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989-2001.
- Hansen, Miriam Bratu. *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Harris, Beth, ed. *Famine and Fashion: Needlewomen in the Nineteenth Century*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2005.
- Hausen, Karin. “Family and Role-Division: The Polarisation of Sexual Stereotypes in the Nineteenth Century — An Aspect of the Dissociation of Work and Family Life.” In *The German Family: Essays on the Social History of the Family in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany*, edited by Richard J. Evans and W. R. Lee, translated by Cathleen Catt, 51–83. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981.
- . “Die Polarisierung der ‘Geschlechtscharaktere‘ — Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben.” In *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas*, edited by Werner Conze, 363–93. Stuttgart: Klett, 1976.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Was heißt denken?* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1954.
- Heller-Roazen, Daniel. *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation*. New York: Zone Books, 2007.
- Hemus, Ruth. *Dada’s Women*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

- Hertz, Deborah. "Intermarriage in the Berlin Salons." *Central European History* 16, no. 4 (December 1983): 303–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4545995>.
- . "Salonières and Literary Women in Late Eighteenth-Century Berlin." *New German Critique* 14 (Spring 1978): 97–108. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/488063>.
- Herzfelde, Wieland. "Introduction to the First International Dada Fair." Translated by Brigid Doherty. *October* 105 (July 1, 2003): 93–104.
- Höch, Hanna. "Die freie Stick-Kunst." *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 20, no. 1 (1919): 22.
- . "Die stickende Frau." *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 20, no. 1–2 (1919): 26.
- . "Vom Sticken." *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 18, no. 12 (1918): 220.
- . "Was Ist Schön?" *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 19, no. 1–2 (1918): 8–16.
- . "Weiss-Stickerei." *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 19, no. 3 (1918): 45–52.
- Höch, Hannah. "Erinnerungen an DADA. Ein Vortrag 1966." In *Hannah Höch 1889-1978. Ihr Werk, ihr Leben, ihre Freunde*, edited by Berlinische Galerie, 201–13. Berlin: Argon, 1989.
- . "Lebensüberblick 1958." In *Hannah Höch 1889-1978. Ihr Werk, ihr Leben, ihre Freunde*, edited by Berlinische Galerie, 195–99. Berlin: Argon, 1989.
- Hoffmann-Curtius, Kathrin. "Geschlechterspiel im Dadaismus." *Kunstforum* 128 (1994): 166–69.
- Houze, Rebecca. "At the Forefront of a Newly Emerging Profession? Ethnography, Education and the Exhibition of Women's Needlework in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 1 (2008): 19–40. doi: 10.1093/jdh/epm040.
- . "From Wiener Kunst im Hause to the Wiener Werkstätte: Marketing Domesticity with Fashionable Interior Design." *Design Issues* 18, no. 1 (2002): 3–23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1512026>.
- . "Hungarian Nationalism, Gottfried Semper, And the Budapest Museum of Applied Art." *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 16, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 2009): 7–38.
- . "The Textile as Structural Framework: Gottfried Semper's Bekleidungsprinzip and the Case of Vienna 1900." *Textile* 4, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 292–311.
- Hunter, Dianne. "Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna O." *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 464–88.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge." In *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, edited by Karen Leeder and Robert Vilain, 74–79. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- . "Paris / Childhood: The Fragmented Body in Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*." In *Modernity and the Text: Revisions of German Modernism*, edited by Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick, 113–41. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

- Ingold, Tim. "Transformations of the Line: Traces, Threads and Surfaces." *Textile* 8, no. 1 (2010): 10–35.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- . *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Isselstein, Ursula. *Studien zu Rahel Levin Varnhagen: Der Text aus meinem beleidigten Herzen*. Torino: Tirrenia Stampatori, 1993.
- Janssen, Carmen Viktoria. *Textile in Texturen. Lesestrategien und Intertextualität bei Goethe und Bettina von Arnim*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000.
- Jenkins, David, ed. *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*. 2 vols. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Jenkinson, Hilary. "Elizabethan Handwritings." *The Library* 3, no. 1 (June 1, 1922): 1–34.
- Joeres, Ruth-Ellen Boetcher. *Respectability and Deviance: Nineteenth-Century German Women Writers and the Ambiguity of Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Jones, Mary Eirwen. *A History of Western Embroidery*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1969.
- K. G. v. H. "Hanna Höchs Muster-Kunst." *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 20, no. 12 (1920): 224.
- Kallos, Kay Klein. "A Woman's Revolution: The Relationship Between Design and the Avant-garde in the Work of Hannah Höch, 1912-1922". Unpublished Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994.
- Key, Ellen. "Ein Gottsucher (Rainer Maria Rilke)." In *Seelen und Werk*, 153–232. Berlin: Fischer, 1911.
- King, Kathryn R. "Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 14, no. 1 (April 1995): 77–93.
- King, Lydia J. *Best-Sellers by Design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988.
- Kittler, Friedrich. *Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900*. 4th ed. Munich: Fink, 2003.
- . *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*. Translated by Michael Metteer. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Kleinbard, David. *The Beginning of Terror: A Psychological Study of Rainer Maria Rilke's Life and Work*. New York: New York University Press, 1993.
- Kortsch, Christine Bayles. *Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women's Fiction: Literacy, Textiles, and Activism*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009.
- Koschorke, Albrecht. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr. Mediologie des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: Fink, 1999.

