

The Materialities of Writing in Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*

By

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Introduction

The Materialities of Writing

Language spills onto a clean, blank page.¹ The text of the “Berner Taschenbuch,” the preserved manuscript fragment of Rilke’s *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (*The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*), begins mid-sentence: “...the woman could not be dismissed for that reason.”² The English translation of this sentence fragment can stand alone as an independent clause; the German original, a dependent clause that would follow a subordinating conjunction, however, cannot: “...man die Person daraufhin nicht entlassen könne.”³ Like flecks of dried blood, these words hang on the edge of a precipice, a massive gaping wound that becomes invisibly bandaged in standard print editions of the novel (see fig. 1):

Sie konnte es nicht ertragen, daß jemand im Hause erkrankte. Einmal, als die Köchin sich verletzt hatte und sie sah sie zufällig mit der eingebundenen Hand, behauptete sie, das Jodoform im ganzen Hause zu riechen, und war schwer zu überzeugen, daß man die Person daraufhin nicht entlassen könne.⁴

The precipice on which these words hang cannot be breached because the first part of the manuscript, corresponding to the first half of the work, is no longer extant.⁵ While we can return to examine the handwritten traces underlying the printed text of the second half of the novel, the first part of the text rests on a void.⁶

In the printed pages leading up to this moment in the text, Malte narrates a scene at his grandmother’s dinner table. She becomes outraged about a few “innocent” [*unschuldige*] wine stains on the spotless tablecloths and begins accusing and reproaching no one in particular. Then,

¹ On the semiotics of the blank page, see Thomas Macho, “Shining oder: Die weiße Seite,” *Weiß*, ed. Wolfgang Ullrich and Juliane Vogel (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2003), 17-28; Uwe Wirth, “Logik der Streichung,” *Schreiben und Streichen. Zu einem Moment produktiver Negativität*, ed. Lucas Marco Gisi, Hubert Thüning and Irmgard M. Wirtz (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 24.

² Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. Michael Hulse (Longon: Penguin, 2009), 79.

³ A more literal translation is as follows: “one could not dismiss the person thereupon.”

⁴ KA 3 540. “She could not bear it when someone in the house was sick. Once when the cook had cut herself, and my grandmother chanced to see her with her hand bandaged, she claimed the whole house reeked of iodoform, and it was difficult to convince her that the woman could not be dismissed for this reason” (modified from Hulse 79).

⁵ Regarding the various manuscript phases in the history of the novel’s composition, see Manfred Engel, Nachwort, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, by Rainer Maria Rilke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), 319-322.

⁶ The manuscripts themselves were not the direct source for the printed text. Unable to finish a fair copy of the manuscript, Rilke’s publisher Anton Kippenberg invited him to Leipzig to dictate the work orally. This oral dictation, along with the typescript produced from it, which was presumably destroyed in the Second World War, constitute a distinct phase of the work’s generation. See Engel 322.

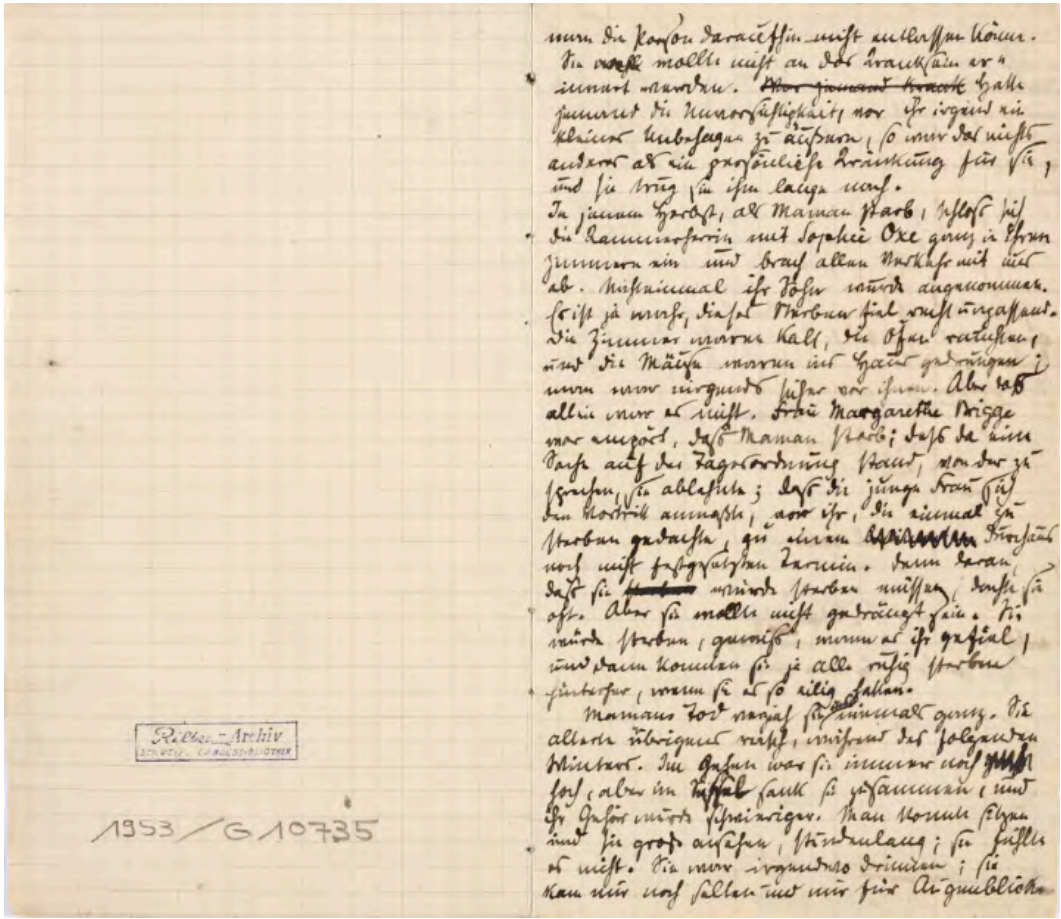


Figure 1. The first pages of text in the “Berner Taschenbuch” (BT 2-3). The first line reads “man die Person daraufhin nicht entlassen könne.”⁷

something “unprecedented and utterly incomprehensible” [*etwas nie Dagewesenes und völlig Unbegreifliches*] causes her to “break off mid-sentence” [*mitten im Satze stehen lassen*]. Malte’s grandfather, Chamberlain Brigge, pours himself a glass of wine, yet once the dark red fluid reaches the top of the vessel, he does not stop pouring. The Dionysian liquid overflows the boundaries of its glass container, spilling onto the pristine table linens. A hush falls over the room as the Count continues to pour. Within the space of this silence, an uncomfortable laughter erupts.⁸

Wine stains on a tablecloth like dried blood surrounding a flesh wound, like ink stains on paper. Returning to the manuscript to reconsider the work through the materiality of its production⁹

⁷ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge. Das Manuskript des “Berner Taschenbuchs.” Faksimile und Textgenetische Edition*, ed. Thomas Richter and Franziska Kolp (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 3.

⁸ Regarding the presence effects of laughter, see Anne Kolb, “Lachen. Zur Präsentation des Präsens bei Kafka, Beckett und Bataille,” *Wider die Repräsentation. Präsens/ & Erzählen in Literatur, Film und Bildender Kunst*, ed. Tanja Prokic, Anne Kolb and Oliver Jahraus (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 183-219.

⁹ We must be careful to keep in mind that writing itself [*Schreiben*] cannot be observed directly, but only the traces of that process [*Schrift*]. Writing as such constitutes a “blind spot.” See Stephan Kammer, “Reflexionen der Hand. Zur Poetologie der Differenz zwischen Schreiben und Schrift,”

illuminates a dimension of reference, a kind of circulating reference,¹⁰ between the materiality of writing and the space of representation, which is largely severed, rendered imperceptible, in the printed work, yet which haunts it like a phantom limb.

As Friedrich Nietzsche wrote, “UNSER SCHREIBZEUG ARBEITET MIT AN UNSEREN GEDANKEN [sic].”¹¹ This dissertation seeks to push this model of participatory interaction to its limit, and proposes an inextricable ontological entanglement of the materialities of writing and what we commonly call “thought.”¹² I explore writing as an interaction or negotiation of different materialities, which implies a dispersal of the agency of textual production onto an array of participants, of which the writer’s intentions, memories, etc. constitute only a part.¹³ At times, the

Bilder der Handschrift. Die graphische Dimension der Literatur, ed. Davide Giuriato and Stephan Kammer (Frankfurt am Main und Basel: Stroemfeld, 2006), 135.

¹⁰ I lean here on Bruno Latour’s conception of circulating reference in *Pandora’s Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999), 24-79.

¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schreibmaschinentexte. Vollständige Edition, Faksimiles und kritischer Kommentar*, ed. Stephan Günzel und Rüdiger Schmidt-Grépály (Weimar: Bauhaus-Universitätsverlag, 2002), 18). Cited in Martin Stingelin, “‘Schreiben’ Einleitung,” “*Mir Ekelt vor diesem Tintenklecksenden Säkulum.*” *Schreibszenen im Zeitalter der Manuskripte* (München: Fink, 2004), 11. “Our writing implements collaborate in producing our thoughts” (translation JH).

¹² On the “entanglement of matter and meaning,” see Karan Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke U P, 2007), and Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs* 28.3 (2003): 810, 813.

¹³ I draw in particular on Karen Barad’s conceptions of agential realism and entanglement Jane Bennett’s notion of vibrant matter. See Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” and Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke U P, 2010). At one moment, Bennett specifically addresses writing as an “assemblage,” a term that she takes from Deleuze and Guattari: “Bodies enhance their power *in or as a heterogeneous assemblage*. What this suggests for the concept of *agency* is that the efficacy or effectivity to which that term has traditionally referred becomes distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localized in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human efforts. The sentences of this book also emerged from the confederate agency of many striving macro- and microactants: from ‘my’ memories, intentions, contentions, intestinal bacteria, eyeglasses, and blood sugar, as well as from the plastic computer keyboard, the bird song from the open window, or the air or particulates in the room, to name only a few of the participants. What is at work here on the page is an animal-vegetable-mineral-sonority cluster with a particular degree and duration of power. What is at work here is what Deleuze and Guattari call an assemblage” (23). The notion of writing as an agential assemblage of heterogeneous factors moves beyond Rüdiger Campe’s canonical conception of the “scene of writing” [*Schreibszene*] as “an unstable ensemble of language, instrumentality, and gesture” (“Die Schreibszene. Schreiben,” *Paradoxien, Dissonanzen, Zusammenbrüche: Situationen Offener Epistemologie*, eds. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Karl Ludwig Pfeiffer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 760) and Vilém Flusser’s description of what constitutes writing: “Um schreiben zu können, benötigen wir – unter anderen – die folgenden Faktoren: eine Oberfläche (Blatt Papier), ein Werkzeug (Füllfeder), Zeichen (Buchstaben), eine Konvention (Bedeutung der Buchstaben), Regeln (Orthographie), ein System (Grammatik), ein durch das System der Sprache bezeichnetes System (semantische Kenntnis der Sprache), eine zu schreibende Botschaft (Ideen) und das Schreiben. Die Komplexität liegt nicht so sehr in der Vielzahl der unerläßlichen Faktoren als in deren Heterogenität.

process and materiality of writing are explicitly thematized in the text. Yet as we will explore, there are also numerous moments in the text that “stick out” uncannily, like symptoms whose cause seems untraceable, and which manifest or point to the materialities of writing only obliquely.¹⁴ Sensual, tactile descriptions of punctured and decaying flesh and blood, for example, figure the materials of paper and ink not only symbolically, but also analogically,¹⁵ through a relationship of material iconicity or a kind of phenomenological metaphor.¹⁶ The text, like any, projects a world whose existence traverses boundaries.¹⁷ The reality that takes shape within the *Aufzeichnungen* is not simply a world within words, a world *written* into being; it is more specifically a world written into existence *by hand* through a dialectic of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*¹⁸ in ink on paper.¹⁹

Die Füllfeder liegt auf einer anderen Wirklichkeitsebene als etwa die Grammatik, die Ideen oder das Motiv zum Schreiben” (Vilém Flusser, “Die Geste des Schreibens,” *Gesten. Versuch einer Phänomenologie* (Düsseldorf, Bensheim: Bollmann 1991), 40).

¹⁴ In describing the way that certain details “stick out,” pointing to the materiality of the text’s production, I draw on Eric Santner’s discussion of Benjamin’s conception of “natural history,” and specifically Benjamin’s notion of the “remnant.” Santner writes: “we truly encounter the radical otherness of the ‘natural’ world only where it appears in the guise of historical remnant. The opacity and recalcitrance that we associate with the materiality of nature – the mute ‘thingness’ of nature – is, paradoxically, most palpable where we encounter it as a piece of human history that has become an enigmatic ruin beyond our capacity to endow it with meaning, to integrate it into our symbolic universe” (*On Creaturely Life* (Chicago; London: U of Chicago P, 2006), xv). The notion the symptom I invoke is formulated by Georges Didi-Huberman *Confronting Images*, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State U P, 2005), 139-228. Engaging closely with Freud’s conception of the symptom in *Die Traumdeutung*, Didi-Huberman describes its “semiotic specificity” as follows: “the symptom is a critical event, a singularity, an intrusion, but it is at the same time the implementation of a signifying structure, of a system that the event is charged with making surge forth, but partially, contradictorily, in such fashion that the meaning is expressed only as an enigma or as the “appearance ‘of something,’” not as a stable set of meanings. ... The symptom is, then, a two-faced semiotic entity: between radiance and dissimulation, between accident and sovereignty, between event and structure. That is why it presents itself above all as something that ‘obscures the situation,’ to quote Freud again...” (261).

¹⁵ Regarding analogy and notions of ontological connectedness in Rilke, see Kaja Silverman, *Flesh of My Flesh*, (Stanford: Stanford U P, 2008), 1-11, 40-41, 65.

¹⁶ Compare Jacques Derrida’s use of the term in discussing “lighting” (*Lichtung*) as a phenomenological metaphor for Heidegger, in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982), 132.

¹⁷ As Wolfgang Iser writes, “boundary crossing is the hallmark of fiction” (*The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: J. Hopkins U P, 1993), xv).

¹⁸ The German verb *durchstreichen* can best be translated as “cross out,” “scratch out,” or “strike through.” The *Durchstreich* – the nominalized form of the verb – is distinguished from a *Tilgung* [erasure] or *Löschung* [deletion] in that the *Streichung* leaves a physical trace on the paper, and that which was written is not annulled. Compare Uwe Wirth, “Logik der Streichung,” *Schreiben und Streichen. Zu einem Moment produktiver Negativität*, ed. Lucas Marco Gisi, Hubert Thüring und Irmgard M. Wirtz (Göttingen: Wallstein; Zürich: Chronos, 2011), 23-24). Throughout the dissertation, I will employ the German terms *Streichung* and *Durchstreich* not only because nominalized English equivalents (“the cross-out” or “the strike-through”) are highly awkward, but also because the structure of the German language allows a conceptual grasping of the *Durchstreich* as entity or

As a component of an assemblage of material participants, the person of the writer is never a stable entity in the act of writing, but is reconfigured and transformed through his or her interaction in this process. Rilke gestures to this when he describes the crisis he underwent ensuing from the process of writing the *Aufzeichnungen* in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salome from December 18, 1911, approximately a year and a half after the publication of the novel. Rilke questions whether Malte, der ja zum Teil aus meinen Gefahren gemacht ist, darin untergeht, gewissermaßen um mir den Untergang zu ersparen, oder ob ich erst recht mit diesen Aufzeichnungen in die Strömung geraten bin, die mich wegreißt und hinübertreibt. Kannst Du's begreifen, daß ich hinter diesem Buch recht wie ein Überlebender zurückgeblieben bin, im Innersten ratlos, unbeschäftigt, nicht mehr zu beschäftigen? Je weiter ich es zu Ende schrieb, desto stärker fühlte ich, daß es ein unbeschreiblicher Abschnitt sein würde, eine hohe Wasserscheide, wie ich mir immer sagte; aber nun erweist es sich, daß alles Gewässer nach der alten Seite abgeflossen ist und ich in eine Dürre hinuntergeh, die nicht anders wird.²⁰

Feeling that he barely survived the process of writing the *Aufzeichnungen*, Rilke doubted whether he would ever be able to write again and did not publish for another twelve years. I argue that the crisis he underwent in writing the *Aufzeichnungen* can be rooted largely in the material dimensions of the novel's composition, in Rilke's attempt to bring the various written fragments into the fixed, "final" form of a printed novel.²¹ In this sense, Rilke's composition of the *Aufzeichnung* was as much a kind

object that is not available in English. Regarding the notion of *Streichkultur*, or "culture of crossing out," as a specific phase in the history of *Schriftkultur* [written culture], see Gisi et al., *Schreiben und Streichen*, 10.

¹⁹ For recent perspectives on the way in which the media and material practices of writing shape the process of production and are reflected in literary works, see the volumes of the book series *Zur Genealogie des Schreibens* (München: Fink), as well as those of the series *Material Texts*, eds. Roger Chartier, Joseph Farrell, Anthony Grafton, Leah Price, Peter Stallybrass, Michael F. Suarez, S.J. (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P). In particular, see Davide Giuriato, ed., "*Schreibkugel ist ein Ding Gleich Mir: Von Eisen.*" *Schreibszenen im Zeitalter der Typoskripte* (Paderborn; München: Fink, 2005); Martin Stingelin, Davide Giuriato, and Sandro Zanetti, eds., "*Mir Ekelt vor diesem Tintenklecksenden Säkulum: Schreibszenen im Zeitalter der Manuskripte*" (München: W. Fink, 2004); Davide Giuriato, Martin Stingelin, and Sandro Zanetti, eds., "*System Ohne General*": *Schreibszenen im Digitalen Zeitalter* (München: Fink, 2006); and Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007).

²⁰ Hartmut Engelhardt, ed., *Materialien zu Rainer Maria Rilke Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 88. "...Who in part is made out of my experiences, goes under in it, in a sense to spare me the going under, or whether with these journals or whether I have really been thrown into the current that is tearing me away and driving me across. ... After this book I have been left behind just like a survivor, helpless in my inmost soul, no longer to be used[.] The nearer I came to the end of writing it, the more strongly I feel that it would be an indescribable division, a high watershed, as I kept telling myself; but now it turns out that all the water has flowed off toward the old side and I am going down into an aridity that will not change" (Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke 1906-1926*, trans. Jane Bannard Greene and M. D. Herter Norton (New York: Norton, 1972), 32-33).

²¹ Rilke in fact had such difficulty producing a fair copy of the manuscript so that his publisher, Anton Kippenberg, invited him to Leipzig to dictate the work orally. Regarding Rilke's particularly vexed relationship to the print medium, compare Irmgard M. Wirtz, "Schrift – Transkription –

of *Hand- or Papierarbeit* as it was *Kopfarbeit*.²² Examining the manuscript as a trace of Rilke's writing process in relation to the printed form of the *Aufzeichnungen*, we begin to see just how essential the material practices of writing were in the emergence of the novel.

As such, this dissertation offers a way of bridging a divide within contemporary literary studies, characteristic of a divide within the humanities more broadly. Roger Chartier has recently characterized this rift as one between frameworks emphasizing "the immateriality of works and the materiality of texts,"²³ that is between frameworks focusing on questions of signification, representation, and textual hermeneutics on the one hand, and those focusing on materiality, affect, and posthermeneutics on the other. This dissertation explores the entanglement of text and work, materiality and immateriality, by perpetually transgressing and problematizing the distinction between process and product, between text, *avant-texte*, and paratext.²⁴ I argue that we cannot understand the semantic dynamics of the novel by taking the manuscript to be separate from the so-called "final" work. Rather, I insist that it is still *present* even in print editions of the novel. I will show that the materiality of writing haunts the printed text of the *Aufzeichnungen* to such an extent that the only way to understand the novel is by returning to the handwritten manuscript.

Transforming a binary into a dialectic, I seek to complicate the generally accepted, but not unproblematic, distinction between the "immateriality of works and the materiality of texts" by focusing on three main kinds of materiality that interact during the process of writing: the materiality of the signifier, the materiality of the manuscript, and the materiality of the body.²⁵ These discourse constellations each have their own genealogies, which are to some degree interconnected, yet are often compartmentalized in today's theoretical landscape. In considering the materiality of the

Typographie. Zur Gemäßigt Mimetischen Faksimile-Edition Von Rilkes *Malte-Fragment*," *editio* 26 (2012): 145-6.

²² Compare Thomas Richter, "'diese amorphe Sprache' – Versuch einer Systematisierung der Streichungen in Rilkes Entwurfshandschrift zu den Aufzeichnungen des *Malte Laurids Brigge*," *Schreiben und Streichen*, ed. Gisi et. al., 176.

²³ Chartier ix. Chartier here inverts the distinction between Work and Text posed by Roland Barthes, whose writes that "the work is held in the hand, the text is held in language" ("From Work to Text," *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 57). The "work" for Barthes is concrete object: the printed book, the manuscript, the e-book; the notion of the text as a singular object becomes replaced by a notion of textuality as an infinite network of signification or a fabric of citations. See also Barthes, "Death of the Author," *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 50. Derrida similarly argues that there is no such thing as an "ideal text," or a literary "work" as an entity that endures as a fixed, finite entity, transcending any particular printed (or handwritten) manifestation. The text is always rooted in the concrete materiality of the signifier. See Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern U P, 1973), 48-59, 75-77.

²⁴ Regarding the notion of the *avant-texte*, see Almuth Grésillon, *Literarische Handschriften: Einführung in die "critique génétique,"* trans. Frauke Rother and Wolfgang Günther (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), 26-28. Regarding the paratext, see Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1997).

²⁵ Important precursors to my conceptualization of the materialities of writing are Rüdiger Campe's notion of the *Schreibszene* as an "ensemble" of language, instrumentality, and gesture in "Die Schreibszene. Schreiben," 760, as well as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer's volume *Materialities of Communication*, trans. William Whobrey (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1994).

signifier, the material form of letters and words, I draw on Derrida's critique of its general "effacement" within the history of Western philosophy and semiotics.²⁶ Yet writing also always proceeds through the body, as Roland Barthes emphasized;²⁷ proceeding from Barthes, I consider a range of more recent discourses on the body, from affect theory (Deleuze²⁸) and third-wave feminism (Butler²⁹) to contemporary new materialist (Barad, Bennett) and post-hermeneutic theories (Gumbrecht³⁰). In approaching the materiality of the manuscript, I draw on work from media theory, *critique génétique*,³¹ New Philology,³² and History of the Book. The production of text always

²⁶ See Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern U P, 1973), 48-59, 75-77. In responding to the Saussurean distinction between signifier and signified, Derrida argued that Saussure overlooked the materiality of the signifier. Saussure's concept of the signifier was essentially an "ideal" signifier, the form of the signifier that transcends any individual incarnation or specific incident of deployment. This implies for Derrida an "effacement" of the signifier. The signifier, Derrida argued, does not enable direct access to the signified. Derrida asserted that all signification happens through the materiality of the signifier, which thus physically shaping the meaning.

²⁷ Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 80. Regarding the centrality of the body for poststructuralist thought going back to Nietzsche, see Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author. Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: U of Edinburgh P, 1998), 30, 57-60. Regarding the often over-looked significance of the body for Derrida, see Jones Irwin, *Derrida and the Writing of the Body* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). The centrality of the body to the process of writing in turn becomes critical in poststructuralist thought, as Burke writes, "the ideas of writing the body, and the body writing, dominate the discourse" (58). In *Sade Fourier Loyola*, Barthes writes that "the pleasure of the Text also includes the amicable return of the author. Of course, the author who returns is not the one identified by our institutions (history and courses and literature, philosophy, church discourse); he is not even the biographical hero...he is not a (civil, moral) person, he is a body...For if, through a twisted dialectic, the Text, destroyer of all subject, contains a subject to love, that subject is dispersed, *somewhat like the ashes we strew into the wind after death ...*" (Burke 30).

²⁸ Of particularly relevance to my work are Deleuze's notions of figuration and sensation in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002).

²⁹ See especially Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: on the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

³⁰ See Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford U P, 2004); Dieter Mersch, *Posthermeneutik* (Berlin: Akademie, 2010); and Tanja Prokic, Anne Kolb and Oliver Jahraus, eds., *Wider die Repräsentation. Präsenz/ & Erzählen in Literatur, Film und Bildender Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011).

³¹ See Grésillon, *Literarische Handschriften*, and Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden, eds., *Genetic Criticism. Texts and Avant-textes* (Philadelphia: U of Penn P, 2004).

³² See the canonical issue of *Speculum*, including Stephen Nichols's introduction "Philology in Manuscript Culture" *Speculum* 65.1 (1990): 1-10; Karl Stackmann, "Neue Philologie?," *Modernes Mittelalter. Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche*, ed. Joachim Heinzle (Frankfurt am Main; Leipzig: Insel, 1994), 398-427; Joachim Bumke, "Der unfeste Text. Überlegungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textkritik der höfischen Epik im 13. Jahrhundert," *"Aufführung" und "Schrift" in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler, 1996), 118-129; Kathryn Starkey and Haiko Wandhoff, "Mouvance - Varianz - Performanz: Die *New Philology* und der unfeste Text,"

happens through the hands that write or type,³³ through the material technologies of paper, pen, and ink,³⁴ or the keyboard and the screen, which can be considered “extensions” of the writer’s body.³⁵

In order to coordinate these various genealogies and to unfold my own theory of writing as an assemblage or intra-action of different materialities – a model that has assumed radically varied forms for different writers in different historical periods and media configurations – I focus on Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. Working closely with a single text enables me to accommodate intensive close reading of this rich novel with its manuscript history in order to provide a thorough and expansive analysis of just how profoundly the materialities of writing shapes the immaterial “content” of the novel. However, the dissertation points beyond this single work and its manuscript history, proposing a fundamental methodology for dealing with the relationship between manuscripts and printed texts as constitutive forms of what we call “the” literary work.

The *Aufzeichnungen* as Case Study

Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge, known in English translation most commonly as *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, was published in 1910. Generically, the work is most similar in its form of the epistolary novel or the *Tagebuch-Roman* (“journal or diary novel”):³⁶ it consists of a collection of seventy-one *Aufzeichnungen*, or written sketches,³⁷ composed by the young poet Malte

Walther von der Vogelweide und die Literaturtheorie. Neun Modellanalysen von “Nemt, frouwe, disen kranz,” ed. Lydia Myklautsch and Johannes Keller (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2008), 45-68.

³³ Against Heidegger’s view that the use of machinery threatens *Handwerk*, Derrida notes that “when we write ‘by hand’ we are not in the time before technology” – for a pen is of course also a machine or technology – and that “having recourse to the typewriter or computer doesn’t bypass the hand.” In Jacques Derrida, “The Word Processor,” *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Palo Alto: Stanford U P, 2005), 21.

³⁴ In Rilke’s case, it is clear that the materiality of his writing implements and the material form of the work were important. See Davide Giuriato, “Paper and Poetics,” trans. Paul Bowman, *Configurations* 18 (2010): 211-229.

³⁵ Regarding media as technological extensions of the human person, compare Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: the Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962), 4-5, 35, 55, 138. In considering the interrelationship between these domains of materiality, Derrida’s description of a fluid boundary between the writer’s life and work is particularly evocative: “This divisible borderline traverses two different ‘bodies’, the corpus [*corpus*] and the body [*corps*], in accordance with laws we are only beginning to catch sight of” (Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronell (New York: Schocken, 1986), 5-6. Cited in Burke, *Death and Return*, 57).

³⁶ See Lorna Martens, “Reliable Narration: Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*,” *The Diary Novel* (New York: Cambridge U P, 1985), 156-172; and Ulrich Fülleborn, “‘Werther’ – ‘Hyperion’ – ‘Malte Laurids Brigge.’ Prosalyrik und Roman,” *Studien zur Deutschen Literatur. Festschrift für Adolf Beck zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, eds. Ulrich Fülleborn and Johannes Krogoll (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979), 86-102.

³⁷ The verb *aufzeichnen* designates the act of sketching, recording, or writing down. In light of the influence of the visual arts on Rilke’s writing, it is particularly significant that the root of this term, *zeichnen*, means to draw or to sketch.

Laurids Brigge, a member of an aristocratic Danish family who has rejected his social position and ventured to Paris. Overwhelmed by the experience of the modern metropolis, confronted at every corner by signs of death,³⁸ Malte's old ways of viewing and understanding the world collapse and his "reality" begins to fluctuate. Something beyond language and form, unknowable and ungraspable, continually threatens, erupting from within the fissures in the stable surfaces he encounters. Malte begins to notice a new, abject class of human lurking in the shadows of Paris, on the margin of the human symbolic order; he calls these figures the *Fortgeworfenen*, the outcasts or discarded ones, and increasingly feels that he belongs to them. Bombarded by sensory impressions against which he has no protection,³⁹ Malte does the only thing he can: "Ich habe etwas getan gegen die Furcht. Ich habe die ganze Nacht gesessen und geschrieben...."⁴⁰

In the space of Malte's writing, emerging through his fragmented subjectivity,⁴¹ the text erodes the distinctions between Malte's perceptions of Paris, his childhood memories, and the pieces of fictional stories and historical events that he weaves together such that the boundaries between them dissolve.⁴² Malte's *Aufzeichnungen* are therefore products of his *Sebenlernen*, his attempts to penetrate through the ruins of old worldviews and see in a new way and to find a language, a mode of narration, with which he can capture this new mode of seeing.⁴³ Malte's writing explores the

³⁸ On the continual appearance of death in the *Aufzeichnungen*, see Margret Eifler "Existentielle Verwandlung in Rilkes Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge," *The German Quarterly* 45.1 (1972): 110. On death in Rilke more generally, see Maurice Blanchot, *L'espace littéraire (The Space of Literature)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968).

³⁹ This aspect of Malte's experience is interpreted with reference to Georg Simmel's "Die Großstadt und das Geistesleben" and the notion that the overstimulation of the subject in the modern metropolis leads to a degradation of the subject's so-called *Reizschutz*, or protective covering of the ego, developed by Freud in *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*. See for example Andreas Huyssen, "Urban Experience and the Modernist Dream of a New Language," *A New History of German Literature*, ed., David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan, and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Cambridge, MA: Belknap P of Harvard U P, 2004), 679.

⁴⁰ KA 3 464. "I did something to counteract the fear. I sat and wrote the whole night" (trans. JH).

⁴¹ See Walter Sokel, "Zwischen Existenz und Weltinnenraum: zum Prozeß der Ent-Ichung im Malte Laurids Brigge," *Zu Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. Egon Schwarz (Stuttgart: Klett, 1983), 90-108.

⁴² I am fully convinced by readings (for example Huyssen, "Urban Experience," among others) that link Malte's experiences of the modern metropolis to psychoanalytical crises (often via Simmel's "Die Großstadt und das Geistesleben"), and that in turn shape or are reflected in the fragmentary form of the novel. My focus, however, will be on the degree to which the nature of Malte's reality, the space-time of the textual reality of the novel, *is* that of writing in general. E. F. Hoffmann has suggested that the apparently fragmentary form of the novel can be divided into three main parts: perceptions of Paris, corresponding roughly to *Aufzeichnungen* 1-26; childhood memories, roughly *Aufz.* 27-48; and attempts to narrate, *Aufz.* 49-71. These major major components of the novel, however, are also fundamental to the process of writing more generally. Regarding the radical openness of boundaries during the process of writing, compare Hubert Thüring, "Streichen als Moment," 56.

⁴³ Compare Judith Ryan's discussion of Malte's process of *Sebenlernen* in "Hypothetisches Erzählen: Zur Funktion von Phantasie und Einbildung in Rilkes 'Malte Laurids Brigge,'" *Materialien zu Rainer Maria Rilke 'Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge,'* ed. Hartmut Engelhardt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 250-255. Regarding Malte's notion of "new seeing" [*Neues Sehen*] in the context of the dissolution of facades, see Sokel 100-101.

spaces of possibility, of fluctuation and transformation, which are opened through the collapse of existing structures. We see this continually on the basic grammatical level of the text; the indicative, the mood used to grasp everyday actuality, perpetually opens into the space of the subjunctive, that hypothetical mood of uncertainty and potentiality.⁴⁴

The world of the *Aufzeichnungen* is a world in which boundaries of all sorts disintegrate: boundaries between subjectivity and objectivity, interior and exterior, past, present and future, reality and possibility, perception and imagination. I will argue that the radical instability and fluctuation of reality in the *Aufzeichnungen* not only reflects, but is also entangled within the material transformation of the novel during the six years in which it was composed. Furthermore, the fluctuation in the *Aufzeichnungen* can be rooted in the fundamental openness of texts during the process of their emergence:

Through the possibility that the text could be expanded or edited at any moment, perpetually and subject to whim, the process of writing is potentially endless.... In this way, a subject- and text-oriented space-time of indeterminate coordinates emerges: in each moment, the boundaries between subject and text, inner and outer, beginning and end, self and other, imagination and perception, past and present, presence and absence can, in principle, shift, dissolve, or be drawn anew, more or less explicitly, more or less performatively, more or less reflexively.⁴⁵

Highly performative and self-reflexive about the dissolution of boundaries during the act of writing, the *Aufzeichnungen* occupy the “more” end of the spectrum drawn above, making it a particularly provocative and productive specimen to study how the materialities of writing manifest themselves in the content of the work.

In this light, the specifics of Rilke’s writing process are also significant. Writing the *Aufzeichnungen* became so tortured for Rilke that he was unable to finish a clean copy of the manuscript, to arrive at a fixed, final form. In order to produce a typescript, Rilke’s publisher, Anton Kippenberg, ultimately called him to Leipzig to dictate the work orally to a secretary. The figure of Malte, like the Rilke of the *Aufzeichnungen*, is also a writer who endures a deep crisis of language and narration during the process of writing. In this respect, as in many others, the text can be read as a semi-autobiography. Much of that which is recorded by Malte resonates with Rilke’s own experiences in Paris and his childhood memories;⁴⁶ often referred to as a fictional or thinly-veiled

⁴⁴ On the “subjunctive style” of the *Aufzeichnungen*, compare Ryan, “Hypothetisches Erzählen.”

⁴⁵ Hubert Thüring, “Streichen als Moment produktiver Negativität,” *Schreiben und Streichen*, ed. Gisi et. al., 56. Translation JH. “...Durch die Möglichkeit des jederzeitigen und beliebigen Fort- und Umschreibens wird der Schreibprozess potenziell unabschließbar.... Auf diese Weise bildet sich eine subjekt- und schriftbezogene Raum-Zeit von unbestimmten Koordinaten heraus: Die Grenzen zwischen Subjekt und Schrift, innen und außen, Anfang und Ende, Eigenem und Fremden, Einbildung und Wahrnehmung, Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Präsenz und Absenz können im Schreibprozess prinzipiell in jedem Moment verschoben, aufgelöst oder neu gezogen werden und dies mehr oder weniger explizit, mehr oder weniger performativ, mehr oder weniger reflektiert.”

⁴⁶ This is the case for some of Malte’s descriptions of Paris that are transposed almost verbatim from Rilke’s letters. Most relevant is Rilke’s letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé from July 18, 1903, reproduced in Engelhardt 23-31. Many of Malte’s childhood memories directly resonate with Rilke’s. See Brigitte von Witzleben, *Untersuchungen zu Rainer Maria Rilkes “Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge”: Studien zu den Quellen und zur Textüberlieferung* (Vaasa: Universität Vaasa, Institut für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 1996), 22-24.

autobiography, the original English translations were actually titled *The Journal of My Other Self*.⁴⁷ A number of the *Aufzeichnungen* comprising the novel, in fact, were copied almost verbatim from Rilke's personal correspondences.⁴⁸

The fact that Rilke at some points rejected any identification with the character Malte problematizes these connections between Rilke's and Malte's biographies. He writes, for example, that "Malte Laurids hat sich, seit Sie nicht von ihm gehört haben, zu einer Gestalt entwickelt, die, ganz von mir abgelöst, Existenz und Eigenart gewann, die mich, je mehr sie sich von mir unterschied, desto stärker interessierte."⁴⁹ This statement resonates with the tradition, common since New Criticism and post-structuralism, of separating the narrator from the author; as Barthes writes, "narrator and characters...are essentially 'paper beings'; the (material) author of a narrative is in no way to be confused with the narrator of that narrative."⁵⁰ The biographical connections between Malte and Rilke are at times so strong, however, especially in cases where Rilke copies almost verbatim from his personal letters into the novel, transforming his own words into Malte's, that the novel challenges us to probe the boundary between the fictional universe occupied by the narrator and the actuality within which the author (and readers) dwell. In doing so, I return to and problematize a model of post-structural analysis that is too often misunderstood and that now seems to lack some of the instrumentality and rigor it once promised.⁵¹

The ontological distinction between Rilke and Malte becomes particularly unstable when we trace the language of the novel and of the manuscript back to the hands that write. In the printed work, we take for granted that the words presented in the text have been uttered by, or rather *penned* by, Malte. Yet when we return to the manuscript, it becomes unclear: could the scratches on paper produced by Rilke's hand also be considered, in a sense to be explored, to be traces of *Malte's* handwriting as well? While the separation of the narrator from the author, of the narrative universe from the author's world, is relatively easy to maintain in dealing with printed works, this distinction becomes blurry when examining the manuscript. The discourse of the printed text is uttered – or

⁴⁷ Regarding the autobiographical in the *Aufzeichnungen*, compare Lorna Martens, "Autobiographical Narrative and the Use of Metaphor: Rilke's Techniques in *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*," *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* 9.2 (1985): 229-249; Linda Haverty Rugg, "A Self at Large in the Hall of Mirrors: Rilke's *Malte Laurids Brigge* as Autobiographical Act," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 29.1 (1993): 43-54.

⁴⁸ See for example Engelhardt 23-35. For commentary on the integration of personal letters into the novel, see Ernst Fedor Hoffmann, "Zum dichterischen Verfahren in Rilkes 'Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge,'" *Materialien zu Rainer Maria Rilke Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, 214ff.

⁴⁹ Letter to Countess Manon zu Solms-Laubach, April 11, 1910, in Engelhardt 82. "Since you last heard from him, Malte Laurids has developed into a form, which, quite detached from me, has gained in existence and uniqueness, and which interested me more and more the more it distinguished itself from me" (translation JH).

⁵⁰ "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 111.

⁵¹ Regarding the poststructuralist conceptions of authorship and their reception, see Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Third Edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008 (1992)) as well as Michael North, "Authorship and Autography," *PMLA* 116.5 (2001): 1377-85; Clara Claiborne Park, "Author! Author! Reconstructing Roland Barthes," *The Hudson Review* 43.3 (1990): 377-98; Benjamin Widiss, *Obscure Invitations: The Persistence of the Author in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (Stanford: Stanford U P, 2011), 1-41.

written, in the case of the *Aufzeichnungen* – by the narrator, but what about the *Durchgestrichene* passages in the manuscript? Does the *avant-texte* also belong to the narrator’s discourse? And if this is the case, does the materiality of the manuscript also then make its way into the fictional universe?

To pose the question more directly at Barthes, if the narrator of a narrative is never to be confused with the author of that narrative, at what point in the material generation of the narrative does the narrator emerge as an entity fully autonomous from the author? The isolation of the author from the narrative universe becomes even more uncertain when we consider writing as an assemblage of intra-acting materialities, in which the material author is a participant. Through his material manipulation, as component of the assemblage, the author becomes entangled within the text, which emerges physically through various manuscript stages. In that the textual representation emerges *through* the interaction of these materialities, and if, as I explore in this dissertation, the materialities of writing remain present in the “final” work, then something of the author also remains in the physical text and within the narrative universe.

Returning to the Manuscript, Real and Virtual

This dissertation explores various ways in which the manuscript and the materialities of writing are still present in the printed work. In several unusual moments, in fact, the printed text explicitly references a manuscript on which the novel is based: six passages are bracketed in parentheses and annotated with the footnote “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben” [written in the margin of the manuscript].⁵² Yet to what “manuscript” do these footnotes refer? A fictional manuscript, or the real manuscript? On the one hand, these references could be interpreted as traces of the activity of a fictional editor, who compiled various manuscript fragments into the form of a novel.⁵³ However, in comparison to the fictional editor of Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, for example, the fictional editor of the *Aufzeichnungen* never enters directly into the representation, never comments on his activity; he remains, if he is presumed to exist, in the shadows.

These footnoted passages, however, not only refer to a fictional manuscript, but also, peculiarly, to the real manuscript, the “Berner Taschenbuch.” In the “Berner Taschenbuch,” almost

⁵² KA 3 531, 587, 592, 603, 617, 629. It remains unclear when in the process of composing the novel the decision to include these footnotes was made. The first passage bearing this footnote (KA 3 531), is not preserved in any extant manuscript fragment. For the latter five examples, the passages footnoted in the printed text are integrated continuously with the surrounding text in the “Berner Taschenbuch,” demarcated only by parentheses or square brackets in the case of KA 3 587 (BT 86), KA 3 592 (BT 97-8), and KA 3 629 (BT 155). In the case of KA 3 603 (BT 114), the text is demarcated in pencil, yet has also been crossed through with a large X; furthermore, some sections within this footnoted passage have been deleted in print, some lines of which are legible, some of which are illegible. The passage on KA 3 617 (BT 136-37) is also completely integrated with the surrounding text and not separated from it by parentheses or other markers whatsoever. Comparing the manuscript to the printed text reveals a great deal of material variance between the real-existing manuscript, the “Berner Taschenbuch,” and the implied manuscript referenced by the footnotes “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben.”

⁵³ Regarding the genre of the “manuscript fiction,” see Uwe Wirth, *Die Geburt des Autors aus dem Geist der Herausgeberfiktion: Editoriale Rahmung im Roman um 1800, Wieland, Goethe, Brentano, Jean Paul und E.T.A. Hoffmann* (München: Fink, 2008).

all of the passages that become bracketed and annotated in the printed text are similarly separated from the primary text of the manuscript, often by parentheses.

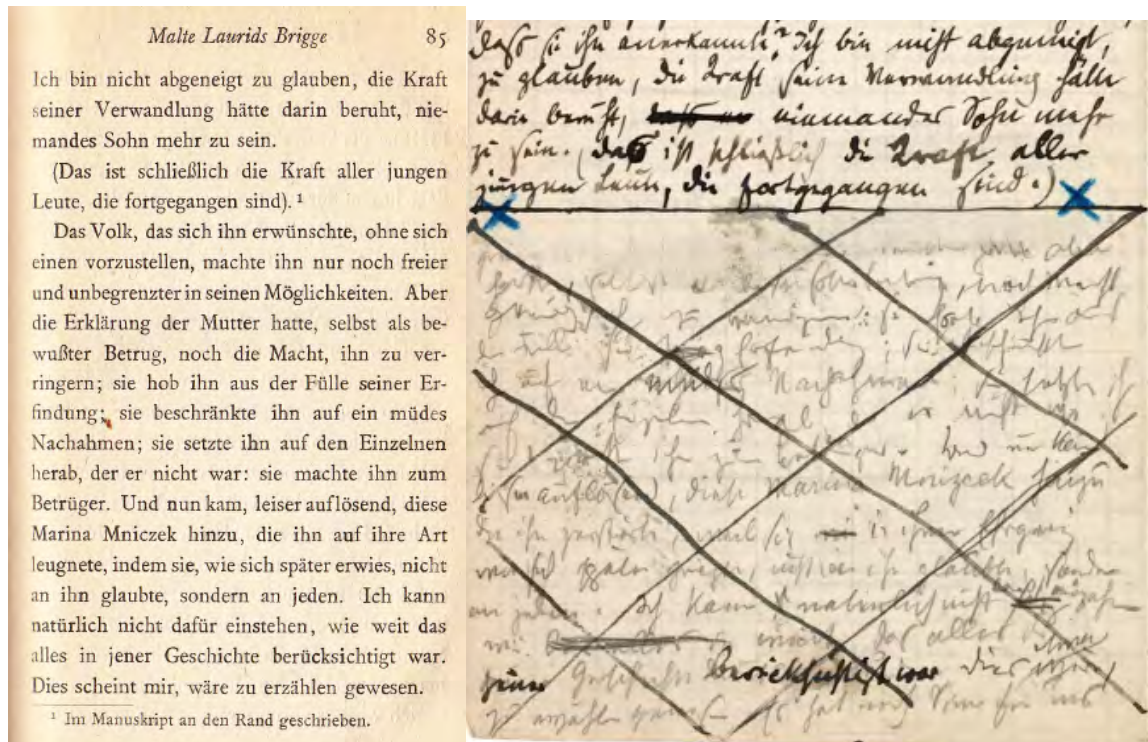


Figure 2. ED 85,⁵⁴ BT 86.

For example, in the above image from the first edition of the novel, we find that the sentence “Das ist schließlich die Kraft aller jungen Leute, die fortgegangen sind” occupies its own paragraph, is marked in parentheses, and annotated with the footnote “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben.” In the “Berner Taschenbuch,” the sentence that appears just above the dark line and crossed-out section of the page is also marked off with parentheses. And yet the sentence in the “Berner Taschenbuch” is not written “in the margin,” as the footnote indicates. There are, in fact, no “margins” in the “Berner Taschenbuch;” the pages are filled to their very edges with text, and anything we might otherwise consider marginal commentary is integrated directly into the primary text. In this way, the footnote creates a distinction between the actual manuscript and a fictional manuscript imagined by the work. Yet at the same time, the appearance of the “Berner Taschenbuch” is also reproduced in the printed text; the typographical layout of the passage, separated by parentheses, forms a partially iconic image (in the Peircean sense) of the “Berner Taschenbuch.” As such, the reference of these footnotes is unstable: they refer both to a fictional manuscript evoked by the work, but also to the real manuscript, the “Berner Taschenbuch.”

The inclusion of footnotes that index a manuscript is the most explicit evocation of what I call the *virtual manuscript* underlying the printed work.⁵⁵ I locate this virtual manuscript *between* the real

⁵⁴ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Leipzig: Insel, 1910).

⁵⁵ Compare Jacob Haubenreich, “Das virtuelle Manuskript: Rilkes Handschrift und die Auflösung der Druckseite,” *Diesseits des Virtuellen. Handschriften im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Urs Bütter, Mario Gotterbarm, Frederik Schneeweiss, Stefanie Seidel, Marc Seiffarth (forthcoming). According to Deleuze’s definition of virtuality, virtual objects are objects that do not exist physically, but

manuscript, the “Berner Taschenbuch,” and the fictive or imagined manuscript of a manuscript fiction. The evocation of a virtual manuscript, however, is paradigmatic of a broader phenomenon, for it is not only an imagined manuscript, a fictional physical document, that is projected, but far more the materiality and physical act of writing itself. As I explore throughout this dissertation, the text of the *Aufzeichnungen* undoes the fixity, the illusory wholeness, of its printed form, pointing beyond its boundaries, allowing a virtual materiality – the materialities of writing – to spill into the space of the representation.

Entstehung and *Entstehungsgeschichte*: the Material Emergence of the *Aufzeichnungen*

Whereas traditional *Entstehungsgeschichte* has often been disregarded as irrelevant to literary theoretical scholarship, the *Entstehungsgeschichte* of the *Aufzeichnungen*, as well as the material form of the “Berner Taschenbuch” and Rilke’s physical process of writing the novel, are actually essential to consider in unfolding the theoretical framework of this dissertation. In bridging *Entstehungsgeschichte* and interpretive textual analysis – looking at the materiality of the text as part of textual analysis – *Entstehungsgeschichte* takes on a central, but entirely reimagined role. The *Entstehungsgeschichte* that this dissertation practices is not teleologically oriented toward the production of a final text⁵⁶ and theorizes *Entstehung*, emergence, in terms of a dialectic or circulation between materiality and semantic structure.

To date, there is little scholarship that offers any theoretical investigation of the materiality of the novel’s production.⁵⁷ While “zahlreiche Durchstreichungen” are commonly mentioned in editorial commentaries on the novel, a thorough examination of the significance of these *Durchstreichungen* for our understanding of the novel has until now not been offered.

We know relatively little about the *Entstehungsgeschichte* of the *Aufzeichnungen*.⁵⁸ Scholars have identified four primary “manuscript phases.” The first phase is comprised of a broad network of written material – source studies, excerpts from poems, notes written in various notebooks, which became reworked into the *Aufzeichnungen* of the novel. An older larger manuscript [*ältere größere Manuskript*], to which Rilke refers to in a letter to Anton Kippenberg on October 20, 1909,⁵⁹

nevertheless someone or something. The word is derived from the French *virtuel*, i.e. capable of producing an effect. The virtual is thus not “real” in the common sense, but also not merely fictive or imaginary. Deleuze develops this idea of the virtual *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966). See also Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke U P, 2002), 21.

⁵⁶ Here the work of “New Philology” provides a point of departure. See n32.

⁵⁷ Several articles on the project of the facsimile edition the “Berner Taschenbuch” have been published to date: Thomas Richter, “Projekt einer textgenetischen Edition von Rilkes *Berner Taschenbuch*,” *Passim. Bulletin des Schweizerischen Literaturarchivs* 5 (2009): 6-7; Thomas Richter, “Textgenetische Edition der Entwurfshandschrift zu Rilkes *Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* – Ein Werkstattbericht,” *Passim. Bulletin des Schweizerischen Literaturarchivs* 6 (2010): 6-7. Thomas Richter, “diese amorphe Sprache,” *Schreiben und Streichen*, 175-194; Irmgard M. Wirtz, “Schrift – Transkription – Typographie. Zur Gemäßigt Mimetischen Faksimile-Edition Von Rilkes *Malte-Fragment*,” *editio* 26 (2012): 145–155.

⁵⁸ The most detailed accounts are given in KA 3, 867-878, Engel 319-322, and BT 226-234.

⁵⁹ “Von meinem Prosabuch ist die Hälfte da; vielleicht etwas mehr. Nun steht der Text in kleinen Taschenbüchern und einem älteren größeren Manuscript und ist schlecht zu übersehen; nicht das

comprises the second phase. This manuscript is no longer extant; most likely, it was reworked, passages were rewritten and recombined, and new passages were composed into what comprises the third manuscript phase, a collection of small notebooks containing the novel, to which Rilke also to in the letter, but of which only the “Berner Taschenbuch” remains. The final manuscript phase was the typescript, which Rilke dictated between the twelfth and twenty-seventh of January 1910 in Leipzig and which is also no longer extant, presumably destroyed during World War II. The “Berner Taschenbuch” is thus a small fragment of work’s material production.

The “Berner Taschenbuch” is a cloth-bound notebook of approximately one hundred double-sided pages that measure approximately 14 x 8 cm x 1cm. As an *Arbeitshandschrift*, it is filled with corrections – words, lines, passages, and entire pages that have been crossed out – as well as “alternate endings” to the novel, the so-called *Tolstoi-Schlüsse*. In some cases, the *durchgestrichene* passages of text remain legible in the manuscript: a single line of ink slices through a line of text, or a passage is marked out with a grid of crisscrossing lines.⁶⁰ In other cases, lines or passages are furiously expunged and beneath which, what once was remains uncannily present in its absence. The text is written primarily in ink, yet some passages are pencil, and colored pencil was used to indicate that certain passages should be moved to different locations in the text. In some cases, the passages in pencil are preliminary sketches for passages composed immediately thereafter in ink. In other cases, the drafts in pencil become part of the final printed text itself. As noted, the pages of the manuscript are filled to the very edges, almost as if the text is threatening to overflow the physical form of the notebook. Unable to fill the space of a margin, Rilke’s meta-discursive commentary is interwoven with the primary discourse itself.

The “mosaic” quality of the novel, often commented upon in scholarship, is underscored when we return to the manuscript. In this way, the manuscript visualizes and materializes not only structuralist notions of syntagmatic and paradigmatic substitution, but also the poststructuralist notion of writing as *bricolage*.⁶¹ Drafts and fragments of other texts and poems are interwoven from time to time into the texture of the work. In certain passages, chunks of text, like pieces of a mosaic, are “lifted” and moved around until they “fit” appropriately. As such, the manuscript is of a hybrid nature: a site where previously drafted fragments are transferred, but also transformed, as well as a site where, through the process of writing, of the hand guiding the pen across paper, new realms of meaning were shaped into existence.

allein: im vergangenen Winter in zunehmender Erschöpfung und Unpäßlichkeit mühsam weiterarbeitend, habe ich...” (Engel 319). Rilke goes on to discuss in the letter that he had given fragments of the different text to different people, and now needed to make a “gleichmäßige durchgehende Abschrift... Sie fehlt mir immer mehr,” by copying the fragments into a clean unified copy. Ultimately unable to produce a complete *Abschrift*, Rilke was invited by Kippenberg to Leipzig to dictate the work orally, which he did between the twelfth and twenty-seventh of January 1910 (*ibid.* 320).

⁶⁰ See Thomas Richter, “diese amorphe Sache,” for a systematization of the *Streichungen* in the “Berner Taschenbuch.”

⁶¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss originally employs the notion of *bricolage* in describing mythical discourse in *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962). Genette expands upon Lévi-Strauss’s usage in “Structuralism and Literary Criticism,” *Figures of Literary Discourse* (New York: Columbia U P, 1982), 3–25. Derrida employs the metaphor to describe all discourse in “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1997), 278–294.

Significant changes were made to the “Berner Taschenbuch” in producing the *Erstdruck*. Print editions of the work contain seventy-one *Aufzeichnungen*, often referred to by number in scholarship on the novel. In the manuscript, there are radical differences in punctuation and in inconsistent divisions of the text into paragraphs and *Aufzeichnungen*. Unlike the printed editions, which separate *Aufzeichnungen* by a break in the text, *Aufzeichnungen* in the manuscript are often divided by a single line. In some cases, when an *Aufzeichnung* ends mid-line, the line of ink separating one *Aufzeichnung* from another follows the contour of the text, and the next *Aufzeichnung* begins on the same line of text:

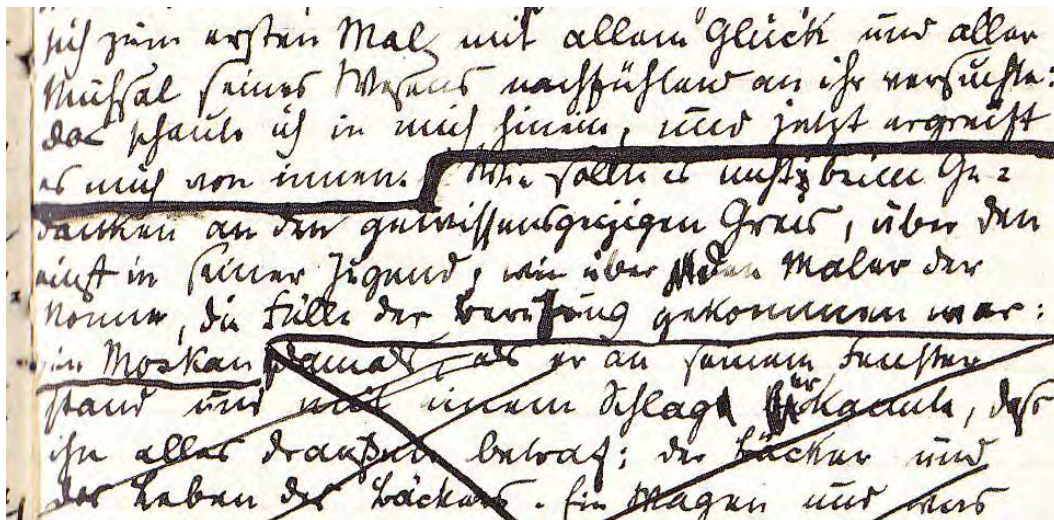


Figure 3. BT 175.

The last *Aufzeichnung* of the novel, Malte’s reinterpretation of the biblical story of the prodigal son, is not the last passage of the manuscript. The text containing the final *Aufzeichnung* is followed directly by twenty more pages of text, which were published in Ernst Zinn’s edition of the *Sämtliche Werke* (1955-66) as the so-called *Tolstoi-Schlüsse*, which Zinn interpreted as the “original” endings of the novel. These twenty pages of the manuscript are so fragmentary, so covered in *Durchstreichungen*, that it is difficult to retrace Zinn’s steps in piecing together a printed version of the text. His decisions to delete certain passages and include others appear largely arbitrary. In most contemporary German-language editions, these text fragments are included in an appendix. They are not included in translations of the novel. As such, these passages retain somewhat of a *Zwischen-* or in-between status, as *avant-texte* made *paratext* that is simultaneously part of “the” text.

The novel was originally published in two volumes, the “Berner Taschenbuch” roughly corresponding to the second volume. Based on Rilke’s accounts of the various pieces of manuscript, we can presume that there was probably also a *Taschenbuch* containing the first part of the novel, which is no longer extant.⁶² The volumes of the *Erstdruck* are only slightly larger in size than the “Berner Taschenbuch” itself; the area of the printed page occupied by text, moreover, is approximately the same dimension as the text-covered pages of the “Berner Taschenbuch.” In this way, the printed text becomes an icon (in the Peircean sense) of the manuscript; together, the two volumes form an icon of the two original *Taschenbücher* that contained the manuscript.

Until the recent publication of the facsimile edition of the “Berner Taschenbuch,” access to the manuscript was, of course, extremely limited. Now available in reproduction, the increased

⁶² Engel 320.

access to the manuscript will not only open up new avenues of inquiry into the novel and the process of its composition,⁶³ but also has the potential to radically transform the way we read the work. In the same way that encountering any paratextual element – such as the *Anhang* containing alternate beginnings and endings to the novel – changes the way we engage with what is more traditionally considered the “finished work,” so too might the manuscript facsimile. We may choose to disregard it, but we cannot unread it either. Increased access to the manuscript also enables us to problematize or alter our image of Rilke, one of the most mythologized modern writers (who participated in his own myth construction). Returning to the manuscript, it becomes evident that Rilke – or the Rilke of the *Aufzeichnungen*, at least – was as much a *Papierarbeiter* as a *Kopfarbeiter*.⁶⁴

The materiality of the *Schreibzeug* and the visual appearance of his texts were also particularly significant for Rilke.⁶⁵ Rilke was actively involved in planning the layout for his collections of poetry as well as for the *Aufzeichnungen*.⁶⁶ In letters to his publisher Kippenberg, Rilke discussed the significance of the materiality of the printed book – layout, paper, color of type, etc. – and the way it influenced his relationship to the work:

... seit zwei Tagen ist das Postpaket da; nun gibt es also wirklich die “Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge.” Ich habe das Buch viel in der Hand; ich habe es besehen, befühlt, aufgeschlagen an vielen Stellen, schließlich ganz gelesen....

Ich denke bei alledem an den grünen Pappband vor allem; die geheftete Ausgabe ist vorzüglich in ihrer Art; aber, das werden Sie verstehen, die andere geht mir am nächsten: i s t [sic] für mich das Buch.⁶⁷

In keeping with Rilke’s deep engagement with the visual arts and the appearance of his texts, I will pay particular attention to the significance of the *visuality* of the manuscript.⁶⁸ This is

⁶³ It should be emphasized that a facsimile edition of the manuscript, while offering different information in a different form than the print edition of the novel, by no means offers unmediated access to the manuscript.

⁶⁴ Richter, “diese amorphe Sache,” 176.

⁶⁵ Giuriato, “Paper and Poetics.” Regarding Rilke’s use of the German *Kurrentschrift* vs. Latin script, see Richter, “Textgenetische Edition,” 6.

⁶⁶ In a letter from 19. August 1907, Rilke discusses his preferences for the type of paper, typeface, layout, and binding of the *Neue Gedichte* (Engelhardt 26-27).

⁶⁷ 9. June 1910, *ibid.* 88-89. “The postal packet has been here for two days; now, the “Aufzeichnung des Malte Laurids Brigge” really do exist. I often have the book in my hand; I have looked at it, felt it, opened it to many passages, finally read it entirely.... I am thinking in particular of the green paperback; the bound edition is wonderful in its own way; but the other one, you will understand, is closer to me: it *is* the book, for me.” In another letter from November 8, 1908, Rilke also comments on the material form of the book: “unser neues Buch ist da, und ich habe die herzlichste Beziehung dazu. Es scheint mir gut angeordnet, und ich empfinde nun recht deutlich, wie es parallel über dem ersten Teil sich entwickelt und ausbreitet. Die Schriftverteilung auf dem Titelblatt ist reich und einfach, und das Grün der obersten Zeile steht auf diesem Papierton fast noch kostbarer als auf dem gelblichen des vorjährigen Bandes“ (*ibid.* 46). And in a letter from February 13, 1910, Rilke also comments on the material form of a particular sentence: “der Satz steht jetzt so wundervoll zum Inhalt, die Zeilenlänge und -verteilung könnte ihm nicht glücklicher angemessen sein....” (*ibid.* 79).

