CAMDEN HOUSE

HISTORY OF GERMAN LITERATURE

Volume 6

Literature of the Sturm und Drang

Edited by David Hill

The Camden House History of German Literature

Volume 6:

Literature of the Sturm und Drang

The Camden House History of German Literature

Volume 6

The Camden House History of German Literature

Vol. 1: Early Germanic Literature and Culture
Edited by Brian Murdoch and Malcolm Read,
University of Stirling, UK

Vol. 2: German Literature of the Early Middle Ages
Edited by Brian Murdoch, University of Stirling, UK

Vol. 3: German Literature of the High Middle Ages
Edited by Will Hasty, University of Florida

Vol. 4: Early Modern German Literature
Edited by Max Reinhart, University of Georgia

Vol. 5: Literature of the German Enlightenment and Sentimentality
Edited by Barbara Becker-Cantarino, Ohio State University

Vol. 6: Literature of the Sturm und Drang
Edited by David Hill, University of Birmingham, UK

Vol. 7: The Literature of Weimar Classicism
Edited by Simon Richter, University of Pennsylvania

Vol. 8: The Literature of German Romanticism
Edited by Dennis Mahoney, University of Vermont

Vol. 9: German Literature of the Nineteenth Century, 1830–1899
Edited by Clayton Koelb and Eric Downing,
University of North Carolina

Vol. 10: German Literature of the Twentieth Century: From Aestheticism to Postmodernism
Ingo R. Stoehr, Kilgore College, Texas

Literature of the Sturm und Drang

Edited by
David Hill

CAMDEN HOUSE

First published 2003
by Camden House

Camden House is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
PO Box 41026, Rochester, NY 14604–4126 USA
and of Boydell & Brewer Limited
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK

ISBN: 1–57113–174–4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Literature of the Sturm und Drang / edited by David Hill.
p. cm. — (Camden House history of German literature; v. 6)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1–57113–174–4 (alk. paper)
1. German literature—18th century—History and criticism. 2. Sturm und Drang Movement. I. Hill, David, 1943–. II. Series.

PT317 .L58 2003
830.9'006—dc21

2002010539

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

This publication is printed on acid-free paper.
Printed in the United States of America.

Contents

List of Illustrations vii

Acknowledgments ix

Abbreviations xi

Introduction 1
David Hill

Sturm und Drang Passions and Eighteenth-Century Psychology 47
Bruce Duncan

Herder and the Sturm und Drang 69
Wulf Koepke

Ossian, Herder, and the Idea of Folk Song 95
Howard Gaskill

"Shakespeare has quite spoilt you": The Drama of the Sturm und Drang 117
Francis Lamport

The Theater Practice of the Sturm und Drang 141
Michael Patterson

"Die schönsten Träume von Freiheit werden ja im Kerker geträumt": The Rhetoric of Freedom in the Sturm und Drang 159
David Hill

Young Goethe's Political Fantasies 187
W. Daniel Wilson

"Wilde Wünsche": The Discourse of Love in the Sturm und Drang 217
Karin A. Wurst

Discursive Dissociations: Women Playwrights as Observers of the Sturm und Drang 241
Susanne Kord

Schiller and the End of the Sturm und Drang 275
Alan Leidner

The Sturm und Drang in Music 289
Margaret Stoljar

The Sturm und Drang and the Periodization of the Eighteenth Century 309
Gerhard Sauder

Works Cited 333

Notes on the Contributors 355

Index 359

Illustrations

Illustration by Daniel Chodowiecki to an edition of Bürger's "Lenore." Courtesy of Taylor Institution, Oxford xii

Drawing of Heidelberg Castle by Friedrich ("Maler") Müller. Pen and ink, before 1778. Courtesy of Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt am Main 45

"The Nightmare," by Johann Heinrich Füssli. Courtesy of Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt am Main 46

Title page of the unauthorized second edition of Schiller's *Die Räuber*. Courtesy of Taylor Institution, Oxford 158

Goethe in 1776 (?), by Georg Melchior Kraus. Courtesy of Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt am Main 186

Acknowledgments

I should like to thank the Deutsches Theatermuseum, Munich, the Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt am Main, and the Taylor Institution, Oxford, for permission to reproduce illustrations.

Quotations from the German are provided in the original, but English translations, which, unless otherwise stated, are by the respective contributors, are to be found in the endnotes that follow each essay.

I should also like to thank all those involved in the preparation of the volume for their encouragement and help, in particular Bruce Duncan, Howard Gaskill, Jim Hardin, Susanne Kord, Matthias Luserke, Jim Walker, and Daniel Wilson.

D. D. H.
August 2002

Abbreviations

GAL *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Winckelmann, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Schiller, Goethe,* ed. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge UP, 1985).

G-CW *Goethe's Collected Works,* 12 vols., eds. Victor Lange et al. (New York: Suhrkamp, 1983–89).

G-HB Goethe, *Briefe: Hamburger Ausgabe*, 4 vols., eds. Karl Robert Mandelkow and Bodo Morawe (Hamburg: Wegner, 1962–67).

G-MA Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens: Münchner Ausgabe,* 21 vols., eds. Karl Richter et al. (Munich: Hanser, 1985–99).

G-U Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, *Ugolino,* ed. Christoph Siegrist, Universal-Bibliothek, 141 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977).

H-SW Johann Gottfried Herder, *Herders sämmtliche Werke,* 33 vols., ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877–1913).

K-SD Friedrich Maximilian Klinger, *Sturm und Drang,* ed. Jörg-Ulrich Fechner, Universal-Bibliothek, 248 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1970).

K-W Friedrich Maximilian Klinger, *Werke: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe,* 6 vols. to date, eds. Sander L. Gilman et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1978–).

L-WB Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, *Werke und Briefe,* 3 vols., ed. Sigrid Damm (Leipzig: Insel, 1987).

S-NA[1] Friedrich Schiller, *Werke: Nationalausgabe,* 41 vols. to date, eds. Julius Petersen et al. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1943–).

SuD *Sturm und Drang:* The Soldiers, The Childmurderess, Storm and Stress, *and* The Robbers, ed. Alan C. Leidner, German Library, 14 (New York: Continuum, 1992).

[1] The reworked version of vol. 5 is referred to as "5N."

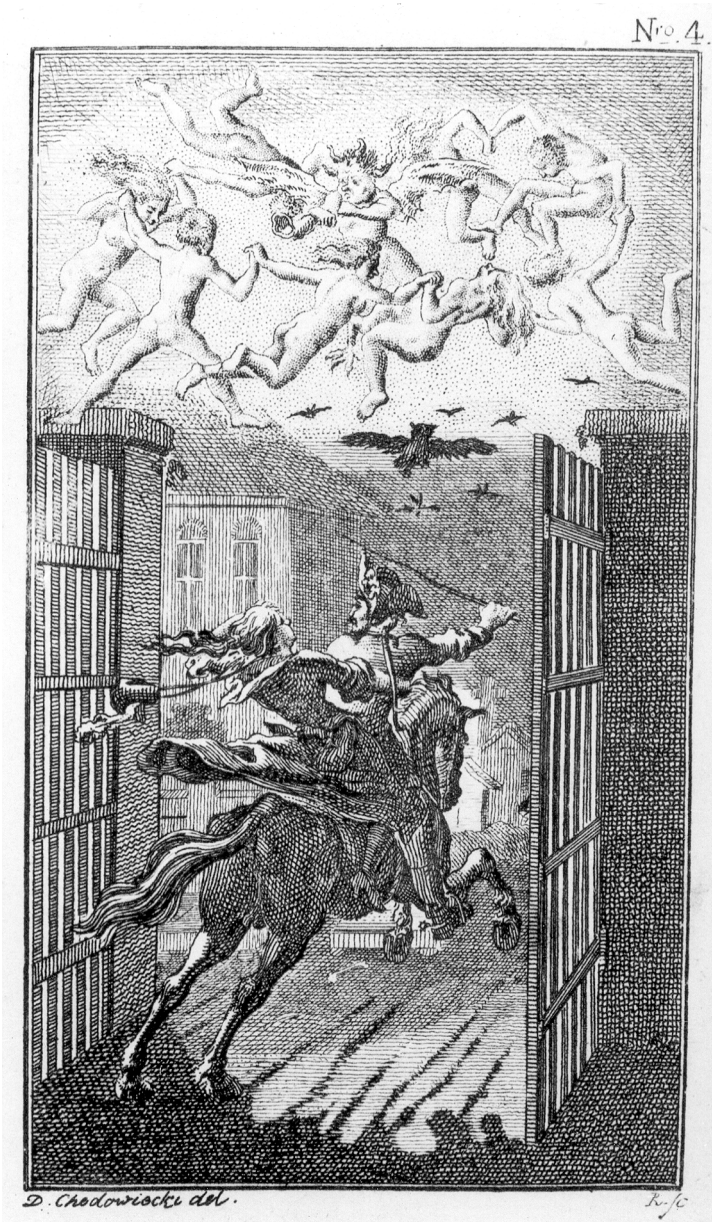

Illustration by Daniel Chodowiecki to an edition of Bürger's "Lenore." Courtesy of Taylor Institution, Oxford.