- Laporte, Dominique. *The History of Shit*. Translated by Nadia Benabid and Rodolphe el-Khoury. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.
- Lavin, Maud. *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- . “Photomontage, Mass Culture, and Modernity: Utopianism in the Circle of New Advertising Designers.” In *Montage and Modern Life 1919-1942*, edited by Matthew Teitelbaum. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.
- Ledbetter, Kathryn. *Victorian Needlework*. Denver: Praeger, 2012.
- Lees-Maffei, Grace, and Rebecca Houze, eds. *The Design History Reader*. New York: Berg, 2010.
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. *Gesture and Speech*. Translated by Anna Bostock Berger. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993.
- Leslie, Esther. “Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft.” *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 1 (1998): 5–13.
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Werke Und Briefe*. Edited by Wilfried Barner. 12 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985.
- Locher, Elmar. *Der Schatten der Hand. Zu sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Händen in Literatur und Kunst*. Bozen: Edition Sturzflüge, 2010.
- Lux., Joseph Aug. “Zur Psychologie der Spitze und der Stickerei.” *Stickerei- und Spitzen-Rundschau* 18 (1917/ 1918): 146–52.
- Macheski, Cecilia. “Penelope’s Daughters: Images of Needlework in Eighteenth-Century Literature.” In *Fetter’d or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, edited by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski, 85–100. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986.
- Maciuika, John V. *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and the German State, 1890-1920*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Makela, Maria. “By Design: The Early Work of Hannah Höch in Context.” In *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, 49–80. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996. Exhibition catalogue.
- . “The Misogynist Machine: Images of Technology in the Work of Hannah Höch.” In *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, edited by Katharina von Ankum, 107–27. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Makholm, Kristin. “Chronology.” In *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, 185–210. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996. Exhibition catalogue.
- Mattenklott, Gert. “‘Schriftleser, Handleser, Sternleser’: Das Echo auf Ernst Fuhrmann, mitgeteilt aus Briefen und Aufzeichnungen von Hofmannsthal, Rilke, Pannwitz, Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff und Vogeler.” *Hofmannsthal Blätter*, no. 30 (1985): 69–92.

- Matthew Buckingham: *Play the Story*. London: Camden Arts Centre, 2007. Exhibition catalogue.
- Mayer, Christa C. "An Early German Needlework Fragment." *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 6 (January 1, 1971): 67–76.
- Meltzer, Françoise. "The Hands of Simone Weil." *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 611–28.
- Mendelssohn, Anja, and Georg Mendelssohn. *Der Mensch in der Handschrift. Mit zahlreichen Schriftproben und 11 Tafeln*. Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1928[–1930].
- Mitchell, Juliet. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. New York: Penguin, 2000. First published 1974 by Allen Lane.
- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. New York: Methuen, 1985.
- Mommsen, Hans, and Winfried Schulze, eds. *Vom Elend der Handarbeit: Probleme historischer Unterschichtenforschung*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981.
- Montaigne, Michel de. *Apology for Raymond Sebond*. Translated by M. A. Screech. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- Müller, Ulrike. *Bauhaus Women: Art - Handicraft - Design*. Translated by Emer Lettow and Sarah Kane. Paris: Flammarion, 2009.
- Muthesius, Stefan. "Alois Riegl? Volkskunst, Hausfleiss, und Hausindustrie." In *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work*. Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2000.
- . "Communications Between Traders, Users and Artists: The Growth of German Language Serial Publications on Domestic Interior Decoration in the Later Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 1 (2005): 7–20. doi: 10.1093/jdh/epi002.
- . "Handwerk/Kunsthandwerk." *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 1 (1998): 85–95. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1316165>.
- . *The Poetic Home: Designing the 19th-Century Domestic Interior*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2009.
- Napier, John. *Hands*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 30 Vols. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-.
- . *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 15 vols. Munich: dtv, 1980.
- Obler, Bibiana. "Taeuber, Arp, and the Politics of Cross-Stitch." *The Art Bulletin* 91, no. 2 (June 2009): 207–229.
- Parker, Rozsika. *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. 2nd ed. New York: Tauris, 2010.

