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Paraphrasis: Goethe, the Novella, and Forms of Translational Knowledge

I hate quotation.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

IF THERE IS ONE ORTHODOXY LEFT in today's ecumenical critical environment it is surely the heresy of paraphrase. No amount of methodological turns, it seems, have been able to leave behind the ghost of Cleanth Brooks. "Most of our difficulties in criticism are rooted in the heresy of paraphrase," he patiently warned us in his literary-papal bull of 1947. "If we allow ourselves to be misled by it, we distort the relation of the poem to its "truth," we raise the problem of belief in a vicious and crippling form, we split the poem between its 'form' and 'content.' . . . To refer the structure of the poem to what is finally a paraphrase of the poem is to refer it to something outside the poem."¹ After Brooks who would disagree that the meaning of a poem cannot be reduced to what he called the poem's "prose-sense," to something unconnected to the poem's form? Who among us today would dare practice or teach paraphrase?

Brooks' exile of paraphrase from the pantheon of critical practice at the end of the Second World War was offered as a solution to a perceived crisis in the humanities, a crisis of course that strikes us as deeply familiar today. And yet to one of Brooks' humanist predecessors, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, the denunciation of paraphrase would have seemed a distinctly odd choice as a means of critical renewal. At work during another moment of a profound sense of crisis in the humanities that accompanied great geo-political struggle, paraphrase was seen by Erasmus as the *solution* to this crisis, not its source. Writing to his fellow humanist, Johann Henckel, in response to an inquiry about his new project of biblical paraphrases, Erasmus noted the "general neglect of languages and the humanities," and continued: "The ancient writers lie neglected. Scholastic philosophy, which I wished to see reformed, not eliminated, is in decline. Almost all liberal studies are dying."² The cause of this rising neglect was, according to Erasmus, methodological conflict. As he wrote in the preface to his *Paraphrase on Acts*, comparing warring humanists to Europe's belligerent kings, "These chaotic enmities between one monarch and another, so fraught with disaster, so implacable, so long-continued, so far beyond all cure—are they not like some desperate sickness of the whole body? Can we discern any part of the world that is immune from the infection of this dread disease? But even more destructive

than that is this pestilence, which with its astounding and insoluble conflict of convictions has overmastered all men's minds" (CWE 50:2-3). Paraphrase was to be the medicine that cured the pestilence of intellectual partisanship. Beginning in 1517, Erasmus, who had already translated and edited the gospels, now turned to paraphrasing them, producing the longest running portion of his entire corpus.

Erasmus was of course drawing on a long, if somewhat eclectic, tradition of biblical and literary paraphrase, including Juvenecus' fourth-century metrical version of the gospels, Arator's sixth-century epic on the Acts of Apostles, or Peter Comestor's twelfth-century biblical abridgment, *Historia scholastica*, to name but a few. Since Quintilian, with whom Erasmus was deeply familiar, paraphrase had been understood as an important type of critical writing and thus critical thinking.³ And paraphrase would live a vibrant after-life, from the rise of the genre of biblical paraphrase in the early modern period to its important role in facilitating the translation of vernacular texts, exemplified in John Dryden's praise of paraphrase as one important type of translation in his preface to *Ovid's Epistles*.⁴ But by the end of the eighteenth century, paraphrase would fall into disrepute. Transforming the words of others to learn the rules of language would give way to a theory of literature that depended upon ideas of natural, spontaneous, and deeply individual expression.⁵ The imitative mirror, so we have been told, gave way to the generative lamp. Brooks' denunciation of paraphrase revealed him to be nothing more than an epigone of an early-nineteenth-century paradigm.

In this essay I want to revisit this historical moment after which paraphrase was thought to be no longer possible. Few writers were more instrumental than Goethe in overturning the rhetorical theory of language that had long dominated European letters throughout the early modern period, and yet by his late period paraphrase would assume, perhaps rather surprisingly, pivotal importance. Emerging out of his *Übersetzerjahrzehnt* (1796-1806) that began with his translation of Cellini's autobiography and ended with Diderot's *Rameaus Neffe*,⁶ paraphrase would become one vital element in a variety of a forms of translational knowledge that came to inform Goethe's post-classical work. Whether it was the Old Testament paraphrase that appears in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* I.4, the over twenty cases of paraphrase in novellas like *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, the paraphrastic speech at the heart of Ottilie's *Tagebuch* in the *Wahlverwandschaften*, the prosification of never written ballads in *Novelle*, or Goethe's reference to himself as the "Epitomator mein selbst" in 1823,⁷ paraphrase emerges with great frequency and significance in Goethe's late work. And yet of this self-proclaimed "self-abridger" we as critics have so far taken little or no notice. Like Erasmus before him, Goethe diagnosed his age as one of extreme intellectual and political partisanship, and like Erasmus, Goethe turned to paraphrase in his late period to try to think his way out of this critical impasse. *Paraphrasis* was to be the communicative framework that would cure the "insoluble conflicts" of the ailing literary-political body. Paraphrase was the antidote to the twin literary spirits that continued to haunt Europe: Luther and literalism.

At its most fundamental level, paraphrase is the art of speaking otherwise. It demarcates a communicative field in which the literary practice of citation

is radically called into question. Paraphrase asks us to inquire about our relationship to the textuality of language, to what we do with texts when we preserve, transmit and transmute them. Like its related concepts of paradox and parody, the speaking *outside* of paraphrase lends it a challenging relationship to its origin. It says in other words what could not be said originally. As Brooks suggested, paraphrase raises the question of belief (whether in a crippling form remains open). We should not be beguiled by paraphrase's reductive identity, that it conveys a simplification of a more complex truth. As we will see in Goethe, paraphrase can entail the taking of great social risk. But paraphrase is more than just a form of substitution, one trope among many. It enters into the tropological space of likeness through the practice of containment. It does not point elsewhere, like metonymy, but enfolds a source within itself in a Deleuzian sense.⁸ It makes a claim to totality, a totality that is also a birth, a generative moment of *unfolding*. Paraphrase is marked by this double aspect of performative compaction and surplus. One can begin to see how the dual structure of enfolding and unfolding, contraction and expansion, that resided within paraphrase could make it such an attractive figure for Goethe's late thought grounded as it was in notions of morphology, polarity and spirality.

Goethe's own paraphrastic turn was in many ways a means of addressing a larger historical shift surrounding practices of citation at the turn of the nineteenth century. In place of an early-modern practice of commonplacing—of excerpting quotations from books and inscribing them in still other books—the hermeneutic paradigm that was fast emerging around 1800 depended upon an altogether different nexus of readerly citation, dissection, and inscription. There was a profound shift underway in how individuals related to the texts that they read and how those texts came to matter in their lives, but this shift still depended in crucial ways on a form of citationality, only now in a different vein. Goethe's paraphrastic turn, by contrast, was aligned with neither the nascent hermeneutics of reading nor an older cultural practice of commonplacing. It was put forth, I want suggest, as an alternative model to *both* of these cultures of literalism. In place of either of the paradigms of citation and interpretation, which mutually reinforced one another, Goethe's paraphrastic stance argued for a model of transformation. In response to a growing sense of crisis surrounding the possibility of holding literature in common in an age of too many books, paraphrase emerged in Goethe's late work as a solution to this breakdown of literary sociability that was itself prefaced on the problem of literary novelty. The more the literary came to be inscribed within a commercial modernity, the more its value was a function of innovation, the *less* it seemed that literature was something that could be mutually shared among readers. Paraphrase proposed a new way of having literature in common, one that was based not on a model of possession, of having originals, and thus originality, in common, but instead on the commonality of a shared transformative grammar. It reconfigured both the social space of textual interactions and the temporal structures that contributed to the making of literary tradition.

