

JAKOB MICHAEL REINHOLD LENZ AND JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

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Abstract

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Rousseau's influence on Lessing is examined in its positive and critical aspects. Their moral philosophies are compared in terms of theology, metaphysics, and ethics. Lessing's critique of contemporary culture, his socio-critical attitudes and his social-reform projects are viewed in the light of Rousseau's condemnation of modern civilization. The Rousseauist content of individual works (Der Minneger, Der neue Zenon, Die kleinen and Der Waldbruder) is then evaluated. The relationship emerges as a dialectic rather than an imitative response. Lessing is receptive to Rousseau's radical human ideals of sincerity and altruistic values in place of dissimulation and self-interest, but is adopting an independent, more optimistic standpoint on the feasibility of attaining these ideals and the consequent role of the individual will. This attitude, fruitful for Lessing's own creativity, later yields to an ineffective submission to the power of the state. The study includes a brief survey of the reception in eighteenth century Germany.

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le rapport entre le rôle dialectique plutôt qu'imitatif. Lenz approuve les idéaux du roman de Rousseau, à savoir la sincérité et les valeurs altruistes au lieu de la dissimulation et l'égoïsme, tout en adoptant une attitude intellectuelle plus optimiste quant à la réalisation pratique de ces idéaux et, conséquemment, au rôle de la volonté humaine. Cette attitude, source féconde pour la pensée de Hegel, est due en grande partie à une subjectivité idéaliste, mais elle a également permis à Hegel de parvenir à sa thèse concernant le rôle de la conscience humaine de Rousseau au dix-huitième siècle.

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## PREFACE

A commonplace assumption in the secondary literature on J.M.R. Lenz is his ineptness, in common with other writers of his period, to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Yet the relationship has hitherto been treated in a very cursory and fragmentary manner. The findings of existing scholarship (generally à propos of some other topic of investigation), which will be summarized in the introductory chapter, usually either emphasize Lenz's criticism of Rousseau or consist of generalizations on the philosophy of sentiment or the artificiality of society. Lenz's attitude to Rousseau has not been viewed systematically in both its positive and negative aspects, and the underlying coherence that emerges despite the apparent contradictions has thus escaped attention. This may be stated briefly as a sympathetic receptiveness to the new human moral, social and cultural ideals expounded by Rousseau, whereby sincerity and altruistic values replace dissimulation and the forces of self-interest. At the same time Lenz adopts an independent, more optimistic standpoint on the question of the feasibility of attaining these ideals and the role of the individual will in bringing them about.

The idea and usefulness of the present study were suggested in the course of a seminar on Lenz given at McGill in the fall of 1969 by Dr. T. Goldsmith-Reber. Aesthetic aims and techniques in Lenz's plays could not be adequately appreciated without reference to their content, and this in turn required an understanding of the mental climate in which he wrote. Some of the ideas that are central to this dissertation were

submitted by the author to a wider critical audience in the form of an article entitled "Lenz, Rousseau, and the Problem of Striving" in Seminar, X.3 (September 1974).

Lenz's writings are examined in relation to Rousseau, first from a thematic standpoint, in the areas of moral philosophy and cultural and social criticism. Individual works, including two important plays (Der Hofmeister and Der neue Menoza), for which some form of influence by Rousseau has long been assumed, are then discussed with the specific view of delineating the extent and limit of this influence. In the process some attention is given to the chronological development of Lenz's attitude to Rousseau, whereby a weakening of the independent critical stance appears to accompany the growing subjectivity of Lenz's art. The method of research is one that seeks to avoid the somewhat mechanical assemblage of similarities which often characterizes positivist influence studies. Textual and conceptual parallels still occupy an important place. Some of these have long been recognized, and their sources are acknowledged; where no such documentation is given, the source may be assumed to be the author. However, at least as much significance is attached to differences between the two writers. The overriding aim is to elicit firm and useful conclusions about the writer Lenz in his philosophical and artistic response to certain compelling issues of his age.

The main part of the investigation is preceded by a survey of Rousseau's reception in eighteenth century Germany, from the somewhat modest beginnings in the Aufklärung to the mystic Rousseau cults associated

with the names of Jean-Paul Richter and Hölderlin. This section is inevitably somewhat detailed. Its length is justified partly by the absence of any comprehensive definitive work on the subject. In particular the insights of recent scholarship have proved relevant to the present study for focusing on the importance in Germany of Rousseau's ideal of "paix," which, it will be shown, proved an obstacle to Lenz's appreciation of Rousseau. Beyond this, in the course of the research on this specific chapter of German literary and philosophical history it became clear that Lenz, as a self-proclaimed admirer of Rousseau, occupies a more integrated role in relation to what preceded and followed him than has hitherto been believed. A further objective of this study is thus, finally, to place the topic in a meaningful historical context and to contribute to our growing knowledge and understanding of that context.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Rousseau and the Sturm und Drang

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) is generally recognized as one of the most significant foreign influences on German literature in the eighteenth century. With the Sturm und Drang his prestige reached new heights, and literary historians such as Hermann Korff and Hermann Hettner have regarded his writings as the key to the entire movement.<sup>1</sup> "Was stumm und ahnungsvoll im Herzen der deutschen Jugend gelegen, das hatte durch Rousseau Leben und Bewußtsein, Ziel und Richtung, Gehalt und Gestalt gewonnen" (Hettner, p.57). The mentor's role, that this judgement implies, does not seem overstated. "Der Jüngling, der keinen Führer hat, wähle diesen", wrote Klinger in reference to Emile.<sup>2</sup> One of Herder's early poems, "Entschluß", concludes with the apostrophe: "Komm! sey mein Führer, Rousseau!"<sup>3</sup> Goethe's account of Strasbourg and the German literary revolution that took place there indicates that Rousseau's reputation stood very high among its participants.<sup>4</sup> He proved a notable exception to the aggressive cultural nationalism directed against French literature, and even the mystically nationalist Göttingen group accorded him recognition.<sup>5</sup>

Although Rousseau's importance to the Sturm und Drang as a total intellectual phenomenon has been repeatedly stressed, only one writer of the movement in the narrow sense, Klinger, has been made the object of monographic studies of his influence.<sup>6</sup> This contrasts with the numerous works listed in the Bibliography, which deal with the relationship of

Rousseau to Kant, Herder, Wieland, Schiller, Goethe, Hölderlin, Jean Paul and Kleist.<sup>7</sup> Of these only Herder and Goethe can be said to have played a prominent role in the Sturm und Drang of the seventeen-seventies, and then more in the sense of a formative phase in their development than as an expression of their highest achievements. Rousseau's influence has been mainly considered, with such writers, in terms of what followed. He is accorded a largely negative role, as one who helped clear away the debris of complacent rationalism and eudemonist ethics, so that new philosophical and cultural values could flourish. Such a broad perspective is not possible in the case of those figures more exclusively associated with the Sturm und Drang, such as Wagner, Lenz, Leisewitz or Müller, who, from a variety of personal and external causes, did not participate in the later classicism.<sup>8</sup> These, nevertheless, are the writers who combine to give the movement its peculiar identity: formal innovation and unbridled criticism of prevailing social mores. They are also the writers who professed the deepest admiration for Rousseau.

Research on Rousseau's influence in such cases has been hindered perhaps by their apparent irrelevance to German Geistesgeschichte. Typical is Korff's judgement: "Lenz hat überhaupt nur als naturalistischer Karikaturist, nicht im Zusammenhange ernsthafter Ideengeschichte eine gewisse Bedeutung" (p. 253). Moreover, their understanding of the French philosopher was often cursory and superficial: "... bei den meisten Stürmern und Drängern ging das Verständnis Rousseaus nicht sehr tief, und ihre Verherrlichung des Franzosen beruhte zum Teil auf

einem schöpferischen Mißverständnis, insofern sie aus seinen Schriften zumeist eben nur die Bejahung eines kulturlosen Natürlichkeitskultus und radikale Zivilisationsfeindschaft herauslasen." <sup>9</sup> Certainly the Sturm und Drang was eclectic in its philosophy, and its attitudes towards Rousseau were often formed by hearsay rather than sustained independent study. Yet paradoxically, this may have at least resulted from a faithful adherence to Rousseau's well known contempt of book-learning and his reliance on feeling and instinct as arbiters of truth. Rousseau is recognized to be an exception from the traditional type of philosopher in that it is by no means necessary to read his works with precision and in their entirety in order to react meaningfully. His is not "one of those rare systems all laid out minutely in advance, with every item in precise position and in perfect harmony with all the others."<sup>10</sup> His objective is not logical demonstration in the sense of Descartes or Pascal, but provocation. "He raises such a storm within us that very few of us have been able to keep our heads in reading him."<sup>11</sup> Those rationalist critics of the Aufklärung who deliberated upon specific points of doctrine such as "natural man" or perfectabilité" were to varying degrees guilty of failing to see the wood for the trees. This, at least, cannot be said of the Sturm und Drang. In a sense their reception of Rousseau can be compared with that of Shakespeare: neither their ignorance of the full canon nor a deficiency of texts hindered them from evolving an integral concept of a, if not the, Shakespearian spirit, and the productive force of this in their own creations could scarcely be overestimated.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Lenz, and Rousseau

I propose to examine the question of Rousseau and the Sturm und Drang in relation to Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751-92), whose writings contain a large number of references to the French philosopher. He refers to the latter at one point as "der Gottliche" (WS, I, 341).<sup>13</sup>

Lenz's reputation as a writer no longer lies in the shadow cast by Goethe's assessment in Dichtung und Wahrheit: "Lenz . . . , als ein vorübergehendes Meteor, zog nur augenblicklich über den Horizont der deutschen Literatur hin und verschwand plötzlich, ohne im Leben eine Spur zurückzulassen."<sup>14</sup> That he continues to be recognized as a force in the theatre is attested by the continuing popularity of Die Soldaten and Der Hofmeister.<sup>15</sup> Besides being frequently performed, the former has given rise to an opera by Bernd Alois Zimmerman (1965) and a notable adaptation by Heinar Kipphardt (1968), whilst the latter was adapted by Brecht (1950). Not only is Lenz acknowledged to be one of the most original dramatists of the Geniezeit, but also his influence on the subsequent development of the German theatre is more fully appreciated today than ever before. His name has become synonymous with a particular genre: the tragi-comedy.<sup>16</sup> It is Lenz who is credited with the initiation of the open form of dramatic structure associated with such dramatists as Büchner, Grabbe, Wedekind, or Brecht.<sup>17</sup> That Lenz was also an original, if erratic, author of theoretical writings dealing with moral and metaphysical, as well as aesthetic matters, is also better appreciated by modern scholarship.<sup>18</sup> The value of these theoretical writings lies, not



least, in the light they throw on the dramatic works, their themes and intent.

Walter Hinderer, in a recent review of the state of Lenz research, concludes: "Man könnte nun in der Tat damit beginnen, Werk und Leben dieser vermeintlichen 'Composition von Genie und Kindheit' auch einmal aus dem zeitgeschichtlichen Kontext zu interpretieren."<sup>19</sup> It is as a child of the eighteenth century, the age of Enlightenment and an age of far-reaching social and cultural upheavals, that Lenz wrote. His response to these problems, for all its modern appeal, cannot be properly understood without prior reference to that context. Among the diverse moulding influences here Rousseau's dominance is beyond question.

Falck, the first to remark upon Rousseau's importance for Lenz notes, from the outset, his relevance to the latter's "philanthropisch-socialistischen Theorien."<sup>20</sup> Eugen Wolff subsequently draws attention to parallels between Rousseau's works and some of Lenz's plays, in particular the relevance of the Nouvelle Héloïse to Der Hofmeister.<sup>21</sup> Rosanow, in the first substantial Lenz monograph, writes in vague terms of the effect of Rousseau's religious outlook and the feeling for nature.<sup>22</sup> The social aspect is taken up by Hausdorff, but in the context of a somewhat negative appraisal of the two writers' "nihilistic" approach to society.<sup>23</sup> Greater insight is shown in Ilse Kaiser's dissertation Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, Der Engländer, Der Waldbruder von J.M.R. Lenz (Erlangen, 1917), dealing with the importance of the Nouvelle Héloïse for Lenz's treatment of love. Kaiser goes beyond the mere identification of sources and

illustrates Lenz's evolvment of an independent creative response, his somewhat wistful celebration of total love in opposition to the renunciation proposed by Rousseau. That Rousseau may have operated as a stimulant for Lenz to develop his own distinctive moral and social attitudes, rather than as an object of slavish imitation, is implicit in Sommerfeld's reference to the relationship: "An Rousseau, diesem vorzüglichsten Vertreter der 'fordernden Epoche' erlebte Lenz -- und Lenz unvergleichlich stärker als alle seine Genossen, stärker als Goethe -- die Abgrenzung des Individuums gegen die Gesellschaft, seine Bezogenheit auf Tun und Leiden: die moralische und soziale Begründung der Individualität."<sup>24</sup>

The treatment of the relationship by subsequent scholars has been small in scope, important more for indicating possible areas of inquiry than for producing solid conclusions. Kindermann, author of the first large-scale monograph since Rosanow, sees Rousseau as an important formative factor, particularly in the progressive trend towards increasing subjectivity in Lenz's work.<sup>25</sup> Max Kommerell sees the main area of influence in the aesthetic theories of the theatre and in the relationship of art and nature.<sup>26</sup> It is interesting, though chronologically unsound, that he chooses to see in Lenz a continuation of "die seelen- und selbst-zergliedernde Richtung" established by the Confessions, thus providing a model for the introspective autobiographical novels of Fritz Jacobi and K.P. Moritz (p. 54). In fact, when Rousseau's notorious autobiography appeared in 1781, Lenz was already living in Moscow, a spent force and forgotten. Kommerell is, however, the first to note temperamental similarities between the two writers. Maria Sinnreich, in a dissertation

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on Das gesellschaftskritische Element im Schaffen von Lenz (Vienna, 1936), takes Rousseau as the model for Lenz's social and ethical criticism (pp. 30-41). This she sees operating in three ways: personal, philosophical and social. The self is re-evaluated in terms of the creed of sentiment; and some ethical concepts of Rousseau, particularly his distinction between "amour de soi" and "amour-propre", can be paralleled in Lenz's moral thought; but it is in his view of social institutions and their bearing on the rights of the individual as a citizen that Rousseau's influence is most recognizable. Sinnreich also remarks on the temperamental similarities between the two writers, suggesting that Lenz's attitude towards Rousseau may have been conditioned by his perception of a "Gefahr seines eigenen Wesens" mirrored in the emotionally unstable Genevan (p. 31). Torggler's somewhat understated dissertation on Lenz's social criticism acknowledges the indebtedness to Rousseau, but does not substantially advance the theme.<sup>27</sup> Rudolf, on the other hand, confines his attention to the philosophical and ethical aspect, considering Rousseau briefly, along with Kant and Shaftesbury, as but one of the many conflicting philosophical trends he sought to synthesize (pp. 59-61, 66).

The present study is conceived both as a contribution to the theme "Rousseau and Germany" and as an attempt to illuminate aspects of Lenz, the man and the work, in the context of a specific and immensely important phenomenon. It will proceed first thematically, then through the study of four individual works of Lenz in which the influence of Rousseau has frequently been conjectured.

Positivist influence-studies have tended to see their task as that of identifying similarities which indicate an active-passive relationship between influencer and influenced. Such an approach fails to relate its findings to an underlying coherent picture of the subject which is the primary object of study.<sup>28</sup> An influence may be more significant where it sets in train an independent creative process, one which may even end in refutation. This may be observed in Herder's reception of Rousseau. Hans Wolff remarks, in this connection, that "eine Abhängigkeit auch dann vorliegen kann, wenn ein Dichter, statt die Ideen eines anderen Denkers zu übernehmen, sich ihnen bewußt entgegenstellt. In der geistigen Entwicklung sind Zustimmung und Widerspruch identische Größen mit umgekehrten Vorzeichen."<sup>29</sup> A further danger is that of seeing evidence of influence in virtually every line written by the author in question.<sup>30</sup> In the case of Rousseau, it is especially difficult to distinguish direct influence from what may have been merely derived from the inevitable exposure to ideas which were "in the air," notably enthusiasm for nature.<sup>31</sup> To a large extent, if we accept the principle of coherence of thought in Rousseau, it is not invariably necessary, or desirable, to distinguish between direct and indirect influence. Overriding the literary historical concern, for delineating the specifics of Rousseau's influence on Lenz, is an awareness of his receptiveness to that phenomenon described by Korff as "Rousseauismus" (p. 76). There is sufficient evidence to suggest that, despite some claims to the contrary, Lenz had a first hand acquaintance with Rousseau's writings. It is, however, still legitimate, when the occasion demands, to cross the boundary between Rousseau and Rousseauism in attempting to understand the intellectual background to his works.

### 3. The relation of Rousseau to eighteenth century thought

Rousseau, more than any other writer, is expressive of a crisis in European thought in the eighteenth century. According to the prevailing progressivist belief, humanity was not immutably fixed, but engaged in a historical process of self-improvement which would lead to an eventual eradication of evil and suffering. The organs of advance were state, church and the establishments of learning; science, culture and a liberal theology were to be its tools. This ran contrary to the medieval Augustinian orthodoxy, which precluded the feasibility of secular progress. Earthly institutions of government and state were rendered necessary by the fact of human sinfulness and could never be more than a corrupt, confused and strife-ridden prelude to the civitas dei. Augustine in fact regarded any preoccupation with earthly reforms as a distraction from the supremely important matter of the salvation of the soul.<sup>32</sup> Precisely when this static view of the world and human destiny began to loosen is a matter of conjecture. The most significant development prior to the eighteenth century was undoubtedly the emergence of a new spirit of sceptical inquiry in the rational empiricism of Montaigne, Descartes and Bacon. This brought in its wake, among other upheavals, the "battle of the Ancients and the Moderns" (Charles Perrault, Querelle des anciens et des modernes, 1688 ff., Jonathan Swift, Battle of the Books, 1704), whereby the ancient world lost its monopoly upon Truth. The concept of progress was born of this spirit: developments in the natural sciences revealed unsuspected potentialities for improving man's physical well-being, whilst the spirit of curiosity that led to overseas explorations provided European civilization with a means of measuring itself against more primitive cultures. Progress became the catch-word for a philosophy of optimism which became enshrined

in the many tomes of the French Encyclopédie.

Rousseau should not be regarded as standing in direct opposition to this philosophy, despite the primitivist views of his early writings. To him fell the role of exposing the enormous deficiency between theory and practice, between the optimistic dreams of the philosophers and the grave social and cultural ills of modern society. He perceived the fundamental error of the rationalists, their attempt to apply abstract intellectual systems to complex human realities. Universal happiness was conceived as a collective goal. Rousseau attacked a culture which aspired to "die Vervollkommnung der menschlichen und außermenschlichen Natur mit Hilfe des gesellschaftlich organisierten Geistes zum Zwecke des menschlichen Glückes."<sup>33</sup> Against this process of abstraction and levelling he asserted an ideal of individual liberty that took the form not merely of a protest against political tyranny but of a search for freedom within the moral sphere. Ethics, under the auspices of such thinkers as Leibnitz in Germany, or Helvetius in France, had been neatly accommodated as a branch of metaphysics. Rousseau's great achievement was to restore to the individual the right of subjective decision, the sovereignty of feeling. Moral responsibility belonged no longer in the realm of a preordained universal entelechy, but with the seat of conscience, the heart. Kant, a founder of modern ethics, learned from Rousseau to see man not as the rational, abstract entity of the metaphysicians, but as the quintessential non-socialized, uncultured "Mensch an sich."<sup>34</sup> The humanistic impulse behind Rousseau's writings, one that tends to be denied by the "nihilist" school of critics,<sup>35</sup> informs all his denunciations of the

abuses rampant in modern culture and which he himself, in some of his later writings, sought to rectify. Everywhere he saw evidence of intellectual complacency, immorality, hypocrisy and glaring social inequities in a species that nature had created as good. This was Rousseau's answer to the doctrine of progress as it was currently understood by his contemporaries in the philosophical movement and one reason for his unpopularity with these. Yet, although Rousseau himself undoubtedly maintained an ambivalent attitude towards the idea of progress, his writings contain much that could be taken to serve that end. They envisage a return to the pristine roots of human nature, not necessarily to remain in a primitive state, but rather to use these as the starting-point for a different form of development, one that would better conform to man's true being..

#### 4. Rousseau's writings

Rousseau's thought evolves through a series of provocative and highly controversial writings between 1750 and 1762, a knowledge of which is indispensable for this study. His later, "pre-romantic" writings, in which aggressive criticism yields to a more serene introspection, belong to a period posterior to the Sturm und Drang.

#### Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts (1750)

Rousseau's prize-winning essay on the question "si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs" was

conceived as a deliberate assault on "tout ce qui fait aujourd'hui l'admiration des hommes."<sup>36</sup> Far from improving humanity, the enormous growth of learning in post-Renaissance Europe had actively contributed to its decline. The arts represent not spiritual emancipation but enslavement, concealing from the "peuples policés" the truth of their lost liberty (p. 4). Where art has sunk to the level of decoration, philosophy supplies the tools for defining virtue without the need to practice it. Thus the principle of dissimulation establishes itself in the guise of learning; modern society emerges as a massive exercise in hypocrisy, whereby the appearance of progress is made to conceal its opposite: cultural and moral decadence. Rousseau detects a similar process in past cultures. Egypt, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, each turned to a cultivation of the intellect and the muses and eventually lost its moral will and was destroyed. Sparta, Persia, the Scythians, the Germanic tribes, instinctively eschewed the arts and learning and thus preserved their rustic virtues, reflected in their military prowess. Such is the lesson of the past for the present: "Peuples, sachez donc une fois, que la nature a voulu vous préserver de la science, comme une mère arrache une arme dangereuse des mains de son enfant; que tous les secrets qu'elle vous cache sont autant de maux dont elle vous garantit, et que la peine que vous trouverez à vous instruire n'est pas le moindre de ses bienfaits" (pp. 11-12). Rousseau restates the Augustine dualistic view of history.<sup>37</sup> Man was born to freedom and happiness, yet lives in moral and social servitude, having eaten of the forbidden fruits of knowledge and culture. The argument is stated rhetorically, with a deliberate use of overstated aphorisms and paradox. In fact, Rousseau does concede that a small elite have through their great intellects succeeded in



benefiting humanity (p. 23). The discourse is important not as history but as the first statement of Rousseau's "cultural pessimism", which in the last resort is directed against "den selbstgefälligen Intellektualismus der rationalistischen Kultur der Zeit."<sup>38</sup> It is akin to that mood which, over a century later, moved Nietzsche to rail against the death of the spirit in an age of mass literacy.

Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes (1754)

Rousseau has left the following account of the moment of inception of the second Discours:

Tout le reste du jour, enfoncé dans la forêt, j'y cherchois, j'y trouvois l'image des premiers temps, dont je traçois fièrement l'histoire; je faisais main basse sur les petits mensonges des hommes; j'osois dévoiler à nu leur nature, suivre le progrès du temps et des choses qui l'ont défigurée, et comparant l'homme de l'homme avec l'homme naturel, leur montrer dans son perfectionnement prétendu la véritable source de ses misères. Mon âme, exaltée par ses contemplations sublimes, s'élevait auprès de la Divinité; et voyant de là mes semblables suivre, dans l'aveugle route de leurs préjugés, celle de leurs erreurs, de leurs malheurs, de leurs crimes, je leur criais d'une foible voix qu'ils ne pouvoient entendre: Insensés, qui vous plaignez sans cesse de la nature, apprenez que tous vos maux vous viennent de vous!<sup>39</sup>

The image of "l'homme naturel", which was to give rise to endless

controversy concerning Rousseau's "noble savage," was conceived as a criterion for modern man. The preface refers to "un état, qui n'existe plus, qui n'a peut-être pas existé, qui probablement n'existera jamais, et dont il est pourtant nécessaire d'avoir des notions justes, pour bien juger de notre état présent."<sup>40</sup> Rousseau, in fact, quickly advances beyond this primitive stage to that of the patriarchal society, asserting that "le genre humain était fait pour y rester toujours, que cet état est la véritable jeunesse du monde, et que tous les progrès ultérieurs ont été en apparence autant de pas vers la perfection de l'individu, et en effet vers la décrépitude de l'espèce" (p. 72).

Patriarchal man retains a moral link with his primitive forebears. He has not yet transformed his natural egoism based on self-preservation (amour de soi) into that superfluous egotistic urge for self-aggrandizement (amour-propre). It is the latter emotion that underlies modern man's unhappiness, his loss of liberty, the formation of society. The creation of artificial needs not known to natural man, the love of luxury, also creates dependence: " . . . chacun doit voir que les liens de la servitude n'étant formés que de la dépendance mutuelle des hommes et des besoins qui les unissent, il est impossible d'asservir un homme sans l'avoir mis auparavant dans le cas de ne pouvoir se passer d'un autre . . . " (p. 65). With the birth of society, the way is open for the seizure of power by the strong at the expense of the weak and for the creation of property: "Le premier qui ayant enclos un terrain s'avisait de dire: "Ceci est à moi", et trouva des gens assez simples pour le croire, fut le vrai fondateur de la société civile" (p. 66).

This structure, once founded, was legitimized by laws and the whole apparatus of legislators and magistrates required to ensure its continued functioning. The discourse takes on a political tone. For a while Rousseau changes the perspective somewhat and adumbrates ideas developed later in the Contrat social, concerning the ideal relationship of citizen and state. He seems to suggest that the member of a society can remain free technically by voluntarily renouncing his natural liberty in exchange for the protection accorded by the society and by maintaining his right to renounce the "contract" at will. But the main focus in this work is the modern "policed" state, where interdependence is based on self-seeking vanity, a "fureur de se distinguer" (p. 89); in which laws are needed at every turn to ensure that it does not disintegrate under the weight of those very vices which led to its formation; a state convulsed with inner tensions bred by inequalities and social injustice, whilst expending its energies on "useless and pernicious arts, and frivolous sciences", tottering inexorably towards the ultimate despotism, which alone will preserve order. The final stage in this sombre historical survey of man's progress is thus revealed as a cataclysmic one in which social man must choose between chaos and tyranny.

Rousseau's second Discours is a cry of protest against contemporary European society, in which liberty has been stifled to the extent that even the concept of liberty is barely understood. Without this key to his nature modern man cannot begin to comprehend the reason for his self-alienation. Continuing the pessimistic mood of the earlier discourse, Rousseau concludes that the Golden Age of happiness lies not in the future, as believed by contemporary philosophers, but is already past: "Mécontent de ton état

présent par des raisons qui annoncent à ta postérité malheureuse de plus grands mécontentements encore, peut-être voudrais-tu pouvoir rétrograder; et ce sentiment doit faire l'éloge de tes premiers aïeux, la critique de tes contemporains, et l'effroi de ceux qui auront le malheur de vivre après toi" (p. 41).

Lettre à M. D'Alembert sur les Spectacles (1758)

In his article on Geneva for the Encyclopédie the philosopher-mathematician D'Alembert had suggested the establishment of a theatre in that state. Rousseau's rebuttal contains his views on the theatre, which he attacks on moral, sociological and dramaturgical grounds. The function of a play is distraction, distraction from the honest performance of duty. It rouses sentiments and emotions within the spectators, which are otherwise foreign to them. It gives, in particular, an exaggerated prominence to love, which thus enables woman to thwart the intended natural order and to gain an ascendancy over man (pp. 159 ff.). One trait which strongly colours Rousseau's moral outlook, with particular respect to the relationship of the sexes, is exemplified here: an ingrained puritanism. It is this that leads to his reassertion of the time-honoured, prejudiced view of the acting profession as dishonorable, corrupt and a threat to right living (pp. 183 ff.) The actor's whole existence, he concludes, is founded on falsehood. "Qu'est-ce que le talent du comédien? L'art de se contrefaire, de revêtir un autre caractère que le sien, de paroître différent de ce qu'on est, de se passionner de sang-froid, de dire autre chose que ce qu'on

«pense, aussi naturellement que si l'on le pensoit réellement, et d'oublier enfin sa propre place à force de prendre celle d'autrui" (p. 186). Thus the theatre, like arts, sciences and political institutions, is weighed in the scales of Nature and found wanting.

Like the previous two works, the Lettre à d'Alembert is best seen as an attack on the pretensions of contemporary culture. Rousseau seeks common-sense in place of intellectual cant. This is nowhere more apparent than in his treatment of the classical dramatic theory based on Aristotle, whereby contemporary dramatists sought to justify their art. Rousseau first denies the theatre any power to improve morals: in matters of taste and ethical values it follows, never leads. Worse, it enables an audience to experience moral grandeur vicariously, relieving it of the necessity to seek that emotion in actual conduct. The Aristotelian concept of pity (an emotion germane to Rousseau's humanism) is treated with similar scepticism: "J'entends dire que la tragédie mène à la pitié par la terreur, soit. Mais quelle est cette pitié? Une émotion passagère et vaine, qui ne dure pas plus que l'illusion qui l'a produite; un reste de sentiment naturel étouffé bientôt par les passions, une pitié stérile, qui se repaît de quelques larmes, et n'a jamais produit le moindre acte d'humanité" (p. 140). The letter concludes with specific criticisms of classical and neo-classical dramatists, Racine, Crébillon and Voltaire.

Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse (1761)

Rousseau's great epistolary novel is of enormous literary historical importance. It has an intensity that sets it apart from the conventional

sentimental bourgeois novel in the tradition of Richardson. It also represents Rousseau's first positive attempt to apply his ideals of freedom and nature to modern society.

St. Preux, a gifted young bourgeois without means or rank, is tutor to the aristocratic Julie d'Etange. A passionate love affair develops from the overwhelming spiritual and physical attraction each feels for the other. Their marriage hopes are thwarted by the forces of social convention in the person of Julie's father, and St. Preux is compelled to leave. He embarks on a world tour with his enlightened friend, Lord Bomston, but remains true to the memory of Julie, who in the meantime defers to her father's wishes and marries Baron Wolmar, a man of rationalist humanistic convictions and an atheist. At this point the tendency of the novel undergoes a distinct change: where previously the sovereignty of passion and the rights of the individual appeared supreme, now it is the ethics of renunciation, of obedience to duty, which become paramount. Julie overcomes her passion, to the extent that when Wolmar displays his magnanimity by inviting St. Preux to share their household, his trust is rigorously honoured. Julie contracts pneumonia through rescuing her child from drowning, and dies, but not before delivering a death-bed speech of great length in which she expresses her wishes on the upbringing of her children. The ideal she hopes to see realised through these is in fact the same as that embodied in her own way of life and to which both St. Preux and Wolmar are brought by her example: that of virtue rather than outward distinction. This goes deeper than in the conventional moral literature of the time in that feeling

plays as much a part as reason; Rousseau's virtue comes not from following the dictates of convention or the precepts of philosophers. It comes from the depths of the individual soul where, alone and aided only by the divine inspiration of conscience, it must first battle with the passions on their own ground. Freedom has been preserved, we must assume, by the voluntary aspect of moral decision. Rousseau's thought has progressed from the stage of absolute pre-social freedom to a new moral freedom, a process which is paralleled in the political theory of the Contrat social.

Through the medium of the letter, numerous discussions on contemporary and timeless issues are woven into the development of the plot: such subjects as suicide, education, the social and cultural world of the Parisian "haut monde." Yet the genre-description "philosophical novel" would not do justice to the emotional undercurrent, the celebration of pure feeling. In particular the first half contains passages expressing that feeling for nature, -- the grandeur and serenity of the Alps, -- which was to reverberate throughout European literature. That these are more than sentimental Rococo pastorals is shown by the criticism of contemporary society with which they are invariably linked. The life which the central characters choose for themselves in their Alpine valley is a patriarchal form of existence. Only in isolation from the mainstream of civilization is it possible to practise natural virtue and to realise true human values.

Emile, ou de l'Education (1762)

Rousseau's treatise on education, of enormous significance for the

pedagogical movement in the eighteenth century, seeks a positive alternative to a corrupt culture. Its opening statement contains the essence of his entire philosophy: "Tout est bien sortant des mains de l'Auteur des choses, tout dégénère entre les mains de l'homme."<sup>41</sup> Education of the child must therefore allow free rein to nature; the learning process proceeds at the child's own pace, primarily from experience. The vast body of what he regards as useless knowledge contained in the standard school curriculum he rejects, together with the whole apparatus of rote, verbalism and birch which passed as methods of instruction. He draws a wide distinction between instruction and education. In this he is infinitely more radical than such predecessors as Locke. The anti-intellectualism of the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts is now applied to a specific area of modern life in which the glorification of the mind is particularly rampant. The child moreover is akin to primitive man in his quintessential goodness; any progression beyond that stage is, as with the historical evolution of man, fraught with perils.

The work is of socio-political relevance. Rousseau's pupil would not be trained for a specific social order or vocation but for that calling common to all men: life. The reason he advances shows a prophetic insight into the instability of the prevailing order or society: "Vous vous fiez à l'ordre actuel de la société sans songer que cet ordre est sujet à des révolutions inévitables, et qu'il vous est impossible de prévoir ni de prévenir celle qui peut regarder vos enfants. . . . Nous approchons de l'état de crise et du siècle des révolutions" (p. 224). Emile takes the trade of a carpenter.



Life, then, is the calling for which Emile is to be educated, and this important concept is celebrated more eloquently than in any other of Rousseau's works (Ch.IV, n.34, below). It is, however, important to note that for Rousseau a philosophy of dynamic activity is tempered by an overriding desire for happiness, and this will be achieved through a state of equilibrium in which will does not exceed ability (p.63). The idyllic yearnings of the earlier discourses have their counterpart in this philosophy of contentment.

One section of the book more than any other accounted for the vast interest it roused, leading to the banishment of both it and its author in much of Europe: Rousseau's statement of his religious beliefs in the "Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard." Dogma is replaced by feeling as the guide to moral conduct. Conscience is celebrated as the infallible "voice of the heart." The existence of a benign Providence and an after-life are attested by faith. Such a faith in an "Etre suprême" arises instinctively from the feeling of reverence we experience before the wonders of the universe as manifested in nature. This form of nature religion is distinct from the pantheism of philosophers like Shaftesbury. Feeling for nature induces the awareness of a deity, but the latter is conceived in personal ethical terms.<sup>42</sup> The importance of this creed is that the pretended certainties of dogmatic philosophy are refuted. Rousseau shares with Blaise Pascal a perception of that stage of philosophical enquiry beyond which reason is powerless to attain spiritual truths: "Le plus digne usage de ma raison est de s'anéantir devant toi . . . ." (p. 348).

Le Contrat social (1762)

Of less immediate importance for the present study is Rousseau's theory of political institutions. In it he grapples with the problem of freedom within society, showing greater mental discipline than in his other writings, even though he evidently doubts the feasibility of ever seeing his theories realized in the world of men. The ideal society originates from a contract between its members, whereby each surrenders his natural liberty in exchange for the protection accorded by society. In this way he maintains a civil liberty, which through its voluntary aspect corresponds to the concept of moral liberty through renunciation as annunciated in the Nouvelle Héloïse. In theory at least, despotism can be avoided by the supremacy of the "volonté générale," the collective will of the people. This is seen to be infallible in its intent, -- a social equivalent of conscience in ethical decision-making, -- if not in specific instances. The work represents a maturing of Rousseau's thought, an attempt to apply his egalitarianist convictions to a political system. It also demonstrates his growing willingness to compromise in comparison to the radical tone of his earliest works, albeit without surrendering the essential pillars of his philosophy: that human society can only, if ever, be restructured in accordance with a human nature that is essentially good.

## II. ROUSSEAU IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GERMANY

### 1. Rousseau criticism in the Aufklärung

Opinions on Rousseau in Germany before the Sturm und Drang vary only to the extent that disagreement takes the form of scornful condemnation or a benign tolerance in showing him the error of his ways. Two names figure prominently among those who regarded him with serious interest: Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn.

Lessing's review of the first Discours, whilst rejecting its thesis, strikes a positive tone in comparison with the totally negative and condescending Verteidigung der Gelehrsamkeit und sonderlich der schönen Wissenschaften gegen den Herrn Rousseau aus Genf (1752), which issued from the bastion of rationalism, Gottsched's Leipzig circle.<sup>1</sup> Lessing alludes to "erhabne Gesinnungen" and "männliche Beredsamkeit."<sup>2</sup> However, he stops short of endorsing Rousseau's theory linking the arts with the decline of society: "Alle grosse Gebäude verfallen mit der Zeit, sie mögen mit Kunst und Zierrathen, oder ohne Kunst und Zierrathen gebaut seyn." Lessing seizes on one aspect of Rousseau's essay that clearly offends his enlightened humanitarian convictions, namely the equation of military prowess with the health of a culture: "Sind wir deswegen auf der Welt, daß wir uns unter einander umbringen sollen?" The association of war with glory and virile values (really only prominent in Rousseau's first discourse) is closer to the spirit of the Sturm und Drang.

In his notice for the Berlinische privilegierte Zeitung of 10 July 1755, following the publication of the Discours sur l'Inégalité, Lessing is still

more positive in his defence of Rousseau, whom he considers to be the victim of misrepresentation by "kleine Geister" both in France (undoubtedly Voltaire) and Germany (probably the Leipzig satire).<sup>3</sup> His appreciation of Rousseau's originality and fearless spirit shows Lessing in advance of most of his contemporaries: "Er ist noch überall der kühne Weltweise, welcher keine Vorurtheile, wenn sie auch noch so allgemein gebilligt wären, ansieht, sondern gradenwegs auf die Wahrheit zugehet, ohne sich um die Scheinwahrheiten, die er bei jedem Tritte aufopfern muß, zu bekümmern. Sein Herz hat dabei an allen seinen spekulativischen Betrachtungen Anteil genommen,"<sup>4</sup> und er spricht folglich aus einem ganz andern Tone, als ein feiler Sophist zu sprechen pflegt, welchen Eigennutz oder Prahlerei zum Lehrer der Weisheit gemacht haben."

The German public became familiar with the second Discours through the translation by Lessing's close friend Moses Mendelssohn, an enterprise which was in fact suggested by Lessing as a linguistic exercise. The translation appeared in 1756, accompanied by a discussion entitled Sendschreiben an den Herrn Magister Lessing in Leipzig and a translation of Voltaire's famous rebuttal.<sup>5</sup> One of Mendelssohn biographers claims that Rousseau himself later requested a copy of the work and a translation of the commentary.<sup>6</sup>

In a letter to Lessing shortly before publication, Mendelssohn praises Rousseau's readiness to question all existing institutions, but regrets his denial of any moral character to civilized man.<sup>7</sup> The Aufklärung

can accept the need for reform, but is less willing to abandon its faith in moral progress. Likewise the Sendschreiben expresses difficulty in sharing Rousseau's radically pessimistic account of modern man's nature and destiny. There can be no turning back from the path of progress and it is unwise to provoke discontent with our present situation. "Wir spielen jetzt nur mit den Ketten der Sklaverei; wir fühlen ihr Gewicht nicht mehr. Wohl! man lasse uns diese tröstliche Fühllosigkeit, wenn man die Fesseln, die uns binden, nicht zerschlagen kann."<sup>8</sup> Mendelssohn's intention appears to be to save Rousseau from himself, to show that he is more socially inclined than he imagines (p. 375), or to prove that the pity instinct of primitive man betrays in fact "die Lust an Harmonie und Ordnung."

Rousseau introduces a concept into his discourse on which Mendelssohn makes great play, both in his commentary and the ensuing correspondence with Lessing: "perfectabilité." To account for the development of man from his happy primitive state to the modern degenerate form of society, Rousseau ascribes to him a "façulté de se perfectionner, façulté qui, à l'aide des circonstances, développe successivement toutes les autres, et reside parmi nous tant dans l'espèce que dans l'individu."<sup>9</sup> In fact there is considerable irony and pessimism in Rousseau's use of this concept, since it encompasses both man's progressivist urge and also the seeds of his eventual decline. The irony is heightened by the fact that the original stimulus in the self-perfecting process is not Reason but the passions: "c'est par leur

activité que notre raison se perfectionne" (p. 48). The most irrational and egoistic impulses attended the birth of human progress.

Mendelssohn, however, overlooks such irony: "O! was für siegreiche Waffen hat er durch dieses Eingeständnis seinen Gegnern in die Hände gegeben! Der Wilde hat ein Bestreben, sich vollkommener zu machen;" and he proceeds to state the Leibnizian view of a harmonious human development in accordance with "dem großen Zweck der Schöpfung."

The limitations of Mendelssohn's critical perspective show themselves as soon as he leaves philosophical terrain and applies himself to a work of fiction. His lengthy review of the Nouvelle Héloïse in the Briefe, die neuste Litteratur betreffend, the review that he and Lessing together with Christoph Nicolai had founded in 1759, was in response to the great interest aroused by the work in Germany following the exceedingly slipshod translation by Johann Gottfried Gellius.<sup>10</sup> In view of this interest the Briefe broke with their customary practice of reviewing only German Literature, publishing Mendelssohn's article from the 4 to 25 July (letters 166-71).<sup>11</sup> Rousseau's novel is criticized for its construction, the numerous digressions on diverse topics unrelated to the plot; for its lack of dialogue; for its failure to create individual characters who define themselves through word and action. Above all it lacks "die ächte Sprache der Leidenschaften, welche in dem Herzen des Lesers ein sympathisches Feuer anzündet, und nicht eher schwärmt, als bis die Einbildungskraft des Lesers vorbereitet ist, mit zu schwärmen . . ." (p. 261). This appraisal of the most emotional piece of European literature prior to Goethe's Werther

is unfortunate, and still more so is its conclusion, which sees Rousseau as an inferior novelist to Richardson.

In his insistence on a concise and logical structure, moderation of the emotive content, self-characterization instead of author-intrusion, Mendelssohn seeks to apply the poetics of the Aufklärung the demand for "Wahrscheinlichkeit." The genre on which these poetics are founded is the drama. It is notable that Lessing still considers Mendelssohn's criticism to be valid some six years later, when discussing the Viennese dramatist Franz Heufeld's stage-adaptation of Rousseau's novel (Julië, oder Wettstreit der Pflicht und Liebe, 1766) in the Hamburgische Dramaturgie. Heufeld would have been better advised to read Mendelssohn's review before embarking on his work.<sup>12</sup> Clearly the task of interpreting Rousseau's novel in an open and unprejudiced manner was greatly hindered by the lack of an independent poetics of the novel in the Aufklärung.<sup>13</sup> (Nor did Blanckenburg's Versuch über den Roman of 1774, with its preference for English models, do anything to remove the "Unwahrscheinlichkeit" stigma from the Héloïse.<sup>14</sup>)

Of interest in relation to Lenz's comments on Rousseau's novel is Mendelssohn's criticism of the character of Julie: "Sie philosophiert unaufhörlich, nicht wie eine Schülerin des Saint-Preux, sondern wie ein Rousseau . . ." (p. 267). Lenz, as we will see, regrets the intrusion of Rousseau's "Perücke" into the sphere of characterization (WS, I, 352).

Foolish and morally suspect is the behaviour of the two main characters. Only the enlightened Wolmar receives praise for injecting reason and moderation into their conduct (pp. 267-68). However, the gulf that separates the Aufklärung from the next generation reveals itself above all in their respective reactions to Rousseau's language:

Was soll ich aber zu der Affectensprache des Hrn. Rousseau sagen? Sie wird von allen Seiten mit der größten Lobeserhebung aufgenommen; man nennt sie erhaben, begeistert, gottlich. Und ich -- zu meiner Schande muß ich es gestehen, ich finde sie spitzfindig, affectirt und voller Schwulst. Hr. Rousseau, der zum Entzucken schön schreibt, so oft er die Sprache der begeisterten Vernunft zu reden hat, scheint über die Natur der Leidenschaften räsonnirt, sie selbst aber niemals gefühlt zu haben; daher es ihm denn so schwer wird, ihre ächte Sprache zu reden. Er will sie durch Ausrufungen und Hyperbeln in einen Zustand von Empfindung zwingen, welche ihm durch die Erfahrung nicht bekannt genug sind; und dieser Versuch muß allemal mißlingen. ... Was auf Empfindung Anspruch macht, muß entweder Empfindungen erregen, oder es wird abgeschmackt.

(p. 267-77)

That Rousseau strove for naturalness and sincerity in expressing the pathos of love is attested by the "Entretien sur les romans" in his preface to the work. There is conscious rejection of the fashionable novel of urbane manners and superficial passion. "Une lettre que



l'amour a réellement dictée, une lettre d'un amant vraiment passionné, sera lâche, diffuse, toute en longueurs, en désordre, en répétitions. Son cœur, plein d'un sentiment qui déborde, redit toujours la même chose, et n'a jamais achevé de dire, comme une source vive qui coule sans cesse et ne s'épuise jamais."<sup>15</sup>

Repetition and disorder in the name of nature are stylistic features which the Sturm und Drang was to discover and use to the extreme. The enlightenment critic is loathe to abandon the yard-sticks of clarity and moderation in language: "wahre Zärtlichkeit ist zu schüchtern, mit Worten zu prahlen und ihren Überfluß auszukramen" (p. 274). This failure to perceive as the essentially new contribution of Rousseau to the consciousness of the age an emotion infinitely deeper than "Zärtlichkeit," underlines the dated character of Mendelssohn's otherwise conscientious (and by no means implacably hostile) criticism.

A reply was not long in coming. Johann Georg Hamann, the "Magus im Norden" who was to exercise an important influence on the Sturm und Drang, published the same year his defence of Rousseau's novel, ABAEIARDI VIRBII: Chimärische Einfälle über den zehnten Theil der Briefe die Neueste Litteratur betreffend.<sup>16</sup> Mendelssohn's reply in the twelfth part of the Briefe (22-29 October 1762) is no match for Hamann's elaborate irony.<sup>17</sup>

Hamann seems to have admired Rousseau, but not excessively.<sup>18</sup> Despite his doctrines Rousseau preserves the rationalist and logical strain of the French Enlightenment, whereas Hamann's "Vernunft des Unbewußten" is mystical in character.<sup>19</sup> Hamann's contribution to the

history of German Rousseauism in the eighteenth century is mainly two-fold: his defence of the Nouvelle Héloïse and his interest in Henry Fuseli's defence of Rousseau (see below.) Even in the case of the Chimärische Einfälle he declared: "Es ist meine Absicht gar nicht gewesen, Rousseau zu vertheidigen-- sondern die Schwäche der Kritik mit Anstand und Stärke aufzudecken."<sup>20</sup> But, as Unger points out (p. 354), Hamann wrote this several months later when the novel itself was no longer fresh in his mind; an earlier letter to Lindner indicates that he was in fact very impressed with it at the time of reading and considered it far superior to Richardson.<sup>21</sup>

At the beginning of his article Hamann indicates that, whatever his merits as a novelist, he does not consider Rousseau deserving of the name of philosopher, -- thereby taking a precisely opposite stand to that of Mendelssohn and Lessing. Going to the heart of the weakness in Mendelssohn's criticism, he reflects: "Solte es nicht, wenigstens einen charakterischen Unterscheid, zwischen dem Romanhaften und Dramatischen geben? Solte dieser Unterscheid nicht in der Fabel selbst und den Hauptpersonen abstechen? Ist es Unwissenheit oder Kunst, diesen Unterscheid gänzlich aus den Augen zu setzen und aufzuheben?" (p. 160) Likewise on the question of plausibility, which had so bothered Mendelssohn's (and later Lessing's) critical conscience: "Ich frage weiter: ob es mit der ästhetischen Wahrscheinlichkeit im Grunde besser aussehen mag als der poetischen Gerechtigkeit." (p. 161) The notion that a work of literature has its own meaning and inner logic is an important aesthetic advance and anticipates the poetics

of Romanticism. Hamann also defends the hero, St. Preux, whom Mendelssohn had referred to ironically as the "Weltweise" on account of his philosophical pretensions; to Hamann, on the contrary, he represents true philosophy, the awareness of the great forces of love and death, above all one which has not been acquired within the remote confines of the academies:

Es ist in der That schwer sich von einem jungen Gelehrten, der ein halber Savoyard zu sein scheint, einen klugen Begriff machen zu können, wenn man unter lauter Sternen der ersten Große zu wandeln gewohnt ist; die auf hohen Schulen und Akademien der Wissenschaften als ein groß Licht den Tag, als ein klein Licht aber die Nacht regieren. Der so genannte St. Preux scheint unterdessen am Fuß der Alpen eben so füglich ein Philosoph genannt werden zu können, als der Knabe Descartes von seinem Vater; jedoch ich kenne Philosophen, die selbst den alten Descartes ungeachtet seiner Verdienste um den heutigen Weg zu philosophiren, aus bloßer christlicher Liebe in ihrer Gesellschaft dulden." (p. 162)

Most significant perhaps, this defence of the unsophisticated is extended to the language of passion. "Ist es ... anständig, daß Sie, die Blumen vollüstiger Beredsamkeit ihrer Vergänglichkeit wegen mit so sprödem Ekel ansehen, und niedrigen Liebhabern in einem Thal der Alpen, zumuthen wollen, ihre Empfindungen in Friedrichsdor oder Pfund Sterling umzusetzen?" (p. 163) The argument amounts to a plea

for freedom in art, freedom from the pedantic restrictions imposed by self-appointed legislators such as "der ästhetische Moses":

"Wie wollen Sie den erstgebornen Affect der menschlichen Seele dem Joch der Beschneidung unterwerfen? Kannst du mit ihm spielen wie mit einem Vogel oder ihn deinen Regeln binden?" (p.164)

A large number of popular-philosophical writings on education by such authors as Johann Bernhard Basedow, Johann Heinrich Campe, Christian Salzmann, to name the better-known, found avid readers in middle-class homes during the remainder of the century, and all show varying degrees of indebtedness, in some cases down to the titles, to Rousseau's Emile.<sup>22</sup> The "Profession de foi" attracted the attention, shortly after its appearance, of Justus Möser, whose Schreiben an den Herrn Vicar in Savoyen, abzugeben bey Herrn Johann Jacob Rousseau was written in 1762.<sup>23</sup> Although Moser's writings contributed to the atmosphere of cultural rejuvenation which made the later Sturm und Drang so receptive to Rousseau's philosophy,<sup>24</sup> the Schreiben continues the critical tradition of the Aufklärung. Rousseau's religion is felt to be too esoteric, beyond the pale for the masses, for whom a well-defined revealed religion is indispensable for advancing "die Glückseligkeit der Menschen und die Vollkommenheit des Ganzen" (p. 129). The influence of a eudemonistic approach to theology and ethics is apparent.

The most important writer of the late Aufklärung, or rather its urbane "aristocratic wing," the Rococo, is Christoph Martin Wieland. His interest in Rousseau, which may have originated from his friendship

with Julie von Bondeli (one of Rousseau's correspondents), is well attested.<sup>25</sup> In particular his widely read popular philosophical

Beyträge zur geheimen Geschichte des menschlichen Verstandes und Herzens (1770) contain two discourses entitled "Betrachtungen über J.J. Rousseaus ursprünglichen Zustand des Menschen" and "Über die von J.J. Rousseau vorgeschlagenen Versuche den wahren Stand der Natur zu entdecken, nebst einem Traumgespräch mit Prometheus."<sup>26</sup>

The stated aim of the Beyträge is the vindication of modern, civilized man. Accordingly, Rousseau's theory of the natural man is taken in the literal sense. Rousseau is depicted as a solitary, irascible misanthropist, exhorting his fellow men to abandon the comforts of civilization and to return to the forests, "zu den Orang-Utangs und den übrigen Affen . . ." This satirical misrepresentation of Rousseau (which he himself sought to refute on numerous occasions) is not new. The obvious model is Voltaire.<sup>27</sup> Wieland postulates an imaginary colony of Indians left in isolation from the influences of civilization and asserts that they would instinctively begin to acquire the knowledge and institutions of civilized man. "~~Die Thorheit des Philosophen Jean-Jaques~~, so wenig Ehre sie der Menschheit macht, ist doch am Ende weiter nichts als lächerlich" (p.200).

Wieland, more than any other, was responsible for perpetuating the Voltairean image of Rousseau's historical philosophy in Germany.<sup>28</sup> One of Bodmer's correspondents wrote in 1773: "Dem Rousseau hat es viel

geschadet, daß Wieland wider ihn ist."<sup>29</sup> This can hardly have endeared Wieland to the Rousseau enthusiasts in the incipient Sturm und Drang, to which his "imported" sensual aestheticism was anathema.<sup>30</sup> It is also difficult to understand the justification for such an attack, since by this time, following the publication of the Nouvelle Héloïse and Emile, Rousseau had obviously moved considerably beyond the stage of the early discourses.

In point of fact it is evident that Wieland is using Rousseau as a convenient spring-board for his own humanistic beliefs. For him social man is the only creature worthy of philosophical concern (p. 176). He even denies primitive man (viewed from a synchronic rather than a diachronic perspective, as an inferior species) the perfectability accorded him by Rousseau, Lessing and Mendelssohn.<sup>31</sup> Civilized man is natural man and as such is an object of beauty. The moral asceticism that Wieland discerns in Rousseau constitutes an admission that the aesthetic and the ethical are irreconcilable, an untenable belief for this precursor of classicism. Here is the beginning of a trend in the German attitude to Rousseau which culminates in the aesthetic writings of Friedrich Schiller.

The socio-political undercurrent of Rousseau's writings, the initial cause of his hostility towards modern society eludes Wieland's critical perspective as surely as that of Mendelssohn. The impression of frivolous detachment made upon his adversaries in the Sturm und Drang resulted from this disinclination to become involved with immediate social realities.

The egalitarian theories contained in the Contrat social he implicitly rejects in his vindication of monarchy, Über das göttliche Recht der Obrigkeit (1777).

Scorn for Rousseau as a philosopher is off-set by admiration of the novelist. Wieland considered the Nouvelle Héloïse "ein göttliches Buch" (letter to Jacobi, 2 December 1771). In his own novel Geschichte des Agathon (1766-67) he makes a number of allusions to Rousseau. In particular the depiction of love in the first part of Héloïse, with its vision of a sensual and spiritual communion, corresponds closely to Wieland's own search for a synthesis of values. It is an admiration tinged with irony. The depiction of a full-blooded passion by the "stoical" Rousseau is seen as a vindication of nature in one who had distorted her whilst taking her name. Thus the well-known letter from St. Preux to Julie following their first tryst (part I, no. 55 -- not 45, as Wieland states) is seen as a manifesto of a harmonious ideal of love that transcends the extremes of sensualist and ascetic alike:

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So werden doch nicht wenige mit uns einstimmig seyn, daß  
 ein Liebhaber, der selbst eine Seele hat, im Besitz der  
 schönsten Statue von Fleisch und Blut, die man nur immer  
 finden kan, selbst jene von den neuern Epicuräern so hoch  
 gepriesene Wollust nur in einem sehr unvollkommenen Grade  
 erfahren würde; und daß diese allein von der Empfindung  
 des Herzens jenen wunderbaren Reiz erhalte, welcher immer  
 für unaussprechlich gehalten worden ist, biß Rousseau, der  
 Stoiker, sich herabgelassen, sie in dem fünf und vierzigsten

der Briefe der neuen Heloise, in einer Vollkommenheit zu schildern, welche sehr deutlich beweist, was für eine begeisterte Kraft die bloße halberloschne Erinnerung an die Erfahrungen seiner glücklichen Jugend über die Seele des Helvetischen Epictets ausgeübt haben müsse. Ohne Zweifel sind es Liebhaber von dieser Art, Saint-Preux' und Agathons, welchen es zukömmt, über die berührte Streitfrage einen entscheidenden Ausspruch zu thun ...<sup>32</sup>

Wieland also remarks upon an irony of Rousseau's novel of which the author himself was aware, as can be seen from his first preface:<sup>33</sup> the creation of a dangerously seductive novel by one who warns against the dangers of novel-reading on young ladies (p. 225). This particular Achilles heel was frequently exploited by Rousseau's critics; we will find further references to it in Lenz's writings.

## 2. Rousseau-mania in the Sturm und Drang

The sporadic attention Rousseau received among writers of the German Aufklärung hardly amounts to a recognition of his epoch-making importance. The precise factors leading to what Korff describes as the "Durchbruch des Rousseauismus im deutschen Geist" around 1770 are of a complex cultural and sociological nature. Historically, the feud between Rousseau and Hume in 1766 cannot be discounted as the incident that first drew wide attention to Rousseau the man and his exceptional personality. The persecutions he suffered in the wake of Emile's appearance served to foster the image of a martyr for truth, thus contributing a heroic



dimension of considerable importance for the development of the German Rousseau-cult.

