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Volume 5

German Literature of the Eighteenth Century

The Enlightenment and Sensibility

Edited by Barbara Becker-Cantarino

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Contents

Illustrations vii

Preface and Acknowledgments ix

Introduction: German Literature in the Era of Enlightenment and Sensibility 1
Barbara Becker-Cantarino

Enlightenment Thought and Natural Law from Leibniz to Kant and its Influence on German Literature 33
Kai Hammermeister

Gottsched's Literary Reforms: The Beginning of Modern German Literature 55
Katherine Goodman

The Literary Marketplace and the Journal, Medium of the Enlightenment 79
Helga Brandes

Religious and Secular Poetry and Epic (1700–1780) 105
Kevin Hilliard

Literary Developments in Switzerland from Bodmer, Breitinger, and Haller to Gessner, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi 131
Rosmarie Zeller

Lessing, Bourgeois Drama, and the National Theater 155
Francis Lamport

Musical Culture and Thought 185
Sarah Colvin

The Era of Sensibility and the Novel of Self-Fashioning 223
Anna Richards

Enlightenment in Austria: 245
Cultural Identity and a National Literature
Franz M. Eybl

Eighteenth-Century Germany in its Historical Context 265
W. Daniel Wilson

The Legacy of the Enlightenment: Critique from 285
Hamann and Herder to the Frankfurt School
Robert Holub

Bibliography 309
Primary Literature 309
Secondary Literature 317

Contributors 329

Index 331

Illustrations

"Family Entertainment." Painting by Daniel Chodowiecki, 1757 xii

Immanuel Kant. Etching by F. W. Bollinger, 1781 32

Johann Christoph Gottsched and Luise Adelgunde Victorie, anonymous painting, ca. 1740 54

First issue of the moral weekly *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen* 78

Title page spread, Anna Louisa Karsch, *Auserlesene Gedichte* 104

Alpine landscape, copperplate after painting by Caspar Wolf 130

Illustrations to Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm,* by Daniel Chodowiecki 154

Flute concert at Sanssouci, painting by Adolf Menzel 184

Sophie La Roche, ca. 1772. Drawing by anonymous artist 222

Josef Anton Stranitzky as Hanswurst 246

"Tolerance." Allegorical engraving by Daniel Chodowiecki 266

Johann Gottfried Herder, painting by Anton Graff 286

Preface and Acknowledgments

COMPRISING THE ERA OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND SENSIBILITY, this volume serves as a major new reference work providing a fresh look at major literary figures, works, and cultural developments from around 1700 up to the literature of the late Enlightenment (*Spätaufklärung*) in up-to-date scholarly essays. These trace literary developments in eighteenth-century German-speaking countries from occasional and learned literature under the influence of French Neoclassicism to the establishment of a new German drama, religious epic, and secular poetry, and the sentimentalist novel of self-fashioning. The volume gives due attention to the newly recognized, stimulating works of women, and contains a chapter on music and literature, chapters on literary developments in Switzerland and in Austria, and concludes with a chapter on changing philosophical attitudes toward the Enlightenment up to the present. The recent re-evaluation of cultural and social phenomena affecting literary works informs the presentations in the individual chapters and allows for the inclusion of hitherto neglected but important texts not considered in older literary histories, works such as essays, travelogues, philosophical texts, and letters.

Thanks are due to the distinguished contributors to this volume who brought their expertise in the diverse aspects of eighteenth-century studies to their chapters and situated them within the framework of the overall design of the Camden House History of German Literature. I owe a sincere debt to the editor of the Camden House History of German Literature, James Hardin, for his indispensable advice and assistance in the preparation of this volume and to Camden House editor Jim Walker for his technical advice. For their thoughtful suggestions, I am indebted to the participants of the Roundtable "Writing a Literary History of the Enlightenment in Germany for an English-Speaking Audience" at the XI. Congress on the Enlightenment held at the University of California, Los Angeles in August 2003. The essays in this volume benefited from colleagues' responses to earlier drafts.

Ohio State University provided research support over many years, in particular by granting a sabbatical leave for work on this volume. My special thanks go to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, whose Research Award has made possible numerous research trips to Germany and other locations in Europe during the past decade to conduct my research into early modern and eighteenth-century German literature and culture. This support was instrumental in allowing me to attend specialized workshops and confer-

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Barbara Becker-Cantarino
Columbus, Ohio, 2004

Note on Translations

On first occurrence, titles of German works are followed by a translation and the date of first publication in parentheses. When an English translation exists, that title has been used, but in most cases titles have been translated anew, following closely the original German wording for the information of the reader. The same applies to original German quotations; all are followed by a close English translation by the author of the respective chapter, unless an existing translation is credited.

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Introduction: German Literature in the Era of Enlightenment and Sensibility

Barbara Becker-Cantarino

The Scope of German Literature in the Eighteenth Century

RICHARD RORTY HAS REMARKED about the Enlightenment, the cultural and philosophical movement most associated with the eighteenth century: "It is sometimes said that the Enlightenment project has failed. But there were two Enlightenment projects — one political and one philosophical. One was to create heaven on earth: a world without caste, class, or cruelty. The other was to find a new, comprehensive, worldview which would replace God with Nature and Reason. The political project has not failed, although it is proceeding very slowly [. . .]. The second, philosophical project is being pursued . . ."[1] However we assess the success or failure of the Enlightenment, the eighteenth century stands out for its important and decisive cultural developments, the effects of which are still felt today.[2] Within a span of about a hundred years, the Age of Enlightenment, as the eighteenth century is usually referred to, brought intellectual and social changes based on the use of reason, common sense, and natural law. These were paralleled by an emphasis on morality, feelings, and the emotions in religious, especially Pietist circles. Progressive thinkers in England, France, and later in Germany began assailing the orthodoxy and authority of the Church and the absolutism of rulers; in Germany the line led from Thomasius, Leibniz, and Wolff to Lessing and Kant, to the advocacy of religious tolerance, the demand for emancipation of the bourgeois individual, and the rise of an educated bourgeois middle class. Literary developments encompassed the emergence of a shared literary language, a bourgeois, secular literature and a national (German-language) theater. This was made possible by advances in literacy and education, especially among bourgeois women, and the reorganization of book production and the book market.

Although often identified solely with the Enlightenment, its most prominent philosophical movement, "the eighteenth century is plural," and has many faces.[3] There is no singular literary work or phase that might signal a clear-cut beginning or distinct ending on which scholars of German literature could nowadays easily agree. Strict periodization and dividing lines appear more problematic today than ever before. Literary periods do not live by dates, and in selecting works or authors whose spirit or works would embody a specific period or set of literary characteristics, we encounter anomalies and anachronisms. Were the poets Johann Christian Günther (1695–1723) and Anna Luisa Karsch (1722–1791) such anomalies, since their poetry can hardly be regarded as enlightened? Was Klopstock's epic *Der Messias,* whose first cantos appeared in 1748, really *the* beginning of modern German literature? Or is the literary classification of "Empfindsamkeit" (sensibility) more appropriate here, and are we to dwell on a dichotomy between Enlightenment and Sensibility? And what about Kant's famous essay "Was ist Aufklärung?" (What is Enlightenment?, 1784) and the intense discussion of Enlightenment during the 1780s that coincided with what is usually called the Storm and Stress movement. Which "story" are we to tell about eighteenth-century German literature when we are aware that every selection of works and authors and every developmental thread or connectivity is but a subjective story, albeit one transmitted by tradition. Differing from older literary historians, we are today especially careful in making claims about historical truth. Moreover, literary and cultural phenomena are now being read as "texts," and the distinction between literary and non-literary texts has largely disappeared or become less important. Avoiding teleological views of literary history, we can no longer reiterate the formerly progressive view according to which all things lead up to the present moment, or in terms of the eighteenth century, lead up to what was for a long time *the* Age of Goethe, the presumed peak of genuine, "deep" German culture: German Classicism and Romanticism (more about this below).

