

# Journal of the American Society of Professional Graphologists

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**Volume One  
Fall 1989**

# THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL GRAPHOLOGISTS

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## PURPOSE OF THE JOURNAL

1. To present theoretical and research papers in scientific graphology according to traditional academic standards.
2. To create a forum for helping graphology gain a wider academic and professional audience in America.
3. To interface with the international professional graphological community.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Manuscript inquiries should be addressed to Marc Seifer, Editor, Box 32, Kingston, RI 02881. Inquiries concerning subscriptions and memberships should be addressed to Thea Stein Lewinson, 9109 North Branch Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817.

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American Society For Professional Graphologists

# EVALUATION OF THE LEFT-HANDED WRITER

*Patricia Siegel*

## ABSTRACT

**Evaluating the writings of left-handers often presents difficulties for analysts because the left-oriented approach to the page can distort the interpretation of common graphics. The direction of many school-taught writing movements runs counter to what is comfortable for left-handers, and they must learn to adjust. The manner in which left-handers compensate for these directional differences is a generally unconscious process, but the choices they make reflect their behavior patterns in adapting to real world situations.**

A considerable number of left-handers have difficulty accommodating their graphic perspective and movements to the "right" way of writing. These individuals may have handwritings that demonstrate inferior rhythm as they push the pen rather than pull it to the right. They may also have to change the pen and paper hold to come out with a result which is acceptable to them. Many have difficulty, for a variety of reasons, making fluid letter forms and connections.

In analyzing any left-hander, the graphologist should segregate those graphics potentially influenced by the left approach to the page versus those that would be comparable for either the left or right-hander.

Left-handed writings can be analyzed according to traditional graphological principles of gestalt analysis. But the analyst should be also aware of possible distortions which can exist. In particular, left-handers normally have a greater proportion of left trends in their writing. Other distortions may occur in the following graphics:

- a. arhythmic upward movement of lower zone connections to the right;
- b. a tendency to print;
- c. a more left-inclined slant;
- d. greater variability of slant;
- e. downward slope of alignment;
- f. a tendency towards arcades; as well as
- g. greater displaced pressure on the horizontal axis.

As a result, there are situations in which right-oriented graphological interpretations may be compromised when analyzing certain left-handed writings. Preliminary observation of the potentially distorting elements listed above should also take into account whether there is easy articulation in the flow of the writing or, instead, a considerable effort or struggle associated with the writing process.

The expressive quality of the handwriting as a whole has to be evaluated in order to determine the degree of adjustment. The greater that adaptation, the more the left-hander's writing can be analyzed by traditional standards.

There are several features which reflect such a right orientation:

- a. The aesthetic and rhythmical contraction and release patterns are most significant.
- b. "t" and "A" cross bars which go from left to right show an ability and inclination to follow the school-copy model.
- c. Circular graphics such as "o" or "8" which are drawn with a counter-clockwise movement are supplemental features demonstrating a rightward psychological approach.

Left-handed writings which are awkward or exhibit the struggle indicated above may reflect minimal neurological impairments or possible hemispheric competition. The theory of hemispheric competition implies some coordination deficiency between functions of the left and right hemispheres of the brain. The individual's ability to form integrated writing patterns may be affected by any kind of neurological problem, even if it is only slight. Graphic indications of such problems include:

- a. Lack of control in the stroke or atactic movement;
- b. Severe variability of slant;
- c. Excessive or inconsistently applied pressure;
- d. Numerous mistakes (particularly in the beginning of words);
- e. Spelling errors in simple words.

If there is some indication of difficulty in producing acceptable script patterns, the graphologist should observe whether the writer attempts to compensate. Does he or she make an effort to conform to school copy letters, slant or other features even when their execution is difficult? Are new or modified forms or other devices created in an attempt to reduce the effect of awkwardness? There may be indications that the writer has better functioning potential than strict traditional interpretation of graphic indicators would otherwise imply. Right-handed writers who were switched from using their left hand early in life may also exhibit awkward movements and compensating tactics while writing.

Many aspects of visual and symbolic orientation are similar for both the left and right-hander. The "right" direction, for instance, represents the future and goal orientation for everyone in Western culture. Other elements having common symbolic connotations include:

- a. Spatial organization (in margins and between lines and words);
- b. Sizes;
- c. Symbolism of up, down and upper, middle and lower zones;
- d. Dynamics of speed, angle and curve;
- e. Visual orientation towards conformity versus individuality;
- f. Significance of the signature in relation to the text.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS PAGE IN YOUR OWN HANDWRITING

PRINT NAME Robert L. Dym Jr. SIGN NAME [Signature]

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 2/28/86

MALE  FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_ AGE 25 YEARS EDUCATION College RIGHT HAND \_\_\_\_\_ LEFT HAND

HEIGHT 6'0" WEIGHT 210 LAST POSITION Logistic Support Analyst HIGHEST SALARY \$36k

LEARNED TO WRITE: STATE/COUNTRY N.Y.C. MARITAL STATUS Single # OF CHILDREN 0

PLEASE WRITE, OR PRINT IF YOU PREFER, AT LEAST 150 WORDS ON "WHY I WOULD LIKE TO WORK FOR THIS ORGANIZATION," OR "WHAT I WOULD MOST LIKE TO DO IN THE FUTURE AND WHY".