In philosophy, Rousseau's successful penetration of the metaphysically dominated German intellectual sphere must be attributed above all to his discovery by Immanuel Kant. Rousseau represented to the latter nothing less than the Newton of modern humanism and ethics.<sup>34</sup> Kant saw beyond the overstated primitivism of the discourses to the essential meaning of Rousseau's philosophy: its recognition of the limits of reason in formulating ethical concepts;<sup>35</sup> in particular the recognition that the ends of philosophical enquiry relate to a common human experience. In this context he avowed a profound indebtedness to Rousseau for having humbled his intellect:

Ich bin selbst aus Neigung ein Forscher. Ich fühle den ganzen Durst nach Erkenntnis und die gierige Unruhe, darin weiterzukommen, oder auch die Zufriedenheit bei jedem Fortschritte. Es war eine Zeit, da ich glaubte, dies alles könnte die Ehre der Menschheit machen, und ich verachtete den Pöbel, der von nichts weiß. Rousseau hat mich zurecht gebracht. Dieser verblendende Vorzug verschwindet, ich lerne die Menschen ehren und würde mich viel unnützer finden als die gemeinen Arbeiter, wenn ich nicht glaubte, daß diese Betrachtung allem übrigen einen Wert erteilen könne, die Rechte der Menschheit wieder herzustellen.<sup>36</sup>

Among Kant's pupils during this formative ("pre-critical") period was Herder. So too, shortly after, was Lenz. Herder wrote in a tribute to Kant many years later: "Mit eben dem Geist, mit dem er Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten, Crusius, Hume prüfte und die Naturgesetze Keplers, Newtons, der Physiker verfolgte, nahm er auch die damals erscheinenden Schriften Rousseaus, seinen Emile und Heloise, sowie jede ihm bekanntgewordene Naturentdeckung auf, würdigte sie und kam immer zurück auf unbefangene Kenntnis der Natur und auf moralischen Wert des Menschen" (Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität, 1795).<sup>37</sup>

Herder, whom Korff describes as "der deutsche Rousseau,"<sup>38</sup> was by no means a swift convert. The poem referred to in the preceding chapter (n.3), written in the first flush of the enthusiasm that Kant inspired (Herder was at Königsberg from 1762 to 1764), he dismissed a few years later as "das Aufstoßen eines von Rousseau'schen Schriften überladenen Magens."<sup>39</sup> He too encountered an obstacle in the idea of the second discourse: if man was by nature good what had induced him to abandon that state in the first place? "Ich erinnere mich, einmal Kant, den großen Schuler des Rousseau, hierüber befragt zu haben: er antwortete aber, wie Onkel Tobias Shandy."<sup>40</sup> In the same letter to Hamann Herder criticizes Rousseau's love of paradox. Irritation with the form in which Rousseau clothes his thought is still evident in the Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769, an important turning-point in Herder's life. Rousseau is included in the sweeping condemnation of all French intellectuals: "bei Rousseau muß alles die Wendung des Paradoxen annehmen, die ihn verdirbt, die ihn verführt, die ihn gemeine Sachen neu, kleine

groß, wahre unwahr, unwahre wahr machen lehrt."<sup>41</sup> Yet it is precisely in the Journal that we observe the emergence of a spirit of revolt against prevailing orthodoxies that is very akin to Rousseau's. Indeed, in one of his reformist visions Herder expresses the hope, "den menschlich wilden Emil des Rousseau zum Nationalkinde Lieflands zu machen . . . "<sup>42</sup> Precisely because of their close identity in perception and intent, which Herder acknowledged even in 1765 in his essay Wie die Philosophie zum Besten des Volkes allgemeiner und nützlicher werden kann,<sup>43</sup> Herder may have sensed the need to assert his intellectual independence in this vital phase of his development.<sup>44</sup> In the Reisejournal Herder grapples with his organic view of human cultural evolution, seeking to give each epoch and culture its proper place in the totality of the human spirit. The egocentric view of history whereby the present age represents the flowering of human development out of darkness and error, is replaced by a historical relativism of immeasurable significance for the later works on poetry and art. Rousseau's cultural pessimism is considered to be as harmful to this view as the unwarranted complacency of the dogmatists: "Das Menschliche Geschlecht hat in allen seinen Zeitaltern, nur in jedem auf andre Art, Glückseligkeit zur Summe; wir, in dem unsrigen, schweiften aus, wenn wir wie Rousseau Zeiten preisen, die nicht mehr sind, und nicht gewesen sind; wenn wir aus diesen zu unserem Mißvergnügen, Romanbilder schaffen und uns wegwerfen, um uns nicht selbst zu genießen" (p. 364).

Scholars of Herder now accept that his attitude to Rousseau undergoes a significant change towards a much more positive acceptance, beginning with his period in Strasbourg.<sup>45</sup> He rereads his works, seeks to encourage a similar interest in his fiancée Caroline Flachsland and must

Be viewed as one of the major direct sources of the Rousseauism of the Strasbourg Sturm und Drang.<sup>46</sup> The change in attitude is reflected in Herder's subsequent philosophical writings. Rousseau's glorification of the patriarchal age is echoed in ecstatic tones: "Das Hirtenleben im schönsten Klima der Welt, wo die freiwillige Natur den einfachsten Bedürfnissen so zuvor oder zu Hülfe kommt, die ruhige und zugleich wandernde Lebensart der väterlichen Patriarchenhütte, mit allem, was sie gibt, und dem Auge entziehet, der damalige Kreis Menschlicher Bedürfnisse, Beschäftigungen und Vergnügen . . . Gott' welch ein Zustand zu Bildung der Natur in den einfachsten, notwendigsten, angenehmsten Neigungen."<sup>47</sup> The monumental Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1784 ff.) represents a synthesis of Herder's life-long efforts to arrive at a new picture of humanity and its historical development. The species is seen in a continuing process of striving towards the goal of humanity, and in the latter sense Rousseau has much to offer in the way of pleas for social tolerance or political and moral freedom.<sup>48</sup> Echoes of Rousseau intrude to show the consciousness of disparities between the ideal and the manifold injustices that hinder this, however temporary: for example the view that the transition from the nomadic to the agricultural society "notwendig jedem furchterlichen Despotismus den Weg geöffnet habe, welcher, da er jeden auf seinem Acker zu finden wußte, zuletzt einem jeden vorschrieb, was er auf diesem Stuck Erde allein thun und sein sollte."<sup>49</sup>

Herder's view of history advances beyond the somewhat naive teleological concepts of the Enlightenment (e.g. Lessing). History is seen in terms of conflicts and choices, with error often preceding truth, in a way that points forward to the nineteenth century. Rousseau's role in imparting a consciousness of reality (the price that man has had to pay in happiness and liberty to achieve his progress) into this historical philosophy is not inconsiderable.

Light has been thrown more recently on a possible factor in Herder's renewed interest in Rousseau in 1771. A letter to J.H. Merck of that year quotes extensively from an English appreciation of Rousseau's writings which Karl Guthke has identified as an essay entitled Remarks on the Writings and Conduct of J.J. Rousseau which appeared anonymously in London in 1767. Its author was the emigrant Swiss painter, Johann Heinrich Füssli (Henry Fuseli by his adopted name).<sup>50</sup> Herder quotes approvingly the description of Rousseau as "a man in the theory, a child in the practice of life:"<sup>51</sup> ". . . mit diesen Worten wird ja gerade Rousseau als Philosoph besonders anerkannt, eine erstaunliche Tatsache, wenn man bedenkt, daß Herder vor kurzem gerade von dem Philosophen nicht weit genug abrücken konnte" (Wolff, p. 782).

The Remarks are ostensibly a defence of Rousseau's conduct in his quarrel with Hume, but they proceed quickly to a review of all his writings to date and constitute a defence of these which shows a degree of insight hitherto unknown. They are, as Guthke states, the first full-length study of Rousseau by a German-speaking writer. Moreover, Füssli

has since come to be regarded as an artist and writer very much akin to the Sturm und Drang. The Remarks, although virtually ignored in England, did not escape the attention of Hamann. Believing the author to be Lawrence Sterne, he reviewed the essay in three successive numbers of the Königsberg Gelehrte und Politische Zeitungen (53 to 55, 3 to 10 July, 1767).<sup>52</sup> His letter to Herder, of 29 July 1767 draws attention to this article.<sup>53</sup>

Beneath the chaotic, often barely intelligible style, Füssli demonstrates his grasp of the fundamental truth that Rousseau's primitivist cult of nature is not incompatible with modern civilized existence. Of the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts he claims (truthfully, although no one had stated it hitherto) that Rousseau has not proposed abolishing learning and culture in the modern world, but had tried to demonstrate how their abuse had led to moral and social corruption. Füssli's own analysis of the malady of present-day culture sees it as a problem of "literature made easy," to which genius alone should have access. "The rudiments of science should never have been levelled with those whom nature made, to crawl . . ." (pp. 11 f., 72).<sup>54</sup> His appreciation of Rousseau's philosophical style, which unites reason and the convictions of the heart with such warmth and **inca ndescence**, could be taken as a fair expression of the enthusiasm felt by the Sturm und Drang: ". . . the stile glows so genially, palpitates so warmly, faints away so pallid, or mixes so meltingly with your heart -- that you cry out, 'There is more than head, art, memory -- there is truth, sentiment, soul!' Such is the language of genius; and do you think it employs another, when

virtue is the theme?" (pp. 49 f., 80: section on Emile). Hamann's interest may be explained by such passages.

The chapter on the Lettre sur les Spectacles shows how Rousseau's anti-theatre views need not necessarily pose an obstacle to his overall appreciation, even where those views are not shared, but in addition to that, Füssli gives his own impressions on the theatre, particularly in an extended footnote, which Mason justly regards as a Sturm und Drang document in its own right.<sup>55</sup> He breaks entirely with seeing any positive moral function in theatre, since:

There is, in tragedy chiefly, such a disparity between the spectator's and hero's circumstances, that it requires the most painful abstraction to snatch one useful lesson from all the flatulency of his passion. The truth is, the most striking play may be written without any good tendency at all; hold the mirror up to life, give action, draw characters, and your play is good.... Your best comedies are worst on the side of morals.... There are besides, frailties, passions which will bribe the heart, in spite of their appendage of evils: where the blood judges, pain, horror, death will vanish in the dazzling light of pleasure. (pp. 74 ff., 86 f.)

Here is an uncompromising, indeed adulatory, admirer of Rousseau, in whom at the same time the pulsating love and excitement engendered by the theatre is evident; nor can one mistake the Shakespearean ring in

this call for life, action, characters and passion, free of the strait-jacket of any illusory moral purpose. He denies that the theatre does harm, and it may even do good in a negative kind of way: "'Tis a harmless entertainment in comparison with those which the greatest number might pursue during the hours of a play. 'Tis better to see Sir John Brute than to act him in the streets: 'tis pleasure instead of debauchery." But to make moral improvement the main purpose of the stage is to mistake its fundamental nature.

The review of Rousseau's writings concludes with a general assessment (part of which Herder quotes). It states the underlying unity of all his works, the core of his philosophy; beyond that, it takes a compassionate look at the man and sees, not a misanthropist, misguided fanatic or figure of ridicule, but one who is above all else good:

He had a clearness and precision of ideas which furnished him with expressions of almost intuitive justness; he had not read so much as meditated; his talent was to reduce a book to one idea, to encompass the sphere of possibilities, and to compare them with existence. Master of nature's boldest strokes, and all its simplicity, he was luxuriant, yet modest, and true to virtue, though courted by the passions. His delicacy of mind was such, that he would immediately discover the most remote or disguised resemblance, or deviation of moral principles. Familiar with man in his different states, he knew his springs of activity, his rights, his strength, his foibles. He had besides,



one peculiar advantage over the rest of those who call themselves wise, that, free of systems, partisans, and sects, he steered right onward, seized the good and the true with that strength and elegance of fancy, that effusion of sentiments which first forced him to write. Take all together, and you have an elegant and nervous writer, the purest moralist, the most penetrating politician -- and a good man. (pp. 93 ff., 90 f.)

This positive and undoubtedly fruitful tribute to Rousseau stands appropriately at the threshold of the period which would see the Genevan attain the height of his prestige in Germany.

Rousseau-mania in the Sturm und Drang resulted from the French philosopher's ability to answer the needs and aspirations of its mental climate. An important formative writer here was Justus Möser, whose essays for the Osnabrück Intelligenzblätter (founded 1766), later published in the Patriotische Phantasien (1774-78), did much to inculcate a sense of the decadence of Rococo culture.<sup>57</sup> Möser, who in Goethe's assessment, "hatte den größten Einfluß auf eine Jugend, die auch etwas Tüchtiges wollte, und im Begriff stand, es zu erfassen,"<sup>58</sup> assailed the evils of city-life, and of wealth and education, and praised the nobility of the ancient Germanic tribes, themes to be encountered again in Rousseau's writings. Significantly it is Rousseau, rather than the Gessner of the Rococo idyll, whom the early Sturm und Drang writer Heinrich Gerstenberg acknowledges in connection with his discovery of runic poetry (Ossian): the bardic age now appears heroic rather than

barbaric and uncultured.<sup>59</sup>

This seething mental climate, composed of many confused and confusing trends, undoubtedly led to excesses in the case of the Rousseau-cult. The Darmstadt circle known as "Die Empfindsamen," a club for literary aesthetes led by Franz Michael Leuchsenring, which included among its members Merck and Caroline Flachsland (Herder's fiancée), was given to acting out the more sentimental and lachrymose parts of the Nouvelle Héloïse. This is of interest in connection with Lenz's Der Hofmeister. Goethe, during his time in Frankfurt, participated in the nature cult that grew up in Rousseau's name, engaging in such practices as bathing in cold water and eating natural foods. Such excesses are satirized in Satyros oder der vergötterte Waldteufel (1773). Dichtung und Wahrheit records that: "diese und andere Torheiten, in Gefolg von mißverstandenen Anregungen Rousseaus, würden uns, wie man versprach, der Natur näher führen und uns aus dem Verderbnisse der Sitten führen." <sup>60</sup>

Rousseau's meaning for Goethe has always been a matter of much speculation.<sup>61</sup> The Strasbourg Tagebuch suggests a serious interest in Rousseau's philosophy at this time. Significant not only for showing the extent of this interest, but also for indicating how Goethe later viewed himself in relation to Rousseau on the question of nature and art, is the discussion in Dichtung und Wahrheit on Rousseau's "Scene lyrique" Pygmalion (1762: published 1770).<sup>62</sup> This intense union of

monologue and music conveys in a single powerful scene a spiritual and sensual yearning that ends with the artist embracing the beauty he has created. The Pygmalion symbol, undoubtedly strengthened by Rousseau's popular play,<sup>63</sup> came to represent immediacy of feeling to the Sturm und Drang:<sup>64</sup> ~~Lenz also wrote a poem on the theme.~~ The classical Goethe writes in retrospect: "diese wunderliche Produktion schwankt gleichfalls zwischen Natur und Kunst, mit dem falschen Bestreben, diese in jene aufzulösen. Wir sehen einen Künstler, der das Vollkommenste geleistet hat, und doch nicht Befriedigung darin findet, seine Idee außer sich, kunstgemäß dargestellt und ihr ein höheres Leben verliehen zu haben; nein, sie soll auch in das irdische Leben zu ihm herabgezogen werden. Er will das Höchste was Geist und Tat hervorgebracht, durch den gemeinsten Akt der Sinnlichkeit zerstören." <sup>65</sup>

Rousseau's radical spirit is evident in Goethe's Sturm und Drang productions, Götz and, above all, Werther. Comparisons between the two Briefroman and their sensitive heroes were frequently drawn.<sup>66</sup> This popular literary speculation will prove relevant to the study of Lenz's criticism of Goethe's novel. It is possible even to draw comparisons between the Nouvelle Héloïse and the later Die Wahlverwandschaften, in which the theme of resignation predominates.

Unlike Schiller, whose response to Rousseau we must now consider, Goethe possessed an openness of mind enabling him to absorb Rousseau's visions of man and nature. They take their place in an endless, creative —

process of defining and redefining self and world, a process which in the last resort is hidden from scrutiny. Statements such as Kommerell's serve to hedge Goethe's thought behind philosophical lines of demarcation and indicate merely that negative attitude towards Rousseau learned from Schiller: "Goethe 'kehrt nie zur Natur zurück', denn er hat und ist sie und braucht außer sich nie mehr zu suchen, als er in sich finden kann."<sup>67</sup>

A more positive, if general, appraisal of the significance of Goethe's early acquaintance with the writings of Rousseau is that of E.M. Butler, who sees in Goethe a mind that

was aware of a profound dissonance as soon as he had ears to hear. Life, or nature as he called it, appeared to him to the full as satisfying as to Homer, true and justified in itself; not so the world of men. This dualistic point of view, the hall-mark of modern times, represents the paradox with which Rousseau had challenged the age and which found an immediate echo in the dualism of Goethe's own nature, in itself a symptom of the times. It gives to Werther and the Urfaust their emotional tension and dynamic power; and it was the real reason why Werther swept a whole generation off its feet and inaugurated a new kind of literature; for it was the first aesthetic presentation of a paradox which seemed far truer than Homer's or Shakespeare's visions of life.<sup>68</sup>

Conversely, one looks in vain for evidence of a more specific commitment to social reform in the writings and actions of the mature

Goethe, autocrat and devoted servant of a despotism he firmly believed to be benevolent. Rousseau's iconoclastic attitude towards the prevailing structure of European society found little response from one who declared: "Es war nie meine Art, gegen Institute zu eifern, das schien mir stets Überhebung, und es mag sein, daß ich zu früh höflich wurde."<sup>69</sup>

### 3. Aftermath: the problem of "paix"

The appearance, beginning in 1781, of Rousseau's Confessions revealed the subjective basis of his thought and actions to a degree hitherto unsuspected, and with a frankness that appalled some of his former admirers.<sup>70</sup> A revealing passage describing his temperament indicates the extent to which all his endeavours represent so many strenuous and often unwilling sorties from a serene inner state of repose: the purpose of his autobiography is to reveal to his fellow men that "naturel ardent, mais faible, moins prompt encore à entreprendre que facile à décourager, sortant du repos par secousses, mais y rentrant par lassitude et par goût . . ."<sup>71</sup> The search of peace, the inclination to flee the world when the dissonances of society become oppressive beyond endurance, the discovery of a more perfect world within himself, -- these are the characteristics of the hermit, who figures so prominently in Sturm und Drang literature. There can be no doubt that Rousseau's alleged "back to Nature" call was often interpreted in this sense. Rousseau, moreover, appeared to embrace such an existential option following his flight to the island of St. Pierre after the endless bitter

controversies unleashed by his writings. To the Sturm und Drang, Rousseau's idyllic withdrawal from the world represented a form of heroism, as is suggested by the following article from the Strasbourg Der Bürgerfreund (an important organ of the movement, with which Lenz was for a time associated) for "4. Heimonat 1777:" "Lebt doch Rousseau selbst nun ruhig, und ernährt sich vom Notenabschreiben! Wer einmal gethan hat, was Rousseau gethan hat, wer so viel zur Aufklärung, zur Besserung des Menschen beygetragen, so viele und harte Verfolgungen ausgestanden, wer mit seiner Gesundheit so viel zu kämpfen hat, wie Rousseau -- der habe Muth genug Noten zu schreiben -- wir wollen ihn lossprechen" (I, i, 408).

What precisely was the nature of the peace that Rousseau both desired and needed so passionately? Where his admirers regard it as a merited reward for a life-time of service to humanity, to others it is an unworthy emotion smacking of cowardice. It is mainly the latter perspective that prevails in German Classicism's "final reckoning" with Rousseau and Rousseauism in the aesthetic writings of Friedrich Schiller.

The youthful Schiller who wrote the passionate attack against despotism, Die Räuber, probably had, contrary to earlier belief, no more than the vaguest knowledge of Rousseau's writings.<sup>72</sup> Where he falls back upon Rousseau in his Selbstrezension of 1782 he draws upon indirect sources, notably H.P. Sturz's Denkwürdigkeiten;<sup>73</sup> it is this source which drew him to the subject matter of the Fiesko.<sup>74</sup> Schiller's interest in Rousseau at this stage was inspired primarily by his reputation

which, in the wake of Friedrich Jacobi's panegyric on the death of Rousseau in 1778, was that of a heroic martyr and fighter against bigotry and oppression.<sup>75</sup> Schiller's ode "An Rousseau" was undoubtedly inspired by this version of the incipient "Rousseau-legend."

The mature Schiller was by no means impervious to the poetic and moral beauty of Rousseau's writings, in particular the Nouvelle Héloïse. Julie, whom her creator depicts as a "belle-âme," acquires that moral dignity that Schiller attributes to the "schöne Seele."<sup>76</sup> From this work he chose the motto for the Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen (1795): "Si c'est la raison qui fait l'homme, c'est le sentiment qui le conduit." Beyond this, however, Schiller's enunciation of his idealistic cultural philosophy contains few tributes to Rousseau.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Schiller's introduction to Rousseau's writings was by way of the critique of the theatre, the Lettre sur les Spectacles. That this incursion into the cultural sphere disturbed his image of Rousseau somewhat is suggested by the Mannheim lecture of 1784 Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet, which laments: "Der harteste Angriff, den sie [die Schaubühne] erleiden mußte, geschah von einer Seite, wo er nicht zu erwarten war."<sup>77</sup> Both this and the earlier essay Über das gegenwärtige deutsche Theater (1782) may be understood in part as an attempt to refute Rousseau.

It is evident that Rousseau's early discourses are once again drawn into the fray in the Ästhetische Erziehung, which refers ironically to certain "denkende Köpfe:" "Sie denken nicht ganz so schlimm von jener Wildheit, die man den ungebildeten Völkern zum Vorwurf macht, und nicht ganz so vortheilhaft von dieser Verfeinerung, die man an den gebildeten preist."<sup>78</sup> Culture is central to Schiller's idealism. If through culture man lost his innocence it is through culture alone that he will regain his freedom, by achieving that sublime state of humanity in which reason and the senses unite in perfect harmony. Rousseau hovers in the background as an antagonist, as yet unnamed, for whom harmony is achieved by a lowering of the sights, by carefully avoiding the grounds for tension. "Totalität bedeutete für Rousseau grundsätzlich den Begriff nur empirischer Einheit und Spannungslosigkeit, hinter der der Abgrund metaphysischer Dualität, wie ihn die Kulturentwicklung enthüllt, lauert, für Schiller, die in der absoluten Identität gegründete Einheitsfunktion unseres Wesens, die sich an den empirischen Trennungen der Kulturentwicklung bewährt."<sup>79</sup> This philosophical antagonism towards Rousseau culminates in the complementary essay Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung (1795), which contains a passage that has done more to influence German criticism of Rousseau (not least in this century) in an unfavorable direction than any other piece of writing. Rousseau is singled out as a supreme example of the modern sentimental, or "elegiac," poet, yearning for a hypothetical golden age to compensate for his inability, or disinclination, to participate in the great challenge of the present, and egoistically indifferent to the damage thus inflicted on art and the sublime potentialities of the human spirit:



Rousseau, als Dichter wie als Philosoph, hat keine andere Tendenz, als die Natur entweder zu suchen oder an der Kunst zu rächen.... Seine Dichtungen haben unwidersprechlich poetischen Gehalt, da sie ein Ideal behandeln; nur weiß er denselben nicht auf poetische Weise zu gebrauchen. Sein ernster Charakter läßt ihn zwar nie zur Frivolität herabsinken, aber erlaubt ihm auch nicht, sich bis zum poetischen Spiel zu erheben. Bald durch Leidenschaft, bald durch Abstraktion angespannt, bringt er es selten oder nie zu der ästhetischen Freiheit, welche der Dichter seinem Stoff gegenüber behaupten, seinem Leser mitteilen muß. Entweder es ist seine kranke Empfindlichkeit, die über ihn herrschet und seine Gefühle bis zum Peinlichen treibt; oder es ist seine Denkkraft, die seiner Imagination Fesseln anlegt und durch die Strenge des Begriffs die Anmut des Gemäldes vernichtet. Beide Eigenschaften, deren innige Wechselwirkung und Vereinigung den Poeten eigentlich ausmacht, finden sich bei diesem Schriftsteller in ungewöhnlich hohem Grad, und nichts fehlt, als daß sie sich auch wirklich mit einander vereinigt äusserten, daß seine Selbsttätigkeit sich mehr in sein Empfinden, daß seine Empfänglichkeit sich mehr in sein Denken mischte. Daher ist auch in dem Ideale, das er von der Menschheit aufstellt, auf die Schranken derselben zu viel, auf ihr Vermögen zu wenig Rücksicht genommen, und überall mehr ein Bedürfnis nach physischer Ruhe als nach moralischer Übereinstimmung darinn sichtbar. Seine leidenschaftliche

Empfindlichkeit ist schuld, daß er die Menschheit, um nur des Streits in derselben recht bald los zu werden, lieber zu der geistlosen Einförmigkeit des ersten Standes zurückgeführt, als jenen Streit in der geistreichen Harmonie einer völlig durchgeführten Bildung geendigt sehen, daß er die Kunst lieber gar nicht anfangen lassen, als ihre Vollendung erwarten will, kurz, daß er das Ziel lieber niedriger steckt und das Ideal lieber herabsetzt, um es nur desto schneller, um es nur desto sicherer zu erreichen.<sup>80</sup>

Of particular interest is the emphasis Schiller places on what he sees as Rousseau's constitutional need for rest. This leads to a too limited assessment of man's potential, a reluctance to see the species strive towards new and untried objectives. Philosophically this interpretation sets Rousseau in diametric opposition to the idealism of the classical period, an opposition effectively summed up in Liepe's parody: "Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den müssen wir verdammen . . ." <sup>81</sup>

With Schiller the history of Rousseau criticism in Germany has come full circle. The enthusiasm of the Sturm und Drang yields before a more critically based restatement of the Aufklärung's optimistic view of humanity and its historical development. It is only in recent years that scholars have appreciated the existence of a new wave of Rousseauism as expressed in the writings of those remarkable individualists of the classical-romantic epoch: Jean Paul Richter, Friederich Hölderlin and Heinrich von Kleist.<sup>82</sup> What these writers came to appreciate was the

enormous spirituality of Rousseau's writings, a quality not properly manifest until the later, unabashedly subjective works became known: the Confessions, the Rêveries du promeneur solitaire (publ. 1781-88).

These works display a serenity and an inwardness to which the Romantics would prove particularly receptive.<sup>83</sup> An integral part of this spiritual state of soul is what Rousseau describes in one of his finest passages as the "sentiment de paix:"

Le sentiment de l'existence, dépouillé de toute autre affection, est par lui-même un sentiment précieux de contentement et de paix, qui suffirait seul pour rendre cette existence chère et douce à qui saurait écarter de soi toutes les impressions sensuelles et terrestres qui viennent sans cesse nous en distraire et en troubler ici-bas la douceur. Mais la plupart des hommes, agités de passions continuelles, connoissent peu cet état, et ne l'ayant goûté qu'imparfaitement durant peu d'instant n'en concervent qu'une idée obscure et confuse, qui ne leur en fait pas sentir le charme.<sup>84</sup>

Jean Paul places Rousseau in the company of such giants as Plato, Sokrates and Shakespeare, all of whom fulfil his existential ideal of the "hohe Mensch;" they constitute a "Fürstenbank" des hohen Adels der Menschheit."<sup>85</sup>

Gewisse Menschen nenn' ich hohe oder Festtagsmenschen....  
 Unter einem hohen Menschen mein' ich nicht den geraden  
 ehrlichen festen Mann, der wie ein Weltkörper seine Bahn  
 ohne andere Abirrungen geht als scheinbare -- noch mein'  
 ich die feine Seele, die mit weissagendem Gefühl alles  
 glättet, jeden schont, jeden vergnügt und sich aufopfert,  
 aber nicht wegwirft -- noch den Mann von Ehre, dessen Wort  
 ein Fels ist und in dessen von der Zentralsonne Ehre ~~brennen-~~  
 den und bewegten Brust keine anderen Gedanken und Absichten  
 sind als Thaten außer ihr -- unendlich weder den kalten von  
 Grundsätzen gelenkten Tugendhaften, noch den Gefühlvollen,  
 dessen Fühlfäden sich um alle Wesen wickeln und zucken in  
 der fremden Wunde und der die Tugend und eine Schöne mit  
 gleichem Feuer umfasst -- auch den bloßen großen Menschen  
 von Genie mein' ich nicht unter dem hohen und schon die  
 Metapher deutet dort wagrechte und hier steilrechte Aus-  
 dehnung an. Sondern den mein' ich, der zum größern oder  
 geringern Grade aller dieser Vorzüge noch etwas setzt, was  
 die Erde so selten hat -- die Erhebung über die Erde, das  
 Gefühl der Geringfügigkeit alles irdischen Thuns und der  
 Unförmlichkeit zwischen unserem Herzen und unserem Orte,  
 das über das verwirrende Gebüsch und den ekelhaften Koder  
 unsers Fußbodens aufgerichtete Angesicht, den Wunsch des  
 Todes und den Blick über die Wolken. (p. 239)

The "Wunsch des Todes" represents the yearning for peace in the mystical form well understood by the Romantics. Yet we find it as an integral part of the spiritual state of the Vicar of Savoy, who declares: "J'aspire au moment où, délivré des entraves du corps, je serai moi sans contradiction."<sup>86</sup> Death comes to assume an important role in Jean Paul's later thinking, giving a higher perspective on life, a guarantor against triviality and arrogance alike.

With Holderlin Rousseau is raised to the level of myth.<sup>87</sup> He (like Kleist) was impressed by the Contrat social, whose visions appeared to him to be vindicated by the historical actuality of the French Revolution.<sup>88</sup> This work provides the motto for the "Hymne an die Menschheit" of 1792, a poem which ends with the stirring lines: "Die Himmel kündigen des Staubes Ehre, / Und zur Vollendung geht die Menschheit ein."<sup>89</sup> Unlike his great teacher, Schiller, Holderlin does not seem to have regarded Rousseau in any other light than as a participant in the forward march of history. Yet the novel Hyperion (written at about the time Hölderlin was contemplating an essay on Rousseau<sup>90</sup>) stresses the hero's longing to withdraw, weary with war and strife, to the idyllic retreat of Pyrenean valley. A thematic relationship here with two poems entitled, significantly, "An die Stille" and "An die Ruhe," is possible.<sup>91</sup> De Man maintains that inwardness as a "dialectic moment in the progression of history" is central to an understanding of Holderlin's image of Rousseau throughout. It is here that the contrast with Schiller's view of Rousseau as a victim of conflict and inner dissonance is most apparent. In the poem Rousseau (1799?), of the multitude of themes those worthy of mention seem to be: restlessness and banishment

(stanzas 4 and 5) -- the awareness of Rousseau's personal tribulations; speech and communication (implicitly contrasted with action) as Rousseau's sphere of fulfillment -- he is "einsame Rede" (stanza 3) and has understood the mute language of the gods (stanza 8). The poem concludes with the vision of a spirit possessed of knowledge too full for a single life-span (cf. the opening line of the poem), but a courageous one, who does not shirk from fulfilling his allotted role in the advance of humanity:

Und wunderbar, als hätte von Anbeginn  
Des Menschen Geist das Werden und Wirken all,  
Des Lebens Weise schon erfahren,

Kennt er im ersten Zeichen Vollendetes schon,  
Und fliegt, der kühne Geist, wie Adler den  
Gewittern, weissagend seinen  
Kommenden Gottern voraus,<sup>92</sup>

It is, with justification, the poem Der Rhein that has received most attention. In what is generally acknowledged to be one of Hölderlin's greatest compositions, the image of Rousseau occupies a central position (stanzas 10-12);<sup>93</sup> a demigod, he is "starkausdauernd" (Jean Paul also admired Rousseau's stoicism) and "gesetzlos";<sup>94</sup> he is also the counterpoint to those other favorites of the gods, such as Prometheus, prototype of the man of action, whose fate was heroic self-destruction (stanza 8). Rousseau is content with his idyllic existence "am Bielersee in frischer Grüne" (stanza 12), to act as a messenger of the gods but not to emulate them. This heralds the onset of the bridal-feast (stanza 14), a vision of "die wiedererstandene goldene Zeit" for gods and men (Böschstein, p.13), in

which the dissonances of being ("das Schicksal") are for a while resolved.

Rousseau's position in this poem, one of the two that have been described as the climax of German Rousseauism,<sup>95</sup> is rightly regarded as the crux interpretationis of Rousseau's meaning for Hölderlin, a relationship which was formerly passed over as a minor idiosyncrasy unworthy of his poetry.<sup>96</sup> Rousseau, the foil to the Titans, emerges through Hölderlin's symbolism as one who immeasurably influenced the destiny of his age whilst retaining intact his links with the fountain-head of feeling, at one with his source, like the Rhine river, despite the obstacles in his path.

It is as an embodiment of feeling also that Rousseau appealed to the more sombre outlook of Heinrich von Kleist.<sup>97</sup> ~~His significance gains con-~~  
siderably in the wake of the intellectual crisis ("Kant-crisis") which led to Kleist's break with rationalism.<sup>98</sup> "Gerade das Einfache und zugleich Unsystematische des Rousseauschen Gefühlsbegriffs ließ Kleist den notwendigen Halt finden, nachdem ihm die komplizierten philosophischen Denkformen zum Fallstrick geworden waren."<sup>99</sup> Feeling, the subjective principle, becomes Kleist's arbiter of truth, providing in infinite variations his basic problematic themes of faith, trust and their opposites. How many Kleistian heroines, confronted with the irrefutable evidence of their own guilt, would not conceivably echo the words of the Vicar of Savoy: "Quand tous les philosophes du monde prouveraient que j'ai tort, si vous sentez que j'ai raison, je n'en veux pas davantage."<sup>100</sup>

A factor that intensified the crisis of 1801 ~~was~~ the profound disillu~~sionment~~ Kleist experienced on seeing at first hand the decadence of post-revolutionary Paris, which he regarded as a betrayal of Rousseau's ideals: "Rousseau ist immer das 4te Wort der Franzosen; und wie wurde er sich schämen, wenn man ihm sagte, daß dies sein Werk sei."<sup>101</sup> Kleist's own answer to universal injustice was identical to Rousseau's: retreat to the sanctuary of an island. There he wrote his sombre Familie Schroffenstein, a play full of Rousseauesque contrasts in which property is seen as a destroyer of natural human relationships in confirmation of the Discours sur l'Inégalité.<sup>102</sup>

Feeling becomes the preserver of humanity and humanist values when activity in the external sphere of politics and social reform flounder on precisely those human imperfections that Rousseau discerned. Peace, withdrawal into the subject, may be the only means of retaining the ideal intact, so that Hölderlin, for example, can view it, besides action, as part of the systole and diastole of history in the rejuvenation of humanity. It is an interesting sequel to Schiller's grand critique of Rousseau that some of the greatest writers of the next generation were able to see Rousseau's subjectivity in a more positive light. Disillusionment with the optimistic spirit of classicism, from a number of philosophical and socio-historial causes, undoubtedly played a part. The incipient romanticism was better able to appreciate the manner in which Rousseau in his later works sublimates the subjective impulse behind all his endeavours, making of it something infinitely richer and less "willkürlich" than even he may have supposed at the outset.



That Rousseau's ideal of "paix" should become such a central issue in German criticism at the end of the eighteenth century is of great interest for our understanding of his reception, some thirty years earlier, by J.M.R. Lenz.

### III. THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUSSEAU IN LENZ'S LIFE

#### 1. Livonia and Königsberg (1751-71)

Lenz grew up in the Russian Baltic province of Livonia (Livland). Herder, too, had spent his formative years in this remote German-speaking territory, in the city of Riga, which, with its prestigious Domschule and a flourishing cultural life in touch with the rest of Europe, was reasonably cosmopolitan in character. By contrast, Dorpat, where Lenz's father was a leading protestant minister, remained conservative and traditionalist in its outlook. Its geographic remoteness reinforced this mental isolation.<sup>1</sup> Very little of the intellectual turbulence of the Enlightenment filtered through, and those ideas that did so made little headway against the prevailing pietist orthodoxy. Lenz's father, Christian David Lenz, a staunch pillar of this, wrote a pamphlet attacking contemporary efforts to reinterpret religious doctrine. In the still extant French translation, La saine doctrine opposée à la fausse (Basle, 1781), it makes scornful reference to "soi-disant esprits forts, qui ne sont en rien meilleurs que les incrédules déclarés, tel (sic) que Voltaire, d'Argens, Rousseau et plusieurs autres."<sup>2</sup>

There is no direct evidence that Lenz knew of Rousseau's writings prior to taking up his studies in Königsberg in 1768. However, among the personalities that particularly influenced his youth we find the historian and jurist Friedrich Konrad Gadebusch, a prominent figure in the educated circles of Dorpat. His was without doubt the largest and most comprehensive library in the region, and he enjoyed the reputation of being an authority on modern German and French literature.<sup>3</sup> We know that he furnished books from his

collection to the schoolboy Lenz, whose mental gifts he quickly perceived. For this and other acts Lenz expresses lavish gratitude to him in one of his earliest letters.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Frau Gadebusch was of French background and sought to instill in him an interest in French culture and to encourage his proficiency in the language.<sup>5</sup> The father was also anxious that his children should learn the international language of culture and diplomacy.<sup>6</sup> Lenz seems to have possessed the gift of tongues to an extraordinary, if perhaps exaggerated, degree.<sup>7</sup> Certainly his knowledge of French, like that of English, is well attested in his later writings. Despite Rosanow's categorical statement: "Man kann mit Gewißheit behaupten, daß Lenz in Livland Rousseau noch nicht gekannt hat" (p. 53), it seems likely that he obtained at least a superficial knowledge of Rousseau's writings, further stimulated by the lure of forbidden fruit.

Life in Livonia at least prepared Lenz for a receptiveness to Rousseau's critique of society. The province had become by the second half of the century one of Europe's most impoverished and socially backward regions. An exceedingly rigid feudal system on the part of the German nobility ensured that the major part of the poverty should be borne by the ethnic peasants. The practice of total serfdom, "Leibeigenschaft," was frequently accompanied by such abuses as flogging.<sup>8</sup> The almost total failure on the part of the European Enlightenment to permeate this world is reflected in the writings of Garlieb Merkel; His tract Die Letten, vorzuglich in Liefland am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1796), is the most graphic contemporary documentation of the social conditions then prevailing.<sup>9</sup>

For a short time, during Lenz's childhood, something of the spirit of the Enlightenment did in fact show itself. Catherine the Great, who visited the province in 1764, was struck by the wretched condition of the peasantry, and instructed her Governor, the Scottish Earl Browne, to initiate a programme of reforms. These were rejected however by the Landtag, which upheld the tradition of Leibeigenschaft as part of the "natural genius of the nation."<sup>10</sup> Likewise the private initiative of Karl Friedrich Schoultz von Ascheraden, whom Eckardt (p. 298) describes as "der ausgezeichnetste Mann ..., den das Livland des 18. Jahrhunderts hervorgebracht hat," was opposed by both the gentry and the bourgeoisie, when in 1764 he proposed a charter of rights for the peasants based on reforms already introduced on his own estates, the so-called Romerhof'sche Bauergesetzbuch. In terms of any tangible improvement the overall result of such discussions was completely negative. However, they undoubtedly left their impression on the young Lenz.<sup>11</sup> They helped give his mind and sensibility a basis of outwardly directed social consciousness that was lacking in the pietism of his up-bringing.<sup>12</sup> Social awareness, in particular the sense of injustice within the social structure, he will find again in the works of Rousseau.

Nothing in Lenz's adolescent productions suggests positively the influence of Rousseau, and little will be gained by discussing these works in any detail. Religious subjects predominate. However, an important, though subtle, change is at work within the traditional pietistic attitude, which, having its roots in German mysticism, concentrated on the inner life as a means of achieving a personal relationship with God. In Lenz's generation

this intensely subjective attitude came to be cultivated as desirable in itself, moving imperceptibly away from the orbit of church and faith, seeing in the secular sphere fitting objects (love, nature etc.) of religious feeling. Intense pathos is evoked in the youthful Der Veröhnungstod Jesu Christi (the first work of Lenz's to be published). Klopstock's Messias is the unmistakable model. This attraction to Klopstock as his first poetic model seems significant in retrospect. Here the separation of religious sensibility from objects of doctrine finds its beginning.<sup>13</sup> Lenz's subjectivity may prove to be an important factor in understanding the role of Rousseau in his development.

From this time dates Lenz's first play, Der verwundete Bräutigam (1766). Based on an actual occurrence within the Lenz circle of acquaintances, it depicts a servant's attempt to murder a young baron who has mistreated him. Much has been written of the figure of Tigras, who differs from the conventional servant type of the sentimental comedy on which the play is largely modelled. His monologue (I.v), described somewhat primly by one commentator as a "sozialistische Trotzrede,"<sup>14</sup> could perhaps be taken as a plea for the rights of the down-trodden common man in the Rousseau tradition: "Bin ich denn ein Hund, daß ich mich zu seinen Füßen krümmen soll' . . . Ich bin ein freier Mensch. Sein Geld unterschneidet ihn bloß von mir."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, such rhetoric may be not so much an assertion of natural rights as a simple statement of actual legal status.<sup>16</sup> Part of Tigras' resentment springs from the fact that his employer has not sufficiently recognized his superior position in relation to the bonded peasantry.<sup>17</sup> In general, Tigras emerges as a

pathological type, who disrupts the harmony of the family and shows himself unworthy of the love of the devoted Laura (I,vii; III,iv).<sup>18</sup> Although the whole episode appears localised and restricted in intent, the play has with some justification been singled out as marking an incipient concern for social matters on its author's part.<sup>19</sup> Criticism of the nobility is implied, even if at this stage it hardly goes beyond a specific instance of a violation of "noblesse oblige" (a concept that Lenz never entirely discards in his attitude towards the aristocracy).

Lenz's immatriculation at the University of Königsberg in the autumn of 1768 marks his emergence from the narrow mental and social confines of his native province. We learn from one of his colleagues that, while his attendance at lectures was rare, he attended those of Kant with some regularity.<sup>20</sup> When Kant took up the chair of Logic and Metaphysics in August 1770, it was Lenz who paid him public homage, by means of an ode, in the name of his fellow students.<sup>21</sup> Kant is cast in the role of a conquering hero, before whom the prevailing intellectual modes quail; he is "der Menschheit-Lehrer" in whom wisdom and virtue are united; to his pupils he has taught the ideals of "Einfalt im Denken und Natur im Leben." Kant was, as we saw in the previous chapter, very much concerned with Rousseau's thought. It is safe to assume that Herder was not his only student for whom Rousseau's writings were recommended reading. Lenz's ode certainly contains some imagery that is reminiscent of Rousseau: Kant's wisdom transcends all outward decorations and artificiality such as "des Hofes Waare" and ecclesiastic robes, and confounds "die Verächter / Des schlechten Kittels und berauchter Hutten / Samt ihren Sitten ..."<sup>22</sup>

Certainly Kant owed himself indebted to Rousseau for having shown him the universality of man and the meaninglessness of rank.<sup>23</sup> As a philosopher Kant was concerned less with social matters than with ethics. He was interested primarily in Rousseau's non-intellectual and non-dogmatic approach and the implications of this in the search for universal moral laws of human nature. Kant talks of "das sittliche Gefühl;" Lenz makes frequent reference in his later philosophical writings to "das moralische Gefühl."<sup>24</sup>

Lenz's first real introduction to Rousseau was thus by way of philosophy, though not, we must assume, in a very systematic sense. If he did not read them at this stage, he would certainly have learned of the importance of the two great novels which so impressed Kant and which are referred to repeatedly in Lenz's later writings.<sup>25</sup> He would also have become acquainted with the attacks on modern culture and civilization contained in the two discourses. It should be noted that Kant did not belong to those who ridiculed the Discours sur l'Inégalité through a too literal interpretation of the natural man. He considered that Rousseau "im Grunde nicht wollte, daß der Mensch wiederum in den Naturstand zurückgehen, sondern von der Stufe, auf der er jetzt steht, dahin zurücksehen sollte."<sup>26</sup> As a student of Kant, Lenz was thus provided with the most positive perspective possible on Rousseau's philosophy, one that stressed not anarchy but moral law, not the dissolution of bonds between man and man but a humanitarian altruism.

At Königsberg Lenz completed his first work of note, an epic poem in Klopstockian hexameters, Die Landplagen (published 1796). Probably

inspired in part by some of the natural calamities that had beset his native province, he depicts the scourges of war, famine, pestilence, fire, flood and earthquake through a succession of broad, apocalyptic visions interspersed with moralizing reflections on Providence and the ultimate triumph of virtue over sin. The result is a remarkable combination of the moral optimism of the Aufklärung and the Baroque pietistic notion of a vengeful deity. Several influences are apparent: Klopstock and Edward Young's Night Thoughts (1742 ff.). Where Young engages in an essentially abstract form of meditation on religion and human destiny, Lenz already shows evidence of a "reformist spirit."<sup>27</sup> His vision of a suffering, heroic humanity depicts actual figures and situations that have a concrete presence lacking in the epic poetry of Klopstock, Milton or Young.<sup>28</sup> Rousseau's influence here, direct or otherwise, is unmistakably present.<sup>29</sup> The figure of the peasant is consistently presented as a virtuous symbol of human dignity in suffering: "der Landmann mit stillen unschuldigen Tränen," "die Bewohner des ländlichen Hauses . . . die Freunde der Tugend" (WS, I. 24, 51). Unlike the conventional sentimental idyll such passages show a critical social awareness. It is the men of wealth and property, those who in Rousseau's theory have most exploited the rise of inequality among men, whose end is viewed as just retribution: "Schrocklicher ist das Ende des Wuchrers" (p. 69). These are predominantly inhabitants of the city, "die satten Städte," "Sammelplatz schändlicher Taten" (pp. 42, 37), that abysmal "gouffre de l'espèce humaine" (Emile, p. 37) which Rousseau consistently portrays as the heart of modern civilization's corruption. Disdain for the "guldnen Kerkern der Städte" we find also in "Der Frühling" of Ewald von Kleist.<sup>30</sup> Lenz, however, pursues the contrasts and dissonances of society with a purposefulness not found in Kleist. A recurrent image



is that of the destruction meted out to the palaces of the mighty (pp. 45, 56, 59, 73, 75). These edifices become synonymous with the sin of superbia: " . . . die dem Himmel / Nachäffen wollten, sind Höllen geworden" (p. 56). These temples to wealth and ostentation, what Rousseau calls a "fureur de se distinguer" (Discours sur l'Inégalité, p. 89), bear the full brunt of divine wrath, whilst those who model their lives on nature are the first to be spared. "Davon ist bei Kleist keine Rede. Müssen wir in dieser . . . Hoherschätzung rettenswerter ländlichen Kultur gegenüber preisgegebener städtischen Zivilisation nicht einen Hauch Rousseauschen Geistes, Anfänge von Lenzens Rousseau-Verehrung erkennen?"<sup>31</sup>

## 2. Strasbourg (1771-76)

With his move to Strasbourg in 1771 Lenz's most intensely creative period begins. His association with the circle of the notary Johann Daniel Salzmann, whose members included Goethe, Lerse and Jung-Stilling, introduced him to writers for whom the names Shakespeare, Ossian and Rousseau were not remote literary figures but living forces: "Lebens-echtheit, wahre freie Leidenschaft, reines natürliches Menschentum sollten einzig würdige, künstlerische Darstellungsmittelpunkte sein; damit aber war von vornherein die rationalistische Gesellschafts- und Moralkonvention über Bord geworfen, die Rokokoperücke zu Boden geschleift und Rousseau die Tore geöffnet. Seine Ideenwelt hatte alle die jungen Menschen des Salzmannschen Kreises aufs tiefste erschüttert und erfaßt -- freilich durchaus nicht so kritiklos, als man dies gemeinhin darzustellen versucht; dafür hatte schon Herders deutsches Durchdenken des Rousseauschen Gedankenkomplexes

Sorge getragen."<sup>32</sup> Herder himself had already left and Lenz did not meet him until 1776, but his influence remained. This can be seen in particular in Lenz's Meynungen eines Laien. Lenz's more immediate intellectual associates may be described as "popular philosophers," who drew heavily on Rousseau's ideas.<sup>33</sup> Salzmann himself, with whom Lenz conducted an intense correspondence on theological matters, was also active in the field of education, where the results of his researches closely resemble those of Rousseau.<sup>34</sup> "Salzmann bemüht sich, den Optimismus Leibnizens mit den Ideen J.J. Rousseaus, die er vorsichtig und mit Bedacht, verwendet, zu vereinen."<sup>35</sup> One of the best known of Lenz's associates, Johann Caspar Lavater, had been acquainted personally with Rousseau as a member of the Zürich circle of admirers in the previous decade.<sup>36</sup>

In 1775 Lenz helped found the "Deutsche Gesellschaft" in Strasbourg, with the purpose of discussing matters of social and cultural interest. Many of Lenz's theoretical essays originated as papers presented to the society. Rousseau was certainly a household word here. Reference has already been made to the defence of Rousseau that appeared in its main organ, Der Bürgerfreund, a journal that devoted itself to such topics as education, religion, morals and language, issues on which Rousseau had much to say.

In such a mental environment Lenz's attitude to Rousseau undoubtedly changed from that engendered in the rarefied intellectual atmosphere of Königsberg. New emphasis was placed upon the practical applicability of

his ideas in matters of society and morals.

More than twenty specific references are scattered through the dramatic and theoretical works, as well as the correspondence, beginning with Der Hofmeister (1773) and continuing into the period of decline in Russia. Only Shakespeare receives greater mention in Lenz's works (with the obvious exclusion of personal acquaintances.) The tone is sometimes one of exuberant admiration, sometimes of constructive criticism. The Anmerkungen übers Theater refer to "der gottliche Rousseau" (WS, I, 341). A recognition of Rousseau's courage and tenacity in the face of the opposition of the intellectual establishment is implied in the phrase used in the Stimmen des Laien: "hartnäckigen Genfer Diogen" (ibid., 551). He is hailed, in an address to the "Society," as one of the greatest French philosophers, who, it is suggested elsewhere, <sup>37</sup> would fully merit a monument besides Voltaire's (ibid., 461, 371 n.). A feature which makes Lenz's attitude towards Rousseau especially intriguing is his use of the Genevan's name as a kind of cipher. In a number of works the name occurs unexpectedly and in apparently disconnected contexts as though charged with a symbolic meaning more apparent to the author than to the reader. Such is the case in Der Hofmeister, Familie der Projektenmacher, Zum Weinen and the late satire Delikatesse der Empfindung.

While it cannot be stated with certainty which of Rousseau's individual works were known to Lenz in any detail, it is clear that he read Emile and probably reread the Nouvelle Héloïse. His paper Über die Vorzüge der deutschen Sprache (1775) makes use of a passage from Emile to illustrate the characteristic difference between the German and French

languages (WS, I, 461), whilst some notes on the subject of education for the nobility stress Rousseau's distinction between "education" and "instruction" (GS, IV, 328). Evident echoes of some of the imagery used in Emile and the importance of the latter in Lenz's important "metaphysical disagreement" with Rousseau must be considered in a later chapter.

For Lenz the Nouvelle Héloïse represents "das beste Buch, das jemals mit französischen Lettern ist abgedruckt worden" (WS, I, 352). Discussions about the novel occur among the characters in several plays and stories, and the implications of these will prove to be of some importance. The important aesthetic document, the Anmerkungen ubers Theater, contains two passages of criticism concerning Rousseau's novel. This fact in itself is noteworthy in a work ostensibly devoted to the theatre. Theodor Friedrich, in his account of the different stages of revision through which the essay passed between the first draft in 1771 (before Herder's contributions to Von deutscher Art und Kunst<sup>38</sup>) and the final version in 1774, sees the references to Rousseau as fairly late additions.<sup>39</sup> This would certainly conform to the dating of most of the other Rousseau references in Lenz's works. According to Friedrich's scheme the earlier of the two references is the more critical. Lenz's radical attack on Aristotles' poetics leads to a juggernaut-like assault on the French, who far from misunderstanding the Greek (Herder's view) have understood and followed him only too faithfully. The purpose of this section, to which Friedrich gives the sub-heading "Anmerkungen uber das Handwerksmäßige in der dramatischen Literatur der Franzosen," (1773) would appear to be to demonstrate the overall mechanical and imitative nature of French literature.

Warming to his theme, he does not limit himself to the theatre only, as is shown by the parenthesis in the following: "Ist's nicht ..., daß Sie in allen französischen Schauspielen (wie in den Romanen) eine gewisse Ähnlichkeit der Fabel gewahr werden, welche wenn man viel gelesen oder gesehn hat, unbeschreiblich ekelhaft wird" (WS, I, 350). The French lack above all the quality that for Lenz is the keystone to his theory of creative writing, the facility to produce varied and tangible living characters. It is here that Rousseau comes in for some criticism, albeit mixed with praise and tempered by the superlative description quoted earlier:

Ich sage, der Dichter malt das ganze Stuck auf seinem eigenen Charakter.... So sind Voltaires Helden fast lauter tolerante Freigeister, Corneillens lauter Senecas. Die ganze Welt nimmt den Ton ihrer Wünsche an, selbst Rousseau in seiner Héloise, das beste Buch, das jemals mit französischen Lettern ist abgedruckt worden, ist davon nicht ausgenommen. So sehr er abändert, so geschickt er sich hinter die Personen zu verstecken weiß, die er auftreten läßt, so guckt doch immer, ich kann es nicht leugnen, etwas von seiner Perucke hervor, und das wünscht ich weg, um mich ganz in seine Welt hinein zu täuschen in dem Palast der Armide Nektar zu schlurfen. (p. 352)

Mendelssohn had levelled a similar criticism at Rousseau's novel, on the basis of a vague concept of literary realism.<sup>40</sup> Lenz does so from the standpoint of an aggressive naturalism that seeks to distinguish between

the writer's individuality, -- the original creative spark that lays him open to the whole of nature, -- and his subjectivity that has the opposite cramping and narrowing effect.<sup>41</sup> The importance of Rousseau for Lenz's aesthetic theories must be considered in greater detail, but it is of interest that at this time Lenz takes issue with Rousseau's subjective traits, here seen as a threat to his art. In the second reference, which Friedrich assigns to the final (1774) stage in the genesis of the work, the criticism is fundamentally the same, but now the positive appreciation of Rousseau's poetic talent is even more strongly to the fore:

Für den mittelmäßigen Teil des Publikums wird Rousseau (der göttliche Rousseau selbst --) unendlichen Reiz mehr haben, wenn er die feinsten Adern der Leidenschaften seines Busens entbloßt und seine Leser mit Sachen anschaulich vertraut macht, die sie alle vorhin schon dunkel fühlten, ohne Rechenschaft davon geben zu können, aber das Genie wird ihn da schätzen, wo er aus den Schlingen und Graziengewebe der feinem Welt Charaktere zu retten weiß, die nun freilich doch oft wie Simson ihre Stärke in dem Schoß der Dame lassen.. (p. 341) <sup>42</sup>

The intrusion of Rousseau's wig is all but overlooked in this tribute to his ability to stir the passions of his readers. This passage, and in particular one phrase, comes to mind in connection with another passage in Lenz where a novel is being appraised: "Eben darin besteht Werthers Verdienst daß er uns mit Leidenschaften und Entfindungen bekannt macht,

die jeder in sich dunkel fühlt, die er aber nicht mit Namen zu nennen weiß" (p. 393).<sup>43</sup> In the ninth letter of the Briefe über die Moralität der Leiden des jungen Werthers (1775), Lenz sets out to compare Goethe's novel and the Nouvelle Héloïse in terms of their "morality", that is their moral effect on their respective audiences.<sup>44</sup> Undoubtedly Lenz was aware of the frequent attempts that were made to draw parallels between the two works, and he begins by stressing the differences between them, as though wishing to defend Goethe from charges of imitation. What is significant here is the implied equation of Rousseau's novel with Goethe's, a distinction which is attained, despite the aesthetic flaws that derive from the former's "Frenchness," on the level of the depiction of passion. Lenz's own attitude towards love and his attempt to see it in ethical terms forms an important part of his personal philosophy, and Rousseau's influence here is paramount. Biographical indications of this are found in the work that documents his curious relationship with Goethe's sister Cornelia Schlosser, the Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten. The degree to which he identifies Cornelia with Rousseau's heroine (and himself with a wayward St. Preux in need of moral guidance) is revealed in the following passage, laden with pathos:

Ich lese in dem Augenblick Juliens Tod in der Héloïse. Gott  
welch ein Gedanke lähmt mich. Dich krank zu wissen Cornelia,  
Dich in derselben Gefahr - o es war mir als ob mir jemand  
zurief, sie stirbt in dem Augenblick. Ich sehe Deinen Mann  
trostlos an Deinem Bette stehen, o ich sehe Dich die letzten  
Züge tun -- laß mich Deine Seele von Deinen Lippen aufsammeln --  
von Deinen bleichen Lippen den Tod einhauchen, den Tod meinen

besten Freund. --- Ich weiß nicht wie mir grad diesen  
 Abend das Buch in die Hände fallen mußte. Und mein Traum --  
 mein Traum der mich nie verläßt. (WS, I, 275-76).<sup>45</sup>

Rousseau's power of evoking emotional experience, attested in the  
Anmerkungen, is here demonstrated in its effect on Lenz's impressionable  
 and highly emotive nature.

In contrast to the novels the philosophical discourses receive scant  
 attention. In the literary satire Pandämonium Germanicum (1775), Goethe  
 remarks on the apparent decline of a nation's art when it has reached a  
 certain degree of perfection (cf. Herder's essay, "Ursachen des gesunkenen  
 Geschmacks bei den verschiedenen Völkern, da er gebluhet", 1775). Lenz  
 replies: "Ich wünschte denn lieber mit Rousseau wir hätten gar keine  
 [Künste] und krochen auf allen Vieren herum" (WS, II, 260). The medium  
 here is satire, a form of writing that tends to make the most of what-  
 ever weapons it can find for the purposes of effect, without inquiring  
 into such niceties as literal truth. The distorted and over-simplified  
 view of what Rousseau had meant by his natural man was, as we saw in the  
 preceding chapter, still widely adhered to, not least as a result of  
 Wieland's widely-publicized Beiträge.<sup>46</sup> Thus Lenz is able to make use  
 of this ready-made image in the poem "Menalk und Mopsus" (1775), another  
 work of satirical intend. To convey the lowly drooping posture of the  
 spirit of Menalk (in reality an insignificant Strasbourg poetaster, Kamm),  
 he likens it to "Rousseaus Quadrupes" (WS, I, 178).<sup>47</sup>



It is possible that in Pandämonium Germanicum Lenz is purposely satirizing the excesses of Rousseau's earliest writings, but this can hardly be taken as an indication of an "indirekte Polemik gegen Rousseau" of the proportion assumed by Kindermann.<sup>48</sup> The next scene depicts Rousseau sitting apart from the company of the French litterati, refusing to join the ridicule of the dying Gellert (an attack with nationalist overtones) (WS, II, 262). Of greater significance than any implied satire of the noble savage, is the fact that Lenz here identifies himself with Rousseau's cry of despair over the derelict state of modern culture. This concludes a scene in which he and Goethe have fought to hold off a pack of literary "Feuillitonen" who worship art for the sake of grandeur.