Any literary history serves a pragmatic goal, that of codification, transmission, and teaching in the humanities, and must consider and address its readers' expectations. Thus, it requires pragmatic decisions about periodization, setting a beginning and end, selecting representative topics and materials, and presenting a cohesive, reasoned narrative. Given the vast store of texts, data, and scholarship, it requires as much selectivity and deliberate omission as it begs for justification of the material chosen and how it is represented.[4] The Camden House History of German Literature decided to include in each multi-authored volume a collection of essays offering the expertise of a number of specialists. The diversity of perspectives represented here decreases the chance of exclusion, and brings out the significance of a subject and era.

Following the most convenient and by now established timeline, the present volume begins with the eighteenth century as distinct from the previous century's "baroque era" or the "early modern" period (now the more common term in German literary scholarship).[5] But it is important to remember that eighteenth-century German literature developed in what might be seen as gradual transformation from the learned literature on one hand and the religious, devotional texts of the seventeenth century on the other. With the publications of the legal scholars Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694) and Christian Thomasius (1655–1728), a new fashion in philosophy, the theories of natural law (a body of law held to be derived from nature and from man's reason, not from God, and binding for human society in addition to divine law) ushered in the early stages of the Enlightenment.[6] Thomasius was the instigator of Enlightenment in Germany who did not hesitate to criticize the weaknesses of monarchy, argued for limitations, and held reason to be necessarily social and sociable ("gesellig"); rulers should listen to reason and the state should become subject to natural law.[7]

Important works were published at this threshold of a new era in German intellectual history, as Klaus Garber has recently reminded us:[8] on Church history (Gottfried Arnold's *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie,* Impartial History of the Church and Heretics, 1688–99), on national education and culture (Leibniz's *Ermahnung an die Teutschen, ihren Verstand und Sprache besser zu üben,* Exhortations to the Germans to Make Better Use of Their Reason and Language, 1697), and on the Christian egalitarian state (Thomasius's *Das Recht Evangelischer Fürsten in theologischen Streitigkeiten,* The Right of Protestant Princes in Theological Disputes, 1697). The traditions of radical religious renewal, of Humanism and the movement of learned societies merged with early modern political theory in the writings of a new community of enlightened citizens—a significant, albeit small group of intellectuals. Thus, it seems appropriate to open the present literary history of German-speaking countries in the eighteenth century with a presentation of the Enlightenment as a cultural and philosophical movement from Thomasius and Leibniz to Kant in the essay by Kai Hammermeister, which reveals the transformations and lasting impact of the period.

As important as the intellectual traditions around 1700 were, they were transmitted and elaborated in philosophical and religious texts, not in major fictional or poetic works. The German *literary* canon rarely recognized them and excludes the flood of popular, gallant novels, poetry, operas, school plays, and a large body of devotional literature from about 1680 to 1720.[9] It was Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1760) who effectively proclaimed and worked for a "new" beginning in German literature patterned on French neo-classical models and enlightened principles, while conveniently negating, devaluing, and forgetting what had preceded him.[10] In many re-

spects, his amazing career as innovator, editor, critic, author, reformer, and, last but not least, Leipzig university professor signaled a new beginning, as Katherine Goodman elaborates in her essay. A "self-made" man, Gottsched exemplified the rise of an educated, bourgeois class in eighteenth-century Germany. As the story goes, the exceptionally tall "Magister" left his hometown Königsberg (East Prussia) to escape Prussian recruiters who were drafting recruits for the "Soldier King's" (Friedrich Wilhelm I) tall palace guard. In 1724 Gottsched appeared in Leipzig, the commercial and cultural center of Saxony with its thriving book fair and university, where Gottsched — with his unusual learning, talent for lecturing, writing, and sense of organization — rose to professor of rhetoric and poetry at a leading German university. His prolific publications and efforts on behalf of German-language literature — including women readers in his literary program — had a lasting influence on eighteenth-century German literary culture of the rising bourgeois class that lies at the heart of this volume's presentation of German eighteenth-century literature.[11]

By analyzing bourgeois literary culture, we leave aside the elaborate festival culture at the larger and smaller courts — the tournaments, processions, opera, drama, ballet, fireworks, horse ballet, masquerade, and musical performances especially in Vienna, Dresden, Munich, Stuttgart and other residential cities.[12] However, Sarah Colvin's essay on musical culture in eighteenth-century Germany presents what was the most prominent, lasting, and outstanding artistic aspect of court culture: music. The study and performance of music, usually singing and playing an instrument (the clavichord and early forms of the piano, flute, and the violin) became a favorite cultural activity among the educated bourgeois. Upper-middle-class women sang and performed in private settings only — as professional singers they shared the bad reputation of actors. Some, like patrician Christiane Mariane von Ziegler in Leipzig in the 1720s and 1730s, had music salons of their own. At the same time, festive, dramatic, and artistic entertainment for the nobility continued to flourish throughout the eighteenth century, activities, of course, to which only persons admitted to court had access. Non-aristocrats — like Gottsched or Lessing — were naturally excluded, and they then fostered a bourgeois literary culture quite independently and for a different reading public.[13] The rift between court and bourgeois literary culture can be seen in Lessing's inability in the 1750s to establish himself in Berlin as head of the Royal Library and in Friedrich's disdain for Lessing and German literature in his *De la Littérature Allemande* (1780).[14]

But then bourgeois literary culture, characterized by its enlightened, distinctively middle-class values — gradually infiltrated the courts and replaced the (mostly French and Italian) festival culture by the end of the eighteenth century. The court of the tiny principality of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach (largely due to the efforts of Duchess Anna Amalia, a niece of Friedrich II's)

became the best known cultural center, as it attracted and employed Wieland, Goethe, Herder, and later Schiller. Lessing's most acclaimed bourgeois drama *Emilia Galotti* (1772) was first performed in homage to his employer's wife — the Duchess of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, sister of Friedrich II — on her birthday, but *Emilia Galotti* was hard pressed to compete with the Duke's preference for French and Italian ballerinas and opera divas. Lessing was not pleased by the circumstances surrounding its staging and did not attend the performance.[15] This drama subsequently enjoyed tremendous success on the stage of the Hamburg Nationaltheater with a bourgeois audience. Its presentation of the Galotti family embodies the new bourgeois, enlightened values, while the figures of the Prince and his secretary Marinelli show an implicit criticism of the aristocracy's lack of humanity and morality, even though the play by no means advocates revolution. Francis Lamport's essay deals with Lessing and the development of the rich tradition of bourgeois drama from the 1730s to the 1770s.

The rise of a bourgeois literature and with it the shift away from court culture and from learned and devotional literature would not have been possible without the creation of a large, new reading public, the proliferation of journals, and a reorganization of the book trade. Helga Brandes takes up that topic in her essay. Kevin Hilliard's essay on religious and secular poetry and epic analyzes the second major cultural strand in eighteenth-century German literature: the fashion of "Empfindsamkeit" (Sensibility) with its predilection for sensitivity, human sentiments, pathos, and virtue. Already in the first half of the eighteenth century, there existed a rich body of verse, some by young (would-be) lovers on the seemingly eternal "wine, women, and song" themes, and some by women. The religious tradition was still strong and was instrumental in helping Klopstock's *Messias* (1748) to unprecedented success. There was also religious poetry in the Lutheran song tradition of Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676) as well as more learned poetry like the Swiss Albrecht von Haller's (1708–1777). Rosmarie Zeller's essay addresses Haller's poetry theses along with other original developments in Switzerland, like Johann Jakob Bodmer's (1698–1783) poetological reflections, and the emergence of the myth of Switzerland celebrating freedom and nature, in which Enlightenment ideas seem to blend effortlessly with the new Sensibility.