- Pasewalck, Sabine. *“Die Fünffingrige Hand”. Die Bedeutung der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung beim späten Rilke*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002.
- Patenburg, Volker. “Aus Händen Lesen.” *KulturPoetik* 3, no. 1 (2003): 42–58.
- Pevsner, Nikolaus. *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*. 4th ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Porter, James I. *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Purdy, Daniel L. *The Tyranny of Elegance: Consumer Cosmopolitanism in the Era of Goethe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Randa, Sigrid. *Alexander Koch. Publizist und Verleger in Darmstadt. Reformen der Kunst und des Lebens um 1900*. Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990.
- Rappold, Claudia. *Charlotte Wolff (1897-1986). Ärztin, Psychotherapeutin, Wissenschaftlerin und Schriftstellerin*. Jüdische Miniaturen 34. Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2005.
- Richter, Gerhard. *Walter Benjamin and the Corpus of Autobiography*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002.
- Richter, Hans. *DADA: Art and Anti-Art*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1965.
- . *DADA- Kunst und Antikunst*. Cologne: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Auguste Rodin*. Translated by Daniel Slager. New York: Archipelago Books, 2004.
- . *Briefe*. Edited by the Rilke-Archiv. 2 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1950.
- . *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1892-1910*. Translated by Jane Bannard Greene and M. D. Herter Norton. New York: W.W. Norton, 1945.
- . *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. Translated by Stephen Mitchell. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- . *Tagebuch Westerwede und Paris 1902*. Edited by Hella Sieber-Rilke. 2 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 2000.
- . *Werke*. Edited by Manfred Engel, Ulrich Fülleborn, Horst Nalewski, and August Stahl. 4 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996.
- , and Lou Andreas-Salomé. *Briefwechsel, 1897-1926*. Edited by Ernst Pfeiffer. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1975.
- Risatti, Howard. *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Robbers, Lutz. “Modern Architecture in the Age of Cinema: Mies Van Der Rohe and The Moving Image”. PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2012.

- Roditi, Edouard. "Hannah Höch und die Berliner Dadaisten: Ein Gespräch mit der Malerin." *Der Monat* 12, no. 134 (November 1959): 60–68.
- . "Interview with Hannah Höch." *Arts* 34, no. December (1959): 24–29.
- Rosen, Ike. *Sticken Modern*. Munich: Südwest Verlag, 1970.
- Rowe, Karen E. "To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale." In *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*, edited by Ruth B. Bottigheimer, 53–73. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.
- Rowe, Katherine. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Santner, Eric L. *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Sawelson-Gorse, Naomi, ed. *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.
- Schäfer, Jörgen. *Exquisite Dada: A Comprehensive Bibliography*. Vol. 10 of *Crisis and the Arts: The History of Dada*. New York: Thompson Gale, 2005.
- Schaffer, Talia. *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Schaschke, Bettina. "Schnittmuster der Kunst." In *Hannah Höch. Aller Anfang ist DADA!*, edited by Ralf Burmeister, 118–35. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007.
- Schor, Naomi. *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*. New York: Methuen, 1987.
- Schuller, Marianne. "'Unsere Sprache ist unser gelebtes Leben.' Randbemerkungen zur Schreibweise Rahel Varnhagens." In *Studien - Materialien - Register*. Vol. 10 of *Gesammelte Werke*, by Rahel Varnhagen, edited by Konrad Feilchenfeldt, Uwe Schweikert and Rahel E. Steiner, 43–59. Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1983.
- Schulz, Armin. "Bild- und Vokabelmischungen sind Weltanschauungen. Zu Hannah Höchs Collage 'Meine Haussprüche'." In *Hannah Höch 1889-1978. Ihr Werk, ihr Leben, ihre Freunde*. Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989. Exhibition catalogue.
- Schwartz, Frederic J. *Blind Spots: Critical Theory And The History Of Art In Twentieth-century Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- . *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture Before the First World War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Schwarzer, Mitchell. "The Design Prototype as Artistic Boundary: The Debate on History and Industry in Central European Applied Arts Museums, 1860-1900." *Design Issues* 9, no. 1 (Autumn 1992): 30–44.