A poem written towards the end of his life, entitled "Was ist Satyre?," contains the only direct clue to the question of whether Lenz read the Lettre sur les Spectacles, a work of obvious relevance to his own literary activities. He denies having ever read the work, though obviously its main line of argument was known to him:

Theater -- o behüte Gott!  
 Ein großer Rousseau -- zwar gelesen hab' ich's nie,  
 Allein er schrieb dagegen, mein' ich,  
 Kurz die Gelehrten all sind einig  
 Theater ist Pedanterie (GS, I, 458).

The poem, addressed to a Moscow minister J.J. Kaufmann, proceeds to ridicule the moral efficacy of long dry sermons besides that of a

Shakespeareplay ("auf der hohen See von wirklichem Geschick / Nicht bloßen Träumereien"). This refutation of Rousseau is in similar vein to Fussli's, and in the same way the D'Alembert letter certainly did not alienate him from an overall receptiveness to Rousseau's writings. It may indeed have further stimulated his efforts towards reform of the theatre, as hinted in Pandämonium Germanicum, to make it more answerable to real human and social needs (an objective whose key lay, as he believed, in Shakespeare).

Lenz's interest in Rousseau appears to become more intense by 1775, the year that finds him at the height of his career and still on good terms with Goethe, the period of his spirited feud with Wieland. References to Rousseau become more frequent. In Particular the Nouvelle Héloïse appears to interest him (cf. the Moralische Bekehrung and the Werther-Briefe). The Rousseau references in the Anmerkungen übers Theater may stem from this period, whereas the earlier Hofmeister displays less familiarity and greater critical distance towards Rousseau's novel.

A letter to Sophie von La Poche of July 1775 describes ambitious plans (never realised) for a "grand tour" which would include a visit to Rousseau, then in Paris: "Wenn ich in der Schweiz die Berge, in Italien die Statuen, in Holland die Festungen, in Frankreich Rousseau, in Engelland das Theater werde gesehen haben, so komm' ich zurück zu Ihren Füßen."<sup>49</sup> The desire to see Rousseau in person possibly underlies the curious "cipher-like" reference in the dramatic fragment Zum Weinen (probably written at the end of 1775). Goethe recounts a (fictional) trip to Paris,

expressing contempt for its corrupt manners. Lenz interrupts with a question:

L. Hast du Rousseau nicht gesehen. --

Gth. Ich schickte zu ihm, ob er mich besuchen wollte,  
aber er kam nicht.

L. Rousseau zu dir.-- (GS, III, 296).

This fanciful juxtaposition of Rousseau and Goethe reminds us of the homage paid to both writers in the Werther-Briefe, where the two writers occupy parallel positions of greatness within their respective national cultures: "Es ist mir eine Freude. . . , wie jeder dieser Dichter für das Bedürfnis seiner Nation so zu sorgen gewußt hat" (WS, I. 397).

In his campaign against the writings of Wieland, a relentless war of pamphleteering and satire that ceased only with Lenz's move to Weimar we begin to see Lenz himself as a second Rousseau. His efforts to expose the moral turpitude of Wieland's writings, his "schlüpfriger Naturalismus" he perceives as an objective and necessary struggle in the name of sounder cultural and philosophical values. In connection with the satiric comedy Die Wolken (later destroyed and replaced by the more subtle Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken), he wrote: "Wehe über mein Vaterland, wenn die Wolken nicht gedruckt werden."<sup>50</sup> In Wieland the Rococo taste for grace and beauty is seen as sensuality, the aesthete's indifference to virtue and morality: "Ich . . . will . . . lieber Schwärmer für die Tugend als Enthusiast für das Schöne seyn, solange das Schöne sich mit der Tugend

nicht vertragen kann."<sup>51</sup> The Rousseau tone is very evident. In fact Lenz's whole conduct of this "crusade" is strongly reminiscent of Rousseau's tenacious campaigns against the philosophical "establishment" in France.<sup>52</sup> Did Lenz consciously see himself as a German Rousseau, waging a lone battle in the name of truth and morality? Aware of his propensity for role-acting one concludes that he probably did. Nor did the similarity escape others. Schlosser wrote on a copy of the Verteidigung des Herrn W. which was circulating in Zurich: "Hélas tais toi Jean Jaq. ils ne t'entendront pas,"<sup>53</sup> a slightly inaccurate rendering of the words that had been addressed to Rousseau to show the vanity of trying to speak to the uncomprehending multitude.<sup>54</sup> On one occasion, too, Lenz makes an ironic contrast between Rousseau and Wieland (of whose polemic against Rousseau's Discours he was undoubtedly aware) in their respective standings as novelists. Writing in June 1775 to Sophie von La Roche, of whose connections with Wieland he profoundly disapproved, he suggests the superiority of Rousseau over Wieland as a novelist, contrasting the feminine psychology of the Nouvelle Héloïse and that of Agathon: "Das wußt' er wohl, daß er [Wieland] Ihnen unter dem Nahmen Danae, die Grazien dedicirt hatte. Mit allen dem hätten Sie von einem ganz andern PinseI gemahlt werden sollen, wenn er Reize der Seele zu mahlen verstanden hätte. Ein Rousseau --"<sup>55</sup> The thought is incomplete, but the intention seems clear.

### 3. Weimar und decline (1777-92)

In April of 1776 Lenz followed Goethe to Weimar. The previous month he wrote to Herder: "Ich habe eine Schrift über die Soldatenehen unter Händen, die ich einem Fürsten vorlesen mochte . . ." <sup>56</sup> The reference is to but one of several schemes of practical reform that he hoped to see realized through gaining access to the political power of a prince. <sup>57</sup> In other words, Lenz was transferring his reformist zeal from the sphere of philosophy and culture to that of politics, a more practical sphere than that of the pen. He had even withdrawn his satire against Wieland, whose influence at the court he would soon require: "Wenn sie gedruckt wird, wünschte ich nicht mehr zu leben. Nicht wegen der Gefahr der ich mich aussetzte, sondern wegen des Guten, das ich sonst ausrichten könnte und das sie auf ewig verhindert." <sup>58</sup>

It must be shown later that Pousseauist insights to a large degree underlie Lenz's reformist impulses. It is a major part of his personal tragedy that, through a variety of internal and external causes -- both his own constitutional limitations and the formidable social obstacles ranged against him -- these Utopian projects lay, within the space of three months, in ruins. Whatever the precise cause of Lenz's banishment from Weimar, it is probable that his recalcitrant conduct stemmed from an unwillingness to accept the petty social conventions of court life. <sup>59</sup> His estrangement from Goethe and the beginning of a period of aimless wanderings and intermittent mental illness date from this time.

Lenz's immediate recourse has a markedly Rousseauesque character: withdrawal, hermit-like, to the rural seclusion of Berka. The contrast between the world of nature and high society is very strongly implied in his letters: " . . . ich bin auf dem Lande und in mir selbst sehr glücklich, nach dem ich am Hofe fast verwittert war." "Ich schmecke die ganze Wollust der Einsamkeit auf den Kontrast des Hofes."<sup>60</sup> A letter to Boie (received 13 August) states: " . . . ich habe viel sehr viel zu thun und mich deswegen von aller menschlichen Gesellschaft abgesondert."<sup>61</sup> This paradoxical need to renounce the world whilst hoping to reshape it, at once recalls Rousseau. "From the outset he stood in a paradoxical relation to society: he had to flee from it in order to save it and give it what he was capable of giving."<sup>62</sup> Rudolf's description of Lenz's existence at Berka as "ein geradezu Rousseausches Leben, ein Leben der Resignation" is true in this sense.<sup>63</sup> It remains to be considered whether Lenz saw in Rousseau a true embodiment of this paradox, or whether he regarded his social withdrawal as a regrettable case of abandoned effort.

The work that most closely reflects this period is the epistolary novel Der Waldbruder. Herz has fled the society of his friends, led by Rothe, in a mood of profound disillusionment. The names clearly suggest Lenz's unhappy experiences at Weimar, the frustration of whatever aspirations he had hoped to see realized there. Yet amid his despondency, Herz echoes the objection that Lenz had made several years before, in a purely metaphysical context, to that passage in Emile which suggests

that man should seek repose as the highest good (WS, I, 492-96):

"Beständig quält mich das, was Rousseau an einem Ort sagt, der Mensch soll nicht verlangen, was nicht in seinen Kräften steht, oder er bleibt ewig ein unbrauchbarer schwacher und halber Mensch. Wenn ich nun aber schwach, halb unbrauchbar bleiben will, lieber als meinen Sinn für das stumpf machen, bei dessen Hervorbringung alle Kräfte der Natur in Bewegung waren, zu dessen Vervollkommen der Himmel selbst alle Umstände vereinigt hat. O Rousseau! Rousseau! wie konntest du das schreiben!" (WS, I, 285)<sup>64</sup> Undoubtedly the tone is different from the philosophical objectivity of Über das erste Principium der Moral.

Where in the earlier work Lenz takes issue with what he regards as the major flaw in Rousseau's philosophy, an Epicurean tendency preventing him from the full social commitment that should logically follow from his account of modern-day society, he now, as we suspect on reading the second sentence, perceives profounder wisdom in Rousseau's doctrine of balancing volition and ability. Whilst continuing to eschew this doctrine (for a variety of personal and philosophical reasons that remain to be discussed), he most certainly felt the need within himself for that inner peace of the soul which, as we saw in an earlier chapter, Rousseau came to value so highly.

Possibly the search for such a peace led Lenz to the country which Rousseau had made synonymous with the sublime peacefulness of nature. A few years later he wrote to Boie: "Ich nahm Abschied von Ihnen, als ich der Trüdelbude der Welt müde, mich der Natur in der stillsten Schweiz in den Schoos warf."<sup>65</sup> The yearning to see the Swiss mountains was conveyed

in the letter to Sophie La Roche quoted earlier.<sup>66</sup> In particular the Pays de Vaud, Rousseau's home as well as that of his heroine Julie, attracted him.<sup>67</sup> A passage in Der Landprediger (1777) refers to Pfarrer Mannheim's drawings of Switzerland, " . . . worunter besonders die Gegenden des Pays-de-Vaud wären, die Rousseau in seiner Héloïse so meisterhaft geschildert" (GS, V, 172).

The last fifteen years of Lenz's life, from his flight to Switzerland to his premature death in Moscow (1792), reflect the anguish and disillusionment of a fragmented mind. Undoubtedly the failure of Lenz's humanistic ambitions contributed to his mental illness, as it is no doubt equally valid to assume that his inherent instability itself rendered such failure inevitable. The sick poet's restlessness and corresponding need for peace assume a pathological character, and Georg Büchner, in his documentation of this period (Lenz, 1839), shows much insight in stressing the need for "Ruhe" as an aspect of his suffering.

In his final years Lenz continues to nurture vague altruistic dreams for improving society and the lot of his fellow men, in particular the poor and deprived.<sup>68</sup> All were more or less beyond his capacity.<sup>69</sup> The last letter of Lenz's that we possess evokes, like some spirit from a dimly remembered past, the name of the man who, more than any other, had inspired his visions of a new society. He would like to see a flourishing book-trade in his native land so that the members of his family " . . . auch den berühmten Rousseau



vom Fuß der Pedemontischen Gebirge zur Ehre unsrer Nation in unsrer Sprache lesen können."<sup>70</sup> The wish is curiously similar to that expressed by Herder, over twenty years perviously, that of conveying the spirit of Rousseau to eighteenth-century Livonia.<sup>71</sup> In this respect, at least, the failure of Lenz is matched by that of Herder, who was obliged to pursue his mission elsewhere. At a time when Rousseauism yielded its first violent fruits in France, Lenz finished his days in the land that had not known a breath of change since his childhood.

#### IV. ROUSSEAU AND LENZ'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

##### 1. The theological basis of being

The totality of Lenz's work cannot be understood without an appreciation of its deeply moral aspect.<sup>1</sup> His concept of what is morally right undergoes a broadening process that leads from strictly theological preoccupations to a concern for the external world, in which morality assumes first and foremost a social application.

Nevertheless, the religious basis of Lenz's thinking and the continuing influence of his pietistic upbringing upon his writings cannot be underestimated.<sup>2</sup> In the Anmerkungen übers Theater, he expresses the view: " . . . ein Mensch ohne alle Religion hat gar keine Empfindung (weh ihm!), ein Mensch mit schiefer Religion schiefe Empfindungen und ein Dichter, der die Religion seines Volkes nicht gegründet hat, ist weniger als ein Meßmusikant" (WS, I, 358). Religion and sentiment are here firmly tied in together, a fact which must not be lost sight of in examining Lenz's views and the relevance of Rousseau.

Lenz's attempts to redefine his religious beliefs are clearly reflected in the series of letters he wrote to Salzmann in the latter part of 1772. They constitute a graphic account of his struggles to reconcile inherited precepts with the more secular and rationalist strain of the Strasbourg Sturm und Drang.<sup>3</sup> Herder had already shown the way towards a freer, relativistic approach to Christian theology. A second important influence was Rousseau.

Lenz's major theological writings consist of his Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen and the two-part essay Meynungen eines Layen den Geistlichen zugeeignet and Stimmen des Layen auf dem letzten theologischen Reichstag im Jahr 1771 (publ. 1775).

In the last-named, specific mention is made of Rousseau's religion, that expressed in the "Profession de Foi du Vicaire savoyard" (Emile, Book IV). This, we must recall, is based on the evidence of the senses, both reason and moral sensibility (to which he gives the name of conscience). The individual has no need of any intermediary, human or divine, between himself and his God.<sup>4</sup> The simpler a religious doctrine the greater the likelihood of its truth, since there is less room for error.<sup>5</sup> Dogmatic complications are both an insult to man's reason and to God himself.<sup>6</sup>

The intrusion of the new Rousseauist spirit in these theological essays is seen in their occasional socially nuanced observations, which would be unthinkable in an orthodox pietistic tract. The prophets and apostles are particularly admired as simple, untutored men, "... die auf keiner Universität promoviert hatten" (WS, I, 518). Lenz is also aware of the manifold evils committed in the name of Christianity, a conviction shared by many thinkers of the Enlightenment: "Wir finden unter keiner Sekte in der Welt größere Verbrechen, größere Scheusale, als unter den Christen" (p. 512). Rousseau's specific criticism of established religions concerns their exploitation by ruling castes to ensure obedience from their subjects. Any imposed dogmatic system is in reality "une affaire de police."<sup>7</sup> Lenz speaks of those ancient priests, "... die den Gottern ihre Absichten oder auch absichtslose

Einfälle unterschoben, um den Pöbel mit dem allerstrengsten und furchtbarsten Zaume und Gebiß zu regieren, die ein menschlicher Verstand nur aussinnen konnte, mit der Ehrfurcht gegen seine Götter" (pp. 517-18). In a different context, the social drama Der Hofmeister, there is a hint at this sort of social repression in the modern age. This emerges from the ominous sounding words of the village schoolmaster, Wenzeslaus: "Nehmt dem Bauer seinen Teufel, und er wird ein Teufel gegen seine Herrschaft werden und ihr beweisen, daß es welche gibt" (WS, II, 91).

The third of the Stimmen attempts to resolve the question of the universality of moral law as opposed to the need for revelation. Here, too, he appears to follow Rousseau's naturalist approach. Men of different cultures, even those regarded as heathen, follow the same laws of conduct towards each other and share the same consciousness of "ein gewisses Supremum Numen" (WS, I, 549). The question thus seems pertinent: " . . . warum wollen wir aus Liebe zum Sonderbaren uns ein ander System erklugeln, als uns aus allen Zeiten und Orten, aus der ganzen Natur zuwinkt" (p. 550). A few lines later we find reiterated the basic doctrine of Rousseau's moral philosophy: "Wir werden alle gut geboren . . ." From this point, however, the rationalist line of argument yields to a metaphysical and psychological appraisal of what Lenz sees as the essence of the human spirit. The latter is constantly beset by its restless, insatiable need for self-extension. "Wir finden ein Leeres in uns, unsere Kräfte, unser ganzer Geist, elastisch wie die Luft, dringt ihm nach und erweitert sich die Sphäre" (p. 551). Lenz contends that this process can

be guided in a morally productive manner (the latter being understood in the special sense that Lenz attaches to "die Moral" and which must be later elaborated) only through divine revelation. He perceives that this same propensity has exposed us to all manner of complicated (and arbitrary dogmas, and for this reason Rousseau must be hailed as one of the greatest of those who have taken a stand for simplicity: "Eben diese anscheinenden Erweiterungen sind die Ausartungen der menschlichen Moralität oder der natürlichen Moralität, wie Sie sie nennen wollen, daher haben von jeher alle wahre Philosophen so viel auf die Einfalt geschrien, gepredigt, losgestimmt, zurückgestimmt wollt ich sagen, und noch neuerlich haben wir an einem der größten unter ihnen; an dem hartnäckigen<sup>8</sup> Genfer Diogen, der den Deutschen ein Argernis und den Franzosen eine Torheit ist, ein ganz frisches Exempel." For all its theoretical wisdom, however, the effectiveness of Rousseau's theology is limited. It fails to satisfy those very expansive impulses whose abuses it sought to eliminate. "Ob mit aller der Einfalt wir aber nun glücklich genug sein, dieses können wir alle in der Theorie geschwind zugeben -- aber in praxi gibt es kein Mensch zu und da stehen wir wieder" (p. 552).

Despite his concurrence in some of Rousseau's basic criticisms of established religions, Lenz accordingly reasserts the need for divine revelation: "Komm, komm uns zu Hilfe, gottliche Offenbarung . . ." (p. 552). He does not regard this, however, as a denial of the natural theology envisaged by Rousseau. In the Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral he declares: "Es ist seltsam, daß man unter der natürlichen und theologischen Moral einen Unterscheid macht, gleich als ob die ewigen Gesetze Gottes über

unser Verhalten nicht zu allen Zeiten dieselben gewesen wären. Die Bibel ist uns nicht gegeben, um eine neue Moral zu lehren, sondern nur die einzige und ewige Moral, die der Finger Gottes in unser Herz geschrieben, in ein neues Licht zu setzen" (WS, I, 496-97). Likewise in the Stimmen: "... ich zweifle, daß Christus dazu erschienen, uns ein neues allgemeines Moralsystem zu geben. Denn wozu ein neues ist doch das alte da, liegt doch in unserer Natur" (p. 556).

Lenz's unwillingness to endorse fully Rousseau's religion of nature, therefore, has nothing to do with dogma, but rather is based on the criterion paramount in all his thinking (e.g. his aesthetic theories): that of effectiveness.<sup>9</sup> His understanding of the historical role of revelation is more fully expanded in his Old Testament exegesis Meinungen eines Layen, which he describes in one remarkable statement as "der Grundstein meiner ganzen Poesie, aller meiner Wahrheit, all meines Gefühls" (GS, IV, 283).<sup>10</sup> The revelation provided by the prophets constitutes a necessary stimulant to our moral consciousness, not by turning it in new directions but through graphic clarification of eternal laws already present in nature. The reasoning here impinges on ideas central to Lenz's metaphysical outlook. On several occasions he refers to an inner "vis inertiae" or state of "Trägheit."<sup>11</sup> The terminology would appear to owe much to Leibnitz. It is a conception of man's being in its raw and presumably natural state from which Lenz evolves his entire philosophy of dynamic effort, whereby the will must counteract the yearning for repose. The broader applications of this, particularly as they relate to Rousseau, remain to be considered. In the present context of theology we see its emergence already in the

correspondence with Salzmann: "Der theologische Glaube ist das complementum unserer Vernunft, das, dasjenige ersetzt, was dieser zur gottfälligen Richtung unsers Willens fehlt."<sup>12</sup>

The difference between Rousseau and Lenz in their theological beliefs is that between a serene state of soul resulting from the subject's relatively passive perception of the moral essence of nature and a dynamically conceived process of struggle towards higher reaches of religious experience. This is underlined in their respective pictures of Christ. Rousseau sees the latter mainly as an outstanding example of the stoical ideal, who in the passive heroism of his suffering and death exceeds even Socrates.<sup>13</sup> Lenz chooses for comparison a quite different figure from the Greek tradition: Prometheus, the symbol of heroism in action (WS, I, 505). We are reminded also of the description of Werther as "ein gekreuzigter Prometheus" (p. 396). Thus, in his treatise Vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen, Lenz evolves a new concept of the Trinity as "three-fold-Nature" -- "eine schaffende, eine bildende und eine stärkende" (GS, IV, 60). His concept of Christ, central to his religious thought, combines Sturm und Drang dynamism with the mystical soul.

Lenz's acquaintance with Rousseau's religion of nature based on the rejection of dogma emerges as one of the important stimuli that impelled him to rethink his inherited theological concepts. His answer to the challenge it presents is an attempt at reconciling the Rousseauist viewpoint with the recognition of divine revelation. In doing so he

inevitably strays from the sphere of traditional theology into that more fully covered in his strictly moral and metaphysical writings, whose concern is with the life and destiny of the individual.<sup>14</sup> Without wishing to deprive it entirely of its mystery, he seeks to remove from religion that dogmatic uniform character which breeds complacency and absolves the individual from the need for any further effort of mind and spirit, what Girard sees as the circumscribing effect of "le sentiment de confort moral."<sup>15</sup> In seeking to restore the concept of individual responsibility in matters of faith, Lenz proceeds from Rousseauist principles, even though the essence of their respective beliefs is quite different.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. The metaphysical basis of being

The metaphysically based view of man and his moral destiny that is implicit in the theological writings we find first stated at length in the Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral, one of Lenz's most carefully reasoned works which originates in the first years in Strasbourg. It begins with his definition of "die Moral" as "die Lehre von der Bestimmung des Menschen und von dem rechten Gebrauch seines freien Willens um diese Bestimmung zu erreichen" (WS, I, 483). In attempting to explain the moral basis of our actions he posits two motivating "Grundtriebe", which are: "der Trieb nach Vollkommenheit und der Trieb nach Glückseligkeit" (p. 487). However, since it is only through the former that the latter can be attained, we finish up with one basic drive: for perfection.



This he defines as "das ursprüngliche Verlangen unsers Wesens, sich eines immer größern Umfanges unserer Kräfte und Fähigkeiten bewußt zu werden" (p. 488). This ceaseless process whereby the individual becomes aware, through effort, of his fullest potential is viewed as a kind of duty.

Perfectability was a favorite concept of Enlightenment optimism. Rousseau also takes account of it in the historical philosophy of the Discours sur l'Inégalité; however, he sees it as a double-edged sword which has conferred at least as much misfortune as happiness on man in his cultural development, an ambiguity which Lessing and Mendelssohn overlooked.<sup>17</sup> Lenz, we find, shares Rousseau's view of perfectability as an antecedent of the Fall (in the theological, not the natural, sense), but, unlike Rousseau, sees this not as a matter for elegiac regret but for rejoicing in an underlying law of existence: "Gut, m.H., hieß bei den ersten Menschen, fähig zur Vollkommenheit, aber noch nicht vollkommen, denn sonst wurden sie nicht gefallen sein. Alle Geschöpfe vom Wurm bis zum Seraph müssen sich vervollkommen können, sonst hörten sie auf endliche Geschöpfe zu sein . . ." (p.490). Lenz's understanding of good and evil is adumbrated in the Salzmann correspondence. The same imperfect creature that tends to evil through the misuse of his undeveloped faculties is capable of the most sublime good (sublime precisely because of his imperfect nature and the degree of effort involved in perfecting it) through the right use of these same faculties: "Was ist das Gute anders, als der gehörige und rechtmäßige Gebrauch, den wir von unsren Fähigkeiten machen? Und das Böse,

als der 'unrechtmäßige' übelübereinstimmende Gebrauch dieser Fähigkeiten, der, wie ein verdorbenes Uhrwerk, immer weiter im verkehrten Wege davon fortgeht . . ."<sup>18</sup> In seeking perfection in accordance with the good, moreover, we are brought up against the opposition between the vis activa, and the vis inertiae<sup>19</sup> between activity and rest. In metaphysical terms, obedience to the moral injunction for self-perfection entails constant movement, a "Zustand der Bewegung" (p. 492).

Lenz here encounters his most serious disagreement with Rousseau: the latter's alleged advocacy of "relative peace," or minimum movement, as the highest good:

Rousseau ist für den Zustand der Ruhe, oder der kleinst-  
möglichsten Bewegung. Allein sollte dieser Zustand einem  
Wesen wohl der angemessenste sein, welches in sich einen  
Grundtrieb zu einer immer höheren Vervollkommenung, zu  
einer immer weitem Entwicklung seiner Fähigkeiten spürt?  
Nein! Der höchste Zustand der Bewegung ist unserm Ich der  
angemessenste, das heißt derjenige Zustand, wo unsere  
Relationen und Situationen so zusammenlaufen, daß wir  
das größtmögliche Feld vor uns haben, unsere Vollkommenheit  
zu erhöhen zu befördern und andern empfindbar zu machen,  
weil wir uns alsdann das größtmöglichste Vergnügen ver-  
sprechen können, welches eigentlich bei allen Menschen  
in der ganzen Welt in dem größten Gefühl unserer Existenz,  
unserer Fähigkeiten, unsers Selbst besteht (pp. 492-93).

It says much for Lenz's critical perception that here, unwittingly, he raises an objection to Rousseau's philosophy which, as we saw in Chapter II, was to become a recurrent issue in German criticism: how to reconcile the subjective search for "paix" with the manifest fact of human imperfection.<sup>20</sup> Lenz, moreover, is writing before the publication of the Confessions and the late "Romantic" works in which this whole issue becomes critical. Lenz's only source consists of a few scattered reflexions in Emile.<sup>21</sup> The question is asked in Book II: "En quoi . . . consiste la sagesse humaine ou la route du vrai bonheur?"<sup>22</sup> Rousseau concludes that the answer lies in achieving a balance between desires and abilities; in diminishing "l'excès des désirs sur les facultés, et à mettre en égalité parfaite la puissance et la volonté." This certainly runs contrary to the idea, which Lenz seems to be expounding, of a productive relationship between "wollen" and "können," that is, that increasing effort brings with it a corresponding increase in capacity. Moreover, although Rousseau stresses the need for activity, he perceives as its ultimate goal a state of rest: "C'est alors seulement que, toutes les forces étant en action, l'âme cependant restera paisible . . ."

We have already noted in the preceding chapter the recurrence of this criticism of Rousseau several years later, in Der Waldbruder, a more subjective, autobiographical context. The suggestion here is that Lenz half perceives the psychological and spiritual wisdom of attaining peace, even though, for reasons that remain to be discussed, he continues to dissociate himself from that doctrine. Philosophically, the criticism is of an objective kind, based on his dynamic Sturm und Drang concept of human nature as endless striving: ". . . unsere Seele ist nicht zum Stillsitzen

sondern zum Gehen, Arbeiten, Handeln geschaffen."<sup>23</sup> Even the physical passions, though essentially egoistic, may be good in effect, as a spur to action.<sup>24</sup> "Konkupiszenz" is even described as "die Wurzel alles moralischen Gefühls" (WS, I, 276), recalling somewhat the central paradox of Mephisto's role in Faust.<sup>25</sup> There is an optimism here lacking in Rousseau's view of the passions as a source of corruption (Discours sur l'inégalité) or, at best, a means of self-preservation (Emile, p. 246). Lenz's response to the retrenchment of passion in the later part of the Nouvelle Héloïse will be considered in due course. In general his attitude shows the influence of the Enlightenment belief in harmony, familiar to Lenz from such writers as Leibniz and Shaftesbury.<sup>26</sup>

The criticism of rest as a philosophical objective cannot be isolated from the socio-critical trend which increasingly dominates Lenz's writings and actions. His disappointment with Rousseau, culminating in the poignant "O Rousseau! Rousseau!" of the "Waldbruder" Herz (WS, I, 285), must be viewed in the light of the fact that this doctrine appears to run counter to much that he had learned from Rousseau's writings. Thus we frequently find the condition of "Ruhe" in association with the suspect values of a society whose shortcomings Rousseau had revealed: moral and social stagnation, and the amoral pursuit of "Genuß."<sup>27</sup>

The quest for an ideal of being in opposition to a society committed to passive enjoyment of the senses and intellectual pedantry leads to the essay Über Götz von Berlichingen. This is regarded as a pivotal work in Lenz's progression from a theologically based ethical system to a viable,

outwardly directed conception of moral existence. He dispenses entirely, for the first time, with Christian concepts.

In a sense Gotz represents Rousseau's philosophy in action, unimpeded by the element of restraint that Lenz deplores, and thus coming closer to the picture of Rousseau which generally prevails in the Sturm und Drang.<sup>28</sup> The influence is evident in much of the imagery which echoes Rousseau's writings.<sup>29</sup> The beginning of the essay presents us with a sombre vision of the average mortal's earthly existence, circumscribed and determined by the vast machine of which he is an insignificant part:

Wir werden geboren -- unsere Eltern geben uns Brot und Kleid -- unsere Lehrer drucken in unser Hirn Worte, Sprachen, Wissenschaften -- irgend ein artiges Mädchen drückt in unser Herz den Wunsch es eigen zu besitzen, es in unsere Arme als unser Eigentum zu schließen, wenn sich nicht gar ein tierisch Bedürfnis mit hineinmischt -- es entsteht eine Lucke in der Republik wo wir hineinpassen -- unsere Freunde, Verwandte, Gonner setzen an und stoßen uns glücklich hinein -- wir drehen uns eine Zeitlang in diesem Platz herum wie die andern Räder und stoßen und treiben -- bis wir wenn's noch so ordentlich geht abgestumpft sind und zuletzt wieder einem neuen Rade Platz machen müssen -- das ist, meine Herren! ohne Ruhm zu melden unsere Biographie -- und was bleibt nun der Mensch noch anders als eine vorzüglich-künstliche kleine Maschine, die in die große Maschine, die wir Welt, Weltbegebenheiten, Weltläufte nennen besser oder schlimmer hineinpaßt (WS, I, 378).

There is more than a hint of the opening of the Contrat social, which Lenz would have known at least from hear-say: "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers."<sup>30</sup> Certainly the underlying thought is identical: slavery is our lot within the rigidly organised social body, even though our nature may cry out for freedom. The image of "eine Lücke in der Republik" that the individual must fill, recalls the distinction made in Emile between civil and natural man: "L'homme civil n'est qu'une unité fractionnaire qui tient au dénominateur, et dont la valeur est dans son rapport avec l'entier, qui est le corps social. Les bonnes institutions sociales sont celles qui savent le mieux dénaturer l'homme, lui ôter son existence absolue pour lui en donner une relative, et transporter le moi dans l'unité commune . . ."<sup>31</sup>

The enslavement of which Lenz writes must be understood in both a social and a metaphysical sense. The latter finds defenders in the determinist philosophies of Helvetius, Lamettrie and others, of whom Lenz is probably thinking when he observes: "Kein Wunder, daß die Philosophen so philosophieren, wenn die Menschen so leben" (p. 378).<sup>32</sup> Rhetorically, he continues: "Aber heißt das gelebt?" The focus of philosophical inquiry thus returns to the same problem underlying Emile: "Vivre est le métier que je lui veux apprendre."<sup>33</sup> Precisely what Rousseau understands by living is explained forthwith: "Vivre, ce n'est pas respirer, c'est agir; c'est faire usage de nos organes, de nos sens, de nos facultés, de toutes les parties de nous-mêmes, qui nous donnent le sentiment de notre existence."<sup>34</sup> Again, thought and rhetorical structure appear to be echoed by Lenz, in one of

the most powerful statements of the philosophy of action: "Was lernen wir hieraus? Das lernen wir hieraus, daß handeln, handeln die Seele der Welt sei, nicht genießen, nicht empfindeln, nicht spitzfundeln, daß wir dadurch allein Gott ähnlich werden, der unaufhörlich handelt und unaufhörlich an seinen Werken sich ergötzt . . ." (pp. 378-79) The passage continues: ". . . das lernen wir daraus, daß die in uns handelnde Kraft, unser Geist, unser höchstes Anteil sei, daß die allein unserm Körper mit allen seinen Sinnlichkeiten und Empfindungen das wahre Leben, die wahre Konsistenz den wahren Wert gebe, daß ohne denselben all unser Genuß all unsere Empfindungen, all unser Wissen doch nur ein Leiden, doch nur ein aufgeschobener Tod sind." Rousseau, too, speaks of this kind of death in life: "L'homme qui a le plus vécu n'est pas celui qui a compté le plus d'années, mais celui qui a le plus senti la vie. Tel s'est fait enterrer à cent ans, qui mourut dès sa naissance (loc. cit.)."

These concurrences do not conceal the important differences between the underlying philosophies. Undoubtedly Lenz is indebted to Rousseau for intensifying his sense of satiety and discontent with the artificial fetters of the status quo, the burning desire to taste life as it should be lived and was ordained by nature, the love of that inalienable "Freiheit," which one of his dramatic characters calls "das Element des Menschen."<sup>35</sup> Yet when Rousseau talks of action this is conceived primarily in opposition to the pedantry and over-intellectualism of modern life. Lenz, as we have seen, whilst certainly endorsing the latter aspect, goes far beyond this. For him action occupies the central place in his dynamic moral philosophy and

cannot tolerate the natural checks and balances invoked by Rousseau.

Lenz, quite simply, believes that action will restore to man his freedom, the condition which Rousseau believes is irrevocably lost (except in its very relative, "civil" form.)<sup>36</sup> This, too, is the lesson of Götz:

"... daß diese unsre handelnde Kraft nicht eher ruhe, nicht eher ablasse zu wirken, zu regen, zu toben, als bis sie uns Freiheit um uns her verschafft, Platz zu handeln" (p. 379).

In what sense can such action be said to guarantee freedom? The ideal of being that Götz symbolizes is one of individual self-determination. This is understood in the sense of recognizing the role allotted to each of us and fulfilling the challenge it imposes. The symbolism thus becomes a theatrical one: "Wir sind alle, meine Herren! in gewissem Verstand noch stumme Personen auf dem großen Theater der Welt, bis es den Direktors gefallen wird uns eine Rolle zu geben. Welche sie aber auch sei, so müssen wir uns doch alle bereit halten in derselben zu handeln, und jenachdem wir besser oder schlimmer, schwächer oder stärker handeln, jenachdem haben wir hernach besser oder schlimmer gespielt, jenachdem verbessern wir auch unser äußerliches und innerliches Glück" (p. 381). Self-determination through action we find restated in the essay Über die Natur unseres Geistes: "Unsere Unabhängigkeit zeigt sich . . . noch mehr im Handeln als im Denken, denn beim Denken nehm ich meine Lage mein Verhältnis und Gefühle wie sie sind, beim Handeln aber verändere ich sie wie es mir gefällt" (WS, I, 575). This work singles out human pride as evidence of his freedom.<sup>37</sup> This instinct, which again contrasts with the resignatory trend to humility in Rousseau's philosophy, is perceived as "ein Wink von der Natur der menschlichen Seele . . . ,



daß sie eine Substanz die nicht selbständig geboren, aber ein Bestreben ein Trieb in ihr sei sich zur Selbständigkeit hinaufzuarbeiten, sich gleichsam von dieser großen Masse der in einander hängenden Schöpfung abzusondern und ein für sich bestehendes Wesen auszumachen . . ." (p. 578).

The influence of Leibnizian metaphysics is of course very evident: the concept of men as intelligent "freywillige und selbständige Wesen" capable of self-perfection through effort.<sup>38</sup> Yet the embodiment of this in the titanic, self-assertive "Kerl," Götz, shatters the serenity of Leibniz' harmonious universe. Moreover, the element of doubt cannot be overlooked, which may perhaps account for Lenz's failure to produce any equivalent of Götz in his own dramas. The essay represents an attempt to come to terms with the doctrines of materialistic determinism as developed by such writers as Lamettrie and Helvetius.<sup>39</sup> Lenz, too, admits to having experienced the sense of dependency: "Wie denn, ich nur ein Ball der Umstände? Ich --?"

(p. 572). In the intensely personal moralische Bekenntung eines Poeten the

author reflects whether "ich sei durch meine Umstände gezwungen das zu sein, was ich bin, also nicht aus mir selber gut und der Gedanke peinigt mich"

(WS, I, 278). The phrase "nicht aus mir selber gut" certainly has problematic implications in view of Lenz's ideal, -- in the last resort a moral ideal, -- of self-determination through striving. Such expressions of doubt lend a personal urgency to Lenz's doctrine, the significance of which will be viewed later. Certainly, their effect would be to make him ill-disposed towards the kind of compromise that Rousseau advocates.

### 3. The ethical basis of being

Lenz on several occasions alludes to the imperative object of his existence, which is to be good: "gut und artig seyn," as he expresses it in a letter to La Roche.<sup>40</sup> His precise understanding of this moral imperative provides perhaps the most important demonstration both of Rousseau's influence and the extent to which Lenz goes beyond him.

Rousseau's ethics are based on the apriori assumption that man is innately good. This may be regarded as the optimistic pole of a philosophy whose negative side is the perception of the degree to which that natural virtue has become stifled by the conditions of modern life.<sup>41</sup> A somewhat conventional statement of this belief appears to underlie Lenz's dramatic sketch Die beiden Alten (probably written 1775). The material, as he states in his foreword, has its source in a newspaper anecdote which is seen as typical of contemporary morals (GS, II, 226).<sup>42</sup> Two worldly villains from Paris, a city consistently depicted by Rousseau as the seat of modern Europe's depravity, conspire to persuade a foolish young country nobleman, St. Armand, to lock away his father, proclaim him dead and claim his inheritance. In due course, the suggestion that he commit patricide awakens him to the realization that he has been alienated from his true nature. The voice of this is, as with Rousseau conscience. "Mein Gewissen erwachte," he declares, and adds: "Ich bin ein unnatürlicher Bösewicht, aber ich bin es nicht durch mich geworden . . ." (p.246).

Bonds of love and loyalty are too strong to be permanently suppressed, and the source of his corruption is an extraneous one: society. This, in Kindermann's view, clearly reflects a confirmation of Rousseau:<sup>43</sup>

"Hier in Den beiden Alten zeigt Lenz, daß ein Kampf gegen die Entsittlichung der Gesellschaft nicht aussichtslos sein muß, Rousseaus Glaube, daß der Mensch im Grunde gut ist, daß er nur durch den Druck der Zivilisation verdorben ist, liegt auch diesem Stück zugrunde."

The concluding scene of Der Hofmeister appears to echo this optimism. Estranged relatives and lovers are reconciled, whilst the elder Pätus tells his son: "erkenne deinen Vater wieder, der eine Weile seine menschliche Natur ausgezogen und in ein wildes Tier ausgeartet war" (WS, II, 103). Yet the artificial, parodistic aspect of this overly joyous "Schlußtableau" (from which the title-hero is conspicuously absent) is very apparent.<sup>44</sup> In his more satisfying works of social commentary, those that move beyond the melodramatic orbit of "Söhne, die den Vater aus Habgier und sinnlicher Abhängigkeit erschlagen wollen" (Freye), Lenz clearly perceives the inadequacy of Rousseau's faith in human virtue for effecting social change.

In Rousseau's ethics this innate virtue is kept alive within each individual through conscience, an infallible inner authority which supplants external dogma as a criterion of moral conduct: ". . . dispensés de consumer notre vie à l'étude de la morale, nous avons à moindre frais un guide plus assuré dans ce dedale immense des opinions humaines."<sup>45</sup> Such a conflict between conscience and dogma is portrayed

in Der neue Menoza. The pedant Beza seeks to overcome the moral anguish of Prince Tandi, who has learned that he has unwittingly married his sister, by arguing that God has not explicitly prohibited incest. This very Rousseauesque hero reacts angrily to the suggestion that he avail himself of this legalism: "Und das Gewissen vergiften! Fort, Verräter! das Bewußtsein, recht getan zu haben, kann nie unglücklich machen. Gram und Schmerz ist noch kein Unglück, sie gelten ein zweideutig Glück, dessen unterste Grundlage Gewissensangst ist" (WS, II, 162). Rousseau's celebration of conscience, which he calls variously "la lumière intérieure," "le vrai guide de l'homme," "l'instinct divin," "un principe inné de justice et de vertu,"<sup>46</sup> is his most distinctive contribution to the ethical outlook of his time. Conscience supplies the regulating force without which individual morals would be in a state of anarchy and doubt. ~~The image Rousseau employs to convey this idea is that of~~

the compass. The Vicar of Savoy describes his original doubts thus:

"Je méditais. . . sur le triste sort des mortels flottant sur cette mer des opinions humaines, sans gouvernail, sans boussole, et livrés à leurs passions orageuses, sans autre guide qu'un pilote inexperimenté qui méconnaît sa route, et qui ne sait ni d'où il vient ni où il va."<sup>47</sup>

A very similar image occurs in Lenz's Stimmen des Laien: "Welch eine wilde See voll Zweifel, die alle zu keinem Zweck führen? Wer wird unsere Vernunft leiten, gutige Gottheit, wenn du nicht selbst uns einen Kompass in die Hand gibst, nach dem wir schiffen können" (WS, I, 514).<sup>48</sup>

In a scene from Der neue Menoza, Donna Diana, possibly the most demonic example of all in the tradition of the vengeful "Machtfrau," sets off to hunt down and murder her husband Count Camäleon, adding that her heart (for Rousseau the seat of conscience!) will aid her in her quest, for "es ist wie ein Kompass, es fehlt nicht" (WS, II, 143). It is this reoccurrence of the image in such an incongruous connection that underlines an important distinction between Lenz and Rousseau. Moral concepts which in Rousseau's thinking operate as sacred and immutable pillars of a universal ethic become, in the mouths of many of Lenz's characters, mere slogans, serving a purely individual point of view. Although Tandi voices Rousseau's optimistic faith in the infallibility of conscience, other characters having less lofty ideals claim its authority. Thus Beza proffers his advice on the legality of incest "von Amts und Gewissens wegen", and complains, when the prince demurs: "Sie sind hartnäckig darauf, Ihr Gewissen unnötiger Weise zu beschweren" (WS, II, 160, 162). It is clear that conscience, too, has received a respectable position within the speculative theories of the pedants. Other characters, more honest in their intentions, still have somewhat bizarre ideas of conscience. For the schoolmaster Wenzeslaus in Der Hofmeister it is an aid to digestion (WS, II, 57). Two heroines, Gustchen von Berg and Mariane Wesener, are led by the force of conscience to perceive their duties towards their fathers, but in the former case this occurs far too late, whilst in the second it is only temporary (pp. 64, 194: cf. the words of Eisenhardt, p. 193). Lenz, in short, is acutely aware of the relative nature of individual conscience as a guide to moral decision and also of its precarious position within

the complex web of conflicting moral and social forces.<sup>49</sup> "The seemingly solid structure of Rousseau's ethical system based on 'la voix du cœur' does not bear the weight of psychological and social realities coldly observed."<sup>50</sup> To this we must return.

The ideal envisaged by the doctrine of conscience is one that Lenz shares completely. The attainment of virtue, and hence of happiness, results from the obedience to moral impulses seated not only in the mind but also in the feelings.<sup>51</sup> It leads to that condition St. Preux describes as "ce sentiment permanent de satisfaction intérieure qui seul peut rendre heureux un être pensant."<sup>52</sup> The heart, "le premier organe de la vérité,"<sup>53</sup> is the vital centre from which the individual receives his predisposition to prefer what is morally right to what is reprehensible, and also his capacity to judge his own conduct by that standard. Lenz, in his writings, refers constantly to a "moralisches Gefühl" (WS, I, 265, 276, 445).<sup>54</sup> In his conviction: "Es ist besser, wenig zu glauben, aber das, was man glaubt, in seinem ganzen Umfang zu empfinden, als alles zu glauben und nichts zu empfinden" (GS, IV, 85). In the same vein he offers, somewhat incongruously, his moral advice to Wieland: ". . . wenn euer Herz euer ist, wird eure Tugend gewiß sicher sein. Bleibt Meister eurer Herzen, und ihr bleibt Meister der Welt. . . . Da . . . alles Glück in der Welt auf unsere innere Beschaffenheit und Empfänglichkeit desselben ankommt, welche Drachen sind feurig genug, diesen Eingang desselben zu bewahren" (WS, I, 446: original emphasis).

It is in this sense that Rousseau understands "vertu," which receives greater stress in his works, possibly, than in those of any other writer before or since. It is important to note, however, that this constant harping on virtue, what Eudo C. Mason has called "das ganze peinliche Gerede Rousseaus von der Tugend,"<sup>55</sup> is distinct, in essence at least, from the somewhat complacent, practical moralizing which fills the bourgeois literature of the period. What Rousseau has in mind is an inner purity, which at times comes close to the Christian concept of Grace. The attainment of this state is the basic theme of the Nouvelle Héloïse. If Julie and St. Preux ultimately concur in conventional moral practice by renouncing each other, their motives are infinitely deeper than obedience to external form, resulting rather from a vital process of moral self-realization. Julie's virtue demonstrates above all that sublime state which appealed to many German writers, undoubtedly influencing the ethical and aesthetical ideal of the "schöne Seele."<sup>56</sup> For Rousseau virtue of this kind is the only conceivable counter-force to society's corruption.

The strong influence of the Nouvelle Héloïse on Lenz's largely autobiographical Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten was noted in the previous chapter. Like Julie, Cornelia is a morally educating force, aiding the poet's cure from the effects of an unruly and misguided passion (Lenz's love of Cleophe Fibich). He seeks the healing influence of her virtue, her "stille Tugend" (Ws, I, 260).<sup>57</sup> "Wie muß doch die Tugend immer die ersten Schritte tun um das Laster herunzubringen,"

he exclaims ecstatically (p. 261). The situation is identical to that existing between Julie and St. Preux: a superior moral nature provides guidance to one who is equally sensitive but for the moment morally confused.

Yet, despite the many optimistic echoes of Rousseau, the Moralische Bekehrung remains a problematic work. Virtue has become an intensely subjective quantity. It is, moreover, an exclusive preserve of the initiated, those endowed with a higher degree of sensibility than is granted to most mortals. This reflects the sense of hermetic exclusiveness that often appears to accompany the practice of virtue in Rousseau's novel, as, for example, when Julie exhorts her lover: "Laisse, mon ami, ces vains moralistes et rentre au fond de ton âme . . ." <sup>58</sup> Lenz equals in intensity the emotional pathos of Rousseau, or of Werther, yet the subjectivity strikes us as being of a different order: overshadowing the Rousseauesque display of sentiment are doubts concerning the morality of precisely this indulgence of pure subjectivity. <sup>59</sup> Such doubts are voiced in the confession: "Liebe S. ich fühle es eben daß ich Anlagen in mir habe, der allerschlechteste Mensch auf dem ganzen Erdboden zu werden und das sobald ich mich in mich selbst verliebe. Welch ein schöner schlechter und elender Charakter Eitelkeit" (WS, I, 279).

Lenz's distrust of the total preoccupation with his subjective state such as he finds in Cornelia's presence is based on an awareness of the power of egoism. It is this which engenders the very relativization of virtue remarked upon earlier (the ease with which concepts like



conscience or duty may be pressed into the service of a purely self-serving line of conduct). The notion that ethics may be self-related occurs in Rousseau. Emile does not show any significant change from the theory of the natural "~~amour~~ de soi" and the corrupt "amour-propre" which he developed in the Discours sur l'Inégalité.<sup>60</sup> Rousseau is obliged to replace the self-effacing Christian ethic with one that is less noble but more practicable, based on the view that love of others has a self-serving motive: "Fais ton bien avec le moindre mal d'autrui qu'il est possible."<sup>61</sup> Rousseau's dichotomy has its equivalent in Lenz's terminology, which distinguished between a "Selbstliebe" that is "gerecht," and a baser "Eigenliebe" or, sometimes, "Eigendunkel."<sup>62</sup> The difference between them appears to be somewhat different than with Rousseau, in that it is mainly a matter of perception. All men are by nature selfish, varying only in the degree to which they realize this, and hence their ability or otherwise to make the egoistic impulse a positive force. Strephon, the hero of Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, declares: "Der Mensch ist so geneigt, sich selber zu betrügen; hat er Verstand genug, sich vor seiner Eigenliebe zu verwahren, so kommen tausend andere und vereinigen ihre Kräfte, seine entschlafene Eigenliebe zu wecken, um den Selbstbetrug unerhort zu machen" (WS, II, 319). It is in the words of the "Waldbruder," Herz, that we see hinted a connection between Lenz's philosophy of dynamic activism and the egoistic principle: "Die Selbstliebe ist immer das, was uns die Kraft zu den andern Tugenden geben muß. . ." (WS, I, 290).

In seeking to preserve the notion of innate virtue Rousseau makes this into an absolute. Its custodian is the heart of the individual, who has only to follow the dictates of moral feeling in order to be good. Goodness is a relatively uncomplicated process of obedience to an ever-present inner source of truth. The only way in which such a virtue may be saved from being undermined by selfishness is through retreat from the world. The good characters whom Rousseau creates from his own nostalgic yearnings -- Emile, Julie, St. Preux -- remain so because they are carefully nurtured away from the artificial, self-serving distractions of society. Rousseau's internal type of virtue resembles a hot-house-plant: " . . . la conscience est timide, elle aime la retraite et la paix . . ."63

For Lenz the mere experience of virtue as sentiment or desire is not enough. The following passage from the philosophical tale Zerbin suggests that here too selfish principles may intrude: "Die edelsten Gesinnungen unserer Seele zeigen sich oft mehr in der Art, unsere Entwürfe auszuführen, als in den Entwürfen selbst, die auch bei dem vorzüglichsten Menschen eigennützig sein müssen, wenn ich den Begriff dieses Wortes so weit ausdehnen will, als er ausgedehnt werden kann. Vielleicht liegt die Ursache in der Natur der menschlichen Seele und ihrer Entschließungen, die, wenn sie entstehen, durch die Zeit und Anwendung der Umstände ihre Uneigennützigkeit erhalten" (GS, V, 81). Virtue must prove itself through action, since, as the passage continues: "Tugend ist nie Plan, sondern Ausführung schwieriger Plane [sic] gewesen . . ." Lenz cannot, like Rousseau, accept the notion of goodness as primarily an inner disposition from which virtue and happiness automatically follow. Man's intrinsic goodness, which as we

have seen Lenz adheres to in principle, is a potential to be evolved, not a more or less static quality to be carefully preserved. Its corollary, the obverse of perfectability, is corruptibility, the realization: "daß ein Mensch von Natur zu allen Lastern fähig sei" (GS, V, 281). (This also resolves the dilemma of Rousseau's doctrine which had bothered Herder: how can an intrinsically good being evolve corrupt institutions.<sup>64</sup>) Lenz invokes a force to halt this drift towards evil, and this is a humanistic faith in man's capacity for self-improvement. In Der Landprediger we read: "Nur unser Unglaube an die Menschheit macht, daß sie so böse ist" (GS, V, 205); and this conviction governs all the philanthropic activities of the pastor Mannheim.

Lenz's distinction between potential and actual virtue lends more urgency to his entire ideal of "Handeln" as an imperative of being. It assumes a practical moral applicability over and above its more strictly metaphysical function. To see this we must return to the Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral, which contains a simple, emphatic statement of Lenz's philosophy of altruism, described by Rudolf as his Categorical Imperative:<sup>65</sup> "Wir müssen suchen andere um uns herum glücklich zu machen" (WS, I, 496). That this is seen as an extension of the metaphysical argument of the impulse to self-perfection is made clear further on: "Wenn jeder diesen Vorsatz in sich zur Reife und zum Leben kommen läßt, so werden wir eine glückliche Welt haben . . . Diese beständig wachsame und wirkende Sorgfalt für den Zustand meines Nebenmenschen wird auch das beste Mittel sein, hier in dieser Welt meine Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln,

meine Vollkommenheit zu befördern."

This altruistic ethic, for Lenz the only viable means of counter-acting egoism, is stated again and again in his writings.<sup>66</sup> Prince Tandi contrasts it in his own people with the selfish pursuit of "Genuß" on the part of the Europeans (WS, II, 130) and practises it himself in his generosity towards the beggars (pp. 158 ff.). Concern for one's fellow men, in particular the weak and the suppressed, is, of course, an important part of Rousseau's moral philosophy. Emile is to be taught the habit of charity, and Julie shows herself strongly imbued with the compassionate state of mind.<sup>67</sup> There can be no doubt that Rousseau experienced the emotion of pity to a high degree.<sup>68</sup> At the same time this brings its own reward in the form of a satisfied conscience, the inner "paix" that Rousseau sought from life. With it it brings a heightened sensibility. In Emile this is depicted as a process of "opening the heart" in the moral education of the child, whose sensibilities would otherwise atrophy. Likewise Julie's many philanthropic activities are not entirely divorced from the pleasurable element akin to the "joy of grief." On her death-bed she reflects: "On ne sait pas . . . quelle douceur c'est de s'attendrir sur ses propres maux et sur ceux des autres. La sensibilité porte toujours dans l'âme un certain contentement de soi-même indépendant de la fortune et des événements."<sup>69</sup> For this reason, too, beggars fulfil a useful social function.<sup>70</sup> The altruistic impulse in Rousseau's writings was undoubtedly a powerful influence on his admirers, particularly where it found its vent in outbursts of indignation at the manifold abuses of society. Yet it cannot be entirely dissociated from the sentimental, subject-related pre-

occupation with the cultivation of virtue for its own sake. Rarely does this become a clear-cut moral imperative to the individual to use the short allotted span of his existence to further the general weal, in the sense understood by Lenz.

Lenz's own attempts to live by his doctrine of altruistic activity were referred to in the preceding chapter. His many projects in the sphere of politics, education, economics and so forth, reveal an inner commitment to social action rare in an age still very much under the influence of Empfindsamkeit. He was in the literal sense an "activist." He describes his plays as "political," and both Der Hofmeister and Die Soldaten hint at practical ways in which social institutions may be reformed to the advantage of human happiness and virtue.<sup>71</sup>

However much this social impulse may owe to Rousseau's exposure of society's ills, the ultimate relationship to society differs for the two writers. For Lenz, virtue evolves through effort and conflict and its theatre is the society of men. This Shakespearian image is appropriate and underlies the entire Götz essay. Rousseau's attitude to society is ambiguous. It involves the individual's seeking absolute truths in endless compromise, so that contact with it must be minimized: "Le précepte de ne jamais nuire à autrui emporte celui de tenir à la société humaine le moins qu'il est possible; car, dans l'état social, le bien de l'un fait nécessairement le mal de l'autre."<sup>72</sup> Consequently he refutes Diderot's claim that only the evil man is alone: "moi je dis qu'il n'y a que le bon qui soit seul . . ." It is certainly not coincidental that the only book Emile is permitted to read is Robinson Crusoe.<sup>73</sup>

Lenz is by no means impervious to this problem, stating, for example, in Vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen that: "man mit dem besten Herzen doch unwissend leicht jemand unrecht tun könnte" (GS, IV, 44). Yet fundamental to his entire moral theory is the conviction, which may owe something to Kant,<sup>74</sup> that society, not the desert, is the only conceivable environment in which the individual will achieve the fullest potential of his moral nature. This too we find stated most clearly in the Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral: "Die meisten, die größten und fürtrefflichsten unserer Fähigkeiten liegen tot, sobald wir aus aller menschlichen Gesellschaft fortgerissen und völlig allein befinden. Daher schaudert unserer Natur für nichts so sehr, als einer gänzlichen Einsamkeit, weil alsdenn unser Gefühl unserer Fähigkeiten das kleinstmögliche wird. Sehen Sie hier die Weisheit des Schöpfers, sehen Sie hier den Keim der Liebe und aller gesellschaftlichen Tugenden auf dem ersten Grundtrieb nach Vollkommenheit gepöpft" (WS, I, 490: original emphasis). The hermit, a popular figure among eighteenth century writers, whose existence is so praised in Rousseau's writings, is treated by Lenz as less than noble.<sup>75</sup> He is at worst a self-centred recluse from the effort of living, at best (like Lenz's "Waldbruder") an affronted refugee from an uncomprehending world, but always a poor alternative to what Lenz strove to maintain as his ideal of the truly moral existence: ceaseless self-perfection in and through the external engagement of the subject's will to virtue.

## V. THE PROBLEM OF CULTURE

### 1. The decline of culture and the Rococo

Rousseau's philosophy is rooted in a fundamentalist type of cultural primitivism, even though his adherence to this is far from consistent. Through learning and the arts, debased and artificial values in society are sustained and propagated. At a time when intellectual pursuits enjoy unprecedented prestige, Rousseau writes: "Toujours des livres! quelle manie! Parce que l'Europe est pleine de livres, les Europeens les regardent comme indispensables, sans songer que, sur les trois quarts de la terre, on n'en a jamais vu."<sup>1</sup>

The only acknowledged source of truth is "le livre de la nature," a phrase which was to become a cliché with the Sturm und Drang." Lenz makes repeated reference to "das Buch der Natur."<sup>3</sup> He undoubtedly shares Rousseau's sense of satiety at the vast quantities of works from the pens of savants having no appreciable effect on the human condition. He remarks, in the Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten, that ". . . es heutzutage mehr Leute gibt die Bucher schreiben, als die welche lesen . . ." (WS, I, 254). His interest in Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost, the only play he translated in full (Amor vincit omnia (1773)), is undoubtedly due to its theme which has been frequently described as Rousseauist, namely the opposition of artificial and pretentious learning and that derived from nature.<sup>4</sup> It is a dramatic plea on behalf of nature and common sense against all that is unreal and affected."<sup>5</sup> Byron's vital and instinctive rebellion against

book-learning in the age of Renaissance would appear just as relevant to those rebelling against the excessive intellectualism of the Enlightenment:

Small have continual plodders ever won,  
 Save base authority from others' books.  
 These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,  
 That give a name to every fixed star,  
 Have no more profit of their shining nights  
 Than those that walk, and wot not what they are (I,1).