Introduction

David Hill

The Sturm und Drang and the Idea of a Literary Period

THE PRESENT VOLUME OFFERS a wealth of basic information about the Sturm und Drang, together with a series of in-depth examinations of some of the most important themes associated with it. Histories of literature conventionally use a single-stranded narrative in order to organize information about literary texts and locate them within a historical development.[1] The present volume provides this basic orientation, especially in this first, introductory chapter, but the following chapters offer a variety of perspectives on the Sturm und Drang by scholars adopting different approaches and placing different emphases. This format allows a range of arguments to be developed. Authors and texts, ideas and forms are not reduced to lists; they are introduced not merely because they are intrinsically or historically important but because they are part of an argument that shows why they are important. Indeed, no history is merely an accumulation of facts: it always consists of hypotheses about the way in which the relationships between the facts may be reconstructed. This volume attempts to respond to the multidimensionality and complexity of authors and texts, ideas and forms, and is able to illuminate them by presenting them in different essays within different argumentative frameworks. The reader is thus drawn into current debates about the Sturm und Drang, and, although the detail of scholarly argument is not placed in the foreground, it is hoped that the volume conveys something of the complexity, the uncertainty, and the excitement of all historiography.

The expression "Sturm und Drang," usually translated as "Storm and Stress," is used today in two ways in English: in a nonspecific, metaphorical sense it suggests an exuberant outburst of youthful energy, while, more specifically and originally, it refers to a particular period or style in German literary history that flourished in the 1770s.[2] As the first

meaning suggests, the literary period was one in which, in both their writings and their lifestyle, a group of young men challenged the conventions of what seemed to them a staid and narrow-minded society. The most prominent of these was the young Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832), but they also included several other authors whose lives and achievements will be briefly reviewed in the next section of this chapter. Among them is Friedrich Maximilian Klinger (1752–1831), who gave the movement its name by changing the title of his play of 1776, *Der Wirrwarr* (Confusion), to *Sturm und Drang* on the insistence of his friend Christoph Kaufmann (1753–95), who may have been thinking of Hamlet's "very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion" (act 3, scene 2).[3] Both terms, "*Wirrwarr*" and "Sturm und Drang," suggest — correctly — that the writers of the Sturm und Drang were more interested in creative energy than in order. Similarly, the writers of the Sturm und Drang, or "Stürmer und Dränger," were also known to contemporaries as the "*Kraftkerle*"[4] or "*Genies*" (geniuses).

The definition of any historical epoch is a problematic enterprise. Literary periods and trends do not have distinct, self-evident boundaries. They represent an attempt, either by contemporaries or by successors, to identify a common style or a common set of ideas that marks off one phase in a complex and relatively gradual evolutionary process. The use of a literary period is, therefore, always an act of interpretation that involves the insertion of caesuras and the selection and ordering of information. But, however problematic and provisional the definition of a period is, it is nevertheless an essential tool that gives shape to a history of literature and allows us to see beyond the individual text to the wider pattern. What is important is to recall that the identification of this wider pattern is part of an act of interpretation and is, therefore, provisional. We have learned to be wary of monothematic "grand narratives" and are conscious that all judgments at all levels need continually to be renegotiated, because the basis on which judgments are made is subject to continual historical change, and because all interpretations are partial in the sense that they prioritize certain meanings at the expense of others. Each literary period is a complex network of ideas and styles that cannot be reduced to one linear "story" but is made up of many crisscrossing themes and styles that fit into various overlapping patterns, and may perhaps best be approached, as in the present volume, by several interlocking studies.

Looking back over the way historians have described the Sturm und Drang,[5] it is, nevertheless, possible to discern with varying degrees of consistency and certainty a core repertoire of themes, motifs, and stylistic

features. Not all of these will be found in every text, or maybe even in every writer, but enough of them will be for the overarching term "Sturm und Drang" to be helpful. There will be debates about where to draw the boundaries of the Sturm und Drang, but these debates are less useful for their conclusions than for the insights they provide into the defining core of the movement. There will be authors and texts that are typical of the Sturm und Drang in certain respects, but less so in others. Moreover, there is a developmental dimension to this problem, inasmuch as what was typical of the Sturm und Drang changed at various stages in the movement, and scholars have therefore on occasion refined the idea of the Sturm und Drang by identifying a distinct number of phases within it — a practice that, of course, has the same benefits and problems as the use of the literary period in the first place.

Other thresholds are also to be borne in mind. It is arguable whether the Sturm und Drang should be restricted merely to literature. The characteristics of Sturm-und-Drang writing are to be found in speculative essays and private letters as much as in plays and poems. Beyond this, there is a philosophical dimension to the Sturm und Drang, although it is not normal to speak of the Sturm und Drang as a phase in the history of philosophy. Histories of music, on the other hand, do acknowledge a Sturm und Drang, but at the same time there is a debate about whether the musical Sturm und Drang should be considered as belonging to the Sturm und Drang proper, albeit at its periphery, or whether it is merely a parallel phenomenon, perhaps the product of the same social and cultural environment.[6] The visual arts are a slightly different matter. The sketches by Goethe and Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751–92) reveal real talent, and there was a time when Goethe thought that his future might lie in art rather than in literature. Friedrich Müller (1749–1825) was known as "Maler" Müller (Müller the Painter) because he was as at home in his painting, and particularly his sketches, as he was in his writing, and in both media he reflects the enthusiasm of the Sturm und Drang for nature together with an interest in the realistic portrayal of everyday life.[7] Heinrich Füssli (1741–1825), known as Henry Fuseli after he moved to England, began as a writer but is remembered today for his paintings, which, by contrast with the work of Müller, reflect the extravagant imaginative flair of the Sturm und Drang (for example, in "The Nightmare").[8] Both Müller and Füssli excelled as writers and also as artists, but although there are connections between what they achieved in each medium, it is not common to think of the Sturm und Drang as a phase in art history.

The Writers of the Sturm und Drang within the Development of German Culture in the Eighteenth Century

The intellectual landscape of eighteenth-century Germany within which the Sturm und Drang so rapidly achieved prominence in the early 1770s was a particularly complex one. A context is provided by the European Enlightenment, a broad social and cultural movement that had emerged around the beginning of the century and insisted on focusing on this world rather than the next. Alexander Pope (1688–1744) formulated the idea in his *Essay on Man* (1733): "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; / The proper study of Mankind is Man."[9] Strongly influenced by deism, the writers of the Enlightenment in general did not doubt the existence of God, and certainly those in Germany did not. They thought of God as a creator whose existence guaranteed the ultimate order of the world, but they turned their attention away from the transcendental, which we could not know, and sought to build up a system of reliable human knowledge based on the faculties of mankind: our five senses and our reason. They rejected the tendency to interpret this world in terms of the next or to derive knowledge from the elaboration of established authorities such as the ancients or the Bible. Instead, they turned a questioning, skeptical eye on the world around them. They saw the natural world as worthy of serious investigation, and one of the things that marked off the beginning of the Enlightenment was the way that it combined empiricism with rational analysis to fuel the natural sciences. Through science people felt increasingly able to appreciate some of the perfection with which the creator had constructed the universe. At the same time, technology revealed its potential for further improvement, and the writers of the Enlightenment looked forward to a more humane society, that is, a society that granted us happiness and allowed our God-given human qualities to flourish. What was new was an understanding of God as the creator of a world that had within it the elements of perfection, rather than thinking of God as standing apart from, and occasionally intervening in, an impenetrable vale of tears. At the same time, the idea of progress was applied to man as a social and moral being in whom folly and prejudice will eventually be eroded by reason and tolerance. There was, thus, also a sociopolitical dimension to the Enlightenment. In terms of knowledge, the Enlightenment attempted to look beyond the meanings that things had been given a priori by external authorities to what one could discern, by the application of the

human faculties, those things really were. The correlate of this idea was that the true identity of people was determined by their individual merit rather than the status they inherited — for example, through their social class. The Enlightenment saw the foundation of modern scientific ways of thinking about the natural world, but it also saw the evolution of modern ways of thinking about the relationship between the individual and society.

