

Truth in Serial Form

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Truth in Serial Form

Serial Formats and the Form of the Series, 1850–1930

Edited by
Malika Maskarinec

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Malika Maskarinec

Introduction

Serial Formats and the Form of the Series, 1850–1930

The essays collected in this volume take as their starting point the veritable explosion of serialized formats during the nineteenth century. Alongside increasingly serialized industrial production, communication, and consumption, nineteenth-century Europe witnessed a burgeoning interest in the form of the series and in practices of serialization across different modes of representation, many of which we have inherited and or have extended to new media. The particular focus of this volume concerns how a serialized-media culture raised new and profound epistemological questions. Just as the accelerated rhythm, anonymity, and broadened accessibility of new media today have created novel possibilities for the dissemination of misinformation and, conversely, given us cause to interrogate standards of trustworthiness, serialized formats of the nineteenth century prompted questions of veracity, fictionality, and credibility. Dedicated to a range of visual and textual media prominent between 1850 and 1930, the essays collected here explore how serialization and the series as a form open aesthetic and epistemic possibilities for negotiating these questions. By inquiring how series provide creative answers to epistemic uncertainties, the volume contributes to a growing treatment of serialized formats as more than a set of limiting, normative conventions.¹ Indeed, the impetus for this volume was to explore how aesthetic and epistemic possibilities are

¹ Simon Rothöhler's *Theorien der Serie zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2020) is paradigmatic for current interest in the topic. While nineteenth-century literature in particular has long been understood to be constrained and diminished by the format and economic interests of periodical publishing, more recent approaches have reevaluated the periodical as a medium for literary experimentation and innovation. For a summary and an example of this reevaluation, see Daniela Gretz, "Poetik der Miszelle? Präliminarien zur Koevolution von periodischer Presse und

Acknowledgments: This collection of essays originated from the conference "Truth and Logic of the Series" held in May 2019 at Eikones – Center for the Theory and History of the Image in Basel. My thanks go to the participants of the conference and to Eikones for supporting the event and this publication. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Ralph Ubl and Markus Klammer for helping conceptualize the topic and event; Daniela Steinebrunner for her incredible organizational support; Sarah Wiesendanger and Selina Gartmann for their assistance in preparing the manuscript; Rüdiger Campe and Karen Feldman as the editors of the series *Paradigms*; two reviewers for their insightful responses to the manuscript; Myrto Aspioti and Stella Diedrich at Walter de Gruyter for their very attentive supervision of the publishing process; and Anthony Mahler for his ever meticulous and indispensable labor completing the manuscript.

specifically created by exploiting the affinities and potential differences between serialized formats and the series as a form.

A first answer to the question of what constitutes a series can be gleaned from a delightful scene in the “Einleitung,” which follows on the heels of the more renowned “Vorrede,” to Adalbert Stifter’s *Bunte Steine* (1853). The scene, which literalizes one German term for “serializing,” *Reihenbildung*, succinctly presents the epistemic problems and possibilities series raise when the narrator, who identifies himself as the author in the introduction, describes his lifelong habit of collecting stones (along with more ephemeral vegetable matter and unspecified “Erddinge”):

Als Knabe trug ich außer Ruten, Gesträuchen und Blüten, die mich ergötzten, auch noch andere Dinge nach Hause, die mich fast noch mehr freuten, weil sie nicht so schnell Farbe und Bestand verloren wie die Pflanzen, nämlich allerlei Steine und Erddinge. Auf Feldern, an Rainen, auf Heiden und Hutweiden, ja sogar auf Wiesen, auf denen doch nur das hohe Gras steht, liegen die mannigfältigsten dieser Dinge herum. Da ich nun viel im Freien umherschweifen durfte, konnte es nicht fehlen, daß ich bald die Plätze entdeckte, auf denen die Dinge zu treffen waren, und daß ich die, welche ich fand, mit nach Hause nahm.

As a boy I took home twigs plants and flowers that caught my fancy, and other things too that pleased me almost better still because they did not lose their color and vitality as quickly as the plants did, namely all kinds of stones and things of the earth. On fields on margins on heaths and pastures and even on meadows where nothing grows but high grass these things lie about in profusion. As I was allowed to roam far and wide, I inevitably discovered the places to find these things, and took home what I found.²

Once the boy returns home, this free, aimless movement (“herumschweifen”) through the landscape and the accidental nature of his findings give way to a measured drive to order them. To do so, he creates a series, placing the objects in a row, an activity the narrator recalls as pleasurable. The practice of making a series, at least in this instance, fosters an affective attachment to the objects, their order, and the very act of placing in a row: “When I had time, I laid out my treasures in a row to contemplate and delight in them” (Wenn ich Zeit hatte, legte ich meine Schätze in eine Reihe, betrachtete sie und hatte mein Vergnügen an ihnen).³ The reader also learns that the narrator’s childhood drive to accumulate and organize stones

modernen Roman mit Blick auf Raabes *Stopfkuchen* und einem Ausblick auf Fontanes *Stechlin*,” *Colloquia Germanica* 49.2–3 (2016): 305–328.

2 Adalbert Stifter, “Einleitung” to *Bunte Steine*, ed. Helmut Bergner, vol. 2.2 of *Werke und Briefe: Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Alfred Doppler and Wolfgang Frühwald (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1982), 17; Adalbert Stifter, “Introduction” to *Motley Stones*, trans. Isabel Fargo Cole (New York: New York Review Books, 2021), 9.

3 Stifter, “Introduction,” 9; Stifter, “Einleitung,” 18.

has not abated, and that he continues to gather more items, to draw them, and to build an archive to pass on to further generations. The brief introduction concludes by anticipating an expansive future to the collection: “As more stones exist than can be counted, I cannot say in advance how long this collection shall be” (Weil es unermeßlich viel Steine gibt, so kann ich gar nicht voraussagen, wie groß diese Sammlung werden wird).⁴ Because nature and the series are potentially infinite, the practice of collecting and serial ordering can be extended indefinitely.

If this row of stones is taken to be exemplary, serializing comes into view as an open-ended affective practice that endows an anterior and arbitrary experience with a perspicacious spatial order. By being placed in a row, the objects are classified as being of the same kind, which invites comparison, yet they are simultaneously parsed such that their particularity remains appreciable. To the series belong not only the set of objects but also those differences established in the repetitive act of placing additional stones. If one broadens one’s view to encompass the place of the introduction within *Bunte Steine*, it becomes apparent that the ordered stones also embody certain poetological claims. In fact, the row of stones references at least three different orderings. In the first place, the narrator belongs to Stifter’s band of self-taught naturalists who perform geological surveys in the interest of generating knowledge about the earth’s deep time.⁵ Second, the narrator draws an explicit analogy between his collection of stones and the texts gathered in the volume: both are attributed to the same desire to collect. Like the narrator’s story collection – a “celebratory gift” (Festgeschenk), as the title page designates the volume – the collection of stones is presented as a private archive that has been made public in the form of an inheritance.

Dieser Sammelgeist nun ist noch immer nicht von mir gewichen. Nicht nur trage ich noch heutzutage buchstäblich Steine in der Tasche nach Hause, um sie zu zeichnen oder zu malen und ihre Abbilder dann weiter zu verwenden, sondern ich lege ja auch hier eine Sammlung von allerlei Spielereien und Kram für die Jugend an, an dem sie eine Freude haben und den sie sich zur Betrachtung zurechtrichten möge.

I have never yet lost the spirit of collecting. To this very day I literally carry home stones in my satchel to draw them or paint them, and make further use of their images, and not only that, here I am starting a collection of diverse odds and ends and fancies for young people, for them to take pleasure in, arrange to their liking and contemplate.⁶

⁴ Stifter, “Introduction,” 9; Stifter, “Einleitung,” 19.

⁵ On Stifter’s fascination with geology and its poetic implications, see Peter Schnyder, “Schrift – Bild – Sammlung – Karte: Medien geologischen Wissens in Stifters *Nachsommer*,” in *Figuren der Übertragung: Adalbert Stifter und das Wissen seiner Zeit*, ed. Michael Gamper and Karl Wagner (Zurich: Chronos, 2009), 235–248.

⁶ Stifter, “Einleitung,” 18; Stifter, “Introduction,” 10.

To make the analogy even more explicit, the titles of the six novellas collected in *Bunte Steine* – “Granit,” “Kalkstein,” “Turmalin,” “Bergkristall,” “Katzensilber,” and “Bergmilch” – explicitly recall the stones of the child’s collection. In this context, it’s important to note that the volume is indeed a collection and serial ordering of works previously published under different titles in various periodical publications. The book format serves as a technology that removes these stories from their original publication venue and places them in a row. The volume of texts, like the boy’s original practice of placing in a row, formats the texts in a way that best suits the dual purpose of appreciating, for generations to come, the texts individually and as a sum; the book volume and the serial order therein represent a format, a specific arrangement of the texts, adapted to the aims of combination and perpetuity.⁷ Contained in the “archive” of *Bunte Steine*, each novella can be individually appreciated as a repetition of its previous publication and at the same time each is presented anew in virtue of its relationship to the neighboring texts. Finally, the collections are analogous in a third way: the autobiographical introduction suggests that the row of stones and, by extension, the collection of novellas act as a record of the narrator’s life while he was collecting these items. The volume memorializes the narrator’s life thus far and formats it in a way to be passed on to further generations.

In each of these three functions – standing in for a geological, a textual, and a personal history – the series of stones proposes a mimetic relationship between its form of representation and the history it represents. At the same time, we know that each of those histories is also generated through the very process of ordering; only in a row do these objects become a record, and only then can they stand in for these different historical orders. As narrated in the introduction, the practice of placing in a row first produces a collection and a history from what would otherwise remain discrete and unrelated items. The scene of making a series thus brings into view what recent Stifter scholars have identified as the crux of his writing: a compulsive drive to minute mimetic faithfulness, a drive whose exertion lays bare the artifice of its own construction.⁸

⁷ I employ the term *format* here, following Susanne Müller, as a specific arrangement of information within the conditions of a medium. *Bunte Steine* formats its texts in a serial order within the medium of the book. See Susanne Müller, “Formatieren,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch des Mediengebrauchs*, ed. Heiko Christians, Matthias Bickenbach, and Nikolaus Wegmann (Cologne: Böhlau, 2015), 253–267.

⁸ On the collapse of mimetic reference in Stifter’s writing, see Sabine Schneider and Barbara Hunfeld, eds., *Die Dinge und die Zeichen: Dimensionen des Realistischen in der Erzählliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008); and Christian Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen: Stifter-Lektüren* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1995).

Beyond Stifter's poetics, the example illustrates a tension between mimetic and antimimetic impulses that is fundamental to the series as it was conceived in the late nineteenth century. Recent research on the significance of the series and serialization as a principle for generating, testing, and communicating knowledge in the natural sciences has demonstrated that the narrator's claim of correspondence between the row of stones and historical orders of things is by no means out of the ordinary for the nineteenth century. In the often-quoted words of James Clerk Maxwell, the nineteenth century came to the realization that the book of nature might actually not be a single-authored tome with beginning and end but instead a serialized magazine without end: "Perhaps the 'book,' as it has been called, of nature is regularly paged; if so, no doubt the introductory parts will explain those that follow, and the methods taught in the first chapters will be taken for granted and used as illustrations in the more advanced parts of the course; but if it is not a 'book' at all, but a *magazine*, nothing is more foolish to suppose that one part can throw light on another."⁹ If the book of nature is a magazine consisting of many unrelated parts and not a single coherent book, then the most adequate form of understanding and representing nature is itself a series, such as a periodical publication. In their excellent introduction to a special journal issue on "Seriality and Scientific Objects in the Nineteenth Century," Nick Hopwood, Simon Schaffer, and Jim Secord chart the shift from the tabular taxonomies and encyclopedias of the eighteenth century to the preponderance of series and serials in the next century. In this context, they quote Michel Foucault's description of the shift from the classical episteme of the eighteenth century to the modern episteme: "For eighteenth-century thought, chronological sequences are merely a property and a more or less blurred expression of the order of beings; for the nineteenth century, they express, in a more or less direct fashion, and even in their interruptions, the profoundly historical mode of being of things and men."¹⁰ Serial arrangements – whether in printing formats, at the world fair, or in a museum – were valued as especially lucid and legible, that is, as possessing the capacity to capture the progressively changing world of things and our knowledge of them. Gowan Dawson has specifically demonstrated in what way the

⁹ James Clerk Maxwell and William Garnett, *The Life of James Clerk Maxwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 243.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2002), 301. See Nick Hopwood, Simon Schaffer, and Jim Secord, "Seriality and Scientific Objects in the Nineteenth Century," *History of Science* 48.3–4 (2010): 254. See also Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., *Science Serialized: Representations of the Sciences in Nineteenth-Century Periodicals* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004). On the specific history of series in nineteenth-century mathematics as a way of making abstract knowledge vivid, see Julia Mierbach, "Die Reihe: Zur mathematischen Poetik einer Denkfigur um 1800 (Goethe, Schelling, Herbart, Novalis)," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 92.3 (2018): 377–427.

emergent field of paleontology welcomed serialized formats and its narrative use of suspenseful cliffhangers not only because it provided a way to revise standing hypotheses in light of emerging discoveries but also because nature itself was understood to be a rhythmical and progressive order.¹¹ A serialized format seemed particularly well suited to capturing the veritable order of things.

If we turn, however, to the end of the time period covered in this volume, the series is no longer underwritten by the same mimetic promise. For a more modernist aesthetic that we perhaps most immediately associate with Arnold Schönberg's serial music, but which can already be perceived in Stifter's work, the series becomes an organizing principle profoundly at odds with mimetic impulses.¹² From this modernist perspective, the series is not a form of representation that captures the unfolding nature of things but instead a self-organizing and autopoietic entity that plainly breaks with the mimetic drives of nineteenth-century realisms. It is the tension between these two conceptions of the series, and not simply its ubiquity across nineteenth-century media or the present, that makes it an exciting subject of inquiry. The series comes into focus as an epistemic practice that seeks to generate knowledge about the world and about itself.

With that tension in mind, I would like to propose two specific ways of parsing the relationship between truth and serialized formats – and series more broadly. The first takes serials into view as a historical phenomenon of mass media and popular culture and defines the truth of the series in terms of its referential value, that is, its ability to capture a progressive history. The second, in contrast, takes its cue from a mathematical definition of series and defines the truth value of a particular unit in a series as a matter of whether it abides by the operation, rule, or law of the series. Truthfulness in this case is established and made evident within the serial form. As such, the series provides one way for aesthetic objects to assert truthfulness independently of the strictures of referentiality. As a way of relating to two types of truthfulness, one might ask whether a specific series relies on the formatting conventions of serialization to establish its lawful form, creating a frictionless affinity between it and the format of serialization. Or perhaps a series

¹¹ "Serial works, like the natural world, followed a strict temporal sequence and, whether published in weekly, monthly, or quarterly installments, were closely tied to patterns of seasonal change." Gowan Dawson, "Paleontology in Parts: Richard Owen, William John Broderip, and the Serialization of Science in Early Victorian Britain," *Isis* 103.4 (2012): 667.

¹² For a discussion of such a modernist perspective on series and its break with the nineteenth century, see Michael McGillen, "Erich Auerbach and the Seriality of the Figure," *New German Critique* 45.1 (2018): 133. McGillen writes that modernist seriality was no longer conceived of as a linear, temporal, or progressive sequence. Erich Auerbach, for example, was interested "in serial repetition as an alternative to the logic of progressive development and fulfillment" (132n66).

instead explicitly breaks with the norms of serialized formats to institute its own authority. Truthfulness in this case relies on the difference between serial form and serialized format. In this introduction, I will say a few words about each of these relationships of series and truth; the volume in its entirety more broadly contributes to a history of serialization by examining different sites of interaction between serialized format and the series form, and their competing notions of truthfulness. The tension between them marks nothing less than the epochal shift in the history of the series from a means of representation best suited to capture the progressive order of nature to the adamantly nonmimetic principles of seriality we associate with modernism.

The ubiquity of series since the late eighteenth century – in everything from industrial manufacturing to scientific practice to leisure consumption – has tempted many a recent scholar to define the very dawn of modernity as “a global culture of seriality.”¹³ In their various medial refractions, serials serve any number of purposes: they generate, enumerate, visualize, and archive knowledge; they manage and protract our attention; and, following Benedict Anderson, they create an imagined community that collectively participates in the synchronized consumption of new periodical media.¹⁴ An illustration from the thousandth issue of the illustrated family weekly *Über Land und Meer*, published in Stuttgart in 1878, nicely illustrates the relationship between assembly-line production and the serialized print format (see Figure 1.1). The image openly credits the sequenced and standardized production process with the regular printing and consumption of *Über Land und Meer* since 1858. The center of the image features a factory building, which is framed by ten chronological scenes detailing the stages of production of the periodical including engraving, typesetting, printing, drying, and delivery. Each vignette depicts the laborers organized in rows, and most of the vignettes foreground well-ordered paper objects as well. The parcelling of the production process is, in turn, reproduced in the parceled visual schematic of the single image, a schematic that also alludes to the ideally perspicuous layout of a magazine. Finally, with the arabesques made of paper that adorn the name of the publication and printers, the spread from *Über Land und Meer* exhibits a high

¹³ Mark W. Turner, “Serial Culture in the Nineteenth Century: G. W. M. Reynolds, the Many *Mysteries of London*, and the Spread of Print,” in *Nineteenth-Century Serial Narrative in Transnational Perspective, 1830s to 1860s: Popular Culture – Serial Culture*, ed. Daniel Stein and Lisanna Wiele (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 196.

¹⁴ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). Kristen Belgum describes the emergence of such a community through a specific periodical in *Popularizing the Nation: Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in “Die Gartenlaube,” 1853–1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

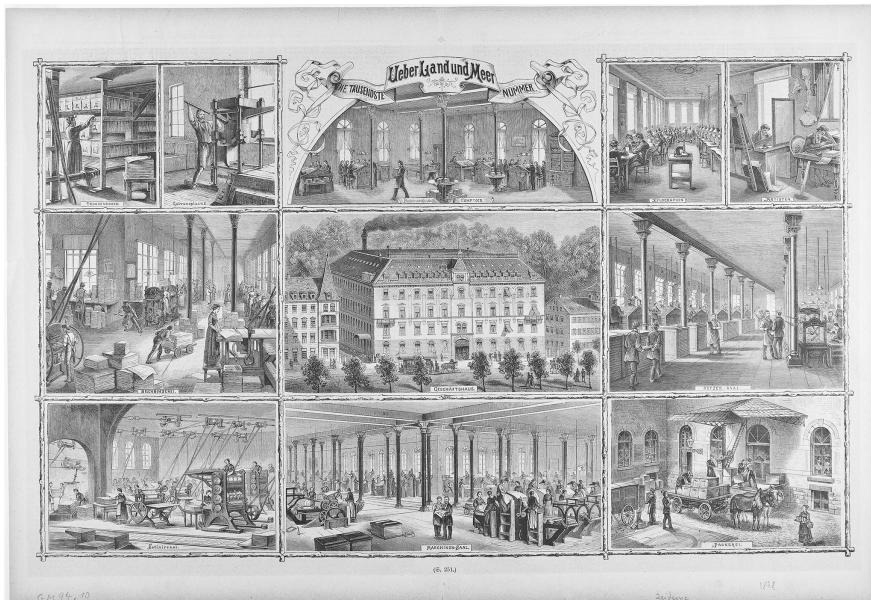


Figure 1.1: Illustration of the publishing house and press of the magazine from *Über Land und Meer: Allgemeine Illustrirte Zeitung*, October 1878, 251. Mainz, Gutenberg-Museum. Photo: D. Bachert.

degree of self-reflexivity that scholars have identified as a distinguishing characteristic of serials, a characteristic that makes them a rich field for investigating media phenomena.¹⁵

There are different genealogies to account for the series and seriality boom in publishing and presentation formats in nineteenth-century science, literature, and visual culture. As an overarching thesis, one might consider a transition from cyclical to linear time, as advanced in Karol Berger's *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow*.¹⁶ Berger argues that the insistence on linearity and progression in European music beginning with Mozart is symptomatic of a transition from a predominantly Christian and agricultural society – which imagined itself in a cyclical, seasonal time embedded within an inaccessible divine eternity – to a secular, industrial society that casts its history as a progressive movement from past to present and into an unknown future. This open-ended, linear temporality underlies the sequential order

¹⁵ See Frank Kelleter, "Five Ways of Looking at Popular Seriality," in *Media of Serial Narrative*, ed. Kelleter (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017), 18.

¹⁶ See Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

of nineteenth-century print culture and reshapes the way in which the era narrates its fictions and its own history. In this vein, Clare Pettitt's recent book *Serial Form* argues that the early nineteenth century demonstrates a "gradual uptake of practices and understandings of sequential time" that anticipates and makes possible the series as "the defining form of modernity," "a form of knowledge," as she defines the series, "about being in time."¹⁷ Umberto Eco, whose essays on seriality from the early 1980s are responsible for much of today's interest in the topic, provides an alternative perspective that examines the series from a structural perspective rather than as a specifically modern historical development. According to Eco, serials structured through repetition and variation provide a modern society of consumers with orientation among an inundation of products.¹⁸ If industrialized production entails a constant flow of new goods, then a serial structure of repetition with measured variation ensures familiarity in the age of constant novelty.

More specifically with regard to nineteenth-century visual culture, one might point to the invention and dissemination of new technologies such as lithography and photography that eased the production process and reduced the costs of reproducing and printing images. Starting in the 1880s, such technologies sparked an explosion in widely available illustrated print material. In his discussion of Eadweard Muybridge's now iconic serial photographs of movements and the automated rotations of Berlin's *Kaiserpanorama*, Jonathan Crary argues that image series constituted an automated form of restructuring modern perception and attention to match an intensified flow of commodities and capital.¹⁹ For Crary, Muybridge's image series exemplify how this form of automated perception, which was removed from a familiar space-time continuum and the associated rules of causality, was put to work in processes of rationalization and control yet also possessed a potential for creative synthesis that refused such discipline. As mass-produced objects, lithographs and photographs can always be placed in varied combinations and orders and so also provided a historical precedent for experiments with seriality in painting.

17 Clare Pettitt, *Serial Forms: The Unfinished Project of Modernity, 1815–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 6.

18 See, for example, Umberto Eco, "Interpreting Serials," in *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 83–100. Norbert Bachtelitz similarly argues that the "feuilleton novel was a consequence of the liberalization of society that encouraged a free press and an audience searching not only for entertainment but also orientation in a world that had become complex and disjointing." Norbert Bachtelitz, "The Beginnings of the Feuilleton Novel in France and the German-Speaking Regions," in Stein and Wiele, *Nineteenth-Century Serial Narrative*, 45.

19 See Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 138–148.

Historians of print and of literature, on the other hand, are likely to refer to the rise of periodicals as a publishing format and point to Eugène Sue's incredibly popular *Les mystères de Paris* (starting in 1842) or Charles Dickens's *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (starting in 1836) as historical turning points. The publication of serialized novels introduced new practices of writing and reading that challenged notions of narrative continuity, formal unity, and authorship. Narratives needed to possess multiple open-ended storylines so that they could be extended indefinitely, a practice that is at odds with the closure attributed to a more classical concept of form. Serialized formats also gave unprecedented power to editors and to the public, who could express preferences by means of their purchasing power, thus demoting the singular genius author of Romanticism to one step in a briskly paced, collaborative, and machinated production process.²⁰ The best defense against the frequent charge that serialized publication and the associated market pressures produced discontinuous storylines comes from Dickens's preface to the book edition of *The Pickwick Papers* from 1837. The preface responds to the charge that "the publication of the book in monthly numbers, containing only thirty-two pages in each" might make the described events seem "unconnected or impossible" by recalling the mimetic realism that serialized forms promise: "And if it be objected to the Pickwick Papers, that they are a mere series of adventures, in which the scenes are ever changing, and the characters come and go like the men and women we encounter in the real world, he can only content himself with the reflection, that they claim to be nothing else."²¹ Dickens thereby alludes to what many saw and continue to see as the specific democratic potential of periodical literature,²² namely, that it is not only read across class lines thanks to its publishing format but that the fluidity of its storylines can incorporate the dense and varied fabric of urban society and depict the intersecting personal histories of diverse social types. And if the series did not already truthfully render an intertwined, democratic metropolis, at least the mass readership of *The Pickwick Papers* would retrospectively bring that society into being. In his foreword to *Die Ritter vom Geiste* (1850–1851), often considered the first German-language novel to borrow the style of the French serial novel, Karl Gutzkow

²⁰ On the nineteenth-century author as a factory laborer, see Petra McGillen, *The Fontane Workshop: Manufacturing Realism in the Industrial Age of Print* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019); and Claudia Stockinger, *An den Ursprüngen populärer Serialität: Das Familienblatt "Die Gartenlaube"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018).

²¹ Charles Dickens, "Preface" to *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1837), n.p.

²² On the imagined communities generated by means of periodical publishing, Kelleter writes that "serial storytelling has widely come to understand and to perform itself as an essentially democratic culture." Kelleter, "Popular Seriality," 29.

similarly promises a faithful social realism, proclaiming that “The new novel is the novel of *juxtaposition*. The whole world is in it! Time in it is like a spread-out cloth!” (Der neue Roman ist der Roman des *Nebeneinanders*. Da liegt die ganze Welt! Da ist die Zeit wie ein ausgespanntes Tuch!) and recommended a ratio of 10,000 to 1 for calculating the representation of social types in a given plot.²³ Critics of the nearly four-thousand-page novel responded that Gutzkow had produced a novel so incoherent that no reader would be likely to see herself reflected therein.

As a phenomenon of print culture, serialization can more specifically be traced, for one, back to changes in printing technology that have been well documented in recent scholarship.²⁴ Most salient among these developments are the rotary printing press, which exponentially increased printing rates, and the production of paper from tree pulp, which made the natural resources for paper production appear unlimited – at least until the end of the century when the ecological costs of mass paper production came into view.²⁵ Technologies of transportation enabled the speedy and widespread dissemination of reading material, while rising literacy rates and increased leisure time created a population of potential readers who could consume the products of this new popular culture. According to a now familiar historical narrative, these diverse factors constituted the conditions for a modern mass press characterized, first, by its periodicity: its reliable and frequent publication; second, by its publicity: its widespread accessibility and correspondingly high circulation rates; third, by its topicality: its increasing ability to report on events in real time; and fourth, its universality: its coverage of a wide variety of subjects. These last two characteristics of journalistic culture, topicality and universality, particularly press the question of truth. As scholars such as Norbert Bachtelitner or Claudia Stockinger have noted, the spatial juxtaposition of vastly different types of items – lead news stories and miscellanies, articles on popular science and works of fiction and advertisements – each with truth claims specific to its genre, creates a field of texts and images in which the boundaries between these genres become fluid.²⁶ An imagined consumer who successively reads the spread of texts performs this erosion of boundaries, Bachtelitner and Stockinger argue, and risks reading fiction as fact and fact as fiction.

²³ Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow, *Die Ritter vom Geiste: Roman in neun Büchern*, ed. Thomas Neumann (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1998), 9–10. All translations of sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

²⁴ See Lothar Müller, *Weisse Magie: Die Epoche des Papiers* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2012).

²⁵ See Richard Menke, “New Grub Street’s Ecologies of Paper,” *Victorian Studies* 61.1 (2018): 60–82.

²⁶ See Norbert Bachtelitner, *Fiktive Nachrichten: Die Anfänge des fiktiven Feuilletonromans* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012).

I remain skeptical that nineteenth-century readers of periodical literature struggled to differentiate factual from fictional genres, reportage from literature. Unlike readers a century prior, readers of the nineteenth century certainly had a well-established notion of novelistic fiction as consisting of events and persons that were probable or even realistic but lacked a stabilizing referent in reality.²⁷ What seems more certain is that the contiguous publication of fact and fiction established significant feedback loops between fictional worlds and the ones in which readers lived; the mass-media culture of serialization is a participatory culture. There is perhaps no better example of such a feedback loop than the best-known character of serialized fiction, Sherlock Holmes, whose fictional status is as often overlooked today as it was in the past. Holmes owes his incredible ability as a detective not merely to his powers of empirical perception but also to his compulsive reading of daily newspapers, whose crime reports endowed him with encyclopedic knowledge of criminal behaviors and tactics. Arthur Conan Doyle's nineteenth-century readers, many of whom may well have shared Holmes's reading habits, were likely to be familiar with the same crime reporting and so were well able to follow the procedures and outcomes of individual cases. Newspaper reports served as a source for fictional detective stories, while reading these stories both drew on one's own knowledge of specific cases in the news or, for less exhaustive readers, supplemented their knowledge of criminality. Detective fiction thereby exploited and contributed to a growing body of criminalistic knowledge.

The ambition of this volume is to understand the series not only as an epistemic practice that represents and generates knowledge about the world but also as a structure that produces knowledge about itself. Since belonging to a series means being defined relationally by what precedes and follows an element, a second possibility for evaluating the truth value of a series depends on the relation of its units and the operation they establish internally. For a strict definition of the series, one might recall the Fibonacci sequence, famously imagined as a newly introduced population of immortal and punctually reproducing rabbits. If after reaching sexual maturity in their second month, each heterosexual pair of rabbits reproduces at the conclusion of the following month, always resulting in one additional heterosexual pair, then the total number of pairs of rabbits at any point is the sum of pairs at the conclusion of each of the past two months. That is, the newest unit in the series is the sum of the past two units of the series. At the end of the second

27 On the emergence of fictionality in the European novel, see Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," in *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti, vol. 1, *History, Geography, and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 336–363.

month, there is still one pair; at the end of the third month, two pairs; at the end of the fourth, three pairs, and so on (0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, . . .). The law of the sequence can thus be summarized as $F_n = F_{n-1} + F_{n-2}$. Defined in this way, the series is a generative, lawful, self-regulating, and, in this case, potentially infinite operation. The relationship among its sequenced units is asymmetrical, transparent (the operation can be identified from the sequence), transitive (it applies to any unit of the sequence taken in order), and irreflexive (the relation is binary: it depends on two elements).²⁸ Insofar as each new unit is constructed from the previous units, one might also describe such a serial structure as fundamentally historical. At the same time, the series is without a teleology, its units are not related through cause and effect, and it lacks a hierarchical relationship of elements. Thinking back to the population of Fibonacci's rabbits, one might even conclude that the series is a fundamentally equalizing and democratic structure, or, from another perspective, irredeemably homogenizing.

A less strict definition of seriality comes by way of understanding the series as a law of morphology. Eva Geulen, for example, glosses *seriality* with the German *Folgerichtigkeit*, an ordering, in other words, that is logical and consistent.²⁹ Series provide a minimalist type of formation or formal arrangement, a threshold at which form can be distinguished from a lack of form. A similar, though again looser, notion of the series, comes by way of Paul Kammerer's spectacular *Das Gesetz der Serie* (1919). Kammerer's defines the series as

eine gesetzmäßige Wiederholung gleicher oder ähnlicher Dinge und Ereignisse – eine Wiederholung (Häufung) in der Zeit oder im Raum, deren Einzelfälle, soweit es nur sorgsame Untersuchung zu offenbaren vermag, nicht durch dieselbe, gemeinsam fortwirkende Ursache verknüpft sein können.

a lawful repetition of the same or similar things and events – a repetition (accumulation) in time or in space, whose individual cases cannot be connected through the same, continuing cause as far as careful investigation can tell.³⁰

Here the series serves to establish patterns of repetition among spatially and temporally discontinuous events that do not stem from a common cause. As Kirk Wetters has recently argued, Kammerer's series is at root a “morphological theory”

²⁸ See Jennifer Dyer, *Serial Images: The Modern Art of Iteration* (Zurich: LIT, 2011).

²⁹ *Folgerichtigkeit*, Geulen writes, was Goethe's “only methodological maxim” for his studies on morphology, and it can only find its adequate form of expression in an open series of morphological notebooks. See Eva Geulen, “Serialization in Goethe's Morphology,” *Compar(a)ison* 2 (2008): 59.

³⁰ Paul Kammerer, *Das Gesetz der Serie: Eine Lehre von den Wiederholungen im Lebens- und im Weltgeschehen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1919), 36.

because it establishes lawfulness among otherwise seemingly arbitrary units.³¹ From that perspective, Kammerer's search for patterns of repetition in his urban environment and his meticulous records of them is not so dissimilar from the ordering of stones practiced by the narrator of Stifter's introduction to *Bunte Steine*. Comparing texts as dissimilar as these two suggests that the series is at root the possibility of structuring and ordering experiences that might otherwise seem arbitrary and that it does so according to principles beyond or contrary to a more dominant logic of causality. The logic of the series is, in other words, one that breaks with or even provides respite from a principle of cause and effect – or, from yet another perspective that captures Stifter and Kammerer, one that concedes to a repetition compulsion.

Among the very plentiful literature on seriality in contemporary scholarship, there is a general tendency to generate definitions that are even looser than Geulen's. These loose definitions often speak of series merely as a generic marker, namely, as a certain pattern of production (for example, of television series) and consumption. This class of looser definitions of series originates from Eco's work, where the series describes any act of repetition and encompasses reprises, copies, serials, and sagas as well as cases of citation, parody, intertextuality, and plagiarism, which provide, so argues Eco, a form of satisfying cultural consumption in the regular return of the familiar.³² The advantage, to my mind, of a somewhat stricter definition such as the notion of *Folgerichtigkeit* that Geulen proposes is that it understands the series as a generative form that establishes a rule for itself and so provides a standard for its own aesthetic truthfulness. As a lawful and self-regulating entity, the series institutes an autopoietic form that can insist on its own standards of truthfulness. The contributions of this volume provide examples for such self-regulating series, while also attending to the historical and media specificity of serialization practices as well. Each case study examines the relationship between the conventions of serialized formats and an autopoietic process of formation by means of a series form.

31 Kirk Wetters, "The Law of the Series and the Crux of Causation: Paul Kammerer's Anomalies," *MLN* 134.3 (2019): 646. Of that morphological theory, Wetters explains, "The 'law of the series' in this sense is akin to physical laws of gravity and inertia. It is a law that might be described as 'autopoietic' insofar as it recursively produces the minimal forms of regularity out of a random and incoherent infinity. In other words, out of chaos it produces the minimal constants of being and time" (647).

32 Umberto Eco, "Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Postmodern Aesthetics," *Dædalus* 134.4 (2005): 1919–2207. For a critique of Eco's definition of the series as a repetition based on the nonidentity of its units, see Christine Blättler, ed., *Kunst der Serie: Die Serie in den Künsten* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010); and Elisabeth Bronfen, Christiane Frey, and David Martyn, eds., *Noch einmal anders: Zu einer Poetik des Seriellen* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2016).

By way of a final example, I would like to suggest that the question of serialization in the nineteenth century is a pertinent one not only because of its ubiquity as a form of representation but also because it is closely related to the question of what constitutes a poetics of realism. In his reading of Gustav Courbet's *After Dinner at Ornans* (1849–1850), T. J. Clark suggests that Courbet's composition generally operates according to an additive principle, a placing next to one another in space. That principle reaches its apotheosis in the mammoth painting *Burial at Ornans*, in which an astonishing number of funeral guests pan across the more-than-six-meter-long canvas and frame the gaping grave in the foreground's center, into which both they and the painting's beholder threaten to fall (see Figure 1.2).³³ For Clark, the artless, additive principle of composition exhibits a commitment to a form of pictorial democracy, or at least to an egalitarian principle. In his response to Clark's reading, Michael Fried notes that there is a certain affinity between Clark's attribution of Courbet's realism to an additive principle and Roman Jakobson's "observations on the predominance of metonymic over metaphoric structures in realist art and literature."³⁴ Leaving the question as to whether an additive principle is an adequate description of Courbet's *Burial at Ornans* (a description Fried contests) aside, I take Clark's and Fried's observations to suggest a more broadly applicable relationship between the many programmatic realisms of the nineteenth century, as dissimilar as they are, and the preponderance of series and serial publications in those realisms, which are nothing



Figure 1.2: Gustav Courbet, *Burial at Ornans*, 1849–1850. Oil on canvas, 315 × 668 cm. Paris, Musée d'Orsay. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Gérard Blot / Hervé Lewandowski.

³³ See T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

³⁴ Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

other than additive in their structure. In other words, the reality effects of those realisms are made possible by the very structure of an iterative sequence that can, by means of repetition and difference, establish a rule for itself with the potential to be extended. Realisms, we can then hypothesize, are neither a matter of mimesis nor simply a protomodernist practice of foregrounding the qualities of one's medium but instead rely on exhibiting a persuasive coherence and continuity of their structures of seriality.

The individual contributions to this volume provide ten case studies of forms of series in relation to historical conventions of serialization. They demonstrate how the form of the series develops its own particular coherence and continuity both by adopting or resisting those conventions or by employing them as a point of departure for an array of formal arrangements. The ten contributions themselves invite being placed in different orders. Their historical breadth, reaching from Heinrich Heine's reports from Paris (Franzel) to futurist experiments in photography (Müller-Helle), suggests a chronological lineage that maps the growing omnipresence of serial forms and their increasing association with commercialization. Alternatively, the ten essays could be easily grouped by whether they consider pictorial or narrative series, or even by the more specific serial media they treat: feuilletons (Franzel, McBride), the ideal of the *Gesamtwerk* (Wimmer, Wittmann), the tension between the form of a series and that of a cycle (Maskarinec, Ubl, Wittmann), photography (Ehninger, Müller-Heller, Wittmann), novel-las published in periodical installments (Strowick, Maskarinec), painting and printing (Wittmann, Strowick, Ubl), and household furnishings (Ehninger, Krajewski). Rather than abide by these more obvious orders, the essays in this volume are grouped according to whether they place an emphasis on the series as a temporal or a spatial arrangement. While these two categories are certainly not mutually exclusive, the distinction makes it possible to focalize the series either as a way of ordering temporal units, whether these units be times of day or historical epochs, or as way of organizing items in space, for example, as a practice of collecting or, in defiance of a serial order, dispersing. The first five essays examine the form of the series in relation to questions of time, temporalities, and history; the second set of five approach spaces of series ranging from the Victorian living room to standardized paper sizes.

At issue in the initial two essays is the relationship between serialized printing formats, the narration of history, and the production of knowledge about time itself. In "Heine's Serial Histories of the Revolution," Sean Franzel shows that Heinrich Heine's Parisian writings seek to undermine a linear, teleological account of the French Revolution by introducing multiple temporalities; the ephemeral formats of the newspaper were apposite to the representation of unfolding historical trajectories in which the texts themselves could participate.

Writing about precisely the academic historiography Heine so disdained and resisted in his journalistic writing, Mario Wimmer's "World History in Six Installments: Epistemic Seriality and the Epistemology of Series" demonstrates that the mimetic promise of the series to capture the progressive history of things was not only at the heart of the embrace of periodical publishing in the natural sciences but was also integral to Leopold von Ranke's vision of world history as a series of historical epochs. These epochs conformed to the confines of a single book volume that would be available annually in time for the Christmas market; their narratives were stylized to anticipate the coming historical era as well.

In contrast, Elisabeth Strowick's "Nachkommenschaften: Stifter's Series" reads the Roderer family's genealogy as uncovering a twofold law of the series consisting in doubling and dispersion, as the perpetuation and undoing of a serial order. Stifter's story of a landscape painter who paints in the form of a series in the hopes of capturing "real reality" – which anticipates experiments in seriality in photography and painting described elsewhere in this volume – itself employs, as Strowick shows, the series as a narrative technique for bringing that law to the fore.

The next three contributions (Wittmann, Müller-Heller, Ehninger) each explore what is at stake in photographic series. Writing on Claude Monet's iconic haystacks, Barbara Wittman argues in "*Le temps retrouvé*: Claude Monet's Series between Impression and Belatedness" that for Monet, the form of the series, as specifically inspired by photographic series and in repudiation of cyclical forms, negotiates the competing demands to capture the impression of the moment and to deliver a finished and completed artwork. Like exhibitions, but with greater permanence, series establish second-order works in which both of these demands can be satisfied.

Insofar as it addresses the end of the volume's timeframe, Katja Müller-Heller's "Sequencing Failure: Photodynamism and the Knotting of Time" reconstructs a more modernist critique of nineteenth-century photographic series. She shows that the photodynamic experiments conducted by the futurist photographer Anton Giulio Bragaglia and dispatched by postcard undermined the strict temporal order of, for example, Étienne-Jules Marey's photographic series and introduced, by means of blurring, an open-ended future. Like Franzel's and Strowick's contributions, Müller-Heller demonstrates the way in which decisively taking leave from a strict serial order introduces the possibility of nonlinear temporalities.

Eva Ehninger's "Trying on the Drawing Room: 'Realness' and Truth in and out of Photographs" opens the section of this volume on serialized spaces with an examination of late nineteenth-century British handbooks on furnishing and decorating both private homes and carte de visite photography studios. The conventions of carte de visite photography, which Ehninger elaborates in detail, reveal the degree to which practices of serialization permeated all aspects of Victorian life. Not only were these photographs themselves reproduced in series and then

placed in personal albums; the many details of the studio settings provided standardized choices for fulfilling the imperative to display individuality. Ehninger's essay explores the irreconcilable tension these photographs embody as commercial, serialized products that promise authentic expression – a tension to which McBride returns at the conclusion of this volume.

By relating Gottfried Keller's novella "Der Landvogt von Greifensee" to the tradition of the *Decameron*, my essay develops a model of an erotic series premised on the unmarried status and open-ended desire of the protagonist. In "The Bachelor: Gottfried Keller's 'Der Landvogt von Greifensee' and the Erotics of Series," I argue that Keller's novella imaginatively enacts the possibility of a unified form within the conditions of fragmented periodical publishing. Along with Franzel's and Wimmer's contributions to this volume, I thereby explore how periodical publications are conceived in relation to and in anticipation of a republication in book form; we argue that the although the book format is often understood as the periodical's antithesis, it can also be understood as a further permutation of a serial form.

In "Max Klinger's *Ein Handschuh* as Cycle and Series," Ralph Ubl shows that as a narration of the impossible restoration of a pair of lovers, Klinger's *Ein Handschuh* is a reflection on the seriality of printing and nineteenth-century consumer culture and at the same time performs a manifold of possible pairings and relationships among its ten sheets. Wittman, Ubl and my essays thus examine how the forms of some series define themselves against cyclical genres, while also never fully taking leave thereof.

In "DIN A: The Basis of All Thought," Markus Krajewski narrates the competing dreams for a global, systematic standardization of paper formats around 1900, beginning with Wilhelm Ostwald's ambitions to create a relationally defined series of paper formats that would ultimately encompass not just offices but also the domestic environment: a nearly utopic vision of serialized standards for ordering public and private life.

Patrizia McBride's "Serial Untruth: The Feuilleton and the Ornamental Image" concludes this volume by recounting how Alfred Polgar's, Hugo von Hofmannsthal's, and Robert Musil's imagistic writing in early twentieth-century Viennese feuilletons responded to pervasive charges against feuilleton writing as a form of commercialized writing that relied on clichés and conventions to pander to paying readers. McBride shows that in response to these derisive charges, the miniatures acted as sites of literary experimentation for communicating affective experience. As in Franzel's analysis of Heine's journalistic writing with which this volume begins, McBride argues that the ephemeral character of the newspaper affords the very possibility of affective engagement in a condensed and poignant form. Her contribution also thereby summarizes one argument at the heart of this volume:

that the proliferation of serialized media formats, while long regarded by their contemporary users and by scholars as an arrangement of mass media that constrained creativity, became a site for testing the aesthetic, affective, and epistemic possibilities of the series as a form.

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I Serial Temporalities

Sean Franzel

Heine's Serial Histories of the Revolution

Historical topics are a constant throughout Heinrich Heine's writings, and his articles on the July Monarchy are infused with one of the central concerns of his prose and poetic works alike, namely, the past, present, and future of the French Revolution. His article collections *Französische Zustände* (1833) and *Lutezia* (1854) engage in complex refractions of historical time, placing reports from one to two years prior (as with *Französische Zustände*) and up to thirteen in *Lutezia* into relation with events that have intervened since their initial publication, including in the latter case the collapse of the July Monarchy in 1848. These articles straddle the immediacy of journalistic reportage and the remove of historical reflection, engaging all the while with alternatives to the modes of history writing pursued by the idealist philosophy of history and by academic historiography.

In this essay, I explore how these Parisian writings create knowledge about time through the effects of serial print. Heine asks readers to understand historical time as an unruly mixture of old and new, to consider how different aspects of the past remain at work in the present and into the future. A particular feature of this temporal knowledge consists in anticipating the continuation of the revolution into the future. Heine calls Hegel "his great teacher," but he constantly relativizes and ironizes any systematic vision of linear, teleological progress. Heine's writings do not pursue the Hegelian pedagogical effect of reason coming to itself, instead modelling various uncertain, unpredictable futures, and favoring the juxtaposition of alternative models of history over any kind of philosophical resolution. Heine relies on various tropes of before and after, prediction and retrospection, and of sequential, serial continuation to place the present into shifting relationships to multiple pasts and futures.

Französische Zustände and *Lutezia* both emerged in tandem with Heine's interest in writing a larger work on the history of the French Revolution, a project that he never completed. In effect, these works represent alternatives to more conventional histories of the revolution by Heine's European contemporaries such Adolphe Thiers, Jules Michelet, and Thomas Carlyle. Positioning his writings as explicitly historical undertakings, Heine faced two key challenges. The first relates to form, for he eschewed conventional historical narrative and embraced the heterogeneous juxtapositions characteristic of periodicals, calling his articles

“fleeting pages” (flüchtige[] Blätter).¹ Yet the book versions of these articles also lay claim to deliberate “artistic arrangement” (künstlerische Zusammenstellung).² The notion that history writing should synthesize disparate items into a philosophical whole (*Zusammenhang*) goes back to the idealist philosophy of history of Friedrich Schiller, Immanuel Kant, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, who relegate the task of collecting fragmentary particulars to mechanical memory and task aesthetic judgment and speculative thought with philosophical overview.³ Heine taps into this vision when asserting that both his initial authorial vision and his retroactive activity organize these pieces into a unified whole, in book form, that will retain its value into the future.⁴ Heine’s first challenge was thus to maintain ostensible authorial control even while eschewing modes of historical narrative modeled on the generic dictates of the epic.⁵

Heine’s second key challenge was that of writing at a time of tremendous uncertainty, many observers concluding that the revolution was still ongoing. After arriving in Paris in May 1831 and beginning work on the articles that he would compile as *Französische Zustände*, Heine called these writings “preliminary studies for the history of the present” (Vorstudien zur Geschichtschreibung der Gegenwart), emphasizing their preparatory nature. These are provisional sketches of the present, but a present that is always disappearing into the past before the full-fledged writing of its history can be attained. In multiple turbulent presents

1 Heinrich Heine, “Vorrede” to *Französische Zustände* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1833), vi. All translations of sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

2 As he puts it in the preface to *Lutezia*, the book is “a whole” (ein Ganzes) produced “through an artistic arrangement of all these monographs” (durch eine künstlerische Zusammenstellung aller dieser Monographien). Heinrich Heine, “Zueigungsbrief,” in *Lutezia: Berichte über Politik, Kunst und Volksleben*, pt. 1, vol. 2 of *Vermischte Schriften* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1854), viii.

3 Laurence Dickey, “Philosophizing about History in the Nineteenth Century: *Zusammenhang* and the ‘Progressive Method’ in German Historical Scholarship,” in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century (1790–1870)*, ed. Allen W. Wood and Songuk Susan Hahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 793–816.

4 In a letter to his publisher, Heine states that *Lutezia* has a “closed unity” (geschlossene Einheit), “despite the rapid change in topics” (trotz der gaukelnden Abwechslung der Themata), and is “a history book that speaks to the present day and will live on in the future” (ein Geschichtsbuch, das den heutigen Tag anspricht und in der Zukunft fortleben wird). Letter to Julius Campe, 18 April 1854, in Heinrich Heine, *Säkularausgabe: Werke, Briefwechsel, Lebenszeugnisse* (HSA), ed. Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Paris, vol. 23, *Briefe 1850–1856*, ed. Fritz H. Eisner (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972), 320.

5 See Susanne Zantop, *Zeitbilder: Geschichte und Literatur bei Heinrich Heine und Mariano José de Larra* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1988), 107–108.

ranging from the early 1830s to the mid-1850s, Heine attempts to articulate the experience that every new moment can potentially recast our understanding of the past. Here Heine singles out institutionalized, academic historians for naïvely treating the revolution solely as a past event, for believing that

die Akten der Revolutionsgeschichte seyen geschlossen, und sie hatten schon über Menschen und Dinge ihr letztes Urtheil gefällt: da brüllten plötzlich die Kanonen der großen Woche, und die Göttinger Fakultät merkte, daß von ihrem akademischen Spruchkollegium an eine höhere Instanz appellirt worden, und daß nicht blos die französische Spezialrevolution noch nicht vollendet sey, sondern daß erst die weit umfassendere Universalrevolution ihren Anfang genommen habe.

the records of the history of the revolution were closed and that they had uttered their last judgment on people and things: all at once, though, the cannons of the great week [of the July Revolution] thundered, and the faculty of Göttingen observed that its academic senate had appealed to a higher authority and that not only was the French special revolution not finished but that the far more comprehensive universal revolution had just begun.⁶

Heine seeks a mode of writing that reveals the shifting status of both present and past, and he places anticipatory weight upon present and future moments when the past is valued anew. As Anthony Phelan puts it, Heine recognizes that “historical or cultural moments are not fixed functions in the representation of social or political formations. Rather, they are constantly appropriated, reappropriated, and revalued.”⁷ To this end, Heine mines the modern media landscape – ephemeral print, visual culture, popular theater, dance, etc. – rather than the more staid source material of state archives that would figure prominently in the self-legitimation of academic historiography in Prussia in particular.⁸ Heine’s history writing of the present places anticipatory weight upon future moments when the past will be taken up anew and attends to how transitory present constellations lend new meaning to the past, including to Heine’s own historical interventions. Heine’s second challenge was thus to write open-ended histories that can re-engage past, present, and future at various points of temporal remove.

Heine took up modes of serial writing and publication in response to both challenges, putting his own writings into proximity to momentous events of the past and situating them as eventful occasions in their own right. In *Lutezia*, Heine states his affinity with Scheherazade’s serial storytelling in *A Thousand and One*

6 Heine, “Artikel VI,” in *Französische Zustände*, 146.

7 Anthony Phelan, *Reading Heinrich Heine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 182–183.

8 See Cornelia Vismann, *Akten: Medientechnik und Recht* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2000), 226–266.

Nights, as he endlessly interrupts himself and defers any final conclusions. His articles bear the caveat that they are “to be continued,” thereby adopting the conventions of serialized, periodical publications, while also reserving for himself the leeway of open-ended perpetuation. In addition to the original periodical publications, republication in book form likewise represents a kind of serial continuation, for it places the articles into new textual environments and creates a new site at which to exercise authorial control and artistic ambitions. Additionally, it doubles the previously published texts as historical artifacts that have participated in the past and adds new material originally published elsewhere or cut by censors. Republication in book form thereby makes it possible to place texts into a new constellation and to present them as a unified whole reflective of the author’s aesthetic intentions. Intervening at the intersection of periodical and book publication as two complementary practices of serialized publishing, Heine uses republication to stage multiple positions from which to encounter time, “the times,” multiple possible moments of provisional ending, continuation, anticipation, and delay. As Michael Gamper puts it, Heine’s historical projects pursue the “overt, proleptically or analeptically oriented correspondence of different moments of historical eventfulness and literary creativity.”⁹ Heine writes himself into the past through republication, situating his own pieces – and the *Schreibszenen* of composing them and sending them off to the publisher – as part of historical events. Like the personalities or societal forces whose standing might have changed in the years since original publication, Heine’s writings come into view both as relicts of a bygone moment and as interventions that lend themselves to mediated reactualization.

In this essay I first explore Heine’s more general approach to history in the early 1830s and his dual critique of academic historians and of the philosophy of history. I then turn to two specific episodes in his serial writing. The first episode deals with Heine’s juxtaposition of significantly different modes of journalism and history writing and his placement of them into varying relations of before and after. Heine profits from the sense that his pieces function both as journalistic responses to specific moments and as historical reflections that place different presents into relation. Through the format of collected, republished articles as well as through tropes of life and death, Heine models complex historical temporalities in an era of ongoing revolution. The practices of serialization introduce

⁹ Michael Gamper, “Gegenwärtige Politik des Vergangenen: Politische Nachträglichkeit bei Heinrich Heine,” in *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen: Formen und Funktionen von Pluralität in der ästhetischen Moderne*, ed. Sabine Schneider and Heinz Brüggemann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010), 89.

complex temporalities, which themselves can exceed the rigid order of a series and established modes of history writing.

Heine's critical take on historical portraiture is a second aspect to his engagement with serial forms. The conceit of the literary image, sketch, and caricature are a key part of his histories of the present, which he undertakes at a time of proliferating imagery in print, popular theater, and more. The portraiture of past and present figures is a popular mode of nineteenth-century history writing and nineteenth-century literary entertainment more broadly, itself an inherently serial mode.¹⁰ Heine's statement that *Lutezia* is a "daguerreotypic history book" (daguerreotypisches Geschichtsbuch)¹¹ in part references this tradition, since early photography was commonly associated with portraiture. He sketches a range of figures in culture and politics across his writings on the July Monarchy, and these become a crucial part of Heine's different modes of writing. I am particularly interested in his serialized accounts of academic historians, which stand out because he uses the ironic characterization of these scholars and their historical method – in particular their valorization of historical personalities – to articulate his own alternative historiographical vision. In effect, Heine sets his own historical character descriptions off from other modes of history writing through a kind of ironic mirroring and mimicry, through a kind of antiportraiture. In contrast to the conventional emphasis on historical personalities – in Thomas Carlyle's 1841 *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* or Karl Gutzkow's 1835 *Öffentliche Charaktere*, to name just two contemporary examples – Heine uses caricature-like portraits to create knowledge about time rather than to reify and glorify historical personalities. The integrity of the individual as a historical subject disintegrates and depersonalized historical forces shine through; temporal refraction trumps the rhetoric of presence.

Reconsidering Heine's history writing through the question of seriality is productive not only because it sheds new light on the ways in which Heine adapts features of journalistic publication.¹² It also shows how Heine construes an awareness of historical time on the basis of textual and medial format rather than philosophical-historical telos. The idealist philosophy of history is notorious for its elision of the textual work that is necessary to narrate the movement of the concept through

¹⁰ See Rüdiger Campe, "To Be Continued: Einige Beobachtungen zu Goethes *Unterhaltungen*," in *Noch einmal anders: Zu einer Poetik des Seriellen*, ed. Elisabeth Bronfen, Christiane Frey, and David Martyn (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2016), 119–136.

¹¹ Heine, "Zueigungsbrief," in *Lutezia*, xiii–xiv.

¹² See Wolfgang Preisendanz's classic article "Der Funktionsübergang von Dichtung und Publizistik bei Heine," in *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste: Grenzphänomene des Ästhetischen*, ed. Hans Robert Jauß (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1968), 343–374.

history.¹³ In contrast, Heine actively draws readers' attention to his writings as a series of specifically timed textual interventions in a broader medial landscape. In a medialized modernity characterized by "the ever-reconfigured constellation of the present at the interface of past and future," as Willi Goetschel puts it, the afterlives of journalistic endeavors model how the past can reemerge and be revalued in the future.¹⁴

Different conceptions of history

Scholars have repeatedly noted how Heine's mode of writing and his concept of history are intimately intertwined.¹⁵ Heine's "performative" approach to history writing generates a "plurality of narratives"¹⁶ and constellates multiple competing conceptions of history, favoring ironic juxtaposition over unambiguous resolution.¹⁷ Rather than developing a single unified historiographical narrative, he pursues a variety of inroads to historical representation, constantly interrupting himself and redirecting readers. The French Revolution is a particularly salient subject for this form of history writing because of the event's multivalent temporal filiations across the past, present, and future. Writers of history seek to understand the past event's effects on the present, but they also seek to understand how both the concerns of the present and the anticipation of the future shape views of the past. Heine dramatizes these kinds of temporal vectors in "Artikel VI" in *Französische Zustände*. At first, Heine demonstratively turns his sights to the past, construing the noise and chatter of the present as a potential distraction but also a riddle to be deciphered: "I wish to contribute as much as possible impartially to understanding the present and

¹³ See Friedrich Kittler, *Die Nacht der Substanz* (Bern: Benteli, 1989), 15–24.

¹⁴ Willi Goetschel, *Heine and Critical Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 21.

¹⁵ See, for example, Walter Erhart, "Heinrich Heine: Das Ende der Geschichte und 'verschiedenartige' Theorien zur Literatur," in *Aufklärung und Skepsis: Internationaler Heine-Kongress 1997 zum 200. Geburtstag*, ed. Joseph A. Kruse, Bernd Witte, and Karin Füllner (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 490; and Gerhard Höhn, "Eternal Return or Indiscernable Progress? Heine's Conception of History after 1848," in *A Companion to the Works of Heinrich Heine*, ed. Roger Cook (Rochester: Camden House, 2002), 169–200.

¹⁶ Goetschel, *Heine and Critical Theory*, 160.

¹⁷ As Erhart puts it, "Heine's oeuvre showcases in detail almost all the possible and contradictory conceptions of history in the nineteenth century, but at the same time it contains an immanent reflection on the forms of presentation with which history is imagined." Erhart, "Heinrich Heine," 490. See also Wolfgang Preisendanz, "Der Sinn der Schreibart in den Berichten aus Paris 1840–1843 *Lutezia*," in *Heinrich Heine: Werkstrukturen und Epochenebezüge*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983), 69–98, here 79.

to look for the key to the noisy enigma of today in the past. The salons lie, the graves are true" (Ich will so viel als möglich parteilos das Verständniß der Gegenwart befördern, und den Schlüssel der lärmenden Tagesräthsel zunächst in der Vergangenheit suchen. Die Salons lügen, die Gräber sind wahr).¹⁸ This is one of several pithy, protodialectical formulations that Heine uses to parse the ambiguous status of the past in the present.¹⁹ In stating that the salons lie and the graves are true, Heine asks how the 1789 Revolution continues to influence events forty years later. However, Heine then goes on to state his desire to reveal "how the past first becomes understandable through the present, and how every new day sheds new light upon the past, something of which our previous writers of historical handbooks had no idea" (Wie diese, die Vergangenheit, erst durch jene, die Gegenwart, ihr eigentliches Verständniß findet, und jeder neue Tag ein neues Licht auf sie wirft, wovon unsere bisherigen Handbuchschreiber keine Ahnung hatten).²⁰ This second statement shifts attention to how present concerns alter our understanding of the past, a feature of historical understanding that historians commonly seek to neutralize.

Here Heine straddles two models of engaging with the past. Reinhart Koselleck has shown how the late eighteenth-century understanding of history breaks with the traditional *topos* of history as the teacher of life (*historia magistra vitae*), a *topos* that assumes that past events repeat themselves and serve as normative models for understanding the present and future.²¹ Traditional history writing is a mimetic mode based in the classical concept of imitating great men and their deeds.²² It is above all the French Revolution that undermines the idea that the past instructs the present, for the revolution is perceived to be unprecedently new and to break with previous experience.²³ As Koselleck argues, postrevolutionary historical consciousness comes to assume a teleological notion of progress, justifying past and present actions from the perspective of a future goal rather than a repeatable past.

¹⁸ Heine, "Artikel VI," in *Französische Zustände*, 139.

¹⁹ On Heine's manipulation of Hegelian categories and his "clinical description" of the "decomposition" of the philosophy of history, see Stathis Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Kant to Marx*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 2003), 46–47, 53.

²⁰ Heine, "Artikel VI," in *Französische Zustände*, 145–146.

²¹ Reinhart Koselleck, "Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 26–42.

²² See Julia Hell, *The Conquest of Ruins: The Third Reich and the Fall of Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 112.

²³ See Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Heine approaches this tension between differing approaches to the past in an unpublished fragment titled “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung,” which was written around the same time as his 1831–1832 articles for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. For Heine, the first approach, the idea of history as a stable repository for lessons from the past, amounts to an “indifferent” approach that sees history as a realm of bleak cyclical repetition (“trostlosen Kreislauf”).²⁴ Ranke and other conservative Prussian historians exemplify this model as they remain indifferent to the future because they see it as in no way diverging from the past and present.²⁵ The second, “providential” model is expressed most fully by the “philosophical school” (philosophische Schule), that is, Hegel and his followers, which sees a future of rational progress and the betterment of the human condition. Heine views this model more positively, but he remains skeptical of the “fanaticism of those promising future happiness” (Schwärmerei der Zukunftbeglückter), for the progressive philosophy of history justifies the present as a means to the end of realizing the future: “we also demand that the living present be valued as it deserves, and not serve merely as a means to an end in the service of the future” (wir [wollen] auch, daß die Gegenwart ihren Wert behalte und daß sie nicht bloß als Mittel gelte und die Zukunft ihr Zweck sei).²⁶

This fragment is an often-cited example of Heine’s particular combination of rejecting teleological views of history while remaining committed to the ideals of the revolution.²⁷ For Heine, the present is justified in its own right via the principle of life rather than that of a progressive, rational future:

Das Leben ist weder Zweck noch Mittel; das Leben ist ein Recht. Das Leben will dieses Recht geltend machen gegen den erstarrenden Tod, gegen die Vergangenheit, und dieses Geltendmachen

²⁴ Heine, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung, 1833,” in *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke* (DHA), ed. Manfred Windfuhr, vol. 10, *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen und kleinere literaturkritische Schriften*, ed. Jan-Christoph Hauschild (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1993), 301–302, here 301. On the question of indifferentism, see Fritz Mende, “Indifferentismus: Bemerkungen zu Heines ästhetischer Terminologie,” in *Heinrich Heine: Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983), 208–218.

²⁵ On Heine’s engagement with Ranke, see Susanne Zantop, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsschreibung: Heine und Ranke,” *Heine Jahrbuch* 23 (1984): 42–68. For a recent discussion, see Azade Seyhan, *Heinrich Heine and the World Literary Map: Redressing the Canon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 41–43.

²⁶ Heine, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung,” 302.

²⁷ “Heine expelled from his thinking not the hope for liberation but the goddess ‘Necessity,’ the thought of *necessary* progress in history.” Ortwin Lämke, *Heines Begriff der Geschichte: Der Journalist Heinrich Heine und die Julimonarchie* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1997), 139. See also Höhn, “Eternal Return or Indiscernible Progress?,” 172; Jeffrey Grossman, “Fractured Histories: Heinrich Heine’s Responses to Violence and Revolution,” in *Contemplating Violence: Critical Studies in*

ist die Revolution. [. .] “Le pain est le droit du peuple,” sagte Saint-Just, und das ist das größte Wort, das in der ganzen Revolution gesprochen worden.

Life is neither means nor end. Life is a right. Life desires to validate this right against the claims of petrifying death, against the past, and this act of validating life is the Revolution. [. .] ‘Le pain est le droit du peuple,’ said Saint-Just, and this is the greatest word spoken in the entire Revolution.²⁸

In being equated with “petrifying death,” the past seems as far removed from instructing life as possible, yet Heine does not bestow this pedagogical function upon the future either. He attempts to do justice to the suffering and struggles of the present on its own terms; indeed, linking life and the present in this way was common in the liberal writings of the *Vormärz*.²⁹ It would almost seem that here Heine reverses his own pithy statement that “the salons lie, the graves are true”: truth as well as moral and historical “greatness” are on the side of life’s self-assertion over and against the past.

In “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung,” Heine uses life as a conceptual lever to open up the problem of treating historical situations, constellations, or actors as autonomous entities in their own right. He writes with polemical, almost activist conviction from the perspective of “our most lively feelings of life” (unseren lebendigsten Lebensgefühlen),³⁰ and yet in this fragment he never returns to the problem of an overarching historical *Zusammenhang*, to the problem of identifying connections between different self-standing historical entities: what links the self-assertion of life at one historical moment to that of a previous or future moment? Indeed, we might conjecture that the difficulty of placing different actions into historically coherent relationships to one another – an epistemological as well as historiographical difficulty – prevented Heine from finishing these reflections or led him to attempt to solve the difficulty through other conceptual or

Modern German Culture, ed. Carl Niekerk and Stefani Engelstein (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 67–87.

²⁸ Heine, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung,” 302.

²⁹ “For Young Germany, the concept of the present is bound up with the concept of life. [. .] Life appears as the basis for a progressive process in whose course conservative political and social forces are overcome.” Peter Uwe Hohendahl, “Literary Criticism in the Epoch of Liberalism,” in *A History of German Literary Criticism, 1730–1980*, ed. Hohendahl (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 202. On the semantics of life, see also Wulf Wülfing, *Schlagworte des Jungen Deutschland: Mit einer Einführung in die Schlagwortforschung* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1982), 159–167.

³⁰ Heine, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung,” 302.

textual means.³¹ In *Französische Zustände*, Heine comes to a somewhat different conclusion as to the specifically historical manifestations of the present. There Heine shifts questions of life and death, and of before and after, onto the publication conditions of print. Both in topic and format, Heine explores notions of before and after that go beyond a simple equation of the present with life.

Interrupting the history of the revolution: *Französische Zustände*

Heine's 1833 *Französische Zustände* is one of many contemporaneous texts reporting back to German readers about the aftermath of the July Revolution, which include Ludwig Börne's well-received *Briefe aus Paris* (1832–1834).³² Heine and Börne both seek to explain events in France to German audiences, both employ short forms associated with travel writing, journalism, and urban reportage, and both thematize the difficulty of writing in and through the present moment while knowing that what they write would reach readers at various sorts of temporal and spatial remove. How might the pacing and serial unfolding of letters or articles in response to current events of the recent past reveal something essential about the time of the revolution and about historical time more generally?

Heine wrote for Cotta's *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* in the 1820s and began working in 1831 as a Parisian correspondent for Cotta's more news-oriented Augsburg-based *Allgemeine Zeitung*, which was the most important daily newspaper in the period. Almost every issue of the *AZ* in the early 1830s contained reports from Paris, and Cotta had six correspondents there at the time.³³ Heine's articles from the early 1830s and early 1840s mix commentary on current events with historical reflection and presume readers' acquaintance with important news items, parliamentary

31 Sigrid Weigel compellingly pursues an answer to this unanswered question in a different way than I am trying to do here, suggesting that Heine approaches individual historical constellations as monads that reflect the whole of history and being. See Sigrid Weigel, "Das Wort wird Fleisch, und das Fleisch blutet": Heines Reflexion der Menschenrechte im Buch *Gottes und in der Weltgeschichte*, in Kruse, Witte, and Füllner, *Aufklärung und Skepsis*, 514.

32 On this body of literature and its broader literary implications, see Ingrid Oesterle, "Der 'Führungswechsel der Zeithorizonte' in der deutschen Literatur: Korrespondenzen aus Paris, der Hauptstadt der Menschheitsgeschichte, und die Ausbildung der geschichtlichen Zeit 'Gegenwart,'" in *Studien zur Ästhetik und Literatur der Kunstperiode*, ed. Dirk Grathoff (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), 11–76; and Rutger Booß, *Ansichten der Revolution: Paris-Berichte deutscher Schriftsteller nach der Juli-Revolution 1830; Heine, Börne, u.a.* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977).

33 Booß, *Ansichten der Revolution*, 80.

speeches, etc. from elsewhere in the paper or other sources.³⁴ This dynamic is reflected in the articles' placement in the "Außerordentliche Beylage zur *Allgemeinen Zeitung*," a section of the paper that was an additional special supplement to the regular supplement. Though the *AZ* did not have a feuilleton section per se, these supplements served a similar function to the feuilleton, combining cultural commentary and theater and literary reviews and operating as a counterpart to more factual journalistic reporting through both content and format.³⁵

The book version of *Französische Zustände* contains nine longer numbered and dated articles first published from December 1831 to June 1832, then "Tagesberichte" about the failed June Rebellion of 1832 (the first major public insurrection that Heine witnessed firsthand and an event immortalized in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*), then a short series of pieces titled "Aus der Normandie" Heine's longer articles titled "Französische Zustände" each appeared in serialized installments over several issues of the *AZ* and were signed, while the shorter articles were often published anonymously.³⁶ The book version is organized by the formal conceit of collecting varied articles by a familiar author. Heine describes the project in the following manner:

Ich gebe hier eine Reihe Artikel und Tagesberichte, die ich, nach dem Begehr des Augenblicks, in stürmischen Verhältnissen aller Art [. . .], für die Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung geschrieben habe. Diese anonymen, flüchtigen Blätter soll ich nun unter meinem Namen als festes Buch herausgeben, damit kein Anderer sie nach eigener Laune zusammenstellt.

I am offering here a series of articles and daily reports that I wrote for the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* according to the desires of the moment, in stormy relations of all different sorts [. . .]. I will now publish these anonymous, fleeting pages under my name as a solid book, so that no one else will arrange them according to their own whims.³⁷

Republication preempts unauthorized reprinting and rearrangement, and it also allows Heine to reintegrate material cut by the censors; books longer than twenty "Bogen" (about 320 pages) were not subject to the same prepublication censorship as newspapers and journals, though this didn't stop Heine's preface – a text with

34 On the importance of intensively reading newspapers for Heine as he was composing these articles, see Lämke, *Heines Begriff der Geschichte*, 9; and Volkmar Hansen, *Heinrich Heines politische Journalistik in der Augsburger "Allgemeinen Zeitung"* (Augsburg: Stadt Augsburg, 1994), 10.

35 Hansen, *Heinrich Heines politische Journalistik*, 44.

36 See Hansen, 67–68. See also Michael Werner, "Der Journalist Heine," in *Heine: Ästhetisch-politische Profile*, ed. Gerhard Höhn (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 300.

37 Heine, "Vorrede" to *Französische Zustände*, v–vi.

its own complex publication and reception history – from being heavily censored.³⁸ Heine would have been quite familiar with conventions of republication, for many of his articles were excerpted in other German papers and journals soon after appearing in the *AZ*; in such cases, book republication would have been the third or fourth printing of a given article.³⁹ Of course, there were financial advantages to republication, since Heine was paid by both Cotta and Campe for journal and book versions respectively.⁴⁰ One might also conclude that Heine included the additional material over and above the main nine articles simply to reach the page threshold necessary to avoid precensorship, though as we will see, Heine uses the juxtaposition of longer and shorter articles in the book version as an important compositional effect.⁴¹ Through a series of supplements, notes, and addenda, Heine performatively opens his editorial workshop to readers, signaling where he has reintegrated censored passages or unpublished or incomplete material.⁴² In the process, the book version presents readers with a complex series of texts, which in their temporal pacing and documentary conceit both correspond to and diverge from the pacing of the newspaper in which they first appeared.

“Artikel VI” of *Französische Zustände* is a key testing ground for Heine’s “preliminary studies for the history of the present.” He begins both the newspaper and the book versions with the promise of an extended series of articles about the relationship between the past and the present and states the general historical remarks sketched above (“the salons lie . . .”). His initial goal is to define the time of the revolution and its status as ongoing as a way to ascertain the continuity of historical events, actions, and agents (again a question not positively addressed by “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung”). In the midst of these historiographical, indeed philosophical-historical remarks, Heine performatively interrupts himself with an extended report of the cholera outbreak. Heine thereby relegates these historical

³⁸ On the publication history of the articles, see the extensive “Apparat” to *Französische Zustände* compiled by Jean-René Derré and Christiane Giesen in DHA, 12.2:621–1071. On censorship in this period, see Katy Heady, *Literature and Censorship in Restoration Germany: Repression and Rhetoric* (Rochester: Camden House, 2009), 11.

³⁹ See Derré and Giesen, “Apparat” to *Französische Zustände*, DHA, 12.2:669.

⁴⁰ “For Heine, the combination of Campe and Cotta represented an attractive business model. Cotta would pay him for his periodical contributions, and Campe again for the book editions.” Rolf Hosfeld, *Heinrich Heine: Die Erfindung des europäischen Intellektuellen* (Munich: Siedler, 2014), 187.

⁴¹ In a different context, Spoerhase speaks of the “Poetik des Druckbogens.” Carlos Spoerhase, *Das Format der Literatur: Praktiken materieller Textualität zwischen 1740 und 1830* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018), 569–604.

⁴² Scholars speak in this context of the “censorship style,” or *Zensurstil*, of Heine and his contemporaries; see Heady, *Literature and Censorship in Restoration Germany*, 19.

reflections to the status of an all-too preliminary preview (“Bevorwortung”) of a future article: this is a “preview of an article that seeks to deal with reflections on the past. But in this moment, the present is the more important, and the topic that it presents to me for discussion is of a sort that all continued writing depends upon it” (Bevorwortung eines Artikels, der sich mit vergangenheitlichen Beleuchtungen beschäftigen mag. Die Gegenwart ist in diesem Augenblicke das Wichtigere, und das Thema, das sie mir zur Besprechung darbietet, ist von der Art, daß überhaupt jedes Weiterschreiben davon abhängt).⁴³ Heine highlights his own inability to continue to write anything at all (including reflective history), but he does in fact present readers with writing of a different kind. Heine positions reflection about the past, what came “before,” in advance of his intervening subarticle about the cholera outbreak, yet, in its entirety, this reflection is deferred to a later point in time. In effect, Heine enacts his own historiographical dictum that the present alters our awareness of the past, that any continued historical reflection remains dependent upon the shifting present.

By inserting the account of the cholera outbreak, Heine stages a scene in which the temporality of rapid-response reportage on the present breaks into the temporal unfolding of a historical metanarrative. “The following communication has perhaps the benefit of being something of a bulletin written on the battlefield itself and during battle, and thus bears the color of the moment in an undistorted way” (Die folgende Mittheilung hat vielleicht das Verdienst, daß sie gleichsam ein Bulletin ist, welches auf dem Schlachtfelde selbst, und zwar während der Schlacht geschrieben worden, und daher unverfälscht die Farbe des Augenblicks trägt).⁴⁴ To the extent that interruption shapes the awareness and representation of time and history, it is a central feature of the revolution and the newspaper alike, which both break in on the old and bring the new.⁴⁵ The advent of the latest news is also a feature of military reporting, a realm with which Heine clearly associates

43 Heine, “Artikel VI,” in *Französische Zustände*, 147.

44 Heine, 149–50.

45 This conjunction of serial print and revolution is something that Heine dramatizes to great effect when relating how his historical and biblical studies are interrupted by the arrival of a packet of newspapers detailing the events of the July Revolution: “I was reading just this story [...] when the thick packet of newspapers arrived with the warm, glowing hot news from the mainland. They were rays of sunshine wrapped in newsprint, and they inflamed my soul into the wildest blaze” (Eben diese Geschichte las ich [...], als das dicke Zeitungspaqet mit den warmen, glühend heißen Neuigkeiten vom festen Lande ankam. Es waren Sonnenstrahlen, eingewickelt in Druckpapier, und sie entflammten meine Seele, bis zum wildesten Brand). Heine, *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift*, in DHA, 11:48.

his articles as “bulletins” written “during battle.” As a textual effect, interruption can be disorienting,⁴⁶ but such juxtaposition also is one of the basic format conditions of newspapers and other serial print products, a condition that facilitates a more general kind of reader orientation to the present, and Heine asks readers to recreate the experience of orientating themselves to a rapidly shifting state of affairs. He treats the cholera outbreak as an echo of the street-level violence and uncertainty of the revolutionary break with the past, a less directly political echo, perhaps, yet one equally disruptive of the status quo.⁴⁷

Readers expecting a continuation of Heine’s historical retrospective in the subsequent article will be disappointed, as Heine postpones it yet again: “The historical retrospectives announced by the previous article have to be postponed. The present made itself so harshly relevant that one is hardly able to contemplate the past” (Die geschichtlichen Rückblicke, die der vorige Artikel angekündigt, müssen vertagt werden. Die Gegenwart hat sich unterdessen so herbe geltend gemacht, daß man sich wenig mit der Vergangenheit beschäftigen konnte).⁴⁸ At first glance, Heine’s history writing seems to stage the inability to write history, making the idea that it is historically necessary to consider the present in light of the past a literal afterthought. But perhaps republication allowed Heine to attain the proper historical distance? The book version of *Französische Zustände* does in fact include the more extensive historical remarks promised in the articles, situating these remarks as supplemental material near the end of the book, in effect migrating his historical reflections from the “Außerordentliche Beylage” of the paper to the appendix of the book. However, despite finding a home for this material in the format of collected articles, he is obliged to put off a full exploration of these historical questions to a hypothetical next book: “I want to present in the supplement a fragment of the article announced here. In a subsequent book, the added material that I wrote later will follow. I was frequently disturbed during this work, mostly through the gruesome cries of my neighbor who died of cholera” (Ich will ein Fragment des Artikels, der hier angekündigt worden, in der Beylage mittheilen. In einem nächsten Buch mag dann die später geschriebene Ergänzung nachfolgen. Ich wurde in dieser Arbeit viel gestört, zumeist durch das grauenhafte Schreien meines Nachbarn, welcher

⁴⁶ See Ortwin Lämke, “Heines ‘Geschichtsschreibung der Gegenwart’: Zu Artikel VI der ‘Französischen Zustände,’” in Kruse, Witte, and Füllner, *Aufklärung und Skepsis*, 616. See also Zantop, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsschreibung,” 53.