⁶⁸ Compare Roswitha M. Kant, *Visualität in Rainer Maria Rilkes Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002). Regarding *visuality* of the manuscript and of writing in general, or *Schriftbildlichkeit*, see Sybille Krämer, “‘Schriftbildlichkeit’ oder Über eine (fast) vergessene Dimension der Schrift,” *Schrift, Bild, Zahl*, ed. Sybille Krämer and Horst Bredekamp

methodologically imperative, I insist, because the reader of the “Berner Taschenbuch” can perceive a strong and dynamic relationship between the visual aspects of the manuscript and the semantic dynamics of the work, and because materiality necessarily has a visual dimension. As a poet experimenting in the genre of the novel – in fact, Rilke never referred to his work as a “novel,” but as his *ProsaBuch* [Prose-book] – Rilke was accustomed to considering, quite literally, the *significance* of the visible form of language, of words arranged into lines on a page, in producing the “meaning” of a poem. We are accustomed to attending to the visual layout of a poem in our textual analysis. But given Rilke’s relationship to the *Aufzeichnungen*, I insist upon extending this methodology to the genre of the novel, and specifically to the material process of its production and its manuscript. For the materiality of the manuscript, the complex (dis)array of *Durchstreichungen* covering its pages, also carries meaning. The materiality of the text is not merely a vessel transporting semantic content, rather the manuscript and the materialities of writing are inextricably entangled within the “meaning” of the work itself.

In the chapters that follow, I think about how the physical process of writing and the materiality and visuality of the manuscript actively *form* the semantic dynamics of the novel and continue to haunt its various printed editions. The materiality of the signifier, of the manuscript, and of the body that writes cannot be separated from the semantic “meaning” or “content” of the work. Through its structure and thematics, the novel erodes the boundaries of the printed form through which it is disseminated, evoking the fluctuating presence of manuscript that lurks beyond.

* * *

This exploration takes a rather unusual form, for reasons that are explored below and that are demanded by the novel itself. The first chapter focuses primarily on the relationship between orality and writing in the novel and on the significance of the materiality of the manuscript, in particular the figure of the *Durchstreichung*, by exploring Malte’s reflections on the medium of handwriting in relation to oral narration, typewriting and print, as well as Malte’s self-reflexive attempts to achieve a radically new form of writing. The second chapter explores images of corporeality and bodily excess⁶⁹ in the *Aufzeichnungen* in relation to the corporeality of writing, the body of the text, and the materiality of the manuscript. The novel, I will argue, imagines a virtual manuscript as a fragmented, disintegrating, wounded body lurking behind or beneath a printed text, which can only offer an illusion of wholeness. The third chapter considers a host of different bodies in the novel – human bodies, architectural bodies – who are in various states of transformation and departure, departing from states of fixity, from the social order, and from the world of the living. The theme of transformation in the novel, I will show, emerges directly out of the experience of writing and, particularly, of crossing out in the manuscript. Images of collapsing and fragmented

(München: Fink, 2003), 157-176; Sybille Krämer, Sybille, Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, and Rainer Tetzke, eds., *Schriftbildlichkeit: Wahrnehmbarkeit, Materialität und Operativität von Notationen* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012); Davide Giuriato and Stephan Kammer, eds., *Bilder der Handschrift. Die graphische Dimension der Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main; Basel: Stroemfeld, 2006); George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle, eds., *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print and Digital Culture* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2001).

⁶⁹ In this respect, Eric Santner in recent work on bodily excess in *The Aufzeichnungen* has become one of my most productive conversation partners in this dissertation. See *On Creaturely Life* and *The Royal Remains: The People’s Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago; London: U of Chicago P, 2011).

architectures and the figures of the *Fortgeworfenen* en-vision the manuscript and the lingering presence of that which has been *durchgestrichen* yet continues to haunt the work.

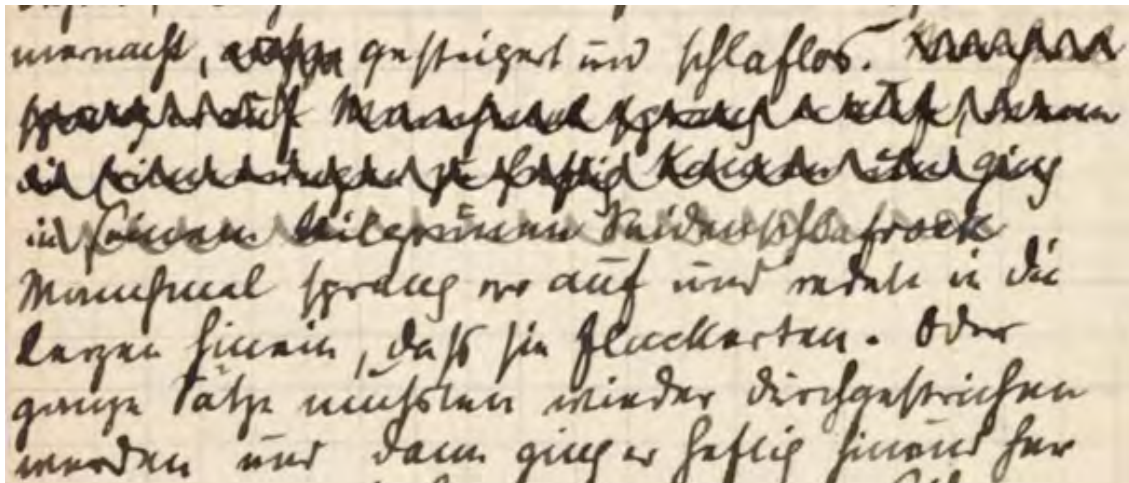
In the fourth chapter, I address a particular ghostly presence in the work: the author. Taking issue with the reception of Barthes's canonical notion of the "death of the author," I address a long-standing issue in scholarship on the *Aufzeichnungen*, namely the degree to which the novel is autobiographical, by focusing not on biographical connections between Malte and Rilke, but rather by returning to the scene of writing to question the degree to which the marks in the manuscript were penned by "Rilke" and to what degree they are, perhaps, penned by Malte. In doing so, I articulate the notion of a *transpositional mode* of writing that emerges in the *Aufzeichnungen* as part of a broader aesthetics of transposition. This includes the notion of a *material intertextuality*, which designates the virtual presence of other material texts within a text.

The chapters of the dissertation are punctuated by three excurses, which emerged as a way to structurally negotiate and accommodate certain features of the work that rebel against the traditional linear organization of a dissertation. The *Aufzeichnungen*, as we will see, is composed of a dense network of disparate intertextual references and discourses that defy any reading that attempts to contain them all. Though both historicizing and contextualizing, these excurses are more associative in their argumentation than the full chapters. Each excursion takes a particularly cryptic image from the chapter that precedes it and explodes it through an array of discourses, ranging from medieval theological exegesis of the stigmata and transubstantiation to the reception of the x-ray, which circulated contemporaneously with the composition of the novel. Each excursion relates to the chapters that surround it, but also to the others in different ways, thereby forming an additional super-structure of interconnectivity on top of the linear progression of the chapters.

The conclusion returns to and reframes the basic question of the relationship between the materiality and immateriality of the literary work, between the manuscript and the printed text. Instead of a binary, I propose a model of dialectics or circulation between the materialities of writing and the representational or hermeneutic dimensions of the text. Drawing on Bruno Latour's conception of "circulating reference," a model of how the material world enters into language in scientific discourse, I consider how a similar notion can be used to re-theorize the referential dynamics at play between the materiality and meaning in the literary text.

Chapter One

The Flickering Presence of the *Durchgestrichene*



... *Manchmal*
sprang er auf ~~Manchmal sprang er auf, wenn~~
~~die Erinnerungen zu heftig kamen und ging~~
~~in seinem nilgrünen Seidenschlafrock~~
Manchmal sprang er auf und redete in die
Kerzen hinein, dass sie flackerten. Oder
ganze Sätze mussten wieder durchgestrichen
werden ...

“Ich lerne sehen,” Malte writes in the fourth *Aufzeichnung*. “Habe ich es schon gesagt? Ich lerne sehen. Ja, ich fange an. Es geht noch schlecht.”⁷⁰ Malte’s project of “learning to see” in a radically new way, brought about by his experiences in the modern Parisian metropolis, is bound up within a simultaneous process of learning to write, of finding an adequate mode of representation to capture his *Neues Sehen*.⁷¹ In fact, seeing, thinking, and writing – *Sehen*, *Erkennen*, and *Sagen*; *Schauen*, *Nachdenken*, and *Aufzeichnen* – are directly related to one another in the “big questions” Malte poses in the fourteenth *Aufzeichnung*:

⁷⁰ KA 3 456-457. “I am learning to see... Have I not mentioned already that I am learning to see? Yes, I am making a start. I have not made much progress yet...” (Hulse 4-5).

⁷¹ Compare Andreas Huyssen, “The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge,” *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, ed. Karen Leeder and Robert Vilain (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U P, 2010), 75.

“Ist es möglich,” denkt Malte, “daß man noch nichts Wirkliches und Wichtiges gesehen, erkannt und gesagt hat? Ist es möglich, daß man Jahrtausende Zeit gehabt hat, zu schauen, nachzudenken und aufzuzeichnen, und daß man die Jahrtausende hat vergehen lassen wie eine Schulpause, in der man sein Butterbrot ißt und einen Apfel?”⁷²

Despite Malte’s emphasis on his project and process of learning to see, his project of learning to narrate or write – *Erzählenlernen* or *Schreibenlernen*, although never articulated as such – is in some respects more fundamental. This chapter explores Malte’s process of *learning to write*. In one of the most cryptic passages of the novel, Malte posits in the eighteenth *Aufzeichnung* a “Zeit der anderen Auslegung” [the time of that other interpretation], a new kind of interpretation, of meaning making, which corresponds to a different mode of writing:

Noch eine Weile kann ich das alles aufschreiben und sagen. Aber es wird ein Tag kommen, da meine Hand weit von mir sein wird, und wenn ich sie schreiben heißen werde, wird sie Worte schreiben, die ich nicht meine. Die Zeit der anderen Auslegung wird anbrechen, und es wird kein Wort auf dem anderen bleiben, und jeder Sinn wird wie Wolken sich auflösen und wie Wasser niedergehen.⁷³

The new mode of writing envisioned here involves a fundamentally different relationship between the hand that writes, the *Ich* that commands it, and the words that are written. Like the notion of *Neues Sehen*, the notion of a *Zeit der anderen Auslegung* remains open, indefinite. Malte seems to anticipate not only a new mode of writing, but a fundamentally different kind of meaning making, a different hermeneutic or semiotic order. In this new order, words will not remain on top of one another; the relationship between words – etymologically perhaps, or syntactically, in the grammatical space of the sentence, or typographically, on the space of the printed page – becomes unstable. And *Sinn*, meaning, the seemingly immaterial realm of thought, begins to dissolve or disintegrate, yet it does not simply disappear, but rather re-materializes in a different form.

A struggling writer, Malte seeks different sources of inspiration, different models toward which he can orient himself in approaching a new mode of writing that can capture his *Neues Sehen*. While the project and the process of learning to write unfold throughout the novel in relation to various other media, Malte orients himself in particular toward a mode of oral storytelling embodied by his maternal grandfather, Count Brahe. At times, it seems as if Malte is seeking to capture or translate the mode of oral narration through the materiality of written text, which appears fundamentally deficient. Yet as I seek to show, the tension between orality and literacy in the novel simultaneously manifests tensions within writing itself, and specifically, within the medium and materiality of handwriting.

By approaching Malte’s struggle to write from a media theoretical perspective, reading Malte’s crisis of writing through the dynamics of orality and literacy, of handwriting and print, and in relation to the medial flux around the turn of the twentieth century, this chapter draws attention to the way

⁷² KA 3 468. “Is it possible, it thinks, that we have neither seen nor perceived nor said anything real or of any importance yet? Is it possible that we have had thousands of years to look, ponder and record, and that we have let those thousands of years pass like a break at school, when one eats a sandwich and an apple?” (Hulse 15).

⁷³ KA 3 490. “For some time yet, I shall still be able to write all of these things down or say them. But a day will come when my hand will be far away from me, and, when I command it to write, the words it writes will be ones I do not intend. The time of that other interpretation will come, and not one word will be left upon another, and all the meanings will dissolve like clouds and fall like rain” (Hulse 34). Compare Mark 13:2: “There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Hulse 169 n10).

that writing by hand – the dialectic of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen* – is not only thematized, both explicitly and implicitly, but also *theorized* by the novel.

This chapter highlights the pervasiveness of *Schreiben* and *Streichen*, writing and scratching through, creation and destruction, not only in the manuscript, but also in the fictional or representational space of the novel. In other words, this chapter highlights the tension and circulation between the semantic and the material domains of the text that are constitutive of the process of writing. Returning to the manuscript and reexamining the work through the materiality of its production allows us too a kind of *Neues Sehen* or *andere Auslegung* by unearthing layers of self-referentiality – certain passages whose material composition forms their very “content” – that are invisible when examining the printed text alone.

Orality and Literacy, Handwriting and Print, Language and Presence

“Dass man erzählte, wirklich erzählte, das muss vor meiner Zeit gewesen sein... Der alte Graf Brahe soll es noch gekonnt haben.”⁷⁴ Echoing the opening lines of Benjamin’s essay “Der Erzähler” (commonly translated as “The Storyteller”),⁷⁵ Malte laments the passing of a mode of oral narration, embodied here in the figure of Count Brahe, Malte’s maternal grandfather. Malte orients himself toward this lost mode of storytelling in striving toward a mode of writing that can adequately capture his reality and his ego-shattering experience of “learning to see.” However, Malte never encountered his grandfather’s storytelling firsthand, but has only heard stories about it told by Count Brahe’s daughter Abelone, Malte’s aunt. Abelone not only witnessed her father’s storytelling, but also served as a secretary of sorts by writing down his memoirs as he dictated them.

Although Abelone was privy to Count Brahe’s narration, Abelone never acquired the oratorical ability of the Count.

Ich habe nie jemanden erzählen hören. Damals, als Abelone mir von Mamans Jugend sprach, zeigte es sich, daß sie nicht erzählen könne. Der alte Graf Brahe soll es noch gekonnt haben. Ich will aufschreiben, was sie davon wußte.⁷⁶

Abelone, Malte reports, could not herself narrate [*erzählen*], at least not in the way that the Count could. The reliability of her report, her ability to adequately describe his narration, is thereby thrown into question. Yet Malte also reports that Abelone, for various reasons, had difficulty writing down the Count’s memoirs at times. Consider the following passage:

Ein paar Tage ging das Diktieren seinen Gang. Aber dann konnte Abelone ›Eckernförde‹ nicht schreiben. Es war ein Eigenname, und sie hatte ihn nie gehört. Der Graf, der im Grunde schon lange einen Vorwand suchte, das Schreiben aufzugeben, das zu langsam war für seine Erinnerungen, stellte sich unwillig.

“Sie kann es nicht schreiben,” sagte er scharf, “und andere werden es nicht lesen können.

⁷⁴ KA 3 557-8. “That one told stories, really told them, that must have been before my time...The old Count Brahe is supposed to have still been able to” (translation JH).

⁷⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Der Erzähler. Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows,” *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 2.2:438-465. Regarding Rilke’s encounter with Nikolai Leskov, see Anna A. Tavis, “The Aesthetics of Icons and Tales: Nikolai Leskov and Victor Vasnetsov,” *Rilke’s Russia: a Cultural Encounter* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern U P, 1994), 65-78.

⁷⁶ KA 3 557-8. “I have never heard anyone tell stories. In the days when Abelone told me about Mama’s youth, it turned out that she could not tell a story. Old Count Brahe is said to have still been able to. I’ll write down what Abelone knew about it” (Pike 109).

Und werden sie es überhaupt *sehen*, was ich da sage?“ fuhr er böse fort und ließ Abelone nicht aus den Augen.

“Werden sie ihn sehen, diesen Saint-Germain?“ schrie er sie an. “Haben wir Saint-Germain gesagt? streich es durch. Schreib: der Marquise von Belmare.”

Abelone strich durch und schrieb. Aber der Graf sprach so schnell weiter, daß man nicht mitkonnte.⁷⁷

In Abelone’s attempts to write down the memoirs that Count Brahe dictates, certain information, certain aspects of the Count’s narration, are lost in translation. At times, the Count speaks more quickly than Abelone can write. There also cases in which Abelone does not know a word or how to spell it, and as such cannot write it; here too, the translation from oral to written breaks down.

Abelone’s particular difficulties in writing down the Count’s speech, however, also point to more fundamental differences between the psychophysical systems of speech and writing. Malte highlights his own act of written mediation when he writes, “ich will aufschreiben, was sie davon wusste.” The passages quoted above do not merely throw into question the reliability of Abelone’s depiction of Count Brahe’s storytelling, but also foreground the *mediation* of this scene through various layers of speech, memory, and writing, all of which appear deficient, limited, or fragmentary.

The scene recalled in this passage, moreover, is not only a scene of orating, but also a scene of writing. Figuring the relationship between speech and writing, or the passage from orality into literacy, Abelone’s difficulty in translating the Count’s speech into writing seems to point to a fundamental deficiency inherent to the medium of writing. Calling into question the ability of writing to make present – “Und werden sie es überhaupt *sehen*, was ich da sage?“ [“And will they be able to see, what I say there?“], the Count asks distraughtly – the passage offers itself as a prime example for a Derridian critique of speech and presence. I suggest, however, that the text already deconstructs itself. For the Count is not a representative of a pure, primary orality;⁷⁸ rather his oration in this scene is oriented toward the production of a written text: “Haben wir Saint-Germain gesagt?“ Count Brahe asks Abelone, “streich es durch. Schreib: der Marquise von Belmare” [“Did we say Saint-Germain? Scratch through it. Write: the Marquise von Belmare“].

In continuing to unpack Malte’s depiction of the scene that unfolds in the Count’s writing chamber, I explore the representation of oration and writing in this passage, paying particular attention to the way in which the representation not only reflects the media-specific logic of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*, which are specific to the medium of handwriting,⁷⁹ but also emerges concretely out of the material process of writing and scratching through in the “Berner Taschenbuch.” This exploration leads me to theorize the flickering “presence” of the *durchgestrichene* or crossed-out

⁷⁷ KA 3 560. “For a few days the dictation took its course. But then Abelone could not write ‘Eckernförde.’ It was a proper name, and she had never heard it. The Count, who had long been seeking a pretext to give up writing, which was too slow for his memories, pretended to be indignant. ‘She can’t write it,’ he said sharply, ‘and others won’t be able to read it. And will they, in any event, see what I am saying here?’ he continued angrily, without taking his eyes off Abelone. ‘Will they see this Saint-Germain?’ he shouted at her. ‘Did we say Saint-Germain? Cross it out. Write: The Marquis von Belmare.’ Abelone crossed out and wrote. But the count continued speaking so rapidly that one couldn’t keep up” (Pike 111).

⁷⁸ Ong describes primary oral cultures as “cultures with no knowledge at all of writing” (*Orality and Literacy* 1); the orality of medieval Europe, or the culture of oral storytelling characterized by Benjamin in his essay “The Storyteller,” are example of secondary orality.

⁷⁹ Regarding the notion of “Streichkultur,” see Gisi et. al., *Schreiben und Streichen*, 9-10.

passages, continuing to exist yet “under erasure,” preserved in the manuscript and haunting the space of the printed text spectrally.⁸⁰

The Space of Storytelling...

The reality that Brahe occupies is marked by a peculiar temporality, which is also a unique feature of his storytelling. “Die Zeitfolgen spielten durchaus keine Rolle für ihn, der Tod war ein kleiner Zwischenfall, den er vollkommen ignorierte, Personen, die er einmal in seine Erinnerung aufgenommen hatte, existierten, und daran konnte ihr Absterben nicht das geringste ändern.”⁸¹ Past and present flow together; deceased persons, still living metaphorically in memory, are as immediately present for the Count as the objects on his writing table. This peculiar temporality pervades the Brahe house at Urnekloster, which is haunted by ghosts of deceased relatives.

Another feature of the count’s storytelling is his ability to pronounce – to literally “speak out” [*aussprechen*] – the places and people he narrates into immediate phenomenological presence. Thus not only do temporal boundaries dissolve, but also the boundary between the space of language and physical, sensory actuality, between the immaterial realm of the signified and the material domain of the signifier. The absent, re-presented in language, becomes immediately and physically present to the count’s audience in the space of his storytelling.⁸²

⁸⁰ “Denn die latente oder ouverte Präsenz der getilgten Schrift ist das Kernelement des Begriffs ‘Streichung’” (ibid. 10). I evoke here the Derridian notion of writing “under erasure” [*sous rature*], a practice that Derrida adopts from Heidegger and transforms. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Translator’s Preface, *Of Grammatology* by Jacques Derrida, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1997), xiv-xvii. In *Zur Seinsfrage*, Heidegger writes, “the sign of crossing through [*Zeichen der Durchkreuzung*, i.e. the sign “under erasure”] can, to be sure, ... not be a merely negative sign of crossing out [*Zeichen der Durchstreichung*]” (ibid. xv). Whereas the sign under erasure indicates for Heidegger an “inarticulable presence,” the sign under erasure is for Derrida “the mark of the absence of a presence, an already always absent present” (ibid. xvii). I contend that the *Durchstreichung* is not a “merely negative” sign, as Heidegger wrote, but that we can use the notion of writing “under erasure” and to think the nature of the *Durchstreichung* in the manuscript.

⁸¹ KA 3 475. “The passage of time played no role for him at all, death was a minor incident that he totally ignored. People he had once taken into his memory *existed*, and against that their dying could not have the least effect” (Pike 22).

⁸² This mode of narration also resonates with the medieval notion of *applicatio* as a process of reading and experiencing Biblical scripture which involved an “Überführung des Textes in sinnliche Erfahrung, die die Seele formt und die Welt neu Gestalt annehmen läßt;” according to Origenes, the scripture “nur dort seinen Sinn entfaltet, wo er mit allen Sinnen erfahren wird, wo er sichtbar für den Sehsinn, hörbar für den Hörsinn, reichbar für den Geruchssinn, schmeckbar für den Geschmackssinn, fühlbar für den Tastsinn wird” (Niklaus Largier, “Das Medium der Schrift,” *Die Kunst des Begehrens: Dekadenz, Sinnlichkeit und Askese* (München: C.H. Beck, 2007), 44, 46). This conception of a kind of textual understanding through sensory, bodily experience is particularly evocative given Rilke’s engagement with the Medieval art, literature and theology during his early period (for example in *Das Studentenbuch* (1905), which was composed between 1899 and 1903), and in the context of the numerous reference to medieval and early modern figures in the *Aufzeichnungen*. Regarding the relationship of tangibility of the signifier (“Spürbarkeit der Zeichen”) to the process

Of the various people and places that the Count narrates, he focuses in particular on the Marquis von Belmare, who also possessed the unique ability to speak things into presence. In the following passage, the Count describes his childhood experience of Belmare's oration:

Ich aber merkte mir seine Augen... Ich habe allerhand Augen gesehen, kannst du mir glauben: solche nicht wieder. Für diese Augen hätte nichts dasein müssen, die hatten's in sich. Du hast von Venedig gehört? Gut. Ich sage dir, die hätten Venedig hier hereingesehen in dieses Zimmer, daß es da gewesen wäre, wie der Tisch. Ich saß in der Ecke einmal und hörte, wie er meinem Vater von Persien erzählte, manchmal mein ich noch, mir riechen die Hände davon.⁸³

Belmare's narration produces a multisensory experience involving not only the eyes, the mouth, and the ears, but also activating the sense of smell. The smells of Persia materialize in the space of Belmare's narration; dispersed by the mouth to waft through the air, the particles linger on Brahe's hands, the emblematic organ of touch. Belmare's eyes, however, are most prominently emphasized. Whereas traditional vision involves the transformation of visual stimuli from the external world into an internal mental image, Belmare's vision runs in reverse, projecting a mental image into external reality by a process of *Hereinsehen*, literally seeing something into a space and into external reality.

In this way, the people and places that Belmare narrates become present, phenomenologically accessible in external reality; in other words, the signified content of Belmare's speech literally transcends the linguistic signifier, materializing into physical presence.⁸⁴ The inability of writing to make present the transcendental signified is suggested when Abelone is unable to write the "Eckernförde,"⁸⁵ a word she has never heard before. "Und werden sie es überhaupt *sehen*, was ich da sage?," the Count responds ["And will they, in any event, *see* what I am saying here?"] The meaning of the question is multivalent, operating on multiple levels, for one "sees" during the reading both physically and metaphorically: "seeing" something in the text, constructing a mental image of something through its textual representation, is dependent on being able to see the words on a page. If Abelone cannot write down the word, the reader will not be able to see the object it represents. On one hand, Brahe questions Abelone's ability to write down his words, to transcribe oral speech into visible written signifiers. If the word is not written, or inappropriately written, then

of textual understanding, see Nicole M. Wink, *Verstehen und Gefühle: Entwurf einer Leiborientierten Kommunikationstheorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004).

⁸³ KA 3 560-61. "But I took note of his eyes...I have seen all sorts of eyes, of that you can be sure: never again such eyes. Those eyes needed nothing external, it resided within them Have you heard of Venice? Good. I'm telling you, those eyes would have seen Venice into this room so it would have been here like this desk. I was once sitting in the corner listening to him tell my father about Persia, I sometimes think my hands still have the smell of it" (Pike 112).

⁸⁴ Regarding this *Vergegenwärtigung* [making present] of the object of narration, compare Ryan, "Hypothetisches Erzählen," 248. The notion of a production of presence through the direct witness of the narrator also resonates with the tradition of icon painting, which plays a significant role in Rilke's early work and in particular in *Das Stundenbuch*. On the icon tradition, see Hans Belting's canonical *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994). Regarding the Eastern Orthodox icon tradition, which Rilke encountered during his two Russia trips (1899/1900), see Clemena Antonova, *Space, Time, and Presence in the Icon: Seeing the World with the Eyes of God* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). On Rilke's encounter with Russian icons, see Tavis, "The Aesthetics of Icons and Tales."

⁸⁵ Eckernförde is the name of the town in which St. Germain dies (Witzleben 93).

the Count's speech will be lost. On the other hand, Brahe's question resonates with a more fundamental question about the ability of writing to represent speech – will they *see* what I *say* there, he asks. We might read Brahe's question in yet another way. If Brahe, like Belmare, can also speak things into presence – if his *Sagen* is not one of representation, but of physical presentation, a process of materializing the signified into external reality, thereby transcending materiality of the signifier (spoken language) – then the question might also be understood to imply the following: can writing language present something in the same way that speech can? Can the reader *see* something in the same way that they *see* it as presented by the Count's speech? The passage thus speaks to the risk in the translation from speech into writing that the world called into being through the oration may become diminished through its translation into writing, or even lost entirely.

The relationship between speech and writing in this scene of narration calls up the conception of writing as a secondary or “parasitic” semiotic system, deficient in relation to speech.⁸⁶ In contrast to the living *logos*, Plato describes the written word as an inhuman, half-dead orphan.⁸⁷ Aristotle writes that “spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words.”⁸⁸ Tracing this thought from Aristotle and Plato through Rousseau, Saussure, and Heidegger, Derrida deconstructs the primacy of speech, as well as the notion that speech, unlike writing, offers absolute proximity to the signified,⁸⁹ a logic that seems to underlie the conception of Brahe's and Belmare's presence-ing oration. Abelone's inability re-present this in writing would seem to point to a fundamental deficiency of writing.

The multisensory experience of listening produced by Belmare's narration also points to another key difference between the scene of oration and the scene of writing or reading, namely that speech and writing involve fundamentally different configurations of the senses. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong explores the psychodynamics of human consciousness in a culture of primary orality and the way in which writing, and eventually print, irreversibly shape human consciousness, perception, and thought.⁹⁰ “The oral word,” Ong writes, “never exists in a simply verbal context, as a written word does. Spoken words are always modifications of a total, existential situation, which always engages the body.”⁹¹ As a dynamic event of temporal duration, situated in the phenomenological world, the spoken word involves all of the senses. With the advent of writing, and intensified by printing, sound becomes reduced to visible form. The written text is thing-like, objectified in visual space.⁹² In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Marshall McLuhan also explores the way that

⁸⁶ Ong 8, 75.

⁸⁷ Derrida, “Plato's Pharmacy,” 77.

⁸⁸ *De interpretatione*, 1, 16a 3, cited in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 11.

⁸⁹ Regarding the apparent transcendence of the signified, see Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 75-77. “

⁹⁰ Ong 78. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 17-26

⁹¹ Ong 69.

⁹² According to both Ong and McLuhan, print intensifies the shift in consciousness first affected by writing. “The difference between the man of print and the man of scribal culture is nearly as great as that between the non-literate and the literate” (90). “Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space. Control of position is everything in print” (121). Furthermore, “words are made out of units (types) which pre-exist as units before the words which they will constitute. Print suggests that words are things far more than writing ever did” (118). Yet commonly today, McLuhan and Ong argue, we have internalized the technology of print so deeply that we forget that the written word encodes first the spoken word, that words are fundamentally oral events; words have become things, out-there, in space, on the surface of a page, contained in a book (McLuhan 32-33). Similarly for Ong, writing is “a ‘secondary

media technology shapes human consciousness. McLuhan writes that any new technology alters the “ratio” relationship between the senses. It is through the senses – of sound and sight, but also taste, touch, and smell – that we phenomenologically grasp and mentally construct the world. When a new technology becomes “interiorized” – for “intelligence is relentlessly reflexive, so that even the external tools that it uses to implement its workings become ‘internalized’, that is, part of its own reflexive process”⁹³ – the interplay of the senses is altered, effectually creating a new world, a new ‘closure,’ a new pattern of interplay among the senses, *through which* the world is perceived.⁹⁴ Phonetic writing “translates man out of the acoustic world of interdependence and interrelation” and into the visual world; for McLuhan, the result of literacy is schizophrenia, the splitting between the eye and the ear.⁹⁵

Thus in considering oral narration as a fully multisensory experience, which becomes restricted to the visual in the experience of reading, the depiction of Brahe’s narration and the anxiety about the possibility of adequately translating this experience into writing – “Und werden sie es überhaupt *sehen*, was ich da sage?” [“And will they, in any event, *see* what I am saying here?”] – takes on further dimensions of meaning. Understood literally, this question concerns the *exteriorization* of spoken language into the visual written signifier; yet metaphorically, the question challenges the nature of writing: in this case, can internal images or memories be adequately translated into the external object-like medium of writing, or can it only be conveyed through the medium of speech, which originates in the body and is connected to psychic interiority? In this case, when speech makes phenomenologically present the signified content, will the written word be able to *make present* the signified content in the way that speech does? When a reader, in turn, encounters the written word “Venice” or “Persia,” does it become present like when it is *spoken* into phenomenological presence by the Count?

The emphasis on seeing – in this sense, of transcending the materiality of the signifier, of literally *seeing through* the signifier to phenomenologically perceive the signified (not only visually, but also olfactorily, tangibly, aurally); as well as the significance of the visual for the written signifier, the dominance of vision in the experience of reading – lead us back to Malte’s project of a “new seeing.” I argue Malte’s project of “new seeing” is fundamentally connected to writing, to the apparent deficiency of writing, but also to the media specificity of handwriting in relation to print. Malte seems to search for a mode of writing that can transmit the phenomenological presence of the signified, in a way like the oration of the count. More specifically, Malte’s attempt to “learn to write,” as extension of his project of “learning to see” [*Sehenlernen*], strives for mode of writing that might best be grasped as *intermedial* or *intersensorial*, which has the ability, like the oration of the Count, to offer a multisensory, even synesthetic experience of reading, that can sensorially augment reality; a writing that transgresses boundaries, corresponding to a seeing that transgresses the boundary between the present and the past, the present and the absent, that can transcend the materiality of the signifier to make present the realm of the signified.

modeling system’, dependent on a primary system, spoken language” (8). All language - even written language - is rooted in sound, in the oral-aural dimension [“Aural” in multiple senses: Benjamin’s discussion of the loss of aura in his essay “the Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” would also be interesting to consider in examining the effects of the mechanization of writing through print technology.] Derrida’s critique of *logos*, of the primacy of the spoken word, fundamentally challenges this.

⁹³ Ong 81.

⁹⁴ McLuhan 22.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Amidst the proliferation of images in the novel of collapsing buildings, crumbling facades, decaying bodies, and masks, Malte questions whether we have ever actually seen or known anything, whether we have ever penetrated the surface [*Oberfläche*] of reality.⁹⁶ I argue that there is an attempt, perceptible even in the printed work, to transgress the apparent and illusory fixity of the boundaries of the print medium.⁹⁷ Structurally and thematically, the work encourages and enables the reader to mentally *look through* the seeming fixity of the printed page, to experience the work as perpetually in flux, in the process of becoming. The printed text points both *explicitly* (for example, in the footnotes “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben”) as well as *implicitly* to a manuscript lying beneath it, which remains present – visually present, even through the iconicity of the typographical format of the text, for example – in its formal constitution.

Thus in a way, the anxiety on the story level about the limits of writing, of *Aufschreiben* [writing down by hand] more specifically, is echoed on the level of the text, which attempts to evoke or re-present the handwritten text lying beneath it. If, as Jacobs writes, editing can be understood as a translation of a text from one materiality into another,⁹⁸ we can consider the way in which the printed text of the *Aufzeichnungen* allows us to *see* the “original” in the translation, the handwritten manuscript in the printed work.

...and the Space of the Page

On the surface, this depiction of the relationship between writing and oration seems an ideal if not quintessential subject for a deconstructionist critique. Writing appears as deficient, secondary to a speech that makes present, that transcends the material to directly present the content of speech. However, when we reexamine this passage by attending to the materiality of the text, the manuscript, through which it takes form, we discover that the relationship between writing and speech is more complex. More specifically, this passage concerns the relationship between oration, handwriting, and print, calling our attention to the *materiality* of the signifier. The insistence on the materiality of handwriting demands that we consider more closely the difference between handwriting and print, to see the printed text as a trace of a manuscript that is “present” in its absence, *durchgestrichen* in the translation of the work into the printed form.

When we look more closely, we notice that the oration of the Count is not of a pure orality, opposed to a purely secondary writing. Abelone does not simply record the Count’s stories, rather he

⁹⁶ “Ist es möglich,” Malte questions, “daß man noch nichts Wirkliches und Wichtiges gesehen, erkannt und gesagt hat? ... daß man... an der Oberfläche des Lebens geblieben ist?” For resonances of such questioning with Symbolism and the *psychologie nouvelle*, see Deborah Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-siècle France* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: Univ. of California Press, 1989), 75-106, 229-279.

⁹⁷ Regarding Rilke’s vexed relationship to the medium of print, see Irmgard M. Wirtz, “Schrift – Transkription – Typographie. Zur Gemäßigt Mimetischen Faksimile-Edition Von Rilkes *Malte-Fragment*,” *editio* 26 (2012): 144-146. In relation to Rilke’s practice of copying down poems that had already been printed, Wolfram Groddeck writes: “Das eigentliche, wirklich aufregende editorische Problem bei Rilke ist vielmehr die Schrift selbst. Sie lässt sich begreifen als performativer Ausdruck eines Unbehagens am Medium des Drucks” (“und wollte er wieder: lies. // Da las er: so, daß sich der Engel bog. Philologische Überlegungen zur kommentierten Ausgabe von Rilkes Werken,” *Text. Kritische Beiträge* 5 (1999): 205; cited in Wirtz 145).

⁹⁸ Wilhelm G. Jacobs, “Materie - Materialität – Geist,” *Editio* 23 (2009): 20.

dictates them to her; his storytelling is fundamentally oriented toward the act of writing down.

“Werden sie ihn sehen, diesen Saint-Germain?” schrie er sie an. “Haben wir Saint-Germain gesagt? streich es durch. Schreib: der Marquise von Belmare.”

Abelone strich durch und schrieb. Aber der Graf sprach so schnell weiter, daß man nicht mitkonnte.⁹⁹

Having written the name St. Germain, Abelone scratches it out, and writes “Belmare.” The reader imagines a fictional page with the name ~~Saint-Germain~~ scratched out, followed by the name “Belmare” – whether on the next line, in the margin, or between the lines, is not specified. Malte also writes in recounting this scene that “ganze Sätze mußten wieder durchgestrichen werden” (“whole sentences had to be crossed out again.”)

In spoken language, there is no such thing as a *Durchstreichung*. One could describe a kind of *immaterielle Durchstreichung* (“immaterial crossing out”), yet to do so would be to impose the logic of handwriting onto the materiality of speech. Yet the act of *Durchstreichen* is also not universal to writing in general: in fact, the *Durchstreichung* as a fundamental phenomenon of writing became increasingly feasible in the nineteenth century, when paper became cheap enough that it could be easily disposed of.¹⁰⁰ The representation of *Schreiben* and *Streichen* in this passage thus draws our attention to particular features of the production of meaning in a “Streichkultur” (culture of crossing-out), a particular phase in the history of *Schriftkultur* (writing culture).¹⁰¹ It is also noteworthy that neither the Count’s *voice*, nor Belmare’s, is described. More emphasis is given to the physical, bodily movement of the Count in space:

Der Graf, bebend, stand und machte eine Bewegung, als stellte er etwas in den Raum hinein, was blieb.

In diesem Moment gewährte er Abelone.

“Siehst du ihn?” herrschte er sie an. Und plötzlich ergriff er den einen silbernen Armleuchter und leuchtete ihr blendend ins Gesicht.

Abelone erinnerte sich, daß sie ihn gesehen habe.¹⁰²

In this scene, the Count does not speak something into presence, rather he “places” something into the room through a bodily gesture – much like the stroke of a writer’s (or a painter’s) hand, which leaves behind a physical trace on the page.

On the following page of the manuscript, we see that the Count’s bodily gestures during narration directly mirror the movement of the pen across the page in the process of writing.

⁹⁹ KA 3 560. “ ‘Will they see this Saint-Germain?’ he shouted at her. ‘Did we say Saint-Germain? Cross it out. Write: The Marquis von Belmare.’ Abelone crossed out and wrote. But the count continued speaking so rapidly that one couldn’t keep up” (Pike 111).

¹⁰⁰ Gisi et. al., *Schreiben und Streichen*, 9-10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 10.

¹⁰² KA 3 562. “The Count, trembling, stopped and made a motion as if placing something in space that stayed there. At that moment he perceived Abelone. ‘Do you see him?’ he barked at her. And suddenly he seized one of the silver candelabras and shone it blindingly into her face. Abelone remembered that she had seen him” (Pike 113-14).

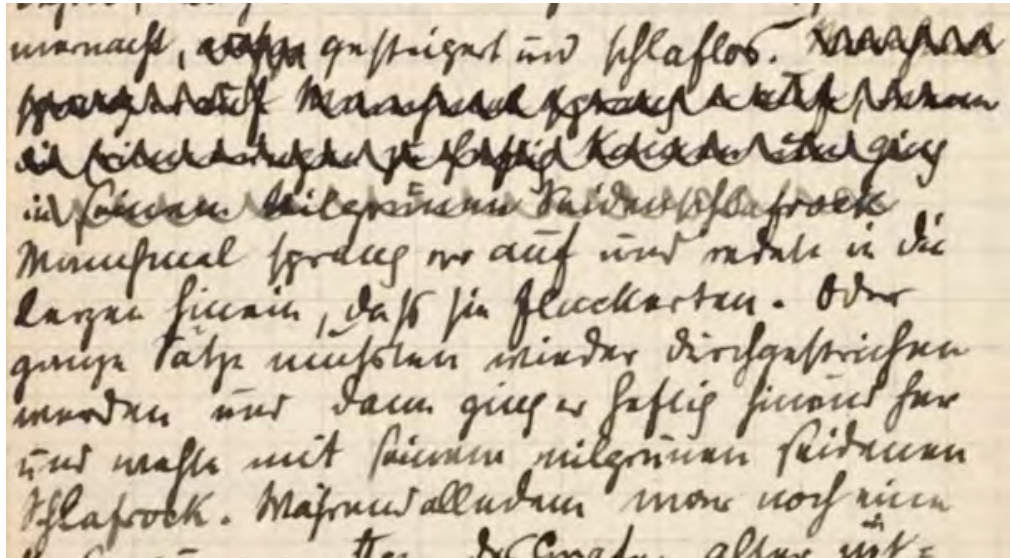


Figure 4. BT 32.

mernacht, aufge gesteigert und schlaflos. Manchmal sprang er auf Manchmal sprang er auf, wenn die Erinnerungen zu heftig kamen und ging in seinem nilgrünen Seidenschlafrock Manchmal sprang er auf und redete in die Kerzen hinein, dass sie flackerten. Oder ganze Sätze mussten wieder durchgestrichen werden und dann ging er heftig hinund her und wehte mit seinem nilgrünen seidenen Schlafrock. Während alledem war noch eine

Figure 5. BT Transkription 32.¹⁰³

“Oder ganze Sätze mussten wieder durchgestrichen werden...” [“or whole sentences had to be crossed through again”]. In this passage, the narration of the act of *Durchstreichen* is directly preceded in the manuscript by several attempts to compose a sentence, each abandoned and crossed out. The narration of *Durchstreichung* corresponds directly to the act of *Durchstreichung* in the text. Yet more specifically, the accumulation of deictic prepositions describing the Count’s movement – he jumps

¹⁰³

... Sometimes

~~he jumped up~~ Sometimes he jumped up, whenever the memories came too intensely and paced in his Nile-green silk dressing gown
 Sometimes he jumped up and spoke into the candles so that they flickered. Or whole sentences had to be crossed through again and then he went intensely back and forth and billowed with his Nile-green silk dressing gown... (translation JH).

up, spoke *into* the candles, lines are struck *through*, he goes back and forth, up and down [*hin und her*] – capture the unrestrained movement of the pen during the action of writing. Unlike the production of a typewritten text, the production of hand written text can proceed in any direction, forward or backward, up and down the space of the page.¹⁰⁴ The flickering of the candlelight when the Count speaks into it also reflects the act of writing and crossing out. Registering the *physicality*, the breathiness, of the counts words, the flickering of the candle acts as a *visual* trace of his words as they pass through space. Similarly, reading through the lines of text in the manuscript containing alternate beginnings of the sentence that have been crossed out, produces a “flickering” effect, both visually and semantically, as fragments of ideas are activated and then immediately extinguished. This flickering also echoes the billowing of the folds of cloth – like pages of text rustling in the breeze¹⁰⁵ – of the Count’s dressing gown.

Reconsidering the question of the transmission of presence in the representation of the Count’s narration / Abelone’s *Aufzeichnen* with attention to the materialities of writing – the materiality of the manuscript, and writing as bodily act – yields a model or theory of presence in the manuscript. The passages that are crossed out, finally erased in the printed text, remain as a trace in the manuscript, flickering or fluctuating between presence and absence in a *Zwischenraum* [in-between space] that constitutes the scene of writing.¹⁰⁶

This particular notion of presence of the *Durchgestrichene* in the manuscript, flickering between presence and absence, also resonates with the Heideggerian conception of Being as a *dynamic* event. For Heidegger, Being is an event of disclosure that happens along a “horizon” of Being, separating the realm of concealment from the realm of disclosure. Things come into Being in that they enter into disclosure.¹⁰⁷ However, this passage into Being is dependent on material

¹⁰⁴ Compare Ong 119. While the medium of print imposes a degree of constraint upon the (typographical) form of the text on the page, handwriting is by no means entirely unconstrained. Regarding the fact that all writing involves an overcoming of material resistances, compare Stingelin, “Schreiben.”

¹⁰⁵ I evoke here Roland Barthes’s attention to the materiality of the text in *The Rustle of Language*.

¹⁰⁶ I evoke here the notion of the “flickering signifier,” which moves beyond Lévi-Strauss and Lacan’s notion of the “floating signifier,” as elaborated by N. Katherine Hayles in “Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers,” *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1999), 25-49. Something like a “flickering signifier” is also inherent in Derrida’s conception of signification as an interplay between presence in absence. See Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1997), 278–294. Terry Eagleton similarly writes that “meaning is scattered or dispersed along the whole chain of signifiers: . . . it is never fully present in any one sign alone, but is rather a kind of constant flickering of presence and absence together” (Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008), 111). Regarding the notion of the *Schreibszene*, compare Campe, “Die Schreibszene. Schreiben,” as well as Thüring, 56.

¹⁰⁷ In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger posits what he in *Vom Wesen des Grundes* calls an “ontological difference” between Being, *Sein*, and Things-that-are, *das Seiende*. Being can be said to occur along a horizon separating the realm of concealment from the realm of disclosure. Being, for Heidegger, is a happening, an event of disclosure, occurring temporally. The idea of the “Zwischen” appears already in *Sein und Zeit*: Henk Oosterling writes, “Heidegger qualifies *Dasein* as Being-in [*In-Sein*] and Being-in-between [*Zwischen*]. The in-between is the movement that inevitably positions beings” (“Sens(a)ble Intermediality and *Interesse*: Towards an Ontology of the In-Between,” *Intermedialities. Histoire et Théorie des Arts, des Lettres et des Techniques* 1 (2003): 44-45). Heidegger at various places defines *Dasein*

conditions and structures. In the scene of writing explored above, candlelight, the light source that registers the passing of words through the air, also illuminates the page on which Abalone writes – as well as the page on which Malte writes and on which Rilke writes. Light is also necessary for a text to be read. Traditionally, in print culture, a work of literature exists fully when it is finished, bound and published, i.e. brought into the public (in German: *veröffentlicht*, made permanently open). Until it reaches its final form and is presented to the public, that which precedes it, i.e. the *avant-texte*, remains unfinished, in the process of becoming. Locked away in an archive, the manuscript phases of the becoming of a work are literally concealed. Opening a box in the archive that contains a manuscript, allowing light to illuminate the pages, enables us to see and experience the text as a thing in flux. Even when exposed, published now as a facsimile, that which has been *durchgestrichen* remains in a liminal state, fluctuating between presence and absence, legible (at times) on the page, yet negated.

As a material object, the manuscript, as well as the printed book, is never stable: not only can the process of writing be unbounded, but the manuscript and book are also ephemeral objects that will decompose naturally if they are not otherwise destroyed. The flickering candlelight in the Count's writing chamber also reminds us of the destructibility of paper and of the traces of life inscribed on it: several pages after this scene, Malte narrates the burning of the papers of his deceased father, which extinguishes the remaining traces of his life and work.¹⁰⁸ We are reminded of the lives of countless women, whom Malte describes in the thirty-ninth *Aufzeichnung*, “die ihre Briefe verbrannt haben” [“those who burned their letters”], thereby extinguishing the only traces of their existence; “und andere, die keine Kraft mehr hatten, sie zu schreiben”¹⁰⁹ [“and others who no longer had the strength to write them”].¹¹⁰ In addition to the ephemerality of paper, we are reminded of other structures that burn in the novel or persist in a state of ruin: the house in the third *Aufzeichnung*, burning as firemen gather around, and steeped in an eerie silence; the interior of the destroyed apartment buildings in the eighteenth *Aufzeichnung*, bearing traces of the lives it formerly

as the “In-Between.” In *Sein und Zeit* he writes: “Als Sorge ist das Dasein das “Zwischen”” (*Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1963), 132). He also speaks of human existence as “die *Erstreckung* des Daseins *zwischen* Geburt und Tod” (ibid. 373). Heidegger continues to explore the *Zwischen* in later moments of his career, especially in *Beiträge zur Philosophie, Holzwege* and *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. In “...dichterisch wohnt der Mensch,” Heidegger explores the way man “dwells” in the ontological difference, along the horizon of Being, referring to this region as the “*Dimension*.” In his second Nietzsche volume, Heidegger writes, “we stand in the differentiation of things-that-are and Being” (L. M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (University Park; London: Pennsylvania State U P, 1972), 47). Man is both *in* the world, engaged with the immediately present, the everyday, yet he is simultaneously *beyond* it, transcending the everyday, dwelling in the past and the future, projecting himself beyond the immediate. Karsten Harries summarizes that “Dasein is indeed not a fact, but a nothingness: a relation, a gap, an in-between” (ibid. 48). In “Wozu Dichter?,” the essay in which Heidegger considers Rilke as a “Dichter in dürftiger Zeit,” Heidegger describes language explicitly as an intermediary between two realms. L. M. Vail writes, “language somehow cuts across the things-that-are and the open realm” (*Sein und Zeit* 349-56; Vail 59). Things come into being in that they are *articulated* in language, which allows us to orient ourselves to Things-that-are (*Sein und Zeit* 161). In this way, language can be thought of as an event of Being.

¹⁰⁸ One might think here of Franz Kafka, who ordered Max Brod to burn all of his writings after his death.

¹⁰⁹ KA 3 549.

¹¹⁰ Pike 100.

contained. We also imagine the countless pages of Rilke's manuscript that are no longer extant – the first half of the manuscript, for example, or the “kleinen Taschenbüchern und einem älteren größeren Manuscript“ which Rilke described in a letter to Kippenberg¹¹¹ and which he was unable to successfully copy into a fair copy of the manuscript – pages containing realms of meaning which have been destroyed, permanently *durchgestrichen*. The candlelight that illuminates the Count's writing chamber thus registers the physicality of the Count's spoken words, the flickering presence of the *Durchgestrichene*, but it is also a crucial material precondition for writing that simultaneously points to the destructibility of text and the realities it presents. For the same gesture of the hand, guiding the pen across paper in striking through a line of text, mirrors the gesture of the hand as it strikes a match. In German, the word *durchstreichen*, literally “to strike through,” contains the same root, *streich*, i.e. “strike,” as the word for match, *Streichholz*, literally “strike-wood.”

The image of Abelone writing and striking through the name Saint Germain and replacing it with the name Belmare thus points us back to the material process of writing through which the text emerged, through the physical process of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*. In this process of writing and scratching through, different possibilities flicker into and out of existence, finally expunged from the printed work, yet remaining, fluctuating between presence and absence, in the manuscript as *Zwischenraum*.

***Durchstreichen* and the Play of Signification**

While the passage points us to consider the physical process of writing and the concrete materiality of the manuscript, attending to the semantics of the text and crossed out variants sheds further light on the process of *Durchstreichen* as involving, at times, a play of signification. Over the next several pages, I consider more closely the example in which the name of St. Germain is scratched through and replaced with the name Belmare. When a word is written, a network of associations is called forth, expunged when the pen then strikes it through, yet remaining as a trace. In this case, what happens to “Saint Germain,” crossed out on the page Abelone inscribes, yet represented through Malte's (via Abelone's) narration of the scene of oration/writing? The names “Saint-Germain” and “Marquis von Belmare” in this context are multivalent signifiers.¹¹² Many myths circulated around the historical figure of St. Germain (1712?-1784) (sometimes confused with Claude Louis, Comte de Saint-Germain (1707-1778)), among which are his connections to alchemy and mysticism. Some reports indicated that St. Germain had lived for 350 years, others that he had lived for over 2000 and had been a contemporary and advisor to Christ.¹¹³ Like Count Brahe, Saint Germain was reported to have direct contact with the dead.¹¹⁴ St. Germain could also purportedly

¹¹¹ Letter to Kippenberg from October 20, 1909, in Engelhardt 69. In considering this material excess, one thinks of the scene in the Count's writing chamber: “Während alledem war noch eine Person zugegen, Sten, des Grafen alter, jütländischer Kammerdiener, dessen Aufgabe es war, wenn der Großvater aufsprang, die Hände schnell über die einzelnen losen Blätter zu legen, die, mit Notizen bedeckt, auf dem Tische herumlagen. Seine Gnaden hatten die Vorstellung, daß das heutige Papier nichts taugt, daß es viel zu leicht sei und davonfliege bei der geringsten Gelegenheit” (KA 3 559).

¹¹² For source history see Witzleben 92-97.

¹¹³ Röse, B., “Germain (Saint-),” *Allgemeine encyclopädie der wissenschaften und künste in alphabetischer Folge*, ed. J. S. Ersch and J. G. Gruber (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1818-1889), 1.61: 167.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 170.

write equally well with both hands, such that when someone dictated to him, he could transcribe with both hands simultaneously onto different sheets of paper, and that the resulting inscriptions were impossible to distinguish. Furthermore, he was reported to have been able to imitate perfectly, *auf das Täuschendste*, the handwriting of others.¹¹⁵ Resonating with Rilke's as well as Malte's childhood – Rilke was dressed and raised as a girl until the age of six by his mother Sophie, and Malte similarly is dressed as a girl by his mother and addressed as Sophie – St. Germain was also reportedly a girl until the age of twenty-two, when he transformed suddenly into a boy.¹¹⁶ On his many travels, St. Germain took on many different pseudonyms, among them a lesser-known pseudonym “Marquis D’Aymar,” or “Belmare,” which he assumed in Venice. There is little source material regarding the pseudonym Belmare: we know that in Venice in the mid-eighteenth century, “the Graf Max von Lamberg, 26 at this time Chamberlain to the Emperor Joseph II., finds M. de St. Germain under the name of Marquis d’Aymar, or Belmare, making a variety of experiments with flax, which he was bleaching to look like Italian silk; he had established quite a large place, and had about a hundred workers... .”¹¹⁷

Flax bleached to look like silk: one text-ile disguises itself as another. So too in the case of St. Germain, “disguising” himself under the pseudonym of Belmare. Yet focusing on the signifiers themselves, rather than the historical personage to which they are attached, opens up further dimensions of linguistic play that are concretely activated in this case by the act of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*. The name “Belmare” translates literally into “beautiful ocean,” and *mare* is a cognate of the German *Meer* [ocean]. The name “Germain,” in addition to being etymologically and iconically linked to the English cognate “German,” contains the French word *main* [hand]. It also can be used in the sense of “first degree,” i.e. a relationship of immediate connection, for example, *cousin germain* [first cousin]. This notion of immediate connection takes on a corporeal dimension in another possible translation, namely “whole blood,” in the sense of *de même sang* in French. This particular meaning of *Germain*, in connection to “Belmare” as “beautiful ocean,” becomes enormously significant metatextually: Belmare’s stories, the Count states, were contained “in his blood,”¹¹⁸ and as Malte writes in the fourteenth *Aufzeichnung*, memories must *become blood* in the writer before they can reemerge as poetry: “die Erinnerungen selbst *sind* es noch nicht. Erst wenn sie Blut werden in uns, Blick und Gebärde, namenlos und nicht mehr zu unterscheiden von uns selbst, erst dann kann es geschehen, daß in einer, sehr seltenen Stunde das erste Wort eines Verses aufsteht in ihrer Mitte.”¹¹⁹ Among the memories that Malte enumerates out of which poetry can be born are memories of the ocean, the *Meer*, the *mare*: “man muss zurückdenken... an Morgen am Meer, an das Meer überhaupt, an Meere...” [“one must think back...to mornings on the ocean, the ocean altogether, oceans”].¹²⁰

Within this network of signification – the metatextual relationship between blood, the hand, the ocean, and poetry, bound up within interplay of the names Germain and Belmare – the word Aymar (the “Marquis d’Aymar, or Belmare”) evokes a unique conception of time. The Aymara

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Cooper-Oakley, Isabel. *The Comte De St. Germain: the Secret of Kings* (Milano: G. Sulli-Rao, 1912), 47; accessed via *Internet Sacred Text Archive*, last accessed 29. March 2013, last modified September 2006, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/sro/csg/>.

¹¹⁸ KA 3 561.

¹¹⁹ KA 3 466-467. “It is not the memories themselves. Only when they become blood in us, glance and gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves, only then can it happen that in a very rare hour the first word of a line arises in their midst and strides out of them” (Pike 13-14).

¹²⁰ KA 3 467.

languages are an almost extinct family of languages, related to Quechua, which are spoken in the Andes. Several features of the language are noteworthy. First, the logic of Aymara is trivalent rather than dichotomous: instead of the two values of Aristotelian logic, true and false, in Aymara there are three, namely true, false, and uncertain.¹²¹ Furthermore, Aymara is noted for its unique temporal structure: whereas speakers of many languages represent that past as behind and the future ahead, the speakers of Aymara represent the future as behind them and the past as in front of them.¹²² The unique temporal structure of the language resonates with the description of the Count's fluid experience of time and the collapse of traditional temporal structures in the space of his narration. It is also a feature that Malte, in a sense to be explored, strives to achieve in his own practice of writing.

In this passage, we find that writing is presented as a process of linguistic play on the level of the signifier. Yet more specifically, this play of possibilities and associations is unlocked by the physical process of *Durchstreichen*. The relationship between the variants “Germain” and “Belmare” unlocks layers of etymological resonance and semantic associations: Germain bears the pseudonym of Belmare like a mask, disguising his identity through a linguistic signifier. Masks play an important role in the novel: in the fifth *Aufzeichnung*, for example, Malte describes the way that people wear many different faces, like masks “as thin as paper,” which can be easily interchanged. On several occasions, Graf Brahe is described as having mask-like features.¹²³ In the play of significations, of mask and identities and pseudonyms that transcend time and space, the figure of Germain/Belmare begins to resemble that of Count Brahe, who shares their oratorical ability, which reproduces the temporal structure of the Aymara languages. St. Germain, a “real”-existing individual, yet one who adopts pseudonyms, wearing different linguistic fiction – for words, as shown above, always tell their own stories – becomes *textualized*, incorporated into the work through the interweaving of various signifiers.

The fabric of associations and references that are brought into play through the act of *Durchstreichen* on the level of the letter has distinct meta-textual dimensions that are revealed when we consider Belmare's alchemical activities. It was reported that Belmare was bleaching one cloth, flax, to make it appear like another, silk. One material, coarse and unrefined, becomes disguised as another. The relationship between these fabrics calls to mind the relationship between the two primary text-fabrics that constitute the body of the *Aufzeichnungen*: the manuscript and the printed work. In this context, the depiction of *Durchstreichen* in the scene of the Count's narration not only reflects on the inability of writing to adequately capture oral narration, but also pushes at the limits

¹²¹ Iván Guzmán de Rojas, *Logical and Linguistic Problems of Social Communication with the Aymara People* (Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 1984), accessed via *Aymara Uta*, last accessed 29. March 2013. <http://aymara.org/biblio/html/igr/igr.html>.

¹²² See Guzmán de Rojas, as well as R. Núñez and E. Sweetser, “With the Future Behind Them: Convergent Evidence From Aymara Language and Gesture in the Crosslinguistic Comparison of Spatial Construals of Time,” *Cognitive Science* 30.3 (2006): 401-450.

¹²³ “Der Graf, oben am Tisch, lächelte beständig mit herabgezogenen Lippen, sein Gesicht erschien größer als sonst, es war, als trüge er eine Maske” (KA 3 474). In the same scene, as the ghost of Christina Brahe walks through the dining hall, Malte writes: “Das Gesicht meines Vaters war jetzt zornig, voller Blut, aber der Großvater, dessen Finger wie eine weiße Krallen meines Vaters Arm umklammerten, lächelte sein maskenhaftes Lächeln” (ibid. 477). And again, following the second appearance of Christinen Brahe: “Aber da schob sich links von dem großen silbernen Schwan, der mit Narzissen gefüllt war, die große Maske des Alten hervor mit ihrem grauen Lächeln. Er hob sein Weinglas meinem Vater zu” (ibid. 479).

of the print medium to adequately represent the process of writing, visible in the manuscript, as a process of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*. The “Gutenberg Galaxy” is governed by laws different than those governing the universe of handwriting. Whereas writing in the manuscript can proceed multi-directionally across the surface of page and can be continually revised, the text of the printed page is fixed in typographical space and proceeds linearly. Malte’s process of learning to write, reproduced in the printed work, attempts to undo, through various acts of de-formation,¹²⁴ the fixity of the print universe. In this way, finally, we are perhaps also reminded of the astronomical discoveries of Tycho Brahe, the namesake of Count Brahe. The last astronomer to base his conclusions on observations of the naked eye – his discoveries were confirmed by a new kind of seeing [*Neues Sehen*] mediated by the telescope – Brahe refuted Aristotle’s notion of a fixed celestial realm, showing the celestial universe to be in perpetual flux.

The last several pages have attempted to account for the play of signification that characterizes the process of writing in the hand-written manuscript. This play, activated by the bodily gestures of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*, becomes partially contained through the process of printing. Yet the materialities of writing in the manuscript assert themselves through the medium of print, rebelling against effacement by the mandates of its service to the printed book.

In concluding this section, I present one final example that highlights the relationship not only between speech, handwriting, and print, but also the material and linguistic textualization of extra-textual reality. “Ich saß,” Malte writes, “in der Ecke einmal und hörte, wie er meinem Vater von Persien erzählte, manchmal mein ich noch, mir riechen die Hände davon.”¹²⁵ In uttering the word “Persia,” the absent signified transcends time and space, becoming physically present as an olfactory trace that lingers on Brahe’s hands. Yet when we return to the manuscript, we find that “China” lingers there as a trace, *durchgestrichen* and replaced with “Persien.”

