

# Authorship and Love

Friedrich Kittler

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## Abstract

This early essay from German media theorist Friedrich Kittler examines a number of epistemic shifts occurring in late 18th-century Germany, anticipating in both methodology and content his groundbreaking 1985 work *Aufschreibesysteme* [*Discourse Networks*]. Of primary concern to Kittler here is the invention of what he calls (drawing upon Foucault) the ‘authorship-function’, product of a new constellation of medial, pedagogical and juridical forces. Alongside broader societal transformations (the transition from societies of the law to societies of the norm, the appearance of new sexualities), Kittler documents the emergence of the author in the late 18th century through analyses of new pedagogical practices (including the invention of hermeneutics), changes in childhood alphabetization, and new erotic relationships between authors and their readers.

## Keywords

authorship, Goethe, hermeneutics, love, media theory, Nietzsche

The seventeenth century seeks to erase the tracks of the individual, so that the work resembles life as much as possible. The eighteenth uses the work in an attempt to arouse interest in the author. The seventeenth century seeks in art – art, a piece of culture; the eighteenth uses art to make propaganda for reforms of a social and political nature. (Nietzsche, 1967: 61)

It’s no accident that Nietzsche wrote ‘such good books’ (see Nietzsche, 2005: 99–143), as he himself once wrote in a surge of authorial delirium: he was the sole philologist amongst philosophers.<sup>1</sup> What his brief note on literary criticism methodically reveals goes far beyond the typical histories and philosophies of works or genres, of writers or of worldviews. In the opposition between Old European and modern writing practices, Nietzsche gives voice to our culture’s language regimes themselves, to the ‘zone which our culture affords for our gestures and our speech’

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(Foucault, 1980b: 30).<sup>2</sup> The most imperious of authors poses, as the author of *Human, All Too Human* had previously, the question of his own shadow: what historical interest had, since the 18th century, commanded the ‘interest in the author’? What will had invented that curious being which was said to invent speech?

To pose the question in this manner meant a reevaluation of all values in the field of philology as well. For one knew that there had been literatures for which the author was a matter of indifference. But, as if under the dictate of that will which Nietzsche dates to the 18th century, the emerging field of literary studies began in the 19th century to develop an interest in betraying that disinterest, began to ‘arouse an interest’ in authors where historically the ‘authorship-function’ (see Foucault, 1980c) simply had not existed. Sainte-Beuve, coiner of the phrase ‘*l’homme et l’œuvre*’, would write the following with funereal expression from the banks of an unfordable river named Lethe:

In regard to the classical authors, we lack adequate means for such a study. To return, book in hand, to the man himself is impossible in the majority of cases involving the true ancients, those of whom we have no more than a mutilated statue. So we are reduced to commenting on the works, admiring them, and picturing the author and the poet behind them. We can thus reconstruct figures of poets and philosophers, busts of Plato, Sophocles or Virgil, in keeping with our lofty ideal; the imperfect state of our knowledge, the scantiness of sources, the lack of the means of information or reconstruction, allows of no more. A wide river, which in most instances is unfordable, separates us from the great men of Antiquity. Let us salute them from one bank to the other.

With the moderns, it is quite different. Here, criticism, which adjusts its method to its means, has other duties. To know a man the more, and to know him thoroughly, above all if he be a notable and celebrated person, is an important matter and one not to be lightly dismissed. (Proust, 1958: 97ff.)<sup>3</sup>

Sainte-Beuve is right about modern literature – thanks in part to his own proclamation that author biographies are to be a ‘duty’ for literary studies. But with respect to the Greeks, Sainte-Beuve confuses the anonymity which the *agon* and the festival afforded their combatants and directors with bust portraits whose features have, alas, been effaced by cruel time. Sainte-Beuve wants to exercise the importunity of modern readers and literary scholars on precisely those cultures which managed to get by without what Nietzsche termed ‘that importunity of modern authors who come bounding towards one’ (Nietzsche, 1967: 61;

trans. modified). His desire to possess ‘methods of return’ literally amounts to a wish for a Wellsian time-machine, one that would make possible biographical literary histories even of antiquity.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, knew what forgetting is: a force, and no mere occupational hazard in the transmission of cultural heritage (Nietzsche, 1997: 35ff.; II §1). Only thus could he ask about the roots of that counterforce arising in the 18th century which no longer forgot the names on title-pages. To diagnose the fervent wish of Sainte-Beuve and his many followers, instead of persisting in it; to oppose ‘haphazard methodology-mongering’, which only writes of the past what it finds in the present, with ‘the grey, which is to say, the documentary’<sup>4</sup> (Nietzsche, 1997: 8; Preface §7), means, first and foremost, to leave said and unsaid where they are. This and nothing else is what Foucault means by ‘archaeology of knowledge’ (see Foucault, 1972, particularly III. 4) and, more generally, by discourse analysis.

To take up documentation: first of all, two stories. One from the High Middle Ages, the other from the 18th century. And indeed: in precisely the spot where in Dante’s *Divina Commedia* the author’s name goes unmentioned, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* introduces one. To ‘make propaganda for reforms of a social and political nature’? Yes, that too; if only all these loanwords that Nietzsche uses didn’t just refer to affairs amongst men. For if anything, the two stories show that the ‘historical-sociological analysis of the author-person’ (Foucault, 1980c: 115)<sup>5</sup> already overlooks something at the level of its terms: the adventures of our sexed bodies.

The first story. In the second circle of the Inferno, enclosure for the bodies of the lustful, night and storm prevail. The night extinguishes facial features; the storm batters the dead against the rocks, pressing screams and blasphemies from their mouths, only to then swallow them forever. Words are powerless against it. Thus, the two damned, whom Dante implores to speak of their love and ‘in the name of their love’, must wait for a pause in the storm. And when they are then able to speak – Francesca of the house of Polenta and Paolo of the house of Malatesta – their speech [*Rede*] both names and possesses a power [*Gewalt*] in no way inferior to that of the hellish storm.<sup>6</sup>

It names the power that books have over bodies. It was reading – aloud and together – from the Lancelot romance that paved the way for their condemned and criminal love. Like a prefiguration (see Auerbach, 1984), the place in the book where Lancelot kisses the wife of his king and master Arthur guided Francesca and Paolo as well to a kiss, one which spared their mouths any further speech: ‘*Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante* – on that day, we read no further.’

And speech [*Rede*] has the power that words have over bodies. When Francesca tells of the two blows of fate that articulated the adventure of their love – when the reading of the book united them in passion, and

when the dagger of the betrayed spouse united them in death – the listener too is bodily affected: at the end of Francesca's bitter narration, Dante himself falls to the earth (which receives us in loving as in dying) '*come corpo morto cade* – like a dead body falls'.

The other story, 450 years later. It's a German waltz which both carves the confused burgher Werther a path into Lotte's rural idyll and which ignites his love. Werther would never allow Lotte this waltz – the first couple's dance our culture had ever seen in which the partners embrace (see Ochse, 1967) – 'with another', 'and even if he should have to perish as a result'. Heaven itself comes to the aid of this death-defying interdiction: a storm mounts whose 'thunder drowns out the music'. It thus prohibits further dancing, but by no means further speaking. The two walk to the window and look 'towards heaven', grateful. Remembering Klopstock's storm poem *Die Frühlingsfeyer*, Lotte cries out 'Klopstock!', thereby demonstrating the power of authors' names over souls. For her invocation of the poet directs Werther's gaze to Lotte's eyes, which gaze back into his, allowing him to behold there his 'apotheosis': the little puppet (or rather pupil<sup>7</sup>) which we are in the mirror of the other's eyes.

One story speaks of bodies. Francesca and Paolo sleep together and die together. The new one speaks of souls. Werther and Lotte exchange words and glances. One story recounts the expiration of words: in the act, in death, in the storm; the other recounts the expiration of music, making possible the invocation of an expressive poet and the exchange of gazes<sup>8</sup> – that is to say, making possible the invention of expression. There the fall to earth, here the upward glance to heaven – and its poet. There the mouths, sites of our alienation and externalization [*Veräußerung*]; here the eyes, portal for entry and reflection. 'The soul is concentrated in the eye, and not only sees through it but is also seen within it', Hegel wrote. From this, he concludes that 'art' makes 'every one of her creations into a thousand-eyed Argus' and even makes 'the speeches and tones and the course of its progression . . . everywhere into an eye, in which the free soul is revealed in its inner infinity' (Hegel, 1975: 153f.).<sup>9</sup> An echo, swollen to philosophical 'truth', of the contingent discursive event in which two gazes in love with one another soak up the speech and text of the *Frühlingsfeyer*.

Nothing, then, has remained the same. The single word love, which we hear so timelessly, can neither bridge the opposition nor conceal it. These are different bodies with different gestures, different organs and different adventures – bodies that come to each other in different times.

