"On Your Imaginary Forces Work" :

Shakespeare in Eighteenth-Century Germany

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Abstract

This thesis explores Christoph Martin Wieland's dialectical translation approach as the first translator of a collection of Shakespeare's plays, *Shakespear Theatralische Werke* (hereafter '*Theatralische Werke*'), using his role as a mediating narrator as a focal point. The thesis is divided into four parts: the first chapter analyzes the form and content of Shakespeare's Renaissance theatre in the context of eighteenth-century aesthetics and theatre practice; the second examines the valorization of imagination through shifts in philosophical concepts and the popularity of fictional narratives, especially English novels in translation; the third analyzes Wieland's translation project in the context of contemporaneous translation theories and recent scholarship; the fourth illustrates how the literary form that he developed assisted Wieland in attracting many readers to dramas that had been deemed unstageable. The thesis investigates how the neoclassical poet Wieland applies techniques to create reading dramas that facilitate the imagining of Shakespeare's dramas. The Epilogue then conceptually builds on the preceding four chapters to illustrate the significance of Wieland's Shakespeare translations to the emergence of the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement and the development of diverse interpretive approaches to Shakespeare as reflected in productions of *Macbeth* at the end of the eighteenth century. The thesis concludes that Wieland's historical explanations, editorial decisions, and additional stage directions, combined with the new philosophical valorization of the imagination, enabled readers in mid-eighteenth-century Germany to embrace the strangeness and ambiguity of Shakespeare's plays and to vividly imagine the reading dramas in *Theatralische Werke.*

Résumé

Ma thèse explore l'approche dialectique de Christoph Martin Wieland dans ses traductions des pièces de Shakespeare. Étant le premier traducteur germanophone avec *Shakespear Theatralische Werke* (plus tard *«Theatralische Werke»*), Wieland préconise un rôle de narrateur médiateur dans ses traductions. Cette thèse est divisée en quatre parties: Le premier chapitre analyse la forme et le contenu du Théâtre Élisabéthain de Shakespeare dans le contexte postérieur de l'esthétique du 18ème siècle et de ses pratiques théâtrales. Le deuxième chapitre examine la valorisation de l'imagination à travers les changements de paradigmes dans les concepts philosophiques et la popularité de la fiction; en particulier les traductions de romans anglais. Le troisième chapitre analyse le projet de traduction de Wieland dans le contexte des théories de traductions contemporaines et des récentes études. Le quatrième chapitre illustre comment la forme littéraire qu'il a développée l'a assisté à attirer autant de lecteurs pour des pièces qui auraient été considérées comme injouable. Par la suite, la thèse se penche sur l'emploie du savoir-faire de Wieland en tant que poète néo-classique, d'écrivain et de metteur en scène pour faciliter la compréhension des pièces de Shakespeare. L'épilogue souligne, à l'aide des concepts des quatre chapitres précédents, l'importance des traductions de Wieland dans l'émergence du mouvement littéraire *Sturm und Drang*. De plus, l'épilogue se penche sur les diverses approches d'interprétation de Shakespeare comme le reflète la production de Macbeth à la fin du 18ème siècle. Pour conclure, la thèse synthétise les explications historiques, les décisions éditoriales et les directions de scène additionnelles produites par Wieland qui valorisent philosophiquement l'imagination. Cela permit aux lecteurs germanophones du 18ème siècle d'embrasser l'étrangéité et l'ambiguïté des pièces de Shakespeare et de vivement imaginer les pièces dramatiques de *Theatralische Werke.*

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When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes

First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespear rose;

Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,

Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new:

Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,

And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.

His pow'rful strokes presiding Truth impress'd,

And unresisted Passion storm'd the breast.[1]

Introduction

German playgoers in the mid-eighteenth century were presented with Shakespeare

performances that had been subject to great alterations. Great tragedies like *King Lear* and *Hamlet*

ended on an uplifting note and lacked both ambiguities and bawdy humour. These modified

productions mirrored London's at the time and were due to neoclassical theatre practice. Since the

English Restoration at the end of the seventeenth century, English theatre directors had felt free to

edit, rewrite, or rearrange the text of plays to make their performances suitable for the theatre of

the long eighteenth century. In the centuries following William Shakespeare's death*, Hamlet*, like

many of his other plays, underwent such adaptations. While alterations of plays are usual and

often necessary to meet the practical limitations of casting or staging, these major interventions in

text and plot were made to meet neoclassical conventions. *Neoclassicism* refers to an era and a

movement in Europe in which artists and scholars took inspiration from classical antiquity.

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[1] Johnson, Samuel. "Prologue." Spoken by Mr. Garrick at the opening of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, 1747
(Louis Kronenberger, *The Portable Johnson & Boswell*, Viking Press, 1968, p. 72

However, the concept of neoclassicism was not unified and there were several (neo) classicisms due to various interpretations of antiquity; these differences were context-specific and based in the interpreting culture and time. Shakespeare's plays were generally only performed on English stages if adapted to this contemporary theatre practice. As a result, Shakespeare's dramas deteriorated to become mere treasure chests of interesting plots and witty phrases to be used as directors wished. David Garrick, a famous London actor and theatre director, was known to alter the content of Shakespeare's plays significantly. Correspondingly, German theatre directors staged *Hamlet* adaptations that departed greatly from Shakespeare's original to spare their audiences the harrowing original ending. The successful productions of *Hamlet* by Franz von Heufeld and Friedrich Ludwig Schröder, in 1773 and 1776 respectively, are two such examples. Their *Hamlets* end happily with Prince Hamlet revealing Claudius' coup d'état, avenging his father's murder, and surviving to become King of Denmark. Transformed into a hero who pursues his quest and reestablishes social order, the character of Hamlet thus conforms with contemporary conventions of classical tragedy. Shakespeare's original play offers neither heroic deeds nor a happy resolution. Hamlet is plagued by inertia and, one after another, tragic deaths ensue. He fails to meet everyone's expectations, especially his own, and his indecisiveness leads to the annihilation of the royal family, including himself.

Between 1720 and 1758,[2] German *Neoclassicism* was under the major influence of the writer, literary critic, and pedagogue Johann Christoph Gottsched, who followed a pedagogical aim in his rigid interpretation of ancient texts, which was to a high degree a reaction against Baroque traditions. He derived conventions for tragedies from the teaching of prescriptive critics like Aristotle, author of *Poetics,*[3] and Horace.[4] For instance, it was crucial to Gottsched that the

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[2] Mitchel, Phillip Marshall. *Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766),* Preface.

hero of a tragedy was a man of the nobility who distinguishes himself as a leader and role model

through his superior character traits and exemplary behaviour. This, however, is not the case in

Shakespeare's Renaissance tragedies, which show leaders as frail human beings with flawed

characters. Gottsched dismissed Shakespeare's plays for their flouting of neoclassical

conventions [5] and thought that Shakespeare's tragedies were unable to elicit fear and pity

(*Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* 12-13). This is relevant because pity and fear are

preconditions for catharsis. Emphasizing the pedagogical goal of morally educating the audience,

Gottsched deemed Shakespeare's liberal, contradictory, and nondidactic Renaissance approach

unsuitable for the contemporary stage.

Shakespeare's dramas in their original form were therefore unknown to most German

theatregoers of the mid-eighteenth century. Moreover, a collection of Shakespeare's dramas in

German was not available prior to the publication of Christoph Martin Wieland's multi-volume

German translation of *Theatralische Werke* in 1762-66. The ending of *Hamlet* is an example of

the vast difference between neoclassical adaptations for the eighteenth-century stage and

Shakespeare's original texts. Here are lines from the unadapted version (this and all following

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[3] Aristotle on tragedies in his *Poetics*: "As Tragedy is an imitation of personages better than the ordinary man, we in our way should follow the example of good portrait-painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is. The poet in like manner, in portraying men quick or slow to anger, or with similar infirmities of character, must know how to represent them as such, and at the same time as good men, as Agathon and Homer have represented Achilles" (1454b 8-14).

[4] Instead of a preface, Gottsched quotes Horace in his treatise *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst:* "Ich habe es für dienlich erachtet, an statt einer Einleitung zu meiner deutschen Poesie, Horazens treffliches Gedicht zu übersetzen. . . [Horaz] trug aus den griechischen Scribenten, die vor ihm davon geschrieben hatten, die vornehmsten Hauptregeln zusammen" (3-5).

[5] Gottsched refers to Shakespeare's tragedy *Julius Caesar*: „Sonderlich ist das engländische Theater insgemein in der Einrichtung der Fabel fehlerhaft, als welche größtentheils nicht besser sind, als die altfrränkischen Haupt- und Staatsactionen der gemeinen Komödianten unter uns" (*Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* 613).

Shakespeare quotations in English are from *The New Oxford Shakespeare)* in which King

Claudius, the murderer of Hamlet's father, offers Hamlet a poisoned cup of wine:

> Hamlet, this pearl is thine.
>
> Here's to thy health. Give him the cup. (*Hamlet* 19. 245-55)

What follows is a succession of tragic incidents. Hamlet's mother dies when she drinks from the

poisoned cup, and the subsequent revelation of the conspiracy culminates in the annihilation of

the entire Danish royal family, including Hamlet. This scene concludes with Horatio's famous

speech of farewell to his dying friend Hamlet:

> Now cracks a noble heart.
>
> Good night, sweet prince,
>
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. (*Hamlet* 19. 317-18)

The original play then ends with the arrival of the Norwegian prince, Fortinbras. In contrast to

theatrical productions, literature was not subject to neoclassical theatre conventions, and

Theatralische Werke could thus faithfully present Shakespeare's plays. In an almost literal

translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Wieland conveyed in beautiful prose the agony and futility

of this family feud and enabled German readers to encounter the plays in a form closer to that of

Shakespeare's time. For example, Wieland's rendering of Claudius' lines is:

> Hamlet, diese Perle ist dein —
>
> Auf deine Gesundheit! — Gebt ihm den Becher. (*Theatralische Werke* VIII 222)

Horatio's valediction is translated into:

> Nun bricht ein edles Herz; gute Nacht liebster Prinz,

und Engels-Schwingen mögen dich zu deiner Ruhe tragen! (*Theatralische Werke* VIII

229)

This approach is consistent throughout Wieland's translation, and Shakespeare's dramas unfold in *Theatralische Werke* with much of their original complexity, ambiguity, and messiness preserved.

Thus, the only way to enjoy Shakespeare's dramas unhampered by neoclassical theatre conventions was by reading them. Knowing through practical experience how challenging a staging of Shakespeare could be, Wieland explicitly translated the dramas for the reader by taking on the role of a narrating mediator. With the assistance of such a narrator, eighteenth-century German readers could perceive the beauty and complexity of Shakespeare's dramas. Aware of the challenges that original versions would pose for his readers, Wieland became a mediator, an expert who walks them through treacherous territory after he has properly equipped them to master the steep inclines and rough terrain of Shakespeare's Renaissance poetry. Like an experienced alpine guide, he leads his readers safely around the inaccessible areas created by offensive passages, points out the breathtakingly beautiful views created by Shakespeare's poetic conceits, and encourages them to detect hidden meanings and see connections beyond the written word by providing additional information and explanations. In short, Wieland presents his readers with a translation that facilitates their imagining of the plays. Besides faithfully rendering the text, Wieland's commentaries, stage directions, and editorial interventions bridge historical and cultural differences while also establishing a close relationship between translator and reader. In addition, Wieland's translation in prose made the text accessible to the common reader unused to poetic drama and conveyed Shakespeare's unique qualities as a playwright. The plays within *Theatralische Werke* were quickly embraced by the reading public and became the most

popular dramas of the century in German-speaking territories (Williams 52).

Only a few plays by Shakespeare had been translated prior to Wieland's *Theatralische Werke*. This was due to a combination of factors including the low quality of early Shakespeare translations, the vast cultural differences between Renaissance and neoclassical theatre practice, and memories of the rather carnivalesque atmosphere surrounding performances of excerpts from Shakespeare by wandering troupes. These considerations deterred Gottsched and his supporters from further engagement with Shakespeare. Following classical examples, tragedies were considered the highest form of art, and strict compliance with Aristotle's unities was seen as crucial to heighten emotion and produce the effects of fear and pity. Due to new standards of taste, manners, moral conduct, and scientific knowledge, the crudities and imperfections of the theatre of Shakespeare's time seemed to be from a bygone era. In the contemporary estimation, vulgar humour, brutishness, and the mixing of genres such as tragedy and comedy belonged to an unrefined past in which medieval superstition such as ghostly appearances, witches, and spells still thrived. Yet, the preference for didactic plays that aimed to morally educate the bourgeoisie, combined with the drastic change in theatre performance of the eighteenth century, had distanced audience and actors from each other. Theatre took on characteristics of a lecture or sermon, and the joint creation by actors and spectators of an often light-hearted communal event faded away as the provision of serious advice or wisdom to the audience began to dominate the experience. The result was that playgoers who found themselves neatly arranged in long rows before a proscenium stage felt increasingly disconnected from the physically distant action. Theatre performances in Shakespeare's time, however, had been spectacles and communal events at once. Most members of the audience were physically much closer to the action onstage since the actor performed on a thrust stage that jutted far into the mingling, standing crowd. Discounting the unifying experience

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of earlier performances, theatre reformers of the early and mid-eighteenth century concentrated on the educational value of the theatre experience. Even when Gottsched's power waned in the second half of the century and was further challenged by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing[6] and the *Sensibility* movement, proscenium stages with their greater physical distance between actors and audience remained. Denis Diderot's invention of the fourth wall, an invisible veil between actors and audience, enabled the creation of an illusion which was thought to facilitate identification with the bourgeois hero and spark sympathy but also confined spectators in a state of passivity that separated them from the action on stage (Lehmann 19). And even though Lessing felt great admiration for Shakespeare and established him as a role model for German dramatists,[7] he, too, thought that the plays were not appropriate for the eighteenth- century stage.