The pedantic mania for naming things is strongly criticized by Rousseau in Emile.<sup>6</sup> Lenz renders this passage in his prose version: "Diese irdischen Gevatter des Himmels, diese Astronomen, die gleich jedem Stern einen Namen an den Hals werfen, haben nicht größeren Gewinn von den schönen Nächten als der ehrliche Bauer, der drunter herumspaziert und viel weiß, was sie bedeuten" (GS, I, 261). The addition of the peasant as representative of a more natural culture is an obvious embellishment from the eighteenth century tradition, for which Rousseau is a possible source.<sup>7</sup>

Lenz echoes Rousseau most closely in his condemnation of the shallowness and artificiality of contemporary culture. A particular problem in Germany arises from its characteristic "steife Sitten" (WS, I, 398). Wieland, who was generally revered as the pride of German letters, is described thus: "Er hat . . . auf einer Seite



unserer vaterländischen alten Steifigkeit, Langsamkeit und Pedanterie, auf der andern der glänzenden Unwissenheit vieler nach falschen Mustern gebildeten Gesellschaften von sogenanntem guten Ton mit wahrer deutscher Mannhaftigkeit und Mut die Stange gehalten, und selbst die Ausschweifungen seiner Muse von der äußersten angestrengtesten Schwärmerei zu der zügellosesten Leichtfertigkeit waren zu diesen Endzwecken nötig" (WS, I, 425). Everywhere he sees evidence of drab conformity, the loss of naturalness and spontaneity, excessive "Gelehrsamkeit" (WS, I, 175). Of the intellectual life in Strasbourg he wrote to Herder: "Kein Laut überall edler Empfindung, die aus dem Herzen kommt, die nicht Wiederhall ist."<sup>8</sup> In similar vein is his letter to Goethe on the "Society:" "... auf einer Seite ists Unglauben, Zerruttetheit, vagues Geschnarch von Belleliteratur wo nichts dahinter ist als Nesselbluthen: auf der andern steife leise Schneckenmoralphilosophie, die ihren großmutterlichen Gang fortkriecht, daß ich oft drüber die Geduld verlieren möchte."<sup>9</sup> This deep-seated malaise provided the spur to Lenz's own reformist ambitions in the literary sphere and in this sense is not wholly negative. Initially, at least, however, it undoubtedly made him particularly receptive to Rousseau's cultural criticism.

An important aspect of Rousseau's analysis is the role attributed to fashion, whether in literature, social conduct or morals. His favorite image in conveying fashion's victims is the puppet.<sup>10</sup> Lenz, too, employs this image in a number of poems (WS, I, 109, 197), and it is also implicit in the characterization of the foppish Mezzotinto (Die Freunde machen den Philosophen): "Es war eins der verwischten Gesichter, das den Stempel der Natur verloren hat. Man sollte ihn für einen Perückenstock halten, dem

man Hut und Degen angetan" (WS, II, 291). Fashion was the guiding force behind the imported Rococo culture and as such a constant object of attack in Lenz's campaign against that culture. The theme is treated again in his later life in a fragment which refers to "die Mode" as "diese Göttin der Veränderung," for whom all philosophers, artists and artisans toil (GS, IV, 379). Using the historical perspective, like Rousseau, he expresses some of the renewed pessimism of his later years: "Nun ubte die Mode ihre Herrschaft unumschränkt aus. Sie wählte Frankreich zu ihrer Residenz. Dort lernte sie der Deutsche kennen, huckte sich vor dem kleinen Götzen, erhielt seine Befehle und befolgte sie aufs genaueste" (pp. 381-2). The satirical dialogue between Mercury and "Mistress Modish," a woman of fashion seeking passage across the Styx into Elysium, reveals the moral harm to family life resulting from entrusting the education of one's children to "Tanzmeister, Singmeister, Zeichenmeister," a return to the theme of Emile and Der Hofmeister (GS, V, 347). In the sequel, "Elysium," the theme is the injurious effect of fashion on art. Mercury reflects on the refinements his image has undergone since antiquity: ". . . wenn man sich jetzt in Gesellschaften da oben produzieren will, so muß man anders aufgestutzt sein, als zu Zeiten der Homere, Amphione und Virgile, Goddam! sie schmissen mich zur Türe hinaus, wenn ich so nackend und natürlich auftreten wollte, wie ich vor ein paar tausend Jahren getan habe" (p. 351). Robinson Crusoe must suffer similar indignities in the process of being rendered into "eine anständigere Form" by modern literati (e.g. the pedagogue J.H. Campe) (p. 352).<sup>11</sup>

"This aspect of Lenz's criticism of cultural fashion finds its most polemic expression in the paper to the "Society" (September 1773), Zweiterlei über Virgils erste Ekloge. Kindermann sees in this minor piece of scholarship a somewhat programmatic attempt to apply Rousseauist criteria to literature.<sup>12</sup> Specifically, Lenz takes issue with the symbolist, biblical interpretation of Virgil by the Renaissance philosopher Johannes Ludovicus Vives, "In allegorias Bucolicorum Vergilii."<sup>13</sup> In practice he is attacking the Rococo Virgil, a creator of intricate and obscure images and allusions, overlaid with an insipid beauty. Lenz offers his own rendering of the first Eclogue showing a high degree of freshness and simplicity. This is followed by an attempt to cast the poet in the mould of the unsophisticated peasant: "Laßt dem Virgil seinen Bauerrock, seinen Strohhut mit einem Rokkenblumenkranz, aber um's Himmels willen, zieht ihm keine seidene Strümpfe an, sonst tut ihr dem armen Teufel unrecht und nehmt ihm noch das wenige was er hat. . . . Er war ein Schäfer, ein Mann der die Schönheiten der Natur fühlte und der darum sang, weil er sie fühlte" (WS, I, 472).

Rousseau sees evidence of the decline of culture in both the unresponsiveness of philosophy to real human needs and in the amoral, frivolous character of the literary arts. Philosophers, by dealing in generalizations and abstract ideas to the exclusion of the one solid criterion of truth, nature, "constitue" "la source des plus grandes erreurs des hommes."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the practitioners of these verbal

acrobatics are inspired primarily by vanity: "Ils n'amassent dans le cabinet que pour répandre dans le public; ils ne veulent être sages qu'aux yeux d'autrui . . ." <sup>15</sup> Such a philosopher Lenz depicts in his tale Zerbin, oder die neuere Philosophie (1776), whose theme is the corruption of an intrinsically good individual through the sterile and complacent rationalism of the Aufklärung. Zerbin, who studies ethics under Gellert, deliberately suppresses his inborn sensibility and seeks his fortune as a moral philosopher in the rationalist mould. His vanity grows in proportion to his reputation, and ultimately the original moral impetus gives way to an empty, self-aggrandizing ritual: "Alles ging gut: er fing hierauf an, statt der verdrießlichen Lehre von Potenzen und Exponenten ein Kollegium über die Moral und eins über das Jus naturæ zu lesen, das ihm gar kein Kopfbrechen kostete und ungemein gut von der Lunge ging" (GS, V, 97). In the one area where, as will be seen in a later chapter, Lenz sees the greatest necessity for practical and humane ethical values, namely that of love, Zerbin's learning fails him. He seeks to divide his allegiance between the intellectually pretentious and socially ambitious Hortensie, whom he marries for form, and the simple, devoted Marie whom he keeps as a secret mistress. Such an arrangement, though justified by reason, leads to a Gretchen type of tragedy for Marie and suicide for Zerbin.

At the beginning of the story the narrator reflects in general on the failure of philosophy to increase the sum of human happiness, and

concludes that the reason lies in the modern tendency, "an dem menschlichen Geschlecht nur die Gattung, nie die Individuen zu lieben" (p. 79). Rousseau had early perceived the fundamental hypocrisy involved in the abstract profession of humanist concern as a substitute for a true, humane conscience.<sup>16</sup> Lenz's appraisal of contemporary philosophers in the Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken reflects a similar contempt for their callous complacency: "Worin besteht die ganze Weisheit dieser Herren, mit der sie so geheim tun? -- In der Zufriedenheit -- ein süßes Wort -- das aber, wenn man's herunter hat, im Magen krümmt -- im Aufgeben aller Rechte der Menschheit, Zusammenlegen der Hände in den Schoß . . . ." (WS, I, 441). Clearly this brand of philosophy is inimicable to the active, socially oriented kind envisaged by Lenz, as delineated in the previous chapter. Thus the positive moral ideal embodied in the demand for "Handeln" is often seen in opposition to a form of passivity that is the sickness of an entire culture. Prince Tandi, in Der neue Menoza, sees European civilization as mere "Genießen," which seems akin to Rousseau's "luxe" of the first Discours:<sup>17</sup> "Handeln macht glücklicher als Genießen" (WS, II, 130). Philosophy as a substitute for action is one of the themes of another play, Die Freunde machen den Philosophen. Strephon deliberately cultivates the philosopher's approach to life without realizing that the resulting detachment has made him incapable of acting decisively in the one issue on which his happiness, and that of another, depends, namely his love for Seraphine. When he appears to have lost the latter through his complacent attitude he reflects: "O verwunschene Philosophie, wie hast du mich zurückgesetzt?" (WS, II, 302). Even such moments of insight he fails to translate into action and is thus brought to the

brink of suicide, from which only a deus ex machina saves him:

"Philosoph -- welch ein Schimpf in meinen letzten Augenblicken!

Ein Mensch, der allen Rechten der Menschheit entsagt, um sich bei  
andern in ein torichtes Ansehen zu setzen" (p. 322).

In such passages Lenz is not necessarily reiterating his doctrine of dynamic self-assertion, which goes beyond Rousseau.<sup>18</sup> He is attacking a culture which sets greater store on reflexion than on meaningful activity. Many passages in Rousseau also refer to this reversal of natural values in the modern age: "Par quel bizarre tour d'esprit nous apprend-on tant de choses inutiles, tandis que l'art d'agir est compté pour rien?"<sup>19</sup> "Si [la nature] nous a destinés à être sains, j'ose presque assurer que l'état de reflexion est un état contre nature, et que l'homme qui médite est un animal dépravé."<sup>20</sup>

Rousseau regarded as a major source of corruption for society both the theatre and the novel. It is clear from the Lettre sur les Spectacles and the preface to the Nouvelle Héloïse that woman is particularly vulnerable in this respect. Through the "belles-lettres" woman learns to experience emotion vicariously, to grow discontented with and inattentive to her natural family duties. Of the effects of reading upon women he writes: "Il y en a bien peu qui ne fassent plus d'abus que d'usage de cette fatale science . . ."<sup>21</sup> This conviction certainly earned the endorsement of Sturm und Drang writers, with their antique concepts of the sexes. "Das Lesen reißt die Frau aus ihrer naturge-

wöllten Einfalt heraus, raubt ihr die Schlichtheit, verwirrt ihr Gefühl; das fortwährende Weilen in einer erdichteten Welt, einer 'Schlaraffenwelt,' läßt sie in der nüchternen Welt ihrer Obliegenheiten nicht mehr zurechtfinden und nimmt ihr den Geschmack an der Erfüllung ihrer häuslichen Pflichten."<sup>22</sup> Such criticism is equally applicable to theatre-going.

Rousseau's perspective is that of the social moralist and is thus rooted in the Enlightenment's belief that literature must serve an ethical function. The extent to which Lenz moves beyond this is considered later in this chapter. Certainly, he shares Rousseau's awareness of the harm wrought by indiscriminate and trivial reading. Mariane, the bourgeois heroine of Die Soldaten, whose ruination begins with a visit to the comedy, is told by the Gräfin v. La Roche that her imagination has removed her from the realities of her social situation: "Ihr einziger Fehler war, daß Sie die Welt nicht kannten, daß Sie den Unterschied nicht kannten, der unter den verschiedenen Ständen herrscht, daß Sie die Pamela nicht gelesen haben, das gefährlichste Buch das eine Person aus Ihrem Stande lesen kann" (WS, II, 225). Mariane is not the only character to be seduced by a work of literature, that is, by an alien (aristocratic) culture. When her father discovers that the officer Desportes has sent her an ode with a gift of jewellery, he is incapable of distinguishing between form and substance and takes the conventional flatteries at their face value, already seeing his daughter as a "gnädige Frau" (pp. 195-7).<sup>23</sup>

A significant number of Lenz's female characters engage in superficial reading of novels and poems, thereby wasting their natural energies and leading them to a distorted view of life. Such are Gustchen (Der Hofmeister), Albertine (Der Landprediger) and Hortensie (Zerbin) -- "die dem Bücherlesen ungemein ergeben war und sich zu dem Ende ganze Wochen lang in ihr Kabinett erschloß, ohne sich anders als beim Essen sehen zu lassen" (GS, V, 92). In the case of Gustchen the relationship to Rousseau's ideas is made explicit. At the same time, however, it is accompanied by an ironic twist which Lenz was to employ on several occasions. As will be shown in greater detail in the discussion of this work, the heroine of Der Hofmeister is a ready victim of Läufer's seduction, having nourished her imagination on popular literature. Foremost here is Rousseau's Héloïse, which does indeed show certain parallels in the plot (the seduction of an aristocratic girl by her tutor). "Hier spielt Lenz sozusagen Rousseaus Dichtung gegen Rousseau aus."<sup>24</sup> The main butt of this satirical barb is undoubtedly Rousseau's remarkable defence of his own self-contradiction, the Préface.<sup>25</sup> With remarkable logic, he asserts that he cannot be accused of corrupting with his novel since only those already corrupt indulge in novel-reading: "Jamais fille chaste n'a lu de romans, et j'ai mis à celui-ci un titre assez décidé pour qu'en l'ouvrant on sût à quoi s'en tenir. Celle qui, malgré ce titre, en osera lire une seule page est une fille perdue; mais qu'elle n'impute point sa perte à ce livre, le mal était fait d'avance."<sup>26</sup>



Seeking to trap Rousseau in his own paradoxes was a favorite pastime of his many detractors. Lenz, however, is not motivated by such a totally unsympathetic attitude. This, I believe, is shown by the dramatic fragment entitled Die Familie der Projektenmacher (1775-76?). The central character is Primavera, a French nobleman whose ideal of an active social conscience is akin to that of Lenz himself. When his son invites him to go hunting he declines, as his project of relief for the poor in Paris is of greater urgency: "Die Not ist zu groß, mein Kind. Der allgemeine Druck, unter dem die Menschheit seufzet, das allgemeine Elend -- ich hielt es für ein Verbrechen, jetzt vergnügt zu sein. Bedenk einmal, wieviel Hunderttausend in diesem Augenblick vielleicht, da wir zechen und fröhlich sind, den Schweiß ihrer Arbeit trinken" (GS, III, 386). The scene is peopled with various family members and hangers-on, including one Bilboquet, "ein französischer Philosoph," all more or less engaged in frivolous intrigues and idle conversation full of cultural allusions. Outside is heard the plaintive cry for alms of a beggar, who is generally ignored, whilst Bilboquet recommends the gallows for such "Mußiggänger" (p. 388). (The irony of Julie's remark, "Wo kämen denn die Philosophen hin, Herr Bilboquet?" is lost upon him.)

Primavera, however, invites the beggar into the house and waits on him with such solicitude that the latter suspects a joke and flees, amid general laughter, when the host is temporarily out of the room. Prior to this powerfully portrayed incident (which culminates in a violent outburst from Primavera against Bilboquet), the cries of the destitute beggar punctuate a trivial exchange between one of the guests and Primavera's daughter-in-law:

"St. Mard (zu Emerinen bei der er sitzt). Soll ich Ihnen nicht von dieser Torte vorlegen? (Etwas leise zu ihr.) St. Preux, Julie! liebte das Gebackene.

Emerine (gießt St. Mard Wein ein). Aber St. Mard will seiner Julie nicht Gelegenheit geben, ihm was über den Wein zu schreiben" (p. 388). <sup>27</sup>

In the next scene, Redan proposes that St. Mard be induced to seduce Emerine by encouraging his propensity for acting out novels: "Gott gebe nur, daß er Rousseaus Héloïse noch nicht so bald durchgelesen habe, moge!" (p. 391). Clearly the later part of the novel, with its triumph of virtue, would not serve such ends.

Rousseau's novel thus falls victim to the kind of misuse that he himself preducted. As with Der Hofmeister, which also portrays the superficial fashion of novel-acting, it is possible that Lenz is ridiculing the excesses of such Rousseau admirers as the Darmstadt circle.<sup>28</sup> In any case the social tenor of the present work is clearly in support of, and not in opposition to, Rousseau's views. It portrays in ironic juxtaposition the real world of human suffering and the artificial isolation of the salons, whose members dissipate their leisure in literary games full of sensuous double-meanings. The crowning irony is the realization that all count Rousseau's writings among their cultural acquisitions, yet remain impervious to their positive humanistic content (what, for example, of Julie's views on succouring beggars?). While this can hardly be viewed as an attack on Rousseau himself, it is not without significance, in view

of the late date, for Lenz's own changing views on the ability of literature to change society.

The audacity of Rousseau's attack on the temple of culture, and its significance for the age, have been appraised thus: "Rousseaus epochemachende Leistung war es, daß er durch die Entschiedenheit seiner radikalen Theorie dem längst schon vorhandenen Gefühle des Kulturüberdrusses endlich die Zunge löste und damit, die Kultur zu einem Problem, d.h. zum Gegenstande eines ernsthaften Nachdenkens machte."<sup>29</sup> Rousseau sees decline in culture as a process of falling away from what was originally wholesome. Lenz conceives of the possibility of reform. He supplies an aggressive future-oriented approach to the whole trend of cultural criticism set in train by Rousseau's writings, which makes him an indisputable leader of the Sturm und Drang. The first task remains, nevertheless, primarily negative, a process of clearing the ground.

The prevailing cultural fashion, against which Lenz was to direct his most formidable literary weapon, satire,<sup>30</sup> was that of the French-inspired Rococo. In this respect it is an off-shoot of the same, essentially aristocratic, culture, against which Rousseau had rebelled. Its tendency is to seek aesthetic satisfaction and to ignore that which is of practical social relevance.<sup>31</sup> The major representative of the literary Rococo in Germany was Wieland, against whom Lenz conducted the intensive campaign described earlier. In view

of the destructive quality of this campaign, justifiable only as a prelude to establishing new cultural values, the following reminiscence of Justus Möser, already mentioned as an important pioneer in the application of Rousseau's ideas, is of interest:

"Auch die Klinger, die Lenze und die Wagner zeigten in einzelnen Theilen eine Stärke wie Herkules, ob sie sich gleich auch, wie dieser, zuerst mit einer schmutzigen Arbeit beschäftigten, und vielleicht zu früh für deutsche Kunst und ihren Ruhm verstarben."<sup>32</sup>

The phrase "schmutzige Arbeit" ("was ist sie anders als gerade der Kampf gegen das Rokoko"<sup>33</sup>) seems particularly applicable to Lenz's attacks against Wieland. In a footnote (Overlooked by Wolff) to the Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken, Lenz talks of a "Verfall alles Geschmacks bei erloschenen Nationen"<sup>34</sup> and the need to attack this evil at the roots, adding the comment: "Wobei man sich freilich die Hand beschmieren muß" (WS, I, 424). Undoubtedly, Lenz felt especially soiled by Die Wolken itself, which he later suppressed. The savageness of its tone can be inferred from the one remaining fragment. This consists of a discussion on the very Rousseauesque idea of conscience. The philosopher Socrates, Wieland in reality, brings sophistry and cynical wit to bear against the simple inarticulate faith of a naive young girl, beset by feelings of sin and remorse. From time to time, the polished arguments reveal themselves as agents of an underlying sinister reality: "Wenn ich ihr nur die ersten Grundsätze der Moral beibringen könnte, das mußst' ein vollkommnes Frauenzimmer werden! . . . He, wenn ich sie einmal aufs Bett hätte, ich wollte sie schon kurieren!" (GS, III, 377).

In thus attacking the Rococo through an implicit equation of formal elegance with a fundamental immorality, Lenz is in evident agreement with Rousseau's analysis.<sup>35</sup> His campaign against Wieland is inspired in part by the conviction that his brand of "schlüpfriger Naturalismus" represents a serious threat to the nation's morals, particularly for youth. In Die Soldaten the heroine falls an easy victim to her aristocratic seducer, following a visit to the theatre: ". . . das tragische Konflikt [wird] dadurch ausgelöst, daß ein junges Mädchen von den Ideen des Rokoko verseucht ist und im Laufe des Werkes dafür büßen muß."<sup>36</sup> Lenz, above all in the unfinished fragments, where he has given free rein to first impulses, portrays the connection between contemporary art and immorality, with a degree of directness not found in Rousseau. Here his satire employs extremes of grotesqueness which clearly mark him off as a forerunner of modern dramatists. In Der tugendhafte Taugenichtz, which also contains, as will be shown, strong echoes of Rousseau's views on education, we again find the erotic used to unmask cultural pretensions, this time in the area of the most fashionable art-form, opera. Johann, an uneducated servant, describes his impressions of a duet:

Ich glaube immer, . . . wenn zwei Leute zusammensingen, es ist als ob sie sonst was mit einander täten. Wenn sich die Stimmen so mit einander vereinigen, daß die Seele des einen an des andern seine anstoßt, daß dich die kränkt! und ihre Blicke und Mienen dann, wie das alles so zusammenfällt

und sie den Othem zu verlieren scheinen und so in einander hinein sterben und dann wieder plötzlich so freudig aus einander fliegen, damit sie mit desto größerer Macht wieder zusammen können-- ich wollte meine Frau eben so gern mit einem andern im Bett sehen, als sie mit ihm singen lassen (WS, II, 546).

Graf Hoditz, a patron of the arts, brings two friends to see the large assembly of singers and actresses whom he keeps in what he describes as "mein Serraglio," whilst the stage directions provide for "eine lange Reihe sauber zugedeckter Betten" (p. 548). Opera is also satirized in Pandämonium Germanicum (WS, II, 272). It represents the pinnacle of an elaborate, aristocratic culture. "Nichts hätte weniger 'volkstümlich' sein können."<sup>37</sup> As such Rousseau attacks it as artificial and pretentious in the Nouvelle Héloïse (pp. 259-68) and earned himself a place in the history of the genre as initiator of a new opera of the people.<sup>39</sup> In attacking this particular art, form Lenz shows himself clearly as a continuer of the opposition to the Rococo, which begins with Rousseau.

## 2. The reform of aesthetics

The Rococo's pursuit of aesthetic pleasure through its emphasis on beauty may be seen as an attempt to rid literature of the heavy didacticism of the Enlightenment and thus represents an important

preliminary stage of the "higher synthesis" in Classicism. To its critics, this separation of the aesthetic and the ethical is the ultimate degeneration of culture. Rousseau's attacks on the contemporary arts gradually reveal themselves as a sense of frustration over the failure of these to measure up to the needs of his "sensibilité morale." Lenz, given a choice, would rather be a "Schwärmer für die Tugend" than "Enthusiast für das Schöne."<sup>39</sup> However, he conceives of a beauty which he calls "das Gute quintessenziert" (WS, I, 384). Already in the Salzmann correspondence he makes the distinction between "Schönheit in abstracto" and "Schönheit in concreto."<sup>40</sup> His later attacks on idealistic poetics in such works as Anmerkungen ubers Theater is thus anticipated.<sup>41</sup> Lenz sees beauty as an automatic outcome of goodness, which in turn is understood, as we have seen, in an essentially practical sense. The presence of virtue in the sense he understands must inevitably lead to beauty, whereas the converse by no means applies. This also is Rousseau's belief.<sup>42</sup> Yet his view that literature has been all but rendered incapable of serving moral ends, so that even his own efforts in this field are suspect, leads him to the radical conclusion which so irritates constructive aestheticians like Schiller.<sup>43</sup> Lenz, on the other hand, still conceives of ways in which the written word may yet be given a new, positive direction. Rousseau's Lettre sur les Spectacles has frequently proved an embarrassment to his followers. Many of these have seen in the theatre the medium par excellence for expressing ideas that owe much to Rousseau's criticism of society. An example of this in Germany is

provided by Junges Deutschland.<sup>44</sup> Although Lenz claims not to have read the letter (see Ch. III), we may assume that he was acquainted with its much-discussed ideas and would certainly have felt himself challenged by them in his calling as a dramatist. In Die Soldaten, I.iv, there is a discussion apparently aimed at discrediting the Enlightenment concept of the theatre as a means of moral instruction. The chaplain Eisenhardt appears to endorse Rousseau's viewpoint in the topical controversy unleashed by the Lettre.<sup>45</sup> He delivers a tirade on the dangerous effects of a visit to the theatre on a normal overworked officer: "... werden ihm nicht in den neusten Komodien die grobsten Verbrechen gegen die heiligsten Rechte der Väter und Familien unter so reizenden Farben vorgestellt, den giftigsten Handlungen so der Stachel genommen, daß ein Bösewicht dasteht als ob er ganz neulich vom Himmel gefallen wäre. Sollte das nicht aufmuntern, sollte das nicht alles ersticken was das Gewissen aus der Eltern Hause mitgebracht haben kann. Einen wachsamem Vater zu betriegen oder ein unschuldig Mädchen in Lastern zu unterrichten, das sind die Preisaufgaben, die dort aufgelöst werden" (WS, II, 193). Eisenhardt's words are fatally confirmed by the events that follow. Already in the next scene we find Marianne returning from the theatre in a state of inner turmoil: "ich werde die Nacht nicht schlafen können für lauter Vergnügen" (p. 194). By the end of the act she has already taken the fatal decision to break faith with Stolzius and seek a union with the nobility. Pride and imagination replace the common sense of her class and she falls an easy prey to the dubious morality of the sphere to which she aspires. Her taste of the theatre, symbolic of



a leisured, sensual culture, makes her dissatisfied with the work ethic of her own class. Ironically, in view of his own role in encouraging his daughter's ambitions, it is her father who earlier stresses this, saying of his daughters: ". . . wenn sie arbeiten werden sie schon gesund bleiben" (p. 186). In thus portraying the theatre as a moral threat to honest bourgeois values Lenz appears to echo Rousseau very closely.<sup>46</sup>

The context of this discussion is limited, however, to a particular social situation. The arguments used are unmistakably Rousseau's, but their scope of application is much less sweeping: ". . . dans le cas précis des Soldats, il ne s'agit pas de savoir si la représentation théâtrale est bénéfique ou néfaste en soi, mais quel est l'effet exercé par un certain type de comédie sur les officiers de la garnison, compte tenu des conditions spécifiques dans lesquelles ils vivent. Lenz ne condamne donc pas le théâtre en tant qu'institution, comme le faisait Rousseau dans la Lettre à d'Alembert."<sup>47</sup> As a dedicated dramatist, Lenz does not duplicate Rousseau's feat of universally condemning an art whilst himself practising it. Die Soldaten is in fact the only important work of Lenz in which the fundamental belief in the moral function of the stage seems in any doubt. In such works as the Anmerkungen-ubers Theater, the Hochburger Schloß and the Rezension des neuen Menoza he is concerned with defining those artistic standards which will enable it best to fulfill that function. Criticism here is not of the theatre per se but of a particular misuse to which it has fallen in current practice.

It is not always realised that Rousseau's writings are also full of this kind of criticism, especially in those works where he is not bound by the particular polemical thesis of the D'Alembert letter.<sup>48</sup> More significant to Lenz's dramatic theory is the letter of St. Preux in the Nouvelle Héloïse criticizing the lifeless, puppet-like conventionality of the Parisian stage.<sup>49</sup> The likelihood of an association here is strengthened by the praise of Rousseau's novel that occurs in the Anmerkungen.

In contrast to the Lettre sur les spectacles Rousseau appears to concede that the theatre has an intrinsic social function, but has become detached from the mass of society and become the exclusive preserve of a small idle clique. He uses the same image we find in Lenz, that of the mirror, in which the people should be able to view the mores of society.<sup>50</sup> Imitation (seen in the Lettre as a threat to honest living in any shape or form) is still regarded as the essence of the theatre, but criticism now centres on the choice of object: "Maintenant on copie au théâtre les conversations d'une centaine de maisons de Paris. Hors de cela, on n'y apprend rien des moeurs des Français. Il y a dans cette grande ville cinq ou six cent mille âmes dont il n'est jamais question sur la scène" (pp. 228-9). The artistic failings of the fashionable neo-classical French drama proceed from its social eliteness: "beaucoup de discours et peu d'action;" "tout se passe en beaux dialogues bien agencés, bien ronflants, où l'on voit d'abord que le premier soin de chaque interlocuteur est toujours celui de briller. Presque tout s'énonce en maximes générales" (p. 230).

Lenz echoes several specific points of criticism made by Rousseau. He writes contemptuously of "die fürchterlichsten Helden des Altertums . . . sauber frisiert in Haarbeutel und seidenen Strümpfen" (WS, I, 330). According to Rousseau modern actors "placent les héros de l'antiquité entre six rangs de jeunes Parisiens; ils calquent les modes françaises sur l'habit romain. . . ." (pp. 231-32). A more fundamental objection reminds us of Lenz's call for individual characterization. "Comme on ne voit que l'acteur dans le personnage, on ne voit non plus que l'auteur dans le drame . . .," (p. 232). St. Preux's complaint is founded on a perception of the rhetorical nature of French theatre, resulting from its subservience to the need for displaying their talents on the part of both actors and author. This results in the intrusion of an extraneous element which thwarts the independent being of the play itself. Lenz in his Anmerkungen übers Theater deplores this same inability of a play to rise beyond the author's particular needs and preoccupations to the level of genuine character drama. His principal list of offenders is the same as Rousseau's: Voltaire and Corneille. Yet with a tour de force similar to that observed earlier in the case of novel-reading, Rousseau himself is judged to be not without sin.<sup>51</sup> In view of the positive acclaim accorded Rousseau elsewhere in this work, Lenz can hardly be accusing him of the same motives of vanity and ostentation attributed to the other authors mentioned. At the most he probably shares Herder's nationalist belief that even the best of French writers will be tainted with "Frenchness" to a certain extent.<sup>52</sup>

We have already observed in Chapter IV that Lenz views Rousseau's one overwhelming personal characteristic, namely his untrammelled subjectivity, from an ambivalent standpoint: attracted to it by taste and temperament, he is nevertheless doubtful of its efficacy. It represents by definition an attitude which fails to reach beyond the orbit of the self. In the sphere of literature this would inevitably entail a limitation of the ability of the work in question to effect changes in the external sphere, which, in Lenz's view, is the function of literature. He himself chose the theatre as the art-form best suited to this kind of outward direction. It is of interest, though, that he seeks to include a novel in his poetics of the theatre, making it equally bound by the requirements of individuality and objective variety in characterization.<sup>53</sup> Hamann's attempt to absolve Rousseau's novel from the criteria of the drama receives no endorsement from Lenz.

Rousseau's critique is an important expression of revolt against what has been called "die Vergesellschaftlichung des Theaters" in the later eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup> It exposes the superficiality of a society ritual which has no relevance to the greater part of the audience and, accordingly, can be of no benefit to it whatever. Lenz describes this same failing: "Wir nehmen ein schönes wonnevolles süßes Gefühl mit nach Hause, so gut als ob wir eine Bouteille Champagner ausgeleert -- aber das ist auch alles" (WS, I, 380). The solution proposed here (Über Gotz) is to harness the dramatic experience to the new call for meaningful, in other words, socially relevant, activity: "Die ideale Tragödie des Sturm und Drang ist . . . nicht eine ästhetische Verwirklichung neuer Theorien,

sondern ganz einfach eine ethische Tat."<sup>55</sup> An obvious way by which a writer could rescue the theatre from the stigma Rousseau placed upon it is to demonstrate its usefulness as an instrument of the same social consciousness initiated by Rousseau. In this sense the evolution of a theatrical realism inspired by Rousseau parallels the development in France (Mercier, Diderot): "War Shakespeare den Sturmern und Drängern Vorbild für den Stil und die leidenschaftliche Kraft, die sie alle beseelte, Inbegriff des Genies schlechthin, seine Gestalten Urbilder aktiven Menschentums, so mußte ihnen doch die Fülle an neuen Stoffen und Motiven aus ihrer eigenen Zeit erwachsen. Es ergibt sich das Paradoxon, daß ihnen im Bezirk des geistigen Gehalts der theaterfeindliche Rousseau der Wegweiser zu einer neuen Form des Dramas wurde."<sup>56</sup>

The extent to which Lenz incorporates into his plays social themes of Rousseau's remains to be shown in the next chapter. However, this positive influence is not confined to specific didactic content, which is not, in fact, the most vital ingredient of Lenz's social drama. The successful presentation of modern social themes presupposes success in that area of dramatic creation whose importance was first appreciated by Goethe and Herder, and where the prime concern was the quality of dramatic effect, its ability to reach the deepest recesses of the soul. Doors to the mind of the audience must first be opened: "Das Interesse ist der große Hauptzweck des Dichters" (WS, I, 364).<sup>57</sup>

The techniques by which Lenz seeks to move his audience owe little to Rousseau, except in the purely negative sense. His use of caricature, explosive effects, swift changes of scene and the mixing of genres, all designed to provoke an inward response, derive from the brutal realization so clearly voiced by Rousseau that the conventional dramatic forms were moribund and had long lost any ability they may have possessed inwardly to alter an audience's view of the world. In this sense he proceeds from premises similar to those of Brecht and his techniques of alienation.

In his observations on the audience he seeks to move, Lenz appears to echo Rousseauist democratic views. "Mein Theater ist . . . unter freyem Himmel vor der ganzen deutschen Nation, in der mir die unteren Stände mit den obern gleich gelten die petites wie die equites ehrenwürdig sind;"<sup>58</sup> he asserts ". . . daß mein Publikum das ganze Volck ist; daß ich den Pobel so wenig ausschließen kann, als Personen von Geschmack und Erziehung..."<sup>59</sup> Clearly the "social elitism of the theatre that Rousseau condemns is equally obnoxious to Lenz. This, however, does not lead to the one-sided idealization of the lower orders we find in Rousseau. Lenz sees the ills of society extending to all levels: "Ich will . . . nichts, als dem Verderbniß der Sitten entgegen arbeiten, das von den glänzenden zu den niedrigen Ständen hinab schleicht, und wogegen diese die Hülfsmittel nicht haben können, als jene."<sup>60</sup> Lenz's comedy, unlike that of the Rousseau follower Mercier, does not attempt to overcome social cleavages.<sup>61</sup> His overriding aim is to contribute to a more humane social ethos by exploiting the theatre's potential for influencing the people at all levels.<sup>62</sup> This, can only be achieved by recognizing the

wide social and cultural diversity of the audience for whom the play is intended: "Daher müssen unsere deutschen Komödienschreiber komisch und tragisch zugleich schreiben, weil das Volk, für das sie schreiben, oder doch wenigstens schreiben sollten, ein solcher Mischmasch von Kultur und Rohigkeit, Sittigkeit und Wildheit ist" (WS, I, 419). The attempts of aestheticians to categorize the dramatic genres fail to perceive that the same dramatic object will be received with varying emotional responses at different cultural levels.<sup>63</sup>

The evaluation of literature in terms of social effect continues into the sphere of the novel. Lenz's most sophisticated discussion of this genre comes in his defence of Werther, his Briefe über die Moralität des jungen Werthers (1775). That Rousseau was also much in Lenz's mind was shown in Chapter III. He is evidently aware of the similarities between Goethe's novel and Rousseau's.<sup>64</sup> At the beginning of the ninth letter he seeks to emphasize their difference and to deny any charge of imitation on Goethe's part: "In der Tat haben die Schicksale des St. Preux und Werthers beim ersten Anblick einige Ähnlichkeit, sie haben aber auch wieder bei schärferer Ansicht so viel Verschiedenheit, daß man sie unmöglich mit einander vergleichen, geschweige denn diesen eine Kopie von jenem nennen darf und kann" (WS, I, 397). There is an additional reason why Rousseau should spring to mind in this context. The so-called immorality of the Nouvelle Héloïse, specifically its depiction of free-love and its implied criticism of social convention, had provoked considerable opposition. Now the comparable condemnation of Werther by rationalist critics is the main accusation Lenz seeks to refute.<sup>65</sup> Rousseau regards all novels as

potentially dangerous to their readers, since they awake passions best left dormant. His own he regards as no exception! However, in his Préface,<sup>66</sup> he argues that the damage has already been done. Those who turn to his novel are already corrupted by the influences of civilization and for these the novel is the only means by which they may still be reached and perhaps influenced for the good. "Il faut des spectacles dans les grandes villes, et des romans aux peuples corrompus. J'ai vu les mœurs de mon temps, et j'ai publié ces lettres. Que n'ai-je vécu dans un siècle où je dusse les jeter au feu!"<sup>67</sup> In similar vein St. Preux writes: "Les romans sont peut-être la dernière instruction qu'il reste à donner à un peuple assez corrompu pour que tout autre lui soit inutile . . ."<sup>68</sup>

The later didactic parts of Rousseau's novel are perhaps more easily reconcilable to this line of argument than its initial depiction of the all-consuming passion of Julie and her head-strong lover, as criticized by moralists. Although, as we have already seen, Lenz occasionally exploits the irony of Rousseau's situation, in the present context he appears to accept at face value the argument of the Préface. Indeed, he adds his own extension. The difference between Rousseau and Goethe arises from a distinction between their respective audiences, whose character and needs each has instinctively grasped: "Es ist mir eine Freude wenn ich den Betrachtungen so nachhänge, wie jeder dieser Dichter für das Bedürfnis seiner Nation so zu sorgen gewußt hat. Rousseau der für verdorbene Sitten schrieb, wie er in seiner Vorrede selbst sagt, unter dessen Landsleuten alles Liebe und Feuer atmet, welche bei dem Witz und Leichtsinn der Nation schon früh in die gröbsten Unordnungen und Aufhebung aller auch der heiligsten Bande



der Unschuld und der ehelichen Treue ausarten, ohne daß ein einziges dieser Laster einmal mehr Aufsehen macht . . ." -- this same Rousseau has shown how a child of his culture can survive its many pitfalls and still preserve the sanctity of morals: "Welch eine Lehre, welch ein Verdienst für seine Nation!" (WS, I, 397.f). Passion, the basic spark which, as Lenz argues elsewhere,<sup>69</sup> must provide the stimulus to ethical action, is present in abundance in the French character, so that the need is to channel it away from the base and the trivial towards "einer daurenden edlen Richtung des Herzens" (p. 398). Goethe, on the other hand, is writing for quite a different society: "für steife Sitten."<sup>70</sup> Pedantry and endless abstract moralizing provide the characteristic ethos of a society in which even the experience of passion becomes a pale and ludicrous imitation of a foreign culture: "-- für diese drollige Sitten, wo niemand Herz hat und wer noch eins hat nicht weiß was er damit anfangen soll -- Goethe stellte einen jungen mutigen lebenvollen Helden auf die Bühne, der weiß was er will und wo er hinauswill, der den Tod selbst nicht scheut, wenn er ihn nur auf guten Wegen ubereilt, der im Stande ist sich selbst zu strafen wenn er es wo versehen haben sollte" (pp. 398-9).

Consistent with the nationalistic trend of the Sturm und Drang Lenz has relativized Rousseau's wholesale radical condemnation of the novel as the last expression of a degenerate society: where this may well be true of France, Germany has its own peculiar moral defect resulting not from a lack of control but from too much. This requires elaboration.

Both Rousseau and Lenz with their different preoccupations find themselves faced with the same question: the moral "usefulness" or otherwise of the novel in their respective cultures, felt by both to be a denial of man's ideal state. Rousseau, as one would expect from his views on the arts, cannot detach himself from a utilitarian outlook. All around he sees the vain and futile pursuit of beauty for its own sake: "Il y a une estime publique attachée aux différents arts en raison inverse de leur utilité réelle."<sup>71</sup> The separation of Rousseau's true aesthetic meaning from that implied by his stated views is, of course, one of modern criticism's most engaging tasks and does not concern us here. Does Lenz in his praise of Werther as a corrective to a stiff and artificial moral code represent any advance beyond Rousseau's grudging acceptance of the novel as a means of exploiting the corrupt interests of the populace in order to re-educate its moral sense in the least direct and painful way?

At the beginning of the Werther-Briefe Lenz explicitly absolves the literary artist from any specific moral purpose: "Warum legt man dem Dichter doch immer moralische Endzwecke unter, an die er nie gedacht hat" (p. 384). Lenz himself had occasion to feel exasperation over the many ludicrous attempts by contemporary critics to explain the "message" of the Hofmeister (p. 385). Enlightenment poetics tended not to stray far beyond the notion of prodesse, and as we have seen, Rousseau at least in theory was strongly influenced by this thinking. To some commentators, notably Sommerfeld,<sup>72</sup> Lenz's attempt to argue an underlying "Moralität" in Goethe's novel appears to involve him in some self-contradiction:

whilst claiming to break with didacticism he cannot base himself whole-heartedly on the Goethean concept of an artistic immanence through free expression of the individual and his passions regardless of any moral considerations. Yet on closer investigation we find that Lenz has his own distinct perspective. It is based on a difference between the moral purpose of a literary work and its moral effect: "Laßt uns einmal die Moralität dieses Romans untersuchen, nicht den moralischen Endzweck den sich der Dichter vorgesetzt (denndahort er auf Dichter zu sein) sondern die moralische Wirkung die das Lesen dieses Romans auf die Herzen des Publikums haben könne und haben muß" (p. 386). Moral effect is not to be understood in terms of specific moral injunctions to this or that line of conduct. For Lenz it lies in the subtle but vital changes which affect the reader's entire consciousness of life and humanity. His discussion began with the premise that: "Ein Mensch der für das echte Gefühl alles dessen was Schön Groß Edel in der Natur oder in den Künsten ist, abgestorben ist, bleibt in meinen Augen immer ein gefährlicher Mensch, schein' er auch so fromm und zahm als er wolle" (p. 383). The only sin he recognizes is indifference, "die Gleichgültigkeit gegen alles was schön und fürtrefflich ist." "Wie sollen, wie können unsere Sitten sich jemals verbessern, wenn wir unempfindlich für wahre Vorzüge bleiben und das aus lieber lauterer Moralität" (p. 393). The broader socio-cultural context in which Lenz's writings must be viewed is here evident. Werther provides him with an exemplary case in the field of the novel for demonstrating his ideal of a salutary interaction between literature and the public for which it was conceived

In Germany the force to be assailed is that innate "Steifigkeit" which is compounded of santimonious moralizing, social stagnation and an atrophied sense of beauty and moral greatness. Any force that may awaken the public from this negative and hence morally unproductive condition must inevitably be for the good, whatever infractions against conventional moral norms may arise in the process. "Das . . . ist eine Wahrheit die niemand von diesen Herren über Werthern eingestehen gutes Herz genug hat, daß jeder Roman der das Herz in seinen verborgensten Schlupfwinkeln anzufassen und zu rühren weiß, auch das Herz bessern muß, er mag aussehen wie er wolle" (pp. 392-93).

Lenz, who, as we saw, is as virulent in his condemnation of excessive and trivial reading as Rousseau, clearly envisages great novels, of which Werther is a harbinger, charged with the power to change humanity by reaching into those recesses of the soul where its finest impulses lie. This represents an optimism lacking in Rousseau. Furthermore, it enables Lenz to view Rousseau's own novel from a much more charitable standpoint than the author himself! Where the latter must resort to a time-worn didactic criterion of "instruction" Lenz is able to judge it in terms of his own more vital theory. St. Preux is seen as a character with whom his countrymen may readily identify. The Anmerkungen übers Theater concede to Rousseau's novel the power of evoking feelings and passions which the readers "~~alle~~ vorhin schon dunkel fühlten" (WS, I, 341), which almost precisely echoes the main merit of Goethe's novel (p. 393).<sup>73</sup> Lenz's theory of effect is applicable to Rousseau not only in the latter's ability to stir the passions dormant in the reader (morally

acceptable to Lenz but not to Rousseau). It is the moral impulses of conscience that are "felt darkly" and require the writer's genius to bring them forth from the hearts of the readers, to be given direction. In the sense that Rousseau understands morality as a product of the feelings rather than of the mind his one great work which gives expression to this does not require to be vindicated by the existing canon of didactic criticism. On the other hand, it provides an eminently fitting subject for the new criterion of literary evaluation based on a total inward transformation, a criterion such as Lenz evolves in the context of the drama and applies also to the novel.

### 3. Cultural pessimism in Lenz

A curious post-script to the present discussion is provided by one of the strange, incoherent fragments that reflect Lenz's state of mind in his later years. The mood of this time moves between unrealistic utopianism and the profoundest disillusionment. In one such fragment, entitled Über Delikatessen der Empfindung, there appears to be a renewal of the questions raised by the moral aspects of Goethe's and Rousseau's novels. In a fantastic dialogue between a "Luftgeist" and Franz Gulliver, the former talks scathingly of Werther's motives:

Luftgeist: . . . er wollte eine fremde Braut not- und ihren Liebhaber umbringen. . .

Gulliver: Das war mir ein sauberer Heiliger.

Luftgeist: Ja, noch heiliger als der im Rousseau. So sind die Gelehrten. Sie schreiben, was sie wollen (GS, V, 257).

The same Mephisto-type cynicism continues with doubts as to the sincerity of the two lovers: "... meinst du, daß die Hirngespinnste von Santeprado und Werther wirklich verliebt waren, weil sie in so zierlich angesetzten Tropen und Figuren sprachen?"<sup>74</sup> Lenz's ideal concept of love as a supreme union of the platonic and the erotic remains to be considered in a later chapter. It is one of the most important positive aspects of his thinking. When Gulliver seeks to defend his heroes in these terms, however, the spirit's reply is harsh in the extreme: "Du sprichst immer von dir. Ich rede von Romanhelden oder Schauspielern fremder sonderbarer Einfälle" (p. 259). The disillusioned view of literature as an essentially artificial medium, divorced from actual living and reflecting the vicarious yearnings of other men's imagination, is here reinforced. This view is ultimately Rousseau's, who is thus once again assaulted with critical weapons of his own making. After the fresh optimism of the dramaturgical writings and the Werther letters, such criticism seems retrograde. Yet the same Rousseauist cultural pessimism can be seen from time to time throughout Lenz's works. His sense of a personal mission to reform literature is an attempt to harness his dynamic, activist philosophy to a new socially oriented concept of culture. Such a mission is alluded to occasionally in letters and above all in the literary satire Pandämonium Germanicum (e.g. WS, 275-76). Yet the same work shows unmistakeable signs of the pessimism engendered by the trivial and ignoble quality of much of contemporary writings. The allusions to Rousseau's second discourse are probably not accidental (see Ch. III). Lenz, appearing in his own play, at one point voices

doubts as to the feasibility of the dramatist's calling in the modern age: "Ach ich nahm mir vor hinabzugehen und ein Maler der menschlichen Gesellschaft zu werden: aber wer mag da malen wenn lauter solche Fratzengesichter unten anzutreffen. Glücklicher Aristophanes, glücklicher Plautus, der noch Leser und Zuschauer fand. Wir finden, weh uns, nichts als Rezensenten und könnten eben so gut in die Tollhäuser gehen um menschliche Natur zu malen" (p. 260).

Rousseau's critique of a derelict culture echoes through Lenz's writings, providing, initially at least, one of the single most important stimuli in his desire to see a new literature, led by a socially responsive theatre, rise from the ruins of a discredited "Bellettrestik." Yet the doubts are never permanently resolved, and the sense of disillusionment based on personal reverses grows with time. He continues to be troubled by a sense of "Fragwürdigkeit" of the written word, a mood that Rousseau more than any other had implanted in the eighteenth century consciousness. Nor could Lenz, like Rousseau, find relief from such dissonances in a detached inner world. For him the only sphere which offered the possibility of a positive redirection of his talents was the social. The autobiographical record of this inward reassessment is the Landprediger Mannheim, who for a while sees the pen as the main instrument for bringing enlightenment and material progress to his peasants (GS, V, 171). Yet his efforts to transform his house into "eine Akademie der Künste und Wissenschaften" (cf. the title of Rousseau's discourse), lead only to material neglect of himself and his dependents. In time Mannheim recognizes his error and the vanity of seeking literary fame. "Gewiß kann man . . . aus einer

solchen Stellungnahme eine Enttäuschung, die Lenz in seiner eigenen literarischen Tätigkeit erfuhr, erkennen. Die Menschen durch poetische Werke zu bessern, scheint ihm nun unausführbar. An Stelle der literarischen Tätigkeit tritt nun praktische Tätigkeit. Sein Ideal ist nun nicht mehr der "Dichter", dessen "Wort" die Welt verbessert, sondern der "Sozialreformer," der den Wohlstand seiner Umgebung hebt, ohne dabei aber seinen eigenen zu vergessen."<sup>75</sup> The social moment in Lenz's work and the extent of Rousseau's influence here must now be considered.



## VI. CRITICISM AND REFORM OF SOCIETY

### 1. The structure of society

In as far as the Sturm und Drang represents a movement of revolt against prevailing values in society, Rousseau's appeal to it lies to a large degree in the negative, iconoclastic trend of his writings: his wholesale rejection of modern civilization as a perversion of man's true nature. Lenz describes Rousseau as "Maler und Darsteller der verderbten Natur" (GS, V, 260). Such phrases as "Verderbnis der Sitten" (WS, I, 419) occur frequently in his writings.<sup>1</sup> The corruption of morals in modern life, specifically within that stronghold of Enlightenment morality the middle-class family, is depicted in the social dramas with a virulence inconceivable in the bourgeois comedies of the preceding generation. In his defence of the Plautus adaptations he writes: "Sieht denn der Rezensent nicht, daß mir kein anderer Weg übrig blieb des Romers Idee treu zu bleiben, als der den mir die verderbten Sitten unserer Zeit anwiesen . . ." (WS, I, 409).

Despite the negative premise implied in Rousseau's preoccupation with "la corruption des mœurs," the possibility of reform is implied in such works as Emile and the Contrat social. Tension between the urge towards a wholesale rejection of society and the self-assertion of more positive, humanist impulses, exists throughout Rousseau's writings.

The former state of mind, particularly evident in the two Discours, has been described as "primitivist," signifying an attitude of yearning

for less complex forms of existence.<sup>2</sup> This may take the form, first, of unfavorable contrasts between the present age and earlier epochs, and, alternatively, of similar comparisons of the higher and lower levels of society as presently constituted. Primitivism of the first kind held strong appeal for writers of the Sturm und Drang, who saw in the supposedly happier ages of Homer, or Ossian, a condemnation of their own ignoble "tintenklecksendes Säkulum" (Karl Moor). While this feeling is present in Lenz's writings, it is not so evident as in these of his contemporaries. In Pandämonium Germanicum, Goethe is made to exclaim: "Ihr Deutsche?-- Hier ist eine Reliquie eurer Vorfahren. Zu Boden mit euch und angebetet, was ihr nicht werden könnt" (WS, II, 266). His enthusiasm for Lavater's physiognomic theories leads him to contrast the ancient and modern spirit, as evinced in the respective facial expressions, and he likens the distinction to that between "einem berittenen wilden Hengst und einem mit Sporn und Kourierpeitsche in Galopp gebrachten Karrengaul."<sup>3</sup>

More common with Lenz is what may be termed a nature-primitivism, the feeling that man is trapped within a deadening and artificial system of conventionalities. The mood underlies the Gotz essay. Robert Hot, the hero of Der Engländer, makes the following elegiac contrast between this state and the freedom and simplicity of nature: "O wie unglücklich ist doch der Mensch! In der ganzen Natur folgt alles seinem Triebe, der Sperber fliegt auf seine Beute, die Biene auf ihre Blume, der Adler in die Sonne selber-- der Mensch, nur der Mensch--" (WS, II, 331). Elsewhere Lenz refers to his hope of instilling in the Strasbourg "Society"

a sense of earth, an "Erdengefuhl . . . , das ganz in französische Liqueurs evaporirt war."<sup>4</sup>

Rousseau sees within the existing social structure one area in which humanity retains its links with nature, with the earth, namely the peasantry. This largest but least studied of the social classes generally aroused at best a sentimental curiosity (Rococo idyll) and, more likely, fear and distaste.<sup>5</sup> Rousseau was the first to praise the peasant's unspoiled existence as a viable alternative to a corrupt urban society, at the same time introducing a dimension of political realism in his appraisal of this most oppressed and deprived section of humanity: "Quand il est question d'estimer la puissance publique, le bel esprit visite les palais du prince, ses ports, ses troupes, ses arsenaux, ses villes; le vrai politique parcourt les terres et va dans la chaumière du laboureur. Le premier voit ce qu'on fait, et le second ce qu'on peut faire."<sup>6</sup>

If nothing else, the sociological foundation of Lenz's theatre of the "Volk," considered in the previous chapter,-- an echo perhaps of Rousseau's "c'est le peuple qui compose le genre humain,"<sup>7</sup>-- would necessitate a concern for the rural peasant, his material and cultural being. Beyond that, the ~~aesthetic commitment to "Interesse"~~ requires the depiction of a vital and full-blooded humanity. Lenz's plays and stories contain a number of fresh, realistically drawn peasant figures, who have remained immune to sentimental idealization. An example is Marie in Zerbin:

Ihre Gutherzigkeit war ohne Grenzen, ihr Wuchs so schon, als er sein konnte, ihr Gesicht nicht fein, aber die ganze Seele malte sich darin. Diese Ehrlichkeit, dieses Sorgenfreie, unendlich Aufmunternde in ihrem Auge verbreitete Trost und Freude auf allen Gesichtern, die sie ansahen; lesen mochte sie nicht, aber desto lieber tanzen, welches ihre Lebensgeister in der ihr so unnachahmbaren Munterkeit erhielt. In der Tat war ihr gewöhnlicher Gang fast ein beständiger Tanz, und wenn sie sprach, jauchzte sie, nicht um damit zu gefallen, sondern weil das herzliche innerliche Vergnügen mit sich selbst und ihrem Zustand keinen andern Ausweg wußte (GS, V, 93).

Sinnreich sees in such depictions a sympathetic interest in the peasant that sets Lenz apart from his fellow Stürmer and even exceeds Rousseau: "Er geht hierin weit über Rousseau hinaus, der wohl gerne die Schönheit der Natur und die Freuden des Landlebens besingt, sonst aber den mittleren Bürger bevorzugt."<sup>8</sup> Indicative, perhaps, of this interest is the insistent manner in which he requests from Ph. Kayser any information he may have on the "philosophical peasant" of Wermatswil, "Kleinjogg."<sup>9</sup> That the peasant probably figured prominently in the many curious social reform "projects" revolving in Lenz's mind at various junctures is suggested by the short fragment of unknown date, Briefe eines jungen L- von Adel an seine Mutter in L-- aus<sup>++</sup> in<sup>++</sup> (WS, I, 328-26).<sup>10</sup>

In one very specific area Lenz saw in the peasant's culture the salvation of his own. He looks to the lower classes to restore to the German language that natural expression which the refinements of education have removed from it. Language theories were much in vogue in the eighteenth century and Rousseau, with his naturalistic approach, was an important contributor. Like Herder after him, he speculated (in the Discours sur l'Inégalité) on the origins of language; but he was also concerned with its modern condition. The linguistic conceits and obscurantism of a refined society came into the orbit of his critique of modern, especially French, culture.<sup>11</sup> In a lecture Über die Bearbeitung der deutschen Sprache im Elsass, Breisgau und den benachbarten Gegenden (given before the "Society" in November 1775) Lenz sees the German language threatened by the same process of decline experienced by others before it in its state of transition from a "rauhe" to a "gebildete Sprache." One of the most dangerous symptoms is its adaptation to the needs of abstract philosophy: "Von jeher ist die Philosophie, oder vielmehr die Sucht zu philosophieren, wenn sie Mode ward, der Sprache am gefährlichsten gewesen" (WS, I, 454). He is specific in his suggestion of the means for countering this tendency: "Wenn wir in die Häuser unserer sogenannten [!] gemeinen Leute gingen, auf ihr Interesse, ihre Leidenschaften acht gäben, und da lernten, wie sich die Natur bei gewissen erheischenden Anlässen ausdrückt, die weder in der Grammatik noch im Wörterbuch stehen: wie unendlich konnten wir unsere gebildete Sprache bereichern, unsere gesellschaftlichen Vergnügen vervielfältigen!" (p. 455).

It is in the Luther tradition that Lenz writes, but one enriched through Rousseau's, and Herder's, rediscovery of folk culture for the eighteenth century. The potentially beneficial effect of that culture he sees demonstrated, for example, in the comic operetta or vaudeville which he evidently sees as a successor to the discredited baroque opera: "Unsere Operetten haben das Glück, das sie auf der Bühne gemacht, bloß den veredelten Gefühlen und Ausdrücken der Natur zu danken, die sie aus den geringen Ständen in unsere verdorbenen und ausgeschliffenen Gesellschaften übertragen" (p. 455).<sup>12</sup> Lenz believes that the language of the common people, condemned as vulgar by the sophisticated, has a richness and clarity which makes it superior to educated speech. As Matz Höcker, the country schoolmaster, tells the refined world:

Hier find't ihr auch noch Wörter regieren,  
 Die, ihr längst tätet verbannisieren,  
 Und euern Umgang gemacht so arm,  
 Wie eine Dorfgeig mit einem Darm (GS, I, 156).