In the first story, the dagger of a prince and the feather of a poet condemn and immortalize a desire that thwarts the dynastic marriage plans of the Polenta and Malatesta families: Francesca, promised to the limping Gianciotto Malatesta for political reasons, commits adultery with his brother and marriage-broker, the beautiful Paolo. In the other

story, the thunder of a god and the proper name of a poet excite and transform a love that is both ‘not at all intended for realization’ (Kaiser, 1976: 208)<sup>10</sup> and a ‘sickness unto death’.<sup>11</sup> To be sure, ‘no cleric accompanied him’, as Goethe writes of his suicidal protagonist’s funeral procession in the novel’s final sentence; but the passion of his love is accompanied from beginning to end, from ‘Homer’ to ‘Klopstock’ and then finally to ‘Ossian’, by a procession of notable literary authors and father-ideals who guide and bless Werther’s path to death. Klopstock in particular, in his imaginary presence between the two mirrored gazes as they merge with one another for the first time at the window, replaces the symbolic father, whose real representation at institutional events like marriage and burial traditionally fell upon precisely those ‘clerics’ who ignore Werther’s solitary passion.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to clerics, father-ideals like Klopstock forbid no desires. This, of course, is why they are enthroned. But this is also why the love between Lotte and Werther, which never transgresses against a single law, remains a love of souls. The place of the despotic spouse and alderman of Rimini, who possessed and exercised the power to forbid, is now occupied by a more limited but more understanding burgher and half-groom: an Albert, who punishes Werther just as little as he himself sleeps with Lotte.

Desire [*Wunsch*] – to speak with Deleuze and Foucault<sup>13</sup> – has entered into a different logic. Old Europe located desire in the widespread net of families and alliances, which wove together political, juridical and genealogical relations. The signifier of this order – and it is for this reason that the dagger of the avenging prince Gianciotto Malatesta and the pen of the Christian poet Dante are one – the signifier of this order was the phallus: symbolic attribute of that big Other, in whose desire [*Begehren*] every desire found its law. It struck, unforeseen, at random and with force, according to the measure of its transgression. It was a law of quite literal – which is to say corporeal – incisions and dissections, which regulated not life and daily routine but rather modes of death – and only these. Gianciotto Malatesta, in harmony with the political and religious practices and theories of his era, did not regulate intentions, feelings, or literary readings; he disciplined bodies which he had caught in misdeeds.

The inverse holds for modernity: the law has been displaced by the norm, which, as in Foucault’s formulation, makes live and lets die. Instead of the neatly-calibrated death penalties, which follow and result from the act, what await us are the countless norms that precede every action and make it into a ‘socially relevant’ one. In the place of sovereign power, which had only political-juridical effects, a power emerges without names and signifiers, one which for the first time in human history takes control of daily life – and this ‘in the name of the people’, which is to say, in the name of no one at all. With bio- and

psychotechniques, it directs [*steuert*] and explores the conditions of life themselves. Amongst its research machinery are the new human sciences, invented in the 18th century to invent individuals and souls. One of the most effective of its steering mechanisms [*Steuerungsmaschinen*] is the familiarization of the erotic: since then, objects of desire appear (at least for good neurotics) in the Gestalt or imago of nothing but mothers and fathers – imagos that the human science known as psychoanalysis then more or less tautologically de-masks as such. The nuclear family can become the imaginary schema of all desires precisely because it, in distinction to clans and alliances, no longer possesses any symbolic functions within the culture. Vouching for this is the psychological family triangle in Goethe's novel, which consists of the 'child' Werther, the 'mother'-image of Lotte, and ideal author-fathers.<sup>14</sup> This new schema directs [*steuert*] feelings, intentions, and fantasies – just not deeds.

*The Sorrows of Young Werther* is thus one of the founding documents of that power which we invoke and celebrate as sexuality, for the sexualities which our culture erects stand at right angles to the reproduction-function that the old alliance-order worked with *per definitionem*. These are the sexualities of children, of hysterics and of perverts – i.e. all possible byways and surrogates of the simple act of sleeping with one another and having children. Modern powers of knowledge are tireless in their efforts to discuss these sexualities, to research them and thus to produce them. Indeed, they even work to produce the *fable convenue* which suggests that sexualities are being relentlessly suppressed.

Belonging to these new sexualities is the waltz which Werther dances with Lotte, and which he would not permit her to dance with any other man – it is, as he says, his life. 'All other dances', as Musset wrote regarding the Old European dances in groups and at a distance before the invention of the waltz in 1770, 'all other dances are in contrast nothing but tired conventions or pretences for the most meaningless conversation. But to hold a woman in one's arms for half an hour during a waltz truly means: to possess her' (de Musset, 1963: 583). No wonder then that Werther no longer even needs to sleep with Lotte. Indeed, the novelist himself confessed as much. Transgressing against the rule that forbade him from passing the best of his knowledge on to knaves, Goethe gave name to the desires and constraints of the new sexuality when he placed the following verses in the mouth of an Albert finally married to Lotte:

For me, Werther's blood is just the stuff  
 Always serves to get my mare warmed up  
 I let him go strolling with my wife  
 Before her eyes expend his life [*sich abranliren*]  
 And then I come from behind at night  
 And roger her with all my might!<sup>15</sup> (see Goethe, 1962: 257)

These verses need no commentary because they *are* the commentary. Werther as Christ-figure, Werther as thwarted revolutionary – these and similar Germanist flights of fancy crumble before the fact that in Albert's cold eyes, Werther is a solitary individual and just as idiotic as (in Greek) every individual is. For what it means in practice to 'abbranliren' [to masturbate] after a dance and a walk with Lotte can be found in any dictionary not quite so tame as the Sachs-Villatte. May all those who don't understand what the phallic function is for Lacan – or who understand it philosophically, which amounts to the same thing – go and look it up. The individual and his property reduce to  $\Phi$ , 'the signifier that has no signified, the one that is based, in the case of man, on phallic *jouissance*'. What is the latter if not the following, which the importance of masturbation in our practice highlights sufficiently – the *jouissance* of the idiot?' (Lacan, 1988: 81)

From desire to love, from the delight of pairing to the *jouissance* [*Lust*] of the idiot or ἰδιώτης – synchronized with this occidental adventure of bodies is the fate of speech. The same 18th century which turned self-stimulation into a medicinal concept also invented and introduced into literary discourses an art of speaking to oneself, the author-function. From then on, literature meant a text whose title-page had to be adorned with a name; and were it to be marred by a false name or none at all, then the duties and investigations of the Sainte-Beuves would commence.

When Francesca and Paolo speak of the power-effects of the book they read, it's different. They name its hero, the Arthurian knight Lancelot, but no author. The consequence: we will never, to the disappointment of said Sainte-Beuves, discover which edition of the Lancelot material the two read – one which survives to this day or a different one. In a significant reversal, they instead give the unnamed author a name from his novel: Francesca names him Galeotto because he brought her together with Paolo, just as the novel's proverbial<sup>16</sup> matchmaker of the same name had brought together Lancelot and Guinevere. Thus the extent to which the hero-function dominates the author-function.

To recreate the actions of a hero – nothing more and nothing less was meant in former times by reading. The hero and the letters that immortalized him were internalized, incorporated [*einverleibt*]. And those who hold incorporation or inscription to be a metaphor of nostalgic structuralists are to be reminded of its literal validity in old Europe. First example, a superstitious one:

Edible images and scraps of paper, drawing upon magical techniques, proceed out of the hope that written formulas, once eaten, will direct themselves in the body's innards against all manner of sickness and malady. [...] Their magical effectiveness is not limited to humans; dogs or cattle, once made to consume the edible paper, are brought closer to recovery. (Rittner, 1976: 27)

Second example, a mnemo-technical one:

Prior to the wide-spread availability of the printing press, mnemo-technics were an important component of religious education. The Catholic Church availed itself of the Classical method, in which one uses images and locations as memory supports: the religious cosmos of the church's architecture and its saints thus became an accumulation of images and locations linked to the material that one was meant to remember. Protestants, and particularly Puritans, turned against the Catholic world of religious images, especially those which could have aroused the passion of young believers (Peter of Ravenna, for example, distributed his memories across the body of his girlfriend). (Kvale, 1978: 251)

Between men and beasts, between lovers and believers – as the two examples show – the difference was disappearing. No suggestion made that readers had accepted the power of words over their bodies only in the knowledge that they were known by the text [*im Wissen, vom Text gewußt zu werden*]: the animals couldn't even read the edible scraps of paper; Dante's lovers called upon no *sujet supposé savoir*<sup>17</sup> author. No suggestion either that only lovers were affected at the level of their bodies, while the pious were carried immediately from the *sensibilia* to the *intelligibilia*: the Mnemo-technician of Ravenna and the lovers of Rimini had the same sole surface for inscription [*Aufschreibefläche*]: the body.

The incidence of the body made reading into a pure externality. Between the hero Lancelot, his love-struck readers and their pious poet, an entire chain of transmissions emerges, carrying words from body to body – a metaphor in the literal sense of the word. The kiss of the characters in the novel is spelled out by the kiss of the lovers, and the collapse in death of these lovers spelled out by the collapse of their poet. The links in this chain do not seek to understand what the novel's author could have meant with the invention of the Ur-kiss; they simply do what they read in the words, and read in the words what the words themselves do. Francesca says it: '*Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse*' [Galeotto was the book, and he who wrote it].

