Contents

Thanks viii
PROLOGUE  The Microbe Experiment ix

PART ONE  The Diffusion of Paper in Europe 1

CHAPTER 1  Leaves from Samarkand 3
1.1  The Arab Intermediate Realm 3
1.2  Calligraphy and the Cairo Wastepaper Basket 10
1.3  In Scheherazade’s World 13
1.4  Timur and Suleika 17

CHAPTER 2  The Rustling Grows Louder 22
2.1  The European Paper Mill Boom 22
2.2  Paper, Scholars, and Playing Cards 26
2.3  The Rise of the File: Paper Kings, Chanceries, and Secretaries 31
2.4  The Merchant of Genoa and His Silent Partner 37
2.5  Ragpckers, Writers, and the Pulpit 46

CHAPTER 3  The Universal Substance 52
3.1  Marshall McLuhan and the Pantagruelion of Rabelais 52
3.2  Harold Innis, the Postal System, and Mephisto’s Scrap 61
3.3  The World in a Page: Watermarks, Formats, Colors 70
PART TWO  Behind the Type Area 79

CHAPTER 1  The Printed and the Unprinted 81
1.1  The Pitfalls of a Formula: “From Script to Print” 81
1.2  The White Page 85
1.3  “Found among the Papers ...” 89

CHAPTER 2  Adventurers and Paper 94
2.1  Don Quixote, the Print Shop, and the Pen 94
2.2  Picaresque Paper: Simplicius Simplicissimus and the Schermesser 99
2.3  Robinson’s Journal, Ink, and Time 104

CHAPTER 3  Transparent Typography 108
3.1  The Epistolary Novel’s Mimicry of Letter Paper 108
3.2  Laurence Sterne, the Straight Line, and the Marbled Page 115
3.3  The Fragmentation of the Printed Page: Jean Paul, Lichtenberg, and Excerpts 119

PART THREE  The Great Expansion 127

CHAPTER 1  The Demons of the Paper Machine 129
1.1  The Mechanization of Sheet-Making 129
1.2  The Loom of Time, the French Revolution, and Credit 140
1.3  Balzac, Journalism, and the Paper Scheme in Lost Illusions 152
1.4  The Secrets of the Scriveners: Charles Dickens and Mr. Nemo 163
1.5  Foolscap and Factory Workers: Herman Melville and the Paper Machine 168

CHAPTER 2  Newsprint and the Emergence of the Popular Press 180
2.1  The Boundless Resource Base 180
2.2  The Newspaper, the Price of Paper, and the Patrioteer 189
2.3  Émile Zola, the Petit Journal, and the Dreyfus Affair 196
CHAPTER 3  Illuminated Inner Worlds  201
3.1  Wilhelm Dilthey, Historism, and Literary Estates  201
3.2  Henry James, Edith Wharton, and the Autograph Hunt  207
3.3  Laterna Magica: Paper and Interiors  215

CHAPTER 4  The Inventory of Modernity  226
4.1  Typewriter Paper, Deckle Edges, and White Space  226
4.2  James Joyce, Newsprint, and Shears  236
4.3  William Gaddis, the Paperwork Crisis, and Punch Cards  242
4.4  Rainald Goetz, the Mystic Writing Pad, and the Smell of Paper  249

EPILOGUE
The Analog and the Digital  253
Notes  265
Bibliography  274
Image Credits  292
Index of Names  293