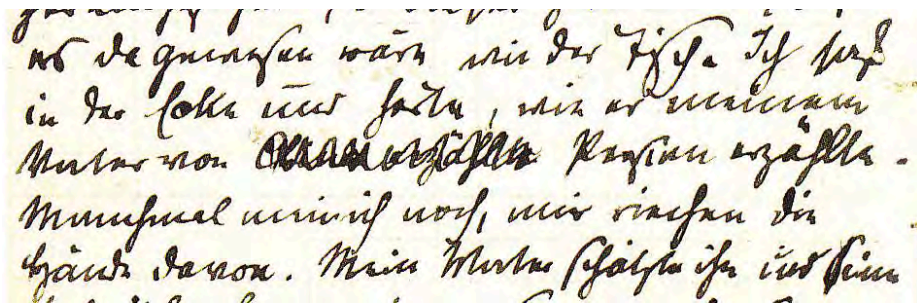


Figure 6. BT 34.

es da gewesen wäre wie der Tisch. Ich saß
in der Ecke und hörte, wie er meinem
Vater von ~~China~~ erzählte Persien erzählte.
Manchmal mein ich noch, mir riechen die
Hände davon. Mein Vater schätzte ihn und seine

Figure 7. BT Transkription 34.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ See Yve-Alain and Rosalind E. Krauss regarding Bataille’s conception of *informe* in *Formless: A Users Guide* (New York: Zone, 1997).

¹²⁵ KA 3 561. “I was once sitting in the corner listening to him tell my father about Persia, I sometimes think my hands still have the smell of it” (Pike 112).

¹²⁶ “...it would have been there, like the table. I sat

We might ask of Malte, reporting Abelone's report of Brahe's report of Belmare's narration, if he simply got the name wrong, and quickly corrected himself. Yet again, the replacement of "China" with "Persia" is not a neutral gesture. In the process of writing, the word China, and with it a vast network of associations, flickers into momentary presence, only to be immediately sliced through by the pen; it lingers as a trace in the manuscript, only to be wiped clean in the printed text. Two things are particularly noteworthy here. St. Germain actually travelled to China, but never to Persia. The *Durchstreichung* here of China, its replacement with Persia, opens up a realm of fluctuation between indexical reference to extra-textual actuality (historical fact), and the intra-textual fabric of the text woven through the process of writing. The introduction of the signifier "Persien" drags along with it a host of intertextual references: perhaps most notably, in the context of storytelling, to the *One Thousand and One Nights*. Like a modern(ist) Scheherazade,¹²⁷ who tells tales springing from diverse origins, Malte writes down historical and fictional narratives from many different time periods – stories, for example, from the "small green book" that Malte remembers from childhood – that become reconfigured in the text, interwoven into a tapestry at times so thick that the individual references become difficult to identify. One particular tapestry from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, Solomon's green silk magic carpet, reappears in Brahe's "nile-green silk dressing gown," which "wehte hin und her," flickering like the candle light, as he rushed throughout the writing chamber.

~~*Gemeinsamkeit, Einsamkeit, Absterben gewisser kulturen...*~~¹²⁸ **Handwriting and Media Shift**

In the previous section, we explored how when we reconsider relationship between oral narration and handwriting (embodied by Brahe and Abelone respectively) through the materialities of writing, we discover that this passage not only mourns a lost mode of narration, but also sheds light on the flickering presence of the *durchgestrichene* passages. This section briefly situates this representation of orating and writing by hand into media history. The relationship between Brahe and Abelone, for example, recalls the relationship of the medieval orator to the scribe to the way in which Count Brahe's narration involves the collapse of temporal boundaries, the materialization of past places and moments in contemporary phenomenological space, the depiction of orating and writing evokes numerous other configurations in media history. As figures of orality and writing, Brahe and Abelone recall the figures of the medieval orator and scribe. Yet Brahe can also be seen to represent the Romantic figure of the storyteller, which emerged in part through the rediscovery of the Middle Ages in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹²⁹ The relationship between Brahe and Abelone, however, also recalls an increasingly prevalent configuration of media technologies and bodies contemporary to the novel's production, namely the relationship between

in the corner once and listened to him
 tell my father ~~about China~~ about Persia.
 Sometimes I think my hands still have the
 Smell of it..." (translation JH).

¹²⁷ Regarding Rilke as "modern-day Scheherazade," see Erika M. Nelson, *Reading Rilke's Orphic Identity* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 16-17.

¹²⁸ The title of this subsection is a quote from a passage in the "Berner Taschenbuch" that was crossed out. It translates roughly: "~~Commonality, Isolation; the dying-off of certain cultures...~~"

¹²⁹ Regarding the role of orality in the discourse network of 1800, see Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*.

the commonly male dictators of text and the often-female typists in the office setting.¹³⁰ In this context, it becomes even more significant that Abelone does not type the Count's memoirs on the typewriter, but rather writes them by hand.¹³¹

Speaking, handwriting, typing on a typewriter, typing on an electronic keyboard (as well as listening to a story, reading a hand-written manuscript, reading a typewritten text, reading an electronic document): each of these media involves a fundamentally different relationship between the subject, producer or receiver, and language. As such, any medial shift alters the relationship of the subject to language. To the degree that the subject is constituted through media, a medial shift, like the advent of printing, the invention of the typewriter, or the advent of digital media, destabilizes the constitution of the subject. In the context of oral narration, the listener is in the immediate phenomenological presence of the orator, the producer of the text.¹³² Writing, the "exteriorization" of language, severs the recipient of the text from the producer.¹³³ The advent of print further separates the reader from the producer: whereas the hand-written text still preserves a trace of the writer's body, in the markings made physically by his hand, bearing his individuality in the individuality of his handwriting, the mechanical reproduction of text through the printing destroys this trace, thus further severing the writer from the reader.¹³⁴ With the advent of the typewriter, the *producer* of text becomes physically separated from the production of the text: no longer formed through the direct contact of the writer's hand with the page – producing letters each of which are different, reflecting the mood or emotional state of the writer – the production of typewritten text is mechanized, as letters are produced by mechanized arms.¹³⁵ This separation of the producer becomes more pronounced, arguably, with the shift from the mechanical typewriter to the electronic keyboard.

Reconsidering the novel in relation to historical and contemporary media history allows us to grasp the way in which the experimental form of the novel, rebelling against the linearity and exclusive visuality of its printed form, participates in the gradual dissolution of the "Gutenberg Galaxy" and even anticipates, one could argue, the development of digital media and hypertext.¹³⁶ Similarly, Malte's attempt to find a multi-sensory mode of narration, akin to the magical storytelling of the Count, not only recalls the medieval scene of oral performance as a fully multi-sensory experience, but also anticipates the sensory simultaneity of contemporary electronic and digital media.¹³⁷

As mentioned earlier, the act of *Durchstreichen* as a fundamental gesture of writing by hand can be localized to a relatively short period in the history of writing.¹³⁸ Today, with the advancement

¹³⁰ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1999), 183-198.

¹³¹ Rilke, as is widely known, was generally wary of new technology and refused to use a typewriter. Regarding the possible figuration of the typewriter in the scene, see the first excursus.

¹³² Ong 72.

¹³³ McLuhan 96.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 209.

¹³⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1994), 259-260. See also Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 202.

¹³⁶ Compare Ernest Hess-Lüttich, "Simultaneität und Sikkzession. Zur (Hypertext-?) Struktur der Zeit-Zeichen in Rilkes *Malte* und Prousts *Recherche*," *Unreading Rilke. Unorthodox Approaches to a Cultural Myth*, ed. Hartmut Heep (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 61-76.

¹³⁷ McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, 72.

¹³⁸ Gisi et. al., *Schreiben und Streichen*, 10.

of computer technology and digital media, the *Streichkultur* [culture of crossing-out] that emerges increasingly in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is giving way to a *Löschkultur* [culture of deletion].¹³⁹ Returning to the “Berner Taschenbuch” and examining more closely that which was crossed out from the scene of the Count’s narration, we find that Malte’s lament of a lost mode of oral mode of narration is connected to another contemporary media shift, namely the decline of letter writing. Following the first sentence of the forty-fourth *Aufzeichnung* (“Dass man erzählte, wirklich erzählte, das muss vor meiner Zeit gewesen sein”), we find the following *durchgestrichene* lines:

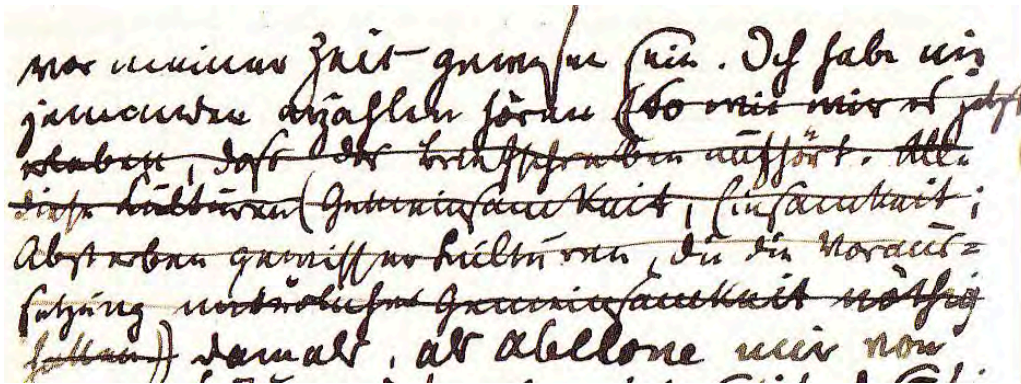


Figure 8. BT 30.

vor meiner Zeit gewesen sein. Ich habe nie jemanden erzählen hören. ((So wie wir es jetzt erleben, dass das Briefschreiben aufhört. Alle diese Kulturen (Gemeinsamkeit, Einsamkeit; Absterben gewisser Kulturen, die die Voraussetzung natürlicher Gemeinsamkeit nöthig hatten)) Damals, als Abelone mir von

Figure 9. BT Transkription 36.¹⁴⁰

Here, Malte (/Rilke?¹⁴¹) laments the decline of another medium of communication, the handwritten letter, and sketches out in a few words the profound implications of that loss: “Gemeinsamkeit,

¹³⁹ Regarding the gesture of the Swipe, see Oliver Ruf, “Bewegtes’ Schreiben. Multimediale Schrift zwischen Wissensdesign, medientechnischer Materialität und virtuellem Ereignis,” *Diesseits des Virtuellen* (forthcoming).

¹⁴⁰ “[That one told stories, really told them, that must have been] before my time. I have never heard anyone tell stories ((Just as we are now experiencing, that letter writing has ceased. All of these cultures (community, isolation; dying off of certain cultures, which had as prerequisite a natural community)))” (translation JH).

¹⁴¹ Since New Criticism and structuralism, the narrative discourse attributed to the narrator, rather than to the author. As Barthes writes, “the (material) author of a narrative is in no way to be confused with the narrator of that narrative” (“Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives,” *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 111). However, such

Einsamkeit; Absterben gewisser Kulturen...” In comparison to many *durchgestrichene* passages that present more coherent text, and which could have been part of the “final” (i.e. printed) narrative, the fragmentary form of these phrases allows one to more clearly designate them as *avant-texte*. In media historical terms, the *Absterben* [dying-off] of the culture of letter writing might best be explained as an effect of the invention of the telegraph, and not inconsequentially, the choppy fragmented text here also reflects the linguistic form of a telegram. With the invention of the telegraph, and later the typewriter, and eventually email and text messaging, the increasing speed of long-distance communication over greater distances is often thought to result in an alienation or isolations of humans from one another.¹⁴² Whereas the orator and audience are physically present to one another, bound into a community existing at a particular moment and space and time, the handwritten letter isolates sender and recipient.¹⁴³ However, the handwritten letter still offers an illusion of proximity and presence: the materiality of the handwritten signifier bears a visual trace of the corporeality of writing, the hand moving the pen across paper, and bears the uniqueness of an individual’s handwriting.¹⁴⁴ In this respect, the telegram or the typewritten letter – like Abelone’s *Aufzeichnungen* in comparison to Brahe’s oration – appear as impoverished forms of linguistic communication. The mechanically produced telegraphic message or typewritten letter further severs the recipient from the physical presence, the body of the sender/producer. This results, in the words of the text, in an “~~Absterben gewisser Kulturen, die die Voraus- / setzung natürlicher Gemeinsamkeit nötig / hatten~~” [my emphasis; “~~a dying-off of certain cultures, which had as a prerequisite a natural community~~”].

In this *durchgestrichene* passage, the connection of the handwritten letter to the dying off [*Absterben*] of communal cultures [*Gemeinsamkeit*] underscores the implications of the contemporary media shifts through which the *Aufzeichnungen* take form. This isolation of the modern subject is not only a product of shifting media configurations, but can be connected as well to the alienation of the subject in the modern metropolis, another key theme of the work. Yet the genre of the handwritten letter has particular significance in the novel, as well as in Rilke’s life and work.¹⁴⁵ Malte reflects at various moments on the activity of letter writing, as well as his inability to write letters. Perhaps most significant is this passage from the fourth *Aufzeichnung*, in which Malte writes about the end of his letter writing.

Ich habe heute einen Brief geschrieben... Ich will auch keinen Brief mehr schreiben. Wozu soll ich jemandem sagen, daß ich mich verändere? Wenn ich mich verändere, bleibe ich ja doch nicht der; der ich war, und bin ich etwas anderes als bisher, so ist klar, daß ich keine

an attribution becomes less certain when referring to passages to passages of the *avant-texte*. I will return to this issue in the fourth chapter.

¹⁴² Consider in this context the flood of recent books to the market such as Margaret Shepher, *The Art of the Handwritten Note: A Guide to Reclaiming Civilized Communication* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002).

¹⁴³ Compare Ong 113, 135.

¹⁴⁴ “Die Individualität eines Autors äußert sich in der Handschrift. Die Edition gibt sich nie wieder” (Wilhelm G. Jacobs, “Materie – Materialität – Geist,” *Editio* 23 (2009): 19). See also Kammer, “Reflexionen der Hand,” 145-146.

¹⁴⁵ See Davide Giuriato, “Die ‘unwirthlichen Blätter’: Rilke, das Papier, die Post und die Briefe an Benvenuta,” *Der Brief: Ereignis und Objekt*, ed. Waltraud Wiethölter and Anne Bohnenkamp (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 2010), 134-146.

Bekanntem habe. Und an fremde Leute, an Leute, die mich nicht kennen, kann ich unmöglich schreiben.¹⁴⁶

Amidst other references to letter writing in the text¹⁴⁷ – childhood letters Malte wrote to Abelone while he was in boarding school;¹⁴⁸ Bettina von Arnim's letters to Goethe, which he read with Abelone;¹⁴⁹ letters of women from the past, which serve as the only trace of their lived existence¹⁵⁰ – one *Aufzeichnung* presents a *Briefentwurf* [draft of a letter].¹⁵¹ This heightens the effect that the novel has assembled from a virtual manuscript composed of a scattered papers, found in a drawer perhaps, which Rilke himself envisions in a letter from April 11, 1910.¹⁵² Yet the inclusion of a letter draft also points to the genre of the epistolary novel, which the *Aufzeichnungen* resemble structurally.¹⁵³ Finally, the inclusion of a letter draft points to the *actual* incorporation of passages from Rilke's letters in the *Aufzeichnungen*.¹⁵⁴

Rilke, we know, was an avid letter writer. His letters are highly literary and have come to form a significant part of his *oeuvre*, having been published in separate volumes, works in and of themselves. Considering the “dying off” of the culture of letter writing – and more specifically, the death of the *handwritten* letter – further informs Rilke's techno-phobia: unlike Nietzsche, who was the first philosopher to use a typewriter,¹⁵⁵ Rilke vehemently refused to use a typewriter. This biographical fact, in turn, gives us further cause to consider carefully the significance of handwriting with regards to the form, the content, and Rilke's process of writing the *Aufzeichnungen*.

Toward a Kairopoetical Narration? The *Wunder* of Writing

Malte's *Aufzeichnungen*, his fragmented and, at times, tortured attempts to narrate, which are interspersed with metadiscursive reflection on the process and the impossibility of *Erzählen*, can be understood as attempts to achieve a mode of narration that *makes present*, in a way similar to Count

¹⁴⁶ KA 3 456. “Today I wrote a letter... I have resolved to write no more letters. Why should I inform anyone of the changes within me? If I am changing, I am no longer the person I was, and if I become someone else, it follows that I have no friends or acquaintances. And to write to strangers, to people who do not know me, is impossible” (adapted from Hulse 4).

¹⁴⁷ Malte references letter exchange between Petrus Abaelard (1079-1142) and Heloise (1101-1164), as well the letters of the “Portugiesin,” Marianna Alcoforado (1640-1723), for example, in describing his idea of “intransitive love” (KA 3 199).

¹⁴⁸ KA 3 543.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 597.

¹⁵⁰ “Wir wissen von der und der, weil Briefe da sind, die wie durch ein Wunder sich erhielten... Aber es sind ihrer zahllos mehr gewesen; solche, die ihre Briefe verbrannt haben, und andere, die keine Kraft mehr hatten, sie zu schreiben” (KA 3 549-50). I return to passage in the third chapter.

¹⁵¹ KA 3 502. This passage is also marked by the footnote “ein Briefentwurf” by the fictional editor.

¹⁵² “Es hätten immer noch Aufzeichnungen hinzukommen können; was nun das Buch ausmacht, ist durchaus nichts Vollzähliges. Es ist nur so, als fände man in einem Schubfach ungeordnete Papiere und fände eben vorderhand nicht mehr und müßte sich begnügen ...” Engelhardt 82. Compare also Hoffmann, “Zum dichterischen Verfahren,” 220.

¹⁵³ Compare Lorna Martens, “Reliable Narration: Rainer Maria Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*,” *The Diary Novel* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1985), 156-172.

¹⁵⁴ For letters and the passages of the *Aufzeichnungen* based on them, see Engelhardt 23-77.

¹⁵⁵ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 200-214.

Brahe's storytelling. But Malte endeavors to make present *through* the medium of writing. On the one hand, Malte's project of *Sebenlernen* demands a new mode of narration, a new form of writing, through which Malte's experiences of the urban metropolis and the internal crises he suffers can be captured. Simultaneously, Malte strives for a mode of narration that can penetrate the illusions and facades of reality, transgressing the boundaries between internal and external, subject and object, self and world.¹⁵⁶ Yet when we return to the manuscript, we find that this struggle to write is not purely mental, but rather plays out through the materialities of writing, in a process of thinking on paper.¹⁵⁷

This struggle evolves into a crisis in Malte's attempt to retell the story of Grischa Otrepjow, which he encountered in the "little green book" of his childhood. After the death of Ivan the Terrible, there were numerous impersonators who assumed the identity of his heir and attempted to claim the throne. Grischa successfully disguises himself and deceives the citizens, including even his own mother, who are eager to believe he is the true heir. After Grischa is finally assassinated, Malte writes that he continues to "wear the mask" for three days. In the following passage, Malte expresses his difficulty in narrating the final moments of Grischa's life:

Es wäre jetzt ein Erzähler denkbar, der viel Sorgfalt an die letzten Augenblicke wendete; er hätte nicht unrecht. Es geht eine Menge in ihnen vor: wie er aus dem innersten Schlaf ans Fenster springt und über das Fenster hinaus in den Hof zwischen die Wachen. Er kann allein nicht auf; sie müssen ihm helfen. Wahrscheinlich ist der Fuß gebrochen. An zwei von den Männern gelehnt, fühlt er, daß sie an ihn glauben. Er sieht sich um: auch die andern glauben an ihn. Sie dauern ihn fast, diese riesigen Strelitzen, es muß weit gekommen sein: sie haben Iwan Grosnij gekannt in all seiner Wirklichkeit und glauben an ihn. Er hätte Lust, sie aufzuklären, aber den Mund öffnen, hieße einfach schreien. Der Schmerz im Fuß ist rasend, und er hält so wenig von sich in diesem Moment, daß er nichts weiß als den Schmerz. Und dann ist keine Zeit. Sie drängen heran, er sieht den Schuiskij und hinter ihm alle. Gleich wird es vorüber sein. Aber da schließen sich seine Wachen. Sie geben ihn nicht auf. Und ein Wunder geschieht. Der Glauben dieser alten Männer pflanzt sich fort, auf einmal will niemand mehr vor. Schuiskij, dicht vor ihm, ruft verzweifelt nach einem Fenster hinauf. Er sieht sich nicht um. Er weiß, wer dort steht; er begreift, daß es still wird, ganz ohne Übergang still. Jetzt wird die Stimme kommen, die er von damals her kennt; die hohe, falsche Stimme, die sich überanstrengt. Und da hört er die Zarin-Mutter, die ihn verleugnet.

Bis hierher geht die Sache von selbst, aber nun, bitte, einen Erzähler, einen Erzähler: denn von den paar Zeilen, die noch bleiben, muß Gewalt ausgehen über jeden Widerspruch hinaus. Ob es gesagt wird oder nicht, man muß darauf schwören, daß zwischen Stimme und Pistolenschuß, unendlich zusammengedrängt, noch einmal Wille und Macht in ihm war, alles zu sein. Sonst versteht man nicht, wie glänzend konsequent es ist, daß sie sein Nachtkleid durchbohrten und in ihm herumstachen, ob sie auf das Harte einer Person stoßen würden. Und daß er im Tode doch noch die Maske trug, drei Tage lang, auf die er fast schon verzichtet hatte.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Such a narration that involves a dissolution of boundaries is defined by Thüring as a fundamental condition of all writing in "Streichen als Moment produktiver Negativität," 56. For resonances with the ideals of symbolism and the *psychologie nouvelle*, see Deborah Silverman 76-79. Regarding the connection of Malte's conception of this new kind of seeing to X-ray vision, see the third excursus.

¹⁵⁷ Regarding Rilke as *Papierarbeiter* rather than *Kopfarbeiter*, see Richter, "diese amorphe Sache," 176.

¹⁵⁸ KA 3 587-88. "We could imagine a writer [*Erzähler*, literally narrator] of our own time who would labour meticulously over those last moments; nor would he be wrong to do so. A great deal happens in them: waking from a deep sleep, he leaps to the window, and out of the window into the

Like Malte, overwhelmed with the task of narrating these last few moments, the final fatal *Augenblick* [instant or moment, literally “blink of the eye”] between the call to fire and the shot of the pistol, the critic is confronted with a passage that seems to overwhelm the possibility of any coherent, all-encompassing reading, a passage that seems to open in infinite directions.¹⁵⁹ In and of itself, this is interesting – on the one hand, it appears that Malte, in fact, applied a great deal of careful labor [*Sorgfalt*] in attempting to narrate this passage, and was actually quite successful at capturing this moment, unfolding over multiple pages that which was infinitesimally compacted [*unendlich zusammengedrängt*]. Yet, on the other, this is precisely where the venture fails: attempting to represent the infinite possibility of Being that is “unendlich zusammengedrängt” into the “Augenblick” over an *expanse* of paginal space and a duration of verbal narration – producing, in other words, a lack of correspondence between *Erzählte Zeit* and *Erzählzeit* – betrays the unique spatio-temporal nature of the *Augenblick*.

Malte’s desperate pleading for a narrator – “aber nun, bitte, einen Erzähler, einen Erzähler” – prompts the question: what kind of an “Erzähler” is Malte pleading for exactly? What kind of “erzählen” does Malte hope to attain? It seems not to be in the classical sense of narrative, as a linear,

courtyard, landing among the sentries. He cannot get to his feet unaided; they have to help him. Quite likely he has broken his foot. Leaning on two of the men, he senses that they believe in him. He looks around: others believe in him too. He almost feels sorry for them, these gigantic *streltsy* – it must be quite a change: they knew Ivan Grozny, in all his reality, and they believe in *him*. He wouldn’t mind enlightening them, but if he opened his mouth he’d simply scream. The pain in his foot is excruciating, and right now he thinks so little of himself that all he is aware of is the pain. And then there is no time. They come crowding round, he sees Shuisky, and behind him all the others. Presently it will be over. But his bodyguards close round him. They are not going to abandon him. And a miracle happens. The faith of these old men spreads; suddenly, no one will advance. Shuisky, right before him, calls up in desperation to an upper window. The imposter does not look round. He knows who is standing there; he realizes that silence has fallen, a sudden and total silence. Now there will be the voice, that voice he knows of old, that high, false voice that overstrains itself. And then he hears the Tsarina Mother disowning him.

Up to this moment, the story tells itself, but now, if you please, we need someone who can tell a story, we need a storyteller: because the few lines that remain to be told must be redolent of a force that would brook no opposition. Whether it is stated or not, you must feel utterly convinced that between the voice and the pistol shot, in that infinitesimal interim, the will and the power were once again in him to be everything. Otherwise there is no understanding how gloriously logical it was that they transfixed him through his nightshirt, and stabbed him through and through in search of the hard core of the man’s being. And that in death he still wore the mask, for three whole days, which he had almost laid aside” (Hulse 122). Interestingly, Hulse translates the word “Erzähler” at the beginning of the first paragraph as “writer,” whereas he translates it as “storyteller” in beginning of the second.

¹⁵⁹ This passage echoes Anne Kolb’s analysis of Malte’s conception of a “Zeit der anderen Auslegung,” which Kolb reads through the anti-hermeneutic turn in contemporary theory: “Mit der Reflexion auf eine (nur) mögliche Schrift, die sich dem Modus der Repräsentation widersetzt... entsteht in der Sehnsucht nach Öffnung des Sinngefüges von Texten über die Dimension des textuell Festgelegten und hermeneutisch Verstehbaren hinaus...” (“Lachen,” 185, my emphasis). On the post- or anti-hermeneutics, see in particular Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford U P, 2004), and Dieter Mersch, *Posthermeneutik*, (Berlin: Akademie, 2010).

chronological ordering of events, or a mere reporting of “what happened.” For Malte, the problem is narrating the *Augenblick*, the space *between* events rather than the events themselves. The possibility of infinite being [alles zu sein], which cannot be contained, exploding into an infinite potentiality that defies all limits of time and space, is inscribed within the infinitesimal space of the *Augenblick*. Benjamin describes the *Augenblick* as a “sonderbares Gespinst aus Raum und Zeit”¹⁶⁰ [peculiar web made of time and space] that appears as a “seeming eternal present”¹⁶¹ in which temporal boundaries dissolve.¹⁶² The passage is composed primarily of syntactically short, simple sentences in the present tense, which iconically capture the immediacy of the moment and present Grischa’s immediate perceptions and cognitive acts: “Er *sieht* sich nicht um... Er *weiß*, wer dort steht...; er *begreift*, daß es still wird... Und da *hört* er die Zarin-Mutter, die ihn verleugnet” (my emphasis). Yet the temporal shape, encoded in linguistic form, that this moment assumes is not only presented in the present tense, but also defined, carved out of the flow of time, by the immanent moments to follow: “Jetzt wird die Stimme kommen, die er von damals her kennt; die hohe, falsche Stimme, die sich überanstrengt” [Now there will be the voice, that voice he knows of old, that high, false voice that overstrains itself]. The future moment is not directly represented, but rather, rooted in the present; the sentence anticipates, in the future tense, the coming of the next moment and the plunge back into the flow of time. Yet the narration of this moment also spills into the subjunctive mood – “wahrscheinlich ist der Fuß gebrochen... Er hätte Lust, sie aufzuklären, aber den Mund öffnen, hieß einfach schreien” [Quite likely he has broken his foot... He wouldn’t mind enlightening them, but if he opened his mouth he’d simply scream]. The distinction between the actual (past, present, and future) and the possible then dissolves, as that which is posited within a subjunctive space spills back into the present: “Der Schmerz im Fuß *ist* rasend. Und dann ist keine Zeit” [my emphasis; “The pain in his foot *is* excruciating... And then there is no time.”] There is “keine Zeit” in the *Augenblick* in multiple senses: the moment Malte attempts to narrate here is by definition so brief that it approaches the limit of zero. Yet there is also “no time” in the *Augenblick* in that the infinite possibility existing in the moment *between* events defies temporal chronology and the linear flow of narration.

The peculiar space-time of the *Augenblick* thus seems to defy narration, at least as traditionally conceived as a sequence of events unfolding in time chronologically. Malte’s description of this would-be narration resonates with Aristotle’s description *kairos*, a mode of time that is distinguished from *chronos*. As Eric Charles writes,

Kairos is an ancient Greek word that means “the right moment” or “the opportune.” The two meanings of the word apparently come from two different sources. In archery, it refers to an opening, or ‘opportunity’ or, more precisely, a long tunnel-like aperture through which

¹⁶⁰ Walter Benjamin, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,” *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 2.1: 440. Regarding the peculiar time-space of the *Augenblick*, compare also Julia S. Happ, “*Augenblicke*: Some Reflections on Ocular Moments in the Prose of Hofmannsthal and Rilke,” *From Magic Columns to Cyberspace: Time and Space in German Literature, Art, and Theory*, ed. Daniel Lambauer, Marie Isabel Schlinzig, and Abigail Dunn (München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2008) and Azadeh Yamini-Hamedani, “Nietzsche’s Eternal Recurrence and the Life of Literature,” *International Journal for Germanic Linguistics and Semiotic Analysis* 16.2 (2011): 189-202.

¹⁶¹ Happ 53.

¹⁶² These *Augenblicke* as “sonderbarer Gespinst aus Raum und Zeit” resonates with the peculiar temporality and spatiality of Count Brahe’s narration, in which past, present, and future, the present and the absent, fold into one another.

the archer's arrow has to pass. Successful passage of a *kairos* requires, therefore, that the archer's arrow be fired not only accurately but with enough power for it to penetrate. The second meaning of *kairos* traces to the art of weaving. There it is "the critical time" when the weaver must draw the yarn through a gap that momentarily opens in the warp of the cloth being woven. Putting the two meanings together, one might understand *kairos* to refer to a passing instant when an opening appears which must be driven through with force if success is to be achieved.¹⁶³

In attempting to narrate the pregnant moment "zwischen Stimme und Pistolenschuß," Malte searches for what I call a *kairopoetical* mode of narration in which *kairos* seems to explode within *chronos*. Like the bullet that literally penetrates the flesh, a current, a *Strom*, must surge through the brief opening in the fabric of the narration, in order for the infinite, time-suspending capacity of this moment to be captured. In rhetoric, *kairos* is conceived as the moment when proof is delivered (as Malte writes, "[es] muß reiner Strom ausgehen, der überzeugt"). *Kairos* can also be conceived as the "now" of writing, an indeterminate time that falls out of the chronological flow of time.

Malte's description of this possible narrator/narration also resonates strongly with post-hermeneutic theory of the production of presence. As Anne Kolb writes,

Es geht nicht länger um ein Denken, das Standpunkte, eindeutig konturierte und festgefügte Positionen formuliert, sondern hinterläßt uns ein fließendes, gleitendes, sich permanent selbst überschreitendes Denken, das nicht weiter in den Rahmen einer starren, rational verbürgten *Ordnung der Dinge* eingespannt werden kann.¹⁶⁴

Conceived in these terms, Malte's attempt to narrate of the story of Grischa's death imagines a mode of *writing*, of *erzählen*, rather than a mode of thinking [*Denken*], that can similarly break out of the constraints of linear and chronological written narration. In the face of a writing that cannot represent, Malte longs for a mode of writing that can *make present*.

Amidst this collapse of temporal distinctions, a *Wunder*, a miracle, happens: "Und dann ist keine Zeit. Sie drängen heran, er sieht den Schuiskij und hinter ihm alle. Gleich wird es vorüber sein. Aber da schließen sich seine Wachen. Sie geben ihn nicht auf. Und ein Wunder geschieht."¹⁶⁵ Containing the root *wund*, "wound," the *Wunder* that occurs here is intimately connected to the physical wounding of the body: the body of Grischa, but also the body of the text.

Many scholars have read the novel as the product of Malte's attempt to "learn to narrate" in the sense of ordering narrative fragments into a coherent, linear, chronological whole. Some have argued that Malte was ultimately successful, for in the final *Aufzeichnung* Malte retells the legend of the prodigal son. Yet others have argued that his attempt fails, as even the final narrative of the prodigal son is filled with metadiscursive commentary on the difficulty and impossibility of narrating, which

¹⁶³ *Kaironomia: On the Will-to-Invent* (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1987), 13.

¹⁶⁴ Kolb, "Lachen," 188-89. "It no longer has to do with a kind of thinking that formulates standpoints or clearly contoured and fixed positions, but rather leaves us with a flowing, gliding thinking that perpetually goes beyond itself, which can no longer be restrained within the frames of a rigid, rationally authenticated *order of things*." Kolb's emphasis on a "fließendes, gleitendes" thought resonates again with the "Strom" that pours out of the Augenblick before Grischa's death. See also Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*.

¹⁶⁵ KA 3 588. "And then there is no time. They come crowding round, he sees Shuisky, and behind him all the others. Presently it will be over. But his bodyguards close round him. They are not going to abandon him. And a miracle happens" (Hulse 122).

disrupt the coherent representation of the events of the story.¹⁶⁶

Erzählen / Schreiben / Dichten

Facing a seeming impossibility, Malte pleads for an “Erzähler” – the same word used to describe Brahe and Belmare – whose narratorial power seems to be rooted in a presencing of oral speech. Returning to the manuscript page on which this plea for an *Erzähler* is written further illuminates and alters our understanding Malte’s crisis.

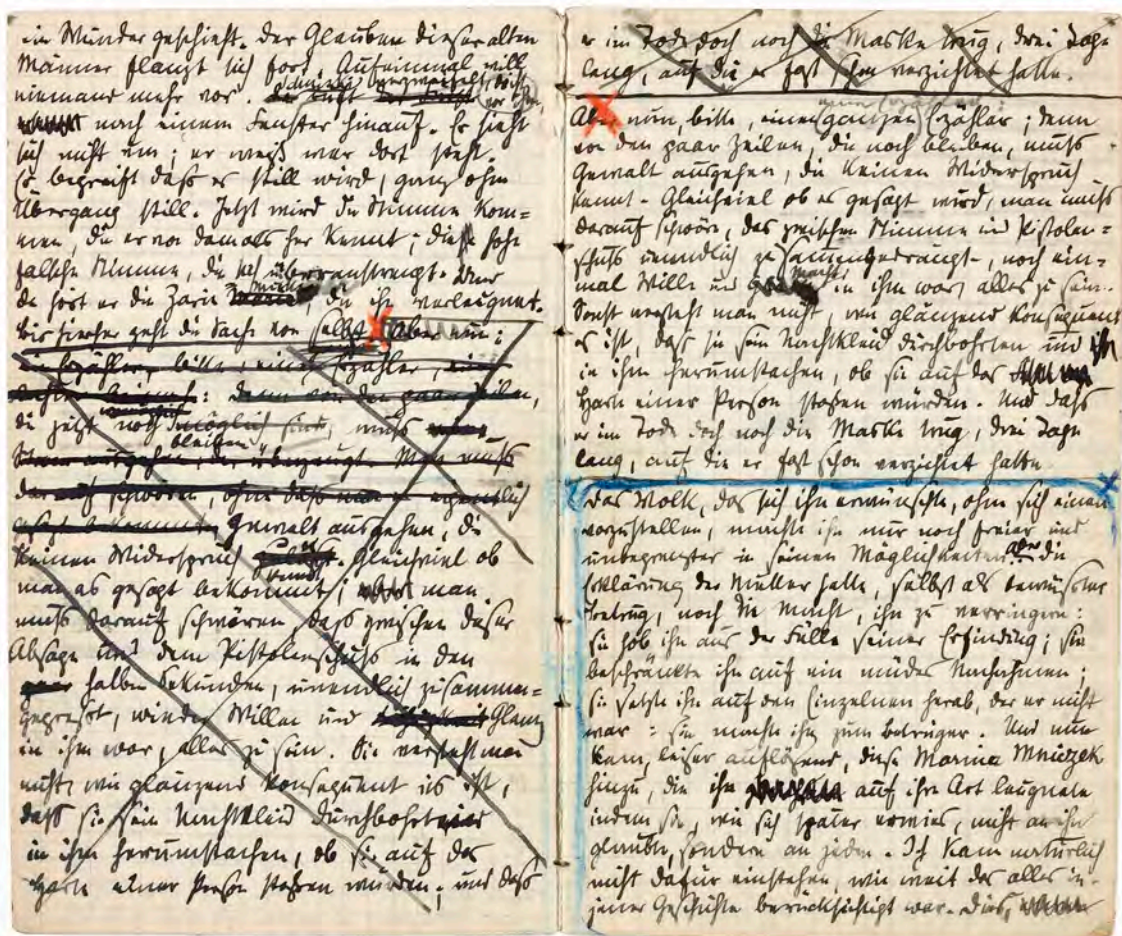


Figure 10. BT 88-89.

Malte’s difficulty in narrating the moment, out of which his tortured plea for a narrator emerges – “aber nun, bitte, einen Erzähler, einen Erzähler” [but now, please, a narrator, a narrator] – is reflected iconically in the visual appearance and the materiality of the manuscript page itself. The climax of Malte’s crisis of narration, this passage is among the most heavily edited in the entire manuscript.

¹⁶⁶ Ernest Hoffmann argues that, over the course of the novel, Malte learns to narrate, that out of his fragmentary reflections on Paris and his attempts to retell scenes from childhood, his narration becomes increasingly more objective and coherent. Judith Ryan argues the opposite in “Hypothetisches Erzählen” 276.

Lines are written, scratched through, rewritten. More than any other section of the manuscript, the ordering of the various chunks of text in the surrounding pages departs radically from their ordering in the printed version, to such a degree that their reordering is difficult to trace retrospectively. The text here, perhaps more than anywhere else, shows itself as a physical *bricolage*.¹⁶⁷ Below is a detail of the passage and my attempt at transcription:

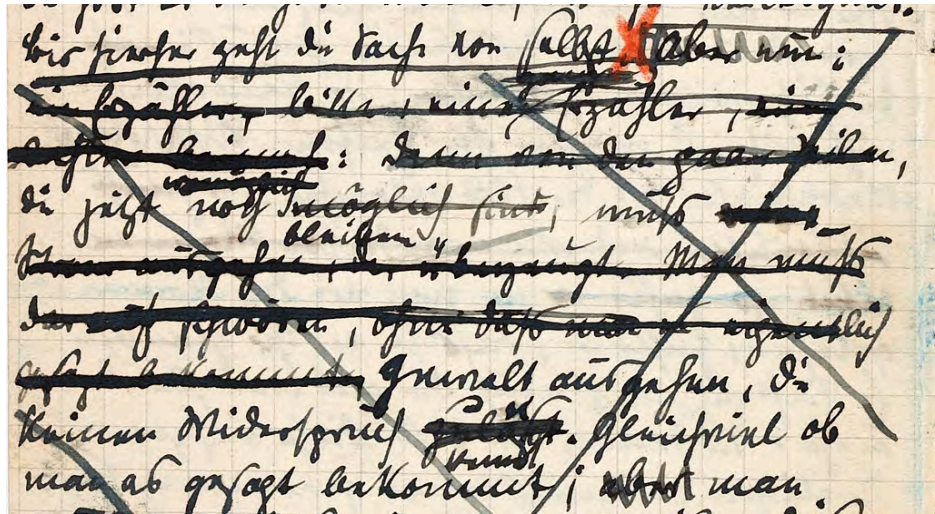


Figure 11. BT 88.

Bis hierher geht die Sache von selbst † Aber nun,
 Ein Erzähler, bitte, einen ^{ganzen} Erzähler, ein
 Dichter beinahe: Denn von den paar Zeilen,
 die jetzt noch ^{womöglich} ^{bleiben} möglich sind, muss reiner
 Strom ausgehen, der überzeugt. Man muss
 darauf schwören, ohne dass man es eigentlich
 gesagt bekommt, Gewalt ausgehen, die
 keinen Widerspruch zulässt, Gleichviel ob
^{kennt}

Figure 12. BT Transkription 88.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962) originally employs the notion of *bricolage* in describing mythical discourse. Genette expands upon Lévi-Strauss’s usage in “Structuralism and Literary Criticism,” *Figures of Literary Discourse* (New York: Columbia U P, 1982), 3–25. Derrida employs the metaphor to describe all discourse in “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001), 360-61.

¹⁶⁸ “Until this moment the story tells itself // X But now:
 a narrator, please, a ^{whole} narrator, a
 poet almost: because from these lines,
 which are still ^{where possible} possible ^{remain} are, must a pure
 current emanate, which convinces. One must

As the text and the spaces between lines and letters become slowly filled with ink, the entire passage is scratched out and rewritten at the top of the next page.

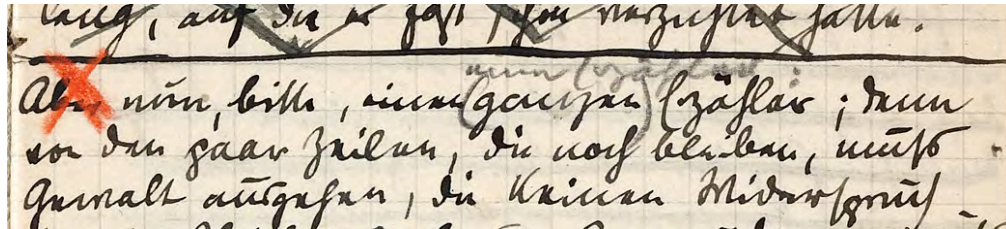


Figure 13. BT 89.

~~lang, auf die er fast schon verzichtet hatte.~~
 † Aber nun, bitte, ^{einen Erzähler} einen (ganzen) Erzähler; denn
 von den paar Zeilen, die noch bleiben, muss
 Gewalt ausgehen, die keinen Widerspruch

Figure 14. BT Transkription 89.¹⁶⁹

This passage is cleaner, but not free of *Durchstreichungen*: “ganzen” [whole] is placed in parentheses, and above, written in pencil, the words “einen Erzähler” [a narrator] are repeated. An X in red pencil is placed at the beginning of the line, indicating that this passage, like a piece of a mosaic, should be positioned elsewhere in the text.

What kind of an *Erzähler*, with what capabilities, is Malte pleading for here? An *Erzähler* like Brahe or Belmare? Faced with the impossibility of representing the *Augenblick*, Malte’s previous reflection on the lost art of storytelling – “Dass man erzählte, wirklich erzählte, das muss vor meiner Zeit gewesen sein...” – and his reflection the seeming deficiency of the written medium to capture the power of this special mode of narrating, have developed here into a crisis. The tension between the oral and the written is highlighted by the *durchgestrichene* phrase “ein Dichter beinahe” [a poet almost]. The art of *dichten*, of composing poetry, is rooted in the oral. The word resonates with the etymologically related notion of dictation, *diktieren*, recalling here the the *Erzählen* of Count Brahe, who “diktierte.” The appearance of the *Dichter* in the *Durchgestrichene* thus evokes not only the medial tension between possibilities of the oral and the written, but also the generic distinction between poetry and prose.¹⁷⁰ As a poet struggling to learn to narrate, Malte’s cry for an *Erzähler* resounds within an uncharted space that opens between the oral and the written, between poetry and prose,

~~swear on it, without it actually dass man es eigentlich
 being stated – a power pour out, which
 which allows ^{knows} no contradiction...~~” (translation JH)

¹⁶⁹ “X But now, please, a (whole) ^{a narrator} narrator; because
 From these couple lines, which are still here, must
 a force emanate...” (translation JH).

¹⁷⁰ Compare Ulrich Fülleborn, “‘Werther’ – ‘Hyperion’ – ‘Malte Laurids Brigge.’ Prosalyrik und Roman,” *Studien zur Deutschen Literatur. Festschrift für Adolf Beck zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Fülleborn and Johannes Krogoll (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979), 86-102.

but which he cannot reach.¹⁷¹ To accomplish his task, Malte searches for a form of narration beyond traditional forms. In attempting to narrate this scene, Malte writes “Es wäre jetzt ein Erzähler denkbar, der viel Sorgfalt an die letzten Augenblicke wendete...” [“A narrator could be conceivable, who would labor meticulously over those last moments...”]¹⁷². For Malte, like for Benjamin, the *Erzähler* is no longer present; yet more specifically, here, the *Erzähler* as a structure of *written* narrative is no longer self-evident, only potentially “denkbar” [conceivable, thinkable]. Malte questions whether it is possible to have something like a true storyteller in the written text.¹⁷³

The appearance of the *Dichter* in the *Durchgestrichene* sheds further light on the nature of the Malte’s task in that *dichten* means not only “to versify, to compose a poem,” but also to tie something together, to tighten,” related etymologically to the English “thick,” dense, or *dicht* in German. *Dicht machen*, for example, implies weaving something very tightly. One can also speak of a *dichte Nacht*, literally a thick night, or utter darkness, as well as a *dichter Haufen Menschen*, a thick mass of humans. The appearances of the *Dichter* in the *durchgestrichene* lines of this passage thus draws our attention not only to the generic form, but also the visuality of the text, to the material thickening of lines on the page through the accumulation of *Durchstreichungen*.

The traditional sense of narration involves the stringing together of a series of events in sequential time; narration necessarily takes place over time. Whereas Lessing in the *Laocoon* asserts that poetry (i.e. literature) is inherently temporal, whereas painting, the visual arts, are inherently spatial, the *written* literary text also necessarily unfolds in space, over the space of the page – unlike the oral narrative, the written text as material object is a spatial and visual object. And it is on the visual space of the page that Malte attempts to adequately capture the infinite space of the *Augenblick*. His exploration of this fundamental impossibility evolves through multiple variants:

¹⁷¹ Rilke’s writing in the *Aufzeichnungen* was also significantly influence by Baudelaire’s *Petits Poèmes en Prose*.

¹⁷² Modified from Hulse 122.

¹⁷³ In this way, Malte’s pleading for “einen Erzähler, einen Dichter beinah” questions the fundamental possibility of an *Erzähler* in a written text. This tension is inscribed within the term *Erzähler*, as well as the English “narrator.” In both languages, the same term is used to describe an oral narrator as well as the narrator of a written text, and as such, this tension between the oral and written remains unresolved in the term. In “Der Erzähler,” Walter Benjamin discusses the differences between oral and written narration, yet vestiges of orality continue to haunt the conception of the idea of the “narrator” of written prose. Genette, for example, refuses to think about narration as writing, defining narration as “telling” in *Narrative Discourse*. Similarly, most structuralist narrative theory does not entertain the fact that what is narrated in fictional prose is *written*. Roland Barthes, particularly in *S/Z* and “From Work to Text,” recovers writing offering a deconstructive account of what it means to consider literary texts as “writing.”

~~Dichter beinahe: Denn von den paar Zeilen,
 die jetzt noch ^{womöglich} möglich sind, muss reiner
 Strom ausgehen, der überzeugt. Man muss
 darauf schwören, ohne dass man es eigentlich
 gesagt bekommt, Gewalt ausgehen, die
 keinen Widerspruch zulässt. Gleichviel ob
 man es gesagt bekommt; ^{kennt} aber man
 muss darauf schwören, dass zwischen dieser
 Absage und dem Pistolenschuss in den
 paar halben Sekunden, unendlich zusammen-
 gepresst, wieder Willen und Fähigkeit(?) Glanz
 in ihm war, alles zu sein. Sie versteht man
 nicht, wie glänzend konsequent es ist,~~

Figure 15. BT 89.

~~Dichter beinahe: Denn von den paar Zeilen,
 die jetzt noch ^{womöglich} möglich sind, muss reiner
 Strom ausgehen, der überzeugt. Man muss
 darauf schwören, ohne dass man es eigentlich
 gesagt bekommt, Gewalt ausgehen, die
 keinen Widerspruch zulässt. Gleichviel ob
 man es gesagt bekommt; ^{kennt} aber man
 muss darauf schwören, dass zwischen dieser
 Absage und dem Pistolenschuss in den
 paar halben Sekunden, unendlich zusammen-
 gepresst, wieder Willen und Fähigkeit(?) Glanz
 in ihm war, alles zu sein. Sie versteht man
 nicht, wie glänzend konsequent es ist,~~

Figure 16. BT Transkription 88.

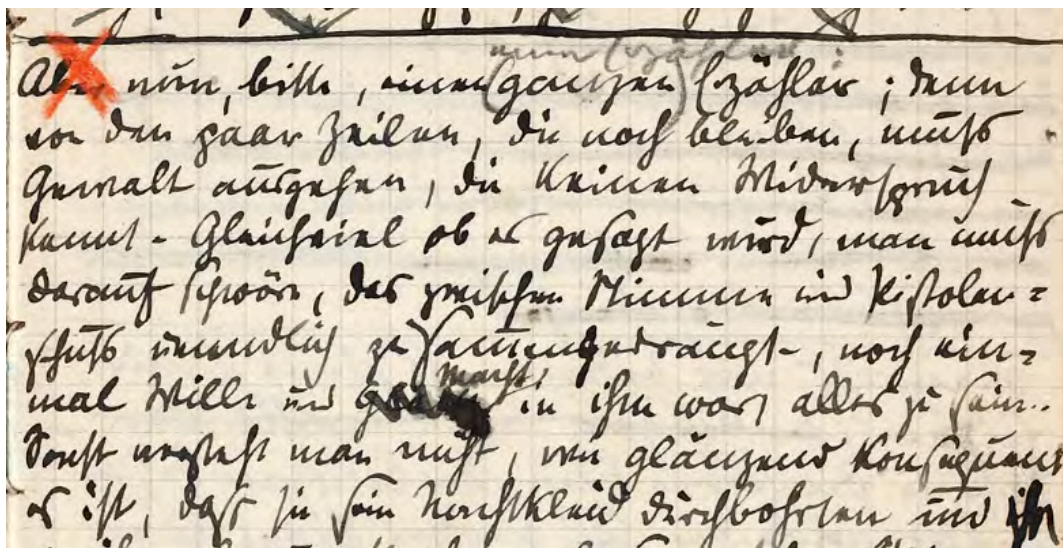


Figure 17. BT 89.

† Aber nun, bitte, einen ^{einen Erzähler:} (ganzen) Erzähler; denn von den paar Zeilen, die noch bleiben, muss Gewalt ausgehen, die keinen Widerspruch kennt. Gleichviel ob es gesagt wird, man muss darauf schwören, das *(sic)* zwischen Stimme und Pistolen-schuss unendlich zusammengedrängt, noch einmal Wille und Glanz ^{Macht} in ihm war, alles zu sein. Sonst versteht man nicht, wie glänzend konsequent es ist, dass sie sein Nachtkleid durchbohrten und ih

Figure 18. BT Transkription 89.

A narrator thus conceived could somehow adequately capture, in the space of the “few lines” [den paar Zeilen], the infinitude of everything happens and everything that is possible in a “couple half-seconds” [paar halben Sekunden]. In order to do this, “[es] muss ~~reiner Strom ausgehen,~~“ “muss eine Gewalt ausgehen,” “~~die überzeugt,~~“ “die keinen Widerspruch zulässt ~~kennt~~” (in print: “über jeden Widerspruch hinaus”). The lines that are possible [möglich] – i.e. the lines of text before they have been written, or during the process of writing – become the lines that remain [bleiben], written down and ultimately fixed in print.

A current, or a stream, must flow forth from these lines, as if to *fill infinitely* the space between them, so as to capture the infinitude of the *Augenblick* – the flow of speech perhaps, as delivered by an oral narrator, but also the flow of ink. The issue at play here is that of spatio-temporal iconicity, between *Erzählte Zeit* and *Erzählzeit* [time of fabula and time of narration], between *geschriebene Zeit* and *Schreibzeit* [the time that is written, and the time of writing], or perhaps most aptly, between the *erzählte geschriebene Zeitraum* [the narrated written time-space] of the *Augenblick* and the physical *Schreibraum* [space of writing] of the page. Can an *Erzähler* adequately capture the infinitude of these two finite seconds in two finite lines on the page? Perhaps the

presencing flow of the count's narration, which literarily transcends the materiality of the signifier, could accomplish something like this. But Malte views his attempt to unfold the infinitude of these moments in language, through a multitude of words expanding over the vast expanse of the page, as a failure. In pleading for an *Erzähler* who could succeed, ink flows over the imaginary boundaries of lines, through a process of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*, of *Zwischen-den-Zeilen schreiben* and *Zwischen-den-Zeilen durchstreichen* [writing between the lines, and crossing out between the lines], until the invisible boundaries of the lines of text, the contours and form of individual words and letters, begin to dissolve into the infinite materiality of ink on the page. What cannot be captured in the linear flow of the text is captured iconically, in the visual logic of the manuscript. Here it is not the semantic, but rather the iconic, the page as *visual* object, that dominates.

The *Wunder* of Writing

The content of Malte's narration is visualized on the manuscript page in other ways as well. Malte asserts "wie glänzend konsequent es ist, daß sie sein Nachtkleid durchbohrten und in ihm herumstachen, ob sie auf das Harte einer Person stoßen würden."¹⁷⁴ The creation of the wounds, the "durchbohren" and "herumstechen" of the body, is represented visually and iconically on the manuscript page itself: Malte's pen slices again and again over the fabric of the page, like the nightgown; like the executioners, who continually stab through the nightgown, as if searching for a hard body beneath, Malte continually writes the word "Erzähler," slicing through it, writing it again, as if he attempting to penetrate down to the essential body of the *Erzähler*,¹⁷⁵ or to penetrate into the *Augenblick* of the story and make it present through the materiality of the signifier. A *Wund* is created in multiples senses: the physical *herumstechen* on the page, spilling ink and leaving scars on its surface; a tear in the fabric of time in the "space" of the *Augenblick*; an attempt, perhaps, to *pierce* the reader, in Barthes's sense of the *punctum*, over and over again.¹⁷⁶ This wound, I argue, amounts to an *opening* of the representational, semiotic, hermeneutic order of the text, approaching a "Zeit der anderen Auslegung."¹⁷⁷ In this way, the density of *Durchstreichungen* on the manuscript page represent iconically, i.e. visually rather than verbally¹⁷⁸ – almost like a photographic snapshot – a specific moment in time, an *Augenblick* that cannot otherwise be narrated and that seems to defy linguistic

¹⁷⁴ Mitchell translates these lines as follows: "what magnificent sense it made that they pierced his night-shirt and stabbed him all over his body, to see if they would strike the hard core of a personality" (191); and Hulse as follows: "how gloriously logical it was that they transfixed him through his nightshirt, and stabbed him through and through in search of the hard core of the man's being" (122).

¹⁷⁵ The relationship with the corporality of the human body and the body of the text will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁶ See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 27.

¹⁷⁷ Compare Kolb, "Lachen," 198-99 and Stefanie Harris, "Exposures: Rilke, Photography, and the City," *New German Critique* 33.3 (2006): 125.

¹⁷⁸ In this way, one could conceive of Malte's attempt in terms of icon painting, attempting to capture or transmit the presence of something, in this case through language rather than through painting. This attempt involves an interplay or experimentation with the limits of the verbal and visual.

representation.¹⁷⁹

This concentrated visual representation of the *Augenblick* is reflected in the concept itself, the literal “blink of the eye.” In the *Durchgestrichene* passages, we find that in these moments, “wieder Wille und Glanz” [“again, the will and the spark”] were “in ihm, alles zu sein” [in him to be everything]. This *Glanz* [spark, glimmer, brilliance] reappears in the phrase “glänzend konsequent” [brilliantly consequential, “gloriously logical” (Hulse), “magnificently sens[ical]” (Mitchell)]. The infinitude of the *Augenblick* resonates here with the brilliant flickering glare – like the flash of a camera, or the spark generated by a gun shot – an intense concentration of light sparkling off a reflective surface that momentarily blinds the viewer, breaking normal cohesiveness of visual perception, distorting forms and making them indeterminant.¹⁸⁰ This momentary brilliant glare is like

¹⁷⁹ Rilke describes his own experience in Paris by comparing himself to a photographic plate in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salome from October 21, 1913: “This time, Paris was just what I had expected: difficult. And I feel like a photographic plate that has been exposed too long, in that I remain forsaken to this powerful influence...” (cited in Harris 121). Similarly regarding Malte as a medium, Santner, *Creaturely Life*, 51-52, and Santner, *Royal Remains*, 219. Regarding the temporality of the photograph, Huysen (referencing Merleau-Ponty) writes that “any photograph holds open a specific moment that the rush of (lived) time would otherwise have immediately closed. The snapshot marks the space where the present turns into memory, but simultaneously it preserves the appearance of a presence. When transposed into writing, this unexpected eruption onto the scene of vision that Barthes called the *punctum* and Merleau-Ponty described in its temporal dimension as the holding open of the moment in space toward its present, its past, and its future allows for a palimpsestic writing of space, one that transcends the seen and the scene and acknowledges the present and past imaginary any snapshot of space carries with it” (“Modernist Miniatures,” 33). Regarding the photograph and Rilke more generally, Stefanie Harris, “Exposures,” and Kenneth S. Calhoun, “Personal Effects: Rilke, Barthes, and the Matter of Photography,” *MLN* 113.3 (1998): 612-634.

¹⁸⁰ Regarding post-hermeneutic thinking as a thought [*Denken*] that glistens, twinkles, or flickers [*blinzelt*] – one recalls here the flickering candle light in the Count’s writing chamber – Anne Kolb describes “ein Denken, das blinzelt, wenn wir es schauen: Ein Blinzeln aber, so Martin Heidegger in seiner für diesen Zusammenhang paradigmatischen Vorlesung mit dem sprechenden Titel ‘Was heißt Denken?’ aus dem Jahre 1951/52, nicht im Sinne eines ‘beiläufigen Augenzwinkern[s] ... , womit man sich bei besonderen Gelegenheiten zu verstehen gibt, daß man das Gesagte und Geplante und überhaupt das, was sich begibt, im Grunde nicht mehr ernst nimmt’; vielmehr handelt es sich bei dem auf der nietzscheanischen Denktradition gründenden Blinzeln, mit und in dem sich uns das lachende Denken der Moderne – so in der Formulierung Heideggers – vor-stellt, um das Hereinbrechen und die im Modus des Präsentischen sich zeitigende Einlösung eines souveränen Ziels: ‘es ist nur noch der gegenwärtige [*präsenste*] Augenblick der Verzehrung, der Auflösung des Geschaffenen, der zählt” (Kolb, “Lachen,” 190). This conception of a *blinzeldes Denken* in relation to the production of presence recalls the scene in the Count’s writing chamber when the Count holds the candelabra up to Abelone’s face and asks if she “sees” the figure of Belmare, about whom the count is narrating: “Der Graf, bebend, stand und machte eine Bewegung, als stellte er etwas in den Raum hinein, was blieb. In diesem Moment gewahrte er Abelone. ‘Siehst du ihn?’ herrschte er sie an. Und plötzlich ergriff er den einen silbernen Armleuchter und leuchtete ihr blendend ins Gesicht. Abelone erinnerte sich, daß sie ihn gesehen habe” (KA 3 562). “Tembling, [the Count] stopped and made a motion as if placing something in space that stayed there. At that moment he perceived Abelone. ‘Do you see him?’ he barked at her. And suddenly he seized one of

staring directly into candle light, or into the sun itself, into a pure infinite radiance that is at once the source of all vision and the force or potential to blind.

We thus see visually, in the manuscript, the outcome of an attempt to “infinitely fill” the *Augenblick*. Yet in the printed text, the text that remains, this operation can only be imagined. In the manuscript, the visible current of ink provides a form of witness, a *Strom der überzeugt*. In the manuscript, the text and the *Durchstreichungen* become so indistinguishably thick [*dick*], that the graspable form of the individual letters, both physically and symbolically, becomes covered over, dissolving into the illegible infinite potentiality of the material.

For Malte, it seems, the infinitude of the *Augenblick* cannot adequately be represented in a series of words that unfold over the space of the page, which thereby *expands* the peculiar space-time of the *Augenblick* over the time of writing/reading. This problem is especially poignant in the printed text, in which letters and lines are fixed and reading is constrained to proceed in a principally linear manner. The logic of writing in the manuscript, however, is governed by a fundamentally different spatio-temporality; writing, particularly in these passages, often proceeds multidirectionally, sections can be returned to and rewritten. As Thüring writes,

Through the possibility that the text could be expanded or edited at any moment, perpetually and subject to whim, the process of writing is potentially endless... In this way, a subject- and text-oriented space-time of indeterminate coordinates emerges: in each moment, the boundaries between subject and text, inner and outer, beginning and end, self and other, imagination and perception, past and present, presence and absence can, in principle, shift, dissolve, or be drawn anew, more or less explicitly, more or less performatively, more or less reflexively.¹⁸¹

Conceived in these terms, the immediate time-space of writing *as a process*, a perpetual present in which time and space open in infinite directions, is visualized iconically in the manuscript and *is* the time-space of the *Augenblick*. Malte’s representation of the *Augenblick* can thus be grasped as a representation the process of *writing itself*, in which extra-textual reality is captured, transformed, and incorporated into text. This attempt to represent the *Augenblick* brings us to the essence of writing itself, which, like the momentary, blinding glare, is a “blind spot.”¹⁸²

Emerging out of and indexing a network of ruptures in the history of the mediality and materiality of linguistic production, Malte’s crisis of writing does not simply reflect, but rather is enmeshed within, indeed *constitutes*, a crisis of subjectivity. In attempting to imagine a would-be-thinkable-narrator, an *Erzähler, einen Dichter beinahe*, the adjective “ganz” as a modifier of *Erzähler* is struck out twice. *Glänzend konsequent* is the iconicity between *Glanz* and *ganz*, on the level of the

the silver candelabras and shone it blindingly into her face. Abelone remembered that she had seen him” (Pike 113-14).