The modern era replaces the myth of the hero with the myth of the one who in prior times had namelessly sung their praises. Nameworthiness is a historical variable. The hero had to have a name in a culture which had its law in a despotic signifier; the writer receives a name in a culture whose norm is, in precisely the opposite fashion, the thorough-going registration of the ruled. In the course of this reversal, what arises out of the nameless herald of the great names, now ephemeral, is the author. The appeal to his new model – the nameless Creator – gives the poet



himself a name.<sup>18</sup> In Lotte and Werther's favourite poem, Klopstock writes:

With deep veneration I regard Creation  
For You, Nameless One,  
You created it!

This is precise description not of a regard, but rather of a discursive praxis: in the writing of his 'deep veneration' before the 'Nameless One', a nameless and unique 'I' emerges; and in the reading of this written veneration, an entry into the Pantheon of poets' proper names, which in contrast to the bourgeois system of names tolerates no homonyms.

The authorship-function directs [*steuert*] the new relationship to literary texts. Rhetoric and *ars poetica* come into disrepute, as the reader's question is no longer what the words do, but rather what their Creator-like creator meant with them. The question arises because their creator, like all of his kind, threatens to disappear behind his work – and hence must always first be sought out. Thus we find amongst the new laws appearing at the close of the 18th century a creator's copyright, which declares literary speech to be the property of authors and forbids its theft. And thus to this day we find amongst the new human sciences a hermeneutics which digs up the buried intention of the author and reanimates it in the intention of the reader. Schleiermacher, to borrow Margaretha Huber's formulation (equal parts elegant and malicious), 'understood hermeneutics as a theory of production in which the one-time act of encounter was consummated: between the secluded reader and the letters of the text, which through his embrace were transformed into spirit [*Geist*]. Afterwards, he withdrew, and what he left behind has ever since borne the name: Interpretation' (1978: 78).

Hermeneutics is the understanding and application of an intention [*eines Meinen*]. What that means and what it doesn't mean is demonstrated by Lotte during the pause in the dance. The 'deep veneration' of Klopstock's 'I' before the 'nameless' God becomes the deep veneration of Charlotte before a poet's proper name. She understands the thunderstorm before her eyes with reference to the author who had himself understood a different thunderstorm with reference to God's love, and she applies this understanding to her own situation: an understanding – but only an understanding – of love overcomes her as well.

Hermeneutic empathy with the author needs a space where it can be rehearsed. This space is opened by solitary and silent reading. Previously a matter for specialists – and, even earlier, in the days of Saint Ambrose, a monstrosity (see Hörisch, 1979) – silent reading becomes the rule. The effect: while Francesca and Paolo, in reading aloud, find themselves in the midst of desire, Lotte and Werther recognize their souls' affinity in

the fact that both have, entirely independently of one another, bestowed their time for solitary reading – and thus their love – upon Klopstock. Hence, the only thing spoken aloud between the two of them is the author's proper name. The text of the *Frühlingsfeyer*, however, is remembered [*erinnert*] in its literal sense: absorbed into the inner depths [*Leser-innerlichkeiten*] of the two readers, who have translated it into interior emotions.<sup>19</sup>

According to Nietzsche, it is the practice of 'today's reader' to literally read over the many individual 'words (or even syllables)' and promptly 'guess' a meaning (Nietzsche, 2002: 81f.; V §192). Thus, Werther and Lotte's eyes do the same thing while reading as while exchanging gazes: they are always-already beyond the corporeality of the letter and the corporeality of the Other,<sup>20</sup> searching for a soul, a meaning, an idea. Such is the severity with which the imperative of the new human science of hermeneutics rules over the characters of Goethe's novel: 'While reading, one must search for the soul of the book, tracing the idea that the author had; thereupon does one have the book in its entirety' (von Hippel, 1859 II: 140f.).

If language, to speak with Klossowski and Deleuze, is the dilemma of either holding onto the words and thereby losing the meaning, or holding onto the meaning and losing the memory for words,<sup>21</sup> then Lotte and Werther possess only the latter capacity. Silent and solitary reading excludes the practice of Dante and his lovers, who in holding on to the words lost their meaning, their senses, and their heads. For this reason, letters can no longer direct [*steuern*] bodies. The dramatic event which was the reading aloud of the chivalric romance has become the lyric of lyrical understanding.

But even understanding has its materiality. The silently-read and internally comprehended books, those which no longer inscribe bodies or provoke desire, instead make writers or authors out of the readers themselves. Francesca and Paolo were no authors – indeed, they were barely even speakers. 'On that day they read no further'; it is first in Hell, first in the pause of the infernal storm, first following Dante's request that they tell their fate. And their listener collapses in misery, speechless like one of the deceased; but after he has 'risen', both from his collapse and his Harrowing of Hell, Dante will write this fate like that of so many others.

Not so for that chain of transmissions which makes a book out of the soulful love between Lotte and Werther. Lotte's deep understanding of Klopstock also leads to a plunge, although not one of the body; instead, Werther 'sinks into the stream of sensations' which Lotte 'pours over him' with the 'slogan' 'Klopstock!' These emotions too will lead to an act of writing; but it's no Dante-like third who makes a text out of their speeches. For after Werther has returned to his solitary quarters, following his immersion in literary feelings, and returned to himself, following

the intimate time with Lotte, he makes a letter out of everything experienced to send to his distant friend. A chain of transmissions arises which leads from the authorship of Klopstock to that of Werther. The hero himself then steps into the place which the older tale had reserved for the poet as a third.

The disappearance of the third who writes what others speak is one of the deep caesuras in the history of speaking. That the older love story assigns reading and writing to distinct instances is characteristic of its entire era. According to Horst Ochse, during the Middle Ages the two capacities of reading and writing (which we so unhesitatingly call a singular capacity) were as a rule divided:<sup>22</sup> on the one hand, there were scribes, unable to read what they copied out, pure calligraphers for manuscript-reproduction in a time without the printing press. Conversely, those who could read were not necessarily capable of writing; one remained dependent upon clerics (professional writers) as Francesca and Paolo depended upon Dante. But even a Dante, however certainly he himself read, did not need to be able to write to acquire the title of a poet. Wolfram von Eschenbach's line '*ine kan decheinen buochstap* [I can't make a single letter]' (Eschenbach, 2006: 50; II. 115 v. 27), often puzzled-over, acquires a precise meaning when read as the statement of a reader incapable of writing.

Only after the two discursive practices of reading and writing were fully coupled to one another, which is to say, only after the alphabetization of Central Europe, could the author come to exist. Friedrich Schlegel noted this in concise form: 'There are so many writers because reading and writing now only differ by degree' (Schlegel, 1958, II: 399; Eisenfeile Nr. 10). In the body of the author, eye and hand, reading and writing, are linked together in both possible directions: the author writes what he read and reads what he wrote. Words and letters no longer need to make the difficult journey through others in order to be transmitted; the externality that they are can disappear under the semblance of freedom and spontaneity. No coincidence that the philosophical phantasm of self-consciousness and the literary phantasm of authorship emerged in the same epoch, around 1800. Just as, according to Derrida, self-consciousness is founded upon the deception inherent in hearing one's own speech (Derrida, 1997: 289), so authorship is founded upon the deception inherent in reading one's own writing and writing one's own reading.

Writing one's own reading: Werther describes the evening thunderstorm before his eyes in high literary manner, following the impression made on him by his reading of Klopstock's *Frühlingsfeyer*. He projects the poem into the evening and the evening into the poem<sup>23</sup> – hermeneutic understanding that terminates in the authorship of the reader. And so throughout. The sole embrace between Werther and Lotte is also a product of writing one's own reading. During their last meeting – since, following a kiss and embrace, nothing remains for Werther, if he is to stay

faithful to the new sexualities, but to take his own life – Lotte attempts to calm through reading the agitation of the two bodies, which don't know what to do with themselves. (As if she wanted to all but symbolize her contrast to Francesca). Werther, however, 'has nothing' with him to read. Hence, Lotte reminds him of his 'translation of some songs from Ossian', which are in her possession but which she 'has not yet read' in the hope 'of hearing them from Werther himself'. So it comes to be that, from the irreplaceable mouth of the translator-author, a text rings out which tells of nothing but souls and death wishes. (As if it wanted to all but symbolize its contrast to the chivalric romance). Thus, when Werther translates Ossian, he writes his own reading; the listener, Lotte, receives an 'intuition' of the fact that one must be suicidal in order to reproduce Macpherson's reproduction – or imitation – of the Old Celtic as the language of his own interior. And when Werther, reading aloud what he himself wrote down, surrenders himself to the 'complete power of these words' to such an extent that he attempts to embrace Lotte, then the feedback loop between writing one's own reading and reading one's own writing becomes complete.<sup>24</sup>