In the heterogeneous picture of eighteenth-century German literature, the rise of an Austrian national literature, running parallel with the Prussian-Austrian military conflicts and enduring rivalry, is the subject of Franz M. Eybl's essay. Although "Josephinism," the liberal, productive phase under the rule of Joseph II (1780–1790) came late in the century and has more often that not been excluded from accounts of German literary history, its seminal importance has since been acknowledged. It encompassed the high point of the "Catholic Enlightenment," a variant of the northern German

Protestant scene with colorful anti-clerical and patriotic works and the development of a popular theater. While already in the 1770s the generation of young Goethe (born in 1749) rebelled against their (literary) fathers in what has been called Storm and Stress, other authors continued to experiment with fiction, biography, and letters, often eclectically using enlightened and sentimental features.[16] Anna Richards's essay deals with the development of the sentimental, self-fashioning novel, including Wieland, Moritz, and two major women writers, Sophie La Roche and Friederike Helene Unger. Dan Wilson's essay assesses cultural developments leading up to the French Revolution and the end of the century.

There was no clearly discernable "end" to Enlightenment and Sensibility, nor to eighteenth-century German literature as such, just as there had been no easily definable beginning. Variously, the French Revolution in 1789, Napoleon's dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, and (in more literary terms) the appearance of the Friedrich Schlegel's *Athenäum* in 1798 and his proclamations of Romanticism as a new literary school could be seen to mark "the end" of the eighteenth century. Yet much of Romanticism — its subjectivity and individualism; its fascination with friendship, love, and sexuality; its obsession with fantasy and imagination; its concept of the poet as genius and priest; its exploration of femininity and masculinity — had begun or been anticipated in works of Sensibility. Moral values and ethical concepts of the Enlightenment lived on in German Classicism and Romanticism. The Enlightenment, already in its day highly contested as a cultural and philosophical movement, had its critics (and enemies and detractors) throughout the eighteenth century. The controversy has lingered on into our times. Thus it is only fitting to conclude the volume with Robert Holub's essay on the various forms of critique of the Enlightenment over the past two centuries.

The Enlightenment as a Cultural and Literary Period

A history of eighteenth-century German literature must look at the origin, usage, and meaning of the two traditional classifications, Enlightenment and Sensibility, and consider their points of convergence and divergence. Although the penchant for strict classifications, lists of characteristics, unequivocal judgments, and standard interpretations in earlier histories has given way to today's literary scholars' preference for crossing boundaries, unstable margins, ambiguities, and subversive readings, these earlier classifications have left their stamp on standard reference works, editions, handbooks and on many of our — often unconscious — notions and valuations of literary texts and periods. The origin and history of the terms Enlightenment

and Sensibility are part of the shifting, unstable views on eighteenth-century German literature.

Enlightenment refers to the dominant philosophical movement of the eighteenth century *and* to the cultural (including the literary) production at large that is influenced by this body of thought. Enlightenment as a cultural and literary period is of interest here in what then-contemporary writers called "the philosophical century."[17] Based on a light metaphor, the German word "aufklären" closely parallels the English "enlighten." Christoph Martin Wieland explained to the readers of his *Teutscher Merkur* in 1789 that everyone knew the meaning of the word "Aufklärung," who "vermittelst eines Paars sehender Augen erkennen gelernt hat, worin der Unterschied zwischen Hell und Dunkel, Licht und Finsternis besteht. Im Dunkeln sieht man entweder gar nichts oder wenigstens nicht so klar, daß man die Gegenstände recht erkennen und voneinander unterscheiden kann: sobald Licht gebracht wird, klaren sich die Sachen auf, werden sichtbar und können voneinander unterschieden werden"[18] (by means of a pair of eyes that see has learned to recognize the difference between brightness and dark, light and darkness. In the dark one either sees not at all or at least not clearly enough so that one can recognize objects and can distinguish them from one another). Light was considered the sphere of cognition and reason, night the realm of irrational fantasies, when already Gottsched in his *Critische Dichtkunst* (Critical Poetics, 1730) declared that magic and fairy tale figures no longer belonged in his enlightened century. Light was to be spread through the print media.

The Enlightenment was an ongoing project. It was based on the free use of reason and empiricism and aimed at fostering scholarship and the sciences. The age was marked by an inherent optimism and an intense questioning of religious ritual and doctrine. This new skepticism led gradually to secularization, the separation of the individual from the dogma and authority of the Church. It generated a belief in universal human progress and in the essentially good, and thus educable nature of the human being. The new worldview was thought capable of ushering in an age of self-fashioning and of education (*Bildung*). Kant's emphasis on man's critical faculties gave rise to dubbing the Enlightenment "Zeitalter der Kritik" (the age of criticism),[19] whose "most characteristic mode of expression was witty, informed, and didactic."[20] In Germany the term "Aufklärung" established itself as a period designation as a result of Hegel's Berlin lectures on the history of philosophy and religion in the 1820s.[21]

Romantic authors rebelled against what they perceived as sheer rationalism and the anti-religious attitudes of the Enlightenment. They considered themselves the true, original poets, the beginning of German literature.[22] But early on Heinrich Heine took a broader cultural view emphasizing "Geistesfreihheit und Protestantismus" (freedom of thought and Protestant-

ism) that belonged together like "Mutter und Tochter" (mother and daughter).[23] Lessing became a symbolic figure, as did Kant when German literature and German national identity were linked by the Young Germans of the 1840s, the liberal, patriotic writers who strove for a united and democratic German nation. For one of the first great literary historians, Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805–1873), who wrote the enduring *Geschichte der poetischen National-Literatur der Deutschen* (History of the Poetic National Literature of the German People), the eighteenth century was the rebirth of German literature under the influence of religiosity, ethics, and criticism.[24] The Storm and Stress became the German revolution as it sought vigorously to compare and equal German and French intellectual and literary achievements.[25] Gervinus's patriotic history grew out of the intense German-French rivalry of the nineteenth century and out of the longing for a strong, unified, democratic German national state. For such a vision, the classical age of Kant, Goethe, and Schiller appeared as the pinnacle and fulfillment of a true German humanity that was ready for such a new state.

Later nineteenth-century German literary historians like Hermann Hettner (1821–1882)[26] and Wilhelm Scherer (1841–1886)[27] applauded reunification under Bismarck in the German Empire under Prussian leadership and elevated the Age of Goethe and German Classicism to the peak of German literature. Nietzsche criticized this patriotic, optimistic, liberal concept of German literature; he called Gervinus "eine dumme Gans" (a stupid goose) and abhorred the contemporary historicism of philologists like Hettner and Scherer, describing them as "das ganze historische Gesindelpack" (the rabble pack of historians).[28] Nevertheless, the patriotic view of German literature as ascending from its nadir in the seventeenth century to its zenith in the Age of Goethe with the eighteenth-century as its anti-chamber has dominated German literary history throughout most of the twentieth century. The English translation of Scherer's work published by Scribner's in 1887 and its several reprints until 1971 have helped entrench this view also in Anglo-American students of German.[29]

With the neo-Romantic movement at the turn of the century and Wilhelm Dilthey's influential *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*[30] (Poetry and Experience, 1907), Romanticism was reevaluated and included as a major, "deep" and characteristically German literary period, the ultimate fulfillment of a process that began with the *German* Enlightenment. For decades to come, Dilthey's teleological view, according to which all German literary and cultural developments lead up to the great Age of Goethe, to classicism, Romanticism, and German idealism, reigned supreme.[31] His insistence on a hermeneutic approach to the study of literature made "Geisteswissenschaft" (search for the spirit, for ideas) the fashionable literary theory in Germany.[32] Dilthey's category "Erlebnis" (personal experience, intuition, inwardness) became the standard for valorizing poetic texts and individual authors as an

expression of genuine human experience. Thus, Goethe's poetry was characterized as "Erlebnisdichtung," the poetry of experience, and set up as a model by which more formalistic and less subjective verses that were considered poetic and beautiful in baroque and eighteenth-century literature before Goethe, came to be judged as stale, artificial, and uninteresting.