⁴⁷ On Heine’s treatment of the cholera outbreak, see Olaf Briese, “Schutzmittel für die Cholera”: Geschichtsphilosophische und politische Cholera-Kompensation bei Heine und seinen Zeitgenossen,” *Heine Jahrbuch* 32 (1993): 9–26.

⁴⁸ Heine, “Artikel VII,” in *Französische Zustände*, 176.

an der Cholera starb).⁴⁹ The cries of his neighbor serve as a figure for the transitory present, for the ever-present possibility that life (and death) in the moment might disrupt more general historical retrospection. The documentation of these cries of a dying man is perhaps also a tragic echo of the passage in “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassung” where Heine justifies the present moment through life’s self-assertion.

Postponing the piece to the next article, then to the next book: in both cases Heine works with a serial logic of before and after, of preview and postscript. This format relies on performative gestures of self-interruptions and continuations and on the (re)arrangement of various kinds of texts into different sequences. As Suzanne Zantop has observed, Heine thereby subverts any notion that historical narrative develops in an organic, cyclical, or progressive fashion.⁵⁰ If there is a homology between the continuation of historical time – the continuation of the revolution – and writing about it, it must be in terms of structures of stops and starts, interruptions and disturbances. Seriality promises that more is to come, but what if more comes in a different way than initially promised?

It is instructive here to take a closer look at the specific location of this mere “Fragment” in the book version, for its placement raises as many questions as it answers. Curiously, Heine does not place it in the chronologically arranged nine articles that comprise the bulk of the book and instead nestles it into the “Tagesberichte” section following them, which is comprised of shorter reports dealing with the failed June Rebellion of 1832 published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Heine introduces them in the following manner:

Die folgenden Tagesberichte, geschrieben Angesichts der Begebenheiten, im Geräusch des Partheikampfs und zwar immer kurz vor Abgang der Post, so schleunig als möglich, damit die Correspondenten des siegenden Juste-Milieu nicht den Vorsprung gewönnen – diese flüchtigen Blätter theile ich hier mit, unverändert, in so weit sie auf die Insurrektion vom 5. Junius Bezug haben. Der Geschichtsschreiber mag sie vielleicht einst um so gewissenhafter benutzen können, da er wenigstens sicher ist, daß sie nicht nach späteren Interessen verfertigt worden.

The following daily reports, written in light of the events, in the din of the partisan battle and always right before the departure of the mail, as quickly as possible so that the correspondents of the victorious Juste-Milieu would not gain the advantage – these fleeting pages I am communicating here, unaltered, to the extent that they have any bearing on the

49 Heine, “Artikel VI,” in *Französische Zustände*, 147.

50 “The principle of the cut, of interruption, becomes predominant for a historiography that exposes concepts like *organic development* or *causal relation* as artistic devices.” Zantop, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsschreibung,” 64.

insurrection of June fifth. The history writer may all the more conscientiously be able to make use of them for he is at least able to be certain that they were not composed on the basis of later interests.⁵¹

These are “fleeting pages,” passed on “unaltered,” except that the fragmentary “Beylage” is inserted after this editorial introduction and before the first “Tagesbericht.” Again the auditory realm and the accelerated pace of these pieces are figures for the fleeting present and its revolutionary potential; these “Tagesberichte” are intended for future historians (a prediction borne out, by the way, by the fact that historians of the period continue to rely on them⁵²). And yet these reports are the textual environment for the historiographical supplement, which is far removed from the article that it ostensibly continues.⁵³ Furthermore, the placement of this “Fragment” in the original book version runs counter to his own editorial assertion that what follows is entirely characterized by the media time of journalistic snapshots of the present. Heine’s introductory remarks thematize his lack of time for extended historical reflection, yet he curiously goes on to insert precisely such reflections in advance of the daily reports, reversing the order of what kind of text does the interrupting familiar from the cholera episode.

The anthology format of *Französische Zustände* underlines Heine’s point that the present and historical awareness are always breaking into and recasting one another. Heine’s framing work foregrounds the external factors that force him into certain editorial decisions and that limit the potential for deliberate authorial composition. In a way, Heine performatively affirms the proposition that an understanding of the present must pass through the understanding of the past, yet he stages this proposition through a stance of coming after, coming after as a stance both toward the historical past and toward a set of texts written at different present moments.⁵⁴ One might be well inspired to deconstruct Heine’s various dichotomies – past versus present, fleeting versus permanent, journalistic versus philosophical, impartial versus partisan, etc. – but it seems clear that Heine himself uses the anthology format to destabilize these categories. That said, in subsequent twentieth-century critical editions of *Französische Zustände*, we can find a

⁵¹ Heine, “Tagesberichte,” in *Französische Zustände*, 288–289.

⁵² “It should be noted that in this case Heine was one of the best-informed eyewitnesses. No French account can do without him.” Klaus Deinet, “Heinrich Heine und Frankreich – eine Neu-einordnung,” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 32.1 (2007): 141.

⁵³ “The theoretical-philosophical excursus announced in the preliminary remark [Vorbemerkung] is therefore entirely unorthodoxly delivered after the fact in the ‘Beylage zu Artikel VI.’” Zantop, *Zeitbilder*, 101.

⁵⁴ On Heine’s modeling of retrospection, or “Nachträglichkeit,” see Michael Gamper, *Der große Mann: Geschichte eines politischen Phantasmas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 217–218.

countervailing impulse to impose narrative continuity onto these articles and to soften the compositional effects of self-interruption and delay. In a perhaps minor yet nonetheless remarkable editorial overreach, the editors of the authoritative *Düsseldorfer Heine-Ausgabe* put the fragmentary “Beylage” in between “Artikel VI” and “Artikel VII,” stating that it was “senselessly” placed amid the “Tagesberichte.”⁵⁵ The editor of the 1961 Aufbau edition places it directly after “Artikel IX” rather than after the prefatory remarks introducing the “Tagesberichte,” doing so “in the interest of the clearness and readability of the texts.”⁵⁶ While seemingly benign at first glance, such interventions distort the problem of coming after and of the afterlife of given articles, and introduce ideals of “clearness” and “readability” that Heine performatively undermines.

Heine writes the history of the revolution and its aftermath through an ensemble of more and less dissimilar texts. This constructive approach to the writing of historical time is based primarily on medial effects rather than on the work of the philosophical concept or on the sense that history has an organic logic akin to biological life cycles or imitable great actors. Heine models the time of the revolution on the basis of serialized textual operations that depart from the narrative logic of a cohesive, linear epic plot. Heine’s serial histories proceed fitfully, in stops and starts, promising all the while that more is to come, both more disruption of the status quo and more opportunity for fragmented critical reflection.

Heine’s antiportraiture

I’d like to turn to a second feature of Heine’s engagement with serial forms, namely, his representation of historical figures, an important side of his more general presentation of his writings as a series of images. He made a name for himself as a prose author with his four-volume *Reisebilder* anthology (1826–1831), which contains texts originally published in periodicals; his four-volume anthology titled *Der Salon* (1834–1840) similarly gathers disparate writings from journals. In both anthology series, Heine uses the conceit of a collection of multiple images to play different representational media off one another, including academic painting (as in his reviews of the Paris academy exhibitions for the *Morgenblatt für gebildete*

55 “In the book version, this addition senselessly[!] ended up between the *Tagesberichte* and the accompanying *Vorbemerkung*. It was therefore drawn into the article itself.” Derré and Giesen, “Apparat” to *Französische Zustände*, DHA, 12.2:860.

56 Gotthard Erler, “Anmerkungen” to *Französische Zustände*, in Heinrich Heine, *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Hans Kaufmann, vol. 4 (Berlin: Aufbau, 1961), 638–639.

Stände collected in *Der Salon*), caricature, public oratory and scholarly lecturing, and early photography.⁵⁷ Along with building on the conventions of travel writing and the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century urban tableau tradition (the title of the French translation of *Reisebilder* was *Tableaux de voyage*), Heine likewise engages with the multiple genres tasked with representing specific historical persons. It was quite common to present histories of the present and recent past as portrait galleries, physiognomies, character sketches. *Französische Zustände* and *Lutezia* are organized in part around what Gerhard Höhn calls “portraits of the most important political personalities from the governing camp as well as characterizations of the oppositional parties,”⁵⁸ and Heine himself promised his editor that “many portraits” would be mixed into *Lutezia*.⁵⁹ Taken as a whole, Heine’s writings take on a certain recursive quality, as he returns to previous personalities (Napoleon, La Fayette, Robespierre), artists, or even specific caricatures or paintings such as Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* across multiple texts. The layering of these references generates a cumulative archive of images, metaphors, and scenes that readers come to associate with Heine’s body of work and authorial voice.

In the hands of a perennially ironic writer such as Heine, though, the more serious, official side of portraiture quickly comes under scrutiny. Even though his writings feature detailed descriptions of embodied personalities, he casts doubt on the value of writing history solely through the representation of individual actors. As he states in *Französische Zustände*: “In these pages, as in the whole book, one may find many contradictory assertions, but they never concern things, only persons. Our judgment must stand firm on the first, while it may change daily on the latter” (Man wird in diesen Blättern, wie im ganzen Buche, vielen widersprechenden Aeußerungen begegnen, aber sie betreffen nie die Dinge, sondern immer die Personen. Ueber erster muß unser Urtheil feststehen, über letztere darf es täglich wechseln).⁶⁰ Heine argues that history is shaped by “things” – “Dinge,” “les choses” – rather than people, things here understood as structures, forces, institutions, transnational processes

57 On Heine’s representation of historical figures as a kind of medial competition, see Petra McGillen, “Andauernder Effekt: Medienkonkurrenz und Rhetorik in Heinrich Heines Napoleon-Schriften,” in *Zwischen Gattungsdisziplin und Gesamtkunstwerk: Literarische Intermedialität 1815–1848*, ed. Stefan Keppler-Tasaki and Wolf Gerhard Schmidt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 203–221.

58 Gerhard Höhn, *Heine-Handbuch: Zeit, Person, Werk*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler 2004), 287. See also Karlheinz Stierle, *Der Mythos von Paris: Zeichen und Bewusstsein der Stadt* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1993), 309–312. On more general trends at the intersection of history writing and visual culture in Germany, see Katrin Maurer, *Visualizing the Past: The Power of the Image in German Historicism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013).

59 Heine to Julius Campe, 7 March 1854, HSA, 23:307.

60 Heine, “Tagesberichte,” in *Französische Zustände*, 290.

and constellations: “conditions” as in the title. As Peter Uwe Hohendahl puts it, “Heine’s publicistic and literary achievement consists of restructuring the function of aspects of the feuilleton – the portrait, the anecdote, the description of milieu – so that the structural processes shine through.”⁶¹ This is part of Heine’s broader conviction that he writes history after the demise the heroic age and that – rather than individual persons – parties, the people, and the masses are the heroes of the modern age.⁶² Here we might add a third challenge for Heine to the two with which I began this essay (the challenge of writing history in fragmentary serial forms, and the challenge of depicting ongoing events such as the revolution): he set out to write the history of impersonal transnational political and cultural structures in part through personal portraits.⁶³ Portraiture allows him to envision the cumulative effect of multiple, conflicting, heterogeneous images of historical actors. Furthermore, portraits of the same figures allow him to track the ongoing unfolding of time through compositional effects of before and after rather than those of absorption in a single image.

Heine’s *Lutezia* is a key place where he develops this kind of history writing. The book’s full title reads *Lutezia: Berichte über Politik, Kunst und Volksleben*, and it anthologizes a series of articles he wrote for the *AZ* in the 1840s. Similarly to *Französische Zustände*, the book version of *Lutezia* (published in 1854 in German and in 1855 in French translation) contains a group of numbered main articles varying in length followed by an appendix containing other tangential articles written at around the same time and published in various other papers. At first glance, there is something Hegelian about Heine’s project, as he tracks conflicts between different societal and ideological forces, including between the conservative aristocracy,

61 Peter Uwe Hohendahl, “Art Evaluation and Reportage: The Aesthetic Theory of the Later Heine,” in *The Institution of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 83–125, 92. See also Höhn, *Heine-Handbuch*, 287–288.

62 On Heine’s relativization of greatness, see Ethel Matala de Mazza, “Die fehlende Hauptsache: Exekutionen der Julimonarchie in Heines *Lutezia*,” in *Heinrich Heine: Ein Wegbereiter der Moderne*, ed. Paolo Chiarini and Walter Hinderer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009), 309–328; and Gamper, *Der große Mann*.

63 Even in the case of his 1840 book on Börne, with Börne’s name in the title and the many explicitly portrait-like sketches throughout, Heine states that the book is “not actually about Börne [...] but instead about the temporal circle in which he first moved” (nicht eigentlich eine Schrift über Börne [...], sondern über den Zeitkreis worinn er sich zunächst bewegte). Heine to Julius Campe, 24 July 1840, HSA, 21:371. As Zantop puts it, “In Heine, [...] historical persons] become representations of specific ideas and condense finally into symbolic figures, into mythological beings lifted out of history.” Zantop, “Verschiedenartige Geschichtsschreibung,” 53. See also Jacques Voisine, “Heine als Porträtiest in der *Lutezia*,” in *Internationaler Heine-Kongress Düsseldorf 1972*, ed. Manfred Windfuhr (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1973), 220–221.

the liberal elites, and the more radical socialist and communist movement, a conflict that Heine describes as the central topic of *Lutezia* in his 1854 introduction.⁶⁴ That said, Heine is also interested in the interplay – the “artistic arrangement” as he puts it in the preface – of different textual units as a compositional and conceptual matrix that moves in tandem with historical developments, as well as with the ebb and flow of the medial landscape. As in *Französische Zustände*, Heine wants to represent the revolution’s persistence and potential for repetition but this time in the tumultuous era of the 1840s and refracted through the remove of the 1850s. In the process, Heine revised and reorganized more pieces than in *Französische Zustände*, tending to make his reports more satirical and critical.

Heine positively associates his articles in *Lutezia* with modern media, in particular with caricature and early photography. Caricature is a subversive alternative to historical portraiture.⁶⁵ Caricatures often distort the appearance of important contemporaries (in *Französische Zustände*, for example, Heine discusses the famous satirical images of the French king as a pear), but they also shed light on broader social and political trends by not accepting self-serious representation at face value. Heine’s work with caricature is part of his broader engagement with small forms such as physiognomies, urban sketches, and political chansons⁶⁶ that engage in the partisan skirmishes of the day and that are closely linked to the rhythms of serial formats, including the illustrated press, which rose to prominence in the 1830s.⁶⁷ Caricature depends on a witty, disjointed succession of images, favors recursive mutation over iconic representation, and was permanently banished to the base of the hierarchy of academic art forms, atop which historical portraiture continued to

64 Heine, “Zueigungsbrief,” in *Lutezia*, pt. 1, x–xi.

65 On Heine’s engagement with history panting, see Zantop, *Zeitbilder*, 63. On caricature, see Günter Oesterle and Ingrid Oesterle, “Gegenfüßler des Ideals” – Prozeßgestalt der Kunst – ‘Mémoire processive’ der Geschichte: Zur ästhetischen Fragwürdigkeit von Karikatur seit dem 18. Jahrhundert,” in “Nervöse Auffangsorgane des inneren und äußeren Lebens”: *Karikaturen*, ed. Klaus Herding and Günter Otto (Gießen: Anabas, 1980), 87–130; see also, more recently, Angela Borchert, “Zeichnungs-, Schreib- und Druckszenen in französischen und deutschen illustrierten Satire-Journalen (1830–1848),” in “Periodical Literature in the Nineteenth Century,” ed. Vance Byrd and Sean Franzel, thematic issue, *Colloquia Germanica* 49.2–3 (2016): 201–234.

66 On the significance of the small form in the nineteenth century (and for Heine in particular), see Ethel Matala de Mazza, *Der populäre Pakt: Verhandlungen der Moderne zwischen Operette und Feuilleton* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2018); see also Martina Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and Its Physiologies, 1830–50* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

67 See Patricia Mainardi, *Another World: Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Print Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

stand tall.⁶⁸ Heine's commitment to caricature as a serial form is on display in what is perhaps the most well-known and enigmatic section of the German preface to *Lutezia*, where Heine casts the 1854 publication as a gallery of photographic images, taking up once more the tension between people and things:

Um die betrübsamen Berichterstattungen zu erheitern, verwob ich sie mit Schilderungen aus dem Gebiete der Kunst und der Wissenschaft, aus den Tanzsälen der guten und der schlechten Societät, und wenn ich [. . .] manche allzunärrische Virtuosenfratze gezeichnet, so geschah es [. . .] um das Bild der Zeit selbst in seinen kleinsten Nüancen zu liefern. Ein ehrliches Daguerreotyp muß eine Fliege eben so gut wie das stolzeste Pferd treu wiedergeben, und meine Berichte sind ein daguerreotypisches Geschichtsbuch, worin jeder Tag sich selber abconterfeite, und durch die Zusammenstellung solcher Bilder hat der ordnende Geist des Künstlers ein Werk geliefert, worin das Dargestellte seine Treue authentisch durch sich selbst documentirt.

To lighten up the doleful reports I wove in sketches from the realm of art and science, from the dance halls of good and bad society, and if I [. . .] sometimes drew all-too-foolish caricatures of *virtuosi*, it was done [. . .] to give a picture of the time in its most minute nuances. A truthful daguerreotype must truly reproduce a fly as accurately as the proudest horse, and my reports are a daguerreotypic history book, in which every day depicts itself, and through the arrangement of such pictures together, the order-giving spirit of the artist has contributed a work in which what is represented authentically documents its fidelity through itself.⁶⁹

On the one hand, Heine suggests that his caricature-like sketches of figures from the arts and sciences are to provide a diversion from his more serious political prognoses, yet these “all-too-foolish caricatures” have a serious core, delivering “a picture of the time in its most minute nuances.” If in *Französische Zustände* the auditory realm – “the din of the partisan battle,” the cries of his dying neighbor – serves as a figure for the present moment in all its transience, then here Heine invokes the newly invented daguerreotype to authenticate the snapshots of the present that he seeks to capture. Human portraiture was one of early photography's most important and lucrative functions,⁷⁰ but Heine states here that his own articles depict individual “days” rather than individual persons: it is each day that depicts itself, copies itself: “sich abconterfeit.” As a noun, *Konterfei* means a portrait and has retained this meaning in contemporary usage, but, as in the English, the

⁶⁸ “The lithographically reproduced sequence of images visualizes, step by step, the poetic process of metamorphosis that ultimately lies at the root of caricature.” Helmut Schanze, “Heines Medien,” in *Zwischen Gattungsdisziplin und Gesamtkunstwerk: Literarische Intermedialität 1815–1848*, ed. Stefan Keppler-Tasaki and Wolf Gerhard Schmidt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 387.

⁶⁹ Heine, “Zueigungsbrief,” in *Lutezia*, pt. 1, xiii.

⁷⁰ Siegbert S. Prawer, “Heine and the Photographers,” in *Paintings on the Move: Heine and the Visual Arts*, ed. Susanne Zantop (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 75–90.

verb *konterfeien* suggests the creation of both an authentic or false (“counterfeit”) image, both portrait and caricature passing as portraiture. Heine’s articles collect images of the times, of “days” into a gallery of sorts, an “arrangement of such pictures” – in effect a gallery of distorted portraits where the day and the times shine through.

Heine has conflicting things to say about photography. He criticizes early photography for deficient, overly mimetic realism along the lines of early nineteenth-century critiques of naturalism, for example, yet he also associates photography more positively with artful caricature.⁷¹ If we grant Heine a commitment to truthful representation and caricature alike, one initial takeaway from this passage might be that the caricature of a person reveals the truth of the time, even of time itself. Paradoxically, these images attain their documentary “fidelity” and force by being placed into relation with other images. What lends individual images their authenticity is the effect of snapshots of the day following on each other – and of the “order-giving spirit of the artist” – and not their stand-alone simulation (or distortion) of presence, of the presence of the present moment. Time, the times, cannot be adequately depicted through a stand-alone image.

The best friseurs: *Lutezia*

Heine’s accounts of the lectures of leading French historians serve as a foil for his own mode of history writing. He characterizes these figures through scenes of them engaged in historical characterization and pits his writings for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* and other journals against the scene of oral speech and its privileging of embodied presence. This is still an early phase in the development of the discipline of history, and Heine’s interest in these figures is also tied up in his concern with the proper mode of historical representation at a transitional moment (an interest he shares with Marx, who likewise addresses French liberal historians in his reckoning with the 1848 Revolution in *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*). In a sense, Heine’s accounts of lecturing historians are a form of second-order observation, as he writes about historical actors discussing revolution-era historical actors.

Heine was all too aware that lectures were a key site where the cultural politics of the day were made. Reporting on political and scholarly speeches was a standard feature of the newspapers and literary magazines of the time, and it

⁷¹ See Sander L. Gilman, “Heine’s Photographs,” in Zantop, *Paintings on the Move*, 92–116.

was a staple of Heine's writings from the start of his career.⁷² In a way, Heine's commentary on lecturers taps into the all-too standard mode of history writing through the portraiture of great orators (e.g., Thucydides on Pericles). His Parisian writings discuss parliamentary and academic addresses by leading politicians such as Adolphe Thiers and François Guizot; both wrote and lectured on the history of the revolution, as did other historians and philosophers such as Jules Michelet, François Mignet, and Victor Cousin. These figures represented a liberal power block between the aristocracy and clergy and the social movement. For Heine, they were all more or less kindred spirits who embodied the commitment to liberal ideals: he admired and corresponded with them; he drew on their work (especially Thiers and Mignet); for a while, Thiers and Heine both overlapped as correspondents for the *AZ*.⁷³ However, even people to whom Heine was well disposed had trouble evading his satirical gaze. Heine's spoofing of the scene of the lecture hall in particular contains a salient historiographical takeaway, for his use of multiple print formats produces different kinds of textual and temporal effects than those available to public oratory.

Over the course of *Lutezia*, Heine attends three different festive speeches at the Académie française by Mignet, the head of the academy at the time, the secretary for life, or “*secrétaire perpetuel*”; Heine knew Mignet well, corresponded with him, and even sent him first versions of the articles on his addresses. Like Thiers, Mignet was both a statesman and a historian, and he rose to public prominence as a writer and journalist and wrote an important history of the revolution.⁷⁴ Heine reports positively on these meetings in various articles and drafts in the 1840s: in Mignet's voice one hears “the voice of the history writer, of the true head of Clio's archives” (die Stimme des Geschichtsschreibers, des wirklichen Chefs von Klio's Archiven),⁷⁵ and he has command of the topic of the revolution,⁷⁶

72 See Helen Ferstenberg, “Heinrich Heine und George Canning,” *Heine-Jahrbuch* 35 (1996): 113–127.

73 Deinet calls Thiers and Mignet Heine's “sources,” and he refers to Thiers's work as the “great treasure trove for all friends of the revolution.” Deinet, “Heinrich Heine und Frankreich,” 131, 130, respectively.

74 In the final installment, Heine signals that this has been a recurring topic in his reports. “Every year I regularly attend the ceremonial session in the rotunda of the Palais Mazarin” (Alle Jahre besuche ich regelmäßig die feierliche Sitzung in der Rotunde des Palais Mazarin). Heine, “Artikel LXI,” in *Lutezia*, pt. 2, 197. On the convoluted genesis of this article, see the “Apparat” compiled by Volkmar Hansen in DHA, 14.2:932–933.

75 Heine, “Artikel XXXV,” in *Lutezia*, pt. 1, 263.

76 “Here the history writer of the revolution was at home in his own field and could let the great fountain of his mind run free” (Der Geschichtsschreiber der Revolution [befand sich] hier auf seinem eigenthümlichen Felde und [konnte] gleichsam die großen Springbrunnen seines

but Heine also suggests that Mignet remains very much the academic.⁷⁷ The final main article in *Lutezia* is a reworked version of several of these earlier pieces, and it is a culminating moment, both of Heine's reports on the Académie française and of the main body of the book, and I will return to the piece's placement in the book version shortly.

As in Mignet's previous speeches reported on by Heine, the topic of his lecture is a recently deceased revolutionary-era statesman and historian, in this case a figure named Pierre Daunou.⁷⁸ In the reworked book version, Heine is quick to pounce on Mignet's title, suggesting parallels between Mignet's youthful appearance and the permanence of his position. Indeed, as Heine remarks in a passage added to the book version, Mignet shares the "eternity" of his office with King Louis Philippe.⁷⁹ Mignet's office is perhaps a relic of an earlier prerevolutionary epoch, but in contrast to the king, who is "unfortunately already very advanced in age" (leider schon hochbejährt), Mignet

[I]st noch jung, oder, was noch besser, er ist der Typus der Jugendlichkeit selbst, er bleibt verschont von der Hand der Zeit, die uns andern die Haare weiß färbt, wo nicht gar ausrauft, und die Stirne so häßlich fältelt: der schöne Mignet trägt noch seine goldlockichte Frisur wie vor zwölf Jahren, und sein Antlitz ist noch immer blühend wie das der Olympier. [. .] Er kommt mir in solchen Momenten immer vor wie ein Hirt, der seine Heerde mustert. Sie gehören ihm ja alle, ihm, dem Perpetuellen, der sie alle überleben und sie früh oder spät in seinen *Précis historiques* seciren und einbalsamiren wird.

is still young, or what is better, he is the epitome of youth itself; he has been spared by the hand of time, who paints the rest of our hair white if he does not pull it out altogether, and wrinkles up our brows in many a hateful fold; the beautiful Mignet still bears his gold-locked hairdo as he did twelve years ago, and his face is always as fresh as that of the Olympians. [. .] In these moments he looks to me like a shepherd reviewing his sheep. They all belong to him, to him, the perpetual one – who will outlive them all and dissect and embalm them all in his *Précis historiques*.⁸⁰

Geistes spielen lassen). Heinrich Heine, "Kampf und Kämpfer," *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt*, 6 September 1843, 876.

77 "Only in the choice of expressions and in the moderating intonation does the academic's traditional duty to praise manifest itself" (Nur in der Wahl der Ausdrücke und in der mildernden Betonung bekundet sich manchmal die traditionelle Lobpflicht des Akademikers). Heine, "Artikel XXXV," in *Lutezia*, pt. 1, 263. For background on this article, see Hansen, *Heinrich Heines politische Journalistik*, 75.

78 On Heine's engagement with the conventions of the eulogy, see McGillen, "Andauernder Effekt."

79 "[. .] whose office is an eternal one like the kingdom" (dessen Amt ein ewiges ist, wie das Königthum). Heine, "Artikel LXI," in *Lutezia*, pt. 2, 198.

80 Heine, 198–199.

Mignet's hair seems to defy time, a sign that he will outlive and eulogize his contemporaries as he does Daunou, perhaps even that he will outlive the king, who would go on to die in 1850. Heine retroactively inserts the 1848 collapse of the July Monarchy – its eventual lack of “eternal” permanence – and the subsequent death of the king into the reworked account of this scene from 1843. The trope of eternal youthfulness is decidedly ambivalent, associated with the perpetuation of the ideals of the revolution as epitomized by Daunou and with the perpetuation of prerevolutionary institutions such as the academy. Heine uses the sketch of Mignet to juxtapose temporal tropes that access broader historical developments and that pertain to the “things” and conditions of French society more than to specific individuals.

Relatedly, Heine finds traces of rhetorical conventions from the prerevolutionary era in Mignet's historical discourse:

Obgleich Mignet seine Reden *Précis historiques* nennt, so sind sie doch noch immer die alten *Eloges*, und es sind noch dieselben Complimente aus der Zeit Ludwigs XIV., nur daß sie jetzt nicht mehr im gepuderten Allongeperrücken stecken, sondern sehr modern frisirt sind.

Even though Mignet calls his speeches *Précis historiques*, they are still just the same old *éloges*, and they are still the same compliments from the time of Louis XIV, except that now they are not set in powdered allonge wigs but instead have modern haircuts.⁸¹

Mignet's historical method creates the effect of the past becoming present through the evocation of past personalities, drawing on an earlier genre of scholarly commemoration based in the mimetic ideal of history as the teacher of life.⁸² The continuity of scholarly self-valorization across historical epochs – a continuity bordering on the timelessness aspired to by the humanistic ideal of the eloquent scholar – almost becomes a limitation, for it neutralizes the disruptive power of the revolution, despite its being the very topic of the lecture.

Heine continues his riff on wigs and hairstyles, on youth and age, as he construes the eulogy as a mode of preserving influential historical persons for posterity, both by figurally bringing them back to life and embalming them:

Und der jetzige Secrétaire perpetuel der Académie ist einer der größten Friseure unserer Zeit, und besitzt den rechten Schick für dieses edle Gewerbe. Selbst wenn an einem Menschen kein einziges gutes Haar ist, weiß er ihm doch einige Lökchen des Lobes anzukräuseln und den Kahlkopf unter dem Toupet der Phrase zu verbergen. Wie glücklich sind doch

81 Heine, 201–202.

82 On the eighteenth century *elegy* as a model of scholarly commemoration that does not separate the “scholar” and “man,” see Georges Canguilhem, “Fontenelle, philosophe et historien des sciences,” in *Études d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1968), 51–58.

diese französischen Akademiker! Da sitzen sie in süßesten Seelenfrieden auf ihren sichern Bänken, und sie können ruhig sterben, denn sie wissen, wie bedenklich auch ihre Handlungen gewesen, so wird sie doch der gute Mignet nach ihrem Tode rühmen und preisen. Unter den Palmen seines Wortes, die ewig grün wie die seiner Uniform, eingelullt vom dem Geplätscher der oratorischen Antithesen, lagern sie hier in der Academie wie in einer kühlen Oase. Die Karawane der Menschheit aber schreitet ihnen zuweilen vorüber, ohne daß sie es merkten, oder etwas anders vernahmen als das Geklingel der Kameele.

And the present *secrétaire perpetuel* of the Academy is one of the greatest *friseurs* of our time, and has the right *chique* for this noble trade. Even when there is not a good hair on a man, he knows how to curl for him a few locks of laudation, and hide his bald head under a wig of praise. How happy are these French Academicians! There they sit in the sweetest peace of soul on their safe benches, and they can die in peace, for they know that however doubtful their deeds may have been in life, the good Mignet will laud and praise them after death. Under the palm-trees of his word, which are evergreen as his uniform, lulled by the plashing of his oratorical antitheses, they rest in the Academy as in a cool oasis. The caravan of humanity passes by them ever and anon, without their noting it, or anything save the ringing of the camels' bells.⁸³

Heine casts historical characterization as a kind of work on the appearance of the face and head: once more we are in striking distance of the portrait, the profile, the daguerreotype. But the metaphor then shifts from hairdresser to undertaker, as the historian prepares the bodies of the dead. Heine imagines the audience members (of which he is a part) almost dead, emerging back out of their graves through the historian's words. This passage encapsulates both Heine's slightly envious fascination with academic historians and his antipathy to them. The revival of the rhetoric of the *ancien régime*, the traditionalist timelessness of reliving the deeds of the past, becomes a strike against Mignet. These scholars' naïve preservation of the rhetorical tradition is set into relief by the contrast between the quiet halls of the academy and the world passing by on the outside. Whether they perceive it or not, the events outside on the boulevards explode the rhetoricians' self-satisfied self-embalming as a viable historical model. Perpetuity then flips over into its opposite: by seeking to be eternal, the scholarly eulogy takes on a fleeting quality; it is a historiographical activity with no real staying power, the sign of a particular historical constellation that will end in death, that will be *aufgehoben*, to speak with Hegel. Heine does the historical work of seeing the ephemerality of this scene, work that Mignet cannot do.

⁸³ Heine, "Artikel LXI," in *Lutezia*, pt. 2, 202; Heine, "Letter LIV," in *Lutetia*, vol. 2 of *French Affairs: Letters from Paris*, vol. 8 of *The Works of Heinrich Heine*, trans. Charles Godfrey Leland (London: William Heinemann, 1893), 446–447.

Heine positions himself at the threshold between inside and outside, between timelessness and eventfulness. While Mignet's "orational antitheses" simply calm his listeners to sleep, even into a sweet, dreamlike death, the antitheses created by Heine's serial, temporal modes of writing are to have the opposite effect, creating an awareness of time that can help readers resist the temptation to reduce the present moment and world history alike to the repetitive, empty tinkling of bells. Heine's commentary on personal presence explores how multiple temporalities are refracted through given events rather than how such temporalities construct any notion of charismatic personality. And yet Heine faces the paradoxical challenge of telling history through individual persons who are not themselves the primary subjects of history. This is where his ironic critiques of historical portraiture and of the rhetorical model of the embodied speaker converge. Just as the rhetorical model of recurrent, repeatable historical topoi dissolved in the wake of the French Revolution, so too does Heine dissolve the rhetorical model of embodied personality, not least by investing certain tropes – life and death, dynamism and stasis – with contradictory meanings. Nonetheless, the scene of rhetorical performance remains instructive to him as a site both to register broader historical forces and to model different kinds of encounters with multiple historical temporalities.

This brings us back to the question of format and republication: this article's placement in *Lutezia* is significant, for it functions both as a conclusion and as a transition to a subsequent set of texts. In a collection so concerned with ends and beginnings, this is the final article in the main section. Following this passage that ends with "the ringing of the camels' bells" is an extensive appendix containing other articles not included in the main article series for the AZ. This appendix opens with a longer article titled "Communismus, Philosophie und Clerisei," which distills down the main political ideologies of the day – the radical social movement, the bourgeois liberalism of the academy, and the conservative, religious reaction. This article is largely based on a piece that was first published in installments in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, after having been turned down by the editors of the AZ as being too political, and in its original form, it included some of the material on Mignet's eulogy of Daunou that was incorporated into "Artikel LXI" of the book version. In the original article for the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* as well as in the book version, Heine considers communism as a central social force. As Heine notes in his prefaces to the German and French book versions, he was forced to remain oblique about the social movement in the original articles for the AZ, even though his conviction that the future belongs above all to the "socialists, or, to call the monster by its true name, the communists" (socialistes, ou, pour nomme le monstre par son vrai nom, les communistes) runs as

a red thread through all the articles.⁸⁴ In effect, Heine's inclusion of this piece after the reworked account of Mignet, at this key moment of transition, is an implicit provocation: What are the academicians missing when they mistake the din outside the lecture hall for tinkling bells? The answer is given by the very first word of the supplemental article's title: "communism." The format of book publication allows Heine to stage the continuation of the article series that breaks off with the portrait of Mignet, as the very format constructs an outside to the lecture hall. Heine writes the after that Mignet cannot see; he writes a future of possible communist revolution in a mode of prophetic prediction, but also as a textual effect that conditions the medial logics of portraiture and of oral eulogy. In 1854, Heine offers readers a continuation of his sketch of the academy that departs from the medial and institutional logic of the lecture and that presents an altogether different historical takeaway regarding the past, present, and future of the revolution.

Seriality functions as a central formal condition of these pieces, both in their original article formats and under the new medial and historical circumstances of the book versions. The project of republishing these previous articles is in its own right a "historiographically ambitious undertaking," as Ethel Matala de Mazza has rightly put it,⁸⁵ and it is also an intervention with strong medial implications, as Heine embraces the constraints as well as the potential of serial formats to model how the revolution can break into and interrupt the present. Through serial form, Heine models the abstract truth and logic that unexpected things come "after," and he uses print media to model this coming after, rather than solely tracking the necessary movement of the concept or engaging in a materialist analysis of social conflict. Even if from a macroperspective, Heine might share a certain belief in the necessity of a coming revolution with the likes of Marx, he nonetheless writes the revolution's future through the media time of before and after. Engaging with competing models of memorializing the revolution and its ongoing relevance, Heine's histories of the revolution in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s stage the revolution as something that can come both before and after as part of an ever-shifting series of events, actors, and medial representations.

⁸⁴ Heine, "Préface" [French version] to *Lutèce: Lettres sur la vie politique, artistique et sociale de la France*, in DHA, 13.1:166. See also Höhn, "Heine's Conception of History after 1848," 182.

⁸⁵ Matala de Mazza, "Die fehlende Hauptsache," 310.

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Mario Wimmer

World History in Six Installments

Epistemic Seriality and the Epistemology of Series

Seriality did not play a major role in nineteenth-century historiography. This is surprising since the notion of seriality had been especially important in the sciences since the political and industrial revolutions around 1800. And in other historically oriented disciplines, such as archaeology or the history of art, series of objects or artifacts had started to play a significant role. Ever since the late eighteenth century, seriality had been a central category in various academic fields and had begun to shape communication through periodical publications and newspaper journalism. Historians of science – most prominently Nick Hopwood, Simon Schaffer, and Jim Secord – have explored this formation across disciplines.¹

By contrast, historians in the long nineteenth century were concerned with problems of individuality, unity, and part and whole or were engaged in shaping a notion of historical time following the trajectory of what Reinhart Koselleck called the collective singular of history.² In this paper, I will consider these issues while examining the problem of seriality in the six installments of Leopold von Ranke's *Weltgeschichte*.

¹ Nick Hopwood, Simon Schaffer, and Jim Secord, "Seriality and Scientific Objects in the Nineteenth Century," *History of Science* 48.3–4 (2010): 251–285.

² Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2012); Georg G. Iggers, "Historicism: The History and Meaning of the Term," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56.1 (January 1995): 129–152; Hayden V. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Karl Acham and Winfried Schulze, *Teil und Ganzes: Zum Verhältnis von Einzel- und Gesamtanalyse in Geschichts- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For a review of the scholarship on Ranke, see Günter Johannes Henz's magisterial *Leopold von Ranke in Geschichtsdenken und Forschung*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2014).

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Doomed to failure

It all began as a failure. When Leopold Ranke, months shy of his thirtieth birthday, published his first book; it was scheduled to be delivered in two volumes. At the time, Ranke had finished his doctorate (without submitting a thesis) and was working on a historical study on Luther until he ran out of money and accepted a teaching position in classics and history at a prestigious gymnasium in Frankfurt an der Oder. Trained as a theologian and classicist, Ranke had been introduced to source criticism by his teachers. He had learned the historian's craft, however, from his friend and fellow student Gustav Adolf Stenzel. As Ernst Schulin has shown in an insightful article, Stenzel was a rigorous scholar with the highly ambitious goal of writing a history spanning from Charlemagne to Rudolf I of the House of Hapsburg.³ When the two parts of Ranke's first volume – entitled *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1535* and *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber: Eine Beylage zu desselben romanischen und germanischen Geschichten* – were published in 1824, Stenzel was still working on his magisterial book, the first volume of which he would only publish in 1827. The younger of the two beat his friend by three years. Ranke later received the credit for the critical method they both employed. While we do not really know how much of the intellectual credit that went to Ranke should be given to Stenzel, the two certainly developed the method during their conversations and private seminar sessions.⁴ In any case, Ranke's first book was anything but an immediate success. Although the supplement part, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber*, contains many statements that have today become commonplaces in historiography, most reviewers at the time were hesitant to praise the book. Alone the fact that it did not sell very well was reason for concern for Ranke simply because he was short on money. The book was published by Georg Andreas Reimer, who was, like Ranke, a member of an influential Enlightenment gentlemen's club, the *Gesetzlose Gesellschaft zu Berlin*.⁵ As a member of the club, Ranke was part of an informal network of power in Prussian political and intellectual circles. With these connections and a monograph, Ranke won, despite the book's reception, a position as an *extraordinarius* (roughly equivalent to an associate professor) at the University of Berlin. If Ranke had not been able to acquire a position

³ Ernst Schulin, "Rankes erstes Buch," *Historische Zeitschrift* 203.3 (1966): 581–609.

⁴ For a critical account of Ranke's first book, see Schulin, "Rankes erstes Buch"; for an even more rigorous and almost hypercritical reading, see Henz, *Leopold von Ranke*, in particular 1:23–39 and 125–152.

⁵ *Die Gesetzlose Gesellschaft zu Berlin: Festschrift zum 100jährigen Bestehen, 1809–1909* (Berlin: Borussia, 1909); *Ph. Buttmann und die Gesetzlosen: Am 4. November – 5. Dezember 1834; Statt Handschrift für die Mitglieder der gesetzlosen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1834).

at that time on the basis of his first book – and on how it was extolled by his influential advocates – he would most likely never have had a successful academic career.

Ranke was lucky that the negative review published by an H. L. Manin, also known as Heinrich Leo, appeared four years after the volume's publication. At that point, Leo's furious polemic could no longer hurt Ranke's career since he had already accepted the teaching position in Berlin.⁶ Still, Ranke ultimately decided not to publish the second volume of *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker* as planned. In his review, Leo demands, in agreement with a majority of his colleagues, that learning and formal documentation of one's research should be presented to the reader, not kept to the author alone. Ranke responded to Leo's devastating criticism with a lengthy rebuttal in which he defends his taste for grand narratives and his disdain for others' work. Throughout his career, Ranke would continue to focus on original sources and give little room to discussing existing scholarship. This dispute evidenced a transformation in historiographical standards and epistemic virtues: while a majority of historians still demanded references to the work of colleagues and an explication of methods, Ranke introduced a new form of historiographical narrative. It aimed to make the author disappear behind the neutral presentation of a series of past events narrated in a chronological order that should imply a causal explanation. Still, for Ranke this episode called for a change in strategy. In the future he would dig for archival materials and move into what might be called serial production.⁷ He requested a research leave from his teaching position in order to consult archival sources, and from 1827 to 1831, he searched for fresh material for his future publications.⁸ This allowed him to acquire sources to support his narratives that attempted to show "how it actually was" (wie es eigentlich gewesen).⁹

During the decade after the publication of his first book, Ranke published three shorter volumes. *Die serbische Revolution: Aus serbischen Papieren und Mittheilungen* (1829) was an occasional book based on what Ranke learned through his

⁶ Heinrich Leo, "Rez. Ranke: *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker 2*," *Ergänzungsblätter zur Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* 16.17 (1828): cols. 129–136; 16.18 (1828): cols. 137–140; see Kurt A. Mautz, "Leo und Ranke: Erich Rothacker zum 65. Geburtstag," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 27.2 (1953): 207–235.

⁷ In addition, Ranke's acquaintance with the statesman Friedrich Eichborn (1779–1856), who would later advance to lead education reform as the minister of culture and education from 1840 to 1848, initiated Ranke's shift from liberal democrat to conservative monarchist.

⁸ Kasper R. Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography," *Modern Intellectual History* 5.3 (2008): 425–453.

⁹ Leopold von Ranke, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber: Eine Beylage zu desselben romanischen und germanischen Geschichten* (Leipzig: G. Reimer, 1824), vi. All translations of sources are by Malika Maskarinec unless otherwise noted.

encounter with Vuk Stefanović Karadžić during his first archival voyage. *Über die Verschwörung gegen Venedig, im Jahre 1618* was the outcome of findings in Venetian archives and was published in 1831. The first volume of *Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert* was published in 1827, and three further volumes were published in 1834–1836 with the title *Die römischen Päpste, ihre Kirche und ihr Staat im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert*. As is obvious at a first glance, these volumes are parts of different book projects. Again, Ranke's attempt at publishing a coherent series had failed. While many would have found this to be an embarrassment, Ranke perceived it as a great success. In his correspondence during those years, there is no trace of doubt or sense of failure. Instead, he felt a sense of greatness. His colleagues agreed that he was charming and sociable but also overambitious, ruthless, selfish, in short, a man without character, a judgment even his later student Jacob Burckhardt would share: "Ranke is unfortunately all too well known for being a good conversationalist without character" (Von Ranke ist es leider allzu bekannt, daß er ein guter Gesellschafter ohne Charakter ist).¹⁰ Yet despite his poor reputation, he had managed to establish himself as an authority, and not only in his field. As the editor of a journal on history and politics, he had positioned himself not as a historian's historian but as a man of politics with the aspiration to find proximity to greatness. In his *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift*, Ranke published mostly his students' research, yet it allowed him to establish a school of thought. Even though only two volumes appeared before the journal was discontinued in 1833, it still helped Ranke position himself as the head of what later would be called the academic Ranke family.

Looking at these early publications, it becomes evident that Ranke's commitment to his publisher Carl Geibel¹¹ would come to shape the rhythm of his literary production. He delivered volume after volume to uphold his promises to his publisher and audience. Through a subscription system, readers paid in advance to receive a series of volumes by Ranke. Ranke had thus entered into a contract with both his readers and his publisher. Many of his books were advertised in brochures of the publishing house or announced either in the paratexts of his books or in the publisher's catalogue. In order to avoid a loss of face, Ranke needed to deliver. Fulfilling this promise was – along with his robust epistemic optimism – at the core of his productivity. Over a period of five decades, the rhythm of these series dictated the publication of Ranke's histories of the German Reformation (six volumes, 1839–1847), of Prussia

¹⁰ Letter to Heinrich Schreiber, 11 August 1840, in Jacob Burckhardt, *Jugend und Schulzeit, erste Reisen nach Italien, Studium in Neuenburg, Basel, Berlin und Bonn: 1818 bis Mai 1843*, vol. 1 of *Briefe* (Basel: Schwabe, 1949), 158.

¹¹ Leopold von Ranke, *Aus den Briefen Leopold von Ranke's an seinen Verleger* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1886).

(nine books in three volumes, 1847–1848), France (six volumes, 1852–1861), England (seven volumes, 1859–1868), and so on up to the publication of his world history in six installments from 1881 to his death in 1886. In this last case, Ranke even insisted that each volume appear on Christmas day of each consecutive year. This decision once again put Ranke in an unpleasant situation. A task that would have been difficult for anyone to accomplish turned out to be even more complicated for a man whose working process was notoriously chaotic. As a result, “Ranke did not succeed in completing the individual parts of his world history in an orderly fashion and as he had planned within the given timeframe every time” (gelang es Ranke nicht, die einzelnen Teile der Weltgeschichte ordnungsmäßig und der gefaßten Absicht entsprechend jedesmal innerhalb des bestimmten Zeitraums zum Abschluß zu bringen), as Wiedemann recalls.¹² Not only did other projects suffer as a result of the time pressure, Ranke’s *Weltgeschichte* was published with many omissions, shortcuts, and compromises, and basically without any acknowledgment of existing scholarship.

The rhythm of the series also left traces on the emergent logic of his writing of history. It was one of the driving forces of Ranke’s oeuvre and of the extraordinary productivity of the most famous “ordinary historian” (G. W. F. Hegel) of the nineteenth century. It also shaped the conditions and possibilities of Ranke’s historiographical narration and argumentation: what was already published in preceding volumes became a presupposition for those to follow. He could not go back and revise or rewrite what was already published; most likely a blessing for an author who tended to make significant changes and revisions even when reading the galley proofs. The printer was the only instance capable of interrupting this process and establishing an ultimate version of each text.

The serial quality of Ranke’s publication projects also engendered a particular understanding of historical time: the publication of his books as individual volumes is structurally homologous to his notion of the historical process. According to Ranke, one can only wish to “accompany in observation the great developments of the present time” (die großen Emergenzien der gegenwärtigen Zeit beobachtend [zu] begleiten) in order to judge them “as part of a large series” (als das *Glied einer großen Reihe*).¹³ Since Ranke’s serially published histories follow a strict chronological presentation, the epochs that already had taken shape in published form in earlier volumes could no longer be revised in later ones. Ultimately, this coincides with a notion of the historical process as irreversible and teleological.

¹² Theodor Wiedemann, “Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke’s: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner letzten Lebensjahre,” pt. 5, *Deutsche Revue über das gesamte nationale Leben der Gegenwart* 17.1 (January–March 1892): 347.

¹³ Leopold von Ranke, “Einleitung” to *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* 1.1 (1832): 6–7; emphasis mine.

In the following, I will further outline the a priori conditions of Ranke's notion of world history, introduce the late phase of Ranke's work, and discuss why he believed he was in a unique position at the height of his powers to embark on a project about world history before turning to the work itself and how it took shape in everyday practice.

World-historical a prioris

Ranke's universal narrative of world history follows what historian Gerhard Masur has called a "world-historical a priori,"¹⁴ that is, a notion of the unity and totality of history,¹⁵ which makes it impossible for the narrative to avoid metaphysical and teleological¹⁶ implications. This is what all attempts at a unifying interpretation of the world-historical process shared and still share despite all their differences. This becomes apparent if we contrast Ranke with one of his student's *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*. Jacob Burckhardt's cultural history rejects some of the conditions that enable Ranke's writings. Let me give two examples relevant for this context. First, Burckhardt did not presume a unity of history but preferred to speak of the "study of the historical,"¹⁷ that is, he relied on "historiographical operations,"¹⁸ which is to say, analytic procedures, to conceive of local regimes of historical knowledge. Second, for Burckhardt, the "absolute metaphor"¹⁹ for his conception of history and historical time was the image, not writing. He did not believe that chronology inevitably and necessarily followed the linear trajectory of the medium of writing and instead chose to think of events as assembled in a mental image that was a "solid metaphor."²⁰ The chronology of Burckhardt's cultural

14 Gerhard Masur, *Ranke's Begriff der Weltgeschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1926).

15 Henning Trüper, "Löwith, Löwith's Heidegger, and the Unity of History," *History and Theory* 53.1 (2014): 45–68.

16 Henning Trüper, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Historical Teleologies in the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

17 Jacob Burckhardt, *Ästhetik der bildenden Kunst: Über das Studium der Geschichte (mit dem Text der "Weltgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen" in der Fassung von 1905)*, ed. Peter Ganz, vol. 10 of *Werke* (Basel: Schwabe; Munich: C. H. Beck, 2000).

18 Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 56. As Certeau defines it, a historiographical operation consists in the combination of "a social place, a scientific practice, and writing." *Ibid.*

19 Hans Blumenberg, "Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 6 (1960): 5–142.

20 On the concept of solid metaphors, see Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

history is therefore more flexible than Ranke's: certain events pertain to more than one context in his thematic cultural history. Ranke's notion of world history establishes a strict chronology only open to including additional sources.

Ranke wrote his world history in a climate of change. The relation to the past had transformed. New infrastructures and media technologies unknown to the eighteenth century had shaped a notion of history that was at odds with the teleological and unified history inherited from a Christian tradition. But the new notion of history could not yet be explicitly articulated and so drew on language from an earlier period of historical thinking.

It is nigh impossible to historicize the province of knowledge one inhabits, which was also true for Ranke, who considered himself to be a man of the eighteenth century even though he passed away in 1886. His career spanned from the 1820s to the 1880s. During these decades, both his conception of history and his working methods changed. Already in the 1830s, Ranke advocated a historical approach that privileges concrete analysis over theoretical speculation. "The truth of things" (Die Wahrheit der Dinge) is to be understood in this approach by attending to the "inner conditions" (inneren Zustände) of a "living system" (lebendes System).²¹ That way one can observe the emergent phenomena of the present moment; but the only way to understand them is to put them in a historical perspective. "If it is our intention purely to comprehend present conditions, then we must, on the one hand, understand their origin and, on the other, try to perceive unwaveringly their development" (Ist es unsre Absicht, die gegenwärtigen Zustände rein aufzufassen, so müssen wir auf der einen Seite ihre Entstehung zu begreifen, auf der andern ihre Fortbildung ungeirrt wahrzunehmen suchen).²²

One year after Ranke's death, the historian Herbert Baxter Adams reported to his American colleagues his recollections of the master: "The historian of the world was not much over five feet in stature; but his head was 'finely chiselled, with a great arched forehead, exceedingly mobile lips (covered only during the last few years of his life by a long white beard), and very bright eyes, with an incessantly inquiring and keenly interested look.'" In a portrait that was published along with Adams's text (see Figure 3.1), "[h]e is pictured sitting in his *Schlafrock*, or gown, in which, like many German scholars, Ranke did his literary work, and in which he was sometimes forced, much against his will, to receive the then Crown Prince of Prussia, one of his most admiring friends."²³

21 Ranke, "Einleitung" to *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift*, 4–5.

22 Ranke, 7.

23 Herbert Baxter Adams, "Leopold von Ranke," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 22 (1886): 557.

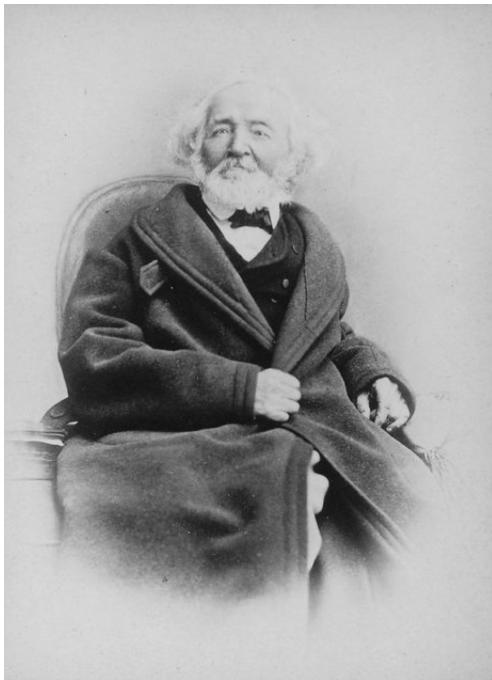


Figure 3.1: Photograph of the old and almost blind Ranke, who in his last years preferred to work from his sofa.

The old historian

The historian must be old. In a diary entry from January 1877, the eighty-two-year-old Ranke came to terms with his situation. Six years after the death of his wife, Clarissa von Ranke, he had retired from teaching. At her death bed, Ranke's amanuensis, Theodor Wiedemann, had promised her to stay with her husband until his death. Later, Wiedemann would call this pledge the beginning of an “intellectual marriage”²⁴ to his master. During these years, Ranke retreated from social engagements and public appearances and lived according to his motto *labor ipse voluptas*.

²⁴ Theodor Wiedemann, “Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke’s: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner letzten Lebensjahre I,” pt. 1, *Deutsche Revue* 16.4 (1891): 167; I want to thank Ann M. Blair for an interesting exchange about this constellation. Based on her extensive studies and my own research on the figure of the amanuensis, this seems to be an exceptional way of describing the social relation between the master and his assistant.

Intellectual work to him was a “euphoric reward” and created a “zone of intensity.”²⁵ Historical work was “not a matter of identifying with various historical personages, but rather identifying the names of history.”²⁶ Ranke considered the writing of history both a science and an art and understood historical work as defined by productivity, not erudition.

Half blind for many years, he nonetheless felt at the height of his powers as a historian. Left alone in the midst of his library and dependent on the hands and eyes of others, he was prolific like never before. He noted:

Poeten werden, wie das Sprüchwort sagt, geboren. Nicht allein Künste, sondern auch einige Wissenschaften pflegen in den Jahren der ersten männlichen Entwicklung, jene in voller Blüthe, diese in originaler Energie zu erscheinen. Musiker und Mathematiker haben das Vorrrecht, in frühen Jahren etwas Vollendetes leisten zu können. Der Historiker aber muss alt werden, nicht allein wegen des unermesslichen Umfangs der Studien, welche die Erkenntniß der historischen Entwicklung erforderlich macht, sondern auch wegen des Wechsels der Zeitumstände, die in einem langen Leben eintreten.

Poets are born, as the saying goes. Not only the arts but also some sciences tend to appear in the years of one's initial male development, some in full bloom, others in their original energy. Musicians and mathematicians have the prerogative to achieve something perfected in their early years. But the historian must become old, not only because of the immeasurable scope of studies that knowledge of historical development entails, but also because of the change of prevailing circumstances that takes place over the course of a long life.²⁷

The experience of a long life, he felt, put him in a privileged position for insight into the world-historical process. Ranke had seen the old regime in France fall and witnessed the rise of a new order. He had seen yet another revolution fail in 1848, and he had lived to see the unification of the German states under Bismarck. Even though he conceived of history as an unfolding of the great powers of the world-historical process, he had experienced rupture and discontinuity, to which he reacted by shifting his political stance from national liberalism to conservative monarchism. “But it is not beneficial to him [the historian]” (Aber es würde ihm doch nicht zuträglich sein), Ranke continued,

wenn ihm dabei nur eine kurze Spanne Zeit zugemessen wäre. Zu seiner Entwicklung gehört es, daß große Begebenheiten sich vor seinen Augen vollziehen, Erschütterungen eintreten, Neugestaltungen versucht werden. Was man oft gesagt, der Historiker müsse thätig in den Geschäften sein, das mag wahr sein, wenn von einer Darstellung der Staatsverwaltung im Einzelnen die Rede ist. Aber eine Universalentwicklung des Historikers wird dadurch nicht bedingt.

25 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (New York: Viking, 1977), 44.

26 Deleuze and Guattari, 183.

27 Leopold von Ranke, *Tagebücher*, ed. Walther Peter Fuchs, vol. 1 of *Aus Werk und Nachlass*, ed. Walther Peter Fuchs and Theodor Schieder (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1964), 79.

if he is only given a short span of time. It belongs to his development that great events take place before his eyes, that revolutions occur, and that new entities are tested. What one has often said – that the historian must be active in affairs – may be true when one is speaking of a detailed account of state government. But it is not a condition of the universal development of the historian.²⁸

What Ranke had witnessed over the course of his life was not only the reverberations of major political changes but also the emergence of a new world order. In his old age, he came to understand that Germany's position as a major geopolitical power had come into question by the rise of other nations.²⁹ It was one of the driving forces of his project of a universal history to defend Germany's position as a world-historical power, if only in historiography. Another aspiration certainly was to articulate a synthesis of his life's work. After all, Ranke had failed to outline a theory of history, a project he had mused on for many years as we know by way of his brother. His volumes of world history, as well as other writings, provide us with a spontaneous philosophy of history, even though Ranke was mostly blind to theoretical concerns.

Ranke's last major project was framed by a vision of God. Upon his return from the estate of his best friend, where he took his first vacation in decades, the almost blind Ranke reported to Wiedemann that he had “made a compact with our dear Lord. He has to grant me another five or six years [to finish writing a history of the world]. Then, I will gladly depart.”³⁰ Ranke's decision to write a history of the world was, in a way, a response to his student Alfred Dove. In 1875, on the occasion of Ranke's eightieth birthday, his student had asked the master to write a universal history.³¹

The orally circulated anecdote of a compact with God may have served to frame the authenticity of the series through a foundational narrative. This anecdote is relevant since it helps establish the narrative of Ranke's world history across the series of volumes in at least two respects. First, Ranke's conception of world history is firmly based on a foundation of written documents, since historians should only concern themselves with written matter. Scripture and writing thus serve as an absolute metaphor for a linear and teleological notion of historical time. Second, Ranke's world history was published in a series of thirteen parts that

28 Ranke, 79.

29 Ulrich Muhlack, “Das Problem der Weltgeschichte bei Leopold Ranke,” in *Die Vergangenheit der Weltgeschichte: Universalhistorisches Denken in Berlin 1800–1933*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig and Philipp Müller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 143–172.

30 Adams, “Leopold von Ranke,” 554.

31 Alfred Dove, “Zu Rankes achtzigstem Geburtstage,” *Im neuen Reich: Wochenschrift für das Leben des deutschen Volkes in Staat, Wissenschaft und Kunst*, 17 December 1875, 969.

came in seven volumes – a series that would later be continued posthumously by three of his students and assistants. During his lifetime, the *rhythm* of the series of volumes, one every Christmas day, was significant for Ranke. This positions the series between two regimes of historicity: a celestial, heavenly realm of history and a mundane, worldly one.

Clouded truth

This distinction between a religious and a secular understanding of history was also reflected in a vellum presented to Ranke on the fiftieth anniversary of when he received his doctorate. Early in August of 1885, the mayor of Berlin visited Leopold Ranke to present him with a vellum document declaring the historian an honorary citizen of city. The vellum was carried by three men up the stairs to Ranke's apartment. He was “astonished” by the gift.

Das Bild der Geschichte hat die Wage [sic] der Gerechtigkeit in der Hand; vor demselben erscheinen dann historische Heroen und Großwürdenträger der Welt in ihrer Pracht, von Cäsar bis auf Napoleon. Ihnen Gerechtigkeit widerfahren zu lassen, kann doch wohl nur heißen: sie in ihrem Wesen erkennen.

The figure of history holds the scales of justice in her hand; in front of her then appear the historical heroes and great dignitaries of the world in their glory, from Caesar to Napoleon. To do them justice can only mean: to recognize their nature.³²

Ranke was intrigued enough by this honor to interrupt his work for two hours. The document he received is vividly illuminated. As seen in Figure 3.2, the illustrations are organized by some ornamental clouds that distinguish the mundane world with its cloudy sky in the lower half of the image from a procession of great world-historical figures waiting to be judged.

One is reminded here of Wilhelm von Humboldt's lecture about the historian's task. His lecture sets out with the claim that the historian's task is the “representation of what has happened” (*Darstellung des Geschehenen*). This is echoed in Ranke's most famous statement that history has to show “wie es eigentlich gewesen,” usually translated in English as “what actually happened.” Ironically, the translators of “Ueber die Aufgabe des Geschichtschreibers” decided to put Ranke's words in Humboldt's mouth and rendered “*Darstellung des Geschehenen*” as “to present what actually happened” instead of as the “presentation of what happened.”

³² Leopold von Ranke, *Zur eigenen Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 53/54 of *Sämmtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890), 653.



Figure 3.2: Vellum document presented to Ranke by the mayor of the city of Berlin on the occasion of Ranke's receiving honorary citizenship to the city of Berlin in 1885. Courtesy of the Special Collections Research Center of Syracuse University Libraries.

Later in the lecture, Humboldt claims that historical truth is not something given but rather resembles the clouds in the sky:

Daher gleicht die historische Wahrheit gewissermassen den Wolken, die erst in der Ferne vor den Augen Gestalt erhalten; und daher sind die Tatsachen der Geschichte in ihren einzelnen verknüpfenden Umständen wenig mehr als die Resultate der Ueberlieferung und Forschung, die man übereingekommen ist für wahr anzunehmen, weil sie, am meisten wahrscheinlich *in sich*, auch am besten in den *Zusammenhang des Ganzen* passen.

Thus historical truth is, as it were, rather like the clouds which take shape for the eye only at a distance. For this reason, the facts of history are in their several connecting circumstances [be it as part of a series or by a unifying notion of universality] little more than the results of tradition and scholarship which one has agreed to accept as true, because they – being most highly probable in themselves – also fit best into the *context of the whole*.³³

³³ Wilhelm von Humboldt, "Ueber die Aufgabe des Geschichtschreibers," in *Werke in fünf Bänden*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, *Schriften zur Anthropologie und Geschichte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche

For Ranke, those clouds of truth embody an epistemological risk. Like the natural sciences, history aims, as a science, to unroll “the series of events as clearly and exactly as possible” (die Reihenfolge der Begebenheiten so scharf und genau wie möglich) and to give back to each individual event its “color and shape” (Farbe und Gestalt).³⁴ Furthermore, he insists that history cannot stop at this point but has to engage with the “study of beginnings” (Erforschung der Anfänge) and try to penetrate “to the deepest and most secret stirrings of the life that the human species leads” (bis zu den tiefsten und geheimsten Regungen des Lebens, welches das Menschengeschlecht führt).³⁵ Ranke’s writing of history has been observed to follow the trajectory of a teleology without telos in the sense that Humboldt first describes it:

Die teleologische Geschichte erreicht auch darum niemals die lebendige Wahrheit der Weltschicksale, weil das Individuum seinen Gipfelpunkt immer innerhalb der Spanne seines flüchtigen Daseins finden muss, und sie daher den letzten Zweck der Ereignisse nicht eigentlich in das Lebendige setzen kann, sondern es in gewissermassen todten Einrichtungen, und dem Begriff eines idealen Ganzen sucht.

Teleological history, therefore, never attains the living truth of universal destiny because the individual always has to reach the pinnacle of his own development within the span of his fleeting existence; teleological history can, for that reason, never properly locate the ultimate goal of events in living things but has to seek it, as it were, in dead institutions and in the concept of an ideal totality.³⁶

Teleology, here, is to be understood as a secular form of linear history following the model of writing and scripture as absolute metaphors. Humboldt, too, insists on the coherence of a series of events in order to establish causal relations: “For if the truth were ever conquered completely, all that which determines the reality of things, like a chain of necessity, would lie uncovered” (Denn wenn sie ganz errungen würde, so läge in ihr enthüllt, was alles Wirkliche, als eine nothwendige Kette, bedingt).³⁷ Yet, as Ranke puts it in his inaugural lecture, this ultimate goal of scientific history involves some risk: “Some mistakenly imagine themselves to be able to rise to such heights as if in flight: but they deceive themselves and, in embracing a cloud instead of Juno, are in the habit of selling phrases and hot air for the truth” (Bis zu solcher Höhe wähnen einige sich wie im Fluge emporschwingen zu können):

Buchgesellschaft 1969), 586; Wilhelm von Humboldt, “On the Historian’s Task,” *History and Theory* 6.1 (1967): 58; emphasis mine.

³⁴ Leopold von Ranke, “Über die Verwandtschaft und den Unterschied der Historie und der Politik,” in *Abhandlungen und Versuche*, vol. 24 of *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1872), 289.

³⁵ Ranke, 292.

³⁶ Humboldt, “Aufgabe des Geschichtschreibers,” 596; Humboldt, “Historian’s Task,” 64.

³⁷ Humboldt, “Aufgabe des Geschichtschreibers,” 587; Humboldt, “Historian’s Task,” 59.

darin aber täuschen sie sich und pflegen, indem sie statt der Juno eine Wolke umarmen, Formeln und leeren Wind für Wahrheit zu verkaufen).³⁸

Ranke must thus have been disappointed with the visualization of what was supposed to be his notion of universal history on the vellum. If there was one claim he emphatically rejected, it was the one that can be seen in the upper left corner of the vellum in the halo-like banner between the personifications of Clio and Justice: Friedrich Schiller's famous "world history is the world's tribunal" (*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*). According to Ranke, the office of history and the task of the historian was to say ("sagen") and not to judge, or, as he would later revise it, to show ("zeigen") "wie es eigentlich gewesen."

With this visualization of Ranke's world-historical project, I come to the nitty-gritty of his everyday work on the volumes, which he had been forced to interrupt to receive the vellum document and its messengers. Picture the following scene: Ranke is sitting in his armchair or lying on his divan (see Figure 3.3). Dressed in his morning gown, almost blind, he is visualizing moments of world history before his mind's eye, which he dictates sentence by sentence. His amanuensis is all ears.³⁹

Das gesamte ungeheure Material, welches er in seinen Werken benutzte, verarbeitete und zum Theil mit minutiösester Genauigkeit analysirte, mußte ihm von dritter Seite durch Vorlesen zugeführt werden, während er dann Alles, was er schuf, dictirte. Er arbeitete, da eine jüngere Kraft der angestrennten Thätigkeit des Greises nicht zu folgen vermochte, stets mit zwei Assistenten, deren einer des Morgens, der andere des Abends 4-5 Stunden ihm zur Seite war.

The incredible sum of material he employed, processed, and in part analyzed with minute exactitude in his work had to be supplied to him by a third person reading aloud while he then dictated everything he produced. Since one younger worker was not able to keep up with the concentrated activity of the old man, he always worked with two assistants, one of which was by his side four to five hours in the morning, the other four to five hours in the evening.⁴⁰

Ranke's voice leads the quill in the hand of Ignaz Jastrow, who tries hard to follow and not to miss a word, obviously without success. Even though his amanuenses were experienced in putting their master's voice into writing, they could not do without amendments, emendations, and interpolations. Over the years they had learned to think like Ranke, finish his sentences, and mimic his style. Even though

38 Ranke, "Verwandtschaft und Unterschied der Historie und Politik," 294.

39 On the collaboration between Ranke and his amanuenses, see Heinz Duchhardt, *Ranke's Sekretär: Theodor Wiedemann und die Bücher-Werkstatt des Altmeisters* (Berlin: Vergangenheitsverlag, 2021). Duchhardt's book appeared after this text was completed, so its findings could not be considered.

40 Georg Winter, "Erinnerungen an Leopold von Ranke," *Nord und Süd*, August 1886, 208.



Figure 3.3: Photograph of Ranke surrounded by his library, early 1880s. Courtesy of the Special Collections Research Center of Syracuse University Libraries.

it is shaped by the voice of his dictation, the sentences are carefully crafted. Many revisions improved the clarity and style. The amanuenses described the process of careful revision in detail. After Ranke had worked his way through the sources read to him, he dictated chapter after chapter; the amanuenses made silent corrections and amendments before the master's voice revised the text; and many would read the galley proofs before Ranke gave his imprimatur and assumed authorship over the distributed intellectual work. We lack, however, material traces of this process; only some relics have survived. In working with Ranke on the edition of his *Sämmtliche Werke*, Wiedemann, in particular, had become a virtuoso at imitating Ranke's writing. Others too claim in their memoirs that they had learned to write like Ranke. As plausible as this sounds and as necessary as it was, it is difficult to come to a conclusion concerning their influence since it also seems quite likely that Ranke's amanuenses were interested in showing off their contributions to his works and to inscribe their names, if only indirectly, in his oeuvre. There are a

number of certainly hagiographic texts, mostly published after Ranke's death, in which they describe their contributions to his world history. And as I noted earlier, some students and one of his amanuenses, Wiedemann, continued the publication of the series after Ranke's death.

In his necrologue, Georg Winter emphasizes Ranke's "intellectual mobility" (geistige Beweglichkeit) during his final years, when he still felt "an incomparable liveliness and cheerfulness of the soul" (eine unvergleichliche Munterkeit und Heiterkeit der Seele).⁴¹ His helping hands were busy and all ears whenever he dictated. While Ranke was seated on his couch in his gown, the amanuensis sat at a desk in the library. After locating and reading sources to him, Ranke would in turn dictate excerpts into the so-called collectanea (*Collectanenbuch*) and after another reading, add his comments. Much to the surprise of his former students, this process went quickly. Like in the descriptions of his seminars, they were taken by his "brilliant intuition" (genialer Spürsinn) and ability to quote from memory. The excerpts and notes in the *Collectanenbuch* were the basis for dictating the manuscript. That way he could compare all the different sources he had been working through over weeks with the help of his amanuenses, who were worried about the reliability of his memory. Behind Ranke's back, Winter would double-check whether he really had not missed something important. Allegedly, he typically did not, but if so, Winter would silently add the passage to the notes or manuscript.

In the aftermath of the publication of Ottokar Lorenz's introduction to historiography,⁴² German intellectuals entered into a heated debate about periodization. It would be the year of Ranke's death. In his textbook, Lorenz puts forward a model of "natural" periodization based on how every father and son enter a generational relation and thus form a "natural unity." This natural unity should serve as the basic unit of historical time, so the traditional classifications into antiquity, medieval, and modern history would no longer have a purpose in organizing history. Lorenz refers to Ranke's universal history as a key witness to this transformation of historical time. He argues that Ranke leads the reader from one small period to another through a series of transitions. His narrative moves unawares from Augustus to Charlemagne. What would otherwise be separated by a partition into antiquity and the Middle Ages appears in Ranke's world history as a series of transitional states in inseparable conjunction. The question, however, for those who were not familiar with Ranke's working process was whether Lorenz accurately assesses it. What ultimately became clear in this debate was that Ranke took

41 Winter, 224.

42 Ottokar Lorenz, *Die Geschichtswissenschaft in Hauptrichtungen und Aufgaben* (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1886).

a bottom-up approach to the serial periodization of world history and did not use preconceived epochs.

Ranke himself could no longer speak to this, but one of his amanuenses, Ignaz Jastrow,⁴³ stepped up and gave a detailed description of Ranke's method during the years when he was working on his world history. His account of the world-history project emphasizes its open-ended character. Ranke, Jastrow emphasizes, did *not* have a preconception of historical periods. They only took shape in the process of Ranke's work with his amanuenses. Ranke's work on a history of the world was a process of arranging individual events into larger aggregates.

Before he started his dictations, Ranke asked his amanuenses to read openings of various universal histories, from Hegel's late lectures on world history to Johannes Müller's eighteenth-century universal history. According to both Jastrow and Wiedemann, Ranke would repudiate every periodization they would encounter in those readings. After a walk, followed by a late lunch, Ranke would dictate an instruction, or what he called a *Regulativ*, of the necessary steps he and his collaborators would have to take over the next couple of years. In principle the *Regulativ* suspended the issue of periodization; it served to guide the work on the project and to introduce new amanuenses to its principles. Later on, with the publication of each volume, Ranke would renew some instructions and adopt new ones for the subsequent tome. Only then did the actual work start. First, a chronology had to be established:

Die Tatsachen, wie sie sich ihm in diesem Studium darstellten, wurden dann der Reihe nach niedergeschrieben. Jedesmal wenn im Laufe der Arbeiten sich herausgestellt hatte, daß eine gewisse Folge von Ereignissen eine zusammengehörige Kette bildete, wurden sie als solche in einem eigenen Diktat zusammengefaßt.

The facts, as they appeared to him in this study, were then written down in order. Whenever it became clear in the course of the work that a certain series of events constituted a connected chain, they were summarized as such in a separate dictation.⁴⁴

The facts as they appeared in the sources were written down orderly in a sequence. Every time it turned out that a series of events added up to a “series,” they would be summarized in a dictation in one sitting. Whenever several of them entered into a “greater whole,” they would be compiled in one section. It

⁴³ After receiving his doctorate in 1878, Jastrow worked with Ranke and later took on various teaching positions at the gymnasium level in Berlin. He submitted a habilitation in 1885 and became a privatdozent in history at the University of Berlin without ever landing a permanent teaching position.

⁴⁴ Here, and in the following, I quote from Ignaz Jastrow, “Aus Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben,” *Tägliche Rundschau*, 24 October 1886, 2–4.

was only during revisions that Ranke decided how these sections added up to form a unified greater time period. Whenever he was able to see a period to its end, a new round of revisions would start.