Theatre as a highly regarded art form in mid-eighteenth century was the subject of copious literary discussions and received much attention. Yet, the novel was considered a low form of art and "not noticed by contemporary literary critics" (Mullan). Written narratives in prose invited readers to be part of imaginary worlds that often appeared very realistic. Reading for leisure became a mass phenomenon in the second half of the eighteenth century. Thus, in a shadow-like existence, novels gained popularity and offered their readers almost unregulated encounters. In particular, English literature in translation filled the shelves of private libraries due to an increase in literacy and the small number of novels in the vernacular. Fictional first-person narratives introduced alternative realities and created relationships between authors and

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[6] See *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn, Friedrich Nicolai Briefwechsel über das Trauerspiel*. In this exchange of letters (1756-57), Lessing outlined his parameters for tragedies that are in many ways contradictory to Gottsched's. He stated, for instance, that "Die tragische Größe einer Handlung besteht nicht darin, daß sie von großen Personen vollbracht wird, sondern darin, daß sie geschickt ist, heftige Leidenschaften zu erregen" (47).
[7] *Hamburger Dramaturgie*: 17. Stück.

their readers. Ranked low in the traditional hierarchy of genres, and therefore ignored by literary critics, popular foreign novels circumvented neoclassical standards and stirred the reader's imagination. These factors played a pivotal role in the success of the introduction of Shakespeare in the form of *Theatralische Werke.* As reading dramas, Shakespeare's plays influenced both German literature and contemporary theatre conventions.

Recent scholarship has recognized the importance of the part played by *Theatralische Werke* in establishing Shakespeare as a 'German' author.[8] Among other characteristics, Wieland's translation project is acknowledged for its dialectical approach[9] and the countless neologisms that enriched the German dictionary.[10] My own contribution to existing research will be the examination and analysis of the techniques Wieland used and the role he assumed as a mediating narrator, how he established a relationship between the author, reader, and himself to facilitate the reader's imagining, and, lastly, how *Theatralische Werke* thus transformed Shakespeare's plays into German reading dramas.

I shall argue that Wieland's innovative translation approach merged two genres, the drama and narrative fiction, with the result that Shakespeare could be imagined anew. In Chapter One, I analyze the form and content of Shakespeare's Renaissance theatre in the context of eighteenth-century aesthetics and theatre practice. In Chapter Two I will examine the valorization of imagination through shifts in philosophical concepts and the popularity of fictional narratives, especially English novels in translation. In Chapter Three, I will analyze

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[8] McCarthy: *Shakespeare as German Author*. Brill Rodopi, 2018.
[9] Snell-Hornby: *The Turns of Translation Studies*. "New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?" J. B. Benjamins, 2006.
[10] B. Menke: "Mit Steken-Pferden zum Deutschen Shakespeare," De Gruyter, 2010.

Wieland's translation project in the context of contemporaneous translation theories and recent

scholarship. In Chapter Four I will illustrate how the literary form that he develops enabled

Wieland to attract many readers to enjoy dramas that had been deemed unstageable. I will

investigate how Wieland employs his knowledge as a neoclassical poet, writer, and stage director

to apply techniques that create dramas that could be easily imagined. The Epilogue then

conceptually builds on the preceding four chapters to illustrate the significance of Wieland's

Shakespeare translations in the emergence of the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement and the

development of diverse interpretive approaches to Shakespeare as reflected in productions of

Macbeth at the end of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 1: Shakespeare's Plays and Eighteenth-Century German Theatre

As early as the sixteenth century, English troupes of actors had toured throughout Europe to perform adapted versions or excerpts of Shakespeare's dramas, usually in their mother tongue (Willenberg 19). Many actors travelled abroad "due to [the] intense competition of the London theatre and restrictions on performances in the English provinces" (Williams 28). They often had no scripts and performed their roles by memory, which meant that they delighted crowds of spectators with improvised renderings. Sometimes plays were performed in the German language, like *Der bestrafte Brudermord*, based on *Hamlet*. Stage performances became especially entertaining when actors attempted to overcome language barriers and overacted to make the plot apparent through exaggerated movements and facial expressions (30). Moreover, German performances also provoked amusement among rural playgoers whose vernacular dialects differed vastly from the German that English actors spoke. Additionally, the limited performance space and plain settings of most venues were not comparable to the sumptuous theatre interiors of royal courts. Venues were often just makeshift stages in marketplaces, and the rather light-hearted performances that took place were interspersed with comedic elements and musical interludes. Long after these troupes had returned to their home country, their performances continued to be remembered for their carnivalesque atmosphere and their extraordinary entertainment value.

Marked by contradiction and transformative changes, the Renaissance was a time of transition. Medieval superstitions steeped in magic and witchcraft were confronted with a much more modern worldview and a growing belief in scientific research, technical advances, and humanism. Shakespeare's Elizabethan theatre would not have existed without the "potent connection between a highly transitional social structure and the rapidly changing dialectic

between the representation of society and the self-expression of its agents in the theatre that accounted for the viability and the richness in cultural functions of the multidimensionality in Shakespearean drama" (Weimann *Theater* 246). The cultural importance of Renaissance Theatre cannot be overstated, considering that the reasonably priced admission allowed more than only aristocrats, academics, or members of the guilds to attend performances (208). In fact, much of London society went to the theatre regularly: about twenty percent of London's population, including women, attended plays each Saturday (Rasmussen). The theatre unified the audience and could act as "Abwehrfunktionen gegen drohende Aufspaltungen," a counterbalance to the divisions of society (Weimann *Volkstheater* 58). A question that arises is whether this unifying entertainment truly counterbalanced the divisions within society, or whether if it is more likely to have been a pacifier to halt upheaval and meaningful social change. The Globe's performances were therefore reminiscent of an annual carnival which lifts restrictions for only a day. Performances in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre were thus broadly representative communal events. Shakespeare and his actors contributed to the egalitarian atmosphere created by this diverse assembly of spectators by making decisions regarding the selection of plays, costumes, and cast as a group (Weimann *Theater* 214). They formed a company known as the Chamberlain's Men (later, the 'King's Men'), a cooperative of actors that collectively owned the Globe Theatre (214). According to Weimann, this shared responsibility greatly influenced the "spirit of the Elizabethan theatrical experience" (214). It required a high degree of versatility and artistic imagination from both playwright and performers to successfully produce exceedingly entertaining and culturally complex theatre performances. Thus, the Globe Theatre's egalitarian organizational structure and culturally rich performances served to foster a sense of community by providing a meeting place for spectators from a broad spectrum of society. This

unifying experience of the performances counterbalanced, for perhaps just two turns of an hourglass, the division causing social stratification and diverging cultural forces.

The content of the plays was another important factor nurturing social cohesion. Following a long tradition of village theatre, the role of the fool was essential as a connecting element between sovereigns and the common people (Weimann *Theater* 238). Fools, or court jesters, were still part of court life, and were hired to entertain the monarch with word games, riddles, songs, and jokes. Shakespeare, not deterred by the threat of monarchal censorship, presented fools as a feature of traditional court life and theatre. In Shakespeare's plays, the fool is often a truth-telling wise man. Thus, the Fool in *King Lear* employs his wit to undermine Lear's authority with the cutting remark, "Thou shouldst not have been old before thou hadst been wise" (1.5.34). The court jester's observation emphasizes the discrepancy between a king who remains unsurpassed in his power and the old man in trouble that Lear truly is. His reflection is therefore a mixture of joke and sad realization. Ultimately the Fool, too, becomes a victim of a weak leader who causes havoc for his confederates and subjects. While the spectators see King Lear as both a sovereign and a frail human being, they are also urged to grasp the importance of good leadership. Shakespeare's depiction of the Fool and Lear undermines the blind obedience that royalty demands from subjects and, at the same time, the play suggests that the connection between a ruler and his people is vital. Thus, the biting comments of the Fool force the audience to view events from different perspectives, which stimulates the development of both critical and communal thinking.

Physical closeness and interaction between actors and audience was crucial to a performance and added to the sense of community. Shakespeare's integrative approach is reflected in the architecture of the Globe Theatre, whose thrust stage, jutting into the crowd,

allowed actors to connect more directly with spectators and encouraged their active participation in the plays (Weimann *Theater* 208). The function of such Renaissance stages stood in direct opposition to the more removed feeling generated by the standard proscenium arch stages of court theatres used for neoclassical theatre performances. The architecture of the Globe Theatre thus played a crucial role in the creation of an interconnected space in Shakespeare's theatre world.[11]

The eighteenth century was, like the Renaissance, a time of transition. Germany was economically far behind more industrially advanced countries such as France and England. In addition, pre-industrial German society was hierarchically structured and socially stratified (Koschorke 59). The nobility still felt entitled to all the privileges connected to their status, but this was increasingly questioned and challenged by members of a growing middle class. In addition, the German Enlightenment's effort to establish a unified national literature lagged because of Germany's territorial fragmentation into hundreds of minute independent states. Most theatrical life had taken place at the courts of these tiny territories. Tragedies were at the pinnacle of the traditional hierarchy of genres, and those complying with Aristotle's unities were thought to be particularly suited to teach moral conduct. Performances of French classicist dramas entertained the higher echelons of society until the rise of the bourgeoisie and their growing cultural influence put an end to this form of privileged entertainment. Early Enlightenment reformers particularly valued French classicist tragedies for the moral education of this surging middle class. Bourgeois moral education thus became the subject of several literary debates. Not surprisingly, it took theatre reformers many decades and countless debates to overcome the

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[11] The effect of the architecture of The Globe Theatre on the relationship between audiences and actors will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

strong influence of French *Classicism* and establish public theatres with programs that offered a wide variety of plays.

Gottsched's approach to reform was two-pronged: his language reform strove to improve the German language to make it more clearly and commonly understood (Ueding 619-20), while his educational goals required the inculcation of morals through tragedy. Accordingly, Gottsched condemned *Volkstheater*, including popular comedies and entertaining appearances of the German fool or clown, 'Hans Wurst'. Aristotle's *mimesis* and the concept of nature had gained new importance during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Gottsched followed Christian Wolff's philosophy and set the imitation of nature at the centre of his thinking. He employed Wolff's principles, which are based on the premise that nature has a system and laws, and applied them to the creation of art. For example, he believed that imagination develops in the soul and is subordinated to rational thought. Truth and probability therefore became immensely important to him. In addition, critics, like Gottsched, rejected the *Schwulst*, or opulence, of the Baroque theatre and attacked its "over-refinement of invention" and general tendency "towards the chryselephantine" (Paulin *Critical* 35). The Baroque style did not hold up well against Gottsched's "aesthetic criteria of clarity and congruity" (36). As expected, when confronted with Shakespeare's work, he found clear words for his rejection of what he thought was highly disordered, improbable, and of low taste: "Die Unordnung und Unwahrscheinlichkeit, welche aus dieser Hindansetzung der Regeln entspringen, die sind auch bey dem Schakespear so handgreiflich und ekelhaft, daß wohl niemand, der nur je etwas vernünftiges gelesen, daran ein Belieben tragen wird" (*Beyträge zur Critischen Historie*, VIII 143). Shakespeare's Renaissance plays, which simultaneously embraced diversity, ambiguity, and social cohesion, were dismissed. Gottsched believed that morally unambiguous plays, and especially tragedies, would

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contribute to the education of the bourgeois audience. These performances were not meant to entertain spectators from various social backgrounds.

This didactic morality of Gottsched's interpretation of Aristotle's *mimesis,* however, had deviated from the classical tradition. Aristotle's *Poetics* (335 BCE), the first work of literary theory generally, is a core text for the analysis of literature. It had been the code of practice for playwrights and theatre performances since antiquity and remained authoritative in the Renaissance and during the Neoclassical and Romantic movements. Reinterpreting Plato's *mimesis*, Aristotle saw the process of imitation as a descriptive re-presentation of nature. Moreover, he strove to understand the very processes of creation, the *entelechy,* by which the potential becomes the actual, and worked with aesthetic principles that conceived nature as a dynamic process of becoming (Böhme 460). Therefore, the classical principle of *mimesis* encompassed both the present and all possible worlds, and inspired artists to mirror nature as a dynamic and creative process. The issue of neoclassical *mimesis* became a contentious issue and was challenged by both *Sturm und Drang* writers who yearned for creativity and individual liberty, and literary critics like Lessing, who thought that sense experience and imagination were essential for the development of empathy. Lessing, a philosopher, author, and proponent of the *Sensibility* movement (see page 19), deeply rooted in neoclassical conventions, harshly criticized Gottsched's interpretation of Aristotle's teaching and the didactic use of *mimesis.* Basing his concepts on Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing saw Gottsched's interpretation of *mimesis* as opposing the imaginative world of the senses in poetry (Fick 27).