Alongside this view, dismissive attitudes toward eighteenth-century literature and Enlightenment culture were common around 1900, attitudes that considered the eighteenth century an imperfect, "alien" stepping stone toward classicism and Romanticism. Critics pointed to the supposedly "un-German" French rationalism of German eighteenth-century literature, and detected in it shallow and superficial English empiricism. In short, the valuation of periods began to take a nationalistic turn. The cultural philosopher Hermann Nohl (1879–1960) spoke of three generations of German "Geistesgeschichte" from 1770 to 1830 as the "Deutsche Bewegung" (German movement) comprising the era of Storm and Stress, Classicism, and Romanticism when the "genuine" German spirit manifested itself and set German literature apart from the "foreign" Enlightenment under the influence of France and England.[33] Already in the 1920s the prolific German scholar Heinz Kindermann (1896–1978) had diagnosed a "Durchbruch der deutschen Seele" (a breakthrough of the German soul) in Pietism and Storm and Stress.[34] Soon thereafter Hermann August Korff's initial two volumes of his influential *Geist der Goethezeit* (Spirit of the Age of Goethe, 1923 and 1930) toned down the rhetoric of a genuine Germanic culture and nation that would feed right into National Socialist ideology, and instead propagated an ideal beauty as "die ganze Formel für den Weg, auf dem die deutsche Klassik emporgestiegen ist: Freiheit, Gesetz, Schönheit und Entwicklung!"[35] (the very formula for the path by which German classicism rose up high: freedom, lawfulness, beauty and development!). The trajectory of such idealization remained a comforting interpretation in post-war Germany and beyond.

Periodization in terms of national characteristics has become obsolete; nevertheless the valorization of classicism and Romanticism as the model, the most creative, aesthetic period of what has been termed "the invention of aesthetic autonomy" persists.[36] Since the 1960s there have been trends to historicize and politicize literary investigation and to apply sociology and social history to the study of literature,[37] yet more recent scholarship on eighteenth-century German literature shows a renewed interest in the works themselves,[38] in literary sociability and reading,[39] in mentality and anthropology,[40] gender questions,[41] institutions,[42] and everyday history.[43] Major developments during the Enlightenment have been recognized and investigated: the reliance on reason; the importance and development of education; the role of scholarship, science, and investigation; the process of secularization, the diminishing authority of the Church and of religious writ-

ings, anti-clericalism, the fight against superstition.[44] New forms of religious thinking are being analyzed: the subjectivist form of Christian devotion, Pietism, Physico-Theology, Neology, Deism, and Pantheism;[45] and exploration continues apace in new, optimistic concepts of a moral human being; new freedoms for the individual; changes in the public sphere; and new forms of organization, political theory, and statehood. All aspects and effects of man's faculty of reason, a search for ultimate truth, and virtue and morality came to characterize German literature of the Enlightenment. Literature was to teach virtue in a pleasing way; it was as much subject to rules and laws (Gottsched's program of neoclassicism) as the role of the imagination and the marvelous was recovered and aesthetics established (Breitinger's *Critische Dichtkunst,* Lessing, Kant). Poetry was often mimetic, didactic (Haller), but also religious, enthusiastic (Klopstock), entertaining and occasional (Karsch), patriotic, fervent (Gleim), and entertaining, witty, erotic (Wieland). Verse forms popular with readers were the religious epic (Klopstock), the comic epic (Wieland), the fable (Gellert) and the epigram (Lessing). Tragedy developed from the models proposed in Gottsched's *Deutsche Schaubühne* to the bourgeois tragedy showing the new, enlightened, middle-class values and family settings (even though the protagonists were often minor aristocrats, the plot derived from classical literature, and sentimental feeling dominated). With Luise Gottsched's comedies to Gellert's, Wieland's, and Lessing's plays, virtue, moral standards, a certain didacticism, but also compassion, wit, and humor prevailed. Prose forms such as moral tales, essays, travel narratives, idylls, fairy tales, and biographical stories filled the moral weeklies, journals, and almanacs. The novel, including translations from English and French, gained in popularity with readers and became more respectable as a literary genre in the eyes of critics.[46] The genre took on increasingly bourgeois, subjective, autobiographical traits and themes, such as the family, marriage, gender relations, father-son and father-daughter conflicts, and education. Integration problems of young intellectual men were reflected in literary texts from Lessing's *Der junge Gelehrte* (The Young Scholar, 1748) to Moritz's *Anton Reiser* (1785), while women authors took up socialization problems of young women from an insider's perspective as reflected in one of the first popular woman's novels, Friderike Helene Unger's *Julchen Grünthal: Eine Pensionsgeschichte* (A Boarding School Story, 1784).

There is no clearly drawn boundary between Enlightenment and Sensibility, though the latter gained increasing influence in fictional and poetic texts by the 1760s. Enlightenment dominated more in philosophy and the public sphere, Sensibility became the trademark for literature and domestic culture.

"Empfindsamkeit": An Era of Sensibility[47]

"Empfindsam" (sentimental, sensible) became a popular phrase in Lessing's age (mid-eighteenth century) — its coinage in German was even (wrongly) attributed to him.[48] "Empfindsam" denoted the penchant for both morality and emotion, a conflation of reason and an emotional impulse or feeling leading to an opinion or principle. A person might be called an "empfindsame Seele" (a sensitive soul), a literary work "eine empfindsame Lektüre" (a sensible read), and letters "empfindsame Briefe" (sentimental letters). In 1757 Louise Adelgunde Victorie Gotttsched (1713–1762) wrote to her friend Dorothea Henriette von Runckel (1724–1800):

> Ein empfindsames Herz gehört unter die geheimen Beschwerlichkeiten dieses Lebens, es leydet bei allen leidenden Gegenständen, wenn es sich außer Stand siehet, allen zu helfen. Und doch möchte ich dieser Leiden ohngeachtet, und die kein Arzt helfen kann, kein gleichgültig Gemüth haben. Wie viel wahres Vergnügen entbehren die kalten unempfindlichen Seelen.[49]
>
> [A sensitive heart belongs to the hidden discomforts of our life, it suffers with all suffering objects when unable to help everywhere. And yet, even considering these sufferings that no doctor can cure, I do not wish to be indifferent. The cold and unfeeling souls, how much true pleasure do they miss out on!]

Considered the model of a "gelehrte Frau" (learned lady) and an enlightened woman in her day, even the "Gottschedin" used the conventional metaphor of the heart to describe sensible feelings as an essential complement to reason. "Empfindsam" became the fashionable term and attitude in the latter half of the eighteenth century when *Yoricks empfindsame Reise durch Frankreich und Italien* (translated by Johann Joachim Christoph Bode in 1769) popularized Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768) in Germany. "Empfindsam" denoted a delicate emotional and physical susceptibility, refined, tender feelings (whose expression was termed "Zärtlichkeit," tenderness), and an immediate, emotional display of sympathy for suffering. Sensibility was in alliance with true virtue, was man's moral sense; a sympathetic heart showed the genuine human quality of empathy and stood for the belief that mankind was not innately self-serving, but benevolent. With sensibility, a human being could perceive and respond to the beautiful and better appreciate art and literature.

Sensibility also denoted a person's special sensuous quality, an "innate sensitiveness or susceptibility revealing itself in a variety of spontaneous activities such as crying, swooning and kneeling."[50] This form of sensibility was thought to be physically based, to affect the organization of the nervous system, and to turn easily into "Empfindelei" (sentimentality), a fashionable

illness as the educational author and professor Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746–1818) explained in his essay *Ueber Empfindsamkeit und Empfindelei in pädagogischer Hinsicht* (Concerning Sensibility and Sentimentality in Pedagogy, 1779). Too much sentiment would detract from the faculty of reasoning; sensibility was not only complimentary to, but in excess could also conflict with and be detrimental to sound, enlightened judgment if feelings were merely cultivated for their own sake and enjoyment ("Empfindelei"). Enlightened educators like Campe preached the use of reason, pointing out the destructive and debilitating consequences of the emotions, and deriding such public display of feeling as tears and swooning, often called womanish and associated with women, though by no means exclusively so. Yet women were considered more prone to crying, blushing, fainting, and hysteria, the "female disease": "The entire female body is riddled by obscure but strangely direct paths of sympathy [. . .] from one extremity of its organic space to the other, it encloses a perpetual possibility of hysteria. The sympathetic sensibility of her organism [. . .] condemns woman to [. . .] diseases of the nerves," as Michel Foucault described the eighteenth-century concept of hysteria.[51] Early in the century English moral weeklies already stressed the special female association with sensibility: "Women were formed to temper Mankind, and sooth them into Tenderness and Compassion."[52] Female virtues were the superior ones, but they were to be used for the benefit of men. The probings into female sensibility and moral sense in Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* and in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* constructed the fashionable female sensibility; Rousseau especially insisted on the sentimental gender distinction, a seemingly biological absolute that separated, according to Rousseau, female from male physically, mentally, and emotionally.