It is very difficult to say on a first meeting with a company why one would like to work for it. In my case I would prefer to digest the details of the job & make the decision, for any decision to work here would be a bankruptcy in my career & would have to be made very carefully.

At a glance, since I have been asked to, I feel I would like to work with \_\_\_\_\_ because of the people I have met so far. I have met people who each have the same commitment to the success of this company. People are its best resource, & it seems that the company has been lucky & fortunate in finding the people here. (Some company's feel they're for the people, other's are vice versa. They are only 1/2 right - it's symbiotic!)

But \_\_\_\_\_ has some problems. They feel I can solve, and if they are the same problems I perceive I can. I \_\_\_\_\_ says his is a pressure job. I agree, my experience has been in pressure situations. I helped set up a \$85 million facility in less than 3 years!

SIGNATURE [Signature]

But is Mr. Leave solving problems or symptoms? I think both and that is a good

position for job satisfaction, which is what one needs in a job.

It may be difficult to differentiate between graphic disturbances which are psychological and those which are neurological in origin. There is, however, an interplay between the physical and emotional forces in a personality which has to be taken into account when developing a handwriting analysis. These forces cannot be completely isolated. The individual's motivation and degree of success in adjusting to a difficult physical process can provide the kind of compensation which enhances potential and overall ability.

### **ROBERT: A LEFT-HANDED PRINTSCRIPT WRITER**

Robert's handwriting has to be specially evaluated both as a printscript and as a left-handed specimen. As indicated above, left-handers have a greater tendency to print than do right-handers, principally because the left hand for most people goes against the grain of the paper as it proceeds across the page.

Robert executes this left to right writing process awkwardly. There is greater than average left-trend, a left slant and the choice of a printscript which symbolically avoids the horizontal connection. The displaced pressure is an additional reflection of this awkwardness and of a combination of physical and psychological adjustment problems. Other elements, such as irregularities and distortions in some forms are not specifically lefty related and can be evaluated by traditional graphic standards.

The overall expressive quality of the writing demonstrates Robert's effort to make an impression with self-conscious stylization that is neither comfortable nor natural for him. The writing dynamics suggest conflicting emotional elements which do not show sufficient integration to allow consistent application of productive energy.

### **REFERENCES**

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**BIOGRAPHY:** A graduate of Cornell University, Patricia Siegel began her training in graphology in a five year program with Daniel S. Anthony and his wife Florence, at the New School For Social Research. In 1978 Pat became a teaching assistant, and in 1980, she took over the entire 8 semester program with co-teacher, Lois Vaisman, when the Anthony's retired. This fully accredited college program

includes courses on the psychology of handwriting, personnel selection and also questioned documents. Pat is a handwriting consultant and questioned documents expert. Her publications include a co-authored study of the handwritings of the split-brain epileptic patients published in *Psychiatric Clinics of North America* in 1988; and "American Left-handed Writings in *Experiencing Graphology*, Freund Publishing House, Tel Aviv, in 1989. This last article represents a lecture Pat gave at the International Congress in Graphology held in Jerusalem in 1985.

This is a preliminary study based upon handwritings from Alcoholics Anonymous. The author found common characteristics associated with extremes in upper and lower case lengths, in breadth of letters, as well as disturbed rhythm of distribution and other factors. The handwriting samples based on material obtained before and after the drinking period illustrates a disturbed, sensitive self-image. Handwriting analysis provides a unique means for demonstrating the development of conditions during the course of this disease.

#### PROLOGUE

Alcoholism and handwriting is an intriguing difficult topic. The best proof of this is that there is virtually no literature about it, at any rate, I have been unable to find any in America. Nothing on the topic was published in any of the German journals in the last five years. A colleague in New York kindly sent me some handwritings of alcoholics and wrote, "I cannot find anything in common in those samples... please inform me I can find nothing." As mentioned, the problem is not so simple. I work in Washington with a psychiatrist, Dr. J. Martin Keshner, who specializes in alcoholism and drug addiction, and is in close cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous. He provided me not only with script material, but also with hints of information about alcoholism, which are absolutely essential for the understanding of these scripts. I must ask, therefore, that you show some patience with me as I discuss something of alcoholism in the next chapter before I move on to the analysis of the handwriting samples. However, I should like to say something in anticipation:

1. The handwriting examples are so diverse in form that it appears impossible to find something in common.
2. The handwriting examples often deteriorate to such a high degree during the period of acute alcoholism that one can scarcely find anything characteristic in them.

Through Alcoholics Anonymous we work principally with recuperating alcoholics, from whom we obtain examples of handwriting. These examples show self-renewing, almost born-again forms, in which some things in common can be recognized. This was especially the case when we received examples of handwriting from the period before the onset of alcoholism. This was particularly informative