If paraphrase initiated for Goethe a fundamental rethinking of practices of citation—of our relationship to reading books and remembering

books—it also required an engagement with the medium of the book itself that underpinned such early-nineteenth-century reading experiences. How could the synoptic reading practices that informed paraphrastic transformation be enacted in the linear format of the book? Where there was sequentiality, how could there be synthesis and summary? On the other hand, how could the expansionist mode of reading that paraphrase also suggested be enacted in the finite form of the book? How was the unfolding of paraphrase to be communicated in and through the bounded technology of the printed codex? The possibility of paraphrastic knowledge thus rested on a fundamental reevaluation of the nature of the book across two very different lines of media-technological figuration in Goethe's work.

Finally, where paraphrase asked early-nineteenth-century readers to reconsider their reading practices and the media-technological conditions that underwrote such practices, it also proposed new formal principles of composition as well. What was to be the form of paraphrase? As I will try to show, it was the genre of the *novella* that emerged in Goethe's late work as the preferred vehicle for articulating this paraphrastic paradigm. Far from aligning the novella with the purely new—with the “unheard of” as it has traditionally been understood—Goethe identified the novella as a key form for addressing paraphrase's overlapping qualities of transformation, synopsis and amplification.⁹ The novella emerged as a site not of the unheard, but the *overheard*, a process of incorporation, transcription and condensation.

For the purposes of this essay, I will be focusing on two key works that stand at the threshold to the late period, *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* and *Die Wahlverwandschaften*, where the former was a novella eventually enfolded into the genre of the novel (in the *Wanderjahre*) and the latter was unfolded out of the same novel into a new novel itself, which would of course then reincorporate the genre of the novella within itself through *Die wunderlichen Nachbarskinder*. I am interested in the ways that these two works address the question of paraphrastic speech and the technological conditions of writing upon which such speech rests. Although seldom brought into critical contact with one another, these two works both address an older man's changing relationship to the order of writing via a female character's innovative textual strategy (the beautiful widow or Ottilie). Whether it is the widow's *Brieftasche* or Ottilie's *Tagebuch*, the medium of the book (broadly conceived as a bound textual object) is reconfigured in these textual spaces to initiate new non-citational models of intermedial interaction. As I will show, paraphrase would crucially come to encompass in Goethe's late work questions of both interlingual and intermedial transformation. I thus conclude by returning to Goethe's programmatic statement about the genre of the novella in *Novelle*, whose mode of composition I see as embodying a fundamental reflection on the recurring questions of sequentiality, simultaneity and mediality that underpinned the concept of paraphrase in his late work. Despite its general dismissal among critics, *Novelle* is a fascinating engagement with the problematic of medial sequentiality and formal simultaneity.

We are in many ways still haunted by the heresy of paraphrase. Following Goethe (and Erasmus before him), I'm interested in exploring the particular knowledge that *paraphrasis* might offer for our contemporary critical

environment today. How might the en- and unfoldings of paraphrase serve as a means of addressing yet another moment marked by extraordinary critical and theoretical fragmentation? In what ways might the “interstitial perspective,” in Homi K. Bhaba’s words,¹⁰ of paraphrase serve as a way of foregrounding modes of translational rather than citational engagements with texts? And how might this centering of the translational within the humanities posit not only new models of literary sociability, but also a renewed vitality of a textual tradition within the present? How might texts make more of a purchase through paraphrase on the lives of those who engage with them? In other words, how could the pedagogy of paraphrase make texts *matter*?

I. “Enough”: The Crisis of Citation

“Genug, das Jagdgedicht selbst war abgesendet, von welchem wir jedoch einige Worte nachzubringen haben.”¹¹ So concludes the elaborate intertextual drama between the Major and the widow in the final version of Goethe’s *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* that involved the transmission of his didactic poem of the hunt, the “Jagdgedicht,” and her woven, Penelopean container, the *Brieftasche*. “Genug” here signifies a crucial boundary moment, one in which some narrative portion has come to an end (the act of sending the poem) and a new one is about to begin (the act of receiving the poem). But this very boundary is marked by its transgression in a double sense—it repeats, at the level of synopsis, what the narrative has previously tried to explain (“das Jagdgedicht selbst war abgesendet”) just as it fails to continue forward, with the narrative substituting instead more synopsis (“von welchem wir jedoch einige Worte nachzubringen haben”). In place of either the reception or citation of the poem we are offered its paraphrase. “Enough” is the sign of a communicative interstice.¹²

The drama of exchange between the widow and the Major that concludes in a moment of paraphrastic speech will be initiated in similar fashion. As Flavio recounts for his father his decisive encounter with the widow, he remarks: “Ich weiß nicht was ich alles sagte, ich weiß nicht wie ich mich gebärdet. Sie entfernte sich nicht, sie widerstrebte nicht, sie antwortete nicht. Ich wagte es sie in meine Arme zu fassen, sie zu fragen, ob sie die Meinige sein wolle. Ich küßte sie mit Ungestüm; sie drängte mich weg.—Ja doch, ja! oder so etwas sagte sie halblaut und wie verworren. Ich entfernte mich und rief: ich sende meinen Vater, der soll für mich reden!” (FA 10:454) At the conclusion of the son’s story we are told, “Was der Major dachte, wollen wir nicht entwickeln.” The crisis of citation here—the son’s inability to recount the widow’s words and the narrator’s inability to recount the Major’s thoughts—marks the introduction of the widow’s *Brieftasche*.

The Major and the widow will engage in an extended textual interaction punctuated by three of the most distinct moments of paraphrase within the novella. The first occurs when the Major calls on the widow the next day to press his son’s “case,” and we are told that the widow and her friend, an older woman, are having a discussion about the “case” or *Brieftasche* that the widow is herself constructing. The older woman claims that it is not possible to make such an elaborate work of art without thinking of the person whom

it is for, without a particular purpose or *Zweck* in mind. (The Kantian overtones of this passage are unmistakable, to which I will return.) The widow eventually confesses that when she is making such handicrafts she does indeed think of others: “Als junge Mädchen werden wir gewöhnt mit den Fingern zu tifteln und mit den Gedanken umher zu schweifen, beides bleibt uns indem wir nach und nach die schwersten und zierlichsten Arbeiten verfertigen lernen, und ich leugne nicht, daß ich an jede Arbeit dieser Art immer Gedanken angeknüpft habe, an Personen, an Zustände, an Freud’ und Leid” (FA 10:456). In response to this confession—to which a reply is hardly said to be possible—the Major, who is said to value the graceful wisdom of Roman writers, attempts to offer a spontaneous “prosaische Paraphrase” of a few poetic verses in order not to appear as a pedant. We are never told which verses he paraphrases, but we are told that the conversation almost grinds to a halt because of it.

The conversation is rescued when the older woman reaches for a collection of poetry lying on the table in front of them. After an extended discussion of the nature of poetry, which the Major sees as a means of promoting his son’s case (“Der Major, der das vorwaltende Gespräch eigentlich nur als Mittel ansah seine Zwecke zu befördern” [FA 10:458]), the widow and the woman confess that they have heard portions of the Major’s “Jagdgedicht” recited from the mouth of his son and would now like to hear him recite it himself. The Major declines, but finally promises to send a manuscript copy. It is at this point that the widow hands him her letter case in order to send her his poem. In return, the Major is once again reminded of a classical passage, and once again to avoid the charge of pedantry he attempts a paraphrase, this time described as an “artige Paraphrase.” The move from *prosaisch* to *artig* results in a “satisfactory” conclusion of the scene (“so schloß sich denn diese Szene auf eine befriedigende Weise”).

This series of paraphrastic exchanges concludes when the Major retires to his family property in order to retrieve a copy of his poem. While searching for the “Jagdgedicht,” he comes across a number of his old commonplace books (*Gedenk- und Erinnerungsbücher*) that contain excerpts of ancient and modern writers (FA 10:464). The narrator includes one verse from Horace’s *Odes* with a poetic translation (where two lines of Latin become eight lines of German). When it comes time for the Major to place his copy of the poem of the hunt in the widow’s embroidered letter case, he realizes a few dedicatory lines are necessary. This time his paraphrase is described as a “poetische Umschreibung” (FA 10:465). The narrator presents for us the Major’s *Umschreibung* along with the Latin original, a passage from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* about Arachne’s weaving competition with Minerva that results in her punishment of being transformed into a spider. At first the Major is dissatisfied with his translation (he is unhappy that he transforms the inflected verb “cum fierent” into the abstract gerund, “das Machen”). Failing to solve this problem, he is then dissatisfied with the medium of poetry itself: he is supposed to be approaching the widow on his son’s behalf, but writing poetic verses to a woman—and to his future daughter-in-law at that—appears inappropriate. But the worst occurs to him last: that comparing a woman to a spider weaving her web is not a terribly endearing compliment at all.