As we move on through the eighteenth century to the Sturm und Drang, the picture becomes complicated as the entanglements of terminology and interpretation come to the surface. Older literary histories tended to present the Sturm und Drang as a reaction against the Enlightenment, an outburst of irrationalism in an ordered, rationalist world. They used the term "Enlightenment" in a narrow sense to refer to the rationalist (and, in Germany, to some extent empiricist) traditions of culture between — approximately — 1720 and the 1770s, after which they saw the decline of these traditions in the Late Enlightenment (from the 1770s until the end of the century). More recent critics have drawn attention to the continuities between the Enlightenment and the Sturm und Drang and have seen the Sturm und Drang as a particularly radical set of attempts to achieve the emancipation of the self, which was, indeed, a central goal of the Enlightenment. They have, thus, used the term "Enlightenment" in a broader sense and discerned within it a number of trends and projects. These strands include not only the narrow sense of Enlightenment but also the Sturm und Drang, "*Empfindsamkeit*" (Sentimentalism, or Sensibility), and the Late Enlightenment. From this perspective, the last third of the eighteenth century appears as a fragmentation of the Enlightenment: the Sturm und Drang was one of the splinters that resulted and was characterized not so much by its specific rejection of rationalism as by its rejection of all assumptions about the parameters within which emancipation should be sought. The Sturm und Drang is, therefore, not a period in the history of culture in the way that, for example, the Renaissance or the Enlightenment are; it is not a turning point in the evolution of culture. Even to call it a "movement" may imply more cohesion and purpose than is appropriate. The Sturm und Drang is represented by a relatively small number of texts; they are important not because they represent a necessary stage in the development of German culture but because of the quality of the writing they contain and because of the radicalism, the complexity, and the incisiveness of their analysis of the human spirit on the threshold of modernity.

The advantage of this approach to the treatment of periodization is that it makes it easier to integrate into a history of literature the great variety of styles of writing and thinking that are to be found in eighteenth-century German literature. Many writers who were active within the Enlightenment in its narrower sense also wrote in what is called the rococo style, which adopted the anacreontic conventions of celebrating wine, women, and song.[10] This style has been rather underresearched, because its frivolity and mild eroticism conflict with the high seriousness and the middle-class inwardness that have often been considered typical of eighteenth-century literature in Germany. In particular, it does not quite fit the traditional image of the Enlightenment: although the rococo is oriented toward the things of this world, it turns away from the somewhat prim and worthy correctness that is often associated with the mid-century Enlightenment.

On the other hand, scholars who were intent on tracing the evolution of an independent national literature placed an emphasis that was all the greater on the historical role of Friedrich Gottlob Klopstock (1724–1803) and the sentimental style of writing he developed around the middle of the century, known as "*Empfindsamkeit*." His emphasis on emotion has been related to the Sturm und Drang, and the boundaries between the two are often indistinct, both in terms of style and at a personal level. Writers in the sentimental style, however, had a preference for an ecstatic and elevated but rather abstract tearfulness. They liked to see themselves as bards or prophets, and there was often a religious as well as a nationalistic note to their writing. What lies behind Sentimentalism and, indeed, all eighteenth-century literature in Germany is a broad cultural movement associated with Pietism, an intensely inward religious revival dating from the beginning of the century. The Pietists sought religious meanings in everyday life, and to the extent that they took religious feeling away from the church they were part of the process of secularization; but at the same time they gave everyday experiences the intensity and the transcendental meaningfulness that had previously been the province of religion, and thus they fueled a new intensity of the inner life in literature.

If the 1770s were the decade of the Sturm und Drang, then they were also the decade of Sentimentalism: the first collected edition of Klopstock's odes was published in 1771, and the best known of his disciples formed an association, the so-called Göttinger Hainbund (Göttingen League of the Grove), in 1772 in an oak grove outside Göttingen. A letter from Johann Heinrich Voss to Ernst Brückner of August 4, 1773 describes how they celebrated Klopstock's birthday, reading

his poetry, drinking wine, and burning the works of Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), the main representative of the rococo style of writing and the bête noire of both the Göttinger Hainbund and the Sturm und Drang.[11] The rococo style of writing was at this time becoming less popular, though its influence was still felt. The 1770s were also the time of that concluding representative moment of the middle phase of the Enlightenment (*the* Enlightenment in the narrow sense), the dispute of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) with Goeze over the role of reason in religion. Lessing's belief that our human faculties were a surer basis for judgment and for humane behavior than external authorities such as the church or even the Bible inspired him to write *Nathan der Weise* (Nathan the Wise, 1779). Lessing, Wieland, and Klopstock dominated the literary scene in Germany in the 1760s and 1770s, although their concerns rapidly began to be regarded as old-fashioned by a younger group of writers, the new avant-garde: the Sturm und Drang.

Most accounts of the Sturm und Drang agree that it had a preliminary phase that was dominated by the explosion of intellectual energy in the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).[12] Herder came from the northeastern reaches of the German cultural world. He was born in Mohrungen (now Morag) in East Prussia, studied theology at Köngisberg (now Kaliningrad, Russia), and in 1764 was appointed to a teaching post in Riga. There he began writing essays on all aspects of cultural history. Herder had a voracious appetite for ideas, and it is not easy specify sources for his arguments, but the two greatest influences on his writing were probably Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). If Herder was the father of the Sturm und Drang, then Hamann was its grandfather. Hamann, who lived in Königsberg, where Herder met him during his studies, turned to religion but did so in a way that was to be typical of the Sturm und Drang, in that for him the love and knowledge of God encompassed the love and knowledge of the whole of creation. Structural links clearly exist between these views and the Enlightenment belief in God as the creator whose hand could be seen in the wonder of the world; but for Hamann the godliness of the world was to be found in its present wonder, not in the fact that it pointed to a past moment of creation. Second, the godliness of the world was something to which the whole person, not merely the individual's intellectual faculties, could and should respond. Correspondingly, Hamann believed that the God-given medium of language should communicate not so much through explanation and argumentation as through allusion and association. Hamann's visionary style of

writing is peppered with references to the most diverse of sources and is notoriously difficult to read, but it is scarcely possible to imagine the Sturm und Drang feeling for a secularized holiness of nature or the style of its prose writing without Hamann, both mediated mainly through Herder.

Despite their criticism of French cultural values, several French authors were admired by the writers of the Sturm und Drang. These authors include Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740–1814)[13] but, above all, the Genevan Rousseau, whose two *Discourses* of 1750 and 1755 develop a radical critique of the contemporary world as artificial and degenerate, and paint, by contrast, a picture of a more primitive, more natural social order whose wholeness and authenticity we must recover.[14] Herder was clearly captivated by Rousseau's vision of an alternative to the falseness of the present world, and, with his special interest in language and culture, he found in folk song, and folk culture in general, the remnants of a more natural, more organic way of life. In his essay "Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker" (Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples), which he published in a volume he edited that was almost a manifesto of the Sturm und Drang, *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (Of German Character and Art, 1773), Herder analyzed the artificiality of modern writing and contrasted it with folk song — or, at least, poetry in the folk style — which, he argued, was the direct expression of the life of a culture.[15] One of the starting points of this essay is, typically, Herder's description of his personal experience of reading Ossian, the Celtic bard, on the sea journey he undertook from Riga to Paris in 1769. By contrast with the faith of Enlightenment writers in the progress of history from the less to the more civilized, Herder's writing thus contains an element of cultural pessimism. Herder was, however, like Rousseau, a child of the Enlightenment, and his writings, like Rousseau's, are full of suggestions as to how reforms might be introduced that would counteract the tendencies of the age. He kept notes of his thoughts on this voyage and published them as *Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769* (Journal of My Journey in the Year 1769, published 1878), which contains proposals of improvements that should be made to everything from school curricula to literary cultures and national economies. Herder combines his historical pessimism with such moments of hope in *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (One More Philosophy of History for the Education of Mankind, 1774) but adds a crucial third perspective, historical relativism. He suggests here that history is an organic process in which each element of a culture can only be understood in terms of its

function for the whole, and at times he speaks of cultures as organisms that have a natural life cycle. Herder does not resolve the tensions between the different historiographies embedded in this work, and maybe he felt that it would be wrong to impose an artificial harmony that would obscure the insights that each approach might offer. All of Herder's writing has something fragmentary, open, and provisional about it, because it reflects his restless energy as a generator of ideas.