¹⁸¹ Translation JH. “Durch die Möglichkeit des jederzeitigen und beliebigen Fort- und Umschreibens wird der Schreibprozess potenziell unabschließbar... Auf diese Weise bildet sich eine subjekt- und schriftbezogene Raum-Zeit von unbestimmten Koordinaten heraus: Die Grenzen zwischen Subjekt und Schrift, innen und außen, Anfang und Ende, Eigenem und Fremden, Einbildung und Wahrnehmung, Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Präsenz und Absenz können im Schreibprozess prinzipiell in jedem Moment verschoben, aufgelöst oder neu gezogen werden und dies mehr oder weniger explizit, mehr oder weniger performativ, mehr oder weniger reflektiert” (56).

¹⁸² As Kammer notes, *Schreiben* itself cannot be known directly, rather only its product, *Schrift*, can be observed (“Reflexionen der Hand,” 135).

materiality of the letter: for the idea of the “whole” narrator, who, for Benjamin twenty years later would no longer be present, flickers in the *Durchgestrichene* on the edge of being. On the one hand, the yearning for a “whole” narrator highlights the fragmentation of the self, and more specifically, the writing self, as origin and producer of text. We might argue that Malte is nostalgic for Benjamin’s *Erzähler* who is no longer present. On the other, the desire for a “whole narrator” [*ganzen Erzähler*] reflects the position of the fragmented subject in post-Nietzschean reality, in the wake of the death of God, in the midst of the death of the Author-God. In the *Aufzeichnungen*, this crisis of subjectivity is bound up in a crisis of writing, in the rupture between oral and the written, between the handwritten and the typewritten and the printed; a crisis rooted rhizomatically in the shift from orality to literacy, from manuscript culture to print culture, from the discourse network of 1800 to 1900, from a network of letters to that telegrams and typewriters. In that the subject is constituted in large part through the technologies and media of writing and communication, Malte’s processes of “learning to see” and “learning to narrate” can be understood as attempt to *write himself out of* the ruins of the self/author and a deeply fragmented conception of language. This implies not an attempt to reconstitute himself as a “whole” Author and Self, but to write into a space beyond all established concepts and forms, beyond the traditional semiotic and hermeneutic order, to a “Zeit der anderen Auslegung.”

Describing this process of “learning to narrate” demands that we “learn to see” in a fundamentally different way. The crisis of subjectivity and narration “represented” in the text is inseparable from the process and materiality of its production. Most concretely, Malte/Rilke’s attempt to write out of this crisis of narration takes place physically and materially on the page, in the process of approaching, through numerous strokes of the pen, sketching and striking through, a certain mode of narrating in which spacetime of the *Erzählte Zeit* – here the infinitude, the *Alles* of the *Augenblick* – collapses into the physical space of the page.

* * *

When we thus return the scene of narration unfolding in Count Brahe’s writing chamber and begin to “learn to see” through a different lens, namely through material traces of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*, traces of a corporeal process of handwriting in ink on paper, we find that Malte’s struggle to narrate emerges out of ruptures in media history that bring the notion of the self and the relation of the individual to society into a certain fluctuation. Reading the written traces in the manuscript allows us to *reread* Malte’s reflections on the immediate, magical “presence-ing” of oral narrative, and the *Hinein-Sehen* (seeing-into) of the project of *Neues Sehen*; we are guided to consider the presence of the *Durchgestrichene* in the manuscript, of that which has been crossed through, erased, thrown out, *fortgeworfen*. The next chapters draw us deeper into the *Durchgestrichene*. By considering a variety of other figures in the text – the nameless, faceless *Fortgeworfenen* as *Zwischenfiguren* who have been *durchgestrichen* from society, as well as a host of corporeal images of flesh, blood, and wounds – we will probe at the ontology of this textual *Zwischenraum*, the fluctuation of presence and absence opened up in the act of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*.

Excuse One

Receiving the Stigmata

Malte closes his narration of the scene of writing in Count Brahe's writing chamber with the following description:

'Morgen schreiben wir von Julie Reventlow,' sagte er und kostete seine Worte. 'Das war eine Heilige.'

Wahrscheinlich sah Abelone ihn ungläubig an...

Er nahm Abelone's Hände und schlug sie auf wie ein Buch.

'Sie hatte die Stigmata,' sagte er, 'hier und hier.' Und er tippte mit seinem kalten Finger hart und kurz in ihre beiden Handflächen.

Den Ausdruck Stigmata kannte Abelone nicht. Es wird sich zeigen, dachte sie; sie war recht ungeduldig, von der Heiligen zu hören, die ihr Vater noch gesehen hatte. Aber sie wurde nicht mehr geholt, nicht am nächsten Morgen und auch später nicht. –

'Von der Gräfin Reventlow ist ja dann oft bei euch gesprochen worden,' schloß Abelone kurz, als ich sie bat, mehr zu erzählen. Sie sah müde aus; auch behauptete sie, das meiste wieder vergessen zu haben. 'Aber die Stellen fühl ich noch manchmal,' lächelte sie und konnte es nicht lassen und schaute beinahe neugierig in ihre leeren Hände.¹⁸³

Abelone does not know the word *stigmata*. The Count communicates the meaning to her through direct bodily contact: his fingers become like the nails of the Passion, which "tapped ...cold[ly] on both palms, hard and sharp." Yet peculiarly, the Count's fingers also figure the mechanical arms of the typewriter: Abelone's hands are opened "like a book" ["wie ein Buch"], onto which the Count fingers type [*tippen*]. The language here directly evokes Thomas's reference to the *typos*, the mark or print, of the nails in Christ's hands (των τυπων των ηλων), in John 20:25: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."¹⁸⁴

The first recorded stigmatic in Christian history was St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century. In his account of this miracle in the *Legenda Maior* (1260-1263), St. Bonaventure writes that the "true love of Christ transformed the lover [St. Francis] into His image," and that "the likeness of the Crucified depicted not on *tablets of stone* or on panels of word carved by hand, but engraved on parts

¹⁸³ KA 3 563. "Tomorrow we shall be writing about Julie Reventlow,' he said, savouring his words. 'She was a saint.' In all probability, Abelone gave him a look of disbelief... He took Abelone's hands and opened them like a book. 'She had the stigmata,' he said, 'here and here.' And he tapped his cold finger on both palms, hard and sharp. Abelone did not know what 'stigmata' meant. Wait and see, she thought; she was most impatient to hear about the saint her father had seen. But she was not brought in any more, neither the following morning nor on any later occasion. – 'Countess Reventlow has often been talked of in your family,' Abelone concluded tersely, when I asked her to go on. She looked tired; and she claimed to have forgotten almost everything. 'But there are times when I still feel it in those two places,' she smiled and, irresistibly drawn to the thought, looked almost with curiosity at her unmarked hands" (Hulse 99-100).

¹⁸⁴ King James Version. The Latin word is *figura* (figuram clavorum).

of his flesh *by the finger of the living God [sic]*.¹⁸⁵ Like the finger of God, which inscribes the stigmata onto the hands of St. Francis, the Count directly presses with his fingers into Abelone's hands. Her hands opened like a book, transformed into a writing surface, Abelone's flesh becomes word, in order that she may receive the stigmata, that she may be converted into a bodily image of Christ, "the word made flesh."¹⁸⁶ Yet unlike St. Francis, who had a vision of Christ, Abelone does not see – physically, spiritually, or metaphorically – the figure whose image she becomes; she has no access to it, nor does she even understand the word *stigmata*. Although she does not understand it immediately, a new meaning becomes signified by the experience inscribed into her body like a text, and she continues to feel it, as a sense memory, long after the original event.¹⁸⁷

The representation of Abelone receiving the stigmata directly mirrors the reader's affective experience of the many piercing descriptions of material and bodily disintegration in the *Aufzeichnungen*, which I explore in the next chapter. Like Abelone, who does not see Christ, who does not know what the signifier *stigmata* points to, the reader of the traditional printed text cannot see the manuscript, but nonetheless experiences it affectively during the process of reading: the suffering body of the manuscript, the *Textkörper* which takes shape as the novel unfolds, becomes transposed into the reader's affective experience during reading.

However, while figuring the nails that penetrate Christ's flesh, the Count's finger's also figure the arms of the typewriter, which tap [*hart und kurz*] into the flesh of the page. The Count thus appears as a strange amalgamation of media technologies: while dictating orally, speaking the word *stigmata*, the Count's hands become the arms of a typewriter, inscribing the meaning of the word into Abelone's flesh. What are we to make of this figuration of the typewriter within the figure of the Count, who otherwise seems to embody the kind of oral narration whose loss Malte laments? Recall that in the scene of oral narration, orator and audience occupy the same physical space. With the

¹⁸⁵ Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of Saint Francis," *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. J. A. Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York and London: New York Press, 1999), XIII: 634. See also Hans Belting, "Franziskus. Der Körper als Bild," *Bild und Körper im Mittelalter*, Ed. Kristin Marek et. al. (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2006), 21; and Paroma Chatterjee, "Francis's Secret Stigmata," *Art History* 35.1 (2012): 40. Chatterjee writes that "in the case of Francis, the subject that required depiction was a novelty: a human being transformed into an acheiropoietos, a body that God's hand had moulded, sealed, and written upon;" "Bonaventure likens Francis's body to a charter sealed by the stigmata when he remarks, 'As it is the Pope's practice to endorse documents with his seal, so Christ, having recognized the teaching of Saint Francis as his own, affixed the seal of his stigmata to his body, and thereby irrevocably confirmed his teaching'" (Chatterjee 59 n16, citing from Bonaventure, "The Morning Sermon on Saint Francis, Preached at Paris, October 4, 1255," *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, II: 513.) See also Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone, 2011), 112-116; Jill Bennett, "Stigmata and sense memory: St. Francis and the affective image," *Art History* 24.1 (2001): 1-16; Arnold Davidson, "Miracles of bodily transformation, or, How St. Francis Received the Stigmata," *Picturing Science. Producing Art*, Caroline Jones et. al. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 101-124; and Bettine Menke and Barbara Vinken, eds., *Stigmata: Poetiken der Körperinschrift* (München: Fink, 2004).

¹⁸⁶ See John 1:1-18.

¹⁸⁷ Compare Jill Bennett, "Stigmata and sense memory," 7. Like Abelone, St. Francis did not understand the "meaning" of the stigmata for some time (ibid. 15, n. 26). Compare also Bernhard Teuber, *Sichtbare Wundmale und Unsichtbare Durchbohrung. Die leibhafte Nachfolge Christi als Paradigma des anhermeneutischen Schreibens*, ed. Menke and Vinken, *Stigmata*, 155-179.

advent of writing, and later of print, production and reception of text, writing and reading, become temporally and spatially isolated. A handwritten text transmits a material and visual trace of the writer's body, the movement of his hand across the page. With the print medium, the reproduction of texts becomes mechanized, effectively erasing the trace of the writer's material manipulation of the text. With the advent of the typewriter, the body of the writer becomes isolated from the surface of the text itself, whose composition becomes mechanically mediated by the pressing of keys.¹⁸⁸

Against this narrative of media history, and given Rilke's own refusal to use a typewriter, it seems surprising that the typewriter here becomes almost mysticized, endowed with a kind of aura. Whereas the oration of the count, his voice and his bodily gestures, enabled the immediate making-present of the people and places narrated, the typewriter also becomes implicated here in the transmission of presence – specifically, the nails stabbing into flesh, producing wounds in Christ's persecuted body allowing blood to flow, are figured in the Count's fingers, which, like the arms of the typewriter, stab into Abelone's book-hands. In a similar way as well, the pen can also be viewed as an instrument of bodily torture, pressing into scratching across the surface, allowing ink to flow. As different as handwriting and typewriting may be, as profound a rift in media history that the invention of the typewriter initiates, the pen and the typewriter arm are similar in that both make a physical impression on the page, leaving a mark. In this scene, Abelone's hands become transformed into paper, and paper is transformed into flesh; as onto Abelone's flesh, as into the body of the reader, meaning is inscribed directly onto the flesh of the page.

In the next chapter, I will explore how the reader, like Abelone, becomes transformed into an affective image, not of the suffering body of Christ, but of the materialities of writing, of the "body" of the manuscript.

¹⁸⁸ See Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1999), 211; and Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 14, 208.

Chapter Two

(Text)-Körperlichkeit and the Double Rend of the Page

*Von allem Geschriebenen liebe ich nur das,
was einer mit seinem Blute schreibt. Schreibe mit Blut:
und du wirst erfahren, daß Blut Geist ist.*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, “Vom Lesen und Schreiben,” *Also Sprach Zarathustra*

Why should our bodies end at the skin...?

—Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto”

The previous chapter focused on the gesture of the *Durchstreichung* in the *Aufzeichnungen*, the way in which the figure of Count Brahe is formed out of the material process of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen* in the manuscript, and the way in which Malte/Rilke’s crisis of narration emerges out of the physical struggle with materialities of representation. In the final scene explored, the representation of the death of Grischa *in* the text is so entangled in the materiality *of* the text that the body of Grischa and the body of the manuscript are inextricably, analogically enmeshed.

This chapter takes us further into the excess of corporeality that haunts the *Aufzeichnungen* and considers how the excessive images of bodiliness in the text can be connected to the materiality or corporality of the manuscript. The performative force of these images punctures the surface of the printed text, allowing the materialities of writing and the corporeality of the manuscript to surge into the space of the representation and into the reader’s own affective, bodily experience during reading.¹⁸⁹ In this way, the materialities of writing in/of the manuscript are transformed, transferred, transposed into the space of representation.

A number of studies attempt to deal with the bodily images in the *Aufzeichnungen*.¹⁹⁰ Most

¹⁸⁹ Regarding the affective of embrace of the reader in Rilke’s poetry more generally, see William Waters, *Poetry’s Touch: On Lyric Address* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U P, 2003).

¹⁹⁰ Santner, *On Creaturely Life*; Santner, *The Royal Remains*; Andreas Huyssen, “Paris/Childhood: The Fragmented Body in Rilke’s *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*,” *Modernity and the Text*, ed. Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick (New York: Columbia U P, 1989, 113-141); Linda Haverty Rugg, “A Self at Large in the Hall of Mirrors: Rilke’s *Malte Laurids Brigge* as Autobiographical Act,” *seminar* 29.1 (1993): 43-54; Patricia Linden, “*Im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben.” *Spiegelschrift und Marginalität in Rainer Maria Rilkes Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Tübingen: Francke, 2005).

commonly, the fragmentation of the body in the *Aufzeichnungen* is approached from a psychoanalytic framework as symbolizing or indexing the fragmentation of the self, an unsuccessful separation of self from world in the mirror phase of ego-development, or the fragmentary experience of the modern metropolis.¹⁹¹ While these studies note the prevalence of bodily images, fragmented body parts are largely explained as indices or symbols of mental/psychological issues of fragmentation, or metonymically: the “severed hand” in the *Aufzeichnungen*, for example, can be read as a metonymy of writing or a figure of “automatic writing.” However, the hand, the heart, the eye, and the mouth are not just metonymies or symbols, rather their “base materiality” is also foregrounded in the *Aufzeichnungen*.¹⁹²

As we have begun to explore, many of the characters, events, and themes are formed out of the physical process of writing and the concrete materiality of the manuscript, which emerged through a complex, at times tortured process of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*. The materiality and corporeality of this process remain perceptible to the reader, viscerally tangible, through highly tactile and sensual descriptions of blood, wounds, rashes, and the cutting and decay of flesh.

Consider for example the following description of the *Fortgeworfenen*, the “discarded ones” or “cast-offs” in the new urban fabric of Paris:

es sind eigentlich keine Bettler, man muss Unterschiede machen. Es sind Abfälle, Schalen von Menschen, die das Schicksal ausgespien hat. Feucht vom Speichel des Schicksals kleben sie an einer Mauer, an einer Laterne, an einer Plakatsäule, oder sie rinnen langsam die Gasse herunter mit einer dunklen, schmutzigen Spur hinter sich her.¹⁹³

These abjected figures occupy a liminal zone at the margins of society, beyond the symbolic order. They are depicted as husks of humans, as if the external skin could be emptied of the substance it contains. One is reminded of the way that faces in the fifth *Aufzeichnung* can be put on and taken off, like masks, “dünn wie Papier” [thin as paper].¹⁹⁴ The materiality of paper is also evoked in the description of the *Fortgeworfenen* who “stick” to the walls, lanterns, and advertising columns. The “glue” that holds them there, like paper advertisements on a surface, is the “spittle” of destiny personified. Not only paper, ink is also evoked: like the pen running along lines of text and down the page, leaving behind a messy trace, “sie rinnen langsam die Gasse herunter mit einer dunklen, schmutzigen Spur hinter sich” [“they dribble [or run] slowly down the street, leaving a dark, dirty trail behind them”]. The association of the *Fortgeworfenen* to the implements of writing is made most explicit when an old woman reaches out a pencil to Malte:

Und wie kam damals jene graue, kleine Frau ..., während sie mir einen alten, langen Bleistift zeigte, der unendlich langsam aus ihren schlechten, geschlossenen Händen sich herausschob.... Ich fühlte, daß das ein Zeichen war, ein Zeichen für Eingeweihte, ein Zeichen, das die Fortgeworfenen kennen....¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ See especially Huyssen, as well as Linden and Haverty Rugg.

¹⁹² I refer here to Rosalind Krauss’s and Yves Alain-Bois’s discussion of “base materialism” of the formless in *Formless: A User’s Guide* (New York: Zone, 1997).

¹⁹³ KA 3 481. “They really are not beggars, one must make distinctions. They are human refuse, the husks of men, spat out by fate. Moist with the spittle of fate, they cling to a wall, a lamp-post, a Morris column, or they dribble slowly down the street, leaving a dark, dirty trail behind them” (Hulse 26).

¹⁹⁴ KA 3 457.

¹⁹⁵ KA 3 481. “And what possessed that little gray woman... showing me some long old pencil thrust out infinitely slowly from her sorry, clenched hands? ... I sensed that it was a signal, a sign for the initiated, a sign the untouchables [*Fortgeworfenen*] recognize...” (Hulse 26-7).

Rather than simply representing or indexing the materiality of writing, the figures of bodily decay in the *Aufzeichnungen* are symptomatic of the materiality and corporeality of writing. In the reader's affective experience of such descriptions, something of the very materiality of writing, of which the decaying flesh of the *Fortgeworfenen* is composed, is transposed into the reader's own bodily experience. Yet there remains something that cannot be incorporated, not only because the *Fortgeworfenen* are expelled from the symbolic order, but also because their flesh is haunted by another materiality, by strange evocations of paper and ink. As such, the reader encounters the materiality of writing when the wounded bodies in the text affectively mirror and yet uncannily diverge from his own.

In the particular textual passages I will examine, the descriptions of bodily sensation and decay are not simply symbolic or indexical representations, but are *symptomatic* of what happens concretely on the manuscript page, through the physical acts of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*. The space of writing, of the manuscript page, the fictional space of the text, and the real space occupied by the reader bleed into one another. The *corpus*, the body of work, becomes flesh, a *corps*, a physical body/bodiliness that haunts the printed text. This manuscript is not only experienced implicitly on a figural or affective level, but is actually explicitly concretized through the passages that are unusually footnoted "im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben."¹⁹⁶ This reference names the specter-manuscript whose materiality the reader may have only subconsciously or affectively felt otherwise.

To explain these phenomena and propose a methodology to deal with them, this chapter takes shape in two parts. In the first section, I look at various passages from the novel in which the materiality of the manuscript and the physical process of writing become incorporated into the figures of the novel itself. In the second section, I develop a theoretical framework to account for the flesh of the manuscript that haunts the figures and images of the text.

Twitching: The Streets of Paris and the Space of the Page

The frenetic to and fro of the Count Brahe's body in the process of dictating his memoirs, which, as explored in depth in the first chapter, mimics the movement of the pen across paper, also recalls the tics of the man that jerks and hops spasmodically along a Parisian boulevard, which similarly capture the movement of the writer's hands across the page. Malte watches as the twitching seems to pulse throughout the man's body, breaking out in the legs, in the neck, and finally in the hands.

...[Ich] versuchte schon, an ihm vorüber den Boulevard hinunterzuschauen, als er über irgend etwas stolperte. Da ich nahe hinter ihm folgte, nahm ich mich in acht, aber als die Stelle kam, war da nichts, rein nichts. Wir gingen beide weiter, er und ich, der Abstand zwischen uns blieb derselbe. Jetzt kam ein Straßenübergang, und da geschah es, daß der Mann vor mir mit ungleichen Beinen die Stufen des Gangsteigs hinunterhüpfte in der Art etwa, wie Kinder manchmal während des Gehens aufhüpfen oder springen, wenn sie sich freuen. Auf den jenseitigen Gangsteig kam er einfach mit einem langen Schritt hinauf. Aber kaum war er oben, zog er das eine Bein ein wenig an und hüpfte auf dem anderen einmal hoch und gleich darauf wieder und wieder. Jetzt konnte man diese plötzliche Bewegung wieder ganz gut für ein Stolpern halten, wenn man sich einredete, es wäre da eine Kleinigkeit gewesen, ein Kern, die glitschige Schale einer Frucht, irgend etwas; und das Seltsame war, daß der Mann selbst an das Vorhandensein eines Hindernisses zu glauben schien, denn er sah sich

¹⁹⁶ KA 3 531, 587, 592, 603, 617, 629.

jedesmal mit jenem halb ärgerlichen, halb vorwurfsvollen Blick, den die Leute in solchen Augenblicken haben, nach der lästigen Stelle um. ... Diese Beobachtung verwirrte mich so sehr, daß zwei Minuten vergingen, ehe ich erkannte, daß, im Halse des Mannes, hinter dem hochgeschobenen Überzieher und den nervös agierenden Händen dasselbe schreckliche, zweisilbige Hüpfen war, das seine Beine eben verlassen hatte. Von diesem Augenblick an war ich an ihn gebunden. Ich begriff, daß dieses Hüpfen in seinem Körper herumirrte, daß es versuchte, hier und da auszubrechen....¹⁹⁷

Twitching along the sidewalk in an “over-explicit motion” [*buchstabierte Bewegung*, literally a “spelled-out movement”] and a “two-syllable hopping motion,” this man directly figures the writer’s pen, scratching its way in a two-syllabic hopping [*hüpfen*] and convulsing [*zucken*]¹⁹⁸ across paper. Like the reader, following the movement of text along the lines of the page, Malte follows the man’s awkward movement down the boulevard and across intersections from a constant distance. Writing does not proceed smoothly down the page, rather the pen jumps back and forth, as if tripping over words, jumping around on the page, “in der Art etwa, wie Kinder manchmal während des Gehens aufhüpfen oder springen, wenn sie sich freuen.” Reaching the end of a line, the pen jumps down [*hinunterhüpfte*], as if descending down tiers of the page, as down the steps of the walkway, “die Stufen des Gangsteigs,” and landing on the next line [“den jenseitigen Gangsteig”] with a long stride.

Unfortunately, we cannot examine the manuscript pages on which this passage of the *Aufzeichnungen* were written, since that portion of the manuscript is no longer extant. It is noteworthy, however, that this passage is based on a similar description of a hopping man in Rilke’s letter to Lou Andreas-Salome from the eighteenth of July, 1903.¹⁹⁹ Significantly, many of the details of this passage from the *Aufzeichnungen* that I emphasize, which seem to figure the visuality of the page and the physical activity of the pen during the process of writing, were added in the translation from the letter to the *Aufzeichnungen*.

¹⁹⁷ KA 3 501-2. “... [I] was already trying to look past him, down the boulevard, when he tripped over something. Since I was following close behind him, I took care when I came to the spot, but there was nothing there, nothing whatsoever. We both continued walking, he and I, the distance between us remaining the same. We came to a crossing, and the man ahead of me raised one leg and hopped down the steps [of the walkway], as children who are having fun sometimes hop and skip when they’re walking. The steps on the other side he cleared in a single bound. But scarcely he was up on the pavement than he again drew up one leg a little and hopped up high on the other foot, then did it again and again. At this point, you might easily once again have taken the sudden movement for tripping, if you’ve concluded that there was some little thing there, the pit or the slippery skin of a fruit, something or other; and the odd thing was that the man himself seemed to imagine there was something in his way, because every time he gave the offending spot one of those looks, part vexed, part reproachful, that people do give at such moments.... This observation so perplexed me that a full two minutes passed before I saw that selfsame fearful two-syllable hopping motion that had just deserted the man’s legs was now going on in his neck, behind the raised greatcoat collar and his nervously busy hands. From that moment on, I was tethered to him. I grasped that this hopping motion was wandering about his body, trying to break out here or there” (Hulse 43-44).

¹⁹⁸ “Ein kalter Stich fuhr mir durch den Rücken, als seine Beine plötzlich einen kleinen, zuckenden Sprung machten, aber niemand hatte es gesehen, und ich dachte mir aus, daß auch ich ein wenig stolpern wollte, im Falle jemand aufmerksam wurde” (KA 3 502).

¹⁹⁹ Engelhardt 27-29.

We can only speculate, of course, as to why this passage may have been so haunting for Rilke during his process of writing the *Aufzeichnungen* and what inspired the transformations of the text. Yet flipping through the pages of the “Berner Taschenbuch,” we find that the description in this passage mirrors iconically (in the Peircean sense) the appearance of the manuscript pages, which display a disconcerting tension between order and disorder. Like the layout and streets of Hausmann’s Paris, the “Berner Taschenbuch” contains pages of graph paper that provided a perfect grid on which to write. Rilke largely wrote in straight lines, completely filling the pages to the edges. Yet like the strange jerking man snaking his way through the nicely laid out boulevards, the absolutely imperfect movements of the hand and the accidents and mistakes that must be crossed through disturb this perfect organization.

Malte’s description of the twitching man not only mirrors the movement of the pen on paper, but also draws our attention to the activity of the man’s hands, which figures the activity of the writer’s hands.

Der Kragen seines Überziehers hatte sich aufgestellt; und wie er sich auch, bald mit einer Hand, bald mit beiden umständlich bemühte, ihn niederzulegen, es wollte nicht gelingen. Das kam vor. Es beunruhigte mich nicht. Aber gleich darauf gewahrte ich mit grenzenloser Verwunderung, daß in den beschäftigten Händen dieses Menschen zwei Bewegungen waren: eine heimliche, rasche, mit welcher er den Kragen unmerklich hochklappte, und jene andere ausführliche, anhaltende, gleichsam übertrieben buchstabierte Bewegung, die das Umlegen des Kragens bewerkstelligen sollte.²⁰⁰

From a distance, the man’s hands seem to be working together to turn down the collar that keeps flipping up. Yet when Malte looks more closely, he sees that the hands are actually working against one another. One “secretive” [*heimliche*] and “hasty” [*rasche*] hand movement almost unnoticeably props the collar up, undoing the “elaborate prolonged, over-explicit motion” [“ausführliche, anhaltende, gleichsam übertrieben buchstabierte Bewegung”] of the other. This “übertrieben buchstabierte Bewegung,” literally “exaggerated, spelled-out movement” of the second hand mimics the hand of the writer, constantly fiddling with language, writing down a word or phrase and immediately scratching through it in a seemingly unending process. Again, examining the tension between order and disorder in the “Berner Taschenbuch,” we find that the process of filling the gridded page by smoothly laying down words is constantly undone by the repeated *Durchstreichung* of words and entire passages.

This image of writing can be directly aligned with Derrida’s notions of writing as a “double gesture” and writing “under erasure.” The latter, originating with Heidegger and later theorized by Derrida,²⁰¹ typographically depicts the inadequacy of linguistic signification that results in a

²⁰⁰ KA 501-2. “The collar of his greatcoat was turned up; and however hard he tried to fold it down, now with one hand, now with both, he simply couldn’t manage it. These things happen. I didn’t find it disconcerting. But then I realized, to my boundless astonishment, that the man’s busy hands were in fact describing two movements: one a hasty, secretive motion with which he covertly flapped up the collar, and the other the elaborate prolonged, over-explicit motion, as it were, with which he was trying to fold it down” (Hulse 44).

²⁰¹ The Derridian notion of writing “under erasure” [*sous rature*] is a practice which Derrida adopts and transforms from Heidegger. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s explanation in Translator’s Preface, *Of Grammatology* by Jacques Derrida, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1997), xiv-xvii. In *Zur Seinsfrage*, Heidegger writes, “the sign of crossing through [*Zeichen der Durchkreuzung*, i.e. the sign “under erasure”] can, to be sure, ... not be a merely negative

fundamental contradiction within language. The practice involves writing a word and crossing it out, allowing it to exist, to resonate, yet in a state of perpetual negation. In this way, Derrida conceives of writing as a double gesture, the product of a “double hand.” Like Malte, who notices through close inspection that twitching man’s hands do not work together, but rather antagonize one another, Derrida asserts that writing involves not the unified activity of a single hand, but rather the oppositional activity of two: one that writes, and one that erases, one that creates meaning, and one that negates it.²⁰²

Eric Santner has also observed that in this passage, “Malte’s own terms of description collapse the distinction between physiology and signification, suggesting that the tic in question is a kind of ‘signifying stress’ moving through the body, an observation that attaches Malte, a struggling writer, all the more passionately to the man.”²⁰³ As Malte “reads” this scene from across the street, the *Zucken*, which pulses through the body of the man and tries to break out through his legs and his hands, causes anxiety to swell in Malte.

“Jetzt wuchs es aus mir heraus wie eine Geschwulst”: *das Große* and the Novel

The description of the anxiety Malte experiences while observing the twitching man is similar to that of *das Große* – translated as “the Big Thing,” “the great thing,” or simply “the Thing” – which welled up in Malte during feverish childhood nights and returns to him again in Paris.

Jetzt war es da. Jetzt wuchs es aus mir heraus wie eine Geschwulst, wie ein zweiter Kopf, und war ein Teil von mir, obwohl es doch gar nicht zu mir gehören konnte, weil es so groß war. Es war da, wie ein großes totes Tier, das einmal, als es noch lebte, meine Hand gewesen war oder mein Arm. Und mein Blut ging durch mich und durch es, wie durch einen und denselben Körper. Und mein Herz mußte sich sehr anstrengen, um das Blut in das Große zu treiben: Es war fast nicht genug Blut da. Und das Blut trat ungern ein in das Große und kam krank und schlecht zurück. Aber das Große schwoll an und wuchs mir vor das Gesicht wie eine warme bläuliche Beule und wuchs mir vor den Mund, und über meinem letzten Auge war schon der Schatten von seinem Rande.²⁰⁴

sign of crossing out [*Zeichen der Durchstreichung*]” (ibid. xv). Whereas the sign under erasure indicates for Heidegger an “inarticulable presence,” the sign under erasure is for Derrida “the mark of the absence of a presence, an already always absent present” (ibid. xvii). I contend that the *Durchstreichung* is not a “merely negative” sign, as Heidegger wrote, but that we can use the notion of writing “under erasure” and to think the nature of the *Durchstreichung* in the manuscript.

²⁰² The notion of a “double gesture” pervades Derrida’s work. Derrida also connects the idea of the double hand to Freud’s notion of the *doppelte Inschrift*, described in *Notiz über Wunderblock*. Both hands are active with the *Wunderblock*: one writes, the other periodically erases what was written. See Linden 107.

²⁰³ *Royal Remains* 194.

²⁰⁴ KA 3 497. “Now it was there. Now it was growing from within me like a tumour, like a second head, and it was a part of me, though it surely could not be mine, since it was so big. There it was, like a big dead animal that had once been my hand when it was still alive, or my arm. And my blood was flowing through me, and through it, as if through one and the same body. And my heart was having to make a great effort to pump the blood into the big thing: there was very nearly not enough blood. And the blood was loth to pass in, and emerged sick and tainted. But the big thing swelled and grew before my face, like a warm, bluish boil, and grew before my mouth, and already its margin cast

Something is growing inside of Malte, something that is trying to escape from within him, yet it remains largely incomprehensible to him, terrifying and unknowable. Malte refers to it over and over as *es*, “it,” eventually naming it *das Große*. Yet this name remains vague and indefinable. Like the “ideas” that precede writing, the big thing is not merely a floating anxiety (or a floating signifier), rather it is rooted within his body, an organic part of him [*ein Teil von mir*]. Like the twitching or convulsing [*Zucken*] that threatens to break through the man’s skin, *das Große* threatens the physical boundaries of Malte’s body. Similarly, the words in the manuscript and the *Durchstreichungen*, scratches of dried ink like scabs over wounds, press up against the edges of the pages, as if threatening to overflow out of the tiny notebook that contains them. Although produced by the writer, the written manuscript, a visual mess of scratches and spilled ink, is simultaneously horrible and foreign, like the carcass of a dead animal or a deadened, dismembered body part. Malte’s descriptions of the Thing as a “second head” or a severed, deadened hand or arm are particularly provocative: like the brain or the hand of an “imagined writer,” the Thing – the text – is simultaneously part of the writer, originating within him, yet it has taken on its own life, only to then suffer a process of mutilation and decimation. The written manuscript, then, is figured as an extension of the physical body of the writer, composed of his own flesh and blood, the tissue of the writer’s body becoming interwoven within the tissue of the text to produce a second, only partially knowable, body.

Malte lingers in particular on the image of his blood pulsing through the body of *das Große*. Here and throughout the text, blood takes on a highly meta-textual significance. In the passage above, Malte describes his blood pulsing both within his own body and within the Thing, “as if through one and the same body.” As for a writer completely drained of energy, it seems to Malte that there was “very nearly not enough blood,” and that his heart is not powerful enough to pump it into the foreign body. Malte’s blood, the blood that pulses through the body of the Thing, becomes polluted, “sick and tainted” [*krank und schlecht*], before returning into his body. Writer and written text become inseparable: blood, the life force that flows out of the writer’s body into the written text, is transformed into ink, dispersed messily across the flesh of the page. Yet it does not remain there, separate from the writer’s body, rather it flows back into the writer, “sick and tainted,” poisoning him, threatening his health.

Blood and Ink, Body and Text

This somewhat suggestive reading is concretized in a host of other passages in the novel, where blood is directly connected to writing.²⁰⁵ Count Brahe, for example, describes that Belmare’s stories are contained in his blood.

Aber es gab natürlich genug, die ihm übelnahmen, daß er an die Vergangenheit nur glaubte, wenn sie *in* ihm war. Das konnten sie nicht begreifen, daß der Kram nur Sinn hat, wenn man damit geboren wird. ‘Die Bücher sind leer,’ schrie der Graf mit einer wütenden Gebärde nach

a shadow on my remaining eye” (Hulse 40).

²⁰⁵ In one letter, Rilke expresses that his crisis of writing maybe be rooted in the physical condition of his body and blood: “Mag sein, daß die fortwährende innere Zerstretheit, in der ich lebe, teilweise körperliche Ursachen hat, eine Düntheit des Blutes ist...” (Engelhardt 92). “It may be that the continual inner scattered-ness [*innere Zerstretheit*] in which I live is caused by bodily factors, by a thinness of the blood ... (translation JH).

den Wänden hin, ‘das Blut, darauf kommt es an, da muß man drin lesen können. Er hatte wunderliche Geschichten drin und merkwürdige Abbildungen, dieser Belmare; er konnte aufschlagen, wo er wollte, da war immer was beschrieben; keine Seite in seinem Blut war überschlagen worden. Und wenn er sich einschloß von Zeit zu Zeit und allein drin blätterte, dann kam er zu den Stellen über das Goldmachen und über die Steine und über die Farben.’²⁰⁶

In this passage, one’s past is understood as existing *in* one’s body as a physical part of the person rather than as an immaterial memory. Narratable experience is understood to be inseparable from corporeal existence; the past only has meaning [*Sinn*] in its *physical* embodiment, as something with which one is born. An aspect of writing is also embodied in the figuration of Belmare’s blood as a kind of book. Books themselves are *leer* [empty], yet one could “read” Belmare’s blood, finding stories and images within it. “Er konnte aufschlagen, wo er wollte”: like the skin, which can be pierced anywhere, a book can be opened to any page, puncturing an imaginary membrane enclosing its contents and allowing light to penetrate, to illuminate pages of text. The physical writing process which produces this imagery becomes enmeshed analogically within it: writing becomes figured as an act of slicing open blood vessels by puncturing the skin, that membrane which separates inner from outer, thereby allowing light to penetrate the interior of the body and allowing blood to flow out.

This image is underscored by the description of the *wunderliche Geschichten drin* [wondrous stories inside]. It feels far from a coincidence that the root of *wunderlich* is *wund*, as in *Wunde* [wound]. Opening this book of blood requires opening the body, creating a wound out of which blood flows. Yet the meaning of the term *wunderlich* is also enlightening on another level: one “wonders” [*wundert*] at something *wunderlich*, something amazing, fantastic, or sublime, something beyond the reach of human understanding – we recall, for example, the *grenzenlose Verwunderung* with which Malte observed the twitching man on the street. A wound opens the deep, dark internal recesses of the body that belong to us and are an integral part of us, yet often remain foreign and unknown. There is something *wunderlich* about the creation of a wound, the penetration of the boundary between internal and external, between embodied self and world. “Da war immer was beschrieben; keine Seite in seinem Blut war überschlagen worden” [“There was always an account of something; not a page of his blood had been left blank”]: the relationship of blood to pages of a book here is complex; we imagine blood itself as composed of pages, fluid pages perhaps, amorphous. Yet this formulation also evokes the image of pages written in blood, rather than ink, recalling the lines of Zarathustra that serve as an epigraph to this chapter.

This description of Belmare’s stories of blood resonates with Malte’s description of poetry in the fourteenth *Aufzeichnung*, in which blood, bodily gesture, and poetic verse are incorporated.

Denn Verse sind nicht, wie die Leute meinen, Gefühle (die hat man früh genug), – es sind Erfahrungen.... Und es genügt auch noch nicht, daß man Erinnerungen hat. Man muß sie vergessen können, wenn es viele sind, und man muß die große Geduld haben, zu warten, daß

²⁰⁶ KA 3 561. “But of course there were enough people who thought ill of him because he only believed in the past when he bore it within himself. They could not grasp that the whole business is devoid of meaning unless you have been born into it. ‘Books are vapid,’ cried the Count, with an irate gesture towards the walls. ‘The blood is what counts – that is what you have to be able to read. He had wondrous tales and amazing pictures in his, this Belmare; wherever he opened it, there was always an account of something; not a page of his blood had been left blank. And at those occasional times when he shut himself up and turned the pages in solitude, he would come across the passages about alchemical ways of making gold, or precious stones, or colours” (Hulse 98).

sie wiederkommen. Denn die Erinnerungen selbst *sind* es noch nicht. Erst wenn sie Blut werden in uns, Blick und Gebärde, namenlos und nicht mehr zu unterscheiden von uns, erst dann kann es geschehen, daß in einer, sehr seltenen Stunde das erste Wort eines Verses aufsteht in ihrer Mitte, und aus ihnen ausgeht.²⁰⁷

This passage asserts that poetry originates in the body. Poetry is decisively material; it is not composed of immaterial feelings. The boundary between the material of poetry and the material of the body dissolves. Not only must memories become forgotten, part of the writer's physical being, "nicht mehr zu unterscheiden von uns selbst;" this embodiment of memories involves a process of *namenlos-werden* [becoming-nameless]. Experiences become de-signified, stripped of meaning, of signification, they become incorporated into our physical flesh. Only then can they emerge anew, forgotten and remembered again, as poetic verse, which is not simply the representation of an experience, but *is* experience, embodied in the materiality of language.

In these accounts of the "pages" of Belmare's blood and the connection of blood to poetic verse, the materiality of the body and the materiality of the manuscript converge. One of the most powerful instances of this convergence is the death of Malte's father. The relevant passage from the print edition is reproduced below, followed by an image of the manuscript page on which it was written and the transcription thereof.

Er zog das Instrument vorsichtig zurück, und es war etwas wie ein Mund da, aus dem zweimal hintereinander Blut austrat, als sagte er etwas Zweisilbiges. Der junge, blonde Arzt nahm es schnell mit einer eleganten Bewegung in seine Watte auf. Und nun blieb die Wunde ruhig wie ein geschlossenes Auge.... Aber nun war der Jägermeister tot, und nicht er allein. Nun war das Herz durchbohrt, unser Herz, das Herz unseres Geschlechts. Nun war es vorbei...²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ KA 3 466-467. "For verses are not feelings, as people imagine – those one has early enough. They are experiences.... And yet it is not enough to have memories. One has to be able to forget them, if there are a great many, and one must have great patience, to wait for their return. For it is not the memories themselves that are of consequence. Only when they are become the very blood within us, our every look and gesture, nameless and no longer distinguishable from our innermost self, only then, in the rarest of hours, can the first word of a poem arise in their midst and go out from among them" (Hulse 13-14).

²⁰⁸ KA 3 566. "He carefully withdrew the instrument, leaving something that resembled a mouth, from which blood issued twice in succession, as if it were uttering a something in two syllables young, blond doctor quickly and elegantly dabbed it up with the cotton wool. And now the wound remained at peace, like a closed eye.... But now the Master of the Hunt was dead, and not only he. Now the heart had been pierced, our heart, the heart of our race. Now it was over..." (modified from Hulse 102-103).

ait igneum circum aliam sustinet. & zog
 der Instrument vorsichtig zurück, und nun(?) es
 war etwas wie ein Mund da, aus dem
 zweimal hintereinander Blut vortrat aus-
 trat, als sagte er etwas zweisilbiges. Der junge
 blonde Arzt tupfte es fast auf. Und er nahm
 es schnell mit einer eleganten Bewegungen in
 seine Watte auf. Und nun blieb die Wunde
 ruhig, wie ein geschlossenes Auge.
 Es ist anzunehmen, dass ich mich noch ein-
 mal verneigte, ohne diesmal recht bei der
 Sache zu sein. Wenigstens war ich erstaunt,
 mich allein zu finden. Jemand hatte die
 Uniform wieder in Ordnung gebracht, und
 das weiße Band lag darüber wie vorher. Aber
 nun war der Jägermeister tot, und nicht
 er allein, dieser(?) kleine dürftige Herr Nun
 war unser Herz durchbohrt, das Herz unseres
 Geschlechts. Nun war es vorbei. Das war also
 das Helmzerbrechen: „Heute Brigge und
 nimmermehr“ sagte etwas in mir. Mein
 Herz fiel mir wohl ein An mein Herz dachte ich
 nicht. Und als es mir später einfiel, wusste
 ich zum ersten Mal, dass es hierfür nicht
 in Betracht kam. Es war ein einzelnes Herz.
 Es war schon dabei, ganz von Anfang anzufangen.

Figures 19 and 20. BT 45; BT Transkription 45.²⁰⁹

aus irgend einem alten Instinkt. Er zog
 das Instrument vorsichtig zurück und nun(?) es
 war etwas wie ein Mund da, aus dem
 zweimal hintereinander Blut vortrat aus-
 trat, als sagte er etwas zweisilbiges. Der junge
 blonde Arzt tupfte es fast auf. Und er nahm
 es schnell mit einer eleganten Bewegungen in
 seine Watte auf. Und nun blieb die Wunde
 ruhig, wie ein geschlossenes Auge.

Es ist anzunehmen, dass ich mich noch ein-
 mal verneigte, ohne diesmal recht bei der
 Sache zu sein. Wenigstens war ich erstaunt,
 mich allein zu finden. Jemand hatte die
 Uniform wieder in Ordnung gebracht, und
 das weiße Band lag darüber wie vorher. Aber
 nun war der Jägermeister tot, und nicht
 er allein, dieser(?) kleine dürftige Herr Nun
 war unser Herz durchbohrt, das Herz unseres
 Geschlechts. Nun war es vorbei. Das war also
 das Helmzerbrechen: „Heute Brigge und
 nimmermehr“ sagte etwas in mir. Mein
 Herz fiel mir wohl ein An mein Herz dachte ich
 nicht. Und als es mir später einfiel, wusste
 ich zum ersten Mal, dass es hierfür nicht
 in Betracht kam. Es war ein einzelnes Herz.
 Es war schon dabei, ganz von Anfang anzufangen.

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... He with-
 drew the instrument carefully, and now there
 was something like a mouth there, out of which
 twice, one time after the other, blood came forth—came
 out, as if it was saying something bisyllabic. The young
 blond doctor dabbed it almost up. And he took
 it up quickly with an elegant movements into
 his cotton cloth. And now a wound remained
 quiet like a closed eye.

It can be assumed, that I once again
 bowed, without this time really knowing
 what I was doing. At least I was astonished
 to find myself alone. Someone had
 brought the uniform back into order, and
 the white ribbon lay across it as before. But
 now the Master of the Hunt was dead, and not
 only he, this small, slightly Lord Now
 was our the heart pierced, our heart, the the heart of our
 race. Now it was over. This, then, was
 the breaking oft he helmet: “Today Brigge and
 never again,” something said within me. My

The activity of the pen, slicing through words and scratching them out, generates this image of the surgical implement slicing through flesh. The act of stabbing that consummates the father's death, his transition from life to death, from living body to corpse, is figured as an act of writing that produces a speech act. Pulling the instrument out of the flesh – we can almost imagine the pen here like a scalpel, having pierced the skin of the page, allowing ink to flow – leaves a wound, an orifice out of which blood gurgles, like language gurgling out of the mouth and pooling like wet ink. In the heart's final beat, the process of forming words on the page forces the heart to take on something of the manuscript's character; the heart, rather than simply expelling blood, pronounces it in "two syllables." This blood *cum* language is caught in a cotton fabric where it dries, as if written ink on paper. Yet the blood also coagulates and dries on the wound itself, which appears as a closed eye. In the description of this wound that is both a mouth and an eye at the same time, the act of seeing and the act of speaking converge.

When we examine the written scratches that comprise this passage in the manuscript, we see, however, that the penetration of the heart does not happen in one quick, clean stroke, and that in this way, the activity of the pen differs decisively from the activity of the knife.

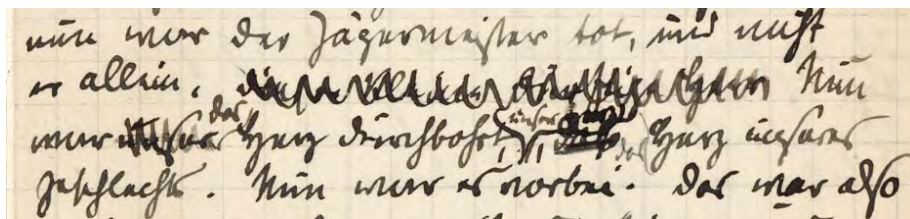


Figure 21. BT 45.

nun war der Jägermeister tot, und nicht
 er allein, ^{das} dieser(?) ^{unser Herz} kleine dürftige Herr Nun
 war unser Herz durchbohrt, ^{das} Das Herz unseres
 Geschlechts. Nun war es vorbei. ^{das} Das war also

Figure 22. BT Transkription 45.²¹⁰

Unlike the final, fatal stab, so rhetorically decisive in print, the flesh of the manuscript displays marks of hesitation, signs of a tentative, unsteady hand. In fact, the marks made here are more reminiscent of Malte's description of the death of Grischa Otrepjow, the false Czar, whose executioners "transfixed him through his nightshirt, and stabbed him through and through in search

~~heart probably struck me~~ About my heart I thought
 not. And later when my thoughts returned to it, I knew
 for the first time ^{with utter certainty}, that it was not
 suited to these purposes. It was a solitary heart.
It was already beginning afresh, right from the beginning.
 I know that I imagined that I could not..." (translation JH).
²¹⁰ "now the Master of the Hunt was dead, and not
 only he, ~~this small, slightly Lord~~ Now
 was ~~our~~ ^{the} heart pierced, ^{our heart}, ~~the~~ ^{the} heart of our
 race..." (translation JH).

of the hard core of the man's being."²¹¹ On the skin of the manuscript page, the signifier *Herz* is poked, prodded, and approached through small cuts of a hand and a pen that cannot speak.

This disconnect between the wound as unified speech act, as imagined in the text, and the physical markings in the manuscript by the hand that produced it, may shed new light on Abelone's inability to successfully write down Count Brahe's stories. If poetry, as Malte writes, originates in the body of the orator, in his blood, one wonders what is lost translation of that poetry by the hand of another. In learning to write, Malte's task is to forget so that he can remember, to let his experiences become blood within him; to then puncture his own flesh with the pen, to allow this blood to flow and to capture it on paper. The process of writing becomes figured as a process of self-mutilation and self-sacrifice, a scratching of the surface, in multiple senses, that lets blood/ink flow.

Textual Bandaging

Unlike the pure blood of seemingly supernatural signification that we have discussed to this point, the reader is also consistently confronted with images of infection, decaying flesh, bodily fluids, punctured tissues, and fragmented and wounded bodies. In this context, images of bandages are particularly significant on the meta-textual level, representing the *Durchstreichungen* that pervade the manuscript, covering over text-wounds, but also holding the body of the manuscript together. During a visit to the *Salpêtrière* hospital, Malte is overwhelmed by the omnipresence of bandages.

Und viele Verbände gab es. Verbände, die den ganzen Kopf Schichte um Schichte umzogen, bis nur noch ein einziges Auge da war, das niemandem mehr gehörte. Verbände, die verbargen, und Verbände, die zeigten, was darunter war. Verbände, die man geöffnet hatte und in denen nun, wie in einem schmutzigen Bett, eine Hand lag, die keine mehr war; und ein eingebundenes Bein, das aus der Reihe herausstand, groß wie ein ganzer Mensch.²¹²

As we have seen, the meta-textual dimensions of the work beg us to look at the manuscript like a wounded body, the writing surface its decimated skin, sliced into by the writing instrument. Confronted here with an image of gouged wounds out of which blood flows, pools, and dries into scabs, the material form of the bandage becomes significant. Bandages cover wounds, holding together the flesh surrounding them. Given the close relationship between manuscript form and bodily form throughout the text, the text nearly demands that we consider the strange insistence on bandages, the extra-material supports of bodies in this narrative, in similar terms. Malte's descriptions of the bandages, some of which completely cover the wound, some of which still show what lies beneath, evoke the *Durchstreichungen* in the manuscript, some of which cover over the text beneath, completely obscuring it from view, others of which allow the text which lies beneath to remain visible.

Thomas Richter, editor of the facsimile edition of the "Berner Taschenbuch," has attempted to systematize the various types of *Streichungen* in the manuscript, identifying at least three "types of deletion":

²¹¹ Hulse 122. "...sein Nachkleid durchbohrten und in ihm herumstachen, ob sie auf das Harte einer Person stoßen würden" (KA 3 588).

²¹² KA 3 493. "And there were bandages, everywhere – bandages wrapped layer upon layer around a whole head till only one single eye was to be seen, belonging to no one; bandages that concealed and bandages that exposed what lay beneath them; bandages that had been undone and in which, as in a soiled bed, a hand that was no longer a hand now lay; and a bandaged leg that stuck out from the row of people, big as a man" (Hulse 37).

– Individual words or sentences with a line.

The text remains legible with such simple strike-throughs.

– Obsolete paragraphs are diagonally crossed out once or twice (within this, one also can find older strike-throughs). A new formulation of the corresponding passage follows directly after the crossed out passage; the earlier text remains – in varying quality – legible.

– Complete deletion.

In this case various kinds of thick strike-throughs can be observed, which represent clear deletion of variance. There are (at least) two different types: the wavy line, which can be categorized between the simple strike-through and the ‘complete deletion,’ which really delete, make illegible, just like the complete deletion, which can be executed with numerous strikes, as concentrated wavy lines or hatching, a total darkening of the manuscript space.²¹³

The question of the significance of these various types of *Streichungen* naturally arises: why were certain lines crossed out with a simple line or a pattern of hatching, and why were others so furiously expunged, completely saturating paper with ink? Richter pursued this question by collating the manuscript with the first print edition and found that relatively few deletions in the manuscript were reversed in the print edition. He asserts that while “various degrees of crossing out may be relevant for the individual reader alone, they were not so for the author’s decision in 1910.”²¹⁴

While it is plausible that the “degree of deletion” may have had little influence on Rilke’s final decisions between variants in dictating the novel, the notions of *Tilgen*, *Durchstreichen*, *Fortwerfen*, of erasure, deletion, throwing away, are of tremendous significance in the *Aufzeichnungen*. The figures of the *Fortgeworfenen*, those who have been cast off by society, erased from the symbolic order, literally “thrown away” like trash, are embodiments of the *Durchgestrichene* of the manuscript: deleted, yet still perceptible within the symbolic order of the work, on the boundary between presence and absence, existence and non-existence.

What is most striking about Richter’s systematization of the types of *Streichungen* is the distinction between those that cover [*verbergen*], making the text illegible [*unleserlich*], and those that show what lies beneath them, allowing the text to remain legible [*lesbar*]. Not only does this description of the *Streichungen* resonate with Malte’s own description of the bandages, but Malte’s account of the wounded, fragmented bodies on hospital beds also describes the visual appearance of the manuscript page more generally.

²¹³ Translation JH. “– Einzelne Wörter oder Sätze mit einem Strich. *Der Text bleibt gut lesbar* bei einer solchen einfachen Streichung. – Ganze obsolete Absätze sind ein- oder zweimal diagonal gestrichen (darin können sich dann ältere Streichungen befinden). Auf solche Passagen... folgt immer unmittelbar eine Neuformulierung des entsprechenden Passus; der frühere Text bleibt – in seiner varianten Qualität– gut lesbar. –Kompletttilgung. Darüber hinaus lassen sich mehrere Arten dickerer Streichungen beobachten, die eindeutige Tilgungen von Varianz darstellen. Hierbei gibt es wohl (mindestens) zwei unterschiedliche Arten: die Wellenlinie, die am ehesten zwischen dem einfachen Strich und der “Kompletttilgung,” die wirklich tilgen, unleserlich machen soll, anzusetzen ist, und eben diese komplette Tilgung, die mit mehreren Strichen durchgeführt sein kann, als verdichtete Wellenlinie oder als Schraffur, als eine totale Schwärzung der Manuskriptstelle“ (190-91, my emphasis).

²¹⁴ Translation JH. “Verschiedene Grade des Gestrichenen können allein für den Leser des Manuskripts relevant sein; sie waren es nicht für die Autorentscheidung von 1910” (191-92).

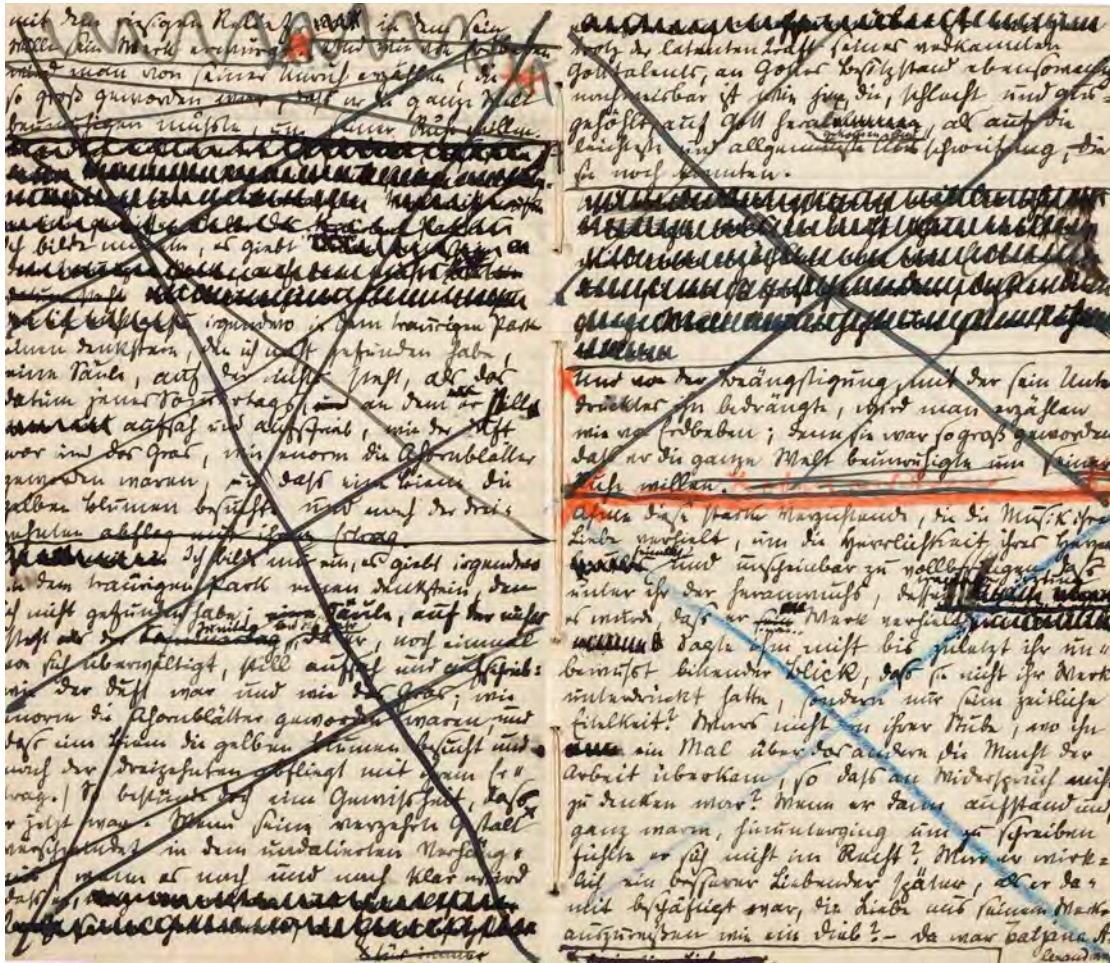


Figure 23. BT 168-69.

Cut up into sections that the writer struggles to fit together, the text of the manuscript is divided into hunks and bits. This textual passage about fragmented bodies and body parts covered in bandages mirrors the form of the mutilated, divided, wounded, barely intelligible manuscript pages. To some degree, the montage-like appearance of the manuscript is actually preserved in print editions. However, in the print edition, the fragments of the manuscript have also been stitched together, coagulating into a Frankenstein monster, a form intelligible as a body, yes, but a foreign one. The *Durchstreichungen* in the manuscript function like bandages – or more appropriately perhaps, like sutures – holding the body together, preventing it from falling apart until its pieces can reconstitute themselves in printed form. Through the process of printing, the wounds of the manuscript seem to heal over. But scars remain, easily overlooked, and pointing to the suffering that the body of the manuscript, coterminous with the body of the writer, has endured, and which remain part of its constitution. For in this case, the decimated body of the manuscript survives, maintained in its feverish state in the archive, a hospital of *Textkörper*.

The *Durchstreichungen* can be read on the one hand read as bandages covering textual wounds, which are healed through the process of print. Yet the *Durchstreichungen* are also of the same materiality as the text-wounds of handwriting themselves: ink scratches on the writing surface, like bloody cuts in the flesh. Is the act of *Durchstreichung* an act of text-body mutilation, or a restorative practice? Does the pen cut, bandage, or both? The same gesture of the hand both brings into existence and obliterates, it creates and destroys. A similar ambiguity arises in the scene of the

Herzstich, in which blood flows in a bisyllabic gurgle from the wound in Malte's father's chest, caught in the cotton fabric: if blood figures ink, if the hand guiding the surgical instrument mimics the hand guiding the writing instrument as it cuts into flesh, what exactly is the writing surface: the skin, into which the pen cuts, or the cotton fabric, which captures blood as a trace of the wound, like dried ink on paper?

The Breakdown of Signification and the Logic of the Symptom

A virtual textual flesh materializes rhizomatically through a mesh of semiotic relationships. On the one hand, the bodily images in the *Aufzeichnungen* can be read symbolically, as figures of the manuscript and of the physical process of writing. The bodily images also point indexically to a body that writes. Yet at the same time, there is also a relationship of material iconicity between blood and ink, paper and flesh. This array of relationships, corresponding to the Peircian triad of symbol, index, and icon, would seem to neatly account for the representation of the materiality of writing in the text. Yet there is something decidedly messy about these figures that threatens to overflow—much like the tic moving through the body of the man on the Parisian boulevard. We feel unable to distill these figures into a neat system of symbolic relationships—and this is precisely the point. Figures grow and metamorphose; signifier and signified, materiality and meaning grow into one another. We are left with a tattered body, with bandages that become enmeshed within into the wounded flesh that grows around them, and are now beginning to unravel. In this way, these bodily figures function more like symptoms than symbols, participating in a disruption of traditional meaning-making based on a stable symbolic order—a disruption which involves us as readers, who are also swept up in a surge, our own bodies becoming enmeshed within an excess of fleshiness.

As such, it is not appropriate to ask what these images mean, but rather to explore how they function, what they do. A full elaboration of how the tactility, materiality, and sensuality of the bodily descriptions in the *Aufzeichnungen* provoke a visceral response in the reader is beyond the scope of this chapter.²¹⁵ In what follows, however, I present several paths of entry into the textual flesh of the *Aufzeichnungen*. In weaving these various discourses together, I hope not only to provide an account of the force of the descriptions of materiality and corporeality in the *Aufzeichnungen*, but also account for their effects.