The first step of these revisions was to study the “characteristic qualities” of the period, its moments of development, in particular the results of developments, the relations to the previous and the following time period, and so on. During this process, it often turned out that the relations to the neighboring periods were entirely different in character. Whereas the difference to the previous period might be clear and distinct, the comparison to the consecutive period might not display any obvious differences. In these cases, Ranke decided to suspend his decision until he had finished reorganizing the following section. Only when he had established the characteristics of the later era would he draw comparative conclusions about the period in question. Occasionally he chose to revise the established chronology, which led to some historical transformations being postponed, predicated, or redated; occasionally Ranke saw the need to establish what he called an “intermediary period.” Once he revisited the notes of the chain of events, he would consider which ones built “a greater whole.” “After the periods had thus been identified, a completely new stage of work began” (Nachdem so die Periode gefunden war, begann ein völlig neues Stadium der Arbeit). He studied the characteristic features of each time period and identified its “developmental moments” (Entwicklungs Momente) and “developmental results” (Entwicklungs Resultate), looked how they connected to the previous and consecutive periods, and finally decided whether the periodization had to be reconsidered based on its “redaction” (Durcharbeitung). As Jastrow emphasizes:

In dem einen Falle wie in dem anderen, wurde das Prinzip und die Charakteristik aller in Betracht kommenden Perioden geändert und neu festgestellt, zuweilen in Form eines neuen ‘Regulativs.’ – Wenn so, ich möchte sagen auf empirischem Wege festgestellt war, daß eine Reihe von Abschnitten eine einheitliche große Entwicklungsperiode der Geschichte bilden, dann wurden von diesem höheren Standpunkte aus die einzelnen Abschnitte in ihrer Abgrenzung noch einmal genau geprüft, zuweilen vollständig über den Haufen geworfen und neu bearbeitet.

In one or the other case, the principle and characteristics of all the periods in question was altered and determined anew, in part in the form of a new “regulative principle.” – Thus, if it was determined by, I would like to say, empirical means that a series of phases composed a single developmental period of history, then the demarcations of the individual phases were examined again closely from this higher standpoint and, at times, completely discarded and revised.⁴⁵

45 Jastrow, 3.

Ranke's thinking of historical time was empirical down to the last beat. His method of organizing historical periods resembles, in certain ways, Linné's compare-and-contrast method of botanical classification. Whenever a new specimen or event cannot fit in the existing system of classification or periodization, a new category has to be introduced. In that sense, Ranke's thinking of historical time was both radically empirical and inductive. Ranke started from individual events and groups of events and organized them in smaller periods that together became part of a larger era. It was characteristic of his scientific and empirical understanding of historical research to review and reconsider his results based on additional evidence. Understood as an empirical science, history has to move, as Jastrow reminds us, from the concrete individual fact, from what is given and at hand, to more abstract, general statements.

But this empirical approach is framed by a metaphysical preconception of unity: each part has to fit the whole. This is without alternative. Even though world history can only be seen by God, the historian's perspective mimics a distant view that allows the clouds of events to take shape. Historical truth can only be established by placing each individual event of relevance into an emergent rationality of historical development. The truth and logic of the chain of events emerge from the empirical and inductive process of historical work, which is driven by a robust epistemological optimism that allows for genius intuition on a religious mission. Even though Ranke was suffering from old age and bodily infirmity, he submitted himself to work, saying to his amanuenses: "Now we must forget these pains, and devote ourselves entirely to the Muse."⁴⁶

Serial epochs

While, for Ranke, the universal unity was guaranteed by the name of God, it was the task of the historian to shape components of historical time called epochs. The serial structure of these epochs is made evident not only in the serialized book volumes but also in the way each epoch is made to conclude in anticipation of the next. The second part of the first volume on world history has a double ending: first we read the last chapter on "A View on Carthage and Syracuse," which is, like the previous chapter, a postscript to the actions of Alexander the Great, again based on Appian, Diodorus, Justin, Lucian, Pausanius, Plutarch, Photius, and Strabo. The book on the rise and fall of the Greek empire concludes with Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse (317–289 BC) and king of Sicily (304–289 BC), who was for Macchiavelli an

⁴⁶ Adams, "Leopold von Ranke," 555.

example “of those who by their crimes come to be princes.” Ranke’s narrative is strong and suggestive by virtue of its simplicity. He focuses on bold characterizations and major political actions. Between the details of troop movements and decisions by the commander in chief, Ranke gives his assessment of the situation. “A surprise attack,” he writes, “might have been able to succeed in the first moment; Agathocles was not in a position to lead a campaign in the full sense of the word. He was able to do enough to get his troops to follow him one more time against the enemy” (Ein Handstreich hätte vielleicht im ersten Moment gelingen können; einen Feldzug im vollen Sinne des Wortes zu führen, war Agathokles nicht im Stande. Soviel bewirkte er, daß ihm die Truppen noch einmal gegen den Feind folgten).⁴⁷

His judgment is at the very least speculative and puts more weight on the protagonists than they could possibly shoulder. Ranke’s perspective becomes clearer if one looks at the comparisons he makes. For instance, the military campaign I just mentioned is compared with a meteor: “The whole undertaking melted away like a swiftly passing meteor” (Das ganze Unternehmen zerrann, wie ein rasch vorüberziehendes Meteor).⁴⁸ But also like a meteor, it had an impact, a “real meaning,” since it showed Carthage which power it would have to fight. Referring to Polybius, Ranke makes one of his sweeping statements that comes across so smoothly and characterizes the language of his world history quite well: “Antiquity was in agreement that Agathocles had acquired his power in the most violent manner” (Das Alterthum war einstimmig darüber seine Macht auf das Gewaltsamste festgesetzt) but then applied it “most mildly” (auf das Glimpflichste).⁴⁹ The chapter concludes with the following paragraph:

Daran knüpft sich überhaupt eine neue Erhebung der punischen Macht. Wenn im Orient der Geist und die Macht der Griechen vollkommen die Oberhand behielt, so behaupteten sich die Karthager im Occident denselben gegenüber in ungeschmälter Größe. Zwischen beiden Elementen, dem griechischen und dem punischen, wäre die occidentalische Welt geteilt geblieben, wären nicht die Römer in ihrer Mitte aufgetreten.

Tied to this is a new rising of Punic power. While the spirit and power of the Greeks completely retained control in the Orient, in the Occident the Carthaginians survived in undiminished greatness in the face of the same. The Occidental world would have remained divided between the two elements, the Greek and the Carthaginian, if the Romans had not appeared in their midst.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, vol. 1, *Die älteste historische Völkergruppe und die Griechen*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1883), 277.

⁴⁸ Ranke, 1:277.

⁴⁹ Ranke, 1:277.

⁵⁰ Ranke, 1:28.

Thus Ranke prepares the scene for volume 2, which would begin with the Roman Empire.

The first chapter of volume 2 begins with what Ranke called the “traditional history of Rome” up to the fourth century of Roman chronology. In the first couple sentences, Ranke lays out the cultural geography of the rising Roman Empire. But it very quickly becomes clear that while this history of the world is universal, it is not all-inclusive. It is based on a distinction between a civilized world in the east of the empire and the “deep darkness” on the Pyrenean and Apennine peninsulas – not to mention all those other minor powers not worth consideration. Ranke’s world history never aspired to cover the entire world. “The East was filled with historical life and had developed within itself the elements of culture on which the history of humanity is based” (Der Osten war mit historischem Leben erfüllt und hatte die Elemente der Cultur, auf denen die Geschichte der Menschheit beruht, in sich entwickelt).⁵¹ Local peoples only existed in their “particular horizon,”⁵² according to Ranke, and did not share the universal space of experience or its horizon of expectations.

The volume, like all the others to follow, connects to the preceding ones but establishes a new beginning. Despite Ranke’s promise to attend to cultural history, the focus, once more, is on politics, great individuals, and the so-called “ideal powers”: religion, art, and science. The ideal powers only surface, however, as epiphenomena with little to no explanatory power. History, for Ranke, is the teacher of politics. This again has to do with the work of periodization as a series of coherent entities. In the argumentation and presentation, each epoch follows an internal logic.

While the first volume establishes that world history is restricted to written sources, the second volume makes it very clear that Ranke’s world history claims to be universal yet exclusive. Ranke’s focus on the great powers excludes the majority of humans from being relevant to the world-historical process. Ranke firmly believed in the “monopoly control over knowledge by history’s winners.”⁵³ Slavery, oppression, exploitation, and so on could not be thematized in Ranke’s universal history because the enslaved, oppressed, and exploited could not participate in the liberating powers of history and become historical subjects. Accordingly, Ranke also refutes the Hegelian idea that in order to understand the universal, one has to immerse oneself in the particular. This was exactly the kind

⁵¹ Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, vol. 2, *Die römische Republik und ihre Weltherrschaft* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1882), 3.

⁵² Ranke, 2:3.

⁵³ Susan Buck-Morris, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 14.

of historical narrative he had found early on in the fictional writings of Sir Walter Scott, which disappointed him for their abundance of fabricated detail and lack of historical truth. Based on that experience, he preferred historical sources to other historiographical narratives about the past.

Ultimately, the volumes were written from the perspective of the establishment of the new German Reich in 1871 and the early decline of German influence in geopolitics. What many of his contemporaries viewed as political pragmatism can in retrospect only be characterized as a narrative of Western civilization. Ranke's rise to international fame had put him in a position of isolation. From this position, he addressed the series of volumes on world history to the German nation and the world. Accordingly, he was recognized as a “leader of German intellectual life” and “Praeceptor Germaniae,” as the *Times* in London would title its obituary. Indeed, his world history concluded his earlier work in the sense that it attempted to explain the rise of Europe and to establish German culture as the zenith of Western civilization.

In general, Ranke's world history was acclaimed for presenting “large connections” (grosse Zusammenhänge). Still, conceiving a “total image” (Gesamtbild), as one reviewer put it, was left to the readers. Furthermore, the particulars of each volume were subject to massive criticism, whereas friendly reviewers praised the broad perspective and Ranke's ability to give a big picture. Others listed the shortcomings in his discussion of the origins of Christianity, the Migration Period, or his – when compared, for example, to Theodor Mommsen – pale picture of the Roman Empire. Ultimately, everyone had to agree on his ignorance of decades of historical scholarship. This echoed the reviews of his first book that had already criticized Ranke for a lack of presenting his and others' research.

Ranke's writings were never nationalist but transnational and thus European in the worst sense of the word. From the very beginning of his career and throughout the volumes of his *Weltgeschichte*, universal history was ultimately a Franco-Germanic affair. It may suffice to quote only one sentence from the first volume to give a sense of the general notion of his hegemonic Germanic perspective: it is, Georg Weber wrote paraphrasing Ranke, the “vocation of the German people to be the bearer of ‘world history’ in the field of the mind” (Beruf des deutschen Volkes, Träger der ‘Weltgeschichte’ auf geistigem Gebiete zu sein).⁵⁴ Sentences like this were received all too well and allowed German readers to ignore the fact that while Germany certainly remained a great geopolitical power, it needed to accept a massive loss of influence.

⁵⁴ Georg Weber, *Geschichtsbilder aus verschiedenen Ländern und Zeitaltern* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1886), 22.

Since world history is only known by God, as Ranke once put it, the historian cannot know its ultimate trajectory. “If one were to set a specific goal for development, one would darken the future and misunderstand the unbridled reach of historical movement” (Wollte man für die Entwicklung ein bestimmtes Ziel angeben, so würde man die Zukunft verdunkeln und die schrankenlose Tragweite der historischen Bewegung verkennen).⁵⁵ While Ranke was obviously aware of the theoretical aporia of assigning a teleology to the world-historical process, the narrative that runs through the series repeatedly makes such claims. Even though Ranke avoids the rationalist determinism of a Hegelian speculative philosophy of world history, he holds on to a version of Aristotelian entelechy – not without ambivalence, to be sure. History is unfolding, both voluntarily and involuntarily, without a clear telos on the future horizon. Any attempt to understand the world-historical process as a unified whole cannot avoid the pitfalls that Ranke was well aware of. His attempt to articulate the “the well-planned planless functioning of the spirit in history” (planvoll planlose(s) Wirken des Geistes in der Geschichte), as one reviewer put it, cannot avoid divination to show how it actually happened. Even a historian like Ranke – old, almost blind, yet with a sense of the past and an unmistakable intuition, a visionary with a “prophetic vision” (Seherblick) – even he could not see the series of volumes on world history come to their end.

Conclusions

Ranke’s late work demonstrates, as one reviewer stated, “the incredible power of the mind over the body” (die wunderbare Kraft des Geistes über den Körper): how spirit outweighs matter. This was also one of the prerequisites of Ranke’s notion of history. History is an afterthought of the living-on of past moments. The capability for human perpetuation (“Fortleben”), as he put it, is the very condition of history and makes possible what was at the time to be understood as cultural memory. Ranke’s students shared this notion of history with the master. Working with him for years, they learned to think in his mindset and to continue sentences in his spirit. His amanuenses were his eyes and hands, and they echoed the sound of the master’s voice. This form of human-assisted thinking facilitated the first seven volumes of Ranke’s *Weltgeschichte*, and it enabled his students to continue his work after his death.

55 Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, 1:viii.

Even though the editors of Ranke's posthumous work were well aware of the delicacy of their task, they felt it was imperative to see the master's universal history to its end. The final volume was based on Ranke's lecture notes from 1870 and, for the first two chapters, was supplemented by the notes of a student who had attended a course Ranke held. Still, this draft was never meant to become a book, and its language is certainly less elaborate than that of the earlier volumes. "For such reasons, should we, however," the editor asks, "rather completely withhold from readers [...] the ninth [part], whose idea was no less composed according to the last wishes of the deceased?" (Sollten wir jedoch aus solchen Gründen, den Lesern [...] den neunten, dessen Idee nicht minder von den letztwilligen Wünschen des Verstorbenen gefaßt worden, am Ende lieber gänzlich vorenthalten?).⁵⁶ Dove believed that only with these final chapters would the "world-encompassing vision" (weltumfassende Anschauung) of Ranke's work become evident and give a perspective on universal history through his "keen eye for the most minor appearances of historical existence" (Scharfblick für die geringsten Erscheinungen des geschichtlichen Daseins).⁵⁷ A supplemental volume would close the series by publishing the lectures on world history that Ranke had delivered for King Maximilian II in Berchtesgaden in the fall of 1854. Like in the case of Herodotus's first universal history, it ultimately was the author's death that shaped the final form of this project.

In his long review of Ranke's *Weltgeschichte*, Constantin Rößler regrets, like so many others, that – despite all the attempts by Ranke's students – the oeuvre ultimately remained unfinished.⁵⁸ He follows the rhetoric of the day and grieves over the world's loss in Ranke's death. However, the volumes that had materialized show how "to make comprehensible the great process of development of the culture of humanity" (Summe des großen Werdeprocesses der Kultur der Menschheit verständlich zu machen) and the ideas immanent to the world-historical process. His theory of history lives on in his historiographical writings and can be supplemented by a study of how his spontaneous philosophy of history shaped his practice as a historian and vice versa.

My point of departure was Ranke's publication of books in series, a practice not unusual at the time, which partly reflected the state of the medium of printing. For anyone who wants to advance a narrative, this characteristic feature of nineteenth-century printing culture could become a driving force. This was also

⁵⁶ Alfred Dove, "Vorwort" to *Weltgeschichte*, by Leopold von Ranke, vol. 9, *Zeiten des Uebergangs zur modernen Welt (XIV. und XV. Jahrhundert)* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1888), vii.

⁵⁷ Dove, vii.

⁵⁸ Constantin Rößler, "Leopold v. Ranke: Weltgeschichte, Theil 1–5: 1880–84," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 29 November 1885, 1–3.

true for Ranke. I argued that Ranke's extraordinary productivity resulted from, among other factors, these means of serial literary production as well as from the contracts this form of publication resulted in between authors and their audience and publisher. Furthermore, for Ranke, publishing in serial format had particular consequences: the continuation of the narrative from volume to volume sequenced time in smaller periods that in print took the form of chapters and sections. In addition, once a volume was published, Ranke could not rewrite the narrative already established but had to move forward. This is reflected in Ranke's notion of a series of events connected through an open-ended teleology and corresponds with the day-to-day practice of his work on the *Weltgeschichte*. His working process was organized in a serialized manner in order to shape epoch after epoch from the materials at hand. Accordingly, Ranke's understanding of the world-historical process and his spontaneous philosophy of history were informed by these practical matters of historical work. While he believed in history as a science, his thinking and work ethic were deeply imbued with his religious views, and he accepted that world history can only be known by God. Thus, he ultimately restricted himself to a universal yet exclusive notion of world history based on the body of texts of the Western tradition. Not only was a structural violence and "denial of coevalness"⁵⁹ at the core of Ranke's understanding of history; his robust epistemological optimism also allowed him to ignore everything and everyone that did not fit into this hegemonic conception of history.

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⁵⁹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

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Elisabeth Strowick

“Nachkommenschaften”

Stifter’s Series

Einmal ist keinmal.¹
Once is never.
—Landlady to Friedrich Roderer

In many respects, seriality is the main undertaking of Stifter’s late narrative “Nachkommenschaften” (1864).² Even the title, which renders *Nachkommenschaften* (“descendances”) in an indefinite plural, opens the question of temporal sequence to a spectrum of fields. The text thereby develops across discourses and media, which it weaves together by means of a narrative technique. *Nachkommenschaften* refers, for one, to the genealogy of the Roderer family, whose dispersion and propagation it narrates, but it can also be read as referring to temporal succession, to seriality in painting and literature.³ The first-person narrator, who works as a landscape painter, has devoted himself exclusively to painting a bog. With the goal of depicting

1 Adalbert Stifter, “Nachkommenschaften,” in *Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Alfred Doppler, Wolfgang Frühwald, and Hartmut Laufhütte, vol. 3.2, *Erzählungen*, ed. Johannes John and Sibylle von Steinsdorf (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2003), 23–94, here 88; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as NK. A translation of “Nachkommenschaften” can be found in James McLellan, “‘Descendants’ and ‘The Village on the Health’: Translating the Relationship between Man and Nature in Adalbert Stifter’s Prose” (master’s thesis, University of Montana, 2005), 12–76; the translations of “Nachkommenschaften” found in my text and all other translations of sources are by Anthony Mahler unless otherwise indicated.

2 On seriality, see Christine Blättler, “Überlegungen zur Serialität als ästhetischem Begriff,” *Weimarer Beiträge* 49, no. 4 (2003): 502–516; Blättler, “Einleitung” to *Kunst der Serie: Die Serie in den Künsten*, ed. Blättler (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010), 7–14; Elisabeth Bronfen, Christiane Frey, and David Martyn, “Vorwort” to *Noch einmal anders: Zu einer Poetik des Seriellen*, ed. Bronfen, Frey, and Martyn (Berlin: Diaphanes, 2016), 7–15; Sabine Mainberger, *Die Kunst des Aufzählens: Elemente einer Poetik des Enumerativen* (Munich: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

3 Another line of reception discusses Stifter’s “Nachkommenschaften” in relation to the question of epigonism. See, for example, Dirk Oschmann, “Absolute Darstellung: Zur Metapoetik von Stifters ‘Nachkommenschaften,’” *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 50 (2009): 135–149, where one can also find an overview of the relevant secondary literature (138n10).

Note: This is a translation of a chapter from Elisabeth Strowick, *Gespenster des Realismus: Zur literarischen Wahrnehmung von Wirklichkeit* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2019), 73–95.

Translated by Anthony Mahler

“real reality,” in which the painted bog would be indistinguishable from the real bog, he undertakes numerous studies outdoors (the bog in the light of dawn, morning, and midday), which are eventually joined together into a single picture in a log cabin specifically built for that purpose. Shortly before completing the painting, Friedrich Roderer destroys it and gives up painting forever. By painting the bog under different lighting conditions, Friedrich Roderer develops a serial manner of representation before modernist painting began to use serial techniques.⁴ Serial techniques are at work not only in Friedrich Roderer’s landscape painting, but also in the narration, whether in the multiple conspicuous series of names or in Stifter’s technique of description. Seriality thus proves to be an interface between Stifter’s poetics and the perceptual aesthetics of modernism. Just like Friedrich Roderer’s serial technique of painting, Stifter’s literary seriality can be read as an experimental arrangement for manufacturing the real in view of the dynamization of perception and representation – a real that the text refers to with the concise formula “real reality” (wirkliche Wirklichkeit; NK, 65). In what follows, I will analyze the manifold (representational) techniques of seriality that make Stifter so interesting for an archaeology or “discursive grammar”⁵ of modernity.

Although I will mainly focus on aspects of serial representation in “Nachkommenschaften,” I will make a detour via the genealogical use of the word *Nachkommenschaft* in Stifter’s narrative.⁶ In the case of the Roderer family, a concept of descent emerges that is based not on origin or background but on doubling and serial dispersion. This concept will be illuminating for my subsequent analysis of the serial representation and epistemology of “real reality.”

4 On seriality in art, see Katharina Sykora, *Das Phänomen des Seriellen in der Kunst: Aspekte einer künstlerischen Methode von Monet bis zur amerikanischen Pop Art* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1983), 34–67; Oskar Bätschmann, *Entfernung der Natur: Landschaftsmalerei 1750–1920* (Cologne: DuMont, 1989), 187–192, 99–135.

5 Gerhart von Graevenitz, “Einleitung” to *Konzepte der Moderne: DFG-Symposion 1997*, ed. Graevenitz (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999), 1–16.

6 On the genealogical dimensions of “Nachkommenschaften,” see Konstanze Fliedl, “Berg, Moor und Baum: Eine Lektüre der ‘Nachkommenschaften,’” in *Stifter und die Stifterforschung im 21. Jahrhundert: Biographie – Wissenschaft – Poetik*, ed. Alfred Doppler, Johannes John, Johann Lachinger, and Hartmut Laufhütte (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2007), 261–282; Stefan Willer, “Grenzenlose Zeit, schlingernder Grund: Genealogische Ordnungen in Stifters ‘Nachkommenschaften,’” in *Figuren der Übertragung: Adalbert Stifter und das Wissen seiner Zeit*, ed. Michael Gamper and Karl Wagner (Zurich: Chronos, 2009), 45–62.

Stifter’s foolish law of the series: Obsession, contingency, dispersion

The representatives of the Roderer family are as preoccupied with signs as the late Stifter,⁷ who exhibits what Helmut Pfotenhauer refers to as a “obsession for signs.”⁸ In fact, obsession is a decisive trait of this family or *Nachkommenschaft*, which allows them to be identified as a series, if one wishes to maintain that obsession is a characteristic of series.⁹ The obsessive character of the Roderer family is presented in the words of Peter Roderer as follows:

[E]s lebt seit Jahrhunderten ein Geschlecht, das immer etwas Anderes erreicht hat, als es mit Heftigkeit angestrebt hat. Und je glühender das Bestreben eines dieses Geschlechtes war, desto sicherer konnte man sein, daß nichts daraus wird. Und nicht etwa durch das Schicksal wurden diese Leute aus ihren Bahnen geworfen; [...] sondern Jeder verließ selber freiwillig und mit Freuden seinen Kampfplatz, und wendete sich zu anderen Dingen.

For centuries, there has lived a family that has always achieved something different from what it has passionately pursued. And the more ardent the pursuit of a member of this family was, the more certain one could be that nothing would come of it. And it was not that these people were thrown off course by fate; [...] but rather each one rather left his battlefield voluntarily and gladly and turned to other things. (NK, 49)

The text also states that the Roderers had a habit of “devoting an immense amount of time and energy to one thing, and then of letting it go and taking up something

⁷ Stifter’s text situates descendancy strictly on a symbolic level. This is evident not only in the law of the series that the Roderer family is subject to and embodies but also in their physical characteristics, which are decidedly staged on the level of signs. All the male progeny of the Roderer family exhibit the same manner of beard (NK, 56), and “all the descendants of our forefather [...] have, almost as if out of obstinacy [...], brown hair and brown eyes with a friendly coloring of the face” ([a]lle Nachkommen unseres Ahnherrn [...] haben fast wie mit Eigensinn [...] braune Haare und braune Augen bei freundlicher Farbe des Angesichtes; NK, 51). Hair and eye color are found on the same level as beard length, that is, biological features are given the status of signs, which is emphasized by the phrase “wie mit Eigensinn.” In this sense, Mathilde, who Friedrich accepts into the family even though she is not biologically related, also exhibits signs of the Roderer family: “The girl had very beautiful rosy cheeks, brown hair, and considerably large brown eyes” (Das Mädchen hatte sehr schöne rosige Wangen, braune Haare und bedeutend große braune Augen; NK, 57). In short, Stifter treats descendancy as a question of semiotics, genealogical relationships on the level of signs, as serially repeating signs – arbitrary and endowed with “Eigensinn.”

⁸ Helmut Pfotenhauer, “Bild und Schrift: Zur Funktion von Medienwechseln in der realistischen Literatur; Stifter, Keller,” in *Das schwierige 19. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Eda Sagarraga*, ed. Jürgen Barkhoff, Gilbert Carr, and Roger Paulin (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000), 212.

⁹ See, for example, Uwe M. Schneede and Christoph Heinrich, eds., *Monets Vermächtnis: Serie – Ordnung und Obsession* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2001).

else. [. . .] Everyone in our family was simply immersed in the ceaselessness of his pursuit, until it stopped" (ein Ungetüm von Zeit und Kraft einem Dinge zuzuwenden, um es dann gehen zu lassen, und ein anderes zu ergreifen. [. . .] Jeder unseres Geschlechtes war von der Unaufhörlichkeit seines Strebens schlechterdings durchdrungen, bis es aufhörte; NK, 50–51).

A thoroughly foolish (*närrisch*) family – a foolish *Nachkommenschaft* or a foolish series – is what Stifter's story is about. They are by no means the only foolish descendants in Stifter's oeuvre – so too are descendants of Hans von Scharnast in Stifter's early narrative "Die Narrenburg," which takes its title from the "foolishness" (*Narrheit*)¹⁰ of the family. As if to make the textual relationship or descent of the two narratives conspicuous, Stifter's "Nachkommenschaften" explicitly describes Friedrich Roderer as a "fool" (Narr; NK, 31) on account of his obsession with painting.¹¹ With this characterization of the Roderer family, the narrative formulates the foolish law of the series, which determines both the narrative events and the narration: vehement obsession with an activity that begins as unexpectedly as it ends and to which distraction and difference are inherent. Considering this freehearted disclosure of the law of the Roderer family and the narrative, it is striking that the scholarship on Stifter has so persistently searched for Friedrich Roderer's motive for giving up painting. There are numerous interpretations of why Friedrich Roderer destroys his picture and abandons painting; indeed, the scholarship on Stifter has developed a proper "investigative sense" for this.¹² I would not like to join in this search here. Where the foolish law of *Nachkommenschaft* determines what happens, there is no need to search for a motive, for an interiority of individual subjects that one could uncover. Instead, the plot is presented as a passing of the subjects through the law of their family

¹⁰ Adalbert Stifter, "Die Narrenburg," in *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1.4, *Studien: Buchfassungen*, ed. Helmut Bergner and Ulrich Dittmann (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980), 319–436, here 322.

¹¹ "When my father expressed concern about my painting business, my uncle said: 'Let the fool be'" (Mein Oheim sagte, als mein Vater Bedenken über meine Malerangelegenheiten äußerte: "Lasse dem Narren das Ding"; NK, 31). Friedrich Roderer himself finds the idea that he is related to Peter Roderer foolish: "It would really be awfully foolish if this rich Roderer [. . .] were another Roderer of our family" (Es wäre doch entsetzlich närrisch, wenn dieser reiche Roderer [. . .] auch noch ein Roderer zu unserem Geschlechte wäre; NK, 37). And Peter Roderer also describes the Roderer family as foolish when he says to Friedrich Roderer: "I have told you Roderer stories in which foolish-enough things happen" (ich habe Ihnen Roderergeschichten erzählt, in denen Närrisches genug vorkommt; NK, 84).

¹² Hans-Peter Ecker, "Darum muß dieses Bild vernichtet werden": Über wissenschaftliche Sinnspiele und poetisch gestaltete Medienkonkurrenz am Beispiel von Stifters 'Nachkommenschaften,'" in *Adalbert Stifter: Dichter und Maler, Denkmalpfleger und Schulmann; Neue Zugänge zu seinem Werk*, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte and Karl Möseneder (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1996), 517.

or *Nachkommenschaft* – a foolish law of the series that I will outline more precisely in the following.

Obsession, contingency, and dispersion are the characteristics of the Roderer family and so also aspects of Stifter’s foolish seriality: each member of the Roderer family was “von der Unaufhörlichkeit seines Strebens schlechterdings durchdrungen, bis es aufhörte.” In other words, the totally unanticipated alternation of obsessive persistence (“Unaufhörlichkeit”) and cessation (“Aufhören”) is constitutive of the series. At the same time, one cannot speak of an end to the series; when it lets an activity go (“es [...] gehen zu lassen”), it continues in “another” series (“immer etwas Anderes erreicht [...] als es mit Heftigkeit angestrebt hat”; “ein anderes [...] ergreifen”). Stifter’s series crosses into the other, into difference and dispersion, into changing course: “And it was not that these people were thrown off course by fate; for then some would have remained on course, because fate and chance are not consistent, but rather each one left his battlefield voluntarily and gladly and turned to other things” (Und nicht etwa durch das Schicksal wurden diese Leute aus ihren Bahnen geworfen; denn dann wäre ja mancher darin geblieben, weil Schicksal und Zufall nicht folgerichtig sind, sondern Jeder verließ selber freiwillig und mit Freuden seinen Kampfplatz, und wendete sich zu anderen Dingen; NK, 49). What is interesting in this passage is that Stifter detaches changing course, which is inherent to seriality, from the logic of fate and chance; something consistent (“folgerichtig”) can be read as serial if it evokes a sequence (*Folge*) and cannot be directly ascribed to fate or chance. And yet one cannot deny that Stifter’s series are related to contingency. This is documented in a temporal respect: ceasing the obsessive activity occurs as suddenly and unexpectedly (“unversehens”) as its onset. The abrupt beginning of the narrative in medias res – a beginning that at the same time articulates the contingency of narration with the contingency of the series – reads: “This is how I unexpectedly became a landscape painter” (So bin ich unversehens ein Landschaftsmaler geworden; NK, 25). As Robert Stockhammer has shown using Stifter’s “Zwei Schwestern,” in Stifter’s work, “the sense of randomness conjoins with its opposite, a radical determinism. Like a ball in a billiard game, the ostensibly acting subject suffers a certain impact that it cannot influence or calculate in advance, but it then follows a course that has been completely calculated in advance, though not by himself. Accidents are not followed by further accidents but by their ‘natural consequences’ [...]” (II, 238).¹³ Seriality in Stifter’s “Nachkommenschaften” is also not presented as a

13 Robert Stockhammer, “Zufälligkeitssinn: Adalbert Stifters Umgang mit der Kontingenz,” *Arca dia: International Journal for Literary Studies* 39 (2004): 274. On chance, also see Friedrich Balke, “Den Zufall denken: Das Problem der Aleatorik in der zeitgenössischen französischen Philosophie,” in *Die Künste des Zufalls*, ed. Peter Gendolla and Thomas Kamphusmann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), 48–76.

sequence of coincidences but rather as a sequence or logic that operates on the insecure basis of contingency. What Stifter's "Nachkommenschaften" stages is the event of the series, the series or *Nachkommenschaft* as event. The onset and cessation do not mark the beginning and end of a series; rather, these moments of contingency function as caesuras, as serial interruptions: they provide the impulse or rhythm of an obsessive proliferation in which the series continues as further, internally differentiated series.

Considering this dynamic of serial distraction and difference, it seems only "folgerichtig" that Stifter's series faces dispersion:

Es ist stets ein merkwürdiges Zeichen der Roderer gewesen, daß sie immer in der Welt zerstreut waren, keiner Gegend angehörten, bald hier bald da auftauchten, und wieder verschwanden, es gehört dieß zu ihrem begabten und unsteten Wesen, und mehrt dieses Wesen hinwiederum.

It has always been a peculiar mark of the Roderers that they have always been dispersed in the world, did not belong to any region, turned up first in one place and then in another, and disappeared again; it belongs to their talented and fickle nature, and further increases this nature. (NK, 62)

Was das Zerstreutsein der Roderer in der Welt anbelangt, so trifft dieses bei uns so gut ein, wie bei den Roderern des Herrn Peter Roderer. [. . .] Ich selber bin noch gar kein Ansässiger, in dem ich [. . .] seit jener Zeit, als ich die Landschaftsmalerei zu betreiben begonnen habe, am wenigsten bei meinen Eltern in Wien, am häufigsten aber an verschiedenen anderen Stellen gewesen bin.

As far as the Roderer's dispersion in the world is concerned, this applies to us as well as to the Roderers of Mr. Peter Roderer. [. . .] I myself have not yet settled down at all, as I [. . .] have been a little bit with my parents in Vienna and most often in various other places ever since the time when I began to practice landscape painting. (NK, 64)

The Roderer *Nachkommenschaft* are characterized by dispersion; they appear "bald hier bald da" and disappear again. Also Friedrich Roderer's painting technique, which I will soon discuss in detail, pursues a dispersion or serialization of place ("seit jener Zeit, als ich die Landschaftsmalerei zu betreiben begonnen habe, [. . .] am häufigsten [. . .] an verschiedenen anderen Stellen gewesen bin").

The serial dynamics of dispersion can also be described with a prominent term from the narrative as expansion or dissemination ("Ausdehnung"). Although used by the grandmother expressly in the sense of genealogical propagation,¹⁴ the text

¹⁴ "My grandmother says that our ancestors always had numerous descendants and that the family has never been so contracted as it is now, but she says it is beginning to expand again, since her younger sons already have so many children and can hope to have even more, a hope that has also not yet past for my father" (Meine Großmutter sagt, daß unsere Vorfahren immer zahlreiche

thematizes techniques of dissemination that are not tied to propagation, or at least not to one's own. These are acts of passing along through circuitous genealogies, which are so characteristic of Stifter, acts that guarantee for Friedrich Roderer,¹⁵ who is childless, the broad dispersion and distribution of his pictures. With regard to the possible fate of his pictures, Friedrich asks himself, “will they be dispersed?” (werden sie zerstreut sein?; NK, 30). Such a possible dispersion would take place among rapidly expanding descendants:

[S]o habe ich eine Schwester, die Kinder hat; so haben meine zwei Oheime Kinder, diese Kinder bekommen einst Kinder, welche wieder Kinder bekommen, so daß ich bei dem hohen Alter, welches ich erreichen werde, Nichten, Neffen, Geschwisterkinder, Urnichten, Urneffen, Urgeschwisterkinder, Ururnichten, Ururneffen, Ururgeschwisterkinder, und so weiter, in großer Zahl haben werde, unter welche ich meine Bilder als Geschenke vertheilen kann.

Then I have a sister who has children; then my two uncles have children; these children will have children one day, who will also have children, so that in the old age I will reach, I will have large numbers of nieces, nephews, cousins, grandnieces, grandnephews, cousins once removed, great grandnieces, great grandnephews, cousins twice removed, and so on, and I will be able to distribute my pictures as gifts among them. (NK, 31)

Descendance or *Nachkommenschaft* is carried out as the proliferation of the *Ur*- as a series of the origin, or, more precisely, as a serialization of the origin. With the phrase “Urur[- . . .] und so weiter,” Friedrich Roderer captures the serial proliferation that is manifested as a gift economy in the joyful distribution, dissemination, and dispersion of his pictures.

Against these forces of dispersion that characterize the Roderer family and Stifter's seriality, Peter Roderer strives to establish “einen festen Stamm der Roderer” and to have all the descendants settle near him:

Ich möchte einen festen Stamm der Roderer in dieser Gegend gründen, und ihn an diese Gegend heften, und wenn meine Nachkommen so denken wie ich, so trocknen sie das Moor völlig aus, verwalten ihre liegende Habe, genießen das Erworbene, vermindern es nie, vermehren es dagegen, wirken gut für die Menschen hier, verwachsen mit ihnen, werden stätig und ruhig, bleiben stets bürgerlich, und sagen: Peter Roderer der Amsterdamer ist der erste gewesen, der sich hier ansässig gemacht hat.

Nachkommenschaften gehabt haben, und daß das Geschlecht nie so zusammengeschmolzen gewesen wäre, wie eben jetzt: sich aber wieder auszudehnen beginne, indem ihre jüngeren Söhne schon so viele Kinder haben, und noch mehr zu bekommen hoffen dürfen, welche Hoffnung bei meinem Vater auch noch nicht vorüber wäre; NK, 31–32).

15 “I will not multiply, just as my great uncle did not multiply [. . .] until he died without child” (II)ch dehne mich nicht aus, wie mein Großheim sich nicht ausgedehnt hat, [. . .] bis er ohne Kind und Kegel gestorben ist; NK, 32).

I would like to establish a firm lineage of the Roderers in this area and attach the lineage to this area, and if my descendants think as I do, they will dry up the bog completely, manage their real estate, enjoy what they have acquired, never diminish it, rather increase it, have a positive effect on the people here, grow together with them, become steady and calm, always remain bourgeois, and say: Peter Roderer the Amsterdamer was the first to settle here. (NK, 62)

Considering the fickleness and dispersion of the Roderer family, Peter Roderer's ambitions seem audacious. Nothing, one would think, could be more antithetical to this family than to bind it to constancy ("bleiben stets bügerlich"; "werden städtig") and settling down somewhere. Stifter's text keeps these opposing forces – the forces of dispersion and those of congregation – in tension. This tension is staged on the level of narration: it is by means of different narrative techniques that Stifter's story allows the congregation and dispersion of descendants or *Nachkommenschaften* to run counter to each other.

The old Roderer's wish to gather together the Roderer family as a firmly established lineage in one place – that is, to become its progenitor or *Stifter* (founder) – corresponds to a specific narrative: Peter Roderer's narrative is rooted in a genealogical model of descent, a narrative that reconstructs the Roderer family tree with its individual branches. It certainly seems that Stifter's story follows Roderer's genealogical model of narration. After Friedrich Roderer states his name, the genealogical narrative takes its course:

Sonach ist der Stammbaum nun aus den Erinnerungen meines Vaters und Roderers völlig aufgestellt worden. Wir, die Friedrich Roderer sind der ältere Zweig von dem Obristen, und die Peter Roderer sind der jüngere. Da der deutsche Herr keine Kinder haben konnte, und die Nachkommenschaft Josephs ausgestorben ist, so sind diese beiden Zweige nun die einzigen Rodererzweige.

The family tree has therefore now been completely worked out from my father's and Roderer's memories. We, the Friedrich Roderers, are the older branch from the colonel, and the Peter Roderers are the younger branch. Since the German gentleman could not have any children, and the descendants of Joseph died out, these two branches are now the only Roderer branches. (NK, 90)

This is followed – also entirely in the spirit of Peter Roderer's efforts at congregation – by the unification of the branches, and since they are the only ones, by the reunification of the entire Roderer family, which is sealed, as it were, by the marriage of Friedrich and Susanna. Here, too, a coupling of genealogy and narration takes place: the unification of the Roderers produces narrative after narrative: "My grandmother was happy that the Roderers had now expanded again in one fell swoop. She was the living record of our branch, and as the old history was researched, more and more memories came to her, and from her lips followed tale after tale, which first helped clarify things an awful lot" (Meine Großmutter

war glücklich, daß sich die Roderer nun wieder mit Einem Schlage ausgedehnt hatten. Sie war die lebendige Handfeste unseres Zweiges, und wie so in der alten Geschichte geforscht wurde, kamen ihr immer mehr Erinnerungen zu und von ihren Lippen folgte Erzählung zu Erzählung, die erst mächtig die Klarheit förderte; NK, 91).¹⁶ But a happy ending as Peter Roderer would imagine it and as suggested by the story does not seem very plausible, since it would deny the so consistently developed law of the essential dispersive dynamic of the *Nachkommenschaft*. Precisely in this sense, the “well-being of the double Roderers” (Doppelrodererwohl; NK, 93) that is wished upon Friedrich and Susanna Roderer remains conspicuously ambivalent. At the ostensible end of the serial narrative, one does not find *unification* but rather an irreducible double; Stifter’s “Nachkommenschaften” concludes with a toast to seriality.

In fact, there is a narrative technique that runs counter to Peter Roderer’s family-tree narrative: the multiple conspicuous series of names that cut through the narrative and drive it forward along its axes. The order of generations installed in Peter Roderer’s family-tree narrative and the form of linear temporality associated with it collapse on the level of names, since all the members of the Roderer family are called the same: Friedrich or Peter Roderer.¹⁷ A relation of descent cannot be established on the level of the series of names. They rather form a narrative grid that the subjects pass through and that exposes both the subjects and the course of the narrative to the dynamics of serial dispersion.

There is, first, the most extensive series: the Roderer series, or, in short, the R series, which is defined by its incessant striving and abrupt cessation. Smaller series include the Peter series (P series), to which – as the name states – the old Peter Roderer belongs. Difference is explicitly formulated here as the serial repetition of the name: each Peter Roderer is primarily “ein anderer”: “a different one, Peter Roderer” (ein anderer, Peter Roderer; NK, 52); “Then there was a different Peter Roderer” (Dann war ein anderer Peter Roderer; NK, 52). Another series is that of the Roderer Peter Buben (RPB series), which encompasses four or five:

Seine Söhne waren die Roderer Peter Buben. Sie waren vier, und hatten ganz gleichen Sinn.

His sons were the Roderer Peter boys. They were four and were of the exact same mind. (NK, 52)

¹⁶ On the “Handfeste,” also see Fliedl, “Berg, Moor und Baum,” 265–266.

¹⁷ On the temporality and belatedness (*Nachträglichkeit*) of names in “Nachkommenschaften,” see Laurence A. Rickels, “Stifter’s ‘Nachkommenschaften’: The Problem of the Surname, the Problem of Painting,” *MLN* 100, no. 3 (1985): 577–598: “[T]he name which is pushed back till the end, is precisely the signature, that name which always comes after, at the end, say, of a letter, or in the corner of a completed painting” (580).

Die Roderer Peter Buben starben unvermählt, jeder über neunzig Jahre alt, und hießen immer die Roderer Peter Buben. [. . .] Mit den Roderer Peter Buben wären die Roderer Peter Buben ausgestorben, wenn es nicht noch einen Roderer Peter Buben gegeben hätte, einen fünften, der aber nie so geheißen hat; denn als das Volk den Namen Roderer Peter Buben schöpfte, da sie gemeinschaftlich als junge Menschen ihren Hof verwalteten, war er schon lange nicht mehr in dem Hause. Er war schon zu den Lebzeiten seines Vaters fortgegangen. Er hieß Friedrich.

The Roderer Peter boys died unmarried, each over ninety years old, and were always called the Roderer Peter boys. [. . .] With the Roderer Peter boys, the Roderer Peter boys would have died out, if there had not been another Roderer Peter boy, a fifth one, who, however, was never called that; this is because when people created the name Roderer Peter boys, because they managed their farm together when they were young, he had not been in the house for a long time. He had already left during his father's lifetime. He was called Friedrich. (NK, 53–54)

While the series of four *Buben* (“boys” or “jacks” in a card game) actually comprises a complete four of a kind, Stifter pulls a fifth *Bube* – a joker, if you will – out of his sleeve, thus adding a decisive structural moment to the series: as the fifth *Bube*, Friedrich belongs to the RPB series and does not belong to it at the same time. And it is precisely he who makes the continuation or proliferation of the series and the dissemination of the family possible, though one couldn't speak of propagation in this case. Here once again the inimitable sentence: “Mit den Roderer Peter Buben wären die Roderer Peter Buben ausgestorben, wenn es nicht noch einen Roderer Peter Buben gegeben hätte, einen fünften, der aber nie so geheißen hat.” The subjunctive is striking; the extinction of the series is prevented by an element of the series that simultaneously belongs and does not belong to it and that continues to proliferate into another series, the Friedrich series (F series), a branch or better a grafting, diversion, or deviation – Friedrich is explicitly a “black sheep” (räudiges Schaf; NK, 54). Stifter's series are not sequences of homogeneous elements; internally contaminated, they rather describe a movement of proliferation, of deterritorialization. The RPB series does not propagate itself but rather proliferates as an internally different series that can never be converted into a lineage and is instead an event of diversion. In the diversion RPB-F – as in the law of the R series – ceasing and incessancy coincide. On the level of names, Stifter thus stages a concept of *Nachkommenschaft* that corresponds far more to the law of the Roderer family and series than to Peter Roderer's model of genealogical narrative. This concept of *Nachkommenschaft* functions as a serial narrative act that combines incessancy and cessation into a diversion or rhythmic scansion.

Serial representation, spatiotemporal perception, "real reality"

The series of names is not the only form of serial representation in Stifter's text. The most sophisticated in this respect is surely Friedrich Roderer's serial technique of painting. Before turning to it in more detail, I would like to discuss the aesthetic program that is linked to it and that has long engaged scholarship on Stifter. It is the representational program of "wirkliche[n] Wirklichkeit" (NK, 65),¹⁸ it is first mentioned not in reference to the Lüpfinger bog but rather with regard to painting the mountain Dachstein:

[U]nd als ich in den Alpen oft [. . .] gewandert war, sagte ich: soll es dann gar nicht möglich sein, den Dachstein gerade so zu malen, wie ich ihn oft und stets vom vorderen Gosausee aus gesehen habe? Warum malen sie ihn alle anders? Was soll denn der Grund dieses Dinges sein? Ich will es doch sehen. [. . .] Ich möchte mir am Ufer des vorderen Gosausees dem Dachstein gegenüber ein Häuschen mit einer sehr großen Glaswand gegen den Dachstein bauen, und nicht eher mehr das Häuschen verlassen, bis es mir gelungen sei, den Dachstein so zu malen, daß man den gemalten und den wirklichen nicht mehr zu unterscheiden vermöge.

And when I was often hiking [. . .] in the Alps, I said: shouldn't it then really be possible to paint the Dachstein just as I have often and always seen it from the frontal Lake Gosau? Why do they all paint it differently? What is supposed to be the reason for this thing? I want to see it after all. [. . .] I would like to build a little house for myself on the shore of the frontal Lake Gosau opposite the Dachstein with a very large glass wall facing the Dachstein and not leave the little house until I have succeeded in painting the Dachstein in such a way that one would no longer be able to distinguish between the painted one and the real one. (NK, 28–29)

¹⁸ On "real reality," see Karl Konrad Polheim, "Die wirkliche Wirklichkeit: Adalbert Stifters 'Nachkommenschaften' und das Problem seiner Kunstanschauung," in *Untersuchungen zur Literatur als Geschichte: Festschrift für Benno von Wiese*, ed. Vincent Günther, Helmut Koopmann, and Peter Pütz (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1973), 385–417; Friedbert Asperberger, "Stifters Erzählung 'Nachkommenschaften,'" *Sprachkunst: Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft* 6 (1975): 238–260; Gerhard Plumpe, "Eine Anmerkung zu Adalbert Stifters 'Nachkommenschaften' und Wilhelm Raabes *Der Dräumling*," *Jahrbuch der Raabe-Gesellschaft* (1994): 70–84; Martina Wedekind, *Wiederholen – Beharren – Auslöschen: Zur Prosa Adalbert Stifters* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), 178. On emendations to the passage on "real reality" in the different editions of Stifter's "Nachkommenschaften," see Johannes John, "Die wirkliche Wirklichkeit derselben . . .": Zur Problematik und Praxis der Emendationen in Adalbert Stifters Erzählung 'Nachkommenschaften,'" *Jahrbuch der Jean-Paul-Gesellschaft* 41 (2006): 205–220; Johannes John, "Übermalungen" – Transkription, Emendation, Interpretation: Zur 17. Manuskriptseite von Adalbert Stifters Erzählung 'Nachkommenschaften,'" in *Text – Material – Medium: Zur Relevanz editorischer Dokumentationen für die literaturwissenschaftliche Interpretation*, ed. Wolfgang Lukas, Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth, and Madleen Podewski (Munich: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 107–122.

Friedrich Roderer's representational program is formulated with explicit reference to perception: "soll es dann gar nicht möglich sein, den Dachstein gerade so zu malen, wie ich ihn [. . .] gesehen habe?" The "real" Dachstein is the perceived Dachstein. The artistic, visual representation is an expedition into the field of visual perception. On the occasion of painting the bog, Friedrich erects a log cabin with a view of the bog: "I wanted [. . .] to represent real reality and to have real reality always next to me for this purpose" (Ich wollte [. . .] die wirkliche Wirklichkeit darstellen, und dazu die wirkliche Wirklichkeit immer neben mir haben; NK, 65). Friedrich's program aims neither at imitation nor at the correspondence of representation and object. Since the object is nothing other than perception ("den Dachstein gerade so [. . .] malen, wie ich ihn [. . .] gesehen habe"), Friedrich studies the constitution of the real in the medium of perception, which he seeks to stage through painting. The log house is, in other words, an experimental arrangement for exploring and producing real reality (meaning perceived reality) in the medium of painting. Friedrich Roderer's ambitions explicitly aim at producing reality: "But I say: why then has God made the real so very real and made it the most real in his work of art [. . .]? Just make reality as real as it is" (Ich aber sage: warum hat denn Gott das Wirkliche gar so wirklich und am wirklichsten in seinem Kunstwerke gemacht [. . .]? Macht nur die Wirklichkeit so wirklich wie sie ist; NK, 65). Representing the real means producing the real. The performative dimension of Friedrich Roderer's art of painting and program is clear, and it shifts the emphasis in the question of how to represent the real toward the reality of representation. The spatial organization of the experimental arrangement conspicuously implies structurally doubling the real: the representation of "real reality" takes place in the mode of "neben"¹⁹ and – as Friedrich Roderer's serial technique of painting will show – "nach" (Roderer's series of pictures are *Nachkommenschaften* in the literal sense). Reality appears, in other words, as spatially and temporally displaced into itself. Translated into the vocabulary of perceived reality, one could say that under the banner of "real reality," Friedrich Roderer seeks to produce and plumb the depths of spatial and temporal perception through the medium of painting, and it is on this basis that Stifter's narrative generates specific literary techniques of representation.

The contours of Stifter's aesthetic reflections become clearer in their historical discursive and medial context: *seeing in modernity*. As Jonathan Crary has shown, at the beginning of the nineteenth century (before 1840), the camera obscura lost its significance as the model for how vision observes and functions. In a close interaction between research in experimental physiology and new visual

¹⁹ "Ich wollte [. . .] die wirkliche Wirklichkeit darstellen, und dazu die wirkliche Wirklichkeit immer neben mir haben" (NK, 65).

media (e.g., photography, stereoscopy), a model of vision in which a passive observer was subject to certain positions shifted toward a model of seeing as a process in which the body of the observer plays an active role and that interrupts any direct correspondence between perception and object. The law of specific nerve energies advanced by Johannes Müller, according to which an identical stimulus can evoke different reactions in different senses, formulates the relation between stimulus and sensation as fundamentally arbitrary; physiological investigations that show how pressure on the eyeball leads to a sensation of light even in complete darkness also detach vision from the act of looking and from a corresponding logic of reference. When findings in perceptual physiology on the act of seeing break with a logic of reference, they shake not least the status of reality. Crary writes: "The theory of specific nerve energies presents the outlines of a visual modernity in which the 'referential illusion' is unsparingly laid bare. The very absence of referentiality is the ground on which new instrumental techniques will construct for an observer a new 'real' world."²⁰

Findings from perceptual physiology and the visual media that shape the discourse on reality are also decisive for Stifter's aesthetic program of "real reality." Comparisons of Stifter's technique of detailed description with the medium of photography, which were already made by his contemporaneous readers and have remained common practice up through recent Stifter scholarship,²¹ can only be limitedly affirmed. Despite all of Stifter's enthusiasm for a photo of his wife,

²⁰ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 91.

²¹ An article from 1848 describes Stifter as a "daguerreotypist who can only promise an excellent image when the sun is shining brightly and peacefully and when his object does not move the slightest during copying" (Daguerrotypisten, der nur dann ein treffliches Bild versprechen kann, wenn eine helle, ruhige Sonne scheint und sein Objekt während des Kopierens nicht im leisesten sich regt). See Moritz Enzinger, *Adalbert Stifter in Urteil seiner Zeit* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1968), 124. Georg Gottfried Gervinus writes: "Stifter knows how to daguerreotype nature on paper." Quoted from Enzinger, *Adalbert Stifter in Urteil seiner Zeit*, 127. Also see the titlepage engraving for *Wien und die Wiener* (1842), which display a camera obscura inscribed with *Daguer*. On photography in Stifter's *Nachsommer*, see Bernd Stiegler, *Philologie des Auges: Die photographische Entdeckung der Welt im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001), 348–364. On photography and painting in "Nachkommenschaften," also see Heinz Drügh, *Ästhetik der Beschreibung: Poetische und kulturelle Energie de-skriptiver Texte (1700–2000)* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2006), 307–332. On photography with reference to Stifter's "Nachkommenschaften," see Larissa Polubojarinova, "Adalbert Stifters 'Nachkommenschaften' und der Diskurs der Photographie," in "Österreichische Literatur: Zentrum und Peripherie," ed. Alexander W. Belobratow, *Jahrbuch der Österreich-Bibliothek in St. Petersburg* 7 (2005–2006): 39–51. On photography in realism, see Gerhard Plumpe, *Der tote Blick: Zum Diskurs der Photographie in der Zeit des Realismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1990); Sabina Becker, ed., *Literatur im Jahrhundert des Auges: Realismus und Fotografie im bürgerlichen Zeitalter* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 2010).

Amalia,²² one must take note of his firm criticism of the medium of photography, which is particularly revealing for the thoughts I will develop in the following on the spatiality and temporality of perception and representation within the framework of Stifter's realistic program of "real reality":

Im Ganzen bin ich den Photographien feind, sie müssen außer Verhältnis sein, weil jede Sammellinse nur treue Bilder gibt, wenn der Gegenstand nicht in der Raumtiefe, sondern in der Ebene ist, die parallel der Linsenbreite ist, und weil jeder Mensch in dem Augenblicke, wo er von der Linse gefangen wird, starr sein muss, also nicht der ist, der er ist, woher meistens der Mangel an Leben in den Photographien röhrt.

As a whole, I am an enemy of photographs; they have to be out of proportion because every converging lens only provides true images when the object is not in the depths but on the plane that is parallel to the lens's surface and because every person has to be rigid in the moment when he is captured by the lens; that is, he is not who he is, which is where most of the lack of life in photographs stems from.²³

Stifter's critique of photography addresses its lack of "Raumtiefe" as well as its rigidity, that is, the motionlessness of the representation. In other words, space and time are the dimensions that Stifter attends to in his interest in the theory of representation; the realistic program of "real reality" aims at spatial and temporal perception and representation.²⁴ Even if – as we can assume from the outset –

²² Stifter is enthusiastic about Amalia's photo: it is "clear and determined" (klar und bestimmt) in contrast to the "fog of the imagination" (Nebel der Einbildungskraft). Adalbert Stifter to Amalia Stifter, 23 January 1866, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. August Sauer, vol. 21, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Gustav Wilhelm (Reichenberg: Franz Kraus, 1928), 137–141, here 140. "God bless the invention of photography; it has now become a blessing for me" (Gott segne die Erfindung der Lichtbilder, mir ist sie jetzt zum Segen geworden). Adalbert Stifter to Amalia Stifter, 9 March 1866, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 21:158–160, here 158.

²³ Adalbert Stifter to Gustav Heckenast, 20 July 1857, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 19:32–42, here 35.

²⁴ Herta Wolf has most decisively situated and analyzed Stifter's program of representing "real reality" in the context of contemporaneous findings in perceptual physiology. See Herta Wolf, "Optische Kammern und visuelle/virtuelle Räume," in *Der Entzug der Bilder*, ed. Michael Wetzel and Wolf (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1994), 79–102. Wolf discusses Friedrich Roderer's log cabin in the sense of the camera obscura and – following Jonathan Crary's thesis of the replacement of the camera obscura as a model for seeing and the dynamization of the field of vision – describes the "aporia" of Friedrich's "visual dispositif": "Because as long as a moving gaze could look at the stationary object, real reality and the representation of it could not be made to coincide. Looking from different views at different sights at different times of day and then transferring them to a static, flat, two-dimensional support delimited by a frame could be described in the narrative, could be imagined, but it could not be represented pictorially. This would have required other media, such as film or Cinerama" (101). Taking up Wolf's analysis (though I do not read the log cabin as a camera obscura but rather as a potentially stereoscopic setting), I will investigate interfaces between writing and visual perception and representation in Stifter's "Nachkommenschaften"; it is on this basis

Friedrich Roderer is unable to achieve these ambitious goals in the medium of painting, he nevertheless formulates the program of Stifter’s modern realism: it is on a poetic level, in narration, that Stifter’s “Nachkommenschaften” stages “real reality” as spatially and temporally differentiated within itself and as such produces it as a simulacrum.

Spatial perception and representation: Stereoscopic narration

Friedrich’s claim to want to paint “as he sees” appears in the context of contemporaneous discussions in perceptual physiology as something impossible. Since painting does not permit three-dimensional representation, it functions, along with photography, as a negative foil in discussions about spatial representation: “When the painting and the object are seen with both eyes, in the case of the painting two *similar* pictures are projected on the retinæ, in the case of the solid object the pictures are *dissimilar*; there is therefore an essential difference between the impressions on the organs of sensation in the two cases, and consequently between the perceptions formed in the mind; the painting therefore cannot be confounded with the solid object.”²⁵ Friedrich Roderer’s ambitions to paint the Dachstein and the bog such that they are indistinguishable from the real Dachstein and the real bog are rejected here – or, to be historically precise, had already been rejected in 1838 – on the basis of perceptual physiology, by Charles Wheatstone, the inventor of the mirror stereoscope and translator of an abridged edition of Jan Evangelista Purkinjé’s influential study on subjective

that – so my thesis – the representational program of “real reality” becomes manifest in the sense of a stereoscopic and serial narrative.

25 Charles Wheatstone, “Contributions to the Physiology of Vision – Part the First: On Some Remarkable, and Hitherto Unobserved, Phenomena of Binocular Vision,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 128 (1838): 371–394; repr. in *Brewster and Wheatstone on Vision*, ed. Nicholas J. Wade (London: Academic Press, 1983), 66. Also see Oliver Wendell Holmes, “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1859, 738–748: “The first effect of looking at a good photograph through the stereoscope is a surprise such as no painting ever produced. The mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture. The scraggy branches of a tree in the foreground run out at us as if they would scratch our eyes out. The elbow of a figure stands forth so as to make us almost uncomfortable. Then there is such a frightful amount of detail, that we have the same sense of infinite complexity which Nature gives us. A painter shows us masses; the stereoscopic figure spares us nothing, – all must be there, every stick, straw, scratch, as faithfully as the dome of St. Peter’s, or the summit of Mont Blanc, or the ever-moving stillness of Niagara” (744).

vision into English.²⁶ In contrast to painting, the stereoscope, which was developed in close connection to the study of spatial perception,²⁷ is capable of representing space. In a break with the monocular orientation of seeing in the camera obscura, the stereoscope addresses the binocularity of the viewing body. Essential for the stereoscope is the fact that the images are not two identical ones but slightly shifted and presented separately for the eyes and are only synthesized into a single image when viewed through the stereoscope. The reproduction of two nonidentical images precedes, in other words, a spatial perception that is perceived as a unity. The stereoscope is thus also paradigmatic for the break with the referentiality of perception in seeing in modernity and the corresponding conception of the real as simulacrum. David Brewster, who improved on Wheatstone's mirror stereoscope by inserting lenticular prisms in 1844, logically conceptualizes the stereoscopic image as a simulacrum: "[T]he relief is given by the play of the optic axes in uniting, in rapid *succession*, similar points of the two pictures."²⁸ According to Crary, "Brewster thus confirms there never really is a stereoscopic image, that it is a conjuration, an effect of the observer's experience of the differential between two other images."²⁹

It is precisely this character of stereoscopic representation as a simulacrum that is manifested as a reality effect.³⁰ Helmholtz speaks of "a kind of vividness which is missing in either of the pictures when viewed without the stereoscope" (eine Art der Lebendigkeit, welche jedem einzelnen dieser Bilder, ausserhalb des Stereoskops gesehen, nicht zukommt).³¹ With regard to informational content and

26 Goethe had already reviewed Jan Evangelista Purkinjé's dissertation, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Sehens in subjectiver Hinsicht* (Prague: Clave, 1819), in 1824. See Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Das Sehen in subjektiver Hinsicht, von Purkinje 1819," in *Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, pt. 1, vol. 25, *Schriften zur allgemeinen Naturlehre, Geologie und Mineralogie*, ed. Wolf von Engelhardt and Manfred Wenzel (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989), 817–827. Wheatstone's English summary from 1830 ("abridged description of the most interesting of Dr. Purkinje's experiments") is based on the 1823 reprint of the first volume. Charles Wheatstone, "Contributions to the Physiology of Vision, no. 1," *Journal of the Royal Institution of Great Britain* 1, no. 1 (October 1830): 101–117; repr. in Wade, *Brewster and Wheatstone on Vision*, 249.

27 On the significance of the stereoscope to the modernization of vision, see Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, esp. 116–136.

28 David Brewster, *The Stereoscope: Its History, Theory, and Construction* (London: John Murray, 1856), 53.

29 Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 122.

30 See Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 141–148.

31 Hermann von Helmholtz, "Optisches über Malerei," in *Populäre wissenschaftliche Vorträge*, vol. 3 (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1876), 61.

vividness, Helmholtz states that stereoscopic representation and the perception of reality not mediated by instruments are equal:

Die Naturwahrheit solcher stereoskopischer Photographien und die Lebhaftigkeit, mit der sie die Körperform darstellen, ist nun in der That so gross, dass manche Objekte, zum Beispiel Gebäude, die man aus stereoskopischen Bildern kennt, wenn man später in Wirklichkeit vor sie hintritt, nicht mehr den Eindruck eines unbekannten oder nur halb bekannten Gegenstandes machen. Man gewinnt in solchen Fällen durch den wirklichen Anblick des abgebildeten Gegenstandes, wenigstens für die Formverhältnisse, keine neuen und genaueren Anschauungen mehr, als man schon hat.

These stereoscopic photographs are so true to nature and so life-like in their portrayals of material things, that after viewing such a picture and recognizing in it some object like a house, for instance, we get the impression, when we actually do see this object, that we have already seen it before and are more or less familiar with it. In cases of this kind, the actual view of the thing itself does not add anything new or more accurate to the previous apperception we got from the picture, so far at least as mere form relations are concerned.³²

With the stereoscope, reality and optics become identical.³³ The stereoscope is not an apparatus that phantasmagorically obscures the process of image generation but rather one that exhibits the medial construction of perception and reality.³⁴

What Friedrich Roderer desires from painting seems to be contemporaneously guaranteed, in other words, by the stereoscope. The distinction between the spatial representation of the stereoscope and painting is by no means as schematic as the discourse of perceptual physiology suggests it to be. For example, using Courbet, Manet, Seurat, and Cézanne, Crary identifies "features of stereoscopic imagery" in painting itself.³⁵ Peter Roderer's program of "real reality" should undoubtedly also be situated in the context of the "emergence of this new optically constructed space," in which "both the 'realism' of the stereoscope and the 'experiments' of certain painters" participated.³⁶ Friedrich Roderer's log cabin for painting the bog could be read in this sense as a binocular arrangement: in

32 Hermann von Helmholtz, *Handbuch der physiologischen Optik* (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1867), 641; Hermann von Helmholtz, *Treatise on Physiological Optics*, ed. P. C. Southall, vol. 3 (Menasha: Optical Society of America, 1925), 303.

33 "No other form of representation in the nineteenth century had so conflated the real with the optical." Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 124.

34 "[T]he Wheatstone model left the hallucinatory and fabricated nature of the experience undisguised." Crary, 129. "A crucial feature of these optical devices of the 1830s and 1840s is the undisguised nature of their operational structure [. . .]. Even though they provide access to 'the real,' they make no claim that the real is anything other than a mechanical production" (132).

35 Crary, 126. See also Angela Breidbach, *Anschauungsraum bei Cézanne: Cézanne und Helmholtz* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003).

36 Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 126.

the mode of doubling, the log house places represented reality *next to* real reality. Stifter, who was interested in optical technology and spatial representation and was obsessed with repetition, constructs here a stereoscopic scene in nuce. I do not mean to claim that there is any structural analogy between the stereoscopic production of images and Friedrich Roderer's log cabin. The differences are obvious. Stifter does not speak of a synthesized vision that combines what is juxtaposed into a spatial perception or representation. Friedrich also envisions the painted and real bog to be indistinguishable, while stereoscopic perception is based on the nonidentity of the two pictures (though Friedrich's serial technique of painting, which I will discuss later, certainly aims at the serial nonidentity of representation). Nevertheless, the discourse on stereoscopic perception and representation seems to be informative in an epistemic respect for reading the program of "real reality." With the indistinguishability of represented reality and perceived reality, Friedrich Roderer ultimately aims at the simulacrum structure of the real. Stifter's "real reality" – already itself a doubled phrase – elevates reality, which is irreducibly perceived as doubled, to the status of a program of realism. And even if the log house does not generate the desired stereoscopic reality effects, it does reveal the manufactured and medial constitution of the real.

Far removed from the objectives of poetic realism, Stifter's program of "real reality" is rather an endeavor in the poetics of knowledge that makes use of a modern optical *dispositif* for questions of poetics and representation theory. Friedrich Roderer's landscape painting – the text leaves no doubt about this – cannot at all satisfy his programmatic claim. But what fails in the medium of painting succeeds in literary representation. The text thus states, on the one hand, regarding Friedrich's view of the bog: "I scarcely made it so far as to step out under the apple tree in the evening sometimes and *look out* into the bog" (kaum daß ich zuweilen Abends ein wenig unter den Apfelbaum trat, und in das Moor *hinaus sah*; NK, 45; emphasis mine); and, on the other, regarding Friedrich's view of the picture: "and I then often went into this adjoining room while I was working and *looked out* of it *out* at my picture" (und ich ging nun während der Arbeit oft in dieses Nebengemach, und *sah* aus demselben auf mein Bild *hinaus*; NK, 44; emphasis mine). Since Friedrich looks out ("hinaussieht") both at the bog and at the picture, the real and painted bog become indistinguishable; the collapse of the reference systems into a simulacrum produces a "real reality" effect, which also bears the index of the spatial. When Friedrich looks out on "real reality," it has to do with a spatial representation. The modern *dispositif* of seeing undergoes a poetological turn in Stifter's "Nachkommenschaften": the referential illusion aimed at by the concept of "real reality" is uncovered through stereoscopic narration.

Temporal perception and representation: Serial painting and narration

Spatial representation is, as already mentioned, only one aspect of "real reality": Friedrich Roderer's and – as the critique of photography makes clear – also Stifter's ambitions in the theory of representation also aim at movement, that is, at the representation of time. And this is precisely where Friedrich Roderer's serial technique of painting the bog at different times of day comes into play.³⁷

[I]ch wollte Moor in Morgenbeleuchtung, Moor in Vormittagbeleuchtung, Moor in Mittagbeleuchtung, Moor in Nachmittagbeleuchtung beginnen, und alle Tage an den Stunden, die dazu geeignet wären, an dem entsprechenden Blatte malen, so lange es der Himmel erlaubte. [. . .] Es ist doch ein Glück, daß ich für meinen Kasten eine Vorrichtung erfunden habe, viel ölnasse Blätter in ihm unterbringen zu können, ohne daß sie sich verwischen.

I wanted to start bog in the light of dawn, bog in the morning light, bog in the midday light, bog in the afternoon light and to paint every day on the corresponding sheet at the suitable hours, as long as the sky allowed it. [. . .] It is really fortunate that I have invented a device for my case so that I can put many wet oil sheets in it without their becoming smudged. (NK, 38)

To realize his serial technique, Friedrich Roderer develops his own procedure "viel ölnasse Bilder [. . .] unter[zu]bringen [. . .], ohne daß sie sich verwischen." In other words, he simultaneously paints different pictures and parallel studies that show the bog as the same motif but in different lighting. It is fundamental that these pictures do not blur together: that is, the differences, which will be explored systematically and serially, can be minimized, but they must be preserved (one could probably speak of an "art of nuance"). The bog series encompasses the bog in the

37 On Friedrich Roderer's painting program in relation to programmatic realism, see Christian Begemann, "Roderers Bilder – Hadlaubs Abschriften: Einige Überlegungen zu Mimesis und Wirklichkeitskonstitution im deutschsprachigen Realismus," in *Die Dinge und die Zeichen: Dimensionen des Realistischen in der Erzählliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Sabine Schneider and Barbara Hunfeld (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 25–41. While Begemann states that "Friedrich Roderer's project [. . .] corresponds quite exactly to the intentions of programmatic realism" (28), according to Ralf Simon, "Friedrich Roderer's painting project intensely pursues the end of the realist program." Ralf Simon, "Gespenster des Realismus: Moderne-Konstellationen in den Spätwerken von Raabe, Stifter und C. F. Meyer," in Graevenitz, *Konzepte der Moderne*, 225. See also Ralf Simon, "Übergänge: Literarischer Realismus und ästhetische Moderne," in *Realismus: Epoche – Werke – Autoren*, ed. Christian Begemann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 207–223. Neither Begemann nor Simon discuss temporality and the serial technique of painting. Only Dirk Oschmann refers to a "seriality" that shapes "the protagonist's *Kunstwollen*," without, however, discussing it further. Oschmann, "Absolute Darstellung," 147.

light of dawn, morning, midday, and afternoon. It seems to be less about the motif, the bog, than about its permanent change in light – that is, in time (dawn, morning, noon, afternoon). Indeed, the serial technique aims at fleetingness, at the passing of time; the object serves as the vehicle for the permanent change in time and is, moreover, almost made to disappear as a motif. This is also supported by the fact that Friedrich Roderer does not choose a stable part of the bog but orients his position according to the best lighting, as if he were trying to paint the passing of time itself: “I really had to hurry; the hours flew by like seconds, the lighting changed, and I had to find the spots from which the lighting was the most beautiful” (Ich mußte mich ungemein beeilen; die Stunden flogen wie Augenblicke dahin, die Beleuchtungen wechselten, und ich mußte die Stellen aufsuchen, von denen sich die Beleuchtungen am schönsten zeigten; NK, 38). Another passage formulates the dependence of the place or “Stelle” on time even more explicitly: “I continued painting at this spot until my time was up” (Ich [. . .] malte noch so lange fort, bis meine Zeit an dieser Stelle aus war; NK, 43).³⁸

While Friedrich Roderer initially criticized how everyone paints the Dachstein differently, in his studies of the bog, he develops a painting technique that decidedly aims at permanent otherness and change. Friedrich’s sentence “Everything changes” (So ändert sich alles; NK, 33) may therefore also claim validity from an aesthetic point of view. The passing of time and the temporality of visual perception, for which the object is only a vehicle, become the standards for an artistic production that demands a serial technique. The application of Friedrich’s serial studies to a *single* picture or masterpiece therefore appears from the outset as a problematic undertaking: “I wanted to develop a series of studies that would then serve to allow me to tackle a very large painting” (Ich wollte eine Reihe von Entwürfen ausarbeiten, die mir dann dienen sollten, ein sehr großes Bild in Angriff nehmen zu können; NK, 41). The later decision to destroy the almost finished picture is based on the following explanation: “My large painting, which is finished except for some small details, cannot represent the gloominess, the simplicity, and the sublimity of the bog. [. . .] That is why the picture has to be destroyed” (Mein großes Bild, welches bis auf Kleinigkeiten fertig ist, kann die Düsterheit, die Einfachheit und Erhabenheit des Moores nicht darstellen. [. . .] Darum muß dieses Bild vernichtet werden; NK, 92).

If one reads this explanation against the background of Friedrich Roderer’s serial technique, with its accentuation of permanent change, the question arises as to how any *single* image could ever satisfy the aesthetic standards of *Nachkommenschaften* – that is, the representation of time and movement. In short, the narrative abandons the *single* image in favor of infinite change of the thing in the time and temporality of

³⁸ When place (“Stelle”) becomes a medium of time, it itself undergoes a serialization, is manifested as a dynamic of permanent displacement, and becomes a fleeting, dispersed event.

visual perception, as articulated by Friedrich Roderer's technique of serial representation.³⁹ One can say with respect to Friedrich's painting technique that the serialization of perception and representation owes its existence to the superimposition of writing and the structural laws of writing onto visual media: "Moor in Morgenbeleuchtung, Moor in Vormittagbeleuchtung, Moor in Mittagbeleuchtung, Moor in Nachmittagbeleuchtung" is unmistakably one of Stifter's syntagmas.⁴⁰

The medium in which the temporalization of representation takes place in "Nachkommenschaften" is the literary text. There is a passage that poetologically stages "real reality" in its temporality; it is a description of a landscape and serves as a model for depicting the bog:

In Wien ist eine Landschaft. Vorne geht über Lehmgrund ein klares Wasser, dann sind Bäume, ein Wäldchen, zwischen dessen Stämmen man wieder in freie Luft sieht. Der Himmel hat ein einfaches Wolkengebäude. Das ist mehrere hundert Millionen Male auf der Welt gewesen, und doch ist die Landschaft die gewaltigste und erschütterndste die es geben kann.

39 The thoughts on seriality developed here are also relevant to the question of the sublime in Stifter's work. "Mein großes Bild [. . .] kann die Düsterheit, die Einfachheit und Erhabenheit des Moores nicht darstellen" (NK, 92), says Friedrich Roderer before destroying his painting. The fact that a *single* picture is not capable of representing the sublime nature of the bog may be in no small part due to the fact that the sublime itself undergoes a serialization in Stifter. Also, as Stifter's "Vorrede" to *Bunte Steine* shows, the sublime is located not in large things ("mein großes Bild") but in "small things" (das Kleine), as it is articulated in the innumerable repetitions of the everyday, in "ordinary everyday infinitely recurring actions" (die gewöhnlichen alltäglichen in Unzahl wiederkehrenden Handlungen). Adalbert Stifter, "Preface" to *Motley Stones*, trans. Isabel Fargo Cole (New York: New York Review Books, 2021), 22, 26; Adalbert Stifter, "Vorrede" to *Bunte Steine, Werke und Briefe*, vol. 2.2, *Bunte Steine: Buchfassungen*, ed. Helmut Bergner (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982), 9–16, here 9, 14. On this, see also Paul Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 139–162. It is only a "small" step from the ordinary and everyday to the uncanny, which is the actual scene of the sublime in Stifter. In this sense, the bog is characterized in "Nachkommenschaften" not only as a sublime place but also as a place of the uncanny: "Since hikers [. . .] avoided the bog in the evening, partly because of the fumes, partly because of the ghosts" ([D]a die Fußgänger [. . .] das Moor am Abende mieden, theils der Dünste, theils der Gespenster wegen; NK, 45). On Stifter's modern transformation of the sublime into the uncanny, see Michael Minden, "Stifter and the Postmodern Sublime," *Jahrbuch des Adalbert-Stifter-Instituts* 11 (2004): 9–21; Eva Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen: Darstellungsproblematik und Sprachreflexion in der Prosa Adalbert Stifters* (Munich: Iudicium, 1992), esp. 9–30; Isolde Schiffermüller, *Buchstäblichkeit und Bildlichkeit bei Adalbert Stifter: Dekonstruktive Lektüren* (Innsbruck: Sturzflüge, 1996), esp. 31–50.

40 Another syntagma is: "Moor im Regen," "Moor im Nebel," which could easily be continued with a further aggregate, Stifter's favorite aggregate: "Moor im Schnee." The passage also underscores the conceptual aspect of how Stifter forms series: "I had already planned to paint bog in the rain from my window. I have not yet thought about bog in the fog" (Moor im Regen hatte ich mir schon vorgenommen, von meinem Fenster aus zu malen. Ueber das Moor im Nebel habe ich noch nicht nachgedacht; NK, 38).