In all this, the solitary figure from Wahlheim was doing just that which was being institutionalized in schools and universities at the same time. Beginning in 1770, students no longer learned to write poems themselves, following the rules of the *ars poetica*, but rather learned, through readings of other authors and poets, to put to paper their own readings – nothing less is meant by the invention and introduction into German classrooms of the personal essay [*des Deutschen Aufsatzes*] (see Heinrich Bosse's demonstration of this in Bosse, 1978). Scholarly knowledge of literature ceases to be philology, i.e. ceases to compare texts with other texts and produce commentaries; it becomes a *Geisteswissenschaft* [discipline within the humanities; lit: science of the spirit] in the literal sense of the word. It is in precisely this sense that Goethe's Faust is an amplification of Werther: the ex-professor denounces the collected knowledge of all four faculties as rummaging in books and deception of students, going to work instead on a new translation of the Gospel of John 'into his beloved German'. However, the Gospel begins, as is well known, with the word 'word' – i.e. with precisely that which the new sciences of the spirit [*Geisteswissenschaften*] disdain (not to even speak of the iteration 'the word "word"', which they would downright abhor). Thus, Faust cannot simply write what the Bible has written, but must instead write what he, Faust, reads behind the words. The *sola scriptura* of the Early Modern period is supplanted by the sol-ipsism of modernity:

The *Word* does not deserve the highest prize,  
I must translate it otherwise

If the Spirit's illumination guides me well [*Wenn ich vom Geiste recht erleuchtet bin*].<sup>25</sup>

The summoned spirit [*Geist*] is Faust's own: his 'love' for mother and mother-tongue,<sup>26</sup> his 'honest sentiment'. They lead to the replacement of the word 'word' by the word 'act'. The translator, who in writing his own reading becomes an author, thus does nothing other than insert within the written and beyond the words the act of an actor, of a spirit, of an author. Faust, whose 'hair-raising' method renders him, as Nietzsche rightly remarks, 'entirely unsound as a philologist' (Nietzsche, 1933, III: 267), invents a literary study well-known to us.

Reading one's own writing: not, say, with the simple goal in mind of polishing what has been written until it becomes 'longer lasting than bronze',<sup>27</sup> but rather, in keeping with the spirit of the new education [*Bildung*] which was emerging in Germany's universities and its bourgeois homes, as a means of reducing the dice-game of events and speeches to stories of lives and souls which hang together. In 1789, Lichtenberg posed a demand as fantastic as it was prophetic, one which in various iterations still rules nurseries and children's hospitals today. All children were to be presented with paper, but always and only in bound form; these volumes could be written in, dirtied or torn to shreds, however the child liked – and the loving parents were to give precise dates for every line, every splotch, every rip and hole. The volumes were to be collected into a 'family archive', where these same children could – and should – later read 'the signature of the progress of their spirit [*Geist*]'. 'What a pleasure', Lichtenberg cried in the hope for such a '*Bibliogenie*', 'what a pleasure it would be, to be able to look over now all my writing books! One's own natural history!' (Lichtenberg, 1942: 45).

What Lichtenberg was himself forced to do without, as no one had so carefully monitored his alphabetization, Goethe enjoyed in broad strokes [*in vollen Zügen*]. Loving and attentive parents praised and archived even his most modest youthful productions.<sup>28</sup> No wonder then that he learned to read his own writing, to find again in what had been written previously his own individuality – and then to write once more about this re-reading itself (namely in the autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*), and so on and so forth. Put economically: Goethe was able to become the first author in the modern sense. Not for nothing is the most famous of his poems signed and precisely dated, with day and year: just those verses which begin to speak of the end of speech speak at the same time – because they repeat, in their 'Wait: before long/You will rest too' the encouragement of a loving mother's voice – of the origin of speech in the author (on 'Wanderer's Nightsong II' see Kittler, 1979 [Engl.: 2013]).

Hence, what in Goethe's day was known as reflection – and thus as a capacity of self-consciousness – rests upon the invention of historically

new storage techniques and reading-writing machines. That individuals could hear their speech, could write their reading and read their writing: this is the effect of the amplification and feedback circuits that everywhere surrounded them. In Hell, and that is to say in the life-world of Old Europe, Francesca doesn't hear a single word of what she cries into the storm; we can give ourselves the titles 'individual' and 'self-consciousness' as a result of the fact that, since the end of the 18th century, hardly a word is lost of our childhood scribbles and personal essays, nor of our dream-speech or our own 'natural history'. Lichtenberg's *Bibliogenie or the Emergence of Books* has become a *self-fulfilling prophecy*.<sup>29</sup>

The European culture of modernity is the only one which wants and has what Aristotle once called impossible: knowledge of the individual. One does not need to derive the individual philosophically from the concept, nor denounce it, in Marxist fashion, as an ideological semblance; the individual is the real correlate of the new techniques of power that save its data and produce its discourses. The storage sites of the individual are to be found not only in our grand and well-known theories, but also in all the scattered and non-descript administrations and bureaucracies that first made the individual describable and documentable. 'The birth of the sciences of man', Foucault writes, 'is probably to be found in these "ignoble" archives, where the modern play of coercion over bodies, gestures and behaviour has its beginnings' (Foucault, 1995: 191).

First and foremost amongst the production sites of the individual are the family and the school. Lichtenberg's project of a family archive for the individualization of children arises at the same time as the reform begun by Herder and others for the individualization of students. One of Herder's valedictory school addresses, bearing the elegant title '*Vitae, non scholae discendum*' [Learn for life, not for school] – Seneca had famously lamented just the opposite – says explicitly what was to be done away with at the Old European school and what was to become the new educational objective:

One has a false concept [of learning] when one believes that it means: committing foreign words to memory. Words are sounds; without thoughts, particularly in one's youth, they impress themselves with great force. But without thoughts, one has only learned them as a parrot; for as is well-known, the raven and the parrot too learn the sounds of words, repeating them at both proper and improper times.

To learn words without thoughts is a harmful opiate for the human soul; while it at first provides a sweet dream, a dance of images and syllables before which one feels oneself to be half-waking,

half-sleeping, as if before some magic vision, one soon feels, as with bodily opium, the wicked consequences of these word-dreams. They cause the soul to languish and hold it fast in a comfortable inactivity; they accustom one to a slumber of thought and acquaint the soul with sweet contortions which later show themselves in life and language. One could read entire volumes of so-called philosophical and poetic writings and one would find, as Hamlet says, ‘words, words, words’, the sounds of words, sounds which lead unfortunate authors to believe that they were thinking, while they were only speaking and repeating; dark or light schemas of the imagination, which one calls now odes and even poems, now treatises – word sounds, opium, dreams. (Herder, 1887, vol. XXX: 266f.)

Herder’s reform seeks to exterminate the ravens and parrots amongst the students. That humans dwell differently in their language than their pets is no new claim; to upset it, one must be the late Lacan or a Chinese mystic. Chuang-tzu [Zhuangzi] has said that humans claim their saying is something different from the twittering of birds; he declined, however, to say whether this difference really exists (Hoffmann, 1975: 18). But in the Europe preceding Herder’s time, the human–animal distinction had been always already guaranteed. According to Dante, for example, the poet of the repeating lovers:

And if it is said that magpies and other birds speak, then we say that this is incorrect, for such an act is not speech but rather a certain imitation of the articulation of our voice, or we say that the birds are attempting to imitate us insofar as we are making noises, but not insofar as we are speaking. Thus, even if a magpie were to become the express echo of a speaker, this would be only a representation or imitation of the articulation of he who had previously spoken. And thus we see that it is solely Man who has been given to speak. (Dante, 1996: I: 2)

That humans make not only noises, like magpies, but also words, is the result of a gift; Dante names the benefactor of this gift God.<sup>30</sup> From this it follows that it also lies with God to remove human speech from those humans who have forfeited His grace and transgressed against His words. The entire *Inferno* – what literary scholar will someday speak of this end of speaking? – is a machine for the prevention of speech. Raging in the circle of the lustful is the storm which rips the words from Francesca’s mouth. Those overcome by *acedia* can no longer articulate entire words – instead they blubber in the mud like frogs (Dante, 1994: VII. 118–23; see also Strauss, 1977: 95–9). Finally, Nimrod – the criminal behind the Tower of Babel and the confusion

of languages, and thus responsible for all of this – can only bellow the nonsensical verse ‘*Rafel mai amech zabi almi*’, which Dante’s guide dismisses with the remark that Dante should waste no words on Nimrod: he has become as incomprehensible to others as they are to him (Dante, 1994: XXXI. 67–82).