Herder's essay on Shakespeare (also published in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*) similarly combines enormous enthusiasm with an emphasis on the need to understand Aristotle and Shakespeare within their respective cultural contexts. Herder was not the only author at this time who built on Lessing's argument that German culture was closer to English than to French culture and that Shakespeare was, therefore, a more appropriate model for German writers. Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg (1737–1823) achieved renown in the late 1750s and the 1760s as a poet capable of writing both in the rococo and in the sentimental style influenced by Klopstock, but in his *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Litteratur* (Letters on Noteworthy Aspects of Literature, 1766–67) he used the example of Shakespeare to argue that rules for the composition of literature (and, therefore, by implication, the normative aesthetics of neoclassicism) can only inhibit the direct free expression of genius, the sole guarantor of true poetry. In his tragedy *Ugolino* (1768) the diction of the characters draws on Sentimentalism, but this is undercut by the almost gothic violence of the plot, in which traditional kinds of dramatic conflict have given way to the macabre portrait of a father and his three sons starving to death in prison. Ambivalent as it is, *Ugolino* must be reckoned the first drama of the Sturm und Drang.

The central figure of the Sturm und Drang — at least from 1770 until his move to Weimar late in 1775 — was Goethe. As a student in Leipzig (1765–68) Goethe had begun writing poetry predominantly in the rococo style, and his collection of poems *Neue Lieder* (New Songs, 1769) already shows notable signs of subtlety and a responsiveness to nature. Yet, his Sturm und Drang writing of two years later is so strikingly original that one looks for external stimuli, however partial the explanations they are likely to offer. First, scholars have often made connections between the new sensitivity to his inner self and the illness that prompted Goethe's hurried departure from Leipzig in the late summer of 1768, together with his withdrawal from active social life and, most important, his close contact with Pietist friends of the family, under whose influence the convalescent came to empathize with some of their intense, inward religious faith. The second essential experience was his

meeting with Herder in the fall of 1770 in Strasbourg, where Goethe had gone to complete his legal studies in the spring. Herder, who was working on his *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (Treatise on the Origins of Language, completed 1770, published 1772), was being treated for an eye condition and had to spend time in a darkened room. Goethe visited Herder soon after the latter's arrival in September, and there developed during the winter of 1770–71 a series of almost daily meetings, during which Goethe received the most intense initiation into the world of ideas Herder was opening up.

At the same time, other new experiences so crowded in on Goethe's life that they cannot easily be placed in sequence. Under Herder's influence Goethe became engrossed in the writers who were to play an important part in the Sturm und Drang, all of whom were seen as somehow primitive and closer to nature. These included Homer; Ossian, whom he translated; and, above all, Shakespeare. He was fascinated by the cathedral in Strasbourg, which seemed to have a harmony the modern world had lost and that he tried to evoke in his essay "Von deutscher Baukunst" (On German Architecture), included in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*. In the countryside of Alsace, Goethe began to show the intensity with which he could respond to nature, and he copied down for Herder folk songs from the oldest inhabitants of the villages. In one idyllic village, Sesenheim (now Sessenheim), he met and fell in love with a pastor's daughter, Friederike Brion. This was also a time of great creativity, as Goethe discovered a style of writing that expressed a new intensity of individual feeling. Goethe's poems of this period are driven by an energy and a directness that were quite new in German literature, and this is the time, too, when he began working on later masterpieces such as *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) and *Faust* (part 1, 1808; part 2, 1832). Nor should one forget Goethe's skill as an artist, which is demonstrated by numerous sketches of landscapes and portraits of friends. At the same time as he was experiencing this outburst of creativity, Goethe began to establish a wide network of friends who were inspired and encouraged by him and whom he helped in many practical ways. This was the literary avant-garde formed by young men who felt that they were engaged in a common enterprise with Goethe. Reviewers were often unable to distinguish the works of Goethe, Lenz, and Klinger; and because these men engaged in intense discussions of work in progress, there is a sense in which at least some of their productions were collaborative ventures. In Strasbourg, Goethe dined regularly with a circle of friends, among whom were such promising writers as Johann Heinrich Jung (1740–1817), Heinrich Leopold Wagner (1747–79), and, a little later, Lenz.

Jung was also known as Jung-Stilling or Stilling from the family name he gave himself in what was effectively an autobiography narrated in the third person. The first volume in particular, *Heinrich Stillings Jugend* (The Youth of Heinrich Stilling, 1777), composed at Goethe's instigation, shows the sensitivity and clarity of self-observation that Pietism could induce, even and especially among the lower social classes; and although it is more commonly included in the tradition of Sentimentalism than the Sturm und Drang, the fact that it was published by Goethe illustrates the connections between the two styles. Lenz also had a Pietist background and had been destined for the Church by his father, but he broke off his theological studies at Königsberg and traveled to Alsace in 1771. There, in a furious burst of energy, he read voraciously at the same time as translating Plautus and Shakespeare, writing essays on literary theory and theology, and composing the plays for which he is chiefly remembered today, *Der Hofmeister* (The Tutor, 1774), *Der neue Menoza* (The New Menoza, 1774), and *Die Soldaten* (The Soldiers, 1776). Lenz's ability to combine humor with an unflinching insight into the way social pressures distort humanity, together with a vision of the depths and potential of that humanity, inspired Georg Büchner in the 1830s and continue to inspire authors and composers in our own time. Lenz is best known as a playwright, but, like Goethe and, later, Schiller, he also made important contributions to poetry and to narrative forms, notably *Zerbin* (1776) and *Der Waldbruder* (The Hermit, written 1776). Wagner is known primarily for one play, *Die Kindermörderin* (The Infanticide, 1776), which, like *Die Soldaten* and *Faust* (which Goethe accused Wagner of plagiarizing), is a document of the Sturm und Drang concern for the tragic consequences of the seduction and desertion of middle-class girls by men of higher social status. As in many other Sturm und Drang plays, however, the gesture of protest against all restrictions to self-fulfillment is accompanied by an insight into a network of social and psychological factors that is so complex that simple moral judgments on individuals are no longer possible.

Goethe was awarded his licentiate and left Strasbourg in August 1771 to pursue a law career based in Frankfurt. There he met Johann Heinrich Merck (1741–91), who at the beginning of the next year took over the review journal *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* and invited Goethe to become a regular contributor. There followed nearly four years in which Goethe was active as a lawyer, including a period working at the imperial court in Wetzlar, but he gives the impression that he devoted his energies to his friendships and his writing. He traveled widely, and among the friends and collaborators in this intellectual and creative

turmoil that was the core of the Sturm und Drang are a number of key figures, including Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801), Klinger, and Maler Müller.

Lavater was a Swiss minister who acted, like Goethe, as an important mediator between members of the Sturm und Drang circle and the broader, looser group of writers in the sentimental tradition, many of whom, including Goethe, he recruited into his investigation of physiognomics. In his *Physiognomische Fragmente* (Physiognomic Fragments, 1775–78) Lavater attempted to correlate the facial features of people and even of animals with their character, believing that he could thereby demonstrate the unity of God's creation. Contemporaries recognized a certain naiveté in Lavater, but they also admired the energy with which he pursued the question of the relationship between essential inner forms and their expression. Goethe's ambivalence about Lavater's otherworldliness is summed up in his contrast between himself as a "Weltkind" (child of the world) and Lavater as a prophet (*G-MA,* 1.1: 247). Equally revealing of the enthusiasm rather than the discrimination of the Sturm und Drang is a man whom Lavater acclaimed as a genius: the Swiss Christoph Kaufmann, who lived the life of a Sturm und Drang genius, complete with extravagantly "natural" dress, but, as far as we know, wrote almost nothing.