This conviction we find everywhere: in the main trend of his admiration for Shakespeare;<sup>13</sup> in his own endorsement of natural earthy language and practical situation comedy, in the Plautus adaptations.<sup>14</sup> The latter, we know,

are designed to hold the mirror up to the "Volk", not to amuse an intellectual élite. "Die Stürmer und Dränger hatten von Rousseau gelernt: Die Denker müssen zum Volk in seiner Sprache reden und nicht in ihrer eigenen, wenn sie verstanden werden wollen. Lenz zeigte nicht nur die Richtung, sondern auch die Methoden, mit denen allein eine Aufklärung der Massen von Erfolg gekrönt sein konnte."<sup>15</sup>

Lenz sought in the peasant's earthy culture not so much the "poetic soul" of humanity, in Herder's sense, but a living alternative to his own stultified and artificial culture. The further development of this theme, which is not without a problematic aspect, must be later considered in connection with the dramatic fragment Die Kleinen. It may suffice here to conclude that the term "Volk" with Lenz takes on a concrete identity, extending to an accentuated sense of the peasants' physical being.<sup>16</sup> He enlists them in his own polemic cause, that of cultural reform, and it is in this sense that he sees himself as "der stinkende Athem des Volks."<sup>17</sup> All this would be difficult to conceive without the influence of Rousseau's writings. At the same time, however, we must perceive a limitation of this influence in the more theoretical area, where the peasant is viewed as a purely abstract political entity. To what extent does Lenz share Rousseau's egalitarian tendencies?

Rousseau's radical denial of social distinctions, first formulated in the Discours sur l'Inégalité, seeks to refute the view fashionable among Enlightenment philosophers, that such distinctions are preordained

by nature. Emile is likewise founded on egalitarian principles:

" . . . l'homme est le même dans tous les états; le riche n'a pas l'estomac plus grand que le pauvre et ne digère pas mieux que lui . . ." <sup>18</sup>

The Sturm und Drang, in contrast to Rousseau's followers in France, retains an element of conservative autocracy. <sup>19</sup> Its glorification of ruthlessness and benign power (Götz) underlines this difference.

"Aus diesem Grunde wissen sie mit dem Rousseauschen Ideal der politischen und sozialen Gleichheit und der reinen Demokratie nicht viel anzufangen." <sup>20</sup>

In Lenz's case, we are told, the concept of society develops "von der jugendlichen Begeisterung für Rousseausche Theorien, einer fast unbedingten Verneinung der Standesschranke, bis zu ihrer von der Erfahrung bestimmten Anerkennung, der stillen Bescheidung in die Gegebenheit der Verhältnisse." <sup>22</sup> Yet the epithet "conservative" seems as irrelevant to Lenz as that of doctrinaire revolutionary. The most frequently cited evidence for this view is the scene in Die Soldaten in which Gräfin von La Roche rebukes Mariane for attempting to rise above her station (WS, II, 227). <sup>22</sup> However, Lenz himself warns against attempts to elicit an underlying message from the words of a character (however sympathetic) which may proceed of necessity from that character's "Individualität" (WS, I, 385). The tone of Lenz's letters to Herder concerning publication of the play, delays in which cause him considerable impatience, suggests at least a strong underlying commitment to some general form of social change: "Bis dahin muß ich noch stumm die Zähne zusammenbeißen und die Leiden meines Volks in meinem verborgensten Herzen wüthen lassen." <sup>23</sup> Certainly the play can hardly be interpreted as an endorsement of the social status quo, even though the underlying reformist impulse results



in little more substantial than the bizarre scheme for military concubines.

This in itself underlines the importance of judging Lenz's plays in terms of his own aesthetic, as viewed in the previous chapter. Specific doctrinaire content, if there be any at all, is secondary to effect. Lenz sees his role as dramatist in the awakening of social consciousness, not in indoctrination.

The most recognizable echo of Rousseau's egalitarianism occurs in a relatively minor play, the late "historisches Gemälde," Die sizilianische Vesper. Admiral Loria praises a common soldier for having countervened an inhumane order: "... sieh in solchen Augenblicken hort aller Unterschied auf, und das menschlichste Herz ist das würdigste zu befehlen. Die Natur sprach durch dich, die Natur die diese Unnaturlichkeiten verabscheut, und obschon du ein einfaltiger Bedienter bist, kannst du deinen Feldherrn, denen ihre Leidenschaften die Vernunft nehmen, Befehle geben" (WS, II, 387). In general, however, Lenz's social perspective is considerably less dogmatic than that of Rousseau. Where the latter sees an inverse relationship between economic power and virtue that tends to favour the bourgeoisie as the main upholder of natural human values, in Lenz we find an outraged sensibility towards "die Unnatur des Menschen" expressed in an all-embracing and unpartisan "möglichst naturalistisch-satirischen Kennzeichnung der sozialen Verhältnisse in Adel und Bürgertum."<sup>24</sup> Such types as the coarse and insensitive aristocrat (Berg, Wermuth, Camaleon) and the obsequious, self-seeking bourgeois (Wesener, Pastor Läufer) are recurrent features in a grotesque mosaic showing the universal distortion of man's intended being. An important social observation to be drawn from Der Hofmeister is

the way in which materialistic dependency on the part of the bourgeoisie effectively inhibits the growth of any superior moral consciousness. This realization contradicts the Romantic assumptions of Rousseau which equate deprivation and nobility of soul. Indeed, the contempt that Lenz often suggests towards his own class, one which is undoubtedly founded on personal experience, is an important element in the apparent conservatism of some of his pronouncements. A passage in Der Landprediger condemns not only the arrogance and mental vacuity ("Leerheit in der Seele") of the gentry but also the self-defensive pride of the bourgeoisie (GS, V, 171). Here he seeks to advance the ideal of an interdependence of the classes which reminds us of Coriolanus' fable of the body and the members in the Shakespeare play that Lenz translates. (The image is found, too, in some late correspondence: "Der Schöpfer liebt und will die Verschiedenheit bei aller Eintracht der Gesinnungen und wenn nur der ganze Leib Aug wäre, was würde der Fuß sagen."<sup>25</sup>)

Apart from his vaguely articulated interest in the peasant, Lenz has little positive to offer by way of an actual restructuring of society. In this he typifies the absence in Germany of a clearly defined political awareness equivalent to the rationalist liberalism of England and the passionate discussions on human rights of the French Enlightenment which preceded the Revolution. One may also assume, as with his views on religion, that in the matter of social equality rationalist concepts meet head-on with inherited pietist notions, the Baroque concept of a social order pre-ordained by God.

In a statement of his aims regarding Die Soldaten Lenz writes: -----

"Überhaupt wird meine Bemühung dahin gegen, die Stände darzustellen, wie sie sind . . ." <sup>26</sup> Elsewhere he describes himself as a "dramatischen Spürhund" and a "Beobachter der Menschheit." <sup>27</sup> Lenz' so-called "unparteilicher Standpunkt" follows logically from his aesthetic views, from his concept of the dramatist's role of artistic service to an infinitely reich "Fundgrube der Natur" (WS, I, 351) by the process of mimesis or "Nachahmung." <sup>28</sup> The social vista must thus be kept as wide as possible, whereas dogmatic particularization would inevitably narrow it. It is, however, the very basis of Lenz's art, making this "moral" in his own sense, that aesthetic considerations are founded squarely on a sense of humanity, each reinforcing the other. It is clear from the conclusion to Anmerkungen übers Theater that the main importance of Shakespeare to Lenz lies in the essential humanity underlying each of his characters, a universal fund of experience that gives the lie to artificial distinctions of rank and station: "Mensch, in jedem Verhältnis gleich bewandert, gleich stark, schlug er ein Theater fürs ganze menschliche Geschlecht auf, wo jeder stehen, staunen, sich freuen, sich wiederfinden konnte, vom obersten bis zum untersten. Seine Könige und Königinnen schämen sich so wenig als der niedrigste Pöbel, warmes Blut im schlagenden Herzen zu fühlen, oder kitzelnder Galle in schalkhaftem Scherzen Luft zu machen, denn sie sind Menschen, auch urterm Reifrock, kennen keine Vapeurs, sterben nicht vor unsern Augen in müßiggehenden Formularen dahin, kennen den tötenden Wohlstand nicht" (WS, I, 362). In his own writings, Lenz is concerned, as he states, to penetrate to the core of his characters, to distinguish "was er zu seyn gezwungen ist, und was er ist." <sup>29</sup> It is the essential humanity

of Gotz he appreciates so highly: ". . . ein Mann der weder auf Ruhm noch Namen Anspruch macht, der nichts sein will als was er ist: ein Mann" (WS, I, 381).

Few eighteenth century writers gave as much emphasis to the essential man as Rousseau.<sup>30</sup> The whole trend of his writings is against the tendency of Enlightenment philosophy to view humanity in abstract and collective terms, whether in the field of morals, education, political theory, or whatever. Again and again he stresses the ultimate relevance of all such theorizing to the individual, rather than the abstract, being. Thus, of Emile: "En sortant de mes mains, il ne sera . . . ni magistrat, ni soldat, ni prêtre; il sera premièrement homme."<sup>31</sup> In similar vein are the opening sentences of several of the writings: "C'est de l'homme que j'ai à parler" (Discours sur l'Inégalité); "L'homme est né libre . . ." (Contrat social); "je veux montrer à mes semblables un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature" (Confessions). It is in this fundamental celebration of the man behind the social forms and trappings, rather than in any dogmatically conceived idea of equality, that Lenz shows himself most responsive to Rousseau's new appraisal of society. In his plays, ". . . die Stände werden insgesamt einer Kritik unterworfen, die nicht von einer besonderen ständischen Position aus, sondern im Namen der Menschheit, um des neuen, an keinen Stand gebundenen Menschenbildes willen, geübt wird."<sup>32</sup> Egalitarianism in this sense ". . . zielt allein auf eine Gleichheit im ideellen Raum, die als eine Abstraktion der von Rousseau geforderten aufzufassen ist . . ."<sup>33</sup>

~~Lenz's attitude towards society as constituted cannot, however,~~  
 be left here. In particular his major plays, with their depiction of greed, vanity and insincerity operating at all social levels to the detriment of the individual's aspirations, often confirm the bleakest premises of Rousseau's anti-civilization views. More precise echoes of these will emerge in the discussion of some of these works later. There are, nevertheless, grounds for optimism in Lenz's thinking: his faith in the potential of humanity, seeking to burst through the unnatural behaviour patterns imposed by society, his belief that this may be reformed through effort and the unceasing application of a practical "virtue." This social orientation of Lenz's ethics was the conclusion of Chapter IV. It remains to examine some of the ways in which Lenz seeks to put this belief into effect. Its presence in his writings distinguishes him from the essentially rhetorical character of much of Sturm und Drang literature, and again Rousseau's influence may be detected in several specific areas of reform.

## 2. The reform of society

In comparison with the mature political thinking of writers in France and England, Lenz's many schemes and projects aimed at improving specific areas of abuse within the existing social structure appear exceedingly naive.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, they are worthy of serious consideration, if for no other reason than that they have a direct bearing on the content of the social dramas. Two areas in particular show evidence of Rousseauist ideas: that of the military and of education.

Lenz's interest in military matters is reflected extensively in his correspondence.<sup>35</sup> One of the reasons for his decision to change the genre description of Die Soldaten from "Komödie" to "Schauspiel" he states thus: "Es konnte . . . noch den Schaden haben, daß ein gantzer Stand, der mir ehrwürdig ist, dadurch ein gewisses Lächerliche, das nur den verdorbenen Sitten einiger Individuen desselben zugedacht war, auf sich bezoge."<sup>36</sup> It would be anachronistic to condemn this interest in military matters. Kant's philosophical justification of pacifism, Zum ewigen Frieden, only appeared in 1795. To the eighteenth century mind the military calling was not necessarily incompatible with humane values, as can be seen in the case of Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, -- a character much admired by Lenz (GS, V, 239) --, and his passion for military strategy and engineering. Respect for military men in Sturm und Drang literature (one recalls that Klinger eventually became a general) must be viewed, in particular, in the context of its reaction against the effeteness of the Rococo, its yearning for valour and outstanding deeds. This socio-critical attitude is apparent in the words of Lenz's Waldbruder who refers to the prospect of becoming a soldier as a "Sprung aus dem Schulmeisterleben auf die erste Staffel der Ehre und des Glücks" (WL, I, 302). The association of a nation's military prowess with a healthy and robust society is one of the arguments used by Rousseau to support the thesis of his first Discours. Lessing, the most humanitarian German writer of the period, is alone in condemning this.<sup>37</sup> Rousseau praises ancient Sparta and Rome for their stern republican virtues of self-discipline and stoicism and points to their military success as evidence of their inner strength. A similar thought underlies a number of subsequent writings in Germany.<sup>38</sup>

Lenz's interest in the military life does not frequently take the form of such idealistic yearnings for glory. What characterizes the social tenor of his writings is his sympathetic concern for the moral and material needs of individual people. Thus, typically, his military interest culminates in a work unique for its time, since it deals with the sociology of soldiering: the tract Über die Soldatenehen (1776).<sup>39</sup> In the opinion of its first editor, ". . . nirgends treten die socialen Tendenzen des Sturmes und Dranges so klar zu Tage" (p. xvi).

There is an obvious thematic connection with Die Soldaten, which exposes the social problems arising from the universal convention that soldiers should be unmarried. Eisenhardt, the chaplain, exclaims: "O Soldatenstand, furchtbare Ehlosigkeit, was für Karikaturen machst du aus den Menschen" (WS, II, 217). From this unnatural state result many social ills: besides the obvious moral dangers to the female members of the community, the soldier himself lacks the sense of purpose and responsibility that accompanies a well-rooted existence.<sup>40</sup> In Die Soldaten the view expressed by the Gräfin La Roche is that marriage would undermine the selfless bravery required in battle (WS, II, 227). Accordingly the suggestion is made of a "Frauenpflanzschule," a reserve pool of women to be placed at the disposal of the soldiers, so that the sacrifice of the few would achieve the security of the community (pp. 243-45). In the later version, however, this suggestion no longer comes from La Roche, who remarks sceptically: "Wie wenig kennt ihr Männer doch das Herz und die Wünsche eines Frauenzimmers" (p. 246). Evidently Lenz's thoughts on the matter were far from final. Über die Soldatenehen expressly refutes the idea that personalities of love and family are incompatible with bravery in the field, and now proposes actual marriage for soldiers. It is an

important complementary document to Die Soldaten, whose political and social naivety has often been criticized.<sup>41</sup> Even here, however, the beginnings of a more realistic grasp of social anatomy are detected. The name of Rousseau has been cited more than once in this connection.<sup>42</sup>

The opening lines indicate the author's awareness that social changes can only be effected by those in positions of power and also that the latter will ignore the need for such changes only at their peril.<sup>43</sup> There is also scorn for "die Gelehrten, von jeher mehr gewohnt sich Kenntnisse zu sammeln als sie anzuwenden, weil das letztere mit mehr Gefahr verknüpft ist . . ." (p. 2). Lenz proceeds to a historical survey which, with its idyllic tone and the natural basis of its anthropological viewpoint, closely resembles Rousseau's Discours. A distant patriarchal age is invoked in which citizen and soldier live in an organic state of mutual dependence. As examples are cited the Greeks together with those "ältern nordischen Nationen, welche ohne Cultur und Wissenschaften dennoch ganz Europa überschwemmten" (p.3). The break-up of this type of society coincided with the development of the class system ("Lehnsverfassung") whereby the weaker, through "Trägheit und Furcht," sought the protection of the mighty in exchange for their freedom. At this point war changes its character from a necessary means of self-preservation, sanctioned by nature, to a means of personal self-aggrandizement on the part of the rulers: "man vergaß, daß der Soldat Vertheidiger des Vaterlandes war, er ward das Instrument der Einfälle der Fürsten und der Leidenschaften ihrer Minister, deren Sklaven sie waren" (p.5). This degeneration of motives corresponds precisely to Rousseau's concept of the change from natural, self-related "amour-propre"



to the artificial, selfish "amour de soi" in the evolution of society.

In Lenz's view, the arts of war have, in the modern age, reached a hitherto unknown degree of technical efficiency, and it is time to match this advance in the moral sphere. This will only be achieved by a return to the values of earlier societies. He does not, however, suggest an actual reconstruction of these in the modern age (nor, in effect, does Rousseau). He portrays a social degeneracy very reminiscent of the ills described by Rousseau, but attributes this in part to the influence of standing armies: "Die verdorbenen Sitten entnerven Bürger und Soldaten, die Schamhaftigkeit ist von unsern Weibern gewichen, die Industrie liegt, der Handel selbst muß am Ende ermatten und in bloße Kunst zu betrogen, zu übervortheilen ausarten, die Ehen werden selten und die Nachkommenschaft elend. . ." (pp. 22-23). One of the causes of the increased sensuality in society is seen as the growth of the Künste und Wissenschaften. The evident echo of Rousseau continues, too, in the accompanying foot-note praising the Spartans for outlawing the arts (p. 24). It is of interest that Lenz here takes a view somewhat similar to that of the Werther-Briefe, namely that this process of cultural corruption has as yet not touched the Germans to the same extent as the Latin races, in whom "Komödien und verbotene Bücher" have so roused the passions and the imagination as to make them unfit for war. In time, however, this process will also overtake the Germans (p. 26).

The problem of the soldier in modern society becomes one of effective motivation. How is this to be achieved against the prevailing trends of a

pleasure-seeking civilization? The solution seeks to restore as far as possible patriarchal values, whilst harnessing the guiding forces of modern society: self-interest and physical desire.<sup>44</sup> Citizens are to be encouraged to marry their daughters to soldiers, who in turn would divide their lives between their families and their profession. The soldier would thus find himself defending a valued personal possession. There follows a rhapsodic vision, with Rousseauesque tones: "Ich sahe nun schon die alten glucklichen Zeiten wieder eintreten, da der Soldat auch zugleich Burger war und, durch die Annehmlichkeiten seines Vaterlandes gefesselt, Blut und Leben freywillig dafur hergab. Ich sah die Gemeinen, ermudet von der Kriegsfatigue, zu Anfange des Herbstes mit ihren Weibern das Blut der Reben einsammeln und nun ganz die Wollust der Liebe und des Genusses nach der Abmergelung durch die Waffen in sich schlurfen" (p. 31). The vision of this idyllic bliss awaiting him at home would immeasurably strengthen the soldier's will in battle: "Ihr Fursten! die Natur allein macht Helden, der Ehrgeiz macht nur ihre Schattenbilder" (p. 32).

The remainder of the essay is devoted to a more detailed exposé of the social benefits to be expected from this scheme, some more convincing than others. Lenz notes with apparent neutrality the gradual concentration of power in the hands of the few, the universal trend towards aristocratic forms of government (thereby predicting, in fact, the rise of nineteenth century power-politics). On one point, however, he is emphatic: any increase in the financial burden of the common man, bourgeois or peasant, will be fraught with peril. Lenz writes with an authority based on first-hand

experience (reflected in his own play Die Kleinen) and which he shares with Rousseau:<sup>45</sup> "Ich deklamiere nicht, ich protokolliere nur das, was ich überall hörte und sah, als ich mich unter diese Leute mischte. Wehe dem neuen Projektentmacher, der diese Erniedrigten noch tiefer erniedrigt, diese Zertretenen noch mehr zertritt, aller Fluch ihrer unterdrückten Seufzer (leider können die meisten nicht mehr seufzen) über ihn!" (p. 52)

The reader is repeatedly reminded of fundamental aspects of Rousseau's criticism of modern society. This is reflected again and again in the conceptual language used:

Wenn der Bürger und Bauer glücklich sind, und der Soldat ist es mit ihnen, dann erst wird der Überfluß Geschmack, und das häßliche Wort Luxus, das itzt nichts weiter als Grillen der Reichen bedeutet, wird dann erfreuliche Pracht, die in dem innern Verhältnis eines jeden Standes ihren Grund hat . . . . .  
 . . . jetzt, da . . . jedermann Gelehrter, niemand aber Mensch ist, würden die Wissenschaften ihren höchsten Gipfel des Ruhms erreicht haben, wenn sie die menschliche Gesellschaft, statt bloß ihr Hirn auseinander zu dehnen, auch durch ihre Anwendung lehrten glücklich seyn (pp. 82-83).

The reconciliation thus envisaged between soldier and citizen is seen as the basis of a new feeling of community, which would also eliminate the present artificial separation of town-life (towns being a means of self-protection) from the country. This idyllic vision of communal living

is an indispensable prerequisite for any evolution of a "general will," and Girard may thus be right in pointing out the resemblance here to Rousseau's Contrat social.<sup>46</sup>

Über die Soldatenleben constitutes Lenz's most detailed and carefully reasoned social "project," the best illustration of his desire to translate the socio-critical impulses of his plays into the more immediate sphere of social experience. Yet a curious note of self-irony intrudes. There is an implied recognition of his own inability to carry out such a project, since he concludes with the hope that his tentative ideas may be realized by a man of action, one who would be free of the usual hesitations and errors of "utopischen Projektentmacher" (pp. 100-1). This recognition of the differing capabilities that separate speculation and action underscores a personal dilemma which, from time to time, surfaces in Lenz's writings (in Pandämonium Germanicum, for example). For the moment, however, it is clear that he has absorbed much of Rousseau's view of society and its foundations, with the (then novel) realization that a society's character and destiny are decided, ultimately, not by the titles and fortunes of princes, but by the values and aspirations of the mass of the common people composing it.

Lenz's interest in education may be inferred from the numerous, if fragmentary, treatments of this topic scattered throughout his writings. It is, of course, of particular relevance to the play Der Hofmeister. The epithet "pedagogical" has often been justly applied to the eighteenth

century. The Sturm und Drang was particularly drawn to Rousseau's contribution, which was to see the essential and instinctive nature of the child in a new, positive light. "Gerade das, was [der Aufklärung] an der Kindesnatur fremd erschienen war, das Unfertige, Regellose, Naive, Naturhafte, ~~wußte [der Sturm und Drang] aus einer innern Wesensverwandschaft heraus zu würdigen.~~"<sup>47</sup> Lenz's interest in education is attested in many of his letters, in addition to his creative works. Somewhat pathetic, in view of the shadow that lies across his later life, are his efforts to become rector of the Domschule in Riga. In his letter to Herder of 2 October 1779 requesting the latter's assistance, he writes: "Soviel sag ich Ihnen frey und wills drucken lassen, daß in ~~meinem Vaterlande~~ mir eine solche Stelle die Wünschenswerthe wäre."<sup>48</sup> He proceeds to list some of the ideal components he would like to see in the school curriculum and his own qualifications for teaching them. Particularly noteworthy in view of the ideas expressed in Der Hofmeister is that the nobility, -- "der fast den ~~zahlreichsten Theil~~ unsers Landes ausmacht und um Unterricht verlegen ist" --, could conceivably be drawn to "unserer Bürgerschule." Lenz undoubtedly viewed himself as an educator in the broader sense through the medium of his plays.<sup>49</sup> His greatest model, Shakespeare, he venerated as a great educator of humanity.<sup>50</sup>

Lenz's views on the education of the child echo strongly those of Rousseau.

The latter rails against the slavery of childhood whereby the infant becomes a victim of the adult's urge to indoctrinate, to mould a weaker being in his own image.<sup>51</sup> Lenz writes:

Die Erziehung ist seit einiger Zeit die Lieblingsangelegenheit unsers Jahrhunderts geworden, und ~~was~~ ist schmeichelhafter für den menschlichen Eigendünkel und für die menschliche Schwachheit zugleich, als die Triebe und Kräfte vernünftiger Wesen zu lenken, die, an dem Anfange ihrer Entwicklung, den Widerstand noch nicht

leisten können, den man bei Wesen von schärferer Einsicht und tätigerem Willen befürchten muß. Da der Mensch von Natur lieber befehlen als gehorchen mag, so tritt er mit einer Menge moralischer Maximen, die meist nicht durch eigene Erfahrung erworben worden, über und über gepanzert auf die Bühne, und der schmeichelhafte Wahn, der Gesetzgeber einer Nachwelt zu werden, sollte er sie auch gleich, wie Lysander, nur durch Spiele und Eidschwore betrügen, läßt ihn über alle Urteile einsichtsvoller Zeitgenossen stolz hinaussehen (GS, V, 306).

The basic assumptions of Rousseau's educational method are clearly taken for granted by Lenz. Intellectualism, with its attendant evils of specialization and compartmentalized knowledge, he rejects.<sup>52</sup> Instead, learning should be through experience: "qu'ils n'apprennent rien dans les livres de ce que l'expérience peut leur enseigner."<sup>53</sup> This in effect is the method employed by the country pastor Mannheim, who tells his flock nothing of doctrine "bis sie selbst drauf kamen" (GS, V, 160). What is stressed is the need to interrelate religion with daily practical life: "Wo will sich die Religion äussern, wo soll sie ihre Kraft und Wirksamkeit beweisen, wenn wir sie als einen abgezogenen Spiritus in Flaschen verwahren und nicht sie durch unser ganzes Leben und Gewerbe dringen lassen" (p. 202). Mannheim employs the

pragmatic method in the education of his own son, following the principle:

"daß alles, was aus dem Menschen wird, aus ihm selber kommen muß, und daß seine Erziehung aufs höchste nur als Stahl dienen müsse, etwas aus ihm herauszuschlagen" (p. 192). All his studies are undertaken on his own initiative, at the bidding of curiosity. "Die Sprachen lernte der Bube alle von sich selbst, wiewohl ihm der Vater alle nur möglichen Hilfsmittel -- nie aber Unterricht -- gab" (p. 193). In only one place does Lenz acknowledge the influence of Rousseau's pedagogic theory, a slight fragmentary work from his "Russian" period, Entwurf einiger Grundsätze.

Für die Erziehung überhaupt, besonders aber Für die Erziehung des Adels.

Typical of the difference between Rousseau and Lenz is the latter's attempt to harness the former's broad philosophical and social principles to a specific aspect of the existing social structure, his "concretization" of Rousseau. Lenz reiterates the helpless condition of the child, his dependence on the stronger and more mature, evaluates the role of book-learning and, as in Der Hofmeister, warns against the dangers of education by strangers: "Auch wurden die größten Römer und Griechen in den Häusern und durch den Umgang ihrer einheimischen Großen gebildet . . ." (GL, IV, 328). The acknowledgment to Rousseau comes, significantly, in the context of distinguishing between education in the true sense and mere instruction:<sup>54</sup>

"Rousseau hat angemerkt, daß ein Unterschied zwischen Unterrichten und Erziehen ist. Unterrichten kann jeder, auch der Fremde, und oft mit besserem Erfolg, als der Einheimische, weil er Kenntnisse von auswärtigen Dingen mitbringt, die uns nötig sind. . . . Erziehung aber ist nur die Wirkung des Beispiels von mehreren großen und wichtigen Männern in unserer Staat, die mögen leben, wo sie wollen" (p. 328).

Emile also contains a few afterthoughts on the education of woman, entitled "Sophie ou la Femme."<sup>55</sup> Women are to be educated to provide ideal wives and mothers. Modesty and domestic duty are the qualities sought. The skills she is to learn, singing, dancing, needlework, cooking and so forth, are all conceived from this fundamentally utilitarian viewpoint. The concept of woman's role is perhaps unpalatable today, but progressive for the time since it considered a field of education hitherto ignored. Rousseau's patriarchal ideal of domestic virtue, seen to fullest effect in the latter part of the Nouvelle Héloïse, proved particularly acceptable to the Sturm und Drang and its concept of sexual roles. It is Lenz, however, who shows his practical bent by setting out at some length, in a letter to Sarasin, the essential components of a woman's education.<sup>56</sup> There is a notable similarity to Rousseau's "Sophie"<sup>57</sup> The two writers stress, for example, the necessity for good physical stamina to enable women to fulfil their role as housekeeper and educator. This runs contrary to current society practice which would consign women to a permanent state of useless, delicate creatures concealed from the main-stream of life: ". . . nun nehmen Sie unsere meisten wohlgezogenen gelehrten, kranken Damen in Paris in Baumwolle eingewickelt und die kraftvolle Nachkommenschaft die von ihnen zu erwarten steht" (p. 109).<sup>58</sup> The essential humanity sought by both in place of the outward veneer is reflected in the following: ". . . was hilft einer Frau wenn Sie der Ausbund aller Eigenschaften eines Engels ist und ihr fehlt was sie alleine zum Menschen macht" (pp. 109-10). The same anti-intellectualism seen in the previous chapter in connection with women readers reappears in the contention, that ". . . ein Frauenzimmer das Pretension auf Verstand macht, das unliebenswürdigste und furchtbarste



aller existierenden Dinge ist" (p. 112), which approaches the hyperbole of Rousseau's view of "l'homme qui médite."<sup>59</sup> There is general agreement on the subjects of the curriculum: cooking ("O wenn doch die meisten französischen Damen dafür weniger Griechisch und Briefstyl wußten, weniger neue Bücher gelesen, weniger Preise für die tiefsinnigen Akademisten in Paris ausgetheilt hätten!"); drawing, less as a fine art than as an aid to domestic design;<sup>60</sup> ornamentation and cosmetics as aids to nature rather than tools of fashion.<sup>61</sup>

Der tugendhafte Taugenichts, already mentioned in connection with the cultural satire, would appear to demonstrate the main thesis of Emile which sets out to refute the Enlightenment belief equating knowledge and virtue. Like Schiller's Räuber it uses the motif of the two brothers.<sup>62</sup> Leybold, the father, repeatedly berates David for his scholastic inferiority to his diligent brother Just: ". . . sieh wie er dich in allen Stücken übertrifft. Es ist kein Kaiser in der Geschichte, von dem er mir nicht Namen und Jahrzahl weiß" (WC, II, 520). Rousseau's condemnation of early indoctrination in "des noms de rois, des dates, des termes de blason, de sphère, de géographie," rather than the solicitous encouragement of moral consciousness, springs to mind.<sup>63</sup> Sturm und Drang writers, including Goethe, draw upon it frequently.<sup>64</sup> Although the play was not completed, one may assume that David's filial loyalty towards his unappreciative father would stand forth in contrast to his brother's treachery. Just is last seen plotting to convince Leybold of his brother's death. David shows a number of Rousseauesque traits, accepting as a mark of honour what his father had intended as a bitter insult: "Holzhacker -- ja Holzhacker, Holzhacker

war meine Bestimmung" (p. 521), and choosing the soldier's profession while his father and brother entertain courtisans in the guise of opera-singers.

Lenz rightly views education as an instrument in any movement towards cultural rejuvenation. Significantly, it is a schoolmaster, Matz Hocker, who supplies the people's voice of resistance to attempts by the cultured world of the Enlightenment to impart its own prideful doctrines to the peasants. Rousseau's view of educational priorities is evident in his address "An die Damen, die Kunstrichter und das ganze menschliche Geschlecht:"<sup>65</sup>

Nun denk ich wohl oft, wie wohl ist mir  
 Doch jetzt in meinem Dorf dafür,  
 Kämen nur nit manche faule Mähren,  
 Mir meine Bäuerlein auch 'fzuklären  
 Und einzublättern ihnen Wind,  
 Daß gleich mit allem fertig sind,  
 Und Gott und Menschen lernen verachten,  
 Druber mit Leid und Seele verschmachten.  
 Ach, gnädige Herren, groß und klein,  
 Bitte, wollet uns lassen allein,  
 Uns verspotten nach Herzens Begehren,  
 Nur unsre Leutlein nit spötteln lehren (GE, I; 154).

A somewhat more problematic figure, is the village-schoolmaster Wenzeslaus, in Der Hofmeister. This play, as the most intense expression of Lenz's interest in the social role of education, and in particular in its relation to Rousseau's ideas, must be viewed separately in the next chapter.

### 3. Problems of love and marriage

The zeal to reform social mores is particularly evident in that most fundamental of human relationships, that of the sexes. Rousseau's importance for this theme is paramount. It is he who first seriously questioned conventional attitudes towards woman, her nature and social role. Both before and after marriage, she could claim no substantial rights.<sup>66</sup> Marriage itself was imposed from considerations of social expediency and was the prelude to a life of domestic service. Prior to this, she may have enjoyed a brief period of veneration as "a lovely and delicate plaything,"<sup>67</sup> but in both instances her position was peripheral in a totally male-oriented society. Consequently, ideas concerning her relationship with the opposite sex were equally superficial.

Rousseau's achievement in the Nouvelle Héloïse is to articulate a new consciousness of woman's peculiar being and also her social rights. At the same time his characteristic puritanism reacts against the lack of moral purpose and rampant immorality both within and outside of marriage, so that he is compelled to restate, albeit in a new and idealized light, the notion of a womanly duty within the domestic framework.<sup>68</sup> Inherent in this is the antique ideal of devotion to a patriarchal type of family structure ordained by nature, an ideal which was to appeal strongly to writers in Germany from Sturm und Drang to, for example, Goethe's Hermann und Dorothea. "Das weibliche Ideal der Geniedramatiker ist nicht das Machtweib, sondern die sanfte, empfindsame, pietätsvolle

Frau, die in der Zurückgezogenheit und Stille wirkt, und sich innerhalb der Schranken der Sitte hält, also im wesentlichen Rousseaus Ideal."<sup>69</sup> Yet the inhuman, institutionalized repression of woman through the marriage of convenience revolts the deepest instincts of Rousseau's nature, where his libertarian sympathies unite with an awareness of love truly experienced. Both aspects are present in his novel, the former predominating only after the latter has been explored with unprecedented thoroughness and intensity. The tension that thus arises is only to some degree resolved when one perceives the character of the work as a complete critique of contemporary attitudes, with their lack of both moral and human substance. This end is served above all through the recognition of Julie's intrinsic humanity, her embodiment of new concepts of virtue. Rousseau accords his heroine a boundless degree of respect and veneration. Consequently St. Preux's love of her becomes a profound educating process, one of heightened moral self-knowledge in and through another being.

Lenz likewise endows women with that superior sensibility and moral insight that verge on the divine. Just as Julie calms her lover's feverish passion and seeks to guide him towards nobler goals, the women that Lenz apotheosizes in his works, -- Cleophe Fibich, Cornelia Schlosser, Henriette Waldner, --<sup>70</sup> are each perceived in the role of "Wegweiserin zum Guten."<sup>71</sup> Such a veneration has sometimes been compared with that of the medieval Minne.<sup>72</sup> Certainly, both Lenz and Rousseau tend to remove the seat of erotic guilt from the female to the male thus favouring the Virgin rather than the temptress Eve as the archetype of woman. Lenz satirizes the

Augustine view of the sinful woman in his poem "Menalk und Mopsus"

(WS, I, 183-4).

The most concise statement of Lenz's ideal of woman occurs in the Werther-Briefe. The occasion is his appreciation of Lotte, who engenders

. . . Enthusiasmus für wirkliche Vorzüge, für weiblichen Wert. Nicht für ein schön Gesicht, nicht für einen schönen Fuß -- für den Inbegriff aller sanfteren Tugenden, aller edleren geistigen, sowohl als körperlichen Reize zusammengekommen, für ein Ideal -- aber nicht eines wahnwitzigen Augenblicks wie die Ideale gewisser Schriftsteller, sondern einer reifen mit der Welt und ihren Verhältnissen und Einschränkungen durchaus bekannten Überlegung, für ein Ideal wie es jede Tochter Germaniens täglich und stündlich werden kann, ohne ein Haar von dem natürlichen Stempel ihrer Seele zu verlieren, vielmehr sich so ihrer verlernten und verkünstelten Natur allein wieder zurück nähert (WS, I, 389-90).

The ideal, of which Lenz writes, is evidently that union of physical and spiritual beauty celebrated by Rousseau.<sup>73</sup> The classical ideal of the "schöne Seele," (which, it has already been suggested, found an important forerunner in Rousseau) is not far removed. It is, however, typical of Lenz to become obsessed with ideals, content not simply to give them expression but also to seek them out in actual life. Thus in one of the earliest of his so-called love-relationships, with Cleophe Fibich, as

reflected in the Tagebuch, he assumes the quixotic role of defending her from the cynical voluptuousness of the "Schwager" (the younger baron Kleist). The result of such a conflict of values, which undoubtedly reflects Lenz's own ambivalence and self-distrust in his relations with the opposite sex, leads to a loss of any sense of a real liaison. The whole dissolves into an ethereal platonic sphere.<sup>74</sup> Nowhere does this search for the elusive ideal of womanly beauty (conceived in the fullest senses) lead to a greater detachment from reality than in Lenz's strange obsession with the portraits of women acquaintances. The urgent desire to possess such representations of his idol indicates, analogous with Christian images of the saints, his extreme veneration of the ideal behind the woman.<sup>75</sup> He falls in love with Henriette von Waldner on the strength of another's description of her (that of his Strasbourg landlady, Luise König), induces her to become a subject for a portrait for Lavater's physiognomastic collection, then becomes embroiled in an argument with the latter concerning possession of the portrait. The incident provides part of the background of Der Waldbruder. Several years before this he unconsciously admits in a letter to Salzmann his tendency to create ideals of women from his imagination and to project these upon actual women.: "Es ist mir wie Pygmalion gegangen. Ich hatte mir zu einer gewissen Absicht in meiner Phantasie ein Mädchen geschaffen -- ich sah mich um und die gütige Natur hatte mir mein Ideal lebendig an die Seite gestellt."<sup>76</sup> One can be sure that such happiness was temporary. Der Waldbruder reflects the sequence of ecstatic idolization and bitter disillusionment when the real fails to measure up to the ideal, which is a recurrent pattern in Lenz's love relationships.

The allusion to the Pygmalion legend in this connection is significant. Lenz, like Rousseau, has left his own poetic version in his poem of 1777 (WS, I, 126).<sup>77</sup> The obsession with the portraits suggests a kind of fetishism similar to that displayed by the legendary artist who conceived a passion for his statue, as first recounted by Ovid (Metamorphoses, Book X).<sup>78</sup> One notes, however, that in this poem, too, Lenz is enamoured of the ideal of spiritual beauty. Peace, solace, the alleviation of pain, are the benefits it promises, whilst the delicately intimated physical attractions become more the concrete symbol of this:

An diesen Lippen, diesen Augen  
 Die Welt vergessend, hinzuhängen  
 Und aus den rosaroten Wangen  
 Des Lebens Überfluß zu saugen  
 An dieses Busens reiner Fülle  
 Die Schmerzen meiner Brust zu wiegen . . . (WS, I, 126).<sup>79</sup>

The charge made by Goethe that Rousseau's Pygmalion monologue depicts the destruction of art through "den gemeinsten Akt der Sinnlichkeit" could hardly be made of Lenz's version.<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps in only one relationship does Lenz find his ideal embodied in an actual woman, in Goethe's sister, Cornelia Schlosser. It is certainly not coincidental that, as was seen in Chapter III, the Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten shows explicitly and implicitly the influence of Rousseau's novel. Cornelia's relationship to the poet is strongly reminiscent of that

of Julie and St. Preux, that of the ever vigilant mentor sustaining her lover's nobler nature through his moral and emotional tribulations. The confessional nature of St. Preux's letters from Paris is recalled, for example, by the opening of the eighth "Selbstunterhaltung:" "Ich muß Dir etwas gestehen, Cornelia! das mir Dein edles Herz gewiß verzeihen wird" (WC, I, 273). We find the same contrast between the vanity of the present surroundings and the fulfillment he had known in her presence: "Bei Dir war alles gesättigt alles befriedigt, hier bin ich ewig wüste und leer" (p. 277).

The underlying concept of woman in both works is of a humanizing, educating force. Lenz comes closest here to one of the great themes of classicism (Iphigenie auf Tauris), supported stylistically.<sup>81</sup> He has not, however, succeeded in achieving a reconciliation between physical and moral, or Platonic, love. Lenz's distrust of the former, which emerges, for example, in the pietistic pronouncements of the Meynungen eines Laien, is symbolized by the passion for Cleophe Fibich, from which he now turns to Cornelia to effect his recovery, and by various guilt-laden references (e.g. to his "Nachtsunden"). Lenz sees his love of Cornelia still through his idealist's prism, in terms of a (very Rousseauésque) conflict between "deine stille Tugend" and his own viciousness. He alternates between the emotional extremes of religious ecstasy and a tortured sense of personal worthlessness. The epithet used repeatedly to describe his love is "rein." St. Preux describes his love in similar terms of religious fervour: "pur" and "sacré" are the most frequently used.



For Lenz this can only imply a non-possessive, Platonic love. Reflecting with regret on his failure to avow his love at the right opportunity, he concludes that the hesitation resulted from the uncertainty of his motives, from a fear that his devotion had not yet reached the crystalline purity he demanded of it: "Nur Besewichter können so gewissenhaft sein. Eine verheiratete Frau dachte ich -- wie wäre der Gedanke mir eingefallen, wenn ich reine Flammen für dich gefühlt hätte" (WS, I, 262).<sup>82</sup>

Where Lenz divides the erotic and spiritual poles of love between two women, Rousseau has attempted to unite them. The first part of the Héloïse, at least, knows no distinction between the pathos of desire and that of spiritual celebration. The indestructable purity of the emotion uniting the lovers, a purity which holds even after St. Preux's seduction of Julie, is shown with an intensity for which one would have to look to Gottfried's Tristan for its equal. It is only later that resignation intrudes, when St. Preux renounces Julie and concurs in her marriage to Wolmar. Rousseau attempts to depict a moral metamorphosis resulting from a realization of the ultimately destructive nature of total love, however noble. Yet it is undeniable that such a resignation constitutes an act of surrender to social necessity, and it is this which accounts for its unsatisfactory aspect.<sup>83</sup> Rousseau appears to be caught on the horns of a dilemma: how to reconcile the freedom impulse so evident in his writings with the moral imperative of virtue upon which he places equal stress. At best he may claim an element of freedom in the voluntary aspect of renunciation, arising from a genuine conviction that it is the morally proper course. Such a conviction is based on his absolute view of marriage

as "le plus inviolable et le plus saint de tous les contrats."<sup>84</sup>

Marriages formed in the absence of inclination he considers undesirable;<sup>85</sup> but his rejection of a society in which adultery and divorce are rampant induces him to affirm the sacrosanct nature even of such marriages. Lenz, too, we note, views the marriage contract as a sacred document.<sup>86</sup> Matrimony he regards as "die Basis aller Glückseligkeit in der Welt . . . , das Fundamentalinstitut der fortgehenden Schöpfung" (GS, IV, 33). The high importance Lenz attaches to marriage in his reformist's vision of society has been stressed by Rosanow and by Sommerfeld, as, for example, "die ursprünglichste, höchste, alle wesentlichen Bezüge des Menschen umspannende Form der Lebensführung."<sup>87</sup> In attributing this conviction to the influence of Rousseau, however, both lack some necessary critical reservations.<sup>88</sup>

It cannot be concealed that much of Rousseau's novel constitutes a passionate indictment of forced marriages. Julie is undeniably a prisoner of convention, the victim of a tyrannical father: "déguiser tout ce qu'on sent; être fausse par devoir, et mentir par modestie: voilà l'état habituel de toute fille de mon âge."<sup>89</sup> Undoubtedly it is this aspect which appealed in particular to the writers of Sturm und Drang. Lenz employs satire against the marriage of convenience in his poem, written under the impact of the Friederike Brion affair, "Die Liebè auf dem Land." Pious and unfeeling ("mit gefalteten Händen"), the pastor gives his daughter to the unloved Kandidat, whilst she must nurture in secret her anguish for the absent lover (WS, I, 140). Her wedding-day is a sacrificial offering. Such injustices are only part of a universal degradation of the marriage

institution, which Lenz catalogues among the various social ills he attributes to rationalist philosophy (Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken). The majority of marriages he regards as nothing more than "Verträge . . ., einander gegen gewisse anderweitige Vorteile, die gleich als ob man sich mit seinem ärgsten Feinde verbände, mit der größten Behutsamkeit von der Welt obrigkeitlich gesichert sein, alles zu erlauben" (WS, I, 443). Animal sensuality is the main purpose served by such legal unions, whereas Lenz conceives of physical love within marriage as an intensification of a true spiritual relationship, as "eine Folge der innigsten Liebe . . ., damit unsere Liebe geistiger, unsere Empfindungen edler, höher, warmer und stärker seien". . ."

(GS, IV, 58). Of significance in connection with Rousseau's viewpoint is the fact that in the same context Lenz conceives of the type of marriage based on friendship, -- "bei denen Vernunft und Ruhe die Stelle von Feuer und Lebhaftigkeit vertritt," -- but evidently regards this as a "second best" type of union (p. 34).

Although Lenz depicts himself engaged in a purely platonic relationship with a married woman in Die Moralische Bekehrung, this is seen as an enriching personal experience of a voluntary nature, not as something forced upon him by virtue of her married state. The element of social conflict is here lacking. Where, however, the preconditions for such conflict exist, namely in the demeaning of marriage to serve society, a more revolutionary attitude shows itself in his writings. How to reconcile this with the ethical impulse, equally vital for Lenz as for Rousseau, becomes, as in the case of the latter, a special problem.

Lenz's comparison of the Nouvelle Héloïse and Goethe's Werther is of interest here, since it attempts specifically to demonstrate the moral character of the latter. Of particular interest is the suggestion that renunciation, the abandonment of the absolute yearnings of the subject, may be salutary within the dissolute fabric of French society, but not so in Germany where "steife Sitten" prevail. Clearly Lenz envisages a morality of love, at least in the society which is his immediate concern, of a different order from bourgeois convention. An interesting change of perspective occurs in the late fragment already referred to, Über Delikatesse der Empfindung, in which he seems no longer concerned with the moral position of the lover in the two novels (the usual centre of critical controversy) but that of the women themselves. Gulliver, stung by the Luftgeist's complacent interpretation of the novels as deterrents to any "wöhlerzogenes Frauenzimmer" inclined to abandon the path of virtue, demands: "Also wolltest du eine Julie heiraten oder eine Lotte, die ihr Brautbette mit Blut befleckt, und so fur besser geziert hält" (GS, V, 260). All the disillusionment of Lenz in his decline shows itself in Gulliver's words: "Was sollen wir aber in einer Welt machen, wo alle Frauenzimmer Lotten oder Julien wären? Davonlaufen oder uns vor den Kopf schießen-- ich weiß kein ander Mittel!" A bitter condemnation of marriage without love in the fullest sense as Lenz envisages it is conveyed in the following tableau: "Die Befriedigung des Geschlechtsreizes ist ein fluchtiger Augenblick; nahen gesetztere Jahre, wo man das Geschlecht vergißt, so kann weder Komödie noch Roman noch Trauerspiel den verlorenen Frieden einer Seele wiederherstellen, die sich mit den Schlangen

die sie in ihren Reizen des Gesichts trug, jetzt in ihrem Gewissen martert, und keiner einzigen edeln Handlung, keiner abgewischten verborgenen Träne bewußt werden kann" (p. 261).

The notion that the sacrifices endured by St. Preux and Werther were both unnecessary and unjust is noteworthy.<sup>90</sup> One effect is undoubtedly to diminish the idea of a tragic necessity in both heroes and to reduce both works to a level of appraisal in which the unmitigated assessment of harsh social reality is possible. A significant number of Lenz's works present such a situation of conflict between the demands of a lover and those of society, and it is possible to see these as so many attempts to resolve the conflict in terms more socially and personally acceptable than Rousseau's submissive ideal. This is one of the conclusions of Ilse Kaiser's dissertation, (Erlangen, 1971), Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, Der Engländer, Der Waldbruder von J.M.R. Lenz.<sup>91</sup>

In Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, a play described by Lenz as one "das meinem Herzen am nächsten ist,"<sup>92</sup> the young fortuneless dreamer Strephon, seems about to lose for ever the love of the aristocratic Seraphine. Incensed by the former's proud refusal to be her husband in all but name she has accepted the hand of her admirer, Don Prado. Strephon is saved from suicide by none other than Don Prado himself who, perceiving that his rival's love is of a superior order to his own, graciously yields his place to him, declaring: "Ich bin zu stolz, Ihnen ein Herz zu entziehen, das Ihnen mit so vielem Recht gehört."

Vielmehr will ich dem Wink des Himmels folgen, der mich zum Mittel hat brauchen wollen, zwei so standhafte Herzen auf ewig mit einander zu vereinigen" (WS, I, 327). This bold reversal of the Héloïse dénouement<sup>93</sup> is justified in advance by Seraphine's confession that virtue is not a substitute for love as a basis of marriage: "Tugend und Pflicht sind nicht Liebe, Prado . . ." (p. 324). The conclusion appears banal when set beside the supremely tragic Werther or the celebration of selfless virtue in the Nouvelle Héloïse.<sup>94</sup> Undoubtedly the play, which bears the marks of Lenz's relationship with Henriette von Waldner, may be viewed as a subjective exercise in wish-fulfillment. Titel describes it as "Lenzens phantastische Antwort auf die Neue Héloïse Rousseaus -- und sein Traum von dem, was er selbst zu verdienen glaubte."<sup>95</sup> Beyond this, however, the play is indicative of Lenz's whole tendency to life-proximity in his works, to see these in terms of actual social reality, however self-related.

The supremacy of love over the shallow conventional form that often passed as marriage is strongly asserted in Die Freunde.<sup>96</sup> In the fragment Die Laube of approximately the same date (ca. 1776), the lover's role in the triangular relationship is played by Constantin, who assures Henriette: "Sie sind in diesen Armen unbefleckter unschuldiger und heiliger als in den Armen ihres Ehemannes" (WS, II, 561). The story Zerbin, as has already been shown, contains the most burning indictment of the fashionable view that sought to segregate marriage and love. This, then, like many other social ills, is attributable in Lenz's view to the prevalence of rationalism over moral feeling. The hubris which results for Zerbin in the destruction of himself and the devoted Marie lies in his cold assessment of marriage

as "nichts mehr, als einen Kontrakt zwischen zwei Parteien aus politischen Absichten" (GS, V, 95). Love, on the other hand, "schien ihm nun als ein Ingredienz, das gar nicht in den Heiratsverspruch gehorte; die große Weisheit unserer heutigen Philosophen ging ihm auf, daß Ehe eine wechselseitige Hilfeleistung, Liebe eine vorubereilende Grille sei; eine Mißheirat schien seinem aufgeklärten Verstande nun ein ebenso unverzeihbares Verbrechen, als es ihm ehemals der Ehebruch und die Verführung der Unschuld geschehen hatten." In Der Engländer (1776), Robert Hot is to be recalled to England by his father from Turin, where he has fallen in love with Armida. His proposed fate is a marriage of convenience with the daughter of Lord Hamilton. The plan that society, represented by Lord Hamilton and Lord Hot, conceives to shake him from his present romantic idealism is to instill in him a taste for sensual pleasures. "Wenn nur ein Mittel wäre, ihm den Geschmack an Wollust und Behäglichkeit beizubringen," remarks Hamilton, and adds: "er hat sie noch nie gekostet; und wenn das so fortstürmt in seiner Seele, kann er sie auch nie kosten lernen" (WS, II, 340). Obviously Robert is seriously out of line with conventional social practice. The agent who is to effect his "cure" is a prostitute, Tognina. The outward symbols of her allurements are the roses which she playfully sheds on him as he lies on his sick bed (p. 349). Flowers and play are both favorite Rococo motifs; that the cultivation of beauty conceals an inner moral turpitude is the basic criticism of his culture that Lenz shares with Rousseau. Unwittingly Tognina provides Hot with the instrument of his suicide. His death provides us, in a particularly audacious manner, with an instance of Lenz's idealization of woman and of love, whilst at the same time

expressing his rejection of the forces of hypocrisy. As the confessor tells him to detach himself from earthly things, he prepares to meet his maker with the demand that the memory of Armida may accompany him; it is her portrait that he kisses instead of the crucifix; "Behaltet euren Himmel für euch" are his dying words (p. 353).

In such works Lenz is consistent in laying the charge of immorality not upon the individual lovers, even though these are often compelled to be immoral in the technical sense in order to achieve their sacred aspirations, but rather upon the social institutions which cynically use the marriage form or exploit sensuality for its own ends. With this conviction he is not predisposed to a sympathetic understanding of Rousseau's novel, whose resolution appears to reiterate that "schroffe Trennung von Liebe und Ehe, die die Gedanken des 18. Jahrhunderts beherrscht."<sup>97</sup> Considerations of social compromise have no place in an idealistic and absolute attitude towards what is regarded as the noblest force in human relations.<sup>98</sup> Yet it is precisely this depiction of total love with which Rousseau was most closely identified, as Lenz well knew.<sup>99</sup> The equation of love and nature is in the Rousseau tradition.<sup>100</sup> What so impressed his apologists such as Hamann and Fussli, whilst offending Enlightenment critics, was his rejection of the tidy, logical language of the mind as inappropriate in expressing the emotions. Both the rationalist view of unbridled passion as a moral threat to the will<sup>101</sup> and the trivial Rococo attitude to love are eschewed by Rousseau and replaced by an intensely serious emotion involving the total being, spiritual and physical. Only in Rousseau did Lenz and his contemporaries



find the pathos of love revealed in all its manifestations: outpourings of emotion, spiritual ecstasy, indifference to danger or opposition, together with such physical signs of the total inner possession as fainting, trembling, pallor, loss of appetite.<sup>102</sup> These were to become part of the stock of the Sturm und Drang's portrayal of passion and can be seen in some of Lenz's stage directions.<sup>103</sup> Love which lacks this intensity belongs inevitably to the sphere of social formality which Rousseau himself had condemned.<sup>104</sup> Here once again is that recurrent ingredient in Lenz's attitude to Rousseau - disappointment, a perplexed feeling that the latter is betraying his own revolutionary ideals.

The reasons for Rousseau's introduction of the resignation theme in his novel have long been the object of speculation. It may perhaps be viewed as expressive of his obsessive elegiac conviction of the vanity of seeking happiness within the modern social structure.<sup>105</sup> Perhaps his own deep-seated puritanism intrudes where it has least reason to be, in the guise of a supposedly virtuous platonism.<sup>106</sup> There are, at least, indications that he himself sensed the unsatisfactory nature of the sacrifice as a lasting solution.<sup>107</sup> Lenz's attitude provides yet another instance of the tendency already noted towards an enthusiastic, reforming zeal, ever-ready to adopt uncompromising positions, one best described as "more Rousseauist than Rousseau." \*Lenz geht . . . in der Bewertung des leidenschaftlichen Lebensgefühls weit über Rousseau hinaus. Er nimmt ihm die letzten Hemmungen und gesteht ihm das absolute Recht zu schrankenloser Auswirkung zu. Darin liegt der Kernpunkt seines Stürmer- und Drängertums." Further conclusions remain to be drawn from this judgment of Kaisers (p. 78).

Lenz undoubtedly sees the experience of love in its fullest and most demanding form as an important ingredient of that dynamic process of self-fulfillment which was viewed earlier as the basis of his individual ethic. Expansion of all the faculties is the overriding goal, whether mental, physical or spiritual. Love moves the heart, making it more receptive to beauty and truth: this is the sole necessary claim to morality for Goethe's Werther. Love may thus be encompassed within Lenz's total moral philosophy, where Rousseau must resort to renunciation in the name of virtue. Despite the platonic idealism of such works as the Moralische Bekerung, Lenz's objective, social ideal (which he himself never attained) is of a full requited love relationship sanctified by a marriage of inclination rather than coercion.<sup>108</sup> In this context Rousseau's resignation must inevitably appear retrogressive. Beyond this it collides with that same metaphysical conviction which is expressed in the Rousseau criticism of Das erste Principium and Der Waldbruder. In sundering the ties of passion and devoting her energies to the quiet cultivation of domestic serenity, Julie is seeking that same inner state of "paix" which Rousseau takes to be the highest good, the only effective means of preserving virtue in a corrupt and corrupting world. Where she had sought "bonheur et . . . paix" (p. 169), instead she found only the inner turbulence of moral conflict. The renunciation of love is the price they must pay for the restoration of peace; "En renonçant à Julie, vous achetez son repos aux dépens du votre, et c'est à vous que vous renoncez pour elle" (Mme d'Orbe to Saint Preux, p.299). What begins as a stirring proclamation of individual rights in an oppressive society thus yields

to Rousseau's idyllic yearning for peace and the freedom from strife. Thus we are brought back to the main stumbling block in the way of Lenz's total acceptance of Rousseau's philosophy.

Despite Genton's observation on the apparent failure of Sturm und Drang dramatists to give a positive value to love in their works.<sup>109</sup> Lenz at least sees it as a supremely important force tending to the greater happiness and virtue of individual and society alike. The frequency with which love situations become, in the major social dramas, the occasion for caricature (the main substance of Genton's remark and which is indeed true of Lenz<sup>110</sup>), results from the character of these as social-critical depictions of the distorting and denaturizing forces in society which work against the attainment of such an ideal. Elsewhere, as we have seen, the ideal of love which Lenz evolves, to a considerable extent in dialectic response to Rousseau, forms a much more positive part of his visions of a happier humanity.

## VII. INDIVIDUAL WORKS

Four works in particular -- two plays, a dramatic fragment and a novel -- show a marked influence of Rousseau's ideas on the creative writing of Lenz. We are concerned not merely with the presence of these, but with their role within the structure of the work concerned. That Lenz's attitude to Rousseau is not one of simple imitation, despite a strong emotional attraction is most apparent from these writings, which serve to complete the perspective from which this attitude may be defined and explained.

### 1. Der Hofmeister

Possible links between this, one of Lenz's best known plays, and works of Rousseau have long been assumed. Erich Schmidt points to the similarity of its theme, that of the tutor seducing his socially superior ward, and that of the Nouvelle Héloïse.<sup>1</sup> Other commentators, beginning with Eugen Wolff, have seen a connection between the tutor theme and Emile.<sup>2</sup> The presence of Rousseau motifs was also noted in Stammer's 1908 dissertation.<sup>3</sup> However, the first real attempt to examine Rousseau's role in the play is that of Clara Stockmeyer, who views the work in terms of a critical "Auseinandersetzung Lenzens mit Rousseau."<sup>4</sup> Both of Rousseau's novels are the object of this. Läufer and Gustchen are seen as shallow, frivolous parodies of St. Pierre and Julie; moreover it is Rousseau's own novel that becomes instrumental in Gustchen's seduction.