"Empfindsamkeit" became also the designation for the literary period from about 1730 to 1800 with its heyday from about 1740 to 1780. The literary circles around Martin Bodmer in Zurich, the messianic poet Klopstock in Hamburg and northern Germany, the young Wieland from his days in Biberach to Erfurt (both Klopstock and Wieland visited and paid homage to Bodmer in Zurich). The poet Gleim and his friendship circle in Halberstadt wrote often in the fashionable style of Sensibility. Gellert's "rührende" (moving) comedies, which brought audiences to tears (like the French *comédie larmoyante)* and Lessing's play *Miß Sara Sampson* (1755) in which the wayward daughter, faithless lover, and the deserted father are all motivated by feelings and passions and all find, understand, and forgive each other in the end (though they do not live happily ever after) were fine examples of the sentimental genre. Bestsellers in their time included such sentimental novels as Sophie La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim, 1771) and, of course, Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774), the first German-language novel of inter-

national (European) acclaim in the eighteenth century *after* the moving, sentimental epic *Der Tod Abels: In fünf Gesängen* (The Death of Abel in Five Cantos, 1758) by the Swiss Salomon Gessner (1730–1788) whose pathos and religiosity were a sign of the religious, Pietist heritage of "Empfindsamkeit."[53] Parodies of the sentimental fashion soon appeared; best known of the parodies is Friedrich Nicolai's (1733–1811) novel *Freuden des jungen Werthers* (1775, The Pleasures of Young Werther) and Goethe's own playful *Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (1777, revised 1786). The cult of feelings ushered in modern psychology, as Karl Philip Moritz (1757–1793) pioneered in his *Magazin der Erfahrungsseelenkunde* (Magazine for Knowing the Soul, 1783–93).[54]

As a cultural and literary movement, "Empfindsamkeit" has not enjoyed the same degree of attention and discussion in traditional histories as the Enlightenment (the era of Gottsched and especially Lessing and the Berlin enlighteners Mendelssohn and Nicolai) has. The philosophical underpinnings of "Empfindsamkeit" appear less prominent, though the susceptibility to tender feelings, to the beautiful, and the notion that man had a moral sense, near reason but also close to intuition, had been the subject of the Earl of Shaftesbury's (1621–1683) rhapsodic, immensely influential writings and English moral-sense philosophy. The literature that followed in its wake, like the moralistic novels of Samuel Richardson — *Pamela* (1740–41), *Clarissa* (1747–48), and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753–54) — were also influential in Germany. Lessing published a translation of the Scottish Francis Hutcheson's *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) as early as 1756. Lessing's interpretation of Aristotle's notion of *katharsis* as outlined in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767–68) may well have been influenced by moral-sense philosophy.[55] Lessing maintained that the effect of tragedy was to arouse in the spectator pity for others and fear for ourselves; the tragic effect was not so much cathartic, purging emotions, as educative, cultivating the abilities of the audience to feel. Pity and compassion for others was a hotly debated topic in the 1750s when Rousseau's *Discours sur l'inégalité* (1755) conceived it as a natural human sentiment, an instinctive emotional compassion for other people's misery, an emotion that the "savage" still knew and applied, but that modern man had lost in the civilization process. Rousseau became the dominant influence on popular sentimental thought focusing on sensibility as special and refined susceptibility — a complex, refined character trait and intuitive capacity that especially women protagonists in his novels exemplified and popularized.

Until recently, historians of German literature expressed relatively little interest in Pietism, the other source of "Empfindsamkeit," nor in religion and religious literature in general. Because of the nationalistic misreading of Pietism as an expression of the "German soul" and because of Marxist leanings, social historians of the generation of the student revolt (the so-

called "68ers") neglected the religious aspects of the eighteenth century and stressed its social and secular components. Their literary histories, like Rolf Grimminger's *Deutsche Aufklärung bis zur Französischen Revolution 1680–1780* (The German Enlightenment up to the French Revolution)[56] or the one-volume *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte* (1989)[57] (*A History of German Literature from the Beginnings to the Present Day,* 1992)[58] omitted a period designation of "Empfindsamkeit" altogether and replaced it by a revalued, "liberal" Storm and Stress. In the meantime new research and discussions have taken up the role and nature of "Empfindsamkeit," its relationship to the Enlightenment, and its significance in eighteenth-century literature including Pietism and the substantial body of devotional and autobiographical literature it produced.[59] In its heyday from about 1690 to about 1750, the subjective, mystical, emotional religiosity of "the heart" that defied dogmatic orthodoxy spread (in Protestant areas) far beyond the organized Pietist groups like Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf's Moravian Brethren in Herrnhut and Herrnhag or August Hermann Francke's schools in Halle. Jacob Spener's call to reforms, *Pia desideria* (Pious Wishes, 1655), Johann Heinrich Reitz's *Historie der Wiedergebohrnen* (History of the Reborn, 1698), among others, and Pietist hymns were read widely and left their mark on the German language and on literary texts.[60]

Gerhard Sauder's study and text collection entitled *Empfindsamkeit* (1974) has had a lasting effect because he presented a coherent, historical development close to actual texts and because he consulted and published a large selection of (mostly little known) poetic and theoretical texts in conjunction with his history.[61] Sauder saw a close connection between the rise and social emancipation of the bourgeois (Bürgertum) and the culture of Sensibility.[62] He stressed their goal of achieving an equilibrium between "head and heart," of fostering the development of a reasonable, empathetic, and virtuous individual and the attendant moral values, sociability, and friendship in family and society. For Sauder, Enlightenment culture (not philosophy) and Sensibility were two sides of the same coin: Sensibility was Enlightenment's turn to the inner human being. Sensibility was a logical reaction, an outgrowth, or parallel development to Enlightenment as far as the literary culture of the newly prominent, educated, urban middle class was concerned. Sauder acknowledged the influence of English moral-sense philosophy and downplayed the influence of Pietism. He dismissed the view that the process of secularization of Pietism resulted in a secular emotionalism that celebrated the senses and the sensual.

There have been few major modifications of Sauder's work on Sensibility.[63] Lothar Pikulik's *Leistungsethik contra Gefühlskult* (Ethics of Achievement Versus the Cult of Feelings, 1984) diagnosed an exaggerated, confining turn to the inner man and an estranged, unworldly egocentricity in the era of Sensibility that could *not* serve as a potentially emancipatory cul-

tural trajectory.[64] Pikulik saw the return of feelings and emotions as a counter-effect against an already civilized aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the cultivation of sentimentality an end in itself: feelings for the sake of feelings. Pikulik presented a narrow view of Sensibility in which the one extreme type of the sensitive individual was seen mostly through the eyes of contemporary criticism of the excesses. In a recent essay Pikulik has modified his position, or rather shifted his focus to the ongoing debate about the emotions.[65] He explains Sensibility's movement toward emancipation and autonomy not as a function of Enlightenment, but rather as a way for sensitivity to emancipate itself from reason and become autonomous by posing the emotional sphere as an alternative to reason. In this evolutionary, cultural process, Moses Mendelssohn's *Briefe über die Empfindungen* (Letters on the Emotions, 1755) with its concept of "vermischte Empfindung" (mixed feelings) provided a new insight: the parallelism of "Lust und Leid" (joy and sorrow) and "Lust *am* Leid" (joy *of* sorrow) produced "Rührung" (sympathy), the enjoyment of a tragic subject as in watching a tragedy. Sensibility then is the self-experience of feeling, distinct from both reason and sensuality. The eighteenth century distinguished not only between spheres of values, but also between the spheres of the mind, a plausible conclusion that will surely have to be refined with a broader basis of texts.