Eric Santner's recent work, particularly in *On Creaturely Life* and *The Royal Remains*, offers an array of terms that attempt to name such phenomena through which we experience the "somatic sublime." The "creaturely," he writes, materializes when "a piece of the human world presents itself as a surplus that both demands and resists symbolization, that is both inside and outside the 'symbolic order.'"²¹⁶ Malte is confronted with the somatic sublime through his encounters with the abject bodies of the *Fortgeworfenen*—the figures of the dying man in the *crèmerie*, the blind newspaper salesman, and a host of other figures who exist at the margins of society, who have been refused integration into the social order. For Santner, the bodily remains in the *Aufzeichnungen* "now persist as a fleshy excess of immanence perturbing the bodies that inhabit the spaces of modern states," the bodies that in modernity become invested with political and national sovereignty.²¹⁷ Thus, for Santner, the bodiliness in the *Aufzeichnungen* becomes primarily symptomatic of transformations in

²¹⁵ I am especially thankful to Regina Karl for our lively conversations about the sensuality of the descriptions in the *Aufzeichnungen*, and to Anne Kolb for her insights into the *Spürbarkeit der Zeichen*.

²¹⁶ *Creaturely Life* xv. Compare Tiedtke 119-120.

²¹⁷ *Royal Remains* 235.

the domains of political theology and biopolitics.

The sublime surplus of decimated and decaying flesh confronts Malte – and the reader – in its “opacity and recalcitrance.”²¹⁸ Yet what sort of force do these descriptions, which I suggest are also symptomatic of the *Schreibszene*, the configuration of the writer’s body and the materiality of textual materials, ultimately exert? And what are the effects of this force? As Andreas Huyssen demonstrates, Malte’s phantasms of fragmented bodies can be interpreted psychoanalytically, as provoked by his experiences in the modern metropolis of Paris and indexing incomplete ego formation during childhood. Yet there remains something about the pulsing bodily images of blood, wounds, rashes, and spit that cannot be grasped psychoanalytically or even as a symptom of political theological or biopolitical shifts. For we are not dealing with mere representation; we must also consider the affectiveness of these images of bodily excess.²¹⁹

In addition to other kinds of passageways between interior and exterior, Malte pays particular attention to bodily orifices: eyes, mouths, and wounds. Orifices are meeting points, points of passage or exchange between the internal space of the body and external space; the mouth, for example, allows the passage of air into and out of the body. Yet this often-idealized bodily origin of poetic verse also spits, eats, and vomits. In foregrounding the bodiliness of mouth or the eye, of the human body in general, the text participates in what Bois and Krauss have termed the “base materialism” of *informe*. For Bataille, *informe* is a force of total dissolution, acting toward the complete decomposition of all systems. In the *Aufzeichnungen*, the work of *informe* an operation of dismantling the symbolic order of Western thought, anticipating, in Malte’s terms, a *Zeit der anderen Auslegung*. The corporeal suffusion in the *Aufzeichnungen* does not simply index crises of political sovereignty, authorship, or subjectivity; via the logic of the symptom, the text also participates in the breakdown of established systems of meaning-making. Just following the passage in which Malte writes that poems are not memories, but rather experiences, and that memories must become blood, nameless, before they can resurface as poetry, Malte, as “Nichts” that nevertheless thinks, poses the questions:

Ist es möglich, ... daß man noch nichts Wirkliches und Wichtiges gesehen, erkannt und gesagt hat? ...

Ist es möglich, daß man trotz Erfindungen und Fortschritten, trotz Kultur, Religion und Weltweisheit an der Oberfläche des Lebens geblieben ist? ...

Ist es möglich, daß die ganze Weltgeschichte mißverstanden worden ist? ...²²⁰

Reality as Malte knows it is no longer valid. All concepts, all surfaces and facades of meaning, all systems of thinking, all ways of understanding reality and human existence are destabilized. All significations reveal themselves as false, as illusions that inevitably crumble and decay. Later in the

²¹⁸ *Creaturely Life* xv.

²¹⁹ See Bois and Krauss 235-40 regarding Kristeva’s theorization of the abject and its relation to Bataille’s notion of *informe*. Krauss writes “the abject ... is ultimately cast, within the theorization of abject art, as multiple forms of the wound ... it is the character of being wounded, victimized, traumatized, marginalized, that is seen as what is at play within this domain” (238). Yet the “wound within abject art [is] produced in advance as semantic, as it thematizes the marginalized, the traumatized, the wounded” (244). “Formless,” in contrast, is an operation of complete and utter declassification; “Part of destiny of the ‘formless’ is to liberate our thinking from the semantic, the servitude to thematics...” (252).

²²⁰ KA 3 468-9. “Is it possible, ... that we have neither seen nor perceived nor said anything real or of any importance? ... Is it possible that despite our inventions and progress, despite our culture, religion and knowledge of the world, we have remained on the surface of life? ... Is it possible that the entire history of the world has been misunderstood? ...” (Hulse 15).

novel, Malte laments, “Ich würde so gerne unter den Bedeutungen bleiben, die mir lieb geworden sind.”²²¹ This is echoed in the *First Duino Elegy*, which Rilke composed two years after the completion of the *Aufzeichnungen*, in the ominous formulation, “dass wir nicht mehr verlässlich zu Hause sind / in der gedeuteten Welt”²²² [“that we’re not at home, not reliably, in the interpreted world”²²³]. The crumbling of and departure from the universe of established significations not only informs Malte’s interest in the abject bodies *Fortgeworfenen*, it is also performed by the text.

Sensation and the Haptic Visuality of the Manuscript

Deleuze’s account of the Figure, sensation, and haptic viscosity offers a way to grasp the force of the bodily descriptions in the *Aufzeichnungen* in connection to the materiality and viscosity of the manuscript page. For Deleuze, the Figure, unlike figuration, connects with the viewer on a direct sensory level: “whereas ‘figuration’ refers to a form that is related to an object it is supposed to represent, the ‘Figure’ is the form that is connected to a sensation, and that conveys the violence of this sensation directly to the nervous system.”²²⁴ As Deleuze writes, “Cézanne gave a simple name to this way of the Figure: sensation. The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation: it acts immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh, whereas abstract form is addressed to the head through the intermediary of the brain.”²²⁵ Sensation furthermore involves a simultaneous unfolding of the subject and world:

at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body that, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed.²²⁶

This model of sensation, which describes the connection that emerges between the text and the reader – as well as the writer, who is always his first reader during the process of writing – directly resonates with the mode of seeing [*Sehen*] in the *Aufzeichnungen* or looking [*Schauen*] in the *New Poems*, modes of perception that involve a dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object. As Malte writes, “Ich lerne sehen. Ich weiß nicht, woran es liegt, es geht alles tiefer in mich ein und bleibt nicht an der Stelle stehen, wo es sonst immer zu Ende war. Ich habe ein Inneres, von dem ich

²²¹ KA 3 490. “I would so gladly stay among the significations that have become dear to me” (Norton 52).

²²² Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. David Oswald (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon, 1997), 26.

²²³ Ibid. 27.

²²⁴ Daniel W. Smith, “Deleuze and Bacon. Three Conceptual Trajectories in *The Logic of Sensation*,” *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, by Gilles Deleuze, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002), viii.

²²⁵ Deleuze, *Logic of Sensation*, 31. For context of experimentation on the direct action of images on nervous system in *fin-de-siècle* Paris, see Debora Silverman.

²²⁶ Deleuze, *Logic of Sensation*, 31. Roswitha M. Kant also draws on Gombrich and Adorno in discussing the “leibliches Sehen” in the *Aufzeichnungen*, involving a dissolving of the borders between subject and object (195-97).

nicht wußte. Alles geht jetzt dorthin. Ich weiß nicht, was dort geschieht.”²²⁷ And later, after describing the ruins of an apartment building and the visual and material traces of the lives once lived there, Malte writes, “Ich erkenne das alles hier, und darum geht es so ohne weiteres in mich ein: es ist zu Hause in mir.”²²⁸

This path of the Figure, the experience of sensation, involves a fundamentally different kind of seeing, based on a haptic visuality. Drawing on Deleuze and the work of Alois Riegl, who coined the term “haptic,” Laura Marks writes,

haptic visuality is distinguished from optical visuality, which sees things from enough distance to perceive them as distinct forms in deep space: in other words, how we usually conceive of vision. Optical visuality depends on a separation between the viewing subject and the object. Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture.... While optical perception privileges the representational power of the image, haptic perception privileges the material presence of the image. Drawing from other forms of sense experience, primarily touch and kinesthetics, haptic visuality involves the body more than is the case with optical visuality.²²⁹

When we look at the manuscript page, different modes of visuality – of *Sehen*, to use Malte’s word – are in tension with one another. One can read the page as a semantic text, prioritizing the relationship between variants that have been crossed out and replaced during the process of writing; this kind of “seeing” has traditionally dominated text genetics. Yet one can also attend to the materiality and visual appearance, the surface or “skin” of the page as image: as Marks writes, haptic works invite a mode of seeing, of looking, that “moves on the surface plane of the screen [or page, in our case] for some time before the viewer realizes what she or he is beholding. Such images resolve into figuration only gradually, if at all.”²³⁰ Indeed, there are certain moments when the semantic content of the text becomes difficult to discern due to the accumulation of *Durchstreichungen*: the semantic figuration of the text, like the optical visuality of a figurative painting, is ripped apart by the materiality of writing.

“Gushing a Material’s Strangeness:” The Double Rend of the Printed Page

Such moments in painting, when the materiality of a painting disturbs the representational capacity of the image, are theorized by Georges Didi-Huberman in *Confronting Images*.²³¹ In this work, the author proposes the idea of the “rend,” the tearing or ripping of fabric or tissue, to describe the moments in paintings where materiality tears through figuration. In this account, mimetic

²²⁷ KA 3 456. “I am learning to see. Why, I cannot say, but all things enter more deeply into me; nor do the impressions remain at the level where they used to cease. There is a place within me of which I knew nothing. Now all things tend that way. I do not know what happens there” (Hulse 4).

²²⁸ KA 3 487. “I recognize everything here, and that is why it enters into me so readily: it is at home in me” (Hulse 31). This passage is explored in more depth in the next chapter.

²²⁹ Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2000), 162-63.

²³⁰ Ibid. 162.

²³¹ And to Deleuze as well: “It is the confrontation of Figure and field, their solitary wrestling in shallow depth, that rips the painting away from all narrative as well as from all symbolization” (xxxiv).

representation and the experience of optic visibility comprise but one mode of signification, whereas the experience of pure, unresolved material can yield a different kind of meaning. Didi-Huberman associates the power of the rend with the symptom:

why, finally, call this power of the rend *symptom*? ... *Symptom* speaks to us of the infernal scansion, the *anadyomene* movement of the visual in the visible and of presence in representation ... it speaks to us of the fabric that rends itself. ... It places us before its visual power as before the emergence of the very process of figurability. It teaches us in this sense – in the brief space of a symptom, then – what figuring is, bearing within itself its own theoretical force. But this is a theory that is active, made flesh, so to speak, a theory whose power happens, paradoxically, when the unity of forms, their ideal synthesis, breaks apart, and this breaking apart gushes a material’s strangeness.²³²

Didi-Huberman unfolds these conceptions of the symptom and the rend through discussion of certain medieval and early modern representations of Christ’s wounded, suffering body, which are not based on formal mimesis, but a kind of *material* mimesis, an *imitatio Christi* on the level of the materiality of painting.²³³ “The theme of the Incarnation would make it possible to *open* the visible to the work of the visual,”²³⁴ to open representability to the work of presentability, to the material process of becoming. In the case of Malte, then, the rend might be said to open *Schrift* [writing/text] to the work of *Schreiben* [writing]. Didi-Huberman describes the case of Fra Angelico, for example, who splatters the lower panel of his *Madonna of the Shadoms* (c. 1440-50) with a “stream of colored spots [that] doesn’t resemble very much from the point of view of appearance: conversely, it resembles quite precisely a process – a *gesture of unction*, even of consecration, that it reenacts (in other words reactualizes, makes concrete again) more than it imitates.”²³⁵ In doing so, Fra Angelico “reach[es] the lowest level and, like Christ himself, humiliate[s] [him]self in the dissemination of pure material events.”²³⁶ Or to use an example more explicitly related to the human body, we might take the example of an early fourteenth-century sheet at the Schnütgen Museum in Cologne, an image of Christ on the cross that is invaded by bloody profusions of red paint that gush over and disfigure the surface.²³⁷

Here the whole body – the whole image – becomes wound. What does this imply? It implies a paradoxical work of presentability in the image: it is there, before us, much too far away or much too close. It gives (quite badly, moreover) the appearance of the body of Christ that would be seen from a reasonable distance, whereas its major visual event – the intense red paint – suddenly creates a distance that is irrational and captivating, an irrationally proximate distance that makes the small painted sheet the visual place of a quasi-embrace. ... Perhaps this image was produced to the end of making the devout person close his eyes under so much violence, and to let his ‘heart bleed’ within him, in accordance with the demands of so many fourteenth-century mystics....²³⁸

²³² Marks 162.

²³³ Aruna D’Souza makes similar argument about Cézanne’s *Bathers*, locating the signifier of the erotic not the forms of the bodies, but the materiality of paint.

²³⁴ 186-87.

²³⁵ 201-203.

²³⁶ Ibid. 201.

²³⁷ Ibid. 205-207.

²³⁸ Ibid. 207. Didi-Huberman concludes the book by discussing the *pan* of yellow paint in Vermeer’s *View of Delft*, also discussed by Proust, that produces a rend within the image, a wound in its surface, by which the materiality of paint, of painting, tears through what appears to be the height of

At certain moments in the “Berner Taschenbuch,” the force of the Deleuzian Figure and of Didi-Huberman’s rend produce what I call a “double rend” that tears through the semantic skin of the text – both that of the manuscript, and also of the printed page – and gushes into the reader’s affective experience. A chaotic array of *Durchstreichen* disfigures the pages of the manuscript, at times rendering the words illegible such that their semantic content dissolves into the material flesh of the manuscript. When the reader apprehends the manuscript directly, the semiological legibility of the text, akin to optic visibility, becomes subsumed by *haptic visibility* that *pierces* the reader viscerally, puncturing – also like Barthes’s *punctum* – his experience of reading, allowing the materiality and corporeality of writing to invade the reader’s bodily experience. To use Santner’s term, perhaps perversely, the reader is confronted with the creatureliness of writing itself.

None of this would seem to apply, however, to the reader’s experience of the *printed* page. For all visibility and materiality of the manuscript is effaced, *durchgestrichen*, rendered invisible in the translation of the work from the materiality of manuscript into that of the printed text. Yet the haptic visibility of the manuscript page, the materialities of writing through which the work takes shape, remain tangible, exerting their force through the printed page. The tactility of the descriptions in the *Aufzeichnungen* explored throughout this chapter does not simply represent the materiality of the manuscript, nor simply index the scene of writing, but rather is symptomatic of a double rend, in the fabric of the manuscript and in the fabric of the printed text. When we return to the scene of writing, we witness moments in which the materiality of writing punctures or tears through the textual representation in the manuscript. These moments not only disfigure the text (literally), but are also *productive* for its emergence: the disfigured bodies of the *Fortgeworfenen* and the images of bodily and material disintegration are, for example, formed out of the messiness of the materiality and corporeality of writing itself.

The force generated by this rend in the manuscript is powerful enough to also tear through the tissue of the printed text, evoking the flesh of a virtual that lies beneath the skin of the printed text. To a degree, the typography of the printed page preserves the appearance of the manuscript, divided into fragmentary chunks like the *Aufzeichnungen* within the “Berner Taschenbuch” itself. Yet the materiality of the manuscript also remains haptically “visible” in the reader’s visceral response to the descriptions of wounded bodies and flesh. The model of looking at the manuscript discussed above involves attending to the tension between the semiological and the phenomenological of the manuscript page. Although the process of printing renders the (haptic) visibility of the manuscript page invisible, the tactility and sensuality of the corporeal descriptions in the *Aufzeichnungen* “make present” [*vergegenwärtigen*] in the reader’s bodily experience – much like the storytelling of Brahe and Belmare, which provokes immediate phenomenological experience – the materialities of writing out of which they emerge. Given that the actors, the bodies in the text, were produced by and have imbedded within them the very project and materiality of writing, a trace of the bloody manuscript remains even when we might imagine the printed work to have erased the messy wounds of ink.

representationalism and shows “figurability at work,” disturbing and disfiguring the picture (269). “It is the accidental and sovereign outcropping of a deposit, of a colored seam: it makes meaning, with violence and equivocation, as a wound on white skin gives meaning – gushing-forth – to the blood that pulses below. It self-presents its material cause and its accidental cause, namely the very gesture, the touch, the intrusion of the paint” (266). The *pan* “implies not illusion but the collapse of illusionist representation.... Its existence in perception has more to do with what Riegl called ‘haptic’ space – supposing the collapse of planes and a quasi-touching – than with a purely optical existence” (270).

And this, finally, offers us a new way to understand Malte's project of *Sehenlernen* as a mode of seeing that rends through the stable surfaces and façades of reality, a mode of seeing based on sensation, a kind of haptic seeing by which one sees with the body, through the mutual becoming of subject and object, which ultimately belong to the same ontological flesh. This mode of seeing also enables us to see the manuscript through the façade of the printed work, to experience a manuscript that surges through its fissures and threatens to destroy its surface.

Excuse Two

The Word Made Flesh: Reading as Transubstantiation

“Abendmahl”

Ewiges will zu uns. Wer hat die Wahl
und trennt die großen und geringen Kräfte?
Erkennst du durch das Dämmern der Geschäfte
im klaren Hinterraum das Abendmahl.

wie sie sichs halten und wie sie sichs reichen
und in der Handlung schlicht und schwer beruhn.
Aus ihren Händen heben sich die Zeichen;
sie wissen nicht, daß sie sie tun

und immer neu mit irgendwelchen Worten
einsetzen, was man trinkt und was man teilt.
Denn da ist keiner, der nicht allerorten
heimlich von hinnen geht, indem er weilt.

Und sitzt nicht immer einer unter ihnen,
der seine Eltern, die ihm ängstlich dienen,
wegschenkt an ihre abgetane Zeit?
(Sie zu verkaufen, ist ihm schon zu weit.)²³⁹

²³⁹ “Evening Meal”

Things eternal want to join us. Who chooses,
and separates the great and lesser powers?
Can't you recognize through the twilight of the shops
the last supper shining in the back room:/
how they hold it there and pass it on
and in those actions gravely, simply rest.
From their hands the signs are rising;
they don't know that they perform them,/
and newly with each exchange of words
establish what one drinks and what one shares.
For there is no one anyplace who isn't
secretly departing, even as he stays./
And doesn't someone always sit among them
who gives away his parents, still anxiously
serving him, to their completed, cast-off time?
(To sell them would not be worth his while.)

Written during the period in which Rilke was composing the *Aufzeichnungen*, the above poem from *Der Neuen Gedichte Anderer Teil* (1908) places the reader into the position of a viewer standing in front of a shop window, looking through into a back room where a family is gathered around an evening meal. In the language of the poem, the depiction of an everyday evening meal merges into a depiction of the Eucharist, the Christian ceremony in which bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. The title of the poem bears this double meaning, referring simply to supper, the evening meal, as well as to the Eucharist, the “Lord’s supper” or Last Supper that Christ shared with his apostles.

Thematizing the recognition of the sacred in the mundane, the poem is paradigmatic of Rilke’s overarching poetic concerns during the period.²⁴⁰ The “vascillating nature of the text, which subtly shifts between sacred and secular senses, between a family dinner and the Eucharist,” presents reader with choice, with possibility of recognizing sacred in the profane; “the poetic text becomes the window through which the reader sees the scene in the ‘back room.’ Whether a reader decides to look through it nor not, is not up to the poem; it can merely extend an invitation.”²⁴¹ While it has been shown that Da Vinci’s painting of the last supper provided a model for Rilke in composing this poem,²⁴² the configuration of the scene described also recalls certain paintings by Pieter Aertsen.



Figure 24. Pieter Aertsen, *Christ with Maria and Martha*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Rainer Maria Rilke, “Evening Meal,” *New Poems [1908]: the Other Part*, trans. Edward Snow (New York: North Star, 1987), 91.

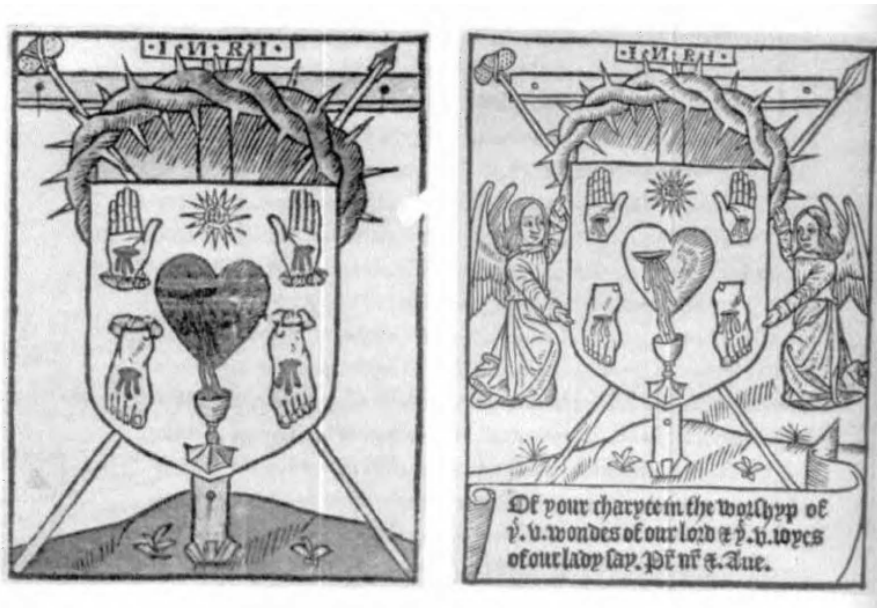
²⁴⁰ Johannes Wich-Schwarz, *Transformation of Language and Religion in Rainer Maria Rilke* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 7.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* 24.

²⁴² *Ibid.* 32, n23.

Standing before *Christ with Maria and Martha*, the viewer, positioned outside the picture plane, gazes into the scene as if through a window and is confronted by a massive hunk of flesh on top of a pile of food for a feast. Through a doorframe, in a back room, the viewer witnesses the spiritual scene. The painting presents the viewer with the possibility of literally seeing through the profane scene of the kitchen into the spiritual scene unfolding in the back room.²⁴³

In recognizing the Eucharist in the evening meal of the poem, the reader is invited to participate in the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ and to remember his wounded, suffering body.²⁴⁴ The reader of the *Aufzeichnungen*, confronted with the tortured, mutilated, decimated body of the manuscript that is spectrally present in the printed text, may also catch a glimpse of the body of Christ. Christ, in fact, haunts the *Aufzeichnungen* in a variety of ways. As discussed in the first excursion, the wounding of Christ is directly evoked in the forty-fourth *Aufzeichnungen* when Abelone receives the stigmata. This description is directly followed, in the forth-fifth *Aufzeichnungen*, by the scene of the *Herzstich*, in which the dead body of Malte's father is stabbed through the heart, producing a wound that strikingly resembles Christ's side wound: "[der Arzt] zog das Instrument vorsichtig zurück, und es war etwas wie ein Mund da, aus dem zweimal hintereinander Blut austrat, als sagte er etwas Zweisilbiges.... Und nun blieb die Wunde ruhig wie ein geschlossenes Auge...."²⁴⁵ In the following images, the side wound is represented a wound in the heart, which directly reflects the description of the wound in Brigge's chest created by the *Herzstich*.



Figures 25 and 26. Devotional woodcuts, late-fifteenth century. Reproduced in Bynum 100.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ I will return to these paintings in the fourth chapter.

²⁴⁴ Regarding the role of Christ in Rilke's work, see Wich-Schwarz 9-33, 102-119.

²⁴⁵ Regarding wound as mouth, see Bynum 196-197.

²⁴⁶ It is also noteworthy that only the wounds of Christ are evoked in the *Aufzeichnungen* – Abelone's receipt of the stigmata, Brigge's wound in the heart – rather than the whole body or person of Christ. One recalls here certain medieval depictions of the wounds of Christ that stand in for his body. In these images, the side wound becomes a wound in the heart, which directly reflects the description of the wound in Brigge's chest created by the *Herzstich*. See Bynum 94-101.

Witnessing the *Herzstich*, Malte describes that time seems to stand still: “Ich hatte das Gefühl, als wäre plötzlich alle Zeit fort aus dem Zimmer. Wir befanden uns wie in einem Bilde.”²⁴⁷ The moment when Christ finally died was also a moment strangely outside of time, when time stopped. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell that darkness descended over the entire earth from three o’clock to six o’clock in the afternoon: “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.”²⁴⁸ In many medieval crucifixion scenes, the sun and the moon are both in the sky at the same time, signifying a moment outside of time.

Christ is also evoked in a passage from the so-called “Tolstoy-endings” at the end of the “Berner Taschenbuch.” In heavily edited form, these endings were published Zinn in the *Sämtliche Werke*, yet the *durchgestrichene* passage I present below was not included in Zinn’s edition. Here we find a formulation of the task of the poet that resonates with Christ’s sacrifice, which is found on the lower half of the following manuscript page.

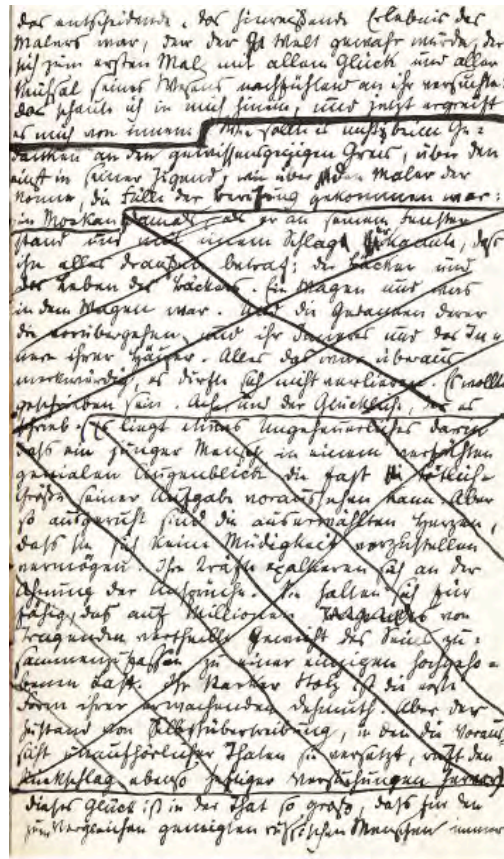


Figure 27. BT 175.

²⁴⁷ KA 3 565. “I had the feeling that suddenly all time had gone from the room. It was as if we were in a painting” (modified from Norton 139 and Hulse 102). One also recalls Count Brahe’s narration, as well as Malte’s attempt to narrate the moment before Grischa’s death, both of which involve a disruption in the flow of chronological time.

²⁴⁸ Luke 23: 44-45. See also Matthew 27:45 and Mark 15:33.

schrieb. (Es liegt etwas Ungeheuerliches darin dass ein junger Mensch in einem verfrühten genialen Augenblick die fast tödtliche Größe seiner Aufgabe voraussehen kann. Aber so ausgeruht sind die auserwählten Herzen, dass sie sich keine Müdigkeit vorzustellen vermögen. Ihre Kräfte exaltieren sich an der Ahnung der Ansprüche. Sie halten sich für fähig, dass auf Millionen Tragendes von Tragenden vertheilte Gewicht des Seins zusammenzufassen zu einer einzigen hochgehobenen Last. Ihr starker Stolz ist die erste Form ihrer erwachenden Dehmuth. Aber der Zustand von Selbstübertreibung, in den die Voraussicht unaufhörlicher Thaten sie versetzt, ruft den Rückschlag ebenso heftiger Versuchungen hervor)

Figure 28. BT Transkription 175.²⁴⁹

Evoking Romantic and Symbolist conceptions of the poet,²⁵⁰ the writer is designated as one of the *auserwählten Herzen* [chosen hearts]. Tireless, he is charged with the task of gathering together the weight of Being, distributed over the whole of humanity, into one heavy burden. This formulation recalls Christ's task of carrying the sins of the world.²⁵¹ Christ's death is not that of an individual human, rather he dies for all mankind, such that humans may live eternally in heaven. Similarly, the death of Malte's father signifies more than the death of an individual: "but now the Master of the Hunt was dead, and not only he. Now the heart had been pierced [*durchbohrt*], our heart, the heart of our race [*Geschlechts*]." ²⁵² Like Christ, who was tempted in the desert, the poet is also tempted to abandon his task. In this passage, Tolstoy is envisioned as a fallen poet, a Christ-like figure who has

²⁴⁹ "There is something monstrous about the fact that a young man in a premature brilliant moment the almost deathly magnitude of his task can predict. But the chosen hearts are calm in this way, that they are not able, to imagine any tiredness. Their powers are delighted at the mere premonition of what will be demanded of them. They believe themselves to be capable of gathering together the weight of being, dispersed across millions of bearers, into a single burden, lifted high. Their powerful pride is the first form of their willing humility. But the condition of crossing the boundaries of the self into which they are placed by the forethought of unremitting tasks, produces a backlash of ever stronger temptations" (translation JH).

²⁵⁰ Compare Bennett, "The Romantic Author," *The Author*, 55-71.

²⁵¹ Wich-Schwarz, however, notes that Rilke's understanding of Christ involves "a profound empathy with the suffering Jesus combined with a refusal to ascribe any kind of salvific power to him" (12).

²⁵² Hulse 103. "Nun war der Jägermeister tot, und nicht er allein. Nun war das Herz durchbohrt, unser Herz, das Herz unseres Geschlechts [...]" (KA 3 566).

gone into the desert and has succumbed to temptation, giving up his call to *Dichtertum*.²⁵³

The possibility of recognizing the spiritual in the mundane presented by the poem “Abendmahl” is also present in the *Aufzeichnungen*. At the “heart” of the Eucharist is the process of transubstantiation, by which the everyday matter of bread and wine is transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ. At the last supper, Christ gave bread to his disciples, saying “This is my body,” and wine, saying, “This is my blood.” Depicted in the poem “Abendmahl,” and the priest, kneeling before the altar during a Catholic mass, holds up the bread and wine and utters a prayer before eating and drinking. According to the doctrine of transubstantiation, the bread and wine are transformed through this ritual into the body and blood of Christ. When the members of the congregation partake in the sacrament, eating Christ’s body and drinking his blood, the body of Christ becomes inseparable from the body of the individual, a component of the believer’s physical being. Through the ritual of communion, individual believers are bound physically, the body and blood of Christ, into a community spanning spatial and temporal boundaries that includes Christ’s disciples gathered with him for the Last Supper.

The ritual of the Eucharist is component of a multisensory staging or reactivation that takes place during the Catholic mass. The Priest speaks about the story of Christ, standing in front of altar images that depict his birth, death, and resurrection. The architectural configuration of the cathedral forms a cross that is filled by the bodies of the believers. With the priest at its head, the bodies of the supplicants are transformed by the Eucharist into the body of Christ. Through these different symbolic fragments, the whole story of Christ becomes reactivated, remembered, made present.

The process of reading the *Aufzeichnungen* similarly activates a process of transubstantiation by which the manuscript and materiality of writing become present or incarnate, if only virtually, in the printed text and in the space of the reader’s body. The materials of the printed text function like the bread and wine of the Eucharist; through a kind of *post-hermeneutic circle* between writer, text, and reader, the body of the manuscript is reactivated through the mundane materiality of the printed text. In “consuming” the text, incorporating it into his or her body, the reader reactivates the living body of the writer who sacrifices himself through the process of writing.²⁵⁴ The reader of the *Aufzeichnungen* is drawn into a communion with the writer and other readers.

Reader response theory also describes an activation of the text during the process of reading. As between priest and congregation, dialectical exchange emerges between the author/text and the reader, who fills in the blanks [*Leerstellen*] between the fragments of narrative presented in realizing the fictional world.²⁵⁵ Reading also binds readers together into a virtual communion or imagined community, to use the words of Benedict Anderson. Yet the reader also undergoes a process of transubstantiation in which the materialities of writing become incorporated in the reader’s bodily experience, transforming the reader into an affective image of the materialities of writing.

The experience of reading produced by the *Aufzeichnungen* thus activates a kind of *double transubstantiation* that corresponds to the notion of the double rend developed in the previous chapter. The *Aufzeichnungen* present the possibility of recognizing the implied manuscript, the

²⁵³ Regarding Rilke’s encounter with Tolstoy, and specifically his omission of the “Tolstoy endings,” see Anna A. Tavis, *Rilke’s Russia: A Cultural Encounter* (Evanston: Northwestern U P, 1994), 100-102.

²⁵⁴ Compare Lucas Marco Gisi, “Selbst-/Verordnete Streichungen? Hans Morgenthalers Poetik der Auslöschung am Beispiel des Romans *Gadscha Puti*,” *Schreiben und Streichen*, 225-246.

²⁵⁵ See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1978).

materialities of writing, within the materiality the matter of the printed text. Yet the reader may also recognize the materialities of writing in the descriptions of bloody wounds and decimated flesh in the text, which are so insistently connected with the materiality of handwriting. In this way, the materiality of the text becomes transformed into human corporeality. Such a connection between blood and ink, body and text – of word made flesh, and flesh made word – becomes literalized in medieval images of Christ as a charter. As Bynum writes, Christ’s “blood-spotted body seems to become the charter below the side wound, illustrating the popular devotional theme of Christ as charter of salvation and calling attention to document, page, and body as skin.”²⁵⁶



Figure 29. Christ as Charter. Folio 23r, Brit. Lib. Add. MS 37049. Reproduced in Bynum 92.

The nature of transubstantiation is among the greatest mysteries in the history of Christianity. What it actually meant for bread and wine to be transformed into the blood and body of Christ was thrown into radical question in the late medieval period. Unlike the dead matter Cartesian materialism, matter in the medieval period was not dead and lifeless, but constantly fluctuating, transforming, unstable, even alive.²⁵⁷ Amongst the various Eucharistic theologies that have emerged over the centuries – transubstantiation, co-substantiation, Real Presence, etc. – two

²⁵⁶ 92.

²⁵⁷ See Bynum 17-18, 29-30.

poles emerge. One pole maintains that the bread and wine of the Eucharist are merely symbolic of Christ's body and blood, representations rather than actually transformed matter. On one end is the doctrine of transubstantiation, which holds that Christ's body and blood actually become present in the Eucharist.

A similar debate is occurring within contemporary literary studies, between approaches to literature focusing on more traditional questions of representation, signification, and interpretation on the one hand, and post-hermeneutic approaches focusing on materiality, affect, and "presence effects" on the other. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht describes an oscillation between "meaning effects," aspects of representation and signification, and "presence effects," the material and affective dimensions of texts and readers' encounters with them.²⁵⁸ What this dissertation seeks to highlight is not only an oscillation, which implies a binary distinction between meaning and materiality, but rather a circulation between them, a dialectical transformation of one into the other.

²⁵⁸ *Production of Presence* xv.

Chapter Three

Bodies of Departure, Materialities in Flux

...the linearity of the symbol...
the traditional concept of time, an entire organization
of the world and of language, was bound up with it.
Writing in the narrow sense—and phonetic writing
above all—is rooted in a past of nonlinear writing. It
had to be defeated, and here one can speak, if one wishes,
of technical success.... A war was declared, and a
suppression of all that resisted linearization was installed.

—Derrida, *Of Grammatology*

Each of the previous chapters has probed the dynamic relationship between the materialities of writing and the immaterial or representational space of the *Aufzeichnungen* by investigating a particular figure. In the first chapter, the *Durchstreichung* emerged as a fundamental gesture of writing in the “Berner Taschenbuch.” Re-presented in the text in various ways, the gesture of the *Durchstreichung* is a site of particular tension between materiality and semantics of the text. In the second chapter, the rending of textual flesh becomes the a dominant figure: the materiality of the manuscript becomes enmeshed within the materiality of the human body – of the writer, of the reader, of the figures in the text – producing an excess of fleshiness that haunts the printed text and produces a rend in its surface, allowing the materialities of writing to surge into the space of the representation and into the reader’s affective experience during reading. This chapter focuses on the figures of departure and transformation in the *Aufzeichnungen* by examining a variety of bodies – human bodies, but also architectural bodies – that depart from or slip out of their fixed positions in the social order or in the realm of the living, bodies in a process of transformation that *are* no longer as or where we expect them to be. I root the slippage of these bodies within the symbolic order in the constant slippage of signification in the manuscript, in the continual physical transformation of the text during the process of its emergence through the dialectic activity of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*.

In particular, I show how Malte’s descriptions of the *Fortgeworfenen* and *Fortgegangenen*, the “discarded ones” and the “departed ones,” are tied up within the materiality of the novel’s production. The exclusion or withdrawal of these figures from the social symbolic order reflects the continual fluctuation and the withdrawal of meaning, rooted concretely in the perpetual act of *Durchstreichen* in the manuscript, that characterizes Rilke’s process of writing as well as the modernist crisis of language more broadly. Secondly, I will consider the fluctuation of gender categories in the *Aufzeichnungen* in relation to the concrete transformation of language during the process of writing. Lastly, I will examine how the fragmented and haunted architectural spaces in the *Aufzeichnungen* – from Malte’s fragmentary recollection from his grandfather’s home, haunted by ghosts, to the

fragmented modern ruins of the Parisian metropolis – emerge out of the fragmentation of Rilke’s own writing process and the fragmented state of the manuscript.

By re-reading these larger themes and issues in the *Aufzeichnungen* through this lens, this chapter also shows how previous scholarship has at times unknowingly tapped into dynamics that become illuminated when we return to consider the materiality of the novel’s composition. In an article on the “composition of reality” in the *Aufzeichnungen*, for example, Andrea Cervi argues that the “kaleidoscopic, accumulative vision” of reality offered by the text is “a consequence of the complex time structure of the text, the diary form allowing various arbitrary jumps forward in time.”²⁵⁹ Cervi also notes the radical “openness” of the novel, the “hypothetical,” “shifting,” and “elusive” character of reality in the text, arguing that the reality of the *Aufzeichnungen* is a reality “in the process of composition and is thus, in a most specific sense, integral to the composition of the text itself.”²⁶⁰ When re-examining Cervi’s description of the “composition of reality” in the text in relation to the physical composition of the text, we discover that such features of the text also reflect the openness of the manuscript during the process of writing. Malte’s question of “whether any deity can be perceived to preside over such a disordered and alien reality,”²⁶¹ reflects, at least in part, Rilke’s own position with respect to his work, unable to order the defiant fragments of text into a cohesive whole.²⁶²

As such, certain perplexing features of the novel become partially illuminated when we return to the manuscript to consider the materiality of the novel’s production. Andreas Huyssen, for example, approaches the various fragmentary visions and phenomena in the *Aufzeichnungen* through a psychoanalytic framework, analyzing the resurfacing of Malte’s childhood memories in relation to Malte’s fragmenting experience of the modern metropolis. Yet the fragmented perceptions and architectures in the text, as I explore in the last section of this chapter, also reflect the fragmentary visuality and architecture of the text of the manuscript. In the first chapter, we saw Malte’s struggle to represent the death of Grisca Otrepjow are entangled within the concrete process of composition as it unfolds on the manuscript page. While the materiality and mediality of the novel’s production are by no means the *only* explanation for such representations in the novel, additional layers of reference are uncovered when we return to the scene of writing.

Fortwerfen and Durchstreichen

Throughout the *Aufzeichnungen*, Malte becomes gradually aware of a new category of human, which he calls the *Fortgeworfenen*, the outcasts. He describes them as “Abfälle, Schale von Menschen” [trash, husks of humans] who have been cast out of the social symbolic order and occupy the marginal zones of the modern Parisian metropolis. The blind newspaper salesmen, for example, whose voice is barely audible to the passersby in the Luxembourg garden; or the patients in the *Salpêtrière* hospital near Paris, whose mutilated, bandaged, putrefying bodies are barely recognizable as

²⁵⁹ Andrea Cervi, “The Composition of Reality. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*,” *The German Novel in the Twentieth Century. Beyond Realism*. ed. David Midgley (New York: Edinburgh U P; St. Martin’s P, 1993), 46.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 49, 57, 52.

²⁶¹ Ibid. 55.

²⁶² I am similarly interested in examining writings on the theme of transformation in the *Aufzeichnungen* through the lens of the concrete transformation of the text during the process of writing. Compare Wich-Schwarz, *Transformation of Language*, and Eifler, “Existentielle Verwandlung.”

human. In the following passage from the eighteenth *Aufzeichnung*, Malte describes a dying man in a *crémérie* with whom he feels a particular affinity.

Ja, er wußte, daß er sich jetzt von allem entfernte, nicht nur von den Menschen. Ein Augenblick noch, und alles wird seinen Sinn verloren haben, und dieser Tisch und die Tasse und der Stuhl, an den er sich klammert, alles Tägliche und Nächste wird unverständlich geworden sein, fremd und schwer. So saß er da und wartete, bis es geschehen sein würde.²⁶³

The man is undergoing a massive transformation, a process of withdrawal from the symbolic order in multiple senses. He withdraws not only from society, from other humans, but also more fundamentally from the world of signification. Malte recognizes in the man's face that he no longer recognizes anything as he gradually departs the world of meaning. The dying man thus occupies an in-between zone on the margins of society, between inclusion and exclusion, presence and absence, between Being and Non-Being, life and death.

As mentioned previously, the figures of the *Fortgeworfenen* also play a central role in Eric Santner's recent engagement with the *Aufzeichnungen*. Santner argues that *Fortgeworfenen* signal the dramatic shifts in biopolitics and the political theological sphere of modernity.²⁶⁴ Yet as explored in the last chapter, Malte's descriptions of the *Fortgeworfenen* can be closely linked to the materialities of writing: "Feucht vom Speichel des Schicksals kleben sie an einer Mauer, an einer Laterne, an einer Plakatsäule, oder sie rinnen langsam die Gasse herunter mit einer dunklen, schmutzigen Spur hinter sich her."²⁶⁵ In this description, the *Fortgeworfenen* resemble sheets of paper, adhering to surfaces throughout the city yet often overlooked. Like the ink deposited by the pen as it moves across lines of the page, the *Fortgeworfenen* flow, leak, trickle, or run [*rinnen*] throughout the alleyways of Paris, leaving a dark, murky trace in their tracks. The connection of the *Fortgeworfenen* to the materiality of writing is concretized when a grey, small woman ["jene graue, kleine Frau"] offers Malte an old, long pencil, which seems to thrust itself out of her closed hands.²⁶⁶

Regarding the significance of this pencil that the old woman reaches out to him, Malte writes, "daß es sich nicht um den Bleistift handeln konnte, begriff ich wohl: Ich fühlte, daß das ein Zeichen war, ein Zeichen für Eingeweihte, ein Zeichen, das die Fortgeworfenen kennen."²⁶⁷ In this chapter, I argue that the pencil in fact is of central importance. Resonating with Malte's description of the *Fortgeworfenen*, the text of the manuscript in the process of writing is similarly unstable, easily extinguishable at every point, by a strike of the pen, which negates its validity, literally disfiguring it, until such fragments become at times barely legible. The peculiar status of the *Fortgeworfenen* also mirrors the in-between status of the *durchgestrichene* passages in the manuscript, which, struck through yet still visible, fluctuate between presence and absence on the edge of the symbolic order of the

²⁶³ KA 3 489-90. "Yes, he knew that he was now withdrawing from everything in the world, not merely from human beings. One moment more, and everything would lose its meaning, and this table and the cup and the chair he was clinging to would become unintelligible, alien and heavy. So he sat there, waiting for it to happen" (Mitchell 51).

²⁶⁴ "Malte's awareness indicates that he is confronting not simply an economic class or subculture generated by the contingencies of urban life but a fundamental dimension – what I am calling the 'creaturely' – of a new social (or better, *biopolitical*) constellation in which he himself is implicated" (Santner, *Creaturely Life*, xvi).

²⁶⁵ KA 3 481. "Moist with the spittle of fate, they cling to a wall, a lamp-post, a Morris column, or they dribble slowly down the street, leaving a dark, dirty trail behind them" (Hulse 26).

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. "For I understood quite well that the pencil in itself was no importance: I felt that it was a sign, a sign for the initiated, a sign only the outcasts could recognize" (Mitchell 40).

text.²⁶⁸ Cast out of society, the *Fortgeworfenen* do not simply disappear, but rather continue to haunt the city; similarly, the *durchgestrichene* passages in the manuscript continue to haunt the space of the text. Physically present in the manuscript, they continue to exert a force even in the printed text, remaining spectrally present.

Having departed or been thrown away, cast out or discarded from the social order, these figures occupy a liminal zone between Being and Non-Being, inclusion and exclusion from the symbolic order. In Heideggarian terms, language “grants” being to things. Things enter into Being in that they enter into language, passing from a realm of concealment into a realm of disclosure along the horizon of Being. This conception of the horizon of Being can be concretized in the *Durchstreichung*, the line crosses out a word, sentence, or passage of text. When struck through, the word or passage remains visible, often still legible, but it is no longer valid, no longer part of the official text. As such, the *durchgestrichene* word fluctuates in an in-between realm between legibility and illegibility, being and non-being, inclusion and exclusion from the text.²⁶⁹

The ontological status of the *Durchgestrichene* also characterizes the status of the manuscript more generally. As Grésillon writes, the manuscript is a *Zwitterwesen*, a liminal or hybrid object of sorts, “neither directly part of the work, ... nor pure waste.”²⁷⁰ Like the figures of the *Fortgeworfenen*, the *Durchgestrichene* passages of the manuscript also exist in a liminal state of fluctuation, hovering along the horizon of being. Through the printing of the novel, the *Durchgestrichene* is returned to the realm of concealment: the passages that are not *veröffentlicht* [published, literally made open] do not make it into the open realm of form.

***Veränderung*: Gender and the Materialization of Representation**

The *Fortgeworfenen* are related to another group of figures that emerge in the novel, the *Fortgegangen*, or “departed ones.” The most prominent example is the prodigal son, whose story Malte re-tells in the final *Aufzeichnung* of the printed text. Like the *Fortgeworfenen*, the various *fortgegangene* figures are undergoing a process of transition or transformation, casting off their previous identities and breaking out of the social categories within which they have been placed.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ This fluctuation between presence and absence of the *Durchgestrichene* can be grounded concretely in the various media incarnations of the work: physically present in the manuscript, struck through yet still visible, these passages were rendered invisible in the earliest print editions of the work; the *durchgestrichene* words and passages – for example, the alternate versions of the beginning and ending of the novel – reappear in the *Sämtliche Werke*, 1955-1966, and again, in a different form, in the recent facsimile edition of the “Berner Taschenbuch.”

²⁶⁹ An expanded version of this line of investigation might approach the status of the “*Fort*”-*geworfenen* through Freud’s conception Da/Fort game. In the Freudian game of *Fort-sein* and *Da-sein*, the *Fort-geworfenen*, inhabiting the margins of society and of existence more generally, have escaped the Heideggarian *Geworfenheit*, or „thrownness,” of humans into *Da-sein*.

²⁷⁰ “Literarische Handschriften sind Zwitterwesen: weder direkt Teil des Werks – bis in die jüngste Vergangenheit wurde nur dem Werk, nicht aber seinen Entstehungshandschriften die Ehre der Publikation zuteil – noch reiner Abfall” (Grésillon 11).

²⁷¹ Margret Eifler describes the notion of “existential transformation” in the *Aufzeichnungen* as involving a transformation of the relation of subject to object and a dissolution or depersonalization of the self, in which the self becomes open to the *Umwelt* (“Existentielle Verwandlung,” 109).

In this section, I explore Malte's reflection on a particular group of women who have departure from traditional social and gender roles, which develops into a manifesto of sorts on the role of women in society and the need for men to transform their behavior in the "dialogue" of love.

In the thirty-ninth *Aufzeichnung*, Malte observes a group of women standing and sketching [*zeichnen*] before the Unicorn tapestries in the Cluny museum in Paris. He focuses in particular on the buttons that are undone on the backs of their dresses, which he notices when they lift their arms to draw: "Es sind da ein paar Knöpfe, die man nicht erreichen kann. Denn als dieses Kleid gemacht wurde, war noch nicht davon die Rede gewesen, daß sie plötzlich allein weggehen würden. In der Familie ist immer jemand für solche Knöpfe."²⁷² Malte bears much in common with these young women in the museum. Like them, he is also a *Fortgangener*, who has abandoned his family heritage and fled to the big city.²⁷³ But he is also linked to them through the activity of (*auf*)*zeichnen*:

Denn es gibt eine Menge junger Mädchen in den Museen, die fortgegangen sind.... Sie finden sich vor diesen Teppichen und vergessen sich ein wenig. ...Aber dann ziehen sie rasch ein Heft hervor und beginnen zu zeichnen, gleichviel was, eine von den Blumen öder ein kleines, vergnügtes Tier. Darauf käme es nicht an, hat man ihnen vorgesagt, was es gerade wäre. Und darauf kommt es wirklich nicht an. Nur daß gezeichnet wird, das ist die Hauptsache; denn dazu sind sie fortgegangen eines Tages, ziemlich gewaltsam.²⁷⁴

The activity of *zeichnen*, drawing or sketching, is directly linked on the level of the signifier to Malte's activity of *aufzeichnen* [writing down] to the title of the novel, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. For these women, it is not the content of what is drawn, but the act of drawing itself that is important. Art, Malte asserts, can actually be born out of this basic, aimless activity of *zeichnen*: "Nein, es ist wirklich besser zu zeichnen, gleichviel was. Mit der Zeit stellt sich die Ähnlichkeit schon ein. Und die Kunst, wenn man sie so allmählich hat, ist doch etwas recht Beneidenswertes."

Walter Sokel similarly describes a process of "Ent-Ichung" in the *Aufzeichnungen* in his essay "Zwischen Existenz und Weltinnenraum."

²⁷² KA 3 547-48. "There are one or two buttons that they cannot reach. For when the dress was made, there was not yet any talk of their going away, suddenly, on their own. At home in the family there is always someone who will help with such buttons" (Hulse 86).

²⁷³ Malte's clothing similarly marks him as belonging to the *Fortgeworfenen* in an earlier passage: "Obwohl mein Anzug, den ich täglich trage, anfängt, gewisse Stellen zu bekommen, obwohl gegen meine Schuhe sich das und jenes einwenden ließe. Zwar mein Kragen ist rein, meine Wäsche auch, und ich könnte, wie ich bin, in eine beliebige Konditorei gehen, womöglich auf den großen Boulevards, und ... Man würde nichts Auffälliges darin finden und mich nicht schelten und hinausweisen ... Man kann also aus ihrer Reinlichkeit gewisse Schlüsse ziehen. Man zieht sie auch. In den Geschäften zieht man sie. Aber es gibt doch ein paar Existenzen, ... die lassen sich nicht irremachen, ... Die sehen mich an und wissen es. Die wissen, daß ich eigentlich zu ihnen gehöre ..." (KA 3 480).

²⁷⁴ KA 3 547. "For there are a lot of young girls in the museums, who have departed ... They find themselves in front of these tapestries and forget themselves a little. ... But then they suddenly take out a sketchbook and begin to draw, anything at all: one of the flowers, or a small, happy animal. It doesn't matter, someone has told me, exactly what it is. And it really doesn't matter. The main thing is just to keep drawing; for that is the reason they departed one day, rather violently" (Modified from Mitchell 131-32).

²⁷⁵This echoes Malte's own relation to writing, which he articulates after posing the "big questions" ("Ist es möglich...?") of the fourteenth *Aufzeichnungen* in grappling with the disintegration of the reality he knows.²⁷⁶ For Malte, as for the women in the museum, it does not matter *what* is written, rather the activity of writing itself is what matters: "Dieser junge, belanglose Ausländer, Brigge, wird sich fünf Treppen hoch hinsetzen müssen und schreiben, Tag und Nacht, ja er wird schreiben müssen, das wird das Ende sein."²⁷⁷

Echoing conceptions of a gender binary, the linguistic construction of gender, and performativity, Malte's reflections begin to read almost like a feminist manifesto that laments the plight of women in relationships and challenges men to change.²⁷⁸ These women, Malte writes, haben schon angefangen, sich umzusehen, zu suchen.... Das kommt, glaube ich, weil sie müde sind. Sie haben jahrhundertlang die ganze Liebe geleistet, sie haben immer den vollen Dialog gespielt, beide Teile. Denn der Mann hat nur nachgesprochen und schlecht. Und hat ihnen das Erlernen schwer gemacht mit seiner Zerstreutheit, mit seiner Nachlässigkeit, mit seiner Eifersucht, die auch eine Art Nachlässigkeit war.²⁷⁹

While a thorough discussion of gender in the *Aufzeichnungen* is beyond the scope of this section, it should be noted that the relationship between men and women is conceived in terms of a linguistic performance and a dialog consisting of roles that are "played." Malte refers to two women in particular, Gaspara Stampa and "the Portuguese woman," who stand for the sublimity or purity of love in renunciation and that endured unreciprocated adversity.²⁸⁰ The fact that we know anything at

²⁷⁵ KA 3 548. "No, it is really better to be drawing, anything at all. In time the likeness will become apparent. And art, gradually acquired in this way, is an enviable accomplishment, after all" (Hulse 86).

²⁷⁶ "Wenn aber dieses alles möglich ist, auch nur einen Schein von Möglichkeit hat, – dann muß ja, um alles in der Welt, etwas geschehen" (KA 3 470). "But if all of this is possible, if it has even a semblance of possibility, —then surely, for the sake of everything in the world, something must be done" (Mitchell 24).

²⁷⁷ KA 3 470. "This young, insignificant foreigner, Brigge, will have to sit down in his room, five flights up, and keep writing, day and night. Yes, he will have to writes; that is how it will end" (Mitchell 24-25).

²⁷⁸ The passages cited in what follows also resonate with Rilke's reflections on the "a-relationality of the male subject" in his 1913 letter to Annette Kolb. "Woman has earned 'the diploma of ability' in love, he muses, but ever since antiquity man has never really 'troubled himself' about affairs of the heart; he carries only 'an elementary grammar of this discipline in his pocket[,] from which a few words have of necessity gone into him[,] with which he occasionally forms sentences, beautiful and rapturous as the sentences of the first pages of his language primers.' Fortunately, though, this 'man of the "new grain" is 'going to pieces,' and when his 'salutary' disintegration is complete, he will finally being the 'long' and 'difficult' process of becoming a lover" (Silverman, *Flesh of My Flesh*, 67, citing from Rilke, *Letters 1910-26*, 47-48). Regarding Rilke's feminism, here and in his modification of the story of Eurydice, see Kaja Silverman 67-69.

²⁷⁹ KA 3 549. "...have already begun to look around, to search... That comes, I think, from their tiredness. Over the centuries they have taken upon themselves the entire task of love; they have always played the whole dialogue – both parts. For man has only repeated their words, and done it badly. And he has made their learning difficult with his distractedness, his negligence, his jealousy, which was itself a kind of negligence" (Mitchell 133-4).

²⁸⁰ The "Portuguese woman" has been identified as Mariana Alcoforado (1640-1723), to whom Rilke also refers in his 1913 letter to Annette Kolb. See Small 40-41.

all about these women, however, is miraculous:

Wir wissen von der und der, weil Briefe da sind, die wie durch ein Wunder sich erhielten, oder Bücher mit anklagenden oder klagenden Gedichten, oder Bilder, die uns anschauen in einer Galerie durch ein Weinen durch, das dem Maler gelang, weil er nicht wußte, was es war. Aber es sind ihrer zahllos mehr gewesen; solche, die ihre Briefe verbrannt haben, und andere, die keine Kraft mehr hatten, sie zu schreiben. ... Formlose, stark gewordene Frauen, die, stark geworden aus Erschöpfung, sich ihren Männern ähnlich werden ließen und die doch innen ganz anders waren, dort, wo ihre Liebe gearbeitet hatte, im Dunkel... Wer kann sagen, wie viele es waren und welche. Es ist, als hätten sie im voraus die Worte vernichtet, mit denen man sie fassen könnte.²⁸¹

The two women Malte mentions, Gaspara Stampa and the Portuguese woman – to this list we might add Sappho, who appears in the fifty-eighth and sixty-eighth *Aufzeichnungen*, and Bettina von Arnim, whose letters Malte reads to Abelone in the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh *Aufzeichnungen* – are among a very few whose lives have been captured in letters, preserved in language. Yet there are so many more whose lives were never recorded. Doomed to remain outside of representation, literally “formless” [*formlos*], it is as if these countless unnamed women were always already erased, as if *durchgestrichen* in advance from history.

The ability of language to grasp [*fassen*] the being of these women resonates again with the Heideggerian metaphoric of Being. Things in the world emerge into Being by passing from a realm of concealment into a realm of disclosure, from darkness into light, in that they enter into language and thereby assume form. Since the words with which these women might have been grasped have been destroyed in advance, the existence of these women remains *im Dunkel* [in the dark], in a realm of concealment. The darkness in which these women existed and toiled, never illuminated by the light representation, resonates with Virginia Woolf’s notion of “dark country” in her 1929 essay on women and fiction: “Her life has an anonymous character which is baffling and puzzling in the extreme. For the first time, this dark country is beginning to be explored in fiction.”²⁸²

²⁸¹ KA 3 549-50. “We know about these women because there are letters that have, as if by a miracle, been preserved, or books of poems written in accusation and lament, or portraits in some gallery that look at us through an almost irresistible desire to cry, which the painter caught because he didn’t know what it was. But there have been innumerable more of them – those who burned their letters, and others who no longer had the strength to write them. ... Shapeless women who, grown fat through exhaustion, let themselves become like their husbands and who nevertheless were entirely different on the inside, where their love had been working, in the dark... It is impossible to know how many or who they were. It is as if they had in advance destroyed all the words by which they might be grasped” (Mitchell 134-5).

²⁸² Woolf writes furthermore that “women are beginning to explore their own sex, to write of women as women have never been written of before.” Virginia Woolf, “Women and Fiction,” *Granite and Rainbow*, cited in Dorothy Hale, *The Novel: an Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900-2000* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 583.

For Woolf, the sentence formed by men cannot serve to represent the “dark country,” which remains undefined by any language of representation. In this context, compare Linda Nochlin, “Why have there been no great women artists?” *ARTnews* 69 (1971): 22-39. However, the relation of language to the Woolf’s “dark country” also echoes the late Heidegger’s writings on language as constituting an event of Being, in that things enter into form, passing from concealment into disclosure, in that they enter into language. See Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1950).

Malte's description of the linguistic, dialogic nature of gender dynamics, as well as his attention to the materiality of the women's letters, points self-reflexively to the materiality of the manuscript and of the language in which this passage takes shape. In following this path here, from the representation of gender in the text to the material body of the text, we mimic a predominant trajectory of third-wave feminist critique, namely that discourses of the linguistic construction of gender fail to acknowledge the fundamental entanglement of gender and material, sexed body.²⁸³ Malte's reflection on the status of women develops into an appeal to men to change [*verändern*]. Examining this passage in the "Berner Taschenbuch" reveals that the very possibility of transformation envisioned by the text, the loosening of the a hardened, antagonistic relationship between men and women, is rooted in the concrete act of *Durchstreichung* in the manuscript, which similarly opens the text to allow for transformation.

Aber nun, da so vieles anders wird, ist es nicht an uns, uns zu verändern? Könnten wir nicht versuchen, uns ein wenig zu entwickeln, und unseren Anteil Arbeit in der Liebe langsam auf uns nehmen nach und nach? Man hat uns alle ihre Mühsal erspart, und so ist sie uns unter die Zerstreungen geglitten, wie in eines Kindes Spiellade manchmal ein Stück echter Spitze fällt und freut und nicht mehr freut und endlich daliegt unter Zerbrochenem und Auseinandergenommenem, schlechter als alles. Wir sind verdorben vom leichten Genuß wie alle Dilettanten und stehen im Geruch der Meisterschaft. Wie aber, wenn wir unsere Erfolge verachteten, wie, wenn wir ganz von vorne begännen die Arbeit der Liebe zu lernen, die immer für uns getan worden ist? Wie, wenn wir hingingen und Anfänger würden, nun, da sich vieles verändert?²⁸⁴

Significantly, the passage is composed primarily of questions formulated in the subjunctive mood. When we return to the manuscript, we discover that this mode of questioning in the subjunctive provided a way to overcome a multi-faceted blockage in formulating the passage. The page below displays multiple attempts to linguistically grasp the nature between men and women:

²⁸³ Compare Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xi.