In Vienna there is a landscape. In front, a clear water goes over a clay ground, then there are trees, a small forest, between whose trunks one can see into the open air again. The sky has a simple cloud structure. This has occurred several hundred million times in the world, and yet the landscape is the most powerful and unsettling landscape that can exist. (NK, 65)

As in the case of “looking out” (*hinausschauen*) at the bog and the picture, the reference of the first sentence of this passage is also unclear. The wording does not make it possible to determine whether we are talking about a real landscape or a landscape painting. Fritz Novotny argues – and the scholarship on Stifter has followed him⁴¹ – that this is a reference to Jacob van Ruisdael’s painting *The Great Forest* (ca. 1655/1660) in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.⁴² In Stifter’s manuscript, one finds the following sentence: “In Vienna, there is a landscape painted by Ruisdael” (In Wien ist eine von Ruisdael gemalte Landschaft). “[V]on Ruisdael gemalte” has been deleted in the magazine edition of the story, a deletion that seems to me to be decisive for Stifter’s literary practice, because it is precisely this deletion that brings about the referential ambivalence of the passage – that is, “real reality” or a reality effect. The scholarship has emphasized the simplicity and generality of this landscape description, as well as the fact that it is a “miserable description of the picture” if one actually takes Ruisdael’s painting as its basis.⁴³ The choice of words is as simple as can be: the verbs *sein, haben, gehen, sehen, geben*; the nouns *Landschaft, Wasser, Bäume, Wäldchen, Stämme, Luft, Himmel*; the adjectives *klar, frei, einfach*. Polheim concludes “that, above all, the essential, simple, and general constitutes the real reality of the described picture and its landscape. [. . .] It is precisely the generally valid, simple, essential that is powerful and unsettling.”⁴⁴ A common interpretation of Stifter.

With regard to the dynamics of the serial that I have analyzed here – *Nachkommenschaft* on the level of representation – a different aspect of this literary description seems to me to be particularly interesting. It is not the simplicity of the vocabulary that is decisive but a moment of temporality of a syntactic nature: “In Wien ist eine Landschaft. Vorne geht über Lehmgrund ein klares Wasser, dann sind Bäume, ein Wäldchen, zwischen dessen Stämmen man wieder in freie Luft sieht.”

If the passage were a description of a picture, one would expect it to define the position of the trees – for example, “in the background” – but instead it abandons

41 See, among others, Polheim, “Die wirkliche Wirklichkeit,” esp. 393–395.

42 Fritz Novotny, *Stifter als Maler* (Vienna: A. Schroll, 1947), 12; see also Novotny, “Adalbert Stifters ‘Nachkommenschaften’ als Malernovelle,” in *Über das “Elementare” in der Kunstgeschichte und andere Aufsätze* (Vienna: Rosenbaum, 1968), 90–91, here 91.

43 Polheim, “Die wirkliche Wirklichkeit,” 396.

44 Polheim, 397.

any topology in favor of temporality: "then" are trees. *Dann* explicitly denotes a moment in time, a, if you will, literal *Nachkommenschaft*. With *dann*, *Nachkommenschaft* becomes the syntactic moment of Stifter's description. The syntagmatic concatenations in Stifter's descriptive techniques are structurally endless: they are series of *dann* (then), *oder* (or), and *und* (and). Here first a *dann* series:

[D]ann waren die Schnecken [. . .] – dann die Fliegen [. . .] – dann die Hummel [. . .] – die Schmetterlinge, besonders ein kleiner [. . .], dann noch ein kleinerer mit Flügeln, wie eitel Abendröthe – dann endlich war die Ammer.

Then there were the snails [. . .] – then the flies [. . .] – then the bumblebees [. . .] – the butterflies, especially a small one [. . .], then another smaller one with wings like pure sunsets – then finally there was the bunting.⁴⁵

dann farbige Blitze – dann blau

then colorful flashes – then blue⁴⁶

Then an *oder* series:

Inmitten all dieser Herrlichkeiten stand er, oder ging, oder sprang, oder saß er.

In the middle of all of these splendors, he stood, or he walked, or jumped, or sat.⁴⁷

Further an *und* series:

blau und blau und blau

blue and blue and blue

und rückte und rückte [. . .]

and adjusted and adjusted [. . .]⁴⁸

45 Adalbert Stifter, "Das Haidedorf," in *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1.4, *Studien: Buchfassungen*, 173–207, here 178.

46 Adalbert Stifter, "Der Hochwald," in *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1.4, *Studien: Buchfassungen*, 209–318, here 256–257.

47 Stifter, "Das Haidedorf," 178. One can find the following *oder* series in Stifter's "Aus dem bairischen Walde": "As the forest pushes long, soft, cushion-like knolls or gentle rises away from each other – knolls and coverings on which are either forest again, or fragmented spinneys, or bright meadows, or greening fields – so the houses stand on such meadows or on a spinney or on a hillside" (Wie der Wald lange weiche polsterartige Erhöhungen oder sanfte Dachungen von sich hinab schiebt, auf denen entweder wieder Wald, oder zerstückte Wäldchen, oder helle Matten oder grünende Felder sind, so stehen auf solchen Matten oder an einem Wäldchen oder auf einem Hange die Häuser). Adalbert Stifter, "Aus dem bairischen Walde," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 15:319–353, here 323.

48 Stifter, "Der Hochwald," 256–257.

In “Nachkommenschaften,” one reads:

[I]ch suchte das Moor und den daranstoßenden, einfarbigen Fichtenwald und die gegenüberliegenden Weidehügel und dem hinter ihm liegenden, ebenfalls einfarbigen Fichtenwald, und die hinter diesem Fichtenwalde emporstehenden mit blauen und mit grauen Lichtern glitzernden Berge zu malen.

I tried to paint the bog and the monochrome spruce forest abutting it and the pasture hills opposite it and the likewise monochrome spruce forest behind it and the mountains that rise behind this spruce forest and glitter with blue and gray lights. (NK, 32)

Through *und*, *oder*, and *dann* series, Stifter installs temporality and movement as a syntactic, poetological aspect of description. Here temporality in descriptions is nothing other than the time of describing: “dann sind Bäume” can be read as a representation of the time of describing in the mode of description, a structurally interminable undertaking.

What Stifter’s serial poetics, which aims at temporalizing representation, articulates is the structural intertwining of the *description of time* with the *time of description*. In this context, a glance at Stifter’s painter’s diary, which he meticulously kept from 1854 until the last year of his life, is striking. It does not contain any travel reports or descriptions but rather the simple documentation of his painting activity according to the date, the beginning of painting, the end of painting, and the object, which are then added up to the duration of painting in hours and minutes. It is impossible to determine whether we are dealing here with a temporal sequencing of painting or the fragmentation of time based on the activity of painting. In 1854, Stifter began a series of paintings (with titles such as *Vergangenheit*, *Sehnsucht*, *Strömendes Wasser*, *Ruhe*, *Einsamkeit*, *Schwermuth*), one of which he called *Bewegung*. From October to December 1858 and from February to April 1859, Stifter worked almost exclusively on *Bewegung*, and afterwards with interruptions until 1867.⁴⁹ In the diary there are almost identical pages that list “an der Bewegung gemalt” as the object (see Figures 4.1–4.3).

⁴⁹ See Adalbert Stifter, *Tagebuch über Malereiarbeiten* [excerpts], in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 14, (Prague: Calve, 1901), 343–350. On Stifter’s painting diary and his works “Bewegung,” see Novotny, *Adalbert Stifter als Maler*, 71, 93–96; Karl Möseneder, “Stimmung und Erdleben: Adalbert Stifters Ikonologie der Landschaftsmalerei,” in Laufhütte and Möseneder, *Adalbert Stifter*, esp. 32–35; Wedekind, *Wiederholen – Beharren – Auslöschen*, 143–164; John, “Übermalungen,” esp. 119–122; Ursula Mahlendorf, “Stifters Absage an die Kunst?,” in *Goethezeit: Studien zur Erkenntnis und Rezeption Goethes und seiner Zeitgenossen; Festschrift für Stuart Atkins*, ed. Gerhart Hoffmeister (Bern: A. Francke, 1981), 369–383, esp. 373–376; Donald C. Riechel, “Adalbert Stifter as Landscape Painter: A View from Cézanne’s Mont Sainte-Victoire,” *Modern Austrian Literature* 20, no. 1 (1987): 1–21, esp. 14–16.

Index	Reckens	Tagebuch	Reckens	Wochen
9	9.27	12.24	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	2 57
10	8.58	11.22	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	2 24
"	12.15	12.47	an das Lederzeug (Lederzeug)	— 32
13	9.10	12.30	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	3 20
"	3.8	3.45	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	— 37
14	11.21	12.55	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	1 34
15	10.54	12.27	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	1 33
"	12.41	1.0	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	— 14
16	9.7	12.30	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	3 23
17	9.21	9.54	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	— 33
"	9.54	11.50	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	1 38
"	11.50	1.0	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	1 12
18	9	10.30	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	1 30
"	10.30	12.15	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	1 46
20	8.56	1	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	4 6
21	9.22	11.45	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	2 23
22	9.34	12.25	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	2 51
23	9.3	11.44	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	2 41
24	8.49	8.49	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	— 14
25	9.1	12.15	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	4 17
26	8.35	8.52	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	3 10
27	9.11	12.21	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	— 46
28	8.44	11.30	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	2 19
29	9.6	11.30	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	2 19
30	8.59	11.36	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	2 37
31	9.26	12.46	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	3 20
"	3.	4.	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	— 1
Salbenwaren				
1	9.23	12.31	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	3 8
2	9.11	11.25	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	2 14
"	12.23	12.39	an das Baumwollgewebe (Lederzeug)	— 36
3	8.5	1.14	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	— 5
"	2.11	2.42	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	4 5
4	8.4	12.9	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	3 40
5	8.32	12	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	2 56
6	9.10	12.6	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	1 1
7	11.10	12.11	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	— 56
8	8.28	12.29	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	3 56
9	8.44	11.30	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	2 48
"	3.15	4.28	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	1 8
10	9.35	12.36	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	3 1
"	2.44	3.23	an das Baumwollgewebe (waffe Brüder)	— 39
Summe		an das Baumwollgewebe	96	38
(3)		an das Lederzeug	—	32

Figure 4.1: Adalbert Stifter, Tagebuch über Malereiarbeiten/am 5t Februar 1854 begonnen, January–April 1859, 15. Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, Adalbert Stifter Archive, inv. no. 238. © National Library of the Czech Republic.

Monat Jahr	Woch Nr.	Zeit Minuten	Gymnasium		Woch Nr.	Minuten
<i>Gymnasium</i>						
11.	8.12	11.55	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		3	43
12.	8.45	11.45	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		3	—
"	2.59	3.51	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt - - -		—	52
14.	9.18	12.5	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		2	47
"	2.59	3.30	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt - - -		—	34
15.	8.38	10.34	zu Tas. Gymnasium - - -		1	56
16.	9.45	12.49	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	40
17.	8.44	12.34	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	50
18.	8.30	11.48	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	18
19.	7.59	11.59	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	—
"	3.8	4.13	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	5
21.	7.52	10.48	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		2	53
"	11.0	12.38	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	38
"	3.20	5.8	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	38
22.	7.47	12.0	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	13
"	2.58	3.57	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		—	59
23.	8.40	12.24	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	35
24.	8.53	12.10	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	17
"	2.51	3.23	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		—	52
25.	8.30	12.45	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	15
"	4.15	5.17	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	2
26.	7.35	11.14	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	39
"	2.45	4.13	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	28
28.	9.3	1.21	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	18
<i>Museum</i>						
1.	8.36	12.36	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	—
2.	9.2	1.22	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	20
3.	9.18	11.0	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	42
4.	8.34	12.59	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	25
"	3.25	3.89	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		—	34
5.	10.30	1.30	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		3	—
6.	8.50	10.40	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	50
"	2.48	4.44	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		1	54
8.	8.13	12.30	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (Friedrichs Bay) - - -		4	12
9.	8.37	11.87	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		3	14
10.	8.22	4.23	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		1	2
10.	8.14	9.58	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		1	42
"	2.55	5.18	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		1	23
11.	10.56	1.5	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		2	9
"	5.11	5.42	zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt (nur für Brüder) - - -		—	31
<i>Summe</i>			zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt - - -		91	29
<i>Summe</i>			zu Tas. Gymnasium grunalt - - -		6	6

Figure 4.2: Stifter, Tagebuch über Malereiarbeiten, January–April 1859, 16. © National Library of the Czech Republic.

Monat Jahr	Nummer	Genre und Titel	Mindestz. Maxim.
12	8.14	11.56	
	2.56	4.41	
"	8.39	9.23	
13	8.39	9.23	
16	3.50	5.9	
18	9.12	12.13	
19.	8.28	11.11	
20	8.6	12.9	
24	8.27	12.27	
"	3.41	4.21	
25	8.43	12.34	
26	8.38	12.25	
27	9.31	11.35	
28	7.55	9.55	
29	4.16	4.46	
"	8.20	12.11	
"	3.41	4.30	
31	8.13	12.40	
<u>April.</u>			
1	9.39	12.23	
2	9.19	12.46	
4	8.26	10.26	
5	9.29	10.12	
6	9.26	12.81	
7	8.39	10.57	
"	11.23	1.41	
10	9.10	12.18	
11	8.19	12.57	
"	3.0	3.45	
12	8.25	10.25	
13	8.13	12.14	
16	11.5	1.2	
17	8.58	10.36	
18	8.44	10.24	
20	8.33	9.57	
21	9.19	10.10	
22	8.21	1.44	
23	8.46	10.46	
25	7.50	9.27	
30	11.30	1.0	
<u>Summe</u>		See des Brunnings gruwall	97 15
(10)			

Figure 4.3: Stifter, Tagebuch über Malereiarbeiten, January–April 1859, 17. © National Library of the Czech Republic.

On page 17 of the diary, one finds the balance of 97 hours and 15 minutes “an der Bewegung gemalt”; the Prague Reichenberg edition calculates 1163 hours and 54 minutes of time painting *Bewegung* in total. What interests me here is not Stifter’s activity as a painter but the seriality of writing as it is found in the painter’s diary. Here, the formulation of the object as “an der Bewegung gemalt” seems to me to be decisive. It is just as unclearly indicated that movement is a painting here as the landscape in Vienna is indicated to be a painting. With movement, time and the question of the temporalization of representation are once again evoked. “An der Bewegung gemalt” could thus be read as “painting movement, that is, painting time itself” – and how else could this be done than through the movement and time of painting? In other words, the meticulous temporal documentation of painting “an der Bewegung” articulates the structural intertwining of the *painting of time* with the *time of painting*, and it does so in the same form as Stifter’s poetics: in the seriality of *writing* – a piece of modern literature.

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Barbara Wittmann

Le temps retrouvé: Claude Monet's Series between Impression and Belatedness

Impressionist paintings are setting suns.¹

—T. J. Clark

Authors – Paul Valéry states it clearly – know not what they do. The author is the most unsuitable person imaginable “to know what others call his work.”² This fact is all the more true when more time has passed in their life’s work. For according to Valéry, with the passage of time, memory also becomes influential, the memory of the work’s laborious development, of the “whole *context* of incidents, hesitations, parts that have been deleted or never executed, makeshifts and surprises.”³ For the author, there can therefore never be a completed work, only accidentally finished and, above all, abandoned works.

By comparison, the interpreter has it easy, because in reading and viewing, texts and pictures become delimited as timeless and readable forms, losing their character as things that were made and developed. But what if an artist wanted to make subjective experiences the content of their art? What if this artist were an impressionist whose works did not overcome or suppress the contingency of the conditions of their creation but rather made the arbitrariness of the moment the theme of paintings? Wouldn’t this impressionist have to work to lift the hermeneutic asymmetry between production and reception, and wouldn’t the proliferating

1 T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 113.

2 Paul Valéry, “The Creation of Art,” in *Aesthetics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, vol. 13 of *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, ed. Jackson Mathews (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 125.

3 Valéry, 125.

Note: This is a translation of an essay published in 2004 under the title “*Le temps retrouvé: Claude Monets Getreideschober zwischen Impression und Nachträglichkeit*,” in *Momente im Prozess: Zeitlichkeit künstlerischer Produktion*, ed. Karin Gludovatz and Martin Peschken (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 211–226. In the course of preparing this essay for republication, I have revised and expanded it and, where necessary, updated the bibliographical references, but I have largely retained the argumentation from the original version.

Translated by Anthony Mahler

time of representation (the winding paths of memory) then become visible in the represented time (of the moment, of the impression)?

In the following, I will treat – using the example of a particularly significant individual case – the fetishization of the first moment in impressionism and the consequences of that fetishization for producing and finishing a work. It will be about the (fantasized) origin of the impressionistic picture, about the ruse of the impression as the epiphanic moment in aesthetic production when a sensation becomes, as it were, physically imprinted on an artist's sense of sight so that they can produce paintings that, for their part, can then be titled “impressions” again. Precisely this short-circuiting of origin and work determines the specific incompleteness of impressionistic paintings; for it is precisely their devices for producing immediacy – their character as cropped selections and their open brushwork – that make finished paintings too appear more abandoned than completed.

More than any other impressionist, Claude Monet was concerned with his paintings' lack of unity, a unity that was perhaps to be created at some point in the future: “I tell myself that anyone who claims to have finished a painting is terribly arrogant. To finish means complete, perfect, and I toil away without advancing, searching, groping, without accomplishing anything much, but to the point of tiring of it” (Je me dis que celui qui dit avoir fini une toile est un terrible orgueilleux. Finir voulant dire complet, parfait, et je travaille à force sans avancer, cherchant, tâtonnant, sans aboutir à grand'chose, mais au point d'en être fatigué).⁴ Once Monet had adopted completion as a requirement, he turned his attention to the contextual possibilities for retroactively transforming abandoned works into finished ones. Beginning in the early 1890s, Monet required his gallerist, Paul Durand-Ruel, to present his works exclusively in solo exhibitions.⁵ If, as Clement Greenberg has noted

⁴ Claude Monet to Gustave Geffroy, 28 March 1893; quoted from Gustave Geffroy, *Monet: Sa vie, son œuvre*, ed. Claudie Judrin (Paris: Macula, 1980), 323; all translations from French into English are by Chad Jorgensen unless otherwise noted. In this sense, Monet's stepson, Jean-Pierre Hoschedé, also reported: “I never heard Monet say about one of his paintings, even the most beautiful, that it was ‘finished.’ The word ‘finished’ did not exist in his vocabulary” (Je n'ai jamais entendu Monet déclarer de l'une de ses œuvres, même des plus belles, qu'elle fut “finie”. Pour lui, le mot fini n'existe pas en peinture – la sienne). Jean-Pierre Hoschedé, *Claude Monet ce mal connu*, in *Monet: A Retrospective*, ed. Charles F. Stuckey (New York: Park Lane, 1985), 135; Jean-Pierre Hoschedé, *Claude Monet, ce mal connu: Intimité familiale d'un demi siècle à Giverny de 1883 à 1926*, vol. 1 (Genève: P. Cailler, 1960), 113.

⁵ See Grace Seiberling, *Monet's Series* (New York: Garland, 1981), 100; Kermit Swiler Champa, “Monet and the Embrace of the Series,” in “Masterpiece” Studies: *Manet, Zola, Van Gogh, and Monet* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 119–143; on the impressionists' exhibition program in general, see Martha Ward, “Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions,” *Art Bulletin* 73.4 (1991): 599–622.

regarding Monet, the individual canvas acts as a cutout segment of a much larger image, then the larger context of the oeuvre acquires – as it is produced in the solo exhibition – a central significance.⁶ Yet ultimately in Monet's case, only the complete oeuvre in its totality can ensure such unity, which the piecemeal character and open, impressionistic brushwork of the single paintings negate. Even solo exhibitions can only guarantee the unity of the paintings – as Monet's contemporaries often regretted – for a short period of time.⁷ That is why the oeuvre must develop an inner coherence that will even endure after the art market has dispersed the ensemble into private collections and museums. What kind of inner coherence this is becomes clear if we look at contemporaneous art criticism. In 1887, Gustave Geffroy was already writing the script for the ideal reception of Monet's landscapes: "Observe [...] all these different states of nature [...] and you will see mornings rise before you, afternoons grow radiant, and the darkness of evening descend" (Observez [...] tous ces états si différents d'une même nature, et vous verrez devant vous se lever des matins, s'épanouir des midis, tomber des soirs).⁸ It seems as if the painter's work follows the cyclic temporality of nature, as if the winding time of the creative process imitates the continuous rhythm of the seasons and times of day, of weather and vegetation, and in this way overcomes the contingency and incompleteness of individual paintings. From that point on, as Maurice Kahn remarked, a single work would always be the sum of all the canvases needed to capture the

⁶ See Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Claude Monet," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 20.

⁷ For example, Louis Gillet wrote: "In some years when the artist's works are scattered through every museum in the Old and New Worlds, who will know that its most precious aspect has vanished into thin air, and that the whole striving of an artist's life has been needlessly squandered – a striving which was the most powerful effort ever made to give a decorative value to the intimate landscape, the painting of inwardness, and to bring to painting a sense of *continuity*?" (Qui saura dans quelque années, lorsque les œuvres de l'artiste se trouveront éparses dans tous les musées des deux mondes, que le plus précieux s'en est évaporé et qu'on aura laissé se perdre inutilement l'effort d'une vie d'artiste, l'effort le plus puissant qui ait été tenté pour donner au paysage intime, au tableau d'intérieur une valeur décorative et faire entrer dans la peinture le sens de la *continuité*?). Louis Gillet, "Les *Nymphéas* de M. Claude Monet," in *The Impressionists: A Retrospective*, ed. Martha Kapos (New York: Hugh Haughton Levin, 1991), 299; Louis Gillet, "L'épilogue de l'impressionnisme: Les *Nymphéas* de M. Claude Monet," *La revue hebdomadaire*, 21 August 1909, 414; quoted from Steven Z. Levine, *Monet and His Critics* (New York: Garland, 1976), 331.

⁸ Gustave Geffroy, "Salon de 1887, IV, Hors de Salon – Claude Monet, II," *La Justice*, 2 June 1887; quoted from Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et catalogue raisonné*, vol. 3, *1887–1898: Peintures* (Lausanne: La Bibliothèque des arts, 1979), 3; English translation quoted from Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet or the Triumph of Impressionism* (Cologne: Taschen, 2003), 234.

moments of a landscape: “Thus, it can be said that a particular work by Monet consists of the number of canvases it takes to fix the varied moods of a certain landscape” (On peut donc dire qu’une œuvre de Monet c’est autant de toiles qu’il en fallu pour fixer les divers instants d’un paysage).⁹

Working with series in the manner Monet established as his privileged mode of production beginning in the late 1880s and early 1890s produces a close relationship between individual paintings: as a second-order work, a series compensates for the fragmentary character of individual paintings. Producing a unity through serialization seems to be diametrically opposed, however, to the idea of an organic œuvre spanning a whole life, an ideal that we may presume was still pursued in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰ Œuvre and series – that is, a life’s work and organic wholeness on the one hand, incomplete repetition and permutation on the other – do not, of course, represent simple opposites. In the following, I would like to place Monet’s series of grain stacks at the center of my analysis not only because they are considered the incunables of the principle of seriality but also because they make visible the productive tension between the time of life and the series more than any subsequent series of paintings ever has.

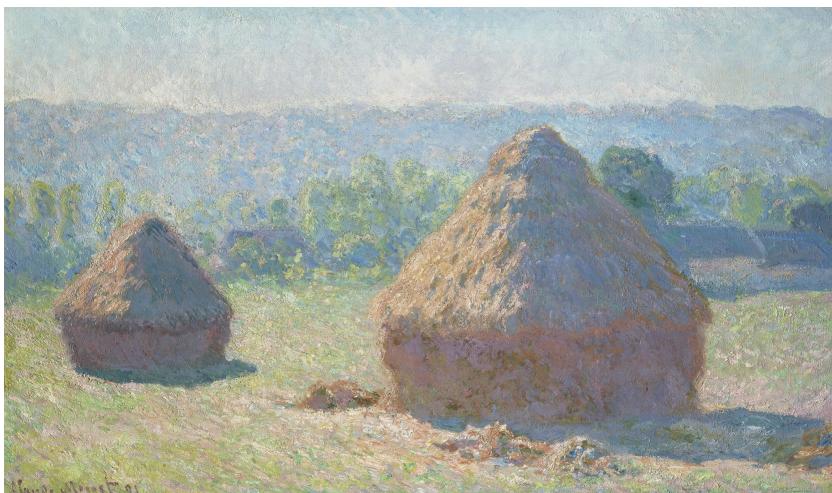


Figure 5.1: Claude Monet, *Grainstacks, End of Summer*, 1891. Paris, Musée d’Orsay, W 1266.

⁹ Maurice Kahn, “Claude Monet’s Garden,” in Stuckey, *Monet*, 242; Maurice Kahn, “Le jardin de Claude Monet,” *Le Temps*, 7 June 1904; quoted from Levine, *Monet and His Critics*, 289.

¹⁰ On the development of the notion of the œuvre as a multidimensional, organic whole, see Gabriele Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist’s Monograph and Its Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

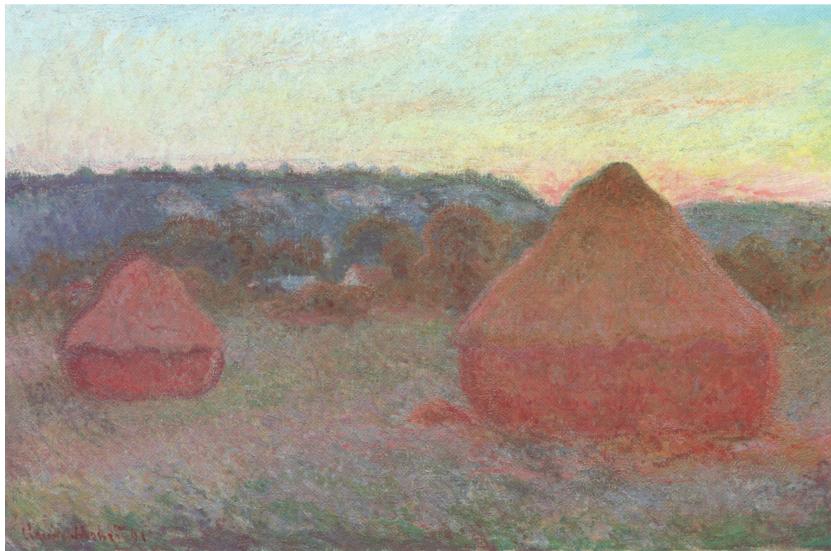


Figure 5.2: Claude Monet, *Grainstacks (End of Day, Autumn)*, 1890. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, W 1270.

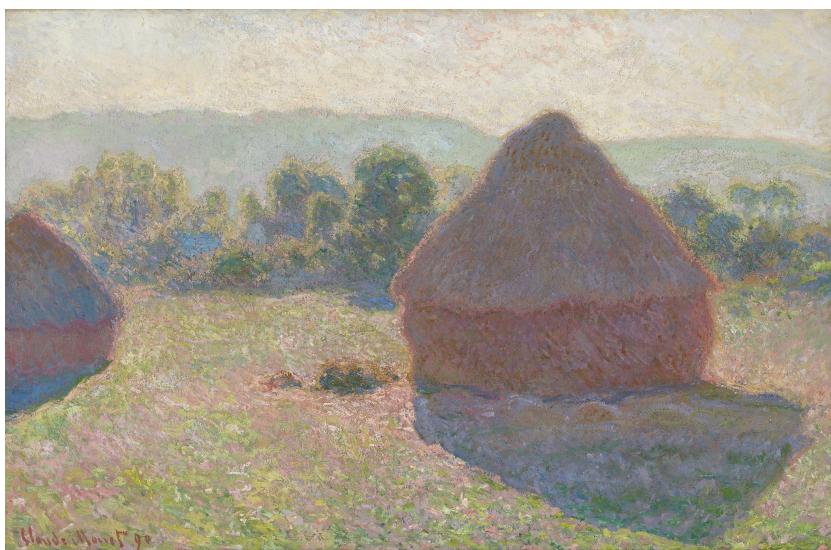


Figure 5.3: Claude Monet, *Grainstacks, Midday*, 1890. Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, W 1271.

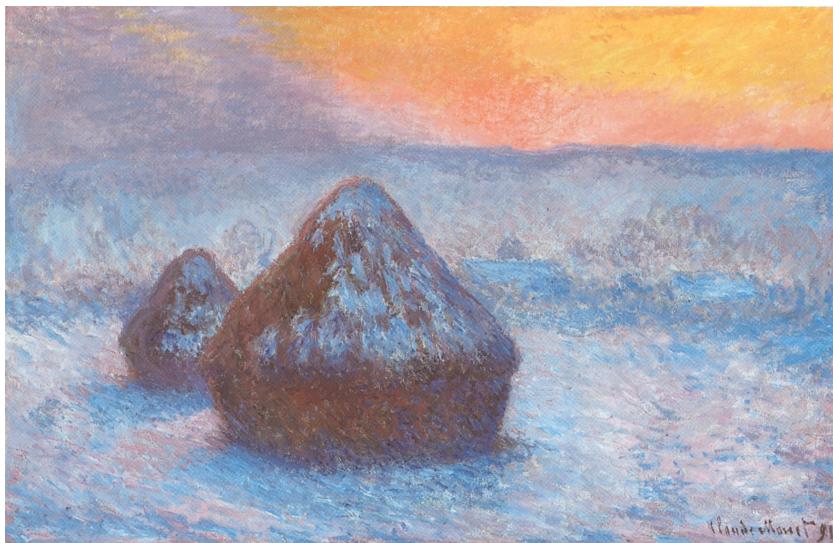


Figure 5.4: Claude Monet, *Grainstacks (Sunset, Snow Effect)*, 1891. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, W 1278.



Figure 5.5: Claude Monet, *Grainstacks (Effect of Snow and Sun)*, 1891. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, W 1279.



Figure 5.6: Claude Monet, *Grainstack, Morning Snow Effect*, 1891. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, W 1280.



Figure 5.7: Claude Monet, *Grainstack*, 1891. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, W 1283.



Figure 5.8: Claude Monet, *Grainstack in the Sunlight, Snow Effect*, 1891. Potsdam, Museum Barberini, Sammlung Hasso Plattner, W 1287.



Figure 5.9: Claude Monet, *Grainstack in Sunshine*, 1891. Zurich, Kunsthaus Zürich, W 1288.

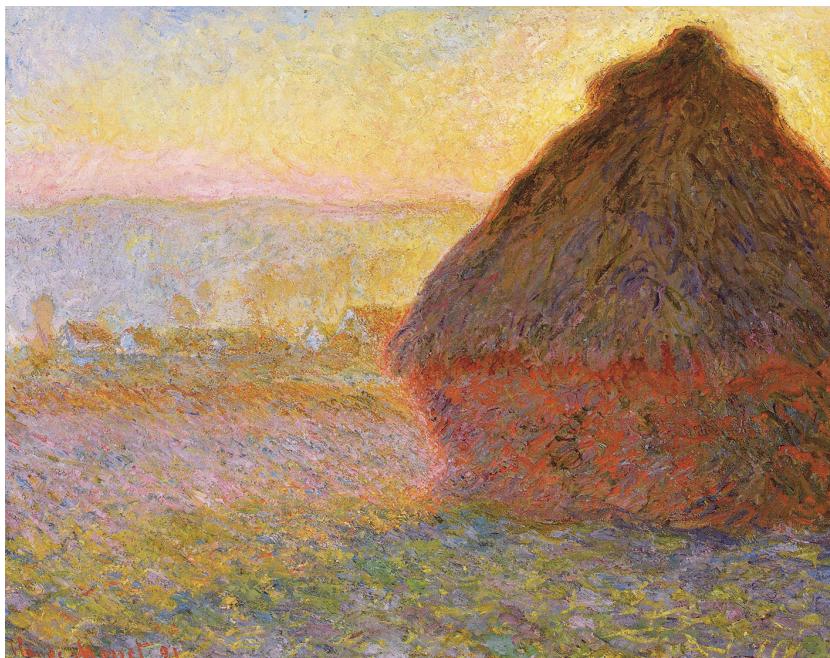


Figure 5.10: Claude Monet, *Grainstack (Sunset)*, 1891. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, W 1289.

The series of grain stacks

In May 1891, Monet exhibited twenty-two paintings in the gallery of the important dealer of impressionistic art Durand-Ruel: a view of the rocky landscape of the Creuse (*Le Bloc*), two versions of a field of oats and poppies, two other views, one of a meadow and one of a field of poppies, two paintings of summery strollers, and fifteen views of one or sometimes two grain stacks (see Figures 5.1–5.10) that a farmer had erected in the field behind Monet's house in Giverny and covered with rye straw to protect the grain.¹¹ The exhibition established a model for the “one-

¹¹ On the series of grain stacks, their exhibition at Durand-Ruel, and the principle of the series in Monet's work in general, see Seiberling, *Monet's Series*; Charles Moffett, “Monet's Haystacks,” in *Aspects of Monet: A Symposium on the Artist's Life and Times*, ed. John Rewald and Frances Weitzenhofer (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 142–159; Steven Z. Levine, “Monet's Series: Repetition, Obsession,” *October* 37 (1986): 65–75; Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet in the '90s: The Series Paintings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 65–105; Champa, “Monet and the Embrace of the Series”; Gottfried Boehm, “Werk und Serie: Probleme des modernen Bildbegriffs seit Monet,”

man show,” which Monet would adhere to from then on until the end of his life. Although he had already presented his work in the 1880s as part of solo exhibitions, those exhibitions were either very small in scope or designed as retrospectives.¹² In contrast to those exhibitions, Monet was now exclusively exhibiting current productions from the years 1889 to 1891. In the small, intimate rooms of the gallery, the formal homogeneity of the paintings stood out more clearly than ever before. The simplicity and reduction of the motifs led to the effective exclusion of intrapictorial narrative elements; instead, the gallery walls as a whole formulated a grand narrative of the changing atmosphere and vegetation. This coherence was, of course, particularly clear in the series that was the focus of the exhibition. It was a selection from more than thirty landscapes with grain stacks that Monet had painted since 1888, the majority of which were done between the late summer of 1890 and spring 1891. As Sylvie Patin has shown, the term *series* appears very early in connection with Monet, albeit in a quite unspecific sense, and probably for the first time in Émile Zola’s criticism of the 1868 Salon, in which he speaks of Monet’s garden paintings as a “series of canvases done in gardens” (*série de toiles prises dans des jardins*).¹³ In the 1870s and 1880s, the painter himself used the term several times in his correspondence, but always very generally in the quantitative sense of “several” or “many” paintings on a related theme.¹⁴ *Series* was first elevated to a term for a genre in the context of the exhibition of the grain stacks in Durand-Ruel’s gallery; after Geffroy’s preface, the catalogue begins with the entry “Série de Meules 1890–1891.”¹⁵ Despite this elevated employment, the historical term is hardly suitable as a tool for art-historical analysis due to its theoretical underdetermination. A few decades ago, Gottfried Boehm made a viable proposal for how to define the concept in art history in his valuable essay “Werk und Serie: Probleme des modernen Bildbegriffs seit Monet.” There he defines a series of paintings as a series whose members do not exhibit any convergence on a goal, any development or “virtual completion,” but rather

in *Kreativität und Werkerfahrung: Festschrift für Ilse Krahl zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Daniel Hees and Gundolf Winter (Duisburg: Gilles & Francke, 1988), 17–24; Karin Sagner-Düchting, ed., *Claude Monet und die Moderne* (Munich: Prestel, 2001); Uwe M. Schneede and Christoph Heinrich, eds., *Monets Vermächtnis: Serie – Ordnung und Obsession* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2001).

12 See Seiberling, *Monet’s Series*, 100.

13 Émile Zola, “Mon Salon, IV,” in *Écrits sur l’art*, ed. Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 209–210; English translation quoted from Sylvie Patin, “Repetitions and ‘Series,’” in *Galeries nationales, Claude Monet, 1840–1926*, ed. Réunion des musées nationaux and the Musée d’Orsay (Paris: ADAGP, Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée d’Orsay, 2010), 260.

14 See Patin, “Repetitions and ‘Series,’” 261.

15 Quoted from Patin, 263.

form an iterative structure that limits the “individuality” of single paintings, their status as unique specimens and thus as works.¹⁶

Following Boehm, I will describe Monet’s series of grain stacks as an ensemble of paintings that iteratively refer to a structure that exceeds thematic proximity, is given or developed in the work on the series, and is understood as a set of formal variables. In contrast to the cycle, which aims at (narrative) closure and infinite recurrence, the series forms an open and potentially infinitely continuable permutational form.

There is an anecdote about how Monet developed his pioneering principle of the series that has been handed down in various versions by his relatives and friends who were critics. In his monograph on Monet, the Duc de Trévise puts the story into the painter’s own mouth as follows:

Quand j’ai commencé, j’étais comme les autres; je croyais qu’il suffisait de deux toiles, une pour “temps gris”, une pour “soleil”. Je peignais alors des meules qui m’avaient frappé et qui faisaient un groupe magnifique, à deux pas d’ici; un jour, je vois que mon éclairage a changé: Je dis à ma belle-fille: “Allez donc à la maison, si vous voulez bien, et apportez-moi une autre toile.” Elle me l’apporte, mais peu après, c’est encore différent: une autre! encore une autre! Et je ne travaillais à chacune que quand j’avais mon effet, voilà tout. Ce n’est pas très difficile à comprendre.

When I started, I was just like the others; I thought two canvases were enough – one for a “gray” day, one for a “sunny” day. At that time I was painting haystacks that had caught my eye; they formed a magnificent group, right near here. One day I noticed that the light had changed. I said to my daughter-in-law, “Would you go back to the house, please, and bring me another canvas.” She brought it to me, but very soon the light had again changed. “One more!” and, “One more still!” And I worked on each one only until I had achieved the effect I wanted; that’s all. That’s not very hard to understand.¹⁷

When Monet initially states that he, “like others,” only requires two canvases, he alludes to a common method of landscape painters, which eighteenth-century manuals had already recommended and which was practiced, for example, in the Barbizon school. In the late 1860s and 1870s, Monet had already painted pairs of paintings that – following this practice – capture a motif under two different atmospheric conditions.¹⁸ The formation of the series as a pictorial form can be understood as an

16 Boehm, “Werk und Serie,” 18–19.

17 Duc de Trévise, “Le pèlerinage de Giverny,” *Revue de l’art ancien et moderne* 51 (1927): 126; Trévise, “Pilgrimage to Giverny,” in Stuckey, *Monet*, 337.

18 See John Rewald, *The History of Impressionism*, rev. ed. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 113–116; Werner Busch, “Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes: Éléments de perspective pratique (1799/1800),” in *Landschaftsmalerei*, ed. Busch (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1997), 233–240; Patin, “Repetitions and ‘Series,’” 260–268. For a detailed genealogy of Monet’s principle of the series, albeit one that presupposes a very broad, unspecific concept of the series, see Charles Stuckey, “The Predictions and Implications of Monet’s Series,” in *The Repeating Image: Multiples in French Painting from David to Matisse*, ed. Eik Kahng (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 83–125.

emancipation from this practice. In Monet's practice, the doubled and multiplied motifs overcome their status as mere preliminary studies and claim from then on – not only retrospectively, but already conceptually – the status of pieces for exhibition.

The pictorial composition of the now serially produced grain stacks is conceivably simple: the painter divides the picture plane into three horizontal stripes that taper toward the top; through changes in the coloration and brushstrokes, these stripes are transformed into a meadow, a chain of hills, and the sky. On the flat terrain of the foremost or lowermost strip, which is only differentiated by color, one or sometimes two stacks of grain rise up. The contours of their heavy bases bulge out roundly. While the grass or the snow slightly gives way at the base and defines the location of the heap in the otherwise uniform landscape, their conical tops seem to stretch toward the horizon line; they only reach it, however, in exceptional cases: then the painter and the beholder have fixed the heap of sheaves in the center of their field of vision or have approached so close that its contours overlap with the edge of the picture.

Neither in the close-up versions nor in the versions with a distanced point of view can the gaze become lost in studying a wide and varied surface of the earth, as was usually the case both in classical landscape painting and still in realistic landscape painting until the middle of the nineteenth century. By means of the horizontal composition and the emphasis on the horizon, the gaze is virtually led out of the picture and into the neighboring painting.¹⁹ The beholder is not given any opportunity to enter the field on paths leading into the depth of the image; and no changes in the terrain or vegetation facilitate comprehending it. Despite the proximity of a village, the landscape remains deserted and without any traces. Monet developed his landscapes as purely optical phenomena that do not allow any space to arise that could be spatially entered or measured in any way.

It's raining, it's snowing, it's painting

Temporally, the grain stacks can largely be arranged according to the cycle of nature and were probably also exhibited in this way at Durand-Ruel. In walking along the gallery walls, the beholder would have traced the cyclic change of the

¹⁹ Anthea Callen has already pointed this out in "Technique and Gender: Landscape, Ideology and the Art of Monet in the 1890s," in *Gendering Landscape Art*, ed. Steven Adams and Anna Gruetznar Robins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 34.

times of day and the seasons of the year. It begins with the airy and light landscapes of late summer. The vegetation determines the color effect with its rich yellow-green tones, and the hazy atmosphere imbues things with a chalky surface. Autumn removes the spectrum of bright colors from the landscape; the meadow, the grain stack, and the background approach each other in color; only the sky still shines in a cool light yellow. And then the snow falls. The grain stacks stand more plastically and more heavily than before in the landscape covered with thick white brushstrokes. Sometimes the nearby village also disappears and the grain ricks lose their connection to the people living there. Forgotten by agriculture and detached from the landscape that is buried under the *facture*, these products of nature, freshly harvested only a few months ago, seem to age rapidly. The stacks stand like mighty monoliths in an entirely inorganic desert of snow and light. Then it begins to thaw; the sun returns and casts golden reflections of light on the stacks. The snow cover becomes patchy; the ground of the field begins to shimmer through; the cool coloring of the winter landscape gradually transforms into warmer color values, until the cold tones have almost completely retreated and the grain stacks glow orange-red in the afternoon and evening sun, as they did in late summer, though ice-blue brushstrokes dominate in the terrain and especially in the shadowy zones, reminding us that the cold time of year is not long behind us. And finally, the evening light of spring makes the grain stacks glow; where their contours stand out against the background and sky, they seem to be on fire. The *facture* becomes more expressive, the individual brushstrokes begin to become distinguishable in the abundance of grain sheaves, and the sky flickers in a soft light yellow.

Even Monet's working method can be read as imitating the cycle of nature. As already mentioned, Monet always worked on several (up to ten) paintings at the same time; that means, that at a certain time of day he would go observe his grain stacks and begin to work on one canvas, then switch to another canvas as soon as the lighting conditions had changed (which, according to his own statements, occurred after about half an hour), and so on. The next day he would set off again with the same pictures and paint at the same times of day on the same canvases. But the landscape would change a little every day, and the painter would reflect those changes of nature in the paintings. There are thus versions of the grain stacks that can be proven to have been started in summer and then painted over again and again until winter descended on the landscape, at which point Monet also made it snow in his paintings.²⁰

20 See Seiberling, *Monet's Series*, 96.

Monet's procedure resembles the other activity that mainly occupied him besides painting: gardening.²¹ Just as Monet the gardener monitored the daily care of his little plants, making sure that his species-rich flower garden was watered, weeded, planted, and pruned, Monet the painter tended to his paintings daily, constantly returning to the same grain stack at the same time (transporting his canvases there in a wheelbarrow). Even the facture seems to resemble agricultural work: in contrast to the spontaneous and sketchy landscapes from the 1870s, Monet now superimposed several layers and hardly varied the brushstrokes within a painting.²² The individual brushstrokes behave largely independently from one another yet nevertheless build a firmly constructed surface, similar to how the architectural form of the grain stacks arises from the disorder of the layered grain.

The series versus the cycle of nature

Despite all the searched-for equivalences between the act of painting and nature, the cycles of human action and “natural history” are completely out of sync in Monet's paintings. In the history of painting up through modernity, grain stacks have functioned as conventionalized signs for the season of autumn; in Jean-François Millet's painting entitled *L'automne* (see Figure 5.11) – which was produced in the context of a cycle of the seasons between 1868 and 1874 – the rick of grain still represents the season of autumn as a whole. Significantly, Monet's series also begins in late summer, so it once again employs the metaphorical field of the completed harvest and the coming death of nature. But then something strange happens: the grain stacks are not collected and threshed but remain – stripped of their agricultural function – standing in the fields in winter. The painter had rented them in order to delay their removal.²³ This interrupts the parallel courses of the cycle of nature and agricultural work, which had often been allegorically captured in paintings of the seasons. This renders a fascinating but also alien view of the products of nature, which no longer conform to their cycle. And the break between the painter's work and nature's time is not only carried in the paintings' motif; this break is also the condition for the emergence of the series as a specifically modern artistic technique.

²¹ On the significance of gardens and gardening to Monet's art, see Champa, “Monet and the Embrace of the Series”; Paul Hayes Tucker, “The Revolution in the Garden: Monet in the Twentieth Century,” in *Monet in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Tucker, George T. M. Shackelford, and Mary-Anne Stevens (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 14–85.

²² See Robert Herbert, “Method and Meaning in Monet,” *Art in America* 67 (1979): 106.

²³ See Hoschedé, *Claude Monet*, 1:47.



Figure 5.11: Jean-François Millet, *Haystacks: Autumn*, ca. 1874. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In the over thirty paintings, there is no development of any kind; all the important decisions had to be made at the beginning when Monet decided not to leave it at one picture. The grain stacks thus arise from combining various techniques that are anything but spontaneous and that are placed in a new relationship from one painting to the next. We can name three variables that Monet combines in an almost arbitrary manner. (1) The painter chose a favorable moment; he determined the season, time of day, and weather. The choice of the moment affects the coloristic composition and the facture. (2) Monet looked for a suitable cropped selection for the painting and selected the distance. Usually there are one or two grain stacks in the anterior middle ground, but sometimes the painter (viewer) moved closer so that the rick of grain overlaps with the edges of the painting. The fundamental compositional changes between the individual versions of the grain stacks result from the fact that Monet moved the borders of the image around the motifs as if with the viewfinder of a camera (see Figure 5.12).²⁴ (3) Monet changes the line of sight several times, which means that we move around the ricks of

²⁴ See Jean Clay, *Comprendre l'impressionnisme* (Paris: Chêne, 1984), 84–85. Hoschedé also describes these events: “If Monet stopped [. . .] during a walk in the countryside or in his gardens and, using his right hand as a visor to enhance his vision, backed up, advanced, moved a little further to the right, a little further to the left, and then continued on his walk, it was because,

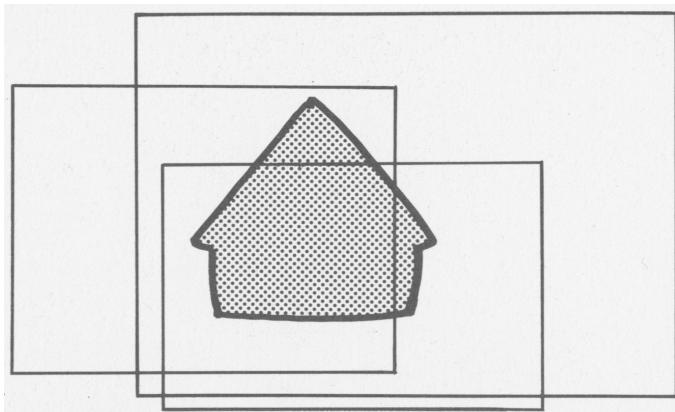


Figure 5.12: Diagram of the compositional method of the *Grainstacks*. Reprinted from Jean Clay, *Comprendre l'impressionnisme* (Paris: Chêne, 1984), 85.

grain with the painter. We thus go a few steps around to the right from Figures 5.4 to 5.5; in the background, the snow-covered housetops have disappeared, making way for the forest bordering on the village to the left.

These aesthetic choices can be freely combined with one another; there are pairs of paintings whose difference consists in a change to only one of the variables, but there are also paintings that differ with regard to all three variables. Monet's repertoire resembles the classical choices of a photographer: a potentially infinite chain of images of the same motif emerges simply from variating the viewpoint, distance, and selected moment. One can hardly make any discernible connection between particular lighting conditions and the painter's compositional choices. Monet translates the continuous, uniform change of nature into discontinuous combinations of individual compositional elements.

very often, at that moment he had just chosen a motif" (Si, au cours d'une promenade dans la campagne ou ses jardins, Monet s'arrêtait [. . .], faisant une visière de sa main droite pour augmenter sa vision, reculait, avançait, allait un peu plus à droite, un peu plus à gauche et puis continuait sa promenade, c'était qu'alors, bien souvent, il venait de choisir un motif). Hoschedé, *Claude Monet*, 1:107.

The belatedness of impressionist paintings

But it is not only the synchronism of human labor and nature that seems to be permanently called into question; the cycle of nature has also lost its fixed structure and clarity. The depiction of a grain stack served Millet to mark his landscape decisively as autumnal; it is precisely this binding association that the motif has lost in Monet's work. Even though all the known paintings in the series depict different lighting conditions that are very specific when taken alone, they can hardly be assigned to a particular time of year or day (apart from the winter landscapes). Without their dating, it would be difficult to distinguish, for example, the paintings from late autumn and spring, and in the whole series, it is practically impossible to determine what precise time of day it is in each case, which also leads to the fact that one can find different titles for the same painting in the scholarship. Monet insists so emphatically on the uniqueness of atmospheric conditions that the possibility of recognizing and identifying them is made considerably more difficult. The famous politician George Clemenceau, a close friend of Monet's, already pointed out how the moment is extracted from time, and he recognized how it breaks open the cyclic duration of nature:

L'artiste avait compris qu'il ne pouvait échapper à l'analyse du phénomène, et que si, dans une même journée, le matin rejoint le soir, par une série de transitions infinies, chaque moment nouveau de chaque jour variable constitue, sous les ruées de la lumière, un nouvel état de l'objet *qui n'avait jamais été et jamais ne sera plus*.

The artist had come to know that there is no escape from careful attention to things as they are, and that if, in the course of one single day, morning conjoins with evening through a sequence of infinitely subtle transitions, every new instant of each ever-changing day becomes, under these inundations of light, a new state of being that has never existed before and shall never be so again.²⁵

Monet transforms the eternally uniform self-reproduction of nature, which was symbolically reflected in the cycles and rituals of everyday agricultural life, into a discontinuous sequence of moments detached from the fabric of time. This atomization of moments into an open series without a goal is an essential condition for the emergence of the series as a modern pictorial concept.²⁶ A comparison with photography is informative for characterizing the specificity of Monet's solution,

²⁵ Georges Clemenceau, *Claude Monet: Les Nymphéas* (Paris: Plon, 1928), 85; Georges Clemenceau, *Claude Monet: The Water-Lilies and Other Writings on Art*, trans. Bruce Michelson (Urbana: Windsor & Down, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.21900/wd.1>.

²⁶ See Boehm, "Werk und Serie."

since, as is well known, it was this new medium that created an important precondition for the development of the principle of seriality.²⁷

While Monet's technique has its roots in a practice of mid-century realistic landscape painting, it owes its topicality to photography, which had considerably accelerated the production of images. On 7 July 1839, a few days after the French state had acquired the right to publish the so-called daguerreotype process, thereby laying the foundation for its rapid dissemination and further development, its inventor exhibited six of his photographs in the Chamber of Deputies. Even before the daguerreotype process was explained in all its technical detail at a joint meeting of the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Fine Arts in August of the same year, this small photography exhibition, the very first one in history, astonished the public. According to the voices of contemporaries, not only did the accuracy of the detail and the fineness of the portrayal exceed all the hopes previously placed in painting and the graphic arts, but the new medium also depicted the most fleeting phenomena of reality, the incidence of the sun's rays, and the manifold effects of light with greater precision and truth than brushes and etching needles had ever been able to do.²⁸

Among the six daguerreotypes exhibited were three pictures (see Figures 5.13–5.14) that deserve special attention in our present context. They show a large Parisian boulevard, the Boulevard du Temple, which leads south from the Place de la République. As if to specifically exhibit the passivity of the photographic act, Daguerre set up his camera on the top floor of a tall building, selected what would be in the view-finder, and pressed the shutter release three times: morning, noon, and evening.²⁹ The images do not differ from each other because of the photographer's active intervention; neither the selected field of view nor the distance from the motif is changed. Instead, authorship is left to the effect of light, which dresses the houses and street in their changing shells, immerses still-illuminated walls in opaque gray, or, conversely, allows still-shaded details to enter the light. While the passers-by on the Paris boulevard have disappeared in the long exposure time (probably well over a quarter of

27 See Ludger Derenthal, "Die Erziehung des Auges": Die serielle Photographie, das wissenschaftliche Experiment und Monets *Getreideschober*," in Schneede and Heinrich, *Monets Vermächtnis*, 23–28. On the development of the series as a necessary consequence of the photographic technique, see Timm Starl, *Im Prisma des Fortschritts: Zur Fotografie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: Jonas, 1991); Danielle Leenaerts, "Temps et image: Particularités de la pratique séquentielle en photographie," *Annales d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie* 21 (1999): 127–145; Phillip Prodger, *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

28 See Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present*, 5th rev. and enlarged edition (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 13–25.

29 See Timm Starl, "Schuhputzer," Kritik der Fotografie, updated 24 June and 11 September 2008, <http://www.kritik-der-fotografie.at/29-Schuhputzer.htm>.

an hour) as if in a wrinkle in time, the shadows of the trees and chimneys wander over the roof tiles and cobblestones. The viewer follows their trail and tries, by looking back and forth between three shots, to find the meaning or narrative that the individual image withholds.

The incredibly fast creation time of the daguerreotype in relation to the traditional medium of panel painting extracts a moment out of the temporal continuum and robs the captured situation of its beginning and end. To quote the historian of photography Timm Starl: "This is a specific feature of snapshot photography: its ambiguity. Like the pictorial objects that have been abruptly catapulted out of time and space, the gaze wanders aimlessly over them and yet is unable to recognize anything other than what is coincidental, which presents itself in the mantle of the spontaneous and (often) of the current as the only correspondence to the present."³⁰

The photographic image is therefore in need of commentary in a heightened sense; captions or labels in family albums frame the artificially isolated, alien moment and embed it in a historical explanation and episodic narrative. If an image is not assisted by text, it restlessly awakens an expectation of the next moment, the next shot, in the hope that it might be able to untie the hollow knot of time and put an end to the endless "And then?" questions. The specific temporal structure of the photographic image – the permanently frozen moment – demands resolution in the series. Daguerre's answer to this problem consisted in drawing on quasi-narrative possibilities that had been developed in the early nineteenth century by both innovative and popular visual media. Variating one and the same landscape through the alienating power of lighting conditions originated from the repertoire of tricks for the magic lantern and diorama, in other words, from those media in which light was fundamentally involved in creating an image.³¹ Before turning to photography, Daguerre was himself the full-time operator of an extremely successful diorama, entertaining his audience with painted backdrop landscapes and artificial lighting that simulated changing times of day and atmospheric conditions. While the subjects hardly varied, lighting tricks and dissolves made the sun go down and thunderstorms roll in or shrouded the scenery in deep night. In 1822, the year of the premiere of the first diorama, the London-based *Times* reported

³⁰ Timm Starl, "Geschoß und Unfall: Bewegung und Moment in der Fotografie um 1900," in *Ins Innere des Bilderbergs: Fotografien aus den Bibliotheken der Hochschule der Künste und der Technischen Universität Berlin*, ed. Joachim Schmid (Göttingen: European Photography Andreas Müller-Pohle, 1988), 10; translated by Anthony Mahler.

³¹ See Heinz Buddemeier, *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung neuer Medien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1970); Detlev Hoffmann and Almut Junker, *Laterna magica: Lichtbilder aus Menschenwelt und Götterwelt* (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1982); Birgit Verwiebe, *Lichtspiele: Vom Mondscheintransparent zum Diorama* (Stuttgart: Füsslin, 1997).

from Paris: "The most striking effect, however, certainly, is the change of light in this scene. From a calm, soft, delicious, serene, day in summer, the horizon gradually changes, becoming more and more overcast, until a darkness, not the effect of night, but evidently of approaching storm, – a murky tempestuous blackness discolours every object, making us listen almost for the thunder which is to grow in the distance, or fancy we feel the large drops, the *avant couriers* of the shower."³²

In dioramas (and in performances with magic lanterns), there was a tendency not to enliven the landscape by means of changing the staffage or with moving figures but rather to pass on the role of narration to nature. As in the painted backdrop landscapes of Daguerre's dioramas, light took over the dramaturgy of the image in the new medium of the daguerreotype as well, even if the spectacular character of the phenomena in the diorama and the magic lantern had to give way to the prosaic effects of changing sunlight at different times of day.

The serialization of daguerreotypes can, to be sure, only offset the irritating quality of the frozen light in a photographic image to a limited extent. For although a daguerreotype captures an infinite number of random details and promises to record light-and-shadow conditions precisely, early photographic images convey only a very distorted impression of actual lighting conditions. Daguerre released his camera shutter for the first shot of the miniseries at eight o'clock in the morning (see Figure 5.13): the trees cast long shadows, and the light comes from the west-southwest. The second shot (see Figure 5.14) was taken a few hours later at noon: the shadows are short, and the sun is already almost in the south. Although the shadows and knowledge of the location of the boulevard make it possible to draw conclusions about the time of day, the depiction of the atmospheric phenomena in the photographic image remains peculiarly abstract.

What is the relationship between Monet's series and the implicit, media-specific seriality of photography? Even his contemporaries liked to describe Monet's paintings with metaphors from photography: the writer and art critic Rémy de Gourmont, for example, characterized Monet's paintings as similar to photography ("The mechanism seems photographic"; *Le mécanisme semble photographique*) and described them further as "the work of an instant, captured in fewer minutes than are required to see it properly with profane eyes" (*l'œuvre d'un instant, enlevée en moins de minutes qu'il n'en faut pour la bien voir à des yeux profanes*).³³ But in stark opposition to Gourmont's description, Monet did not create his paintings in the moment of a single sitting. Creating one of his paintings was an extremely lengthy process, and the particular moment had to be found

32 "Diorama," *Times*, 4 October 1823.

33 Rémy de Gourmont, "Note sur Claude Monet," *L'art moderne*, 28 July 1901, 255.

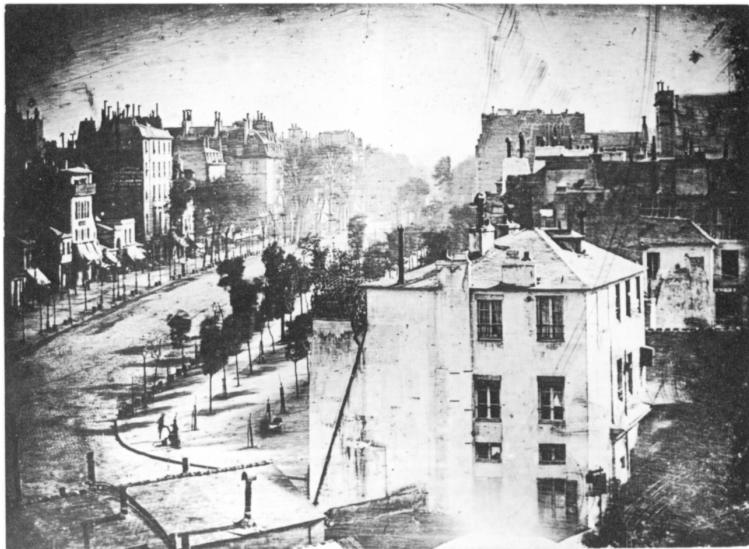


Figure 5.13: Louis Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Eight O'Clock in the Morning*, between 24 April and 4 May 1838. Daguerreotype (destroyed).



Figure 5.14: Louis Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Midday*, between 24 April und 4 May 1838. Daguerreotype (destroyed).

again and again.³⁴ As already described, Monet visited his grain stacks daily and would work, for example, between four o'clock in the afternoon and half past four on the same canvas on which he had painted the day before. He would return at the same time to work on the same canvas for several weeks, perhaps even for months, but nature could change enormously during this time. As early as 1883 – so a few years before the creation of the *Grain Stacks* – Jules Laforgue, one of the most astute theorists of impressionism, described this time loop as the foundational aporia of an impression:

Critiques qui codifiez le beau et guidez l'art, voici un peintre qui vient planter son chevalet devant un paysage assez stable comme lumière, un état d'après-midi, par exemple. Supposons qu'au lieu de peindre son paysage en plusieurs séances, il a le bon sens d'en établir la vie de tons en *quinze minutes*, c'est-à-dire qu'il est impressionniste. [. . .] Dans ces quinze minutes l'éclairage du paysage: le ciel vivant, les terrains, les verdures, tout cela dans le réseau immatériel de la riche atmosphère avec la vie incessamment ondulatoire de ses corpuscules invisibles réfléchissants ou réfractants, l'éclairage du paysage a infinitement varié, a vécu en un mot.

You critics who codify the beautiful and guide the development of art, I would have you look at this painter who sets down his easel before a rather evenly lighted landscape – an afternoon scene, for example. Let us suppose that instead of painting his landscape in several sittings, he has the good sense to record its tonal values in *fifteen minutes* – that is, let us suppose that he is an Impressionist. [. . .] In the course of these fifteen minutes, the lighting of the landscape – the vibrant sky, the fields, the trees, everything within the insubstantial network of the rich atmosphere with the constantly undulating life of its invisible reflecting and refracting corpuscles – has undergone infinite changes, has, in a word, lived.³⁵

But it is not only the external conditions of perception that continuously change; the physiological perceptive faculty of the painter is also subject to constant impairments and fatigue:

Un exemple entre des milliards. Je vois tel violet, j'abaisse mes yeux vers ma palette pour l'y combiner, mon œil est involontairement tiré par la blancheur de ma manchette; mon œil a changé, mon violet en souffre, etc., etc. De sorte qu'en définitive, même en ne restant que quinze minutes devant un paysage, l'œuvre ne sera jamais l'équivalent de la réalité fugitive, mais le compte rendu d'une certaine sensibilité optique sans identique à un moment qui ne se reproduira plus identique chez cet individu, sous l'excitation d'un paysage à un moment de sa vie lumineuse qui n'aura plus l'état identique de ce moment.

34 See Seiberling, *Monet's Series*, 92.

35 Jules Laforgue, “L'impressionnisme (1883),” in *Les écrivains devant l'impressionnisme*, ed. Denys Riout (Paris: Macula, 1989), 337–338; Jules Laforgue, “The Eye and the Poet,” in Kapos, *The Impressionists*, 188–189.

One of a myriad [of] examples: I see a certain shade of violet; I lower my eyes towards my palette to mix it and my eye is involuntarily drawn by the white of my shirt sleeve; my eye has changed, my violet suffers. So, in short, even if one remains only fifteen minutes before a landscape, one's work will never be the real equivalent of the fugitive reality, but rather the record of the response of a certain unique sensibility to a moment which can never be reproduced exactly for the individual, under the excitement of a landscape at a certain moment of its luminous life which can never be duplicated.³⁶

The shortening of the production time to a (dilated) “first moment” gives birth – as Laforgue’s text shows – to a previously unknown artistic paranoia nesting in the interstice between the representational means and the represented world, between the violet of the landscape, the palette, and the white of the painter’s cuff. If sensory perception already changes in the infinitesimally short moment of shifting one’s gaze, then one can indeed no longer trust one’s eyes. The homogeneity of the impression disappears here in the interim of a distracted gaze, and the time of the landscape – the atmospheric change of nature – escapes when the painter turns his back.

Laforgue’s reflections make clear that the time of the impressionistic process of production is borrowed from another medium. In contrast to the painted image, the photographic image arises not only in an extremely short time, it is also characterized by a specific synchronism, that is, by the completely simultaneous emergence of all the elements in the image, very much in contrast to gradual production, stroke by stroke, and line by line. The utopia of the temporal unity of perception and production characterizes Monet’s work on the specific temporality of his own medium under the conditions of another. When the temporal logic of photography begins to determine that of painting, one can go mad with Laforgue, or one can discover belatedness as the actual mode of working on a canvas.

Thus, Monet did not sacrifice completing a painting – at least in the majority of cases – to the rapid progress of time but rather made use of a skill that the momentary character of the grain stacks seemed to preclude: he remembered, that is, he tried to find and reproduce the particular atmospheric effect in front the subject, or if necessary, in the studio. The painter’s stepson, Jean-Pierre Hoschedé, reported on Monet’s practice as follows:

Et, chaque jour, il le ramenait infailliblement à ce même endroit, à la même heure que la veille et le lendemain, fidèle au rendez-vous fixé par cette même heure, ce même instant pour se retrouver face à face avec la même émotion, avec la même volonté de l’inscrire sur sa toile.

And, each day, he would infallibly bring it back to that same place, at the same time as the day before and the day after, faithful to the appointment fixed by that same time, that

36 Laforgue, “L’impressionnisme (1883),” 338; Laforgue, “The Eye and the Poet,” 189.

same moment, to *find* himself face-to-face with the same emotion, with the same will to inscribe it on his canvas.³⁷

Monet's problem in aesthetic production thus consists in a kind of automimesis; the artist constantly imitates who he was in a particular moment. Admittedly, this psychotechnique is in the greatest conceivable tension with a basic principle of impressionism, a principle whose apodictic character is clearly expressed in Félix Fénéon's formulation: "As a working method – execution directly from nature, and not in the studio from memories, sketches, written documents" (Comme méthode de travail, – l'exécution d'après la nature directement, et non dans l'atelier d'après des souvenirs, des croquis, des documents écrits).³⁸

By continuing working in his studio on a painting begun in the open air, Monet surprisingly returned to a traditional practice of landscape painters such as Camille Corot. Corot did not paint in the open air, but he did produce his studies in plein air, following a convention of the genre. The painter's workshop is here – as in Monet's case – the place for recovering a lost impression. But one does not see this conflict in Corot's landscapes (see Figure 5.15): the distancing chiaroscuro clothes meadows, trees, and lakes in the closed past of a nostalgic memory. In the wake of Claude Lorrain, the chiaroscuro of landscape painting created – as Richard Schiff has noted – a kind of time capsule in which a specific atmospheric moment dilates into an infinitely long duration, as if several moments in memory had overlapped and thereby robbed the setting of its sharp contours.³⁹ The subject and figures sometimes underscore this effect of the irretrievable past, such as when Corot transforms woods and meadows into stages for the appearance of nymphs or, more profanely, titles his paintings *Memory of the Ville-d'Avray*.

In contrast, Monet passes the conflict between presence and memory on to the viewer: through cropping, colorism, and brushstrokes, he emphasizes the subjective nature of an impression already lost in the next moment. The painter looks for a specific moment – for lighting and weather conditions that will only last for a short time and so bear with them an awareness of their impending, inevitable loss. This is why he is fond of the quickly fading evening glow or of snowy landscapes whose

37 Hoschedé, *Claude Monet*, 1:107–108; emphasis mine.

38 Félix Fénéon, "L'impressionnisme," in *Œuvres plus que complètes*, ed. Joan U. Halperin, vol. 1 (Paris: Droz, 1970), 65.

39 See Richard Schiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 99–108.



Figure 5.15: Camille Corot, *The Clearing: Memory of Ville d'Avray*, 1872. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

icy cover already seems threatened again by the incidence of light.⁴⁰ The preferred backlit settings reinforce the impression of belatedness – the awareness that we always arrive a little too late and only catch the transient state of light while it is disappearing. One of the most attentive visitors to the 1891 exhibition, Monet's fellow painter Camille Pissarro, referred to the grain stacks as "Monet's marvelous *Sunsets*" (*les merveilleux Soleils couchants de Monet*);⁴¹ following this comment, T. J. Clark asks: "What do sunsets do, then? They make Nature grimace, of course, 'in order to prove [...] that the moment is unique and we shall never look on its like again.'"⁴²

⁴⁰ Grace Seiberling has pointed out that the specific tonality of the sunset (warm red and orange tones, intense blues and purples) defines most of the paintings in the series, even those depicting entirely different moments in the day. See Seiberling, *Monet's Series*, 97.

⁴¹ Camille Pissarro to Lucien Pissarro, 5 May 1891; quoted from Seiberling, *Monet's Series*, 101.

⁴² Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 112. Clark paraphrases Fénéon's 1887 criticism on Monet: "The primary goal is to capture some of these fugitive appearances on the canvas. Hence the necessity of completing a landscape in a single sitting and of causing nature to make faces so as to establish beyond doubt that it was caught in a unique moment never to be recaptured" (Empreindre une de ces fugitives apparences sur le sujetile, c'est le but. – De là résultaient la nécessité d'enlever un paysage en une séance et une propension à faire grimacer la nature pour bien prouver que

The epiphanic moment

In the context of the first exhibition of the grain stacks at Durand-Ruel, this aspect of the series must have stood out even more clearly. We are confronted by two female strollers that Monet placed directly above the landscapes and that seem as if they could be turned-around figures of viewers from a painting by Caspar David Friedrich (see Figures 5.16–5.17). They suggest that the ideal viewer of Monet's grain stacks is never a farmer, never an autochthonous inhabitant and user of the landscape, but a visitor and stroller (or, like Monet, even the renter of this landscape). The strollers are representatives of a recipient who rarely deviates from the existing paths, who will not enter the field of the grain stacks, and to whom the landscape is revealed in a *déjà vu*. In his monographic essay on Monet from 1891, the art critic Octave Mirbeau emphatically stresses the experiential quality of these paintings:

Sur un coteau ensoleillé dont on ne voit que l'extrême sommet, terre rose, herbes roussies, en plein ciel, en pleine sonorité de ciel, parmi les nuages blancs et roses, qui se hâtent sur l'azur firmamental, une femme s'avance, svelte, légère, impondérable, un coup de vent dans la mousseline ondulante de son voile, le bas de sa robe un peu soulevé en arrière et balance par l'envolée de la marche, elle semble glisser au ras des herbes. Elle a, dans sa modernité, la grâce lointaine d'un rêve, le charme inattendu d'une aérienne apparition. Regardez-la bien. On dirait que tout à l'heure elle aura passé.

On a sunlit hillside – we see only the summit, the rose-pink earth, the dry grasses – against the sky, against the sweet-toned sky, among the white and rose clouds that race across the azure of the firmament, a woman makes her way, slender, light, imponderable; a gust of wind is in the fluttering chiffon of her veil, the bottom of her dress is raised in back, tossed by the flight of her stride; she seems to skim across the grass. In her modernity, she has the distant grace of a dream, the unexpected charm of an airy apparition. Observe her closely. It is almost as if she will be gone shortly.⁴³

la minute était unique et qu'on ne la reverrait jamais plus). Félix Fénéon, “Neo-Impressionism (1887),” in *Symbolist Art Theories: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Henri Dorra (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 162; Félix Fénéon, “Le néo-impressionnisme,” in Fénéon, *Œuvres*, 1:73. Also before Clark, art critics liked to read the grain stacks as “allegories” for the end – the “sunset” – of impressionism. Julius Meier-Graefe thus dates the beginning of the end of impressionism based on Monet's series. He exposes Monet's method as pseudoscientific and accuses him of adhering to the “Romanticism of an optician.” See Julius Meier-Graefe, “Monet,” in *Kunst-Schreiberei: Essays und Kunstkritik* (Leipzig: Kiepenhauer, 1987), 169.

⁴³ Octave Mirbeau, “Claude Monet,” *L'art dans les deux mondes*, 7 March 1891, 185; Octave Mirbeau, “Claude Monet,” in Stuckey, *Monet*, 160.

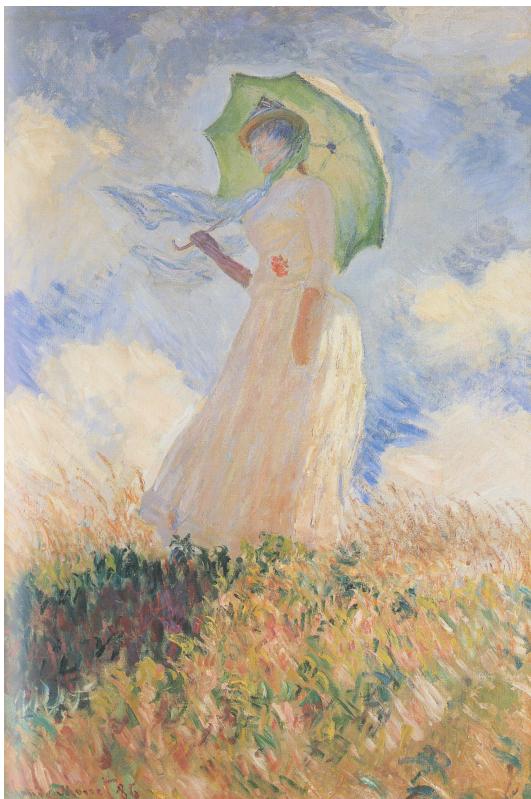


Figure 5.16: Claude Monet, *Study of a Figure Outdoors, Women with a Parasol, Facing Right*, 1886. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

In Mirbeau's evocation, Monet's stroller acquires the character of an apparition: the viewer who follows the critic's invitation and looks at her closely ("Regardez-la bien") will have already missed her ("tout à l'heure elle aura passé"). But the two elusive figures of viewers are not only indications of a reception experience that always precedes ours,⁴⁴ in an even stronger private sense, they are figures of memory. With the two summery-dressed girls, for whom Monet's step-daughter Suzanne Hoschedé served as the model, the painter repeats a picture he had made eleven years earlier of his now deceased first wife, Camille, and their

⁴⁴ Precisely these conditions in aesthetic reception were already defined by Caspar David Friedrich's landscape painting. See Joseph Leo Koerner's brilliant reading of Friedrich's *Rückenfiguren* (figures with their backs turned toward the viewer) in *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 233–244.



Figure 5.17: Claude Monet, *Study of a Figure Outdoors, Woman with a Parasol, Facing Left*, 1886. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

son Jean (see Figure 5.18). Compared with the “original” version from 1875, Monet stages the two versions created in 1886 as if they were blurry phantom images, overexposed by the sudden flash of memory. While Camille, who is indeed backlit but has a physical presence, casts a large moving shadow on the grass and looks directly at us with her veiled face, in the late paintings Suzanne remains without a gaze and in one version even without a shadow.

Monet’s strollers thus conceal the protracted and arbitrary (production) process of remembering behind the sudden appearance of a *mémoire involontaire*, which ensures the authenticity of immediate perception, even if it is conjugated in the past tense – and not, like the *impression*, in the present tense. After Hippolyte Taine’s widely read investigation “De l’intelligence,” the *mémoire involontaire* was furthermore suspected of enabling a particularly intense form of remembering: while the images of perception abrade each other, immediate memory leads,



Figure 5.18: Claude Monet, *Woman with a Parasol – Madame Monet and Her Son*, 1875. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art.

according to Taine, to the complete reproduction of the remembered moment, to a “total rebirth” (renaissance totale).⁴⁵ A decade earlier, Charles Baudelaire had already devoted a separate chapter in “Le peintre de la vie modern” to “mnemonic art” (l’art mnémonique), and it should be understood as the heart of his famous essay’s reflections on aesthetic production.⁴⁶ Baudelaire’s exemplary artist, Constantin Guy, also doesn’t respond to the acceleration of perception –

⁴⁵ Hippolyte Taine, *De l'intelligence*, vol. 1 (Paris: Hachette, 1870), 161. See Jean-François Perrin, “Taine et la mémoire involontaire,” *Romantisme* 82 (1993): 73–81. On Taine’s significance for Monet’s work, see Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, “Le grand tout: Monet on Belle-Île and the Impulse toward Unity,” *Art Bulletin* 97 (2015): 323–341.

