

Introduction

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Many months before the publication of a given *Mosaic* issue, once the essays for that issue have been selected, I send the talented team at Winnipeg's Têtro Design content ideas, from which they develop front and back cover images. How, in the case of this issue, did I miss sending "the hand"? Not until the proof stage, when I paused again over Donald Barthelme's image of Eugénie Grandet's hand, an image featured in Daniel Punday's "Donald Barthelme and the Emergence of the Dynamic Page," did I realize how provocative a role the hand plays in several of the following essays, in Punday's essay, for example, which concerns the passage from handwriting through manual typing to electronic textuality. In other of this issue's essays, contributors consider the verbal-visual or word-image relation, that between the hands of the author and the hands of the artist; the relation of first-hand knowledge, or its lack, to trauma and bearing witness; close-hand images—a scene of arms, legs, hands, and feet dangling from trees after a plane crash, or a scene of torture when a man, day after day, remains in a room, handcuffed to a pole and hooded—images that are hard to handle; the significance of a note handwritten by Nabokov; "sleight-of-hand"; P.K. Page's poetic memoir as *Hand Luggage*; figures of hands "immense and empty"; guns in the hands of soldiers; and, not the least, Joe Sacco's close attention to human hands and his engagement with hand imagery, what Rebecca Scherr calls the haptic visuality of Sacco's *Palestine*, and what, in her study of *Palestine*, she means by "shaking hands" with other people's pain.

Barthelme's image-tracing, "Eugénie Grandet," is of a single hand. Yet this is not the single and singular hand that emerges in the sixteenth-century West in conjunction with such oppositions as human versus animal, the lone hand, for instance, with which Andreas Vesalius of Brussels began his career (Goldberg 88)—both as early modern Europe's foremost anatomist, and, with quill as well as scalpel in hand, author of the *Fabrica*, "one of the most important and astute successes of the first century of printing" (Carlino 39). Nor is the hand in this issue the singular hand that, Martin Heidegger claims some four hundred years after Vesalius, elevates man "by an abyss of essence" over animals such as apes, which, while they "have organs that can grasp," do not have the hand (16).¹ Rather, the issue marks a departure from traditional mind/body, man/animal oppositions, having more to do with what Rebecca Scherr calls a "relation of mutuality," with reaching out to the other, not nostalgically, and without a manipulating, colonizing hand.

NOTE

1/ See also Jacques Derrida's "Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand" in *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida* (Trans. John P. Leavey Jr. Ed. John Sallis. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987. 161-96. Print).

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