God then, the God of Old Europe, both gave *to* and took *from* Man the language which distinguished him from His other creations. Thus, humans needed to make no particular effort to draw this distinction themselves, nor to prove it. It was Cartesian linguistics (provided that it’s not just a phantasm of the one who named it, Chomsky) that first moved the distinction between human languages and animal noises into the possibility of using language to generate an unlimited amount of sentences, and thereby prove the spontaneity of the subject (Chomsky, 1966: 5). And finally, it was only following the school reform begun in 1770 that this fundamental spontaneity was transformed into a teachable and learnable capacity, one which individual socialization techniques would embed in every individual so deeply that he would then continue, independently and voluntarily, to deepen the distinction between himself and the animals. Dante’s theological finding had become a pedagogical imperative.<sup>31</sup>

All the reformers of the era unified their voices behind this imperative. Disharmony prevailed only in the question as to which voice would exterminate the parrots the most effectively. Since on Pestalozzi’s account, school made the child ‘parrot forth to himself and his teacher entire sentences in a language it had never learned and which was not in any way the language it spoke in daily life’, Pestalozzi chose instead to invent an ideal mother, one who would speak to her child strictly out of love and thereby lead it, coercion-free, to produce its own speech (see Kittler, 1979: 11). Herder was less sceptical with respect to his workplace. His school speeches invent the school as we know it: a school which raises ‘humans’ and only ‘humans’. The imitators of imitators, the ravens and parrots in student form, were in for it. To simply read without understanding, to simply write without thinking was not forbidden (which would be harmless, in light of the pleasure we derive from transgressions), but rather was viewed as being beneath human dignity. What Herder finds so horrifying about reading and writing – these simple and real acts which must give way to the new and fictive acts of understanding and thinking – is expressed in his comparison: an opiate must be withdrawn. And truly, Dante’s lovers repeated a text with such literality that it directed [*steuerie*] their bodies and transported them into states of drug-like rapture. Thus, with the ‘dance of images and syllables’, the Occident of 1800 excommunicated one of its oldest techniques of intoxication. If in writing and reading, as another reformer wrote around that time, we ‘must not think anything which we do not understand’ (Bergk,



1802: 272), then all effects of words on bodies are excluded. We become individuals: character as armour against a delirium.<sup>32</sup>

The famed (and italicized) '*I think*' 'must', according to Kant, 'be able to accompany all my representations'. Otherwise, 'something would be represented in me' or even (a possibility which Kant naturally doesn't even deign to ignore) something could happen to me 'which could not be thought at all' and which would 'not thoroughly belong to me' (Kant, 2007: B 132f.). This I of the theorems of self-consciousness does not reside there where Kant thought to have discovered it, as king in the innermost regions of the soul. Instead, it commands there as a lieutenant, read: *lieu tenant* [place-holder, deputy], where Others have commanded it to go – from far outside, on the battlefields of discourse [*Reden*]. Its formulation in modal logic already attests to this: 'I' am not said to be relentlessly monitoring the various minor skirmishes of desires; 'I' must only be able to confirm, in the case of occasional monitoring inquiries on the behalf of power, having received my orders. The I then has its positivity only in the literary: as the shifter of the author's proper name, which since the time of Kant and Herder must be able to accompany speech acts.

The intoxicating and I-less rewriting and repeating of language was acceptable only so long as our culture was a culture of the law. The law in its externality commanded no more than rote [*auswendige*] compliance. Ever since our culture became one of the norm, power has preferred disobedience to fealty to the letter. If power still commands anything at all, then in sheer paradoxicality: freedom. Herder's school address speaks in the same breath *against* parrots and *for* this new educational objective. No longer can anyone be permitted to be (like Francesca and Paolo) 'the slave of foreign thoughts and opinions'; instead, everyone must 'strive to become free and independent' (Herder, 1887: XXX: 268; '*Vitae, non scholae discendum*').<sup>33</sup> There's a simple, practical explanation for these grand words, drawn from the heavens of Enlightenment: teachers banned from the classroom the request and retrieval of 'spoon-fed' answers, checking on the contrary whether every individual student 'could himself present what he had learned in his own manner and with his own words' (XXX: 268). It must have been a strange moment when it happened for the first time, when for the first time a student who had been called upon no longer received praise for his correct answer, but rather a frowning of the brow – and then was forced to learn to paraphrase until (to take up a previous example) the Greek *logos* suddenly meant 'act'. But the teacher too had to learn an innovative speaking technique, in order to 'draw out of the catechized his ownmost words' (XXX: 269): according to Herder, children acquire this individual speech, the only one fit for humans, solely when they are 'spoken to' by their 'earliest teachers' in 'comprehensible, humane, lovely tones' and when 'the content and tone of the speech' contain 'reason, grace and dignity'

(XXX: 218, 'On the Formation of Speech and Language in Children and Youths'). In other words: the love of the instructor produces *en miniature* the authorship of his students – for since then, author has been the name for those who always and only speak in their own words.

Of course there are no 'own' words. The world of speech symbols and discourse networks [*Diskursnetze*]<sup>34</sup> is, quite simply, a world of machines. Thus, what the Enlightenment deserves is, instead of continuing attempts to emulate its program, only the mistrust which the *nouveaux philosophes* have transferred from discourse analysis into the political sphere. André Glucksmann writes:

Rare, in our times, are powers who refrain from telling us: 'You are free.' Rare are the subjects who reject the pleasure of feeling free. [...] Perhaps it would be proper to consider the question of freedom in a different way, not as a question asked of me by me, but as one produced by an interpellation: 'You are free...' thus the rulers break in, in a solemn tone.

Is it not yielding too much to their behest to echo it by asking: 'Am I free?' without first of all questioning this voice which at once installs itself in each one of us?' (Glucksmann, 1980: 11)

The ends towards which the pedagogue's claim 'you are free speakers' was made are neither difficult to guess nor at all secret. One who merely repeats in his own words what Others have said and written says *slightly* more than the wording asserts. The two translators, Werther and Faust, demonstrate as much: joining the literal is a reference back to the speaker. Such is the urgency with which the individualization of Central Europe needed a function of literary authorship. That discourse which has been known since then as the freest of all was named by Herder himself a 'dangerous betrayer of its creator', i.e. its author:

Every poem, especially a whole, great poem, a work of the soul and life, is a dangerous betrayer of its author, often where he least believed that he was betraying himself. One sees in the poem not only, for instance, as the masses proclaim, the man's poetic talents; one also sees which senses and inclinations ruled in him, by what paths and how he received images, how he ordered and adjusted them and the chaos of his impressions. (Herder, 2004: 218; "On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul")

The literary text makes its author normalizable under two conditions: when it is in proper modern fashion a 'work of the soul and life', and no

longer mere rhetorical variations on other texts; and when it no longer falls into the hands of the 'masses', read: traditional philology, but rather into those of hermeneutic literary studies. Under these conditions, however, 'every poem' allows both monitoring of the monitoring which the writing individual applied to the 'chaos of his impressions', as well as a monitoring of the unmonitored which preceded all 'ordering and adjusting'. The entire field between norm and deviance becomes measurable.

Such is the directness with which authorship and love are coupled together. To give the paradoxical command 'Speak spontaneously!' means (to speak with Herder) to 'elicit' a psychic depth: the author reveals his 'dominant affections' without noticing it at all, i.e. unconsciously, and thereby reveals that sexuality which is for us the unconscious *par excellence*. The demand, both loving and cunning, to speak of one's ownmost affections provides the scientific powers of our culture with feedback on that which they themselves have elicited and called forth. In the archives, the produced unconscious [*Unbewußte*] does not become conscious [*bewußt*] in the Freudian sense, but it does become *known* [*gewußt*] – as we ourselves know from the countless pathographies and psychoanalyses of authors which have proliferated around literary texts since the 19th century.

The author is not only the victim but also the agent of individualization. He speaks in his own words, in order to enable his readers to do the same; he reveals his own sexuality to elicit that of his readers. Just this is what happened to the 60-year-old Goethe with 20-year-old Bettina Brentano. If Goethe did not recognize himself in Bettina's passionate love, and evaded giving any answer to her desires, this was because no one recognizes his truth in the spirits that he himself has summoned. For it was the power of this love to take literally the myth of the author, which had itself been introduced to do away with textual literality. Bettina's letters are the most precise formulations of the unfulfillable demand which emerged with the appearance of the author. 'Every mood', she writes to Goethe, 'becomes through your loving understanding more individual and more charming' (von Arnim, 1959: V: 354). The sentence has the status of a definition: individuality and sexuality are effects of positive feedback along the authorship-function. The author thus functions like a fun-house mirror, in which every reader sees herself and only herself, although many gaze into it, and from which every reader feels loved and understood, although the author (as the 'Dedication' to *Faust* says) writes for the 'unfamiliar crowd'.<sup>35</sup> Bettina lays her head upon Goethe's books when she goes to sleep, 'encircling them with her arms' (von Arnim, 1959: V: 371). Following Lotte's ecstatic exclamation of the 'name' 'Klopstock', Werther 'never wishes to hear it again' from the mouth of any other. Such readers, male and female, who name an author as their own correspond precisely to the program of the authors themselves. In 1765, Herder sketched an ideal

pastor and 'Orator of God' who would speak to the many as if every individual listener were 'with him alone' (Herder, 1887: XXXII: 10; 'Der Redner Gottes') and addressed in his unique being. This fictive speaker's fictive listener would say softly to himself:

Here my heart is struck, it throbs: the incident described has been taken from the course of my own life; I am known to him, and must remain so until the end of my life: no one fits this mold but I. I hurry towards my image, my heart pounds toward it, wanting to embrace it. (XXXII: 9)

Herder's desire for a new pastoral theology only makes sense in literary form; thus it was fulfilled, just over 20 years later, not by reformed sermons, but rather by the new literature of authors. It's no problem for the pastor in his pulpit to address his listeners and 'strike their heart': they are, in distinction to readers, simply there, present. Herder's difficulty is something else: no sermon provides every individual listener with a 'mold' into which he or she 'fits'. Quite the contrary: just as the chivalric novel speaks of the great heroes, the preacher speaks to all assembled of the one Saviour, in whose name they are, after all, assembled. It is the address of the absent reader that first requires a discursive technique [*Redetechnik*] capable of persuading every reader that he or she is 'entirely alone' with the author.