As might be expected, even neoclassical critics were divided in their interpretation of nature and thus Aristotle's *mimesis*. Although Gottsched and Johann Jakob Breitinger, for

example, founded their theories on the teachings of Wolff, to whom nature was an unchanging

system that was subject to rules and laws, they still disagreed on the concept of nature in

Aristotle's *mimesis*. As a result of Gottsched's desire to educate the middle class, his

interpretation of *mimesis* (the mirroring of nature in art) became a strict enforcement of rules and

laws within plays and performances. Gottsched's concept of *mimesis* was accordingly

determined by how reality should be and not how it is. This view disregarded the ambivalence of

human nature and the messiness of life itself, and therefore no longer mirrored human

experience. According to a stringent application of Aristotle's unities of location, action, and

time, all the dramatic action of a tragedy had to take place within one day or twenty-four hours,

in one location, and with an ordered, sequential structure aimed at one effect, thus usually

centred on one character. Furthermore, as in classical tragedies, it was imperative that the hero of

the play be a member of the ruling class who displayed leadership qualities and was a role model

for exemplary behaviour. Even more importantly, *verisimilitude,* or the probability of a plot, was

not only a key standard for Gottsched but also defined the nature of truth (Lorenz 86).

Consequently, the dramatic action of tragedies had to be both possible and morally good (90).

Breitinger, two years Gottsched's senior, rejected this moralizing concept of *mimesis.* He

endorsed the more dynamic artistic process of "imitating possible nature," which still aligned

with the neoclassical concept of Wolff's unchanging cosmos because it referred to the concept of

essence as "the inner possibility of a thing" (Wankhammer 174). A poet was, in his view, a

creator who invented stories about an imaginable world: "Ein jedes wohlerfundenes Gedicht ist

darum nicht anderst anzusehen, als eine Historie aus einer andern möglichen Welt" (Breitinger

qtd. in Wankhammer 176). Breitinger's understanding of *mimesis* aligned closely with

Shakespeare's Renaissance theatre. Believing in a greater order that allowed numerous variations

within the system, Breitinger's view mirrored the multitude of meanings and interpretations in Shakespeare's poetry.

Gottsched and his followers no longer perceived themselves as part of a universal whole as people had believed in Shakespeare's time, but instead saw nature as a system operating by laws that humans could discover and manipulate. The Renaissance concept of Aristotle's *mimesis*, unlike the neoclassical interpretation, strove to recreate nature's dynamic instead of mimicking its appearance (Weimann *Volkstheater* 334). According to this view, the dynamic conception of nature required a flexible application of the unities. The answer was found in the extension of *mimesis* by adding the notion of *imitatio*, in which the artist "nicht so sehr *die* Natur als *der* Natur nachahme" (Weimann *Theater* 334). Thus, art should not be a mere mirror image but should rather be understood as a striving to behave like nature. This broadening of the *mimesis* concept was necessary to prevent art from degenerating into a flat reflection (334). An extended concept of *mimesis* was able not only to produce a more realistic reflection of nature but even to supersede nature, according to George Puttenham (1589), who declared that "arte is not only an aide and coadiutor to nature in all her actions but an alterer of them, and in some sort a surmounter of her skill" (qtd. in Weimann *Volkstheater* 334). In a certain sense, art rises to become the master of nature, or the real world, because it is not bound to abide by the rules of the natural order. Creative works were therefore not confined to visible natural phenomena but could expand in one's imagination. Thus, the extended concept of *mimesis* found in Shakespearean dramas preserved an inner order while allowing poetic freedom regarding the unities of time, place, and action. The Elizabethan theatre took liberties in the "poetische Freiheit in der Gestaltung von Raum und Zeit" (334). Correspondingly, narratives could easily skip over

a decade, as in *A Winter's Tale,* compress time in *Henry V* "into an hourglass" (1.1.31), or follow the well-travelled Pericles in the play of the same name.

Shakespeare and his contemporary playwrights were exposed to harsh censorship (Shakespeare *Oxford* 37). Playwrights of that time were in constant fear of severe retribution beyond mere literary censorship. Two of Shakespeare's colleagues were muzzled permanently. Christopher Marlowe, for example, "the most brilliant and adventurous of Shakespeare's predecessors . . . was murdered in 1593, at the age of twenty-nine, almost certainly assassinated because of his alleged atheism and political radicalism" (37). Thomas Kyd, another highly talented playwright, "was arrested and tortured, and died a year later, never having recovered," and several of Shakespeare's plays had to be "significantly altered as a result of censorship" (37). Alterations and an evasive narration style were ways for Shakespeare to persevere in the face of such suppression. When he wrote about England, he wrote about the past; when he wrote plays about the present, he wrote about some other place (38). The extended form of the *mimesis* that offered him such poetic freedom also provided him with a tool to circumvent censorship laws. Imagination was therefore not only part of his art but also an escape from political censorship, imprisonment, or death. "Shakespeare's elision of his own moment and his own voice, his insistence that he is representing some other time or some other place, is typical of a writer living under tyranny" (38). Both the extension of *mimesis* and an evasive narrative style assisted in the creation of highly imaginative plays which were universally applicable and usually politically acceptable.

After decades of neoclassical hegemony, Gottsched's influence as a theatre reformer waned at mid-century, and, with the rise of the *Sensibility* movement, a fervent opponent appeared in the person of Lessing, a leading figure in that movement who aimed to influence

desire and will through the practical application of Enlightenment thought (Schulte-Sasse *Poetik* 304). "Empfindsamkeit," or *Sensibility*, is temporally and conceptually situated between *Neoclassicism* and *Romanticism* and emerged in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century. The supporters of this literary movement despised the rigidity of Gottsched's reforms and rejected what they saw as an overemphasis on rationality. As a result, from mid-century onwards, the concept of morality lost its aesthetic reference to rationality (304), and the new moral teaching in literature abstained from repressing emotions (319). Many texts portrayed a change in behaviour due to the arousal of a person's emotions. Lessing aimed to reconcile head and heart through the cultivation of feelings (Fick 54). The rise of the bourgeoisie, the new interest in psychology, the growing recognition of the importance of human sensuous experience, and England's literature were some of the sources and reasons for the fundamental shift in society that nurtured the appreciation of emotions (53).

In the remaining decades of the eighteenth century, art played a leading role in moral education by stirring emotions, arousing compassion, and using illusion to lead people back to what was believed to be their original moral state (Schulte-Sasse *Poetik* 312). Lessing pointed out that his theory regarding compassion must not be understood as an altruistic sorrow for the pitiable state of a stranger but rather as denoting compassion as the resonating quality of feelings that one shares with a fellow human being (*Hamburgische Dramaturgie* Stück 74-78). As a playwright, Lessing attempted to morally educate the bourgeoisie with a new form of theatre, the *Bürgerliches Trauerspiel*. Seneca, whose heroic tragedies depicted causality and great passion, became a model for Lessing's plays. However, his *Bürgerliches Trauerspiel* focused more on private matters and the human side of conflicts which differed from the Aristotelian classic tragic hero of noble birth since to Lessing it was impossible for a common

member of the audience to identify with a king or emperor. Thus, the hero of his *Trauerspiel*

came from the middle class to allow bourgeois spectators to identify with the leading character.

Lessing aimed at a catharsis to arouse sympathy. A tragedy was "valued not so much according

to its plot as by the effect it has on the emotions of the viewer" (Schwarz 173). Not surprisingly,

"Lessing called Shakespeare the greatest tragic genius of modern European culture" because of

the effect the English bard had on the audience (173). In spite of this praise, however, Lessing

refrained from a presentation of Shakespeare's plays onstage because of the content and

dramatic structure, as we will see.

While still indebted to French conventions of *Neoclassicism*, another significant

influence on Lessing's aesthetic theory came from Denis Diderot, who also was highly critical

of the pure rationality of *Neoclassicism* and laid bare the "fault of this convention" (Cassirer

295). Nevertheless, it was Lessing who took the final step and exposed "the untenable and

baneful confusion which had existed in French drama and dramatic theory regarding the

difference between demands of pure aesthetic 'reason' and merely conventional and temporally

restricted demands," by separating both "ruthlessly" (295-296). Rejecting French *Classicism* and

court culture, Lessing proclaimed, "If pomp and etiquette make machines out of men, it is the

task of the poet to make men again out of these machines" (qtd. in Cassirer 296).

Roger Paulin describes Lessing as the most radical critic of the 1760s and his *17.*

Literaturbrief as a "pro-Shakespearean manifesto" that became for many the "origin of

Shakespeare enthusiasm in Germany" (Paulin *Voltaire* 96). In his letter, Lessing vented his anger

concerning Gottsched's introduction of French taste and style to the German stage and suggested

that new models were needed to invigorate German culture because Gottsched should have

noticed:

. . . daß wir mehr in den Geschmack der Engländer, als der Franzosen einschlagen;

daß wir in unsern Trauerspielen mehr sehen und denken wollen, als uns das furchtsame

französische Trauerspiel zu sehen und zu denken gibt; daß das Große, das Schreckliche,

das Melancholische, besser auf uns wirkt als das Artige, das Zärtliche, das Verliebte . . .

(*Briefe* 17)

The emotional effect of the sublime found in English tragedies contrasted with the controlled

structure of French classicists plays. Even though Lessing rejected French classicist dramas and

endorsed English playwrights as role models for the German stage, his goal as a dramatist of the

Enlightenment was to nurture and teach sympathy through the effect of plays. Lessing outlined

his theoretical approach in his letter exchange with Moses Mendelssohn and Friedrich Nicolai,

and concludes, "Der mitleidigste Mensch ist der beste Mensch" (*Briefwechsel* 55). Even though

Shakespeare was regarded by Lessing as a supreme dramatist, the disorder and moral ambiguity

of Shakespeare's plays were incompatible with current theatre conventions. Lessing viewed

"artistic creation as an ordering process. The creator of a drama works according to purposes, in

the same manner as God works according to purposes, in other words as a rationalist" (Schwartz

176). Lessing was still indebted to Neoclassicism and embraced Shakespeare's dramas as poetry.

Thus, plays like *Hamlet*, with no clear moral message, many sentences with elliptical structure,

and a disregard for the neoclassical unities, were more suitable to be read as literature.

It took about a decade before Wieland's *Hamlet* appeared on the stage, and then only in

very adapted versions. The list of neoclassical objections to the play was long. Hamlet, although

noble, is an erratic and indecisive anti-hero; the drama takes place in several locations inside and

outside the castle; and, instead of a plot that takes place in a day, *Hamlet* spans weeks or months,

and involves multiple subplots and a large cast. In addition, the appearance of a ghost is highly improbable, and, it was feared, might promote unwanted superstitions or pagan beliefs. Moreover, the accidental death of the hero in the finale neither carries a clear moral message nor met the expectation of eighteenth-century audiences. All these attributes made *Hamlet* incompatible with the conventions of neoclassical theatre practice.

Hamlet finally appeared on the German-speaking stage in 1773 in a production by Franz von Heufeld in Vienna, and, only three years later, in Hamburg in a production by Friedrich Ludwig Schröder. Both versions were based on Wieland's translation but adapted by each theatre manager to comply with neoclassical conventions. For example, Heufeld focussed on the Danish royal family to ensure unity of action and location (Nenon *Hamlet* 106), and stripped Hamlet's speeches of bawdy humour to adhere to neoclassical taste and mores. Additionally, the characters were generally less ambiguous in their actions and moral conduct. Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, for instance, is in Heufeld's version a willing accomplice to the murder of her first husband by Claudius, the new king, and dies after her guilt-ridden confession to her son. On the other hand, Hamlet takes revenge for the fratricide by killing the new king and survives (107-108). Monika Nenon describes these adaptations as necessary steps taken by Heufeld to assure compliance with form and taste: "Heufeld geht es um die Reinheit der Sprache, um Spielbarkeit und Regelmäßigkeit, der mit seiner *Hamlet*version ein den Regeln entsprechendes Stück auf die Bühne bringen will" (109). *Hamlet* underwent similar alterations when the play came to the Hamburg stage. Schröder followed the rules of a classical tragedy and therefore unified action, location, and time (111). Shakespeare's tragedy once more ends in a non-tragic way with Hamlet's survival (Häublein 76). The neoclassical versions of *Hamlet* in Hamburg and Vienna both received cordial receptions.

Alterations to Shakespeare in compliance with neoclassical taste were prevalent in eighteenth-century England as well, as it, too, was also strongly influenced by French *Classicism* (Winchester Stone 891). Many German tourists attended Shakespeare's plays in London in the 1770s and enjoyed the performances of the famous actor David Garrick. In a similar fashion to the German adaptations, Garrick, also the playhouse manager of his theatre, changed Shakespeare's dramas to meet contemporary taste. However, not everyone agreed with these interventions. For example, a parody by Jesse Foot was entitled *Hamlet with Alterations,* and "the younger Boswell wrote . . . how prevalent and damning was the influence of French dramatic criticism in the eighteenth century" and printed what was supposed to be the ending of Garrick's Alteration entitled *Hamlet as Altered by David Garrick, Esq. 1777* (890-91).