²⁸⁴ KA 3 550. "But now that so much is changing, isn't it time for us to change? Couldn't we try to gradually develop and slowly take upon ourselves, little by little, our part in the great task of love? We have been spared all its trouble, and that is why it has slipped in among our distractions, as a piece of real lace will sometimes fall into a child's toy-box and please him and no longer please him, and finally it lies there among the broken and dismembered toys, more wretched than any of them. We have been spoiled by superficial pleasures like all dilettantes, and are looked upon as masters. But what if we despised our successes? What if we started from the very outset to learn the task of love, which has always been done for us? What if we went ahead and became beginners, now that much is changing?" (Mitchell 135).

fallen, in das sie nicht von ihm, sein, von
 dem sie nicht; Und kommen sie unter die
 Leute, so konnten sie nicht gehalten mit
 pflichten, als gingen sie immer mit
 Saligen im. Was kann sagen mir viele et
 waren mit selbst. Es ist als wären sie im
 Hovant die Worte unvollständig, mit dem
 was sie sagen könnten. Und ihren gegenseitig
 (die) gegenseitig abgegrenzt, mit ihm u
 nur der Mann, und Monotonie mit
 Silbent, der nie begreifen sollte die Liebe
 zu lassen, weil es sie im Grunde zu be-
 sitzen glückte, der nicht über ihn gekommen
~~war~~. Und ihren gegenseitig
 immer der Mann: brüderlich unter ihnen; ein
 junger, besitzter, der nie gut gefallt
 falls die Liebe zu lassen, weil es sich zu
 haben glückte, von nicht zu seiner Mal
 demselben gekommen war im Grunde und Mal;
 ein ganzes Morgens, der besitzter wollte
 ohne gebrauch zu können.

Aber wie da so nicht anders mit, ist
 es nicht an ihm, steht zu verändere?
 Lohnt mir nicht nach ihm, und ein wenig
 zu entwickeln und unsern Aufsicht Arbeit
 die der Liebe heraus aus ihm heraus, mit
 und uns. Man hat ihm alle ihre Mühsal
 und so ist sie und unter die persönlichen
 geglaubt, wie in einem Dienst Teil
 unempfindlich in Thier und unser Teil
 fällt, und freut und nicht unser freut
 und nicht Salig unter gebrauch
 und Antikontingenz, selbst

Figure 30. BT 16.

~~man sie fassen könnte. Und ihnen gegenüber
 , diesen grenzenlos abgewandelten, war im-
 mer der Mann, ein Monomane und
 Dilettant, der nie begonnen hatte die Liebe
 zu lernen, weil er sie im Genuss zu be-
 sitzen glaubte, der mühlos über ihn gekom-
 men war. Und ihnen gegenüber war
 immer der ^{i mann} Mann: beinah nur einer; ein
 zerstreuter, beschäftigter, der nie Zeit gehabt
 hatte, die Liebe zu lernen, weil er sie zu
 besitzen glaubte xx mühlos zu einer Mei-
 sterschaft gekommen war in Genuss und Ekel;
 ein geiziger Vergeuder, der besitzen wollte
 ohne gebrauchen zu können.~~

Aber nun da so vieles anders wird, ist
 es es(?) nicht an uns, uns zu verändern?
 Könnten wir nicht versuchen, uns ein wenig
 zu entwickeln und unseren Antheil Arbeit
 in der Liebe langsam auf uns nehmen, nach
 und nach? Man hat uns alle ihre Mühsal erspart,
 und so ist sie uns unter die Zerstreungen(sic)
 geglitten, wie in eines Kindes Spiellade

Figure 31. BT Transkription 16.²⁸⁵

Echoing Simone de Beauvoir's conception the oppositional binary between men and women, *l'Un et l'Autre*,²⁸⁶ a passage is twice attempted which begins "Und ihnen gegenüber..." [And opposed to them...]. In the first attempt, man is bound by the indicative mood into a fixed position of *Gegenübersein* [ontological opposed-ness], opposite the female lovers, "diesen grenzenlos abgewandelten" [these boundlessly altered/transformed]. The second attempt similarly begins "Und ihnen gegenüber..." Both variants are then struck through with a large X, literally deforming preexisting text and making space for a new possibility to emerge. In this space, the fixity of *Gegenübersein* posited in the indicative mood opens grammatically into the subjunctive mood, into a linguistic space of possibility in which the transformation of reality is envisioned. The *Durchstreichung* of the text in the manuscript thus forms a visual icon (in the Peircean sense) of the destabilization of gender relationality, both in the representational order of the text as well as in contemporary society. Acknowledging that gender categories are not fixed absolutes, but rooted – at least in part – in

²⁸⁵ "And opposed to them, these boundlessly altered ones, was always the man, a monomaniac and a dilettant who had never begun to learn how to love, because he believed he possessed the pleasures, that had come to him so tirelessly. And the man was always opposed to them: nearly only one; distracted [zerstreuter] and preoccupied, he had never had the time to learn how to love, because he believed he possessed—had come without effort to his mastery in pleasure and disgust; a miserly squanderer, who wanted to possess with expending. But now that so much is changing, isn't it time for us to change? Couldn't we try to gradually develop and slowly take upon ourselves, little by little, our part in the great task of love? We have been spared all its trouble, and that is why it has slipped in among our distractions ..." (translation JH).

²⁸⁶ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1953).

language, destabilizes these categories ontologically. For language is never fixed, but always in flux. The categories are not simply rewritten, framed in different terms, rather their destabilization opens a space of fluctuation in which a new order can emerge.²⁸⁷

The destabilization enacted by the transition from the indicative to the subjunctive is paradigmatic for the novel's "subjunctive style."²⁸⁸ The novel, in fact, opens with the grammatical eruption of the subjunctive from within the space of the indicative: "So, also hierher kommen die Leute zu leben, ich würde eher meinen, es stürbe sich hier."²⁸⁹ Yet the space of the subjunctive, a space of possibility and transformation and fluctuation, *is* also the space of writing in the manuscript, where language is never stable and in which multiple variants exist alongside one another.

At the same time, however, Malte posits a fundamentally new kind of writing, a new hermeneutic order. In the eighteenth *Aufzeichnung*, Malte writes, "die Zeit der anderen Auslegung wird anbrechen, ... und jeder Sinn wird wie Wolken sich auflösen und wie Wasser niedergehen."²⁹⁰ This prophetic vision of writing, a writing perhaps in which preexisting categories and forms dissolve and re-materialize in a fundamentally different order, characterizes the kind of transformation for which Malte calls. The *fortgangene* women, in the process of departing from their assigned positions in society, can thus be seen as pioneers of a new, uncharted order of reality.

Zerstreuung

A recurrent modifier in this passage that sticks out strangely and becomes particularly charged when we attend to the materiality of the manuscript: namely, the characterization of men as *zerstreut* [distracted]. "Denn der Mann hat nur nachgesprochen und schlecht," Malte writes, "und hat ihnen das Erlernen schwergemacht mit seiner Zerstretheit..."²⁹¹ The word *zerstreut* appears in the second of the two crossed-out passages cited above, in which man is described as "ein zerstreuter, beschäftigter, der nie Zeit gehabt hat, die Liebe zu lernen."²⁹² The term reappears in the final version

²⁸⁷ I evoke here Malte's notion of the "Zeit der anderen Auslegung" (KA 3 468). This also resonates with Nietzsche's definition of art in the essay "On truth and lies in an Extra-moral sense," in which Nietzsche describes art as breaking through the ossified "cells of concepts" [Zellen der Begriffe] that constitute truth. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne," *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 2:3:381.

²⁸⁸ Compare Judith Ryan, "'Hypothetisches Erzählen:' Zur Funktion von Phantasie und Einbildung in Rilkes 'Malte Laurids Brigge,'" *Materialien zu Rainer Maria Rilke 'Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge,'* ed. Hartmut Engelhardt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 244-279.

²⁸⁹ KA 3 455. "So, then this is where people come to live, I would have rather thought there were dying here" (translation JH).

²⁹⁰ KA 3 468. "The time of that other interpretation will come, ... and all the meanings will dissolve like clouds and fall like rain" (Hulse 34).

²⁹¹ KA 3 549. "For man has only repeated their words. And has made their learning difficult with his distractedness..." (Mitchell 42-43).

²⁹² "Distracted and preoccupied, he had never had the time to learn how to love" (ibid.).

of the passage in the manuscript and in the printed text: “Man hat uns alle ihre Mühsal [d.h. die Mühsal der Liebe] erspart, und so ist sie uns unter die Zerstreungen geglitten.”²⁹³

While the word *zerstreut* might be translated as distracted, absent-minded, or scattered; it designates not only a mental states of distraction, but also a more literal sense of scattering, as in the physical scattering of papers. Rilke’s uncollected poems, for example, are published in German under the heading *Zerstreute Gedichte*, i.e. scattered poems. One also recalls Count Brahe’s chamber servant, Sten, who had to hold down all the Count’s loose papers to keep them from scattering when rushed throughout the room while dictating.²⁹⁴ The Count even criticizes modern paper [“das heutige Papier”], writing that it “nichts taugt, daß es viel zu leicht sei und davonfliege bei der geringsten Gelegenheit” [“is worthless, that it is too light and flies away at the slightest opportunity”]. The idea of loose, scattered papers also evokes the image the implied manuscript, referenced by the implied editor with the annotations “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben.” Rilke describes the novel in just these terms: “Es hätten immer noch Aufzeichnungen hinzukommen können; was nun das Buch ausmacht, ist durchaus nichts Vollzähliges. Es ist nur so, als fände man in einem Schubfach ungeordnete Papiere und fände eben vorderhand nicht mehr und müßte sich begnügen...”²⁹⁵ This image of the *Aufzeichnungen* as a kind of imagined or virtual *Nachlass* contrasts with the physical form “Berner Taschenbuch,” a bound notebook. However, the image of scattered papers recalls an earlier stage in the novel’s manuscript history, which “habe vorbereitende Notizen umfasst (‘Über diese Gruppe wissen wir so gut wie nichts’).”²⁹⁶ yet recalls earlier manuscript phases of the novel’s generation, before the various scattered notes and sketches were compiled by Rilke into a more complete manuscript.²⁹⁷ The image of the scattered papers of *Nachlass* also recalls that of Malte’s father, a collection loose papers bundled tightly together – almost resembling the form of a book, perhaps – that Malte’s burns after his father’s death.

Ich ging zwischen dem Schreibtisch und dem großen weißen Kachelofen hin und her und verbrannte die Papiere des Jägermeisters. Ich hatte begonnen, die Briefschaften, so wie sie zusammengebunden waren, ins Feuer zu werfen, aber die kleinen Pakete waren zu fest verschnürt und verkohlten nur an den Rändern. Es kostete mich Überwindung, sie zu lockern... Dann konnte es geschehen, daß Photographien herausglitten, die schwerer waren als das andere; diese Photographien verbrannten unglaublich langsam. Ich weiß nicht, wie es kam, plötzlich bildete ich mir ein, es könnte Ingeborgs Bild darunter sein. Aber sooft ich

²⁹³ “We have been spared all its trouble, and that is why it has slipped in among our distractions” (ibid.).

²⁹⁴ “...dessen Aufgabe es war, wenn der Großvater aufsprang, die Hände schnell über die einzelnen losen Blätter zu legen, die, mit Notizen bedeckt, auf dem Tische herumlagen. Seine Gnaden hatten die Vorstellung, daß das heutige Papier nichts taugt, daß es viel zu leicht sei und davonfliege bei der geringsten Gelegenheit” (KA 3 559).

²⁹⁵ Letter to Countess Manon zu Solms-Laubach on April 11, 1910, Engelhardt 82. “More *Aufzeichnungen* could always have been added; that which constitutes the book is in no way complete. It is as if one found disordered papers in a drawer and found nothing more for the time being and had to satisfy oneself with them” (Translation JH). The letter continues: “Ich weiß nicht, wieweit man aus den Papieren auf ein ganzes Dasein wird schließen können” / “I don’t know the degree to which one will be able to grasp an entire being [i.e. Malte] out of these papers alone.”

²⁹⁶ Engel 320. Richter, “Editorischer Bericht,” BT 228.

²⁹⁷ See Engel 320 regarding the phases of the novel’s manuscript history.

hinsah, waren es reife, großartige, deutlich schöne Frauen, die mich auf andere Gedanken brachten.²⁹⁸

As this bundle of papers burns and disintegrates physically, transforming from one material state into another, the traces of life they record are destroyed. The photographs of of the “reife, großartige, deutlich schöne Frauen” among the letters, “die mich auf andere Gedanken brachten ...,” brings the reader’s thoughts to the “formlose, stark gewordene Frauen” Malte reflected on in the museum: “those who burned their letters,” thus extinguishing the traces of their own existence, as well as “others who no longer had the strength to write them.”

Following the path of the signifier further, we discover that Rilke also uses the term *zerstreut* to describe his physical condition while during the process of writing the *Aufzeichnungen*. In a letter to Lou Andreas-Salome on January 10, 1912, Rilke writes:

Mag sein, daß die fortwährende innere Zerstretheit, in der ich lebe, teilweise körperliche Ursachen hat, eine Dünnhheit des Blutes ist.... Ich stehe doch jeden Tag mit dem Zweifel auf, ob es mir gelingen wird, es zu tun, und dieses Mißtrauen ist groß geworden über der tatsächlichen Erfahrung, daß Wochen, ja Monate vergehen können, in denen ich nur mit äußerster Anstrengung fünf Zeilen eines ganz gleichgültigen Briefes aufbringe, die mir, wenn sie endlich da sind, einen Nachgeschmack von solcher Unfähigkeit hinterlassen, wie etwa ein Gelähmter sie empfindet, der nicht einmal mehr die Hand geben kann.²⁹⁹

The condition of *innere Zerstretheit* [inner scattered-ness] Rilke experience during his crisis of writing is not just a mental crisis, but felt by Rilke to be rooted in the physical condition of his body and blood. The few meager lines of text he produced over weeks and months of struggle strike Rilke as impoverished. They are not only uninspired, but their visual appearance on the page is also unappealing: to Rilke, known for his particularly beautiful handwriting, these lines they appear to have been written by someone who does not have full use of his hand.

Thus tracing this path of the signifier *zerstreut*, we can begin to hear resonances of the materialities of writing – the *Zerstretheit* of loose papers, the physiologically based *Zerstretheit* Rilke experienced during writing – in Malte’s characterization and critique of men. In the passages we have focused on in this section, the transformation and fluctuation of gender categories Malte observes and calls for in the novel can be rooted in the concrete transformation and fluctuation of language in the manuscript and in the process of in the process of writing itself.

²⁹⁸ KA 3 567-8. “I walked back and forth between the desk and the large white porcelain stove, burning the Master of the Hunt’s papers. I had begun by throwing the letters into the fire in bundles, just as I had found them; but they were tied together too firmly, and only charred at the edges. I had to exercise a good deal of self-control before I could loosen them. ... Then some photographs, heavier than the rest, happened to slip out; these photographs took an unbelievably long time to burn. I don’t know why, but suddenly I imagined that Ingeborg’s picture might be among them. Each time I looked, though, I saw mature, splendid, obviously beautiful women, who brought me to other thoughts” (modified from Mitchell 161).

²⁹⁹ Engelhardt, *Materialien*, 92. “It may be that the continual inner scattered-ness [*innere Zerstretheit*] in which I live is caused by bodily factors, by a thinness of the blood ... Yet I get up every day doubting whether I will be able to do this, and this mistrust has grown through the actual experience that weeks, even months can pass, in which, through the utmost struggle, I am only able to muster five lines of the most apathetic letter. When these lines are finally there, they leave me with an aftertaste of such inaptitude, like a lame person might experience who can no longer offer his hand” (translation JH).

In this way, the materialities of writing find expression in the printed novel not through symbols, but through symptoms that partially obscure their origins. By evoking the materialities of writing in different ways, both explicitly and implicitly, self-reflexively and spectrally, the novel works to undo the apparent fixity of its form, pointing to a manuscript lying beneath in a state of perpetual fluctuation.

The Hauntological Structure of the *Aufzeichnungen*

Throughout this dissertation, we have encountered moments in which the printed text of the novel is haunted by the materiality of the manuscript.³⁰⁰ Throughout the *Editionsgeschichte* of the novel, ghosts of its production, passages that have been *durchgestrichen* or amputated in the translation of the manuscript into the printed form, have become increasingly visible: in posthumous publication of the alternate beginnings and endings to the novel, and most recently, in the facsimile-edition of the “Berner Taschenbuch.” While included in German print editions of the novel, these fragments of *avant-texte* maintain a liminal status with respect to the official text, fluctuating on the paratextual threshold between inclusion and exclusion. The alternate beginnings and endings, for example, are published in an appendix, as *avant-texte* become *paratext*, included in the book, yet excluded from the “text.” Yet long before these fragments of *avant-texte* came to light, the seemingly stable form of the first print edition of the novel was already haunted by the materialities of writing.

In *Specters of Marx* (1993), Derrida explores the ontological status of the specter as fluctuating between being and non-being³⁰¹ and coins the term “hauntology,” the notion that the present is always haunted by the past. In this section, I discuss the hauntological structure of the text, the way that the manuscript and materialities of writing haunt the printed text, by attending a number of passages in the *Aufzeichnungen* in which ghosts appear.

All representation is ghostly, in a sense. For Derrida, all language, all signification, all writing is defined by the “presence-absence of the trace.”³⁰² Derrida roots signification in difference, in the “nonpresence of the other inscribed within the sense of the present” and “the relationship to death as the concrete structure of the living present.”³⁰³ As we have explored, the *Aufzeichnungen* is also haunted by that which escapes representation, that which cannot be represented directly, and that

³⁰⁰ I invoke here the quote from Derrida that serves as an epigraph to this chapter. Derrida writes that all writing, especially phonetic writing, is rooted in a “past of nonlinear writing” and is characterized by the “suppression of all that resisted linearization” (*Of Grammatology* 84-87). I suggest that the “ghosts” of a different mode of nonlinear writing – writing by hand in the manuscript, which is governed by a logic different from that of the printed text – haunt the *Aufzeichnungen*.

³⁰¹ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994). As C. McCrea writes, Derrida’s hauntology concerns “the paradoxical state of the spectre, which is neither being nor non-being,” C. McCrea, “Gaming’s Hauntology: Media Apparitions in Forbidden Siren, Dead Rising and Michigan: Report From Hell,” *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play*, B. Perron, ed. (Boston and New York: McFarland, 2009), 220-237, 221.

³⁰² Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 69-73, 41-46, here 71. See also Monika Schmitz-Evans, *Schrift und Abwesenheit*. Schmitz-Evans, Monika. *Schrift und Abwesenheit: Historische Paradigmen zu einer Poetik der Entzifferung und des Schreibens* (München: W. Fink, 1995).

³⁰³ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 71.

which manifests itself only obliquely through symptoms.³⁰⁴ Similarly for Blanchot, all language is haunted by that which cannot be represented: “the eternal torment of our language, when its longing turns back toward what it always misses, through the necessity under which it labors of being the lack of what it would say.”³⁰⁵ For Žižek, drawing on Lacan, representation in the symbolic order is always incomplete; the real is that which escapes representation: the “real (the part of reality that remains non-symbolized) returns in the guise of the spectral apparitions.”³⁰⁶ And as Julian Wolfreys writes in *Victorian Hauntings*, “to tell a story is always to invoke ghosts, to open a space through which something other returns’ so that ‘all stories are, more or less, ghost stories’ and all fiction is, more or less, hauntological.”³⁰⁷

Ghosts actually appear in a number of passages throughout the novel. In the fifteenth *Aufzeichnungen*, the ghost of Christine Brahe appears and passes through the dining hall of the house at Urnekloster:

Die Mahlzeit schleppte sich weiter wie immer, und man war gerade beim Nachtschisch angelangt, als meine Blicke von einer Bewegung ergriffen und mitgenommen wurden, die im Hintergrund des Saales, im Halbdunkel, vor sich ging. Dort war nach und nach eine, wie ich meinte, stets verschlossene Türe, von welcher man mir gesagt hätte, daß sie in das Zwischengeschoß führe, aufgegangen, und jetzt, während ich mit einem mir ganz neuen Gefühl von Neugier und Bestürzung hinsah, trat in das Dunkel der Türöffnung eine schlanke, hellgekleidete Dame und kam langsam auf uns zu. Ich weiß nicht, ob ich eine Bewegung machte oder einen Laut von mir gab, der Lärm eines umstürzenden Stuhles zwang mich, meine Blicke von der merkwürdigen Gestalt abzureißen, und ich sah meinen Vater, der aufgesprungen war und nun, totenbleich im Gesicht, mit herabhängenden geballten Händen, auf die Dame zuing. Sie bewegte sich indessen, von dieser Szene ganz unberührt, auf uns zu, Schritt für Schritt, und sie war schon nicht mehr weit von dem Platze des Grafen, als dieser sich mit einem Ruck erhob, meinen Vater beim Arme faßte, ihn an den Tisch zurückzog und festhielt, während die fremde Dame, langsam und teilnahmslos, durch den nun frei gewordenen Raum vorüberging, Schritt für Schritt, durch unbeschreibliche Stille, in der nur irgendwo ein Glas zitternd klirrte, und in einer Tür der gegenüberliegenden Wand des Saales verschwand.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ Compare Didi-Huberman 261, and Santner, *Creaturely Life*, xv.

³⁰⁵ Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1993), xxvii.

³⁰⁶ Slavoj Žižek, “The Specter of Ideology,” *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 21. Cited in Orrin N. C. Wang, “Ghost Theory,” *Studies in Romanticism* 46.2 (2007): 203-225, 220.

³⁰⁷ Andrew Gallix, “Hauntology: A not-so-new critical manifestation,” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media Ltd., 17. June 2011, last accessed 22. March 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2011/jun/17/hauntology-critical>. See also Srdjan Smajić, *Ghost-Seers, Detectives, and Spiritualists: Theories of Vision in Victorian Literature and Science* (New York: Cambridge U P, 2010), 15.

³⁰⁸ KA 3 476-7. “The meal dragged on as always, and we had just reached the dessert when my eye was caught and held by a movement at the far end of the hall, where it was half dark. A door which I had supposed was always locked, and which I had been told gave on to the mezzanine floor, had opened gradually, and now, as I looked on with an entirely unfamiliar feeling of curiosity and alarm, a slender woman in a light-coloured dress stepped into the darkness of the doorway and slowly came towards us. I do not know if I made any movement or sound myself; the racket of a chair being

The ghost of Christine emerges out of a liminal space that is both physical and ontological: she appears in the half-darkness of a door normally locked, leading to a *Zwischengeschoß*, literally an in-between level of the house. From a space of fluctuation between absence and presence (Derrida), from the horizon between disclosure and concealment (Heidegger), she passes into a realm of disclosure, into the “nun frei gewordenen Raum” [the space that had been cleared] before disappearing again into concealment.

Count Brahe’s writing chamber is also haunted by spirits, which are summoned by his chamber servant Sten.

Dieser Sten verbrachte die Sonntagnachmittage damit, Swedenborg zu lesen, und niemand von der Dienerschaft hätte je sein Zimmer betreten mögen, weil es hieß, daß er zitiere. Die Familie Stens hatte seit je Umgang mit Geistern gehabt, und Sten war für diesen Verkehr ganz besonders vorausbestimmt. Seiner Mutter war etwas erschienen in der Nacht, da sie ihn gebar. Er hatte große, runde Augen, und das andere Ende seines Blicks kam hinter jeden zu liegen, den er damit ansah. Abelonens Vater fragte ihn oft nach den Geistern, wie man sonst jemanden nach seinen Angehörigen fragt. ‘Kommen sie, Sten?’ sagte er wohlwollend. ‘Es ist gut, wenn sie kommen.’³⁰⁹

Count Brahe encourages Sten’s contact with ghosts, inviting him to summon them into the space of his writing chamber. The fact that Sten is reading Emanuel Swedenborg is also significant, as Swedenborg was purported to have contact with the spiritual world, and even criticized by Immanuel Kant in a volume entitled *Träume eines Geistessehers* (1766).³¹⁰

Having departed [*fortgegangen*] from the realm of the living, *durchgestrichen* from existence yet continuing to haunt the house at Urnekloster, the ghosts of the *Aufzeichnungen* are ontologically akin

overturned forced me to tear my eyes from the strange apparition, and I saw my father, who had leaped to his feet, walking towards the woman, his face as pale as death, his fists clenched at his sides. She herself, quite unmoved by this scene, continued coming towards us, pace by pace, and she was already close to where the Count was sitting when he abruptly rose and, seizing my father by the arm, drew him back to the table and held him there; while the strange woman moved on, slowly and unconcernedly, through the space thus vacated, pace by pace, through an indescribable silence in which the only sounds was the tremulous clink of a glass somewhere or other, and vanished through a door in the opposite wall of the dining hall” (Hulse 22).

³⁰⁹ KA 3 559-60. “This Sten spent his Sunday afternoons reading Swedenborg, and none of the servants would ever have ventured to enter his room, believing he was summoning up the dead. Sten’s family had always been familiar with spirits, and Sten was marked out by destiny for this kind of contact. His mother had seen an apparition on the night he was born. Sten had large, round eyes, and the far end of his gaze invariably rested somewhere behind the person he was looking at. Abalone’s father frequently asked after the spirits as one might ask after someone’s family: ‘Are they coming, Sten?’ he would say well-meaningly. ‘It is good if they come’” (Hulse 96-7).

³¹⁰ Swedenborg (1688-1772), Swedish philosopher, theologian, scientist, and mystic, was an anti-Cartesian materialist known for his theory of correspondence who proposed that the soul was rooted in material substances. Known for his theory of correspondence, Swedenborg had significant influence on various nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophers and poets, and his scientific writings on the brain were also the first to anticipate the concept of the neuron. See Kaja Silverman 2; H. Fodstad, “The neuron theory,” *Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery* 77 (2001): 20-24; C. G. Gross, “Emanuel Swedenborg: A neuroscientist before his time,” *The Neuroscientist* 3.2 (1997): 142-147; and C. G. Gross, “Three before their time: neuroscientists whose ideas were ignored by their contemporaries,” *Experimental Brain Research* 192.3 (2009): 321.

to the *Fortgeworfenen* and the *Fortgegangenen*, who have withdrawn from their fixed positions in the framework of society, existing in a state of *Durchgestrichensein*, barely perceptible on the margins. As the novel unfolds during the act of reading, a kind of intra-textual community of marginal figures emerges, each figure haunted by the trace of the others.

The Ghost of the Prodigal Son

It has been noted that these various figures culminate in the figure of the prodigal son, whose store Malte retells in the last *Aufzeichnung* of the printed text. The language through which the story is retold directly links the prodigal son to the other *fortgange* figures in the novel. “Wird er bleiben und das ungefähre Leben nachlügen, das ihm zuschreiben, und ihnen allen mit dem ganzen Gesicht ähnlich werden? ... Nein, er wird fortgehen.... Fortgehen für immer.”³¹¹ The description of the prodigal son’s departure from his family links him to the women sketching in the museum, who have also departed from their families. Yet while this figure is haunted by other figures in the novel, the prodigal son also “appears” in *durchgestrichene* passages at earlier points in the manuscript

In the “Berner Taschenbuch,” the prodigal son first appears in a *durchgestrichene* passage in the midst of Malte’s attempt to write the death of Grischa Otrepjow. This first draft of the passage is written in pencil and has been heavily smudged, making portions of it difficult to read. Certain words were written over in ink, before the entire passage was crossed out.



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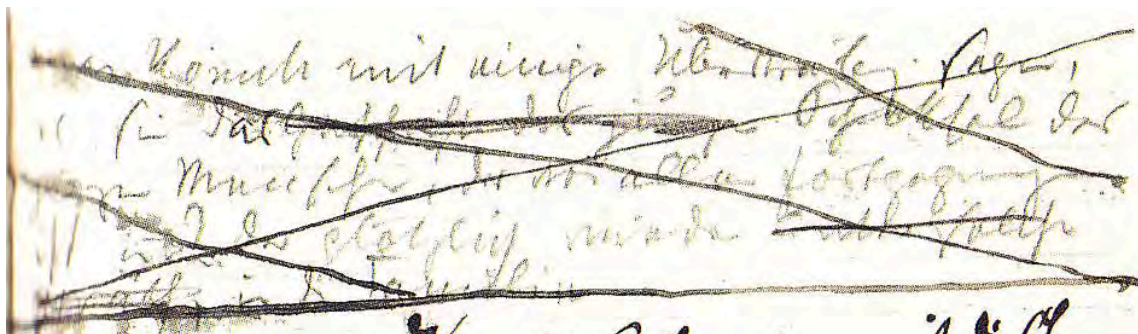


Figure 32. BT 86-87.

³¹¹ KA 3 631. “Can he stay and conform to this lying life of approximations which they [his family] have assigned to him, and come to resemble them all in every feature of his face? ... No, he will go away ... go away forever” (Mitchell 253-4).

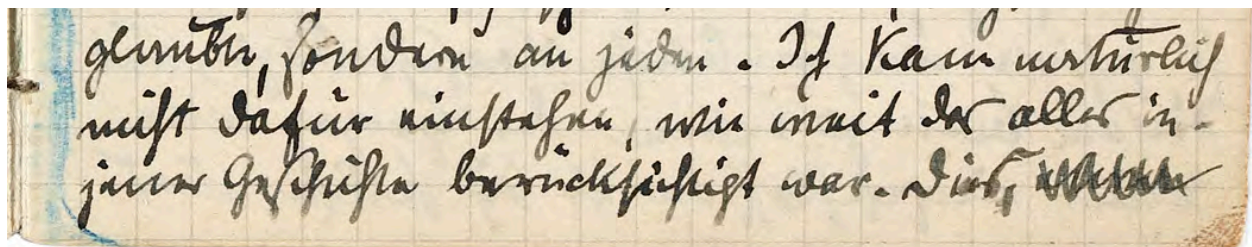
seiner Geschichte berücksichtigt war Dies ^{etwa} wäre
zu erzählen gewesen Es hat noch Sinn für uns

[page break]

Man könnte mit einiger Übertreibung sagen,
es sei das Geschäft(?) des jungen Schicksal des
jungen Menschen, der von allen fortgegangen
ist und der plötzlich wieder unter solche
geräth in d Familie

Figure 33. BT 86-87.³¹²

The prodigal son appears again two pages later, in the second formulation of the passage:



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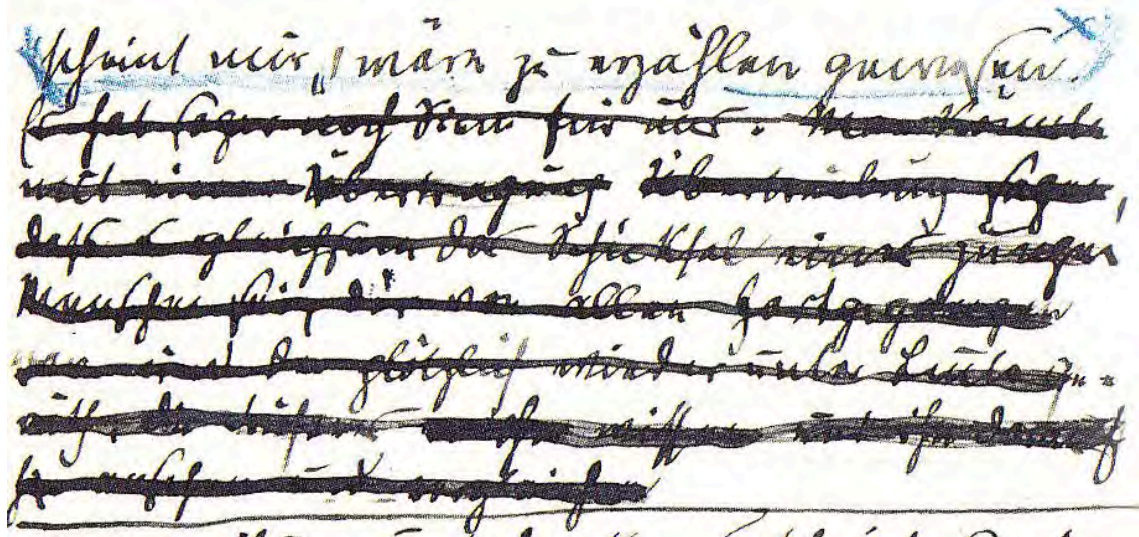


Figure 34. BT 89-90.

³¹² “of his story had been considered. This would need to be told – It still has meaning for us

[page break]

One could say with some conviction, that it is the business(?) of the young fate of the young man, who departed from everything and suddenly again ~~under such~~ came in th family” (translation JH).

glaubte, sondern an jeden. Ich kann natürlich
nicht dafür einstehen, wie weit das alles in
jener Geschichte berücksichtigt war. Dies, etwas(?)

[page break]

† scheint mir, wäre zu erzählen gewesen. †
~~Es hat sogar noch Sinn für uns. Man könnte
mit einer Übertragung Übertreibung sagen,
dass es gleichsam das Schicksal eines jungen
Menschen sei, der von allen fortgegangen
war und der plötzlich wieder unter Leute ge-
rath, die Früheres(?) von ihm wissen und ihn darauf
hin ansehen und vergleichen~~

Figure 35. BT Transkription 89-90.³¹³

Although the prodigal son named here, the story of this singular figure – “des jungen Menschen,” “eines jungen Menschen” – resonates in the language of these *durchgestrichene* passages. In the first example, written in pencil – already implying a kind of *Durchstreichung* on the level of the material – the passage is crossed out with a loose criss-cross hatching. In the second, the reference to the prodigal son is cross out more thoroughly, more decisively perhaps, making it far more difficult to read. Even in the printed work, the presence of the prodigal son continues to haunt Malte’s telling of the end of Grischa Otrepjow: in printed versions of a work, he appears in a passage bracketed off in parentheses from the rest of the text, which is annotated “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben.” The text of the footnote reads: “(Das ist schließlich die Kraft aller jungen Leute, die fortgegangen sind.)”³¹⁴ Fluctuating between the space of the printed page and that of the virtual manuscript, the reference to the prodigal son in the footnote endows him with a liminal status, between presence and absence, between inclusion within and exclusion from the text.

Like the blind newspaper salesman Malte encounters in the fifty-ninth *Aufzeichnung*, whose barely audible voice calls out “in raschen Zwischenräumen” [in rapid in-between spaces],³¹⁵ or like

³¹³ “believed, but any anyone. Of course I can
not vouch for how much all of this
was dealt with in that story. These things, something(?)

[page break]

\ it seems to me, should have been told. x/
~~It still even has meaning for us. One could
claim ith some conviction exaggeration sagen,
that it was simultaneously the fate of that young
man, who departed from everything
and suddenly again among the people ap-
peared, who knew earlier(?) things about him and
inspect and regard him in relation thereto” (translation JH).~~

³¹⁴ KA 3 587. “(That, after all, is the power of all young people who have departed.)” (modified from Hulse 121).

³¹⁵ KA 3 600.

the ghost of Christine Brahe, who emerges out of a *Zwischengeschoss* in the house at Urnekloster, prodigal son appears in the *durchgestrichene Zwischenräumen* of the manuscript.

Manuscript as Haunted House

The house at Urnekloster is haunted by ghosts, yet there are other haunted houses in the text – or rather, houses that haunt. Malte is overwhelmed by the fragmented buildings and collapsing structures in the modern urban ruins of Paris. As Huyssen has argued, Malte’s fragmenting experiences in Paris cause the phantoms of fragmented childhood memories to resurface³¹⁶ and intermingle with his present experience.³¹⁷ Consider the following passage from the fifteenth *Aufzeichnung*, in which Malte describes his fragmentary memory of the house at Urnekloster:

Zwölf Jahre oder höchstens dreizehn muß ich damals gewesen sein. ... So wie ich es in meiner kindlich gearbeiteten Erinnerung wiederfinde, ist es kein Gebäude; es ist ganz aufgeteilt in mir; da ein Raum, dort ein Raum und hier ein Stück Gang, das diese beiden Räume nicht verbindet, sondern für sich, als Fragment, aufbewahrt ist.³¹⁸

It has been argued that Malte’s fragmentary memory of the Brahe house Urnekloster reflects the formal and narrative principle of the novel.³¹⁹ Yet Malte also encounters *physically* fragmented structures, both in childhood and in Paris. The images of disintegrating structures buildings and the modern urban ruins during the Hausmannization of Paris also point to the materiality of the manuscript. Returning to the manuscript, we discover further rooms and passageways, *Zwischenräume* or *Zwischengänge* that are forgotten in the printed text.

Malte recalls, for example, a childhood visit to the house of the Schulin family, which was partially destroyed by a fire.

Das große, alte Schloß war abgebrannt vor ein paar Jahren, und nun wohnten sie in den beiden engen Seitenflügeln und schränkten sich ein. ... Georg hatte ganz vergessen, daß das Haus nicht da war, und für uns alle war es in diesem Augenblick da. Wir stiegen die Freitreppe hinauf, die auf die alte Terrasse führte, und wunderten uns nur, daß es ganz dunkel sei. Auf einmal ging eine Tür, links unten hinter uns, und jemand rief: ‘Hierher!’ und hob und

³¹⁶ “It is actually Malte’s particular experience of the city that triggers the resurfacing of childhood disturbances and confronts Rilke/Malte with the necessity of working through them: the city, as it were, functioning, in a very un-Proustian spirit, as the Proustian madeleine for all the childhood anxieties related to the phantasm of the fragmented body... In the process of writing his Paris diary, Malte himself becomes increasingly aware that his country childhood was actually haunted by the same kinds of phantasms that make life miserable for him in the big city, and he, senses that it is the city itself that makes his childhood resurface” (Huyssen, “Paris / Childhood,” 121, 131).

³¹⁷ Compare Heide Völtz, “Realität” und “Fiktion” aus systemtheoretischer Perspektive in Rainer Maria Rilkes “Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge” und “Duineser Elegien” (Stuttgart: Hans-Dieter Heinz, 2003), 93: “In ihnen entwickelt sich Maltes Wunsch, momentan auftauchende Erinnerungen zu einem Kontinuum zu verbinden, das einer als fremd erfahrenden Großstadt entgegengesetzt werden kann.”

³¹⁸ KA 3 470. “Twelve years old I must have been at the time, or at most thirteen... As I find it again in my memories, reworked from childhood, it is not a building; it is completely divided up inside of me; a room here, a room there, and then a piece of hallway that doesn’t connect these two rooms, but is preserved as a fragment, by itself?” (modified from Hulse 17 and Mitchell 25).

³¹⁹ Völtz 93.

schwenkte ein dunstiges Licht. Mein Vater lachte: ‘Wir steigen hier herum wie die Gespenster,’ und er half uns wieder die Stufen zurück. ‘Aber es war doch eben ein Haus da,’ sagte Maman und konnte sich gar nicht so rasch an Wjera Schulin gewöhnen, die warm und lachend herausgelaufen war. ... Wenn Maman und ich hier wohnten, so wäre es immer da. Maman sah zerstreut aus, während alle zugleich redeten. Sie dachte gewiß an das Haus. ... Sie saß eigentümlich gerade da, mir kam vor, daß sie auf mich wartete. Kaum war ich bei ihr und fühlte, daß sie innen zitterte, so wußte ich, daß das Haus jetzt erst wieder verging. ‘Malte, Feigling,’ lachte es irgendwo. Es war Wjeras Stimme. Aber wie ließen einander nicht los und ertrugen es zusammen; und wir blieben so, Maman und ich, bis das Haus wieder ganz vergangen war.³²⁰

In this passage, Malte reports not his fragmented memory of a house, but rather his memories of house that is in fact fragmented. “Like ghosts,” Malte’s family staggers around the spot where the destroyed wing once stood, as if it were still there. Still present somehow in its absence, it haunts the physical space of the estate and the minds of Malte’s family. For both Malte and his mother, the house is still there.

There are other invisible, ghostly presences in the Schulin house: smells. ‘Mama riecht’, sagte Wjera Schulin hinter ihm, ‘da müssen wir immer alle still sein, sie riecht mit den Ohren,’ dabei aber stand sie selbst mit hochgezogenen Augenbrauen da, aufmerksam und ganz Nase. Die Schulins waren in dieser Beziehung ein bißchen eigen seit dem Brande. In den engen, überheizten Stuben kam jeden Augenblick ein Geruch auf, und dann untersuchte man ihn.... Aber auf einmal (war es die Hitze in den Zimmern oder das viele nahe Licht) überfiel mich zum erstenmal in meinem Leben etwas wie Gespensterfurcht. Es wurde mir klar, daß alle die deutlichen großen Menschen, die eben noch gesprochen und gelacht hatten, gebückt herumgingen und sich mit etwas Unsichtbarem beschäftigten; daß sie zugaben, daß da etwas war, was sie nicht sahen. Und es war schrecklich, daß es stärker war als sie alle. Meine Angst steigerte sich. Mir war, als könnte das, was sie suchten, plötzlich aus mir ausbrechen wie ein Ausschlag....³²¹

³²⁰ KA 3 552-556. “The big old manor house had burned down some years before, and they now lived in the two cramped wings and were economizing.... George had completely forgotten that the house was not there, and for all of us it was there at that moment. We ascended the flight of steps that led up to the old terrace, and merely thought it odd that all was in darkness. All at once the door opened, below and behind us to the left, and someone called ‘Over here!’ and raised a dim lantern and swung it. My father laughed: ‘Here we are, wandering about like ghosts’: and he helped us back down the steps. ‘But there was a house there just now,’ said Maman, finding it hard to adjust so quickly to Viera Schulin, who had come out, warm and laughing.... If Maman and I lived here, it would always be there. They were all talking at once, and Maman had an absent look to her. No doubt she was thinking about the house.... She was sitting strangely erect, and I felt she was waiting for me. Scarcely was I beside her, scarcely did I feel how she trembled within, then I realized only now that the house was disappearing once more. ‘Malte, you coward,’ came a laugh from somewhere. The voice was Viera’s but we did not let go of each other, and endured it together; and so we remained, Maman and I, till the house had once again completely disappeared” (modified from Hulse 89-93).

³²¹ KA 3 555-6. “‘Mama can smell something,’ said Viera Schulin behind him, ‘we always have to be quiet. She smells with the ears.’ She herself stood attentively with her eyebrows raised, all nose. Ever

This description of synesthetic perception, of smells that are heard, olfactory traces perceived by the organs of hearing, also displays the logic of haunting. Auditory apparitions are triggered by an unknown source emanating from another sensory domain. Malte, in fact, directly connects this synesthetic perception with ghostly presence; the adults appear to Malte like ghost-hunters, and he experiences for the first time *etwas wie Gespensterfurcht*, which Malte worries will break out into a bodily rash.

This fear-producing synesthetic experience echos – or rather reeks of, to use a more appropriate sensory metaphor – Malte’s description of Paris in the first *Aufzeichnungen* of the novel.

Die Gasse begann von allen Seiten zu riechen. Es roch, soviel sich unterscheiden ließ, nach Jodoform, nach dem Fett von Pommes frites, nach Angst. Alle Städte riechen im Sommer....

Und sonst? ein Kind in einem stehenden Kinderwagen: es war dick, grünlich und hatte einen deutlichen Ausschlag auf der Stirn. Er heilte offenbar ab und tat nicht weh. Das Kind schlief, der Mund war offen, atmete Jodoform, Pommes frites, Angst. Das war nun mal so. Die Hauptsache war, daß man lebte. Das war die Hauptsache.³²²

As in the scene at the Schulin house, the smells of Paris are directly inhaled through the mouth, which is, of course, also the organ of speech, the idealized site of poetic production. The smell of fear comes in direct contact with the rash which broken out on a child’s forehead, echoing Malte’s concern that his fear of ghosts at the Schulin house will manifest itself in the same manner. Although ghosts per se are not mentioned in the first *Aufzeichnung*, the passage – indeed the entire novel, which opens with the lines, “So, also hierher kommen die Leute, um zu leben, ich würde eher meinen, es stürbe sich hier” – hovers on the border between life and death.³²³

Malte’s encounter with the ruins of the Schulin house, previous sections of which have been destroyed, burned down, resonates with Malte’s descriptions of the modern ruins of Paris. In the third *Aufzeichnung*, Malte describes a house that burns:

Das sind die Geräusche. Aber es gibt hier etwas, was furchtbarer ist: die Stille. Ich glaube, bei großen Bränden tritt manchmal so ein Augenblick äußerster Spannung ein, die Wasserstrahlen fallen ab, die Feuerwehrlente klettern nicht mehr, niemand rührt sich. Lautlos schiebt sich ein schwarzes Gesimse vor oben, und eine hohe Mauer, hinter welcher das Feuer auffährt, neigt sich, lautlos. Alles steht und wartet mit hochgeschobenen Schultern, die

since the fire, the Schulins had been a little peculiar in this respect. In the cramped, overheated rooms, an odour might arise at any moment, and would promptly be analyzed.... But all at once (was it the heat in the rooms, or the closeness of so many lights?) I was overcome, for the first time in my life, by something skin to fear of ghosts. It dawned on me that all these assertive, grown-up people who had just been talking and laughing were going about bent over, occupied with something invisible; that they conceded something was there that they could not see. And the terrible thing was that it was stronger than all of them. My fear grew apace. I imagined that what they were looking for might suddenly break forth from within me, like a rash...” (modified from Hulse 92-3).

³²² KA 3 455. “The street began to smell from all sides. As far as I could distinguish the odours, it smelled of iodoform, of the fat of *pommes frites*, and of fear... What else? a baby in a halted pram, plump, greenish, with a rash on its forehead. The rash was clearly healing and not painful. The child was asleep, its mouth hung open, it was breathing iodoform, *pommes frites*, fear. That was simply the way it was. The main thing was to be living. That was the main thing” (modified from Hulse 3).

³²³ “So this is where people come to live, I would rather think there was dying here” (translation JH).

Gesichter über die Augen zusammengezogen, auf den schrecklichen Schlag. So ist hier die Stille.³²⁴

Against the *Geräusche* of the metropolis, an eerie silence bathes this scene of destruction. This silence, I suggest, can be correlated to the silence of writing and of reading. As explored in the first chapter, Malte reflects on the act of writing against the backdrop of oral storytelling. In different ways, orality haunts the text – in the figure of Count Brahe, who communes with ghosts, but also in passages in which Malte seems narrates an act of speaking. “Habe ich es schon gesagt? Ich lerne sehen,”³²⁵ he writes for example in the fifth *Aufzeichnung*. Such statements have been interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, we can read these as expressions of Malte’s longing to be part of a speech community again, as he is now isolated in the modern metropolis. However, we can also read such remnants of orality as traces of an alternate beginning to the novel, which was abandoned but reappeared in the *Sämtliche Werke* and in now often in an *Anhang* of print editions. This alternate beginning opens with a frame narrative, in which Malte arrives at the house and of a third-party listener and, seated before a fire, begins telling his memories and stories. This configuration recalls certain Romantic frame narratives, for example E. T. A. Hoffmann’s *Die Serparionsbrüder*, in which storytellers are similarly gathered around a fire. The alternate beginning of the *Aufzeichnungen*, in which Malte tells his stories orally to a third-person narrator who records them, continues to haunt the text of the *Aufzeichnungen*; Malte’s voice is referenced negatively in the silence of reading.

Unlike the ruins of the Schulin’s country manor, the modern urban ruins that Malte encounters were created by the Hausmannization of Paris in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, during which the narrow Medieval streets of Paris were replaced with a systematically gridded and rigidly ordered network of boulevards. This massive restructuring of the space of the city can be used to grasp the relationship of the manuscript to the printed text. Like the Hausmannization of Paris, the process of printing transforms the windy, meandering streets of the manuscript into broad, easily navigable boulevards of the printed text.

The Textual *Innenseite*

The spectral presence of the manuscript becomes most visible in Malte’s description of the remains of an apartment building whose façade was torn down in the Hausmannization of Paris.

Häuser? Aber, um genau zu sein, es waren Häuser, die nicht mehr da waren. Häuser, die man abgebrochen hatte von oben bis unten.... Man sah ihre Innenseite.... Am unvergeßlichsten aber waren die Wände selbst.... Man sah in den verschiedenen Stockwerken Zimmerwände, an denen noch die Tapeten klebten, da und dort den Ansatz des Fußbodens oder der Decke. Neben den Zimmerwänden blieb die ganze Mauer entlang noch ein schmutzigweißer Raum, und durch diesen kroch in unsäglich widerlichen, wurmweichen, gleichsam verdauenden

³²⁴ KA 3 456. “Those are the sounds I hear. But there is something more fearful still: the silence. I have a notion that, at big fires, a moment of extreme suspense can sometimes occur, when the jets of water slacken off, the firemen no longer climb, no one moves a muscle. Without a sound, a high black wall of masonry cants over up above, the fire blazing behind it, and, without a sound, leans, about to topple. Everyone stands waiting, shoulders tensed, faces drawn in around their eyes, for the terrible crash. That is how the silence is here” (Hulse 4). The description of this moment [*Augenblick*], in which time almost seems to stand still, recalls Malte’s attempt to describe the last moments [*Augenblicke*] before the death of Grischa Otrepjow (KA 3 587-88).

³²⁵ “Have I said it already? I am learning to see,” (KA 3 457).

Bewegungen die offene, rostfleckige Rinne der Abortröhre.... Das zähe Leben dieser Zimmer hatte sich nicht zertreten lassen.... Man konnte sehen, daß es in der Farbe war, die es langsam, Jahr um Jahr, verwandelt hatte: Blau in schimmliges Grün, Grün in Grau und Gelb in ein altes, abgestandenes Weiß, das fault... Es war in jedem Streifen, der abgeschunden war, es war in den feuchten Blasen am unteren Rande der Tapeten, es schwankte in den abgerissenen Fetzen, und aus den garstigen Flecken, die vor langer Zeit entstanden waren.... Da standen die Mittag und die Krankheiten und das Ausgeatmete und der jahrealte Rauch und der Schweiß, der unter den Schultern ausbricht und die Kleider schwer macht, und das Fade aus den Munden und der Fuselgeruch gärender Füße. Da stand das Scharfe vom Urin und das Brennen vom Ruß und grauer Kartoffeldunst und der schwere, glatte Gestank von alterndem Schmalze.... Man wird sagen, ich hätte lange davorgestanden; aber ich will einen Eid geben dafür, daß ich zu laufen begann, sobald ich die Mauer erkannt hatte. Denn das ist das Schreckliche, daß ich sie erkannt habe. Ich erkenne das alles hier, und darum geht es so ohne weiteres in mich ein: es ist zu Hause in mir.³²⁶

In Malte's description of his experience standing in front of this partially demolished building, looking at the physical traces of the lives it once contained, it is unclear where Malte's physical perception ends and a kind of hallucinatory vision begins: is this something he actually sees, something he imagines or hallucinates, a kind of phantasmagoric vision perhaps?³²⁷ Unfortunately, we cannot compare the description of the *Innenseite* of this house to the manuscript pages on which it was composed, since the manuscript containing the first half of the novel is no longer extant. But

³²⁶ KA 3 485-87. "Buildings? Rather, to be exact, they were buildings that were no longer there. Buildings that had been torn down, top to bottom... You could see the inner side.... Most unforgettable of all, though, were the walls themselves.... You could see the walls of rooms on the various floors, with wallpaper still adhering, and here and there a fragment of the floor or ceiling. Next to the walls of the rooms, a dirty-white space ran down the entire wall, and through it, describing an inexpressibly disgusting, worm-like twist like that of the digestive tract, crept the wide-open, rust-speckled channel of the toilet plumbing... The stubborn life of those rooms had refused to be stamped out... You could see it was in the paint, which it had gradually changed, from year to year: blue into mouldy green, green into grey, and grey into an old, stale, putrescent white... It was in every flayed strip, as was in the damp blisters at the lower edges of wallpaper, it flapped in the torn-off shreds, and it sweated out of nasty stains made long ago... There they all hung, the midday mealtimes and the illnesses and the breath exhaled and the smoke of years and the sweat from armpits that makes clothing heavy and the flat reek of mouths and the clammy odour of perspiring feet. There they hung, the acrid tang of urine and the smell of burning soot and the steamy greyness of potatoes and the slick, heavy stink of old lard... You might assume I stood looking at it for a long time, but I swear I broke into a run the moment I recognized that wall. For that is the terrible thing: I recognized it. I recognize everything here, and that is why it enters into me so readily: it is at home in me" (Hulse 30-31).

³²⁷ Eric Santner's reading of this passage emphasizes Malte's lack of a *Reizschutz* and also envisions Malte as a medium in a double sense: his sensorium becomes like a photographic plate on the one hand, but he also has access to the dead. See Santner, *On Creaturely Life*, 51-52. Compare also Renate Breuninger's reading of this passage in *Wirklichkeit in der Dichtung Rilkes* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 209-214.

in a certain way, the absence of the first enables a different kind of seeing, a different way of approaching the visuality of the manuscript pages and its figuration in the novel.³²⁸

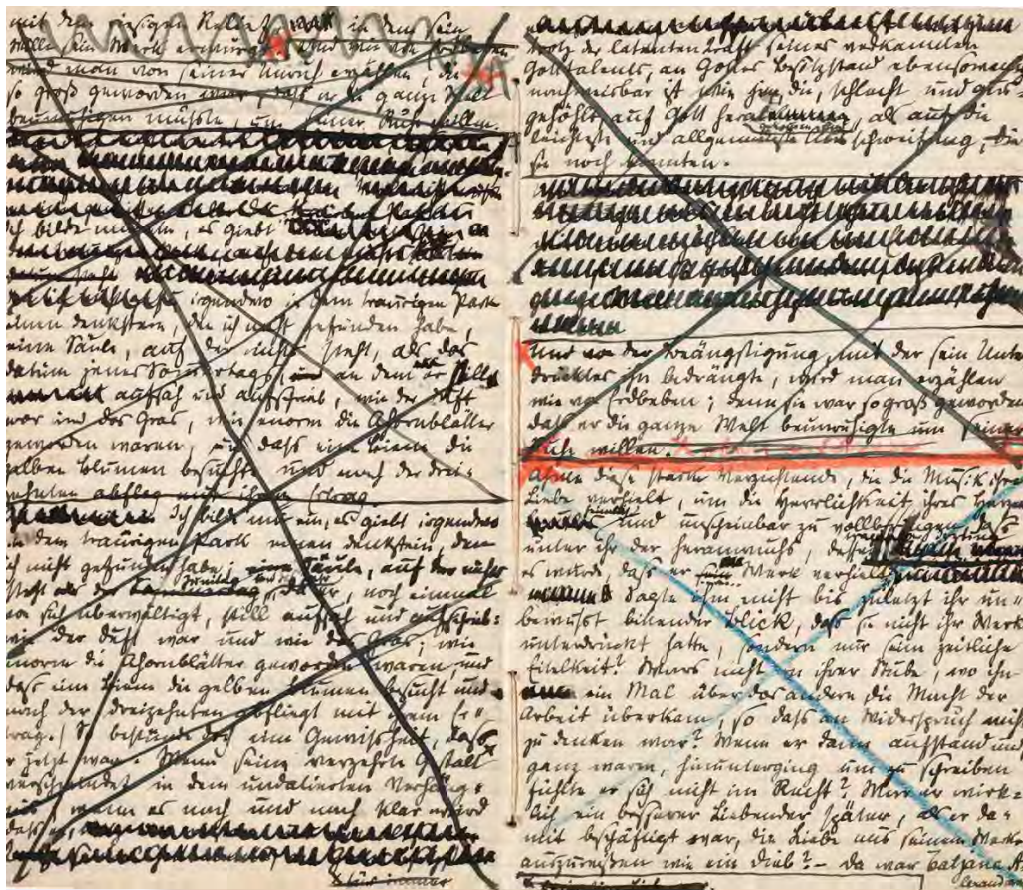


Figure 36. BT 168-69.

The text covering of these two facing pages from one of the so-called “Tolstoy-endings” has been *durchgestrichen* multiple times; the structure of meaning that once stood as a projection of these words has been negated, but not destroyed: traces of the life once extant there remains visible. Horizontal lines spanning the width of the page divide “rooms” of text like floors of a building, isolating units inhabited by different inhabitants, each leading their own lives. Broad strokes of the pen form a crisscross of diagonal, intersecting lines, like the “complex scaffolding of long, tarred poles had been driven at an angle between the rubble-covered waste ground and the exposed wall.” Like the gutter between the facing pages, the “walls” of the “rooms,” “a dirty-white space ran down the entire wall.” Like intestines or plumbing pipes, thick, coiling lines of an “inexpressibly disgusting, worm-like twist like that of the digestive tract,” strike through passages of text in the upper halves of both pages. The “stubborn life” contained on these pages, fluctuating between presence and absence, refuses to be “stamped out.” It remains in the ink that will fade and discolor over time, in the paper that will yellow, become brittle, and disintegrate. “Damp blisters at the lower edges of wallpaper... sweated out of nasty stains made long ago” recall pools of spilled ink that saturate the paper, or dried droplets of sweat of the writer. One opens the manuscript, long locked away in the archive:

³²⁸ Regarding the visuality of text, see Krämer, “Schriftbildlichkeit”; Krämer et. al., *Schriftbildlichkeit*; Giuriato and Kammer, *Bilder der Handschrift*; and Bornstein and Tinkle, *The Iconic Page*.

“there issued the air of those lives,” the world contained within words, “a stale, idle, fuggy air, not yet dispersed by any breeze.” “I recognize everything here, and that is why it enters into me so readily: it is at home in me”: just as the house enters into Malte, becoming part of his physical being, the boundary between writer and written text, between the materiality of the manuscript and the materiality of writer’s body, dissolves. The written text enters into him, becoming part of his being. The (*Schreib-*)*Szene*, the scene (of writing) that is described here – and this, perhaps, is especially the case for Rilke, who had such difficulty writing his “Prose-book” – becomes a scene of fundamental terror.

In this passage, it is striking that the haunting presence of the inhabitants’ past lives is not a purely immaterial spectral presence, but is rather inscribed in material traces onto the walls. Although Malte observes the building from a distance, his horrifying vision provokes a visceral experience whereby the vision is translated into Malte’s body, becoming “at home in him.” As explored in the second chapter, such descriptions of bodily filth and base materialism provoke an affective experience of disgust in the reader. When we read this passage in relation to the appearance and materiality of the manuscript, it is as if the *materiality* of the manuscript itself presses into the reader’s bodily experience, safe and distanced as he may seem to be from the printed words on the page.

When attuned to the materialities of writing, looking with a different kind of *Sehen*, we see the materiality of the manuscript in Malte’s description of the apartment building, as if mentally tearing down the façade of the printed text to reveal its *Innenseite*. In this context, the passage from the fifth *Aufzeichnung* in which Malte gazes at the *Innenseite* of a face is also revealing:

Aber die Frau, die Frau: sie war ganz in sich hineingefallen, vornüber in ihre Hände. ... Die Frau erschrak, und hob sich aus sich ab, zu schnell, zu heftig, so daß das Gesicht in den zwei Händen blieb. Ich konnte es darin liegen sehen, seine hohle Form. Es kostete mich unbeschreibliche Anstrengung, bei diesen Händen zu bleiben und nicht zu schauen, was sich aus ihnen abgerissen hatte. Mir graute, ein Gesicht von innen zu sehen, aber ich fürchtete mich doch noch viel mehr vor dem bloßen wunden Kopf ohne Gesicht.³²⁹

Similarly to his vision of the *Innenseite* of the ruined apartment building, the vision of the *Innenseite* of the face is terrifying for Malte. That which lies beyond behind the face, the façade, is disorienting and beyond comprehension. The “hohle Form” [hollow, cavernous form] of the “wunden Kopf ohne Gesicht” [bare head without a face] – again, we encounter the root *wund*, as in *Wunde* [wound], *wundern* [to be astonished by], and *Wunder* [miracle] – can only be grasped negatively, as “Nichtgesicht” [non-face],³³⁰ which Malte cannot look at directly.

This description of the inner-side of the face directly follows Malte’s reflection on the changeability of faces, the way that people have different faces that they can easily put on and take

³²⁹ KA 3 457-8. “But that woman, that woman: she had fallen into herself completely, bowed forward into her hands ... The woman was startled and startled and lifted out of herself too rapidly and too roughly, so that her face remained in her two hands. I could see it lying in them, the hollow mould of it. It cost me an indescribably effort to keep my gaze on those hands and not to look at what had been torn from out of them. I was appalled to see the inside of the face, but I was far more terrified still of seeing a head bare and stripped of its face” (modified from Hulse 6).

³³⁰ KA 3 457. Compare Deleuze’s discussion of the animality of heads in Francis Bacon’s paintings, Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 19-22. Compare also Didi-Huberman’s discussion of Dürer’s *Man of Sorrows* (1509-10), the frontspiece of the *Small Passion* (1511), in which Christ’s face rests in his wounded hands, in *Confronting Images*, 176.

off, and which are “an vielen Stellen dünn wie Papier” [as thin as paper in many places].³³¹ The printed text, like a façade, a face as thin as paper, invites us to rip it off, to look through it with a kind of X-ray vision, and encounter the horrifying ruins of the manuscript lying beneath it.

In this sense, the horror Malte experiences in confronting the inner side of the paper-thin face or the *Innenseite* of the apartment whose exterior has been torn down, could be understood to represent that horror that Rilke might have experienced during his continual confrontation with the manuscript and the materialities of writing while composing the *Aufzeichnungen*. This kind of interpretative narrative, however, has become problematic in the landscape of recent theory. In the fourth and final chapter, I turn to this figure who increasingly haunts contemporary literary theory, and whose unfinished business is gradually resurfacing through the field’s renewed interest in modern literary manuscripts: the author.