By contrast with most members of the circle, Klinger came from a poor background, and he received not only encouragement but also financial support from Goethe when he went to study at the University of Giessen. Klinger seems to have thrown himself with enthusiasm into both the lifestyle and the writing style of the Sturm und Drang. Some of his plays, such as *Otto* (1775) and *Das leidende Weib* (The Suffering Wife, 1775), show their dependence (on *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Der Hofmeister,* respectively), but *Die Zwillinge* (The Twins, 1776), *Sturm und Drang,* and *Simsone Grisaldo* (1776) are full of the sometimes rather unfocused intensity that has come to be seen as characteristic of the movement. Friedrich Müller worked in various literary genres and published an incomplete version of the Faust story, *Fausts Leben, dramatasiert: I. Teil* (Faust's Life, Dramatized: First Part, 1778), but increasingly devoted his main energies to his sketches and his painting.

Goethe's life was marked not only by these collegial friendships, intense though they often were, but also by a series of relations with women that were situated somewhere between friendship and love. In Wetzlar Goethe met Charlotte Buff, and he drew on the experience in his novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther,[16] 1774), which caused a furor because of its sympathetic insights

into the mind of young man who commits suicide as a result of a hopeless love affair. There date from these years a host of poems that, at least in the first instance, reflect immediate emotional experiences, and several major plays. The most significant among the latter was *Götz von Berlichingen,*[17] a historical drama in the most extravagant Shakespearean manner that, together with *Werther,* established Goethe's reputation well beyond his circle of friends and admirers. There were also rather more conventional domestic dramas, including *Clavigo* (1774), *Stella* (1776), and the "Singspiel" *Claudine von Villa Bella* (1776). Of possibly greatest significance, however, was an early draft of *Faust. Faust* itself did not appear in print until 1808, and then only as part 1; but this draft, known rather imprecisely as the "*Urfaust*" (Original Faust), of which a copy was discovered in 1887, is a valuable indication of the progress Goethe had made on the project before he moved to Weimar.[18] He also began work on *Egmont,* though it did not appear until 1788, after he had completed it in Italy.

In 1775 Goethe formed an attachment to Lili Schönemann, the daughter of a Frankfurt banking family, and this time he seems to have been seriously tempted by the prospect of marriage; but to settle down, accommodate himself to the materialism of her family, and above all, so it seemed, put an end to the excitement of self-discovery was more than he could bear. Feeling that he had to leave Frankfurt, he set off for Italy when the invitation to join the court of Weimar that he had been led to expect failed to turn up. Duke Karl August's emissary, however, caught up with him in Heidelberg and took him to Weimar, where they arrived on November 7. This date marks the beginning of the end of the Sturm und Drang. The circle of colleagues known as the Sturm und Drang was held together by friendship and admiration and by shared values and attitudes that found expression not only in writing (imaginative literature, essays and reviews on a broad range of topics in the arts, and letters, which were often passed on to still other friends) but also in their behavior. They cultivated an exuberance that had the no doubt intended effect of causing something of a scandal. When, for example, in the early summer of 1775 the brothers Christian (1748–1821) and Friedrich Leopold (1750–1819) Stolberg, noblemen and authors in the sentimental tradition, and a friend persuaded Goethe to join them on a trip that took them to Switzerland, all four had suits made consisting of the blue coat and yellow waistcoat and trousers that Werther was famous for wearing in Goethe's novel and that had become almost a badge of the new sensibility.[19]

When Goethe first arrived in Weimar, he continued this extravagant lifestyle. He gradually distanced himself from such wild abandon, however. In a complicated and not unambiguous process his values and his writing began to change,[20] and the end of this core phase of the Sturm und Drang was marked when Lenz and Klinger, both of whom had come to Weimar in the summer of 1776 in the hope of finding employment or patronage, were expelled in disgrace. There are many hypotheses, and we shall probably never know exactly what provoked the rift in each case, but the context is clear: Goethe was developing away from the attitudes and values that lay behind the Sturm und Drang. After this falling out, both Lenz and Klinger had difficulty gathering their lives together. The rejection by Goethe, the friend he idolized, probably provoked the mental breakdown that Lenz suffered about a year later; and Klinger had an unsettled and apparently unhappy few years before he established a career in Russia in 1780, by which time his lifestyle and his interests were already changing in a direction similar to Goethe's. When Wagner died in 1779, it seemed as if the Sturm und Drang had run its course.

Goethe was the key figure in the Sturm und Drang, and the most vivid account of the movement is to be found in his *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (From My Life: Poetry and Truth, 1811–33), the first part of an uncompleted autobiographical project, which covers the period up to Goethe's departure for Weimar at the end of 1775. *Dichtung und Wahrheit* has had a decisive influence on the formation of the literary canon in Germany, both in terms of Goethe's evaluation of the Sturm und Drang and in the selection of individuals he chooses to discuss. Thus, there are a number of women writers of the period who share some characteristics of Sturm und Drang writing — for example, Christiane Karoline Schlegel (1739–1833), Marianne Ehrmann (1755–95), and Sophie Albrecht (1757–1840); but they are not mentioned by Goethe and have been largely excluded from the canon. Only recently have feminist critics begun to demand a reevaluation of them.[21] In other respects, too, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* reflects the perspective of the older Goethe, whose portrayal of the Sturm und Drang reflects his experience of what seemed to him the dangerous collapse of values in the French Revolution and among the Romantics, who, he felt, paid too little attention to the demands of life in the real world.

It is not easy — and maybe not entirely possible — to escape the dominance of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* when writing of the Sturm und Drang, but we should recognize that each member of the circle has his own biography, his own concerns, and his own style, and contemporary

views may be better represented in letters or, for example, in Lenz's *Pandämonium Germanicum* (written 1775; published 1819), a kind of satirical comment on the literary scene that includes most of its real authors as characters. The Sturm und Drang consists of a set of intertwining fates, and, as has become clear, there are many links to authors who might more conventionally be linked with the sentimental style of writing, which in the 1770s came to be focused on the Göttinger Hainbund. Johann Anton Leisewitz (1752–1806) was a member of the Göttingen circle but wrote one play, *Julius von Tarent* (Julius of Tarentum, 1776), that explores further the Sturm und Drang motifs of the rivalry of brothers and the distortions of nature that are implied by the attempt to subordinate feelings to institutions such as family or state. Gottfried August Bürger (1747–94) bridged the Göttingen and Sturm und Drang circles and helped to develop the idea of folk poetry — particularly in his ballads, of which the most celebrated, "Lenore" (1773), was inspired by Herder and by the mood Goethe had created in *Götz von Berlichingen*. Bürger thus played an important role in creating the German tradition of the art ballad in the folk style: a narrative poem, often involving a fast-moving sequence of scenes characterized by action and direct speech and usually with a twist that is either gruesome or supernatural or both. Bürger's is also an interesting case because it demonstrates the sharpness of social criticism that was possible in the Sturm und Drang. In general, the writers of the Sturm und Drang were impelled by an urge to protest against the aesthetic and moral values of a social world that they felt had become deadeningly oppressive; but their criticisms tended not to be overtly political. Two writers did, however, show how far they were willing to go in their confrontation with the political powers: Bürger and Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739–91), who is remembered for his poetry, his editorship of the *Deutsche Chronik* (German Chronicle, 1774–77), and the ten years of imprisonment he earned through his insubordination. Both writers, typically, stand at the edges of the Sturm und Drang.

Schubart's career was marked by the two outstanding features of the part of Germany from which he came, Swabia: a middle-class culture that was strongly influenced by Pietism, and a notoriously oppressive and authoritarian ruler, Karl Eugen, Duke of Württemberg. Both also played a crucial role in the life of Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), who visited Schubart in prison. There has been debate about whether or not the early work of Schiller should be included in the Sturm und Drang as a final phase of its evolution. As a student, Schiller was an avid reader of Shakespeare and Rousseau and of the plays referred to above as the core

of the Sturm und Drang, and his first-hand experience of tyranny at Karl Eugen's academy, the Karlsschule (Karl's School), seems to have made the young Schiller's criticisms all the stronger. There is thus in his early writing a spirit of turbulence and protest, matched by emotional outbursts, that is reminiscent of the Sturm und Drang. On the other hand, while the stage directions are often extravagant, the structure of the plays is more balanced, and they seem to exist in a world where moral judgments are valid and necessary. *Die Räuber* (The Robbers, 1781), for example, takes up the motif of fraternal conflict; but whereas Klinger had ended *Die Zwillinge* in an orgy of destruction, with the murderous insanity of the main brother and his sacrificial death at the hands of his own father, Schiller's resolution is the brother's recognition of his own moral failures and his decision to hand himself over the authorities. In *Die Räuber,* but also in *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua* (The Conspiracy of Fiesco of Genoa, 1783) and *Kabale und Liebe* (Intrigue and Love, 1784) and in his poems, Schiller, like Schubart, is emphatic in his social and moral criticism and includes stylistic elements and motifs that tend to be associated with a wide range of styles, from the Enlightenment or the sentimental style of writing as much as the Sturm und Drang: the present volume is based on the assumption that, whether or not one decides to include Schiller in the Sturm und Drang, a discussion of the Sturm und Drang would be incomplete if it did not take account of his early writing. The story of the long-drawn-out composition of *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien* (Don Carlos, Infant of Spain, 1787), which he had begun in 1782, is the story of Schiller rethinking his aesthetic and philosophical values and moving into the phase of his life where he could, from about 1794, form the working alliance with Goethe that is the basis of what is known today as Weimar Classicism.