The circulation of the letter case thus coincides with three of the most conspicuous moments of paraphrase in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, moments that revolve around at least one author (Horace) who served throughout the early modern period as one of the principle authorities in upholding the rhetorical foundations of literary tradition, of a theory of literature based on the imitation of authority. The case is not only implicated in the drama of paraphrase, but one could say that the container functions as a figure of paraphrase itself, of paraphrase understood as containment, or, in a more Deleuzean vein, “envelopment.” Not only do we have one work enveloping another (the case and the poem), but the included poem is itself enveloped by a work that envelops another (the translation of the epigraph). Still further, the container was made, so we are told, while its maker was listening-in on the conversations of others and thinking at the same time of the memories of still other individuals. The scene of overhearing and day-dreaming that surrounds the case’s making captures the very ambiguity of attention towards direct speech that is dramatized within the container itself. The case is shown to repeatedly envelop, but also preclude, the direct speech of others.

The widow’s *Brieftasche* marks, on the one hand, an important substitution for another case in the novella, that of the *Toilettenkästchen* of the Major’s friend from the theater.¹³ It replaces the combinatory arts that resided in the *Toilettenkästchen*—and the chemical principles of *adhesion* in its “tinctures”—with a combinatory model of what Deleuze would call “inhesion.”¹⁴ Where the theatrical case was premised on the idea of combining related elements (“affinities”) that would coalesce to produce a new entity (an analogue to the process of human generation), the widow’s envelopmental case is based on the serial logic of enfolding, an adding-in of a potentially limitless number of unrelated elements. (Envelopment is different from notions of solution and dissolution, a point I will return to in the next section on the *Wahlverwandschaften*.)

If the *Brieftasche* marked a larger shift of the *ars combinatoria* in Goethe’s late work away from the chemical solution, in a more immediate sense in the narrative it functions as a substitution for the Major’s commonplace books and the models of citationality and sociability that they promoted. The commonplace book represented one of the most important identities of the medium of the book in the early modern period,¹⁵ capturing a larger cultural investment in literary practices of citation and memory that underpinned the rhetorical theory of literature. Literature was preserved, but also consumed in the sense of incorporated into one’s sense of self, through individual acts of excerpting, memorizing, and imitating selected passages from classical works. The commonplace book—and the mode of reading it supported—enacted a delicate balance between the principles of dissection and preservation. A tradition lived on in its own words even as it was chopped-up into lots of little pieces and digested by its readers. It was this tripartite structure of excerption, citation, and digestion that allowed literature to matter to the lives of individuals.

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, this culture of citational digestion was undergoing a profound change. Commonplacings of course did

not die around 1800. We know it lived a vibrant afterlife well into the nineteenth century and down to today.¹⁶ But it did become subordinated to a new way of reading that fell under the heading of hermeneutics, one that moved from the memorization of a citation to its interpretation. One no longer dissected to preserve, as in the commonplace book, but preserved in order to dissect. Literature was still chopped-up and quoted, only the terms were now reversed. The more it was consumed, the more it remained—indeed needed to remain—intact. Literature according to this model was no longer brought into some private space of personal meaning in order to serve a common public purpose. Its interiority, its *isolation* from intersubjectivity, was now the guarantor of its public legitimacy. It was the individuality, not commonality of the citation that mattered now.

As a witness to the birth of hermeneutics and the decline of commonplace, Goethe saw paraphrase as a resolution to *both* of these competing cultures of citation, to these two ages of literalism. In place of the commonplace book's citations of dissected originals that were then re-cited for public purposes (the court or salon); and in place of the hermeneutic monograph's dissection of cited originals as a sign of one's own privacy (the subject of modernity); the widow's paraphrastic container consisted of a series of literary enfoldings that in turn generated a series of social unfoldings that followed. The *Brieftasche* did not substitute itself for the commonplace book so much as enfold it within itself. And yet this new container did not then posit a (more authentic) inside in relation to the outside of its façade, as in the logic of the hermeneutic container that needed to be "penetrated." Instead, following the logic of the fold, every inside was reconfigured as just another outside. The textual fold would then be applied to the field of painting in the *Wahlverwandschaften* when a viewer cries out, "Tournez s'il vous plait [sic]" (FA 8:429), as the singular surface of the painted canvas assumes the folded identity of the printed page.¹⁷

Such envelopmental (versus citational) logic in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* would significantly result in a crisis of sociability as the Major does not know how to receive what he has been given nor how to offer something in reply. As we are told when the Major receives the case for the first time, "die zierliche Pracht dieser Gabe hatte so gar kein Verhältnis zu dem was ihn gewöhnlich umgab, zu dem übrigen dessen er sich bediente, daß er sie sich, obgleich dargereicht, kaum zueignen konnte" (FA 10:460; my emphasis). As the name of the title poem that introduced Goethe's collected works, "Zueignung" was of course a charged word in Goethe's vocabulary, capturing the dual meaning of making something one's own (*zu eigen machen*) and also dedicating something to someone else. Throughout *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* the Major is marked by a crisis of possession, much like Eduard in *Die Wahlverwandschaften*,¹⁸ but such possessive emergencies are then amplified by a related crisis of *Mitteilung* (as the friend from the theater will say, "Mitteilungen sind schwerer, als man denkt" [FA 10:443]). It is this double bind of not being able to claim someone else's work as one's own that initiates the subsequent problem of not being able to dedicate it to another (how can you give that which is not yours?).¹⁹ The act of paraphrase will initially allow the Major to compose himself (*sich*

zusammennehmen) when he receives the gift and extract himself from the scene, thus deferring for a moment the crisis of *Zueignung*. But the subsequent paraphrastic *Umschreibung* of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which serves as the dedicatory epigraph to his poem in her case and from which no resolution of "meaning" can be drawn, will ultimately prove to be the grounds of the overall breakdown of *Zueignung* in the novella. Paraphrase does not ultimately enact a moment of closure, but initiates instead a permanent state of possessive deferral.

Such new non-citational and unclosable social configurations will characteristically assume physiological dimensions in the novella as well. The larger crisis of textual ownership that the Major endures will be acted out at a corporal level when he famously loses one of his front teeth (referred to as "der Schlußstein seines organischen Wesens" [FA 10:488]). The significance of this corporal breakdown, and the mineralogical metaphor used to interpret it, should not be overlooked when we recall that it was precisely the work of "Zueignung" that Goethe had ascribed to the intermaxillary bone, or *os incisivum*, that was the seat of the human dental structure. As he writes in the record of his well-known "discovery": "Sein vorderster breitester und stärkster Teil, dem ich den Namen des Körpers gegeben, ist nach der Art des Futters eingerichtet, das die Natur dem Tiere bestimmt hat; denn es muß seine Speise mit diesem Teile zuerst anfassen, ergreifen, abrufen, abnagen, zerschneiden, sie auf eine oder andere Weise sich *zueignen*" (FA 24:17). Unlike his contemporaries who saw in the particular structure of the human jaw the preconditions of speech—of something going out—the function of this skeletal piece for Goethe is identified as the act of "Zueignung," of regulating the incorporation of material from the outside in.²⁰ The identification of the front tooth as the body's keystone or *Schlußstein*—and the overt linkage of the osteological and the mineralogical here—was a sign of the way all such sites of material permanence and possession were being subject in Goethe to the laws of time and exchange. Indeed, this liquidation of the mineralogical would similarly be enacted in the *Wahlverwandschaften* during the dedication of the *Grundstein* of the new garden house that fails to signify a relational permanence (FA 8:330–31) or the removal of the *Grabstein* by Charlotte at the opening of part two (FA 8:394–95).²¹ There was a persistent problem of grounding (*Grundstein*) and closing (*Schlußstein*) surrounding the figure of either mineralogical stone or skeletal tooth. The loss of the front tooth was thus the final sign of the Major's initiation into the widow's space of permanent *paraphrasis*, of the de-demarcation of citational property.