Stockmeyer thus concludes that Lenz

... sich in bewußten Gegensatz zu dem von der Sturm- und Dranggeneration sonst so verehrten Philosophen stellt. Der Hofmeister mutet stellenweise wie eine Parodie auf die Neue Héloïse an. Lenz entkleidet mit einem gewissen Behagen den in Rousseaus Roman geschilderten Vorgang seines poetischen Schimmers. Es ist, als wollte er sagen: "So sieht das Leben aus, wenn man es mit unbefangenen Augen statt durch die Brille eines philosophischen Systems anschaut." Das Mädchen, dem das Schicksal einer Julie begegnet, ist in Wirklichkeit nicht ein Engel, sondern ein schwaches, sinnliches Wesen; ein Jungling wie St. Preux ist ein haltloser Mensch (loc. cit.).

A similar criticism of Emile and its apparent "Verherrlichung der Hofmeistererziehung" is the presumed intention of the play's tendentious rejection of the private tutor in favour of communal education: "Vor allem ist ihm Rousseau darin zu sehr Poet oder abstrakter Theoretiker, daß er das intime Zusammenleben zwischen Lehrer und Schuler so idyllisch schildert. Lenz weiß aus Erfahrung, daß sich die Dinge in Wirklichkeit ganz anders verhalten." By stressing only the parodistic aspects and attributing to these a purely polemical intention Stockmeyer undoubtedly presents a one-sided interpretation that fails to take account of the infinitely more positive social and moral insights contained in Rousseau's writings. Kindermann to some extent restores the balance: "Die stürmische Rythmik der Leidenschaften, das Anstürmen gegen alther-

gebrachte Autoritäten und Anschauungen, die Hinwendung zu natürlichem Empfinden -- sie wären ohne Rousseau nicht denkbar gewesen."<sup>5</sup> Rousseau's ethical demand for sincerity and naturalness in human relations (the major theme of the later Neue Menoza), in rejection of the slippery morals of the Rococo, is already clearly heard in Der Hofmeister.<sup>6</sup> "Neben Shakespeare gibt es für diese Tragikomödie kein Vorbild von gleich nachhaltiger Wirkung wie Rousseau."<sup>7</sup>

The question of the relevance of Emile bears on the admittedly important pedagogic theme; but whether this is the central theme is questionable. The irony of the play's subtitle, "Vorteile der Privaterziehung," is seen as a refutation of Rousseau's tutorial method of education.<sup>8</sup> Yet Lenz himself, in the Werther letters, seeks to lessen the importance of this one theme within the composite depiction of social reality: "Man hat mir allerlei moralische Endzwecke und philosophische Sätze bei einigen meiner Komödien angedichtet, man hat sich den Kopf zerbrochen, ob ich wirklich den Hofmeisterstand für so gefährlich in der Republik halte, man hat nicht bedacht, daß ich nur ein bedingtes Gemälde geben wollte von Sachen wie sie da sind". . ." (WS, I, 385). The importance of education in Lenz's social thinking was observed in the preceding chapter, and its role in Der Hofmeister should not be underestimated. He is clearly alive to current controversy and the need for educational reform. His technique, however, is to integrate the diverse facets of the problem into the structure of characterization, notably with the Geheimer Rat von Berg und Wenzeslaus, the village school master. It is the dramatic potential or debate upon the social issues involved, not the unequivocal resolution of any of these, which ultimately serves Lenz's avowed purpose as a dramatist: to awaken the hearts and minds

of his audiences in a manner ultimately fruitful in terms of moral and social progress. Following this cautionary note, we may proceed to examine the issue of private versus public education opened by the Geh. Rat in II.i (WS, II, 28 f.) and brought to a somewhat banal conclusion with the final words of Fritz v. Berg (p. 104).

The implied sympathy towards the ideal of communal education is no more likely to be a criticism of Rousseau than an endorsement of the reforming efforts of Basedow, whose name is closely linked with the beginnings of Prussian state education in the seventeen-sixties.<sup>9</sup> His model school, or Philanthropinum, received widespread attention at the time Der Hofmeister was written. The "Hofmeister" system, which was designed to segregate children of the nobility and thus preserve the caste system, was already in general disrepute and the object of repeated attacks in contemporary writings.<sup>10</sup> Lenz's play closely reflects the well-documented current abuses: the social elitism described by the Geh. Rat (p. 29) and "which compels even Läufer to regard the prospect of assisting in Wenzeslaus' village school as a "Demütigung" despite his abominable treatment by his aristocratic employers (p. 60); the tutor's lowly servant status, which accorded ill with the enormous moral responsibility entrusted him as the total educator of his charge ("Merk Er sich, mein Freund: daß Domestiken in Gesellschaften von Standespersonen nicht mitreden" (p. 15).<sup>11</sup> Lenz himself had suffered the humiliation of the tutor's position during his period in Königsberg. Thus for both personal and topical reasons the theme would have readily suggested itself. On the other hand, Rousseau's novel (with which, as we have seen, Lenz was

fairly well acquainted) does not in the first instance appear as an apology of a social institution, but rather as a statement of pedagogical ideals whose realization, for lack of a better alternative, is sought in a highly individualized context. Indeed, at the beginning of his treatise Rousseau laments the decline of "l'institution publique" together with the ideals of nationhood and citizenship which alone can support such education.<sup>12</sup> Since Lenz has demonstrated elsewhere his ability to view Rousseau within his own national social context, it is likely that he considered the establishment of state education to be still feasible and desirable in Germany, without necessarily belying the validity of Rousseau's view of the situation in France.<sup>13</sup> Rousseau also occasionally moves away from his idealist's visions to take note of the present reality, describing the fate of most children taught by tutors in terms with which Lenz would readily agree: "Un enfant passe six ou sept ans . . . entre les mains des femmes, victimes de leur caprice et du sien; . . . après avoir étouffé le naturel par les passions qu'on a fait naître, on remet cet être factice entre les mains d'un précepteur, lequel achève de développer les germes artificiels qu'il trouve déjà tout formés, et lui apprend tout, hors à se connaître, hors à tirer parti de lui-même, hors à savoir vivre et se rendre heureux."<sup>14</sup> He considers that the true tutor is the father (Emile is an orphan) and attacks those parents who abandon this duty to a paid servant: "Ame vénale! crois-tu donner à ton fils un autre père avec de l'argent?"<sup>15</sup>

If Geh. Rat v. Berg is the principal opponent of tutorial education, his views are undoubtedly saturated with Rousseauist idealism. Emile's up-bringing, far from elitist in concept, is designed to fit him for any



station in life and to equip him for survival in the coming age of social revolution.<sup>16</sup> Berg advises his brother thus: "... unsere Kinder sollen und müssen das nicht werden, was wir waren: die Zeiten ändern sich, Sitten, Umstände, alles, und wenn du nichts mehr und nicht weniger geworden wärest, als das leibhaftige Kontrefei deines Eltervaters - -" (p. 12). Strictly in the Rousseau mould is his call for absolute freedom, through which alone the individual may fully evolve, through an empirical process of trial and error leading ultimately to truth: "Ohne Freiheit geht das Leben bergab rückwärts; Freiheit ist das Element des Menschen wie das Wasser des Fisches, und ein Mensch der sich der Freiheit begibt, vergiftet die edelsten Geister seines Bluts, erstickt seine süßesten Freuden des Lebens in der Blute und ermordet sich selbst" (p. 25).<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the machinations of the plot appear to lead triumphantly to the ultimate endorsement of this idealism. Berg, true to his doctrine, has his son Fritz educated at a communal school. The latter demonstrates unswerving personal loyalty, even taking the place of his friend in a debtor's prison. He emerges from these tribulations unscathed; -- "dank seiner gesunden unverkrüppelten Natur und dank der väterlichen Versöhnlichkeit" --<sup>18</sup> as though bearing witness to Rousseau's faith in the inherent goodness of man. The comic counterpart of the pontifical Geheimer Rat is his blustering brother (a figure strongly reminiscent of Squire Western in Fielding's Tom Jones), who represents a caricature of the very attitudes that Rousseau criticized. Läufer's task he defines as that of instructing his son "in allen Wissenschaften und Artigkeiten und Weltmanieren" (p. 12); "... und wenn die Kanaille nicht behalten will, ... so schlagen Sie ihm das Buch an den Kopf, daß er's Aufstehen vergißt ...". (p. 16).

Yet by closely integrating these readily recognizable attitudes with the characterization Lenz undoubtedly enables their limitations to be shown. They are the limitations of the characters themselves. Berg's vapid idealism presupposes a freedom of decision and action at inferior social levels, where the cold facts of economic deprivation make this impossible. In his discussion with Pastor Läufer, seeking his assistance in getting better employment conditions for his son (II.i), this is made effectively clear: on the one hand much rhetoric, combined with contemptuous jibes at the narrow servility of the bourgeois, on the other the plaintive voice of a class obliged to subsist on the meagre resources of its schooling and sullenly defending itself against the scorn of the nobility (pp. 24-31). The Geheimer Rat's views are irreproachable in themselves, but in the context of this ill-matched encounter they become strangely ineffective. One notes too the paradox whereby the nobleman may enjoy the luxury of criticizing his class, whereas the voice of conservatism belongs to the bourgeois. Lenz's low opinion of the bourgeoisie, whose state of materialistic dependency makes it ill-suited for any kind of moral leadership, was observed in the preceding chapter (p. 158). Here, rather than in the superficial didacticism of the tutor theme, Rousseau's idealism may indeed be at issue. The impeding social obstacles are displayed so relentlessly that it is reduced to the level of the Utopian phantasies of a leisured class permitted even the luxury of liberal thought.

Much more fundamental than that of Emile is the importance of the Nouvelle Héloïse, as is suggested by the evident similarities in plot. Stockmeyer's comments on the characters of Gustchen and Läufer as shallow

parodies of Julie and St. Preux are well-founded, whatever the conclusions to be drawn from them. Indeed, the distortion extends to a number of details. St. Preux, evincing the superior moral values that Rousseau associates with the bourgeoisie, rejects the prospect of becoming "un mercenaire, un homme à ses gages, une espèce de valet."<sup>19</sup> Whilst rebelling against the prejudices of Julie's class, he regards himself as occupying a position of trust, whereas the original betrayer of that trust, Abalard, he considers "un misérable digne de son sort."<sup>20</sup> Lenz's tutor, by contrast, must expend most of his time and mental energy in negotiating a salary which will supply the basic needs of his existence. His seduction of Gustchen follows inevitably from his material and moral subjugation, showing him the victim, rather than the victimizer, of a frivolous girl whose imagination has been fed by hours of idle reading. Where St. Preux feels the stirrings of conscience urging him to leave, Lauffer endures the humiliations and deprivations of his post only on account of the "Aussichten in eine selige Zukunft" which he anticipates, presumably through the liaison with his student (p. 31)

It is difficult to see the basis of Lenz's criticism other than in Rousseau's failure to perceive that existing iniquities themselves inhibit the operation of the moral and social consciousness required to effect reform. This sombre quality led Hebbel to see the play as an excellent example of the tragi-comedy, in which according to his definition, " . . . ein tragisches Geschick in untragischer Form auftritt, wo auf der einen Seite wohl der kämpfende und untergehende Mensch auf der anderen jedoch nicht die berechtigte sittliche Macht, sondern ein Sumpf von faulen Verhältnissen vorhanden ist, der Tausende von Opfern hinunterwürgt, ohne ein

einziges zu verdienen."<sup>21</sup>

Of a more direct kind is the irony achieved at Rousseau's expense through the device of allowing his own novel to become instrumental in Gustchen's seduction. This had already been noted in Chapter V. Rousseau's aversion to reading, especially among women, as a means of stimulating the imagination and projecting the reader into an artificial world were well known, as was his somewhat casuistic attempt to defend his own role as a writer of novels. It would appear that at the time of Der Hofmeister Lenz was more readily influenced by the topical controversy surrounding Rousseau's famous Préface, whereas in the later Briefe über Werther he is, as we have seen, more sympathetic to Rousseau's argument.

Gustchen typifies the immature girl whose notions of life are moulded entirely by what she has read. Her feelings towards Fritz, as he takes his leave to begin his university studies, are consciously modelled on literary precedents: Romeo and Juliet (the allusions to suicide, the sleeping potion, Count Paris); Gellert's name is invoked (p. 20). Superficial pathos abounds, and even the stage directions appear to parody those of classical tragedy: "Faßt sie an die Hand;" "Fallt ihr um den Hals." All of this merely serves to reinforce "die Scheinhaftigkeit der Beziehung zwischen den Dialogpartnern."<sup>22</sup> Geh. Rat von Berg, who has overheard the conversation, offers this advice: ". . . keine Affen von uns Alten sein, eh ihr so reif seid als wird; keine Romane spielen wollen, die nur in der ausschweifenden Einbildungskraft eines hungrigen Poeten ausgeheckt sind und von denen ihr in der heutigen Welt keinen Schatten der Wirklichkeit antrefft" (p. 23). Acting novels was

in fact a popular social pastime among those who cultivated sensibility.<sup>23</sup>

Rousseau's novel was, as we have seen, far from immune to this practice.<sup>24</sup>

This artificial craving for sentiment thus requires fulfillment, and in the absence of the supposed lover it is the tutor that fills the void. She projects Läufer into the same fantasy world, addressing him as Romeo (p. 41); at first her histrionic pathos is directed beyond him to the absent Fritz, yet reality, in its most tangible physical sense, inevitably reasserts itself and with disastrous consequences. It is Läufer who returns the kiss, however, little it may have been intended for him. He makes the fatalistic prediction, following a long silence, that he may share Abalard's doom. It is at this moment that Gustchen first becomes properly conscious of her tutor's actual presence and his separate identity. His words suggest a new literary role. "Hast du die Neue Héloïse gelesen?" she demands abruptly (p. 41). Juliet is thus metamorphosed to Julie and, true to her role, Gustchen conceives a passion for her tutor, which leads predictably to her seduction. Rousseau's prediction that his novel would only corrupt those in whom the seeds of corruption are already present is thus grotesquely confirmed.<sup>25</sup> Yet Gustchen is no Parisian courtesan: she is representative of an entire generation in which sentiment has run riot. That Rousseau's novel contains ample warnings of the danger merely heightens the parody.<sup>26</sup> Whilst attacking the sickness of Rococo culture, Rousseau contributes to it, and it is the consciousness of this basic paradox which is never wholly absent from Lenz's attitude to Rousseau. Girard writes of the scenes under review: " . . . le lecteur ne peut manquer d'évoquer la sentimentalité de type wertherien, le lyrisme exalté de Klopstock et d'Ossian auxquels s'ajoutent

les éléments de marivaudage."<sup>27</sup> Such a list of the formative components of sensibility is hardly complete, however, without the name of Rousseau.

The full extent of Lenz's parody is by no means exhausted. As the previous chapter has shown, one aspect in particular of this "best of French books" did not appeal to Lenz's taste, namely the resignation of St. Preux. It would hardly be surprising, then, to find evidence of this also in the one work evidently written with Rousseau's novel much in mind. It is possible to see an indication of Lenz's ideal of full requited love in the ultimate reunion of Fritz and Gustchen, made possible only by the former's remarkable powers of forgiveness (he even adopts Läufer's child).<sup>28</sup> The play thus ends in the traditional style of a sentimental bourgeois comedy, with a "Schluß-Tableau" of multiple reconciliations. One character, however, is absent from this "zärtliche Gruppe" (Geh. Rat, p. 100). The title-hero, Läufer, vanishes from the scene (V.x) following his marriage with the peasant girl Lise, a union he will be unable to consummate.

Läufer's self-castration, -- "dieser gegen alle Kunst verstossende Zug" (Rosanow, p. 210), -- constitutes a grotesque variant of a feature of the Abalard story which is absent from Rousseau's version.<sup>29</sup> Several studies have been made of this in terms of the author's psychological complexities; but ultimately it must be viewed within the context of the play. The most notable aspect, differing from the traditional story, is the voluntary nature of the deed. It thus assumes the appearance of a deliberate act of moral decision. Wenzeslaus certainly views it in this

light: "So recht, werter Freund! Das ist die Bahn, auf der Ihr eine Leuchte der Kirche, ein Stern erster Größe, ein Kirchenvater selber werden könnt" (p. 80). Yet almost immediately, Läufer regrets his action, denying the high motives claimed by Wenzeslaus: "Ich fürchte, meine Bewegungsgründe waren von anderer Art . . . Reue, Verzweiflung --" (p. 81). In a grotesquely concrete manner, Lenz's tutor thus has performed an act of renunciation, doing so not from any strength of soul triumphing over the forces of corruption, but from a condition of despair.<sup>30</sup> His marriage to Lise can only be viewed as a travesty of platonism, since it becomes evident that in his feelings towards her the sensuous has not been entirely stilled, as the ultra-ascetic Wenzeslaus quickly perceives (pp. 94-95).<sup>31</sup>

" . . . La castration accomplie, puis refusée, n'est qu'un envers grotesque du suicide werthérien, le mariage avec Lise une parodie dérisoire du renoncement de Saint-Preux."<sup>31</sup> The implications of this conclusion remain to be considered. That Läufer's social situation is one of total disadvantage that extends not least to the moral sphere, has already been stated. His needs, and hence the manner of their fulfillment, are of a different order from those of his superiors. These are secondary and artificial, the product of a leisured society ("Genuß"): maintaining social appearances (Majorin), fulfilling romantic yearnings (Gustchen), or even easing one's liberal conscience (Geh.Rat). Läufer, by contrast, whose bourgeois theological training makes him mentally superior to his employers, is nevertheless bound to a level of existence where needs are primary: an adequate living salary, elementary self-respect. Above all the ful-

fillment of his natural physical requirements is denied the countless means available to the upper classes whereby these are rendered socially acceptable.<sup>33</sup> "Lenz gestaltet im Hofmeister nichts anderes als die Tragik des sozial Unterlegenen, den seine Wünsche mit der Gesellschaftsordnung kollidieren lassen."<sup>34</sup> In such a situation of despair, Läufer's renunciation, if such it may be called, consists of attempting, -- vainly as it turns out, -- to remove a need which he has no hope of fulfilling. In place of Rousseau's supreme act of sacrifice is the instinctive, futile gesture of both revolt against, and submission to, the overwhelming social obstacles stacked against him.

Läufer's act of resignation is completed by his marriage to an uncultured peasant girl, a step which has frequently been viewed as a wholly positive, Rousseauist solution.<sup>35</sup> Yet there is more ambivalence surrounding Lise than is often assumed. The scene (V.x) appears to be in the sentimental mode. The allusions to "Gesangbuch" and "Schafwirt," the naive tone of her responses, reinforce the impression of piety and pastoral simplicity. Yet there is something unmistakably brazen in her account of past amours, in the calculating approach to marriage which weighs up clerics against soldiers (the former "artig" and "manierlich," the latter more attractively attired), and not least in her precipitous acceptance of Läufer's marriage proposal even before he has finished speaking (p. 94). As Genton states: "Lenz hat den Ton von Lises Reden so naiv und zugleich schlau und zielbewußt gestimmt, daß er hier unmöglich das unverdorbene, natürliche Landmädchen geben wollte, welche spätere Interpretationen in ihr sehen."<sup>36</sup> It is easier to see in her a



kinship with Mariane Wesener (Die Soldaten). Like the latter she has had lower class pretensions instilled in her by her father (p. 94). Läufer offers her the prospect of a respectable union with an educated bourgeois, for which she is quite willing to forego parenthood. This necessarily undermines the apparent sincerity of her offer of quiet affection in a ménage à deux untroubled by the storms of passion (p. 96). We are indeed familiar with such an ideal, for it is precisely what Julie seeks in her marriage with Wolmar. Lenz's view of this solution to the problem of love confronted by social obstacles has already been fully discussed.<sup>37</sup>

The effect, then, of the ambivalence surrounding Läufer's marriage is to again bring into doubt that Rousseauesque yearning for idyllic peace that Lenz criticizes in his metaphysical writings. Indeed the same yearning becomes an object of satire through its association with the character of the Major, whose every answer to the misfortunes that befall his household is a strengthened desire to become a peasant (pp. 49, 50), a sentiment attributed by Stammer to "Rousseausche Anregungen."<sup>38</sup> It undoubtedly underlines the entrapped situation in which even the gentry finds itself, yet the caricature effect is unmistakable. Berg resorts to this obsession mechanically, in anguished response to each new and comic revelation of the plot; it becomes part of his overall melancholy temperament already known to us from his wife's less than charitable description (pp. 42-32). One character, in particular, clearly embodies Rousseau's philosophy of contentment. The needs of Wenzeslaus, the village schoolmaster, are the simplest: modest food,

books and tobacco. As his needs do not exceed his capacity he has achieved happiness in Rousseau's sense.<sup>39</sup> Sovereign in his little school, he seeks only the remuneration of "Gottes Lohn, . . . ein gutes Gewissen" (p. 59). The primitivistic aspect of his world ("eine Welt der Natur, die vor aller Kunst liegt"<sup>40</sup>) has been shown to correspond closely to Rousseau's nature-civilization dichotomy:

"A character like Wenzeslaus, and the life he leads, is purposely depicted in conscious opposition to rules, fashions and 'frenchified' delicacy; he may be rough and earthy, but his healthy strength and simple, good morality are thus all the more emphasized in comparison with the evil character of the upper classes who sicken in luxury."<sup>41</sup>

The presence of this scrupulously honest figure, who stands out in glaring contrast to the inhuman society beyond the walls of his school, has been taken without qualification as "ein deutlicher Hinweis des Rousseauschülers auf die noch ungeweckten Kräfte des Volkstums und den engen Zusammenhang der Menschheit und den Mächten des Bodens."<sup>42</sup> Undoubtedly he achieves heroic heights when resisting the intrusion of Graf Wermuth: a confrontation of earthy courage, backed if necessary by a righteous primeval violence, and the artificial power of rank (p. 53). Yet none of these sympathetic qualities can remove entirely the limitations of his outlook.<sup>43</sup> If Wenzeslaus evinces a moral integrity superior to that of the society beyond his school-house, his attitude towards that society is undeniably one of indifference. He is a recluse through instincts of self-protection, not a disillusioned philanthropist sorrowing in the wilderness. He clings to a religious dogmatism which, for Lenz, evokes the narrowness of his own upbringing.

Above all the inadequacy of the man and the quiescent ideal, he symbolizes is revealed in his attitude towards the passions. As we have seen, Lenz attempts to harness these in a positive manner in his moral philosophy. To Wenzeslaus they are a source of fear, "die bösen Begierden" (p. 59), to be held at bay through a rigorous regime of work and a frugal diet. His addiction to tobacco is an obvious symbol of the need to suppress the senses through artificial anaesthetization.<sup>44</sup> It is only modern psychological insights that reveal the full irony of the following avowal: "Ich habe geraucht, als ich kaum von meiner Mutter Brust entwöhnt war; die Warze mit dem Pfeifenmundstück verwechselt" (p. 58).<sup>45</sup> In endorsing Läufer's self-castration and denouncing his subsequent "relapse," he is finally identified with a philosophy of futility and self-denial, unable to comprehend his pupil's more vital aspirations.

Der Hofmeister belongs to that period of Lenz's life (1772-73) marked by an intense social interest, which in turn is expressed through revitalizing efforts in the dramatic and dramaturgic sphere (Plautus comedies, Anmerkungen übers Theater). The independent creative urge is paramount. The role of Rousseau in this play is thus not one of unconditional acceptance, nor does it suggest the deeper appreciation of his writings and aspirations which, as was suggested in Chapter III, Lenz acquires from 1775 on. It would be difficult not to see in it confirmation of Rousseau's critique of the existing social structure and the principles (if not the particulars) of his program of educational reform. Yet Lenz's attitude is one of a critical ambivalence,

which is found, not so much in the issue of private or public education, a red herring which has received too much attention in research, but in the attitude of irony which, beginning with the explicit and implicit allusions to the Nouvelle Héloïse (Rousseau's most popular and sentimental work), sets out to show the ineffectiveness of sensibility and of the ethic of ascetic withdrawal in dealing with a harsh and inhuman social reality. Similar reservations concerning Rousseau's philosophy have been already clearly observed in Lenz's moral and metaphysical writings. The next work to be considered, however, bears the marks of Lenz's personal feuds in the philosophical and cultural spheres and it is here (as was seen in Chapter V) that Lenz comes to recognize in Rousseau an ally with whom he must inevitably identify.

## 2. Der neue Menoza

Lenz describes this play, written in 1774, as "ein ubereiltes Stück, an dem nichts als die Idee schätzbar ist."<sup>46</sup> The nature of this idea -- the collision of philosophical values through the confrontation of an alien individual and the European society of the Enlightenment -- leads to problems in interpreting the dramatic structure. The importance to the history of the theatre seems slight in comparison with that of Lenz's other major plays: "Der Durchbruch zu einer 'realistischen' Form sozialer Dramatik, der den Hofmeister zum Ausgangspunkt einer über Buchners Woyzeck führenden Entwicklungslinie macht, ist im Neuen Menoza (noch) nicht vollzogen."<sup>47</sup> Instead, it belongs more to the earlier Saxon comedy of character. Lenz does not, nevertheless, end that tradition.

His treatment points forward to Romanticism with its elaborate, arbitrary plots and introspective heroes at odds with their age. The problem Lenz treats is a cultural one, so that the play cannot have the same force now that it had, despite the alleged artistic failings, on his contemporaries. "So ausschweifend als das ganze Märchen ist, so wünschte ichs doch gemacht zu haben," wrote J.H. Merck to Nicolai.<sup>48</sup> Herder quotes from it in his Alteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechtes.<sup>49</sup> There were also dissenting voices, notably that of Wieland, which provoked Lenz to write a critical defence, the Rezension des Neuen Menoza, von dem Verfasser selbst aufgesetzt. Clearly the play touched a sensitive nerve within the established culture.

The title derives from that of a novel by the Danish author Eric Pontoppidan, Menoza, ein asiatischer Prinz, welcher die Welt umhergezogen, Christen zu suchen, aber des Gesuchten wenig gefunden in the German version (1742), which Lenz recalled from his childhood reading.<sup>50</sup> His play shares only certain external details with this somewhat tendentious product of Christian sectarian strife. Its link with the Enlightenment is stronger: the theme of the naive outsider who observes and comments upon European society, a device employed by Montesquieu and Voltaire. A predecessor on the stage was Deslisles' Arlequin Sauvage (1721), which remained popular in Germany as late as 1767.<sup>51</sup> One notes that Rousseau was impressed by the theme and situation of this play, even if he regarded its popularity as an example of the public taste for sensationalism.<sup>52</sup> Its rejection of

a complex civilization clearly appealed to him.

Lenz's version constitutes one of his most virulent attacks on contemporary culture, and it is evident that much bitter personal experience underlies the extremes of its satire. In learning to despise the sensual aestheticism of the Rococo and the complacency of rationalist optimism, he found himself in close alliance with the views of Rousseau.

It is difficult not to view Tandi as a conscious embodiment of Rousseau's philosophy, and most critics assume such an influence.<sup>53</sup>

Girard has perceived more specific evidence of this in Zierau's judgment of the Prince: "Entweder fehlt es ihm an aller Kultur, oder der gute Prinz ist überspannt und gehört aux petites maisons" (WS, II, 118).<sup>54</sup>

Zierau is Tandi's rationalist adversary, and it is certainly not coincidental that Voltaire, who fulfils a similar role in relation to Rousseau, writes of the latter's literary productions: "Ces extravagantes platitudes ne méritent pas un décret de prise de corps; les petites maisons suffisent avec de bons bouillons, de la saignée, et du régime."<sup>55</sup> The question then arises, to what extent is Tandi intended to fulfil Rousseau's ideal of the "savage." The Natural Man described in the Discours sur l'Inégalité, whom Voltaire (and Wieland) regard as Rousseau's last word on the subject, is a somewhat hazy, primeval being who is clearly an absurdity in a modern setting. Yet he has a more developed modern counterpart, one who has retained intact an intrinsic goodness, the robust common sense and spontaneity of action attributed to the savage. Such a man is

Emile, of whom Rousseau writes: ". . . voulant former l'homme de la nature, il ne s'agit pas pour cela d'en faire un sauvage et de le reléguer au fond des bois; mais qu'enfermé dans le tourbillon social, il suffît qu'il ne s'y laisse entrainer ni par les passions ni par les opinions des hommes; qu'il voie par ses yeux, qu'il sente par son coeur; qu'aucune autorité ne le gouverne, hors celle de sa propre raison."<sup>56</sup> The description applies well to Tandi who, shows some degree of integration into his new society, whilst viewing its mores from his own unshakable "reason of the heart."

The play is rooted more than any other of Lenz's in that cultural pessimism that culminates in Rousseau's writings. "Das Ungenügen an einem in gesellschaftlichen Konventionen erstarrenden Leben und am Streben nach rastloser Vermehrung bloßen Wissens, das Ungenügen an der Zivilisation wächst während des 18. Jahrhunderts im Schloß und auch als Widersacher der Aufklärung zu einer unaufhaltsamen geistigen Bewegung heran, die schließlich in Rousseau ihren wirkungsmächtigen Vertreter findet."<sup>57</sup> Tandi's first exposure to European culture comes in the intellectual field. The first of a series of such confrontations is his meeting with Zierau, a "Baccalaureus" from Leipzig where he has devoted three years of service to "den Musen und Grazien" (p. 115). His account of the advances being made in every sphere of knowledge elicits from the Prince no more than the occasional laconic "So?", until the leading luminaries of the German Aufklärung -- Gellert, Rabner, Schlegel, Uz and others -- are invoked, with "der unsterbliche Wieland" at their head. Clearly we are entering

the sphere of personal polemics. However, Rousseau's criticism of the exalted written word as a substitute for the real world is echoed in the discussion of Wieland's Der goldene Spiegel. The Prince inquires where he may find the perfect citizens described, to which the pedant replies: "Wo? he he, in dem Buche des Herrn Hofrat Wieland." Tandi declares: ". . . ich nehme die Menschen lieber wie sie sind, ohne Grazie, als wie sie aus einem spitzigen Federkiel hervorgehen" (p. 117). He has thus identified the fatal flaw of Enlightenment optimism which confuses the logical, artistic enunciation of an ideal (here in the sphere of political construction) with its realization. One prerequisite of reform is thus excluded from the outset, that of action. There is considerable ironic humour, resulting from a culturally conditioned misconception of means and ends, in Zierau's initial boast: "Die Verbesserung aller Künste, aller Disziplinen und Stände ist seit einigen tausend Jahren die vereinigte Bemühung unserer besten Köpfe gewesen, es scheint, wir sind dem Zeitpunkte nah, da wir von diesen herkulischen Bestrebungen endlich einmal die Früchte einsammeln, und es wäre zu wünschen, die entferntesten Nationen der Welt kamen, an unsrer Ernte Teil zu nehmen" (p. 116). Tandi's scorn at the idea of achieving the Golden Age by such means is conveyed at the end of the scene as he returns Wieland's script, taking aim at the characteristic speculative syntax of Enlightenment philosophy: "Genug, genug, mit all Euren Wenns wird die Welt kein Haar besser oder schlimmer, mein lieber ehrwürdiger Herr Autor" (p. 118). It is this gesture that prompts Zierau to echo Voltaire's gibe against Rousseau, earlier referred to. Rousseau's views on the vicarious, substitutional character of philosophy in a world of rampant injustice are familiar. His criticism is also moral.



Philosophical speculation he denounces repeatedly as an exercise in deceit, whereby lies parade as truth. Formal elegance and the dexterous, self-flattering use of abstractions serve no other purpose: "On y apprend à plaider avec art, de la cause du mensonge, à ébranler à force de philosophie tous les principes de la vertu. . .," St. Preux writes of the Paris salons.<sup>58</sup>

Tandi's rejection of an ill-founded Enlightenment optimism begins as an instinctive response, but swiftly proves justified through his first-hand experience of the new culture. In the next scene that may be said to form part of the anti-civilization theme (II.iv) the Prince has suffered the shock of witnessing Count Camäleon's attempted seduction of Wilhelmine. His host finds him preparing to return to Cumba full of the profoundest disillusion with "der aufgeklärte Weltteil" (p. 123). His denunciation of European morals is familiar in tone and content to many to be found in the writings of Rousseau: ". . . alles, was ihr zusammen-gestoppelt, bleibt auf der Oberfläche eures Verstandes, wird zu List, nicht zu Empfindung, ihr kennt das Wort nicht einmal; was ihr Empfindung nennt, ist verkleisterte Wollust, was ihr Tugend nennt, ist Schminke, womit ihr Brutalität bestreicht. Ihr seid wunderschöne Masken mit Lastern und Niedertrachtigkeiten ausgestopft wie ein Fuchsbalg mit Heu, Herz und Eingeweide sucht man vergeblich, die sind schon im zwölften Jahre zu allen Teufeln gegangen" (pp. 124 f.). The hypocritical attempt to disguise sensuality and self-interest behind philosophy, the total absence of the instinct of feeling, the implication that education is powerless to change society, these are fundamental to Rousseau's cultural and social

criticism. Moreover, true to the latter's predictions, the very men who regard their task as that of leading society towards greater happiness, -- writers, philosophers and, we discover, theologians, -- are the least immune to the universal sickness.<sup>59</sup>

Tandi's meeting with the theologian, Beza, completes the philosophical theme. He is now obliged to assert his views in the face of a two-frontal opposition; the Utopian optimism of the rationalist Zieraus and the Baroque, apocalyptic pessimism of Beza's "ist doch alles Kot, Staub, Nichts" (p. 131). The basis of a dialectic confrontation of values from which a positive, viable attitude towards society may emerge, is thus provided.<sup>60</sup> In one respect Beza appears to echo Rousseau, namely in his doctrine of decline. Tandì does not share the same historical perspective: "Ich denke, die Welt ist um nichts schlimmer, als sie zu allen Zeiten gewesen" (p. 130). The similarity to Rousseau is, however, superficial. It soon becomes apparent that Beza's pessimism is not that of the disillusioned humanist but derives from fundamental deficiencies within himself. Lenz describes him in his Rezension as der "waisen-häuserische Freudenhaßer, bloß weil es Freude ist, und er keinen schon in diesem Jammertal glücklichen Menschen leiden kann" (WS, I, 417). Being impervious to the joyful ingredient of life he lacks that essential prerequisite of good-will which prompts the search for positive meaning. Tandì, by contrast, is agonizingly conscious of the evils of modern society, but voices a conditional optimism which derives its strength from a force ignored by his antagonists and which is central to Rousseau's beliefs: the efficacy of moral conscience.<sup>61</sup>

In answer to Beza's fanatical nihilism, Tandi declares: "Aber wir haben einen Geist, der aus diesem Nichts etwas machen kann" (p. 131). His philosophy is essentially that contained in Lenz's theoretical writings. True reason, unlike the rationalists' idol, is tempered by faith: "Der echten Vernunft ist der Glaube das einzige Gewicht, das ihre Triebfeder in Bewegung setzen kann, sonst stehen sie still und rosten ein, und wehe denn der Maschine." Faith (an important attribute of the heart according to Rousseau's Vicar of Savoy) clearly restores the responsibility both of achieving and appreciating happiness to the moral consciousness of the individual. That perfection begins within, is perceived by Tandi alone in this confrontation of philosophies: "Soland wir selbst nicht Gold sind, nützen uns die goldenen Zeiten zu nichts, und wenn wir das sind, können wir uns auch mit ehernen und bleiernen Zeiten aussohnen" (p. 132). The implication of these final words is an alternative to Rousseau's dualism of nature and civilization, past and present, that realistically accepts the fact of human corruptibility whilst holding out the hope of future reform. The means by which this will be achieved is identical to that contained in Lenz's all-important Gotz essay. Earlier in the scene Tandi asserts in answer to Zierau's doctrine of rationalistic epicureanism:

"Das bloß Genießen scheint mir recht die Krankheit, an der die Europäer arbeiten. . . . Handeln macht glücklicher als Genießen" (p. 130). This equation of corruption and inertia and the consequent need for meaningful activity (as for example in the area of social reform) we have viewed as central to Lenz's thought. As we have seen, its derivation from Rousseau is more in a dialectic sense. The consciousness of a society sapped of its vitality through its passive enjoyment of luxury

is wholly Rousseau's. His contempt for the epicurean is profound.<sup>62</sup> He also comes close to stating a doctrine of activity.<sup>63</sup> Yet there remains that opposite impulse for inward peace which, for Lenz, is difficult to accommodate with dynamic endeavour. This, too, must be borne in mind in viewing the present work.

At the end of the second act, Tandi's views are firmly established as a positive alternative to the philosophical distortions of both the hedonist and the ascetic. He has emerged from this confrontation as the sole standard-bearer of a philosophy of feeling. This is not without significance for the last scene of the act, in which Tandi avows his love for Wilhelmine. We find some of the few genuinely lyrical passages of romance in Lenz's plays: "O als der Mond mir die Züge Ihrer Hand versilberte, als ich las, was mein Herz in seinen kühnsten Ausschweifungen nicht so kühn gewesen war zu hoffen ... ach ich dachte, der Himmel sei auf die Erde herabgeleitet und ergieße sich in wonnervollen Träumen um mich herum" (p. 137). Unlike the scenes between Läufer and Wilhelmine in Der Hofmeister, the language has a purity and pathos untainted by the grotesque that affects much of the play as a whole.<sup>64</sup> The depiction of the man of feeling and deep human sensitivity at this point reveals his most noble aspect. Comparison has been made with current literature's noblest lover: "Schon nach diesen Szenen kann man darauf schließen, daß zum Vorbilde des Prinzen Tandi in hohem Maße der Held des Neuen Héloïse, St. Preux, . . . gedient hat."<sup>65</sup> Sincerity and feeling in love are, however, not all that invite comparison. The hero's situation, as Lenz describes it in his Rezension, is of one in quest

of "Wahrheit, Große und Güte" in an alien land and who finds neither these nor happiness (WS, I, 415). He is affronted at every turn by the falsehoods on which he perceives this society to be founded. The play undoubtedly verges on tragedy as a result. What one observes from the third act onwards is the growing sense of isolation of the hero and a mood very similar to that experienced by St. Preux as he enters the alien world of Paris society: "un état d'âme complexe, fait de mélancholie et d'angoisse."<sup>66</sup> Tandi's loneliness results from the same sense of moral and philosophical alienation: "Ce chaos ne m'offre qu'une solitude affreuse où règne un morne silence. . . . Je n'entends point la langue du pays, et personne ici n'entend la mienne."<sup>67</sup> "Ainsi les hommes à qui l'on parle ne sont point ceux avec qui l'on converse; leurs sentiments ne partent point de leur cœur, leurs discours ne représentent point leurs pensées . . ." <sup>68</sup>

The manner in which Tandi, representative of an ingenuous and atavistic code of ethics, reacts to the complex, ambiguous mores of modern Europe, becomes the main dramatic theme from the third act onwards. The character himself is for much of the time absent from the scene. His actions and utterances are reported from the opposite stand-point, that of society itself, and this results in a comic rendering of a theme that is potentially tragic. Biederling's attempt to explain to an incredulous Graf Camaleon the spirit of Tandi's comparison between Cumbian and European society underscores this. There are strong similarities with Rousseau's contrast between Paris and Geneva: where the one seeks pleasure in distractions, in the aesthetic lie of the imagination ("ein glänzender Nebel, ein Firnis, den wir über alle Dinge streichen, die uns in Weg

kommen, und wodurch wir sie reizend und angenehm machen" (p. 141), the other finds genuine happiness in honest toil and mutual service.<sup>69</sup> Yet it is clear that Biederling himself, the one European who is most amenable to Tandi's views, shows at best a most imperfect grasp of their merit: his narration is punctuated with hesitations, repetitions and lame quotations which he is clearly unwilling to substantiate. Girard makes the following comment on this: "Lenz ne mets certes en cause ni les conceptions de Tandi ni sa conduite exemplaire, mais pose implicitement le problème de leur efficacité. . ."<sup>70</sup> It is indeed the efficacy (not, however, the inherent truth) of Tandi's, and hence Rousseau's, faith in the superior power of virtuous feeling that may be questioned.

The challenge to this faith proceeds from the complex, intrigue-ridden apparatus of the very society which it seeks to change. The burlesque structure of the comedy derives from the relentless violation of the one by the other. The Elysium of Tandi's marriage to Wilhelmine is shattered, when it is revealed that as a result of past torturous intrigues he has married his own sister. His reaction is immediate and instinctive, the same passive obedience to conscience whose precedent is Rousseau's Héloïse: the Prince renounces his bride. Kindermann's commentary is of interest: "Tandis und Wilhelmines uberschwangliche, rousseauhafte Gefühlsmäßigkeit ist für Lenz gewiß problematisch. . . . Tandi wird durch seine Liebe plötzlich in ein Netz typisch europäischer Wirrsale verwickelt. Wird er auch zum schwachen Europäer werden, wird er sich seiner Reinheit bewähren? Das ist das Prüfungsproblem, das Lenz sich selbst stellt. Und er sucht die Lösung über den leidenschaftlichen

seelischen Kampf Tandis weg bis zur skeptischen Askese hin . . . "71

Tandi's withdrawal from society, his refusal to even consider the sufferings of his former wife, have the character of a sudden recollection of a truth that had been suppressed: the utter depravity of the world. Yet this recourse to a dogmatic position of rigid rejection is altogether too easy; it lacks the vitality and the resilience of the will to resist. The dominant mood of this acquiescent acceptance of guilt is akin to that melancholy observed earlier in the self-mutilation of Läufer.<sup>72</sup>

The full problematic aspect of Tandi, the man of feeling, is thus revealed. The consciousness of virtue must preserve itself in isolation from the world, yet it is only in the world of men that the philosophy of action that he himself advocated can be realised. Thus the fundamental dilemma that Lenz finds in Rousseau is reflected in the character of Tandi. His altruistic endeavours do not go beyond placing his purse at the disposal of the halt and the blind in Leipzig, an essentially passive gesture as meaningful for the self-denial it entails as for the charitable aspect. The melancholy sapping his spirit remains. His host says of him: ". . . das ist wahr, daß er was auf dem Herzen haben muß, denn ich hab ihn einmal gesehen, da sah er aus, Gott verzeih mir, wie ein Eccehomo" (p. 158). There are undoubtedly parallels between Tandi and Christ.<sup>73</sup> Yet it is a suffering Messiah, alone in a world that "understood him not," not the scourger of money-lenders. He clings to a faith in the divine infallibility of moral feeling and in some ways is reminiscent of Rousseau's Vicar of Savoy.<sup>74</sup> For both, Rousseau and Tandi, the stylistic expression of virtue

in adversity is pathos.<sup>75</sup> This reaction to the inability of virtuous sentiment to right injustice is an admission of helplessness, and its only recourse is to nurture its wounds, to find solace in the "joy of grief." Tandi's pain is "sein einziges höchstes Gut;" he tells Beza, who has come to offer him the doubtful comforts of theological scholarship (an exoneration of incest!): " . . . jetzt muß ich meine Wonne in Tränen und Seufzern suchen, und wenn Ihr mit die nehmt, was bleibt mir übrig, als kalte Verzweiflung" (p. 161). Even his attempt to cling to his doctrine of conscience wavers in the presence of Wilhelmine (p. 175): the mood that now threatens is a nihilism that will not stop short of embracing sin. It is precisely at this point that Wilhelmine reveals the secret she has learned: they are not related after all. The device of the sudden change of fortune returns us to the sphere of comedy, and it is to the comic structure of the play that we must turn our attention.

Girard seeks to isolate the position of the hero from the comedy: "En dépit de l'effet comique des contrastes, de la verve de Biederling, du romanesque échevelé de Donna Diana, des impulsions caricaturales du comte Caméléon, Lenz a reproduit une situation fondamentalement pathétique, à la fois rousseauiste et werthérienne: la solitude du génie dans un monde peuplé de marionnettes sans âme."<sup>76</sup> The validity of Tandi's rejection of the cultural values of Europe is nowhere questioned, not indeed is the intrinsic nobility of his character. Yet he cannot be regarded as immune from the comic perspective in which the characters are conceived. Hinck, in his analysis of the structure, sees an opposition between the primitivist's call for action and for the release of the powers of feeling, these being



Rousseauist in origin, and the static forces of convention represented by society.<sup>77</sup> Yet it may be argued that Rousseau's gospel of feeling, in as much as it aims at pure subjective sentiment, itself tends towards a static condition. Undoubtedly society is repeatedly, and with comic effect, subjected to a series of "Überrumpelungssituationen," that reassert the dynamic forces that it lacks.<sup>78</sup> Yet to some extent the hero himself becomes embroiled in the same mechanism, and at precisely that point where he appears to be moving towards a rigid position of lamely introspective, self-pitying sentiment.

This reassertion of the autonomy of the plot ("Hand-lung") is significant. The basically undramatic nature of the anti-civilization theme has occasionally been stressed. "Wir sehen von dem Gegensatz Tandis zur 'verdorbenen europäischen Kulturwelt' uberaus wenig, fast nichts in Handlung umgesetzt."<sup>79</sup> Korff, indeed, sees it as a fundamental flaw of the Sturm und Drang drama, ". . . daß ihre Helden, die ihre Intention nach Tatmenschen darstellen sollen, in Wahrheit 'Redehelden' bleiben;" further, ". . . daß das Drama, das seinem Wesen nach Leben und Handlung ist, als Dichtung doch dazu verurteilt ist, aus lauter Reden zu bestehen."<sup>80</sup> Lehnz, whose own failure to create even an apparent replica of the revered Gotz type is frequently remarked on, shows in Der neue Menoza at least an awareness of this dilemma. Tandi's pathetic outbursts are not permitted to retain the level of the sublime for any length of time; he too is made to fall victim to the various unexpected twists of fate which are the stock of dramatic comedy. One perhaps may draw one conclusion from this in view of the close identity between the

views and attitudes of Tandi and those of Rousseau. As we have seen earlier, Lenz criticizes Rousseau in the Anmerkungen übers Theater for creating one-dimensional characters in his own image, in other words, for ignoring the dynamics of characterization (WS, I, 341, 352). This recognition of the basically undramatic nature of Rousseau's pathos, the often rhetorical character of sentiment, is implicit in the structure of this play.

There is, moreover, an aesthetic awareness of the closeness of sentiment, however noble, to the superficial sentimentality that was much in vogue. We find evidence of this awareness, accompanied by a hyperbolic reassertion of the author's social and realistic commitment, in a letter to Herder in which Lenz writes of the scene depicting the lovers after their marriage (III.iii): "Ich verabscheue die Scene nach der Hochzeitsnacht. Wie konnt' ich Schwein sie auch malen! Ich, der stinkende Athem des Volks, der sich nie in eine Spähre der Herrlichkeit zu erheben wagen darf."<sup>81</sup> This suggests the social perspective which is introduced in the last two scenes of the play. These function as a coda, having little connection with the rest of the plot. The Burgermeister of Naumburg seeks relief from the day's toil and suggests to Zierau, who is his son, that they go to a puppet play. Hanswurst is a special favorite of his. The "Baccalaureus" expresses his disdain for such lowly comedy: "Vergnügen ohne Geschmack ist kein Vergnügen" (p. 177). He echoes the conventional poetics of the Aufklärung: "Was die schöne Natur nicht nachahmt, . . . das kann unmöglich gefallen;" aesthetic pleasure arises from the imitation of nature, and

this is understood in the idealized sense, stripped of the earthly, incidental features of common living. To this Gottschedian theorizing, the Burgermeister bluntly retorts: "Willst unsern Herrngott lehren besser machen? Ich weiß nicht, es tut mir immer weh in den Ohren, wenn ich den Fratzen so räsonnieren hore." The conflict over the nature and purpose of art is between intellect and nature, between the over-educated fop and the honest toiler of the type elsewhere described by Lenz as "der ehrwürdigste Teil des Publikums, dem ich die erleuchteten gern aufopfere" (WS, I, 408). Significantly, it is also a conflict of generations. The notion that the theatre should be a form of relaxation, subordinate to the duties of the day, echoes Tandi's description of his native Cumbans. These ". . . finden ihr Vergnügen an der Arbeit, mit Kopf oder Faust, . . . und nach der Arbeit kommen sie zu einander, sich zu erlustigen. . ." (pp. 140-41). Very similar views are expressed, as we noted, in the Lettre sur les Spectacles of Rousseau. The basis of Rousseau's theatre criticism is its illusory basis, whereby illusion becomes a substitute for reality. Zierau, pressed for a definition of the grandiose foreignism, "Illusion," eventually concedes: "Es ist die Täuschung" (p. 177). Deception is the essence of this "sinnliche Betrug." The father is incapable of the mental gymnastics required for the separation of art and reality. This leads to the explosive, farcical outcome of his visit to the classical theatre on Zierau's insistence, his evening ruined by attempts to sort out the three unities: ". . . ich hatte mich krumm geschrieben im Comptoir, da kommt so ein h-föttischer Tagdieb und sagt mir von dreimaleins und schone Natur, daß ich den ganzen Abend da gesessen bin wie ein Narr,

der nicht weiß, wozu ihn Gott geschaffen hat. Gezählt und gerechnet und nach der Uhr gesehen . . ." (p. 179). The play ends with his violent reaction against both the aesthetic abstractions that ruin simple pleasures and the irresponsible life of ease lead by those that formulate them: ". . . ich glaube, die junge Welt stellt sich noch zuletzt auf den Kopf für lauter schöner Natur. Ich will euch kuranzen, ich will euch's Collegia über die schöne Natur lesen, wart nur!"

The theme of cultural decline, seen as a generation phenomenon, is thus reasserted in the play's concluding scenes. It is this aspect that Lenz, reinforced no doubt by his own entanglements with proponents of aestheticism, comes to regard as the most valid aspect of Rousseauism. The rejection of the ideal of "schöne Natur," that we find expressed elsewhere,<sup>82</sup> may here be seen more specifically in the context of the controversy initiated by Justus Moser's "Harlequin, oder die Vertheidigung des Grotesk-Komischen" (1761).<sup>83</sup> Indeed, the insertion of the controversy at this point may serve as a defence of the play itself, with its formal idiosyncrasies and grotesque characterization.<sup>84</sup> In view of the predominance of Rousseauist ideas in the play we must perhaps wonder whether some defence is implied against Rousseau's known condemnation of the theatre, by emphasising the distance from the classical theatre of illusion and enforcing the sovereignty of popular taste. In general terms, at least, Der neue Menoza shows a more positive attitude to Rousseau than Der Hofmeister.

### 3. Die Kleinen

Dissatisfaction with society and the constant restless search for an alternative characterize Lenz's final Strasbourg years. The dramatic fragment, Die Kleinen, is product of such a mood. It illustrates also Lenz's tendency to look for sounder human values not, like many of his contemporaries, to the superhuman individualists, but to the largely ignored mass of common people. "Nicht die revolutionäre Tat einzelner rucksichtloser Naturen gab ihm die Erwartung neuer Zeiten, sondern die in Bewegung geratende, die zur Einsicht ihrer Lage gebrachte große Masse."<sup>85</sup> No writer had done more to focus attention on this section of society than Rousseau.

Hanns von Engelbrecht, a nobleman "reisend aus philosophischen Absichten," is spurred in his quest by a profound sense of alienation from his own sphere. He confides to the minister Bismarck: "Ich sehe . . . , daß ich nicht glücklich mehr sein kann, alles was die Welt hat, ist freudenleer und welk für mich, ich bin also auf den Entschluß gefallen, mein Glück in dem Glück anderer Leute aufzusuchen" (WS, II., 507-8). Intuitively he feels the falseness of associating happiness with rank; it is his intention to investigate, ". . . in wie weit Leute außer meinem Stande, an Tugend, an feiner Empfindung und also auch an Glück uns vorzuziehen seien" (p. 508).

Engelbrecht's opening monologue bids farewell to the "große Männer, Genies, Ideale" revered by an aristocratic, increasingly classicist culture.

It is his intention: ". . . die unberühmten Tugenden zu studieren, die jedermann mit Füßen tritt . . .;" ". . . unter den armen zerbrochenen schwachen Sterblichen umhergehen und von ihnen lernen, was mir fehlt, was euch fehlt -- Demut" (p. 489). The assumption is that by instilling a sympathetic awareness of the humblest level of society into his own, Engelbrecht/Lenz will assist in the latter's moral improvement.<sup>86</sup> This injunction to the privileged classes is a recurrent theme in Rousseau's writings.<sup>87</sup> "Si vous voulez . . . être homme en effet, apprenez à redescendre," Julie advises her lover, satiated with Parisian life.<sup>88</sup> Readers of Emile are urged: "Etudiez les gens de cet ordre, vous verrez que, sous un autre langage, ils ont autant d'esprit et plus de bon sens que vous."<sup>90</sup> An acquaintance with the spirit of these lowly people promises an educative, humanistic experience, the moral lesson of humility. We find precisely the same thought expressed in Lenz's letter to Sophie v. La Roche of July 1775: "Könnten . . . Personen von Ihrem Stande, Ihren Einsichten, Ihrem Herzen, sich jemals ganz in den Gesichtskreis dieser Armen herabniedrigen, anschauend wie Gott erkennen, was ihren Kummer, der oft mit einer Handwendung eines erleuchteten Wesens, wie der Stein von dem Grabe Christi weggewälzt werden könnte, auf die ihnen eigenthümliche Art behandeln."<sup>91</sup> Totally absent from Engelbrecht's monologue is the sentimental idealizing of the masses that ignores their very real social and economic deprivation. Again addressing the mighty: "Wer machte euch zu dem, was ihr seid waren sie es nicht? . . . Wer seid ihr, die ihr auf ihren Schultern steht und sie zertretet, und nicht lieber mit ihnen auf gleichen Boden euch hinstellt und sie auf eure Hand tupfen laßt. Ihr, die ihr nur durch ihre Vergünstigung da seid, ihr sie regieren?"

mehr als das; beherrschen, zwingen? ihr sie zwingen, von denen ihr lernen muß, wie ihr zwingen sollt, und die durch eine originelle Wendung eure jahrhundertlange Kunst zu Schanden machen könnten, wenn sie wollten! die aber nicht wollen, weil sie Tugend haben, die euch fehlt" (p. 489). The preconceptions of the poor with which Engelbrecht begins his quest are unmistakably Rousseauist: they are seen as superior in virtue to those of higher rank; the latter, moreover, are in fact dependant on them for their tacit concurrence in economic and social inequality.<sup>92</sup>

If Rousseau's awareness of the oppressed conditions of the peasants distinguishes him from the writers of sentimental idylls, he retains an idealistic vision of their moral state. Similarly, Engelbrecht everywhere seeks evidence of the happiness imparted by the virtue of humility, as when he exclaims on seeing the peasant girl: "Soviel Schönheit und soviel Duldsamkeit. Welt, Welt! große traurige beschämende Schule. Die ganze Glückseligkeit dieses Mädchens, Kartoffeln zu essen, die sie selber gegessen hat" (p. 493). The reality of hunger eludes him. Rousseau's viewpoint is nowhere more in evidence than in the hero's reflexions on observing the peasants playing cards at an inn: "Welch ein Ausdruck in den Gesichtern! Wie stumpf, schwach und verfehlt sind die Lineamenten der meisten unserer Städter. Mir ekelt vor jedem feinern Gesicht. Der kleine Gewinn, um den sie spielen, dient nur um ihrem Vergnügen Würze zu geben. . . . Wehe, wer diese unschuldigen Herzen mit Leidenschaften ansteckt. Wehe den Dramenschreibern, die den Mißklang fremder ihnen unnatürlicher Gefühle in diese Stände bringen, den Deserteurschreibern--<sup>93</sup> . . . Glückliche sind diese Leute eben durch die Härte ihrer Fibern, durch ihre

Apathie. Feinere mußigere Leute! behaltet eure Leidenschaften für euch und verfeinert sie nicht damit. Eure Kultur ist Gift für sie" (p. 500).

The twin influences are clearly Lavater's physiognomic theories (in which Lenz expresses great interest in his correspondence) and the cultural theories of Rousseau as expressed in the Discours sur les Sciences et les Sciences et les Arts and the Lettre sur les Spectacles.<sup>94</sup>

For all this, Engelbrecht's Rousseauism is by no means the sole perspective involved, any more than Tandi's in Der neue Menoza. The few scenes of peasant life that are actually portrayed in the fragment (as opposed to being described by the hero) are by no means done so idealistically. The churlish behaviour of the inn-keeper is an example (p. 495). It is perhaps for this reason that Kindermann states in connection with the work that: "... Lenz Rousseaus Idealauffassung der unteren Volksschichten gar nicht eilt."<sup>95</sup> As was noted in Chapter VI, Lenz's realistic attitude towards society extends to all levels. How, then, are we to view the person of Engelbrecht and his views within the broader structure of the play? There is no doubt that he strongly reflects the autobiographical experience of the author. The sense of cultural alienation reaches crisis proportions at Weimar, and Lenz's experiences there undoubtedly intrude into later versions of the play.<sup>96</sup> In one such fragment the whole aesthetic ideal of Weimar classicism is in question. Bismarck, or Oeyras as he is named here, is evidently refuting a critical observation of Engelbrecht: "Du tust der großen Welt den vornehmen Ständen Unrecht" (p. 510). He claims that the outward posture of "Stille Einförmigkeit und Zwang" imposes a moral detachment that is more receptive to the



good and beautiful. Engelbrecht's reply points up Lenz's basic distrust of appearances that belie reality, and it may be taken as a crystallization of the artistic aims of his comedies: "Zwar scheinen sie alle ruhig schon gütig menschenfreundlich, sind sie's aber darum. Geben Sie nur Achtung auf die immer lächelnden Gesichter, wenn sie vom Lachen ausruhen was für häßliche Fratzen sie schneiden." Lenz sees truth better served through the presentation of a grimace than through any emulation of Winckelmann-like qualities.