The Sturm und Drang and the Search for Self-Realization in Eighteenth-Century Germany

The Sturm und Drang shares several features with the tradition of sentimental writing in England and France that is sometimes called Pre-Romanticism,[22] but it was different in important ways that make it a specifically German phenomenon. The political events of the eighteenth century, however, give few clues as to the reasons for the cultural distinctiveness of Germany. Despite the Seven Years' War (1756–63), which reflected the growth of Prussia and sparked off debates about national identity, the eighteenth century was predominantly a period of outward

calm in German history. The background of the literary rebellion of the Sturm und Drang is to be found, rather, in the underlying shifts in the structure of society.

Germany did not exist as a nation in the eighteenth century. To call the Sturm und Drang German is to refer not to a nation but to the cultural traditions of the German-speaking part of Europe, including some of Switzerland and the Baltic States; but even this formulation is approximate — not least because, in the early and middle parts of the century, the aristocracy generally preferred French: only the lower and middle classes regularly spoke German. Instead of a nation, there were more than three hundred separate political entities, which varied greatly in size and kind. The Holy Roman Empire provided a political framework that acted as a counterbalance to political fragmentation, but its powers were so limited, and its procedures so cumbersome, that it was unable to act as an effective centralizing force.

The dominant political system in the German states was feudal absolutism, under which all power was concentrated in the monarch. (By contrast, the free imperial cities — such as Frankfurt, where Goethe grew up — owed allegiance directly to the emperor and were governed by an elite of wealthy families.) By comparison with medieval feudalism, the central administrative system of each territory was more fully developed and was overseen by a cabinet of ministers who advised the monarch. The aristocracy increasingly played the part of senior administrators, acting on behalf of the monarch within a structure that was coming to look more and more like the apparatus of the modern state. They were assisted at the lower levels by an army of educated administrators, which began to form an important element within the middle classes beside the merchants and entrepreneurs, who were also increasing in economic importance. Although these sections of society tend to interest historians because their role changed so fundamentally during the eighteenth century, it should not be forgotten that the German lands remained predominantly agricultural: about three-quarters of the population were peasants with a low standard of living and level of education.

Many of these features could be found elsewhere in Europe, but three related factors distinguish the German situation. First, the fragmentation of the German states, exacerbated by the tendency toward centralization within each of them, contrasted with the centralization of France and England, which allowed the development of large-scale trade focused on a substantial metropolitan capital. Second, visitors from abroad felt that Germany was backward in comparison with England and France. The economy had struggled to recover from the devastation of

the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), communications were poor, trade and manufacturing were underdeveloped, and social divisions were sharp. Third, the middle classes, whose advance at this time is often taken as an indicator of social and economic progress, were weak by comparison with their counterparts in England and France. They grew in numbers and importance during the century, despite the restrictions of the guild system and the political fragmentation, which, accompanied by high import duties and a fragmentation of currencies and trading regulations, made it difficult to expand production; but they remained largely excluded from the world of politics.

Historians who have tried to account for the emergence in the twentieth century of a society capable of perpetrating the horrors of the Holocaust have often argued that the route by which Germany attained modern nationhood was exceptional, and they trace the origins of Germany's "*Sonderweg*" (special route) back to these distinguishing features of Germany in the eighteenth century.[23] In doing so, they counter a history based on heroic nationalism but in the end often reproduce its structure, albeit with reversed moral evaluation; they exaggerate the uniqueness of Germany in both the twentieth and the eighteenth centuries and suppose a normal development against which German history is an aberration. In both versions the Sturm und Drang appears as a crucial moment in the emergence of a German national identity that was to achieve its fulfillment in the twentieth century, the moment when the ideals of the court were rejected in favor of a newly discovered *Volk* (people), when outer forms, manners, "*Zivilisation,*" were rejected in favor of German "*Innerlichkeit*" (inwardness) and "*Kultur*" (culture): it is symptomatic that English has no adequate translation of either word. This is, with either a positive or a negative moral judgment placed on it, the legend of Germany as the land of poets and thinkers — the dissatisfied, idealistic, Faustian Germany.

To read the Sturm und Drang in this way is not entirely wrong. The movement was marked by a gesture of dissatisfaction with the proprieties of a culture that had begun to seem superficial and alien and a wish to discover alternative, more authentic values among the common folk and in nature. It is not entirely wrong to regard the Sturm und Drang either as a key moment in the emancipation of modern German literature or as a self-indulgent evasion of the duty of humans to understand and improve the world, as a moment of liberation or as a moment of withdrawal. These two approaches are, in the end, compatible with each other: the Sturm und Drang is both a radicalization of the European Enlightenment and a failure to realize its potential. Eighteenth-century

European culture is more complex, however, and the Sturm und Drang is more deeply embedded in it than either approach tends to suggest. There are close links in terms of style, ideas, and personalities between the Sturm und Drang and other examples of eighteenth-century writing, ranging from Laurence Sterne (1713–68) and Rousseau to Klopstock and his admirers. Before Gerstenberg, Herder, or Goethe, it was Lessing who defended Shakespeare, and it was Lessing who argued that artistic production was more than merely the intelligent application of rules. To exaggerate the divide between the Sturm und Drang and the Enlightenment is to simplify each of them and to abstract them from the remarkable proliferation of styles that characterizes eighteenth-century German literature.

Norbert Elias resolves these issues by looking at the functions of culture in this society and arguing that the multiplicity of competing styles of thinking and writing that are characteristic of the eighteenth century can be interpreted as so many attempts by a middle-class intelligentsia to find an adequate means of self-expression in a world whose cultural framework was governed, as was the political framework, by the aristocracy.[24] The middle classes were beginning to coalesce as a social group, and the intelligentsia was a kind of ideological avant-garde that attempted to define their shared identity against the cultural hegemony of the aristocracy. Another way of putting it is to say that a new realm of public discourse was beginning to evolve.[25] Sociological terms such as "middle class" and "aristocracy" are, of course, abstractions and do not do justice to the diversity of each of these social groups, to the regionalism of Germany, or to the shifts that took place during the century, such as, for example, the cautious absorption by the courts of elements of middle-class culture. They do, however, allow us to identify a common theme behind the otherwise bewildering variety of styles, and they acknowledge the political undertones of eighteenth-century literature in Germany.

Despite its frequent negative portrayals of the values of the court, eighteenth-century literature tends not to engage in what we today would regard as political issues, such as foreign policy or questions of representation or taxation. The middle classes tended to concede decision-making power to the courts and seem to have preferred to feel that they were engaging in a higher moral realm that gave them a surer legitimacy. Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's novel *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G**** (Life of the Swedish Countess of G***, 1747–48) shows how a combination of reason and virtue and generosity and steadfastness allows the hero and heroine to overcome the problems of

the world, which take the form, in the first instance, of the wickedness and vanity of the court. This is a pattern that recurs through much German literature of the eighteenth century. A set of values that is associated with the possession of power and is often, but not always, explicitly linked to the world of the court is contrasted with values that relate to the nonpolitical self and that, however problematic they may be shown to be, especially in the later part of the century, nevertheless reflect an inner, private merit. This contrast between acquired and attributed status is overlaid by the Christian connotations of spirit and body, albeit with the additional twist formulated in Max Weber's "Protestant Ethic" thesis that success in this world could be interpreted as evidence that one was destined for salvation.