³³¹ KA 3 457.

Excuse Three

Malte's *Neues Sehen* and the X-Ray

*If the new x-rays, that the papers do laud,
When the ghosts do walk at night,
Will show 'neath our hat to the world abroad
How our hair stands on end in our fright.*

—Homer C. Bennett

Ich schluckte ein paarmal; denn nun wollte ich es erzählen. Aber wie? Ich nahm mich unbeschreiblich zusammen, aber es war nicht auszudrücken, so daß es einer begriff. Gab es Worte für dieses Ereignis, so war ich zu klein, welche zu finden.... Das Wirkliche da unten noch einmal durchzumachen, anders, abgewandelt, von Anfang an....³³²

In this passage from the twenty-ninth *Aufzeichnung*, Malte recalls a childhood experience that, both then and now, defies his comprehension and his ability to represent it. While sitting and drawing [*zeichnen*], a crayon drops to the floor and rolls beneath the table. Crawling under to fetch it, groping around with his hand until his eyes adjust to the darkness, Malte is horrified as another large and emaciated hand emerges out of the wall and reaches toward him:

Ich erkannte vor allem meine eigene, ausgespreizte Hand, die sich ganz allein, ein bißchen wie ein Wassertier, da unten bewegte und den Grund untersuchte. Ich sah ihr, weiß ich noch, fast neugierig zu; es kam mir vor, als könnte sie Dinge, die ich sie nicht gelehrt hatte, wie sie da unten so eigenmächtig heruntastete mit Bewegungen, die ich nie an ihr beobachtet hatte. Ich verfolgte sie, wie sie vordrang, es interessierte mich, ich war auf allerhand vorbereitet. Aber wie hätte ich darauf gefaßt sein sollen, daß ihr mit einem Male aus der Wand eine andere Hand entgegenkam, eine größere, ungewöhnlich magere Hand, wie ich noch nie eine gesehen hatte. Sie suchte in ähnlicher Weise von der anderen Seite her, und die beiden gespreizten Hände bewegten sich blind aufeinander zu. Meine Neugierde war noch nicht aufgebraucht, aber plötzlich war sie zu Ende, und es war nur Grauen da. Ich fühlte, daß die eine von den Händen mir gehörte und daß sie sich da in etwas einließ, was nicht wieder gutzumachen war. Mit allem Recht, das ich auf sie hatte, hielt ich sie an und zog sie flach und langsam zurück, indem ich die andere nicht aus den Augen ließ, die weitersuchte. Ich begriff, daß sie es nicht aufgeben würde, ich kann nicht sagen, wie ich

³³² KA 3 520-1. "I swallowed a couple times; for now I wanted to tell her. But how? I made an indescribable effort to pull myself together, but it could not be expressed so that someone else would understand. If there were words for what had happened, I was too small to find them... to have to relive that reality down there once more, with a difference, transmuted, from the very beginning..." (modified from Hulse 61-2).

wieder hinaufkam....³³³

This passage, sometimes referred to in the literature as the “Aufzeichnung mit der Hand,” offers itself to numerous interpretations. The activity of Malte’s hand, which seems to move about on its own, acting outside of Malte’s conscious control, can be interpreted as a figure automatic writing.³³⁴ The older, thinner hand that appears, however, is much more difficult to grasp. Appearing from the opposite wall in the eerie darkness underneath the table and groping along the floor toward Malte’s hand, the activity of this larger, older, thinner hand mirrors that of Malte’s. A mirror image of Malte’s hand, emerging from another temporal dimension, it is as if Malte’s hand is reaching from a later stage in life back into his childhood past, attempting to grasp this childhood event. Memory thus becomes embodied in this image of a hand – the bodily instrument of grasping, but also of writing – which reaches from a future temporality into the present. Yet the larger, older, thinner hand might also be the hand of the writer, of Rilke, groping into the past at the same time it gropes around fictional world it is writing into existence.

The description of the large, thin, terrifying hand also recalls the first X-ray image produced by Wilham Conrad Röntgen, a sinister-looking image of his wife’s hand.³³⁵

³³³ KA 3 520. “I made out in particular my own outspread hand, moving all alone down below, a little like some aquatic animal exploring the seabed. I still recall that I watched it almost with curiosity; as it groped about down there with a mind of its own, moving in ways I had never seen it move, it seemed able to do things I had not taught it. I observed it as it pushed onwards; I was still interested, and prepared for anything. But how could I have expected another hand suddenly to come towards it from the wall, a larger and unusually thin hand, such as I had never seen before? It was searching in a similar fashion, from the other side, and the two outspread hands moved blindly towards each other. My curiosity was not yet satisfied, but all at once it was at an end, and all that remained in its place was horror. I sensed that one of the hands belonged to me and that it was about to enter something that could never be righted again. Asserting all the rights I had over it, I stopped it and withdrew it, slowly and held flat, never taking my eyes off the other hand as it continued to search. I realized it would not abandon the search. I cannot say how I got up again” (modified from Hulse 61).

³³⁴ As such, this passage with another from the eighteenth *Aufzeichnung*: “Noch eine Weile kann ich das alles aufschreiben und sagen. Aber es wird ein Tag kommen, da meine Hand weit von mir sein wird, und wenn ich sie schreiben heißen werde, wird sie Worte schreiben, die ich nicht meine. Die Zeit der anderen Auslegung wird anbrechen, und es wird kein Wort auf dem anderen bleiben, und jeder Sinn wird wie Wolken sich auflösen und wie Wasser niedergehen. Bei aller Furcht bin ich schließlich doch wie einer, der vor etwas Großem steht, und ich erinnere mich, daß es früher oft ähnlich in mir war, eh ich zu schreiben begann. Aber diesmal werde ich geschrieben werden” (KA 3 490).

³³⁵ Röntgen reports in the first paper he published on his discovery, “Hält man die Hand zwischen den Entladungsapparat und den Schirm, so sieht man die dunkleren Schatten der Handknochen in dem nur wenig dunklen Schattenbild der Hand” (“Ueber Eine Neue Art Von Strahlen. (Vorläufige Mittheilung),” *Sitzungs-Berichte der Physikalisch-medicinischen Gesellschaft zu Würzburg* 9 (1895): 2).



Figure 37. "Hand mit Ringen." The first X-ray image. 1895.

Upon viewing the image, Anna Röntgen is purported to have declared, "I have seen my death." The notion that one could see one's own death, contained inside of them and newly visible through X-ray radiography, directly resonates with Malte's conception of the *eigener Tod*, which was "carried visibly" within a person. Malte writes in the eighth *Aufzeichnung*, for example, "früher wußte man (oder vielleicht man ahnte es), daß man den Tod *in sich* hatte wie die Frucht den Kern. ... Meinem Großvater noch, dem alten Kammerherrn Brigge, sah man es an, daß er einen Tod in sich trug."³³⁶

As Ernst Peter Fischer stated in his opening address at the 2005 meeting of the Deutsche Röntgen Gesellschaft, the ability to see through the exterior surface of the body "suddenly showed the whole world in utter clarity, that the world is not as it appears to be."³³⁷ Fischer went on to cite a

³³⁶ KA 3 459-60. "In the old days, people knew (or perhaps they had an intuition) that they had their death *inside* them like a fruit has a core... My grandfather, old Chamberlain Brigge, visibly carried his death about within him" (modified from Hulse 7 and Mitchell 10).

³³⁷ "[es] zeigte sich nämlich plötzlich in aller Deutlichkeit für das breite Publikum, daß die Welt nicht so ist, wie sie aussieht." Ernst Peter Fischer, „Der Durchblick des Jahrhunderts. Welt- und Menschenbilder seit den Tagen von Röntgen,“ *Deutsche Röntgengesellschaft e. V. Deutsche*

passage from the *Aufzeichnungen*, which we encountered earlier, in context of Malte's *Neues Sehen*, and return to now through a new lens:

Ist es möglich, ... daß man noch nichts Wirkliches und Wichtiges gesehen, erkannt und gesagt hat? ...

Ja, es ist möglich.

Ist es möglich, daß man trotz Erfindungen und Fortschritten, trotz Kultur, Religion und Weltweisheit an der Oberfläche des Lebens geblieben ist? Ist es möglich, daß man sogar diese Oberfläche, die doch immerhin etwas gewesen wäre, mit einem unglaublich langweiligen Stoff überzogen hat, so daß sie aussieht wie die Salonmöbel in den Sommerferien?³³⁸

In this passage, the sheets covering the furniture resemble skin converging bones – one recalls the paper-thin skin covering faces that Malte describes in the third *Aufzeichnung*.³³⁹ The existential questions Malte poses about the nature of reality underlie his process of *Sehenlernen*, of attempting to acquire a mode of seeing that, like X-ray vision, penetrates through the illusory surfaces [*Oberflächen*] of reality. We can also read this mode of vision metatextually, allowing it to inform our understanding of the spectral presence of the manuscript within or beneath the surface of the printed text.

When Röntgen presented his new discovery of the X-ray in 1895 in Würzburg, he became instantaneously famous.³⁴⁰ News of Röntgen's findings spread rapidly, inciting the imagination of Europe and beyond,³⁴¹ and “trigger[ing] the most immediate and widespread reaction to any scientific discovery before the explosion of the first atomic bomb in 1945.”³⁴² In 1896 alone, over fifty books and pamphlets and thousands of papers were published on X-rays.³⁴³ In January 1896, Röntgen produced the first “medical” X-ray image: the image of his wife's hand, along with X-ray images of other body parts, was published and circulated rapidly. Yet these “invisible rays” also soon became associated with clairvoyance and the unconscious; X-ray images were at times believed to be spirit photographs. These invisible rays also had dangerous side effects: within a year after Röntgen's discovery, doctors began reporting hair loss and skin lesions.³⁴⁴

The discovery of the X-ray altered humans' relationship to the body and raised questions about the relationship between interiority and exteriority, the limits of human vision, and the nature

Röntgengesellschaft e. V., 5 August 2008. Web. 20 July 2012.

<http://www.drg.de/fachinformationen/vortraege/99-roentgenkongress2005-rede>

³³⁸ KA 3 468-9. “Is it possible, ... that we have neither seen nor perceived nor said anything real or of any importance yet? ... Yes, it is possible. Is it possible that despite our inventions and progress, despite our culture, religion, and knowledge of the world, we have remained on the surface of life? Is it possible that even that surface, which might still have been something, has been covered with an unbelievably boring material, leaving it looking like drawing-room furniture in the summer holidays?” (Hulse 15).

³³⁹ KA 3 457.

³⁴⁰ For background and scientific detail, see Alexi Assmus, “Early History of X-Rays,” *Beam Line* (Summer 1995): 10-24.

³⁴¹ See Linda Simon, *Dark Light. Electricity and Anxiety from the Telegraph to the X-Ray* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2004), especially 272-299; regarding the American reception, see Assmus.

³⁴² Linda Dalrymple Henderson, “X-Rays and the Quest for Invisible Reality in the Art of Kupka, Duchamp, and the Cubists,” *Art Journal* 47.4 (1988): 323.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ This description of “invisible rays” that cause wounds also directly resonates with the iconography of St. Francis receiving the stigmata. See Belting, “Franziskus,” 32-35.

of matter.³⁴⁵ Röntgen's earliest report on his discovery spoke to the penetrability [*Durchlässigkeit*] – the words penetrability, permeability, or transmissibility appear thirty-two times in this first essay alone – of all bodies, despite their illusory appearance of solidity and stability: “one quickly discovers that all bodies are penetrable in the same way, but to very different degrees.”³⁴⁶ In conjunction with the discovery of radioactivity, examination with X-rays contributed to a more dynamic conceptualization of material reality not as stable and fixed, but rather in perpetual flux and decay.³⁴⁷ Investigation of the relationship between the visible and the invisible and the unconscious exploded in the fields of contemporary physics, medicine, philosophy, psychology, art, and literature.³⁴⁸ Early experimentation was even conducted by Charcot on hysterics at the *Salpêtrière*.³⁴⁹ Röntgen's investigation of the penetrability [*Durchlässigkeit*] of all bodies elides the distinction between animate and inanimate; all substances and objects are composed of the same materiality, penetrable to varying degrees by the X-rays. As Fischer extrapolates in his speech at the Röntgen society, “we are no longer a (subjective) I, which confronts an (objective) world. We are an inseparable part of the world.”³⁵⁰

Less than a year after the discovery of X-rays, Röntgen himself submitted a Dürer painting to X-rays in Munich, where Rilke was studying art history at the time.³⁵¹ X-radiography of an oil painting penetrates through accumulated the layers of paint, allowing one to see through the visible surface of the painting, with a kind of *Neues Sehen*, which discloses the underdrawings concealed beneath it. As in Freud's description of Rome as a metaphor for memory in *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, the X-ray image reveals layers of the painting's unconscious that buried beneath the surface.³⁵²

An oil painting takes shape gradually through the material accretion of layers of paint. Like the process of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen* in handwriting, the composition of an oil painting involves not just addition, but also the scraping away of previous strokes. Unlike a photograph or a printed text, an oil painting is a *unicum*, produced directly by the hands of the painter that directly manipulate the material surface of the composition. To varying degrees, the individual brushstrokes, traces of

³⁴⁵ Compare Fischer: “Es ist, wie bereits gesagt wurde - unser Weltbild wird zu einer Weltbildung, und dabei ergibt sich auch ein neues Menschenbild - eben eine Menschenbildung. Wir sind nicht mehr nur Hervorbringungen (Schöpfungen) der Natur; die Natur ist auch unsere Schöpfung, unsere Bildung.” For resonances with Rilkean materialism, compare Kaja Silverman 28, 64-65.

³⁴⁶ “Man findet bald, dass alle Körper für dasselbe durchlässig sind, aber in sehr verschiedenem Grade.“ Röntgen, “Ueber eine neue Art von Strahlen,” 1.

³⁴⁷ Compare Henderson 327-28. Henderson also connects the discoveries of the X-ray and radioactivity to the Bergson's dynamic conception of reality and his philosophy of becoming.

³⁴⁸ Henderson 323. The X-ray is represented explicitly in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, see José van Dijck, “X-Ray Vision in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*,” *The Transparent Body* (Seattle and London: U of Washington P, 2005, 83-99), and Henderson 325.

³⁴⁹ Henderson 326. On Charcot and photography, see Georges Didi-Hubermann, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 2003).

³⁵⁰ “Wir sind nicht mehr ein (subjektives) Ich, das einer (objektiven) Welt gegenübertritt. Wir gehören untrennbar zur Welt.”

³⁵¹ Regarding early history of the X-ray examination of paintings, see A. Burroughs, *Art Criticism from a Laboratory* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1938), and K. Wehlte, “Aus der Praxis der maltechnischen Röntgenographie,” *Technische Mitteilungen für Malerei* 48 (1932): 71-72.

³⁵² Psychoanalysis, in this sense, can be compared to a kind of psychological X-ray imaging.

the painter's bodily gesture, remain visible in the texture of the painting's surface. In contrast, a printed text is mechanically reproduced. In literature of the print universe, the "work," the "final text," is the printed text. Mechanically reproduced, the process of printing strips the text (the manuscript as *unicum*), to use Benjamin's term, of its aura. Printing, the transformation of the manuscript into the printed text, involves the *translation of the ideal form of the signifier from one materiality into another*, effacing the materiality of the manuscript in the process.³⁵³

In Röntgen's first publication after his discovery of the X-ray, the first object he reports imaging is, in fact, a book. Röntgen writes,

Man findet bald, dass alle Körper für dasselbe durchlässig sind, aber in sehr verschiedenem Grade. Einige Beispiele führe ich an. Papier ist sehr durchlässig: hinter einem eingebundenen Buch von ca. 1000 Seiten sah ich den Fluoreszenzschirm noch deutlich leuchten; die Druckerschwärze bietet kein merkliches Hindernis.³⁵⁴

Unlike an oil painting, whose layers of pigment provide varying degrees of resistance to the X-rays,³⁵⁵ the printed text is easily penetrable, virtually disappearing when viewed with X-ray vision. In various ways, the "final" text of the *Aufzeichnungen* makes the "underdrawing" of the novel, of which we have a concrete trace in the "Berner Taschenbuch," *virtually* discernable, even tangible. When one reads with a certain kind of vision, the manuscript and the materialities of writing become visible. Malte's phantasmagoric vision of the *Innenseite* of the apartment building and the inner side of the *Kopf ohne Gesicht* function like an X-ray image of the novel, allowing the materialities of writing to become spectrally visible through the surface of the printed text.

In this vein, might we similarly imagine the facsimile of the "Berner Taschenbuch," a photographic reproduction of the manuscript, to function like X-ray image of the printed work, penetrating through its surface and allowing the "underdrawings" to become visible?



Figure 38. Close-up of Duchamp, *Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel*, 1910. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

³⁵³ Regarding the effacement of the signifier for Derrida, see *Speech and Phenomena*, 75-77.

³⁵⁴ Röntgen, "Ueber eine neue Art von Strahlen," 1-2. "One quickly discovers that all bodies are penetrable in the same way, but to very different degrees. A few examples are as follows. Paper is very penetrable: behind a bound book of ca. 1000 pages, I still saw the fluorescent screen clearly; the darkness of the printing ink appears to exert no resistance" (translation JH).

³⁵⁵ Josef Riederer, "Pigmentungersuchung bei Buchmalereien," *Restaurator* 1-2 (1981): 153.

Chapter Four

Authorial Hauntings: Breaking the Frame

Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book ... Painting myself for others, I represent myself in a better coloring than my own natural complexion. I have no more made my book, than my book has made me: 'tis a book consubstantial with the author, of a peculiar design, a member of my life ...

—Montaigne

After his father's death, Malte remains behind to "set things in order." He narrates the burning of his father's papers – his father's authorial estate, so to speak – thereby extinguishing the remaining material traces of his father's life and human relationships. The town to which Malte has returned³⁵⁶ is pervaded by the co-presence of life and death, steeped in childhood memory, but also now shrouded in his father's death. Preparing to depart, Malte describes his oscillating feelings of distance and familiarity with the place.

Ich weiß, daß ich mir einbildete, nicht sofort wieder abreisen zu können. Erst muß alles geordnet sein, wiederholte ich mir. Was geordnet sein wollte, war mir nicht klar. Es war so gut wie nichts zu tun. Ich ging in der Stadt umher und konstatierte, daß sie sich verändert hatte. Es war mir angenehm, aus dem Hotel hinauszutreten, in dem ich abgestiegen war, und zu sehen, daß es nun eine Stadt für Erwachsene war, die sich für einen zusammennahm, fast wie für einen Fremden. Ein bißchen klein war alles geworden, und ich promenierte die Längelinie hinaus bis an den Leuchtturm und wieder zurück. Wenn ich in die Gegend der Amaliengade kam, so konnte es freilich geschehen, daß von irgendwo etwas ausging, was man jahrelang anerkannt hatte und was seine Macht noch einmal versuchte. Es gab da gewisse Eckfenster oder Torbogen oder Laternen, die viel von einem wußten und damit drohten.... Der Verdacht stieg in mir auf, daß noch keiner dieser Einflüsse und Zusammenhänge wirklich bewältigt worden war. Man hatte sie eines Tages heimlich verlassen, unfertig wie sie waren. Auch die Kindheit würde also gewissermaßen noch zu leisten sein, wenn man sie nicht für immer verloren geben wollte.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ While the town is not named in the text, some accounts identify it as Copenhagen (KA 3 973). See also Brigitte von Witzleben's account of Rilke's travels in Copenhagen, 81-86.

³⁵⁷ KA 3 566-67. "I know I supposed that I could not depart right away. First, everything has to be set in order, I told myself repeatedly. *What* it was that needed to be set in order was not clear to me. Next to nothing needed to be done. I walked about the town and noted that it had changed. It was pleasant to step out of the hotel I was staying in and to see that it was now a city for adults, trying to look its best for me, almost as if I were a stranger. Everything had shrunk a little, and I strolled down Langelinie, as far as the lighthouse, and back. When my walks took me to the Amaliengade

The town Malte once inhabited as a child and where his father died, departing from the world of the living, is a site of continual departure: having long ago departed and returning now to set his father's things in order, Malte's anticipates his own immanent departure. Like the interior wall of the destroyed apartment building, bearing traces of the lives it once contained, certain corners and alleyways of the town are haunted by the spectral presence of the past, by visceral childhood memories that, re-enlivened, again exert a force over Malte when he returns to the scene.

A writer, returning to the scene of unfinished writing years after abandoning his work and again traversing streets now both familiar and foreign, might experience something similar. Not only has the writer continued to evolve and transform, but so too has the text itself, through the transformative forces of reception as well as physical decay. Certain corners and alleyways of this text-town begin to pulse with the energy originally invested in them, reawakening the pain and suffering, perhaps, the torment and frustration the writer endured during their production, like a reopened wound revealing the infection still festering beneath.

Both cases – Malte's return to his childhood town, the writer's return the “childhood” of his work – involve a return to a scene of death and departure.³⁵⁸ The association of writing and death, of course, has a long history. For Plato, the speaking word is living, whereas the written word is dead. For Derrida, writing is also pervaded by absence. The manuscript is also the site of multiple departures or deaths. Besides Malte's father, another father figure haunts the text(s) of the *Aufzeichnungen*, remaining present in his absence: the Author.³⁵⁹ Just as Malte was left behind (alive) to take care of his father's remains, so too was the writer, the modern *scriptor*,³⁶⁰ left behind after the death of the Author, the father of the work. In the *Aufzeichnungen*, we not only witness the “death” of the Father/Author, but also the way in which this figure continues to haunt the spaces of the text.³⁶¹

During the process of its production, even the very moment of inscription, the writer already departs from the text. In this way, the act of inscription erases the writer from the scene. As Roland Barthes writes,

neighborhood, there might well be some presence I had been under the sway of for years and which tested its old power over me again. There were particular corner windows or archways or street lamps that knew a great deal about me, and used the knowledge threateningly. ... I had a growing suspicion that I had not yet put any of these influences or associations fully behind me. I had deserted them in secret one day, all unfinished as they were. My childhood, too, still lay ahead of me, in a sense, if I were not to give it up for good” (Hulse 103).

³⁵⁸ This is echoed in the opening line of the *Aufzeichnungen*: “So, also hierher kommen die Leute zu leben, ich würde eher meinen, es stürbe sich hier” (KA 3 455). Malte's entry into Paris, constituting the entry into the novel, is already marked by death.

³⁵⁹ I refer to Barthes's canonical proclamation in “The Death of the Author,” *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 49-55.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. 52.

³⁶¹ Such a reading of the *Aufzeichnungen* as staging the Author's death has a notable precedent. Friedrich Kittler reads Malte's encounter with fragmented bodies and fragmented scenes of language at the *Salpêtrière* hospital as exemplifying the psychophysical decomposition of language and the displacement of the author by the writer. See *Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900* (München: Fink, 1995 [1985]), 401ff. Eric Santner has recently written of Kittler's reading that “the ‘death of the king’ [in the *Aufzeichnungen*] ultimately signifies one thing and one thing only: the death and displacement of the *author*, a figure understood to be some kind of sovereign of the space of meaning, by the *writer*, a figure seen more as a stenographer who merely transcribes the inexhaustible flow of ultimately meaningless information from one medium to another” (*Royal Remains* 231-2).

writing is the destruction of every voice, every origin. Writing is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity into which our subject flees, the black-and-white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes. No doubt it has always been so: once a fact is *recounted* – for intransitive purposes, and no longer to act directly upon reality, i.e., exclusive of any function except that exercise of the symbol itself – this gap appears, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins.³⁶²

The preceding chapters have explored the phenomenon of writing in the *Aufzeichnungen* as a self-conscious negotiation or interplay of various materialities. Implying a fragmentation or dispersal of authorial agency, the plural image of writing that emerges within the text both resonates with and challenges contemporary debates on authorship. Beginning with Wimsatt and Beardsley's canonical essay "The Intentional Fallacy" in 1946 and radicalized by poststructuralism and deconstruction the late 1960s, the question of authorship has generated a massive amount of scholarship and become a highly charged issue in literary studies in particular.³⁶³ The primary question of this chapter concerns not absence of the author from the text *per se*, but is rather as follows: what exactly happens to the author or writing subject when, in Barthes's words, "writing begins?" What of the (former) presence of the writing subject, his material manipulation of and in-corporation into the text, remains once the author has departed? I suggest that the material agency commonly called the "author" does remain in

³⁶² Barthes, "Death of the Author," 49.

³⁶³ For a general overview of the history of authorship, see Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005) and Seán Burke, ed., *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern. A Reader* (Edinburgh: U of Edinburgh P, 1991). Wimsatt and Beardsley write that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" ("The Intentional Fallacy," *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1954), 3). In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), Wayne Booth outlines a collection of author-like figures in the work, including the implied author, the narrator, and the implied narrator, all of which are isolated from the real flesh-and-blood author. The anti-authorial/anti-intentional perspectives of New Criticism, which are radicalized in Roland Barthes's notion of textuality and Derrida's notion of writing, are rooted in the earlier linguistic work of Saussure and Bakhtin. In elaborating his notion of the differential sign, Saussure notes *Course in General Linguistics* that "language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences that have issued from the system" (eds. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Reidlinger, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Fontana, 1974), 120). Bakhtin's notions of dialogism and the otherness that characterizes language similarly have implications regarding the author's "ownership" of his/her language: "When a member of a speaking collective comes upon a word, it is not as a neutral word of language, [...] uninhabited by others' voices. No, he receives the word from another's voice and filled with that other voice. The word enters his context from another context, permeated with the interpretations of others. His own thought finds the word already inhabited" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. C. Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 1984), 201). See also Paul de Man, "Autobiography as De-facement," *Modern Language Notes* 94.5 (1979): 919-930. Regarding the poststructuralist conceptions of authorship and their reception, see Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: U of Edinburgh P, 2008 [1992]) as well as Michael North, "Authorship and Autography," *PMLA* 116.5 (2001): 1377-85; Clara Claiborne Park, "Author! Author! Reconstructing Roland Barthes," *The Hudson Review* 43.3 (1990): 377-98; Benjamin Widiss, *Obscure Invitations: The Persistence of the Author in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford U P, 2011), 1-41.

the text, as a trace, yet it is not a unified agent. Rather, the author remains ontologically enmeshed within the text, a component of the assemblage that is writing.

The phenomenon of writing in/of the *Aufzeichnungen*, which brings into tension different conceptions of authorship, becomes further complicated when we consider the semi-autobiographical nature of the work:³⁶⁴ many of Malte's childhood memories, his descriptions of Paris, the crises he undergoes during writing, resonate directly with Rilke's own biography. A number of passages depicting Paris were copied almost verbatim from Rilke's letters and incorporated directly into the *Aufzeichnungen*, something that is often noted in secondary scholarship but has not been explored theoretically; this aspect of the works' composition, I suggest, can be understood as part of a larger experimental compositional principle.

In approaching the question of autobiography in the *Aufzeichnungen*, I go beyond simply enumerating the biographical connections between Rilke and Malte and explore the way in which the work continually traverses or breaks the frame between domains: between Malte's biography and Rilke's; between fiction and reality; between text-internal and text-external reference; between the materiality of writing and the immateriality of representation. The autobiographical in the *Aufzeichnungen* can be rooted not only on the level of reference (to Rilke's biography, for example); I approach the phenomenon of the death of the author in the act of writing, and the transformation of the authorial self into the fictional-autobiographical self of the text, by rooting autobiography in the concrete materiality of the text and the physical process of writing; in doing so, I traverse the fluid boundary between *corps* and *corpus*, the body of the author and the body of the text.³⁶⁵

Such an approach, which begins with hand-written manuscripts – and of such a mythologized writer like Rilke nonetheless³⁶⁶ – may appear problematic to some. Traditionally, hand-written manuscripts have been an object of study primarily for the discipline of *critique génétique*, which has traditionally concerned itself with reconstructing a chronological record of the author's process of constructing a text, but which today has grown to encompass an increasing variety of methodological practices and approaches.³⁶⁷ Within literary theory, however, hand-written manuscripts have been largely banished over the last five as objects of critical inquiry; in many contexts, one can hardly talk about modern literary manuscripts without being accused of fetishizing the author, as if handwritten manuscripts can offer nothing more than a mirage of authorial presence.³⁶⁸ The vehemence of such paranoia, however, ultimately reveals the force that questions of authorship and intentionality still exert, the threat they still pose, and that these questions are anything but settled.

³⁶⁴ On the autobiographical in the *Aufzeichnungen*, compare Lorna Martens, "Autobiographical Narrative and the Use of Metaphor: Rilke's Techniques in *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*," *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* 9.2 (1985): 229-249, and Linda Haverty Rugg, "A Self at Large in the Hall of Mirrors: Rilke's *Malte Laurids Brigge* as Autobiographical Act," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 29.1 (1993): 43-54.

³⁶⁵ Derrida describes of a fluid boundary between the writer's life and work: "This divisible borderline traverses two different 'bodies', the corpus [*corpus*] and the body [*corps*], in accordance with laws we are only beginning to catch sight of" (*Ear of the Other* 5-6, cited in Burke, *Death and Return*, 57).

³⁶⁶ Compare Marjorie Perloff, "Reading Gass Reading Rilke," *Parnassus* 25.1/2 (2001): 486-507.

³⁶⁷ Compare Grésillon, *Literarische Handschriften*, and Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden, eds., *Genetic Criticism. Texts and Avant-textes* (Philadelphia: U of Penn P, 2004).

³⁶⁸ Compare Kammer, "Reflexionen der Hand," 131-135.

The “Death” of the Author?

Roland Barthes’s essay “The Death of the Author” pronounced the death of a certain kind of author, the author with a capital ‘A,’ giving “birth” to the reader, but also leaving behind the writer, as *scriptor*.³⁶⁹ The poststructuralist death of the Author as creative genius and final instance governing textual meaning also marked the death of a certain notion of the Work, leaving behind, or giving birth to, Text.³⁷⁰ The notion of the Author’s death has often been misunderstood in contemporary literary studies;³⁷¹ under a misappropriated banner, and paranoid of falling prey to the “cult of the Author,” adherence to this notion has led many to ignore questions of authorship, intentionality, and agency altogether. In various ways, the *Aufzeichnungen* examines and takes issue with authorship; it both stages the Author’s, and is also haunted by his ghost.

When the Author died, he did not vanish entirely, but continues to haunt literature and literary theory.³⁷² The haunting “presence” of the author – or the author’s corpse, perhaps – manifests itself in various ways. In examining authorship in/of the *Aufzeichnungen*, this chapter does three things. It begins by briefly re-animating the history of anti-authorial positions in recent literary theory and discussing how consideration of the materialities of writing opens alternate roads of entry into the issue. The chapter then examines the motif of death in the *Aufzeichnungen* in relationship to representations of writing and notions of authorship, before probing the categorical distinction between author and narrator (Rilke and Malte).³⁷³ Finally, the chapter articulates the notions of *material intertextuality* and the *transpositional mode* by connection questions of authorship to theories of autobiography and intertextuality, illuminating the ways in which the text self-reflexively interrogates the text-ualization of reality during the writing, the transformation or incorporation of one ontological domain into another, by consistently and self-reflexively breaking different frames of reference: between Malte’s life and Rilke’s, but also between the space of the manuscript page, the typographical space of the printed page, and the fictional “space” of the text.

Barthes’s proclamation of the death of the Author was not the fatal blow that killed him. Like Malte’s father, who was already dead when the *Herzstich* was performed – an operation which not only secured the death of Malte’s father, but also penetrated through the heart of an entire race family lineage, “das Herz unseres Geschlechts” – the Author, the Father-God of textual meaning, had been long dead by the time of Barthes’s proclamation. The Author’s death, arguably, was already implicit in Nietzsche’s proclamation of God’s death.³⁷⁴ As Foucault writes, the “author’s

³⁶⁹ Barthes, “Death of the Author,” 52. See also Burke, *Death and Return*, 20-61.

³⁷⁰ See Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text.”

³⁷¹ Regarding the misunderstanding of Barthes’s claim, compare Burke, *Death and Return*, North, “Authorship and Autography,” Park, “Author! Author!,” and Widiss, *Obscure Invitations*, 1-41.

³⁷² A number of studies claim this directly, speaking of the return or resurrection of the author: for example, Burke’s *The Death and Return of the Author*, William Irwin’s *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?*, and Jane Gallop, “The Friendly Return of the Author,” in *The Deaths of the Author*.

³⁷³ As Barthes writes, “the (material) author of a narrative is in no way to be confused with the narrator of that narrative” (“Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives,” *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 79-124, 111).

³⁷⁴ The proclamation was originally made in *The Gay Science* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Kevin J. H. Dettmar writes that “both Barthes (in 1968) and Foucault (in 1969) have written obituaries, but both were quite belated; both in fact put the time of death quite close to Nietzsche’s announcement of the death of God: 1882 ...” (*The Illicit Joy of Postmodernism. Reading against the Grain* (Madison: U of

disappearance, [...] since Mallarmé, has been a constantly recurring event;”³⁷⁵ Barthes similarly cites Mallarmé, Valéry, and Proust in a sort of “prehistory” of the author’s death, as figures who have already tried to subvert ... the Author’s empire.... In France, Mallarmé, no doubt the first, saw and foresaw in all its scope the necessity to substitute language itself for the subject hitherto supposed to be its owner; for Mallarmé, as for us, it is language which speaks, not the author Mallarmé’s whole poetics consists in suppressing the author in favor of writing.³⁷⁶

In the climate of post-structuralism, Barthes’s proclamation of the death of the Author can be compared to the *Herzstich*, an act of killing a body already dead in order to guarantee against *Scheintod* [“false death”], to make sure that author was actually dead and would not be buried alive.

Yet what happened, exactly, when the Author “died?” Did he simply disappear? What traces of the Author’s presence remain after his death? Michel Foucault already posed this question directly in his 1969 essay “What is an Author?”³⁷⁷ However, when attending to the materialities of writing, the question of the “trace” of the author in the text becomes more concrete; for while different notions of authorship can be isolated conceptually, actual “authorship” is always an embodied phenomenon that happens through a set of concrete material practices and agents.

While the theological dimensions of the metaphor of the author’s “death” have been most often foregrounded, the corporeal as well as political dimensions of Barthes’s metaphoric in “Death of the Author” are also highly significant. In unpacking these dimensions, Eric Santner’s recent work once again offers a route of entry. In *The Royal Remains*, Santner examines the way that Kantorowicz’s notion of “the king’s two bodies” continues to pervade modern biopolitics. According to Kantorowicz, the medieval sovereign had both a physical body as well as the symbolic/political body.³⁷⁸ The symbolic body is not simply worn over the physical body, like a robe, but rather these two bodies are inextricably enmeshed within one another. Santner, in turn, argues that when the king died, the symbolic body did not simply disappear, leaving behind the physical body; rather, the “death” of the symbolic body produces an excess of fleshiness, which Santner grasps through the notions of “the creaturely”³⁷⁹ and the “somatic sublime.”³⁸⁰

Wisconsin P, 1996), 126-127). Deleuze writes, “on défigure Nietzsche quand on en fait le penseur de la mort de Dieu Ce qui l’intéresse c’est la mort de l’homme” [One disfigures Nietzsche when one makes him the thinker of the death of God What interested him was the death of man]” (*Foucault* (Paris : Minuit, 1986), 138).

³⁷⁵ Michel Foucault, “What is an Author,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 105.

³⁷⁶ Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” *The Rustle of Language*, 50.

³⁷⁷ “It is not enough, however, to repeat the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared. For the same reason, it is not enough to keep repeating (after Nietzsche) that God and man have died a common death. Instead, we must locate the space left empty by the author’s disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers” (Foucault, “What is an Author?” 105).

³⁷⁸ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 1981).

³⁷⁹ “Malte’s language indicates an awareness that he is confronting not simply an economic class or subculture generated by the contingencies of urban life but a fundamental dimension –what I am calling the ‘creaturely’ – of a new social (or better, *biopolitical*) constellation in which he himself is implicated” (Santner, *On Creaturely Life*, xvi).

³⁸⁰ Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 85, 233, 239.

The Author can also be understood as a sovereign of sorts in the space of meaning. In this context, the political dimension of Barthes's metaphoric of the author's death resonates loudly. Barthes writes that attempts to subvert the "Author's empire," which thereby transfer a "sovereign place to language," constitute a kind of prehistory of modernity.³⁸¹ "Refusing to assign the text ... an ultimate meaning, liberates an activity we may call countertheological, properly revolutionary, for to refuse to halt meaning is finally to refuse God and his hypostases, reason, science, the law."³⁸² As notions of the Author and Subject fill the theological void left by the death of God,³⁸³ or when the Author is overthrown, sovereignty is transferred to language itself.

In his chapter on the *Aufzeichnungen*, Santner argues that the bodily remains in the novel "persist as a fleshy excess of immanence perturbing the bodies that inhabit the spaces of modern states," the bodies that become invested with political and national sovereignty in the modern state.³⁸⁴ Santner briefly considers the prevalence of death and bodily decay in connection to authorship, even titling the chapter "The Poet's Two Bodies,"³⁸⁵ yet ultimately argues that this interpretation fails to account for the "flare-up[s] of the flesh" in the *Aufzeichnungen*, which "are ultimately symptoms that point to crucial shifts in the political theology of sovereignty, shifts that simply cannot be accounted for by the discourse of even the most materialist media theory."³⁸⁶

However, employing Santner's own terms in re-examining the "flare-ups of the flesh" in the *Aufzeichnungen* – and precisely from the perspective of a "most materialist media theory" – proves remarkably enlightening. For like the medieval King, the Author also possesses "two bodies" that are inextricably interwoven: a physical, human body, the body of a writer; as well as a symbolic or social body. In the nineteenth century, this symbolic body took on a specific form through conceptions of Author as creative genius.³⁸⁷ Employing Santner's terms, one could also argue that the bodiliness in/of the *Aufzeichnungen* persists as a residue of the Author's death, which materializes not only on the level of representation, but is enmeshed within the materiality of the text. A "sublime fleshiness" pulsates within the manuscript, spilling into the spaces of representation within the novel as well as into the reader's bodily experience during reading.

In approaching the relationship between the author's body and the body of the handwritten text, the materiality and visibility of the text offers both an image – a trace – of the process of its generation as well as an image of the author (or author-construct) that produced it.³⁸⁸ In attempting

³⁸¹ "Death of the Author" 53, 51.

³⁸² Ibid. 54.

³⁸³ Compare for example Burke, *Death and Return*, 23.

³⁸⁴ Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 235.

³⁸⁵ For Kittler, "the 'death of the king' ultimately signifies one thing and one thing only: the death and displacement of the *author*, a figure understood to be some kind of sovereign of the space of meaning, by the *writer*, a figure seen more as a stenographer who merely transcribes the inexhaustible flow of ultimately meaningless information from one medium to another" (ibid. 232).

³⁸⁶ Ibid. 234.

³⁸⁷ Andrew Piper also describes how the early nineteenth-century book's materiality, physical appearance, and typographical format reflected not only an image of the author, but also the heroic individualism of the emerging nationalistic body politic ("Producing Corporeal Integrity (Wieland, Byron, Rousseau)," *Dreaming in Books: the Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009), 58-64).

³⁸⁸ Compare Jan Dirk-Müller, "The Body of the Book: The Media Transition from Manuscript to Print," *Materialities of Communication*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, trans. William Whobrey (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1994), 32-44; and Piper 46-49.

to cultivate a certain authorial image, many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers refused to circulate or destroyed their hand-written manuscripts so as to prevent the surfacing of any physical trace that might damage their image.³⁸⁹ English dramatist Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare's writing process that "in all his writings he never blotted out a line."³⁹⁰ Rilke's writing has been similarly characterized; consider the following estimation of Rilke's poetry in light of his handwritten manuscripts:

Wenn man einige dieser Entwürfe mit den endgültigen ... Abschriften und dem Druck vergleicht, so sind die Änderungen meist unbedeutend. Das Gedicht, vorbereitet durch unzählige Beobachtungen der Natur und des menschlichen Herzens, scheint in einem Augenblick der Inspiration geboren zu sein.³⁹¹

In her *Erinnerungen an Rainer Maria Rilke*, Fürstin Marie von Thurn und Taxis presents a similar image of Rilke and his process of writing the *Aufzeichnungen*:

Denn er hat wohl nie eine Zeile ohne Inspiration und inneren Antrieb geschrieben. Er konnte dann nicht innehalten, und meist wusste er kaum, wie die Aufzeichnungen in dem kleinen Notizbuch entstanden waren, das er immer bei sich trug. Er hat es mir oft gezeigt, und ich staunte jedesmal, wenn ich die klare und reine Handschrift fast ohne jede Korrektur betrachtete.³⁹²

These descriptions (re)present an image of authorship as a pure transmission of *Geist* onto the page, unsullied by any mental or material struggle. If not entirely imagined, these words are descriptions of fair copies, for the material state of the handwritten manuscript projected by these words bears little in common with the "Berner Taschenbuch;" clean, neat, and free of any corrections, it resembles the appearance of a printed text, cleared entirely of *Durchstreichungen*. Through the lens of media history, we see in such descriptions how the logic of the printed text is projected onto the image of the Author, a modern figure that is ultimately a product of print culture.³⁹³ Free of erasures and

³⁸⁹ Grésillon, *Literarische Handschriften*, 115.

³⁹⁰ Cited in Richter, "diese amorphe Sache," 175.

³⁹¹ Paul-Emile Schazmann, "Das Schweizerische Rilke-Archiv in Bern/Bestand und Umfang," *Das Schweizerische Rilke-Archiv der Schweiz. Landesbibliothek in Bern* (Zürich: Max Niehans, 1952), 17. Cited in Richter, "diese amorphe Sache," 175. "When one compares these drafts with the final fair copies and the printed text, the changes are mostly insignificant. The poem, prepared through countless observations of nature and the human heart, seems to have been born in a moment of inspiration" (translation JH).

³⁹² Fürstin Marie von Thurn und Taxis-Hohenlohe, *Erinnerungen an Rainer Maria Rilke*, München: R. Oldenbourg ; Zürich: Corona, 1937), 8. Cited in Richter 175. "For he probably never wrote a line with inspiration and inner impetus. He couldn't pause for a moment, and often barely knew how the *Aufzeichnungen* arose in the small notebook, which he always carried with him. He often showed it to me, and I am amazed every time when I see his clear, pure handwriting, with almost no corrections" (translation JH).

³⁹³ Regarding the emergence of the notions of author and subject out of the printing revolution, Elizabeth Eisenstein writes, "in accounting for the emergence of uniquely distinguished, personally celebrated artists out of the ranks of more anonymous artisans, the preservative powers of print deserve more attention . . . [T]he cult of personality was repeatedly undermined by the conditions of scribal culture and was powerfully reinforced after the advent of printing. The personal histories of even the most celebrated masters could not be recorded until writing materials became relatively abundant. And until records could be duplicated, they were not likely to be preserved intact for very long" (*The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge U P, 1983), 129). See also

Durchstreichungen, the printed text appears as an icon (in the Peircean sense) of an ideal text that exists beyond the material and emotional immanence of its producer. The printed text can appear to be made without human hands;³⁹⁴ authorship is imagined here as a kind of pure mental work, transposed almost miraculously onto the page, rather than a manual labor that unfolds through the engagement of the hands on paper. The author is imagined to be a conduit of *Geist*, a vessel or mediator of the divine, whose process of creation yields the text in a pure, perfect, final form.³⁹⁵

In a certain sense, the manuscript can be understood to provide an image of the author, of the author's body even. For every text or manuscript is itself a material body that which interacts with the body of the writer during the process of its materialization, its emergence into being. Thus the death of the Author in the *Aufzeichnungen* is registered not only in images of material excess; rather, the "sublime fleshiness" produced by the death of the Author also remains present in the materiality of the manuscript itself and is transposed in various ways into the printed text. The implied author projected by the text is the Author in the process of dying a death that is not only metaphorical, but also materializes in the process of writing in the manuscript, a death that takes place through the concrete materialities of writing.³⁹⁶ This writer of the *Aufzeichnung* does not triumphantly conquer death, living on eternally in his work, rather his half-dead corpse continues to haunt it like a zombie.

The theme of the author's death resonates with the excessive descriptions of death and decay throughout the novel. Wich-Schwarz has even suggested that Malte writes from a post-mortem stance, a position beyond the grave.³⁹⁷ The theoretical discussion of the death of the author in the *Aufzeichnungen* becomes more complex when we consider authorship not only as an abstract category, but also as an embodied, material phenomenon. Yet this conception becomes more complicated when we take into account the semi-autobiographicality of the *Aufzeichnungen*, an issue that has continually plagued scholarship on the novel. In a letter from Rilke to Lou Andreas-Salomé from 1911, Rilke describes his conflicted relationship to Malte and to his project of writing. Rilke writes, "[dass ich] hinter diesem Buch recht wie ein Überlebender zurückgeblieben bin, im Innersten ratlos, unbeschäftigt, nicht mehr zu beschäftigen;" Malte "untergeht, gewissermaßen um mir den Untergang zu ersparen."³⁹⁸ Rilke continues,

Der andere, Untergangene, hat mich irgendwie abgenutzt, hat mit den Kräften und
Gegenständen meines Lebens den immensen Aufwand seines Untergangs betrieben, da ist

McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, 104, 131-133, and Bennett, *The Author*, 44-49. Piper describes how the early nineteenth-century book's materiality, physical appearance, and typographical format reflected not only an image of the author, but also the image of the heroic individuality of the emerging nationalistic body politic (58-64).

³⁹⁴ As Heidegger writes in his essay "The Hand and the Typewriter" (1942-43), "the typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e. the realm of the word. The word itself turns into something typed" (cited in Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone Film Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1999), 199).

³⁹⁵ Compare Bennett, "The Romantic Author," *The Author*, 55-71.

³⁹⁶ Compare Lucas Marco Gisi's discussion of a literal writing-oneself-to-death in "Selbst-/Verordnete Streichungen? Hans Morgenthalers Poetik der Auslöschung am Beispiel des Romans *Gadscha Puti*," *Schreiben und Streichen*, 225-246.

³⁹⁷ 34.

³⁹⁸ Engelhardt 88. "[That he] remains behind after this book like a survivor, utterly helpless, disengaged, unable to engage..." Malte "perishes in a sense, in order to spare me from perishing" (translation JH).

nichts, was nicht in seinen Händen, in seinem Herzen war, er hat sich mit der Inständigkeit seiner Verzweiflung alles angeeignet, kaum scheint mir ein Ding neu, so entdeck ich auch schon den Bruch daran, die brüske Stelle, wo er sich abgerissen hat.³⁹⁹

The corporeal dimension of Rilke's engagement with the project of the novel stands out in these passages: he writes of the energy [*Kräften*] used up in the process and the "brüske Stelle" at which Malte and the novel were ripped off of him, like a scab. Yet the figure of Malte also takes on a corporeal dimension, metaphorical perhaps, but also synonymous with the materiality of the manuscript: the entirety of Rilke's being passes through Malte's body, through his hands and his heart, during writing. The language here recalls Malte's description of *das Große*, the "big thing" composed of his childhood fears incarnate; a "second head," part of him yet also a foreign body, into which his own blood flowed and returned, sick and depleted.

Autobiographical references can be located in numerous details of Malte's present and past experiences. Numerous descriptions of Paris are transposed almost verbatim from letters Rilke wrote after his own arrival there.⁴⁰⁰ On the surface, the autobiographical dimension poses little argument against the poststructuralist distinctions of author from narrator. Even if the author is a referent of the work, he is no more "present" in it, no more accessible, than the author any other text. In what follows, however, I suggest that the explicitly semi-autobiographical elements in the *Aufzeichnungen* function to destabilize the conceptions of authorship and writing. A self-aware exploration in writing, the *Aufzeichnungen* experiment with and negotiate the translation or incorporation of extra-textual reality into fiction, into text. And in this vein, rather than the death of the author in the *Aufzeichnungen*, we might better speak of the transformation of the author during the act of (autobiographical) writing: for death itself is neither an end nor a vanishing act, but involves a transformation of matter, an incorporation of the living body back into the earth.

Autobiography and Intertextuality

On the surface, it may seem counterintuitive to speak of the author's absence from the *Aufzeichnungen*, given the obvious and numerous references to Rilke's life. It has often been noted that *Die Aufzeichnungen* is a thinly veiled autobiography; indeed, the first English translations of the novel were entitled *The Journal of My Other Self*.⁴⁰¹ As William Gass writes,

The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge invent 'another self' whose very name is a rhythmic echo of Rainer Maria Rilke; yet this other self, its almost unendurably beautiful and squalid encounters, these records of lonely reading and empty rooms and lovely yet lost objects, this static parade of exquisite perceptions that constitute the frozen frieze-like flow of the book, are so infused with the poet's presence, the poet's particular sensibilities, that Malte, his surrogate, cannot avoid surrendering his self to his author's *style*, even when the outcome of

³⁹⁹ Ibid. "That other one, the one who perished, somehow used me up, he fuelled the immense progression of his downfall with the strength and materials of my own life; there is nothing that did not pass through his hands, through his heart, he appropriated everything with the intensity of despair; hardly does anything seems new to me before I notice the crack in it, the rough spot where he tore himself off" (modified from Greene and Norton 33.).

⁴⁰⁰ For relevant letters and passages, see Engelhardt 23-77.

⁴⁰¹ The first edition of this English translation was published by Norton in 1930. M. D. Herter Norton, Translator's Forward, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. M. D. Herter Norton (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), 8.

his life appears to be different than his creator's. We might permit Malte to possess the thought that *Denn Verse sind nicht, wie die Leute meinen, Gefühle (die hat man früh genug), - es sind Erfahrungen*,⁴⁰² but the movement of the mind (from cities, people, and things, to animals, birds, and blooms), the music of the words (*Um eines Verses willen muss man viele Städte sehen, Menschen und Dinge, man muss die Tiere kennen, man muss fühlen, wie die Vögel fliegen, und die Gebärde wissen, mit welcher die kleinen Blumen sich auf tun am Morgen*)⁴⁰³, the romantic innocence of the idea, are unmistakably Rilkean.⁴⁰⁴

In pursuing the autobiographical in *Die Aufzeichnungen*, what interests me is not Rilke's presence in the sense Gass discusses it, i.e. as unmediated metaphysical presence transmitted via style, but rather the transpositional process by which passages from Rilke's letters and biography – for a biography, too, is a text of sorts – become intertexts, incorporated into the text of the novel.

The text of the *Aufzeichnungen* is formed out of a vast network of intertextual references: references to fictional, historical, mythical, and biblical stories and figures, from antiquity to the middle ages to the twentieth century, from Denmark, Paris, Venice, Russia, and Persia, from the work of Sappho, Goethe, Tolstoy, and Cézanne, among many others. In this light, Rilke appears as a collector of sorts, drawing on diverse sources, including his own experiences, and extensively consulting encyclopedia in gathering material to integrate into the novel. Malte's re-narrations of stories through his own consciousness are at times so fragmented that the text becomes highly disorienting and seems almost incomprehensible. The often-obscure intertextual references are at times so decontextualized that it becomes difficult for the reader to trace their origin without the aid of the numerous compendia and commentaries on the novel.⁴⁰⁵ As an assemblage of ontologically heterogeneous fragments – historical events, fiction, Rilke's life and letters – the text of the *Aufzeichnungen* can be considered a *bricolage* not only in the poststructuralist sense,⁴⁰⁶ but also in a more literal sense. The printed text remains fragmented, divided into seventy-one *Aufzeichnungen* that are laid out typographically to reflect iconically the appearance of the manuscript, divided into chunks.

Much early scholarship on the *Aufzeichnungen* engages in enumerating and tracing the numerous autobiographical references in the novel. Structuralism and New Critical readings reacted to earlier biographically based scholarship, attempting to divorce narrator from author, Malte from Rilke. Rilke's own commentary sheds interesting and at times contradictory theoretical insight onto the relationship between the narrator and author of the *Aufzeichnungen*; I deploy Rilke's commentary

⁴⁰² “For poems are not, as people think, simply emotions (one has emotions early enough) – they are experiences” (Mitchell 19).

⁴⁰³ “For the sake of a single poem, you must see many cities, many people and Things, you must understand animals, must feel how birds fly, and know the gesture which small flowers make when they open in the morning” (Mitchell 19).

⁴⁰⁴ William H. Gass, “The Death of the Author,” *Salmagundi* 65 (1984): 3–26, 8.

⁴⁰⁵ Most thorough are Small's *Rilke, Kommentar zu den Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, Stahl and Marx's *Rilke – Kommentar zu den “Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge,” zur erzählerischen Prosa, zu den essayistischen Schriften und zum Dramatischen Werk*, and Witzleben's *Untersuchungen zu Rainer Maria Rilkes “Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge.”*

⁴⁰⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962) originally employs the notion of *bricolage* in describing mythical discourse. Genette expands upon Lévi-Strauss's usage in “Structuralism and Literary Criticism,” *Figures of Literary Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 3–25. Derrida employs the metaphor to describe all discourse in “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1997), 278–294.

here not as interpretative explanation of his connection to Malte, but rather as one voice in a larger theoretical discussion. On the one hand, Rilke saw his own crises and those of Malte as intimately interrelated: as mentioned earlier, Rilke wrote that Malte's decline [*Untergang*] spared him from his own, leaving him behind as a survivor [*Überlebender*].⁴⁰⁷ Yet at the same time, Rilke rejected any identification with the character Malte. He writes in another letter that "Malte Laurids hat sich, seit Sie nicht von ihm gehört haben, zu einer Gestalt entwickelt, die, ganz von mir abgelöst, Existenz und Eigenart gewann, die mich, je mehr sie sich von mir unterschied, desto stärker interessierte."⁴⁰⁸ Yet precisely when they seem most dissociated from one another, the boundary becomes threatened, beginning to disintegrate: this happens most paradigmatically in the passages lifted verbatim from Rilke's letters, which make it seem impossible to fully separate the two from one another, to isolate one to the realm of fiction, the other to historical reality.

The notions of author and narrator, as well as the conditions of possibility of separating author from narrator, are rooted in the structure of the print universe.⁴⁰⁹ In the context of oral storytelling, the orator and audience occupy the same physical space. Writing enables the separation of reader from the writer, yet a hand-written text still bears a trace of the writer's physical presence. In the printed text, however, that connection is severed; as Walter Ong argues, the radical poststructuralist and deconstructionist stances that make the text a product of language, rather than a product of an author, represent the culmination of this structural feature of the printed text.⁴¹⁰ The theoretical dissociation of the author, who exists outside the text, from the narrator, a figure of the text, is a result of the print medium itself, which effectually erases the traces of the writer's physical presence from the printed text. This distinction between author and narrator, however, is by no means a universal distinction.

This is not to say, however, that the separation of author from narrator is a mere fiction of New Criticism and poststructuralist theories of textuality. For there is no "truth" that exists outside of discourse; reality is never given, but always constituted, mediated. For late twentieth-century theorists, and for many still today, handwritten manuscripts have become so saturated in so-called author worship [*Autorverehrung*] that they have been ousted from the domain of legitimate theoretical discourse. The question arises: what does one, what can one today *see*, when one confronts the materiality of the handwritten text – and precisely from the perspective of a most radical "death of the author" stance?

Let me pose the question in another way. According to New Criticism, the words of the textual discourse are uttered not by the author, but by the narrator. The text, of course, has an existence separate from that of the author; yet how far back in the "genesis" of the work does this distinction go? At what point is the narrator "born," or is this even an appropriate metaphor? From a poststructuralist perspective, the author departs at the very moment of inscription. Yet from the perspective of discourses of fictionality, all fictions are in some way related to actuality, incorporating "reality" into the fictional universe of the text, otherwise they would be entirely incomprehensible.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ Engelhardt 88.

⁴⁰⁸ Letter to Gräfin Manon zu Solms-Laubach, April 11, 1910, in Engelhardt, *Materialien*, 82 "Malte Laurids, since you haven't heard from him, Malte Laurids has developed into a figure, which, totally separate from myself, gained in existence and originality; the more it distinguished itself from me, the more it interested me" (translation JH). Compare Martens, *The Diary Novel*, 158-9.

⁴⁰⁹ See n393.

⁴¹⁰ Compare Ong 73, 162-66.

⁴¹¹ Compare David Novitz, *Knowledge, Fiction & Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple U P, 1987), 19.

And as Donald Murray has suggested, “all writing is autobiography.”⁴¹²

Anticipating the Structuralist, New Critical, and poststructuralist discourses on authorship, the *Aufzeichnungen* fundamentally destabilize the relationship between author and narrator in a number of ways. Yet of course, the *Aufzeichnungen* is not the only semi-autobiographical novel; while aspects of the Malte's experience refer intertextually to Rilke's biography and letters, this alone is not particularly noteworthy. The question emerges as to *why* precisely the relationship between Malte and Rilke has been such a pressing issue in the history of scholarship on the novel.

Autobiography as Narrative of Transformation

Die Aufzeichnungen continually unmask itself as a kind of semi-autobiography. To describe it as such highlights one referential layer of the novel's complex referential structure. As a semi-autobiography, *Die Aufzeichnungen* can be more specifically understood as an “aesthetic autobiography”⁴¹³ or a kind of *autofiction*, although the applicability of the latter term is debatable.⁴¹⁴ As a fictional autobiography, *Die Aufzeichnungen* is also a fiction of autobiographical writing. Like the term “author,” notions of autobiography and autofiction are loaded with theoretical baggage. Thus in discussing the autobiographical in the *Aufzeichnungen* in relation to authorship, in order to ultimately root the autobiographical in the materiality of writing, I necessarily limit the scope of my discussion, drawing primarily on the conception of autobiography as a “narrative of transformation.”

In *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation*, Carolyn Barros writes that “autobiography is about change; it narrates a series of transformations... As a text of a life, autobiography presents the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of individuals who have undergone transformations of some kind...”⁴¹⁵ The change narrated in autobiography is fundamentally transformative: “a significant mutation in the characteristic qualities and societal relationships of the principal persona, ... change is then the operative *metaphor* in autobiographical discourse.”⁴¹⁶ All autobiographies, Barros argues, can be

⁴¹² Donald M. Murray, “All Writing Is Autobiography,” *College Composition and Communication* 42.1 (1991): 66–74. Paul de Man asserts in a more nuanced manner that “autobiography... is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts” (“Autobiography as De-facement,” 921).

⁴¹³ Suzanne Nalbantian, *Aesthetic autobiography: from life to art in Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Anaïs Nin* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994).

⁴¹⁴ For an overview and historiography of the term, see E. H. Jones, “Autofiction: A Brief History of Neologism,” *Life Writing: Essays on Autobiography, Biography and Literature*, ed. Richard Bradford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 175-184.

⁴¹⁵ Carolyn A. Barros, *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998), 1.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. 2. For Tzvetan Todorov as well, transformation as fundamental to narrative. See *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1977), 219-233. Todorov writes that “narrative is constituted in the tension of two formal categories, difference and resemblance; the exclusive presence of one of them brings us into a type of discourse which is not narrative. If the predicates do not change, we are not yet within narrative, but in the immobility of psittacism; yet if the predicates do not resemble each other, we find ourselves beyond narrative, in an ideal reportage entirely consisting of differences.... Now, transformation represents precisely a synthesis of difference and resemblance.... Rather than a ‘two-sided-unit,’ it is an operation in two directions: it asserts both resemblance and differences; it engages and suspends time, in a single movement; it

distilled into the following formula: “someone telling someone else ‘something happened to *me*.”⁴¹⁷ Three elements here define the basic autobiographical act: *persona*, the subject to whom something is happening, the “to me” undergoing the transformation; *figura*, the “something” that happened, the name for the transformation itself; and the *dynamis*, the motive force for the transformation.⁴¹⁸

Rather than “self” or “narrator,” “*persona*” becomes the operative term, defined as “a ‘reinscription’ of the self ‘within a textual system.’”⁴¹⁹ This notion is exemplified by Montaigne when he writes that the very subject of his *Essays* is the transformation of the self: “I cannot keep my subject still.... I do not portray being: I portray passing.... My history needs to be adapted to the moment. I may presently change, not only by chance, but also by intention. This is a record of various and changeable occurrences.”⁴²⁰ Yet the “I” of the autobiographical narrative is never stable; not only is it transformed by the *figura*, the “something” that happened, but it is also essentially unstable in the very act of telling.⁴²¹

Attempting to apply Barros’s formula to the *Aufzeichnungen*, however, destabilizes all of its terms. In the *Aufzeichnungen*, the “someone,” the “me” doing the telling (*persona*), but also the “something” that happened (*figura*), the force behind the transformation (*dynamis*), as well as the process of “telling” itself, are all unknown or in flux. Malte directly addresses the instability of these terms in the fourth *Aufzeichnung*, where he describes his recent inability to write letters:

Ich lerne sehen. Ich weiß nicht, woran es liegt, es geht alles tiefer in mich ein und bleibt nicht an der Stelle stehen, wo es sonst immer zu Ende war. Ich habe ein Inneres, von dem ich nicht wußte. Alles geht jetzt dorthin. Ich weiß nicht, was dort geschieht.