Exactly this is what the literature of authors does, more simply, more effectively, and more erotically than the 'Orator of God'. Schiller places his 'Theatre as a Moral Institution' in precisely the spot which tradition had accorded to religion. Because religion 'is for the majority of people no longer anything', a literature was needed to supplement the old law or replace it. Laws are negative: they only forbid; literature has positive effects: instead of 'just disarming' desires and 'affections', it 'uses' them as 'tools for higher plans'. Laws are modest: they only judge actions; literature, because it 'extends its jurisdiction into the heart's most hidden recesses', seizes or invents the individual himself (Schiller, 1959: 263ff.).

If the book as media technology is thus, to speak with Friedrich Schlegel and Nietzsche, for all and for none, then the literature of the *Goethezeit* espouses to be for all people in general and for everyone in particular.<sup>36</sup> The love of the author (*genitivus subiectivus* and *obiectivus*) makes this trick possible. To her death Bettina Brentano was spared the knowledge of what it meant to 'hurry towards' the author's 'image' in print, and to believe that 'this mould fits no one but me'. Goethe had sent her a love poem in the form of a riddle, on which she was to 'guess her fill' (von Arnim, 1959: V: 156, 163).<sup>37</sup> Thus encouraged, she found written in every line Goethe's 'love' and her 'reward'. Only the riddle's single-word solution evaded Bettina, to her good fortune: it was the last name of another woman, Goethe's dream girl.<sup>38</sup> Such a *circulus vitiosus*

or (in German) such a *Teufelskreis* is hermeneutics; and if Heidegger occupied himself with searching for 'the right way to enter into' a hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 2008: 198/153),<sup>39</sup> the more pressing question seems to be if one who finds himself in one can ever escape.

For the circle is constructed in such a way that, upon entering, the reader himself becomes a writer, thereby pulling other readers in after him. A contemporary formulation of this snowball effect reads as follows: 'Artworks which are products of genius have as characteristic that they in turn re-awaken and form genius, where it had lain buried in rubble' (Bergk, 1799: 133). This is what happens to Bettina Brentano, when she amorously and incorrectly interprets Goethe poems and then publishes both her interpretation and her love in book form. This is also what happens to the hero of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Golden Pot*, a student named Anselmus who takes up the task of copying manuscripts for an old archivist. At first, everything proceeds as it did with medieval scribes: Anselmus is to copy a text whose hieroglyphic signs are unknown to him. But as a modern reader, he becomes exasperated with this old-fashioned task and chooses instead to seek a personal meaning behind the signs. And indeed: Anselmus 'feels as if from his deepest interior' that the unreadable text concerns Anselmus himself – and *his* dream girl, the archivist's daughter. Such hermeneutics have self-fulfilling power: the beloved appears immediately in a visual hallucination and tells the student their shared, secret story. Returned from this state of rapture, Anselmus discovers to his astonishment that during the time when he had utterly abandoned himself to listening or hallucinating or kissing, the entire task of writing had been carried out unconsciously, and that the hieroglyphs and the oral narration of his beloved are one and the same (Hoffmann, 1972: 58–69; Eighth Vigil). After this coincidence of foreign signs and beloved voice, of ancient book and his own love story of the soul, Anselmus is prepared to enter as Poet into the land of Poetry. He has learned to write *from* his love and *of* his love. All that remains for the narrator Hoffman is to invite his readers to imitate his protagonist (1972: 32; Fourth Vigil).

It's with good reason that *The Golden Pot* is called 'a fairy-tale from the modern era'. Hallucination and love produce, in a manner equal parts fairy-tale-like and historically exact, a fairy-tale creature of the modern era: the author. Reading and writing lose their effort and externality because they become speaking and listening; speaking and listening, in becoming acoustic and verbal hallucination, lose whatever remainders of externality still clung to them in a phonocentric era. Schiller's pentameter 'Once the soul *speaks*, then, oh! it is no longer the *soul* that speaks' is thus not merely citable; it also has practical import. The neutralization of discourse accomplished for the hero by love is carried out for his author by a different drug, alcohol. A 'golden pot' full of punch leads the narrator to hallucinate Anselmus

and his beloved living united in love in the poet-country of Atlantis – until, awakening, he ultimately finds this ‘vision’, when ‘everything dissolved in mist, lying upon the paper on the violet table, written up quite cleanly and apparently by [the narrator] himself’ (1972: 91; Twelfth Vigil). Intoxication, instead of being as before a ‘dance of images and syllables’, leads one to forget the syllables for the sake of the images. Further, it makes their inscription into a game which the hand carries out by itself, provided that its hallucinating owner has ventured deep enough into his own soul. Such is the manner in which the psychology of Man dissolves the body of language. A narrated and a narrating author arise out of the internalization of writing. *The Golden Pot* is the confirmation message of the finally completed alphabetization of Central Europe.

Prior to the *Goethezeit*, ABC books consisted simply of letters, woodcuttings and Christian prayers, all to be learned by rote (with the aid of a flogging, if need be). In the *Goethezeit*, primers were garnished, as the primer-author Campe promises, with ‘all sorts of sweets’. For the young child Ludwig Tieck, these sweets came in the form of a mother, almost as if she had studied Pestalozzi. ‘In his mother’s lap’, as the first biographer of the young child, later poet, would write, ‘he learned his letters; all the more swiftly as imagination came to his aid. The letters seemed alive, they became pleasant forms of all shapes. Barely four years old, the boy could read’ (Köpke, 1970: I: 14). And like the mother, so the school. A *New Picture ABC* of 1793 pursues and proclaims as its sole objective:

Without difficulty or pain  
 To lead you pleasantly  
 Into our world of books  
 Which contains such treasures  
 And from early on to adorn with virtues  
 Your soft, tender heart. (Campe, 1975: 73)<sup>40</sup>

This objective is naturally just as humane as it is absurd: the child, in order to be able to receive at all the comforting message that its alphabetization was now to be painless, had to have already been alphabetized. No trick, then, can remove the violence of enculturation; women were quick to notice this as well. ‘He’s such a good little creature’, Franziska Reventlow wrote of her child, ‘why must I plague both him and myself with this damned learning? It’s utter nonsense that one can do it while playing; for a normal child, it’s always a torment’ (Reventlow, 1971: 388).<sup>41</sup> As a result, the humanism of 1800 had to reach for different means, beyond mere schoolbook reform. In order to produce men who wrote lovingly and to ‘lead’ the ‘soft, tender heart’ of the student Anselmus ‘without difficulty or pain into our world of books’, writing was dematerialized into acoustic hallucination and authorship was

sweetened with the ‘sweets’ of love. The current research plan of reception aesthetics would call such reading and writing – which discovers in paper only and always its own individuality – identificatory. But this would be to render harmless the history of speech. For the strange capacity to no longer take books at their word, but rather to take them to heart, did not fall from the heavens. The soul, as the instance of identifications, first had to be itself produced. Just this was done by the new sexualities: in Lichtenberg’s family archive, the love *of* the parents and *for* the parents; in Bettina Brentano’s Goethe cult, the love *of* the author and *for* the author; in Hoffmann’s modern fairy-tale, the love *of* the reader and *for* the reader. Common to all these sexualities is their reciprocity. ‘*Les sentiments, c’est toujours réciproque*’, as Lacan has said (1988: 4).<sup>42</sup> For the simple reason that the soul arises in the mirror. In the field of speech, the name for the mirror which was held before bodies was: author.

It was first with Nietzsche that the historical coupling of authorship and love came undone – and, moreover, through an act of excess. Nietzsche doesn’t wait for his readers’ declarations of love, for them to proclaim that he’s a great author; he poses and answers the question ‘Why I write such good books’ himself. His answer: ‘I *know* women’ (2005: 105; IV §5). Such knowledge excludes the love of ‘beautiful souls’ from reading and writing, for according to Nietzsche this knowledge is the strategic knowledge that predators – men and women – have of one another.