The impact of paraphrase will move from the onto- to the phylogenetic level as the Major's son will also undergo his own paraphrastic apprenticeship, unlearning such citational tactics as the recitation of his father's poetry at social gatherings, the more subtle instance of autocitatoriality when he shouts "Mein Vater! [wo ist] mein Vater!" (FA 10:472) upon returning to his father's estate after having been rebuffed by the widow, or finally, scenic citations such as the chance encounter between father and son that transpires during a moonlit night in front of "hochstämmige Erlen" (FA 10:482), where Hilarie and Flavio see "die Gestalt eines Mannes hin und herschweben," a

kind of ghostly recuperation of the *Erlkönig* himself.²² The decisive moment of Flavio's physical recuperation that will mark his spiritual transformation under the code of *paraphrasis* will transpire one night when he reads aloud with Hilarie from his correspondence poems, poems which were initially written for the widow (FA 10:477). In place of the traditional model of the *Wechselgedicht*—where the poet speaks for another—Flavio learns how to enfold the voice of a *third* party into the place of this other speaker. In the words of the narrator, which could serve as the epigraph to the entire novella, “Man hatte einen Dritten im Sinne” (FA 10:471). It is this new envelopmental relationship to textuality that will allow Flavio and Hilarie to gradually move closer to one another, both physically as they simultaneously grasp the book and thus also begin to touch one another, and figuratively as their lives become increasingly entwined.

Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren thus emerges in Goethe's work as a crucial space to reflect on how texts contain other texts, how such textual containers are passed around or shared among individuals, and how they are then passed *down* from one generation to another. It is a novella in many ways about the intersecting practices of *traditio* and *translatio*, posing the question of what the tradition of translation might look like. Unlike the geographic constrictions associated with citationality, spatial orders are expanded under the sign of paraphrase, much like the frozen flood that enables new intersubjective connections to emerge in the novella (FA 10:478). But unlike the temporal linearity that underpinned the literalism of both commonplac-ing and hermeneutics, the time of *paraphrasis* is figured as both singular and periodic. The frozen flood is at once temporary, a sign of radical contingency, and also the condition of return to the prior social order when Hilarie and Flavio were supposed to marry one another at the opening of the novella. When Hilarie and the Major first articulate their love for one another in front of the genealogical tree (FA 10:477), this initial genealogical perversion (like that of Otto in the *Wahlverwandschaften*) was not so much repaired by the *Technik* of paraphrase, as it was a means to envision an altogether new model of the genealogical itself. Paraphrase undoes both the linearity *and* literality at the heart of a notion of literary “tradition,” at the same time that it initiates the possibility of new interpersonal and intergenerational dramas of exchange. To return to the Kantian allusions above, the question of purpose or audience in the work of art is neither cancelled (it is for no one but oneself) nor is it made immediate (it is for this group right before me). Rather, the sociability of the paraphrastic container assumes more indirect models of relationality and temporal arrival. The Major's inability to control the meaning of the textual synthesis within the widow's container—mirrored at a heterodiegetic level as well (“Wie sich nun der Freund aus einer solchen Verlegenheit gezogen, ist uns selbst unbekannt geblieben” [FA 10:466])—suggests the way paraphrase was being figured in Goethe as a form of non-linear synonymy. Paraphrase was the technique of initiating something new that could at some point in the future be held in common, like the lyrical manuscripts of Flavio and Hilarie that they grasp simultaneously or the letters that are shared by the widow with the Major at the very close of the novella inside the walls of the post office.

II. Otilie's *Tagebuch*: Rethinking Seriality and the Book

Paraphrase thus emerges in Goethe's late work as a decisive cultural technology for reconfiguring readers' relationships to their texts across the domains of both time and space. But it was also asking fundamental questions about the nature of textuality itself that made possible such non-citational reading practices and compositional writing practices. How was paraphrastic speech to be generated out of and through the communications technology of the printed book? If Goethe's paraphrastic turn was, on the one hand, deeply engaged with one of the more contentious sites of cultural change during the early nineteenth century—the larger value of the repetition of language—it was also integrally related to an emerging nineteenth-century interest in synoptic ways of knowing, in the value of processual synthesis over taxonomic stasis.²³ Paraphrase was not simply not citation. It was also an act of condensation and summarization, a grasping together or *Zusammenfassung* of the order of language. But how could the dominant nineteenth-century vehicle of language, the book in all its linearity, make possible such paraphrastic knowledge? How was it possible to arrive at paraphrastic knowledge through reading?

Few works in Goethe's corpus are more insistent on, and have become so infamous for, their relationship to the order of writing than *Die Wahlverwandschaften*. What I would like to focus on in the section that follows is the way the materiality of writing is gradually reconceptualized in the novel according to the principles of serial *paraphrasis*, which we already saw at work in the widow's serially envelopmental *Brieftasche*. The work of the *Wahlverwandschaften* in many ways prefigures or sets the stage for the subsequent paraphrastic additions made to *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*. Where Goethe's interest in paraphrase served in the first section as a way of negotiating two different forms of literalism, whether in the form of commonplacing or hermeneutic canonization, in this section I want to explore the way paraphrase serves Goethe as a means of rethinking the two fundamental identities that had come to surround the printed book by the early nineteenth century and that oscillated between the poles of seriality and totality. The book emerges in Goethe's work neither as a space of pure sequentiality nor synoptic tabularity, but rather as a *synthesis* of seriality and the synthetic itself. As I will try to show, Otilie's *Tagebuch* or "daily book" becomes the mediological core of the novel that balances what Gerhard Neumann has called Goethe's dual attention to the *Aperçu* and the *Series*.²⁴ As Goethe himself would write on this relationship between the synoptic and the serial in his periodical, *Zur Morphologie*: "Alles wahre *Aperçu* kömmt aus einer Folge und bringt Folge. Es ist ein Mittelglied einer großen produktiv aufsteigenden Kette" (FA 24:568).

"Eduard—so nennen wir einen reichen Baron im besten Mannesalter—Eduard hatte in seiner Baumschule die schönste Stunde eines Aprilnachmittags zugebracht, um frisch erhaltene Ppropfreiser auf junge Stämme zu bringen" (FA 8:271). As Heinz Schlaffer first pointed out, Goethe's novel famously begins with the proper name and the undermining of this name—that this

is not exactly his name or this could be anyone's name ("so nennen wir").²⁵ The repetition of the name "Eduard" is a sign of the arbitrariness of the sign. But what strikes me as so crucial to this opening sentence is the way such semiotic contingency is then incorporated into the problematic of *paraphrasis* at both a figural and syntactic level. As Italo Calvino would say, time takes no time here, as an hour is said to have passed in a single sentence. The alternation of definite and indefinite articles ("*die* schönste Stunde *eines* Aprilnachmittags") additionally lends the language a wavering sense of specificity that always remains at the level of the general (which hour, which day?). The narrator's initial parenthetical interjection ("so nennen wir") is not simply the sign of the negation of referentiality, but also the sign of the summarization of a missing narrative. "So nennen wir" asks for a "weil" that is no longer present. In that abrupt parenthetical turn after only the first word—the turn that makes this sentence so unique among novelistic openings—we can see the way the word "Eduard" begins to echo that of "genug" in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*. Syntactically "Eduard" becomes the sign of paraphrase, of a boundary that contains its own internal decomposition of a boundary.