Ich habe heute einen Brief geschrieben, dabei ist es mir aufgefallen, daß ich erst drei Wochen hier bin. Drei Wochen anderswo, auf dem Lande zum Beispiel, das konnte sein wie ein Tag, hier sind es Jahre. Ich will auch keinen Brief mehr schreiben. Wozu soll ich jemandem sagen, daß ich mich verändere? Wenn ich mich verändere, bleibe ich ja doch nicht der; der ich war, und bin ich etwas anderes als bisher, so ist klar, daß ich keine Bekannten habe. Und an fremde Leute, an Leute, die mich nicht kennen, kann ich unmöglich schreiben.⁴²²

permits discourse to acquire a meaning without this meaning becoming pure information; in a word, it makes narrative possible and yields us its very definition” (233).

⁴¹⁷ Barros vii.

⁴¹⁸ “The *persona* is the spoken or inscribed subject of the transformation, the ‘to me’ while changing, being looked back on by the changed self; the *figura* is the mode or type of transformation, the ‘something’ that happened; and the *dynamis* is the motive force or power to which the inscribed *persona* attributes the change, the ‘what’ that changed the ‘me’. The *persona* is constructed in sets of *before* and *after* qualities and characteristics that say, ‘I was not always as I now am; I have changed.’ The *figura* identifies and encapsulates the change that is implied by the before and after *persona* and frames the potential and limits of the change within its term or phrase. The *dynamis* specifies and elaborates the motive force to which the *persona* of autobiography attributes the transformation” (Barros vii).

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. 12. Barros cites here Paul John Eakin, *Fictions of Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1985), 186.

⁴²⁰ Barros 6.

⁴²¹ Ibid. 20.

⁴²² KA 3 456. “I am learning to see. I don’t know why it is, but everything enters me more deeply and doesn’t stop where it once used to. I have an interior that I never knew of. Everything passes into it now. I don’t know what happens there. Today, while I was writing a letter, it struck me that I have been here just three weeks. Three weeks anywhere else, in the country for example, would be like one

In this passage, the process of transformation that Malte is undergoing is named as such, as a process of change [*Veränderung*]. Malte describes the instability of his *Ich*, the transformation of himself as *persona*, during this process: “If I’m changing, I am no longer who I was.” How to adequately define the *figura* remains for Malte unclear; in certain moments, Malte grasps it as a process of “learning to see,” yet the “something” that is happening to him remains fundamentally ungraspable: “I have an interior that I never knew of. Everything passes into it now. *I don’t know what happens there.*”⁴²³ The cause of this transformation, the *dynamis*, also remains unknown - “ich weiß nicht, woran es liegt...;” the act of telling, the “someone telling someone else,” is also thrown into question: “Wozu soll ich jemandem sagen, daß ich mich verändere?”

Malte continually returns to the idea that a transformation is occurring within and around him and attempts to grasp it in different ways. Following his experience with the dying man in the *Crémérie* in the eighteenth *Aufzeichnung*, Malte describes his fearful attempts to defend himself against this transformation:

Und ich wehre mich noch.... Ich sage mir: es ist nichts geschehen, und doch habe ich jenen Mann nur begreifen können, weil auch in mir etwas vor sich geht, das anfängt, mich von allem zu entfernen und abzutrennen. ... Aber ich fürchte mich, ich fürchte mich namenlos vor dieser Veränderung. Ich bin ja noch gar nicht in dieser Welt eingewöhnt gewesen, die mir gut scheint. Was soll ich in einer anderen? Ich würde so gerne unter den Bedeutungen bleiben, die mir lieb geworden sind, und wenn schon etwas sich verändern muß, so möchte ich doch wenigstens unter den Hunden leben dürfen, die eine verwandte Welt haben und dieselben Dinge...⁴²⁴

Here, Maltes grasps the transformation he is undergoing as a departure, a distancing or a separation [*entfernen* and *abtrennen*] from everything in the world, in both a semiotic and existentialist sense: the departure from the world of established meanings is also connected with the departure of the dying man from the world of the living. Death is imagined not simply as an ending, but also a process of

day; here they are years. And I don’t want to write any more letters. What’s the use of telling someone that I am changing? If I’m changing, I am no longer who I was; and if I am something else, it’s obvious that I have no acquaintances. And I can’t possibly write to strangers” (modified from Mitchell 5-6).

⁴²³ Mitchell 5. My emphasis.

⁴²⁴ KA 3 490. “And I am still defending myself... I tell myself: ‘Nothing has happened,’ and yet I was able to understand this man just because inside me too something is taking place that is beginning to withdraw and separate me from everything... I am frightened, I am unspeakably frightened of this transformation. I have not yet grown accustomed to this world, which seems good to me. What would I do in another? I would so much like to remain among the meanings that have become dear to me, and if something has to change, I would at least want to live among dogs, who have a world that is related to our own, with the same Things in it” (Mitchell 52). In a passage in parentheses which is footnoted “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben,” Malte writes further: “Ich bin diesen Versuchungen erlegen, und das hat gewisse Veränderungen zur Folge gehabt, wenn nicht in meinem Charakter, so doch in meiner Weltanschauung, jedenfalls in meinem Leben. Eine vollkommen andere Auffassung aller Dinge hat sich unter diesen Einflüssen in mir herausgebildet, es sind gewisse Unterschiede da, die mich von den Menschen mehr als alles Bisherige abtrennen. Eine veränderte Welt. Ein neues Leben voll neuer Bedeutungen. Ich habe es augenblicklich etwas schwer, weil alles zu neu ist. Ich bin ein Anfänger in meinen eigenen Verhältnissen” (ibid.)

transformation. The language of the passage resonates with the condition of the *Fortgeworfenen*, who exist beyond the symbolic order of society, hovering in a liminal zone between life and death.

Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge can be conceived as a narrative of transformation, yet none of the elements of the formula “someone telling someone else ‘something happened to me’” are fixed entities; each of them is destabilized in the process of writing itself. The temporality of the *Aufzeichnungen* as autobiographical narrative is also remarkable in that Malte does not describe something that *happened* to him, in the past tense, but rather something that *is happening* to him, in the present tense. The transformation that Malte undergoes is inseparable from the process of recording it; writing becomes both the *figura* in the *Aufzeichnungen*, as well as the *dynamis*: Malte’s attempts to write, the crises he endures in attempting to narrate his experience, become the motive or propagating force of the transformation he continues to endure. As *figura* and *dynamis*, writing itself becomes the source of the destabilization of the self/subject, the *persona*, during the act of writing. At the same time, the unity of the “someone” who tells, as well as his agency with respect to the generation of the text, begins to dissolve. Malte writes,

Noch eine Weile kann ich das alles aufschreiben und sagen. Aber es wird ein Tag kommen, da meine Hand weit von mir sein wird, und wenn ich sie schreiben heißen werde, wird sie Worte schreiben, die ich nicht meine. Die Zeit der anderen Auslegung wird anbrechen, und es wird kein Wort auf dem anderen bleiben, und jeder Sinn wird wie Wolken sich auflösen und wie Wasser niedergehen. Bei aller Furcht bin ich schließlich doch wie einer, der vor etwas Großem steht, und ich erinnere mich, daß es früher oft ähnlich in mir war, eh ich zu schreiben begann. Aber diesmal werde ich geschrieben werden. Ich bin der Eindruck, der sich verwandeln wird.⁴²⁵

The crisis of language, narration, and subjectivity and the radical questioning of the nature of reality in the *Aufzeichnungen* manifest themselves in a quasi-autobiographical mode of narration in which neither *persona* nor *figura* nor *dynamis* are stable, a narration that does not reflect on and report a transformation but emerges immediately out of it, a mode of narration that *is* transformation itself. Narration of transformation does not happen after the fact, rather the subject is constituted, transformed, by the very act of narrating itself.

As explored in the previous chapter, the dynamics of these transformations in the novel can be rooted in the concrete materiality of handwriting. In his article “Streichen als Moment produktiver Negativität,” cited previously, Hubert Thüring describes the radical openness, the dissolution of boundaries that characterizes the process writing by hand, involving the continual transformative activity of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen*:

Through the possibility that the text could be expanded or edited at any moment, perpetually and subject to whim, the process of writing is potentially endless... In this way, a subject- and text-oriented space-time of indeterminate coordinates emerges: in each moment, the boundaries between subject and text, inner and outer, beginning and end, self and other, imagination and perception, past and present, presence and absence can, in principle, shift, dissolve, or be drawn anew, more or less explicitly, more or less performatively, more or less

⁴²⁵ KA 3 490. “For some time yet, I shall still be able to write all of these things down or say them. But a day will come when my hand will be far away from me, and, when I command it to write, the words it writes will be ones I do not intend. The time of that other interpretation will come, and not one word will be left upon another, and all the meanings will dissolve like clouds and fall like rain. Through I am full of fear, I am yet like a man in the presence of greatness, and I recall that I often used to have this sensation within me before I began to write. But this time it is I who shall be written. I am the impression that will be transformed” (Hulse 34).

reflexively.⁴²⁶

This depiction of writing echoes the fundamental characteristics of the crises Malte endures in Paris: the dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object, self and world, interior and exterior, past and present, presence and absence, imagination and perception. Yet the dissolution of these boundaries happens on the material level of writing by hand in the manuscript: passages that were once discarded, existing in a past stage of the genesis of the work, can resurface, entering again into the primary discourse of the text. In the process of writing, elements can be dislocated from their original context and recombined into new temporal and spatial configurations. In the space of the text, things imagined and things actually experienced can inhabit the same ontological sphere. The distinctions between the subject, the writer, and the material text become unstable. As Nietzsche wrote, “UNSER SCHREIBZEUG ARBEITET MIT AN UNSEREN GEDANKEN” [our writing implements are co-collaborators on our thoughts].⁴²⁷ Agency in the process of writing is not contained solely within the mind of writing subject alone, but is also dispersed throughout his or her body, as well as other bodies that constitute in the scene of writing: language, the signifier, as well as the materials of writing, paper, pen, and ink.

What we catch sight of, then, when we return to the manuscript of *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, is that the “autobiographical” can be located not only on the level of biographical reference (i.e. correspondences between Rilke’s biography and Malte’s), but also in the materiality of writing and the manuscript: not only does Malte’s crisis of writing reflect Rilke’s concrete process, but more deeply, the figures, events and texture of reality in the space of the novel bear autobiographical witness to the process of writing itself.

Emerging through a ceaseless process of writing, scratching through, and re-writing, the space of writing in and of the *Aufzeichnungen* is a space of continual transformation and fluctuation, a space in which boundaries of all sorts collapse: between interior and exterior, between self and other, between fiction and reality, between material and immaterial. “Mit jeder Zeile brach man die Welt an,” Malte writes of the process of reading; with each line, piece by piece, a world comes slowly into existence. Similarly, the creation of the (fictional) world of the *Aufzeichnungen* – the creation of any textual world, for that matter – happens bit by bit; the so-called immaterial aspects of the work – content, meaning, representation – emerge through the interaction of an ensemble of materialities that constitute the scene of writing. Yet in the *Aufzeichnungen*, the peculiar space-time of the writing⁴²⁸ becomes the space-time of the novel; meaning does not efface matter, rather meaning is permeated – remaining visible, palpable even at times – by the materialities of writing through which it emerges.

Through the materiality of the manuscript, we can thus reconsider more closely the distinction between narrator and author/writer, between Malte and Rilke. On the level of the immaterial, Rilke and Malte occupy different ontological zones, namely historical reality and fiction;

⁴²⁶ Translation JH. “Durch die Möglichkeit des jederzeitigen und beliebigen Fort- und Umschreibens wird der Schreibprozess potenziell unabschließbar... Auf diese Weise bildet sich eine subjekt- und schriftbezogene Raum-Zeit von unbestimmten Koordinaten heraus: Die Grenzen zwischen Subjekt und Schrift, innen und außen, Anfang und Ende, Eigenem und Fremden, Einbildung und Wahrnehmung, Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Präsenz und Absenz können im Schreibprozess prinzipiell in jedem Moment verschoben, aufgelöst oder neu gezogen werden und dies mehr oder weniger explizit, mehr oder weniger performativ, mehr oder weniger reflektiert” (56).

⁴²⁷ Cited in Stingelin, “Schreiben,” 11.

⁴²⁸ Thüring, “Streichen als Moment,” 56.

yet in the manuscript, in the materiality of the signifier, these zones touch, problematizing their distinction.

Whose Hand Is It That Writes?

In a variety of ways, the *Aufzeichnungen* force us to question the relationship between the fictional world, i.e. the text-internal world in which the narrator dwells, and the text-external world of the author/reader. Beyond the biographical links between Rilke and Malte, beyond the direct incorporation of letters (extra-textual reality) into the textual discourse “penned” by Malte, the relationship between Rilke and Malte, between author and narrator, is also complicated when we return to the physical scene of writing.

In exploring the relationship between Malte and Rilke through the materiality of the manuscript, I pose the question: whose hand is it that writes? The handwritten text in the manuscript bears a trace of the author’s hand, his physical presence in manipulating the material text, yet the narrator is thought to “utter” a discourse that the written text re-presents. Yet Malte is not a narrator who tells, rather he is emphatically a writer, an *Aufschreiber* or *Aufzeichner* [one who writes down or sketches].⁴²⁹ The written text in the manuscript, as well as the *Durchstreichungen*, can be attributed to Rilke’s hand. Yet are these written marks on paper *only* traces of Rilke’s handwriting, or can they also be thought (re)present Malte’s?

One is immediately tempted to answer this question in the negative; Malte is, of course, a fictional figure, whereas the “Berner Taschenbuch” is a real document existing in the reader’s actuality. Indeed, one cannot simply equate Malte’s fictional writing with Rilke’s actual writing. But why not, exactly? What is the relationship between the author and the fictional narrator in the act of writing, at the moment when the narrator’s discourse first enters into material form through the stroke of the writer’s pen? To what degree can writer and narrator be distinguished in the materiality of the text, in language, where the fictional and actual most closely touch? Might the author be thought to perform the narrator’s discourse, to impersonate the narrator, to embody the narrator in the act of writing? Certainly, there is no single answer to this question, in part because the answer would differ for each historical writer if not each instance of writing. Yet to answer this question is particularly difficult in Rilke’s case given the complexity of Malte’s semi-autobiographical connection to Rilke the fact that Malte himself is a writer; as such, the text we read is a product of his fictional hand.

Approaching these questions through the materiality of the text, rather than by imposing the abstract theoretical categories of author/narrator and fiction/actuality, provides an alternative route of entry. Consider, for example, the relationship between primary discourse of the text and the

⁴²⁹ This becomes all the more emphatic when we compare the earlier versions of the introduction to the novel, first published in the *Sämtliche Werke*, in which Malte is introduced in the third person and begins narrating orally while sitting in front of a fire. The “zweite Fassung des Eingangs,” as it has been edited, begins as follows: “An einem Herbstabende eines dieser letzten Jahre besuchte Malte Laurids Brigge, ziemlich unerwartet, einen von den wenigen Bekannten, die er in Paris besaß. Es war ein schwerer, feuchter, gleichsam beständig fallender Abend; ... So war es angenehm, die beiden Lehnstühle an das Kaminfeuer zu rücken... Der Schein des Feuers kam und ging über die Hände Brigges, ... Das Gesicht Malte Laurids Brigges aber war weit aus alledem fortgerückt, ins Dunkel hinein, und seine Worte kamen aus unbestimmter Entfernung, als er von sich zu sprechen begann...” (KA 3 640).

writer's meta-discourse, often found in manuscript margins. Manuscript margins traditionally serve several functions: a repository for emerging ideas, to which the author can later return and work through, a space for corrections and revisions of passages that have already been inscribed, as well as a space for meta-discursive commentary.⁴³⁰ In the “Berner Taschenbuch,” however, there are no margins to speak of, the pages are filled to the very edges with text. As such, any corrections occupy the same paginal space as the primary discourse, written directly after a crossed-out word or crammed between the lines. Distinguishing meta-discourse from primary discourse becomes difficult not only because they occupy the same paginal space, but also because significant portions of the primary discourse of the novel are composed of Malte's meta-discursive commentary on his process of writing. In the space of the manuscript, how can one definitively distinguish Malte's meta-discursive commentary from Rilke's? It becomes difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish *Selbstreferenz*, Rilke's meta-discourse on his own process of writing, from *Fremdreferenz*, Malte's meta-discourse, in this case, which becomes part of the primary discourse of the novel through its inclusion in the printed text.

Two examples serve to illustrate the merging of Malte and Rilke in the materiality of writing. Just preceding the passage from the fifty-fourth *Aufzeichnung* in which Malte narrates stories from the “little green book,” the following lines are written in the manuscript:

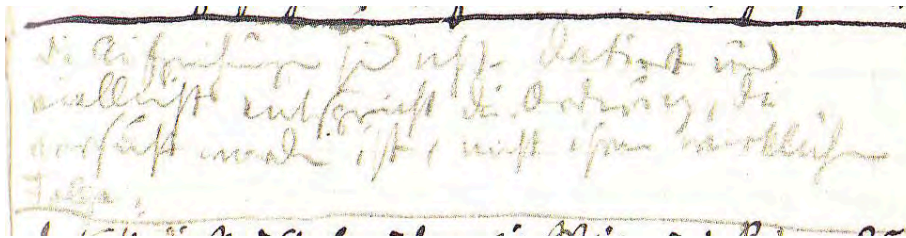


Figure 39. BT 83.

Die Zeichnungen sind nicht datiert und
vielleicht entspricht die Ordnung, die
versucht worden ist, nicht ihrer wirklichen
Folge.

Figure 40. BT Transkription 83.⁴³¹

Who writes these lines? Rilke? An implied editor, perhaps, who otherwise appears only indirectly through his annotation of certain passages with the footnote “im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben?” Do the *Aufzeichnungen* referenced in this passage in the manuscript refer to the *Aufzeichnungen* of the novel, in the “Berner Taschenbuch,” or to the fictional *Aufzeichnungen* penned

⁴³⁰ Grésillon, *Literarische Handschriften*, 76. See also Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 1992).

⁴³¹ There is an error in the published transcription that should be noted. Rather than “Die Zeichnungen sind,” the text in the “Berner Taschenbuch” reads “Die Aufzeichnungen sind....” “the *Aufzeichnungen* are not dated and perhaps the order, which is attempted here, does not correspond to their actual succession” (translation JH).

by Malte, constituting the fictional or virtual manuscript referenced which is referenced by the footnotes in the printed text?⁴³²

These lines are written in pencil, yet this alone is not enough to safely attribute them to Rilke. While Rilke often used pencil to draft sections before writing over them or rewriting them in ink, some sections are formulated only in pencil. Two lines separate this sentence from those surrounding it, yet similar lines separate one *Aufzeichnung* from another in the “Berner Taschenbuch.” Had these lines appeared in some way in the novel, they would be attributed to Malte. We attribute this meta-discursive commentary to Rilke, rather than to Malte or to an implied editor, only because it does not appear in print.

Compare the following example from the same *Aufzeichnung* of the novel, in which Malte expresses his frustration and inability to successfully narrate the death of Grischa Otrepiow:

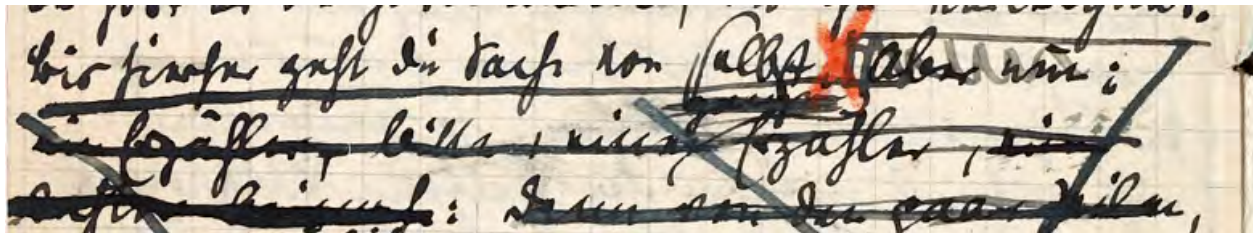


Figure 41. BT 89.

Bis hierher geht die Sache von selbst | Aber nun;
 Ein Erzähler, bitte, einen ^{ganzen} Erzähler, ein
 Dichter beinahe; Denn von den paar Zeilen;

Figure 42. BT Transkription 89.⁴³³

These lines are printed in the novel, i.e. part of the primary discourse, and as such can be attributed to Malte. Yet in the moment of writing, might these lines have expressed Rilke’s own frustration, later – or simultaneously – transformed, translated, and incorporated into Malte’s?

One could also approach the question of whose hand writes by focusing on the status of the *Durchgestrichene*. Through the process of printing, that text which is not *durchgestrichen* becomes constitutive of the discourse world, organized by the perspective of the narrator. Yet what about the *Durchgestrichene* passages in the manuscript? We may feel comfortable to simply designate them as drafts, bits of language written by the author that are discarded. Yet when we *read* what is *durchgestrichen*, where and how do these bits of represented world exist? Are they, or were they ever, “uttered” by the narrator, or does he first utter them when they are printed? Could Malte be thought to have *written* the *durchgestrichene* passages? To discourse world do the *durchgestrichene* passages belong?

The publication of portions of the so-called *avant-texte* complicates the question. Are the alternate beginnings and endings of the novel, first published in the *Sämtliche Werke* and now included in most German editions, part of *the* text or the *paratext*?⁴³⁴ Can we attribute them to Malte,

⁴³² Rilke similarly imagines such a virtual manuscript when he writes in a letter, “es ist nur so, als fände man in einem Schubfach ungeordnete Papiere . . .” (Engelhardt 82) / “It is as if one found unordered papers in a drawer” (translation JH).

⁴³³ ~~a narrator, please, a~~ ^{whole} ~~narrator, a~~ ~~poet almost. . .~~ (translation JH).

⁴³⁴ Recall that for Genette, the paratext is by definition a threshold between interior and exterior.

or only to Rilke? What about the *durchgestrichene* passages that were not originally printed, preserved in an archival box in Bern, but recently published in the facsimile edition of the “Berner Taschenbuch”? Once they enter the printed form of the facsimile, do the *Durchstreichungen* perhaps also become Malte’s marks?

If we allow ourselves to travel down this road, our speculation ultimately leads nowhere – a productive nowhere, perhaps, that fails to provide answers *per se*. The question of which meta-discursive comments can be attributed to Malte, and which to Rilke, *reframes* on the material level the more abstract question of the degree to which the novel is autobiographical. The text continually encourages us to pose the question, catching us in a productive trap of sorts. When we approach the autobiographical connection between Malte and Rilke not by comparing their biographies, but by examining the relationship between Malte’s and Rilke’s process on the material level, in the manuscript, the neat oppositions between fiction and actuality, between writer and narrator, disintegrate. For in the process of writing, the very distinctions between subject and text, inner and outer, beginning and end, finished and unfinished, are constantly under erasure.⁴³⁵

The broader question of the degree to which the novel is autobiographical, of what can be attributed to Rilke and what only to Malte, however, *obscures* an underlying question: *why* exactly is the relationship between Malte and Rilke so troubling to begin with? What is it about the text that continually provokes scholars to reexamine this issue?

Breaking the Frame: Material Intertextuality and the Transpositional Mode

In the passage cited at the beginning of this chapter, Malte narrates the burning of his father’s papers. Among the documents Malte discovers in sifting through his father’s *Nachlass* is a “Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde” [description of a death hour], which gives Malte insight into his father’s final hours:

Es kann sein, daß ich nun etwas weiß, was er gefürchtet hat. Ich will sagen, wie ich zu dieser Annahme komme. Ganz innen in seiner Brieftasche befand sich ein Papier, seit langem gefaltet, mürbe, gebrochen in den Bügen. Ich habe es gelesen, bevor ich es verbrannte. Es war von seiner besten Hand, sicher und gleichmäßig geschrieben, aber ich merkte gleich, daß es nur eine Abschrift war. ... Ich begreife übrigens jetzt gut, daß man ganz innen in der Brieftasche die Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde bei sich trägt durch alle die Jahre.⁴³⁶

In the eighth *Aufzeichnung*, Malte describes the idea of an *eigener Tod* [individual death] as something unique to a person, a physical part of one’s constitution, likened to the pit of a fruit.⁴³⁷ This is echoed

⁴³⁵ Compare Thüring, “Streichen,” 56.

⁴³⁶ KA 3 568, 572. “It is possible that I now know something that he did fear. Let me say how I arrived at this assumption. Well inside his wallet was a sheet of paper, folded long since, brittle and broken along the creases. I read it before I burned it. It was written by the finest hand, firmly and evenly; but I perceived right away that it was only a copy... Now I understand very well, by the way, that man will carry, all those years, the description of a death hour” (modified from Hulse 104, 107).

⁴³⁷ “...Früher wußte man (oder vielleicht man ahnte es), daß man den Tod *in* sich hatte wie die Frucht den Kern. ... Meinem Großvater noch, dem alten Kammerherrn Brigge, sah man es an, daß er einen Tod in sich trug” (KA 3 459-60). “In the old days, people knew (or perhaps they had an intuition) that they had their death *inside* them like a fruit has a core... My grandfather, old Chamberlain Brigge, visibly carried his death about within him” (modified from Hulse 7 and Mitchell 10).

in Malte's notion that one carries a *Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde* throughout one's life in a metaphorical *Brieftasche*; in the latter case, however, the location of death is transposed from the human body into an external body, a text. Malte emphasizes the physical condition of the paper, which, long folded and now fragile, crumbles. Like the dead body that once carried it, it too undergoes a process of decay and disintegration.

Malte even comments on the steady and even handwriting of the letter, noting that it is an *Abschrift*, or copy. This fact that it is a copy signals its peculiar referentiality. Although Malte's father has carried this document deep within in his existential *Brieftasche* throughout his entire life, the letter most directly describes the death of seventeenth-century Danish king Christian IV:

'Drei Stunden vor seinem Tod,' so begann es und handelte von Christian dem Vierten. Ich kann den Inhalt natürlich nicht wörtlich wiederholen. Drei Stunden vor seinem Tod beehrte er aufzustehen. Der Arzt und der Kammerdiener Wormius halfen ihm auf die Füße. Er stand ein wenig unsicher, aber er stand, und sie zogen ihm das gesteppte Nachtkleid an. Dann setzte er sich plötzlich vorn an das Bettende und sagte etwas. Es war nicht zu verstehen. Der Arzt behielt immerzu seine linke Hand, damit der König nicht auf das Bett zurücksinke. So saßen sie, und der König sagte von Zeit zu Zeit mühsam und trübe das Unverständliche. Schließlich begann der Arzt ihm zuzusprechen; er hoffte allmählich zu erraten, was der König meinte. Nach einer Weile unterbrach ihn der König und sagte auf einmal ganz klar: 'O Doktor, Doktor, wie heißt er?' Der Arzt hatte Mühe, sich zu besinnen.

'Sperling, Allergnädigster König.'

Aber darauf kam es nun wirklich nicht an. Der König, sobald er hörte, daß man ihn verstand, riß das rechte Auge, das ihm geblieben war, weit auf und sagte mit dem ganzen Gesicht das eine Wort, das seine Zunge seit Stunden formte, das einzige, das es noch gab: 'Döden,' sagte er, 'Döden.'

Mehr stand nicht auf dem Blatt. Ich las es mehrere Male, ehe ich es verbrannte. Und es fiel mir ein, daß mein Vater viel gelitten hatte zuletzt. So hatte man mir erzählt.⁴³⁸

Malte names the immediate referent of the text, King Christian IV. Yet the description also gives Malte insight into his own father's death; for Malte – and thus for the reader of *Die Aufzeichnungen* as well – a referential relation to Malte's father is established. As such, this *Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde* lies on a threshold. The letter refers both inside and outside the text: to Christian IV, a figure of

⁴³⁸ KA 3 568-9. "Three hours before his death,' it began. It was about Christian IV. Naturally I cannot reproduce the content word for word. Three hours before his death, he desired to get up. The doctor and Wormius, the valet, assisted him to his feet. He stood rather unsteadily, but he stood, and they pulled on his quilted dressing-gown. Then he suddenly sat down at the foot of the bed and said something unintelligible. The doctor kept hold of his left hand so that the King would not sink back on the bed. There they sat, and from time to time the King, made an effort and sluggishly repeated the unintelligible thing he had said. In due course, the doctor started talking to him in encouraging tones, hoping little by little to work out what the King was saying. After a while the King interrupted him, saying all at once, quite distinctly, 'Oh doctor, doctor, what is your name?' The doctor had some difficulty remembering. 'Sperling, most gracious Majesty.' But this was really of no consequence at all. The moment the King found that they understood what he was saying, he opened wide his right eye, which he still had, and put the whole expression of his features into that one word his tongue had been forming for hours, the one thing that still existed: 'Döden,' he said, 'döden.' That was all that was written on the sheet of paper. I read it several times before I burned it. And I recalled that my father had suffered greatly at the last. That was what they had told me" (Hulse 104-105).

historical extra-textual reality, as well as to Malte's father, a fictional character of the text. Furthermore, Rilke copied this description almost verbatim from an encyclopedia; a fictional copy in the space of the novel, the passage is an actual copy of another text. The printed passage in the novel, referring both to Malte's father and to Christian IV, is thus a virtual palimpsest of multiple physical and virtual texts that are distinct but simultaneously merge together: copied from an encyclopedia (1) into the "Berner Taschenbuch" (2) and subsequently translated into the printed text (3), it also exists as a fictional, crumbling document (4) that Malte transcribes from memory into the fictional manuscript (5) on which the novel is based, the manuscript referenced in the footnotes "im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben." An inter-text that spans the ontological boundaries, between fiction and reality, between materiality and immateriality, the status of this passage in the novel can also be conceived through the Kristevaian and Genetteian notions of intertextuality but is fully grasped by neither.⁴³⁹

The novel is filled with instances of self-aware intertextual reference. Malte incorporates scenes and figures from Paris into his writing and re-narrates fictional and historical narratives, creating an intertextual web of sorts through which he attempts to grasp transformations and self and world he is undergoing and witnessing. Yet the extra-textual references are not incorporated seamlessly into the text; while woven into an intra-textual web within which new referential connections emerge, they remain marked by their otherness, sticking out from the fabric of the text like threads demanding to be unraveled.⁴⁴⁰ At times, Malte gives enough information to contextualize a transposed reference: in the case of the *Beschreiben einer Sterbestunde*, he names its immediate referent, Christian IV. In re-narrating the stories from the "little green book," Malte similarly names the figures of Grisca Otrepjow and Charles the Bold. At other times, however, the fragmentary details surfacing from Malte's memory and recorded on the page fail to condense into a coherent narrative. It seems clear that Malte is citing from *somewhere*, yet he fails to give enough context to establish a frame of reference. For both contemporary and today's readers, the intertextual references are so obscure and so radically decontextualized that the narrative becomes very difficult to piece together without reference to available indices.

Continually citing, referencing, translating, incorporating, and transposing from other texts, the novel is self-consciously intertextual, a *bricolage* composed of multiple texts woven into an intertextual fabric. Among the vast network of intertextual references to various ontological domains that merge in the space of the novel, there are numerous references to Rilke's life and works, including passages that are copied almost verbatim from Rilke's letters. In the same way that the description of Christian IV's death is transposed from one context into another, accruing additional levels of referentiality through its incorporation into the text, some of Rilke's experiences of Paris were directly transposed from his letters into the fictional text. In the process, they were transferred from Rilke's pen to Malte's.

The question remains unanswered to *why* the semi-autobiographical nature of the work remains so troubling in secondary scholarship. Instead of attempting to answer the question "what is

⁴³⁹ See Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia U P, 1980), particularly "The Bounded Text" (36-63) and "Word, Dialogue, Novel" (64-91); Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia U P, 1984); Gérard Genette, *The Architext: an Introduction* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992); Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1997). For a good general introduction to intertextuality, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁴⁴⁰ The notion that all language is marked by otherness is central for Kristeva's conception of intertextuality. Compare Allen 53.

the relationship between Malte and Rilke,” between writer and narrator, I instead ask: what about the text continually provokes this question?

In responding, I employ the notion of the frame. More specifically, I return to Victor Stoichita’s analysis of a certain phenomenon in Northern Renaissance art exemplified by certain paintings of Pieter Aertsen, which were introduced in the third excursus.⁴⁴¹ In order to bring the Aertsen paintings into dialog with the *Aufzeichnungen*, it is necessary to take a detour and trace Stoichita’s analysis in some depth.

In the opening chapter of *The Self-Aware Image*, Stoichita deals with what he calls a “split painting” or “inverted still life;” these paintings are “genuine ‘theoretical objects,’ paintings whose theme is *painting*.”⁴⁴² In the foreground of Pieter Aertsen’s *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, for example, the viewer is confronted with a *trompe l’oeil* depiction of a kitchen space dominated by a large hunk of meat. Through the open doorway or passageway, we see a depiction of the biblical scene in the background in which Martha chooses to occupy herself with kitchen and household tasks, whereas Mary chooses to remain with Christ. Given the painting’s historical context, it is remarkable that a giant hunk of meat in a kitchen dominates the foreground of the painting, whereas the religious scene is relegated to the background.⁴⁴³ As such, the painting inverts the typical relationship between the sacred and the profane, between the text and the “outside-the-text.”⁴⁴⁴ What previously had been the subject of painting as such, a religious scene is made into a “framed reality:” framed by the doorway, it becomes a “living painting.”⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴¹ There is of extensive work on the “frame” in literary studies, yet for various reasons Stoichita’s analysis of Aertsen’s images provides the most productive model for analyzing certain dynamics of the *Aufzeichnungen*. The term “frame” has been used in numerous ways in literary analysis, making it difficult to establish a unified definition. Ryan and Berlatsky both offer an overview of the history and metaphorical slippage of the concept of the frame in literature, and offer new metaphors – the stack and the gutter, respectively – through which to better systematize the various framing phenomena (Marie-Laure Ryan, “Stacks, Frames and Boundaries, or Narrative as Computer Language,” *Poetics Today* 11.4 (1990): 873–899; Eric Berlatsky, “Lost in the Gutter: Within and Between Frames in Narrative and Narrative Theory” *Narrative* 17.2 (2009): 162-187). Most commonly, notions of framing are encountered in the context of paratextuality (Genette, *Paratexts*) and in the analysis of “frame narratives” or “embedded narratives.” Umberto Eco also proposes a notion of “intertextual framing” as tied to genre expectations (*The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: U of Indiana P, 1984), 21). For canonical works of frame analysis, see Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); John Frow, “The Literary Frame,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 16.2 (1982): 25-30; Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987), 54-73; and Georg Simmel, “The Picture Frame: An Aesthetic Study,” trans. Mark Ritter, *Theory, Culture & Society* 11.1 (1994): 11-17. See also William Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997) and Werner Wolf and Walter Bernhart, eds., *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2006).

⁴⁴² Stoichita 3.

⁴⁴³ Prior to and during this period, the primary subjects of painting were religious.

⁴⁴⁴ Stoichita 7. Christopher S. Wood makes a similar argument about the emergence of landscape as a genre in *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993).

⁴⁴⁵ Stoichita 4.



Figure 43. Pieter Aertsen, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, 1552, oil on wood, 60x101.5 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

While the doorway acts as a frame separating different domains – background from foreground, sacred from profane – it is noteworthy that neither the doorway, nor the other aperture, the window in the upper right corner, are fully depicted. These frames *within* the painting are cut off by the frame *of* the painting. The structural composition produces an ambivalent relationship between the sacred, “pictorialized” scene in the background and the kitchen space in the foreground: on the one hand, the doorway frames the scene, separating it from the foreground; yet the table in the foreground does not extend all the way to the left edge of the painting, revealing that the spaces are actually connected, that the scene is a continuation of the foreground.⁴⁴⁶

The intermediate area between the exhibition space and the background image belongs to both the real and the imaginary spaces, thereby presenting itself as an ‘interworld’. On the one hand, it is an extension of the space that receives the painting, and on the other, it radiates from and reinforces what already exists in the background painting (the still-life behind Mary).⁴⁴⁷

Yet the space of the foreground of the painting also “encroach[es] into the spectator’s space” through the *trompe l’oeil* effects: the “conspicuous open cupboard on the right... appears to pierce the surface of the painting. ... And the whole of the actual painting could be seen as a work conceived as a result of ‘disintegrations, reconstructions, advances, retreats, imitations, deceptions.’”⁴⁴⁸ The lower edge of the table, which reinforces the painting’s boundary, acts like a “springboard” between the viewer’s world and the world of the painting. As such, an “intermediate area” or “interworld” arises through the tug-and-pull of the painting, an in-between space in which the spectator’s space and the space the canvas remain separate while also strangely (if only illusorily)

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. 5.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. 8.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. 4, citing from Étienne Binet, *Essay des merveilles de nature, et des plus nobles artifices: Pièce très-nécessaire, à tous ceux que font profession d’éloquence* (Rouen: R. de Beauvais, 1621), 308, 314.

merging.⁴⁴⁹

The notion of the frame discussed hereto is specific neither to Aertsen nor to Stoichita's analysis. All intertextuality could, in a sense, be approached as a kind of re-framing. The particular paintings Stoichita discusses, however, suggest not only an intertextual relationship, but also involve the reader in an act of transubstantiation. Like the table, which connects the spectator's space with the space of the painting, the large hunk of meat in the center of the canvas also connects, both literally and allegorically, the foreground to the background of the painting. On the surface, the hunk of meat is jarring: "What more striking contrast could there be than that between a world of objects in the middle of which a large piece of meat prevails and the world in which the Word of Christ reigns?"⁴⁵⁰ Yet the piece of meat, or *carne* in Latin, points to the incarnation of Christ, "the word made flesh." Recognizing this, the viewer is called to participate in an act of transubstantiation, to recognize the body of Christ, the lamb of God, the Word made flesh, in the giant hunk of meat.⁴⁵¹ "Through the problematization of food," Stoichita writes,

[Aertsen's] paintings thematize in a very specific way the actual function of the painting. The fundamental contrast that structures Aertsen's work is the contrast that exists between flesh and word. But it must be stressed that this contrast is produced by the *painting* itself. For, in the final analysis, it is the painting (cut and divided, split, intertwined; in a word, *intertextualized*) that follows the action of the transubstantiation by, as it were, becoming 'spiritual food.'⁴⁵²

All intertextuality, it could be argued, could be approached through the concept of the frame. Yet the inter-textuality we encounter in Aertsen happens not only referentially, but through an act of transubstantiation, implying an ontological connectedness between otherwise ontologically separate domains. This, what I describe as a *material intertextuality*, an intertextuality as transubstantiality, is central to the intertextuality in and of the *Aufzeichnungen*.

In Aertsen's painting, the boundary between the fictional space of the painting and the real space of the viewer is pierced. Returning to the issue of the frame, Stoichita writes:

By subjecting his 'camera' to a 'tracking shot,' by capturing in its field of vision what normally remains 'outside-the-frame' (the 'pro-fane,' the 'outside-the-text,' the 'nonpainting') and by transforming this outside-the-text into a painting, Aertsen marks a significant moment in the history of art. Aertsen's originality does not lie in the fact that he pierced the background of the representation by placing a painting there. On the contrary. In this case, the innovation is that he brought into the work's field of vision a fragment of the spectator's space, that is to say what was (according to the norm) *this side of* the painting.⁴⁵³

What we find, in other words, is a complex and elaborate play between realms that are separated, but also connected, by a complex array of frames: between background, foreground, and spectator's space; between sacred and profane; between allegorical and realistic modes of representation.

⁴⁴⁹ This notion of the "interworld" also resonates with Genette's definition of paratextuality as occupying a threshold that is both outside and inside a boundary. See Genette, *Paratexts*, 2 and Allen 100.

⁴⁵⁰ Stoichita 8.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. 9.

⁴⁵² 10. Stoichita cites here Kristeva's definition in of intertextuality in *Séméiotiké: recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1969).

⁴⁵³ 8.

Something fundamentally similar, a kind of metaleptic rupture,⁴⁵⁴ happens over and over again in the *Aufzeichnungen*. Malte/Rilke transposes from numerous historical and fictional texts in the process of writing. However, like in the Aertsen painting, the boundary between foreground and background, between text-internal and text-external reality, fiction and autobiography, is pierced over and over again in the *Aufzeichnungen*. Not only is the text of the *Aufzeichnungen* self-consciously intertextual, foregrounding the material otherness of the various texts from which it is composed; the *material practice* of writing, both in and of the *Aufzeichnungen*, is a *self-consciously intertextual writing* that highlights the act of material transposition from one textual system into another. For example, Malte describes the material form of “little green book” from which he recounts the historical stories of Grisca Otrepjow and Charles the Bold. Malte also describes the crumbling material condition of the *Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde* he finds after his father’s death. Rilke’s practice of transposing almost verbatim from his own can also be viewed through this lens. The text constantly traverses the boundary between different domains, opening and closing the frame between that both separates intra- and extra-textual reality, but also allows them to flow into one another.

In this light, the intertextual references to Rilke’s own biography and letters become particularly significant. Treatments of the relationship between Malte and Rilke oscillate between grasping Malte as an entirely autonomous figure on the one hand and a “thinly-veiled” mirror image of Rilke on the other. Seen through the lens offered by Stoichita, Rilke’s biography becomes a “framed reality” within the text, yet the precise nature and location of the frame are difficult to establish because the textualization of reality, the transposition of extra-textual reality into the text, also involves a *transformation*. Framed by the fictional, a window onto biographism is constantly opened; the biographical remains framed, yet the boundary between the fictional and autobiographical is also *pierced*. Situating ourselves within the fictional ontology, looking through the window of the text into the “back room” of Rilke’s life, we can identify four spaces in this configuration: 1) the narrative reality in which Malte dwells, 2) Rilke’s biography, 3) various intertextual realities, and 4) the reader’s actuality, which comes into contact with the other framed realities through the activity of reading. The frame that links these spaces is language itself, the text; a consequence of its referential structure and iterability, the same language, the same text, can simultaneously refer to multiple domains (as in the case of the *Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde*), allowing them to collapse into each other and challenging our tendency to categorically distinguish them.

Approaching the relationship between Malte and Rilke through the notion of the frame and with attention to the practice of *transpositional writing* allows us new insight into the issues of writing, authorship, and autobiography, which are self-consciously negotiated and problematized through

⁴⁵⁴ Narratologically speaking, the term *metalepsis* refers to the transgression of narrative boundaries, and is most commonly employed in analysis of embedded or frame narratives. See Gérard Genette, Jane E Lewin, and Jonathan Culler, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell U P, 1980), 234-37; Enikő Bollobás, “Tropes of Intersubjectivity: Metalepsis and Rhizome in the Novels of H.D. (Hilda Doolittle),” *Americana* 7.2 (2011), accessed 14. April 2003, <http://americanaejournal.hu/vol7no2/bollobas>; Brian Cummings, “Metalepsis: The Boundaries of Metaphor,” *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, & Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge UP, 2007), 217–233; Elaine Freedgood, “Fictional Settlements: Footnotes, Metalepsis, and the Colonial Effect,” *New Literary History* 41.2 (2010): 393–411; Debra Malina, *Breaking the Frame: Metalepsis and the Construction of the Subject* (Columbus: Ohio State U P, 2002); John Pier, “Metalepsis,” *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, last updated 13. March 2013, last accessed 23 March 2013. <http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Metalepsis>; Tim Whitmarsh, “An I for an I: Reading Fictional Autobiography,” *CentoPagine* 3 (2009): 56–66.

material process of writing of the novel. Malte's emphasis on both the materiality of the *Beschreibung einer Sterbestunde* as well as its double referentiality (Christian IV and Malte's father), for example, is paradigmatic of the *transpositional aesthetic* that both shapes the material practice of writing and manifests itself in the space of the representation. *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* emerges through this lens as an experiment in *textualizing* extra-textual reality, incorporating extra-textual material into text through the material process of writing.

As a "theoretical object,"⁴⁵⁵ the work itself makes autobiography and authorship its subject, bringing the material and immaterial dimensions of writing into tension. Drawing attention not only to the content of the transposed intertexts, but also to the *act* of re-narration and the materiality of the texts transposed, the novel constantly reminds us of its own materiality. While we could approach the relationship between Malte and Rilke from the perspective of intertextuality, we find that something more is happening when we focus here on the materiality of textual production. In this way, the frame separating not only fiction and reality, Malte and Rilke, but also the material and immaterial dimensions of the text and of writing, is continually broken. As we have explored over the unfolding of this dissertation, the novel constantly points to the existence of and is pervaded by the presence of another "intertext" that remains present *within* the printed text: the manuscript.

All established definitions of intertextuality – for Genette, the presence of one text within another, or for Kristeva and Barthes, the radical intertextuality of all language – effectually efface the *materiality* of the text. In the Genettean and the Kristevan/Barthesian senses, Text is understood to be immaterial or ideal. One text can only become present or referenced within another when its content is extracted from its original material context and translated into another one.⁴⁵⁶ The printed text of the *Aufzeichnungen* is an inter-text in a different sense. In various ways, the materiality of the manuscript becomes present in the printed text. On the one hand, the typographical layout of the printed text offers an iconic image of the manuscript, the fragmented blocks of text in the printed work mirroring the visual appearance of the text in the manuscript. The annotations "im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben," which serve as a kind of autobiographical confession, also open the structure of the printed text, allowing a virtual manuscript lying beyond its surface to materialize. The materiality of the manuscript is not only evoked in the footnotes or in peculiar images that stick out in their material strangeness, like symptoms whose cause appears untraceable, but rather, the materiality of writing and of the manuscript are extensively enmeshed or entangled within the text. *Genotext* within *phenotext*,⁴⁵⁷ *material text* within *semiotic text*,⁴⁵⁸ the materialities of writing become transposed into the space of the representation.

The occasional annotations "im Manuskript an den Rand geschrieben" thus serve as a kind of autobiographical confession⁴⁵⁹ of the novel's *mit der Hand Geschriebensein*, its status as *manu*-script, a

⁴⁵⁵ Stoichita 3.

⁴⁵⁶ As such, deconstruction and poststructuralism yield a dual or contradictory heritage: the materiality of the signifier (Derrida) and the corporeality of writing/reading (Barthes) stand in contrast to notions of intertextuality that effectually efface the materiality of the text (Chartier viii).

⁴⁵⁷ Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 86-87; Allen 50-6, 66.

⁴⁵⁸ Shillingsburg 71.

⁴⁵⁹ Stoichita writes regarding the reproduction of apertures and frames in painting that "the reproduction of 'real openings' in painting can be regarded as the image's 'autobiographical confession,' a confession that must be interpreted on the ... metaphorical level. To be more precise: still-life pieces, landscapes, and interior are in no way, *a fortiori*, views of a niche, through a window or door; but it can be confidently maintained that paintings that depict a niche, window, or door are confirmation of a meditation on the structural consubstantiality between the picture frame and all

text written by hand [*à la main*]. They open a window onto a virtual manuscript – a manuscript whose status is neither real nor purely fictional, like the interworld of Aertsen’s painting – that lies just beyond the surface of the printed work. Like the *trompe l’oeil* effect in Aertsen, which bring the real space inhabited by the spectator into play with the fictional space of the painting, the footnotes in the *Aufzeichnungen* bring the “Berner Taschenbuch,” an object in the reader’s reality, into play with the *virtual manuscript*. The referential play or tension *within* the work – between text and virtual manuscript, between the text Malte writes and the materiality of the different texts he cites or re-narrates – mimics the tension between the printed work and the actual manuscript, the “Berner Taschenbuch.” In both cases, the boundary between domains is continually traversed or pierced, destabilizing the relationship between fiction and reality, between Malte’s life and Rilke’s, between the material and immaterial aspects of the work.

* * *

Through the continually breaking of frames within the novel, *Die Aufzeichnungen* fundamentally disturbs the surfaces of our literary ontological categories: author, implied author, narrator; avant-text, text, paratext; text and work.⁴⁶⁰ The reason that we *continue* to ask the question of the degree to which the novel is autobiographical, the degree to which Rilke’s own life and process of writing are the referent of Malte’s writing, is that the text constantly opens and closes the frame.

In other words, we are provoked to ask these questions precisely because the work thematizes and theorizes the process of writing.

Like the viewer of *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, who is engages by the painting in an act of transubstantiation, recognizing the body of Christ in the hunk of *carne* in the foreground, the reader of the *Aufzeichnungen* similarly participates in an act of transubstantiation, recognizing with a kind of *Neues Sehen* the materialities of writing within the printed text. A virtual materiality is not simply imagined, but *resurrected*; even in its “final” printed form, the work remains through and through a *manu-script*, a text written by hand.

other types of enframement.... All picture frames establish the identity of the fiction. To give a painting a painted frame, in addition to its actual frame, indicates that the fiction has been raised to the power of 2” (55).

⁴⁶⁰ One could argue that this sort of defamiliarization is fundamental to all literature. Viktor Shklovskij first coined the term in “Art and Technique,” reproduced in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), 15-21. A similar notion can be found in Nietzsche’s conception of art as breaking through the ossified “cells of concepts” [Zellen der Begriffe] in “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense,” as well as in Foucault’s conception of a “laughter that shatter[s] ... all the familiar landmarks of ... our thought” in the preface to *The Order of Things*, xv.

Conclusion

Circulating Reference and the Literary Work

...fast so, als ob es nicht mehr aus dem Kopf über die Hand,
den Stift aufs Papier, sondern umgekehrt aus dem Papier
heraus in den Stift hinein, von dort in die Hand und über den
Schreibarm, die Schultern und den Hals in den Kopf strömen würde.⁴⁶¹
—Gert Jonke, “Individuum und Metamorphose,” *Stoffgewitter*

Gerade das Eigenthümliche der Sprache, daß sie
sich blos um sich selbst bekümmert, weiß keiner.
—Novalis, “Monolog”

This dissertation has attended to the numerous ways in which the materiality of the manuscript and handwriting remain present in the printed text of the *Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. In certain cases, the concrete markings on the manuscript page and the physical activity of *Schreiben* and *Durchstreichen* in the manuscript become transformed into figures and scenes in the fictional space of the novel. To a degree, the narrative reality of the *Aufzeichnungen*, unstable and in flux, can be rooted in the perpetual transformation of the text in the process of its emergence. The materialities of writing continually haunt the spaces of the novel, or spill into the space of representation: certain details stick out peculiarly in the text, like symptoms whose cause cannot be traced, or fragments of ruins pulsating with a signifying force that seems beyond interpretation. The materialities of writing also spill into the reader’s bodily experience at times; disturbing images produce bodily sensations in the reader, transforming him or her into an affective image of the materialities of writing.

Wilhelm G. Jacobs writes that “editing is a translation from one kind of materiality into another one. The edition does not present the old text, but a newly constituted one....”⁴⁶² In the case of the *Aufzeichnungen*, the material form of its print editions differs radically from that of the manuscript. Rilke, as we know, had extreme difficulty producing a “fair copy” of the novel to be translated into a typescript. This dissertation has sought to uncover traces of the “original” in the translation, so to speak, the ways in which the manuscript and the materialities of the novel’s composition continue to inhabit the printed forms of the novel. Unlike a painting by Cézanne or a sculpture by Rodin, in which the physical marks made by the hand are still perceptible in the final work, the process of printing, of transposing the text from the medium of the handwritten manuscript into the medium of print, *effaces* the materiality of production.

⁴⁶¹ “... almost as if it no longer flowed out of the head and through the hand, the pen onto paper, but rather in reverse, from the paper into the pen, and from there into the hand and through the writing arm, the shoulders and the neck into the head” (translation JH).

⁴⁶² “Materie - Materialität – Geist” 20.

The phenomenon of a *trans-* or *intermateriality* that pervades the work also informs a notion of authorship that takes shape within it. As Thomas Richter, editor of the facsimile edition of the “Berner Taschenbuch,” has shown, the Rilke of the *Aufzeichnungen* was much less a *Kopfarbeiter* than a *Papierarbeiter*. Incorporating fragments from various domains, the *Aufzeichnungen* emerge as an assemblage of intertextual fragments transposed from different domains, including historical and fictional stories as well as Rilke’s biography and letters. At the same time, and in various ways, the materialities of writing also become transposed into the novel, manifesting a kind of *material intertextuality*, in which the materiality of the manuscript or the materialities of writing remain present, through a certain kind of reference, in the text’s representational fabric.

Returning to the manuscript enables us to restore a dimension of referentiality that is severed, rendered invisible, by the print medium. While there are self-reflexive instances in which writing or narration is depicted, this dissertation has concerned itself largely with phenomena, figures, and moments that can be conceived as symptoms, peculiar protrusions that stick out of the textual fabric and that seem to signify something but are difficult to place.⁴⁶³ The traces or symptoms of the materiality of writing that I have explored are multivalent and point in many directions. Yet returning to the manuscript and bringing it back into proximity with the printed text – almost like reattaching a limb whose absence is felt as phantom pains – allows us to navigate the dimension of referentiality that has been severed.

The object of focus of this dissertation has been neither the *product* of writing, the text, nor the *process* of writing, nor the medium itself, in this case handwriting in the manuscript. Its object spans the distinction between the “ideal text,” a text that is somehow the “same” regardless of the material text that bears it: the manuscript, a standard print edition, a translation, or the more recent facsimile edition. The notion of “text” that has taken shape through these explorations is that of a product that bears within it the process of its production, a text that is both material *and* immaterial. It is not simply that the process of writing is represented in the text, nor that the process and medium *shape* this product. What this dissertation traces, rather, is a circulation between materiality and representation, between the materiality of writing and the immaterial or ideal spaces of meaning.

In part, the recent interest in the materiality of textual production can be connected to the increasing production and availability of manuscript facsimile editions, which have been facilitated by the possibilities of digitalization. While the fixity and stability of “the” text has been undone theoretically, the fact of the increasingly availability of facsimiles is also altering how we conceive of the text. Once we have encountered the manuscript, in a sense, we cannot go back. If we let it, the encounter with the manuscript has the potential to irrevocably alter how we come to the text, how we read. And in the case of the *Aufzeichnungen*, when the materiality and visuality of the manuscript are evoked so powerfully in the “final” text, maintaining a categorical separation between final text and *avant-texte* begins to make less sense.

What notion of “reference” is at work here? In the cases we have explored, we have discovered relationships of iconicity, indexicality, and symbolism (all in the classical Peircean sense) in the relationship between the manuscript or the materialities of writing on the one hand, and the “content” of the printed work on the other. Yet the phenomena we have explored, in which something of the materiality, of writing and of the manuscript is somehow *transposed* into the space of representation, or even into the reader’s affective response to the text while reading, are grounded in a different kind of hermeneutics, a different kind of reference.

The notion of reference I am after can be coordinated with Bruno Latour’s notion of “circulating reference.” In the second chapter of *Pandora’s Hope*, Latour is concerned with the

⁴⁶³ Santner, *Creaturely Life*, xv.

phenomenon of scientific reference, arguing that language and nature – i.e., things in the natural world, and signs that refer to them – do not belong to separate ontological domains: “there is neither correspondence, nor gaps, nor even two distinct ontological domains, but an entirely different phenomenon: circulating reference.”⁴⁶⁴ Following a scientific expedition in the Amazon, Latour traces the series of transformations that occurs when plant samples are extracted from their context, sorted, laid out on a table, described, categorized, and labeled with tags. In the process, each individual specimen is transformed into a sign that refers to countless others. These specimens are then transported into boxes in a cabinet, which is transformed into a table or chart, which eventually makes its way into a scientific text.⁴⁶⁵ At each stage in this process, there is an act of transposition or transmission; from one step to the next, something is transformed, but also preserved through its transformation.⁴⁶⁶ “During the transportation,” Latour writes, “something has been preserved. If I can manage to grasp this *invariant*, this *je ne sais quoi*, I believe, I will have understood scientific reference.”⁴⁶⁷

Each stage in the chain described above – from the Amazon forest to its representation in a scientific publication – involves a movement from concrete to abstract, from matter to sign. Echoing Barthes’s description of myth,⁴⁶⁸ Latour writes that each abstraction becomes the concrete material for another transformation:

at every stage, each element belongs to matter by its origin and to form by its destination: it is abstracted from a too-concrete domain before it becomes, at the next stage, too concrete again. We never detect the rupture between things and signs, and we never face the imposition of arbitrary and discrete signs on shapeless and continuous matter. We see only an unbroken series of well-nested elements, each of which plays the role of sign for the previous one and of thing for the succeeding one... [If we then] erase the mediations that I have delighted in describing ... [we] obtain the canonical model of words and world separated by an abyss and related by the perilous bridge of correspondence.⁴⁶⁹

Latour’s model has its limitations in discussing the relationship between nature and language. For example, Latour is not concerned with the *generation* of scientific terms – with the fundamental arbitrariness of the taxonomical terms used to designate plant specimens, for instance⁴⁷⁰ – but with the way that scientific discourse uses established conventions to speak (truthfully) about the world. Latour’s conception of “circulating reference” is not a model of *all* reference, but specifically describes the process by which science “pack[s] the world into words,” transforming and transposing material things and phenomena into concepts of language.

For a scientific text to be “reliable,” to convey “truth,” these chains of reference must be traceable. The reader must be able trace the successive chains of reference backwards, from abstraction to concrete referent. If the reader cannot, the chain is broken:

⁴⁶⁴ 24.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. 36.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ In general, Latour is somewhat dismissive of semiotics and the philosophy of language, failing to acknowledge the degree to which certain aspects of poststructuralist semiotic theory, reaching back to Nietzsche and even earlier, in fact resonate with and are precursors to the model he outlines.

⁴⁶⁹ 56, 72.

⁴⁷⁰ I would refer the reader here to Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 67-69; and Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv-xxiv.

If the chain is interrupted at any point, it ceases to transport truth – ceases that is, to produce, to construct, to trace, and to conduct it. *The word “reference” designates the quality of the chain in its entirety [sic], and no longer *adequatio rei et intellectus*. Truth-value circulates here like electricity through a wire, so long as this circuit is not interrupted.*⁴⁷¹

A fictional text, of course, is different in many respects from a scientific text, primarily in that the object of reference is not a materially extant, extra-textual reality, but a fictional world that is projected by, or that materializes through the language of text itself. As such, it is not “truth-value” that circulates in a fictional text, but something else. The fictional world projected or materialized by the *Aufzeichnungen* is not a mimetic representation of a material world outside itself, outside of language. The domain of materiality to which it refers is the materiality of its own production. As this dissertation has shown, however, the novel does not simply refer or represent self-reflexively; rather the materialities of writing become translated, transferred, transposed into the representational fabric of the text.

The endeavor that I have undertaken over the course of my engagement with the materialities of writing in Rilke’s *Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* is, in certain respects, similar to Latour’s study of scientific reference. For Latour, circulating reference involves a transformation of matter into language. Yet we can also trace a kind of circulating reference at play in the *Aufzeichnungen*, a translation or transference between the materialities of writing and the level of signification or representation, between the “materiality of the text and the immateriality of the work,” to use Chartier’s terms once again. The goal has been to reveal the intricate connections between the materiality of writing/text, on one hand, and the “meaning” of the literary text on the other.

But at the same time, the model of circulating reference I have been exploring in the *Aufzeichnungen* is in certain respects more complex than Latour’s notion. The circulation between the material form the semantic content, which that takes place on the manuscript page and lingers spectrally in the printed text, is by its very nature difficult to trace. The circulation reference in the *Aufzeichnungen* does not move bi-directionally along a circuit, rather materiality and meaning become enmeshed within a network of entanglements replete with disturbances and recursions.

For fictional representation and literary meaning are also always rooted in the material world; all representation *materializes* through the interactive assemblage of agencies that constitute what we commonly call “writing.” This dimension of reference, however, has gone largely unexplored, in large part because it is severed from view by the processes of editing and printing, which translate the work from one materiality into another, rendering the former largely invisible.

When we reconnect the manuscript to the printed text, we are able – at least in part – to observe or trace this circulation of reference, but we also become aware of how the circuit is *broken* in the process of printing. Bringing the manuscript and the printed text together closes the circuit – at least to a degree – allowing us to trace the way in which the materialities of writing become transposed into the textual representation. Certain details that in the printed text may have protruded uncannily from the textual fabric, charged with the force of an untraceable signification, find their place with the path of circulatory reference that becomes increasingly palpable, pulsating but not fully graspable in the printed text alone.

In contemporary literary studies – and across the humanities and social sciences more broadly – it often seems that the rift between camps focusing on materiality, affect, and anti-hermeneutics on the one hand, and representation, meaning, and textual hermeneutics on the other, is growing wider and wider. My exploration of the materialities of writing in Rilke’s *Aufzeichnungen*

⁴⁷¹ 69.

des Malte Laurids Brigge – of the circulation of reference between the material and the “immaterial,” of writing as an interactive assemblage of agencies in the production of what we call “meaning,” of *representation* as a process of *materialization* – offers itself perhaps less as a method, then as an assemblage itself of lenses through we can begin a process, like Malte, of “learning to see.”

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