Lessing opposed alterations of Shakespeare's plays, and his judgement was correspondingly harsh: "Shakespeare will studiert, nicht geplündert sein" (*Hamburgische Dramaturgie* Stück 73). Yet, although Lessing defended Shakespeare's art, he was convinced that staging these dramas posed significant challenges. Like Lessing, Wieland supported the neoclassical view that the only acceptable form for the presentation of the plays in *Theatralische Werke* was as literature to be read. Whereas theatre performances were subject to contemporary neoclassical theatre practices, there were no concepts or theoretical frameworks for published dramas that had been judged unsuitable to be staged. *Theatralische Werke* was therefore conceptualized as a collection of reading dramas. As such, *Theatralische Werke* was read and enthusiastically shared by young students. It planted a youthful admiration in them that blossomed into a fully grown adult veneration of Shakespeare, and finally evolved into a literary movement, the *Sturm und Drang.* The fact that *Theatralische Werke* was deemed unstageable enraged admirers of Shakespeare who in turn regarded the neoclassical stage conventions as

unsuitable for his plays. The *Sturm und Drang* movement thus repudiated the strict rules of the normative aesthetic that dominated the German stage and strove for more imaginative creativity and individual liberty. Perhaps not surprisingly, Shakespeare, a playwright with a "Fähigkeit zu gesteigerter Vorstellungskraft" (Sulzer qtd. in Sauder 335), became their role model. He was the perfect antithesis to neoclassical dogma and facilitated the liberation of German theatre.

Wieland was the first to use the term *Lesedrama,* or 'reading drama,' in his review of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen.* Goethe's play was deemed unstageable but received Wieland's praise as reading material. As a result, neoclassical critics labelled plays *Lesedrama* that did not follow neoclassical theatre conventions and were thus deemed unstageable. Predictably, the term *Lesedrama* was utilized by such critics to keep unadapted plays by Shakespeare and those written in a 'Shakespearean' manner away from the stage. This suppression of creativity sparked a strong response from the young authors belonging to the *Sturm and Drang* movement. They challenged current theatre conventions by deliberately writing plays in a 'Shakespearean' fashion. Critics, on the other hand, used the term 'Shakespearisieren' to describe German poets who disregarded the unities and wrote plays which included multiple plots, numerous characters and scenes, and action that took more than a day; "der Dichter läßt die Einheiten außer acht" (Inbar *Lesedrama* 7). As it was of no advantage for a young playwright to produce plays that would not be staged, these *Lesedramas* can be considered as acts of resistance against cultural norms that smothered the creative impulse. Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen,* with its historical background, large cast, multiple locations, and long time span paralleled Shakespeare's poetic freedom and became a stimulus for other *Lesedramas* (Ranke 164).

Goethe, not intimidated by the hostility of the critics, challenged neoclassical norms. He was rewarded with great support from spectators who yearned for more creativity on the

stage. *Götz von Berlichingen* thus received an enthusiastic reception from audiences.

Paradoxically, neoclassical theatre critics still stubbornly claimed that *Götz von Berlichingen* was

unstageable even after the play was successfully staged in 1775 and 1776 (Inbar *Lesedrama* 30).

In the same vein, Schiller announced in his preface to *Die Räuber* (1781) that his play should

only be read because it, too, was written in a 'Shakespearean' manner (33). By labelling *Die*

Räuber a *Lesedrama*, Schiller supported Goethe's discontent with existing theatre practice. This

self-proclamation by Schiller of his play's weakness and unsuitability for the stage, possibly

ironic, leaves it to the reader to draw the conclusion that it was the German stage that was not

ready for his new form of drama. Despite its designation as a *Lesedrama*, *Die Räuber*, like

Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen,* was celebrated by audiences and rejected by neoclassical

critics. Even though invented to keep Shakespeare and like-minded German poets away from the

German stage, the category of *Lesedrama* was reclaimed by young authors to express their

discontent. Theatre reformers had underestimated both the imagination of readers and the

determination of a young generation of 'Shakespearisierenden' authors who felt imprisoned by

neoclassical rules. Indeed, *Theatralische Werke* with its far-reaching influence on German culture

had become "one of the most clandestinely influential works of literature" (Gundolf qtd. in

McCarthy 64). Together these authors and readers became the playwrights and audiences of a

new and exciting theatre. While the genre *Lesedrama* lasted only about twenty years, it had a

remarkable impact on concepts of theatre.

The aim of early Enlightenment theatre was the moral education of the middle-class

audience. Tragedies abiding by the classical traditions and Aristotle's rules were employed to

convey values and exemplary behaviour. However, a generation of authors saw such moralizing

as an attempt to stunt creativity and the social expectations of bourgeois society and as an attack

upon their self-determinism. Whereas novels in translation opened the door to other cultures and worldviews, first-person narratives invited self-reflexivity and an engagement with all imaginable possibilities. In addition, growing bourgeois wealth and increasing social mobility nurtured individual liberty, and, as we will explore in more depth in the next chapter, philosophers such as David Hume and Baumgarten provided the theoretical framework for a shift in the concept of imagination that helped to unravel the predetermination and blind obedience of hierarchical society. Wieland's progressive translation approach conveyed Shakespeare's spirit, and, as a result, Shakespeare became a role model for the *Sturm and Drang* and his art evolved into the antithesis of the Gottschedian reform efforts. Shakespeare's plays offered young writers of the *Sturm and Drang* movement the supreme quality of Shakespeare's poetry and ambivalent and highly dramatic plots. In addition, they were filled with astute depictions of characters who exerted individual agency. Thus, the popularity and cultural impact of *Theatralische Werke* contributed to a general questioning of neoclassical theatre conventions. Wieland's Shakespeare, kept from the stage and relegated to *Lesedrama* status, became a catalyst for a shift in thought and aesthetics that ended neoclassical hegemony.

Chapter 2: Fictional Stories in Translation and the Valorization of Imagination

In the early eighteenth century, England was a little-known and overlooked island on the outskirts of Europe that did not receive much attention (Willenberg 19). However, this changed drastically during the third and fourth decades of the century when the French Enlightenment philosophers Voltaire and Montesquieu expressed great interest in the thought of English and Scottish philosophers such as Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hume. Their portrayals of these philosophers triggered a European-wide enthusiasm that shaped Germans' perception of England for some time: "Ihre Darstellungen lösten in fast ganz Europa eine Welle der Englandbegeisterung aus und sollten auch das deutsche Englandbild für geraume Zeit prägen" (20). Anglophilia reached its peak in the eighteenth century (5), and the island became a destination for well-heeled travellers who especially enjoyed London's rich culture. Itineraries often included tours of monastic ruins, a visit to the British Library to view the Magna Carta, and attendance at one of Shakespeare's plays staged (and adapted to neoclassic conventions) by David Garrick. An anecdote that added to Garrick's popularity claimed that his Hamlet was so realistic that "a foreigner, who knew no English, was so upset . . . that he fainted away" when he saw the terrified Hamlet facing the ghostly appearance of his dead father (Clery 43). In short, German Anglophilia was based on a wide-ranging admiration for England's constitution, philosophers, culture, geographic location, and even its ghostly appearances (Willenberg 40).

This admiration of all things English included literature. A significant event in the growth of the novel's popularity was the publication of the individual experience of an ordinary Englishman who was exposed to an extraordinary ordeal — *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe. Already available in translation only a year after its first publication, *Robinson Crusoe* entered

the German book market in 1720. About twenty years later, escape literature from England was followed by novels offering moral guidance, such as Samuel Richardson's highly influential epistolary novels, *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded* (hereafter *Pamela*) and *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady* (hereafter *Clarissa*), and mock epics like *Joseph Andrews* by Henry Fielding (Willenberg 178). These early publications, even though printed in small numbers, stimulated the imagination of readers, and nurtured their thoughts of self-determination. Demand continued to increase, and, by the second half of the century, English novels and dramas in translation were particularly widely distributed (177). Tables at mid-century book fairs were thus crowded with German translations of English novels, dramas, travel journals, and philosophical and scientific writings. Bernd Fabian calls this period "das englische Jahrhundert der deutschen Literatur-, Geistes-, und Wissenschaftsgeschichte" (qtd. in Willenberg 5). Indeed, English fiction strongly affected the *Sensibility* and *Sturm and Drang* German literary movements in the latter half of the eighteenth century. New concepts, such as the first-person narrative with a universal validity well-suited for self-reflection, found their way into German literature. For example, novels by Defoe and Richardson accentuated the interiority of the main characters, contained a significant notion of melancholy and subjectivity, and thus displayed many *Sensibility* traits (Brodey 13). Translated literature, and particularly English novels, played a formative role in the concept of German storytelling and the development of a new German literature.

Moralizing novels such as *Clarissa* resonated with the commonly accepted belief that everyone could be educated and that reading conduct literature would lead to further moral improvement. Albrecht von Haller, a biologist, anatomist, and poet, was a devotee of Richardson's *Clarissa* and commended the book as "ein Meisterstück in der Abschilderung der Sitten, der Art zu denken und sich natürlich und dennoch wizig auszudrüken" (Price 192).

Haller's research included a search for the physiological basis for the difference between impulses and feelings, and his anatomical investigations included dissections and experiments on the nervous system. Literature found its way into his dissecting room in unusual ways. Von Haller and his students must have been familiar with the woes and untimely death of the letter-writing heroine Clarissa because an observer discovered to his surprise that "anatomy professor Albrecht von Haller and his students were busy inventing sequels to Richardson's *Clarissa* while dissecting a corpse" (Oz-Salzberger *Enlightenment* 47). Such examples of blurred lines between fiction and reality and philosophy and natural science, illustrate the strong interest in emotions at that time that prompted widespread inquiries into the fields of sensory reception and literature. From today's point of view, this incident implies a remarkable elevation of the status of literature as a form of epistemic investigation. Scientific investigations were a foil for the understanding of literature and vice versa. *Clarissa*, therefore, not only was a role model for the literary movement *Sensibility*, but also influenced philosophical and scientific inquiries as well. Moreover, *Clarissa* was also especially suited for a deeper engagement with literature because the novel accommodated many interpretative approaches, from solemnly reading it as a tragedy that incites sympathy or reading and rereading it as a moral conduct book, to simply enjoying its comedic qualities.

Many more people learned how to read due to reforms in education systems. For example, King Friedrich II reorganized various levels of the Prussian system and improved the quality of instruction. As a result, members of the lower classes as well as those of the rapidly growing middle class gained access to a school education. Reading for leisure became a mass phenomenon in the second half of the century, and the demand for reading material became overwhelming. A lack of German literature in the vernacular motivated booksellers and

publishers to fall back on translations. Although novels in translation soon amounted to a third of all books published, the book market could not meet the fast-growing demand for new reading material. Consequently, people began to share books, pass them around in reading circles, make them accessible in lending libraries, or exchange them with friends. Anglophilia, the popularity of first-person narratives in translation, and the enjoyment of books unregulated by the standards of neoclassical theatre reformers all paved the way for the successful introduction of *Theatralische Werke* beginning in 1762. Published in a form devised especially for the reader, Shakespeare's plays were quickly embraced as imaginative narratives.

Despite the widely shared view that Renaissance theatre was obsolete, interest in Shakespeare's dramas had slowly grown and entered the literary discussions of the 1750s. For example, an anonymous writer expressed his admiration for Shakespeare in the German edition of *The Guardian Weekly*. He stated in his article that Shakespeare's importance to the theatre world was equal to that of the Greeks, and that this outstanding poet did not abide by Aristotle's rules because he was led by nature (Blinn 15). Nature is, as we see here, a slippery concept that even among admirers of the classics was either understood as a dynamic and ever evolving process or the diametrical opposite, as a subject that abides by laws and rules. The latter concept was, as mentioned earlier, shared by critics like Gottsched. In addition, the article stressed the breadth of Shakespeare's imagination and his realistic depiction of characters (15). Whereas Shakespeare was beginning to be mentioned in literary reviews and discussions, his dramas were generally not available in German until the publication of Wieland's *Theatralische Werke* in the next decade.

Beyond the ready availability of foreign literature, book publishers had an additional economic interest in producing translated books because they provided a way to circumvent

copyrights (McCarthy 9). German authors had to be paid for their output, while the work of foreign authors was effectively free, and translators "inexpensive" (9). In Wieland's case, his salary as a city councillor in Biberach became the subject of a legal dispute and was suspended for over a year. His precarious economic situation drove him to agree to finish his translation in only four years, and installments of *Theatralische Werke* appeared annually between 1762 and 1766. Embraced by many readers aware of Shakespeare's reputation, *Theatralische Werke* enjoyed great popularity. As a result, "Wieland's translation remained the edition of Shakespeare the public read and the one which theatre people based their stage versions on" (Williams 52). *Theatralische Werke* thus became a collection of the most popular dramas of eighteenth-century Germany (52).