⁴⁶ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), 1–40; Charles Baudelaire, “Le peintre de la vie modern,” in *Critique d'art, suivi de Critique musicale*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 343–384.

triggered here by modern city life – by synchronizing reception and production: while Guy strolls through the streets during the day and records his impressions only cursorily in a sketchbook, he creates the actual drawings at night in his studio on the basis of a “memory that [. . .] calls back to life” (mémoire résurrectionniste) and resurrects the most fleeting impressions like “Lazarus” (Lazare).⁴⁷ The immediacy with which these memories return distinguishes them as images that have a motivation and so are capable of overcoming the contingency of their origin.

It is precisely this epiphany of previously experienced and remembered moments that distinguishes Monet’s paintings from the arbitrary snapshots of photography.⁴⁸ In this respect, Monet’s series can be understood as an attempt to counter the momentariness of the new medium. The photographic moment is – as Siegfried Kracauer writes in his essay on photography – dissimilar to memory.⁴⁹ The abundance of details provided by the photograph overloads what one experienced with contingent information and immerses it in an alienating light. Against this amnesia of the photographed moment, Monet offers a utopian moment in which nonrepeatable lighting conditions return as an epiphany. This epiphany is only possible, however, under the condition of duplicating moments, because only a sequence of several pictures activates the time between the different times of day and seasons, thereby allowing the viewer to recover specific lighting or weather conditions.

To summarize, in Monet, the utopia of the impression leads to recognizing the genuinely aesthetic condition of the works as “shards of the future,”⁵⁰ that is, as fragments whose unity and completeness is postponed into an uncertain future. The technique of the series should cancel the fragmentary character of the single picture in the larger unity of the cycle of nature. But the individuality of the single moments and the aimless openness of the series of images then lead to the cyclic course of nature dissolving into an endless linear band of dissociated moments. Comparing it with photography reveals that time is not simply atomized in Monet’s grain stacks but rather distilled – distilled to the serendipitous moment in which

⁴⁷ Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” 17; Baudelaire, “Le peintre de la vie moderne,” 359.

⁴⁸ On the “profane” epiphany of memory in the late nineteenth century, see Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Suddenness: On the Moment of Aesthetic Appearance*, trans. Ruth Crowley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); on epiphany as the aesthetic moment par excellence, see Martin Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. John Farrell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, “Epiphanien,” in *Dimensionen ästhetischer Erfahrung*, ed. Joachim Küpper and Christoph Menke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 203–222.

⁴⁹ Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 47–63.

⁵⁰ Valéry, “The Creation of Art,” 127.

what is unique and unrepeatable in nature becomes visible. Monet subordinated his work to the cycle of nature but ultimately transformed its cyclic course into a series of epiphanic moments resembling the subjective gaze of the *mémoire involontaire*. This ruse of aesthetic production legitimizes the (claimed) equivalence of the sense perception and the image, even when the belatedness of the production process is already beyond question.

Finally, it should be recalled that in the discipline of art history, Monet is often placed as a pioneer at the beginning of a series of twentieth-century artists who engage with the principle of seriality,⁵¹ despite the fact that Monet's conception is clearly different from most serial strategies in classical modernism and postwar art. In Mondrian, Albers, Warhol, or also in the work of the American minimalists, seriality serves as a technique of pictorial permutation and decisively opposes the notion of the work as an experienced time in the artist's life. By contrast, in Monet's work, the series can be considered the condition of an experiential aesthetic reception that emerges from the work's permeability to its (fictionalized) process of production and passes the moment of the always already lost first perception in aesthetic production on to the viewer. Through this experiential quality, the completed painting refers to its "origin" and thus recalls a particularly exceptional moment that was lifted out of serial repetition and at the same time emerged from it.

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⁵¹ See Katharina Sykora, *Das Phänomen des Seriellen in der Kunst: Aspekte einer künstlerischen Methode von Monet bis zur amerikanischen Pop Art* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1983); Sagner-Düchting, *Claude Monet und die Moderne*; Schneede and Heinrich, *Monets Vermächtnis*.

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Katja Müller-Helle

Sequencing Failure

Photodynamism and the Knotting of Time

In early October 2020, a postcard from Rome was delivered to Münsterschwarzach Abbey in Lower Franconia. It had been written in April 1969 and arrived fifty-one years late. A sticker bearing the words “Redirected due to incorrect address” (Nach adressiert wg. unkorrekter Anschrift) explained the half-century delay in the officious tones of the German postal service.¹ The postcard was put back into circulation when someone from the abbey uploaded it to social media, where it inevitably became a figure of fun: “Yeah, post from Italy always takes that long . . .”² Implicit in this light-hearted remark is the fact that postal services are more than just distribution routes, addresses, and the conveyance of tidings. They are inscribed with specific forms of temporality. Sometimes delivery is remarkably quick; sometimes – as with the fifty-year-old postcard – it can take a lifetime.

Fifty-seven years ago, another postcard was dispatched from Rome, this time to the nearby town of Frosinone. This postcard played havoc with the existing temporal order in an entirely different way, for it dealt with the smallest fractions of time, a momentariness that could just barely be captured in images thanks to the photographic camera. It was delivered in July 1911 to Giuseppa Pelonzi, the wife of the futurist photographer Anton Giulio Bragaglia. The handwritten message – “Many [greetings]. Niny [presumably Anton’s nickname]. Frosinone Railway station, 8:45. Tuesday” (Tanti. Niny. Stazione di Frosinone ore 8 ¼ auto. Martedì) – gave the location and time of its posting at the Frosinone railway station (see Figure 6.1).³ The precise written data – “8 Lug 11,” “Frosinone Stazione,” and “Roma” – suggest that this postcard was a means of communicating a specific point in time and space. The front of the postcard, however, shows an attempt to undermine this temporal precision by way of a long exposure and the resultant blurring of the image (see Figure 6.2). This image, entitled *Salutando (The Bow, 1911)*, was the first photodynamic experiment by

¹ “Postkarte kommt mit 51 Jahren Verspätung in Kloster an,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 October 2020, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/stil/trends-nischen/kloster-in-bayern-postkarte-aus-rom-kommt-nach-51-jahren-an-16993525.html>. All translations of sources are by Jonathan Blower unless otherwise noted.

² “Postkarte kommt mit 51 Jahren Verspätung in Kloster an.”

³ For further analysis of this postcard, see Katja Müller-Helle, *Zeitspeicher der Fotografie: Zukunftsbilder 1860–1913* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2017), 164.

Translated by Jonathan Blower



Figure 6.1: Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia, *Salutando (The Bow)*, 1913. Postcard, verso. Rome, Centro Studi Bragaglia.



Figure 6.2: Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia, *Salutando (The Bow)*, July 1911. Postcard, 17.5 x 23 cm. Rome, Centro Studi Bragaglia. Reprinted from Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Fotodinamismo Futurista* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1970), 45.

Bragaglia and his younger brother Arturo. It fixed the photographic trace of a physical movement in time: the upper part of a body bending forward. Rather than being divided into different positions or a sequence of stops in space, the motion of the body was captured in a single photographic image as a synthesis of impressions of

the whole. Due to the settings and technical preconditions of the camera, the temporal and spatial imprecision of the rendering produced a blurred effect of bodily outlines. Unlike the message on the verso of the postcard, which conveyed only precise information about the spatiotemporal parameters of the posted item, the representation on the recto showed the protraction of a temporal moment, the fusion of bodily forms in one image, a rupture in the sequential logic of what might otherwise have been a series. Two years later, this aesthetic of blurriness and the expansion of an instant in an individual image had migrated into futurist portraiture. The Bragaglias' photograph of Umberto Boccioni – a painter, theorist, and leading futurist – depicts the visual diffusion of the head in motion in what Boccioni called a polyphysiognomic portrait (see Figure 6.3). The movements of the head have been transformed into a layering of discrete elements; the ears, the nose, and the eyes are recombined into fragmentary body parts. The Bragaglias used three lamps to flood their moving subject with light in order to isolate the trajectory of the moving body. The image in the resulting blur oscillates between fixity and dissolution, its temporal structure captured in the in-between of before and after.

In the following, I examine futurist photography's critique of the dominant paradigm of serialization as represented by Étienne-Jules Marey's scientific chronophotography in nineteenth-century physiology. By essentializing blurred instant



Figure 6.3: Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia, *Ritratto polifisiognomico di Umberto Boccioni* (*Polyphysiognomic Portrait of Umberto Boccioni*), 1912–13. Silver gelatin print, 12.3 × 17 cm. Milan, Collection Calmarini. Reprinted from Giovanni Lista, *Futurism and Photography* (London: Merrell, 2001), 30.

photographs that were formerly considered failures and substantiating them with metaphors of life, duration, and a concept of history that promised an open future, the photodynamic experiments of Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia attacked the logic of the serial photograph (as exemplified by Marey), especially its temporal and spatial organization according to a before and after and its linearly represented movements. They did so by intervening in a linear history of photographic technologies. This approach to the paradigm of chronophotographic visuality, which presented itself as the dissection of motion and the serial arrangement of visual motifs, was negotiated on two levels in futurist photography. First, its photographic experiments with blurriness transposed the dissected, sequenced temporal moment into the duration of the individual image. Futurist photographs encapsulated a holistic concept of time that was opposed to the progress and technical optimization of the scientific method, which strove for pin-sharp images of bodily movement. Second, the temporal experimentation of photodynamism was associated with a new materiality of dispatch and distribution that existed outside the science laboratory and the art museum: the postcard. On both levels, the photographic experimentation of the photodynamists served to transform old models of image serialization that were already obsolete, a transformation that made it possible to conceive of a new and open future. So the Bragaglia photographs from around 1911 to 1913 can be read in two ways: they reevaluate the problem of sequencing in the image while also reopening a window onto earlier nineteenth-century media. As the cultural theorist Walter Benjamin put it, the impact of new reproducible media such as film and photography went beyond the production of new modes representation; crucially, they also retroactively changed the way people thought about existing media and artifacts.⁴

4 “Um neunzehnhundert hatte die technische Reproduktion einen Standard erreicht, auf dem sie nicht nur die Gesamtheit der überkommenen Kunstwerke zu ihrem Objekt zu machen und deren Wirkung den tiefsten Veränderungen zu unterwerfen begann, sondern sich einen eigenen Platz unter den künstlerischen Verfahrensweisen eroberte. Für das Studium dieses Standards ist nichts aufschlussreicher, als wie seine beiden verschiedenen Manifestationen – Reproduktion des Kunstwerks und Filmkunst – auf die Kunst in ihrer überkommenen Gestalt zurückwirken.” Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit: Drei Studien zur Kunstsoziologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), 11. “Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes. For the study of this standard nothing is more revealing than the nature of the repercussions that these two different manifestations – the reproduction of works of art and the art of the film – have had on art in its traditional form.” Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 213–214.

Past failures

From 1911 until 1913, Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia experimented with a camera apparatus in an attempt to portray movement within the confines of instantaneous photography.⁵ Their neologism *fotodinamismo*, or photodynamism – an allusion to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti’s “dynamism of free verse” – implied that conventional photographic images were to be superseded.⁶ According to Anton Giulio Bragaglia’s sixty-page manifesto *Fotodinamismo futurista* (1913), the conventional uses of photography were instantaneous photography and chronophotography:

La cronofotografia di Marey poi, essendo una cinematografia eseguita sopra una lastra comune o sopra una film continua, anche se non usa i quadretti per dividere il movimento, già scandito e spezzato in diverse istantanee, spezza sempre il gesto e lo stacca da se stesso in varie imagini istantanee, ben distanti tra loro.

The chronophotography of Marey has also been a form of cinematography, this time carried out on a single plate or a continuous strip of film, even though it hasn’t used frames to divide up the movement. Instead, the movement has already been marked off into units, much as one does in scanning poetry, and broken up into snapshots. Chronophotography, in short, also shatters the action. The instantaneous images are even further apart.⁷

Bragaglia’s photographs of various gestures – the lighting of a cigarette (*Il fumatore*), a slap in the face (*Lo schiaffo*), or a change of position (*Cambiando postura*) – capture motion by sacrificing the sharp outlines of objects and bodies (see Figures 6.4–6.6).

In her reflections on the emergence of “cinematic time,” the film theorist Mary Ann Doane characterizes this blurring effect as a tool for making the length of duration accessible to representation: “the trajectory traced by Bragaglia’s photographs effectively lengthens the duration of the present – the instant – to make it accessible to representation, even if it is a representation characterized by a certain illegibility. It sacrifices the object.”⁸ However, rather than sacrificing the

⁵ For general information on the work of Anton Giulio Bragaglia and photodynamism, see Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 84–88; Giovanni Lista, *Futurism and Photography* (London: Merrell, 2001); and Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830–1904)* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), 296–318.

⁶ See Lista, *Futurism and Photography*, 21.

⁷ Anton Giulio Bragaglia, “Fotodinamismo futurista,” unpaginated manuscript, FF 1913, Malandrini Collection, Florence. For a reprint of the manifesto, see Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Fotodinamismo futurista*, ed. Antonella Vigliani Bragaglia (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1970). Subsequent quotations are from the archival manuscript and are cited below as FF 1913. Anton Giulio Bragaglia, “Futurist Photodynamism,” ed. and trans. Lawrence Rainey, *Modernism / Modernity* 15 (2008): 370.

⁸ Doane, *Emergence of Cinematic Time*, 88.



Figure 6.4: Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia, *Il fumatore* (The Smoker), 1911. Silver gelatin print, 11.8 × 14.5 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, gift of the Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005, inventory no. 2005.100.247. © 2016 by bpk, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Anton Giulio Bragaglia, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Figure 6.5: Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia, *Lo schiaffo* (The Slap), 1912. Rome, Centro Studi Bragaglia. Reprinted from Bragaglia, *Fotodinamismo Futurista*, 6.



Figure 6.6: Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia, *Cambiando positura (Changing Position)*, 1911. Silver gelatin print, 12.8 × 17.9 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, gift of the Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005, inventory no. 2005.100.135. © 2016 by bpk, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Anton Giulio Bragaglia, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

object completely, the Bragaglias' photodynamic experiments sought to transform the paradigms of sequencing that had been used more or less successfully in the past to depict precise portions of time. In terms of the visual experiments conducted by the French physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey, this undated photograph of a horse in motion would have been classified as a failure (see Figure 6.7). The purpose of Marey's photographs was to facilitate the exact scientific analysis of moving bodies in order to demonstrate the hypothesis that all bodily movements follow the natural laws of mechanics. Marey regarded the human body as a living machine that could be expected to follow the same laws as inanimate nature. From the 1880s onwards, having previously experimented with various graphic methods, Marey set up a laboratory in the Bois de Boulogne and used his new invention – a photographic revolver – to capture several instants on a single photographic plate. Marey's work was based on the supposed mechanical objectivity of the camera apparatus, which has recently been discussed by the historians of science Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison in the context of a nineteenth-century system of scientific objectivity.⁹ According to Daston and Galison, Marey thought

⁹ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

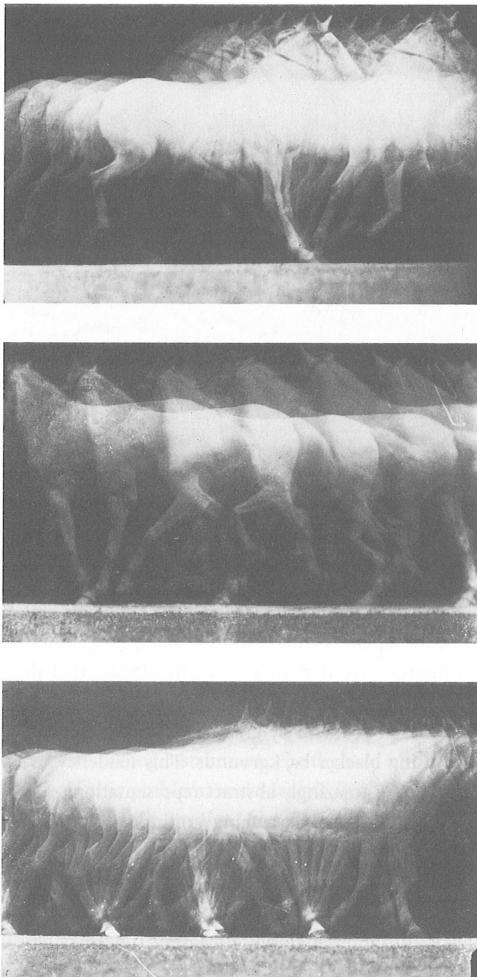


Figure 6.7: Étienne-Jules Marey, *Arabian Horse*, around 1886. Paris, Collège de France.

the camera would “eliminate suspect mediation” between nature and representation.¹⁰ The precision of the photographic image would compensate for any undesired action by the subject as well as any fatigue on the part of the scientist. As the “failed” chronophotograph of the horse suggests, the expectations of the scientific photographers were often thwarted. The different outlines of the horse are

¹⁰ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” *Representations* 50 (Autumn 1992): 81.

blurred, the overlapping representations of the beginning, middle, and end of the movement melt into one another, and it is impossible to determine the precise position of the horse in time and space.

The Bragaglia brothers' photodynamic experiments incorporated this out-of-focus effect as part of their vision for a futurist aesthetics of movement. They also relied on their scientific predecessors in other ways: in the pictorial logic of their black-and-white imagery, in their rigid experimental methods, and in the parallelism between the picture plane and the movements they captured. But within this scientific framework, they also disrupted the analytical depiction of motion by introducing long exposure times to encapsulate their ideal of an inner concept of movement. Photodynamics was supposed to represent the inner essence of life via movement: "We are seeking the interior essence of things: pure movement" (Noi ricerchiamo la essenza interiore delle cose: il puro movimento).¹¹ This new approach to representing motion was opposed to the analytical time segments of cinematography and chronophotography. Bragaglia uses the metaphor of an imaginary clock to characterize the difference:

Volgarmente potremmo paragonare la cronofotografia ad un orologio le cui sfere segnino solo i quarti d'ora: la cinematografia ad uno che segni anche i minuti primi e la Fotodinamica ad un terzo che ci indichi non solo i secondi ma i minuti intermomentali esistenti tra i secondi, nei passaggi; essendo essa quasi un calcolo infinitesimale del movimento.

To put it crudely, we could compare chronophotography to a clock whose face was marked only with the quarter-hours, cinematography to one on which the minutes have also been indicated, and Photodynamism to a third on which are marked not only the seconds, but also the tiny inter-momental fractions that exist in the passages between one second and another. This becomes an almost infinitesimal calculation of movement.¹²

The blurred image had become the index of a new inner logic of movement. This inner movement was to be achieved by transforming Marey's analytical system of experimentation. In sharp opposition to Marey, Bragaglia contrasted external, cold clock time with the concept of an inner movement of intuition represented by the blurred images of movement.

Around 1900, the concepts of analysis and intuition – as introduced by the French philosopher Henri Bergson – were discussed at length in French and Italian philosophical circles and were noted in the artistic manifestos of the avant-garde. Bergson connects intuition with the sensation of time and differentiates physical, conventional clock time (*temps*) from an inner conception of time based

11 Bragaglia, "Futurist Photodynamism," 376; FF 1913, n.p.

12 FF 1913, n.p.; Bragaglia, "Futurist Photodynamism," 370.

on individual perception (*durée*).¹³ The pattern for the intuitive conception of time, according to Bergson, is the perception of movement. Bragaglia read the writings of Bergson and transferred his division of analytical and intuitive time into the field of scientific and artistic production by way of motion photography. In photodynamic experiments that would revolutionize photography and the arts, the “inner calculation of movement” was to be represented by the trajectory of light. In order to extract the inner movement of the trajectory of light, the Bragaglias chose not to use the newest available medium, film (though it would have suited the desire to be truly contemporary), and instead transformed the scientific observation of motion into a picture of a long *durée*. The futurist project, which was supposed to represent the dynamism of life for future generations, was therefore a reevaluation of past modes of representation and the associated paradigms of analysis and precision. The retroactive impact of photodynamism thus elevated chronophotography and its past technological failures, reclaiming its experimental status as an innovative technique that pointed to the future at a time when most other standard photographic techniques were already well established.

Open future

This future-oriented perspective was informed by the invention of new media in the nineteenth century; photography, cinematography, and telegraphy were historicized in real time and perceived in the mode of future expectation.¹⁴ Early photographs, for example, were of interest not only because of what they actually depicted but also because of what technically produced images might potentially explore in the future. In a now famous report presented to the Chambre des Députés in Paris on 3 July 1839, the French physicist Dominique François Arago envisaged how the newly invented image technology would revolutionize disciplines such as archaeology, astronomy, and the arts.¹⁵ In his rhetoric of a flourishing future, the temporality of the actual artifacts of early daguerreotypes and their future application falls apart. Like the countless patents of new technologies in the nineteenth century,

¹³ Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Alcan, 1889). For an English translation, see Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910).

¹⁴ On the fabrication of historic time in relation to technical media, see Bernhard Siegert, “Von der Unmöglichkeit, Mediengeschichte zu schreiben,” in *Rekursionen: Von Faltungen des Wissens*, ed. Ana Ofak and Philipp von Hilgers (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010), 149–166.

¹⁵ See Dominique François Arago, *Rapport de M. Arago sur le Daguerréotype, Lu à la séance de la Chambre des Députés le 3 juillet 1839* (Paris: Bachelier, 1839).

that temporality points to the future fulfillment of technology.¹⁶ As Bernhard Siegert puts it: “This discourse can be nothing other than prophetic at its core, because only in a vision of the future can the arrival of something not yet present appear as a historic event from the past – a past that still lies in the future.”¹⁷ This aporia poses a problem for historians. When the phenomenon in question is not yet fully shaped or defined, how can historians go back to a historic moment without including later results that merely seem to fulfill former speculations? How does one describe a constellation that reverses linear time and ideas of a “before” and “after” while simultaneously confronting the presence of the past with the presence of the future in the *futurum exactum*?

From the historiographic perspective, this focus on the expectations associated with movement photography around 1913 means a shift away from a teleology of technological optimization and toward a description of recursive structures of historical constellations. Historians of photography have tended to concentrate on a kind of narration that describes the development of nonfunctional techniques in terms of their optimization and standardization around the end of the nineteenth century: from early examples of long exposure times to snapshot photography; from heavy camera obscuras to mobile, handheld cameras; and from blurred to sharp images.¹⁸ In contrast, the rhetoric of the futurist manifestos supports the open future of movement photography and conceptualizes the old/new image techniques as tools of potential knowledge by reassessing how failure and success had come to be defined, thereby reversing the linearization of technical optimization.

The historian of science Hans-Jörg Rheinberger coined the paired terms “epistemic and technical things” to describe the relationship between provisional

¹⁶ In this context, the archive plays a crucial role not only as a container for storing promising techniques from the past but also for preserving the “past futures” of technology. For a theorization of the archive, see Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1995). For an English translation, see Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For recent discussions of the temporalities of the archive in relation to technology, see Doane, *Emergence of Cinematic Time*; and Knut Ebeling, *Wilde Archäologien 1: Theorien der materiellen Kultur von Kant bis Kittler* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2012), 730–739.

¹⁷ Siegert, “Von der Unmöglichkeit, Mediengeschichte zu schreiben,” 151.

¹⁸ For a critique of teleological histories of photography, see Peter Geimer, *Bilder aus Versehen: Eine Geschichte fotografischer Erscheinungen* (Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts, 2010). For an English translation, see Peter Geimer, *Inadvertent Images: A History of Photographic Apparitions*, trans. Gerrit Jackson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). For a similar focus on nonteleological ways of understanding historical and technological change in the realm of media archaeology, see Thomas Elsaesser, “The New Film History as Media Archaeology,” *Cinémas* 14 (2004): 75–117; and Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka, eds., *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

assemblages of techniques, inscriptions, and representations on the one hand and standardized techniques on the other. Epistemic things, according to Rheinberger, are characterized by their undefined status: they are vague things without definite boundaries in a state of processing that has not yet come to an end.¹⁹ Technical things, by contrast, are fixed in definition and standardized in their application. Epistemic things are bound to a system of experimentation that is not only focused on the product but implements a process whose final results cannot be foreseen at the beginning. Epistemic things therefore belong to unclassified knowledge, they are “machines for making the future.”²⁰ Even if the Bragaglia brothers could have easily produced sharp images or projected film images, they chose to go back to an earlier phase in order to reclaim photography’s experimental status and its promise of future results. To use Rheinberger’s terminology, they foiled the teleological linearity of the history of photography, its trajectory from epistemic thing to technical thing, from the realm of experiment, vague ideas, and expectations to optimized techniques that merely fulfill prior speculation about the future.

Photodynamism laid claim to the flourishing potential of future innovation by going back to former image technologies, a strategy that can be seen as a recursive structure. Markus Krajewski defines such structures in his short text “Die Rose: Vorstufe zu einer kleinen Geschichte der Rekursion”: “Recursion means recourse to familiar knowledge that serves as a starting point for the production of something new.”²¹ On the basis of motion photography’s failures, the Bragaglia brothers tried to reorganize the relationship between technology, images, and meaning in order to claim that the prospective aspect of photography worked through the problem of past, present, and future in relation to technical media. For Rheinberger, this sort of recursive structure is a signum for our general understanding of historical time, which, following the French literary theorist Jacques Derrida, always has to deal with the paradoxical coexistence of belated and antecedent knowledge:

¹⁹ Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, “Epistemische Dinge – Technische Dinge,” lecture at the Bochumer Kolloquium Medienwissenschaft, Universität Bochum, 2 July 2008, https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/bkm/archivseiten/09_rheinberger.html. For the broader theoretical framework, see Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Experiment, Differenz, Schrift: Zur Geschichte epistemischer Dinge* (Marburg an der Lahn: Basiliken-Presse, 1992); Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Experimentalsysteme und epistemische Dinge: Eine Geschichte der Proteinsynthese im Reagenzglas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006); and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Historische Epistemologie zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2007).

²⁰ Rheinberger, “Epistemische Dinge,” n.p.

²¹ Markus Krajewski, “Die Rose: Vorstufe zu einer kleinen Geschichte der Rekursion,” lecture at the conference Hyperkult VII, Universität Lüneburg, 16 July 1998, 10.

What is the historian concerned with? Does he look back on a past that is in turn the result of another past that lies even further back and so on back to the very beginnings? Or does he look back on a past that turns out to be the result of a “différance” that is always already postponed or shifted, accessible from the dimension of the past future? [...] These conditions [the emergence of something new] seem accessible, like the new itself, only through a kind of recurrence that requires the existence of a product in order to make palpable the circumstances of its fabrication.²²

In this manner, historical artifacts situated within a past future perspective manage to escape two potential traps: the linearization of historical movements and the search for origins. But the problem for this perspective is a “knotting of time,”²³ an intertwining of past and future. Describing photodynamic images with such a rhetoric of an unknown future is, paradoxically, based on their status as experiments and their ability to produce imprecise knowledge. Anton Giulio Bragaglia and Arturo Bragaglia sought to present a machine in an “epistemic phase” that would produce open futures; at the same time, this led to a knotted time structure of past and present image technologies.

In the epistemic phase, the representational status of things is not just vague; perhaps more importantly, their vague representational status becomes the point of reference. Rheinberger: “We cannot yet point to epistemic things. If there *is* something like a reference in this epistemic phase, then it is always ascribed but remains uncertain and *must* remain uncertain.”²⁴ It is exactly this quality of *vague reference* that opens up a whole horizon of possible meanings, and which makes the relation between the image and what it represents remain unclear. The vague reference of a trajectory of light that sacrifices mimetic exactness, which would allow us to identify a certain object, is the culminating point of a wide range of ideas about how photodynamic photographs could represent the flow of life. As Bragaglia puts it: “A shout, a tragic pause, a gesture of terror, in the entirety of the scene, in the complete external unfolding of its intimate drama, can now be expressed in one single work” (Un grido, una pausa tragica, un gesto di terrore, in tutta la scena, in tutto lo svolgimento esteriore dell'intimo dramma può venir espresso in una sola opera).²⁵ In the Futurist Manifesto of 1913, the “vague reference” of photodynamic imagery is transformed into a wide range of linguistic metaphors. In his essay on the “naming” of photography, the historian Geoffrey Batchen describes how the early phase of photography generated “a mass of metaphor” because the characteristics of the new medium were

22 Rheinberger, *Experimentalsysteme und epistemische Dinge*, 193.

23 Rheinberger, 195.

24 Rheinberger, “Epistemische Dinge,” n.p.

25 Bragaglia, “Futurist Photodynamism,” 371; FF 1913, n.p.

still vague and undefined.²⁶ With regard to photodynamism, I would like to argue that this richness in generating metaphors is not only the case for the early phase of the medium but is dependent on whether photography is treated as an epistemic thing or as a technical thing, as a tool for generating unknown knowledge or as precise data about the world. Recent discussions on the potential of film and photography to articulate different temporal levels in the context of a theory of history have argued that only film possesses a prospective quality.²⁷ This prospective quality of the projected moving image not only relates the *pastness* or *thenness* of a given past to the *presentness* of the *now* of the time of projection. It also opens up an “open future” that is analyzed as being distinct from the “completed future” of photography: “In contrast to photography, which as a storage medium refers to a completed and in that sense inaccessible past, just as film does, the more recent temporal medium lends the indexical, fixed images the illusion of an open future in and through the projection context.”²⁸ The media theorist Simon Rothöler argues here that the medium of film might serve as a historiographic model for measuring the openness of past future horizons.²⁹ Rather than wedding this combination of media characteristics and a historiographical model to an ontological argument (the presentness of filmic projection *always* opens up prospective qualities), the thinking of new and unexpected future perspectives could depend on treating media as epistemic or technical things in any historic phase.

26 Geoffrey Batchen, “The Naming of Photography: A Mass of Metaphor,” *History of Photography* 17 (1993): 22–32.

27 “Cinema, the projected moving image, demands that we participate in the movement we perceive. Analysis of perceiving motion can only offer some insights into the way the moving image exceeds our contemplation of a static image. Motion always has a projective aspect, a progressive movement in a direction, and therefore invokes possibility and a future. Of course, we can project these states into a static image, but with an actually moving image we are swept along with the motion itself.” Tom Gunning, “Moving Away from the Index: Cinema and the Impression of Reality,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 18 (2007): 42.

28 Simon Rothöler, *Amateure der Weltgeschichte: Historiographische Praktiken der Gegenwart* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2011), 82.

29 “What is necessary is a measuring of the openness of past future horizons and then the insight that what happened then did not necessarily have to happen and therefore was not clearly foreseeable but rather at best represented only one of several possibilities; a perspective on the past future as a possibility instead of as an illusion or anticipation of what actually occurred.” Lucian Hölscher, *Neue Annalistik: Umrisse einer Theorie der Geschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 52.

Postcards

In his 1986 book, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, the German media philosopher Friedrich Kittler used Bragaglia's photodynamic postcard of a typewriter to illustrate his concept of technical evolution – and took the opportunity to proclaim a genetic link between celluloid film and the various automated parts of a machine gun (see Figure 6.8).³⁰ But the postcard of Bragaglia's typewriter undermines Kittler's argumentation, which predominantly relies on a technical understanding of reproducible media. The blurred image is not simply an illustration of technical improvements to photography; it exemplifies how futurist expectations for the future of photography sought to reverse the teleological conception of its history in order to promote the potential of a new image of time (see Figure 6.9).³¹ This new image not only served as a model for a time structure on the representational level; in futurist aesthetics, it was connected to a whole new concept of history that promoted the potential of an open future.

For this new conception of the future, which was to be pictured by the representation of time, it was also crucial that the futurists and other avant-garde artists sought out new materials and media.³² For instance, the futurist action artist Fortunato Depero used postcards as a medium of artistic self-expression by printing large numbers of self-portraits, pasting them onto postcards, and then drawing and writing on them in thick red letters in multiple reworkings of their surfaces (see Figures 6.10–6.12). This avant-garde practice constituted a material appropriation of the conventional picture postcard. From the 1880s onward, picture postcards with standardized motifs were being written, sent, and – after the standardization of the postal service – also delivered in the millions.³³ As an artistic material characterized by the ephemeral form of the dispatch with its distribution routes and postmarks, the postcard was also bound up on the material level with ideas about the novelty of modern technology and revolutionary uses of media. “The new postcard was seen as fast, efficient, often political, and potentially dangerous even as it was represented as a fad.”³⁴ Beyond that, the postcard

³⁰ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

³¹ For a reading of Kittler's evolution of technology in relation to hardware and imaginative processes, see Stefan Andriopoulos, “Psychic Television,” *Critical Inquiry* 31 (2005): 623.

³² See Giovanni Lista, *L'art postal futuriste* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1979).

³³ See Friedrich Tietjen, “Masses of Different Images: On the Production and Sending of Personal Photographs until circa 1920,” in *Send Me an Image: From Postcards to Social Media*, ed. Felix Hoffmann and Kathrin Schöneg (Göttingen: Steidl, 2021), 37–50.

³⁴ Monica Cure, *Picturing the Postcard: A New Media Crisis at the Turn of the Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2018), 5.

Schriftspeichermechanik und Klangspeichermechanik sind Nebenprodukte des amerikanischen Bürgerkriegs. Edison, im Krieg ein blutjunger Telegraphist, entwickelte seinen Phonographen ja beim Versuch, die Arbeitsgeschwindigkeit des Morseschreibers über Menschenmaß zu steigern. Remington nahm im September 1874 die Serienfabrikation von Sholes-Modellen auf, einfach weil nach Ende des »Bürgerkriegsbooms die Geschäfte langsamer gingen und freie Kapazitäten verfügbar waren.«²⁹

Die Schreibmaschine wurde zum Diskursmaschinengewehr. Was nicht umsonst Anschlag heißt, läuft in automatisierten und diskreten Schritten wie die Munitionszufuhr bei Revolver und MG oder der Zelluloidtransport beim Film. »Die Feder war einst mächtiger als das Schwert«, schreibt 1898 Otto Burghagen, der erste deutsche Schreibmaschinenmograph, »wo aber die Schreibmaschine herrscht, da müssen Krupp'sche Kanonen verstummen!«³⁰ Nur widerlegen ihn seine eigenen Ausführungen über »die große Zeiter-sparnis, welche die Maschine dem Kaufmann so wertvoll macht. Mit ihrer Hilfe erledigt man seine schriftlichen Ar-

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Anton Giulio und Arturo Bragaglia, *Dattilografa*, 1911

Figure 6.8: Illustration from Friedrich Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter* (Berlin: Brinkmann & Bose, 1986), 283.

also brought another form of temporality to pictures: the temporal logic of distribution, dispatch, and circulation. After being mailed, postcards become part of a fairly open temporality of potential delays and postponements, as with the postcard that arrived fifty-one years late, which was temporarily lost in the Italian postal system and almost failed to reach its addressee. Although today real-time streaming and social media have turned postcards into dinosaurs of media archaeology, their past future at the beginning of the twentieth century prefigured the utopian tropes in the sender-recipient logic of visual media that are now once again making it possible to imagine an open future in the ubiquitous visual worlds of the Internet.



Figure 6.9: Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Dattilografa (Typist)*, 1911. Postcard. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gillman Paper Collection.

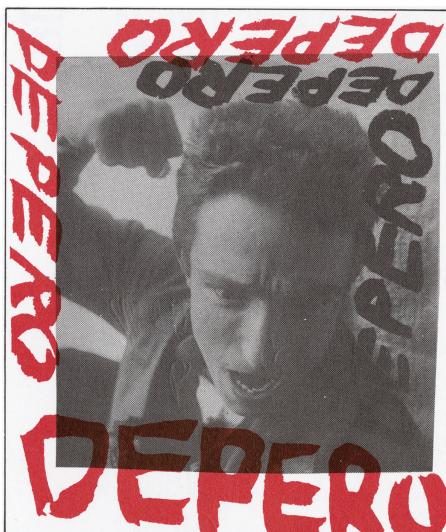


Figure 6.10: Fortunato Depero, self-portrait with clenched fist, 24 March 1915. Silver gelatin print, 7.5 x 7 cm. Roverto, Museo d'arte e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Archivio del '900. Reprinted from Lista, *Futurism and Photography*, 38.



Figure 6.11: Fortunato Depero, self-portrait with clenched fist, 1915. Silver gelatin print mounted on card with signature. Reprinted from Giovanni Lista, *L'art postal futuriste* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1979), 75.



Figure 6.12: Fortunato Depero, postcard, 1925. Reprinted from Lista, *L'art postal futuriste*, 68.

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II Serial Formats

Eva Ehninger

Trying on the Drawing Room

Realness and Truth in and out of Photographs

In his essay *Kleine Geschichte der Fotografie* (1931), Walter Benjamin offers a scathing critique of late nineteenth-century commercial photography. It is specifically the serially produced format of the carte de visite portrait (see Figure 7.1) that meets his contempt. In 1854, Eugène Disdéri had developed a special camera that allowed photographers to produce a plate with eight portraits of their customers in each sitting and to deliver an infinite number of prints in the future. After it was bootlegged by savvy British businessmen to circumvent the Frenchman's national patent, Disdéri's invention caught on quickly around Europe. By the 1860s, the immense popularity of the relatively inexpensive, readily available little cardboard portrait was coined by contemporaneous critics as "cartomania" – the collective frenzy of buying, collecting, exchanging, and sitting for one's own serially produced photograph.¹

For Benjamin, these portraits were symptomatic of an overall increase in the mechanization of communication media during the second half of the nineteenth century. He argues that as an industrialized form of portrait photography, the carte de visite was more closely related to technology than to traditional portrait painting. Without discrimination, the camera documents and reveals minute details of the sitter's physiognomy as well as structural qualities of the studio environment that would not be registered in a conventional portrait. Photography's mass production and the regular repetition of its novel visual features trained consumers to perceive and judge the world accordingly. This new kind of perception focused on reproducibility and similarity, in short, on serial phenomena.

According to Benjamin, the carte de visite thus played a decisive role in transforming human perception and processes of self-presentation and self-identification. It was a motor for and outcome of the commercialized perception of the world and self as discrete, unrelated, and decontextualized elements. For Benjamin, commercial photography provided visual evidence of modern society's alienation from and

¹ Andrew Wynter, "Photographic Portraiture," *Once a Week*, 31 January 1863, 148–150, 149 speaks of a "carte de visite mania"; "A Contemporary Hobby," *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1861, 467 uses the term "cardomania."



Figure 7.1: André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, portraits of André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri / autoportraits, 1860–1870, 1859–1860. Positive, contact print, monochrome, nontransparent, object: ca. 18.5 × 23.7 cm, picture carrier: ca. 18.5 × 23.7 cm, picture: ca. 9.5 × 6 cm (each). Basel, Fotosammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, L0001_E1_F2.

simultaneous dependence on technology, a problematic combination that increasingly came to define modern society.²

Anyone who has had the opportunity to leaf through an album of portrait photographs from the second half of the nineteenth century (see Figure 7.2) is compelled to agree with Benjamin's description of their visual qualities (though not necessarily with his assessment that they are regrettable products of capitalist mass production). Dozens, sometimes hundreds of mostly anonymous people, dressed in their Sunday best and arrested in a set of predetermined poses, stand or sit amid the sparse and interchangeable furnishings of photography studios.

² Walter Benjamin, "Kleine Geschichte der Fotografie (1931)," *Walter Benjamin: Medienästhetische Schriften*, ed. Detlev Schöttker (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 300–316. See also Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 10–18.

Men, women, and children look at us from the distance of 150 years, their demeanors and expressions ranging from self-confidence to surrender. At the time of their production, each of these little portraits served the express aim of self-representation, which was a novel opportunity for the majority of those assembled in the albums. What is striking today, however, is not their individuality but rather their comparability. Aided by a standardized format, the repetitive furnishings of studios, and conventionalized gestures and poses, late nineteenth-century commercial portrait photography was an equalizing machine, despite its apparent service to the self-representation of each paying individual.

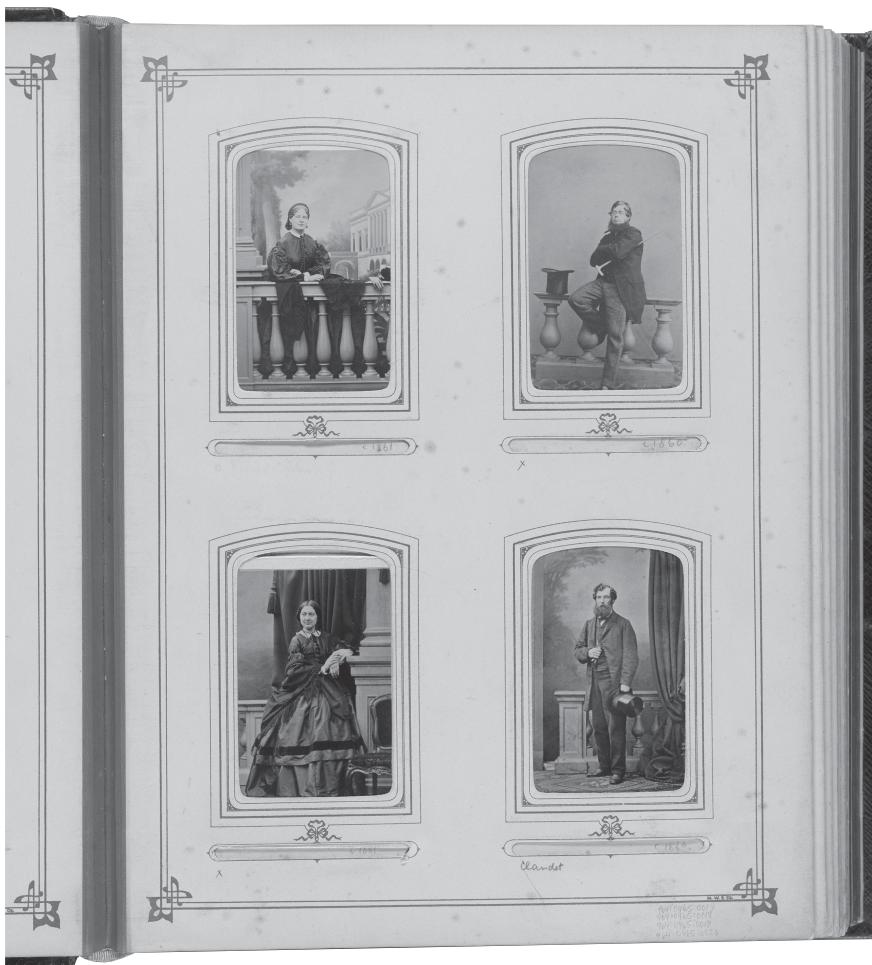


Figure 7.2: Black calf album, ca. 1870. Austin, Harry Ransom Center, 964.0465.0017-0020.

Carte de visite photography seems to confirm the seriality of modern life on more than one level. First, the serial production of sets of identical photographs in a standardized format made it possible for cartes to be collected, exchanged, and stored together in equally mass-produced and standardized containers such as frames, boxes, stock books, or albums. Second, studio settings commonly featured equally standardized furnishings and backgrounds, thus aiding the serial aesthetics of the cartes de visite, even if the respective photographs were produced in different establishments or even in different countries.

Contemporaneous commentators were well aware of this doubled seriality, which, as they admit, not only led to a troubling similarity of all those photographed but also impacted the formation and perception of the self. They regarded the built environment and its furnishings as formative for the inhabitant's self-perception and character. If this environment was serially produced, individual evolvement and character building became difficult. And if, additionally, everyone looked more or less the same in their photographic portrait, the options for convincing one's audience of the faithfulness of one's own photographic representation were limited. Cartes de visite, and their circulation within the social spheres they represented, thus played an important, if complex, role in negotiating between serial photographic reality and truth.

In order to examine the troubled relation between photographic reality and truthful representation, and the role of serial repetition in it, I have decided to focus my attention not on persons portrayed in cartes de visite from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century but rather on the room that served as the stage for producing and consuming them: the drawing room. My analysis examines two different but related discourses in order to capture the doubled seriality of the drawing room, which is based on the circulation of this symbolic interior, and to gauge how the truth value of its serial reproduction works against the referential truth of the photographic image. Handbooks on decorating the home and guidelines for furnishing the photo studio both comment on the problem of visual similarity. Contemporaneous authors' answers to how homeowners and studio operators alike might counter the consequences of the increased mechanization of life differ from the conclusions Benjamin would draw seventy years later. Rather than dismissing serial production outright, they offer pragmatic advice: on how to achieve an individually furnished home that both reflects and hones the character of its inhabitants; and on how to provide one's sitters with an environment that is so closely related to their individual homes that the image produced is a "true" portrait of their respective character.

From popular decorating-advice books, then, I will investigate the frictions between individual ambition and mass-produced furnishings for home decoration. Though these publications were already in high demand during the first half of the nineteenth century, their most rapid growth in number and reach came during the

1870s and 1880s, and coincided with the time when cartes de visite reached a high point in popularity. Three such books, published in chronological succession, illustrate in an exemplary manner the paradoxical relationship between individual décor and serial production as well as between personal aspiration toward good taste and its popular – and apparently quite tasteless – commercialization: the British architect and designer Charles Eastlake published his *Hints on Household Taste* for the first time in the women's magazine *The Queen* in 1865 and assembled these articles in a book in 1868.³ His writings provided an important foundation for popularizing a critical assessment of mass-produced design and the view of handmade furniture and decoration as a sign of good taste and moral integrity. Lucy Orrin-smith, who worked as a tile painter, engraver, and embroiderer for the company Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., was a fervent advocate of Eastlake's concepts. Her book, *The Drawing Room: Its Decorations and Furniture* (1878), builds on his earlier study but aims at a socially more stratified audience, providing advice on how to implement Eastlake's high aesthetic standards in households with less financial means.⁴ H. R. Haweis's *The Art of Decoration* was published in 1881. It represents the common reaction during the 1880s against the rampant use of mass-produced furniture as well as against what Haweis understood as the excesses of the "Aesthetic Movement," which Eastlake had supported fifteen years earlier.⁵ Between these three publications, we can grasp the paradoxical nature of the drawing room as a representation of individual refinement and social standing, which became increasingly standardized due to industrially produced furnishings and popular lessons in taste. The mere number of advice books on questions of home decorating published during this time is evidence of the interest of a broad segment of society. Nevertheless, it is necessary to treat these texts with caution, as they do not map the actual state of home decorating but rather answer the aspirational hopes of their readers.⁶ A glimpse at sales catalogues from furniture manufacturers throws into relief the losing battle they fought against mass-produced home furnishings.

After looking at books on home decorating, I will discuss advice given to photographers on how to decorate their studios. This will allow me to reconstruct the

³ The book was published with great success in 1868 by Longmans, Green and Company in London under the title *Hints on Household Taste, in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details*.

⁴ Lucy Orrin-smith, *The Drawing-Room: Its Decorations and Furniture* (London: MacMillan, 1878). The book appeared in the Art at Home series, which also included titles such as *The Dining-Room* by Mrs. Loftie; *The Bedroom* by Lady Barker; *Dress* by Mrs. Oliphant; *Domestic Architecture* by J. J. Stephenson; *Drawing and Painting* by H. Stacey Marks.

⁵ H. R. Haweis, *The Art of Decoration* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1881).

⁶ Nineteenth-century domestic-advice literature is a highly stylized genre. It builds on or even plagiarizes from a history of manners and etiquette books that reaches back into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

reciprocal relationship between the drawing room at home, apparently decorated according to individual tastes, means, and needs, and the drawing room in studios, which catered to a constantly broadening social stratum. It was an important marketing feature to provide sitters with the opportunity to have an image produced that showed them as genuinely belonging to the virtual but nevertheless genteel society of everyone who was photographed. “Realness” becomes an important criterion here. According to contemporaneous commentators, real furniture and decoration, which designates a genteel space where customers can enter at least temporarily into polite society, was a necessary precondition for producing truthful portraits.

In the drawing room, the logic of serial production – of architecture, furniture, design, and photographs – is matched with the circular logic of reference and repetition. Truth, as we shall see, is a moving target in this dynamic process of self-representation. While the circularity of the drawing room at home, in studios, in photographs, and then again at home in photographic albums seems to confirm aspirations of self-expression and social distinction, the serial format of the carte de visite undermines efforts at differentiation and individuality. Serialization is perceived as a threat to the truthful representation of the portraits’ subjects.

On a broader level, then, the nineteenth-century discourse and practice of portrait photography clearly reflects on the logic of series and their complex relation to what might be considered truth. But this reflection does not necessarily aim for critical distance – a role Benjamin attributes to art and that he defines as the basis for truth.⁷ Lamenting the impact of technology on self-perception and self-representation while at the same time performing it, the nineteenth-century practice and discourse of portrait photography shows how truth is a process of pragmatic negotiation – a process built on the circulation, recognition, and interpretation of serially produced signs and images.

The paradox of the drawing room

Originally, the concept of the drawing room was associated with gentility, a set of personal attributes connoting elegance, good breeding, and social superiority that were by definition beyond the reach of commerce. Up until the eighteenth century,

⁷ The significance of the concept of reflection for Benjamin’s understanding of art is already apparent in Walter Benjamin, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (Bern: A. Francke, 1920). According to Benjamin, for artists working in reproductive media such as film and photography, the critique of mechanized production and presentation is an integral part of their work. See Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*.

the term had designated the room between the royal bedchamber and the representative state rooms where privileged members of the English royal court assembled in the morning to attend the king's first formal appearance of the day. During the nineteenth century, the term was applied more and more regularly to the representative room within the bourgeois home in which guests were entertained. The drawing rooms of the upper classes served as illustrious, though unattainable, models for these modest adaptations.

Claims of social refinement were demonstrated in drawing rooms in multiple ways. First, the decision to dedicate a specific room to the demonstration of social standing depended on the architectural generosity of the building and on the inhabitants' means to furnish it. Second, the elaborate decoration of the room, with discreet but precise reference to fashion and novelty, acted as a delicate marker of aesthetic education and taste. Third, the social rituals performed there demonstrated and honed genteel behavior. The drawing room provided the stage for daily social visits, music and literature recitals, and polite conversation, often based on pictures displayed on the walls or on albums presented on tables.

The furnishings of this environment were fairly standardized. They included carpets, window draperies, a drawing-room suite, fancy chairs, a center table, a mantle, sometimes a piano, and a myriad of smaller decorative objects. Subtle variations on these elements mirrored the social and cultural position of each respective drawing-room owner, or rather, their aspired position.

During the 1870s, drawing-room furniture and decoration increasingly became available to an aspiring middle class as mass-produced consumer items, which undermined their claim to gentility. Paradoxically, the successful commercialization and serial production of this interior were outcomes of the drawing room's presumed elitism, which connected it to qualities outside of the commercial realm. In her study *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850–1930*, Katherine Grier argues that the middle-class adaptation of the drawing room may be captured with the term *paraphrase*.⁸ The term implies that when a message is restated, it undergoes a change, often in the direction of

⁸ With this term, Grier refers to Thorstein Veblen's influential book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), in which the sociologist introduced the term *emulation* to describe the wish to meet an aesthetic standard in order to communicate aristocratic gentility. According to Grier, Veblen's concept did not map the necessary distortion of this abstract ideal within the realm of urban middle-class housing and readymade furniture, a fact that the term *paraphrase* can capture. Like Veblen, Grier mainly focuses on American Victorianism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850–1930*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2010). Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1899).

compression and economy. The economics of design and the production of less expensive lines of consumer goods follow the same logic. Paraphrase pares down elements indicating an object's style and adherence to aesthetic standards to a minimally acceptable level.⁹ Compressing the established drawing-room vocabulary into a few meaningful elements is not only evident in adaptations of this interior for modest middle-class homes. It is practiced even more forcefully in the decoration of photo studios, which were frequented for the most part by just that segment of society.¹⁰

While I value Grier's conceptual clarification of middle-class drawing rooms as a shorthand – a set of signs pointing toward social aspirations – I think that there is a danger in pushing the parallelization of furnishings and language too far.¹¹ Aesthetic choices for decorating a drawing room might be guided by a wish to communicate a specific social position, but this communicative aim remains unspoken and might well be misunderstood, distorted, overlooked, or deliberately ignored by guests and visitors. What is more, the parallelization of design and speech does not take into account the popular nineteenth-century notion that the furnishings of a home do not only give voice to an individual's character but actually help create it. Authors such as Eastlake, Orrin Smith, or Haweis accordingly compared drawing-room furnishings not with their owners but rather with their owners' dress. Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste* is structured as a movement from the outer appearance of the house's architecture, into the home and its different rooms, and lastly to its inhabitants, their physical appearance and dress. The same underlying rules that guide the author's rules for decorating the lived environment are manifest in his discussion of dress, jewelry, and even beard styles. Furnishing as well as dress should be of good material, well-made, comfortable, functional, and appropriate to social standing and occasion.¹² For Eastlake, the personal experience of living in such a well-designed

⁹ Penny Sparke discusses this phenomenon of reduction and simultaneous reinforcement of aesthetic markers for the design and production of upholstery in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Penny Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste* (London: Pandora, 1995), 39–41.

¹⁰ The middle class was not a stable social group but constantly growing throughout the 1860s–1880s. By the end of the century, prices had dropped to such an extent that photographic portraits had become available to the working classes as well. See Annie Rudd, "Victorians Living in Public: Cartes de Visite as 19th-Century Social Media," *Photography and Culture* 9.3 (2017): 195–217.

¹¹ Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 17. Sparke, who focuses on the communicative application of consumer goods and design as well, argues that the individual furnishings of a drawing room gave away a homeowner's social standing as readily as the sound of a geographically and socially specific dialect. Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 28.

¹² Charles Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste: The Classic Handbook of Victorian Interior Decoration* (1868; repr., New York: Dover, 1969), 258–281.

environment, not only the occasional sight of one, is a prerequisite for the formation of good taste. The décor envelops a house's inhabitants, both shaping and expressing their individual character and social status. Haweis, writing twenty years later, describes this intimate relationship between interior and dress in a nutshell: "Furniture is a kind of dress, dress is a kind of furniture, which both mirror the mind of their owner, and the temper of the age; which both minister to our comfort and culture, and they ought to be considered together."¹³

Benjamin's later critical assessment of the impact of mechanization and serialization on individuals and their perception of the world is consistent with this earlier discourse on the drawing room. Slowly but inexorably, like a woman's corset, the lived environment shapes its inhabitants over time. If this environment is produced serially, its rationalized form and aesthetics also becomes an integral part of one's persona, self-perception, and self-presentation. Orrinsmith aligns her understanding of the lived environment as a dress that both forms and represents its wearer with the serialized reality of middle-class life. "Most of us live in a 'row,'" she writes, "either of houses in a street or of villas in a suburb." This consumerist straightjacket – our dependence on mass-produced architecture, design, furniture, and dress – can only be eased by means of an education in taste, Orrinsmith argues. Taste is the precondition for a deliberate and personal reinterpretation of socially accepted and industrially reproduced aesthetic standards to express one's own character: "As regards our outward walls, the livery of sameness is donned by all, but there is scope of originality within doors, and surely our rooms should be made to suit our individual tastes and characters."¹⁴

Orrinsmith's hopeful statement reveals the paradox of the nineteenth-century drawing room. Her and her colleagues' advice books on decorating this symbolic interior were addressed to a growing middle class that regularly acquired factory-

13 Haweis, *The Art of Decoration*, 17.

14 Orrinsmith, *The Drawing-Room*, 143–144. This description of the drawing-room's relation to its owner makes palpable the difference between Benjamin's negative assessment of capitalist consumerism and the more ambivalent stance in the late nineteenth century. Benjamin describes the bourgeois interior of the nineteenth century as an *etui*, a case that snugly and comfortably encloses individuals with all their accessories in an illusionary refuge from technological progress and consumer capitalism. By contrast, for late nineteenth-century authors, interior decoration was not necessarily a delusion, but rather had, if tasteful and appropriate, the potential to form its inhabitants and thereby to support their development into thoughtful and reflective individuals. See Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 5.1–5.2 of *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 52–53.

made products of furnishing and design in its aspiration to become part of a genteel drawing-room community. Sales catalogues of furniture factories, such as those of Laverton & Co. in Bristol or Benham & Sons or Silber & Fleming in London, provide insight into the growing market for standardized drawing-room interiors.¹⁵ Laverton & Co., for example, advertises readymade drawing-room furniture ranging from four-piece to seven-piece suites to accommodate for the different room sizes of its customers (see Figure 7.3). The price list included in the catalogue also provides estimates for furnishing four-room to twelve-room houses, with a price tag between 24 and 752 pounds.¹⁶ The manufacturing firm Wallach Brothers

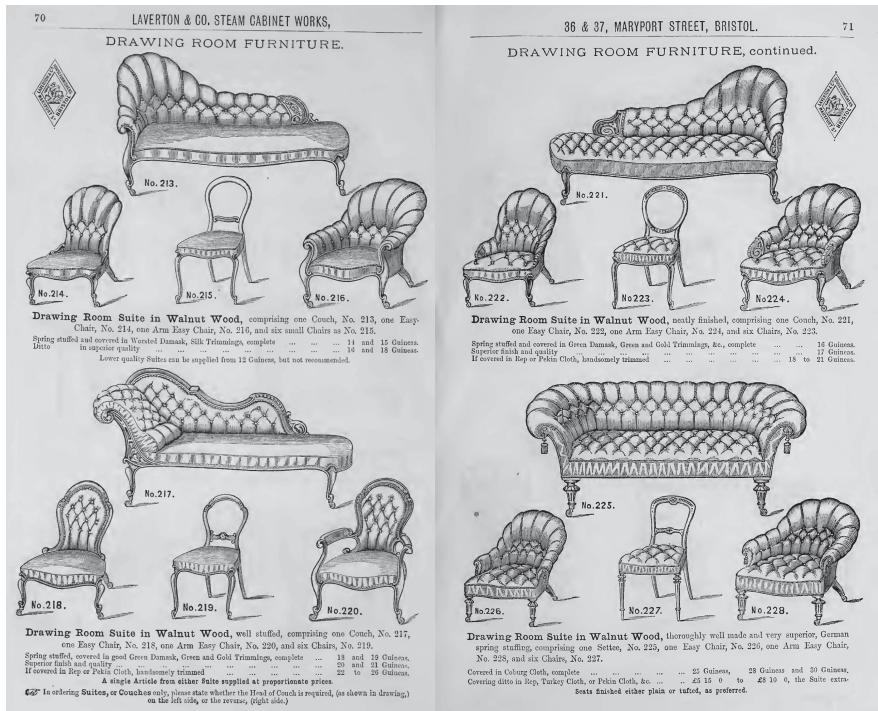


Figure 7.3: Laverton & Co., General House Furnishers, Upholsterers & Carpet Warehousemen, *New Illustrated Catalogue of Furniture and General Price List* (1875), 70–71.

¹⁵ E.g., Laverton & Co., *New Illustrated Catalogue of Furniture and General Price List* (Bristol: Laverton & Co., 1875); Benham & Sons, *Manufacturing and Furnishing Ironmongers, Hot Water & Gas Engineers, Stove, Range & Bath Makers, Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Benham & Sons, ca. 1868); Silber & Fleming, *Manufacturers, Importers, Warehousemen and Agents, Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Silber & Fleming, 1880).

¹⁶ Laverton & Co., *New Illustrated Catalogue of Furniture*, 158–169.



Figure 7.4: Wallach Brothers, *Wholesale and Retail Furniture Warehousemen* (Melbourne 1884–1888), 73.

illustrates their catalogue with model interiors (see Figures 7.4–7.5). A stately drawing room serves as the foil for more modest interiors for three-room or four-room houses. The differentiated offers indicate that the largest possible segment of society could afford a drawing room. At the same time, this very seriality undermined the conventional aim of having a drawing room, namely, to act out one's membership in the elite social sphere of gentility and cultivation. In repeating both social aspiration and its machine-made realization, serially produced carte de visite photographs further reinforce this paradox.



Figure 7.5: Wallach Brothers, *Wholesale and Retail Furniture Warehousemen* (Melbourne 1884–1888), 194.

The photo studio as a public drawing room

In the mid-nineteenth century, commercial photo studios were a new kind of place. Socializing was an element of the product they sold (see Figure 7.6).¹⁷ There was not a real precedent for what such spaces should look like. As a result, commercial studios were regularly furnished as if they were a drawing room in a well-to-do household of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, which had served as a social space for an elite community, the “best people.” Commercial studios thus did not replicate the more constricted domestic drawing rooms of the nineteenth-century middle class. It was rather the other way around. Their elaborate furnishings served as sample drawing rooms for their middle-class customers. In a world that provided few models for interior décor, commercial

¹⁷ Other such places include new hotels in urban areas or compartments in trains or on steamships. See, e.g., David Bowie, “Innovation and 19th Century Hotel Industry Evolution,” *Tourism Management* 64 (2018): 314–323.



Figure 7.6: Unknown photographer, depiction of a typical nineteenth-century photographer's studio, 1875–1890. Positive, contact print, monochrome, nontransparent, picture carrier: 20.2 × 25.8 cm, picture: 19.1 × 25.8 cm, object: 24.4 × 31.4 cm. Basel, Fotosammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, L0767_F58.

studios introduced people to the essential artifact vocabulary of respectable living spaces – the appropriate furniture, carpets, draperies, and wall decorations in three dimensions and in glowing color. These spaces implied that gentility was accessible through the great engine of commerce and that their customers, as temporary inhabitants of the room, were themselves (or might become) drawing-room people, comfortable with the room's social ceremony and at home in its specific milieu. They were model interiors that allowed people to try on the idea and picture themselves as drawing-room owners.¹⁸

It is therefore not surprising that an abundance of articles in trade journals taught photographers the same lessons in taste as those that Eastlake, Orrin Smith, and Haweis addressed to middle-class homeowners. An article in *The Illustrated Photographer*, for example, published in 1870, recommends well-designed wallpaper

¹⁸ See Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 22–23.

as a background for studio walls. Reiterating the convictions formulated by the designer and author William Morris, and repeated by Orrin Smith, the article dismisses the naturalistic, three-dimensional rendering of flowers in wallpaper, while praising simple, harmonious, and flat designs. “If you wish to convey the idea of an apartment,” the author writes, “the rule of flatness in the ornament, and conventional instead of naturalistic treatment should be strictly observed.”¹⁹

As a rule, recommendations given to photographers concerning the furnishing of their studios circled around the quality of realness. Their mock-up drawing rooms needed to be as realistic as possible. In 1883 C. Brangwin Barnes writes in *The Photographic News*: “It has often been a source of perplexity and wonderment to me, as to how and why photographers in general have been led away from the realism of domesticity and homeliness in the interior fittings and furniture of their studios. [. . .] Our aim, I take it, is to represent our sitter as at home; and, to do this correctly, why not use furniture of a description that is in everyday use? I should like to see the studio furnished like an ordinary drawing or sitting room.”²⁰ An article from the same magazine, published a few years later, comments on the difficulty of making customers feel comfortable in a studio by furnishing it in accordance with sitters’ homes while at the same time catering to a large spectrum of customers with different economic backgrounds and diverse expectations of what a representative drawing room should look like. The advice given is a compromise: avoid meanness on the one hand, ostentation on the other, and see to it that everything is in good taste and looks natural.²¹ The quality of realness is singled out by many authors, who point out that the naturalistic image of the photograph should be matched by furnishing the studio as a real drawing room in order to provide a natural scene, which in turn allows for a truthful likeness of each sitter.

In his advice book for photographers, *Photographic Studios of Europe* (1882), H. Baden Pritchard adds another layer to this quality of realness. Writing about the studio of the brothers W. & D. Downey, who had become famous for their

¹⁹ “Backgrounds and Accessories for the Glass Room: III,” *Illustrated Photographer*, 29 April 1870, 138–139. “We need hardly add,” writes the author, “that such a paper would be most unsuitable to the requirements of either an artist’s taste, the wall of a room, or a photographer’s background” (139). The article also quotes directly from a popular decoration-advice book, *Cassell’s Household Guide*, to emphasize the importance of the background in decorating a room.

²⁰ C. Brangwin Barnes, “Inside the Studio,” *Photographic News*, 27 July 1883, 467. The arguments that a studio’s adherence to the natural surroundings of its sitters would help put customers at ease, lead to appreciable results, and support the good reputation of the photographer is regularly reiterated in contemporaneous trade magazines during the 1870s and 1880s. See, e.g., “Posing and Lighting,” *British Journal of Photography*, 9 December 1870, 582.

²¹ “Notes,” *Photographic News*, 2 December 1887, 761.

commercially highly successful cartes de visite of Queen Victoria and her family, Pritchard notes with appreciation that the studio does not work with painted backgrounds depicting the desired interior but is rather furnished like a representative drawing room “painted in a French grey, which almost resembles lavender.”²² He makes a similar observation about a number of other well-established studios, noting that their appearance as “well-appointed drawing rooms,” elegantly furnished and thickly carpeted, sets them apart from ordinary studios. Describing the studio of Alexander Bassano, for example, he notes: “Another point that struck us in the studio was the presence of nought but real furniture. The tables, chairs, and bookcases were real, the piano was real, the Persian carpet was real.”²³ In his description of the studio of Mr. Jabez Hughes, he writes: “The studio furniture is in every case real. Tables and chairs are of solid oak, while couch and settee, with their mouse-coloured velvet coverings, are worthy of notice, if only because of the excellent carving on them. In a picture they appear handsome, for the simple reason that they *are* handsome.”²⁴

According to Pritchard, these studio drawing rooms put customers at ease because of their realness. In a studio furnished like an actual drawing room, they can spend a comfortable hour leisurely looking at art on the walls or albums on the tables and enjoying the tasteful decoration and conversation with friends and other customers and not worry about their imminent session in front of the camera.²⁵ Natural surroundings lead to natural behavior and thus to a true likeness. The authors are in agreement that only when commercial photo studios are perceived as genteel establishments can they successfully shape their customers’ self-perception, at least for the time of their sitting, as belonging to the genteel realm of the “best people.”²⁶

22 H. Baden Pritchard, *Photographic Studios of Europe* (London: Piper & Carter, 1882), 20.

23 Pritchard, 81.

24 Pritchard, 136; emphasis mine.

25 Twenty years earlier John Bockett made a similar observation regarding Hughes’s studio: “A word or two as regards the accessories used: – No deception is at all practiced; a chair is a chair, a bookcase is really so, and also the piano. Each article appeared to be made in the best style of oak, simply oiled, but polished – an arrangement which, although expensive, undoubtedly gave most pleasing results in the negatives taken. [. . .] Altogether, I do not know when I passed three or four hours more pleasantly; and I felt, when I left, that, to an observing person, a visit over a first-class photographic establishment is not in vain.” John Bockett, “The Holidays of a London Photographer,” *British Journal of Photography*, 28 October 1864, 425.

26 This sentiment can be found in many contemporaneous articles. See, e.g., George Croughton, “Expression in Portraiture,” *British Journal of Photography*, 17 May 1872, 229: “It is to be expected that all persons entering a strange place, and particularly for the purpose of having their portraits taken, should feel nervous and ill at ease; and if they are allowed to remain so this feeling will show itself in the expression. It is, therefore, the policy of the photographer to inspire his sitters with confidence, and, to use a homely phrase, to make them feel at home. [. . .] Then, to

What is more, by integrating the medium of photography into this genteel public space, photographers were able to sell their own product as genteel as well. In presenting photographic prints on the walls, carte de visite albums on the tables, and framed portrait photographs on top of the piano, the studio owners defined these new pictures as a respectable, appropriate element of drawing-room décor. Photographers thereby participated in guiding new habits of consumption.²⁷ Both commercial pressures and social aspirations led to the creation of quasi-public spaces that used the material vocabulary of gentility – the artifacts of the drawing room – to attract and maintain business. All efforts to make these rooms look “real,” to establish the impression of a personal space representing good taste and character, were geared against the impression (and reality) of serial production and consumption. Here the aspirational tone of the advice books needs to be emphasized: most studios were far from realizing this ideal of the “real” drawing room, just as most middle-class homeowners were financially incapable of following Eastlake’s furnishing advice²⁸

Circulating the drawing room

Once produced, the serialized carte de visite portraits entered the homes of their middle-class owners. They were fit into prefabricated frames, albums, or concertinas and put on display in serially manufactured drawing-room suites, where they served as individualizing decorations and inspiration for conversation among family members and guests. By the 1880s, both furnishings for drawing rooms and cases for photographs could be ordered from the same wholesalers. Silber and Fleming, for example, offered photographic albums in standardized sizes and cover colors as well as standard drawing-room suites in a single sales catalogue (see Figures 7.7).

make any one feel at home, the place they are in should be like home; that is, the studio should be furnished and arranged as much like an ordinary room as possible. [...] For myself, I cannot see why ordinary drawing-room furniture cannot be used in the studio instead of those wonderful things that are everything in turn and nothing long. I am sure that the pictures would look much better for the use of ordinary furniture, and undoubtedly the sitter would feel more comfortable upon an ordinary chair.”

27 Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 53.

28 The authors often recognize this discrepancy and differentiate between good studios and common ones. See, e.g., Prichard, *Photographic Studios of Europe*, 123: “Perhaps in no other profession except those of literature and art do we find so vast a gulf as between the highest and the lowest photography. [...] In photography we have those who, by earnest study and thorough education, have elevated their art to the level of the great professions, and the man – to be found in every town – who manufacturers cartes at a few shillings per dozen.”

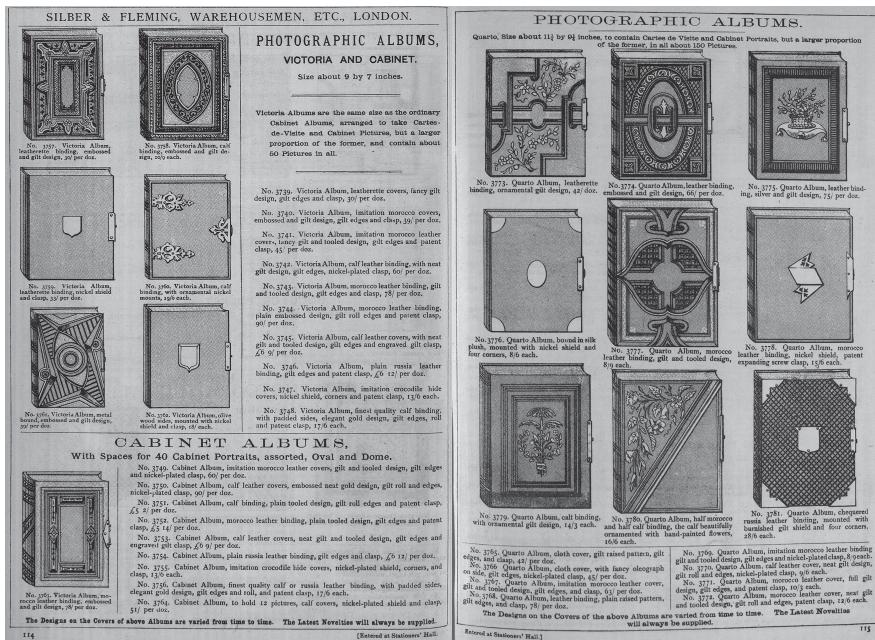


Figure 7.7: Silber & Fleming, *Illustrated Catalogue* (London 1880), 114–115.

Home building was a major industry in Britain, increasing more than sixfold between the middle and the end of the nineteenth century.²⁹ As the number of homeowners grew rapidly – be it of grand Victorian houses consisting of dozens of rooms and extensive grounds or, more commonly, of modest two-story buildings with strategic partitioning – products for furnishing and decorating this privately owned space were on the rise. As a consequence, the production of furniture underwent rapid changes. At the start of the nineteenth century, most new furniture had been bought from a cabinetmaker's shop. Customers could order their furniture to be made according to drawings in a catalogue, or they could select from readymade pieces on display in the shop. Already by mid-century, however, furniture making had become, like tailoring, a partially sweated trade. Wholesalers had become middlemen between producers and customers, supplying furniture stores with products at cheaper costs. As the system of production was broken into simple parts, carpenters were forced to specialize on one specific item of furniture, or

²⁹ Roderick Floud, *The People and the British Economy, 1830–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 59–60. Floud estimates the total expenditure on housing in 1856 at six million pounds; by 1899, that figure had reached thirty-eight million pounds.

even just a part of one, which they could produce quickly and cheaply in order to have a relatively secure return of the funds they invested in materials and workspace. The production of these parts could be easily learned by semiskilled labor including women and children, who worked from home or under the supervision of a so-called sweater or garret master. Until the end of the nineteenth century, furniture making remained a largely nonindustrialized trade, with large and expensive manufacturing machines entering into the workflow quite late. Nonetheless, nineteenth-century furniture production was based on a serial logic, which allowed for constant and swift adjustment of price and quantity according to market developments.

This resulted not only in generally unacceptable living conditions for workers. The quality of furniture also suffered: new furniture veneers were used in preference to hardwoods, and nails and glue for construction rather than dovetailing – qualities that Eastlake criticized as signs of falseness in his *Hints on Household Taste*.³⁰ The pressure to produce pieces quickly and cheaply is a confirmation of growing demand. A considerable amount of furniture was needed to create the “comfortable” home that most Victorians were counseled to want. In *Cassell’s Household Guide*, for example, the clueless homeowner would find a list of furniture needed for an “average” house: “[I]n the drawing room and dining room, a couch, several upholstered easy chairs, two tables, including one with eight plain chairs, and a chiffonier, or chest with or without glass front, a bookcase with leather strips along the tops to keep the dust off the books, a mirror and fender for the fireplace.”³¹ All of these items were presented as basics required for comfortable living. They were all available in a range of qualities and materials to fit every budget, so there was no excuse for anyone to be without the necessary number of chairs, tables, and carpets.

One illustrative example for how the idea of genteel living was marketed to a broad segment of middle-class consumers is the matching suite of furniture. Architectural-advice books published in the mid- to late nineteenth century reveal that drawing rooms were an important factor in space and room-use planning even for

³⁰ With this, Eastlake builds on A. W. Pugin, who criticizes the “falseness” of objects decorated in a way that conceals their function in his influential study *Contrasts, or a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, and Similar Buildings of the Present Day, Shewing the Present Decay of Taste* (1836). The same notions and terminology are later used by Orrin Smith and Haweis as well. See Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste*, 172; Orrin Smith, *The Drawing-Room*, 2–4; Haweis, *The Art of Decoration*, 4.

³¹ Quoted from Kelly Graham, *Gone to the Shops: Shopping in Victorian England* (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 78.

very modest structures.³² For these drawing rooms, the standardized and commercialized suite, in seven or five pieces, became a codified unit in furniture manufacturing.³³ Owning one was probably the easiest way to create a modern representative drawing room. It served as a compressed formula, a paraphrase, of genteel living.

The matching suite is a case in point for the manner in which an aesthetic convention that had developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries among a social and economic elite was transferred into serialized production and sold as a marker of good taste and genteel living. According to Peter Thornton, aesthetic unity in interior design by means of matching frames and textiles was originally based on the concept of *régularité*, which ascribed a sense of order and harmony created by means of architecture and decoration.³⁴ During the second half of the nineteenth century, commercial drawing rooms such as photo studios probably played an important role in the popularization of the aesthetic ideal of *régularité*. This led middle-class homeowners to furnish rooms in a way that seemed to reflect their appreciation of a comprehensive scheme of decoration, even if it was readymade, serially produced, and executed in modest materials. The matching drawing-room suite thus resonated with gentility on the one hand and spoke to middle-class respectability on the other, as it evinced not only aesthetic sensibility but also the economic means to purchase all the necessary furniture at once instead of buying them one piece at a time. But because the matching suite so clearly reflected middle-class aspirations, it was quickly dismissed in advice books for home decoration as a sign of the bad taste of those who had the means but lacked the education to become acceptable members of the drawing-room community.³⁵ As soon as the markers of taste were commercialized and

32 Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 71.