If the syntax of the opening sentence works toward arguing for the prioritization of paraphrastic speech for novelistic narration, what Eduard is doing, the scene's action, contributes in a more nuanced way. Eduard is adding new grafts to young stems, suggesting an additive or serial logic that runs counter to the synoptic identity of paraphrase with which the sentence opens. On the other hand, the hybridity of the "stem"—that a new piece will be enfolded into its being as part of its growth—indicates a distinctly paraphrastic identity of the organic here, one that suggests just how important the principle of enfolding would become for Goethe's theory of entelechy or self-unfolding in his post-classical phase. This tension is then further "unfolded" as we move from subject to verb in the sentence, as the repetition of the subject (the double "Eduard") turns to a repetition with a difference in the verb, where "zubringen" becomes "zu bringen." Where the parenthetical clause undermines the referentiality of the hero's name—and thus necessitates its repetition, of saying it twice—the infinitive clause and its logic of causality ("in order to") signals a move away from the doubleness of citation through recourse to that most elementary of typographic signs, the blank space ("zubringen" / "zu bringen"). The space becomes a sign of the gap of knowledge opened up by the passage away from paraphrase.

The opening sentence is thus a remarkable piece of artistry that incorporates within itself two opposing narratological principles of seriality and synopsis. Indeed, we could say that it charts a gradual trajectory *away* from the one to the other, from a poetics of summarization to that of serialization. Not only is the opening space of *paraphrasis* framed as an ontogenetic idyll—we are in the space of the *Baumschule*, the nursery of language—it is also a phase that is immediately framed as past as the second sentence begins: "Sein Geschäft war eben vollendet." The novel begins a second time out of the idyll of narrative *paraphrasis*, which is framed as already over.

From such paraphrastic beginnings, the narratological structure of the opening chapter of the novel will then move in two different, yet

related directions of seriality. The first will consist of the serial narration of Eduard's walk to find his wife in the *Moosbütte*. It begins: "Dieser stieg *nun* die Terrassen hinunter, musterte, im Vorbeigehen, Gewächshäuser und Treibebeete, *bis* er ans Wasser, *dann* über einen Steg an den Ort kam, *wo* sich der Pfad nach den neuen Anlagen in zwei Arme teilte" (FA 8:272; my emphasis). We follow Eduard as he follows the path through nature. Words like *nun*, *bis*, *dann*, and *wo* locate the subject in serial time and space, a sequentiality that is also at work at the level of focalization as we see what he sees in the order that he sees it ("dieser . . . musterte, im Vorbeigehen, Gewächshäuser und Treibebeete"). Optical experience is framed as a "measuring in passing." Figure will then follow narration as what is seen mirrors how it is seen—the objects of such perceptual seriality are themselves spaces of organic unfolding (the green house and flower bed). The seriality of the walk will then be replaced by the subsequent, and exclusive, recourse to direct speech for the remainder of the chapter. This turn to the more properly dramatic form of dialogue within the genre of the novel will result in the almost total effacement of the heterodiegetic narrator, who is reduced to attributional phrases such as "sagte Eduard" and "versetzte Charlotte" for the rest of the chapter. Whether it is the *Nacheinander* of the walk or the *Nebeneinander* of the *Gespräch*, such serial forms of narration that govern the narrative structure of the opening chapter manifest a trajectory away from synoptic narration, which we already saw imbedded in the opening sentence. We move, in other words, into a world marked out by the dominance of the perspectival, as such forms of seriality introduce a crisis of the *overview*, a point of view that is figured in this novel as the very condition of possibility of the classical realist novel.

The dialogue that transpires between Eduard and Charlotte in the first chapter will concern the arrival of the Hauptmann, one of whose major contributions of course will be the mapping of the couple's estate. The Hauptmann's arrival and the synoptic overview promised by his cartographic project can be read on one level as a provisional attempt to reverse the introduction of the perspectival that has made its way into the novel. The map or *Karte* reduces the sequentiality of the peripatetic knowledge of the couple's property to a single image. It could be read in this sense as an attempt to return the reader to the idyll of the heterodiegetic narrator's paraphrastic speech with which the novel opened. I say provisional because it is key that the Hauptmann's cartographic work largely disappears in the second half of the novel (indeed he is renamed the Major, drawing a line of connection to our earlier novella), as his presence is primarily reduced to one of likeness through the character of the ill-fated Otto, the ultimate figure of citationality in the novel (and thus a decidedly doomed one).²⁶

In keeping with the logic of substitutionality that increasingly governs Goethe's writing after 1806, the Hauptmann's map will be replaced in part two by the presence of Ottilie's diary or *Tagebuch*. Like the substitution of the widow's case for the Major's commonplace books in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, Ottilie's *Tagebuch* similarly marks a pedagogical space designed to replace the citational practices that had dominated in the first part of the novel (nowhere more absurdly on display than when Ottilie transcribes

Eduard's documents and copies not only the words but his handwriting as well [FA 8:355]). For Walter Benjamin's path-breaking reading of the novel, Otilie's diary served as the ultimate manifestation of her embodiment of what he called "das Dasein einer Schwindenden,"²⁷ a key sign of the way her corporal emaciation was a necessary accompaniment to a communicative arrestation. She represented for Benjamin, and for a variety of critics who have come after, a semiotic hollowing-out, the figural apotheosis of a *Leerstelle*.²⁸ But what interests me about Otilie is not her emptiness, but her paraphrastic being, the way she represents, at the level of both her bibliographic and personal corpus, a semiotic enfolding.²⁹ As I will try to show, the increasing ambiguity of direct speech that comes to surround her is accompanied by a representational strategy that moves from the serial to the synoptic, from the citational to the translational, that thus runs counter to the narratological trajectory staked out at the opening of the novel.

Turning to the *Tagebuch* more directly, the first aspect that one must attend to is the fact that this is the only space of the novel marked out by the use of quotation marks. Quotation marks appear quite seldomly in Goethe's printed works and are rarely used for dialogue within his prose, although they do appear more often in his poetry to mark out a speaker within a poem. But they are importantly never used, as far as I have been able to ascertain, for the genre of the aphorism that characterizes Otilie's entries (more often typographic signs like long dashes and multiple paragraph breaks are used to separate entries). Such an anomaly of course raises the question of what quotation marks are doing here. On the one hand, they could suggest that what we are reading is something more akin to a commonplace book than a diary.³⁰ These quotations are Otilie's quotations, the quotation marks are her quotation marks. There are ample markers in the text to support this reading, as when the editor tells us in the third section that the following entries are likely not a product of her own reflection ("weil aber die meisten derselben wohl nicht durch ihre eigene Reflexion entstanden sein können" [FA 8:418]) or when the internal narrator of the sixth and final section tells us that she will begin to undertake the quotation of insights from the letters of friends (FA 8:462). The diary is framed not as a lyrical space of self-disclosure but as a citational space of being spoken for.

On the other hand, there are also ample markers to suggest that many of the entries are indeed unique observations of Otilie's. The presence of the first person pronoun in the passage above ("ich nehme mir vor, dieses Versäumnis wieder gut zu machen" [FA 8:462]) is one such example, but so are other minor markers like "uns Frauen" in the fourth section (FA 8:432) or the fact that the passage cited above about the way the maxims in section three do not belong to her is qualified both by the signification of probability ("wohl . . . nicht entstanden sein können") and quantity ("weil aber die meisten . . ."). It is likely that most are not her observations, but it is *possible* that *some* are. If the quotation marks are understood as an indication that these statements, or at least some of these statements, are her statements, then the possession of the quotation marks—who is doing the citing here—becomes harder to identify. If the contents of the quotations belong to her (in part), who do the quotations belong to (narrator, editor, author or publisher)? Who

is quoting Otilie, who is also quoting others? Far from delimiting citational property, the quotation marks in the *Wahlverwandschaften* stand as signifiers of an acute undecidability of the attribution of speech to speaker. They mark the exact reversal of the very point of such typographic signs, a point that Marjorie Garber has argued is a function of the hollowing out of intentionality in any act of citation, of having someone else speak for you.³¹