Part of *Theatralische Werke's* appeal arises, according to Goethe, from Shakespeare's refusal to "morally regulate the audience," and his decision to open up "to them the multiplicity of the world, demonstrating the fallacy rather than the validity of accepted moral perceptions" (qtd. in Williams 19). The promotion of dialectical thinking and the questioning of hegemonic structures echoes the tenet of a young generation of writers who yearned for more freedom. The way of life of the growing middle class in mid-eighteenth century was just the opposite. Membership in a distinct social rank within bourgeois society dictated each person's personal appearance, customs, and manners. Reading novels offered an escape from these restrictions and stimulated the senses, while the time spent in solitude nurtured a feeling of independence. A growing number of book lovers enjoyed this new freedom. The conclusion to be drawn from Goethe's remarks, according to Simon Williams, is that these plays "can further the audience's growth through expanding their understanding of the world," and can enable "the audience to think independently of an inherited moral system" (19). On the other hand, *Neoclassicism*

promoted old traditions and reinvigorated both the classics and the inherent belief in eternal and unchanging truth. As we have seen, literary reformers of the mid-eighteenth century, most notably Gottsched, also strove to educate the middle class morally. French plays were thought most apt to instruct the audience while reaffirming existing hierarchies and cultural hegemony. Independent thought, the critical examination of mores, morals, and customs, and the nurturing of doubts in monarchical infallibility were new to eighteenth-century German readers of Shakespeare and stimulated questioning, especially in young readers, of existing norms. For Shakespeare did not mince words when he addressed, for example, human pride and pretentiousness:

> But man, proud man,
>
> Dressed in a little brief authority,
>
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
>
> His glassy essence, like an angry ape
>
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
>
> As makes the angels weep . . . (*Measure for Measure* 2.2.121-126)

Such thought-provoking lines were embraced by a wide readership through Wieland's translation:

> O! nur der Mensch, der stolze Mensch, für etliche Augenblicke in ein wenig Ansehen gekleidet, vergißt was er am gewissesten wissen kann, seiner zerbrechlichen Natur; und spielt, gleichsam einem erboßten Affen, so phantastische Streiche vor den Augen des Himmels, dass die Engel darüber weinen . . . (*Theatralische Werke II*, 201-202)

Wieland's translation contributed to the formation of a new German literature. He had successfully made Shakespeare accessible to the German people in a translation that promoted

literary creativity, for "Shakespeare has released rather than disabled the imagination of creative writers" (Williams xi). To give but one example, Goethe's reading of *Theatralische Werke* inspired his writing in both *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* and *Wilhelm Meister* and for "two of his early plays, *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Egmont*" (Schmidt-Jhms 83). Like Hamlet's haunting relationship with his father's ghost, the character Wilhelm Meister was "obsessed with Shakespeare's 'Geist,' who was quintessentially expressive of the symbiosis of Shakespeare and Germany" (Paulin *Critical* 197). In art, as in life, German writers found Shakespeare to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

Shakespeare evolved into a powerful force that motivated young authors to question authority in general and neoclassical hegemony in particular. Every new edition of *Theatralische Werke* inspired and elated its readers. The young Goethe enthusiastically exclaimed his delight when the last volume of Wieland's Shakespeare became available: "Nun erschien Wielands Übersetzung. Sie ward verschlungen, Freunden und Bekannten mitgeteilt und empfohlen" (qtd. in McCarthy 93). Nevertheless, it was rare for Shakespeare enthusiasts to see these plays performed since Shakespeare's bawdy humour and ribald double entendres were incompatible with contemporary conventions. Accordingly, Wieland's Shakespeare dramas were generally not produced for the next decade except in significantly altered and adapted versions. Christian Weisse, for instance, wrote a neoclassical adaptation, *Romeo und Julia* (1767). By complying with contemporary theatre practice, Weisse departed far from the original, and his stage play presented mere fragments of the original (Wagener 9). Goethe, who perceived Wieland's translation as the "Urbild" of Shakespeare's drama, dismissed Weisse's adaptation and hoped to write his own stage version of the play, which he planned to call *Romeo* (9). The popularity of *Theatralische Werke* and the exclusion of more faithful renderings of

Shakespeare's plays thus inspired the search for new forms of presentation and ignited the imagination of young readers. Shakespeare's 'Geist,' or spirit, filled the pages of *Theatralische Werke* and contributed to the discontent with neoclassical theatre practice. It took many years and the end of neoclassical hegemony, however, until performances came close to Shakespeare's originals.

To move from the public performance of the theatre to the private occupation of solitary reading was to move from the social to the antisocial, and pointed to general "incongruities between traditional moral values and the promise of an autonomous bourgeois subject as well as to competing philosophical points of view about what it means to be human" (Mathäs 10). The preservation of moral values stood in direct opposition to a self-serving engagement with imaginary worlds. For example, members of the bourgeoisie were expected to practice the accepted moral code, which included a strong work ethic. Leisurely occupation, such as the reading of novels, was tainted with idleness. In addition, novels of low quality attracted many readers, and these lighthearted diversions stood in direct opposition to the enlightened philosophical belief in general progress and humans' improvement. Reading became a widespread phenomenon that, in excess, interfered with the fulfilment of social duties demanded by the codified behaviour of bourgeois society. In particular, the indiscriminate devouring of books as a means of enjoyment and distraction became a concern. This new habit of unrestrained reading, in which many middle-class women engaged, caused disquietude among literary critics and was treated with general suspicion. The call for dietary measures to restrain excessive reading of literature of sometimes questionable content gave rise to therapists who specialized in the treatment of reading addiction (Koschorke 411). To the worried parents and spouses of their patients, "die Lesesucht," or reading addiction, became the culprit responsible for the

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accumulation of too many ideas in their loved ones' book-crammed minds, a condition which was believed to be the main reason for moral corruption (411).

Reading therapists suspected that excessive reading removes the reader from the traditional effect of poetry where the text is a *mimesis*, or a reflection of the real world, and leads the afflicted reader into an imaginary world instead (Koschorke 420). Not restricted by social norms, mass-produced publications came under the scrutiny of therapists as well. They noticed how far the content of some of these books also deviated from the high standards of Gottsched's teachings respecting *mimesis* and thus did not reflect reality as it should be. Thus, uncontrolled subject matter and the excessive reading habits of many readers collided with the neoclassical aim of upholding strict moral standards. Shakespeare's highly imaginative narratives, the antithesis of Gottsched's reforms, had multiple plots, bawdy humour, numerous locations, various time frames, and scenes of tragedy interspersed with comedic interludes. Although realistic and shockingly honest in depicting flawed characters in extreme situations, Shakespeare's plays did not depict life as it should be, and certainly were often not very probable. These complex stories were ideal examples of the power of the individual imagination and nature's imitation as a dynamic concept or possible reality. Acknowledging the limitations of theatrical presentation, Shakespeare urges the audience in the Prologue to *Henry V* to repair these deficiencies with their imagination:

On your imaginary forces work.

. . . .

Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:

Into a thousand parts divide one man,

And make imaginary puissance.

> Think when we talk of horses, that you see them,
>
> Printing with their proud hoofs i' th' receiving earth;
>
> For 'tis your thoughts that must deck our kings,
>
> Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
>
> Turning th' accomplishment of many years
>
> Into an hour-glass . . . (1.1.18-31)

This imaginary power resonated with young German readers who admired Shakespeare's creative ability to supersede restrictions in art imposed by nature and her laws. Moreover, these young readers employed imagination in art to envision change in their own lives, and Shakespeare became a role-model for self-determinism and questioning authority. For an increasing number of the bourgeoisie their social position was no longer predetermined, and thus many dreamed of a different future and strove for more independence.

Besides its ancient role in creating art and inventing other worlds, imagination had a rather unsettling past tied to magic and sorcery. It was a common medieval belief that one's ability to envision could cross the threshold between imagination and reality and transmogrify a dream into reality (Schulte-Sasse *Imagination* 95). For example, when troubled by a dreadful, oppressive nightmare, or the "mütterlich-monströse Einbildungskraft," a pregnant woman had reason enough to fear grievous consequences such as a miscarriage or physical deformities in her unborn child (95). The concept of imagination had been tied to a body perceived as porous and thus easily affected by external influences and their impression upon the mind. A pivotal shift in the concept of the imagination occurred in the eighteenth century, however, that transformed imagination from a fanciful power carrying negative connotations connected to witchcraft and evil into one of the most revered of abilities: the capacity to imagine a different future.

According to Hume, change could only occur if one could imagine it. Imagination was no longer a threat but the possibility of change. Hume believed in the supreme power of the human imagination to envision a different future and thus assist in decision-making processes (100). The vindication of imagination, however, entailed a dichotomy of body and mind in which thoughts and dreams ceased to be made responsible for causing any physical harm whereas envisioning change and subsequent decision-making were both relegated purely to the mind.

Hume's valorization of imagination strengthened individual liberty and undermined the neoclassical notion that rationalism controls sensuousness (Cassirer 305). What is more, the rationalization of our sensory system was, according to Hume, the very weakness of the neoclassical position, for sensations, including feelings and imagination, were not subject to rational thought but were their master. "Feeling no longer needs to justify itself before the tribunal of reason; on the contrary, reason is summoned before the forum of sensation . . . all authority which pure reason had wielded had been unjust and unnatural, in short, had been usurped authority" (305). Imagination had thus evolved from the realm of superstition to an ability of the mind that even superseded rationalism. After severing ties to witchcraft and magic, Hume vindicated imagination per se. The ancient belief in an unchanging cosmos was challenged by Enlightenment concepts that promoted a progressive improvement of society. Envisioning change superseded all restrictions that Aristotle's *mimesis* had imposed. Hume's imagination referred to the possibility of a different future, which required the establishing of new concepts, including education and individual liberty.

Similarly, Baumgarten challenged the traditional view of imagination and reason in his *Aesthetica*, published in 1750, which marked "the turning point in how the imagination was valued" (Holmes). His treatise, which strongly influenced the recognition of the domain of sense

experience, relativized the importance of reason by stating that "imagination along with the fine arts" forms an "aesthetic truth" and thus is "on equal epistemic footing as reason" (Holmes). According to Baumgarten, reason had dominated the arts for over two millennia but was now challenged by "aesthetic truth," which undermined the traditional restriction on imagination and the "imitation of nature via a system of learnable rules" (Holmes). Creativity had not flourished, and originality was impossible within the traditionally rigid system's "fixed set of ideas" (Holmes). One could argue that the suffocation of creativity was not ancient but due to the relatively recent development of stringent rules connected to Gottsched's moralizing art. Nevertheless, Baumgarten made an important point in his claim that restrictions on the Aristotelian tradition of *mimesis* ceased to exist when the focus of eighteenth-century scientists and philosophers on human perception transcended set rules and expanded the concept of creativity. Basing 'aesthetic truth' on human perception, Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* became highly influential. Lessing, among those deeply influenced by Baumgarten, was convinced that perception played a crucial role in the impact of tragedies, and thought that spectators could only develop empathy if they could feel the agony of the character.

Having travelled to imaginary worlds as avid readers of novels, and affected by the new valorization of the imagination, the *Sturm and Drang* spurned neoclassical dogmatism. Hume and Baumgarten had established theoretical frameworks for new concepts of imagination which not only allowed but also encouraged the rebels of the *Sturm and Drang* in their search for creativity and individual freedom. As young authors began to create their imaginative universes and envision a different future, imagination regained its position as a dynamic force within a unified cosmos and became the ruler of the artistic universe. Wilhelm, the main character in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* by Goethe, reflects this change. He reads Shakespeare

(presumably Wieland's translation) and "becomes aware for the first time of the wealth of his perceptions and the abundance of his imagination. Shakespeare works on him like a magician who entirely possesses his mind" (Williams 2). A philosophical shift in the concept of imagination thus removed the limitations imposed by traditional rules and turned Shakespeare's 'magic' into an inspiration for self-determining authors. But that is one of the effects of the publication of Wieland's Shakespeare project which will be examined in detail in the Epilogue. For now, we will first turn to the translation theories and approaches of Wieland's time and then to Wieland's translation project itself.

Chapter 3: *Theatralische Werke* – The Translation Project

Although translated literature became immensely popular in the eighteenth century, there were few treatises on translation theories (Willenberg 258). The credo of most translators in the period was the belief that a "literal translation had to be faithful to the original" (Stockhorst 11). However, an indisputably original manuscript written by one author without any collaboration or later alterations did not always exist. In Shakespeare's case, for example, since it is known that the creation of drama in Renaissance England was often collaborative, it is not surprising that in at least four of his plays fellow playwrights were actively involved in the writing process (Shakespeare *Oxford* xxxvii). Furthermore, Shakespeare rarely invented the basic structures of his dramas but instead turned the content of existing tales, myths, or histories into extraordinary plots. As well, plays were always adapted and changed according to the requirements of the venue, audience, and actors. Thus, compositional teamwork, borrowed plots or plot elements, and the constant alterations of the text imposed by practical restraints or artistic decisions all oppose the concept of one original source and the idea of an authoritative script.

Quite often, there was also no such thing as an original manuscript or one authorized by the author. For instance, more than half of Shakespeare's texts were only "printed and copied in manuscripts after his death" (Shakespeare *New Oxford* 53). Even the plays that went into print in his lifetime are problematic and prone to errors because "he [Shakespeare] was himself, supremely, a man of the theatre. We have seen that he displayed no interest in how plays were printed" (Shakespeare *Oxford* xxxix). One can imagine how Shakespeare struggled to keep the Globe open while London was beleaguered by recurring plagues and political censorship threatened her authors, who where fighting to hire or retain the best actors in times of great competition, and collaborating with others to finance and manage the cooperatively owned

Globe. Amid all this, Shakespeare always had to be mindful of a play's economic feasibility, including considerations of costuming, sets, available actors, and, above all, the production's entertainment value, since each of these factors played an essential role in the success of a performance that would hopefully attract crowds of spectators. Printing complete and correct manuscripts of his plays was thus understandably not the most pressing matter for Shakespeare, whose plays were originals only in the sense of uniqueness since none of the many performances were precisely alike, and the manuscripts were just letter-filled pages waiting to be adapted and imbued with life. In addition, as Samuel Johnson wrote in the 1765 Preface to his edition of Shakespeare's plays, "his works were transcribed for the players by those who . . . seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errours; they were . . . sometimes mutilated by the actors . . . and were at last printed without correction by the press" (qtd. in Kronenberger 691).