In a detailed presentation and interpretation of poetry from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, Hans-Georg Kemper devoted one volume to *Empfindsamkeit,* showing the close interrelationship of Pietism and Sensibility.[66] Kemper makes an excellent case for the enduring, symbiotic relationship between religion and German lyrical poetry throughout much of the eighteenth century, citing for instance the emotionalism in Pietist verses such as Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf's *Teutsche Gedichte* (1735) and their echo in the collection by Immanuel Jakob Pyra (1715–1744) and Samuel Gotthold Lange (1711–1781) *Thirsis und Damons freundschaftliche Lieder* (Thirsis's and Damon's Friendship Songs, 1745) and in Klopstock's *Geistliche Lieder* (Spiritual Songs, 1758).[67] Adaptations, intertextuality, and transformations of Pietist hymns establish the close relationship between the often mystic, emotional language with its body, love, and sexuality metaphors and their transference into verses by Klopstock, Gellert, the young Wieland, and other poets of the same generation.

The recent interest in anthropology has found fertile historical ground in the eighteenth century. Using discourse analysis, communication theory, literary anthropology, and sexuality studies, Albrecht Koschorke rereads "Empfindsamkeit" in his monumental *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr: Mediologie des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Body Currents and Script Traffic: Mediology of the Eighteenth Century, 1999) as a shift in the circulation of social energies.[68] Koschorke first describes (well-known) changes in social interaction in the nobility and the bourgeois with regard to conversation, gallantry,

and love that lead to a closure of the body. This type of closure strengthened the body and enabled self-control as seen in the new, enlightened bourgeois concept of virtue.[69] Tears became substitutes for other bodily effusions, a form of sublimation in a culture of empathy and compassion. The rise of literacy and the bourgeois reading culture produced a turn away from bodily fluids to sensations of the soul, from desire and passion to sensibility and sociability. Writing belonged to the process of substitutions, and no longer competed with orality, but rather created new forms of communication. The debate about reading signaled the split of self-consciousness of enlightened literary culture, according to Koschorke a duality like that of nature and culture (with reference to Julie's garden in Rousseau's *Julie*). In other words, Koschorke first constructs a development of bodies closing themselves off from one another, then conceptualizes them as a closed, self-referenced system, and in a third step shows a substitution of the exchange of bodies by the medium of writing; the body is replaced by the written text. Koschorke's study may have linked his reading of the eighteenth century to modern media studies, but it has not produced any startling new, nor coherent interpretation as its abstraction clouds historic specificity and textual detail. By the same token, it nevertheless shows the richness of that literature and its possibilities for subjective, novel, creative readings and associations using the gamut of currently fashionable theories. This will surely find students and followers.

Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture, Gender, and the Rise of "Schöne Literatur" (*Belles Lettres*)

Recent research and reevaluations of eighteenth-century German literature have established the importance of the development of a bourgeois literary culture with the rise of literacy (especially among women), changes in the book market and in the public sphere, the importance of letters and letter writing and of friendship, the beginnings of modern authorship, the shift from devotional to secular literature: the development of "Schöne Literatur" that became *the* entertaining and formative (even educational) pastime (together with music). Since it has also been called a "feminization of literary culture" by some, it seems important to address the new role of women.[70] They were instrumental in the rise of *belles lettres* and by the same token literature became a stepping stone and a medium for women's beginning cultural (not political) emancipation in eighteenth-century Germany. The interdependence of the rise of a young, mostly female reading public coupled with an increase in women writing and the flourishing of *belles lettres*—poetry and songs, bourgeois drama and comedy for the professional stage,

experimental dramatic forms for lay groups, stories, essays, novels, and letters — comprised the literary culture of Sensibility.

Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's (1724–1803) readings were legendary in his day. He was "von liebenswürdigen Leserinnen zugleich liebkost und verehrt" (at the same time beloved and venerated by amiable women readers) as evidenced in his detailed description of one such reading in the garden of a wealthy Magdeburg merchant "in einem Ringe von Mädchen, die entfernter von Männern umschlossen waren.[. . .] Wie man dann mit Händeklatschen, mit Entzückungen und mit Tränen Fanny lobte, so sah ich auf schwimmende Augen um mich herum, wie auf Elysäer Felder"[71] (in a circle of young women who were surrounded by young men at some distance.[. . .] When they applauded and praised Fanny [Klopstock's beloved], I was looking at teary eyes around me as if in the Elysian fields). It was a social occasion, a garden party with entertainment for a select group of educated, upper middle class friends — a typical setting for literary culture in mid-eighteenth-century Germany. In a theatrical self-stylization the poet Klopstock saw himself as the center of attention; his audience was a mixed one, young, and emotionally aroused by his poetry.[72] For Klopstock, religion became poetry and poetry became religion, a religion for a lay, especially a female audience. The emotional reaction, the mixed audience of young women and men who enjoyed Klopstock signaled the shift away from learned theologians (who had little use for Klopstock's theology and effusions) to a secular audience. Klopstock's inventive, original vocabulary, his pathos, his enthusiastic and mystic, dark language, his exalted and often contrived images without a specific dogmatic content appealed to a young lay audience with a Pietist upbringing who were equally leery of the theologian's dogmatic fights and the clergy's moralistic preaching. With his poetry and the epic *Messias,* Klopstock spoke the "language of the heart,"[73] and he polished his *Oden und Elegien* (1771) to fit the emotional needs and tastes of the new reading public.[74] Like his fellow authors Wieland, Herder, Voss, Spalding or Lavater, Klopstock used his poetic works to communicate and socialize with women; in 1771 he founded one of the very first reading societies for young women, who had been excluded from the numerous, flourishing reading societies in eighteenth-century Germany established by and for men alone, with statutory exclusion of women, students, and Jews. Reading and recitation of literature became a pastime in private social gatherings of mixed gender (scholars and theologians were exclusively male), literary sociability ("Geselligkeit") a new phenomenon in well-to-do bourgeois circles by the mid-eighteenth century.

The new literary sociability was due to a large extent to the spread of literacy among women, especially in the middle-class, that took place from about the 1730s on. In the seventeenth century, for the most part, only women of the nobility could read well, could patronize authors or write

themselves, but with few exceptions only devotional verses and diary type chronicles.[75] There were no novels, dramas, or major *secular* poetry published by women in German before Luise Gottsched (born in 1713) and the generation of the somewhat younger Sophie von La Roche (born in 1730).[76] Both owed their unusual education and learning to ambitious, well-to-do and well-meaning fathers with a professional occupation. By about 1700, the religious instruction (catechism schools) required of all children except the very poor had provided most girls with some rudimentary literacy which included memorization of biblical passages and church songs, but this training was insufficient for sustained reading, let alone writing. When the enlighteners advocated women's education and emphasized the importance of literacy and reading — printing, for instance, suggestions for a lady's personal library such as the Hamburg moral weekly *Der Patriot* did in 1724 — well-to do bourgeois girls began receiving private tutoring (often together with their brothers). The general interest in education during the Enlightenment coincided with the Pietists' desire to read scriptures and devotional texts and fostered a reading ability that went beyond mere spelling. Changes in household chores and improved living conditions for upper middle-class women allowed reading to develop as a pastime, and eventually fostered a writing ability that far surpassed the rudimentary literacy skills still evident in the first third of the century in the older generation. For instance, mothers' letters to their famous sons, such as Justina Salome Lessing's (ca. 1700–1775) letters to Gotthold Ephraim (1729–1781), were still ungrammatical and riddled with spelling errors in the early 1700s.[77] But by 1783, literacy had become an essential skill and quality for middle class women and even reading quietly alone was considered an entertaining, useful pastime, not a learned, critical occupation;[78] or, as Sophie von La Roche explained to her women readers in "Ueber das Lesen" (On reading) in her journal *Pomona,* it was seen as a "stilles Lesen zur Erweiterung des Verstandes" (a quiet reading to widen the intellectual horizon).[79]