Yet the search for a humanly more satisfying alternative in a Rousseauesque world of "des petits gens" involves Lenz in a dilemma that undoubtedly accounts for the fragmentary nature of the work.<sup>97</sup> Stockmeyer has stated the problem well: "Er schwankt, was er mit seinen Kleinen anfangen will; soll er sie als gut und glücklich hinstellen, weil sie den schädlichen Einflüssen der Kultur ferne stehen, oder als beschränkt und unglücklich, weil der Druck und die Enge ihrer sozialen Verhältnisse sie nicht zum Bewußtsein ihrer selbst kommen lassen? Er kann sich nicht für die erste noch für die zweite Auffassung entschließen . . ."<sup>98</sup> The two attitudes are implicit in the two versions of the opening monologue.<sup>99</sup> The alternative version, stressing the mental limitations of the lowly ("wie dunkel und traurig jede Vortstellung"), introduces a perspective not found in Rousseau's primitivist glorification that echoes so strongly through the first version. What these people lack, within the physical and mental bounds in which they are forced to subsist, is precisely that faculty of a "Selbstbesinnung," or increasing consciousness, which we have seen to be a vital ingredient of Lenz's moral philosophy. The small

and lowly may well engender the virtue of humility, but it can also be equated with pettiness and vacuity. We find this mood expressed very graphically in K.P. Moritz's novel Anton Reiser: "Das Kleine naht sich dem Hinschwinden, der Vernichtung -- die Idee des Kleinen ist es, welche Leiden, Leerheit und Traurigkeit hervorbringt -- das Grab ist das enge Haus, der Sarg ist eine Wohnung, still, kühl und klein -- Kleinheit erweckt Leerheit, Leerheit erweckt Traurigkeit -- Traurigkeit ist der Vernichtung Anfang . . ." <sup>100</sup>

Lenz undoubtedly envied the peasants on account of their apparent contentment, their unquestioning humility, and these are the virtues that Rousseau extols in his many depictions of peasant life. Demut we find celebrated elsewhere in Lenz; it provides the title of a poem written in 1774 (WS, I, 89-92), and it is urged upon Mariane by Gräfin La Roche: ". . . wie glücklich hätten Sie einen rechtschaffenen Bürger machen können, wenn Sie diese furtreffliche Gesichtszüge, dieses einnehmende bezaubernde Wesen mit einem demütigen menschenfreundlichen Geist beseelt hätten . . ." (Die Soldaten: WS, II, 226). Yet for Lenz the question remains: at what point does the salutary avoidance of arrogance become a substitute for the effort of living. Hochmut is described in the Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten as "die wahre Folterbank aller Sterblichen" -- "Und doch kann ohne ihn unsere Natur nie furtrefflich werden. Er ist die vis centrifuga der menschlichen Seele, ohne die sie nie aus dem Flecken kommt" (WS, I, 271). Lenz's uncertain attitude towards that class of society embodying Rousseau's ideal of modest self-contentment exactly reflects the doubts revealed in his meta-

physical writings: the reconcilability of Rousseau's desire for "paix" with a doctrine of striving. Engelbrecht / Lenz, alienated from the cultural aspirations of his own social background, is equally unequipped to enter and seek identity in that other, largely unknown, sphere of humanity which Rousseau (and with him Herder) had hailed as a positive alternative.<sup>101</sup>

The world of the little people, with whom Engelbrecht / Lenz seeks identity,<sup>102</sup> remains a mere nostalgic vision. A third existential possibility remains: withdrawal into oneself, the hermit's existence. This, too, has its equivalent in Rousseau, who sought flight from the dissonances of society on the island of St. Pierre, and whose later writings are increasingly concerned with an ever purer "sentiment de l'existence."<sup>103</sup> Yet the Einsiedler (who as the brother of the statesman Bismarck again suggests identity with Goethe's "brother", Lenz) does not succeed in conveying the superior type of immanent virtue that such writers as Jean-Paul and Hölderlin came to rever in Rousseau. The feeling that he is an imposter, leading a useless and self-centred existence which, again, amounts to an easy alternative to action, is never far from the surface. His planned death in the final act was to be accompanied by words of despair: "Verfehlt -- ein ganzes langes Patriarchenleben -- und mein Tod -- unbekannt -- unberühmt -- unwürdig --" (p. 512). "There is a sense of hopelessness which borders on nihilism in the portrayal of Heinrich Bismarck."<sup>104</sup>

In Die Kleinen Lenz fails to reconcile warring social, philosophical and artistic impulses. Alienated from his own culture, he yet fails to find acceptance in a Rousseauistic world. The sense of serenity and self-contentment in Nature, which the latter presupposes, founders on the poet's restless nature, now still further agitated by the frustration of his aspirations. The result is a highly incoherent collection of fragments. The problems of existence raised continue, however, into the more complete Waldbruder, the last work with which we are concerned.

#### 4. Der Waldbruder

Lenz's epistolary novel (ca. 1776) shows more clearly than any other work the marks of his disillusionment with society. It began in the aftermath of a strange passion for the society lady, Henriette v. Waldner, whom he had never met in person, an affair that was inevitably doomed to failure. In its final form it evidently incorporates the author's experience at Weimar, which was one of frustrated hopes and misunderstood endeavours. Rothe's reproach of Herz would closely reflect Goethe's interpretation of this unhappy period: "Liebe und Freundschaft vereinigten sich, Dich glücklich zu machen. Du schrittst über alles das hinaus, in das furchtbare Schlaraffenland verwilderter Ideen" (WS, I, 291).

The outward form raises the question of Rousseau's influence. Lenz himself described his work as "ein kleiner Roman in Briefen von mehreren Personen, der einen wunderbaren Pendant zum Werther geben dürfte."<sup>105</sup>

Werther, however, is monological, whereas Der Waldbruder employs the device of juxtaposing letters by different writers in order to provide a multiple perspective. The often ironical effect of this can already be seen in the patronizing words of Rothe (Goethe) just quoted, when laid beside the tortured outbursts in the letters of Herz (Lenz). Rousseau does not create irony in the Nouvelle Héloïse. The authors of his letters are all cast in the same moral, humanistic mould, and reflect only different facets of their creator. Yet he must be regarded as the originator of this particular novel form. A particular device of Rousseau's, the use of "editorial" footnotes, is used by Lenz (p. 293).

There is some resemblance between the situation of Herz and that of St. Preux. Both are separated by a large social barrier from the object of their affection.<sup>106</sup> The opening letter written by Herz from his mossy hermitage to his city-friend, Rothe bears the stamp of Rousseau's nature-nostalgia. As in Die Kleinen he envies the simple uncultured existence of the peasants in the nearby village: "Wenn ich denn einmal herunter gehe und den engen Kreis von Ideen in dem die Adamskinder so ganz existieren, die einfachen und ewig einformigen Geschäfte und die Gewißheit und Sicherheit ihrer Freunden übersehe, so wird mir das Herz so enge und ich möchte die Stunde verwünschen, da ich nicht ein Bauer geworden bin" (p. 283). This time no illusions are harboured regarding the feasibility of achieving any identity with this most natural section of humanity. Herz admits that among them he is "nirgends zu Haus," unable to share their crude humour of which he

himself becomes the object when they perceive his awkward self-consciousness.

Repelled by the social world, Herz is nevertheless unable to divest himself of the self-awareness and the aspirations which are the fruit of the cultural mentality to which he has been born. To return to an earlier cultural level that lacks this consciousness is not the solution he seeks. There is, however, a second alternative, likewise implicit in Rousseau: the hermit's withdrawal to total isolation.<sup>107</sup> The Waldbruder Herz has been described as "an eloquent statement of that Rousseauistic back-to-nature creed which became virtually a religion during the German 'Sturm und Drang.'" <sup>108</sup> Certainly, Herz celebrates his sense of a spiritual empathy with nature in tones of reverence that recall St. Preux's celebration of the Haut-Vaud: "Ich ging gestern, als die Sonne uns mitten im Winter einen Nachsommer machte, in der Wiese spazieren, und überließ mich so ganz dem Gefühl für einen Gegenstand der's verdient, auch ohne Hoffnung zu brennen. Das matte Grün der Wiesen, das mit Reif und Schnee zu kämpfen schien, die braunen verdorrten Gebüsche, welch ein herzerquickender Anblick für mich!" (p. 285). Communion with nature is a theme by no means absent from Lenz's writings, but it is not dominant as with some of his contemporaries.<sup>109</sup> The lure of Rousseau's invitation to return to nature as a gesture of rejection of the social world is particularly compelling here. "Abzusterben für die Welt, die mich so wenig kannte, als ich sie zu kennen wünschte --:" the prospect now invokes "schwermütige

Wollust" in one who has been misunderstood and eventually rejected by a society for which he had entertained such hopes. (p. 285).

Yet it is part of the inner anguish that Lenz portrays in this self-portrait that at precisely this point he should recall his doubts concerning Rousseau's doctrine of peace and self-contentment. "Beständig quält mich das, was Rousseau an einem Ort sagt, der Mensch soll nicht verlangen, was nicht in seinen Kräften steht, oder er bleibt ewig ein unbrauchbarer schwacher und halber Mensch. Wenn ich nun aber schwach, half unbrauchbar bleiben will, lieber als meinen Sinn für das stumpf machen, bei dessen Hervorbringung alle Kräfte der Natur in Bewegung waren, zu dessen Vervollkommen der Himmel selbst alle Umstände vereinigt hat. O Rousseau! Rousseau! wie konntest du das schreiben!"

(p. 285). The convinced confidence of the similar passage in Das erste Principium der Moral is gone.<sup>11</sup> The contentment advocated by Rousseau

and which results from self-restraint offers a tempting alternative to the anguish which comes from frustrated ambition. Yet to abandon this commitment would be for Lenz philosophically impossible. Herz has embraced the hermit's mode of being only in the outward form, rejected by a society that condemns his noblest aspirations as "wild ideas,"

These have not been abandoned, or submerged in a Rousseauist concept of man's humility in the face of nature; they continue to seeth within him. Unlike Rousseau, Herz has not left society to preserve himself from its corruption. He has withdrawn in order to nurture intact his own ideal of that society. His is a spirit that requires and seeks sustenance not among the forests, meadows and streams inhabited by

Rousseau's characters, but in a society receptive to his humanistic philosophy of unceasing altruistic endeavour. This, we have already seen, is the essence of Lenz's moral philosophy. Rousseau had written: "La conscience est timide, elle aime la retraite et la paix . . ." <sup>111</sup> Closer to Lenz is the observation of Diderot (Le Père de famille): "Il n'y a que le méchant qui soit seul." Herz' hermit existence must thus be viewed against a background of moral and psychological defeat. The Nature feeling of his early letters is short lived, soon giving way to a restless self-preoccupation. Indeed, closer examination shows that the nature descriptions are from the outset tinged with the pathological, where in Rousseau we find only poetry and spiritual grandeur. In the passage quoted earlier his attention ultimately settles on the moribund aspect of the scene before him, and this becomes a symbol of his own desire to escape the world. <sup>112</sup>

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By means of the multiple perspective, Lenz reveals ironically the situation, both questionable and misunderstood, of his most autobiographical hero. Herz's gradual retreat into a fantasy world, his progressive alienation from his own friends and social milieu, is effectively documented through the letters written to, from and about him. "Er lebt und webt in lauter Phantasien und kann nichts auch manchmal nicht die unerheblichste Kleinigkeit aus der wirklichen Welt an ihren rechten Ort legen. Daher ist das Leben dieses Menschen ein Zusammenhang von den empfindlichsten Leiden und Plagen, die dadurch nur noch empfindlicher werden, daß er sie keinem Menschen begreiflich machen kann" (pp. 317-18). In the same letter, Rothe remarks that Herz



has created his own world in which all men have become magnified embodiments of virtue or vice, unable to grasp " . . . daß der größte Teil der Menschen mittelmäßig ist, und weder große Tugenden noch große Laster anders als dem Hörensagen nach kennen" (p. 318).

One of the root causes of the alienation of Herz is thus his refusal to accept the values of moderation and compromise (such as those proclaimed by the cultural "mandarins" at Weimar) and to this end he sacrifices no less than his happiness, the respect of his friends, possibly his life.<sup>113</sup>

Der Waldbruder is the most subjective of Lenz's writings, and in its very subjectivity Rousseau's influence comes to mind. For the latter, isolation offers the means of tasting in purest form "le goût des plaisirs de l'âme."<sup>114</sup> Loneliness itself becomes a source of comfort to Herz: "Ich lache nicht, aber ich bin glücklicher als Ihr, ich weide mich zuweilen an einer Träne, die mir das süße Gefühl des Mitleids mit mir selbst auf die Wange bringt" (p. 292). For Lenz, in the wake of the collapse of all his endeavours within society, only the pleasure of his own sorrow remains: recourse to what he describes elsewhere as an "angenehme [n] Wollust der Schmerzen" (WS, I, 366), Rousseau's "coupe amère et douce de la sensibilité."<sup>115</sup> Yet it is precisely the cultivation of feeling in isolation from society that Lenz, guided by his own social ideals as well, no doubt, by an instinctive presentiment of the dangers lurking in his own temperament once released from the discipline of some purposeful application, has criticized explicitly and implicitly in his theoretical and creative writings: this alone inhibited his total acceptance of Rousseau. Un-

trammelled feeling is now given full rein, accompanied by a vague desire for absolute freedom: "Nur Freiheit will ich haben, zu lieben was ich will und so stark und dauerhaft, als es mir gefällt" (p. 292). Lenz's views on human dependence, his insistence on freedom through a socially directed striving (Über Gotz von Berlichingen) have been abandoned, whilst the element of self-restraint by which Rousseau tempers his belief in personal liberty has been rejected. The "Waldbruder", detached from society through the latter's refusal to recognize his aspirations, thus finds himself in a limbo, the unlimited sphere of his own subjectivity, answerable only to the impulses of his own imagination.

Der Waldbruder symbolizes the ultimate impasse in Lenz's life and, in a sense, the failure of his "Rousseauism." The positive human and social impulses received from Rousseau cease to be channelled into meaningful external activity. They dissolve instead in an, undoubtedly mistaken, imitation of the latter's ideal of pure feeling. Given the biographical and psychological situation in which Lenz finds himself, this state inevitably lacks the serenity, the higher philosophical perspective of Rousseau. The calm synthesis needed to combine the objective and subjective aspects of Rousseau's writings would not be achieved for another generation in Germany; certainly there is no hint of it in Lenz's agitated, tragically ironic novel.

### VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Which considerations emerge from this study to enable a broader evaluation of Lenz's relationship to Rousseau? Does this add anything of significant interest to the history of German Rousseauism? The name Rousseau has always been justly linked with the German Sturm und Drang. Each proceeds from a critical reappraisal of modern socialized man and deplores his loss of vitality and freedom through the imposition of unnatural values by an overly intellectualized culture. Yet despite this bond of sympathy Sturm und Drang writers were often incapable of moving beyond the stage of an adolescent fervour, of adapting Rousseau's insights to their own particular individual and political needs. If anything, they perpetuated and even extolled in the name of supremacy of the individual the Enlightenment's image of Rousseau as an arbitrary and illogical philosophical freak. The insights displayed by such writers as Fussli went largely unheeded, and the ultimately belittling judgment on Rousseau's stature as handed down to German classicism belonged to Schiller.

Lenz occupies a productive, hitherto disregarded position between two equally ineffective extremes. Where the Aufklärung lacked the inspiration to view Rousseau's writings in more than a piecemeal fashion that relied heavily on received philosophical precepts, the writers of the next generation all too readily saw their task completed in paying homage to the totality of genius. In comparison with the uncritical adulation which was the characteristic mode of Sturm und Drang Rousseauism,

the attitude of J.M.R. Lenz alone is worthy of the epithet "dialectic." Where a writer like Klinger skates with apparent unconcern over the hidden tension implicit in Rousseau's doctrines of revolutionary activity and idyllic rest, Lenz perceives it clearly, making it the occasion, in turn, of grotesque irony or sombre pessimism.<sup>1</sup> In this, moreover, he remains true to his own concept of a human society that is beset with contradictions. Rousseauist ideas, when they occur in his creative writings, rarely have the appearance of extraneous imports, but form part of the structure of characterization, are modified or confounded by subsequent events, whilst the direct references to Rousseau are often of an ambivalent kind. Only in viewing the over-all humanistic tendency of the work in question can we appreciate the ultimate identity of the two writers as champions of a freer, natural human order founded on the moral precepts of feeling instead of on those sustained only by cant and prejudice.

In this relationship are features relevant to what may be termed the dialectics of imitation and originality. The same is true of Lenz's translations of Shakespeare, which leave no doubt as to the originality of their author. In such a relationship, where questions of influence arise, two impulses are to be reconciled: the subservient urge to pay homage, and that of the creative ego whereby the writer's own individual integrity is maintained. In a sense the "master" operates as both a stimulus and a threat to the writer's creativity. The degree to which the threat is felt is perhaps a measure of the writer's worth.

The identity is perhaps greatest in the area of cultural criticism, where both writers mercilessly flay contemporary fashion in letters, art and ethics. Lenz's feud with Wieland, some satirical poems and Der neue Menoza, all fall within this area. The underlying mood is polemical, criticism of an area of society very close to the writers' interest and in which each, to varying degree, produces more vital, more lasting things than those under attack. The depth of Lenz's convictions here, parallelling those of Rousseau in his own world of priests and salons, excludes mere imitation.

Greater variations are noted in their respective handling of social problems, though both men were fired by the same thirst for justice and the capacity for pity.<sup>2</sup> Lenz lacks the theoretical dogmatism of Rousseau and he is hesitant on the matter of social egalitarianism. He has sometimes been seen to champion a "subjektive Gemäßheit,"<sup>3</sup> but attempts to systematize his social thinking are of doubtful value. Greater attention should be paid than has hitherto been the case to his many, often bizarre, projects for social reform: "Die Zeit ist gekommen, hinter der angeblich nutzlosen Geschäftigkeit die wirklichen Absichten des Schriftstellers und Gesellschaftsreformers Lenz zu suchen."<sup>4</sup> With many of these projects Lenz clearly derived stimuli from the ideas of Rousseau. The naivety and ultimate failure of these projects does not alter their character as an attempt to find practical means of application for a view of society that, with Rousseau, remains essentially in the abstract realm of rhetoric. Lenz's attempt at a more concrete Rousseauism in a world bound by the thousand taboos and restricted perspectives of the eighteenth century

German world of the autonomous warrior-prince (this several years before that philosophy was translated into political action before the Parisian barricades), counterbalances the overly theoretical bent of his moral writings, which retain much of the metaphysical ballast rejected by Rousseau.

The biographical survey in Chapter III suggested a development in Lenz's attitude to Rousseau, which emerged again in the chronological discussion of individual works in Chapter VII. The attitude of independent criticism gradually yields to a more sympathetic appreciation of the Genevan, accompanied by a deeper acquaintance with his works. The turning point comes in the latter part of 1774 and the first half of 1775 (Der neue Menoza, Über Gotz von Berlichingen, Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten, Briefe über die Moralität des jungen Werthers, accompanied by several sympathetic references in writings and correspondence). This breakthrough of Rousseau into the creative consciousness of Lenz provides him, initially at least, with fruitful insights. It also contains the seeds of a process that in time contributes to the disintegration and decline of both artist and personality. To this aspect of the relationship we must now turn.

The duality of Rousseau has been alluded to more than once in the course of this study, and its relevance must now be brought into sharper focus. Rousseau, perhaps for the first time, undertakes the feat of transforming human society in visionary terms whose origins are rooted wholly in the arbitrary impulses of the subject. This results

in the paradox whereby the most far-reaching historical and political processes are set in train by a man intensely preoccupied with his own sentiment. The paradox shows itself in the diversity of assessments found among scholars: "Rousseau . . . schreibt nicht nur für die Gegenwart, sondern ausschließlich in Bezug auf die Gegenwart; . . . er ist nicht Historiker, sondern Ankläger, Revolutionär und Reformator. . . ." <sup>5</sup>

"Pour Rousseau . . . , le seul principe 'actif' dans l'âme, c'est le sentiment; le prix de la vie se mesure à la part qu'y prend ce sentiment . . . . Il ne faut plus dire: vivez pour apprendre et comprendre; ni: vivez pour obéir à l'ordre et à la règle; mais: vivez pour aimer, vous attacher, pour écouter la voix du coeur." <sup>6</sup>

It would be more accurate to say that Rousseau, through the weight of his genius, opened the way to trends that had been long in the making, not least in Germany. The notion that subjective feeling should be given sole power of judgement over truth was an implied article of belief among the Pietists.<sup>7</sup> Its explosive potential is aptly conveyed by Schneider in the phrase "die gefährlichste Keimzelle im Zersetzungsprozeß der Aufklärung" <sup>8</sup> Lenz, we know, was imbued with the pietist tradition, but what strikes us when viewing his most active and creative period (1772-75), is not, as one might expect, a heightening of the subjective impulses in accordance with Sturm und Drang tastes, but rather a deliberate attempt at objectivity. The intense efforts at casting his ethical beliefs into something like a philosophical system, the concentration on social realities and, not least, the formulation of a concept of art designed both to reflect and to affect those realities, are the major ingredients of this. The appreciation of the objective, indeed rationalist, aspects

of Lenz is a long-overdue realization of recent scholarship.<sup>9</sup>

Criticism of Rousseau, especially in such works as Der Hofmeister and the Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral (important products of the earlier part of the period referred to) appears to fall within this objective phase. The former shows Lenz at a point of greatest critical distance from Rousseau, mocking sentimentality and the naive ideal (Wenzeslaus, Lise). It is this work, too, in which the dialectic irony which is the stylistic expression of Lenz's objectivizing effort, is seen in its most consistently satisfying form. The second work shows the beginnings of Lenz's preoccupation with Rousseau's doctrine of "paix." At this stage his objection to the idyllic urge for rest and retreat rests on firm philosophical foundations. In essence the objection is the same as Schiller's.<sup>10</sup> In seeking to evade the imperative to act, and hence to contribute to the perfection of humanity, Rousseau is seen to place undue weight on the arbitrary inclinations of the subject. A more striking indication of Lenz's perception is that Rousseau's subjectivity also offends his aesthetic sense. The following is an assessment of Rousseau's peculiar quality in characterization, taken from a recent study:<sup>11</sup>

Es gibt bei Rousseau, mit Ausnahme vielleicht seiner frühesten Schriften, keine Rollendichtung mehr; alles ist Bekenntnis.

Die Gestalten der "Nouvelle Héloïse" sind nur fein nuancierte Variationen seiner eigenen, ins Ideal gesteigerten Subjektivität.

Gleiches gilt für den "Emile." Selbst eine Konfrontierung der in



jeder menschlichen Seele angelegten widersprüchlichen Möglichkeiten und streitenden Triebe, wie sie von so vielen anderen, ebenfalls "subjektiven", Dichtern betrieben wird, suchen wir bei Rousseau vergeblich: er weigerte sich, die Welt des guten Jean-Jacques zu verlassen, wollte nur in jenen Empfindungen schwelgen, in denen er sich gerne und mit gutem Gewissen wiedererkennen konnte. Dramatische Konflikte, tragische Konfrontationen fehlen daher in seinem Werk völlig.

Lenz, in his otherwise positive evaluation of the Héloïse in Anmerkungen übers Theater (WS, I, 352), criticizes precisely this tendency of Rousseau to cast characters in his own image. Moreover, the occurrence of this criticism in a work supposedly devoted to the poetics of the drama suggests that, despite the attractiveness of his ideas, Rousseau offended Lenz's sense of dramatic construction. Schlüter correctly makes the link between excessive subjectivity and the inability to create dramatic conflict. Lenz, I believe, not only perceives this same connection, but recognizes its relevance to his own situation as a dramatic artist.

The ability to create and sustain the tensions of a work of drama demands a certain ruthless dissociation of self from characters. Conflicting concepts of truth, the ironic display of limitations even in those characters most clearly sympathetic, are the essence of dramatic creation. Lenz's most successful comedies are those in which, through various devices such as "Überrumpelungssituationen" (Hinck), no one view-point is given unconditional ascendancy. The hero of Der neue Menoza embodies the most salutary aspects of the Rousseauist creed in terms of social and philo-

sophical rejuvenation; nor is it difficult to see in him the most heart-felt frustrations and aspirations of the author. Yet Menoza remains bound by the overall, objectivizing perspective of the comic structure.

Lenz was thus led partly by his artistic instinct to distrust Rousseau's unabashed subjectivity. That this instinct was correct can be seen from the unsatisfactory character of those later, usually fragmentary works, in which personal tragedy is the one exclusive theme. The meaning of this ascendancy of the subjective in the later Lenz and its bearing on his relationship to Rousseau must now be considered.

The fatal phase in Lenz's life that begins with the traumatic Weimar experience is marked by an ever-increasing mental and physical isolation. Society's failure to comprehend the aspirations of this sensitive and child-like poet forced him into a state of self-pre-occupation which was, potentially, present from the beginning. (That psychopathological factors intrude to heighten this condition is not considered at issue here). From 1776 onwards we see a transformation. One who had sought through a ceaseless effort of the will to translate Rousseauist ideals into a program of dynamic, active reform of contemporary society, culture and letters, becomes a recluse. Here, symbolized by the "Waldbruder" Herz, Lenz enters that state of total subjectivity for which Rousseau, the hermit and exile, was the supreme example in the European consciousness. It is as though he at last

relaxes his guard and freely embraces a state of identity that he had intuitively recognized **throughout**, resisting on grounds of philosophical conviction (the metaphysical and social imperative to act), but also undoubtedly from an awareness of the very perils of the subjective abyss to which this shared temperament exposed him.<sup>12</sup> There are, indeed, compelling similarities between Lenz and Rousseau, symptomatic of the instability that derives from excessive subjectivity. The peculiar nature of its perception is described by Dilthey thus: "Durch das ~~un~~g<sup>o</sup>l<sup>o</sup>eliche Leben Rousseaus geht die Unfähigkeit, irgendeinen Menschen in seinem wahren Wesen zu erfassen. Wie sein **leidenschaftliches** Gemüt ihm die Menschen vor- spiegelte, so waren sie für ihn; er lebte ganz in sich selber. . . . Dasjenige, was ihm von Glück, von beseligenden, seinen Gefühlen und seiner tiefen Leidenschaften entsprechenden Situationen und Gestalten vorschwebte, verdichtete und formte er aus den schwimmenden Nebeln der Träumerei zu greifbaren Gestalten. Dieser Vorgang ist in allen großen Dichtern mitwirkend . . . . Aber in Rousseau war derselbe leitend."<sup>13</sup> Lenz's lack of the objective faculty in his human contacts is one of the characteristics described by Goethe in Dichtung und Wahrheit: ". . . seine Liebe wie sein Haß waren imaginär, mit seinen Vorstellungen und Gefühlen verfuhr er willkürlich, damit er immerfort etwas zu tun haben mochte."<sup>14</sup> In other respects, for example the propensity of both men to erotic fantasy, the temperamental similarity is confirmed.

Yet the Lenz who nourishes his wounded sensibilities at **Berka**, possibly in conscious imitation of Rousseau, retains important differences. As with

Rousseau, his flight may be taken as a protest against a society that has proved insensitive to his visions, "Weltflucht" instead of "Weltkompromiß."<sup>15</sup> But there the similarity ends. The inner tranquillity that Rousseau achieved in a higher state of subjective perception became the means of preserving his sense of universal human values in and through the world of nature, and this, as we noted, was not appreciated in Germany before Holderlin's generation. Lenz was neither culturally nor psychologically equipped to appreciate, certainly not to emulate, such a transformation. Der Waldbruder thus contains the most strident rejection of Rousseau's siren-call to restrain the striving impulse, but at the same time despair and defiance, not the confident anticipation of success, are the dominant tone of Herz's words. The culturally alienated heroes of this work, of Die Kleinen, as well as Der Engländer and Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, fail to achieve any lasting contact with that idyllic sphere that Rousseau exalts as the highest happiness. This failure results from the restless melancholy of these men, receptive only for brief, blessed interludes to the beauties of nature, whereas it is precisely these that provide Rousseau's boundless wealth of subjective feeling with that universal object required to preclude the arbitrary aspects of sensibility. Yet Rousseau's inwardness, his intrinsically misanthropic exaltation of nature over society, is in the last resort escapist. If Lenz's heroes appear less than at ease in such a world, one is tempted to conclude that for them the ugliness of society is the only tangible reality, one invoking the challenge to reform, not the gesture of aloof dismissal.

Ultimately, the weight of this reality and of this challenge, would prove too great for Lenz's delicate spirit.

Some comparison may be made here with Goethe, whose attitude towards Rousseau we found to be essentially non-committal. As has been pointed out by Muller-Solger, Goethe was not without reformist intentions when he began to devote his energies to the service of the Weimar state.<sup>16</sup> Werther had shown the depths to which an essentially passive consciousness of society's dissonances must lead. But the guiding conviction of the mature Goethe, born of his experience of the microcosmic world of Weimar, is the permanent nature of man's earthly existence. For him the flight from material realities, intuitively perceived as essential in preserving inner harmony, finds artistic expression in ironic detachment and shows itself in the channelling of intellectual energies into the realm of science. Lenz, the expounder of "verwilderte Ideen," was undoubtedly Goethe's reminder of a phase in their shared existence from which he now sought to free himself, and Lenz's Waldbruder is the most graphic document we have of this symbolic separation of Goethe from his alter ego. At incalculable cost to his own happiness, Lenz held fast to a belief in the radical revamping of society's guiding values, beginning with the individual, -- a belief received from Rousseau and confirmed with a clarity not equalled by Goethe even in his most revolutionary period.<sup>17</sup>

Guided by the keen socio-critical instinct and the dynamic moral philosophy which were his unique contribution to the Sturm und Drang,

Lenz was able to pursue Rousseau's visions in a way that seemed most relevant to the needs of his age and society. He was, when need arose, more Rousseauist than Rousseau, as in his belief in the triumph of absolute love over convention, or in his rejection of resignation as an alternative to confronting injustices. It is generally recognized that this phase yields to one marked by an increasing loss of contact with external reality.<sup>18</sup> As I have suggested elsewhere, a contributory cause in this process was the traumatic, though inevitable, failure of Lenz's reform-projects, in effect his attempt to become a practical Rousseauist.<sup>19</sup> This intention also underlies his efforts to redeem contemporary literature from its decorative and irrelevant function as perceived by Rousseau, an aim which, as was seen in Chapter V, he ultimately abandoned in the disillusionment of his later years. Through such frustration of his keenest aspirations he is thrown more and more upon his inner sensibility, for which he finds unlimited nourishment in the writings of Rousseau, yet deriving none of the universal quality found in Rousseau's nature mysticism. Bereft of his sustaining faith in the virtue of engaged activity, Lenz finds himself at the mercy of a purposeless emotionalism that leads progressively from morbid self-preoccupation to mental disintegration and early death. "Die tiefe Empfindsamkeit, ohne welche Klopstock nicht Klopstock und Shakespeare nicht Shakespeare gewesen wäre, hat ihn zu Grund gerichtet. Unter andern Verhältnissen wäre L. unsterblich geworden."<sup>20</sup> The author of this quasi-obituary might well have added Rousseau's name to those whose genius was nurtured by wells of feelings. In Lenz we have, instead, a tragic symbol of an epoch whose inner tensions we can appreciate today more fully perhaps than hitherto. The tradition of sensibility

shows itself increasingly inadequate to reflect a growing awareness of society's imperfections. Although Rousseau achieves the feat of expressing this more eloquently than any other writer of his age whilst maintaining intact his links with a more vitalized philosophy of feeling, in the pathetically honest, schizoid figure of Lenz the inherent strain and the potential despair of this idealism are laid bare.

IX. FOOTNOTES

## I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 H.A. Korff, Geist der Goethezeit (Leipzig: Weber, 1927), I, 69 ff.  
H. Hettner, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im achtzehnten Jahrhundert (Leipzig: List, 1929), III, 5 ff.
- 2 Friedrich Klinger, Werke (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1809 ff.), VIII, 97.
- 3 Sämtliche Werke, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877 ff.), XXIX, 265.
- 4 See Dichtung und Wahrheit ~~the~~ Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche (Zürich: Artemis 1949), X, 533-36.
- 5 Cf. Erich Schmidt, Richardson, Rousseau und Goethe (Jena: Frommann, 1875), pp. 117-18. Racially conceived interpretations of Rousseau's importance for German literature are products more of the present century, e.g. Hans Ruppert, Die Darstellung der Leidenschaften und Affekte im Drama des Sturmes und Dranges (diss. Bonn, 1941), pp. 52-53.
- 6 F.A. Wynekin, Rousseaus Einfluß auf Klinger (diss. Berkeley, 1912); J..Bollag, F.M. Klingers Kulturprogramm in seiner Abhängigkeit von Rousseau (diss. Basel, 1922); Hans M. Wolff, "Der Rousseaugehalt in Klingers Drama 'Das leidende Weib,'" JEGP, ~~XXXIX~~ (1940), 355-75.
- 7 No single definitive work exists on the subject of Rousseau and German literature, despite the evident value of such a study. Wolfgang Liepe's project as announced in the Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, LI (1926), 299-328, was never brought to fruition due to war-time loss of material: cf. Karl Guthke, Wege zur Literatur (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1967), p. 133.
- 8 This narrowing of the field even excludes Klinger.
- 9 Guthke, p. 137.
- 10 E.H. Wright, The Meaning of Rousseau (Oxford, 1929), p. 4.
- 11 Ibid., p.6.
- 12 The first step in eliciting the integrating factor in Rousseau's writings was taken with Lessing's observation that all his speculations spring directly from the heart: Werke, ed. Petersen & Olschhausen (Berlin: Bong, n.d.), IX, 411 (see Ch. II, below).



- 13 Werke und Schriften, ed. Britta Titel & Helmut Haug, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Govert, 1966). For works not contained in this edition reference will be made to Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Franz Blei, 5 vols. (Munich & Leipzig: Muller, 1909 ff.), abbreviated: "GS."
- 14 Gedenkausgabe, X, 659. Friedrich Gundolf (Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist, Berlin, 1914), Hettner (op. cit., pp. 138 ff.) and Korff (op. cit., p. 255) were largely responsible for continuing this negative view.
- 15 For a complete history of the stage productions of Lenz see Elisabeth Genton, Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz et la Scène allemande (Paris: Didier, 1966), appendix.
- 16 Karl Guthke, Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961); René Girard, Lenz 1751-1792: Genèse d'une dramaturgie du tragi-comique (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968).
- 17 Volker Klotz, Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama (Munich: Hanser, 1960).
- 18 Ottomar Rudolf, Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz, Moralist und Aufklärer (Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1970).
- 19 "Lebt wohl, große Männer: über den 'Affen Goethes' den Dichter Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz," Die Zeit, XLVII (Hamburg, 24. Nov. 1970), 26.
- 20 P. Th. Falck, Der Dichter J.M.R. Lenz in Livland (Winterthur: Westförling, 1878), p. 37.
- 21 Eugen Wolff, "Die Sturm- und Drang-Komödie und ihre fremden Vorbilder," Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte, NF I (1887-88), 192-220.
- 22 M.N. Rosanow, Jakob M.R. Lenz, der Dichter der Sturm- und Drangperiode: sein Leben und seine Werke (Leipzig: Schulze, 1909), pp. 119-20, 109-10.
- 23 Georg Hausdorff, Die Einheitlichkeit des dramatischen Problems bei Lenz (diss. Würzburg, 1913), p. 52.
- 24 Martin Sommerfeld, "Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz und Goethes Werther," Euphorion, XXIV (1922), 68-107, p. 90: original emphasis. The phrase "fordernde Epoche" originated with Goethe.
- 25 Heinz Kindermann, J.M.R. Lenz und die deutsche Romantik (Vienna & Leipzig: Braumüller, 1925).

- 26 Jean Pauls Verhältnis zu Rousseau (Marburg: 1925), pp. 53-57.
- 27 Josef Torggler, "Sozialbewußtsein und Gesellschaftskritik bei J.M.R. Lenz" (diss. Innsbruck, 1957), pp. 84-85.
- 28 This is the main failing of Wynek's study of the Rousseau-Klinger relationship (see n. 6).
- 29 Hans M. Wolff, "Der junge Herder und die Entwicklungsidee Rousseaus," PMLA, LVII (1942), 753-819, p. 778.
- 30 See, for example, Oskar Ritter v. Xylander, Heinrich von Kleist und J.J. Rousseau (Berlin: Matthiesen, 1937).
- 31 Cf. Guthke, op. cit. (n. 7), p. 133 f.
- 32 H.E. Barnes, An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World (New York, 1965), I, 304.
- 33 Korff, p. 65.
- 34 The relationship of Rousseau to Kant will be dealt with in the next chapter.
- 35 Cf. a number of German scholars in the Schiller tradition of Rousseau criticism (see Ch. II below) such as Kommerell (n. 26), or Otto Hänssel, Der Einfluß Rousseaus auf die philosophisch-pädagogischen Anschauungen Herders (diss. Dresden, 1902).
- 36 Contained in J.-J. Rousseau, Du Contrat social (etc.) (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 2.
- 37 Wolfgang Liepe, Beiträge zur Literatur- und Geistesgeschichte (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1963), p. 66.
- 38 Ibid., p. 107.
- 39 Les Confessions, in: Jean-Jaques Rousseau, Oeuvres (Paris: Werdet & Lequien, 1826 ff.), II, 172-73.
- 40 In J.J. Rousseau, Du Contrat social (etc.) (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 35.
- 41 Emile (Paris: Garnier, 1964), p. 5.
- 42 Cf. Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe: Two Essays (Princeton: U.P., 1945), pp. 52 ff.

## II. ROUSSEAU IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GERMANY

- 1 Wolfgang Liepe, Beiträge zur Literatur- und Geistesgeschichte (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1963), p. 96.
- 2 Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Lachmann & Muncker (Stuttgart, 1890), V, 64-65.
- 3 Werke, ed. Petersen & Oslhausen (Berlin: Bong, n.d.), IX, 411.
- 4 Cf. above, ch. I, n. 12.
- 5 See Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire (Paris: Garnier, 1880), XXXVIII, 446 ff.: letter to J.-J. Rousseau of 30 August 1755.
- 6 M. Kayserling, Moses Mendelssohn: sein Leben und Wirken (Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1888), pp. 48-49.
- 7 Briefe von und an Lessing, ed. Franz Muncker (Leipzig: Göschen, 1904 ff.), III, 27: "Wenn Rousseau dem gesitteten Menschen nur nicht alle Moralität abspräche! Für diese bin ich allzusehr eingenommen."
- 8 Moses Mendelssohn's gesammelte Schriften (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1843 ff.), I, 374.
- 9 Du Contrat social (etc.) (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 48.
- 10 Published by Weidmann, Leipzig 1761. Mendelssohn subjects the translation to detailed criticism in the 171st letter of the Briefe (Gesammelte Schriften, IV part 2, 278 ff.). See also letters 221-22 (ibid. pp. 348-53), 11 to 18, March, 1762. Gellius' translation was also the butt of a ribald epigram by Abram Kästner, who wrote (alluding to the fact that Rousseau's hero does not share the same fate as his medieval counterpart):  
 "Das Schicksal Abälards hat auch St. Preux erlitten:  
 Der ihn uns Deutschen gab, wie hat er ihn verschnitten!"  
 (Schmidt, Richardson, Rousseau und Goethe, p. 116.)
- 11 Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, IV, 2, 260-83.
- 12 Hamburgische Dramaturgie, St. 8, 9 (26-29 May 1767): Werke, V, 56-60.
- 13 Martin Sommerfeld, "Romantheorie und Romantypus der deutschen Aufklärung," Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, IV (1926), 459-90. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965).
- 14 Friedrich v. Blanckenburg, Versuch über den Roman, Faksimiledruck der Originalausgabe von 1774 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965), pp. 411-12.

- 15 Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 741.
- 16 Sämtliche Werke, ed. Josef Nadler (Vienna: Herden, 1950), II, 157-65.
- 17 Gesammelte Schriften, IV, 2, 311-23. Mendelssohn reprints the anonymous article, correctly guessing the author's identity.
- 18 Cf. Rudolf Unger, Hamann und die Aufklärung (Halle: 1925), pp. 340-56.
- 19 Hermann Korff, Die Dichtung von Sturm und Drang (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1928), p. 50. Cf. Goethe, Dichtung und Wahrheit (Gedenkausgabe, X, 563), on Hamann's concept of the "total man."
- 20 Hamann, Briefwechsel (Wiesbaden etc. 1955 ff.), II, 139-40: letter to Johann Gotthelf Lindner, 4 March 1762 (original emphasis).
- 21 Ibid., II, 104-105: letter of 25 August 1761.
- 22 For a survey of these titles see Paul Kluckhohn, Die Auffassung der Liebe in der Literatur des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts (Halle: Niemayer, 1922), pp. 307 ff. For an indication of the lasting popularity of this work in Germany cf. Friedrich Stolberg: "Die confessions de Rousseau habe ich mit unendlichem Interesse diesen Sommer gelesen, u: die Eloise hat mich auch als ich sie laß unendlich gerührt. Doch liebe ich von allen Schriften des guten J.J. nichts so sehr wie den Emil" (Briefe, Neumünster, 1966, p. 150: letter of 12 March 1783).
- 23 Published Bremen, 1777 and contained in Sämtliche Werke (Berlin & Stettin, 1797), VII, 116-40. The essay was translated into English as A Letter to the Reverend Vicar of Savoy: To be left at J.J. Rousseau's, London, 1776, by one "Jöach. Andr. Fred. Warnecke, LL.C., a native of Osnabruck."
- 24 Cf. later in this chapter.
- 25 See Timotheus Klein, Wieland und Rousseau (diss. Munich, 1902). Bondeli, Wieland's one-time fiancée, was the authress of reminiscences of Rousseau which H.P. Sturz used for his Denkwürdigkeiten von Johann Jacob Rousseau, 1786 (ed. Anselm Ruest, Magdeburg: Der Einzige, 1925), a source of Schiller's knowledge of Rousseau.
- 26 Sämtliche Werke (Leipzig: Goschen, 1784 ff.), XIV, 147 ff., 215 ff.
- 27 "... il prend envie de marcher à quatre pattes, quand on lit votre ouvrage" (see n. 5 above).
- 28 Richard Fester, Rousseau und die deutsche Geschichtsphilosophie (Stuttgart: Goschen, 1890), p. 39.

- 29 Klein, p. 40.
- 30 Cf. Erich Schmidt, Lenz und Klinger: zwei Dichter der Geniezeit (Berlin: Weidmann, 1878), p. 53.
- 31 See Frederic Tubach, "Perfectabilité: der zweite Diskurs Rousseaus und die deutsche Aufklärung," Etudes Germaniques, XV (1960), 144-51, p. 151.
- 32 Geschichte des Agathon (1767 edition) (Berlin: Akademie, 1961), p. 123.
- 33 Nouvelle Héloïse, pp. 737-57.
- 34 On Rousseau's relationship to Kant see Konrad Dietrich, Kant und Rousseau (Tübingen, 1878); Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe: Two Essays (Princeton: U.P. 1945); Wolfgang Liepe, op. cit. (n. 1): chapter on "Rousseau-Kant-Schiller."
- 35 There is a striking resemblance between Rousseau's apostrophe, "Conscience! conscience! instinct divin . . ." (Emile, p. 354) and Kant's "Pflicht! du erhabener, großer Name . . ." in the Kritik der praktischen Vernunft: Werke, ed. Cassirer (Berlin, 1912-18), V, 95. In both cases dogma is replaced by a subjectively perceived moral decision.
- 36 Fragmente und Bemerkungen zu den Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen (Werke, VIII, 624).
- 37 Herder, Sämtliche Werke, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877 ff.), XVII, 404 (original emphases).
- 38 Korff, Geist der Goethezeit, I, 75.
- 39 Letter to Scheffner, 31 October 1767. (Quoted by H.M. Wolff, "Der junge Herder und die Entwicklungsidee Rousseaus," PMLA, LVII (1942), 753-819, p. 766)
- 40 Letter to Hamann, April 1768: Johann Georg Hamann, Briefwechsel (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1955 f.), II, 409.
- 41 Sämtliche Werke, IV, 416.
- 42 Ibid., p. 371.
- 43 "Sein großes Thema ist gar zu sehr mit dem meinigen verwandt . . ." (Sämtliche Werke, XXXII, 41).
- 44 Cf. Fester, op. cit. p. 42.
- 45 See in particular Hans Wolff, op. cit. (n. 39). This view is also accepted in Robert Clark's definitive study, Herder, his Life and Thought (Berkeley, 1955).

- 46 Wolff considers Herder the one who "am meisten dazu beigetragen hat, Rousseau in Deutschland populär zu machen und den Rousseauismus der siebziger Jahre herbeizuführen" (p. 755).
- 47 Sämtliche Werke, V, 480: original emphases.
- 48 Cf. Fester, p. 59.
- 49 Ibid., pp. 61 ff.
- 50 See Karl S. Guthke, "Zur Frühgeschichte des Rousseauismus in Deutschland," Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, LXXVII (1958), 384-96, reprinted in Wege zur Literatur, pp. 133-46; also "A note on Herder and Rousseau," Modern Language Quarterly, XIX (1958), 303-6.
- 51 The letter to Merck is contained in Herders Lebensbild (Erlangen: Eläsing, 1846), III, 1, 321-26.
- 52 Reprinted by Unger, op. cit. (n. 18), pp. 872-78. Hamann translates the preface and part of Ch. I and summarizes the rest.
- 53 Hamann, Briefwechsel, II, 397. For Herder's grateful acknowledgement see Briefe an Joh. Georg Hamann (Berlin: Gaertner, 1889), p. 38.
- 54 Page references are, first to the 1767 edition, secondly to Eudo C. Mason's edition, with German translation (Zürich: Fretz & Wasmuth, 1962).
- 55 Op. cit., p. 56 (Introduction).
- 57 See Hans Wolff, "Rousseau, Möser und der Kampf gegen das Rokoko," Monatshefte, XXXIV (1942), 113-25. "Hamann schuf das Verständnis für die Form, Moser das Verständnis für den Inhalt der Werke Rousseau, sie beide vereint sind die entscheidenden Faktoren in der Entstehung des Rousseauismus der 70er Jahre" (p. 124).
- 58 Dichtung und Wahrheit, XIII (Gedenkausgabe, X, 653).
- 59 Albert Wagner, Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg und der Sturm und Drang (Heidelberg: Winter, 1920 ff.), II, 274-76.
- 60 Gedenkausgabe, X, 363.
- 61 See for example Erich Schmidt, Richardson, Rousseau und Goethe (Jena, 1875); J. Benrubi, "Goethe et Schiller, continuateurs de Rousseau," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, XX (1912), 441-60; Albert Aron, "The mature Goethe and Rousseau," JEGP, XXXV (1936), 170-82; Maurice Bémol, "Goethe et Rousseau, ou la double influence," Etudes Germaniques, IX (1954), 257-77. Among the many textual concordances that have been noted the most interesting has been

- pointed out by Aron (p. 182) and also by Benjamin Woodbridge, MLN, LV (1940), 581-83: a passage in the Rêveries du promeneur solitaire ends: "A peine est-il dans nos plus vives jouissances un instant où le cœur puisse véritablement nous dire: Je voudrais que cet instant dût toujours" (Oeuvres, III, 304: original emphasis!), which inevitably reminds one of Faust's wager with Mephisto.
- 62 Oeuvres, XI, 317-26. For an important interpretation, refuting Goethe, see Hermann Schlüter, Das Pygmalion-Symbol bei Rousseau, Hamann, Schiller (Zürich: Juris, 1968).
- 63 Performances took place in Vienna (1772), Dresden (1776) and Mannheim (1778). The experiments of Wieland and Goethe at Weimar with the musical play ("melodrama") were strongly influenced by it. See Paul Merker, Studien zur neuhochdeutschen Legendendichtung (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 141 ff., on the effect of the legend in Germany.
- 64 Cf. Erich Schmidt, Lenz und Klinger, p. 77: ". . . fühle, aber kritische und vernünftige nicht, denn wir wollen nur nachempfindend schwelgen, jede Gestalt der Kunst uns durch Gluthblicke sinnlich beleben, wie Pygmalion seine Statue . . ."
- 65 Gedenkausgabe, X, 536.
- 66 Julie von Bondeli (see n. 25) wrote in 1775: "Werther est un St. Preux, plus ardent, plus sombre et plus überspannt encore que lui" (quoted by Schmidt, op. cit., p. 172).
- 67 Max Kommerell, Jean Pauls Verhältnis zu Rousseau (Marburg, 1925), p. 59.
- 68 E.M. Butler, The Tyranny of Greece over Germany (Boston: Beacon, 1958: new edition), pp. 88-89.
- 69 Goethe im Gespräch (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1960), p. 147.
- 70 Cf. Herder's letter to Hamann of 11 July 1782: "Rousseaus Confessionen werden Sie gelesen haben; wie bist Du vom Himmel gefallen, Du Morgenstern! Und was wird Kant zum Leben seines ehemaligen Helden sagen!" (Briefe an Hamann, p. 184).
- 71 Oeuvres, II, 1.
- 72 Valuable studies of the relationship of Schiller to Rousseau have been undertaken by Wolfgang Liepe, whose articles "Der junge Schiller und Rousseau" and "Kulturproblem und Totalitätsideal: Zur Entwicklung der Problemstellung von Rousseau zu Schiller" are reprinted in Beiträge zur Literatur- und Geistesgeschichte (see n. 1).

- 73 See n. 25 above.
- 74 Schiller's notice for the first performance (Mannheim, January 1784) reads: "Niesko, von dem ich vorläufig nichts Empfehlenderes zu sagen weiß, als daß ihn J.J. Rousseau am Herzen trug."
- 75 "Johann Jakob Rousseau gehört unter diejenigen, welche der Himmel in gewissen Zeitaltern aus vielen Tausenden auszuwählen uns zu senden scheint, damit sie durch Wort und Tag auf die Völker umher wirken:" Der Teutsche Merkur, XXIII (1778).
- 76 Cf. Nouvelle Héloïse, pp. 169, 180.
- 77 Schiller, Werke (Weimar, 1962), XX, 89.
- 78 Ibid., p. 337.
- 79 Liebe, p. 77.
- 80 Werke, XX, 451-52.
- 81 Liebe, p. 109.
- 82 See Bernhard Böschenstein, "Die Transfiguration Rousseaus in der deutschen Dichtung um 1800: Hölderlin - Jean Paul - Kleist," in Studien zur Dichtung des Absoluten (Zurich & Freiburg: Atlantis, 1968), pp. 11-24.
- 83 The French-Romantics appear to have been more willing to acknowledge Rousseau as their predecessor than those in Germany. See Rudolf Buck, Rousseau und die deutsche Romantik (Berlin: Jünker & Dünnhaupt, 1939), p. 140.
- 84 Rêveries du promeneur solitaire (5me Promenade): Oeuvres, III, 305.
- 85 Die Unsichtbare Loge (1793): Sämtliche Werke (Berlin: Reimer, 1840 ff.), I, 240.
- 86 Emile, p. 358. Cf. Böschenstein, p. 18.
- 87 See in addition to Böschenstein's article: Paul de Man, "L'image de Rousseau dans la poésie de Hölderlin," Deutsche Beiträge zur geistigen Überlieferung, V (1965), 157-83. References here are to the translation of Renate Böschenstein-Schäfer, "Holderlins Rousseaubild," Hölderlin-Jahrbuch, XV (1967-68), 180-208.
- 88 See Hölderlin's letter to Neuffer, 28 November 1791, in Sämtliche Werke (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1946-68), VI, i, 70.
- 89 Sämtliche Werke, I, i, 148.
- 90 De Man, p. 186 n.
- 91 Ibid., p. 190.



- 92 Sämtliche Werke, II, i, 12-13.
- 93 Ibid., 146-47.
- 94 Böschenstein suggests the epithet is an echo of Klopstock who uses it in relation to Dionysos. Rousseau is thus associated with poetry and boundlessness, reinforced by the image of the river (p. 12).
- 95 Buck, op. cit., p. 131.
- 96 De Man, p. 181.
- 97 See in addition to Böschenstein, Oskar Xylander, Heinrich von Kleist und J.J. Rousseau (Berlin, 1937), Siegfried Streller, "Heinrich von Kleist und Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Weimarer Beiträge, VIII (1962), 541-66: reprinted in Heinrich von Kleist (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967).
- 98 In the document usually regarded as the first expression of his crisis, a letter to his fiancée of 22 March 1801, Kleist praises her "Neigung for Rousseau" and promises to send her the collected works, to be read in the order he will dictate: Sämtliche Werke und Briefe (Munich: Hanser, 1961 ), II, 632.
- 99 Xylander, p. 374.
- 100 Emile, p. 353. One must not overlook the fundamental difference between Rousseau's concept of sentiment and Kleist's. For the former it is a means to an end, that of perceiving truth, which itself is still understood in the objective and universal sense of the Enlightenment, (even though the use to which subjectivity is put in the Confessions should have awakened him to its limitations.) For Kleist feeling is the subject's one and only means of preserving its sense of integrity, the "heilige-Selbstgewißheit des Ich um seine Bestimmung" (Gerhard Fricke, Gefühl und Schicksal bei Heinrich v. Kleist, new ed.: Darmstadt: WBG, 1963, p. 29). Instead of reflecting universal truth, it is more a defiance on the individual's part of a universe that would banish truth completely.
- 101 Letter to Caroline von Schlieben, 18 July 1801: Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, II, 665.
- 102 Cf. Böschenstein, p. 22; Streller, pp. 545 ff. The possibility of a connection between Penthesilea's Amazon state and Rousseau's ideal society in the Contrat social is suggested by Hans Wolff, "Kleists Amazonenstaat im Lichte Rousseaus," PMLA, LIII (1938), 189-206.

### III. THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUSSEAU IN LENZ'S LIFE

- 1 Cf. Julius Eckardt, Livland im achtzehnten Jahrhundert (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1876), I, 519 ff.
- 2 Cited by René Girard, Lenz 1751-1792: Genèse d'une dramaturgie du tragi-comique, p. 45.
- 3 Eckardt, I, 517
- 4 Briefe von und an J.M.R. Lenz, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Wolff, 1918), I, 2-3 letter of 2 January 1765.
- 5 Falk assumes that Frau Gadebusch (née Ferrier) was Lenz's principal source of introduction to Rousseau (Lenz in Livland, p. 37).
- 6 Rosanow, Lenz, der Dichter der Sturm- und Drangperiode, p. 38.
- 7 Hermann Rauch, in his study Lenz und Shakespeare (Berlin: Apollant, 1892), claims that Lenz was already conversant in his pre-university years with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, English, Italian, German, Swedish, Russian and Estonian.
- 8 For a detailed account of the condition of the Lettish peasant, see Eckardt, pp. 417 ff.
- 9 Published more recently in Freimütiges aus den Schriften Garlieb Merkels, ed. Horst Adameck (Berlin: Rutten & Loening, 1959).
- 10 Eckardt, p. 327.
- 11 Cf. Girard, p. 120: "Ces débats ont incontestablement laissé des traces dans la pensée de Lenz."
- 12 Nevertheless it is noteworthy that several of the clerical ranks (e.g. Merkel's father) were in the van of the movement for peasant reform. (See Eckardt, pp. 443-44.)
- 13 Cf. G. Kaiser, Klopstock: Religion und Dichtung (Gütersloh: 1963), pp. 123 ff.
- 14 Karl Freye, "Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenzens Knabenjahre," Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Erziehung und des Unterrichts, VII (1917), p. 189.
- 15 Gesammelte Werke, ed. Richard Daunicht (Munich: Fink, 1967), I, 14.
- 16 Cf. Girard, pp. 16-17.

- 17 "Ein freier Mensch muß doch vor einem Bauern, von einem Sklaven vorausshaben" (loc. cit.).
- 18 Dreye sees Tigras as "der 'eingefleischte Teufel', den der junge Poet abschreckend zeichnen will" (p. 188), an unjustifiably tendencious portrayal of the young Lenz as conservative and autocratic.
- 19 Georg Hausdorff, Die Einheitlichkeit des dramatischen Problems bei Lenz (diss. Würzburg, 1913), p. 11. Cf. also Rudolf: "Lenzens Sicht auf die Gesellschaft, Lenzens Kritik an der Gesellschaft, hat hier ihre Entstehung" (Lenz, Moralist und Aufklärer, p. 133).
- 20 J.F. Reichardt, "Etwas über den Dichter Lenz," Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit und ihres Geschmacks, I (1796), 113.
- 21 "Als Sr. Hochedelgebohrnen der Herr Professor Kant den 21sten August 1770 für die Professor-Würde disputierte," GS, I, 65-66. See also Rudolf Reicke, "Reinhold Lenz in Königsberg und sein Gedicht auf Kant," Altpreuussische Monatschrift, LV (1867), 647-58.
- 22 "Diese Verse ahnen bereits das Rousseau'sche Pathos der Verherrlichung des Naturhaften und bekunden eine deutliche sozialkritische Note." Torggler, "Sozialbewußtsein und Gesellschaftskritik bei Lenz," p. 37.
- 23 Cf. above, ch. II, n. 36.
- 24 Rudolf, p. 56.
- 25 Cf. above, ch. II, n. 37.
- 26 Cited by Fester, Rousseau und die deutsche Geschichtsphilosophie, p. 81.
- 27 Cf. Rosanow, p. 71.
- 28 Rudolf describes this quality as "tendenziösen Naturalismus" (p. 144).
- 29 Cf. Kindermann, Lenz und die deutsche Romantik, pp. 24-25.
- 30 The Kleist influence was especially stressed by O. Anwald, Beiträge zum Studium der Gedichte von J.M.P. Lenz (diss. Munich, 1897: no longer extant).
- 31 Kindermann, p. 25.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 50-51.
- 33 A detailed account of these friends is given by Rudolf, pp. 85-125.
- 34 Cf. August Stöber, Der Aktuar Salzmann, Goethes Freund und Tischgenosse in Straßburg (Frankfurt: Völcker, 1855), pp. 36-37.

