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Born 1986; B.A. University of Chicago, Comparative Literature and Germanic Studies with honors, 2008; M.A. Princeton University, German, 2011; Doctoral Student in German, Princeton University, since 2009; Visiting Student at Humboldt University 2012/13 (DAAD Research Grant).

Dissertation Project

"Style and Physiology: Training a New Reading Subject from Herder to Humboldt 1764-1836"

This dissertation project begins by contending that J.G. Herder's concern with the speed and components of oral transmission – of tones and accents – in his concept of poetry and translation (for example the 1773 "Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian") and in his imagined, projected media history of Greek versus German cultural techniques (in early texts such as *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur, Abhandlung über die Ode, Kritische Wälder, Der Redner Gottes* to the later *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* and "Homer und Ossian") is not a desire of a return to a "primordial orality" or the "mother's mouth." It is, in other words, not merely a fantasy to be entirely rid of techniques of erudition, despite his rhetoric of vitality and a proto-Romantic "reverie of the origin." It is, rather, a project of regulating, of modulating the temporality of aesthetic processes (which are, for Herder, physiological) in the particular medial conditions both of the expanding, diversifying print market and of the contemporary culture of erudition.

Throughout his *oeuvre*, from the personal reflections and drafts of future project, in his *Journal meiner Reise in 1769* to his early reviews in the Enlightenment bookseller/distributor Friedrich Nicolai's *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* and in his later pedagogical and theological writings, Herder critiques the culture and reading practices of *Gelehrsamkeit* while simultaneously being embedded in it. He uses declamations and the aural as a corrective or regulatory measure for the then cultural crisis brought on by print culture as well as the fast-fading culture of learnedness. Though he is not directly calling for declamations or an overall shift back to the oral tradition, his pedagogical impetus to train the "German ear" to perceive the rhythm of the hexameter is an attempt to regulate this medial situation of the 'simultaneous flood of books.' The project begins

by tracing Herder's attempt to cultivate a medium to transmit to a new reading public, focusing on how units like meter are means of transport of particular affects for pedagogical purposes. The readings of Herder's pedagogy, sermons, texts on language, aesthetics and literary criticism in this chapter will be informed by Gottsched, Baumgarten, and Klopstock's earlier texts on techniques of oration, aesthetic training and prosody.

The second chapter of the dissertation will focus on the 'Seelenärzte' and medical doctors circulating in Halle (Bolten), Berlin (Karl Philipp Moritz), Zürich (Samuel Tissot), Hannover (Georg Ballhorn and Zimmermann) concerned with diagnosing 'sicknesses of the soul', supposedly a result of 'pathological' silent reading techniques. Here too, the reader/listener is set up as a biological/physiological entity. Different verse forms (for Bolten the anacreontic ode for e.g.) and their performance have a physiological-anthropological grounding and serve as techniques of regulating the health of the new reading subject, endangered by various 'reading pathologies', most famously *Lesesucht*.

I will follow through Herder's project of determining poetic verse, whose speed of transmission bears a regulative function, to the seemingly unregulated, jarring prose of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, who writes in the midst of wide-spread pedagogical reforms from the 1780s-1830s. Having imbibed the discourse of the learned at a startlingly fast pace and with great breadth, feeds it back to the book market with texts labeled "grotesque," themselves critiquing various erudite figures while at the same time replicating and functioning according to their discourse. The prose functions as unhinging the new reading subject while itself being a result of the training described above.

Finally, the dissertation will close with the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt on the historical development of particular forms of language and its vocal articulation (particularly the 1836 "Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues") as a continuation and consequence of Herder's project to train a new reading subject.

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