Reading ability was usually acquired first with religious literature and through reading aloud for others, as Friderika Baldinger (1739–1786), a parson's daughter from Langensalza, later married to a prominent professor of medicine in Marburg and Göttingen, elaborated in her "Versuch über meine Verstandeserziehung" (1791, Essay on My Intellectual Education). Baldinger described the time around 1750:

> Ich wünschte so gar gelehrt zu werden, und ärgerte mich, dass mich mein Geschlecht davon ausschloss. Je so willst du wenigstens klug werden, dachte ich, und dies wird man aus Büchern, du willst brav lesen. — Aber woher nun die Bücher, die mich klug machen sollten? Denn in einer Handelsstadt gabs keine. — Ich konnte überaus fertig lesen und konnte lesen eh ich sollte, ich glaube in meinem dritten Jahr

> schon! Das von meiner Mutter immer für ein Wunder erkannt wurde. — Bei ihr wurde immer viel in der Bibel gelesen, und gebetet. Dies war mein Amt, weil ich mich auszeichnete und mit Empfindung las.[80]
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> [I wanted to become very learned and was annoyed that my sex was excluded from it. At least, you want to become sensible, I thought, and that one becomes through books. — But how could I get books that would make me sensible? In our industrial town there were none. — I was able to read extremely well, could read before I was supposed to, I believe when I was only three! My mother thought of this as a miracle. — There was much Bible reading with her and praying. That was my part, because I excelled and read with sentiment.]

Baldinger's statement demonstrates the shift from the older, enlightened concept of education for women as a way of becoming learned to the newer one as a way of acquiring sensibility or common sense. Books were a means of self-education, but around 1750 young girls obviously were no longer interested in religious books as their mother's generation which had read from the Bible and spent much time in prayer. Reading with "Empfindung" was appreciated and rewarded by Baldinger's Pietist uncle (he stood in for the deceased father as head of the household), who required the girl and her siblings to read a certain number of chapters from the Bible each day:

> Dafür kriegte jedes von jedem Kapitel einen Pfennig. Die Mägde und meine Schwester schliefen gemeiniglich schon bei dem dritten Capitel fest, ich aber, durch den Beifall des Vetters und durch die vielen Pfennige aufgemuntert, las so lange, bis mich der Vetter selbst schweigen hies, und eben dadurch wurde meine Fertigkeit im lesen so sehr vergrössert. Ich las nun bei dem andern Vetter alles mit, was man mir vorlegte, und wurde nicht wenig bewundert, wenn ich die schweren Namen der alten Kayser, so ohne Anstand weg las.[81]
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> [Each one of us received for each chapter a penny. The maids and my sisters usually were fast asleep by the third chapter, but encouraged by my uncle's applause and the many pennies I read on until my uncle made me stop. This increased my reading ability very much. Then I read at another relative's house everything that was put in front of me, and I was admired for the way I read the difficult names of the ancient emperors without blinking an eye.]

This scene reflects the enduring importance of reading aloud from the Bible in the family circle. Until well into the eighteenth century, reading began with the Bible and religious literature, these formed the basis for literacy and writing. But history, stories, and fictional literature soon followed and became the preferred reading matter by the second half of the century. Bald-

inger's shift from the "gelehrt" (learned) to "klug" (sensible) also illustrates the typical orientation of German women's education in the course of the eighteenth century. Women had not received professional education nor advanced schooling, had not trained their minds with the study of classical literature, rhetoric, and sciences; instead, they had relied much more on instinct, common sense, emotions, introspection, compassion — qualities that religious practice and especially Pietism taught and required of them.

Unlike the growing class of "professional men," bourgeois women were not to become professionals (tutors, professors, lawyers, doctors, public officials, theologians), and by 1750 "learning" had become the exclusive province of men. A generation earlier, Louise Gottsched and a few selected, scholarly women were praised for their learning. But by mid-century the ideal shifted to the "schöne Seele" (beautiful soul), to the emotional qualities of woman, sensibility was considered the foremost and finest quality of woman.[82] In 1770 the then young theologian and aspiring author Johann Gottfried Herder wrote to Caroline Flachsland (1750–1809), who would later become his wife:

> So abscheulich in meinen Augen ein gelehrtes Frauenzimmer ist; so schön, dünkt mich, ists für eine zarte Seele, wie Sie, so feine Empfindungen nachfühlen zu können. Sie veredeln u. verfeinern die Seele, u. wenn sie Roman sind [. . .] so sind sie der geistigste und zärtlichste Roman den eine menschliche Seele nur in der schönsten Blüte ihrer Zeit, ihrer Kräfte, und ihres Lebens durchwandern kann.[83]
>
> [As despicable as a learned woman appears to me, so beautiful is, I believe, a tender soul like you who can sympathize with such tender emotions. They ennoble and refine the soul, and if they are a fiction, they are the most spiritual fiction that a human soul can traverse in the most beautiful flowering of its time, its energy, and its life.]

Not so much reason, but sensibility and sensitivity were considered woman's foremost natural and most desirable qualities. The cultural myth of equating women with feelings became a generally accepted notion during the second half of the eighteenth century. It was used to limit woman to the realm of feelings when Fichte posited in 1796: "In das Innere über die Grenze ihres Gefühls eindringen, kann [das Weib] nicht"[84] (woman cannot enter into the innermost being, cannot go beyond the limitations of her emotions). Feelings were assigned to women and implicitly here the lesser cognitive capabilities of woman. The more rigid gender dichotomy that assigned intellect and learning to men, feelings and passion to women as their "natural character" developed towards the end of the century, when "Empfindsamkeit" became mostly associated with excessive, sickly emotions and trivial literature that had fallen out of fashion. It was a good enough ar-

gument to keep women from professional knowledge and (higher, university) education, and it showed them their place in the ever more competitive literary marketplace around 1800 as well.

But earlier in the eighteenth century, authors from Gottsched to Klopstock's generation had responded to their new, young, and increasingly female audience accordingly, providing "schöne Literatur" for the "schöne Geschlecht" (the "fair" sex). As Kant suggested in 1764:

> Das schöne Geschlecht hat eben so wohl Verstand als das männliche, nur ist es ein schöner Verstand, der unsrige soll ein tiefer sein [. . .]. Gefühl vor Schildereien von Ausdruck, und vor die Tonkunst, nicht in so ferne sie Kunst sondern Empfindung äussert, alles dieses verfeinert oder erhebt den Geschmack dieses Geschlechts, und hat jederzeit einige Verknüpfungen mit sittlichen Regungen.[85]
>
> [The fair sex has intelligence no less high than we do, but it is beautiful, ours is to be profound and approaching the sublime [. . .] An interest in fiction of some expressiveness and in music, not as an expression of art but of sentiment, all this refines and elevates the taste of this sex, and is always somewhat related to moral sensations.]

Beauty, sentiments, and women were considered interrelated, and the "schöne Geschlecht" was served with "schöne Literatur." The authors wrote about a then-contemporary utopian world of sensibility and morality in mostly middle class, contemporary settings presenting, for instance, the trials of loyal and broken friendships and familial relations that were played out in ever new variations on and against plots of romantic love and passionate attachment. The presentation of friendship and love was set in allegorical, historical and often contemporary modes made for spirited entertainment and moral lessons on the perils of love, the power and rewards of friendship and honor, as in Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's *Die zärtlichen Schwestern* (The Tenderhearted Sisters, 1747). Women protagonists abounded showing a women's world, albeit from a curious male perspective, as in Gellert's popular novel *Das Leben der Schwedischen Gräfin von G**** (The Life of the Swedish Countess of G***, 1747) in an improbable plot: when the countess's husband is believed to have died in war, she marries his best friend who gives his marital place back to his friend after the friend's unexpected return. With his sentimental friendship ethos, the bachelor professor Gellert shunned all complications of gender and passion in the heyday of the friendship cult in Germany in the 1750s and 1760s. It seems that he merely revived a traditional literary motif, the male friendship tradition of antiquity, and created a utopia of male friendship.