33 During the 1870s, the majority of trade catalogues offered seven-piece suites. Given the large number of firms offering suites, sales competition was probably intense by the late 1870s and encouraged constant innovation in upholstery, frames, and forms to push prices down and to attract and hold consumer attention. By the 1880s, the number of pieces in suites was commonly reduced to five, which reflected the smaller houses of less prosperous consumers.

34 The concept was based on the application of standard precepts of Renaissance architecture to the interior and its furnishing and reflected, according to Thornton, a new sense of the proper qualities of intellectual and social life. Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France, and Holland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 103–104.

35 Starting in the mid-1870s, many advice writers started to advocate harmonious rather than matching décor, but popular preferences still clearly relied heavily on matching color and pattern schemes and on sets and suites of furniture. As trade catalogues, historical photographs, and surviving furniture verify, the decision to purchase a suite never became unfashionable for ordinary customers. See Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 189.

became accessible for a larger audience, they needed to be updated to prevent unwanted comparisons.

This dreaded leveling of social distinction could be suspended in the private photo album. On its pages, portraits of family, friends, and role models could be organized into one's own drawing-room community. The standardized photographs could be arranged, and potentially rearranged, in idiosyncratic orders. Famous and elite personas were collected and integrated into a personal narrative, and the shared space of the album page was decorated and beautified. Here the promise of individualization, identification, and self-representation could be at least partially enacted.

The continued commercial success of commercial photography and its resulting serial aesthetic put pressure on the truth-building capabilities of these portraits, however. Consider, for example, James Mackay's dismissive remarks about other people's photo albums, which end with the realization that all the photographs in the lovingly presented book look the same: "No visitor can remain long in a friend's house before the album is produced; and, in looking over the pages intended to interest and edify him, good taste is often shocked at the ridiculous sameness of one photograph to another. The first thing sure to catch the eye is the curtain and pillar, graced with an elegant Elizabethan chair, and this is repeated *ad nauseam* until it becomes so hackneyed as to be positively painful to bear."³⁶ Mackay's description of the dreadful activity of looking at other people's albums points to the circularity of drawing-room aesthetics and values that I mentioned in the introduction. The commercialized drawing rooms at photo studios served as the background for portrait photographs and as a template for sitters in furnishing their own drawing rooms at home. Finished photographs were collected in a representative photo album and then displayed within that very room, serving as a source of conversation and thus meant to guide, shape, and advance the taste of all the members of the social group gathered there. As the drawing room circulated in the shared cultural territory of row houses and cartes de visite, it made visible the modern subject as embedded in and shaped by its serialized surroundings. Though the carte de visite did not make much of an effort to hide the fact that its gentility was thoroughly commercialized, this did not limit its success. The symbolic value of the drawing room remained in place precisely because of its serialization and circulation. Everybody could potentially become a member of that virtual drawing-room community that was created in photographs and reassembled in personal albums.

³⁶ James Mackay, "A Few Remarks on Backgrounds," *British Journal of Photography*, 14 October 1870, 484.

Realness and truth

The carte de visite portrait lends itself specifically to examining the relationship between truth and serial form. It is embroiled in the discursive production of truth in two respects. First, historically, photography was understood to document reality. Due to its automated production with the help of a mechanical apparatus, the medium provided a radically new standard for what could be regarded as a transparent representation of the world.³⁷ With regard to portraiture, however, an important argument against photography's truthfulness was precisely this mechanized production process. According to critics, this disqualified the new technology from producing a truthful image. Instead of delivering a truthful likeness of an individual person, their character, and their inner self, photography was said to produce merely a lifeless copy of surface phenomena.³⁸

Second, with the invention of the carte de visite, photography's contested claim to truth was embedded in a serial format. The apparently realistic photographic documentation of each individual was juxtaposed with the repetitive aesthetic of the little cardboard photographs. The commercial photographic portrait thus points to the larger underlying issue at hand: how to *become* an individual when one is surrounded and shaped by serially produced objects, architecture, and images. Whether they criticize serially produced photographs or standardized drawing-room suites, contemporaneous authors acknowledge this problem. If the surroundings shape the individual, then modern individuals are in danger of being shaped into serial similarity. The authors' pragmatic solution is their insistence on acquiring real surroundings, which make the inhabitant of the drawing room or the visitor of the photo studio believe, at least temporarily, in their individuality. Truth can then be produced through the repetitive experience of seeing oneself and being seen in a fitting context.

The serial logic illustrated by the appearance of the drawing room in commercial portrait photography is thus not just based on the standardization of format, which relates each individual carte de visite to every other carte de visite

³⁷ Richard Shiff, "Phototropism (Figuring the Proper)," *Studies in the History of Art* 20 (1989): 161–179. Already during the nineteenth century, the status of photography as an objective "pencil of nature" activated solely by the disinterested rays of the sun was regularly questioned. See Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (1844; repr., New York: Da Capo, 1969). Photography's ideology of objectivity arguably has remained intact up through today.

³⁸ John Leighton, "On Photography as a Means or an End," *Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 1.6 (1853): 74–75; "Mr. Wynfield's Photographs," *Reader* 3, 30 January 1864, 144–145; see also Gerhard Plumpe, *Der tote Blick: Zum Diskurs der Photographie in der Zeit des Realismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1990), 28–48.

and allows them to be fitted into equally standardized spaces such as frames, albums, or middle-class drawing rooms in newly developed terraced houses. What is more, the reoccurrence of the drawing room within the photographs further condenses the serial logic of the images, as they develop a relational structure based on both similarity and difference.³⁹ The circular proliferation of the drawing room, from drawing room to commercial studio to representative portrait photograph and back to the drawing room, is not only the result of an increasingly industrialized material and product world of the late nineteenth century. The serialization of the lived environment also transforms processes of self-representation and self-perception.

My assessment of the late nineteenth-century discourse on this serialization of objects, images, and the self has shown that a simple integration of commercial portrait photography into the modernist argument that industrial capitalist society exerts alienating forces – Benjamin's argument – is insufficient. It does not allow the more subtle agreements about what might be considered a true picture within a specific social setting and by a limited number of participants as they view, collect, and share serially produced commercial portrait photography. Though the photographs are fully integrated into capitalist trade and image practices, their handling does leave, according to contemporaneous critics, room for reflection and identification. Their serial logic is acknowledged, addressed, and often lamented, but this very logic is at the same time a significant asset: it has a stabilizing, affirmative effect for all those who participate in the production of truth.

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³⁹ Simon Rothöhler writes that a series is characterized both by the similarity of its components and by their identification as single elements. It is, according to Rothöhler, a mode of linking discrete segments that thereby enter into a relational structure. Similarity and discreteness are thus equally important forces in the process of serialization. Simon Rothöhler, *Theorien der Serie zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2020), 14–15.

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Malika Maskarinec

The Bachelor

Gottfried Keller's "Der Landvogt von Greifensee" and Serial Erotics

When the ten fictional narrators of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* withdraw from Florence to the paradisiacal countryside in the interest of avoiding infection and the social demise accompanying the plague, they agree that storytelling will do more than pass the time: it will maintain the good form of their small gathering, for one, by keeping at bay the temptation to transgress sexual norms. Having warned that "things that lack order will not last long," Pampinea, the first queen of the proceedings, pleads for a well-ordered day intended to maintain the group's morals: "So that I may begin by setting you all a good example, through which, proceeding from good to better, our company will be enabled to live an ordered and agreeable existence for as long as we choose to remain together."¹ Rather than perform conventionally forbidden sexual acts, which they believe to be ubiquitous in plague-ridden Florence, sexual desire is instead redirected into the stories they share. The hundred stories are rightly famous for their pervasive focus on sex, typically of an adulterous nature and frequently initiated by the female characters. Of the hundred stories told, nearly ninety displace desire from its potential realization in sexual acts that would threaten the "definite form"² of the group onto the form-giving activity of storytelling. Within the state of exception staged in the *Decameron*, the possibility of speaking freely about sexual desire and transgressive acts sustains storytelling in the round to the point of its completion with the tenth story of the tenth day.

How untethered erotic energy has the force to protract the time of narration is modelled in the serial arrangement of Panfilo's story on the second day (2.7), a story that stands out for its unusual length relative to the typically brief narratives of the *Decameron*. Shipwrecked on her way to meet her intended groom, the extraordinarily beautiful and desirable Alatiel, the daughter of the Sultan, falls into the hands of a series of eight men over a period of four years. The story unfolds at a breathtaking pace of tragic mishaps and egregious crimes that propel the woman's movement among these men and eastward across the Mediterranean. At each turn, she makes the most of her misfortune and learns to enjoy and liberally partake in the sexual pleasure she is offered. The dense and highly erratic chain of events is held together only by means of the continuity of her desire. The series unfolds, in other words, thanks to her desire and availability. The

¹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G. H. McWilliam, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1995), 21.

² Boccaccio, 20.

story concludes when she returns home to her father, successfully feigns her virginity, and sets sail a second time to her groom: “And so, despite the fact that eight separate men had made love to her on thousands of different occasions, she entered his bed as a virgin and convinced him that it was really so. And for many years afterwards she lived a contented life as his queen.”³ Her husband, who should have been her first and only lover, ultimately figures as the ninth man in a series, yet ensures, through matrimony, its conclusion. In this story, as in the *Decameron* itself, the series unfolds such that the story’s end returns to the point of its departure through a pattern of repetition and variation, thereby effecting its own closure.

In both the frame and this embedded narrative, care has been taken to achieve a good form. Panfilo’s story appropriately concludes with an image depicting the closure of the series in the form of a cycle. He cites the saying “A kissed mouth doesn’t lose its freshness: like the moon it turns up new again.”⁴ Lips and moon do more than suggestively allude to Alatiel’s beauty. Their round shapes describe the complete and perfect form of the woman’s journey completed in matrimony. The unbridled erotic energy that carries her through the series of nine men, comes full circle and has, like her lips, lost nothing of its potency over the course of its journey. Rather than being depleted over the series, her desire is sustained by it. Because the lunar image likewise describes the full circle of the *Decameron*’s storytelling, the story of Alatiel’s nine lovers models the arrangement of the frame narrative as well. In each case, a series is premised on a self-sustaining erotic force that ultimately finds closure in a lunar, cyclical form.

Serial erotics

I take the story just described to be illustrative of the way in which sexual desire can become the basic premise for the serial arrangement of a given narrative. The popular American television series *The Bachelor* and the global boom in spin-offs it has inspired over the past two decades – which all conclude only when the starring figure’s erotic availability is suspended in matrimony – indicate that such a serial arrangement has lost nothing of its cultural allure. In the following, I argue that Gottfried Keller’s novella “Der Landvogt von Greifensee” belongs to this tradition of erotic serials. Placing it in this tradition is, I claim, revealing about the fate of novella cycles in the nineteenth century. Situating any of Keller’s novellas within a tradition of erotic series may seem unfounded given the overwhelming

³ Boccaccio, 147.

⁴ Boccaccio, 147–148.

prudishness of his romantic tales. Indeed, Keller specifically conceived of the cycle *Züricher Novellen*, in which “Der Landvogt” is included, as a break with the erotic license he took in the first edition of “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe” (1855/1856), for which he was unsparingly criticized. “I am planning,” he explained of the new project, “if God will, as the sanctimonious say, to write, piece by piece, a series of Zurich novellas, which should contain, in contrast to *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, more positive life” (Ich habe vor, wenn der Herr will, wie die Mucker sagen, nach u nach eine Reihe Zürchernovellen zu schreiben, welche im Gegensatz zu den Leuten von Seldwyla, mehr positives Leben enthalten sollen).⁵ The phrase “positive life” should be understood as life conforming to norms regarding sexual behavior. But in spite of the relative chasteness of the ensuing stories, “Der Landvogt von Greifensee” shares with the *Decameron*, first, a focus on different forms of sensual pleasure – eating, drinking, and, to the modest degree permitted, displays of desire – and, second, a serial structure premised on the erotic desire and desirability of the unmarried protagonist.⁶ To be sure, in this case the protagonist’s desirability derives less from his beauty and more from his political and economic status. In the novella, the eponymous character, the forty-two-year-old Landvogt von Greifensee, reflects on his past life and the five women he has courted, all five of whom turned him down. In the first half, he narrates the five courtships as a series of stories; in the second, he invites all five women to a flowery banquet at his estate where he will supposedly (but ultimately does not) select a wife. The novella concludes by recording his death as a bachelor at the age of seventy-seven many years after the banquet. As I will show, the series of five courtships in “Der Landvogt,” like the series of Alatiel’s lovers, models the form of the novella cycle in which it is framed, namely, Keller’s *Züricher Novellen*. Once again, the structures of frame and embedded narrative are made to reflect one another as a mutual enforcement of their formal closure.

⁵ Gottfried Keller to Berthold Auerbach, 25 June 1860, in *Historisch-Kritische Gottfried Keller-Ausgabe*, ed. Walter Morgenthaler, vol. 22, *Züricher Novellen: Apparat zu Band 6*, ed. Morgenthaler et al. (Basel: Stroemfeld; Zurich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1999), 443. This edition is hereafter cited as HKKA. All translations of sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁶ Hans-Jürgen Schrader describes how the editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, Julius Rodenberg, eagerly censored published texts in the interest of the public’s morality. Hans-Jürgen Schrader, “Im Schraubstock moderner Marktmechanismen: Vom Druck Kellers und Meyers in Rodenbergs *Deutscher Rundschau*,” *Jahresbericht der Gottfried Keller-Gesellschaft* 62 (1993): 19.

A story about nothing

Despite Keller's inherited and self-imposed prudishness, the *Decameron* provides a revealing foil for bringing key features of “Der Landvogt” into view. Two differences – regarding who narrates and what happens – are particularly revealing for the narrative structure of Keller's novella and the way in which it models a novella cycle. To begin with, from a novella cycle we expect a gathering of storytellers who speak in turns. Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* (1795) or E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Serapionsbrüder* (1819) are two more historically proximate examples of such gatherings of storytellers. In Keller's novella, by contrast, the Landvogt retains an absolute monopoly on speech and storytelling. In the first half of the text, he recounts all five tales of his past courtships to his housekeeper, Marianne. Later, when the five women come to visit his castle, they are repeatedly admonished to stay silent. “Quiet” (Ruhig), he commands them.⁷ So unlike the *Decameron*'s female characters, who possess an impressive degree of narrative, political, and erotic agency, the women in “Der Landvogt” are unanimously relegated to the position of passive listeners. The setting echoes the famous frontispiece of *Die Gartenlaube*, in which the family patriarch is reading aloud to a passive audience of his descendants; the unmarried Landvogt occupies the position of the paterfamilias, and since he does not possess a family, the women compose his audience. By endowing the male protagonist with exclusive control over speech, the novella is a fictional counterexample to both the late nineteenth-century boom in female authorship and the collective nature of periodical publishing in which editors, critics, and lay readers had a say in the progression of serials. Keller's novella relegates women to the position of quiet recipients and so resists coding periodical literature as feminized writing.⁸

The second dramatic difference concerns what happens. The novella, as I mentioned, recalls five courtships, each of which failed to end in the anticipated happy end of marriage. Keller's contemporary Wilhelm Petersen spoke for many when he complained about the lack of a happy ending: “The great crowd in northern Germany demands a happy end, and though I'm principally opposed to marriage, I cannot help but share, to a certain degree, this vulgar sentiment” (Der große Haufe in Norddeutschland verlangt daß sie am Schlusse ‘sich kriegen’ und, obwohl ein grundsätzlicher Gegner der Ehe, kann ich doch nicht umhin, diesen

⁷ Gottfried Keller, “Der Landvogt von Greifensee,” in *Zürcher Novellen*, HKKA, 6:240.

⁸ On the alleged femininity and thus triviality of periodical literature in contrast to the male-authored book, see Manuela Günter, “Ermanne dich, oder vielmehr erweibe dich einmal!”: Gender Trouble in der Literatur nach der Kunstperiode,” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 30.2 (2006): 38–61.

vulgären Geschmack bis zu einem gewissen Grade zu theilen).⁹ The suspense and main narrative event we would expect from a tale of courtship are not simply missing; they are missing five times over and from the very beginning. What's more, the entire novella is constructed as an act of remembrance such that readers know from the very beginning that each of the courtships will fail and that the Landvogt will end the story as he begins it, namely, as a bachelor. The Landvogt's erotic availability – the central premise of the series of five stories – is instead only put to rest when he dies.

Another look back to the *Decameron*, in which storytelling is motivated by the gruesome menace of the plague, or to Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, which is set in motion by the peril of the nearby French Revolutionary Army, makes the matter of eventfulness all the more striking. In each case, storytelling serves to reconstitute a social order under threat. It responds to what Andreas Gailus describes, in his brilliant reading of Goethe's novella cycle, as "systematic traumas" that threaten to undermine a social system from within.¹⁰ As Gailus explains, for Goethe "the novella becomes a traumatic narrative concerned with the catastrophic force of newness."¹¹ What is missing from Keller's "Der Landvogt" – as, for that matter, from his novellas and novella cycles in general – is any such force of newness. They relay no challenge to the status quo, no necessity to adapt, no demand to restore the physical or political health of a community. "Der Landvogt" is rather a story of an elderly man looking back at what has, in matter of fact, *not* happened. If the story does contain an event – the Landvogt's *not* marrying – it too has been dispersed over a series of episodes so as to ensure that there is no climactic moment of disappointment. This is a story about the noneventfulness of the past and consequently hardly seems to satisfy the expectations of newness we associate with the genre novella.

Among early readers of "Der Landvogt," Theodor Fontane was particularly sensitive to the absence of eventfulness. His remarks provide a telling, if scathing, summary as well as a warning about the pitfalls of serial story arrangements for authors and readers alike. While scholarship today continues to thematize serial publications with regard to their supposedly action-packed (if simplistic) stories that rely on suspenseful cliffhangers to draw readers from one installment to the next, Fontane's reading is a valuable reminder that the repetitions of a series or serial could also just as well inspire little more than a headache. Fontane, one should note, read the original serialized publication of "Der Landvogt" in the *Deutsche Rundschau* and wrote

⁹ Wilhelm Petersen to Gottfried Keller, 17 June 1877, in HKKA, 22:521.

¹⁰ Andreas Gailus, "The Poetics of Containment: Goethe's *Conversations of German Refugees* and the Crisis of Representation," *Modern Philology*, 100.3 (2003): 438.

¹¹ Gailus, 442.

from the cultural metropole of Berlin, where he was, by all accounts, happily married. From this position, the review imagines the unhappily unmarried Keller living with his sister in the cultural backwaters of provincial Zurich.

Der Landvogt, eine reizende Figur (aber doch ein wenig schattenhaft), war fünfmal auf Freiers Füßen, auch schon fünfmal verlobt, und kam doch zu keiner Frau. Die Novelle erzählt nun erst seine fünf Liebesgeschichten und dann, wie er schließlich als Mann mittlerer Jahre seine fünf Liebsten, die nun meist längst verheiratet sind, zu sich aufs Schloß lädt. Jede der Frauengestalten wird vorzüglich charakterisiert und jede einzelne Liebesgeschichte ist allerliebst, dennoch ermüdet man zuletzt und fühlt das bekannte Mühlrad im Kopf. So gut die Gestalten auseinandergehalten sind, quirlen sie einem zuletzt doch wirr durcheinander, und man ist schließlich froh, daß das grausame Spiel ein Ende hat. [. . .] Im ganzen hab' ich doch den Eindruck, als sei er in jene "zweite Epoche" getreten, wo die "Kunst" für das auftreten muß, was an eigentlichem "Borax" bereits verlorengegangen ist. In kleinen Städten, wo die geistige Zufuhr geringer ist, tritt dieser Zustand des Erschöpfteins eher ein als dort, wo die Schriftsteller viel sehen und erleben.

The governor, a charming figure (but still a bit shady), was five times a suitor, also five times engaged, and still did not acquire a wife. The novella first tells his five love stories and then how as a middle-aged man he invites his five sweethearts, most of whom are long since married, to his castle. Each of the female figures is exquisitely characterized, and each love story is delightful, yet one tires in the end and feels a familiar churning in one's head. As well as the figures are differentiated, they still ultimately swirl chaotically together, and one is then happy that the cruel game comes to an end. [. . .] But all in all, I have the impression as if he [Keller] has entered that "second epoch" when "art" must compensate for what has already been lost in actual "borax." This state of exhaustion is more likely to occur in small towns, where intellectual stimulus is lower, than in places where authors see and experience a lot.¹²

While Keller had originally imagined a story of six or seven women, the ultimate five was already too much for Fontane, for whom the basic structure of "Der Landvogt" is one of wearying repetition.¹³ In attempting to entertain too much, it entertains too little – a failure Fontane attributes to the cultural paucity of the Swiss author's experience and the ensuing decline of his creative talents. The fictional characters of "Der Landvogt" nearly share Fontane's assessment. The

12 Theodor Fontane, "Züricher Novellen," in *Aufsätze, Kritiken, Erinnerungen*, vol. 1, *Aufsätze und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Jürgen Kolbe, unnumbered vol. of *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Walter Keitel (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1969), 497.

13 "He lives in Greifensee Castle beyond the Zürichberg and invites on a Sunday six or seven pretty women to entertain himself and also for the fun of remembering, after all the bygone love affairs" (Der haus't auf dem Schloß Greifensee jenseits des Zürichberges u ladet auf einen Sonntag, um sich einen Hauptspaß zu machen u auch ein Erinnerungsvergnügen, nach all' den vorübergegangenen Liebesstürmen 6 oder 7 hübsche Weibsbilder ein). Gottfried Keller to Adolf Exner, 27 August 1875, in *HKKA*, 22:471.

Landvogt's housekeeper, Marianne, who first listens to the series of five stories and then watches the banquet's festivities, expresses relief when it comes to an end: "I would never have thought that such a ridiculous story as this rooster in a henhouse of five could have had such an edifying and delicate ending!" (Ich hätte nie gedacht, daß eine so lächerliche Geschichte, wie fünf Körbe sind, ein so erbauliches und zierliches Ende nehmen könnte!).¹⁴ Like Fontane, the intradiegetic recipient of this seemingly silly plot is happiest when it concludes.

The noneventfulness of the novella, epitomized by the unsatisfying conclusion of bachelorthood, is by no means unusual for Keller. In each of his four novella cycles, Keller consistently struggles with precisely the form of closure envisioned in the *Decameron*'s image of rounded lips and the lunar cycle. Although Keller and his critics often invoke the *Decameron* and the fictional practice of telling stories in the round, the comparison invites disappointment since Keller's novella cycles fail as cycles:¹⁵ only *Das Sinngedicht* rounds off with a kiss and the promise of matrimony. The fact that the frame narrative of the *Züricher Novellen* peters out after the third of the five novellas so consistently frustrated critics that the text has received relatively little attention to this day. Rather than being contained within a frame or possessing a happy end or exhibiting another type of closure, the novellas collected in *Die Leute von Seldwyla I* and *II* and in the *Züricher Novellen* are related primarily by means of geography: the collected stories are set in the fictional Seldwyla or in the canton of Zurich. In 1939, György Lukács suggested that Keller's partiality for the form of the novella cycle derives from his Swiss political affinities: his novella cycles are akin to a federation, a loose union of largely autonomous entities.¹⁶ One could extend Lukács's political analogy and also note that, like the Swiss Confederation, the lack of closure in Keller's novella cycles means that the author could, and in matter of fact did, progressively add stories to the cycles over time. Freed from an encompassing frame or any logic of crisis and resolution, the novella cycles could be expanded according to Keller's fitful and unreliable writing habits or according to the demands of his publishers. Viewed in this way, the novella cycle opens up, abandons its circular form, and stretches into an open-ended linear series so as to accommodate the contingencies of modern authorship and the demands of the publishing market. Such a cycle might then appear to be a mere aggregation of political or economic expedience

14 Keller, "Der Landvogt," 6:246.

15 For an overview of Keller's relationship to the *Decameron*, see Ursula Amrein, "Gottfried Kellers 'artiger kleiner Dekameron': Poetik und Schreibweise des *Sinngedichts* in der Nachfolge Boccaccios," in *Boccaccio und die Folgen: Fontane, Storm, Keller, Ebner-Eschenbach und die Novellenkunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Hugo Aust and Hubertus Fischer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), 119–134.

16 Georg Lukács, *Gottfried Keller* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1946), 76–77.

rather than an example of the good and definite form that Pampinea advocates in the *Decameron*. The series, on this reading, represents a repudiation of cyclical form, if not of the coherency and closure we associate with form more generally.

However, in my close reading, I would like to resist this conclusion and demonstrate that “Der Landvogt” ultimately models a novella cycle endowed with a closed form. Keller’s novella, in other words, demonstrates how a work of literature can achieve the form of closure Panfilo’s story attributes to the *Decameron* with the image of lips and the moon within the conditions of periodical publishing. Furthermore, rather than regard serialized publishing in the periodical press as a mere hindrance to literary form, a selling-out to the commercialization of literature, as it were, the novella imagines a form specifically reliant on those practices. In short, I propose reading the story’s plot as an allegorical enactment of how a serially organized and serialized novella cycle achieves formal closure. To begin, I first discuss the context of the novella’s serial publication and outline what I describe as its recursive structure. These recursions set the stage for reading “Der Landvogt” as modelling the possibility of formal closure.

A picture of everything

As I have noted, Keller’s *Züricher Novellen* was first published in the *Deutsche Rundschau*. Understanding the periodical’s ambitions provides a critical background for my reading of how “Der Landvogt” engages with the form of the novella cycle and with the publishing practices of serialization. The unillustrated *Deutsche Rundschau* was printed monthly at the Verlag Gebrüder Paetel in Berlin. At its height, it boasted a circulation of ten thousand, which, while modest compared to the most popular periodicals of the era, was impressive for an elite publication of its kind. Julius Rodenberg, who became the editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau* at its founding in 1874, had already met Keller in Berlin while the latter was drafting *Der grüne Heinrich* and began to recruit him as an author in 1874 after enthusiastically reading *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. Their correspondence gives the impression that Keller’s very idea to write a new novella cycle was prompted by Rodenberg’s ample hyperbolic flattery and incessant urging to write for the periodical: “My esteemed Shakespeare of the novella!” (Mein verehrter Shakespeare der Novelle!) begins one letter.¹⁷ Rodenberg’s continued appeals for Keller’s fidelity to the *Deutsche Rundschau* were successful, as Keller would publish most of his remaining works, including *Das Sinngedicht* (1881) and *Martin Salander* (1886), in its pages.

¹⁷ Julius Rodenberg to Gottfried Keller, 16 February 1877, in *HKKA*, 22:506.

As a recent boom in scholarship on German-language periodical culture has amply demonstrated, family periodicals (*Familienzeitschriften*) like *Die Gartenlaube* or *Daheim*, which aimed at the broadest possible readership, but also *Kulturzeitschriften* like the *Deutsche Rundschau*, regarded themselves as providing a *Bildungsprogramm* for the general public. They aimed at nothing less than the cultural and political education of good citizens. Carrying the torch of the Enlightenment in the era of mass media, periodicals operated in parallel to and more widely than the better-established institutions of schools and universities.¹⁸ To realize this ambitious program, it was essential that periodicals provided, for one, an overview of contemporary developments in science and culture. As Gerhart von Graevenitz emphasizes, periodicals sought “to provide an overall *picture* of knowledge, to make possible an overview.”¹⁹ By outlining such a universal grasp of concepts such as nature or life, family and high-culture periodicals alike intended to withstand the growing specialization and fractioning of knowledge.²⁰

¹⁸ In contrast to an early tendency in the scholarship to regard the format and printing pace of periodicals along with their economic dependency on the market of readers as impeding the creative genius of late nineteenth-century authors, scholars have recently proposed regarding periodicals as a field for literary experimentation. For a summary and example of this transition in views, see Daniela Gretz, “Ein literarischer ‘Versuch’ im Experimentierfeld Zeitschrift: Medieneffekte der *Deutschen Rundschau* auf Gottfried Kellers *Sinngedicht*,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 134.2 (2015): 191–215.

¹⁹ “Überblick” [Overview] and ‘Rundschau’ [review] equally designated the method and epistemic goal of the cultured press: the coherence of knowledge was to be made visible through pictures and forms of visualization analogous to pictures. This was also true when, as in the case of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, the individual periodical did not present any pictures but still fit with the program of ‘Rundschau’ [review] into the visualization context of the whole differentiated medium.” Gerhart von Graevenitz, “Wissen und Sehen: Anthropologie und Perspektivismus in der Zeitschriftenpresse des 19. Jahrhunderts und in realistischen Texten; Zu Stifters *Bunten Steinen* und Kellers *Sinngedicht*,” in *Wissen in Literatur im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Lutz Danneberg and Friederich Vollhardt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2002), 152.

²⁰ Cultural periodicals aimed to provide “a maximally universal overview of all the fields of knowledge [. .]. At least in the beginning, they were still clearly oriented in this by the semantics of *Bildung* (also of the emerging humanities) and increasingly integrated literature, which operates across discourses. This function explicitly determined the programmatic positions in which one repeatedly finds, up through the present, formulations that come down to espousing the avoidance of specialist discourses, of partisan points of view, or of a merely fashionable direction. In the German Empire and in the Weimar Republic, these orientations tended to be tied to universalist concepts like *life*, *being*, *mind*, *nature*, *culture*, *totality*, the *whole*, or also the *modern*.” Gustav Frank, Madleen Podewski, and Stefan Scherer, “Kultur – Zeit – Schrift: Literatur- und Kulturzeitschriften als ‘kleine Archive’,” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 34.2 (2010): 19.

Offering an overview of developments in culture, politics, history, and science was of essence to the *Deutsche Rundschau*. The breadth of perspectives is already advertised in the title *Rundschau*, and it dictated the layout of content. Serialized works of literature preceded articles in science and politics and literary reviews. A reader of the first installment of the “Der Landvogt,” for example, could turn to articles on the slave trade, Shakespeare, the American Civil War, Frédéric Chopin, and Paul Anselm von Feuerbach. The issue concluded with a “Berliner Chronik” and “Literarische Rundschau.”²¹ In an editorial statement anticipating the periodical’s founding, Rodenberg positions the publication as providing an overview not only of the fractious individual arts (literature, music, and the visual arts) but also of “those manifold elements of education today” (jene mannigfachen Elemente der heutigen Bildung), which were otherwise dispersed among the dense market of periodicals.

Der deutsche Leser hat zur Ausfüllung seiner Mußestunden illustrierte und andere Blätter; der hat zahlreiche Fachjournale, wenn er sich belehren will, und zu seiner Orientierung auf den verschiedenen Gebieten der Literatur, des Theaters, der Musik und bildenden Künste ebenso viele kritische Führer. Allein ihm fehlt eine Zeitschrift, welche dadurch, daß sie jene mannigfachen Elemente der heutigen Bildung zusammen in sich begreift, einen Überblick über den ganzen Umfang derselben ermöglicht und einem Bedürfnisse der hochgebildeten Kreise unserer Nation entgegenkommt, welches bisher noch nicht vollständig befriedigt worden ist. In diese Lücke einzutreten ist die Deutsche Rundschau bestimmt. Sie wird Unterhaltung in der edelsten Form bieten und zugleich den wissenschaftlichen Fragen, den politischen, literarischen und künstlerischen Vorgängen mit der größten Aufmerksamkeit folgen.

To fill his leisure time, the German reader has magazines and other papers; he has numerous professional journals if he wants to educate himself and just as many critical guides for his orientation in the different fields of literature, theater, music, and the visual arts. He only lacks a periodical that by considering all those myriad elements of education today together, enables an overview of its entire scope and addresses a need of the highly educated circles of our nation that has not yet been fully satisfied. The *Deutsche Rundschau* is meant to step into this gap. It will offer entertainment in the noblest form and concurrently follow scientific questions and political, literary, and artistic affairs with the greatest attention.²²

Also evident in this programmatic statement, as in the red, black, gold coloring of its annual book covers, is the *Deutsche Rundschau*’s commitment to the recently founded Prussian-led German Empire, a commitment that would be realized by cultivating a national consciousness among its citizen-readers. At the same time, the title page listed alphabetically the far-flung urban booksellers around the

21 *Deutsche Rundschau*, 6 March 1877.

22 Julius Rodenberg, *Die Begründung der “Deutschen Rundschau”: Ein Rückblick* (Berlin: Gebrüder Paetel, 1899), 29.

globe, from Alexandria to Zurich, where its pages could be purchased. It thereby emphasized its ambition to create a community of readers beyond the borders of the German Empire, among a transnational German-speaking diaspora. The inclusion of select Austrian and Swiss authors was integral to balancing this simultaneously nationalist and transnational mission. While their inclusion underwrote Rodenberg's vision of a pan-German ("großdeutsch") literary cannon, examples of Swiss literature by Keller or Conrad Ferdinand Meyer were thought to provide the newly extant German citizen with an education in federalist political values that was needed to balance the German overemphasis on a classical cultural education.²³ The all-encompassing vision of the *Deutsche Rundschau* is evident in Rodenberg's early appeal to Keller, where he asks Keller to provide nothing less than an overview of the sum of his poetic achievements: "to sum up your poetic manifestation in one overall picture" (Ihre dichterische Erscheinung einmal in einem Gesamtbilde zusammenzufassen).²⁴ The *Zürcher Novellen*, in turn, as I will discuss in conclusion, takes the periodical's political purpose to heart and places the question of the good citizen's education at the heart of its frame narrative.

Along with providing an overview of a unified field of knowledge, the *Deutsche Rundschau*, like other periodicals of the era, aspired to serve as an archive of the knowledge gathered in its pages. Graevenitz is again to the point when he writes that their pages were cast as "memoria houses" or "memory books for culture and education."²⁵ While each issue acted as a small-scale repository, the periodical's archival ambitions were only fully satisfied when the single issues were bound together at the year's end in book form and equipped with a table of contents providing an overview of its pages. After all, issues of the *Deutsche Rundschau* were not merely meant to be read and discarded but instead collected in the format of a book. As a book volume, the periodical transcended its initial ephemerality and became an encyclopedic archive of knowledge. The periodical's projection of

23 See Günter Butzer, Manuela Günter, and Renate von Heydebrand, "Strategien zur Kanonisierung des 'Realismus' am Beispiel der *Deutschen Rundschau*," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 24.1 (1999): 55–81.

24 Julius Rodenberg to Gottfried Keller, 22 October 1875, in *Gehrter Herr – lieber Freund: Schweizer Autoren und ihre deutschen Verleger; Mit einer Umkehrung und drei Exkursionen*, ed. Räthus Luck (Basel: Stroemfeld, 1998), 130.

25 Gerhart von Graevenitz, "Memoria und Realismus: Erzählende Literatur in der deutschen 'Bildungspresse' des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Memoria: Vergessen und Erinnern*, ed. Anselm Haverkamp and Renate Lachmann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1993), 288, 283. As Frank, Podewski, and Scherer point out, this archival function differentiated the monthly periodical from more frequently published newspapers: "Instead of with daily news, it was concerned with selecting and presenting what was true and valuable with a proclivity to a national, patriotic point of view." Frank, Podewski, and Scherer, "Literatur- und Kulturzeitschriften," 19.

itself as a book in the making, Gowan Dawson explains, also helped ensure a market of readers among wealthier subscribers that did not wish to associate themselves with trivial and inexpensive periodicals.²⁶ Especially attuned to its function as an archive, the *Deutsche Rundschau* entirely abstained, unlike *Die Gartenlaube* or *Über Land und Meer*, from publishing news and instead placed what it hoped to be the continuation of the German literary canon as its lead. Claudia Stockinger emphasizes the affinity of the *Deutsche Rundschau* to the book format particularly forcefully in her recent history of *Die Gartenlaube* when she writes, “The *Deutsche Rundschau* [...] produced such a unity *in opposition to* or *in spite of* its periodicity. [...] The *Gartenlaube* was conceived as a periodical and could in the process become a book; the *Deutsche Rundschau* was conceived as a book, yet remained in the process a periodical.”²⁷

That the ephemeral character of the periodical was but a mere transitory moment on the way to its final book format is perhaps best demonstrated by Keller’s own handling of his copy of the *Züricher Novellen* in the *Deutsche Rundschau*. For when preparing the second printing of the *Züricher Novellen* as a book edition with Weibert Verlag, Keller created his own manuscript by cutting apart the relevant issues of the *Deutsche Rundschau* and rebinding them into a continuous text onto which he could enter his own revisions.²⁸ Realizing the single-author book necessitated dismantling the holistic vision of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, for which the juxtaposition of dissimilar texts was essential, in the interests of this alternative form and format. With the help of scissors and thread, Keller could transform the periodical into the template for a single-author book.

Züricher Novellen

The five novellas we now refer to as the *Züricher Novellen* stem from three different production and publishing histories, meaning that the making of that novella cycle necessitated an act of compilation. While “Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten” first appeared in *Berthold Auerbach’s deutscher Volks-Kalender* in 1860, “Hadlaub,” “Der Narr von Manegg,” “Der Landvogt von Greifensee,” and the frame narrative that encompasses these three novellas first appeared serialized

²⁶ Gowan Dawson, “Paleontology in Parts: Richard Owen, William John Broderip, and the Serialization of Science in Early Victorian Britain,” *Isis* 103.4 (December 2012): 657.

²⁷ Claudia Stockinger, *An den Ursprüngen populärer Serialität: Das Familienblatt “Die Gartenlaube”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018), 78.

²⁸ Keller reports on this process in a letter to Adolf Exner from 12 August 1877, in *HKKA*, 22:532.

in the *Deutsche Rundschau*. The fifth novella, “Ursula,” on the other hand, was written in the summer and fall of 1877 in response to Ferdinand Weibert’s proposal that the first book edition of the *Züricher Novellen* include a previously unpublished text. That book edition of the *Züricher Novellen* was thus intended as a reprint, yet also as a more complete rendering, of the original; as a reproduction and as the better original. Consequently, the five novellas we now refer to as the *Züricher Novellen* were first published together and in their currently familiar order in two volumes in 1877 by the Stuttgart Weibert Verlag (see the first column in Figure 8.1). There they were scheduled and appeared, surprisingly given Keller’s proclivity for missing deadlines, in time for the Christmas market – which Keller described to Theodor Storm as “the Christmas publishing market that breathes down my neck” (der buchhändlerische Weihnachtstrafic, der mir auf dem Nacken saß).²⁹ The first volume encompassed the three novellas and the frame story: the second comprised “Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten” and “Ursula.” Only in the first *Gesamtausgabe* of Keller’s oeuvre, available for purchase beginning in 1889, were the five novellas of the *Züricher Novellen* contained in a single volume.

The first three novellas published in the *Deutsche Rundschau* between November 1876 and April 1877 also possess a five-part structure insofar as they were published across five issues of the periodical. Each installment was titled *Züricher Novellen* followed by an installment number (1 through 5), the title of the

The five <i>Züricher Novellen</i> in the Weibert Verlag’s first book edition (1877)	The five installments of the <i>Züricher Novellen</i> in the <i>Deutsche Rundschau</i>	The five parts of “Der Landvogt von Greifensee” in both the periodical and book editions
Volume 1	1) November 1876 “Hadlaub” 2) December 1876 “Der Narr auf Manegg” 3) February 1877 “Der Landvogt von Greifensee”	1) Distelfink 2) Hanswurstel 3) Kapitän 4) Grasmücke 5) Amsel
Volume 2	4) March 1877 “Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten” 5) April 1877 “Ursula”	“Der Narr auf Manegg” “Der Landvogt von Greifensee (Anfang)” “Der Landvogt von Greifensee (Schluss)”

Figure 8.1: Five-part structures of the *Züricher Novellen* and “Der Landvogt von Greifensee.”

²⁹ Gottfried Keller to Theodor Storm, 25 June 1878, in HKKA, 22:557.

specific novella, and when a novella was split over two issues, the part number of that specific novella (see the second column of Figure 8.1). As the publishing dates and missing installment for January 1877 make clear, Keller struggled to abide by the periodical's publishing deadlines; the missing installment of the *Züricher Novellen* in the January 1877 issue of the *Deutsche Rundschau* was replaced by Paul Heyse's "Die Frau Marchesa." It would be a mistake to simply blame this gap, or for that matter the unfinished quality of the novellas, on a rigorous publishing rhythm. Throughout his writing career, Keller was notoriously quick to sign publishing contracts before having put pen to paper and consequently incapable of abiding by agreed-upon timelines.

As I have mentioned, "Der Landvogt von Greifensee" itself comprises five miniature novellas that recount the courtships of the five women and are situated within a frame narrative. In both the *Deutsche Rundschau* and in the later book editions, these five mini novellas are set off from the frame narrative by means of individual titles and line breaks such that they are typographically stylized as individual novellas contained in the greater frame. The five mini novellas bear the titles of the Landvogt's infantilizing pet names for the five women he has courted. The majority of them are given generic names of birds. They are Distelfink (1), Hanswurstel (2), Kapitän (3), Amsel and Grasmücke (4 and 5). The second installment of "Der Landvogt" in the *Deutsche Rundschau* begins with the story of Kapitän, whose name is the third title of the text: *Züricher Novellen (Schluss), Der Landvogt (II), Kapitän*. The arrangement of the plot as a series of five and the breaks in the body of the text make it particularly well suited to being serialized. Indeed, the five mini novellas could have also been adapted to a periodical layout with a less generous allotment of space to works of literature than what the *Deutsche Rundschau* offered.

These five mini novellas are framed by the story of the Landvogt's inviting the five women to the castle and, seen more broadly, by the frame narrative of the *Züricher Novellen*. The structure of "Der Landvogt von Greifensee" can thus be pictured as follows, where F stands for frame:

F_{ZN} F_{LG} 1 2 3 4 5 F_{LG} F_{ZN}

As scholars at least since Gerhard Kaiser have noticed, the five novellas framed in "Der Landvogt" anticipate the five novellas of the *Züricher Novellen*,³⁰ to which I would add that there is also a parallel in the five issues of the *Deutsche Rundschau* in which the original three *Züricher Novellen* appeared. Figure 8.1 visualizes these

³⁰ Gerhard Kaiser, *Gottfried Keller: Das gedichtete Leben* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1981), 458.

multiple and, to an extent, recursive five-part structures. To these initial three structures of five, one can add that when the women first arrive at the Landvogt's estate, they are silent witnesses to his court of marital affairs, in which the Landvogt presides over five marital disputes and sentences the guilty parties to some form of absurd punishment. If these five micronarratives are included, the recursive structure of "Der Landvogt" becomes all the more poignant:

F_{ZN} F_{LG} 1 2 3 4 5 F_{LG} 1 2 3 4 5 F_{ZN}

In total, the structuring of "Der Landvogt" displays at least a fourfold series of five elements, each series being recursively embedded within a large sequence of the same. Although each individual series is finite, the recursions suggest that the number of sequences nested within one another might be unending. Like the mirroring between the frame and embedded narratives I attributed to the *Decameron* and the "Der Landvogt" at the beginning of the essay, these recursive structures should also be understood as securing a form. While I cannot definitively say that these recursions are a product of Keller's wit or planning, these recursions and the series of five they rely on nonetheless sets the stage for reading "Der Landvogt" as an interpolation into the form of the series in an age of serialization.

It also bears noting that four of the Landvogt's five courtships are initiated in similar acts of ordering, if not in a serial form then at least as acts of *Reihenbildung*. For example, in the first episode, he and "Distelfink" plant an orchard of fifty cherry trees. The fifty cherry trees (and I take the factor of five to be significant), which are described as "young, slender little trees" (junge[] schlanke[] Bäumchen), are planted in rows of alternating species of red and white cherries. Those rows can be visualized as R W R W R (where R stands for red and W for white). The fruit promised by the cherry trees does not, as one might expect, anticipate the fecundity of the Landvogt and Distelfink's sexual union, which never takes place. Instead, it anticipates the five women the Landvogt will erotically pursue. The resulting series of R W R W R in effect stands for the alternating lost or retained virginal status of the five women when they arrive many years later at the Landvogt's castle. Three of them are married and thus tainted (red), and two are unmarried and in possession of their virginal status (white). In effect, the women too can be summarized with the series: R W R W R.

The novella begins when the unmarried protagonist happens to meet the first of these five women he had previously unsuccessfully courted. He then decides, for little reason other than his own amusement, to invite all five to his estate. The whimsical decision is described as follows:

[Es] befiehl ihn plötzlich der Wunsch, nicht nur diese [Distelfink], sondern auch noch drei oder vier weitere Stück schöne Wesen bei sich zu versammeln, zu denen er einst in ähnlichen Beziehungen gestanden; genug, es erwachte, je weiter er ritt, eine eigentliche Sehnsucht in ihm, alle die guten Liebenswerten, die er einst gern gehabt, auf einmal bei einander zu sehen und einen Tag mit ihnen zu verleben. [. . .] Da gab es auf seinem Register der Kosenamen noch eine, die hieß der Hanswurstel, eine andere, die hieß die Grasmücke, eine der Kapitän, und eine vierte die Amsel, was mit dem Distelfink zusammen fünf ausmachte.

He was suddenly seized by the desire to gather at his house not just this one [Goldfinch] but also three or four other specimens of pretty beings with whom he had once been in similar relationships; enough, the further he rode, an actual longing arose in him to see all the good, attractive women he had once been fond of all together at once and to spend a day with them. [. . .] On his list of pet names, there was another one named Harlequin, another who was named Warbler, one the Captain, and a fourth Blackbird, who together with Goldfinch made five.³¹

What begins as a vague desire to gather three or four “pretty beings” takes shape as the longing to gather all the women he has courted. The ensuing story is thus set in motion by the Landvogt’s longing for beauty and the drive to collect or aggregate five objects from his past; it is a drive to accumulate and to chronological. The course of the story thereby also reinforces the recursive form of the novella: first the Landvogt recalls the five women, then he conjures their presence by narrating the stories of the five courtships to the housekeeper, and then invites the five to the estate. These three acts of recall reiterate and reestablish the series of five three times.

What both motivates and makes possible this aggregation of women is quite obviously the fact that he has married none of them. Not only would marriage to any of the five have stopped the series short in its tracks, it would also have ostensibly robbed the Landvogt of any later desire to invite the five women to his castle or the social license to do so. What sets the narrative in motion is, in other words, an erotic potentiality that has escaped being made actual in being tethered to any single object. Unbound, that potential not only propels each further iteration of the series; it is also the condition, at the end of the Landvogt’s life, for reiterating the series in its entirety in storytelling and the reason for his desire to gather five beautiful objects in his bachelor’s home. The Landvogt himself says as much when he reflects that it was precisely the failure of each of the individual courtships that made the series of five possible.

Denn hätte mich die erste von Euch genommen, so wäre ich nicht an die zweite geraten; hätte die zweite mir die Hand gereicht, so wäre die dritte mir ewig verborgen geblieben,

31 Keller, “Der Landvogt,” 6:149.

und so weiter, und ich genösse nicht des Glückes, einen fünffachen Spiegel der Erinnerung zu besitzen, von keinem Hauche der rauhen Wirklichkeit getrübt.

For if I had taken the first of you, I wouldn't have met the second; had the second given me her hand, the third would have remained concealed from me forever, and so on, and I would not have enjoyed the fortune of possessing a fivefold mirror of memory, not clouded by a single whiff of harsh reality.³²

The last clause bears emphasis. Because he married none of them, they have become mere objects of his memory, objects, one might say, of his erotic fantasy, untouched by the vicissitudes of reality. It is for this reason that the women are primarily referred to by the Landvogt's pet names rather than by their given names. The fact that the women belong to the domain of fantasy and not that of reality is nicely underscored by how, as the Landvogt remarks upon their arrival, none of the women seem to have aged since he last saw them. They are just as beautiful as ten or twenty years ago, even though he himself has grown older. Although he stands in linear, historical time, their serial order is the timeless one of a fictional sphere that emerges from an untethered erotic fantasy. The erotic freedom of the bachelor's narcissistic fantasy is the enabling condition of serial fiction.

The full extent of that narcissism only comes into view by tracking the diegetic time of the narratives. Careful attention to the details of the five mini novellas reveals that the first courtship took place when the Landvogt was twenty-five, the second when he was twenty-six, the third when he was thirty-three, and the fourth and fifth at thirty-four. The Landvogt narrates the stories of the courtships and invites the women to his home at the age of forty-two, and he dies at the age of seventy-seven. In effect, each woman marks a different station, one might say a *topos*, of the Landvogt's biography. Because these five sleeping-beauty-like women are timeless and because the erotic fantasy of the bachelor is free to recall them, their five stories together reconstruct the totality of the Landvogt's life. What might have been a romantic novella is instead a biography, or better, a necrology.³³ Conversely, the continuity of the Landvogt's life underwrites and naturalizes what otherwise might appear to be an arbitrary series of five. While the initial nebulous desire to collect four or five beautiful women might have prompted a disordered accumulation of unrelated women, the fact that each marks a *topos* of

32 Keller, 6:239.

33 On the significance of necrologies and their narrative patterns in the nineteenth century, see Gerhart von Graevenitz, "Geschichte aus dem Geist des Nekrologs: Zur Begründung der Biographie im 19. Jahrhundert," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 54 (1980): 105–170.

his life ensures that they are of one kind and that their order is a serial one mimetically reflected in a series of narratives. What the narrative exemplifies, in other words, is not an arbitrary grouping, but the form of a series organized by discernible principles.

The serial form of the Landvogt's life is wonderfully underscored by the contrasting figure of the housekeeper, Marianne. Although Marianne primarily serves as an oral and visual spectator of the novella's events, the reader learns in passing that she joined the estate only after having lost all of her nine children: "One by one, she had nine children, whom she loved above everything else and with all the passion she possessed; but all of them died, which almost broke her heart each time" (Sie bekamen nach und nach neun Kinder, die sie über alles liebte und mit der ganzen Leidenschaftlichkeit, die ihr eigen war; aber alle starben hinweg, was ihr jedesmal fast das Herz brach).³⁴ The mention of these nine children suggests that if she were the protagonist, Marianne's life might too be narrated as a series of prematurely interrupted libidinal attachments. While the early deaths of the nine children mean that they cannot be gathered in this world, Marianne anticipates her happy reunion with her series of nine in the next world, a banquet perhaps not entirely unlike the one organized by the Landvogt. In the meantime, her necrology waits to be narrated, its serial form already having been prefigured in these nine tragic losses.

As I have noted, the chief plot driving "Der Landvogt von Greifensee" is the desire to collect these five objects, these five women, in a simultaneous presence, "all together." The Landvogt achieves this aggregation when he and all five women are seated together at a table in an arrangement described in great detail. The Landvogt sits at the head of the table, Distelfink across from him, Hanswurstel to his right, and Amsel to his left. Kapitän and Grasmücke, in a curious moment of ambiguity, occupy the two remaining seats. The five women, whose courtships with the Landvogt have just been narrated in serial form, are now seated together in one place at one time. Seated in the round, they might seem to undo the linear, forward-directed historical trajectory in which they were serially introduced. Sitting at the head of the table, the Landvogt further undoes that serial order when he gazes back and forth between the five different women, opening up different possible orderings and combinations. His gaze, in other words, unbinds the women from their original serial order and creates, it first seems, the possibility of endless variation determined only by his visual pleasure:

Mit einem warmen Glücksgefühle sah er sie so an einem Tische versammelt und unterhielt das Gespräch nach allen Seiten mit großer Beflissenheit, damit er ohne Verletzung des

³⁴ Keller, "Der Landvogt," 6:151.

guten Tones alle der Reihe nach ansehen konnte, vor- und rückwärts gezählt und überspringend, wie es ihn gelüstete.

With a warm feeling of happiness, he looked at them thus assembled at one table and eagerly kept the conversation going on all sides so that he could, without undermining the good tone, look at them all in sequence, counting forward and backward and skipping as he desired.³⁵

However, this playful back-and-forth of his gaze gives way to a different structure, that of the pentagram, a highly symbolic star that perhaps inadvertently suggests the Landvogt's membership in a society of free masons. The Landvogt himself points out their star-like seating arrangement:

Ich habe Euch, Verehrte, heute mit dem Sprichworte: Zeit bringt Rosen! begrüßt, und sicherlich war es wohl angebracht, da sie mir ein magisches Pentagramma von fünf so schönen Häuptern vor das Auge gezeichnet hat, in welchem die zauberkräftige Linie geheimnisvoll von einem Haupte zum anderen zieht, sich kreuzt und auf jedem Punkt in sich selbst zurückkehrt, alles Unheil von mir abwendend!

I welcomed you today, adored guests, with the saying “time brings roses,” and it was certainly fitting since you have drawn before my eyes a magic pentagram of five so beautiful heads, in which the magical line mysteriously runs from one head to another, crosses itself, and returns to every point in it, protecting me from all harm.³⁶

If the five lines of the pentagram are drawn in the order of the series of courtships stories (Distelfink → Hanswurstel → Kapitän → Amsel → Grasmücke → Distelfink), it becomes clear where Grasmücke and Kapitän must be seated: Grasmücke sits to the right, Kapitän to the left of the Landvogt (see Figure 8.2). Alternatively, if instead of redrawing the lines in the order given by the series, the pentagram is viewed as a closed, finished form, then none of the individual lines can be isolated or given temporal priority. As a closed shape, the pentagram both contains but also suspends the order of the series; it endows the series with a celestial form.

In order for the seated women to serve as a “fivefold mirror,” as the Landvogt describes it, he must project himself from his side of the table into its center, as only from there could he see himself reflected in each of the five points. In other words, the Landvogt must imaginatively draw the star and then occupy its center. The Landvogt's placement of himself in the center to see his five reflections, along with the iconographic use of the pentagram at least since Da Vinci's popular *Virtruvian Man*, suggests that the pentagram is a form by means of

35 Keller, 6:236.

36 Keller, 6:239.

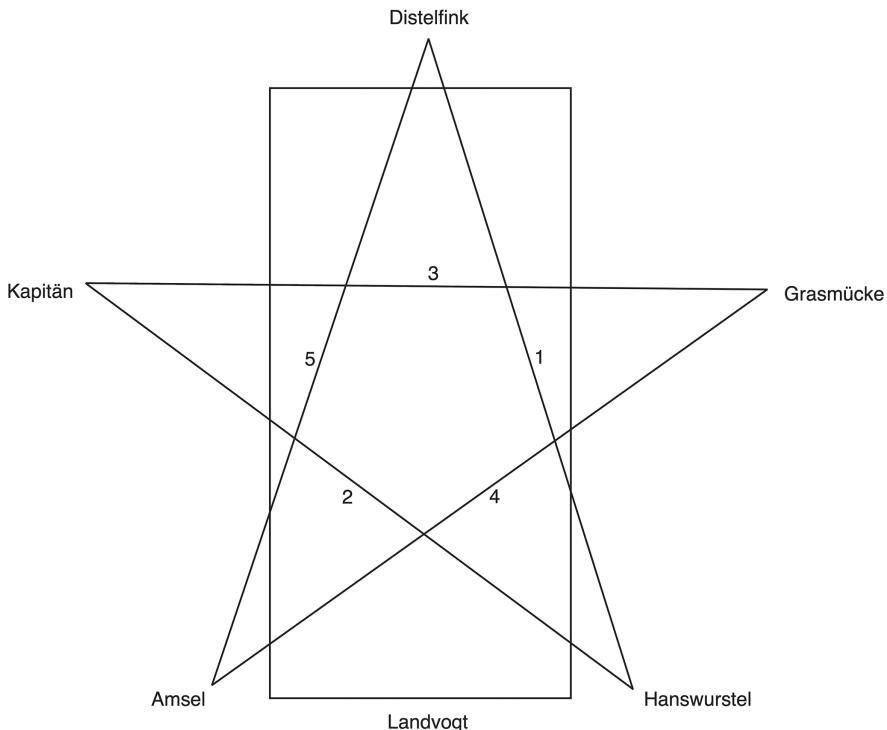


Figure 8.2: The seating arrangement at the Landvogt's banquet.

which he comes to recognize his own perfection. Just as the five women serve as narrative topoi for telling the Landvogt's life story, so too does their composition at the banquet table, the archive of his erotic exploits, create a complete image of his selfhood. It is an image whose form retains but also transcends the previous serial order.

The image the Landvogt attains of himself as reflected in the seating arrangement acquires even greater perfection if one regards the series of five not only as a pentagram, but also, recalling the Landvogt's exclamation "time brings roses," as a string of roses or rosary beads. Regarded in this way, each of the five women marks one decade of the fifty stations (as anticipated by the fifty cherry trees) and stands in for one of the five "wounds" inflicted upon him in his life as a bachelor. And as is fitting for the rosary, the five are joined by the housekeeper, Maria(nne), who stands to the side of the banquet table. In the forms of the pentagram and the rosary, the women come to represent the topoi of the Landvogt's life and become an image of the nearly Christ-like perfection he has attained through the trials of his courtships. It is also worth noting that as a "fivefold

mirror," they also signal, as do mirrors throughout Keller's work, a programmatic reflection on Keller's realist poetics. While the realism of the Landvogt's life story is ostensibly premised on its mirroring an anterior history (in this case, his courting of the five women), closer inspection reveals the story's reality to be an artfully constructed projection onto that supposed history. The Landvogt's life story is not given and retold but instead created out of the arrangement of these women according to the desires of the bachelor's fantasy.

Finally, if one recalls the context of the text's first publication in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, then the unfolding of the "Der Landvogt" from a series to the form of the pentagram suggests that this story is about more than the perfected form of the Landvogt's self or the artifice of poetic realism. The central transition of the novella, from a potential open-ended series to a closed form is, I claim, an imaginative reenactment of the transition from the periodical, serialized issues of the journal to the bound form the book, in which the single issues achieve a spatial and temporal simultaneity. To summarize, in "Der Landvogt," the five stories of the five courtships are first narrated as a series, but when the five women later arrive at the castle and are placed as a pentagram around the banquet table, they achieve spatial and temporal unity. If each of the five women is taken to embody one of the five mini novellas in "Der Landvogt," which themselves stand for the five issues of the *Deutsche Rundschau* and the five novellas in the book edition of the *Züricher Novellen*, then the gathering of the five women enacts the gathering of the five novellas in one volume. The banquet, like the book format, fulfills the ambitions integral to the *Deutsche Rundschau*: to provide an overview and to archive unity within a single volume. The gathering of five women provides a comprehensive and intelligible overview of the Landvogt's erotic exploits, indeed, an overview of his life and self. Finally, just as the book, as archive, performs the task of storage and memorialization, and thus relieves its readers of that task, so too does the presence of the five women render unnecessary the Landvogt's own act of remembering and with it also serial narration. What was in the past has been made present, and in that present, it achieves a formal and symbolic closure, a form that it could otherwise never have possessed. While the star may lack the rounded forms of lips and the moon with which the *Decameron* reflects on the perfection of its own cyclical form, it nonetheless provides a celestial and thus timeless symbol. When gathered together and given an immutable form that supersedes the original linear, serial order, the series of the novella cycle aims for closure not despite but within the conditions of serialized publishing. To conclude the point: the narrative enacts the possibility of a form emergent from the order of a series.

Serial reproduction

To conclude, I want to consider very briefly one further way the novella “Der Landvogt” engages an aspect of nineteenth-century periodical literature, namely, the status of originals in the age of serial reproduction. To take the so-called pre-prints of Keller’s novellas in periodicals seriously means to call into question the longstanding status of the final edition in the *Gesamtausgabe* as the authoritative text most reflective of an author’s originality.³⁷ Instead, tracking the genealogy of print editions and reading the structure of the novella as reflecting on the very structure of periodical publishing undermines that status of the book publication as the authoritative text. Printing histories thereby bring to light yet a further dimension of what Eric Downing has observed as the propensity of German realist authors for twice-told tales. While Downing focuses on stories like Keller’s *Sieben Legenden* that are borrowed from elsewhere or are at least fictionally cast as being borrowed, the multitude of editions of individual works constitutes a further case of realist repetition. Downing’s observation that Keller attributes the status of original (*Urfabel*) not to the source but to the retold or recovered tale is also applicable to publication histories.³⁸ We have come to accept that not the first publication but the “last” represents the truest form of a work of literature, the textual original.

The question as to which text in a chain of reproductions constitutes an original is absolutely central to the *Züricher Novellen* and “Der Landvogt.” For one, in the different frame narratives, “Der Landvogt” is cast as the product of four relays. First, within the novella, the Landvogt narrates the five stories to his house-keeper, Marianne. Second, a third-person narrator relays the Landvogt’s speech. He claims to have done so faithfully, having only edited out Marianne’s interruptions so as to make the narrative more intelligible. He thereby adopts a function comparable to that of an editor responsible for the coherence rather than the content. The narrator explains:

Nachdem das Eis einmal gebrochen war, machte er [der Landvogt] sie [Marianne] nach und nach, wie es sich schickte, mit den fünf Gegenständen bekannt und stellte ihr dar, wie es

³⁷ On the origin of relying on collections rather than periodical prints in scholarship in Wilhelm Dilthey’s vision of the literary archive, see Vance Byrd and Sean Franzel, “Introduction: Periodical Literature in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Periodical Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Byrd and Franzel, thematic issue, *Colloquia Germanica* 49.2–3 (2016): 105.

³⁸ “Thus, [Keller’s] tale derives its realist quality from its retelling both of the ‘actual event’ and of the reality that constantly reveals itself as a repetition of an *Urfabel*. [. . .] Even as an original it seems only to manifest itself in its re-presentation.” Eric Downing, *Double Exposures: Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-Century German Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 93.

sich damit begeben habe, wobei der Vortragende und die Zuhörerin sich in mannigfacher Laune verwirrten und kreuzten. Wir wollen die Geschichten nacherzählen, jedoch alles ordentlich einteilen, abrunden und für unser Verständnis einrichten.

After the ice had been broken, he acquainted her, at suitable moments, with the five objects, one by one, and described to her what had taken place; in doing so, the speaker and the listener became tangled and intersected in myriad moods. We want to retell the stories but to organize everything in an orderly fashion, to round them off, and to arrange them for our understanding.³⁹

The narrator provides, we are to believe, a well-formatted reproduction of the Landvogt's speech, an editing job that divides the five objects or five stories in a perspicuous and intelligible order, namely, that of a series.

To these two relays are added two more staged in the frame narrative of the *Züricher Novellen*, which is set in 1820s Zurich. The story begins with a portrait of the young and gloomy Herr Jacques, who is profoundly worried that he has been born into an era where it is no longer possible to be original, in which personality has become a matter of mass production. He worries "that there are nowadays no original people, no more originals, rather only people by the dozen and uniformly manufactured people by the thousand" (daß es heutzutage keine ursprünglichen Menschen, keine Originale mehr gebe, sondern nur noch Dutzendleute und gleichmäßig abgedrehte Tausendspersonen).⁴⁰ His fears seem realized when he attempts to write a new version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* but gets no further than the title. Unhappy, Herr Jacques goes for a walk and happens to meet his godfather, who offers to cure him of this misguided notion of originality by providing him with the historical characters of the *Züricher Novellen*. The frame narrative thus motivates the historical material employed in the *Züricher Novellen*⁴¹ and announces an explicitly pedagogical project. For that reason, it easily complies, as I have suggested, with the interests of the *Deutsche Rundschau*.

39 Keller, "Der Landvogt," 6:155.

40 Keller, *Züricher Novellen*, 6:7.

41 While Keller borrowed the historical Landvogt von Greifensee as his protagonist, the novella imagines the events that are missing from the bachelor's biographies, namely, the erotic exploits overlooked in accounts of his political and military exploits. For background on Salomon Landolt (1741–1818), Keller primarily relied on the biography by David Hess (1820). While multiple male characters, including Johann Jakob Bodmer and Salomon Geßner, have historical male counterparts, such precedents are interestingly absent for the novella's female characters. On the historical content of the novella, see Ursula Amrein, "Geschichte als Spiegelkabinett: Gottfried Kellers 'Der Landvogt von Greifensee' und das Zürich im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Alte Löcher – neue Blicke: Zürich im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmut Holzhey and Simon Zurbuchen (Zurich: Chronos, 1997), 167–177.

With the goal of curing him of his desire to be an original, his godfather gives Herr Jacques the manuscript (presumably including the story of the Landvogt) and tells him to make a faithful handwritten copy.⁴² This represents the third further fictional relay of the text. Finally, the anonymous third-person narrator of the frame narrative, whose own role in the history of the text is unclear, explains that the print edition of the novella is an exact reproduction of Herr Jacques's copy: the fourth relay. "Herr Jacques took his godfather's manuscript with him and, as a matter of fact, carefully and neatly made a copy of it, just as it appears not less faithfully in the following in print" (Herr Jacques nahm das Manuscript seines Herrn Paten mit und fertigte in der That mit großer Sorgfalt und Reinlichkeit eine Kopie davon an, wie sie im Nachstehenden nicht minder getreu im Druck erscheint).⁴³ So between the novellas of courtship and the frame, the text owes its genesis to four relays – from the Landvogt to Marianne, from Marianne to the narrator of the novella, from Herr Jacques's godfather to Herr Jacques, and from Herr Jacques to print. Each ostensibly claims to be a faithful reproduction rather than an original. This process, let me repeat, is all for the purpose of teaching Herr Jacques that "only someone who deserves to be imitated is a good original!" (ein gutes Original ist nur, wer Nachahmung verdient!). An original, the fictional genealogy then suggests, is one worth reproducing, or better put, an original only achieves its status as such retrospectively, through the machinations of reproduction. We are thereby confronted with an ideal of storytelling that is not only compatible with publishing practices that entail multiple editions of the same work but even embraces reproduction as a condition of originality.

The idea of artworks as contingent on practices of reproduction is confirmed by the beginning of "Der Landvogt." It is mid-May in the year 1783, and the Landvogt is celebrating the local holiday, Kaiser Heinrichs Tag, which is dedicated to the memory of the medieval emperor. In honor of the day, the Landvogt is reviewing a military troop of volunteers he has assembled in case the French should one day invade. He is perched on his horse, on an elevated hill, observing the troops' orderly formation. Of the troops, we are told that they are all dressed in green, that most of them, according to local custom and preferences, are called Heinrich, and that all of them regard the Landvogt as a father figure. In other words, from the very beginning, the bachelor, the Landvogt von Greifensee, is the symbolic father of a literal army of young green Henrys – *grüne Heinrichs* – standing in line, ready to defend their father's estate should it come under attack. The Landvogt is the father figure, I want to emphasize, not just of one original and authoritative *grüner*

42 Keller, *Zürcher Novellen*, 6:22.

43 Keller, 6:144.

Heinrich but of a well-ordered multitude of them, just as Keller, who remains best known to this day for *Der grüne Heinrich*, is the author of not just one but of the four revised and reprinted editions of the novel issued in his lifetime. This, I would like to suggest, is Keller's vision of the work of art in the age of serial production: *Der grüne Heinrich* is a product of serial mass production, the offspring of its bachelor father, and now stands at attention in a series of *Heinrichs* to defend the nation. Procreation has been replaced with industrial-scale mechanical reproduction, which engenders an otherwise impossible multitude of green Heinrichs. And only as such, as a product of serial reproduction, does *Der grüne Heinrich* first become an original. "Der Landvogt" thus envisions how serial repetitions become the very condition for the achievement of the modern literary work. So while the story of "Der Landvogt" fails to provide a happy end, it does provide closure to the potentially open-ended form of the series or serial in the form of a star and a book.

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Ralph Ubl

Max Klinger's *Ein Handschuh* as Cycle and Series

In 1881, the German artist Max Klinger (1857–1920) published *Ein Handschuh: Cyclus von zehn Compositonen radirt von Max Klinger*. As “Opus VI,” this portfolio was one of Klinger's earliest printed suites, the first of which was published in 1879.¹ The individual plates were based on drawings by Klinger. Eight of them had already been exhibited in Berlin in 1878.² The series was, however, undoubtedly planned as a contribution to the “etching revival,” and Klinger's drawings as a whole should be viewed in that context, as he himself explained in his programmatic work *Malerei und Zeichnung* (1891).³ In contrast to the drawings, the individual etchings are arranged in a fixed order with Roman numerals indicated in the upper right corner with a delicate stroke. Klinger left them unchanged in all four editions published during his lifetime.⁴

This fixed order contrasts with the erratic trajectory of the images. Sudden changes in scene, time, protagonists, pictorial genres, and modes of representation prevail between the etchings. From a roller-skating rink in plate I, where a dropped glove (plate II) offers the opportunity for an act of gallantry, we reach a bedroom (plate III), and from there the world of a dream that is first about the rescue of the glove (plate IV), then its triumph (plate V), and then a homage to it

1 See Hans W. Singer, *Max Klingers Stiche, Radierungen und Steindrucke: Wissenschaftliches Verzeichnis* (Berlin: Amsler & Ruthardt, 1909).

2 The exhibition history of these drawings is explained by Marit Lange, “Max Klinger und Norwegen,” *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 33 (1994): 157–212, esp. 165–171. A detailed comparison of the drawings and the etchings is provided by Christiane Hertel, *Studien zu Max Klingers graphischem Zyklus “Paraphrase über den Fund eines Handschuhs” (1878–1881)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), 118–124.

3 See Max Klinger, *Malerei und Zeichnung* (Leipzig: G. Reusche, 1891), 5. On the etching revival, see Jay Anne Clarke, “The Construction of Artistic Identity in Turn-of-the-Century Berlin: The Prints of Klinger, Kollwitz, and Liebermann” (PhD diss., Brown University, 1999); Peter Parshall, ed., *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy, 1850–1900* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2009).

4 See Singer, *Max Klingers Stiche, Radierungen und Steindrucke*, 40–41.

Note: The first part of this essay has been published in French as “Qu'est-ce que s'orienter dans la gravure,” in *Hubert Damisch: L'art au travail*, ed. Giovanni Careri and Georges Didi-Huberman (Paris: Mimesis, 2016), 190–206.

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(plate VI), so as to return again in plate VII to the now flooded bedchamber beset with monsters, and, after two further enigmatic images – first one of repose (plate VIII), then one of abduction (plate IX) – the dream finally ends with an allegory of love (plate X; see Figures 9.1–9.10).

During Klinger's lifetime, the cycle was consistently interpreted as dealing with an episode from the artist's love life. The artist was recognized in the second man on the left on the rink in plate I as well as in plates II, III, IV, and VII. For example, in his 1895 art-critical study on Klinger, the philosopher Richard Avenarius writes,

Die Geschichte der Jugendverliebtheit, die sich Klinger hier vom Herzen wegradiert hat, beginnt auf der Berliner Rollschuhbahn. Eine schlanke Brasilianerin verliert ihren Handschuh. Der Teutone sieht ihn, nimmt ihn, betrachtet ihn als Beute und legt ihn abends auf sein Bett, ihn vor dem Einschlafen noch in Bequemlichkeit zu beäugeln und zu beseufzen.

The story of youthful infatuation that Klinger has etched here from his heart begins at the Berlin roller-skating rink. A slender Brazilian woman loses her glove. The Teuton sees it, takes it, considers it his prey, and lays it on his bed in the evening to stare at it and sigh over it.⁵

Contemporaneous interpreters understood the real event, however, as an occasion that allowed Klinger to investigate “a kind of ‘dream logic’” (eine Art “Traumlogik”) and to create a “psychological study” (psychologische Studie) through etching.⁶ The art critic Franz Servaes sums up this relationship between event and deep psychic structure as follows: “A totally insignificant experience, a courteous little coincidence, as occurs hundreds of times and quickly whooshes by, sets the entire mechanism of the soul's life in motion” (Ein Nichts von einem Erlebnis, ein artiger kleiner Zufall, wie er hundertfach vorkommt und eilends vorüberhuscht, setzt hier den ganzen Mechanismus des Seelenlebens in Bewegung).⁷ Based on intellectual history, recent art-historical investigations have attempted to reconstruct what Klinger and his

⁵ Richard Avenarius, *Max Klinger's Griffelkunst: Ein Begleiter durch seine Phantasiewelt* (Berlin: Amsler & Ruthardt, 1895), 19. All translations of sources are by Anthony Mahler unless otherwise noted. See also Max Schmid, *Klinger* (Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1899), 24; Willy Pastor, *Max Klinger* (Berlin: Amsler & Ruthardt, 1919), 31. On the traces of the Brazilian in Klinger's work, see Renate Hartleb, “‘Eve, sans trêve’: Zur Frau im Werk von Max Klinger,” in *Max Klinger, 1857–1920: “Ein Handschuh”; Traum und künstlerische Wirklichkeit*, ed. Edda Hevers et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Städtische Galerie im Städelischen Kunstinstitut, 1992), 84–90.

⁶ On the “Traumlogik” of the etchings, see Paul Kühn, *Max Klinger* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1907), 60. On their “Psychologie,” see Franz Hermann Meissner, *Max Klinger* (Leipzig: Schuster & Loeffler, 1899), 35. See also Berthold Haendcke, *Max Klinger als Künstler: Eine Studie* (Strasbourg: J. H. Ed. Heitz, 1899), 17.

⁷ Franz Servaes, *Max Klinger* (Berlin: J. Bard, 1902), 16–17.

contemporaries understood by “Mechanismus des Seelenlebens.”⁸ In his reading of Klinger's cycle, Jonathan Crary has further explained how this new knowledge of the unconscious interacts with commodity fetishism and the general spectacularization of social relations in Klinger's pictures.⁹

These different perspectives of interpretation have placed *Ein Handschuh* in a rich autobiographical, social, and epistemic context. But we do not yet have a systematic analysis of the internal connections between the ten etchings. In this essay, I would like to answer the question of what the cyclic form of *Ein Handschuh* consists in. Following the methodological model of Wolfgang Kemp's pictorial narratology, I will examine the cyclic form by turning to the relationships and caesuras between the pictures.¹⁰ This attention to intervals not only stems from a methodology inspired by structuralism but can also be found in the sources, both in Klinger's own writings on etching and in the Romantic poetology of the cycle.

In *Malerei und Zeichnung*, which was first published in 1891 but which he began in the early 1880s, Klinger differentiates between the fundamentally affirmative art of painting and the negative arts of drawing and etching. Painting is affirmative because it celebrates the world of the body in its abundance and color. The graphic arts are negative because the black and white turns away from the visible world and even expresses a rejection of that world. This negation is communicated in each drawn stroke since graphic traces do not refer to the world but to the artist's interior. This is especially true for prints. While drawing often tends “toward the gray, pale” (ins Graue, Blasse), prints are characterized by “unity,

⁸ This direction in the scholarship was begun by Alexander Dückers, *Max Klinger* (Berlin: Rembrandt, 1976). A very good overview and new insights can be found in Marsha Morton, *Max Klinger and Wilhelmine Culture: On the Threshold of German Modernism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 251–266.

⁹ See Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 127–134.