Predators, however, are interested neither in insights nor in knowledge. Nietzsche’s proud sentence is itself only one sortie in the contact sport played out between the genders, a turn in the spiral over and beyond love, a feint, a bit of deterrence strategy.<sup>43</sup> For just after, we read: ‘I am not willing to let myself be torn apart: the perfect woman tears apart what she loves... I know these love-worthy maenads...’ (2005: 105). So the whole exhibition which the book *Ecce Homo* is in title and in content serves only the author’s desire to not be torn apart like a beloved and to not be loved like a saint (which is to say, since the days of Goethe and Werther: like an author). ‘I have a real fear that someday people will consider me holy: you will guess why I am publishing this book beforehand; it is supposed to stop any nonsense as far as I am concerned... I do not want to be a saint, I would rather be a Hanswurst... Perhaps I am a Hanswurst...’ (2005: 184; XV §1).<sup>44</sup>

‘I *know* women’ is thus the sentence of the Hanswurst. Only after Nietzsche no longer signs with ‘Nietzsche’, only after he no longer drives the excess of authorship to the blasphemy of ‘*Ecce Homo*’ but instead simply forgets Christianity and the printing press, only then does that ‘*horrible* truth’ speak out of him which he attributed to the Hanswurst (2005: 184). A postcard from the days of the so-called

Turin breakdown, when the ex-professor embraced Hackney horses and was all the criminals of the era, writes to Cosima Wagner:

Ariadne, I love you. Dionysos (Nietzsche, 1933: III: 1350).

The place of knowledge is ceded to love, the place of the signature with the family name is ceded to a God who thinks of nothing else but expunging ‘bourgeois names’ and making ‘bourgeois pasts’ ‘entirely forgotten’ (Nietzsche, 1999: 43; §8); finally, the place of the desire to not be torn to shreds is ceded to the myth of Dionysos Zagreus, the shredded body.

Excess of authorship – of love; ‘I *know* women’ – dismembered God is my name –: In Nietzsche’s writing, all transgressions of authorship and love are entwined into a daunting riddle-script. Hence, even his biography – and the authorship-function consists in giving a life-story to the anonymous murmur of speech – can no longer serve as a source of information: was it the peak of madness that led Nietzsche to emerge as author, or the peak of authorship that led Nietzsche to emerge as madman?

For a long time, the length of an entire century, a love between an I and a mirror-image, between authors and readers, had expelled desire and power from literary discourses. With the signature ‘Dionysos’ on a cheap postcard, sent from Turin in early January 1889, they find their way back in. Indeed, what mirror could capture the play between Dionysos, dismembered God of dismemberments, and Ariadne, ruler of the labyrinth?

Those days were the end of an era. Since then, we’ve learned that Classic-Romantic literature was, in the adventures of speaking and of bodies, not a marriage of love bringing together letters and body parts of their own free will, but rather one of the many techniques of their manipulation that have come and gone. There’s no longer any reason to fight the myth of the author in the name of social-democratic philanthropy, nor to confront the god-like geniuses or radiant poet princes with an authorship or legal voice [*Mündigkeit*] for all. Let us leave the 19th century, with its Feuerbachian dream of winning back the divine images of Man squandered upon the Heavens; let us forget the fourth Feuerbach thesis, with its question of how the Gods came to that Heaven. For in so dreaming and so questioning, ‘[the sky] transforms into a mirror, grown brittle through the questioning going on for centuries, which forgets that it is simply blue’ (Huber, 1978: 88). Under the simple blue sky, coincidences are possible: between body parts and body signs, between men and women. One of the new media which have overwhelmed our literacy sings of a book of books, a book which calls for its own abolition. In a pop song, we hear:

And we read from pleasant bibles  
That are bound in blood and skin,



That the Wilderness is gathering  
All its children back again.<sup>45</sup>

*Translated by Matthew J. Fraser*

## Notes

1. The first theses on this topic were presented in the Studium Generale of the University of Freiburg on 28 November 1978. The rules of writing and the objections of the listeners have given rise to something else.
2. Linking this formulation to Nietzsche is my apology for a few snide remarks in which I attributed psychologisms to him in the analysis of speech [*Reden*]. See Kittler and Turk (1977: 22).
3. I quote Sainte-Beuve following Marcel Proust (*Against Sainte-Beuve* in Proust, 1958), who protested against Sainte-Beuve in a manner that was as passionate as it was powerless. For Proust's wish – that works would not be interrogated according to the 'prominent and well-known' face which is meant by the phrase '*l'homme et l'oeuvre*' but rather according to that 'other I' which, during writing, removes us from 'our habits, our social life, our vices' (Proust, 1958: 100) – remains (ambiguity of modernity) under the spell of 'egology'. Writing is not the turn inward into the true I (even a preconscious one) but rather dispersal without mercy.
4. See also Foucault (1980a). [The pun on colours in this sentence is lost in translation; Kittler describes Sainte-Beuve's technique as 'Methodenwesen ins Blaue hinein', alluding to Nietzsche's critique, in the foreword to the *Genealogy of Morals*, of histories of morality that proceed by means of what Nietzsche terms 'Hypothesenwesen in's Blaue' (hypothesis-mongering into the blue). *In's Blaue (hinein)* is a German idiom meaning 'haphazardly, to nowhere in particular, and carries a somewhat more pejorative valence than the English "into the blue".' Immediately following his critique, Nietzsche writes that 'It is quite clear which colour is a hundred times more important for a genealogist than blue: namely grey, which is to say, that which can be documented, which can actually be confirmed and has actually existed.' – MJF]
5. Foucault's text explicitly leaves this complex aside, in favour of an analysis of the formal conditions of authorship. However, what he does suggest on this front remains as limited as Nietzsche's remarks on the subject.
6. [Here and elsewhere in the text, Kittler uses two distinct terms for indicating speech: 'sprechen' and 'reden'. While both generally mean 'to speak', the latter, particularly in the nominal form 'die Rede', could also be rendered in English as 'discourse'. Although Kittler is doubtless drawing on both senses of the word, I have generally attempted to avoid rendering 'Rede' as 'discourse', in order to preserve the distinction between 'Rede' and the explicitly Foucauldian 'Diskurs', which Kittler also uses in this text. – MJF]
7. [An etymological pun – the pupil receives its name from the Latin *pupilla*, 'little girl, doll', so-called for the tiny image we see of ourselves reflected in the eye of the other. – MJF]
8. See Kaiser (1977: 56): 'The exchange of gazes is the central love symbol in Goethe's work, for in it the gaze sees only the gaze, and not the form of the other. The exchange of gazes is complete encounter, while in observation, the

gaze can make the person opposite into an object, because it did not encounter the other's gaze.' Of course, Dante's lovers escape the modern alternative of either exchange of gazes or objectification.

9. One would be hard-pressed to find a text which propagated with more brutality the complicity of internality and *opsis* in the subordination of the 'World of Hearing', which would have to wait for a Nietzsche before it could again be named and celebrated.
10. One finds there the sentence 'In the most secret of his inner regions, Werther *wants* the impossibility of fulfilment.' To write today can only mean to write in protest of the fact that the sexual relation does not cease to not write itself.
11. A sentence of Werther's which Kierkegaard only quotes. It has recently become necessary to remind even literary scholars of this. This last remark is directed at the address of Prof. Dr. Ludwig Rohner, who finds it completely impossible and 'un-Wertherlike' to analyse the 'sickness unto death', recommending instead a more thorough reading of Kierkegaard. This in Rohner (1978: 43).
12. The para-symbolic function of the author becomes even clearer in Johann Martin Miller's 'Werther' imitation. In *Siegiwart*, Klopstock plays the role of God himself when his book strengthens an oath of fidelity: 'Therese buried her face in her hands and leaned over *The Messiah*. Her soul was suddenly even more powerfully overwhelmed, the thought of her separation drawing ever closer grasped her entirely; her breast pounded with greater intensity; one sigh followed another, and Kronhelm heard the teardrops fall onto the book. He seized her hand; she led him to the book and he felt that it was wet. Then, he swore in his heart to remain true to her forever! And the oath was as sacred to him as if he had sworn it upon the Gospel' (Miller, 1971: I: 422). Reference from Wolf Kittler.
13. The following four sections combine theses from Foucault (1990, 1995) as well as Deleuze and Guattari (1983). [Consistency with the English-language translations of the texts Kittler invokes here seemed to require both 'Wunsch' and 'Begehren' to be rendered as desire: the first chapter of Deleuze and Guattari's *L'Anti-Œdipe*, titled 'Les Machines désirantes', is translated in German as 'Die Wunschmaschinen' and in English as 'The Desiring-Machines'. *Der Wunsch* translates roughly to 'a desire (for)', whereas *das Begehren*, the nominalized form of the verb *begehren*, suggests the activity and movement of desire in a more capacious sense. – MJF]
14. See Meyer-Kalkus (1977). The piece shows in detail how Lotte is figured as Mother and Werther's favourite authors as ideal fathers.
15. [The lines, from an early Goethe farce entitled *Hanswurst's Wedding*, are nearly untranslatable, as they rely strongly on the success of the doggerel rhyme scheme and a particular vulgarity for their effect. A literal translation would read: 'For me, dear Wertherian blood/is always welcome as a teaser-stallion/I let Werther go walking with my wife / Get himself off before her eyes/and then I come from behind at night / and screw her like mad.' – MJF]
16. [Kittler alludes here to the fact that *galeotto* can be used in Italian to refer (on the basis of this scene from Dante) to a person, a place, or an event that initiated a love affair. – MJF]