Despite the challenges of finding an original to which one could be faithful, French eighteenth-century translators commonly "assumed that every language could be translated into any other language" (Stockhorst 10). This claim was supported by many theorists, among them René Descartes and Nicolas Beauzée (10), and filled translators and critics alike with an over-confidence that led to disappointments. Shakespeare's language is filled with archaic diction and frequent ambiguities, and therefore posed extraordinary interpretive obstacles to English scholars and even more so for any translator. Semantic and pragmatic problems had to be solved. Scholars had "to work out what his language means" to then be able to "appreciate the effects that his choice of language conveys" (Crystal xlv). The presumption that everything was translatable made the task of rendering Shakespeare's plays even more controversial. Wieland encountered various instances where questions respecting the meaning of Shakespeare's

language arose, only to discover that they had already been the subject of countless discussions and disagreements among English scholars and poets, including implications for the action onstage and the audience's reactions. One such point of discussion was the ambiguity of Hamlet's advice to Ophelia, "get thee to a nunn'ry" (*Hamlet* 8.120). In Elizabethan English, 'nunnery' means either "a place of residence for a body or community of nuns, a building in which nuns live as a religious community; a convent," or "a brothel" (OED). Because 'nunnery' had two entirely different meanings, his advice is either for Ophelia to withdraw to a chaste religious life or to sell her body as a common prostitute. The double meaning of nunnery "adds to the tone of sexual disgust" (*Hamlet* 8.120n) in Hamlet's speech, it likewise increases Ophelia's agony. Since Hamlet and she were lovers, he not only breaks his implied vow to wed her but also insults her by implying that her loving embrace was due to her promiscuity. Such ambiguities ensure that the work of a translator always entails the editing of the text because choosing a word with one meaning results in a loss of ambiguity and a gain in clarity but is deprived of any deliberate equivocation on the part of the author. Of course, the translator may find an equivalently ambiguous word, but it is more than possible that the word requiring translation has various meanings, does not exist in the receiving language, is undocumented slang, or cannot be found in the resources available to the translator. In this case, Wieland knowingly or inadvertently removes the double entendre present in the original English when he chooses to have Hamlet propose that Ophelia retreat to a convent, "In ein Nonnen-Kloster, geh." (Wieland *Theatralische Werke VIII* 111).

Every translation contains a collection of such choices, errors, and inadvertences, with the consequential loss of nuance, differing meanings, and cultural references. However, despite these challenges and shortcomings, each translation is also an addition to the receiving literary body and

invites readers to encounter another culture and language. Thus, even for the exceptionally gifted poet that Wieland unquestionably was, it was an audacious undertaking to bring Shakespeare's imaginative world which had filled the Globe's "most excellent canopy . . . this majestical roof fretted with golden fire" (*Hamlet* 7.253-254) not only into the German language but into the heart of German culture.

Disregarding the fact that not every text or language is translatable, theoretical discussion concentrated entirely on transmission parameters. Beyond the divergence "between literal translations (aiming at the formal equivalence of source and target text) and paraphrastic translations (aiming at the functional equivalence of source and target text)" was the concern of whether accuracy should trump the beauty of a translation (Stockhorst 10). In the 1760s, the customary favouring of beauty over precision transformed French infidelity to Gallic accuracy as former 'belles infidèles' such as Diderot, Voltaire, and Chateaubriand began to support "the new exactitude in translation theory" (11). Nevertheless, this supposed agreement on "exactitude in translation" became the subject of great discontent within the German-speaking literary world after a heated, literary dispute. Whereas Gottsched advocated "a meticulous, yet merely paraphrastic translation, in order to facilitate the access to foreign texts," in Zurich, Breitinger and Johann Jakob Bodmer, on the contrary, "assigned a downright sacrosanct status to the original text" (12). Bodmer, for example, revised his first published translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* four times within fifty years.

The realization of exactitude was, however, a different matter altogether, and "in practice, theoretical commitments to faithfulness played only a minor role even in Germany, while omissions, amendments and modifications were the real order of the day" (Stockhorst 13). In the same vein, Wieland completed the translation of twenty-two Shakespeare plays in only four

years, but the result had many shortcomings, especially considering that he took on the project without a profound knowledge of English and with only a few literary sources at hand (Willenberg 305). As an illustration, he left scenes untranslated when he thought them superfluous or in bad taste, like the tavern scene in *Henry IV Part I* where Falstaff, crowned with a pillow and drink in hand, mockingly impersonates Hal's father, the king. He also cut almost every song, and translated all but *Ein St. Johanis Nacht-Traum* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) into prose, not blank verse. Thus, disagreements on translation parameters and Wieland's interventions and omissions were reflected in the limitations of *Theatralische Werke* and its ambivalent reception by literary critics. Yet, these apparent shortcomings surprisingly contributed to its success, as we will see.

A group of fervent Shakespeare admirers voiced their discontent with Wieland's footnotes because they perceived his annotations as presumptuous and heretical. A leading figure in this disagreement was Johann Gottfried Herder, who took issue with what he perceived as a lack of feeling in Wieland's prose. In addition, some influential neoclassical critics rejected Wieland's approach. For example, the writer and pedagogue Christian F. Weisse employed his criticism to both lash out at Wieland and disparage young authors of the *Sturm und Drang* movement when he claimed that the translation "poses a threat to the pursuit of good German style by seducing a host of second- and third-rate authors to imitate its harmful model" (McCarthy 27). This last comment is a reference to the skyrocketing number of young writers who believed in the literary *genius*, someone who is endowed with such natural talents and gifts that their superb writing appears to be effortless. Their greatness is not achieved by hard work but flows from the pen of an inspired mind. As a result, the rather mediocre output from self-described geniuses lowered the overall quality of publications generally. The rapidly expanding

book trade and uncritical demand for 'Lesefutter' gave these average authors a ready market. However, this pervasive criticism of Wieland's project and Weisse's "overall negative tone set the precedent to what dominated in the following years" (27). Moreover, this hateful critique was strongly reinforced by Wilhelm Gerstenberg, whose "protracted and consistently belittling critique in his *Briefe über die Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur*. . . drowned out more positive reviews and prevented recognition of the positive aspect of the footnotes" (27). Wieland could not satisfy either side of the literary divide. His objectivity and open criticism of Shakespeare's shortcomings upset readers who venerated Shakespeare and regarded him as an infallible genius, while he also disappointed neoclassical critics who saw in his many neologisms a danger to the unification of the German language. Yet, *Theatralische Werke* received high praise from such literary giants of Wieland's time as Lessing, Goethe, and the Shakespeare expert Johann Joachim Eschenburg. They "hailed its invigorating achievements, seeing in the elisions and the prose rendition poetic innovation suited to reproduce the spirit of the original" (McCarthy 63). Lessing expressed his pleasure in exuberant praise: "Wir haben einen deutschen Shakespeare" (B. Menke 15-16). Wieland's poetic panache and editorial decisions made him particularly suitable for this daunting task of translation since he "had versatility and adaptability, the translator's virtues" (Paulin *Critical* 101). The proof lay in *Theatralische Werke's* great popularity, for it was "probably more widely read than any other published drama in Germany" (Williams 52). Not only had Wieland tackled the challenge of translating a major part of Shakespeare's dramas into German, but he had also produced plays that appealed to the common reader.

Chapter 4: How Shakespeare's Plays Became Reading Dramas

Wieland grew up in the Enlightenment era and a cultural world that was steeped in an understanding of neoclassical form. He could therefore not imagine seeing Shakespeare's plays performed as written. Echoing the didactic attitude of Gottsched, Wieland asserted, "Hier sehen wir das Theater als eine Schule der Tugend und Sitten, als ein politisch-moralisches Institut an" (*Briefe* 20). Shakespeare's puns and vulgarities were distasteful to the poet in Wieland, who ascribed them to the "ruling taste of the time and the lower portion of the parterre" and often omitted them (Williams 13). Nevertheless, Wieland admired Shakespeare for the beauty of his poetry and his psychologically astute depiction of characters and decided to become his translator. Agreeing with the prevailing view that unadapted Shakespeare was unsuitable for the stage, Wieland decided to translate the plays in a manner that would allow each reader to imagine their own unique performance. Bearing in mind neoclassical standards of manners and decorum, Wieland used his experience both as a poet and as a stage director to bring Shakespeare's plays to life in a form that could be embraced by eighteenth-century readers but was still close to the original experience.

Even though Wieland promoted the neoclassical morals and values of thinkers such as Gottsched, he rebuked Gottsched for his rigid application of Aristotle's *mimesis*. He went so far in his rejection as to defend Shakespeare's apparent formlessness, and argued that "Shakespeare could have observed the unities had he wished, but he did not care to" (Williams 12). Wieland called for more flexibility regarding theatrical form and demanded that "the artificiality of the stage should be accepted and the playwright be allowed freedom in his choice of place, his use of time, and his construction of the action" (Williams 12-13). Wieland's plea for more tolerance foreshadowed a significant shift in aesthetics that occurred later in the century. Until then,

however, Shakespeare's plays had to be adapted to contemporary conventions or they were not performed. During the years when Wieland dedicated himself to translating Shakespeare's plays for the German reader, he tried also to establish a new form of novel with his *Geschichte des Agathon,* a Fielding-like excursion to ancient Greece. This hope was thwarted with the rise of a movement that embraced individualism, subjectivity, and extreme emotionalism, the *Sturm und Drang*. And whereas *Theatralische Werke* inspired young authors in the creation of their own work, Wieland's novel fell out of favour only years after its first publication with the rise of new forms of literature such as epistolary novels like the *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* by Sophie von La Roche (published by Wieland), or *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* by Goethe. Ironically, *Theatralische Werke* contributed to a pivotal aesthetic shift in literature, but one could almost say that Wieland wrote himself out of history as a novelist.

Wieland's first encounter with Shakespeare and the English language occurred early in his adult life during his stay at Zurich with Breitinger and Bodmer, who were both admirers of Shakespeare and known for their skillful and erudite English translations. Shakespeare had a deep impact on Wieland, who with youthful admiration described the English bard as "der größte unter allen Genies und zugleich der vollkommenste und extravaganteste unter allen Scribenten" (qtd. in McCarthy 23). Soon he was convinced that Shakespeare's dramas must be made accessible to German readers and therefore agreed to render twenty-two of Shakespeare's plays into German.

Foreign literature was often translated by poets and writers of high repute, "among them Voltaire, Pope, and Lessing" (Oz-Salzberger *Translation*). Some of them, like Alexander Pope, who translated Homer's *Iliad* and *The Odyssey* into English, were even celebrated and generously rewarded for their exceptional achievements in the field. Generally, "the

caliber of its translators at times foretold and affected a book's success in translation" (Oz-Salzberger *Translation*). Wieland, who would become the first major novelist in Germany (Paulin *Critical* 101), was already established as a poet when he decided to bring Shakespeare to Germany. His literary fame and poetic ability helped to ensure the commercial success of his translation, which facilitated the ultimate naturalization of Shakespeare as a 'German' author.

In 1761, Wieland was the first person to stage a complete Shakespeare drama in the German language on a German stage. Not only was this the first attempt in Germany to present a full production, not just scenes, of Shakespeare, it was, according to Ernst Stadler, "unter seinem Namen und ohne grobe Entstellung" (qtd. in Leuca 247). "It was also the first such effort in continental Europe" (Leuca 247n3). *The Tempest* was translated by Wieland and performed in his hometown, Biberach, under the title *Der erstaunliche Schiffbruch oder die verzauberte Insel* (247). Although a local success, the production did not have a great impact on the acceptance of Shakespeare on the German stage generally. A possible explanation for this limited influence is that *The Tempest* is one of the few dramas by Shakespeare with numerous neoclassical features. Limited to one location (the island) and one plot, the events are chronologically structured, and the play requires only a small cast of twelve characters.[12]

As mentioned earlier, theatrical productions in Shakespeare's time were communal events that were characterized by a close relationship between actor and audience. The Globe Theatre's elongated thrust stage jutted twenty feet into the audience, and both the actors and the spectators enjoyed the theatrical energy that such physical closeness made possible. In

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[12] Most other plays by Shakespeare are much more populous and can contain up to sixty characters, as does, for example *Henry VI, Part II.*

Renaissance fashion, characters often spoke directly to the audience when they pondered

questions or problems in soliloquies, or they whispered remarks in 'asides' loud enough to be

heard by the audience but that by convention went unnoticed by those on stage. Moreover, the

groundlings, ground floor audience members without seats who stood around the stage, actively

participated in the performance. For example, the audience in *Julius Caesar* suddenly transforms

into a crowd of plebians gathered to hear of Caesar's death from Antony, whose moving speech

famously begins, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears" (*Julius Caesar* 3.2.65). The

Globe was not alone in offering the experience of a communal theatrical event, for even

wandering theatre troupes performing in marketplaces could have a similar unifying effect on

their audience. Villagers and townspeople surrounding the market's temporary stage frequently

became part of the play, for instance, when actors entered the stage by walking through the

crowd or heckled their fellow actors while pretending to be spectators. In contrast, German mid-

eighteenth-century performances took place in former court theatres with proscenium arch

stages.