- 35 Allgemeine deutsche Biographie (Leipzig, 1875-1912), XXX, 300.
- 36 Cf. Leonore Speerli, Rousseau und Zürich (Erlenbach: Rentsch, 1941).
- 37 In the Shakespeare essay, Das Hochburger Schloß, Sommerfeld misreads the passage in question as advocating a Rousseau monument besides one to Shakespeare, an attractive, if erroneous, assumption! ("Lenz und Goethes Werther," Euphorion, XXIV, 90).
- 38 Cf. Lenz's preamble (WS, I, 329).
- 39 Theodor Friedrich, Die 'Anmerkungen übers Theater' des Dichters Reinhold Lenz (diss. Leipzig, 1908). See in particular the appendix containing a reprinting of the essay in different types to indicate the different stages of genesis. Gustav Keckeis, Dramaturgische Probleme im Sturm und Drang (Bern: Francke, 1907), considers that the work consists of four lectures given at different times (pp. 28-29).
- 40 Cf. above, in Ch. II.
- 41 For more on Lenz's theories of literary creation see the dissertation by Britta Titel on "Nachahmung der Natur" als Prinzip dramatischer Gestaltung bei Lenz (Frankfurt, 1961); cf. esp. p. 18.
- 42 Titel (p. 30) sees here an acknowledgement of Rousseau's stressing the importance of the individual man; later (p. 45) she refers to "Lenzens-- unter dem Zeichen Rousseaus und Herders stehender-- Entdeckung des Menschen in seiner ganzen Naturwahrheit..." Any criticism of Rousseau would thus be that in his characterizations he does not always succeed in achieving the object implied by his theoretical writings.
- 43 My emphasis.
- 44 Lenz later returned to the discussion in a somewhat different vein in Über Delikatesse der Empfindung (GS, V, 256 f.). The implications of this later criticism must be discussed in due course.
- 45 The motif of the dream-omen also occurs in the Nouvelle Héloïse (Part V, letter 9, p. 603). Cf. Karl Weinhold's introduction to his edition of the Moralische Bekehrung, Goethe-Jahrbuch, X (1889), 103.
- 46 Cf. above, Ch. II, n. 29.
- 47 That Menalk and Mopsus (Wieland) are spirits after death has been pointed out by L.E. Gemeinhardt, Germanic Review, XVII (1942), 112 ff.
- 48 Op. cit., ch. 4, n. 118.
- 49 Briefe, I, 122: letter of 31 July 1775.
- 50 Ibid., p. 126: letter to Lavater, Sept. 1775.
- 51 Ibid., p. 175: letter to Boie, Feb. 1776.

- 52 The similarity in tone is seen, for instance, in the Verteidigung des Herrn W.: "... ich will mir lieber Geschmack, Einsicht, Güte des Herzens, alles absprechen lassen (Beschuldigungen, die mir weher tun als körperliche Angriffe auf mein Leben) lieber ein Ungeheuer scheinen, als zu den Ungerechtigkeiten meines Vaterlandes stillschweigen" (WS, I, 433-34).
- 53 Briefe, I, 188: letter from Ph. Kayser, 3 March 1776.
- 54 Cf. Emile, p. 108.
- 55 Briefe, I, 110.
- 56 Ibid., 197.
- 57 See Über die Soldatenehen, ed. Karl Freye (Leipzig: Wolff, 1914). Unlike the "Frauenpflanzschule" idea proposed in Die Soldaten, Lenz envisages actual marriage for soldiers to spare the population the ill-effects of celibate soldiers. He also had ideas for the economic development of Weimar: cf. Briefe, II, 10-11.
- 58 Briefe, I, 178: letter to H.C. Boie, February 1776.
- 59 Cf. this writer's article "Lenz, Rousseau, and the Problem of Striving," Seminar, X (1974), p. 172, n.25.
- 60 Briefe, II, 22: letters to Simon and Pfeffel, July 1776.
- 61 Ibid., 25.
- 62 Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe (Princeton: University Press, 1945), p.9.
- 63 Rudolf, p. 61.
- 64 Cf. Emile, p. 13, also p. 182: "D'où vient la faiblesse de l'homme? De l'inégalité qui se trouve entre sa force et ses desirs." The former passage is suggested by the editors, WS, I, 665.
- 65 Letter of 5 April 1780, first published by W. Kurrelmeyer, "Ein unbekannter Brief Lenzens an Boie," Modern Language Notes, LVI (1941), 445-47.
- 66 See n. 49.
- 67 Briefe, II, 113: letter to J. Sarasin, 28 September 1777.
- 68 E.G. the founding of a university in Dorpat, creation of a free polyglot version of the Bible for the poor, promotion of freer trade relations between Livonia and Russia (Briefe, II, 185-86, 244, 250 ff.).

- 69 Cf., for example, Herder's attitude to Lenz's ambition of attaining the Rector's post at the Riga Domschule (R. Haym, Herder, Berlin 1885, II, 13, n. 3). Cf. Briefe, II, 139: letter to Herder, October 1779.
- 70 Briefe, II, 252: letter to Baron Stiernhielm, 14 January 1792.
- 71 Cf. above, Ch. II, no. 42.

#### IV. ROUSSEAU AND LENZ'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

- 1 The chief merit of Rudolf's recent study (Lenz, Moralist und Aufklärer) lies in its demonstration of this.
- 2 Cf. Paul Heinrichsdorff, Lenzens religiöse Haltung (Berlin: Matthiesen, 1932). The prevalence of biblical themes and motifs in Lenz's dramatic works (e.g. the Prodigal Son) has been shown by Albrecht Schöne, Säkularisation als sprachbildende Kraft: Studien zur Dichtung deutscher Pfarrersöhne (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).
- 3 See Rudolf, pp. 196-201.
- 4 "Dieu n'a-t-il pas tout dit à nos yeux, à notre conscience, à notre jugement? Qu'est-ce que les hommes nous diront de plus?" "Que d'hommes entre Dieu et moi!" (Emile, pp. 361, 364).
- 5 "La meilleure de toutes les religions est infailliblement la plus claire . . ." "Le Dieu que j'adore n'est point un Dieu des ténèbres" (ibid., pp. 367, 368).
- 6 "Leurs révélations ne font que dégrader Dieu, en lui donnant les passions humaines." "Je crois trop en Dieu pour croire à tant de miracles si peu dignes de lui" (ibid., pp. 361, 366).
- 7 Emile, p. 362. Cf. Discours sur l'Inégalité and Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 579.
- 8 This epithet seems to carry undertones of admiration with Lenz, signifying a heroic opposition to established forces. Beza uses it to describe Prince Tandi in Der neue Menoza (WS, II, 162).
- 9 Justus Möser had also questioned the efficacy of Rousseau's theology in his Schreiben an den Herrn Vicar in Savoyen (see Ch. II), but the tone is much less sympathetic than Lenz's.
- 10 Attempts to explain this statement are found in Girard, Lenz 1751-1792: Genèse d'une dramaturgie du tragi-comique, pp. 126-27, and Schöne, p. 98.

- 11 E.g. Briefe, I, 61.
- 12 Briefe, I, 65: letter of October 1772.
- 13 Emile, pp. 379-80.
- 14 At the end of the Stimmen Lenz admits a distinction between theology proper and "die weltliche Theologie oder der Naturalismus, den ich Ihnen predige . . ."-- the latter being concerned with "unserer Bestimmung in dieser Zeitlichkeit" (WS, I, 569). The story Der Landprediger depicts a decidedly worldly and socially oriented theologian.
- 15 Girard, p. 134.
- 16 Even this is in accordance with Rousseau, whose Vicar of Savoy repeatedly stresses the personal nature of his beliefs and his unwillingness to enforce them on others.
- 17 See above, Ch. II, sect. 1.
- 18 Briefe, I, 55.
- 19 See n. 11.
- 20 Documentation and interpretation in this section follow the author's article, previously cited (Ch. III. n. 59).
- 21 Parallels are noted in the editors' annotations (WS, I, 694). Cf. also Ch. III, n. 65.
- 22 Emile, p. 63.
- 23 Briefe, I, 59: letter to Salzmann, October 1772. Cf. Diffey, p. 173.
- 24 "Die Triebfeder unserer Handlungen ist die Konkupiszenz: ohne Begier nach etwas bleiben wir ruhig . . ." (WS, I, 501-2). See also Girard, p. 71.
- 25 The dynamics of good and evil are described with almost Nietzschean brutality in a late fragment: "Eine Seele ohne starken Trieb zum Laster ist nicht wert, fromm und gut zu sein. Ihre Güte ist Federlosigkeit, ihre Bescheidenheit Niederträchtigkeit, ihre Frommigkeit Furcht vor den Folgen böser Handlungen auf sich, nicht auf andere. Ein Bösewicht ist allezeit von einer gewissen Konsistenz und Größe, ein Guter ist nichts, wenn ers nicht aus einem Bösewicht geworden ist" (GS, IV, 283).
- 26 "... es muß in unserm Bestreben nach Vollkommenheit eine gewisse Übereinstimmung aller unserer Kräfte zu einem Ganzen, eine gewisse Harmonie sein, welche eigentlich den wahren Begriff des höchsten Schönen gibt" (WS, I, 489). Cf. Rudolf, pp. 64-65.

- 27 Diffeey, p. 170-71.
- 28 Cf. Hindermann, Lenz und die deutsche Romantik, p. 105, and Rudolf, p. 215.
- 29 Cf. editors' annotations (WS, I, 665-6).
- 30 Du Contrat social [etc.], p. 236.
- 31 Emile, p. 9. This and following parallels are suggested by the editors (see n. 29).
- 32 Cf. here the essay Über die Natur unseres Geistes (esp. WS, I, 573) and later in this chapter.
- 33 Emile, p. 12.
- 34 Emile, p. 13.
- 35 Geh. v. Berg in Der Hofmeister (WS, II, 25).
- 36 Lenz's faith in the possibility of acquiring freedom is seen as the golden thread of optimism running through his writings in the dissertation by Britta Titel, "Nachahmung der Natur" als Prinzip dramatischer Gestaltung bei J.M.R. Lenz (Frankfurt a.M., 1961), pp. 254 ff.
- 37 Cf. John Osborne, "The Problem of Pride in the work of J.M.R. Lenz," PEGS, N. N. XXXIX (1968-69), 57-84.
- 38 Briefe, I, 52: letter to Salzmann, October 1772.
- 39 See above, n. 32. The importance of the work for Lenz's relationship to determinism is dealt with more fully elsewhere (Diffeey, p. 177-78).
- 40 Briefe, I, 182. Cf. also Pandemonium Germanicum (WS, II, 252-53). Lenz's love of virtue we find attested by one of his acquaintances in Friedrich Stolberg, Briefe (Neumünster, 1966), p. 73: letter of 8 June 1776.
- 41 See above, Ch. I, n. 41.
- 42 Oskar Gluth, in his dissertation Lenz als Dramatiker (Munich, 1912), suggests that the same anecdote may have provided Schiller with material for Die Räuber (p. 57). Cf. below, Ch. VI, n. 62.
- 43 Hindermann, p. 206. Cf. also Rudolf, p. 195, and Karl Freye, Sturm und Drang: Dichtungen aus der Geniezeit (Berlin, 1911), I, xl.
- 44 Cf. Gert Mattenklott, Melancholie in der Dramatik des Sturm und Drang (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968), pp. 166-67.



- 45 Emile, 355.
- 46 Ibid., pp. 323, 348, 354, 352.
- 47 Emile, p. 321.
- 48 Cf. also p. 568.
- 49 Cf. Girard, p. 138.
- 50 Diffey, p. 176..
- 51 It is incorrect to see in Rousseau a conflict between feeling and reason. The two are regarded as complementary, each necessary in its own way and neither functioning properly without the other.
- 52 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 58.
- 53 Ibid., p. 507.
- 54 See Ch. III, n. 24. Lenz's belief in the sanctity of feeling, as long as it is genuine, is emphasised in his Abgerissene Beobachtungen über die launigen Dichter (WS, I, 464-5).
- 55 See the introduction to Füssli's Remarks on the writings and conduct of Rousseau (Ch. II, n. 54, above), p. 59.
- 56 See Ch. II, n. 76.
- 57 The moral characteristics that would make Cornelia eminently fitted for such a role are described by Georg Witkowski, Cornelia die Schwester Goethes (Frankfurt, 1924).
- 58 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 199.
- 59 This aspect of the work is elaborated in Diffey, p. 177.
- 60 Cf. Emile, p. 249 and Ch. I, above.
- 61 Discours sur l'Inégalité, p. 60.
- 62 The phrase "gerechte Selbstliebe" occurs in Die Kleinen (WS, II, 514). The poem "An den Geist" contains the expression "mit zarter Selbstlieb'" (WS, I, 203). Martin Stern suggests Rousseau's influence here: see "Akzente des Grams," Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft, 4 (1966), 165. "Eigenliebe" and its cognates occur, in addition to the example cited, in GS, I, 216 and V, 281; WS, I, 363, n.
- 63 Emile, p. 355.
- 64 Cf. above, Ch. II, n. 40.

- 85 Rudolf, p. 204.
- 66 Cf. also the first version of the fragment Die Laube: "Wo ist ein Mensch, der sich rühmen kann, tugendhaft gehandelt zu haben oder vergnügt gestorben zu sein, als der, der überzeugt ist, daß er vollkommen glücklich machte" J.M.R. Lenz, Dramatischer Nachlaß, ed. Karl Weinhold (Frankfurt: 1884), p. 120.
- 67 Emile, pp. 85, 299, 260 ff., Nouvelle Héloïse, pp. 517 ff.
- 68 E.G. the well-known encounter with the poor peasant related in the Confessions (Oeuvres, I, 239).
- 69 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 713.
- 70 Ibid., p. 524.
- 71 Cf. the letter to Herder on Die Soldaten: "Ich freue mich himmlische Freude, daß Du mein Stück gerade von der Seite empfindest auf der ich's empfunden wünschte, von der politischen" (Briefe, I, 145).
- 72 Emile, p. 99 n.
- 73 Ibid., p. 211.
- 74 Kant compared social man with the tree in a forest, compelled to grow straight by the surrounding trees. See Reflexionen zur Anthropologie, ed. Benno Erdmann (Leipzig, 1882), pp. 212 ff., esp. nos. 674, 676.
- 75 Cf. Diffey, p. 179, n. 45, and the discussion of Die Kleinen in Ch. VII below.

#### V. THE PROBLEM OF CULTURE

- 1 Emile, p. 373.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 177, 378.
- 3 WS, I, 526; GS, V, 308; Briefe, I, 46.
- 4 Cf. Karl Clarke, "Lenz! Übersetzungen aus dem Englischen," Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte, N.F. X (1896), 122; Rosanow, p. 175; Kindermann, p. 54; Girard, p. 193; Hans-Günther Schwarz, "Lenz und Shakespeare," Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, 1971, p. 90.

- 5 Clarke, p. 123, n. 2.
- 6 This aspect of Rousseau's education criticism is reflected in the first version of Götz von Berlichingen, when Gottfried declares: "Ich kannte alle Pfade, Weeg und Furthen eh ich wußt wie Fluß Dorf und Burg hies" (Gedenkausgabe, IV, 531). Cf. Clara Stockmeyer, Soziale Probleme im Drama des Sturmes und Dranges (Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1922), p. 34.
- 7 This is not present, either, in Pope's version, which Lenz used as the basis for his translation. See The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare (London: Rivington, 1821), IV (edition containing the textual variations of Pope and others).
- 8 Briefe, I, 123: Letter of 28 August 1775.
- 9 Ibid., 89: Letter of February 1775.
- 10 Cf. St. Preux's description of Parisian life: "toutes ces poupées sortent de chez la même marchande de modes . . ." (Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 250).
- 11 Cf. above, Ch. IV, n. 73.
- 12 Kindermann, pp. 89-90.
- 13 Opera, (Basel, 1555), I, 640 ff. Lenz's interest in this writer is shown by his translation of the essay De causis corruptarum artium: see Erich Schmidt, "Lenziana," Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1901, p. 986.
- 14 Emile, p. 331.
- 15 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 31.
- 16 The humanistic trend of Rousseau's writings is observed most clearly in Emile, with its exhortation to teach the love of humanity: "Homme, ne deshonne point l'homme" (p. 266). Cf. above Ch. I, 3.
- 17 Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts, p. 14.
- 18 Strephon, like Lenz's heroes in general, is far removed from the ideal of the "Kerl" embodied in Gotz.
- 19 Emile, pp. 298-99. Cf. also the preface to Narcisse: "l'homme est né pour agir et penser, et non pour réfléchir" (Oeuvres, XI, 235).
- 20 Discours sur l'Inégalité, p. 45.
- 21 Emile, p. 54.
- 22 Stockmeyer, op. cit. (n. 6), p. 62.

- 23 "... le madrigal est adressé à la fille et c'est le père qui est séduit! Lenz définit, dans un raccourci burlesque, la fonction d'une certaine littérature; elle n'est qu'un divertissement pour l'aristocrate qu'elle n'engage à rien, mais elle abuse le bourgeois qui la prend à la lettre" (Girard, p. 360).
- 24 Elisabeth Genton, "Lenz, Klinger, Wagner" (diss. F.U. Berlin, 1955), p. 100.
- 25 Not to be confused with the "Préface de Julie" or the "Entretien sur les romans" (cf. Ch. II, n. 15).
- 26 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 4.
- 27 Cf. Nouvelle Héloïse, I, letter 50 (pp. 112-14).
- 28 Cf. Ch. II, 2.
- 29 H.A. Korff, Geist der Goethezeit, I, 64.
- 30 That Lenz's satire, in contrast to that of some of his contemporaries, has a deliberate purpose, is shown by Walter Petter, Das Satirische bei Lenz (diss. Halle, 1920), p. 21. Lenz defines this as that of attacking "verdorbene Sitten" (WS, I, 455).
- 31 See Hans Wolff, "Rousseau, Moser und der Kampf gegen das Rokoko," Monatshefte, XXXIV (1942), 113-25 (esp. pp. 113-15).
- 32 Quoted by Wolff (p. 125) from the Patriotische Phantasien (1774-78), IV.
- 33 Wolff, loc. cit.
- 34 A reference to Herder's essay "Ursachen des gesunkenen Geschmacks bei den verschiedenen Völkern, da er geblühet" (Berlin, 1775) (cf. WS, I, 682).
- 35 Cf. especially Nouvelle Héloïse, II (St. Preux's letters from Paris.)
- 36 Wolff, p. 124.
- 37 W.H. Bruford, Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Goethezeit (Weimar: Böhlau, 1936), p. 87.
- 38 Le Devin du village (1752), which is frequently linked with Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona (1733) as a major influence in the development of the "opera-bouffe."
- 39 Briefe, I, 175: letter to Boie, February 1776.
- 40 Ibid., 58: letter of October 1772.

- 41 "Für Lenz gibt es keine abstrahierte Schönheit; ihm ist sie unzertrennlich mit den Erscheinungen der realen stofflichen Welt verbunden; . . . Sein Ideal ist die Schönheit in re" (Keckeis Dramaturgische Probleme im Sturm und Drang, pp. 48-49).
- 42 His notion of the "belle âme" as implied in the characterization of Julie demonstrates this (cf. Ch. II, no. 76).
- 43 See Ch. II, n. 80.
- 44 Cf. Theodor Mundt, Dramaturgie oder Theorie und Geschichte der dramatischen Kunst (Berlin, 1848), I, 23 ff. Mundt considers that the new social relevance of the stage would not have been possible in Rousseau's time. Cf. also Margret Dietrich, Europäische Dramaturgie im 19. Jahrhundert (Graz: Bohlau, 1961), pp. 235 ff.
- 45 See Hans Wolff, "The controversy over the theatre in Lenz's Die Soldaten," Germanic Review, XIV (1939), 159-64.
- 46 Cf. his attack on Molière: "Voyez comment . . . cet homme trouble tout l'ordre de la société, . . . comment il tourne en dérision les respectables droits des pères sur leurs enfants, des maris sur leurs femmes, des maîtres sur leurs serviteurs!" (Lettre sur les Spectacles, p. 149).
- 47 Girard, p. 364.
- 48 It is unrewarding to consider any direct influence of this work on Lenz, in view of his claim never to have read it. W.W. Pusey, Mercier in Germany (New York: Columbia U.P., 1939), appears concerned as to whether the criticism of the excessive portrayal of love on the French stage (Anmerkungen ubers Theater) should be attributed to Rousseau's critique or to Mercier (p. 179).
- 49 Nouvelle Héloïse, II, letter 17 (pp. 227-32).
- 50 Ibid., p. 228; WS, I, 336. Lenz's concept of the "refracting" role of genius is, of course, in advance of Rousseau, as will be seen later in this chapter.
- 51 The passage in question (WS, I, 352) is quoted in full in Ch. III, p. 73.
- 52 Cf. Ch. II, n. 41.
- 53 It is of interest that Rousseau, in one of the few pieces of self-criticism of his novel, sees as its artistic virtue the relation of his characters to their author, referring in particular to the absence of any "evil" characters, or any other not sympathetic to himself (Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 733, n.). If Rousseau can be said to have a theory of literature it would view the art as an extension of his own (virtuous!) personality. Cf. Herman Schluter, Das Pygmalion-Symbol bei Rousseau, Hamann, Schiller, pp. 11-44.

- 54 Siegfried Melchinger, Dramaturgie des Sturms und Drangs (Gotha: Klotz, 1929), p. 13.
- 55 Elisabeth Genton, "Lenz, Klinger, Wagner," p. 117.
- 56 Helmut de Boor / R. Newald, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, II, i, 259.
- 57 Lenz's concern for achieving positive social effect through the theatre shows that, in contrast to Fussli (see Ch. II), he accepts Rousseau's premise that the stage influences morals.
- 58 Briefe, I, 105: letter to Gotter, 10 May 1775.
- 59 Ibid., 115: letter to Sophie v. La Roche, July 1775.
- 60 Ibid., 115-16.
- 61 Girard describes Mercier's comedy as "une tentative pour réduire l'hiatus entre les couches sociales," whereas, "la définition de la comédie proposée par Lenz est fondée sur la conscience aigüe d'une contradiction irréductible dans l'état actuel de la société" (p. 179). Lenz, like the Sturm und Drang in general, is unreceptive to the more abstract, egalitarian aspect of Rousseau's social theories (cf. the next chapter).
- 62 "Wer bedenkt, was das Theater für Einflüsse auf eine Nation haben kann, wird sich mit mir für eine Sache interessieren, die in Theaterzeitungen und Almanachen gewiß nicht ausgemacht werden kann" (WS, I, 419).
- 63 See in particular Karl Guthke, Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie, p. 54.
- 64 Cf. Ch. II, n. 67.
- 65 Lenz does not state the precise point at issue. Schmitz-Kallenberg, the first editor of the Briefe (Münster, 1918), assumed it to be the hero's suicide and the imitations this engendered, especially as Rousseau's Héloïse contains a defense of suicide by its hero (pp. 356 ff.) Sommerfeld, in his discussion (op. cit., ch. I, n. 24) takes a wider view of Werther's "immorality": "Dieser anarchistischer Individualismus war gesellschaftsfeindlich, dies 'fatalistische' Leben, dieser Schicksalsweg eines Charakters . . . schien dem Hohn zu sprechen, was sie von der 'Perfektibilität' oder 'Korruptibilität' . . . des Menschen durch freien Willen und lichtvolle Vernunft wußten; dieses Dulden und Pflegen der Triebe, dieses nur auf die Sinne gegründete Verbundensein mit Natur und Menschen schien der wahren sittlichen Bildungsaufgabe zu widersprechen" (p. 89). Cf. also the summary given by John Osborne in his more recent analysis of the work (Seminar, X, 203 f.).
- 66 See n. 25.

- 67 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 3.
- 68 Ibid., p. 225.
- 69 WS, I, 501-2. Cf. ch. IV, n. 24.
- 70 See earlier in this chapter.
- 71 Emile, p. 213.
- 72 Martin Sommerfeld, op. cit., p. 79.
- 73 Cf. Ch. III above (p. 74f): "Eben darin besteht Werthers Verdienst, daß er uns mit Leidenschaften und Empfindungen bekannt machte, die jeder in sich dunkel fühlt . . . ."
- 74 The name Anteporado is evidently a Spanish rendering of St. Preux.
- 75 Rudolf, pp. 237-38.

#### VI. CRITICISM AND REFORM OF SOCIETY

- 1 Cf. also Briefe, I, 115-16: letter to Sophie v. La Roche, July 1775.
- 2 Edith Runge, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Sturm und Drang Literature (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1946).
- 3 Briefe, I, 96: letter to Lavater, April 1775.
- 4 Briefe, I, 89: letter to Goethe, February 1775.
- 5 Cf. Bruford, Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Goethezeit, p. 122.
- 6 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 519.
- 7 Emile, p. 21.
- 8 Maria Linnreich, "Das gesellschaftliche Element im Schaffen von Lenz" (diss. Vienna, 1936), p. 18.
- 9 Briefe, II, 65-66: letter from Kayser, 20 February 1777.
- 10 On Lenz's exposure to peasant-reform movements during his youth in Livonia, cf. Ch. III, 1.
- 11 On his condemnation of the artificiality and insincerity of cultured French, see Emile, p. 56, 402. Julie chides her lover for having acquired fashionable stylistic embellishments in Paris: "Que veux-tu qu'une pauvre Suisse entende à ces sublimes figures" (Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 213).
- 12 Cf. ch. V, esp. n. 38.

- 13 Cf. his praise of Shakespeare's "not a mouse stirring" (Hamlet) and his contempt for Voltaire's elaborate rendering (WL, I, 371).
- 14 Cf. Karl Conrady, "Zu den deutschen Plautusübertragungen," Euphoriion, XLVIII (1954), esp. pp. 392-3.
- 15 Sturm und Drang (Berlin Volkseigner Verlag, 1967), p. 174.
- 16 Besides certain scenes in Die Kleinen, still to be discussed, this particularly evident in the Coriolan translation, e.g. II, iii (GL, III, 431-32).
- 17 Briefe, I, 124: letter to Herder, 28 August 1775.
- 18 Emile, p. 204.
- 19 Cf. Israel Stamm, "Sturm und Drang and Conservatism," Germanic Review, XXX (1955), 265-81.
- 20 Clara Stockmeyer, Soziale Probleme im Drama des Sturmes und Dranges, p. 5.
- 21 Maria Sinnreich, "Das gesellschaftskritische Element im Schaffen von Lenz," p. 44.
- 22 Rudolf sees this advice as "immer noch Ausdruck des 'Absolutismus'", however idealized and enlightened (p. 181).
- 23 Briefe, I, 145: letter of 18 November 1775. The letter of 20 November (loc. cit.) describes the play as "politisch."
- 24 Paul Bockmann, Formgeschichte der deutschen Dichtung (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1949), I, 664.
- 25 Briefe, II, 205: letter to Pastor Dingelstedt, June 1787.
- 26 Briefe, I, 115: letter to Sophie v. La Roche, July 1775.
- 27 Briefe, II, 105: letter to Sarasin, September 1777.
- 28 On the significance of the formula "Nachahmung der Natur" (WL, I, 333) in Lenz' art, see Britta Titel, "Nachahmung der Natur" als Prinzip dramatischer Gestaltung bei Lenz (diss. Frankfurt, 1961).
- 29 Briefe, I, 113: letter to Sophie v. La Roche, July 1775.
- 30 On Rousseau's importance to Kant in this respect, see Ch. II, n. 36.
- 31 Emile, p. 12.
- 32 Titel, op. cit., p. 53.
- 33 Ibid., p. 61.



- 34 On Lenz's "projects," cf. Ch. III, above, and this writer, op. cit. (Ch. III, n.59).
- 35 Briefe, I, 255-56, II, 13-14, 16, 21. From Berka he requested a number of books should be sent on to him from Weimar, among which are several dealing with the arts of warfare (Briefe, II, 3-5). Cf. also the Tagebuch (WS, I, 212).
- 36 Briefe, I, 191: letter to J.G. Zimmermann, March 1776.
- 37 Cf. above, Ch. II, p. 23.
- 38 L.g., Herder, Haben wir noch jetzt das Publikum und das Vaterland der Alten (1765); Thomas Abt, Vom Tode für das Vaterland; Joh. Georg Zimmermann, Von dem Nationalstolz.
- 39 Ed. Karl Freye (Leipzig: Wolff, 1914). References in the text are to this edition. Lenz had planned a greater work, to be dedicated to Duke Carl August of Weimar. That Lenz attached great importance to having his plan adopted by a figure of political power, such as the Duke, is apparent from his letter to Herder of March 1776 (Briefe, I, 197) and that to Carl August himself of November 29 (ibid., II, 56). Letters to the publisher, Weidmann, suggest that Lenz even dreamt of reaching the highest seat of power, the court of Versailles:
- 40 Lenz's views on the social importance of marriage remain to be discussed.
- 41 Kindermann: "ein erschütterndes Zeugnis politischer Unreife des deutschen Bürgertums im 18. Jahrhundert" (p. 232). Cf. also Torggler, "Sozialbewußtsein und Gesellschaftskritik bei Lenz," p. 166, and Stockmeyer, p. 124.
- 42 Mit Rousseau gedacht ist die Grundtendenz, eine Lösung zu suchen, die das Gemeinschaftsgefühl der Gesellschaft befriedigen könne . . . " (Kindermann, p. 232). Torggler, on the other hand, considers that Lenz is not yet capable of applying Rousseau's ideas in a concrete manner (p. 166). There is justification for seeing Über die Soldatenehen as an advance in this direction.
- 43 Cf. above, Ch. I, p. 20, on Rousseau's prediction of revolution.
- 44 Cf. Ch. IV, n. 24.
- 45 Cf. the Confessions, Bk. IV (Oeuvres, I, 239).
- 46 Girard, p. 116, n.19. There are otherwise no indications that Lenz was especially familiar with this work.
- 47 Stockmeyer, p. 32.

- 48 Briefe, II, 139, Herder evidently did not look favourably upon Lenz's ambition (despite the support of the publisher Hartknoch) and considered him unfit for the post: cf. R. Haym, Herder (Berlin, 1885), II, 13, n. 3, and Ch. III, above: n. 70.
- 49 Cf. Genton, "Lenz, Klinger, Wagner," p. 75.
- 50 Hermann Rauch, Lenz und Shakespeare (Berlin: Apolant, 1892), p. 13.
- 51 Emile, pp. 61 ff. Cf. also p. 75: "Puisque avec l'âge de raison commence la servitude civile, pourquoi le prévenir par la servitude privée? Souffrons qu'un moment de la vie soit exempt de ce joug que la nature ne nous a pas imposé, et laissons à l'enfance l'exercice de la liberté naturelle . . ."
- 52 Cf. in particular "Über Ovid" (WS, I, 475).
- 53 Emile, p. 301.
- 54 Cf. Emile, p. 12.
- 55 Ibid., pp. 445 ff.
- 56 Briefe, II, 108-12: letter of 28 September 1777.
- 57 Cf. Genton, "Lenz, Klinger, Wagner," pp. 99 ff.
- 58 "Les femmes ne doivent pas être robustes comme eux les hommes, mais pour eux, pour que les hommes qui naîtront d'elles le soient aussi" (Emile, p. 547).
- 59 See above, Ch. V, n. 20.
- 60 Cf. Emile, p. 460.
- 61 Ibid., pp. 465-6.
- 62 This is to be found in Christian Schubart's tale Zur Geschichte des menschlichen Herzens (publ. in the Schwabische Merkur, 1775). Cf. Ch. IV, n. 42.
- 63 Emile, pp. 109-10.
- 64 Cf. Ch. V, n. 6.
- 65 Publ. 1776 in Kayser's Fluchtige Aufsätze. Cf. Briefe, I, 129.
- 66 Cf. Bruford, Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Goethezeit, pp. 226 ff.
- 67 Runge, p. 246.
- 68 E.g., Emile, pp. 446, 558.

- 69 Stockmeyer, p. 54.
- 70 Represented respectively in the autobiographical "love trilogy" of the Tagebuch, Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten, und Der Waldbruder. "The first of these may be regarded as an attempt to reconcile the erotic and the moral, which is achieved in the serene classicism of the second; the last reflects the tragedy of unfulfilled promise.
- 71 M. Toegel, "J.M.R. Lenz: die religiösen Wurzeln seiner Kunst" (diss. Vienna, 1939), pp. 78 ff.
- 72 Sinnreich, p. 82; Rudolf, p. 248.
- 73 "Rousseaus geistiges Erbe ist hier herauszuhören" (Heinz Dwenger, Der Lyriker Lenz, diss. Hamburg, 1960, p. 43).
- 74 "Alles wird ins Irreale hinübergeführt" (Rudolf, p. 218).
- 75 Cf. his letter to Lavater, Briefe, I, 168: "Ists Idolatrie, so kann sie mir Gott nicht zurechnen, es ist sein Geschopf: sein Bild."
- 76 Briefe, I, 20: letter of 10 June 1772.
- 77 See Briefe, II, 72.
- 78 Cf. WS, I, 606, where the editors suggest a connection between this poem and the portrait cult.
- 79 The poem is related thematically with "Von Gram und Taumel fortgerissen" und "Verzeih den Kranz" (WS, I, 127).
- 80 See above, Ch. II, n. 65. Rousseau was probably truer to his ideal of moral and aesthetic beauty than Goethe believed (see Ch. II, n. 62).
- 81 "Das Schriftstück gehört stilistisch zu dem Besten, das Lenz geschrieben hat" was the judgement of the first editor, Karl Weinhold (Goethe-Jahrbuch, 4 [1889], 91).
- 82 On the motif of the lost opportunity, cf. also the love lyric "Der verlorne Augenblick" (WS, I, 118).
- 83 Cf. Stockmeyer, p. 136: "Die Dichtung ist eine glühende Verteidigung der Liebe über die ständischen Schranken hinweg und zugleich ein Protest gegen die Konventionsheirat. Das resignierte Glück, das Julie schließlich an der Seite des Gatten zuteil wird, ist ja nur ein ganz ungenügender Ersatz für das verlorene."
- 84 Emile, p. 403.
- 85 Ibid., p. 507.
- 86 On the motif of the marriage contract in Die Soldaten and Zerbin, see Johann Froitzheim, Lenz, Goethe und Cleophe Fibich (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1888).

- 87 Rosanow, p. 123; Sommerfeld, "Lenz und Goethe's Werther," p. 91 (quotation from Sommerfeld).
- 88 "Dem Beispiel Rousseaus folgend . . . eifert sich Lenz gegen die Sittenverderbnis der damaligen Zeit und bekundet eine viel höhere Anschauung über die Liebe und die Ehe als die Anhänger der epikureischen Moral" (Rosanow, loc. cit.).
- 89 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 188.
- 90 Cf. also the poem "Lottes Klage um Werthers Tod" (GS, I, 109).
- 91 On the importance of this work for the present topic see Ch. I, above.
- 92 Briefe, I, 84: letter to Johann Lenz, 7 November 1774. The same letter uses the title, "Der Poet, Weg zum Ehemann."
- 93 See Paul Heinrichsdorff, Lenzens religiöse Haltung, p. 157: "Zum Stand der Lenzforschung". His summarization is based largely on Kaiser: "Einfluß: Rousseau Nouvelle Héloïse. Aufgabe und Ziel des Menschen nach Rousseau ist es, die Leidenschaft zu bezähmen, wo es mit sittlichen Pflichten zusammenstößt. Das edle Gefühl verhindert, daß die Leidenschaft sich über Menschenliebe, Kinderpflicht, Gattenpflicht hinwegsetzt. Die sinnliche Liebe wird der seelischen aufgeopfert. Bei Lenz keine Trennung von sinnlicher und geistiger Liebe. Gottesliebe mündet bei ihm in irdische Liebe. Mit Rousseau ist die Ablehnung der Gesellschaft gemeinsam."
- 94 Lenz himself condemns as superficial Nicolai's Werther parody, Die Freuden des jungen Werthers, in which Albert abdicates his Bride to Werther (WS, I, 391). Lenz, however, generally forgets consistency when polemic ends are to be served, and it is not necessary to conclude like Freye, that Lenz intended to revise the play whereby Strephon should renounce Seraphine (Sturm und Drang, p. xlvi).
- 95 Nachahmung der Natur, p. 74.
- 96 "Liebe ist alles" (Kaiser, p. 100).
- 97 Paul Kluckhohn, Die Auffassung der Liebe, p. 98.
- 98 Cf. Lenz's description of woman as "das Geschlecht, das allein aus Männern Menschen machen, und durch die Liebe ihren regellosen Kräften und Fähigkeiten eine Gestalt geben konnte . . ." (WS, I, 443).
- 99 In the love lyrics kindermann sees a transition from the early anacreonticism to Rousseau's ideal of intense, sincere experience (pp. 99-100). The poem "Ach bist du fort" (WS, I, 108-8) represents an important stage in this development.
- 100 Cf. Lenz's rendering of Biron's speech on the power of love in Love's Labour's Lost. "Have at you, then, affliction's men at arms," (in Tieck's version: "Auf, ins Gewehr, streitbare Liebesritter") is simplified to "Es ist deine Schuld, Natur!" (GS, I, 297).

- 101 Cf. for example the novel *Manon Lescaut* by Rousseau's contemporary, Abbé Prévost.
- 102 See for example *Nouvelle Héloïse*, I, letter 14 (p. 38).
- 103 Rousseauist pathos is noticeable in the depiction of love in *Der neue Menoza*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.
- 104 Cf. Matz Höcker's depiction of love in society:  
 "Die Herren wollen nur ihren Stül exerzieren,  
 Die Damen wollen für schön passieren,  
 Und käm' man bis auf den Herzens-Grund,  
 Sie liebten sich beide wie Katz und Hund" (GS, I, 156-57).  
 Lenz's major criticism of the French stage is its superficial presentation of passion: ". . . alles atmet, seufzt, weint, blutet" (WS, I, 331).
- 105 "Aus dieser Stimmung der Resignation und der Überzeugung von der Tragik der Liebe hatte auch Rousseau die Menschen seiner Zeit nicht herauszuführen vermocht". (Kluckhohn, p. 94).
- 106 Cf. J.-L. Bellenot, "Les formes de l'amour dans la 'Nouvelle Héloïse,'" *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, XXX (1953-55), 149-207 (esp. pp. 163 ff.).
- 107 Julie reclaims in her dying words "le droit de s'aimer toujours sans crime" (*Nouvelle Héloïse*, p. 731), whilst the liberal Englishman, Edouard, denounces the submission to "un insensé préjugé" (p. 169).
- 108 Love from afar is described in somewhat disparaging terms in *Zum Weinen*: "Sie sehen, daß dies -- (Liebe kann ich es nicht nennen, oder es mußte eine vollkommen geistige und platonische Liebe sein) daß dies, sage ich, ein Vergnügen von eben der Art ist, als wenn ich ein vortreffliches Gemälde, oder eine Statue des Altertums, oder einen Palast von besonderer Schönheit bewundern, mein Herz kommt dabei nicht in die geringste Bewegung, nur die Phantasei ergiebt sich ein wenig" (GS, III, 292).
- 109 Lenz, Klinger, Wagner, p. 52.
- 110 Cf. Walter Hincks commentary on the love scenes in *Der neue Menoza*:  
 "Einerseits ist die Ausdrucksweise der Liebenden sowohl von rousseauischer Empfindsamkeit als auch Leidenschaftlichkeit durchtönt, zum andern werden die beiden Vertreter des vertieften, edlen Gefühls hineingerissen in die Sphäre des Grotesken:" *Das deutsche Lustspiel des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts und die italienische Komödie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965), p. 346.

## VII. INDIVIDUAL WORKS

- 1 *Lenz und Klinger: zwei Dichter der Geniezeit* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1878), p. 34.
- 2 Wolff, op. cit. (Ch. I, n. 21), p. 215.

- 3 Wolfgang Stämmler, Der Hofmeister von J.M.R. Lenz: ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhundert (Diss. Halle, 1908), p. 34.
- 4 Soziale Probleme im Drama des Sturmes und Dranges, p. 44. Heinrichsdorff's "Forschungsbericht" (see Ch. VI, n. 93) uses Stockmeyer's conclusions.
- 5 Kindermann, p. 137.
- 6 Ibid., p. 138.
- 7 Willy Meyer, Lenzens Hofmeister: ein Kapitel aus der Entwicklungsgeschichte der deutschen Literatur (diss. Erlangen, 1933), p. 67.
- 8 Cf. Elise Dosenheimer, Das 'deutsche' soziale Drama von Lessing bis Sternheim (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967: reprint of the original 1949 edition), p. 35.
- 9 Cf. Stämmler, pp. 12 ff.; Girard, p. 114.
- 10 An informative sociological study is that of Franz Neumann, Der Hofmeister: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Erziehung im 18. Jahrhundert (diss. Halle, 1931). See also Bruford, op. cit., p. 70.
- 11 Cf. Rabener's satirical depiction: "[Ob er] von guten Sitten, ob er fleißig, ob er gelehrt ist; darnach fragt man eben nicht. Aber wieviel verlangt der Herr für seine Mühe? Das ist unsere Sorge" (cited by Neumann, p. 49).
- 12 Emile, p. 10.
- 13 See WS, I, 397 f. and Ch. V. above.
- 14 Emile, p. 21.
- 15 Ibid., p. 28. Cf. also Wolmar's words: "Le respectable état de précepteur exige tant de talents qu'on ne saurait payer, tant de vertus qui ne sont point à prix, qu'il est inutile d'en chercher un avec de l'argent" (Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 490).
- 16 Emile, p. 224, Cf. Ch. I, above, p. 20.
- 17 The Rousseauism of Berg's views has been remarked upon by both Rosanow (p. 201) and Girard (p. 230, n. 17).
- 18 Stockmeyer, p. 38.
- 19 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 59.
- 20 Ibid., p. 60.
- 21 Friedrich Hebbel, Werke, ed. T. Poppe (Berlin: Bong, 1923), II, 379-80.

- 22 Titel, Nachahmung der Natur, p. 125.
- 23 Cf. Wolfgang Kayser, Das sprachliche Kunstwerk (Munich: Francke, 1969), p. 366.
- 24 See Ch. II, pp. (45-46).
- 25 Cf. the Préface, Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 4. In the MS version of this scene the seductive role assigned to this novel is still more apparent. This time Läufer is undoubtedly the active seducer and it is he, not Gustchen, who first mentions the book and offers to lend it to his pupil, who has not yet read it (WS, II, 721).
- 26 St. Preux, for example, warns Julie against reading love-novels, since "ces études énervant l'âme, la jettent dans la mollesse, et lui ôtent tout son ressort" (Nouvelle Héloïse, o. 34). It is the unhealthy appetite for vicarious emotion, not the ennobling experience of real love, that is condemned. Julie, moreover, commends her tutor for not resorting to the use of novels to achieve her seduction! (ibid., p. 35).
- 27 Girard, p. 240.
- 28 Meyer takes this view: "Für Rousseau gab es Grenzen, über die hinaus Liebe nicht schreiten könne -- für Lenz gibt es solche nicht" (op. cit., n. 7, p. 40).
- 29 Rousseau refers in passing to Abalard's fate (n. 20). The MS version of Der Hofmeister suggests that Lenz may have read it here (see WS II, 721).
- 30 Cf. Gert Matthenklott, Melancholie in der Dramatik des Sturm und Drang (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968), p. 161.
- 31 One is reminded here of Lenz's view of the passions as a determining, but ultimately beneficial, factor in the individual's moral growth. Cf. his advice to a friend, "der auf Akademien Theologie studiert:" "Setzt euch also aus dieser Dependenz heraus, fastet, seid keusch, -- je nachdem ihr größere Kräfte anwendet, zu widerstehen, je nachdem wird ihr impuls sich verringern; ihrer Herrschaft aber ganz entsagen, ganz willkürlich werden, könnt ihr ebensowenig, als die Pflanze, die am Boden hängt, auf demselben herumtanzen mag" (GS, IV, 23).
- 32 Girard, p. 280.
- 33 E.g. the Major's words: "ich hätte dem Lausejungen einen Adelbrief gekauft, da hättet ihr können zusammen kriechen" (p. 70).
- 34 Georg Hausdorff, Die Einheitlichkeit des dramatischen Problems bei J.M.R. Lenz (diss. Würzburg, 1913), p. 29.
- 35 Erich Schmidt regards Lise as "eine der besten Naiven, welche unser Drama überhaupt aufzuweisen hat" (Lenz und Klinger, p. 37); cf. also Rosanow, p. 211, Rudolf, pp. 169-70.

- 36 Lenz, Klinger, Wagner, p. 82.
- 37 Girard (p. 279 n. 101) suggests that irony may be intended at Rousseau's somewhat expedient view of marriage as a cure for the excesses of sensuality: "Le premier moyen qui s'offre pour résoudre cette difficulté est de le marier bien vite; c'est incontestablement l'expédient le plus sûr et le plus naturel" (Emile, p. 393).
- 38 Op. cit. (n. 3), p. 21.
- 39 See Ch. IV.
- 40 Gerhart Unger, Lenz's Hofmeister (diss. Göttingen, 1942), p. 83.
- 41 Runge, Primitivism and related Ideas in Sturm und Drang Literature, p. 217-18.
- 42 Maria Simureich, "Das gesellschaftskritische Element im Schaffen von Lenz" (diss. Vienna, 1936), p. 48. A similar view is taken by Kindermann (p. 129) and Rudolf (p. 162).
- 43 Gènton goes too far in seeing Wenzeslaus as pure caricature showing "die ganze menschliche Unwürdigkeit dieses Standes" (Lenz, Klinger, Wagner, p. 71).
- 44 The following fragment suggests Lenz's consciousness of the effect of smoking on the passions: "Immer hab' ich bemerkt, daß unter den Tobaksrauchern die gutartigsten Leute sein. Das setzt eine gewisse Stille und Zufriedenheit des Geistes voraus, in der man sich bloß hinsetzt, um zu genießen, und jede Pause in unsrer Seele ist uns heilsam, in der sie sich ein wenig zurechtlegen kann und Ordnung in ihre Begehrungskräfte bringen" (GS, IV, 286). However, we know that Lenz was unable to accept "Stille und Zufriedenheit" as a worthy lasting objective.
- 45 Cf. Mattenklott, p. 162.
- 46 Briefe, I, 115: letter to Sophie v. La Roche, July 1775.
- 47 Walter Hinck, Das deutsche Lustspiel, p. 330.
- 48 J.H. Merck, Briefe, ed. Herbert Kraft (Frankfurt: Insel, 1968), p. 120.
- 49 Cf. Lenz's letter to Herder of October 1776 (Briefe, II, 39).
- 50 Lessing's review of the German translation is found in Lessing's Werke, IX, 126.
- 51 See Hinck, op. cit., pp. 136.
- 52 Lettre à d'Alembert, p. 136.
- 53 Rosanow, p. 194; August Sauer, Stürmer und Dränger (Berlin: Spemann, 1883), II, viii; Torggler, op. cit., pp. 151-52; Hinck, p. 333.



- 54 A Parisian lunatic asylum.
- 55 Voltaire, Romans et Contes (Paris: Pleiade, 1950), p. 345.
- 56 Emile, p. 306.
- 57 Walter Hinck (ed.), Der neue Menoza (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965; series "Komedia," 9), p. 76.
- 58 La Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 209.
- 59 Cf. Rudolf, p. 192.
- 60 Both the situation and the views of the characters involved are strangely reminiscent of Thomas Mann's Der Zauberberg: Castorp between Settembrini and Naphta! The parallel can be instructive: in both cases a restless, vital central character instinctively resists ready-made and abstract interpretations of life that oversimplify and distort.
- 61 Cf. Girard's characterization of Tandi as an "incarnation de la conscience morale" (pp. 306 ff.)
- 62 "Je vois que ces vulgaires épicuriens pour ne vouloir jamais perdre une occasion les perdent toutes, et, toujours ennuyés au sein des plaisirs, n'en savent jamais trouver aucun" (Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 527).
- 63 See Ch. IV, n. 34.
- 64 Cf. Hinck's edition, p. 92, also Girard (p. 303): "L'utilisation de ce lyrisme sentimental traduit-elle une intention parodique de l'auteur? Rien n'est moins sûr . . ."
- 65 Rosanow, p. 222.
- 66 Girard, p. 310.
- 67 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 207.
- 68 Ibid., p. 211.
- 69 There are compelling similarities with Rousseau's Lettre sur les Spectacles which Lenz would have known at least from hear-say (cf. Ch. III, p. [77] . "Wir wollen nichts als uns immer amüsieren, und da schmeckt uns am Ende kein einzig Vergnügen mehr, und unser Vergnügen selber wird uns zur Pein" (p. 141). ". . . c'est le mécontentement de soi-même, c'est le poids de l'oisiveté, c'est l'oubli des goûts simples et naturels, qui rendent si nécessaire un amusement étranger" (Lettres sur les Spectacles, p. 133).
- 70 Girard, p. 314.

- 71 Kindermann, p. 183.
- 72 Mattenklott defines the mood thus: "Ihr besonderes Wesen gründet in der Hoffnungslosigkeit -- sie kennt keine Wunschbilder, die über das 'jetzt' hinausgewiesen, und auch die Furcht hat sie verlernt. Erwartet sie überhaupt etwas, so nichts als die eigene Bestätigung" (op. cit., p. 8).
- 73 Cf. Rudolf, p. 191, and Edward Harris, The structure of dramatic characterization in four plays by J.M.R. Lenz, (diss. Tulane, 1967), p. 127.
- 74 "Was macht das Glück der Welt, wenn es nicht das harmonische Spiel der Empfindungen, die von der elendesten Kreaturen bis zu Gott hinauf in ewigem Verhältnis zu einander stimmen?" (p. 162).
- 75 Cf. Paul Bockmann, Formgeschichte der deutschen Dichtung, I, 655: ". . . so gehört es . . . zur weiteren Entfaltung der Sturm- und Drangbewegung, daß sie ein gefühlsmittelbares Pathos zur Geltung zu bringen sucht, das . . . die Unbedingtheit des Geistes gegenüber aller Leidbetroffenheit des Menschen zu behaupten weiß."
- 76 Girard, p. 311.
- 77 Op. cit. (n. 57), p. 90. See also Das deutsche Lustspiel, p. 345.
- 78 "Es . . . gehört zum Wesen der Überrumpfung, daß die dramatischen Personen fast immer im Augenblick innerer Abwehrschwäche, nämlich äußerster Ahnungslosigkeit überfallen, also aus einem Zustand relativer Sicherheit gerissen wird" (Hinck, Das deutsche Lustspiel, p. 128).
- 79 Hausdorff, op. cit. (n. 34), p. 57.
- 80 Hermann Korff, Die Dichtung von Sturm und Drang im Zusammenhange der Geistesgeschichte (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1928), pp. 196-97.
- 81 Briefe, I, 124: letter of 18 August [1775]..
- 82 Cf. Ch. 3, nn. 40, 41.
- 83 See Hinck's edition, p. 79. Moser's importance as an opponent of the Rococo is described above in Ch. V.
- 84 Girard takes a somewhat different view: "Lenz introduit finalement dans l'oeuvre une dimension parodique qui ne touche pas seulement au personnage de Zierau, mais à l'ensemble de la pièce, dont l'aspect sérieux et dramatique est corrigé par la vigueur de la comédie populaire" (p. 337).
- 85 Keckeis, Dramaturgische Probleme im Sturm und Drang, p. 56.

- 86 The theme of sympathy is still stronger in the alternative version:  
"O setzt euch in ihren Gesichtspunkt und lernt die bemitleiden deren  
eingebildetes Glück ihr beneidet" (p. 775).
- 87 On Rousseau's influence on Die Kleinen, cf. Rosanow (p. 337),  
Weinhold (Dramatischer Nachlaß, pp. 239-40), Kindermann (p. 300).
- 88 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 283.
- 90 Emile, p. 266.
- 91 Briefe, I, 114-15.
- 92 Cf. Discours sur l'Inégalité, p. 89: "... si l'on voit une poignée  
de puissants et de riches au faite des grandeurs et de la fortune,  
tandis que la foule rampe dans l'obscurité et dans la misère, c'est  
que les premiers n'estiment les choses dont ils jouissent qu'autant  
que les autres en sont privés ..."
- 93 Louis-Sebastian Mercier's play Le Déserteur (1770) appears in the  
theatrical programm contributing to the seduction of Mariane in  
Die Soldaten (WS, II, 188). The editors offer a somewhat more  
complicated explanation (ibid., p. 775).
- 94 The expressiveness of peasant faces, contrasted with the artificial  
imitations of emotion on the stage, is noted in two separate versions  
of the fragment Catharina von Siena, with which the work under dis-  
cussion has certain thematic links: see WS, II, 432 and 473.
- 95 Kindermann, p. 300.
- 96 See Ch. III, n. 59.
- 97 The source of the play's motto "Ce sont des petits gens" has not  
been identified.
- 98 Soziale Probleme im Drama des Sturmes und Dranges, p. 103.
- 99 WS, II, pp. 489 and 774-75.
- 100 Deutsche Literaturdenkmale (Heilbronn, 1886), XXIII, p. 328.
- 101 This failure, though based on somewhat different premises, is  
described by Hans Mayer in his "Nachwort;" WS, II, 819-23.
- 102 See above, Ch. II, sec. 3.
- 104 John Fitzell, The Hermit in German Literature (U. of N. California, 1961),  
p. 26.
- 105 Briefe, I, 200: letter to Boie, 11 March 1776. Schiller added the  
subtitle "ein Pedant zu Werthers Leiden" when he first published  
the novel in Die Horen (1797).

- 106 Cf. Rosanow, p. 62, n. 500.
- 107 "Un être vraiment heureux est un être solitaire" (Emile, p. 259).  
"Je ne veux pour tout bien qu'une petite métairie dans quelque coin du monde" (*ibid.*, p. 583).
- 108 Fitzell, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.
- 109 Cf. the passage describing his emotions in his Seesenheim paradise, beginning "An den Brusten der Natur hange ich jetzt mit doppelter Inbrunst . . ." Briefe, I, 62-63: letter to Salzmann, October 1772. Rosanow surmises Rousseau's influence here (pp. 109-10).
- 110 See Diffey, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
- 111 Emile, p. 355.
- 112 On the use of nature in Der Waldbruder, cf. Sommerfeld, Euphorion, XXIV (1922), 103-4; Heinrichsdorff, Lenzens religiöse Haltung, p. 112: "Die Natur erhält die Bedeutung eines Vergleichs, wird in Beziehung zum menschlichen Leben gesetzt und stets im übertragenen Sinne verstanden . . ."
- 113 ". . . his career may be expected to end tragically" (Fitzell, p. 60).
- 114 Emile, p. 355.
- 115 Nouvelle Héloïse, p. 404.

#### VIII. CONCLUSIONS

- 1 Cf. Klinger's handling of Rousseauist themes in Das leidende Weib with that of Der neue Menoza. See Hans Wolff, "Der Rousseaugehalt in Klingers Drama 'Das leidende Weib,'" JEGP, XXXIX (1940), 355-75.
- 2 Cf. Maria Linnreich, "Das gesellschaftskritische Element im Schaffen von Lenz," pp. 17-18, also above, Ch. IV, n. 68.
- 3 Kindermann, p. 124.
- 4 Hans Meyer, "Nachwort," Wb, II, 803.
- 6 Hans Wolff, "Der junge Herder und die Entwicklungsidee Rousseaus," PMLA, LVII (1942), pp. 138-9.
- 7 Cf. Casimir von Creuz, Versuch über die Seele (1754): "Wir können keine andere Gewißheit haben, als diejenige, welche uns unsere Empfindungen geben" (quoted by Rudolf, p. 47).

- 8 F.J. Schneider, Die deutsche Dichtung der Aufklärungszeit (Stuttgart, 1948), p. 33.
- 9 Elisabeth Genton, "Lenz, Klinger, Wagner. Studien über die rationalistischen Elemente im Denken und Dichten des Sturm und Drangs" (diss., Berlin, 1955); Rudolf, op. cit.
- 10 See above, Ch. II, n. 80.
- 11 Hermann Schluter, Das Pygmalion-Symbol bei Rousseau, Hamann, Schiller (Zürich, 1968), p. 37. Cf. also Ch. V, n. 53.
- 12 Maria Sinnreich talks of Lenz perceiving in Rousseau a "Gefahr seines eigenen Wesens" (op. cit., p. 31).
- 13 Wilhelm Dilthey, Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 217-8.
- 14 Gedenkausgabe, X, 655.
- 15 Meyer, Ws, II, 820.
- 16 Hermann Müller-Solger, "Goethes 'Wanderers Nachtlied II'," Seminar, X (1974), p. 261.
- 17 Cf. Sommerfeld's assessment of Lenz's Rousseauism in Ch. I, n. 24.
- 18 Kindermann, p. 157; Heinrichsdorff (p. 98) sees "ein immer stärkeres Anwachsen seiner Isolierung von der Wirklichkeit;" Rudolf (p. 234) seeks to impart some purpose to this later phase by suggesting a renewal of religious faith.
- 19 See Author, op. cit.
- 20 Lenz in Briefen, p. 109: letter of N.M. Karamsin, 31 May 1789.

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