¹⁰ See Wolfgang Kemp, “Ellipsen, Analepsen, Gleichzeitigkeiten: Schwierige Aufgaben für die Bild-erzählung,” in *Der Text des Bildes: Möglichkeiten und Mittel eigenständiger Bilderzählung*, ed. Kemp (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1989), 62–88. See also Amy Kurlander, Stephan S. Wolohojian, and Christopher S. Wood, “Das erzählte Drama in Bildern: Adolph von Menzel und Max Klinger,” in Kemp, *Der Text des Bildes*, 35–61. Building on Kemp's work, Thomas Jäger has produced a foundational examination of the narrative forms of printed image cycles and the function of intervals in them. Jäger's work has been fruitful for my own thoughts on Klinger in multiple regards. See Thomas Jäger, *Die Bilderzählung: Narrative Strukturen in Zyklen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts von Tiepolo und Goya bis Rethel* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 1998). For detailed analyses of individual cycles by Klinger, see Jan Brachmann, “Ins Ungewisse hinauf . . .”: *Johannes Brahms und Max Klinger im Zwiespalt von Kunst und Kommunikation* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999), 121–150; Christian Drude, *Historismus als Montage: Kombinationsverfahren im graphischen Werk Max Klingers* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2005), esp. 155–177; and Anja Wenn, *Max Klingers Grafikzyklus “Ein Leben”* (Weimar: VDG, 2006), 329–354.

force, and depth" (Einheitlichkeit, Kraft und Tiefe).¹¹ Through the stark contrast between black markings and white paper, an emphatic gap (*Lücke*) emerges as the defining feature of psychic life: "The draftsman therefore stands before the unfilled gaps, between our will and ability, between the desired and the attainable, and nothing remains for him but a personal resignation with the world of incompatible forces" (Der Zeichner steht daher vor den unausgefüllten Lücken, zwischen unserem Wollen und Können, dem Ersehnten und dem Erreichbaren, und es bleibt ihm nichts als ein persönliches Abfinden mit der Welt unvereinbarer Kräfte).¹²

Klinger understood this gap to consist in the lack of color but also in the blank areas where the white ground of the paper emerges as an unmarked space.¹³ The hypothesis that the intervals between the plates also stand for this constitutive lack of human desire is supported by the Romantic poetics of the cycle. Fundamental to the Romantic poetics of the cycle was the idea that the intervals between the elements of a cycle point to a dimension that cannot be represented in the individual elements. In his reflections on Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, which he understood as a model for lyric cycles, August Wilhelm Schlegel writes, "Love shapes life rhapsodically. The unfilled interstices between one state of the soul and another provide *échappées de vue* into the infinite" (Die Liebe bildet das Leben rhapsodisch. Die unausgefüllten Zwischenräume von einem Seelenzustande zum anderen geben *échappées de vue* ins Unendliche).¹⁴ The intervals

11 Klinger, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, 5.

12 Klinger, 41. On this quotation and more generally on drawing and etching as negative arts, see the excellent study by Thomas Roeske, "Der Zeichner als verneinender Künstler: Max Klinger und Arthur Schopenhauer," in *Schopenhauer und die Künste*, ed. Günther Baum and Dieter Birnbacher (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 118–136. On the more general intellectual-historical context of Klinger's text, see Marsha Morton, "*Malerei und Zeichnung*: The History and Context of Max Klinger's Guide to the Arts," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 58.4 (1995): 542–569.

13 Klinger, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, 32–33. On the history of *Malerei und Zeichnung*, see Felix Billeter, "Max Klingers Schrift *Malerei und Zeichnung*: Ein Blick auf ihre Entstehungsgeschichte," in *Festschrift für Christian Lenz: Von Duccio bis Beckmann*, ed. Billeter, Helga Gutbrod, and Andrea Pophanken (Frankfurt am Main: Blick in die Welt, 1998), 65–83.

14 August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über die romantische Literatur [1803–1804]*, in *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik [1803–1827]*, ed. Ernst Behler, vol. 2.1 of *Kritische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen*, ed. Georg Braungart, Behler, and Frank Jolles (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2007), 156–177, here 155. On the significance of Schlegel's reflections for Heinrich Heine's and Robert Schumann's cycles, which in turn guided Klinger, see Günter Schnitzler, "Zyklische Prinzipien in Dichtung und Musik am Beispiel von Heines *Lyrischem Intermezzo* und Schumanns *Dichterliebe*," in *Übergänge: Zwischen Künsten und Kulturen; Internationaler Kongress zum 150. Todesjahr von Heinrich Heine und Robert Schumann*, ed. Henriette Herwig et al. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2007), 321–336. My thinking on the poetics of Klinger's cycle has also significantly benefited from John Daverio, "The Song Cycle: Journeys through a Romantic Landscape," in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth*

point to love as an unrepresentable force that is only fragmentarily (another word for "rhapsodisch") expressed in the individual poems of the cycle. Transferred to *Ein Handschuh*, which is also a kind of love cycle, this model suggests that the caesuras between the etchings refer to an infinite ground of desire that precedes the individual pictures. In the following I will develop and test this interpretation. In doing so, it will become apparent that this unrepresentable force in the intervals bursts open the cyclic form and creates a different kind of connection between the etchings: a serial one.

That *Ein Handschuh* forms, first of all, a cycle but also, effectively, a series depends on how we view its central motif. The glove points to the formal principles that connect the ten etchings. As we try to understand this cycle as a cycle, new aspects of the glove come into play again and again: the five fingers and four interstices of one glove as well as the ten fingers of both gloves figurally represent the numerical order of the ten-part cycle in various ways; the relation between outer hull and inner body reflects how each single sheet refers to its respective printing plate as a companion; and finally, Klinger turns his cycle into a series by revealing that the most basic relation between the plates results from the spatial incongruence between the two gloves, between left and right.

***Ein Handschuh* as cycle**

Let us first take a closer look at plate I, which bears the title "Ort." It displays the skating rink opened in 1876 at the Hasenheide as a meeting place of Berlin society. The people watch and greet one another; the fall of a girl attracts some attention from the crowd, while our gaze is directed to the woman in white sitting alone. The second plate with the title "Handlung" performs a sudden change of scene. With a 180-degree pan, we are brought from the entrance area to the middle of the skating rink in the immediate vicinity of the man in the foreground, who reaches, while still moving, toward a glove that the woman in front of him has dropped. The landscape format has switched to a vertical format; the long shot to a subjective perspective. Two figures are set apart: two figures, but not a pair. While pairs are dominant in plate I – there are, altogether, three pairs of men and three mixed-gender pairs – in plate II, we see one group of three figures

Century, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 279–312; and Ingo Müller, "Eins in Allem und Alles in Einem: Zur Ästhetik von Gedicht- und Liederzyklus im Lichte romantischer Universalpoesie," in *Wort und Ton*, ed. Günter Schnitzler and Achim Aurnhammer (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2011), 243–274.

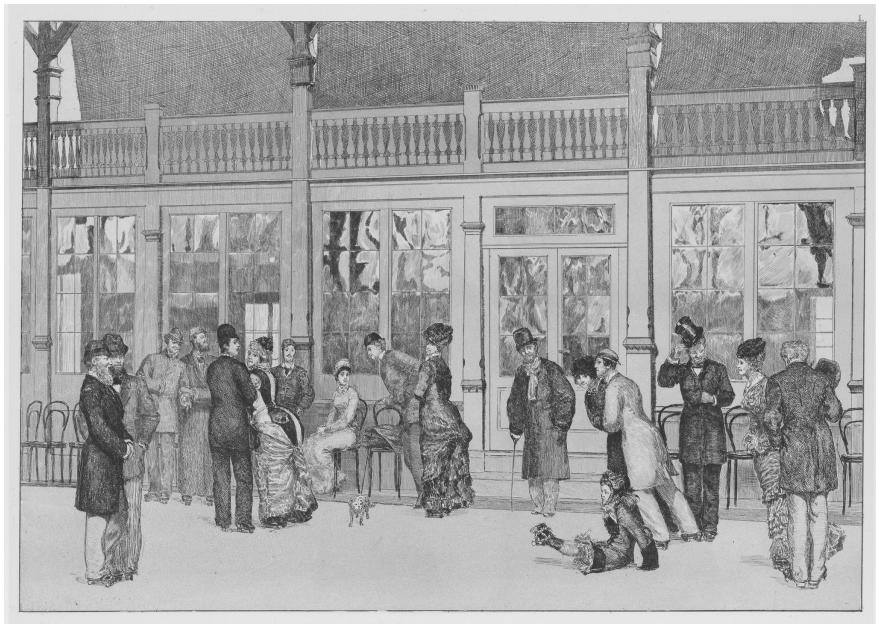


Figure 9.1: Max Klinger, *Ort (Place)*, plate I from *Ein Handschuh: Cyclus von zehn Compositionen; Opus VI*, 1881. Etching and aquatint with chine collé, 25.8 × 34.7 cm.

and two single figures. The motif of the lost glove suggests that the constellation of figures in plate II is to be read as a disturbance of paired symmetry. A woman is missing in the group of three in the background, or there is one man too many. This asymmetry is repeated in the foreground: the woman now has only one lone glove, while the man, also wearing gloves, is poised to grab a third. This is the “Handlung” named in the title of the plate. But the title does not only refer to this single concrete action of picking up a glove; the plate also asks us to understand the action as a chain of multiple actions, each of which is connected to the hand. In contrast to plate I, where the attention of the men is attracted by an incident – namely, the fall of the girl – plate II demonstrates how incidents lead to actions: a man tries to pick up a glove that has fallen to the ground or was intentionally dropped. In contrast to the fall of the girl or the fall of the hat, the dropping of the glove can be considered with regard to an agent’s intentions and so can be understood as part of the chain of actions we identify as the narrative action or plot of the image.

In this way the narrative gains speed from the difference between plate I and plate II and moves from the description of a scene to the depiction of a plot. Yet “Ort” and “Handlung” are not so closely linked as they may at first appear. A span of multiple hours stretches between the two images. In the first plate, the short

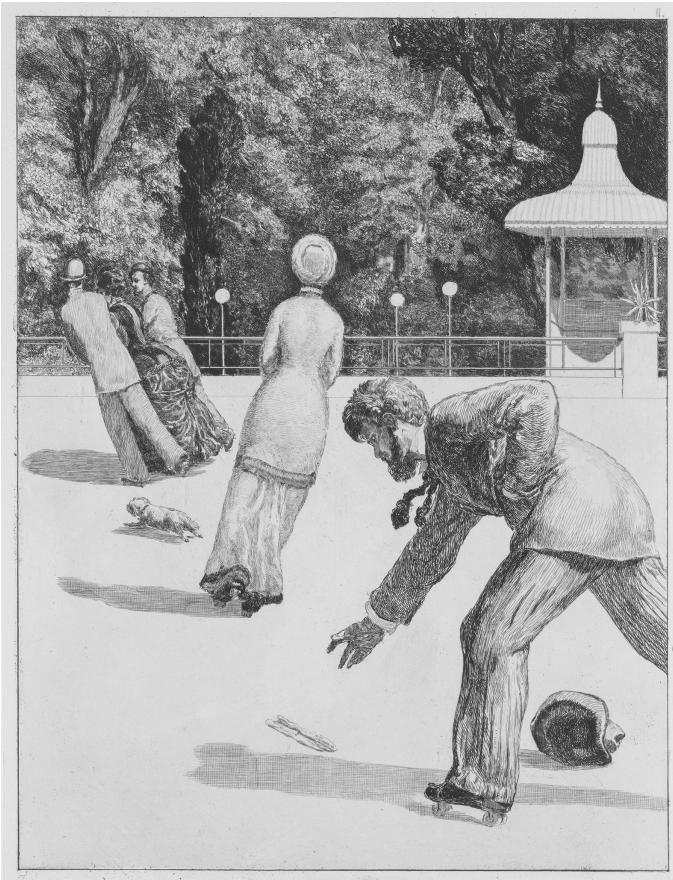


Figure 9.2: Klinger, *Handlung (Action)*, plate II from *Ein Handschuh*. 29.9 × 21.1 cm.

shadows indicate midday; in the second, it is already afternoon. The virtuosic references that plate II makes to plate I conceal the lapse of time that extends in the interval between the two images. Only in the transition from plate II to plate III, which leads from the light of a sunny afternoon into a bedroom and a dream, does this temporal lapse become clearly noticeable. It is nighttime. The protagonist is sitting in bed, his face buried in his hands. To his left is an extinguished candle and a full glass; in front of him, a glove, or, more precisely, the glove. Behind the glove rises up a sharply tiered succession of background landscapes. A tree grows all the way in the front. Behind it passes a black streak, which is probably a river. On the far bank one can see a small feminine figure standing at the beginning of a path that leads across rolling hills into a forest, which is, in turn,

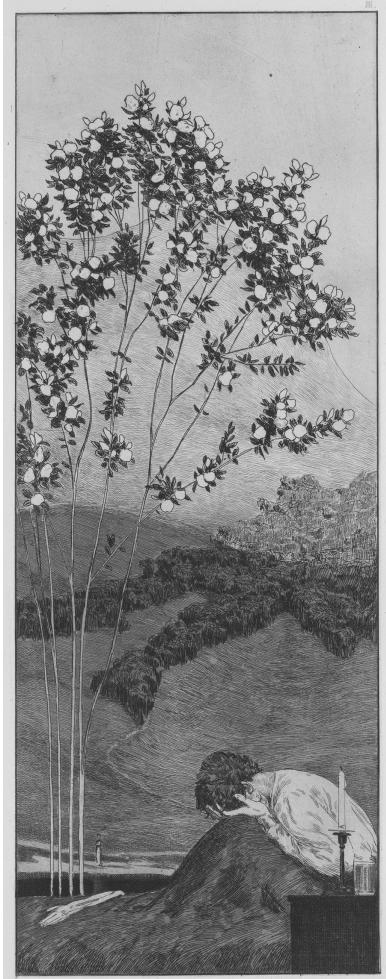


Figure 9.3: Klinger, *Wünsche* (Desires), plate III from *Ein Handschuh*. 31.8 × 13.9 cm.

situated on the slope of a mountain. The plate bears the title “Wünsche,” and the disjointed spatial relations ask us to imagine how the various elements combine into a meaningful scene from the artist’s sexual fantasy. It does not take much interpretative acumen to understand that the woman is figured as a guide waiting to lead the artist from the distinct and isolated objects of the foreground into the dense grove in the background.

The leaps in pictorial setting correspond to a stronger emergence of the intervals between the plates. While the transition from plate I to plate II was effectively devised for the construction of a narrative, the three following intervals direct our attention to the discontinuity between the images. They are thresholds

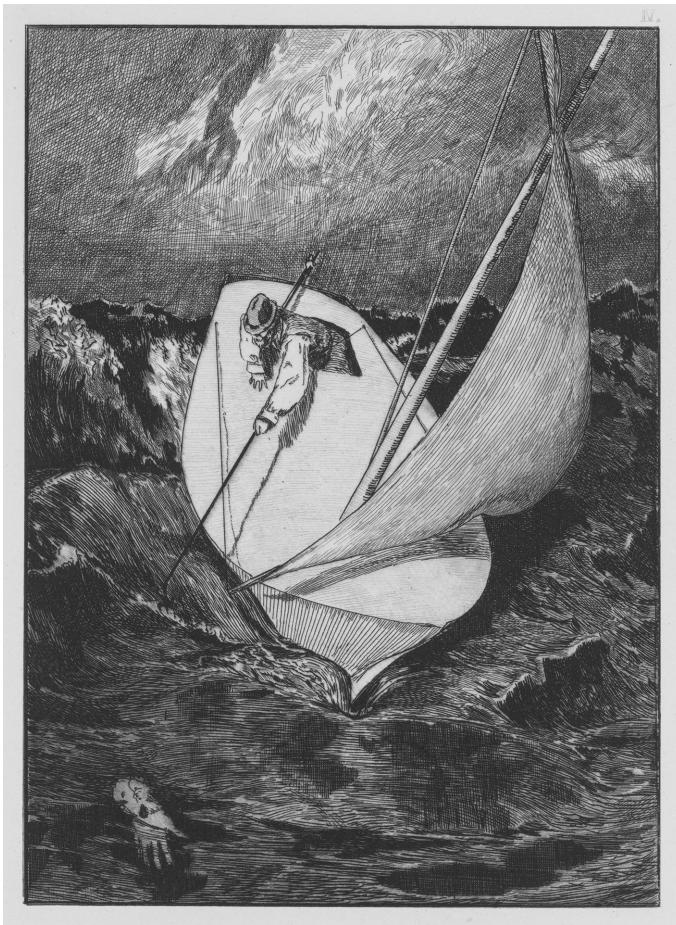


Figure 9.4: Klinger, *Rettung* (Rescue), plate IV from *Ein Handschuh*. 23.8 × 18.2 cm.

that lead ever deeper into a dream world. In plate IV, entitled “Rettung,” the artist has left behind his bed and is integrated as an agent into the dream. With plate V, which depicts the glove as the driver of a triumphal chariot, the series of images has arrived in the dream world and will not leave it again, not even in the last image. Significant in this context is Christiane Hertel’s observation that the triumphal chariot is not formed by a shell but by a mollusk.¹⁵ The interior of the dream reached in plate V is a warm, bilaterally symmetrical, and folded organism.

¹⁵ See Hertel, *Studien zu Max Klingers graphischem Zyklus*, 67.

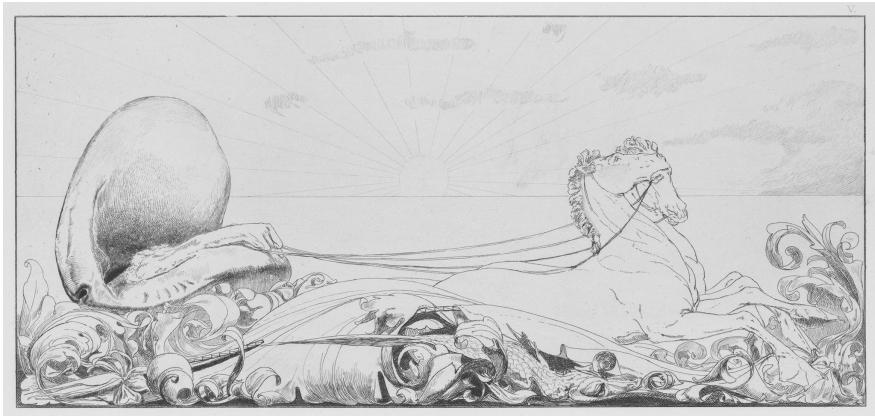


Figure 9.5: Klinger, *Triumph*, plate V from *Ein Handschuh*. 14.4 × 26.8 cm.



Figure 9.6: Klinger, *Huldigung (Homage)*, plate VI from *Ein Handschuh*. 15.9 × 32.8 cm.

Each of these intervals, which guide us ever deeper into the dream world, presents the organization of the whole cycle in a new way. The interval between plate I and plate II has the function, as we have seen, of selecting the main characters and identifying the plot of the narrative in the events on the skating rink. Since we are led from the real world into the dream world between plate II and plate III, it seems right to assume that plates I and II form a stable setting from which the other eight plates are differentiated as a dream sequence. But the transition from plate III to plate IV reveals a different organization that consolidates the events at the Hasenheide and the dream sequence together by emphasizing the first three plates as a group.



Figure 9.7: Klinger, *Ängste* (Fears), plate VII from *Ein Handschuh*. 14.3 × 26.9 cm.

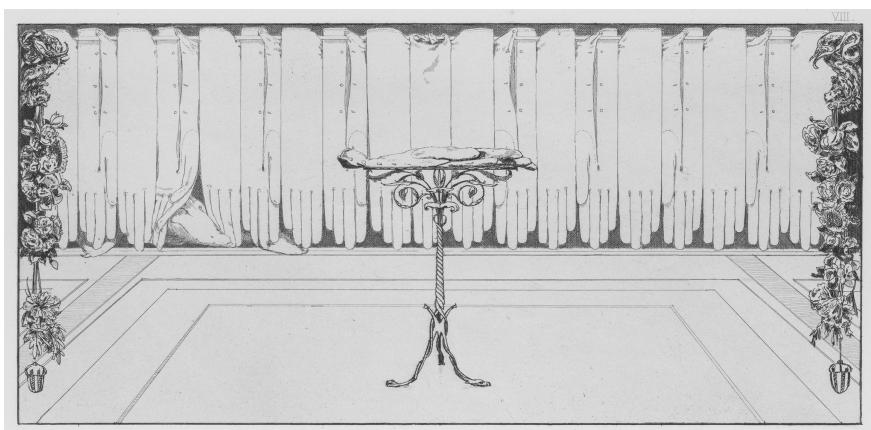


Figure 9.8: Klinger, *Ruhe* (Repose), plate VIII from *Ein Handschuh*. 14.3 × 26.8 cm.

The cohesion of plates I–III is first of all apparent when one looks back from the metaphorical and synecdochic relationships in plate III to the first two images. Then one discovers similar semiotic transfers, which cast doubt on our first impression that we are dealing with representations of perceived scenes. In plate II, for example, the trees to the left and right of the single female figure resemble a hand or a fist.¹⁶ The trees are transformed into simulacra, and the roller-skating rink as a whole becomes a venue for imaginary relations between the foreground

16 I also owe this observation to Hertel, 142.

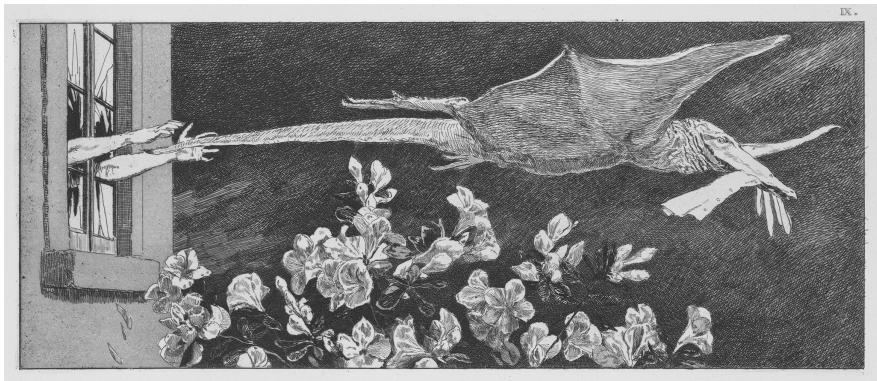


Figure 9.9: Klinger, *Entführung (Abduction)*, plate IX from *Ein Handschuh*. 12 × 26.9 cm.



Figure 9.10: Klinger, *Amor (Cupid)*, plate X from *Ein Handschuh*. 14.3 × 26.6 cm.

and background comparable to those in plate III. Doubts can also arise about the reality of the depicted scene when one inspects plate I. The windowpanes in the background dissolve the group of people into shapeless, shimmering reflections.¹⁷ Since a total of five pairs of windows are depicted – each of which contains ten small panes – it is also obvious to relate this derealizing effect to the ten-part cycle. In short, the distinction between stable framing plates that are firmly

17 In this context, I would like to refer to Drude's illuminating analysis of Klinger's use of etching and aquatint in plate I. See Drude, *Historismus als Montage*, 114–115.

anchored in reality and a dream narrative cannot be maintained once the first two images are viewed from the perspective of the third.¹⁸

In the context of the entire cycle, the cohesion of the first three plates can also be made more concrete with regard to their themes: they form the exposition of the main thematic motif of the cycle. At first, this can only be inferred indirectly from how the ensuing four plates are connected by the common theme of the sea. The maritime scene of rescue in plate IV is followed by three further images with marine themes: in plates V and VI, the sea appears as an element of Venus as indicated by both the mussel chariot and the metamorphosis of froth into roses; and in plate VII, the sea is a deep and gloomy body of water bearing monsters. Viewed in such a way, this marine sequence forms the four-part center of the ten-part cycle.

As soon as we carry out this partitioning and identify a four-part middle group framed by two groups of three, then the symmetry between the groups of three comes to the fore. Their symmetry is not merely numerical: in each group, one plate depicts the situation before an abduction (plates I and VIII), one the moment of abduction (plates II and IX), and one the state of affairs after the abduction (plates III and X). In both cases, prior to the abduction, there is a multitude ordered into pairs with a lone figure set apart from them: at the beginning, Berlin society with the Brazilian sitting in solitude (and doubled by the equally lonely girl who has fallen to the ground); and at the end, the lone glove on a display table. Both images are, in their own ways, ostentatious spaces: here a social one, the skating rink; there a commercial one, the shop window. Even the consequences of abduction are the same in the first and second groups of three: plate III depicts the companionship of the artist and the glove, plate X that of the glove and Cupid. While the two groups of three at the beginning and end of the cycle are variations on the same theme, the central group containing the four marine images forms a counterpattern to them. It begins in plate IV with the opposite of abduction: rescue on the high seas. Both of the following images are devoted to ostentation, to triumph and homage. The fourth (plate VII) is an image of companionship – the artist and the human-sized glove share a bed – and it is at the same time an image of the destruction of this intimacy by the invading monsters. If we place a caesura between the third and the fourth plate, then the cycle displays a three-part structure of, to use musical terminology, exposition, development, and recapitulation: abc **baae** abc.¹⁹

¹⁸ See the very helpful discussion of the relationship between the frame narrative and the embedded narrative in Brachmann, *Johannes Brahms und Max Klinger*, 124–125.

¹⁹ On the general relationship to Klinger's adoption of musical principles of organization, see Brachmann's seminal investigation *Johannes Brahms und Max Klinger*.

If we now examine the next interval more closely, the one between plate IV and plate V, then we are confronted once again with another form of organizing the plates. In the first four plates, the artist is the main character. Starting with the fifth, the glove is: it grows to the size of a human, takes the reins, homage is paid to it, it lies with the artist in bed, it presents itself, and, in conclusion, it gains the presence of a body or at least a corporeal hull. Only in the transition from the fourth to the fifth plate does the cycle take us entirely into the world of the glove, just as one has to insert all five fingers into a glove to put it on. But starting in plate V, the glove is no longer an object that drops to the ground or lies on a blanket or floats in the ocean or is cared for by the artist, who is the main character; rather it is itself the protagonist. That this transformation occurs in the fourth interval is evidenced by a conspicuous formal aspect that I have left unmentioned: while the first four images vary considerably in format and size, the format remains more or less the same in the last six images (though all ten sheets have the same paper format and size).²⁰

I have already noted the pan from the long shot of the landscape to the subjective perspective of the vertical format at the beginning of the series; I have also noted how the narrow vertical format of plate III contributes to the figural displacements and compressions in this landscape where the bed, tree, valley, forest, and mountain are all condensed together into a single flat layer. Plate IV employs the subjective perspective of plate II again, but unlike plate II, the point of view is far away from the events. Not only is the figure of the artist much smaller in relation to plate II, the pictorial field is also almost a third smaller – while the sizes of the sheets are identical – and its subject thus appears, in comparison to plate II, to lie at a far distance. To summarize briefly, the first four plates depict differing relationships between the viewer and the image, and they do so because they are also about the differing relationships between the main character and an object: the glove. The relation between viewer and image thereby becomes analogous to that between character and object.

As soon as the cycle enters the world of the glove and declares it the protagonist, the format and size of the images remain stable. The uniform landscape format, which connects plates V through X, neutralizes the relation to the viewer and strengthens the axis between the plates. The direction of reading is emphasized,

²⁰ On the significance of format to Klinger's cycles, see Brachmann, *Johannes Brahms und Max Klinger*, 120–135; Drude, *Historismus als Montage*, 155–177. On formats and narration more generally, see Wolfgang Kemp, "The Narrativity of the Frame," in *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*, ed. Paul Duro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 11–23; Jäger, *Bilderzählung*, 88–94.

which also emerges as the axis of events, unfolding now from left to right.²¹ As disjointed as the thematic succession of these six plates may be, they are effectively tied together through their uniform orientation and formatting. With the fifth plate, we have slipped on the glove; we have arrived in its world, and we do not leave it again. The ensuing intervals are therefore different from the first four. From plate I to V, each of the four intervals opens a new perspective on the entire organization of the cycle. The first interval announces a realistic narration. The caesura between plate II and III differentiates between the realistic frame narrative and the dream sequence. At the transition between plate III and IV, the structure of thematic exposition, development, and recapitulation, which spans the whole cycle, becomes visible. And the transition from plate IV to V divides the entire cycle between the world of the artist and that of the glove. In contrast, the subsequent five intervals, which connect plates V through X, are of the same kind. They no longer serve the purpose of opening new possibilities of cyclic order. Their function is to unfold the elementary theme of the cycle.

The elementary theme is already familiar to us from the first two plates: it is the formation and separation of couples or pairs. When the single glove becomes the protagonist, the pair is first restored in the guise of triumphal ornaments. The glove is celebrated in a chariot with two horses (plate V) and on an altar decorated by two lamps (plate VI). But in the ensuing plate (VII), "Ängste," the monumental glove and its bedfellow are beset by monsters that point to the pair missing from "Triumph" (V) and "Huldigung" (VI): the pair of gloves. Indeed, the true source of the anxieties tormenting the false pair of bedfellows, the artist and the glove, is the pair of gloves reaching into the image from the left. In contrast, plate VIII conveys the impression – which we will soon see to be deceptive – that one glove could simply be separated without disrupting the series of pairs: a single left glove lies in the foreground on the display table; behind it hang eight pairs and, as a precise count reveals, one single left glove exactly in the middle.²² Even in this rigorously symmetrical image, a false pair occupies the center, so it is not surprising that a monster is peeking out from under the hanging gloves. This monster already accompanies the glove in plate V, hidden in the arabesque waves underneath the triumphal chariot. It rises up out of the water in plate VII, stalks the glove in plate VIII, and abducts the glove in plate IX. Contemporaries saw it as the artist's rival. But if we more closely examine the artist's hand reaching toward the glove in plate II, then we can see bestial features in it as well. The

²¹ On direction as an element of narratives in nineteenth-century printed cycles, see Jäger, *Bilderzählung*, esp. 96–98.

²² This strange feature was already noticed by Hertel, *Studien zu Max Klingers graphischem Zyklus*, 76.

monster is undoubtedly the glove's antagonist. Like the glove, it consists primarily of skin, but in contrast to the glove as protagonist, it is characterized by its intact symmetry. This particularly stands out in the image of abduction: the monster is the most important member in a chain of symmetrical entities – first the window, then the arm, and subsequently the two wings – that contrast with the single glove on the one hand and the multitude of azalea flowers on the other. All of the images in which the glove is the main character thus revolve around either the disturbance of paired symmetry or its false and monstrous restoration.

This theme finally finds its resolution in plate X. Aurora's roses, the exhausted glove, and the likewise tired Cupid indicate that it is the morning after a busy night, and if the four remaining arrows in Cupid's quiver are any indication, then more such nights are in store. Yet even if the image does not lead entirely out of the dream world into the waking world, it still concludes the cycle in an alternate mode. Klinger equips his Cupid with the wings of a dragonfly, indicating that the glove, lying here as a limp hull before the god of love, served as the larva for Cupid.

At this point at the very latest, it seems to be evident that the diverse interpretive possibilities for the glove are based in the end on its representation in Klinger's cycle as a symbol of symbolization. A lost glove, just like the symbolon, longs for unification with its pair; in contrast to identity tokens, however, the glove always has two companions: the other glove and the lady's hand. At the beginning of the cycle, the glove is identified as such an ambiguous symbol. First, in contrast to the girl's fall and the fall of the hat, the dropping of the glove is characterized as a symbolic action, one that demands an answer. Since the recipient does not answer immediately – that is, he does not immediately return the glove so as to strike up an acquaintance with the lady – the theme of the formation of pairs traverses various additional forms of disturbance and false restitution, creating metaphorical and synecdochic substitutions so as to conclude in the tenth and final plate with a surprising twist. Neither the other glove nor the lady's hand were the missing companion; instead, the companion was formed within the interior of the glove itself and has just emerged from it. The disturbance of mirror symmetry results in a different, generative, and therefore higher type of dyad, that of form and life.

Klinger's contemporaries understood *Ein Handschuh* as an ironic treatment of an episode from the artist's *éducation sentimentale*.²³ The final point is not only

²³ "The fantastic comedy of *Ein Handschuh* seems like an amusing prologue to the dark tragedy *Eine Liebe*" (Die phantastische Komödie vom "Handschuh" wirkt wie ein lustiges Vorspiel zu der finsternen Tragödie "Eine Liebe"). Avenarius, *Max Klinger's Griffelkunst*, 19. See also Schmid, *Klinger*, 24 ("youthful follies"; Jugendsele); Meissner, *Max Klinger*, 40 ("a fine, worldly mind, winged mockery, laughing humor"; ein feiner, weltüberlegener Geist, ein geflügelter Spott, ein lachender

that new life is created in the isolated fetish but also that this new life does not at all leave the old one behind. As already mentioned, Cupid has four more arrows in his quiver. We should thus conceive of the cycle not as representing a completed and overcome life phase but rather as leading back to its beginning and as directing erotic desire toward a new object. In Klinger's drawings and etchings from the same years, we encounter Cupid as a creature of varying forms with different goals. He appears as a muscular man who uses tied-up naked women for target practice in *Amors Opfer* (1879), and he drives women into an enclosure with a riding crop in another pen drawing from the same year. According to the art historian Annegret Friedrich, the god of love embodies here a masculinity that is hard and violent and controls a passive female crowd.²⁴ But the same Cupid, already an adult and propelled by insect wings, can also descend on the sleeping artist at night and sit down on the bed next to him; or as an archer, he can hit the working artist so deeply in the heart that he, disoriented from pain or desire, almost falls off his chair.²⁵ Cupid appears in yet another role when he is caressed by Zeus in plate 42 from the cycle *Amor und Psyche* (1880).²⁶ If we look back from the last plate of *Ein Handschuh* to the first plate – following, as it were, Cupid's arrows – we can discover allusions to such a polymorphic sexuality already in the scene at the roller-skating rink. The girl's fall attracts the attention of the older man in the middle. To the right of Klinger and a figure who has been identified as the painter Christian Krogh, Klinger's friend and housemate, are two men who are not as good as the artist and his companion at keeping their balance, so they have to support one another. On the right between two men, there is a lady who does not heed their greetings and is instead running toward the

Humor); Lothar Brieger-Wasservogel, *Max Klinger* (Leipzig: H. Seemann, 1902), 61 (“youthful romantic follies”; jugendliche Liebesselei); Kühn, *Max Klinger*, 61 (“fantastic romantic comedy”; phantastische Liebeskomödie).

24 See Annegret Friedrich, *Das Urteil des Paris: Ein Bild und sein Kontext um die Jahrhundertwende* (Marburg: Jonas, 1997), 168. This applies to *Amors Opfer* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett) and *Amor treibt Mädchen mit einer Gerte* (Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig).

25 See *Traum des Künstlers* (1874/1876, private collection, Munich); reproduced in Alfred Weidinger, ed., *Klinger* (Munich: Hirmer, 2020), 153, cat. no. 221; *Vom Pfeil getroffen* (1878, private collection); reproduced in Herwig Guratzsch, ed., *Max Klinger: Bestandskatalog der Bildwerke, Gemälde und Zeichnungen im Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1995), 48. In 2000, the drawing was restituted to the descendants of Claire Kirstein and has since been in private ownership.

26 See Hansdieter Erbsmehl, “Homoerotik und Mannmännlichkeit in Max Klingers Kunst und Leben,” in *Max Klinger: Wege zur Neubewertung*, ed. Pavla Langer, Zita A. Pataki, and Thomas Pöpper (Leipzig: Plöttner, 2008), 76–88.

fallen girl. Last but not least, both men and women have discovered an object that interests them in front of the image space.²⁷ The story of the glove thus begins in a situation where couples appear and are formed, but both the forms and the objects of desire are multiform. And the story ends with a depiction of Cupid as an alluring ephebe, freshly hatched from the paraphernalia of heterosexual fetishism and with four arrows that refer back to this initial polymorphism.

It is of particular significance for the medium of etching that this sexual poetics of postponed and hindered pairing is developed based on a glove and its counterpart, on their separation and the impossibility of uniting them again. All of this suggests that *Ein Handschuh* wants to be read as an artist's dream, as the dream of the artist as printmaker. With regard to the art of etching, the cycle is allegorically about the relation between the image and the printing plate, about the removal of a single printed sheet from its laterally inverted counterpart, about fantasies of supplementation and completeness evoked by this separation, and finally, about the true nature of the relation between image and printing plate, which is identified not as a relation of mechanical reproduction but as an intimate imprinting and metamorphosis. This is at least the conclusion to be drawn from the last image if one reads it as an allegory of etching. Cupid hatches out of the glove just as the image originates from the printing plate.

***Ein Handschuh* as series**

These references to the medium lead to a question that was undoubtedly of interest to a printmaker used to considering the inversion of the printed image in his work on the plate. Which glove are we actually dealing with here? The left one or the right one? A glove is necessarily a left one or a right one, at least so long as it

27 Crary has provided an exceptional description of the ambiguity of the scene: "The first print, 'Place,' may be the single richest unit in Klinger's series. Few other images of this time are so pregnant with the ordinary anxiety, the expectancy, the sublimated precariousness of a modernizing urban world in which the individual is adrift on a smoothed-out surface devoid of any enduring markers. The appearance of stasis is undermined throughout, not only by the obvious symbol of the roller skates and the young girl who has fallen down, but by the network of glances and gestures that anticipate, that already accommodate the dislodgments and vagrancy of sexual and social certainties. Homoerotic desires intermingle here as the bound model of the heterosexual couple is displaced by the prospect of new transient configurations (which take explicit shape in the ambiguous trio of skaters in the second print). One of Klinger's achievements here was to find a means of formalizing effects of social fragmentation and psychic dissociation while preserving the naturalist surface of the image." Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 131.

is not a modern rubber glove that can be turned inside out without problem but rather a bourgeois piece of clothing made of leather and furnished with a slit and six buttons on its front side like the one in Klinger's cycle. Because of this, the orientation of the glove is identifiable in every plate, usually easily. That the lady drops a left glove in plate II is to be expected given the stereotypical coding of the left as sinister and feminine. It is thus all the more surprising that the artist has taken a right glove into his bedroom; that he attempts to rescue a left one at high seas; that a right one sits on the triumphal chariot; homage is rendered to a left one; the artist's bedfellow is once again a right one; on the display table lies a left one; the monster abducts a right one; and the dragonfly-like Cupid emerges out of a left one. Every interval after plate II completes one and the same operation: the inversion of a glove into its counterpart.²⁸

The organization of the cycle is thus created on two different levels. On the surface, the intervals mark the transitions between different forms of organization. Depending on whether I pass from the first plate to the second, from the second to the third, from the third to the fourth, or from the fourth to the fifth, the cyclic organization is presented differently: first as a realistic narrative; then as a frame and a dream narrative; then as the exposition, development, and recapitulation of a narrative theme; and finally, as the glove's transition from object to protagonist. Independent from these sophisticated transformations carried out by the first five intervals, every interval also always performs another operation: the inversion of the glove into its companion. From one image to the next, the left glove transforms into the right one or vice versa, as if at every interval the cycle wanted to plunge into a world in which one can lose a left glove and find a right one.

If we view *Ein Handschuh* as applying this simple rule of inversion from one plate to the next, then the cycle turns out to be a series. One doesn't have to discover the inversion of the glove in order to sense the significance of seriality to *Ein Handschuh*. Klinger provides a conspicuous iconographic hint for it in plate

28 In a letter to his parents from 1878, Klinger reports that he needs to buy an expensive pair of gloves. He also needs two for a cycle called *Ein Handschuh*. Max Klinger, *Briefe von Max Klinger aus den Jahren 1874–1919*, ed. Hans W. Singer (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1924), 27. Renate Berger, the only other scholar to have asked how the single glove is oriented in the different plates, comes to quite different conclusions: "In eight of the ten plates of the cycle, Klinger chooses the left glove, only in 'Triumph' and 'Wünsche' does he deviate from this order and use the right one." Renate Berger, "Zweite Haut: Zu Max Klingers 'Paraphrase ueber den Fund eines Handschuhs,'" in *Frauen, Bilder, Männer, Mythen: Kunsthistorische Beiträge*, ed. Ilsebill Barta et al. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1987), 125. But plate IV clearly shows a right glove, since the slit can be recognized; in plate VIII, too, we can tell it must be a right glove when we realize that we would have to see the thumb if the dragon had abducted the left one. And plate I, "Ort," doesn't show a glove at all. So the correct count is nine plates; five show a left glove, and four a right glove.

VIII by presenting the individual glove as an example of a series of pairs. This plate also evokes a rich semantic context of seriality. If we understand the presentation as a store window, then we are looking at serially produced goods as they are staged and made visible for consumption; if, by contrast, we emphasize the quasi-ritual focus on the one single glove, we arrive at erotic fetishism; finally, if we pay attention to the alternation of left and right, we relate consumer culture and eroticism to modern printmaking. According to Klinger, it was both a serial art and an autographic expression of subjectivity.

In his 1891 essay *Malerei und Zeichnung*, Klinger describes the printing press as a condition and motor of modern subjectivization. While genuine spatial art (*Raumkunst*), in which all the arts are connected by architecture, was predominant in premodern times, the printing press led to the dispersion of pictures and thus to the differentiation and separation of the individual arts. This loss corresponded, however, to a gain in the liberation of subjectivity. From then on, the individual artist could reach a large, dispersed, and individualized audience in the small format of spontaneous drawing.²⁹ A comparable relationship of seriality and subjectivity is prevalent in *Ein Handschuh*. When viewed as a cycle, the etchings are about a subject that expresses itself in an artifact (II–IV), submits to this artifact (V–VIII), and finally elevates it to a matrix in which a new life is created (X). The abundance of varying relationships between the plates generated by the cyclic form is based on a much simpler relationship between the plates, namely, the relationship between inverted counterparts. It also refers to a simpler understanding of etching not as a process of metamorphosis or of cyclic renewal but as one of serial production.

For Klinger, the inversion of left and right might additionally point to a deeper dimension. Images undergo a lateral inversion in the printing press, and the individual glove undergoes the same in the intervals between the images of *Ein Handschuh*. Lateral inversion can therefore be understood as a mechanical process that is, in principle, invisible and unconscious due to its seriality and opacity. Klinger explored this association of seriality and psychological drive (*Trieb*) in his prints from around 1880. In “Der Tod als Pflasterer,” the sixth and final plate of the cycle *Eva und die Zukunft* (1880), a skeleton lets a kind of hammer smash down on a group of mortals again and again. In “Amor, Tod und Jenseits,” the last plate of the cycle *Intermezzi* (1881), and in the wash pen drawing *Klinger und Krohg wollen die Zeit totschlagen* (1876/1877), the power of love and

29 See Klinger, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, 5–6, 10, 26, 37–40.

time is expressed in a serial movement that can be described as genuinely modern: the allegorical figures are pedaling on bicycles.³⁰ In *Ein Handschuh*, it is printing, as a serial process of inversion, that is associated with the unconscious. Klinger may have found a philosophical and physiological suggestion for this in the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer.

Following Kant, Schopenhauer understood left and right as a philosophical problem. According to Kant, left and right form a precategorical differentiation that does not belong to understanding (as the faculty of concepts) but to intuition. Since human intuition is the intuition of a finite subject – that is, a corporeally situated subject – it always exhibits, so Kant, a distinction between left and right. These considerations are based on a rich tradition of philosophical reflection on left and right, which reached a climax in Leibniz and which Kant first dealt with in detail in his precritical work *Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenenden im Raume* (1768).³¹ It was only with his critical turn that Kant moved orientation into the subject. The finite subject can orient itself in the world because the essential distinctions that ensure its orientation are created by the form of spatial perception. This transcendental basis for orientation remains directly present to the finite, corporeally situated subject in its feeling for the difference between its left hand and its right hand.³²

Through Schopenhauer, this idea might have reached Klinger. Schopenhauer illustrates this theory of genuinely intuitive distinctions by using the example of a left glove that does not match a right glove.³³ But as so often occurs in the afterlife of

³⁰ For an interpretation of the historical connection between psychic and technical seriality and automatism, see Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 134–138; for an interpretation of the drawing *Klinger und Krohg wollen die Zeit totschlagen*, see Ulrich Pfisterer, “Kreative Langeweile – oder: Max Klinger als Glückskünstler,” in *Bilder – Räume – Betrachter: Festschrift für Wolfgang Kemp zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Steffen Bogen, Wolfgang Brassat, and David Ganz (Berlin: Reimer, 2006), 230–249.

³¹ To be highlighted from the expansive literature on the topic are James Van Cleve and Robert E. Frederick, eds., *The Philosophy of Right and Left: Incongruent Counterparts and the Nature of Space* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1991); Matthew S. Rukgaber, “The Key to Transcendental Philosophy”: Space, Time and the Body in Kant,” *Kant-Studien* 100.2 (2009): 166–186; Marco Giovanelli, “Leibniz, Kant und der moderne Symmetriebegriff,” *Kant-Studien* 102.4 (2011): 422–454; Vincenzo De Risi, *Geometry and Monadology: Leibniz's Analysis Situs and Philosophy of Space* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2007).

³² See Immanuel Kant, “What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?,” trans. Allen W. Wood, in Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1–18, esp. 8–9.

³³ “This cannot be understood through mere concepts, nor clarified through them; rather, we recognize it quite immediately and intuitively, just as we recognize the distinction between right and left and all that depends on this, e.g., that the left glove does not fit the right hand.” Arthur

Kant's philosophy, his concern to secure the conditions of the possibility of cognition – or, in our case, of a precategorical orientation – turns into an abyss. This abyss gapes open between the plates in Klinger's *Ein Handschuh*. In each interval, the individual glove disappears from our intuition and returns inverted in the next plate, as if it had vanished into the chaotic manifold of bare sensations, where the spatial determinations of intuition do not apply, and then reappears to visual perception as a spatially formed but reoriented object. Schopenhauer describes an unconscious process in which such a spatial inversion takes place: dreaming.

Schopenhauer elaborates his theory of dreams in his “Versuch über das Geistersehen,” which was published as part of his *Parerga und Paralipomena*, which Klinger called his “daily literary fodder” (tägliches literarisches Futter).³⁴ According to Schopenhauer, a dream is a representation of sensory stimuli that do not come from the outside world but from the body itself. These endogenous stimuli only become noticeable in sleep because that is when the intake of much stronger external stimuli is interrupted. Based on their origin inside the body, these stimuli are to be ascribed to “organic life” (organisches Leben). Organic life encompasses feelings and passions and is “a constant need, an eternally recurring lack and endless distress” (ein beständiges Bedürfen, stets wiederkehrender Mangel und endlose Not).³⁵ Life is thus an expression of the primal and blind drive that is

Schopenhauer, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, trans. and ed. David E. Cartwright, Edward E. Erdmann, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), § 15. “Dies läßt sich aus bloßen Begriffen nicht verstehen, noch durch sie verdeutlichen; sondern wir erkennen es ganz unmittelbar und intuitiv, eben wie den Unterschied zwischen Rechts und Links und was von diesem abhängt, z.B. daß der linke Handschuh nicht zur rechten Hand paßt.” Arthur Schopenhauer, “Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde,” in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Arthur Hübscher, vol. 1 (Mannheim: F. A. Brockhaus, 1988), § 15; also §§ 23, 36. This idea was also easily comprehensible in popular depictions of Schopenhauer's philosophy, such as in Julius Frauenstädt, *Briefe über die Schopenhauer'sche Philosophie* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1854), 166.

³⁴ Klinger, *Briefe*, 205. On Klinger and Schopenhauer, see Roeske, “Der Zeichner als verneinender Künstler” (with references to older literature), and also the index in Morton, *Max Klinger and Wilhelmine Culture*.

³⁵ Arthur Schopenhauer, “Additional Remarks on the Doctrine of the Nothingness of Existence,” in *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, vol. 2, trans. and ed. Adrian del Caro and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2015), 257; Arthur Schopenhauer, “Nachträge zur Lehre von der Nichtigkeit des Daseyns,” in *Parerga und Paralipomena II*, vol. 6 of *Sämtliche Werke*, 303. On Schopenhauer's physiology of the will, see Jürgen Brunner, “Die Materialisierung bewußter und unbewußter psychischer Phänomene bei Schopenhauer,” *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 88 (2007): 89–116; Brunner, “Medizin: Naturphilosophie und Experimentalphysiologie,” in *Schopenhauer-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, ed. Daniel Schubbe and Matthias Kofler (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2018), 248–257.

precipitated by lack and that Schopenhauer calls the will. But these endogenous stimuli only become dream images when they are formed by the brain. The brain – for Schopenhauer the physical substrate of what Kant calls “intuition” and “understanding” – has the function of representing the will for us. In the case of dreams, this means that the brain endows the chaotic manifold of stimuli during sleep with spatial order, temporal sequence, and causal connections. Only through this cerebral process can the will be intuited in images, and it entails a spatial inversion. Since sensory stimuli do not come from the outside world but from inside the body during sleep, the brain is forced to process stimuli in the opposite direction: not from the outside to the inside but from the inside to the outside. This, according to Schopenhauer, is why we are confused when we awake from dreams and cannot find our way around our own bedrooms. We have mixed up left and right, front and back.³⁶

Klinger may have been interested in various aspects of Schopenhauer's theory of dreams, and as an artist, he is to be situated in the same context of a knowledge of the unconscious that Schopenhauer's philosophy also decisively contributed to. I would like to emphasize in particular his understanding of dreaming as a physical

36 “Therefore, the brain now works as if in reverse. [. . .] Incidentally, as a special confirmation of this assumption, the very common but strange fact might be mentioned that, when we wake up again immediately after first falling asleep, we often experience complete spatial disorientation, such that we are now forced to look at everything in reverse, that is, imagine what is on the right side of the bed to be on the left, and what is behind to be in front, and with such definition that in the darkness even the rational reflection that it is actually the other way around is incapable of obliterating that false imagination, for which purpose touch is needed.” Arthur Schopenhauer, “Essay on Spirit-Seeing and Related Issues,” in *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. Sabine Roehr and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2014), 218. “Das Gehirn arbeitet also jetzt wie umgekehrt. [. . .] Als eine specielle Bestätigung dieser Annahme könnte man beiläufig die sehr gewöhnliche, aber seltsame Thatsache anführen, daß, wenn wir aus dem ersten Einschlafen sogleich wieder erwachen, oft eine totale räumliche Desorientierung bei uns eingetreten ist, der Art, daß wir jetzt alles umgekehrt aufzufassen, nämlich was rechts vom Bette ist links, und was hinten ist nach vorne zu imaginieren, genöthigt sind, und zwar mit solcher Entschiedenheit, daß, im Finstern, selbst die vernünftige Ueberlegung, es verhalte sich doch umgekehrt, jene falsche Imagination nicht aufzuheben vermag, sondern hierzu das Getast nöthig ist.” Arthur Schopenhauer, “Versuch über das Geistersehen,” in *Parerga und Paralipomena I*, vol. 5 of *Sämtliche Werke*, 265–266. These ideas could also be easily found indirectly, for example, in Julius Frauenstädt, *Schopenhauer Lexikon* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1871), 2:394. Schopenhauer's source for this idea, which I could not otherwise find in nineteenth-century dream theory, might be Plato (*Timaeus* 45b–46b). On lateral inversion in Plato, see Ulrike Bruchmüller, “Imagination und Innovation in der Philosophie Platons: Möglichkeiten der Referenz für alte und neue Transformationen,” in *Imagination, Transformation und die Entstehung des Neuen*, ed. Philipp Brüllmann, Ursula Rombach, and Cornelia Wilde (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 23–70.

event that creates images of “seeming reality and corporeality” (scheinbarer Wirklichkeit und Leibhaftigkeit). Unlike fantasies or memories, dreams are based on current sense perceptions, since the stimuli coming from inside the body are transported through the brain to the sense organs, where they bring about actual “sensations of light, colour, sound, smell, and taste, only without the external causes that stimulate them otherwise” (wirkliche Licht-, Farben-, Schall, Geruchs- und Geschmacksempfindungen, nur ohne die sonst sie erregenden äußereren Ursachen).³⁷ So the supposedly realistic scenes in plates I and II could just as well represent dream images. Dreams cannot be distinguished from reality through the criterion of corporeality. Conversely, Klinger could also have gleaned from Schopenhauer that various degrees of corporeality recur in the dream world. We can dream that we are imagining something, and then in the dream, we imagine fantasy images that are just as vague as those we imagine when we are awake (see plate V or X). By contrast, all bodies that appear directly in the dream world – and especially our own – possess “objective distinctness and vivid reality” (objektive Anschaulichkeit und Leibhaftigkeit; see plate VIII).³⁸

But the artist could have found more than just a theory of dream images in “Versuch über das Geistersehen”; and this text is more than just an important element in the discourse on the unconscious that *Ein Handschuh* also participates in. The relationship between philosophy and the work of art can also be viewed here from a different angle that does not trace the artwork back to philosophy and also does not derive the two from the epistemic conditions they share. If we imagine Klinger as a reader of this passage from *Parerga und Paralipomena*, we can rather understand how he interprets Schopenhauer’s text as a “semantic precondition” (semantische Vorleistung)³⁹ that suggests an artistic processing in the form of the cycle of prints. This semantic precondition links lateral inversion with a process of the unconscious.

It is obvious that Klinger does not adopt the details of Schopenhauer’s dream theory. Schopenhauer mentions spatial confusion upon waking. But in *Ein Handschuh*, disorientation prevails in all the images. Even the fact that the glove is lost on a roller-skating rink refers to the confusion between above and below. In German, a glove is called a *Handschoen*: one sticks one’s hand inside of a shoe, and this hand-

37 Schopenhauer, “On Spirit-Seeing,” 219; Schopenhauer, “Über das Geistersehen,” 266.

38 Schopenhauer, “On Spirit-Seeing,” 201; Schopenhauer, “Über das Geistersehen,” 244–245. On the physical experience of dreaming in Klinger, see also Morton, *Max Klinger and Wilhelmine Culture*, 258–267.

39 David Wellbery proposes this term to describe the genuinely literary reception of Schopenhauer by writers such as Proust and Beckett. David E. Wellbery, *Schopenhauers Bedeutung für die moderne Literatur* (Munich: Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, 1998), 14–15.

shoe begins to circulate the moment that shoes for the feet are provided with wheels. Back and front also enter into an unstable relationship, for example, in plate II, when the latent images in the trees come to the fore, or in plate III, where the very close objects in the foreground have to be seen together with the background landscape, which appears to be at an undefined distance. While these examples show how disorientation emerges as a theme, whether in the modern iconography of the roller-skating rink or because of the spatial relationships in the individual images, the inversion of the glove between the images is in itself inconspicuous. Klinger took advantage of precisely this fact that the lateral inversions of the glove can be easily overlooked – and has been *de facto* overlooked in art-critical and art-historical engagement with the cycle – to elaborate Schopenhauer's semantic precondition through the means of printmaking. Lateral inversion is unconscious, since it takes place below the threshold of our attention; it is also a constantly repeated unconscious process that always performs the same operation; and this operation does not take place in the images but rather in the intervals and thus outside of what can be represented. In Schopenhauer's terminology, we can describe the fate of the one glove as leaving the realm of representation (*Vorstellung*) in the intervals and dipping into the realm of the will only to reappear as a representation in the next image.

In my introductory definition of Romantic cycles, I cited August Wilhelm Schlegel's conception of intervals as views onto the infinite. While an individual element of a cycle represents a constituted world in which the subject finds the objects of his desire, the intervals point to desire as a constituent force that precedes the subject and objects. But what might infinity mean in the intervals of *Ein Handschuh*, in which the same serially repeating transformation takes place again and again. Instead of endowing this force with the divine attribute of infinity, it might make more sense to return to the theoretical content of Schopenhauer's philosophy. As a blind drive, the will is endless. While as a cycle the etchings come to an ironic conclusion and new beginning in plate X, as a series they are connected together by the repetition of one and the same procedure. This repetition is endless since it doesn't develop or have a goal but only consists in the alternation of left and right.

Coda: Handling *Ein Handschuh*

Both forms of *Ein Handschuh* make manifest quite different relations: a dynamic variety in the cyclic one, a simple rule in the serial one. Thematically, however, there is a stable core, no matter whether we look at the ten etchings from the perspective of serial inversion or follow the narrative development of the cycle:

cycle and series are both about the dissolution of the pair and its (failed) restoration. We can sort the ten etchings in such a way that they form four complete pairs of gloves, but there always remains an extra left glove on a plate: II, IV, VI, VII, and X show a left glove; III, V, VII, and IX a right one.

In a letter to his mother, presumably from 1883 – that is, after the publication of the cycle – Klinger arranges the etchings in a way that deviates significantly from their numbering. He claims to be correcting the interpretations found in art criticism:

Die allenthalben von Seiten der Kritik geschehen falsche und weitschweifige Auffassung dieser Blätter, verlassen den Autor zu einigen commentirenden Worten. Diese Umschreibung des fundes selbst enthält im Blatt 1. die im allegorisirten fundes selbst welches triumphirende heimgeführt und einer Huldigung zugeführt wird. Blatt 2 zeigt wie dem finder die Gewißheit den Handschuh zurück zu geben als Alp drückt, der Drache ist die künftige Personification derselben. 4. Hier als nach einem schon an sich Abgeschlossenen Gedankenfolge, glaubt der Autor das zu Grundliegend gedachte Vorkomniß als Intermezzo einzuschaltenen. 5 bringt einen Traum im Halbschlaf und 6 den vom Wachen ermüdeten Amor am Morgen. 7 ist eine nochmalige Glorification und No 8 allegorisiert die Zurückstellung des fundes.

The incorrect and longwinded interpretations of these plates found everywhere in the criticism have forced the author to offer a few of his own words of commentary. This description of the find itself contains in plate 1 the allegorized find itself, which is triumphantly driven home and offered homage. Plate 2 shows how the certainty of giving back the glove oppresses the finder as a nightmare; the dragon is the future personification of that. 4. Here, as if after an already completed sequence of thoughts, the author means to insert the incident thought to be the basis as an intermezzo. 5 brings a dream in a state of being half-asleep, and 6 the tired Cupid upon waking in the morning. 7 is another glorification and no. 8 allegorizes the restitution of the find.⁴⁰

In reconstructing the new arrangement, one should first note that Klinger selects only eight plates and does not explicitly say which one is the third. In my opinion, the following reconstruction is the only conclusive one: V (1), VII (2), IX, II (4), IV (5), X (6), VI (7), VIII (8). The Roman numerals denote the plates in their published order; the Arabic numerals refer to their arrangement in Klinger's letter. He clearly identifies the plates newly listed as 1 and 2 as the triumph (V) and nightmare (VII). Since he then indicates the loss of the glove (II) as the fourth plate, one has to ask which plate he now understands as the third. He names the "Drachen" and thus points to plate IX. As 5, he now cites a dream that occurs while the artist is dozing. Since plate III shows the artist still sitting awake in bed, and since we are deeply immersed in the dream world after plate V, he must mean plate IV. For 6, he clearly refers to the yawning Cupid in X; for 7, to the "nochmalige Glorification" in VI, and finally 8 is VIII, of which he now says that the glove presented

⁴⁰ Klinger, *Briefe*, 28; the unconventional spelling and grammar are in the original.

in isolation has been returned. The first plate on the roller-skating rink and the third, which shows the artist in his bed before falling asleep, are not included.

Is this new arrangement the secret and actual order of the cycle?⁴¹ Klinger did not change the order of the etchings in the three editions published later during his lifetime. So it makes sense to interpret the new arrangement in the private context in which it was undertaken. The proposal was addressed exclusively to his mother. The artist presented her with what is allegedly the only correct interpretation, but on closer inspection it turns out to be misleading. Contrary to what Klinger claims in the letter to his mother, the left glove has not at all been returned or made again into a pair in plate VIII. Its separation has rather been multiplied, since the glove presented in the center is accompanied by three more left gloves. As already explained above, the arrangement in pairs is brought into disarray through two false pairs of two left gloves each.

Klinger's assertion that one glove will eventually become a pair again is thus an ironic lie. But Klinger is also telling the truth with the misleading rearrangement he makes for his mother. For if we examine how the orientation of the glove is now distributed across the plates, we arrive at the following arrangement: right, right, right, left, left, left, left, left. In contrast to the official order in which left and right alternate, now all the right gloves come first and then all left ones. If we then imagine that Klinger's mother laid out the etchings in this order, then we can see that the three right gloves are on the left and the five left gloves are on the right. If there is a hidden intention behind this arrangement, it is probably only that of returning to the obvious theme of *Ein Handschuh*: that the symmetry of the pair has been disturbed.⁴²

41 As argued by Hans-Georg Pfeifer, *Max Klinger (1857–1920) Graphikzyklen: Subjektivität und Kompensation im künstlerischen Symbolismus als Parallelentwicklung zu den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse* (Gießen: W. Schmitz, 1980), 36–38.

42 The criticism mentioned in the letter could be that of the Norwegian writer Georges Brandes. Brandes had already discussed the drawings for *Ein Handschuh* in a review for the Norwegian daily newspaper *Dagblader* in April 1878, and in November of the same year he published his article in the London periodical *The Academy* in a modified form. In the review, he put the plates in his own order, which he retained in his future discussions of *Ein Handschuh*, even after the publication of the etchings. If Klinger is responding to Brandes in the letter to his mother, then he does not do so by correcting the order but rather by rearranging it yet again in a way that also ignores the numbering of the etchings but still correctly presents the central theme of the cycle. For the publication venues and chronology of Brandes's texts, see Lange, "Max Klinger und Norwegen," 167–168; Charlotte Kristensen, "Max Klinger und Georg Brandes," in *Max Klinger: ". . . der moderne Künstler schlechthin,"* ed. Richard Hüttel and Hans-Werner Schmidt (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010), 22–29, esp. 22; and Morton, *Max Klinger and Wilhelmine Culture*, 61–62.

For collectors of prints, completeness, be it of a group of works or of an entire oeuvre, was of particular value.⁴³ Materially, the ten plates, which are only held together by a folder and only ordered by their numbering, can easily be separated and scattered – or also simply arranged differently than the numbering suggests. Klinger was clearly aware that by publishing his etchings he was handing them over and thereby losing control over the arrangement of the plates and the completeness of the cycle. He anticipated this rearrangement and dissemination of the work on various levels. Thematically, they are about a loss that is not restored; by contrast, the cyclic form of the etchings relates them to one another so intimately that they constantly reveal new relationships. But viewed as a series, they can be continually and completely rearranged without losing their thematic connection. Klinger demonstrates this in his letter to his mother: *Ein Handschuh* still forms a unity even when two plates are missing and the remaining eight are arranged in a completely new way and with misleading irony.

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⁴³ See Peter Parshall, “A Darker Side of Light: Prints, Privacy, and Possession,” in Parshall, *Darker Side of Light*, 2–41, esp. 27.

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Markus Krajewski

DIN A

The Basis of All Thought

It passes through our hands every day, folded or crumpled, flat or wrinkled, but always in the same dimensions, always maintaining its proportions. Self-similar when halved or doubled, it contains the entire world of letters, numbers, and signs on a paper base with mathematically regular dimensions that can be traced back – as I will show in a moment – at least to the eighteenth century to a note by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg from 1796. It is the most visible and, at the same time, the most ubiquitous achievement of DIN: DIN 476, the norm for metric flat formats established in 1921, accepted almost worldwide as ISO 216 since 1961. Walter Porstmann from Berlin is regarded as its official “intellectual progenitor” (geistigen Vater),¹ but he made use of the ideas of Wilhelm Ostwald, the Leipzig winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, who in turn made use of the ideas of the Swiss entrepreneur and *Lebenskünstler* Karl Wilhelm Bührer. The fathers of the format thus derived from one other just as the individual sizes – A4, A5, A6 – are derived from the three principles of similarity, halving, and initial dimension. This all needs, of course, to be explained. In this essay, I want to describe the necessary contexts for the logic and historical truth of this series. Its inception, and so also its grandest claim, was formulated in 1911 by Ostwald when he proposed a new paper format with dimensions that were to be nothing less than globally standardized under the expressive title “world format” (Weltformat).

World format

What do a currency, a language, and a registry have in common? No doubt there are countless instances or places of overlap where these three media come together in various historical constellations, whether on counting boards in a port’s trading posts (*Kontore*) in the High Middle Ages, in the back rooms of the Bank of England, or, to give a more recent example, in the data sets of a spreadsheet in a tax office. All three objects are also the subjects of a series of treatises, each furnished with the

¹ Max Helbig and Winfried Hennig, *DIN-Format A4: Ein Erfolgssystem in Gefahr* (Berlin: Beuth, 1988), 14. All translations of sources are by Anthony Mahler unless otherwise noted.

Translated by Anthony Mahler and Charles Marcrum

programmatic prefix *Welt-*, that began to flow from Ostwald's pen in 1906. These include texts such as "Weltgeld," "Die Weltsprache," "Das Gehirn der Welt," "Das Weltformat für Drucksachen," "Die Weltorganisation der Chemiker," "Sekundäre Weltformate," and, in all its programmatic simplicity, "Die Organisation der Welt."²

Language is a medium; so too is money. In the series of world projects for which Ostwald vehemently pursued global acceptance before the First World War, one of his most prominent plans aimed to standardize the format of paper. So what was the problem? The quite fundamental difficulty consisted in the fact that human thought always takes place only one-dimensionally, both in speech – that is, in the duration of a "temporal sequence of sounds" (zeitliche Reihenfolge von Lauten)³ – and in the form of linear writing. In contrast to the scroll, the imprinting of linear script on the surface of a sheet of paper expands thinking into two dimensions – and thereby even trains the reader in seeing images. "Two-dimensional representation on a flat surface thus constitutes the most practical compromise between the linear simplicity of thinking and the varied manifold of reality that is to be emulated in thought" (die zweidimensionale Darstellung auf der Fläche stellt somit das [sic] zweckmässigste Kompromiss zwischen der linearen Einfachheit des Denkens und vielfältigen [sic] Mannigfaltigkeit der in Gedanken nachzubildenden Wirklichkeit dar).⁴ But "dividing the line of thought" (Teilung der Gedankenlinie) – that is, line breaks and page breaks – comes about "entirely arbitrarily according to reasons of purely technical practicality" (vollkommen willkürlich nach rein technischen Zweckmässigkeitsgründen).⁵

Around 1900 in Germany, both type area and page format were dominated by the arbitrariness that had also been so common in money, measurements, and weights fifty years earlier. Every publisher and printer worked at their own discretion and according to their own aesthetic preferences. Despite that fact, the standardization of formats has, of course, a long history. One need only think of the division of printed sheets into folio, quarto, octavo, and sextodecimo, or of the standard formats established by the Verein deutscher Papierfabrikanten (Association of German Paper Manufacturers) in 1883.⁶ Yet these norms – including the "official

2 See Wilhelm Ostwald, "Die Weltmünze," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 17 July 1910, 1.

3 Wilhelm Ostwald, "Die Brücke: Norm, Idee, vom Buch, Weltformat," unpublished typescript, 1914, NL Ostwald 4541, 4, Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

4 Ostwald, 6. In this unpublished typescript from 1914, Ostwald already formulates several insights of media theory that surprisingly anticipate many later ideas, such as those in Vilém Flusser's *Die Schrift: Hat Schreiben Zukunft?* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1992), 11.

5 Flusser, *Schrift*, 8.

6 Rainer Müller, *Flächenformate* (doctoral diss., Universität zu Köln, 1971), 152; see also Helbig and Hennig, *DIN-Format A4*, 12–19, who trace a genealogical arc from the Statute of Bologna (1389) to the DIN system.

imperial format" (amtliche Reichsformat) for written correspondence by government agencies – suffered in particular from a lack of consistent application and acceptance. Moreover, this state of affairs was not at all beneficial to those who depended on collecting ideas on paper for the professional purposes of acquiring and disseminating knowledge, predominantly academics, journalists, and librarians. Their collections, particularly of smaller texts like journal articles, offprints, and excerpts, were inevitably dominated by a proliferation and chaos of formats, which, according to Ostwald, could only lead to confusion and mistakes. Just as in the media of money and language, the "exponential increase in communicative relations" (Vermannigfaltung der Verkehrsbeziehungen)⁷ – that means both in written correspondence and in global transportation – contributed especially to exacerbating the chaos in the simultaneous existence of the most varied paper formats. Not least, aesthetic criteria came into play in dealing with the problem of format: "Anyone who has previously [. . .] worked with offprints and excerpts from longer works will have found the abhorrent lack of order that unavoidably arises from the arbitrariness and diversity of formats embarrassing" (Jeder, der bisher [. . .] mit Separatabzügen und Ausschnitten aus dickeren Werken gearbeitet hat, wird peinlich den abstossenden Mangel an Ordnung empfunden haben, der unvermeidlich durch die Willkür und Mannigfaltigkeit der Formate entsteht).⁸ Standardization was necessary. Some stored their papers in boxes in order "to remove this repugnant sight from view" (diesen widerwärtigen Anblick dem Auge zu entziehen).⁹ But this too could not be a long-term solution, since the edges of oversized notebooks would protrude, while the smaller ones would be hidden between larger documents.

Von grundsätzlich können alle diese Nachteile nur dadurch beseitigt werden, dass man sich prinzipiell entschliesst, die gesamte Literatur (dieses Wort in dem allerweitesten Umfange genommen, also alles Gedruckte, Geschriebene und sonst irgendwie Vervielfältigte einschliessend) nur in ganz bestimmten *einheitlichen Formaten* herauszugeben, die ein automatisches Zueinanderpassen alles dieses Materials gewährleisten, aus welcher Quelle es auch sonst stammen und für welche Zwecke es sonst dienen mag. Auf den ersten Blick sieht ein derartiges Verlangen ungeheuerlich aus, und man möchte überhaupt die Möglichkeit, es durchzuführen nicht ernsthaft erwägen.

All of these disadvantages can only be completely eliminated if one resolves, in principle, to issue all literature (taken in the broadest scope of the word, that is, everything printed, written, and otherwise duplicated) only in very specific *standardized formats*, which guarantee

⁷ Wilhelm Ostwald, "Weltformat für Drucksachen," in *Der energetische Imperativ* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1912), 253.

⁸ Ostwald, "Die Brücke," 19.

⁹ Ostwald, 19.

that all of this material is automatically compatible, regardless of what source it may come from or what purpose it may otherwise serve. At first glance, such a desire seems outrageous, and one might not even seriously consider the possibility of carrying it out.¹⁰

Fortunately, Ostwald also knew a way to remedy the enormous variety of paper. The establishment of the metric system served as a model for standardization, because “this system was ordered uniformly and systematically” (dieses System einheitlich und systematisch geordnet worden ist),¹¹ that is, it was standardized consistently and without any arbitrariness. For the basic premise of any standardization consists above all in developing “a system of units” (ein System von Einheiten) that “should fulfill demands to define the basic elements and the composite concepts in a manner that is as simple as possible and that reduces arbitrariness to a minimum” (Forderungen einer möglichst einfachen, die Willkür auf ein Minimum reduzierenden Definition der Grundelemente und der zusammengesetzten Begriffe erfüllen soll).¹² If paper were standardized with the same success as matchboxes or light bulbs, one could expect a “facilitation of [...] written] correspondence” (Erleichterung des [...] Schrift-]Verkehrs)¹³ as well as a reduction in production costs, two possible achievements that conform to a great degree with the energetic imperative.

Laying down new units often proves to be difficult, especially since it may involve a loss of traditional symbols of power and representation. It is no coincidence that the European monarchs were so vehemently opposed to the metric system in the early nineteenth century after the French Revolution, since instead of defining, for example, the distance between the elbow and the middle finger of King Henry VII as an ell, the new definition would be based on unchanging natural constants such as the circumference of the earth. Ostwald therefore demanded a consistent system in which one unit can be logically derived from another. New standards “must be absolutely consistent with existing standards if they are associated with them” (müssen sich an die vorhandenen Normen restlos anschliessen, soweit sie mit diesen in Zusammenhang stehen).¹⁴

To ensure that arbitrariness would prevail just as little in the selection of formats as in the metric system, Ostwald postulated three fundamental requirements for conceptualizing a systematic series of different paper formats that nevertheless have the

¹⁰ Ostwald, 20.

¹¹ Ostwald, “Weltformat für Drucksachen,” 255.

¹² Wilhelm Ostwald, “Theorie der Einheiten,” in *Congrès Mondial des Associations Internationales, Bruxelles, 15–18 juin 1913*, ed. Union des Associations Internationales (Brussels: Oscar Lamberty, 1914), 380.

¹³ Ostwald, “Weltformat für Drucksachen,” 254.

¹⁴ Ostwald, “Die Brücke,” 23. On deriving the units out of themselves, see also Ostwald, “Theorie der Einheiten,” 398–400.

same characteristics. “From the stamp to the street poster, we have paper objects of extremely varied dimensions, and it is therefore necessary to determine a series of formats that will cover all conceivable applications” (Von der Briefmarke bis zum Straßenplakat haben wir papierene Objekte von sehr verschiedenen Abmessungen und es ist deshalb notwendig, eine Reihe von Formaten zu bestimmen, um alle denkbaren Anwendungen zu decken).¹⁵ There has to be a clear relationship between the individual layouts of stamps and posters. The first requirement states that the particular formats must be able to be produced from one another by bisecting or folding, just as one folds the quarto format to obtain the octavo format. “One wants, that is, to produce through division every possibly necessary small format from the same large sheet of paper *without any waste*” (Man will nämlich aus demselben grossen Bogen Papier alle etwa erforderlichen kleinen Formate *ohne Verlust* durch Teilen herstellen).¹⁶ Following Ostwald’s famous energetic imperative, which prohibits wasting energy, one could say: “Don’t squander paper; use it.” Ostwald captures this postulate in the later so-called halving principle, which states that two adjacent formats of a series result from one another through halving or doubling such that the areas always have a 1:2 relationship.

Closely related is the second requirement of geometric similarity, which states “that the relationship of the side to the height is expressed by the same number in all of these formats” (daß das Verhältnis von Seite zur Höhe bei all diesen Formaten durch die gleiche Zahl ausgedrückt wird).¹⁷ This, in turn, can only be achieved in one way: through the square root of two. The so-called similarity principle thus states that “the two sides of the formats must relate like the sides of a square to its diagonal, or, expressed mathematically, $1:\sqrt{2}$ ” (die beiden Seiten der Formate sich verhalten wie die Seite eines Quadrats zur Diagonalen oder, mathematisch ausgedrückt, wie $1:\sqrt{2}$).¹⁸

Ostwald’s first two postulates do not yet present any new insights. In the *Göttinger Taschenkalender* from 1796, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg formulates laws for how the shape of paper can produce a “very pleasing and convenient format” (sehr gefälliges und bequemes Format).¹⁹ But Lichtenberg’s insights aim, even though they already consider the principle of halving, less for strict, logical consistency than for presenting a mathematical rule for aesthetic pleasure.

15 Ostwald, “Die Brücke,” 24.

16 Ostwald, 24; emphasis mine.

17 Ostwald, “Weltformat für Drucksachen,” 256.

18 Ostwald, 256.

19 Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, “Ueber Bücher-Formate,” in *Göttinger Taschen Calender für das Jahr 1796* (Göttingen: Joh. Chr. Dieterich, 1796), 177.

It is only with Ostwald's third requirement that the definition of format achieves a systematic character. It finally links the series of formats to a clear base unit. The so-called consistency principle thus stipulates what unit to begin calculating with. "There is of course here no doubt that one must make the series consistent with the *metric system*" (Hier besteht natürlich kein Zweifel, dass man die Reihe an das *metrische System* anschliessen muss).²⁰ Logically, the starting point for the series of formats is one centimeter.

If one begins to calculate a series of particular widths and heights on the basis of the three principles, "then one is quickly convinced that it is a very beautiful and somewhat more forceful format, that is, it is not quite so sleek" (so überzeugt man sich bald, dass es sich um ein sehr hübsches, etwas kräftigeres, d.h. nicht ganz so schlankes Format handelt; see Figure 10.1).²¹ A comparison with previously used paper formats, such as the official imperial format (330 × 420 mm) of the Association of German Paper Manufacturers, reveals that this forcefully sleek format, free of arbitrariness, deviates by only a few millimeters.