Where Gabrielle Brandstetter has argued that the genre of the letter in the *Wahlverwandschaften* serves as a means to represent the interiorization of reading and writing that would become such a hallmark of this period,³² it is the genre of the *Tagebuch*, I want to suggest, that draws our attention to the ambiguous sociability that continues to surround the technology of writing during this period. As is typical for Goethe, the letter takes us in and the diary takes us at least half-way out. In decitationalizing the citation, far from affirming a program of interiorization, Otilie's diary dissolves the rigid boundaries between interior and exterior, between mine and yours, that was increasingly programmatically being asserted for the medium of writing. As we are told at the opening of the fifth section, what follows are the "traces" of a conversation that has "likely" occurred: "Dieser Vorfall *mag* jedoch zu einem Gespräch Anlaß gegeben haben, wovon wir die *Spuren* in Otiliens *Tagebuch* finden" (451; my emphasis). Words in quotation marks are traces of probable conversations that are no longer literally transcribed or cited. The speech of others is enfolded into the speech of another, even as its externality or objectivity is preserved in some fashion. And just as Otilie's writing increasingly promotes a sense of possessive ambiguity, a sense of the porousness between inside and outside, it also becomes increasingly paraphrastic. In the sixth and final section, Otilie, who is recalling her time wandering out of doors and witnessing the signs of spring, will speak of the delightful repetition of the "Jahresmärchen" (FA 8:462),³³ as we can see in this combinatory notion of the annual fairy tale the ultimate alignment of temporality and the timeless, the sequential and the synoptic, in a single figure. *Paraphrasis* emerges at the end of Otilie's diary as a semiotic idyll, much like the novel's opening.

Where the Major's commonplace books of citations turned to the widow's syncretic container of paraphrastic speech in *Der Mann von funfzig Jahren*, here Otilie's *Tagebuch* turns to a *commonplace book of synoptic speech*, as the citational is undone from within. The point of Otilie's diary is not to return us to the cartographic ideal promised by the Hauptmann's map—to the tabular world of the overview—but instead to *synthesize* the inherent seriality of the "daily book." Unlike Lenardo's *Tagebuch* in the *Wanderjahre* (or Werther's monological letters for that matter), Otilie's diary lacks any indication of the specific dates of writing. The "daily book" is shorn of its temporality, even as it remains a *Tagebuch*. It elevates the perspectival view of serial citation (whether as commonplace or dialogue) into the paraphrastic overview of the classical heterodiegetic narrator. The *Tagebuch* emerges in the *Wahlverwandschaften* as the mediological foundation of a new narrative poetics that depends on what we might characterize as an embodied or serial *paraphrasis*. It represents the condition of possibility of *synoptic reading*.

III. "Novelle": The Intermediality of Paraphrase

The framed narrative spaces of Otilie's diary entries, which I am arguing serve as an important substitution for the textual format of the Hauptmann's cartography, will themselves eventually be substituted for by the close of the novel, this time by the genre of the novella. In chapter ten, part two, one chapter after what will turn out to be the final diary entry of Otilie's included in the novel, the framed narrative will be titled "Die wunderlichen Nachbarskinder. Novelle," and it is a transcription of a tale told by the traveling Englishman. While there has been ample speculation on how the novella refers back to characters in the novel³⁴—prompted by the narrator's own comment, "[er] ahndete nicht, wie nahe diese seinen Zuhörern verwandt war" (FA 8:470)—I am interested in the novella's sheer presence as a genre here and the way this genre is linked, via its relationship to the *Tagebuch*, to practices of medial transcription. The diary that is continued by a novella is, on the one hand, a direct inversion of the way Lenardo's diary in the *Wanderjahre* is a continuation of the novella, "Das nußbraune Mädchen." And yet like Otilie's diary, Lenardo's diary will be grounded in a similar practice of the incorporation of foreign speech (Meyer's description of the textile industry), a foreignness that will eventually be registered at a narratological level as well, as the "diary" gradually shifts to a heterodiegetic narrator at its close, transforming itself generically back into a novella (FA 10:717).³⁵

By the time of the mid 1820s, when Goethe is at work completing his novel of novellas (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*), the identity of the novella as a space of both generic and medial translation would assume a programmatic character, no more indicatively on display than in his final novella, *Novelle* (1828). *Novelle* was a prose paraphrase of an earlier planned, but never completed, poetic ballad of the hunt, which Goethe had conceived as an outgrowth of his successful bourgeois epic, *Hermann und Dorothea* (1798). The idea for *Novelle* had come to Goethe in the fall of 1826 when he was editing for publication his correspondence with Schiller to whom he had once mentioned the idea. (The other important influence was of course Goethe's reading of James Fennimore Cooper's novel, *The Pioneers* (1823).) One could add to this that *Die Jagd* had also been one of the most influential *Singspiele*, or comic operas, from the era of the *Sturm und Drang* and Goethe will recall in Book 14 of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* his visit to the Jagdschloß Bensberg during this period in which he marvelled at Jan Weenix the Younger's murals of the hunt (FA 14:682). The intermedial lineage from opera to painting to poetry to prose that surrounded the theme of the hunt and that underwrote *Novelle's* paraphrastic relationship to its immediate poetic predecessor was itself grounded upon another sequence of media-translational practices of memorialization, from oral conversation to epistolary exchange to printed edition. Paraphrastic speech was repeatedly configured in Goethe as the constantly overlapping work of intermediality.

To see this more concretely, we need to look at the draft that Goethe used as the basis of *Novelle*, which consisted of a list of 107 numbered key words ("37. Gärten, 38. Stieg, 39. Gebüsch, 40. DaraufWald, 41. Erste Höhe," etc.) and which Goethe had prepared as a "Reinschrift" or "fair copy" prior to writing

the novella (FA 8:1057–60). The fair-copy draft in numbered form drew attention to the way the “hunt” served as an essential figure of the seriality of human experience for Goethe. It provided a privileged metaphorical constellation to capture Goethe’s attention to the primacy of “die Folge” as one of the basic elements of all natural forms.³⁶ But the *fair-copy* aspect of this list also drew attention to the way such seriality was a medial and formal predecessor of novellistic narration. The manuscriptural identity of the list highlighted it as an antecedent to a subsequent print (and prose) manifestation. Where paraphrase had been used to mark the narratological opening of the *Wahlverwandschaften*, which was then followed by a variety of techniques of seriality, in *Novelle* the serial was configured as the threshold to paraphrastic speech, much like Otilie’s detemporalized daily book of decitationalized quotations.

The fair-copy identity of the serial list not only suggested the importance of its subsequent translation into print—that its identity was that of an antecedent or prototype. It also drew attention to the list’s *archival* status, that such serial compositional practices about the serial nature of human experience depended upon, indeed necessitated, technologies of preservation. There was a dialectic to the practice of succession that allowed for the synoptic to emerge out of the technology of preservation thus canceling the very category of succession itself. As Otilie would remark in her final diary entry, “Alles Vollkommene in seiner Art muß über seine Art hinausgehen” (FA 8:463), but also: “Und doch ist nichts so flüchtig das nicht eine Spur, das nicht seines Gleichen zurücklasse” (FA 8:463). *Paraphrasis* was just such a drama of continual self-exceeding alongside the persistence of some remainder in the form of a likeness (*seines Gleichen*). The printed prose paraphrase of the poetic hunt preserved as a manuscript list was the signature instance of this project of intermedial-serial synopsis.

The programmatic nature of *Novelle* emerges even more clearly when we remember that it was the poem of the hunt, also prepared as a *Reinschrift* in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, that was the literary object enfolded into the widow’s paraphrastic container and that was never cited directly in the text. Where the poem of the hunt was enfolded into the widow’s container in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, and thus only available as paraphrase in the narrative, in *Novelle* the poem of the hunt is paraphrased in the manuscript fair-copy and then *unfolded* in the novella. *Novelle* thus paraphrases at a mediological level, its generic neighbor, *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, just as *Der Mann fünfzig Jahren* paraphrases at the level of plot the compositional practice of *Novelle*, as we are left with nothing but paraphrases of paraphrase by the great Self-Epitomator. *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* would tellingly “conclude” (inconclusively) with the summary of letters whose contents contain a summary of the events of the novella.

