

royal academy truly owed “the totality of his education” to the discourse network of 1800; according to the rector, Pforta under Prussian occupation constituted “a self-contained educational state, which completely absorbed all aspects of the life of the individual.”<sup>14</sup> In 1859, on the one-hundredth birthday of Schiller, students heard a teacher, who had been commissioned by Prussian authorities to write the first textbook on German literary history, deliver an address on the greatness of the Poet; they then spent the evening hours, after a celebratory dinner, in general, but private, reading of Schiller in the school library.<sup>15</sup> One spent the rest of one’s school time attempting to deal with one’s own person in the manner that Karl August Koberstein’s literary history dealt with the classical writers. As Poet and Critic unified in one person, the schoolboy Nietzsche wrote, aside from poetic works, the corresponding poetic autobiographies, which, after conjuring the inexhaustible days of his childhood, regularly listed his private reading and writing. “My Life”; “Course of My Life”; “A Look Back”; “From My Life”; “My Literary and Musical Activity”—and so on runs the list that an author from the new crop by the name of Nietzsche added to the classical discourse network. Only much later, namely, at the university level of the same educational path, could he read the “autobiographical constructions, which were to have justified the contingency of his being”<sup>16</sup> for what they were: German essays, programmed by pedagogues and written by students in the royal academy. Looking longingly toward a different “Future of Our Educational Institutions,” Nietzsche, the professor of philology, described their nineteenth century:

The last department in which the German teacher in a public school is at all active, which is also regarded as his sphere of highest activity, and is here and there even considered the pinnacle of public-school education, is the “German essay.” Because the most gifted pupils almost always display the greatest eagerness in this department, it ought to have been made clear how dangerously stimulating, precisely here, the task of the teacher must be. The German essay is a call to the individual, and the more strongly a pupil is conscious of his distinguishing qualities, the more personally will he do his German essay. This “personal doing” is further encouraged at most schools by the choice of essay topics, and I find the strongest evidence of this in the lower grades, where pupils are given the non-pedagogical topic of describing their own life, their own development. . . . How often does someone’s later literary work turn out to be the sad consequence of this pedagogical original sin against the spirit!<sup>17</sup>

All the sins of the classical discourse network thus concentrate in the German essay. Alone, crying in the wilderness, Nietzsche discovered the material basis of any literary work and, in particular, of his own. The pamphlet *Our School Essay as a Disguised Dime Novelist* was soon to appear in mass editions; with affectionate stylistic criticism it demon-

strated the identity between, on the one hand, Karl May, Buffalo Bill, and Texas Jack, and on the other hand, the 386 model essays on *Iphigenia* written by teachers.<sup>18</sup>

The Spirit stinks because of the pedagogic original sin against it. First the German essay generates productive literary men (more precisely, schoolboys); second, it generates the autobiographies of their production; third, it generates—because they so gladly make “obligatory” the “judgment of works of poetry”<sup>19</sup>—the literary-critical continuators, those who wrote “Letter to My Friend, in Which I Recommend the Reading of My Favorite Poet” and generally neutralized discursive effects.<sup>20</sup>

Even in dead-silent, solitary rooms, the gymnasium students of the nineteenth century were never alone; the “totality of their education” contained them as the German essay contained the literary industry. They could intend and understand everything that paper patiently took and gave—except the “influence of women,” as Nietzsche later learned to his “astonishment.”<sup>21</sup> They were very well prepared for a culture of universal alphabetization.

Thus the classical-romantic discourse network ended in megalomania and desperation. A fragment, not accidentally entitled “Euphorion,” sets the courtly signature “F W v Nietzky, homme étudié en lettres” beneath a self-portrait of naked despair.

It is deathly still in the room—the one sound is the pen scratching across the paper—for I love to think by writing, given that the machine that could imprint our thoughts into some material without their being spoken or written has yet to be invented. In front of me is an inkwell in which I can drown the sorrows of my black heart, a pair of scissors to accustom me to the idea of slitting my throat, manuscripts with which I can wipe myself, and a chamber pot.<sup>22</sup>

This is a primal scene, less well known but no less fraught with consequences than the despair of Faust in and over his study in the Republic of Scholars. The scholar is replaced, however, by the very man of letters whom Faust made to appear magically as the redeemer from heaps of books. The one who signs himself “homme étudié en lettres” has experienced nothing beyond the formative education of the gymnasium, which as an “appeal to the individual” is the opposite of scholarly training. The scene of writing is therefore bare of all library props, and thus bare, too, of any enigma about how supposed texts are to be translated into Spirit and meaning. The solitary writer is a writer and nothing more: not a translator, scribe, or interpreter. Bare and impoverished, the scratching of the pen exposes a function that had never been described: writing in its materiality. There is no Bible to Germanize, no voice to transcribe, and so there are none of the miracles that in 1800 obscured that materiality. One no longer writes around the fact of writing—writing has become its own