Wir zögern nicht, die so gewonnenen Formate alsbald *Weltformate* zu nennen, da wegen ihrer restlosen Definition aus der Natur der Aufgabe eine Konkurrenz irgendwelcher andern Formate (etwa der Mittelwerte aus dem gegenwärtig gebräuchlichen) nicht in Frage kommt.

We do not hesitate to name immediately the formats obtained in this manner *world formats*, because based on their absolute definition out of the nature of the task, competition from any other format (for instance, the averages of the formats currently in use) is out of the question.²²

Weltformat			
Basis (cm)	B : H (cm)	No.	
1	—		
1,41	1 : 1,41	I	
2	1,41 : 2	II	
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
22,6	16 : 22,6	IX	
32	22,6 : 32	X	
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

Figure 10.1: The world format, tabulated. Adapted from Wilhelm Ostwald, "Weltformat für Drucksachen," in *Der energetische Imperativ* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1912), 256.

²⁰ Ostwald, "Die Brücke," 24.

²¹ Ostwald, 25.

²² Ostwald, 26.

No world format can function without a world that accepts it. Ostwald's texts on introducing the series of formats thus end with inevitable appeals to publishers and editors to use the practical world format for their own print products. But in contrast to his pamphlets on a world language or a world currency, Ostwald did not believe it was necessary in this case to move a higher authority to issue a corresponding decree. "For this introduction can [...] take place successively without great disadvantages, and, for example, a resolution by the body of all German publishers is not at all necessary" (Denn diese Einführung kann ja [...] ohne großen Nachteil sukzessive erfolgen, und es ist keineswegs etwa ein Beschuß der gesamten deutschen Verlegerschaft erforderlich).²³ The dissemination would best proceed inductively ("successively"). It began in April 1912 when the journals of the Internationale Assoziation der chemischen Gesellschaften (International Association of Chemical Societies), whose president was none other than Wilhelm Ostwald, were "definitively" (endgültig) printed in the world format.²⁴

In the spring of 1911, the entrepreneur of world projects Wilhelm Ostwald received, entirely unexpectedly, a suggestion to standardize all the world's knowledge on a very concrete basis, the paper format, in order to make it ready for inquiries of all kinds at a central place. A letter from the Swiss entrepreneur Karl Wilhelm Bührer (1861–1917) led to the foundation of Die Brücke – Internationales Institut für die Organisierung der geistigen Arbeit (The Bridge – International Institute for Organizing Intellectual Labor) with the aim to centralize all the world's knowledge in a huge card catalogue in Munich, meticulously ordered on index cards in world format.²⁵ But the Bridge collapsed only two years later in 1913. Bührer, the secret hero of the paper sizes still in use today, "died a few years after that" (ist wenige Jahre hernach gestorben).²⁶ But his suggestion to elevate the standardized paper format to the "technical basic form of all culture" continued to be influential, even if the governing entities were differently distributed. The Normenausschuß der deutschen Industrie (NDI; Standards Committee of German Industry) was formed as an institution for carrying out the standardization of paper. In the end, the NDI, later called DIN, dominated the emergence of standards for paper sizes. But the experts argued about the position left vacant by the loss of Bührer. Bührer's paper-format project was fed by the flow of money from

23 Ostwald, "Weltformat für Drucksachen," 260.

24 Ostwald, 261.

25 For details of the project's spectacular failure, see Markus Krajewski, *Paper Machines: About Cards and Catalogs, 1548–1929* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).

26 Wilhelm Ostwald, *Lebenslinien – Eine Selbstbiographie: Nach der Ausgabe von 1926/27 überarbeitet und kommentiert von Karl Hansel* (Leipzig: Verlag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, 2003), 520.

Ostwald, and Ostwald benefited from Bührer's insights into the material effects of standardized paper sheets, which one believed to be the basis of nothing less than progress and civilization. But while Ostwald and Bührer were living in symbiotic harmony on the idea of paper, someone else had already parasitized the idea without being noticed. The parasite was not sitting under the Bridge in Munich, where Bührer kindly thanked Ostwald for every check, but was rather much closer to the host. He was a continual guest, day after day, in the Haus Energie in Großbothen as Ostwald's secretary.

Satz für Satz: From world format to DIN format

Die Fruchtbarkeit der Trichine ist ungeheuer groß.²⁷
 The trichina is incredibly fertile.
 —Walter Porstmann

In the fall of 1911 – the Bridge had just taken up its work – Ostwald received another petition, this time from a Saxon examination candidate who was driven by anxiety over an impending career in the civil service to ask the “great physicist and chemist whether or not there is an open position in his intellectual kingdom” (großen und chemiker, ob in seinem geistigen königreiche nicht eine stelle frei sei).²⁸ After passing his exams in physics and applied mathematics, Walter Porstmann (1886–1959) entered in 1912 into the service of Wilhelm Ostwald, who employed the twenty-six-year-old for two years as a private secretary and assistant at his country home, the Haus Energie, in Großbothen near Leipzig. Porstmann's work consisted of using a typewriter to transcribe texts that Ostwald had spoken into his dictation machine (a Carl Lindström A. G. Parlograph that is still present in the house today).²⁹ These texts frequently included essays and speeches by

27 Walter Porstmann, “Aus dem Leben der Trichine,” *Prometheus: Illustrierte Wochenzeitschrift über die Fortschritte in Gewerbe, Industrie und Wissenschaft*, 1 May 1920, 243.

28 Walter Porstmann, “wie ich zu den formaten kam,” in *DIN 1917–1927*, ed. Normenausschuss der deutschen Industrie (Berlin: Beuth, 1927), 52. The consistent use of lowercase in the self-created font (“einalfabetsschrift”) is part of the characteristic orthographic reform that Porstmann developed later. See Walter Porstmann, *Flott und leserlich: Anleitung zur Formung der Erwachsenenhandschrift* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1935).

29 On the literary productivity using Lindström's Parlographs at that time in the discourse network Franz Kafka–Felice Bauer, see especially Bernhard Siegert, *Relays: Literature as an Epoch of the Postal System*, trans. Kevin Repp (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 207–218. In his time as a professor in Leipzig, Ostwald first still typed his own texts; in Großbothen, however, he adopted “a dictation machine and a secretary so as to compose the overflowing production”

Ostwald on the Bridge and the question of paper formats. “As a mathematician, the strict construction of the proposed *world formats* captivated me. That was the first seed of today’s German system of formats” ([A]ls mathematiker fesselte mich der strenge Aufbau der vorgeschlagenen *weltformate*. das war der erste keim zur heutigen deutschen formatordnung).³⁰ But the seed was still confined. The creator of the first systematic proposal for how to organize a whole series of paper formats was still named Wilhelm Ostwald. And he did not like to be distracted from his work, especially not by his secretary.

For the official purpose of increasing the efficiency of his work and so as not to be disturbed in his “energetic moments,” the shy scholar designed a special arrangement, a relay station of thoughts. His daughter recalls it as follows:

Die Lösung mit dem Sekretär sah so aus: Mein Vater schraubte eigenhändig je eine Fahrradklingel – Elektrizität war noch nicht im Hause – außen an die Türrahmen seiner beiden Arbeitszimmer, und darunter wurde ein Bänkchen gestellt. Hatte er nun ein paar Walzen mit Briefen oder Buch vollgesprochen, so tat er sie, manchmal mit Anweisungszettel, in einen Bürokorbs, brachte diesen auf das Bänkchen vor der Türe und klingelte an der Fahrradklingel. Der Sekretär lauschte, bis der Herr Geheimrat wieder drin war, und holte sich dann die Arbeit in sein Zimmer. War sie fertig, so wurde der Bürokorbs mit den Blättern seinerseits auf das Bänkchen gestellt und geklingelt. Mein Vater holte sich’s herein, wenn der energetische Augenblick gekommen war.

The solution with the secretary looked like this: my father personally screwed a bicycle bell – the house did not yet have electricity – outside his two studies on the door frames and placed a small bench beneath them. When he had filled up a couple rolls with dictations of letters or books, then he put them, sometimes with instructions on a slip of paper, into an office basket, brought it to the bench in front of the door, and rang the bicycle bell. The secretary listened until the privy councilor was inside again and then took the work into his own room. When it was finished, he placed the office basket with his sheets on his bench and rang his bell. My father would fetch it when an energetic moment had come.³¹

By virtue of this relay circuit, which took Ostwald’s words scratched in wax and transferred them onto paper, his secretary, Porstmann, who had the “right to heed his [own] energetic moments” (Recht, seine [eigenen] energetischen Augenblicke zu beachten),³² could copy his master’s ideas unhindered, *Satz für Satz*,

(eine Diktiermaschine und ein Sekretär dazu, um die überquellende Produktion zu fassen). Grete Ostwald, *Wilhelm Ostwald – mein Vater* (Stuttgart: Berliner Union, 1953), 112.

³⁰ Porstmann, “wie ich zu den Formaten kam,” 52.

³¹ Grete Ostwald, *Wilhelm Ostwald – mein Vater*, 112. Walter Porstmann is not named a single time in Ostwald’s *Lebenslinien*, a first clue to the nature of the relationship between Ostwald and Porstmann.

³² Grete Ostwald, 112.

that is, literally, “sentence for sentence” or “principle for principle” but also, idiomatically, “word for word.”

But something disturbed the productivity of this exclusive, machine-based system of communication. Frictions arose, both in the person-to-person interface and in the accuracy of the transcriptions. Porstmann rang without first hearing a ring.

er stand in seinem labor, als ich ein jahr später zu ihm sagte: “herr geheimrat, in den weltformaten ist eine unstimmigkeit insofern, als sie von der flächeneinheit und nicht von der längeneinheit abgeleitet werden sollten.” er sah eine weile durch mich hindurch, schüttelte sich: “das ist belanglos.” – diese ablehnung war das erste wasser auf jenen keim.

He was standing in his laboratory a year later when I said to him: “privy councilor, there is a inconsistency in the world formats since they should be derived from a unit of area and not a unit of length.” He looked straight through me for a while and shook his head: “That is irrelevant.” – This rejection was the first water on the seed.³³

The secretary rebelled against what was dictated. From then on, he cultivated his own delicate little (papyrus) plant of paper standards under the name *metric format system (metrisches formatssystem)*, and it would soon begin to outgrow and overtake the world formats. Ostwald rang the bell one last time for his querulous secretary. They parted in disagreement. In 1914, shortly after the collapse of the Bridge, Walter Porstmann felt compelled to leave Großbothen. There was nominal continuity in the break: Ostwald’s son Walter took up the vacant secretary post.

Porstmann summarizes the further developments laconically: “The Bridge fell, the world formats were being rejected by authorities and business, the war came” (die brücke ging unter, die weltformate wurden von behörde und geschäft abgelehnt, der krieg kam).³⁴ Meanwhile, however, Porstmann worked diligently to spread his supposedly superior metric format system. Entirely contrary to his previous vocation, the former secretary betrayed the secrecy of his work for Ostwald. Still in 1914, he published two articles in the magazine *Prometheus*, which were followed in the ensuing years by a whole series of testimonies. In his 1915 essay “Flachformatnormen,” Porstmann shows that he is an eager student and copyist of Wilhelm Ostwald, but one who would like to see the plant of (paper) standardization, which was thriving optimally under the conditions of war, perceived as being under the care of his own green thumb. His brief historical account of the question of standardized formats stretches from Lichtenberg through Bührer to Ostwald,

33 Porstmann, “wie ich zu den formaten kam,” 53.

34 Porstmann, 53.

who in Porstmann's view, however, had only set up "a self-enclosed system of flat formats that seemed at first glance not to be arbitrary" (ein auf den ersten Blick willkürlich erscheinendes, in sich geschlossenes System von Flachformaten).³⁵ Porstmann's writing strategy places Porstmann himself at the end of this development with three basic principles. The "first principle derives from purely practical, technical interests, for only the bisection principle makes possible the most favorable and absolute utilization of the paper surface" (erste Grundsatz entspringt rein praktisch-technischen Interessen, denn lediglich das Halbierungsprinzip ermöglicht die günstigste und restlose Ausnutzung der Papierfläche).³⁶ This first principle is of course nothing more than Ostwald's halving principle. "The second principle is therefore: all formats should be geometrically similar to one another" (Der zweite Grundsatz heißt folglich: Alle Formate sollen einander geometrisch ähnlich sein).³⁷ In other words, here Ostwald's similarity principle is brought to bear. But similar is not the same as identical. In order to avoid copying Ostwald's system exactly, Porstmann introduces consistency with the metric system into the third principle, a sophistic differentiation that should secure his ownership of the plant. The subordinate mimics the master. He applies the similarity principle to the two competing systems themselves by converting the exact copy into a merely similar one. Rather than choosing a page length of one centimeter as the initial dimension as in the world format, he instead bases the initial dimension on a measurement of area so as to reproach Ostwald's starting point as arbitrary.

Wenn also Ostwald zum Anschluß der Reihe an das metrische Maßsystem eine Seite gleich 1 cm macht, so kann der nächste kommen und sagen, ich mache die *Diagonale* des Ausgangsformates gleich 1 cm, und ein dritter macht eine beliebige andere Linie gleich 1 cm. [...] Die Weltformate sind folglich eine Lösung, die beliebig viele andere gleichberechtigte neben sich hat, also eine *willkürliche* Lösung.

Thus, when Ostwald makes a page equal to one centimeter in order to make the series consistent with the metric system of measurement, then the next person can come and say, I'll make the *diagonal* of the initial format equal to one centimeter, and a third can make any other line equal to one centimeter. [...] The world formats are therefore a solution that has any number of equally valid solutions alongside them, that is, an *arbitrary* solution.³⁸

35 Walter Porstmann, "Flachformatnormen," pt. 1, *Prometheus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift über die Fortschritte in Gewerbe, Industrie und Wissenschaft*, 6 November 1915, 90.

36 Porstmann, 91.

37 Porstmann, 91.

38 Porstmann, "Flachformatnormen," pt. 2, *Prometheus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift über die Fortschritte in Gewerbe, Industrie und Wissenschaft*, 13 November 1915, 107.

Only the metric format system could remedy this by taking an *area* as the initial dimension for flat formats: “The area of the initial format of the series should be equal to one square centimeter. This is the only perfect form to make it consistent” (die Fläche des Ausgangsformates der Reihe soll gleich 1 Quadratzentimeter sein. Dies ist die einzige einwandfreie Form für den Anschluß).³⁹ Bisection. Similarity. Consistency. Porstmann copies the principles (*Sätze*) of the world-format series *Satz für Satz*, word for word.

Porstmann also resolutely continues to disseminate his system by claiming an improper validity for the consistency principle. The standardization of volume formats was logically connected to the standardization of flat formats.⁴⁰ But this is by no means the end of the similarities between Ostwald’s and Porstmann’s efforts in standardization. Porstmann filled large parts of his literary activity with the topics he copied in Großbothen in his energetic moments. Thus, in the second year of World War I, he was still concerned with a general theory of order, which Ostwald had already begun to develop in his 1914 lectures on “Moderne Naturphilosophie.” Porstmann tries again in this publication to develop a more comprehensive approach than Ostwald’s when he sketches his science of order as a superset of his master’s “energetic sciences” (energetischen Wissenschaften).⁴¹ It was also no small wager for Porstmann to attempt to counter Ostwald’s omnipresent energetic imperative with the same concept under a different name. His *biological* imperative reads: “Increase the efficient use of energy. This results in a pleasurable existence, that is, happiness” (Steigere die Energieverwertung. Dies hat erfreuliches Dasein, d. h. Glück zur Folge).⁴² But the initial climax of the filiations was Porstmann’s first monograph, *Normenlehre*, in 1917. There he supplements his earlier article in *Prometheus* with a few additional chapters and consolidates it into an ensemble of the most varied areas of standardization such as numismatics, time measurement, and quantity standards all the way to the “standardization of the systems of standards” (Normierung der Normensysteme).⁴³ “Over the course of two years, all of his

39 Porstmann, “wie ich zu den formaten kam,” 107.

40 See Walter Porstmann, “Raumformatnormen,” pts. 1 and 2, *Prometheus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift über die Fortschritte in Gewerbe, Industrie und Wissenschaft*, 15 January 1916, 250–254; 22 January 1916, 266–269.

41 Walter Porstmann, “Ordnungslehre und Mikrozählung,” *Prometheus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift über die Fortschritte in Gewerbe, Industrie und Wissenschaft*, 23 October 1915, 58; cf. Wilhelm Ostwald, *Moderne Naturphilosophie: I. Die Ordnungswissenschaften* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1914).

42 Walter Porstmann, “Ordnung,” *Prometheus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift über die Fortschritte in Gewerbe, Industrie und Wissenschaft*, 5 June 1920, 287.

43 Walter Porstmann, *Normenlehre: Grundlagen, Reform, Organisation der Maß- und Normensysteme* (Leipzig: A. Haase, 1917), 119.

[Ostwald's] thoughts, to the extent that they were intended for publication, went through my head. He dictated onto the wax cylinder, and I wrote on the typewriter, often feverishly, from early morning until evening" (Über zwei Jahre gingen mir seine sämtlichen Gedanken, soweit sie für die Öffentlichkeit bestimmt waren, durch den Kopf. Er diktierte auf die Wachswalze, und ich schrieb oft fieberhaft von früh bis abends auf der Schreibmaschine).⁴⁴ It is hardly a coincidence that some sections of Porstmann's *Normenlehre* bear titles that were very familiar to him from Großbothen. "World Money" (Weltgeld), "Calendar Reform" (Kalenderreform), "The World Space Formats" (Die Weltraumformate), and "Organizational Institutes" (Organisationsinstitute) were headings that Porstmann had transcribed only months earlier but could now author under his own name. *Normenlehre* eventually fulfilled its purpose. While previous statements on format reform had remained "buried in libraries" (in den Büchereien begraben), Porstmann's book attracted attention from an important authority: "A piece had fallen into standardizing hands and continued to smolder slowly" (ein Stück war in normenhände geraten, das glimmte langsam weiter).⁴⁵

Whose standardizing hands were they? None other than those of the director of the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI; Association of German Engineers), Waldemar Hellmich, the first chairman of the Normenausschuss der deutschen Industrie (NDI; Standards Committee of German Industry), which was founded in December 1917 and renamed itself in 1926 as the Deutscher Normenausschuss (DNA; German Standards Committee), from which the Deutsche Institut für Normung (DIN; German Institute for Standardization) ultimately emerged.⁴⁶ Already at the beginning of the First World War, German industry recognized the urgent need to coordinate, modularize, and standardize machine production and the manufacture of incompatible machine parts. Porstmann, who was "in the army at the time" (z.Z. im Heere),⁴⁷ also shared this insight. For "precisely the mutual interchangeability of individual parts is, for the army, for the soldier, for the driver of a motor vehicle under shellfire, the only

44 Walter Porstmann, "Wilhelm Ostwald wird 75 Jahre alt," *VDI-Nachrichten: Mitteilungen des Vereins Deutscher Ingenieure und des Deutschen Verbandes technisch-wissenschaftlicher Vereine*, 29 August 1928, 2.

45 Porstmann, "wie ich zu den formaten kam," 53.

46 For details, see Thomas Wölker, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Deutschen Normenausschusses von 1917 bis 1925* (Berlin: VDI, 1992); on Hellmich, esp. 243–245; on the NDI from a cultural-studies perspective, see Peter Berz, "Der deutsche Normenausschuss: Zur Theorie und Geschichte einer technischen Institution," in *Übertragung und Gesetz: Gründungsmythen, Kriegstheater und Unterwerfungstechniken*, ed. Armin Adam and Martin Stingelin (Berlin: Akademie, 1995), 221–236; on the broader military-historical context of standardization, see Peter Berz, *08/15: Ein Standard des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001), esp. 56–76.

47 Porstmann, *Normenlehre*, vi.

foundation for the absolutely efficient use of the material" (gerade die gegenseitige Austauschbarkeit der Einzelteile ist für das Heer, für den Soldaten, für den Kraftwagenfahrer im Granatfeuer die einzige Grundlage zur restlosen Ausbeutung des Materials).⁴⁸ But what was only institutionalized in the production sector toward the end of the war in the NDI was already accomplished in 1914 at the strategic level through setting up the wartime raw-material department as part of Walther Rathenau's standardization of the supply and efficient use of raw materials.⁴⁹ The NDI was founded on the insight of curbing conflicts between different production processes in favor of unified and standardized productivity in the wartime economy. The committee's firm goal consisted in implementing the principle of the energetic imperative not only within the machine industry but also throughout the entire production sector. "Every internal waste of energy weakens our capacity to fight and so must be avoided" (Jede Energievergeudung im Innern schwächt die Kampffähigkeit und muß daher vermieden werden).⁵⁰ For the practice of production, this meant, on the one hand, reducing the multitude of different manufacturing processes to a few and, on the other, breaking down complicated parts into multiple simple ones according to the "modular principle" (Baukastenprinzip)⁵¹ in order to be able to use them in other production processes and their machines. This also led to the application of another well-known standardization idea, namely, Bührer's monograph principle. The so-called blueprint standard of the NDI from 1917 stipulates that the central office in Berlin should publish "each individual part of a device separately on its own sheet" (jeden einzelnen Teil eines Geräts für sich auf einem besonderen Blatt).⁵² And finally, so as to be able to assemble these individual sheets into a functional machine on-site in an engineering office without any problems – that is, to make them compatible with the other paperwork in every office and planning department – the dimensions of the standard sheets themselves had to be standardized.

It is thus not surprising that the NDI attempted, based on the theories of energy and of format, to "standardize the blueprint formats following *Ostwald*" (die

⁴⁸ Walter Porstmann, "Die Norm als Waffe," *Die Umschau: Wochenschrift über die Fortschritte in Wissenschaft und Technik*, 27 July 1918, 369.

⁴⁹ On this act of institutionalization as a world project during the First World War, see Markus Krajewski, *World Projects: Global Information before World War I* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 137–183.

⁵⁰ Waldemar Hellmich, Eröffnungsrede, in Normenausschuß der Deutschen Industrie: Bericht über die Gründungsversammlung am 22. Dezember 1917, Archiv des DIN, Stehordner "1917," 3, Berlin; quoted from Wölker, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Deutschen Normenausschusses*, 142.

⁵¹ Berz, "Der deutsche Normenausschuß," 224.

⁵² Friedrich Haier, Das Fabo in Spandau: Seine Aufgaben und seine Stellung; Vortrag gehalten im Kriegsamte am 4. Juni 1917, Archiv des DIN, Stehordner "1917," 4, Berlin; also see Berz, "Der deutsche Normenausschuß," 228.

zeichnungsformate im anschluß an *ostwald* zu ordnen).⁵³ In 1919, the chief energeticist was invited to the NDI meetings in Leipzig in order to advise the committee regarding the standardization of paper formats. In his autobiography, Ostwald writes of these meetings, where he once again broke down the three principles of the world format for those gathered, that “I determined in the first session that, of those present, I was the only knowledgeable one” (Ich mußte auf der ersten Sitzung feststellen, daß ich unter den Anwesenden der einzige Sachkundige war).⁵⁴ Yet something continued to deeply disturb the success of his communication with the committee. “At the proceedings, I quickly realized that there was a decided personal dislike for me among the top-ranking men” (Bei den Verhandlungen mußte ich alsbald erkennen, daß seitens der führenden Männer eine entschiedene persönliche Abneigung gegen mich bestand).⁵⁵ Although the meetings initially led to the standard sheet DIN 5 for blueprint formats, the committee then went back again on this standard based on the world format. The explanation was that attempting to introduce it in governmental agencies and businesses stirred up massive resistance because the new dimensions were poorly compatible with the previous folio format and business papers. There was a lack of similarity.⁵⁶ The world formats failed “a second time, just as before with the Bridge, because they are not generally acceptable” (zum zweiten male, genauso wie damals bei der brücke, weil sie nicht allgemein annehmbar sind),⁵⁷ as Walter Porstmann summarizes the developments with considerable schadenfreude. For meanwhile, his time had come. In 1920, Hellmich personally invited him to the proceedings, where the former subordinate once more encountered his old master from Großbothen in a triumphant reversal of fortunes. After “tough battles” (harten kämpfe[n]), “all manner of tactical measures” (vielerlei taktischen maßnahmen), and “countless instances of open and secret resistance” (zahllosen offenen und heimlichen widerstände[n]),⁵⁸ the committee decided to enact a new general norm entirely based upon Porstmann’s amendments in the following year, 1921: DIN 476, with the famous DIN A series.⁵⁹ Thanks to the longevity of DIN 476, the dimensions of a sheet of paper are still codified today as DIN A4, DIN A5, and so on. Porstmann’s proposal was corrected a little, though, in that they

⁵³ Porstmann, “wie ich zu den formaten kam,” 53.

⁵⁴ Ostwald, *Lebenslinien*, 521.

⁵⁵ Ostwald, 521.

⁵⁶ See Wölker, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Deutschen Normenausschusses*, 198.

⁵⁷ Porstmann, “wie ich zu den formaten kam,” 53.

⁵⁸ Porstmann, 53.

⁵⁹ Walter Porstmann, *Papierformate: Die Dinformate und ihre Einführung in die Praxis; Bearbeitet im Auftrag des Normenausschusses der Deutschen Industrie-Dinorm e. V.* (Berlin: Dinorm, 1923), 28.

took the area of one square meter as the initial dimension instead of the area of one square centimeter. But Porstmann, who had in the meantime received his doctorate from the Universität Leipzig with a remarkable thirty-seven-page dissertation,⁶⁰ had achieved his goal. At the DIN, he was declared the “intellectual progenitor of the A series” (geistigen Vater der A-Reihe)⁶¹ and the “creator of the DIN formats” (Schöpfer der DIN-Formate).⁶²

For his services, the NDI ennobled Porstmann as the father of the series of formats. The series, in turn, unfolded its impact after World War I not only in governmental agencies and industrial planning offices but also in the entire business life of the Weimar Republic. The economy was from then on based on an identically sized paper format, which allowed it to attain a new productive force from the energetic impetus of increased efficiency in handling paper transactions and the minimized use of paper. But at the same time, the *Wirtschaft* (which translates as “economy,” but a *Wirt* is also a “host,” so a *Wirtschaft* is a host’s domain or affairs or accommodations) was attributed to Porstmann and not to Ostwald. Porstmann gathered together “his” ordering principles from transferring Ostwald’s texts while he was a guest in Großbothen. Between the dictation and the required transcription, he inserted his own name after a short latency period. To copy is to parasitize. Both require an extremely mimetic arrangement. “I often watched him on his walks and put myself into his movements and in his gait in order to experience his mood” (Oft sah ich ihm auf seinen Spaziergängen nach und versetzte mich in seine Bewegungen und in seinen Gang, um seine Stimmung zu erleben).⁶³ The medial order of secretary and master, of guest and host, in Ostwald’s *Haus Energie* figures as the origin of the success story of paper formats. In his book *The Parasite*, Michel Serres writes, “In the parasitic chain, the last to come tries to supplant his predecessor.”⁶⁴ Not Ostwald but Porstmann is regarded as the father of the series of formats. The guest lives off the host, who doesn’t receive anything from the guest; at most, fallacious copies. Porstmann had rightly

⁶⁰ The dissertation is not only remarkable for its brevity. Porstmann also gets by with exactly four literary references. Envyable. Most important, however, is the faithful application of Bührer’s monograph principle: the work consists of two barely altered sections of Porstmann’s *Normenlehre*, which was published one year earlier. See Walter Porstmann, *Untersuchungen über den Aufbau und Zusammenschluß der Maßsysteme* (Berlin: Normenausschuß der deutschen Industrie, 1918).

⁶¹ Helbig and Hennig, *DIN-Format A4*, 14.

⁶² “Der Schöpfer der DIN-Formate, Walter Porstmann, 70 Jahre alt (8. März),” *Allgemeine Papier-Rundschau*, 20 March 1956, 267.

⁶³ Porstmann, “Wilhelm Ostwald wird 75 Jahre alt,” 2.

⁶⁴ Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 4.

pursued this position in Ostwald's "kingdom." The parasite is always there when something new emerges so as to leech off it directly. "I absorbed his teachings and views such that I could soon remodel them and shape them myself" (Ich nahm seine Lehren und Anschauungen so auf, daß ich sie bald selber ummodelln und gestalten konnte).⁶⁵ For parasitic interactions are relational and, above all, dynamic. The parasite changes sides in the relationship and attempts to put itself in the position of the host. It was not by chance that Porstmann wrote the following in an article about the life of the trichina and in full consciousness of finding himself on the path to the other side: "The natural scientist has always shown a lively interest for the peculiar life path of parasites" (Der Naturwissenschaftler hat von jeher dem sonderbaren Lebensgang der Parasiten lebhaftes Interesse entgegengebracht).⁶⁶ The physicist and applied mathematician was on the verge of creating his own kingdom. Parasitizing means creating disorder. Porstmann rang without being bidden and disturbed Ostwald to point out an "inconsistency" in the world formats. He lastingly disrupted the ideal transfer of thoughts into circulating texts. But being parasitic also means creating a new order, an order like the one that identically sized paper in a standardized format promises to produce. Porstmann built his kingdom through a flood of texts on the questions of standardization. He lived quite well off the thoughts from Großbothen. "The trichina is incredibly fertile."⁶⁷ Inspired by the texts he was supposed to copy – "Ostwald is a fertile writer" (Ostwald ist ein fruchtbarer Schriftsteller)⁶⁸ – Porstmann became a troublemaker who not only intervened without being called in Ostwald's harmonious communication with himself but also interrupted the negotiations between Ostwald and the NDI by advancing his "own" suggestions. It was a short path from being a tolerated guest in Großbothen to becoming the father of paper formats. "When changing hosts, the trichina is not bound to any particular animal, which is not always the case with other parasites" (Beim Wirtswechsel ist die Trichine an kein bestimmtes Tier gebunden, was bei anderen Schmarotzern nicht immer der Fall ist).⁶⁹ Porstmann effortlessly changed institutions, changed the relation of what was copied, and transferred (himself), without any disturbances, from the Haus Energie to the NDI, the Standards Committee of German Industry.

⁶⁵ Porstmann, "Wilhelm Ostwald wird 75 Jahre alt," 2.

⁶⁶ Porstmann, "Aus dem Leben der Trichine," 243.

⁶⁷ Porstmann, 243.

⁶⁸ Porstmann, "Wilhelm Ostwald wird 75 Jahre alt," 2.

⁶⁹ Porstmann, "Aus dem Leben der Trichine," 245.

Applied science: The flowerpot

What remains to be added is what became of Ostwald's world formats. As the DIN A series – flanked by its secondary formats like DIN B, DIN C, and so on – began its triumphal march through business life and bureaucratic routines to ultimately become the basis for standardizing paper on an international level in 1961 in the form of ISO 216 and DIN 476,⁷⁰ there was nothing left for the world format to do but to retire like its inventor into private life. Ostwald certainly made more than one attempt to disseminate the world formats through exemplary venues. The Bridge thus proudly presented a list of institutions that had subscribed entirely to the world format. But he was still far away from the absoluteness he desired, that is, from the gradual adoption of the format by leading institutions in publishing and ultimately by all of them. So the insular successes were rather what counted, such as the absolute implementation of the world formats on Brioni, an island in the Adriatic "whose proprietors switched all of their foreign business to the world format and principles of the Bridge" (deren Besitzer seinen Fremdenbetrieb ganz auf Weltformat und Brückengrundsätze eingestellt hatte).⁷¹ But this remained merely a remainder of the targeted absoluteness. Even in Ostwald's own projects, such as in the world auxiliary language, introducing the world format met with vehement resistance. After the movement's schism into Idists and Esperantists, the collaboration between Louis Couturat and Ostwald broke down due, among other reasons, to the question of what format the Ido journal *Progreso*, which they had founded, should be published in. Eventually, Couturat succeeded in opposing publishing the journal using the dimensions of the world format, which resulted in a break with Ostwald.⁷² In short, all Ostwald's attempts to establish his format system in even less important places than the NDI were in vain.

After the turbulence of the First World War and the failure of the world formats in the NDI, Ostwald primarily devoted himself to his scientific theory of colors, the same enduring preoccupation that Goethe had pursued. In addition to theoretical reflections and practical chemical experiments with numerous color studies on canvas, Ostwald also produced an abundance of paintings. And he also still needed to care for the extensive estate in Großbothen, including its park-like

⁷⁰ See Helbig and Hennig, *DIN-Format A4*, 102–104; on the formats derived from it, see 49; and on the secondary world formats, see Wilhelm Ostwald, *Sekundäre Weltformate* (Ansbach: Fr. Seybold's Buchhandlung, 1912).

⁷¹ Grete Ostwald, *Wilhelm Ostwald – mein Vater*, 146.

⁷² See Jan-Peter Domschke und Peter Lewandrowski, *Wilhelm Ostwald: Chemiker, Wissenschaftstheoretiker, Organisator* (Leipzig: Urania, 1982), 104.

garden (see Figure 10.2). As Porstmann notes in his homage on the occasion of Ostwald's seventy-fifth birthday, "Ostwald's garden is beautiful; it has an enormous number of flowers with magnificent blossoms, and one does not quite know what one should pick in the abundance" (Der Garten Ostwalds ist wunderschön, in ihm stehen ungeheuer viel Blumen mit herrlichen Blüten, und man weiß nicht recht, was man aus der Fülle pflücken soll).⁷³ While Porstmann describes his years of apprenticeship (*Lehrjahre*) with his master Wilhelm as the germination phase of his own order of formats, he harvested the prospering flowers of that seed already as an alleged master gardener, that is, with his own hands. He entered someone else's garden and picked flowers that did not belong to him so as to arrange them elsewhere as his own bouquet in his *Normenlehre*. He seems to have grasped the doctrine (*Lehre*) of the similarity principle all too well. Yet one can give Porstmann credit for how he reflects – even as an author of parasitical articles – on the filiation of thoughts. He thus freely confesses that he "was set ablaze for Ostwald's thoughts" (Feuer und Flamme wurde für die Gedankengänge von Ostwald).⁷⁴ It is logical that Porstmann describes his activities in standardizing flat formats (*Flachformatnormierung*) after leaving Großbothen and its lush garden as embers that developed into a conflagration (*Flächenbrand*) under the conditions of World War I. As soon as Porstmann was sure of the victory of "his" format ideas, he significantly switched the metaphors of his description from a floral context to a fire allegory. Something was smoldering, and it continued to do so until Porstmann was "summoned to the NDI [...] by Mr. Hellmich on account of this glimmer" (aufgrund dieses glimmens [...] von herrn hellmich zum ndi geholt).⁷⁵ The only question is what it was that Porstmann finally burned, blossoms or leaves of paper? And whom did they belong to? In any case, they were not his paper in metric flat format. The consequence of Porstmann's flaming enthusiasm for the format system was nothing less than the auto-da-fé of the world formats. Under the careful supervision of a former copyist, the dimensions of Ostwald's world-format standardization fell victim to the world fire and its impetus for standardization.

Did the victory march of the DIN A series mean that the world format was no longer employed after the 1920s and that the entire German Empire was conquered by the DIN format? No, because in a small village not far from Leipzig, one man insisted all the more emphatically on his own format system. Ostwald no longer reacted to the numerous articles Porstmann published after 1915 in

73 Porstmann, "Wilhelm Ostwald wird 75 Jahre alt," 2.

74 Porstmann, 2.

75 Porstmann, "wie ich zu den formaten kam," 53.

Prometheus, in which Porstmann attempts to position the axioms of format standardization as his own achievement. Instead, the privy councilor defiantly clung to the world format in his own world in Großbothen (see Figure 10.2). Indeed, he did so quite literally: in his Haus Energie, there were leaflets and wallets, business cards and stationery, “sofa cushions, and even tablecloths and towels in world format” (Sofakissen, ja sogar Tischdecken und Handtücher im Weltformat).⁷⁶ And three years before his death, Ostwald again returned to the topic of the world formats in order to publicly demonstrate once again their universality. Remarkably, to do so, he chose an example that takes up Porstmann’s initial metaphor of the paper format as a delicate plant in order to play it out in reality. In a typescript called “Die Wissenschaft vom Blumentopf,” which was published in 1929 under the title “Kritische Betrachtungen über den Blumentopf” in the periodical *Die Gartenwelt*, Ostwald analyzes the requirements for containers that hold plants. In addition to suitable air permeability and stability, the shape of the pot is, above all, decisive so as to ensure that the pots can be fit together when placed “side by side” (Nebeneinanderstellen der Töpfe), especially so as “to make better use of space” (den Raum besser auszunutzen).⁷⁷ This last application of the world formats thus employs the principle of preventing (space) waste and so also the



Figure 10.2: The gardener and his harvest. Großbothen, Wilhelm Ostwald-Forschungs- und Gedenkstätte. Private estate of Wilhelm Ostwald.

⁷⁶ Grete Ostwald, *Wilhelm Ostwald – mein Vater*, 145.

⁷⁷ Wilhelm Ostwald, “Kritische Betrachtungen über den Blumentopf,” *Die Gartenwelt: Illustrierte Wochenschrift für den gesamten Gartenbau*, 13 September 1929, 509.

principle of absoluteness. For the appropriate arrangement of pots can be achieved in particular by “taking standardization into account” (Rücksicht auf die Normung genommen) in their dimensions.⁷⁸ It is hardly surprising that Ostwald therefore proposes applying the halving and similarity principles in arguing “that each following pot should contain twice as much soil as its predecessor and that the forms should all be geometrically similar” (daß jeder folgende Topf doppelt so viel Erde enthalten soll wie seine Vorgänger und daß die Formen alle geometisch ähnlich sein sollen).⁷⁹ If one establishes the shape of the pots in analogy to the rectangular shape of the standardized paper – that is, as a relation of $1:\sqrt{2}$ between height and width – one will have standardized four-sided flowerpots and will “soon [be convinced] by the their winning appearance” (bald von ihrem gewinnenden Aussehen).⁸⁰ And also with regard to the method of dissemination, Ostwald once again relies on the principle of induction, which had already been sufficiently tested. “The new pot will probably first be used in flower stores, where the public will much prefer to buy plants housed in such a handsome and practical device than ones in an old, unsightly pot” (Der neue Topf wird voraussichtlich zuerst Anwendung finden in den Blumenläden, wo das Publikum Pflanzen, die in einem solchen hübschen und zweckmäßigen Gerät untergebracht sind, viel lieber kaufen wird, als solche im alten, unschönen Topf).⁸¹ The aesthetic conviction of consumers, their appreciation of the flowerpots’ simultaneous beauty and practicality, will – as Ostwald assumes once again – convince people to rely henceforth only on the new form.

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⁷⁸ Ostwald, 510.

⁷⁹ Ostwald, 510.

⁸⁰ Ostwald, 510.

⁸¹ Ostwald, 510.

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Patrizia McBride

Serial Untruth

The Feuilleton and the Ornamental Image

Das Leben der Seele und des zufälligen Tages, in 2–3 Seiten eingedampft, vom Überflüssigen befreit wie das Rind im Liebig-Tiegel! Dem Leser bleibe es überlassen, diese Extracte aus eigenen Kräften wieder aufzulösen, in geniessbare Bouillon zu verwandeln, aufkochen zu lassen im eigenen Geiste, mit einem Worte sie dünnflüssig und verdaulich zu machen.¹

The life of the soul and the randomness of the day, condensed into two to three pages, freed from anything superfluous like the beef in a Liebig jar! It is left to the reader to dissolve these extracts again on their own, to transform them into edible bouillon, to bring it to a boil in their own mind, in a word, to render it liquid and digestible.

—Peter Altenberg

In a famed poetological essay that doubles as an autobiographical confession, Peter Altenberg likens his much-celebrated literary miniatures to bouillon paste containing the dehydrated extract of contemporary life. Readers of his short prose texts are instructed to pour water on them to produce nourishing broth, much like they would have done with the beef bouillon made popular by Liebig. Altenberg's comparison riffs on a lofty cliché that portrays literature as a life-spending elixir to call attention to the gritty reality of contemporary writerly practice, which unfolded in modularly produced, “savory” short forms that had to compete for the attention of harried readers in the commercial press. One might wonder how the analogy to industrially manufactured broth affects the autobiographical claim of this particular text. How can ordinary bouillon paste contain the singular extract of an individual's life? Altenberg's text does not dwell on this potential argumentative hiccup, and most of his readers probably did not either, enjoying the image's pleasures without probing its deeper conceptual layers.

Altenberg's bouillon at once thematizes and models the use of catchy imagery that was central to the success of the feuilleton at the turn of the century. The poetics of reduction and condensation at the heart of the literary miniature drew upon

¹ Peter Altenberg, “Selbstbiographie,” in *Was der Tag mir zuträgt: Fünfundsechzig neue Studien* (Berlin: Samuel Fischer, 1901), 2. All translations of sources are by Malika Maskarinec unless otherwise noted.

surprising and captivating images whose formulaic quality often left a canned aftertaste, not unlike the broth produced by the factory-made Liebig bouillon. This is because feuilleton writers were unafraid of brazenly placing clichés in the service of entertainment in order to gain an edge on the more serious sections of the newspaper. The undemanding quality of their writing made it accessible and enjoyable, its surface-level, associative thrust effectively displacing the layered structure of long-form literary genres like the novel. As suggested by Altenberg's commercially produced broth, the feuilleton's main appeal lay in a paradox of sorts, namely, its ability to make clichéd images expressive vessels for subjective feeling and singular experience. But the images' formulaic quality often rubbed the discerning reader the wrong way. Their conventionality was evidence that the subjectivity they relayed was fabricated and phony, the rhetorical adornment of industrially produced prose. Imagistic writing was thus spurned for skimming the surface of experience, which it grasped as forms that had no essential relation to the truth of an author's self but were rather used as ornaments, that is, as embellishing props designed to elicit clichéd feelings. This prompted Karl Kraus to proclaim, in his signature take-no-prisoner fashion, that feuilletonism trafficked in the cynical repetition of clichés in order to peddle decorative triviality and self-complacent sentimentality.²

This essay reconstructs the debates that flared up in response to the proliferation of imagistic writing in the feuilleton by focusing on three authors – Alfred Polgar, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Robert Musil – who, like Kraus, recognized that serial literary forms owed their success to the unabashed deployment of clichés in the affective manipulation of readers. Yet far from dismissing manipulative literary writing as merely exploitative and untruthful, these writers embraced it as a tool for investigating the affective quality of modern experience and as a paradoxical template for reenergizing literature.

In “Umrisse eines neuen Journalismus” (1907), Hugo von Hofmannsthal wonders aloud about the challenges that present-day journalism posed to literature.³ Unlike the many contemporaries who, like Karl Kraus, insisted on separating inherently meaningful literary practice from the commodified and disposable writing of the newspaper, Hofmannsthal looks to journalism as an arena for developing edgy and compelling writing focused on the ephemeral and the everyday. Fully aware that the feuilleton section of newspapers was already brimming with literary ambition, Hofmannsthal makes it clear that the model he has in mind has nothing to do

2 For Kraus's most vehement indictment of feuilletonism, see the diatribe *Heine und die Folgen* (Munich: Langen, 1910).

3 Hugo von Hofmannsthal, “Umrisse eines neuen Journalismus,” in *Reden und Aufsätze I: 1891–1913*, ed. Bernd Schoeller and Rudolf Hirsch, unnumbered vol. of *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1979), 378–381. The essay was originally published in the Viennese daily *Die Zeit* in 1907.

with the inconsequential frothiness of feuilletonism, which places pseudo-literary clichés gleaned from its figurehead, Heinrich Heine, in the service of overblown triviality, second-rate pretension, and contrived abstruseness. This critique rehearses long-held concerns about the literary feuilleton. Originating from the miscellany and announcement section of the Enlightenment press, the medley of genres assembled under the heading of the feuilleton had appeared in the bottom portion of daily newspapers since the 1830s, often set off by a horizontal line, which was a graphic innovation imported from the French press. This functional placement “under the feuilleton line” (unter dem Strich) made it possible to group together texts that were wildly disparate both formally and in terms of content, helping bestow a coherent physiognomy on aesthetically pleasing writing that displayed varying blends of information, opinion, and entertainment. While assigned second-rate status in the functional differentiation that gave pride of place to political and economic reporting, feuilleton columns offered respite from the self-important and unapologetically insipid style that marked a paper’s weightier sections. Their playful tone spiced up the experience of reading by simulating a chatty back-and-forth that addressed readers personally while they provided pleasing and undemanding content based in the everyday, the realm of sociability, and changing cultural mores.⁴

Like the feuilleton, the new literary writing Hofmannsthal has in mind is to focus on the quotidian and the contingent, shedding the pretension of disclosing eternal human truths that authorized high-brow literature while seeking to bring the material closer to the reader in emotionally stirring prose:

Das meiste von dem Material, das Lessing benützte, gehörte, als Material, anderen Leuten. Aber seine unsterbliche Person ist in der Intensität seines Satzbaues und in der wundervollen, mutigen Geste seiner Wendungen. Ich glaube nicht die Hälfte von dem, was H.G. Wells sagt. Aber seine Geste ist nicht nur spannend, sondern auch ermutigend; die etwas prahlerische, aber immer angefeuerte Motion seines Geistes versetzt auch die unserigen in eine Motion, ähnlich jener, mit der wir im Expreßzug auf unserem Platz neben dem Fenster liegen und die Abschaffung der Entfernung genießen.

Most of the material Lessing used belonged, as material, to other people. But his immortal person is in the intensity of his sentence construction and in the wonderful, courageous gesture of his expressions. I don’t believe half of what H. G. Wells says. Yet his gesture is not

⁴ For a discussion of the feuilleton as a genre marking the intersection between literature and journalism, see the essays in Kai Kauffmann and Erhard Schütz, eds., *Die lange Geschichte des Feuilletons: Beiträge zur Feuilletonforschung* (Berlin: Weidler, 2000). See also Hildegard Kernmayer and Simone Jung, eds., *Feuilleton: Schreiben an der Schnittstelle zwischen Journalismus und Literatur* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017). On the literary small form in historical and comparative perspective, see Thomas Althaus, Wolfgang Bunzel, and Dirk Götsche, eds., *Kleine Prosa: Theorie und Geschichte eines Textfeldes im Literatursystem der Moderne* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

only exciting but also encouraging; the somewhat boastful yet always inspired motion of his mind also sets ours into a motion similar to when we are sitting in our seat next to the window in an express train and enjoying the elimination of distances.⁵

In invoking the example of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the pioneering public intellectual of German modernity, Hofmannsthal boldly claims that it is fine for writers to use material poached from other authors as long as their work is infused with contagious intellectual passion. This makes for writing that bears an author's unique signature even as it relies upon recycled material, as is shown by the prolific H. G. Wells, whose writing can be boastful and not always in keeping with the truth yet is always bolstered by singular intellectual intensity, which mobilizes the reader affectively and bridges the distance to the material. The example of Wells shows that intellectual dynamism can cannily deploy stylistic and rhetorical formulas ("Gesten") to push readers' buttons in order to move and animate them. Gestural, rhetorical writing is thus not bad in itself as long as it deploys imaginative rhetorical prowess and keeps its eyes trained on quotidian experience. The problem with the feuilleton, and the reason for Hofmannsthal's absolute rejection, is that it already does both but poorly and in bad faith. It trivializes and sentimentalizes the everyday by relying on true-and-trite rhetorical tricks, at once pandering and condescending to readers instead of sweeping them off their feet.

Like Hofmannsthal, Alfred Polgar envisions a literary writing that can give an honest and witty account of everyday occurrences, compelling readers to engage with them through gripping prose. Polgar's engagement as a writer had meant writing primarily for the feuilleton section of the newspaper ever since his start as an essayist and theater critic in turn-of-the-century Vienna. This dependence on newspaper publishing prompted him to draw a distinct line between his writerly practice and the self-indulgent feuilleton pieces that appeared alongside his own texts. A case in point is his 1906 essay on "Das Wiener Feuilleton," which brings the formulaic essence of feuilleton writing to its own poignant formula:

Das ist die Formel des Wiener Feuilletons: Erst die Sprache und dann der Gedanke. Das Primäre ist das Geplauder; das Sekundäre: das "Worüber". Man hat nicht den Eindruck, [...] daß eine Idee die ihr organischen Worte ausgeschwitzt habe. [...] Sondern man hat den Eindruck, daß zuerst das Sprachgewässer da war und dann durch allerlei Hineingeworfenes (meist, wie gesagt, dem Autor nicht Gehöriges) in sanfte wellige Bewegung versetzt wurde.

This is the formula of Viennese feuilletons: first the language and then the thought. The chatter is primary; "what it is about" is secondary. One does not have the impression [...]

⁵ Hofmannsthal, "Umrisse eines neuen Journalismus," 380.

that an idea has sweated out its organic words. Instead, one has the impression that the linguistic pool was there first and was then set into a gentle rippling motion by all the things thrown into it (mostly, as mentioned, things that do not belong to the author).⁶

In this passage Polgar emerges as a ruthless practitioner of the very imagistic writing that was at once the feuilleton's cardinal sin and its most formidable weapon. In reducing feuilleton writing to the recipe "first the language and then the thought," Polgar sardonically likens the feuilletonist to a motormouth whose musings are reflexively set in motion by his own blather rather than by hard-won ideas. His indictment of the Viennese feuilleton prosecutes its case by further heaping one unflattering image upon the next. In the space of a few sentences, feuilletons are compared to a liquid surface lightly wrinkled by the haphazard content dropped into it, to linguistic workouts unencumbered by actual thought, and to flimsy vessels manufactured out of catchy but hollow formulations. Taken together, the negative images reprise a familiar critique of the feuilleton as light reading fare that evaporates without leaving a trace in the reader. Polgar thus agrees with Hofmannsthal that the main crime of feuilletonism lies in its ability to breed in the reader a "leisurely intimacy with all things" (betuliche Intimität zu allen Dingen), that is, a sense of trivial and noncommittal intimacy that inexorably devalues anything it touches. Its gauzy sentimentality and lazy, exploitative quality turns serious subjects into cynical entertainment, giving readers permission to retreat into comfortable indifference rather than moving them to action.

If the feuilleton uses images to lull its readers into self-satisfied indifference, Polgar was determined to turn them into a most formidable weapon. In a short piece on the graphic artist and newspaper caricaturist Fred Dolbin, he highlights the physiognomic thrust of Dolbin's writing, which relies on images that have the eloquence of "sketched epigrams" (gezeichnete Epigramme).⁷ His texts, Polgar argues, consist of vignettes that strike at the essence of a person or an object by highlighting one defining trait, much like caricatures. They hinge on isolating a pregnant detail and detaching it from its context so as to give it a spin that magnifies and distorts it. This characterization strikingly reprises an essay by Hofmannsthal from 1897 in which he seizes on a Franz Stuck exhibit to comment on the physiognomic style of feuilletonism. Flouting the wisdom of the day, Hofmannsthal praises the ornamental writing that swells the feuilleton, recommending it as good training for the aspiring writer. Ornaments, he claims, are forms whose sensuous appeal lends itself to being used in rhetorical ways, generally to endow a practice

6 Alfred Polgar, "Das Wiener Feuilleton," in *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Marcel Reich-Ranicki and Ulrich Weinzierl, vol. 4, *Literatur* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1984), 201–202.

7 Polgar, "Der Zeichner Dolbin," in *Kleine Schriften*, 4:267.

or an object with a pleasing aesthetic quality or symbolic value they do not intrinsically possess – as in paper cutters made to look like daggers or crucifixes used as photograph holders. Ornamental writing is in itself neither good nor bad, but is rather a technique that treats the distinctive features of a thing in isolation, making it possible to grasp “the symbolic value of detail” (den symbolischen Wert des Details).⁸ It teaches writers to approach objects as outwardly perceivable forms, liberating them from the conventional meanings to which they are tied and making them available for vivid and concise storytelling – what Hofmannsthal calls “the abbreviation of the feuilleton worldview” (die Abbreviatur des feuilletonistischen Weltbildes).⁹ This operation entails a kind of physiognomic writing that manipulates the visible forms of experience without being constrained by the canons of realism or verisimilitude.

The resulting distortion shines a light on the antinaturalist and partisan quality of the writing Polgar embraces in his praise of Dolbin. Like caricature, the imagistic writing Polgar favors grasps the visible surface of experience as a language of forms. It isolates a detail and gives it emblematic value, making it stand for the truth of a state of affairs without pretending to offer a balanced depiction. Polgar’s gloss on the distortions of caricature writing echo arguments Hofmannsthal made to warn against the dangers of the ornamental, which can be enjoyed for its own sake and even elevated to a philosophy, as dramatized by the lures of aestheticism. In other words, separating the visible forms that make up experience from the meanings they carry bears the danger that images can be used in a purely manipulative fashion, as triggers for cheap aesthetic thrills that may well be entertaining but shed no light on experience and can in fact obscure it.¹⁰

Polgar explicitly dramatizes these risks in the later sketch “Im Vorüberfahren” (1926), which takes on the poetics of reportage, the small-form literary trend that in the 1920s enlisted the evidentiary force of visual narration to anchor writing in objectivity and truth. The essay starts by musing on what one sees when riding in a car moving through the landscape:

⁸ Hofmannsthal, “Franz Stuck,” in *Reden und Aufsätze I*, 529.

⁹ Hofmannsthal, 529.

¹⁰ In his famed essay “Ornament und Verbrechen,” Adolf Loos offers a sharp indictment of ornamentation that echoes Hofmannsthal’s characterization of the ornament as a form divorced from its conventional meaning, which for Loos maps onto a form’s practical use or function. Loos condemns his contemporaries’ penchant for repurposing forms from past ages and alien cultures in order to ennable or embellish objects, which in his eyes winds up turning the objects into fraudulent displays of feigned pomp and social status. Adolf Loos, “Ornament und Verbrechen,” in *Trotzdem: Gesammelte Schriften*, facsimile of the first edition from 1931, ed. Adolf Opel (Vienna: Prachner, 1982), 78–88.

Das Auto fährt nicht rasch, dreissig-Kilometer-Tempo. Einen halben Kilometer also in der Minute.

In solcher Minute macht die Kamera des Auges viele Aufnahmen. Manche lohnten es vielleicht, daß man sie einer Dichterei zum Entwickeln gäbe. Ein halber Kilometer ist lange Zeit, die Minute ein unendlicher Raum, und das Nichtsgeschehen, bis zum Platzen voll von Möglichkeiten des Geschehens, über alle Maßen dramatisch.

The automobile does not drive quickly, a speed of thirty kilometers. So half a kilometer in a minute.

In such a minute, the camera of the eye takes a lot of pictures. Some would be worth giving to a poetry workshop to develop. Half a kilometer is a long time, a minute an infinite space, and the lack of events is bursting full of possibilities of events, dramatic beyond all measure.¹¹

Contemporaries would have recognized in this opening a stock theme of literary reportage, which stakes its claim to incisive and fast-moving storytelling on the precision and speed of the photographic image. Here the trope is, however, given a twist. The car in which the speaker is riding is neither going fast nor is it making its way through a bustling metropolitan environment, the favorite backdrop of reportage writing. In fact, the country road on which the vehicle is moving offers little to see, and the ensuing lack of visual stimulation stretches time and space rather than producing the hurried simultaneity of reportage. Yet, the speaker suggests, the ride's very uneventfulness opens it up to countless possibilities, which can be unfolded by developing the images taken in by the camera eye through an ordinary writerly solvent ("Dichterei") – that is, through literary storytelling. This is to say that the very emptiness of the visual field stimulates the hungry imagination of the writer, setting it free to stalk any incipient form and feed on its potential meanings.

In keeping with a basic convention of feuilletonism, what follows dramatizes how the most inessential objects can give rise to a sort of writerly flânerie. A man appears suddenly at the margin of the road, his gaze transfixed on the passing car like a rope that stretches and finally breaks when he vanishes from the visual field. When a hare almost gets run over, its near-death experience dredges up memories of a less fortunate peer hit by the speaker's car years before, which enables him to relive the sense of guilt and queasy intimacy he had shared with a lady companion and fellow rider. A man and a woman then appear in the field of vision and bring the narrative back to the present. Though the speaker professes not to really care about them, he starts speculating about their identity and life together, afraid that he might miss something by treating them as mere extras in his narrative. As becomes clear, the speaker does not genuinely care about them but is simply looking

11 Polgar, "Im Vorüberfahren," in *Kleine Schriften*, 2:176–177.

for attention-grabbing narrative material. His lack of curiosity is mirrored and highlighted by the next apparition, which consists of a fellow with a walking stick strolling by the edge of the road. The man's ostentatious failure to make eye contact compels the narrator to christen him "Martin" to better admonish him that the world could care less about his aloofness. Yet the obnoxious Martin gets the last word in the story. As the speaker savors the fleeting vision of an attractive woman sitting at the wheel of a passing car, he locks eyes with her for a split second, her mysterious gaze telegraphing erotic desire and the promise of existential fulfillment. But the reverie unceremoniously dissipates when the speaker applies to it the lesson he just taught Martin. As he concludes, the woman at the wheel is unlikely to care about him, much like the rest of the world.

This closing makes clear that the speaker had it coming. His distanced gaze has enabled him to treat experience as a treasure trove of visual forms to be used as fodder for ingenious storytelling. But like Martin he has failed to make eye contact with the world around him, in a lack of reciprocity that bespeaks a fundamental indifference. His images are thus unconcerned with conveying substantive insight and are ornamental in the pejorative sense outlined by Hofmannsthal. Because they treat the objects they portray as opaque surfaces or screens for projecting a writer's narcissism, they come across as callous and exploitative, as exemplified by the erotic fantasy that wraps up the miniature, where the speaker's titillation at the sight of the female driver discharges itself in a surge of clichés that tell readers nothing about the woman and everything about the speaker's lusty desire. In portraying the lady's gaze as at once "naked [...] and full of mystery, concealed and shameless, hostile and ready" (*nackt [...] und voll Geheimnis, verhüllt und schamlos, feindlich und bereit*),¹² the speaker's longing for steamy sex with a feral stranger is expressed in language that couches the fantasy's coarseness in pathos and pretension and that rehearses a trite commonplace about the erotic bliss dispensed by preternatural femmes fatales. The problem here is not just that the images are used as clichés, that is, as fungible props deployed to elicit affects that have no genuine relation to the object they portray. Here, rather, the affects themselves appear rehearsed and phony, like secondhand feelings borrowed from a mawkish fantasy world.

One can conclude that Polgar's literary broth in this miniature was made with industrial-strength bouillon designed to leave a rancid aftertaste in the reader. Can ornamental images be vessels for more than contrived feeling and phony subjectivity? What is their affective potential and charge? Is ornamental writing always destined to be kitsch, as Karl Kraus insists? Robert Musil asks exactly this question in a miniature titled "Schwarze Magie" published in the 1936

12 Polgar, 2:180.

collection *Nachlass zu Lebzeiten*. The black magic invoked by the title concerns the befuddling spectacle of singing and dancing Hussars made popular by small cabaret theaters. As the narrator muses, the lure of Russian soldiers clad in exotic uniforms may well lie in their valiant pledge to fight until death, but in point of fact all they do in peacetime is put up predictable acts consisting of corny and erotically suggestive songs. Determined to get to the bottom of their queasy appeal, the narrator attempts to make out what exactly is kitschy about them:

Wenn das ein gemaltes Bild wäre, so hätte man ein Schulbeispiel von Kitsch vor sich. Wenn das ein „lebendes Bild“ wäre, so würde man die versunkene Sentimentalität eines einst beliebt gewesenen Gesellschaftsspiels vor sich haben, also etwas, das zur Hälfte Kitsch, zur andern Hälfte aber traurig wie ein eben verklungenes Glockenspiel. Doch da es nun ein singendes lebendes Bild ist, was ist es da? [. . .] Sollte es möglich sein, daß der Kitsch, wenn ihm eine und dann zwei Dimensionen des Kitsches zuwachsen, erträglicher und immer weniger kitschig wird?

If this were a painted picture, then we would have a textbook example of kitsch. If it were a “tableau vivant,” we would have before us the unnerving sentimentality of a once beloved parlor game, that is, something half kitsch and half sad, like a glockenspiel that has just been played. But since it is a singing tableau vivant, what is it then? [. . .] Could it be possible that kitsch grows ever more tolerable and ever less kitschy if one, and then two, dimensions of kitsch are added to it?¹³

The passage relates the affective impact of the singing Hussars to the medium of their performance. As the speaker muses, a painting that immortalized their act by presenting it as an image in isolation would undoubtedly be kitsch. If this were, however, a nineteenth-century tableau vivant, in which motionless people act out a symbolically pregnant scene, then one could wistfully speak of a bygone social ritual that registers as kitsch in the present. But the Hussars’ tableau is neither a kitschy painting nor an old-fashioned living display. It is not frozen in time but rather entails the live action of singing individuals. Its being a cross between static representation and actual experience at once adds layers to its kitschiness and renders it less kitschy, that is, truer and affectively more resonant in its ability to fold in the viewer.

In refusing to treat the Hussars as a scam and thus moralize their act, the narrator focuses on the central puzzle posed by their performance, namely, how can the affect they elicit be so canned and yet so real? How can it be that kitschy forms gain in affective intensity through repetition, which somehow makes them

13 Robert Musil, “Schwarze Magie,” in *Prosa und Stücke: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches, Essays und Reden, Kritik*, vol. 2 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978), 501–503, here 501; Robert Musil, “Black Magic,” in *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, trans. Peter Wortsman (Brooklyn: Archipelago Books, 2006), 54.

emotionally truer? For the narrator, this question brings up the memory of hunkering in a trench with a fellow soldier during war time. The narrator still cringes at the thought of how his companion sought to cope with his fear of impending danger by singing a sad, kitschy tune: “And it was kitsch. But it was the sort of kitsch that lay like another layer of sadness over our sadness [. . .]. There is so much that one might have felt at this last eternal hour, and the articulation of the fearful image of death is not necessarily best rendered in oil” (Es war ein Kitsch, der nur noch als eine Traurigkeit mehr mit in der Traurigkeit lag [. . .]. Im Grunde hätte man manches fühlen können in dieser jahrelangen letzten Stunde, und der Druck der Todesvorstellung mußte nicht gerade ein Öldruck sein).¹⁴ The speaker marvels at just how odd it is that utter existential angst could express itself through such a phony song. One would think that the presence of death would elicit more substantive feelings than the equivalent of a kitschy oil painting. Real art, he muses, would put such an experience to the test, acting as a solvent that strips away the kitsch that encrusts it.

Yet if it is possible for kitsch to grow additional dimensions so as to become “reality” (volle Wirklichkeit), telling real experience apart from kitsch is not as simple as it may seem.¹⁵ After all, what exactly is kitsch? Kitsch, the speaker ventures, is premised on establishing a formulaic relation between a feeling and its symbolic expression, a relation that uses clichés to elicit affects on demand. That is to say, kitsch has to reify the conceptual tie that links lived experience to the words used to gloss it in order to reliably push affective buttons. In so doing, it strips “life off of concepts” (das Leben von den Begriffen), depriving concepts of the singular affective charge they gain in given situations and reducing them to bloodless mechanisms.¹⁶ The question of kitsch’s relation to life raises the ante for the speaker, who now finds himself having to define life itself, a task he avoids by squeezing the whole discussion into formulas that are meant to describe the logical relations of the terms he has been juggling: kitsch, art, and life. But a final glimpse at the tableau of the singing Hussars, who have pledged to fight to their death yet merrily parade around for the amusement of female audiences, shows the pointlessness of the whole enterprise. The image blends kitsch and life, life and art, art and kitsch in ways that make it impossible to tell any of the terms apart, let alone to quarantine kitsch.

As Musil’s discussion makes clear, tableaux like the singing Hussars operate by enframing experience, reducing it to prepackaged and easily repeatable visual

¹⁴ Musil, “Black Magic,” 54–55; Musil, “Schwarze Magie,” 502.

¹⁵ Musil, “Black Magic,” 54; Musil, “Schwarze Magie,” 502.

¹⁶ Musil, “Black Magic,” 56, translation modified; Musil, “Schwarze Magie,” 503.

formulas offered up to the gaze of an audience; as such they are ornamental images. The singing Hussars are ornamental in Hofmannsthal's sense because their relation to the meaning they convey is conventional and not necessarily true. Their black uniforms evoke the thrill of combat and mortal danger, but this has no bearing on current experience, since the men do not fight during peacetime. The valiance signified by their uniforms becomes instead a proxy for sexual prowess, as confirmed by their erotically suggestive songs, which are meant to offer safe discharge for the repressed sexual fantasies ascribed to the women who watch them. With Lauren Berlant, one could say that the Hussars are a cliché designed to mobilize individual women affectively and to teach them how they should feel as women. They are a staged fantasy meant to evoke phantasmatic, shared womanlihood. By interpellating women as a cohesive group bound together by private fantasies of romance and forbidden sexual gratification, the Hussars invite women to recognize their desire in the fantasy and thereby fold them into what Berlant calls an intimate public. In being invited to join in phony transgression, women get to take part in a "leisurely intimacy," to use Polgar's formulation, an innocuous form of intimacy that uses fantasies of indiscretion as a normalizing tool and an affirmation of the status quo. This is because the fantasies offer a space for vicariously experiencing transgression that ends up displacing real action; they become an empty proxy for any step women may take toward actual sexual emancipation. Formulaic repetition is here a means to shape and contain feeling by triggering it within safe, sanitized bounds. The wife and mother indulges her private fantasy while sublimating her desire by investing it with a fuzzy utopian meaning that binds her to other women.¹⁷ In short, women are being duped by the Hussars, as confirmed by the condescension that creeps into the speaker's tone when he hints at the female audiences who have made the spectacle of singing soldiers such a success.

For better or worse, Musil's miniature does not take issue with the emotional exploitation of a manufactured intimate public. Its central concern is rather the status of the formulaic feeling elicited by ornamental images. Are the feelings bogus because they are derivative and repetitive like the images that trigger them? The speaker in Polgar's sketch would answer this question with a partial yes. There, ornamental images are fodder for artful narratives that belie the speaker's fundamental indifference toward the people and situations that make up his stories. When, at long last, the final vision of a driving femme fatale

17 For Berlant's argument on the manufacturing of a female public in twentieth-century American culture, see her "Introduction" to *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 1–31; see especially 5–13 for her discussion of intimate publics.

engages him emotionally, the reader receives the impression that ordinary lustfulness is here contained and sanitized by means of cringy clichés. More generally, his collection of images seems to substitute formulaic affect for the genuine feeling that is to be found in real experience. For Musil, by contrast, cliché affect is always already part of emotional life. Even in a limit situation like that of mortal danger, feeling can resort to a kitschy container for its expression. The fantasy container may be formulaic and bogus, but the feeling is real, and this is what makes intimate publics so powerful. In fact, repeated formulations even contribute to their intensity for Musil, as Hofmannsthal already knew when he tied gestural, rhetorical prose to intensity and the ability to move an audience. This is because feelings express themselves in ways that are always in some respect formulaic, which makes kitsch an integral part of life's emotional mix. In this case the problem is not how to separate genuine from phony feelings – an impossible and pointless endeavor, as Musil concludes. The problem is, rather, the dishonest fantasy that makes unadulterated, singular feeling the source of shared existential truth, as is the case for women's intimate public.

This insight enables us to circle back, in conclusion, to Altenberg's bouillon cube. His catchy image comparing the brevity and density of short prose to dehydrated soup extract expresses his desire to mobilize the reader to pour water on the exsiccated prose so as to recover the incomparable truths of an existence lived in unapologetic pursuit of the ecstatic pleasures dispensed by women, writing, and nature's beauty. Altenberg's cozy bohemianism and agreeable antibourgeois gesture make for an autobiographical account in which heroic writerly heterodoxy is often indistinguishable from sentimental narcissism. This is because the speaker of his autobiography never reflects on the function of the ornamental images that are made to do their black magic in his prose, as Musil might say. Images like the bouillon cube are instead used as visual metaphors that ostensibly grant access to an individual's unadulterated emotions. Their connection to singular emotional truth is taken at face value. Having learned his craft from Altenberg, Alfred Polgar sought to inject his effusive visual style with a degree of reflexivity and distance, as evidenced by the incongruous mix of affable chatter and jaundiced punch lines that often characterizes his miniatures. What for some registered as cynicism in Polgar was a way of probing the affective power of ornamental writing and poking a hole in its claim to emotional truth. In his raving review of Polgar's prose, Musil praises his gift for looking at things in a dispassionate, blunt way that makes them come apart “like taken-apart toys” (wie auseinandergenommene Spielzeuge).¹⁸ Polgar used imagistic writing as his weapon of choice, turning the sentimental cliché

18 Robert Musil, “Interview mit Alfred Polgar,” in *Gesammelte Werke*, 2:1154–60, here 1158.

into a sharp blade that cut through the cynical fluff of the feuilleton to bring the marginal and the everyday into focused view. In so doing, Musil suggests, Polgar perfected a literary writing in short forms that should provide a template for literary practice in his time. Its ornamental bent and visual style shed light on emotional life by suggesting that clichéd forms could very well carry genuine feeling. Understanding this connection was key to avoiding the kind of affective manipulation that forged individuals into manufactured publics. Literature could, for Musil, scrub the kitsch from life while underscoring the power residing in its formulaic, quotidian character.

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Contributors

Eva Ehninger is professor of modern art at the Humboldt University of Berlin. From 2015 to 2017, she was the Laurenz Assistant Professor for Contemporary Art at the University of Basel. Her main areas of research include the history of photography and theories of representation. Her second monograph, *The Modern Dream of Order: Victoria, Photography, and the Social Imagination*, is forthcoming. She has recently published articles on “Group Formation: Queen Victoria in India” (*PhotoResearcher* 2018) and “Die Industrie der Fotografie: Arbeit als Bildproblem” (*kritische berichte* 2018). Further articles have appeared in scholarly journals such as the *Getty Research Journal*, the *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, and *Texte zur Kunst*.

Sean Franzel is associate professor of German at the University of Missouri. His research interests span the literary, intellectual, and media history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His first book is titled *Connected by the Ear: The Media, Pedagogy, and Politics of the Romantic Lecture* and offers an interdisciplinary study of the Romantic and idealist lecture that intervenes in media history, the history of scholarly culture, theories of publicity, and Romantic legacies in aesthetic and political discourse. His second book is a study of temporality and seriality in the nineteenth-century periodical, titled *Writing Time: The Aesthetics of Ephemeral in Nineteenth-Century Serial Literature*. Recent projects include a coedited and cotranslated collection of essays by Reinhart Koselleck, and a coedited special journal issue on periodical literature in the nineteenth century. Previous projects include a coedited volume of essays entitled “Performing Knowledge, 1750–1850” and a coedited volume of essays on ephemerality as a central concept of the long nineteenth century.

Markus Krajewski is professor of media history and theory at the University of Basel. His current research areas include epistemologies of the marginal, the history of accuracy, and media and architecture. His book publications include *Bauformen des Gewissens: Über Fassaden deutscher Nachkriegsarchitektur* (2016); *Lesen, Schreiben, Denken: Zur wissenschaftlichen Abschlußarbeit in 7 Schritten* (2013); *The Server: A Media History from the Present to the Baroque* (2010; Eng. trans. 2018); *Paper Machines: About Cards & Catalogs, 1548–1929* (2002; Eng. trans. 2011); and *World Projects: Global Information before World War I* (2006; Eng. trans. 2014). He is also the author of the electronic reference management software *synapsen: A digital note box* (www.synapsen.ch).

Malika Maskarinec is assistant professor at the Institut für Germanistik of the University of Bern, after previously serving as a postdoc and the managing director at Eikones – Center for the Theory and History of the Image at the University of Basel. Her research interests encompass literature, aesthetics, and the visual arts from the nineteenth century to the present. Her first monograph, *The Forces of Form in German Modernism*, was published with Northwestern University Press in 2018; her second monograph, *Allegories of Format in Gottfried Keller's Unlikely Oeuvre*, is forthcoming.

Patricia McBride is professor of German studies at Cornell University. Her research spans German-language literature and culture from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, with a special emphasis on theories of modernity and modernism, the intersection of aesthetics, philosophy, and political theory, visual and media studies, and Austrian literature and culture, especially fin-de-siècle Vienna. She has authored myriad volumes, including *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (2006) and *The Chatter of the Visible: Montage and Narrative in Weimar Germany* (2018), and is a coeditor of the volume *Legacies of Modernism: Art and Politics in Northern Europe, 1890–1950* (2007).

Katja Müller-Helle is the head of the research project “The Technical Image” at the Humboldt University of Berlin. Her research areas include the history and theory of photography, media history, the historiography of avant-garde culture, and theories of pictorial evidence. Recent books she has edited include *The Legacy of Transgressive Objects* (2019); *Zeitspeicher der Fotografie: Zukunftsbilder 1860–1913* (2017); and *Blitzlicht* (2012). In 2014/2015 and 2018, she was a fellow at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

Elisabeth Strowick is professor of German at New York University. Her research interests encompass German literature and thought from the nineteenth century to the present, literary theory, psychoanalysis, aesthetics, rhetoric, and the poetics of knowledge. She has authored *Gespenster des Realismus: Zur literarischen Wahrnehmung von Wirklichkeit* (2019) and *Sprechende Körper – Poetik der Ansteckung: Performativa in Literatur und Rhetorik* (2009). She has edited an *MLN* special issue with the title *Curse and Modernity* (2016) and coedited the volumes *Jenseits von Bayreuth: Richard Wagner heute; Neue kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven* (2014); *Wirklichkeit und Wahrnehmung: Neue Perspektiven auf Theodor Storm* (2013); and a special issue of *Monatshefte für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur* with the title “Observation in Science and Literature” (2013).

Ralph Uhl is professor for art history and the director of Eikones at the University of Basel. Select publications include *Prehistoric Future: Max Ernst and the Return of Painting between the Wars* (2004; Eng. trans. 2013); *Bildtheorie zur Einführung* (together with Wolfram Pichler, 2014); “Pulcinellas Fest für das Auge: Édouard Manets *Ein Maskenball in der Oper* (1873)” (2016); “Qu'est-ce que s'orienter dans la gravure?” (2016); “Good Objecthood – Form und Objekt bei Michael Fried” (2018); and “Delacroix's *parade*” (2020).

Mario Wimmer is the managing director of the Collegium Helveticum. He has previously worked in the research group “Media of Exactitude” as a senior researcher and taught in Basel's program for the history and theory of media. He is working on a second book titled *Ranke's Blindness* that engages with the life and work of the late Leopold von Ranke, who, after he turned almost blind, reiterated his life's work while writing a universal history with the hands and eyes of others. His most important publications include *Archivkörper: Eine Geschichte historischer Einbildungskraft* (2012, repr. 2013); “The Afterlives of Scholarship: Warburg and Cassirer” (2017); “The Present as Future Past: Anonymous History of Historical Times” (2015); and “On Sources: Mythical and Historical Thinking in fin-de-siècle Vienna” (2013).

Barbara Wittmann is professor for art history at the Berlin University of the Arts. Her research primarily concerns nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, with a focus on portraiture, practices of scientific drawing, and children's drawings. Important publications include *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien: Eine Kultur- und Wissensgeschichte der Kinderzeichnung, 1500–1950* (2018); and *Gesichter geben: Édouard Manet und die Poetik des Porträts* (2004). Additionally, she edited the volume *Werkzeuge des Entwerfens* (2018) and coedited a special issue of *Science in Context* with the title “Knowledge in the Making: Drawing and Writing as Research Techniques” (2013).

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