     Lessing, who had rebelled against Gottsched, revolutionized the theatre and invented the

new genre of the '*Bürgerliches Trauerspiel*'. These tragedies, such as *Miss Sara Sampson* and

Emilia Galotti, centered on ordinary bourgeois people. Yet, performances remained physically

distant because of the limitations of the proscenium stages, and theatrically distant because of the

illusion of *imitatio naturae* sought by Lessing, who followed Denis Diderot's theory that a strict

separation of audience and actors is necessary to create such an illusion.[13] Illusion was believed to

be a highly effective tool because the state of passivity it induced in spectators allowed them

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[13] See p. 17, Lehmann, Johannes F. *Der Blick durch die Wand. Zur Geschichte des Theaterzuschauers und des Visuellen bei Diderot und Lessing.* Rombach, 2000.

to identify with the suffering of a bourgeois hero more readily. As a result, the audience would theoretically become more sympathetic and proactive in identifying problems and finding solutions. This strict separation of spectators and actors was like an invisible veil between the audience and the stage, and was called the 'fourth wall'. The previous physical closeness and exchange of energy between performers and the spectators was replaced by an attempt to create an illusion of perfect naturalness and credibility.

Other aspects of the architecture of court theatres also contributed to this feeling of isolation. Even though Shakespeare's Globe stage was flanked by two boxes for the wealthy, the two balconies of the three-storey building were open and filled with people who could afford the more expansive view provided by a higher vantage point overlooking both the stage and the groundlings. The balconies on the upper floors of most court theatres, on the other hand, were divided entirely into box seats and turned towards the audience on the main floor. Attending court theatres had always been a dual performance in which the nobility and celebrities could publicly parade while watching the audience watching them. The result was a heightened self-awareness and a constant self-assessment of their own behaviour that caused members of the audience in the second half of the eighteenth century to feel even more disconnected from the performance on stage. Another factor was the sheer number of theatregoers: a quickly growing middle-class with a penchant for diversion turned the theatre into an entertainment for the masses. Thus, the venues grew larger in the second half of the century, and actors were physically even more distant from much of the audience. This caused frustration in countless spectators who complained that they could not hear the actors' voices. The cumulative effect of these developments transformed a visit to the theatre from a communal event into a socially distant, isolating, and at times even frustrating experience. Challenged by contemporary theatre

practice, authors explored other routes to connect to their audience. The new 'Leselust' and readers' yearning for personal connection inspired playwrights to experiment with new forms of presentation and "envision literature as a comfortable coterie," and thus regain a close relationship with their readers (Nuss 3). In the comfort and privacy of their homes, book lovers could establish a personal connection to authors. Furthermore, the book itself evolved into a materialized manifestation of this bond and was considered a friend. An example of this occurs in the Preface that was added to the second edition of *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* in which Goethe's fictional editor warmly recommends embracing the book as a friend in times of hardship: "schöpfe Trost aus seinem [Werther's] Leiden, und lass das Büchlein deinen Freund sein."

Wieland realized the advantage that literature offered for the translation of Shakespeare's Renaissance plays. He became a mediator of Shakespeare's narratives, vividly imagined the plays, and conveyed this experience to his readers. Through his annotations, commentaries regarding unresolved ambiguities, additional stage directions, and explanations for his omission of scenes or text passages, he reestablished a social relationship between author, translator, and reading audience, a relationship that had suffered under the conditions in modern theatres. Shakespeare's plays in *Theatralische Werke* became a mixture of immediacy, the unmediated presentation of the plays, and mediacy, Wieland's telling a story as the narrating translator. Even though Wieland assumes authority for the transmission of the narratives, his dialectical translation approach, which encourages different points of view, constantly engages in a discourse with his readers. In addition, the narration of stories and presentations onstage are both suitable for a mimetic representation.

Aristotle's explication of *mimesis* in his *Poetics* encompasses both the narrative and the direct presentation:

> Given both the same means and the same kind of object for imitation, one may either speak at one moment in narrative and at another in an assumed character . . . or the imitators may represent the whole story dramatically, as though they were actually doing the things described. (1448)

Even though narration is not 'showing' the plot, the diegesis is nevertheless a performative act that invokes the ancient role of a storyteller. Confined to the pages of *Theatralische Werke* as he was, however, Wieland's achievement was to breathe life into Shakespeare's characters with his prose translation and guided narration. Shakespeare's Renaissance theatre had superseded reality in its ability to extend Aristotle's *mimesis*, and thus the content of stories, beyond one location, one day or even one lifetime, and consequently to allow dramatic possibilities that were unhampered by the constraints of time or space in our physical existence. Wieland's role as a narrating translator was a dynamic process of imitation in which the plays in *Theatralische Werke* preserved the core of Shakespeare's plays while they were transformed into German reading dramas. Wieland's explanations are interspersed throughout to bridge the distance of time, the differences of culture, and Shakespeare's archaic diction.

Whereas the original versions of the plays could not be staged, *Theatralische Werke* could be enjoyed as an interior voice in readers' minds or read aloud to others. Reading *Theatralische Werke* offered the choice of another form of mimetic presentation than that of a presentation on the stage the dramatic reading. Coinciding with the sudden increase of literacy and the eighteenth-century phenomenon of 'Lesesucht,' reading itself had become an important part of people's daily lives and, thus, their reality. As a result, the reading of the

dramas in *Theatralische Werke* offered another mimetic layer. A dramatic reading, for example, was at once an opportunity to assume the role of a well-liked character or villain of a play, and although the quality of the impersonation of characters might only reach the standard of the first rehearsals of a play, this very quality of imperfection would have added to the communal enjoyment of the performance. We find an example of 'Gesellschaftskultur' in the social life of Sophie von La Roche: "Geselligkeiten wie die im Hause La Roche bieten den Bürgern die Möglichkeit, zusammenzukommen, sich zu unterhalten, neue Literatur zu rezipieren und persönliche Beziehungen zu knüpfen" (Nenon *Geselligkeit* 31). Wieland's commentaries and footnotes provided the performing reader with additional contextual and other information that could guide a dramatic reading or be shared with listeners. Thus, this additional layer of mimetic presentation in Wieland's reading dramas carried an image of Shakespeare's world into eighteenth-century Germany and vivified Shakespeare's Renaissance plays in the form of literature.

Even though Wieland omitted text passages that he found incompatible with current taste, he explained his reasoning in footnotes and engaged in an exchange between translator and reader by taking on different perspectives. This is acknowledged by recent scholarship as a very modern approach: the act of translation becomes a constant oscillation between source text, translation, and reader.[14] "This concept of loyalty towards all parties involved in the translation event" is, in Mary Snell-Hornby's opinion, "a valuable contribution towards a framework of translation ethics" (78). Contemporary translation theories recognize Wieland's achievement as a translator and acknowledge the poetic accomplishment of the translation. Indeed, Wieland

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[14] Snell-Hornby: *The Turns of Translation Studies*, 77-78.

appears to McCarthy "as the first substantive translator in early modern German literature who valued the act of translation as a multimedial event not confined to verbal communication alone" (64). Wieland's striving for the unattainable goal of recreating the source texts became a discourse on various levels and remained a project in process. Far ahead of his time, Wieland could not please either side of the literary divide, and his influence as a writer and translator dwindled with the rise of the *Sturm und Drang*. Today, however, Wieland's progressive approach that turned a collection of plays from a distant era and country into the most popular dramas of eighteenth- century Germany has attracted further scholarly inquiries such as McCarthy's *Shakespeare as German Author,* Paulin's *The Critical Reception of Shakespeare in Germany,* and Häublein's *Die Entdeckung Shakespeares auf der deutschen Bühne des 18. Jahrhunderts: Adaption und Wirkung der Vermittlung auf dem Theater,* to name but a few.

Goethe also developed a translation theory in which he regards Wieland's approach as exemplary for the introduction of foreign literature. Under the influence of Herder, Goethe initially reversed his enthusiasm for *Theatralische Werke,* but he acknowledged decades later the quality of the translation. He called Wieland's approach ideal for introducing a work of literature because *Theatralische Werke* truly brought Shakespeare's spirit to the German reader. Foreshadowing modern translation techniques, the role of the translator as a mediator between author and reader was a focal point of Goethe's translation theory. He introduced a three-epoch system that illustrated different stages in the transmission of literature:

> The first acquaints the reader with the original in a prose translation, which proves to be the best introduction to the foreign original for readers with no background. The second phase entails an effort on the translator's part to appropriate the foreign text and present it

as his/her own . . . The third epoch is the result of transformations from the first and second. (qtd. in McCarthy 64)

Goethe emphasizes the importance of the prose form because it makes a translated text accessible to the common reader. Eighteenth-century Germany experienced a surge in literacy, and readers came from various social and educational backgrounds, including book lovers from the lower classes who generally had no access to higher education like servants, tradespeople, and women and children. Wieland decided to translate all of Shakespeare's plays into prose except one, *Die St. Johanis Nacht (Midsummer Night's Dream),* which he rendered into blank verse. As one of the first German poets to write poems in blank verse, Wieland would have been very capable of translating all the plays into that form had he chosen to do so. Prose, however, appeared to him to be a more neutral style. In addition, prose dialogue heightened the sense of the play's realism, which appealed to readers who were familiar with lifelike stories in novels.

A complete translation in blank verse would also not have been faithful to the original since most of Shakespeare's dramas were only partly composed in blank verse. For example, more than half of the lines in *Macbeth* are written in prose. This alternation between iambic pentameter and prose offered Shakespeare another tool to develop intricately nuanced speeches. These subtle changes are employed for various reasons. Firstly, Shakespeare could express differences in social position. His common people express themselves more often in prose whereas the members of the nobility generally speak in blank verse. Here are two examples, beginning firstly with the weaver Bottom's lines from *A Midsummers Night's Dream*, which are in prose. In this example, we can see how at times even prose can sound stilted and unlike everyday speech, at least to our modern ears:

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to

their eyes. I will move storms. I will condole, in some measure. To the rest — Yet my

chief humour is for a tyrant. (*MND* 1.2.19-22)

An example of the heightened speech of the nobility may be found in *Hamlet* in the famous

soliloquy of Prince Hamlet, written completely in blank verse:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles

And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep:

No more; and, by a sleep, to say we end

The heartache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd, to die, to sleep – (8.57-65)

A second reason for the alternation between prose and blank verse was to convey the character,

mood, and mental capacity of a character through the author's choice of words and form of

speech. The rhythmic speech patterns of the iambic pentameter facilitate recitation while the

heartbeat-like thump of the repetitive beat of the stresses in the language carries the story

forward. For example, in the famous storm scene King Lear stands unsheltered while lightning

flashes, thunder peals, rain pelts down, and a raging wind tugs at his wet clothing. Lear's

confrontation with nature begins nobly with the King in full command of his mental faculties.

His speech to the heavens is correspondingly presented in multi-syllabic blank verse:

You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,

> Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
>
> Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
>
> Smite flat the thick rotundity of the world. (*King Lear* 9. 4-7)

Soon, however, his exhaustion and confusion transform his speech pattern and language into prose that finally deteriorates into mere utterances about earthly needs in words of mainly one syllable:

> My wit begins to turn.
>
> [*To the Fool*] Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy. Art cold?
>
> I am cold myself. [*To Kent*] Where is this straw, my fellow? (*King Lear* 9. 63-65)

Without the ability to move between poetry and prose, Wieland's rendition in prose loses the subtlety available to Shakespeare and is also much shorter, but gains a style that makes the dramas accessible to the common reader:

> Ihr Schweflichten, meine Gedanken ausrichtenden Blitze, senget mein weisses Haupt;
>
> und du allerschütternder Donner, schlage die dike Runde der Welt platt…
>
> In der That, mein guter Junge; komm führ uns in die Hütte — (*Theatralische Werke I*
>
> 228)

Wieland's realistic prose became very popular among authors of the *Sturm und Drang* movement who adopted this style for their own plays. The effect was immense, states Renata Häublein: "Sämtliche Bühnenfassungen Shakespearescher Dramen übernahmen diese Sprachform, die über die Aufführungen beträchtlich zur Entwicklung eines realistischen Spielstils beitrug" (27). Wieland's rendition into prose, which was why many literary critics dismissed his translation, ironically not only made Shakespeare more accessible and contributed

to *Theatralische Werke's* wide distribution, but also had far-reaching effects upon future translations of Shakespeare and the style of German acting generally.