17. This as a formulation in Lacanian terms (for the analyst) of the (always imaginary) knowledge of being known [*das Wissen, gewußt zu werden*].
18. The ease with which the attribute of the Creator – and explicitly with reference to love – makes its way from the composed God to his composing author is shown by the lovers' first joint reading of the *Messiah* in *Siegwart*: 'That must have been a godly man, she said, to depict love so truly and sacredly! Yes indeed, said Kronhelm' (Miller, 1971: 1: 358).
19. [Here, Kittler is drawing out the invention of internality belonging to this new discursive order when he speaks of the 'literal' sense of the German *erinnern* (to remember): read literally, the word implies 'to internalize successfully/completely', and is picked up on later in the sentence by '*Leser-innerlichkeiten*' and '*inwendig*' (turned inward) versus '*auswendig*' (idiomatically, 'by rote', but literally 'turned outward'). – MJF]
20. Heinz Schläffer has analysed this skipping- or reading-over in the 'Klopstock' scene with reference to one of the two lovers and to an ironic-esoteric authorial intention: 'The poetic idea precedes all experience, which hinders the latter. Like Don Quixote's Dulcinea, Werther's Lotte is, as the "form of a beloved," already finished as a mold before he sees her; he will never see her properly. For the exploration of interiority, a poet's proper name will suffice for him: "Klopstock"' (1978: 216). Leaving only the question of why Lotte has an interiority, and why she articulates it through the names of poets.
21. See Deleuze (1990: 291): 'In other words, the alternative is between two purities, the false and the true, the purity of responsibility and the purity of innocence, the purity of Memory and the purity of Forgetfulness. Posing the problem from a linguistic point of view, *Le Baphomet* says *either* the words are recalled but their sense remains obscure; *or* the sense appears when the memory of the words disappears.'
22. So long as Ochse's claim remains unpublished, consult provisionally Furet and Ozouf (1982). Admittedly, Furet and Ozouf are writing about a more alphabetized time: 'We are inclined to forget, today, that for a long time writing was really a technical exercise, involving instruments, muscular gymnastics and a knack. Jean Meyer rightly reminds us that although we now think of reading and writing as two elementary and simultaneous learning processes, they used to be culturally dissociated skills, and that historically speaking there were at least two types of written civilization, those governed by the scribe, in which writing was queen, and those of the literati, in which it was no more than manual labour. Like the rest of ancient Europe, France was in an ambiguous situation in this respect: the two kinds of skill were becoming so bound up with each other that only mastery of both of them, which was learnt in school, was regarded as defining education. But they continued to be carefully distinguished and ranked, like two unequally difficult and perhaps equally unnecessary arts. Reading and writing rested upon the same knowledge, but the fact that writing was, in addition, a technique entailed an extra difficulty. On another level, however, reading's original necessity – the ability to read the word of God – meant that it kept its claims to universality. It was an instrument of salvation, whereas writing ceased to be an art and became a convenience. And if indeed it was more elementary, then it was so in both senses of the word: easier, undoubtedly,

but also more fundamental. Let the poor, in fortune or in spirit, leave the school able to read, and the Good Lord will take care of the rest' (Furet and Ozouf, 1982: 76).

23. See Koebner (1977: 44f.) on this reading situation, which has been widely propagated since Bodmer and Breitinger.
24. The preceding is in response to objections raised by Hans-Peter Herrmann, who drew parallels between the Ossian read aloud in Goethe and the Ossian [sic; presumably Lancelot] read aloud in Dante. On the decisive difference, the originality of Werther's own translation, see Trunz (1968: 58): 'He [Goethe] linguistically reworked the old translation, and the entire lyrical capacity which he had acquired since Straßburg thereby came to fruition; it is expressed in the word selection and most of all in the rhythm, which goes far beyond the sounds of the 1771 translation, and also beyond the English text.'
25. [Trans. following Kaufmann in Goethe, 1961. – MJF]
26. The equation *Menschensprache* = *Muttersprache* [Human-language = Mother-language/mother tongue] was established by Herder. See Herder, 2004: 212. I have described the manner in which this equation couples language and erotics in Kittler (1978b).
27. [Kittler is alluding to the first lines of Horace's Ode 3.30, '*Exegi monumentum aere perennius.*' – MJF]
28. On the particularities in Goethe's biography and their return in the *Bildungsroman*-biography of Wilhelm Meister, see Kittler (1978a: 71–3, 99–109).
29. [English in original. – MJF]
30. See Dante (1996: I.4): 'On reasonable grounds then we believe that Adam was given the ability to speak by Him who had kneaded him out of clay.'
31. Another one of Herder's school addresses, '*Von der Ausbildung der Rede und Sprache in Kindern und Jünglingen*' [On the Education of Students in Language and Speech], tells how this imperative functioned in practice and where the beast-people [*Tiermenschen*] reside: amongst exotic peoples and in my own language, the Saxon dialect. 'When we come into the world we are of course able to scream and cry, but not to talk or speak; we emit only animal sounds. These animal sounds remain with some people and races throughout their entire lives. One has only to stand at a distance from which the sound of the voice and accent can be heard without the meaning of the words being conveyed: in some people one will hear the turkey, the goose, the duck [...], just not the human voice. Thuringia has many good things, but fine-sounding speech is not one of them. One realizes this when one hears sounds, sounds mixed together, but does not understand the meaning of what is said. Youths who have acquired this unpleasant dialect of merely animal sounds, whether they come from the cities or the country, should make every effort in school to acquire a human, natural speech possessed of character and soul and to rid themselves of their peasant or shrieking back-alley dialects. They should leave off the barking and yelping, the clucking and cawing, the swallowing and dragging together of words and syllables and speak human rather than animal language' (Herder, 1887: XXX: 217) [trans. following Kittler, 1990: 37f.].
32. [Kittler makes explicit the link between 18th-century techniques for the production of individuals and 20th-century sexual science through his use here

- of the term *Charakterpanzer* (character-armor), coined by Wilhelm Reich in his 1933 *Character Analysis*. – MJF]
33. Analogous demands are posed by Lichtenberg and Bergk: ‘Don’t let your readings rule you; instead, rule over them’ (Lichtenberg, 1942: 44). ‘But what does it mean to understand something? It does not merely mean to understand words and their meaning, to grasp the content of sayings and the individual periods, but also to appreciate the sense and connection that thoughts have amongst one another, to penetrate cause and effect, to bring the whole together into a unity in consciousness’ – that reader-I which must be able to accompany all my readings – ‘and bring spirit and speech into the dead letters’ (Bergk, 1802: 172).
  34. [Note that this is not translating the German *Aufschreibesysteme*, which Kittler used as the title of his habilitation in 1985 and which was subsequently rendered, in the 1990 English translation of this work, as *Discourse Networks*. The term ‘*Aufschreibesysteme*’, which Kittler never uses in this essay, would be more literally rendered as ‘recording systems’. – MJF]
  35. On the mirror function in the author-reader relation of the *Goethezeit*, see also Kittler (1977: 163f.).
  36. See Heinrich Bosse’s forthcoming ‘*Von dem Gedankenkommerz*’ [Heinrich Bosse reports that this note refers to a manuscript which was shown to Kittler but never appeared in print. – MJF]
  37. Goethe’s accompanying letter may have been rewritten by Bettina Brentano during her editing of the correspondence. Even apologetic Goethe scholars do not dispute that the sonnet ‘*Scharade*’ was sent.
  38. The sonnet has as its solution (Minna) ‘*Herzlieb*’.
  39. Of course, a Heidegger-citing Wittgenstein will later (in direct contradiction to Gadamer) task hermeneutics with finding the door leading outwards in a room that appears to be closed (see Heidegger and Fink, 1970: 31).
  40. As with Campe, cited following Dietrich Leube’s afterword to Campe (1975: 73). Reference from Erich Kleinschmidt.
  41. For this too I thank Gabriele Flade.
  42. The sentence in context: ‘I put forward that idea a long time ago, very gently, by saying that feelings are always mutual. I did so in order to be asked, “Then what, then what, of love, of love – is it always mutual?” “But of course, but of course!” That is why the unconscious was invented – so that we would realize that man’s desire [*désir/Begehren*] is the desire of the Other, and that love, while it is a passion that involves ignorance of desire, nevertheless leaves desire its whole import’ (Lacan, 1988: 4).
  43. André Glucksmann has instructed us to read Nietzsche as the thinker of dissuasion (see Glucksmann, 1980: 237–63).
  44. [‘Hanswurst’ is a vulgar, comical stock figure from German theatre – the same one who lends his name to Goethe’s poem, cited by Kittler above. The Cambridge translation renders it as ‘buffoon’, but this loses the connection to the Goethe piece. – MJF]
  45. [The song is Leonard Cohen’s ‘Last Year’s Man’. – MJF]

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**Readers of this translation of Kittler's essay on 'Authorship and Love' may also be interested in reading Geoffrey Winthrop-Young's 'On Friedrich Kittler's "Authorship and Love"', also available in *Theory, Culture & Society*.**

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