The moral criticism of individuals who hold power is, therefore, not uncommon, and to the extent that individuals are presented as representatives of a social class one may claim that the literature is challenging their legitimacy and is political. On the other hand, these matters are not addressed in a systematic way as political issues: solutions are not presented in terms of political or social reform, and would-be reformers are often shown to be in their own way as problematic as the representatives of the system with which they are in conflict. Different styles of writing seem to have reflected different attitudes toward the basis on which the identity of a self-aware middle-class could be laid. What unites the Pietist tradition and the rationalist tradition, despite all their differences, is their rejection of tradition and authority and, indeed, of all truths and values that are not validated by the individual. It may even be suggested, albeit rather schematically, that what is sometimes called "Enlightened Absolutism," a form of absolutism that claimed to incorporate reason and virtue into the workings of the state, made it necessary for the writers we label as Sturm und Drang to abandon the terrain of reason and virtue and declare that genuine merit took the form of authenticity, of truth to oneself and to nature.

At the same time, these values reflect an anxiety about change, which may help to explain why, despite the urgency of its protests, there is something conservative about the Sturm und Drang. What was beginning to emerge in the eighteenth century, headed by the middle classes, was a highly differentiated economy based on competition and money, instead of community and tradition: society was fragmenting — or reforming. By comparison with England, where the industrial revolution was well under way, there was little technological innovation in eighteenth-century Germany; but there were the beginnings of the social reorganization of work, which, combined with the expansion of state

administration, may have made German writers particularly sensitive to the phenomenon we now know as alienation, the feeling of estrangement that comes from losing one's place in a self-sustaining community. There was thus a feeling of loss, also experienced as a feeling of no longer belonging. At the same time there is, as in Rousseau, a feeling, expressed with different degrees of confidence by different authors on different occasions, that it may yet be possible to overcome alienation. Three realms are particularly important for the writers of the Sturm und Drang in this respect: nature, the community, and the individual.

The idea of nature was used, as it is today, in two senses. On the one hand, it refers to the essential features of a being, as when we talk about a person's true nature. On the other hand, it can be applied to the landscape. The rhetoric of the Sturm und Drang tended to idealize both meanings, but it also united them in the argument that the landscape was the true, natural physical world inasmuch as it had not been made artificial by being subordinated to the intelligence of human beings. Admittedly, the distinction is not a precise one, because working with nature does not necessarily imply alienation; and both Rousseau and the writers of the Sturm und Drang were capable of idealizing a peasant farmer who is one with the land, or a gardener who is sensitive to nature, because they in some sense participate in the oneness of nature that for these writers had acquired a moral value.

The same kind of argument could be used to legitimate the feelings of German national identity that emerged in the Sturm und Drang. In part, these feelings derived from the fact that, as Elias argues, the aristocratic culture to which the middle-class intelligentsia was opposed was a culture that was to a great extent (at least until the end of the century) oriented toward France, was articulated in the French language, and subscribed to French neoclassical norms. The emancipation from these cultural values and this aesthetic could, therefore, at the same time be expressed with less offense as an anti-French cultural movement. Moreover, to write in German in a German tradition was to be truer to one's identity as a German than to adopt foreign and socially alien models. The term "nationalism" should, however, be used with caution, because it would be wrong to attribute to the Sturm und Drang the kind of nationalism found in Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which represented the demands of a national entity for increased power and influence: in the eighteenth century there was no such national unit, and the desire for one was as much the expression of other concerns about class identity and the essence of selfhood. For the Sturm und Drang it

was important that the individual should be integrated into a community, and feelings of nationhood were an extension of this desire.

The search for self-realization, or true selfhood, was perhaps the most fundamental urge of the Sturm und Drang, and the idea of the nation is in some ways a reflection of the idea of the self, a fragmented being for whose fulfillment they longed. This is at root the phenomenon known as individualism, one of the key features of modern consciousness. On the one hand, the differentiation of society and the competition to demonstrate merit means that life becomes enriched as people become conscious of themselves as individuals different from other people. On the other hand, the same process means the fragmentation of society and the isolation of individuals who no longer feel that they are part of an integrative community.[26] Reason, order, the norms of polite society, and the other dimensions of the world against which Sturm und Drang figures tend to try to assert themselves are all characterized by their claim to universality and, thus, to the suppression of the individual. One of the achievements of the Sturm und Drang is the sensitivity with which they were able to register the restrictions placed on the individual.

The Challenge to Neoclassical Norms in the Sturm und Drang

The writers of the Sturm und Drang were often known at the time, by friends and foes alike, as the "*Genies*." The idea of genius was not new in the Sturm und Drang. It had a long history in aesthetics, and writers of the previous generation had already moved away from the constructivist aesthetics associated with Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766). Lessing, in particular, had recognized the value of imagination and inspiration in artistic creation. What distinguishes the writers of the Sturm und Drang is the priority they give this concept, attributing to the genius of the creative artist powers of judgment that transcend all traditional norms and expectations and specially the so-called "rules," which derived their authority from Aristotle, as interpreted by the writers of the French neoclassical tradition. Herder, borrowing an image from the English writer Edward Young (1683–1765), observed that crutches help the sick but hinder the healthy: similarly, aesthetic rules can help an incompetent writer produce a play that at least has the virtue of correctness, but a true genius will cast them aside and allow his writing to be determined only by what he knows to be right (*H-SW,* 5: 183).

Lavater's response to the idea of genius is as ecstatic and incoherent as is appropriate for a being who is capable of transcendental cognition:

> *Menschengötter! Schöpfer! Zerstörer! Offenbarer der Geheimnisse Gottes und der Menschen! Dollmetscher der Natur! Aussprecher unaussprechlicher Dinge! Propheten! Priester! Könige der Welt* . . . die die Gottheit organisirt und gebildet hat — zu offenbaren durch sie sich selbst und ihre Schöpfungskraft und Weisheit und Huld. *Offenbarer der Majestät aller Dinge, und ihres Verhältnisses zum ewigen Quell und Ziel aller Dinge: Genieen* — von euch reden wir![27]

It is not surprising that, with this kind of preference for associative and emotive rhetoric, the writers of the Sturm und Drang should have been accused of arbitrary and self-indulgent subjectivism. Lenz, however, argues that liberation from the rules allows the genius to write as he must: what is arbitrary for Lenz is the neoclassical idealization of nature that denies what nature objectively is and what art objectively requires (*L-WB*, 2: 648).

Goethe's Werther makes it clear that the debate about the rules is about more than artistic creation when he introduces the analogy of society, where laws may prevent abuses but never in themselves produce greatness:

> Man kann zum Vorteile der Regeln viel sagen, ohngefähr was man zum Lobe der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft sagen kann. Ein Mensch, der sich nach ihnen bildet, wird nie etwas abgeschmacktes und schlechtes hervor bringen, wie einer, der sich durch Gesetze und Wohlstand modeln läßt, nie ein unerträglicher Nachbar, nie ein merkwürdiger Bösewicht werden kann; dagegen wird aber auch all Regel, man rede was man wolle, das wahre Gefühl von Natur und den wahren Ausdruck derselben zerstören! (*G-MA,* 1.2: 205)[28]

The letter continues with a telling comparison between art and love, both of which, Werther says, must be free of external constraints if they are to be authentic; and it ends with a vision of the supremacy that genius will finally assert:

> O meine Freunde! warum der Strom des Genies so selten ausbricht, so selten in hohen Fluten hereinbraust, und eure staunende Seele erschüttert. Lieben Freunde, da wohnen die gelaßnen Kerls auf beiden Seiten des Ufers, denen ihre Gartenhäuschen, Tulpenbeete, und Krautfelder zu Grunde gehen würden, und die daher in Zeiten mit dämmen und ableiten der künftig drohenden Gefahr abzuwehren wissen. (*G-MA,* 1.2: 206)[29]

In all three realms — the organization of society, the organization of the private life, and art — Werther contrasts an inner necessity with the restrictions of outer forms. The former is in each case associated with a force of nature, the flood water, which sweeps aside human constructs.

It is notable that the human constructs mentioned here are all ones which represent an attempt to appropriate nature, either by the intensive cultivation of useful and presumably marketable crops or else by building a summer-house which will allow the civilized, protected enjoyment of a civilized nature. The phrase "die gelaßnen Kerls" (respectable fellows) suggests the smug disregard for nature, an application to the individual of these attempts to civilize nature: "*gelassen*" was one of those key words used by Gellert to refer to the essence of virtue, the ability to remain composed and unaffected by whatever circumstance threw at one. What was for Gellert (and again for Goethe later in his life) civilization and order is for Werther little more than a desperate and in the end futile attempt to control nature.