The epistolary novel became a favorite narrative form in the eighteenth century when personal and literary correspondence was the mainstay for

carrying out friendly exchanges and establishing friendships. A model was Samuel Richardson, who corresponded with a large number of educated and literary women about his own relationship and about his writing, portrayed sentimental female friendship in his immensely popular and influential epistolary fiction. Friendship served as a close emotional bond and support in a patriarchal world, a negotiation of feelings, desires, and identity, as did the correspondence and friendship of Clarissa and Anna in *Clarissa or, the History of a Young Lady* (1747–48) with an intimate portrayal of female protagonists.

In her first and most successful novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771), the prolific German writer Sophie von La Roche (1730–1807) portrayed the life of a young contemporary woman who eludes passionate suitors and attains a certain autonomy as a single woman through friendships, founding a school, charity, and compassion. Lady Sternheim encounters and accepts friendship, and finds her higher calling by befriending other women, being sociable and working for disadvantaged women before returning to the fold of patriarchal society in a seemingly ideal and egalitarian marriage set in an idyllic country estate in England. La Roche decisively expanded and changed the structure of the traditional romance novel by allowing her heroine to elude male tutelage and develop as an autonomous, but nevertheless sociable individual through the emotional support of friends and the heroine's active support and exercise of friendship.

How responsive such sentimental fiction was to contemporary readers' taste can be seen in young Caroline Flachsland's (born in 1750) reaction in a 1771 letter to Herder:

> Ich habe indeßen auch [die] Geschichte der Fräulein von Sternheim gelesen. mein ganzes Ideal von einem Frauenzimmer! sanft, zärtlich, wohlthätig, stolz und tugendhaft. und betrogen. Ich habe köstliche, herrliche Stunden beym Durchlesen gehabt. ach, wie weit bin ich noch von meinem Ideal von mir selbst weg! welche Berge stehn gethürmt vor mir! ach! ach, ich werde im Staub und in der Asche bleiben![86]
>
> [In the meantime I have also read *The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim*. My very ideal of a woman! Humble, tender, compassionate, proud, and virtuous. And deceived. I have had wonderful, delicious hours in reading it. Alas, how far away I am from my own ideal! What mountains are towering ahead of me. Alas, alas, I shall remain in ashes and dust.]

Like Klopstock, La Roche wrote for the new sensible reading public, young men and women, and touched her readers' hearts. The sentimental narrative occupied a central place in the development of a new and innovative *belles letters* in eighteenth-century Germany. Reason and sentiment were no longer posited as contradictory polarities, the "head" was set in rela-

tionship to "the heart." The new *belles lettres* spoke to both and were closely linked to the inner and the outer life of the new readership; they were central to and mirrored literary sociability and social relationships. But this phenomenon still awaits full critical appreciation, as "Empfindsamkeit" comes increasingly into view as a project marked by its innovations rather than its disabling moments.

What "Empfindsamkeit" achieved for "schöne Literatur," the Enlightenment did for criticism as we know it.[87] The modern concept of literature and of literary criticism was closely tied to the rise of the new, educated, bourgeois reading public and authors. Literature, journals, literary feuds, publishing, and reading served the emancipation movement of the middle class, including in a more restricted way the cultural emancipation of middle class women, as an instrument to gain self-esteem and articulate human demands. A powerful convention had come into being: the convention that ideas and humanity were equally accessible to educated men and women and that human beings were judged by their intellectual and humane qualities, not by birth or social rank (to be sure: the intellectual was considered more man's domain, the moral or humane side more woman's realm). The literature of the eighteenth century in Germany that ends with an avalanche of new publications—novels, stories, journals, dramatic works of all kinds, and poetry—should be presented along its own historical and cultural terms and aspirations *and* with critical analysis, as the essays in this volume have attempted to do. Eighteenth-century German literature thus evolves as a lively tapestry of readable, sometimes sophisticated, sometimes sensible texts about the century's human condition.

Notes

[1] Richard Rorty, "The Continuity between the Enlightenment and 'Postmodernism,'" in *What's Left of Enlightenment: A Postmodern Question,* ed. Keith Michael Baker and Peter Hanns Reill (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001), 19.

[2] For an excellent discussion of the Enlightenment in Germany and an exploration of its significance for the present, see the essays in James Schmidt, ed., *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions,* Philosophical Traditions, vol. 7 (Berkeley: U of California P, 1996).

[3] Lawrence Lipkin, "Inventing the Eighteenth Centuries: A Long View," in *The Profession of Eighteenth-Century Literature,* ed. Leo Damrosch (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1992), 7. While speaking, of course, of English literature, the same applies to German.

[4] "The old historicist ideal of value-free scholarship seems increasingly a delusion even in the case of works like catalogs, much less editions and biographies. Choices grounded in various interests and assumptions must be made in simple listings and

topologies," writes John Bender, "A New History of the Enlightenment?," in *The Profession of Eighteenth-Century Literature,* 63. Bender voices the present "discipline in crisis" with a hope for "sustained critical discourse yielding genuine knowledge" (77).

[5] "Barock," originally a designation for art, architecture, and music and here extending deep into the eighteenth century (Bach died in 1750), was the period designation of choice for German handbooks, older literary histories, and scholarship of the seventeenth century, see Wilfried Barner, ed., *Der literarische Barockbegriff,* Wege der Forschung, vol. 358 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975). Historians now use "early modern" for the period of roughly 1450 through 1750, avoiding earlier period designations such as Renaissance, Humanism, Reformation, Baroque; most literary scholars in German have followed suit; see Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, "The Early Modern Period (1450–1720)," in *The Cambridge History of German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 92–147.

[6] See T. J. Hochstrasser, *Natural Law Theories in the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999).

[7] Recent research has pointed to the importance of natural law theory in Germany as liberal, albeit monarchist, political theory; see Frank Grunert, *Normbegründung und politische Legitimität: Zur Rechts- und Staatsphilosophie der deutschen Frühaufklärung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000).

[8] Klaus Garber, "Begin with Goethe? Forgotten Traditions at the Threshold of the Modern Age," in *Imperiled Heritage: Tradition, History, and Utopia in Early Modern German Literature: Selected Essays by Klaus Garber,* ed. Max Reinhart. Studies in European Cultural Transition, vol. 5 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 209–51.

[9] An exception is Richard Newald's literary history, *Vom Späthumanismus zur Empfindsamkeit, 1570–1750.* Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, vol. 5 (Munich: Beck, 1951), with chapters on devotional literature (417–46) and on the early Enlightenment (447–60). Alt, *Aufklärung* 65 points to changing literary norms and imagery (for instance Christian Weise's, 1642–1708) novels and plays. away from the convoluted style ("Schwulst") of the baroque era. Olaf Simons, *Marteaus Europa oder der Roman, bevor er Literatur wurde: Eine Untersuchung des deutschen und englischen Buchangebots der Jahre 1710 bis 1720.* Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, vol. 52 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001) is one of few recent studies to deal with fictional texts in the early eighteenth century, while there are countless studies on the latter half of the century and quite a few on the canonical works by Schnabel and Gellert.

[10] The history of German literature is a history of new beginnings, belatedness, and forgetfulness, as Wilfried Barner has succinctly discussed in "Über das Negieren von Tradition: Zur Typologie literaturprogrammatischer Epochenschwellen in Deutschland," in *Epochenschwelle und Epochenbewußtsein,* ed. Reinhart Herzog and Reinhart Koselleck (Munich: Fink, 1987), 3–51.

[11] I prefer the translation "bourgeois" for the ubiquitous "bürgerlich" used in German texts of the eighteenth century to denote an urban, educated class of mostly