IV. Conclusion: Paraphrase / Parasite

I want to conclude by returning to the figure of Otilie as an embodiment of paraphrase, as a figure of what it means to live paraphrase. Like the widow’s case that is made in a moment of overhearing the conversations of others or

Goethe's own *Reinschrift* that is composed when he overhears his earlier epistolary "conversation" with Schiller, it will be Otilie's person, her sense of self, that will be composed in moments of overhearing. Two times she will lie at the feet of Charlotte, Eduard's wife, and listen to others discuss her fate, the first when her mother passes away and the second when Otto has drowned. In each moment, she will identify a new "path" or *Bahn* according to which she will live her life, a path that depends on the principle of *Entsagung*. "Aber wie damals," Otilie tells Charlotte towards the close of the novel, "habe ich auch diesmal in meinem halben Totenschlaf mir meine neue Bahn vorgezeichnet" (FA 8:500). What she hears in this "half-dead sleep," what remains of her sources' words, is fundamentally unclear, but something does remain, something deeply transformative. And like the Major's unrecited fair-copy "Jagdgedicht" or Goethe's fair-copy draft of his unwritten poem that are both then subsumed and medially transformed, Otilie will herself undergo a process of corporal "transsubstantiation" as her path-like being is ultimately transformed into a static image set behind the glass wall of her casket. As she encloses and incorporates the speech of others through the practice of overhearing; as she makes their words her own without directly citing those words through the practice of *ent-sagen* (literally a not saying); and as she is transformed from a form of textually grounded personhood through her diary to a visually synoptic being in the form of the image, she becomes, I am suggesting, a perfect embodiment of *paraphrasis*.

But what ultimately strikes me as so significant about this transformation is the effect it has on those around her. In keeping with the intermixing of Christian, chemical, and textile metaphors that guide this novel, Otilie's corporal dissolution—her *Erlösung*—undoes or dissolves (*löst*) the debt that we owe to her, to the *corpus* as such. Whether it is her own body, her body of writings in the *Tagebuch*, or the manuscriptural *Reinschrift* of the "Jagdgedicht" or its serial paraphrase in *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* or *Novelle*, writing, and novellistic writing in particular, is marked by a tripartite structure of incorporation, preservation, and dissolution. It is precisely the translational work between incorporation and preservation that allows for the dissolution of some medial bond. That is why we get the very bizarre final scene of Otilie's maid who falls from a great height onto her casket only to rise up again and declare she has been forgiven for allowing Otilie to starve herself (she in fact ate Otilie's food for her) (FA 8:524). Falling onto or into the textual container is a way of being released from it. And that is why the architect returns after Otilie's death and is reminded of the *tableau vivant* in which he played the blind Belisarius receiving alms—standing before the imagized female body he likens himself to someone who cannot see (FA 8:525). Paraphrase undoes our debt to the work of art. It replaces the law of citation with that of translation—with practices of transcription, transformation, and transsubstantiation.

Identifying the significance of the paraphrastic in Goethe's late thought can, on the one hand, help us rewrite important aspects of the reception history surrounding his relationship to translation and translational practices, a reception that has been shaped in no small measure by Benjamin's influential reading of the notes to the *West-östlicher Divan* and the significance accorded to the interlinear version in that essay.³⁷ This Goethean inspired

view of translation, which implies an essential telos and which always seems to conclude for critics with Hölderlin's Sophocles translations, does little justice to the variety of actual translational practices that we find in Goethe's late work. Nor does it capture the way Goethe's interest in the compressions and the expansions inherent in translation—not its literalism—were increasingly fundamental to his thinking about the nature of the work of art more broadly in his late period. As Goethe would remark to Riemer during the summer of 1807 in Karlsbad after he had begun work on the *Wanderjahre* in May of that year, "Die Kunst stellt eigentlich nicht Begriffe dar, aber die Art, wie sie darstellt, ist ein Begreifen, ein Zusammenfassen des Gemeinsamen und Charakteristischen, das heißt der Stil."³⁸ Art for the late Goethe was a process of grasping together (*zusammenfassen*) of the general and characteristic. Art was the serial summarization of the general, a kind of infinite regress of paraphrase.

If Goethe's interest in the paraphrastic was in some sense a reaction to emerging paradigms of citationality in the early nineteenth century, paradigms which would subsequently underwrite the growing institutionalization of *Literaturwissenschaft* as an academic discipline, paraphrase continues to pose deep challenges to our own current disciplinary formations. As I have tried to show, the enfoldings at the heart of paraphrase propose an altogether different model of literary tradition, from the rigid periodization that dominates today to the more periodic and asymmetrical couplings between disparate points in time. It moves us past a literary history founded on genealogy. At the same time, in place of an osteological or mineralogical theory of textuality that strives for an ideal of textual permanence—the dream of permanent citationality—paraphrase argues for a morphological and intermedial relationship to text, for the necessity of change alongside that of preservation. Instead of cordoning off the two places of readerly and writerly work, of text and reader, paraphrase marks a profound challenge to the paradigms of intellectual property bequeathed to us by the historical moment when Goethe was writing and that became an essential fundament of the hermeneutic program.³⁹ Paraphrase enacts a reading experience based not on individuation, but *incorporation*. The serial enfoldings of paraphrase enable personal unfoldings or what we could call "growth," where such growth is predicated on the necessary *breakdown* of the boundaries of intellectual property, between the mine and the yours. Under such a translational model of reading, reading is no longer understood as a form of commercial consumption—as the "purchase" of a text that leaves both subject and object largely unaffected. Instead, paraphrastic reading operates according to an altogether different logic of consumption, one more akin to that of the parasite in the sense Michel Serres gives to this idea.⁴⁰ The subject of paraphrase transforms even as s/he is transformed. *Paraphrasis* is an internalization that is also a displacement (*para-situ*). As Erasmus himself argued, the more the matter of reading is changed—the more we pay attention to it as matter—the more it comes to matter to the life of the reader.⁴¹ To paraphrase Susan Sontag, today what we need is not an erotics, but a transformatics of art.

NOTES

1. Cleanth Brooks, "The Heresy of Paraphrase," *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1947], 1974) 201.
2. Desiderius Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1995) 12:60. Hereafter cited as CWE in the text.
3. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1961) 4:113–19.
4. John Dryden, *The Poems of John Dryden*, vol. 1, ed. Paul Hammond (London: Longman, 1995) 384–85.
5. David Wellbery, "The Transformation of Rhetoric," *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 5: *Romanticism*, ed. Marshall Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 185–202.
6. For an overview of Goethe's translational activity, see Wolfgang Butzlaff, "Goethe als Übersetzer," *Goethe: "Trostlos zu sein ist Liebenden der schönste Trost"* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000) 73–120 and Manfred Fuhrmann, "Goethes Übersetzungsmaximen," *Goethe-Jahrbuch* 117 (2000): 26–45.
7. J.W. Goethe to Sulpiz Boisserée January 27, 1823. J.W. Goethe, *Werke*, Abt. IV., Bd. 36 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1999) 284.
8. I am interested in this essay in exploring how Goethe's work with textile folds in his paraphrastic novellas acts out the insights of Deleuze in his work on the fold. See Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993).
9. For a stunning reading of Goethe's novellas from the 1790s as an engagement with the problematic of literary novelty, see Andreas Gailus, "Poetics of Containment: Goethe's *Conversations of German Refugees* and the Crisis of Representation," *Modern Philology* 100.3 (February 2003): 436–74.
10. Homi K. Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2008) 4.
11. J.W. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989) 466. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as FA.
12. "Enough" is a fascinating word in Goethe's corpus both in the way that it is grammatically an extremely unique word (as the Grimms tell us, *genug* has "a rather strange position and history") and also the way it shifts from his early work as a word that the artist cannot say (as Alphons will remark upon receiving Tasso's book as a gift, "Lang wünscht' ich schon, du möchtest dich entschließen/ Und endlich sagen: Hier! es ist genug" (lines 395–96)) to a word in the late work that the narrator is constantly invoking. But as Goethe himself liked to say, this will have to be treated in another place.
13. For readings of the novella that draw on this aspect of the *Toilette*, see Gesa Dane, *Die beilsame Tiolette. Kosmetik und Bildung in Goethes "Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1994) and Barbara Thums, "Diatätische Toilettenkunst und organische (Selbst-)Bildung: Goethes *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*," *Sexualität-Recht-Leben. Die Entstehung eines Dispositivs um 1800*, Hg. Maximilian Bergengruen, Johannes F. Lehmann, Hubert Thüning (München: Fink, 2005) 295–316. Both authors draw attention to the etymological root of the "toile" or "cloth" in the theatrical case to indicate its connection to the widow's woven case.
14. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold*, 22. This will have important implications for the way the chemical metaphors of *Die Wahlverwandschaften* undergo an important change in the figure of Otilie as another enfolder.

15. Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).
16. William, St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) 224 and Stephen Colclough, "Recovering the Reader: Commonplace Books and Diaries as Sources of Reading Experience," *Publishing History* 44 (1998): 5-37.
17. I am indebted for this observation to Catriona MacLeod from her talk, "Tournez s'il vous plaît: *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* Between Stage and Page," delivered at the GSNA conference: *Goethe and the Postclassical*, Pittsburgh, PA, Nov. 8, 2008.
18. For a discussion of Eduard as "ein Mensch der Habe," see Fritz Breithaupt, *Jenseits der Bilder: Goethes Politik der Wahrnehmung* (Freiburg: Rombach, 2000) 131.
19. As Ottilie will write in her *Tagebuch*, paraphrasing the visiting architect, "Wie am Handwerker so am bildenden Künstler kann man auf deutlichste gewahr werden, daß der Mensch sich das am wenigsten zuzueignen vermag was ihm ganz eigens angehört" (FA 8:409).
20. See George A. Wells, "Goethe and the Intermaxillary Bone," *British Journal for the History of Science* 3 (1966-67): 348-61.
21. For a lengthier discussion of the breakdown of the *Stein* in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, see Fritz Breithaupt, *Jenseits der Bilder*, 173.
22. Henriette Herwig points out that this landscape is also a citation of Homer's *Odysseus* where Circe tells Odysseus that he will find Persephone's "grove" near "unfruchtbare Weiden, hohen Erlen und Pappen." See Henriette Herwig, *Das ewig Männliche zieht uns hinab: Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre. Geschlechterdifferenz, Sozialerwandel, historische Anthropologie* (Tübingen: Francke, 1997) 220.
23. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994) 243-49 and more recently Richard Yeo, *Encyclopedic Visions: Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), as well as Gerhard Neumann, "Enzyklopädie und Poesie: Goethes Konzept der Moderne," *AUMLA* (February 2003): 1-21.
24. Gerhard Neumann, *Ideenparadiese: Untersuchungen zur Aphoristik von Lichtenberg, Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel und Goethe* (München: Fink, 1976) 726.
25. Heinz Schlaffer, "Namen und Buchstaben in Goethes *Wahlverwandtschaften*," *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften. Kritische Modelle und Diskursanalysen zum Mythos Literatur*, Hg. Norbert W. Bolz (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981) 211-29. For a more recent reading in a similar vein, see Christian Mittermüller, *Sprachskepsis und Poetologie. Goethes Romane 'Die Wahlverwandtschaften' und 'Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre'* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2008).
26. As Heinz Schlaffer has pointed out, the palindromic structure of Otto's name further increases this character's citational identity as the name cites itself within itself. See Schlaffer 214.
27. Walter Benjamin, "Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 1.1, Hg. Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974) 125-201, here 193.
28. Jochen Hörisch, for example, will follow Benjamin and speak of "das sprachlose Sein Ottilies." Jochen Hörisch, *Die andere Goethezeit: Poetische Mobilmachung des Subjekts um 1800* (München: Fink, 1992) 160. For a focus on Ottilie's "imagization" as an exploration of the ontological absence at the heart of the image, see David Wellbery, "Die Wahlverwandtschaften," *Goethes Erzählwerk. Interpretationen*, Hg. Paul Michael

Lützeler und James E. McLeod (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1985) 291–318. For a cultural historical analysis of “wasting women” in the eighteenth century, see Anna Richards, “Starving for Identity: Wasting Women in German Literature,” *German Life and Letters* 50 (1997): 417–28. And for the argument that Otilie comes to embody a new eighteenth-century paradigm of readerly *Innerlichkeit*, see Gabriele Brandstetter, “Gesten des Verfehlens: Epistolographische Aporien in Goethes *Wahlverwandschaften*,” *Erzählen und Wissen. Paradigmen und Aporien ihrer Inszenierung in Goethes „Wahlverwandschaften*,” Hg. Gabriele Brandstetter (Freiburg: Rombach, 2003) 41–64. For an emphasis on Otilie’s mediality and not her absence, see Herbert Anton, “Rettende Bilder. Otiliens Tagebuch und Goethes Dichtungsverständnis,” in Bolz (n. 25) 169–91.

29. In this way we can see a key precursor of Otilie in the figure of “Die pilgernde Törlin,” the title character of Goethe’s novella that was published in Cotta’s *Taschenbuch* a year prior to *Die Wahlverwandschaften* in 1808. One could add the later Makarie to the list of archival, aphoristic women.

30. This is the argument put forth by Judith Ryan who sees Otilie’s *Tagebuch* as a hybrid between an older tradition of bookkeeping and an emerging tradition of psychological reflection. I read the trajectory the other way: that Otilie’s *Tagebuch*, and crucial details such as the erasure of dates, suggests the way this medium is moving away from the pietistically informed confessional book and towards a space of synoptic generalization. See Judith Ryan, “‘Pfeile mit Widerhaken’: On the Aphorisms in Goethe’s *Wahlverwandschaften* und *Wanderjahre*” *Goethe Yearbook* 16 (2009): 2–3.

31. Marjorie Garber, “ “ ” (Quotation Marks),” *Critical Inquiry* 25 (Summer 1999): 653–79.

32. See Gabriele Brandstetter (n. 28) 49.

33. For a discussion of the way the novel merges these two competing concerns with the temporal and the timeless, see Thorsten Critzmann, *Goethes Wahlverwandschaften als Jahresmärchen* (Köln: SH-Verlag, 2006) 118f.

34. For a review of these positions, see Albert E. Gurganus, “Typologies of Repetition, Reflection, and Recurrence: Interpreting the Novella in Goethe’s *Wahlverwandschaften*,” *Goethe Yearbook* 15 (2008): 99–114.

35. For a discussion of Lenardo’s *Tagebuch* and the way it registers the preservation of medial *Überarbeitung*, see Klaus Detlef-Müller, “Lenardos Tagebuch. Zum Romanbegriff in Goethes *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 53 (1979): 275–99.

36. See Goethe’s comment to Riemer, “Die Natur kann zu allem, was sie machen will, nur in einer Folge gelangen. Sie macht keine Sprünge.” J.W. Goethe, *Begegnungen und Gespräche*, Hg. Renate Grumach (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) #2414.

37. See for example Nicolla Antonetti, *Übersetzung als Auslegung in Goethes West-östlichem Divan im Kontext frühbromantischer Übersetzungstheorie und Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Francke, 2002) and Carrie Asman, “‘Der Satz ist die Mauer’: Zur Figur des Übersetzers bei Benjamin und Goethe: Werther, Faust, Wilhelm Meister,” *Goethe-Jahrbuch* 111 (1994): 61–79.

38. J.W. Goethe, *Begegnungen und Gespräche* 6:296.

39. For a discussion of the alignment of hermeneutics and intellectual property, see Heinrich Bosse, *Autorschaft ist Werkberrschaft. Über die Entstehung des Urheberrechts aus dem Geist der Goethezeit* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1981).

40. Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence Schehr (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007).

41. As Erasmus remarked about the kind of reading he hoped his paraphrases would make possible: "It will have its effect if we grow really tired of our diseases and bite off some of this medicine constantly, if we chew it assiduously and pass it down into our spiritual stomachs, if we do not cast up again what we have swallowed but keep it in the stomach of the spirit until it develops all its powers and transforms the whole of us into itself" (CWE 10:74).