What has emerged from this passage in Goethe's *Werther* is a model of repression, accompanied by hints of the possibility that the natural order of things might be restored; and it is not difficult to understand how later readers could have seen connections with the French Revolution, which broke out less than twenty years after the novel appeared. Indeed, the writers of the Sturm und Drang thought of themselves, and were thought of, as radical, Goethe himself later spoke about the Sturm und Drang as a revolution (*G-MA*, 16: 522), and it is true that arguments about the violent restoration of the natural order were later used to legitimate the French Revolution. Although this passage from *Werther* contains images of the forces of nature destroying an ordered society, however, it does not express them in terms of conflict between social classes: what is threatened seems to be society as such, or even existence. At the beginning of his novella *Der arme Spielmann* (The Poor Minstrel), which first appeared in the journal *Iris* for 1848, the year of European revolutions, Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872) compares the mass of the people streaming in through the city gates with flood waters, but the social connotations here in *Werther* over seventy years earlier are less specific. What Werther envisages, if one can reduce it to a rudimentary social content, is the collapse of a fragile, overcivilized order that stands in the way of true love, true art, true greatness, and nature. This is criticism of society as such, rather than of particular social institutions. Some writers of the Sturm und Drang, notably Lenz in his work on the relationship between the army and civil society, did develop proposals for institutional reform; but although it is possible to discern in these proposals quite fundamental social criticisms, the proposals themselves concern practical measures for improving efficiency, and even the aggressive tone adopted by Bürger and Schubart was directed against abuses of the system rather than the system as such.

What is revolutionary about the authors of the Sturm und Drang is less their politics than their acceptance of passion, both in the literary figures they created and in their style of writing. Their essays, no less than their more strictly literary works, adopt a poetic style that demands a response from the reader's emotions and imagination. There is an argument to be found in these texts, and often a subtle and complex one, but it is conducted in the form of a sequence of impressions, usually with an "I"-figure in the foreground. This style allows them to be informal in tone and to cover an emotional range from the sarcastic to the ecstatic. They demand, in the first instance, an empathetic reader who can respond with equal enthusiasm, rather than a carefully reflecting reader concerned with the balance of arguments. This characteristic is found equally in the plays, the poems, and the narrative fiction. The language of the characters in Sturm und Drang plays often has the same kind of intensity that breaks up the syntax and threatens to disrupt communication. Guelfo in Klinger's *Die Zwillinge,* for example, gazes out of the window at the sunset, and his emotions stir to the point where he forces a kiss on Kamilla, the fiancée of the brother who is also his mortal enemy:

> Die letzten Sonnenstrahlen durch die Bäume her — Ich möchte mich in die Feuerhelle dort schwingen, auf jenen Wolken reiten mit vergoldetem Saume! — Kamilla! *Faßt sie an der Hand.* Ach! und ich bin wieder so hin — ich möchte diese Feuerwolken zusammenpacken, Sturm und Wetter erregen und mich zerschmettert in den Abgrund stürzen! — Kamilla! Kamilla! Kamilla! *Küßt sie heftig.* (*K-W,* 2: 104)[30]

This style of writing is associative: the dashes indicate the leaps of imagination which link ideas whose relationship is not explicit, and the exclamation marks indicate an intensity which goes beyond the precise dictionary meaning of words. This is the disjointed stammering of a man who is overwhelmed by emotion, whose words and images are gestures rather than an abstract medium for communicating clear and distinct ideas. Klinger is here, in the violence of the language as much as in the violence of the kiss Guelfo forces on Kamilla, deliberately rejecting the coherent, balanced, and, in the end, idealizing language demanded by the French neoclassical tradition. We would scarcely guess that in this passage Guelfo is responding to Kamilla's comments on the beauty of the evening. He is so turned in on himself that he answers her with a monologue: his actual communication with her reaches its climax in his repetition of her name and in the rapelike final gesture.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to give the impression that all writing in the Sturm und Drang is of this kind. There are many passages and

many whole plays, including plays by Klinger and Goethe, where the language used is not experimental in this kind of way, or is only rarely so; but it remains a potential in the Sturm und Drang and indicates the priority given to truth of expression. Even here, though, we have to be careful, for, as has been suggested, an appreciation of Guelfo requires that we should be able to identify sufficiently with the emotional logic behind his outbursts but, at the same time, that we should retain a perspective that recognizes what is happening — how, for example, communication is distorted and Guelfo uses the language of love (the kiss) to express anger at his brother. In the case of *Werther,* the first-person utterances of Werther himself in his letters are moderated by a more reflective editor who is from the beginning aware of the suicide to which Werther's excesses are leading him; and so here, too, there is a level at which the reader is invited to empathize with an emotional, not always coherent character, but also a level at which the reader is offered a more distanced, balanced perspective. To call this irony would be going too far in most cases, but there is a sense in which the writing of the Sturm und Drang involves "putting on" a particular style. This feature is particularly evident in the private letters of Sturm und Drang writers, where it is possible to watch them changing mode according to the person to whom they are writing and the persona they are adopting. In general, there is a self-awareness to the Sturm und Drang that we are likely to miss if we simply take the expression of emotion at face value.

Guelfo's kiss shows, in a play that follows the neoclassical conventions relatively closely, the way in which the Sturm und Drang places greater emphasis on action on stage, shown by stage directions, which here indicate violence. The French neoclassical tragedy of Jean Racine (1639–99), which was still a guide to good taste — that is, to aristocratic good taste — in eighteenth-century Germany, avoided action on stage and laid the whole weight of the play in the words: beautiful words that articulated with clarity and elegance the attitudes of the characters and expressed a confidence in the ability of language to communicate complete meanings. The writers of the Sturm und Drang were more often skeptical about the power of language to communicate clear meanings,[31] and specifically language in the modern, supposedly civilized world, where the reification of language has become a further symptom of the alienation of the individual from his true self and from nature. Faust uses this point to extend the topos of the unknowability of God when Gretchen asks him to define his religious beliefs, and he replies that any name would do because none is adequate:

Nenn's Glück! Herz! Liebe! Gott!
Ich habe keinen Namen
Dafür. Gefühl ist alles
Name Schall und Rauch. (*G-MA,* 1.2: 174)[32]

Linguistic form is cast in doubt because it inhibits the expression of a true content, and similarly Goethe's early poetry contains several examples of neologisms that stretch the existing language by making the reader's imagination create the link between the elements of compound words such as "*Knabenmorgen Blütenträume*" (*G-MA,* 1.1: 231).[33]

The same principle applies to the way in which the writers of the Sturm und Drang rejected the forms of drama deriving from the neoclassical tradition, which Goethe described as fetters preventing him from expressing himself truly and freely (*G-MA,* 1.2: 412). He admired, by contrast, Shakespeare's ability to avoid abstraction and, at the same time, to release an audience's imagination. The precise historical setting of *Götz von Berlichingen* is essential to what the play is about, and Goethe would have been unable to give us this broad portrait of society over a period of years if he had not looked to Shakespeare rather than to the French neoclassical tradition in his treatment of time, place, thematic unity, and the spectrum of society he presents. Lenz too, in *Der Hofmeister* and *Die Soldaten,* was able to offer such subtle analyses of social relations only because of his disregard of the neoclassical conventions. Not all plays of the Sturm und Drang are so extreme, however. In some cases the practical considerations of performance acted as a restraint. With *Die Zwillinge,* for example, Klinger entered and won a competition for an original play that could be easily performed. He therefore used a small cast and offered a limited view of the social world, however immoderate the behavior of the characters. Gerstenberg's *Ugolino* is an interesting and characteristically transitional play. The stage represents the room in the tower where the father and his three sons are imprisoned, and the time is the time it take a man to starve to death, so that, although in technical terms Gerstenberg follows the unities to the letter, they are not allowed to play the traditional role of abstracting and idealizing but are built into the action of the play.

The emphasis on the plastic expression of content rather than on the acceptance of preordained forms is also reflected in the lyric poetry of the Sturm und Drang, particularly that of Goethe. He was able to draw on Klopstock's experiments with free verse. His great verse hymns, such as "Prometheus," "Ganymed," or "Mahomets Gesang" (Song for Mohammed),[34] have no regular meter and no regular pattern of stanzas. In these