- Scott, Joan Wallach. "Fantasy Echo: History and the Construction of Identity." *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (2001): 284–304.
- . "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053–75.
- Semper, Gottfried. *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*. Translated by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Sennett, Richard. *The Craftsman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Simmons, Sherwin. "Hand to the Friend, Fist to the Foe': The Struggle of Signs in the Weimar Republic." *Journal of Design History* 13, no. 4 (2000): 319–39.
- Simonton, Deborah. *A History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Stradal, Marianne, and Ulrike Brommer. *Mit Nadel und Faden. Kulturgeschichte der klassischen Handarbeiten*. Freiburg: Herder, 1990.
- Steakley, James D., and Charlotte Wolff. "Love Between Women and Love Between Men: Interview with Charlotte Wolff." *New German Critique*, no. 23 (April 1, 1981): 73–81.
- Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Susman, Margarete. *Frauen der Romantik*. Edited by Barbara Hahn. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996.
- Synge, Lanto. *Art of Embroidery: History of Style and Technique*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2001.
- Tallis, Raymond. *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human Being*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003.
- Tarnoff, Maura. "Sewing Authorship in John Skelton's Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell." *ELH* 75, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 415–38.
- Tewarson, Heidi Thomann. *Rahel Levin Varnhagen: The Life and Work of a German Jewish Intellectual*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Tong, Rosemarie Putnam. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. 2nd ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.
- Treitl, Corinna. *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
- Troy, Virginia Gardner. *The Modernist Textile: Europe and America 1890-1940*. Burlington, Vermont: Lund Humphries, 2006.
- Tubach, Frederic C. "The Image of the Hand in Rilke's Poetry." *PMLA* 76, no. 3 (June 1961): 240–46.

- Ullstein, Hermann. *The Rise and Fall of the House of Ullstein*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943.
- Varnhagen, Rahel. *Gesammelte Werke*. Edited by Konrad Feilchenfeldt, Uwe Schweikert and Rahel E. Steiner. 10 vols. Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1983.
- . *Ich will noch leben, wenn man's liest: Journalistische Beiträge aus den Jahren 1812-1829*. Edited by Lieselotte Kinskofer. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2001.
- Varnhagen, Rahel Levin. *Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde. Nach dem Manuskript der Sammlung Varnhagen*. Edited by Barbara Hahn. 6 vols. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011.
- Vaschide, Nicolas. *Essai sur la psychologie de la main*. Paris, 1909.
- Völker, Angela. *Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte 1910-1932*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004.
- Wakely, H. "Our Identity at Our Fingertips?" *Wellcome Library Blog*, November 26, 2009.
<http://libraryblog.wellcome.ac.uk/libraryblog/2009/11/our-identity-at-our-fingertips/>.
- Walker, John Albert. *Design History and the History of Design*. London: Pluto, 1989.
- Wilson, Frank R. *The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture*. New York: Vintage, 1998.
- Wolf, Christa, and Charlotte Wolff. *Ja, unsere Kreise berühren sich: Briefe*. Munich: Luchterhand, 2004.
- Wolff, Charlotte. Archive. Wellcome Library, London, UK.
- . "Character and Mentality as Related to Hand-Markings." *The British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1941): 364–82.
- . "The Hand of the Mental Defective." *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 20, no. 2 (1944): 147–60.
- . *The Hand in Psychological Diagnosis*. London: Methuen, 1951; New York: Philosophical Library, 1952.
- . "The Hands of Mongolian Imbeciles in Relation to Their Three Personality Groups." *Journal of Mental Science* 88, no. 372 (July 1942): 415–18.
- . *Hindsight*. London; New York: Quartet Books, 1980.
- . *The Human Hand*. London: Methuen, 1942; New York: Knopf, 1943.
- . *Love Between Women*. London: Duckworth, 1971; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971.
- . *Magnus Hirschfeld: A Portrait of a Pioneer in Sexology*. London; New York: Quartet Books, 1986.
- . "La Main et les facteurs constitutionnels de la déficience mentale et morale." *Enfance* 2, no. 3 (1949): 189–201.
- . "La Main et les tendances psycho-biologiques chez l'enfant." *Enfance* 1, no. 5 (1948): 412–17.

- . *An Older Love*. London: Quartet Books, 1976.
- . *On the Way to Myself: Communications to a Friend*. London: Methuen, 1969.
- . *A Psychology of Gesture*. Translated by Anne Tennant. London: Methuen, 1945; New York: Arno Press, 1948.
- . *Studies in Hand-Reading*. Translated by O. Cook. London: Chatto & Windus, 1936; New York: Knopf, 1937.
- Wolff, Lotte. “Les Révélations psychiques de la main.” *Minotaure* 6 (Winter 1935): 38–44.
- [Wolff, Oskar Ludwig Bernhard.] *Actenmäßiger Bericht Über Die Erste Versammlung Deutscher Schriftstellerinnen, Gehalten Zu Weimar Am 5., 6. Und 7. October 1846*. Leipzig: Gerhard, 1846.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell. 5 vols. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977-1985.
- . *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. Edited by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. 6 vols. London: Hogarth, 1975-1980.
- Wurst, Karin. *Fabricating Pleasure: Fashion, Entertainment, and Cultural Consumption in Germany, 1780-1830*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- Zedler, Johann Heinrich. “Hand, Lat. Manus.” *Grosses Vollständiges Universallexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*. Halle and Leipzig: Zedler, 1731-1754. <http://www.zedler-lexikon.de>.