Goethe places Wieland's translation in the second epoch of his translation theory, and therefore describes Wieland as one who acquaints the reader with the original in prose and makes the translation his own. As the first German interpreter who presents his audience with a mixture of reading drama and mediated narrative, Wieland turns *Theatralische Werke* into a personal project. In addition, the translation is also steeped in Wieland's own vocabulary, words that he invented to master Shakespeare's verbal ingenuity. Shakespeare was a great inventor of words, having found the standard vocabulary inadequate. In addition, his texts are filled with a varied diction that encompasses over twenty thousand words, more than any other poet, which in turn drove Wieland to invent countless neologisms. These newly added expressions enhanced the German 'Wortschatz' (literally "word treasure"), and many are still used today, such as "lebensüberdrüssig / world-weary," "turmhoch / tow'ring," or "Feen-Land / fairy-land" (Paulin *Critical* 112n125). This host of new words and compounds from *Theatralische Werke* enlivened and enriched the German language. Wieland himself saw his translation as an ongoing project and invited other writers to contribute their own translations. This would, according to Goethe's theory, finally move Shakespeare's works into Goethe's third epoch. Not surprisingly, Wieland welcomed the revision of *Theatralische Werke* by the Shakespeare expert Johann Joachim Eschenburg ten years after its first publication. Wieland promoted translations as a cosmopolite who believed in the importance of cultural exchange. Translations were at the core of the Enlightenment because they made an international exchange of intellectual discourse and

cultural diversity possible. A literary prize in Wieland's honour is awarded today to remind us of his lifelong encouragement and support of young translators.[15]

Wieland's role extends beyond the intermediation of Shakespeare's drama, the translated text, and the reader because Wieland's footnotes also establish a close connection between the translating narrator and the reader. For example, in *Prinz von Dänemark* (*Hamlet)*, Wieland speaks indirectly to his audience by addressing the reader with the more neutral indefinite pronoun 'man,' and states that "man würde diese ganze Scene ebenso gern ausgelassen haben, wenn man dem Leser nicht eine Idee von der berüchtigten Todtengräber- Scene hätte geben wollen" (*Theatralische Werke VIII.* 203). Yet, he then provides an explanation for his reasoning for the partial omission of the grave-digger scene. What we see in this footnote is Wieland's consideration for the reader's inquisitiveness that he satisfies with a shortened version of the scene. Here is an excerpt:

> *Hamlet.* Ich frage, wie der Mann heißt, für den du das Grab machst?
>
> *Todtengräber.* Ich mach es für keinen Mann, Herr.
>
> *Hamlet.* Für was für eine Frau dann?
>
> *Todtengräber.* Auch für keine Frau.
>
> *Hamlet.* Wer soll dann darin begraben werden?
>
> *Todtengräber.* Eine die in ihrem Leben ein Weibsbild war, aber, Gott tröst ihre Seele!
>
> nun ist sie todt. (*Theatralische Werke VIII.* 203-204)

Even though shorter than the English version, the scene allows an insight into the word games and laconic humour of the *Todtengräber*. Moreover, Hamlet is revealed as initially completely unaware that this grave is prepared for his former lover, Ophelia.

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[15] The Wieland Translation Prize is awarded biannually for an outstanding translation into German.

In addition, even though parts of this scene remained untranslated, by highlighting this gap Wieland creates a form of record-keeping. Bettine Menke concludes that by drawing attention to the incompleteness of the translation of *Theatralische Werke* Wieland also creates what Walter Benjamin describes as a mode of "Fortleben" in which a text lives on in its incompleteness (36). By leaving a void, untranslated passages keep the reader in suspense. They produce a longing for completeness which in this case could not be satisfied unless a bilingual reader consulted a complete English version. Unresolved puzzles have the effect of keeping our mind occupied. We long to learn the solution, discover the secret, and prove our intelligence. This problem-solving ability is responsible for our continuing effort to assemble pieces until they lead to a conclusion. Withholding information is therefore a technique that is often used in literature to cause a lingering awareness of incongruent or incomplete information in readers' minds, and encourage them to fill in the gap. Wieland's footnotes have a similar effect. Whereas on the one hand they offer answers in the form of summaries of the omitted passages, on the other hand they raise new questions concerning the information which remains concealed. Wieland thus hoped to stimulate further inquiries and would have agreed with Goethe that the steps and various approaches as outlined in the third epoch of Goethe's translation theory are necessary to achieve the best result for the introduction of foreign literature.

Decades later, at Wieland's funeral, Goethe alluded in his eulogy to the late author's penchant for lively discussions: "Es war Wieland in allen Stücken weniger um einen festen Standpunkt als um eine geistreiche Debatte zu thun" (qtd. in B. Menke 35). The footnotes in *Theatralische Werke* are an example of Wieland's desire to engage in intellectual debates. The next example of Wieland's dialectical approach, in which he motivates the reader to take on multiple perspectives, gives an insight not only into Wieland's work as the editor of

Shakespeare's text but also into his concerns regarding the preservation of manners and decorum. While explaining his rejection of William Warburton's decision to assign parts of Hermia's speech in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to Lysander, Wieland enters into a hypothetical debate with Warburton, the editor of an English edition of Shakespeare's plays, Shakespeare, and the reader. Warburton assumes that it must have been a mistake on Shakespeare's part to have Hermia say these words because female decorum would prevent her from making such a declaration. Warburton therefore assigns this speech to Lysander. In Shakespeare's original version, Hermia assures Lysander of her love, and expresses her willingness to flee with him:

> My good Lysander,
>
> I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
>
> By his best arrow with the golden head,
>
> By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
>
> By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
>
> By that fire which burned the Carthage queen
>
> When the false Trojan under sail was seen;
>
> By all the vows that ever men have broke —
>
> In number more than ever women spoke —
>
> In that same place thou hast appointed me
>
> Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee. (*MND* 1.168-178)

Rejecting Warburton's intervention, Wieland becomes a mediator between Shakespeare's original text, Warburton's intervention, and the customs and manners of eighteenth-century society. He explains in his footnote how he will preserve Hermia's honour:

Damit aber doch daß von Warburton in dem Text vermißte Decorum gerettet werde, habe ich nach seinem Beispiel die Freyheit gebraucht, auf die Worte, Hermias, my good Lysander', den Lysander sagen zu lassen: Zaudert Hermia? Welches er im Englischen nicht sagt. Worauf Hermia dann, als ob sie sich recolligire, erwidert: Nein! Bey Amors … (*Theatralische Werke I* 12)

The addition of the little phrase, "Zaudert Hermia?", is an example of Wieland as a mediating narrator:

A Midsummer Night's Dream:

Hermia: My good Lysander / I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow / By his best arrow with the golden head / By the simplicity of Venus' doves. (1.169-171)

Ein St. Johanis Nachts-Traum:

Hermia: Ach! Lysander!

Lysander: Zaudert Hermia? [my emphasis]

Hermia: Nein! / Bey Armors stärkstem Bogen schwör ich dir / Beim schärfsten seiner goldgespitzten Pfeile / Lysander, bey der unschuldvollen Einfalt / Der Dauben, die der Venus Wagen ziehen / Beym Feuer das Carthagos Königin — / Verzehre, da sie mit geblähten Segeln Den ungetreuen Troyer ziehen sah; (*Theatralische Werke I* 12)

The addition of "Zaudert Hermia?" reveals Hermia's maidenly hesitation in making this decision and is meant to preserve the propriety of Hermia's behaviour, thus making her agreement to flee with her lover more palatable to Wieland's readers. Especially interesting is the fact that the change is noted by Wieland himself, who does not try to obfuscate his intervention. To the contrary, the discussion of various approaches and an open debate are at the core of his approach.

Wieland uses the same technique when providing background information, as in his reference in *Timon of Athens* to the medical treatment for venereal disease in Renaissance England. Wieland modestly assumes that this would most likely be unknown to most German readers. Referring to Warburton's explanation in his footnote, he suggests that Timandra, the prostitute, should "bring die rosenwangichte Jugend zur Hunger-Cur, und zur Diät" (*Theatralische Werke III* 265). Then, in a footnote, he explains the euphemism 'Hungerkur' as "Tonne-Fasten," a treatment for syphilis: "Die Cur derselbigen wurde in damaligen Zeiten entweder durch Guajacum, oder Mercurialische Salben gemacht; und in beiden Fällen wurde der Patient sehr warm und eingesperrt gehalten" (265). He refers to his source, the "Geschichte der Arzneikunst" by Dr. Friend, and gives a detailed account of the length and effect of the medical / physical treatment. Knowing that Timon wishes the prostitute and scores of her young male customers to be infected with syphilis, the reader now realizes that Timandra's reply, "An den Galgen du Ungeheuer," is justified. This excursion into medical history also fleshes out how far Timon has withdrawn from society and allows us a glimpse into the extent of his cynicism. As a mediator, Wieland employs one great advantage that literature has over live theatre — the addition of annotations.

Wieland not only adds to the text, but also removes lines that do not comply with eighteenth-century conventions. Words, lines, and whole scenes fall victim to his editorial scissors. For instance, in *Was Ihr Wollt (Twelfth Night)*, Wieland decided to cut two scenes that he found dispensable because, as his footnote explains, Sir Tobey Belch and Sir Andrew are "müßige, lüderliche, rauschichte Schlingels" (*Theatralische Werke VII* 414). Wieland uses the same footnote to criticize Renaissance theatre when he adds that their "platte Scherze, Wortspiele und tolle Einfälle nirgends als auf einem Engländischen Theater, und auch da

nur…den Pöbel belustigen können" (414). This major intervention and scathing criticism are very reminiscent of the relentless interventions of neoclassical stage adaptations discussed earlier. Yet, the significant difference between a performance that omits scenes and Wieland's footnoted edits is that such a performance leaves the audience unaware of the intervention, whereas by pointing out the deletions and briefly describing the omitted scenes, Wieland's footnotes become written asides in which the translator speaks directly to the audience while simultaneously keeping a record of what is absent.

Wieland also seeks to explain his reasoning regarding his editorial decisions concerning language. For instance, he describes how the differing tastes and standards of decorum between Shakespeare's audiences and those of eighteenth-century Germany restrict a translator from using expressions that the liberty of the sixteenth century allowed poets of that time: "Ich habe mich genötigt gesehen, einige ekelhafte Ausdrücke . . . wegzulasssen. Ein Dichter, der nur für Zuhörer arbeitete, hat sich im sechszehnten Jahrhundert Freyheiten erlauben können, die sein Übersezer, der im achtzehnten *für Leser arbeitet* [my emphasis] nicht nehmen darf" (*Theatralische Werke I* 27). One of those expressions is the word 'bum'. This word is used by the puck (a goblin) Robin Goodfellow when he brags about his pranks in one of his many disguises, this time appearing as a stool: "The wisest aunt telling the wisest tale / Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me; / Then I slip from her bum" (*MND* 3.51-53). Wieland's translation transforms these two lines into, "Ein weises Mütterlein, trotz ihrer Weisheit, / Für einen dreygebeinten Stuhl mich an; / Dann schlüpf ich unter ihr hinweg, sie wackelt" (*Theatralische Werke I* 27). Wieland is attempting to bridge two forms of representation (the theatre and literature) over the cultural distance between Shakespearean audiences and eighteenth-century German readers. He wants the reader to understand why the translation of Shakespeare poses

such an extraordinary challenge to the transmission of meaning and experience from one language to another. The avoidance of coarse language and Wieland's corresponding explanation are an invitation to consider the difficult task of the translator, someone who is torn between the longing to convey the beauty of the original poetry with accuracy and the desire to meet the refined taste of the implied audience.

Stage directions are instructions for directors and actors concerning a scene's location, the entry and exit of characters, costuming, the presence of props, or a character's gesticulation, modulation of the voice, or position on stage. Shakespeare's plays do not offer much guidance in these matters and particularly often fail to mention the exit or appearance of characters. This crucial information was later penned into prompt books to avoid future confusion. Wieland extended these stage directions to facilitate the imagining of the plays. Perhaps only someone like Wieland, who had already staged Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, could be aware of the importance of additional stage directions to explain the setting and actions of the characters to the reader. In Shakespeare's original version of *Twelfth Night*, for example, Sir Toby's entrance in Scene Three is simply announced with "Enter Sir Toby and Maria" (1.3.1) and later, "Enter Sir Andrew" (1.3.36). Wieland, however, provides the reader with much more specific information regarding the location of the next scene: "Dritte Scene – Verwandelt sich in ein Zimmer in Olivia's Hause" (*Theatralische Werke VII* 12). And again, whereas Shakespeare briefly announces, "Enter Valentine, and Viola [as Caesario] in man's attire" (*Twelfth Night* 1.4. 1), Wieland gives the reader enough information to imagine the change of location "Fünfte Scene / (Verwandelt sich in den Palast.) / Valentin, und Viola in Mannskleidern, treten auf" (*Theatralische Werke VII 1*3). Having his reader in mind, he uses the word 'transform' to announce a new location because the change is not a mechanical act of stagehands moving walls

and props behind the curtain to create, under immense time constraints, a new setting for the next scene but is an act of the will, an act of transformative imagination. Furthermore, Wieland establishes a relationship with each reader by using the plural pronoun "we" when providing his rationale for his omission of another scene, "Wir lassen also diese Zwischen-Scenen um so mehr weg, als wir der häuffigen Wortspiele wegen, öfter Lüken machen müßten" (*Theatralische Werke VII* 12). Writing in the first-person plural, Wieland is striking a personal tone. He wants the reader not only to identify with him but to imagine participating in the translation. Such comments became a strong connecting element between the narrator Wieland and the German reader.

Wieland thus transformed Shakespeare's scripts into reading dramas. Circumventing current theatre conventions, as a mediator of Shakespeare's narratives, Wieland established the new literary form of the reading drama that could either be read in solitude or enacted in a dramatic reading. He used an open, personal tone and invited all to participate in his dialectical approach. Although the limitation of the individuals' ability to envision these fantastic tales was always a challenge, Wieland knew how to assist and facilitate the imagining of the plays to convert the letter-filled pages of *Theatralische Werke* into a theatre of the imagination where "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact" (*MND* 7. 7-8). As mediator, Wieland reestablished a relationship with his reading audience that conveyed the excitement and communal feeling of Renaissance performances that had been lost in more socially distant and isolating modern performances.

Epilogue: *Theatralische Werke* and the *Sturm und Drang*

Embedded in an Enlightenment effort to improve the moral conduct of the bourgeoisie, theatre reformers based their theoretical ideas on French *Classicism* and employed neoclassical theatre conventions for didactic stage productions. Yet, after decades of neoclassical reign, the conviction that art should always have an underlying moral purpose was undermined by young authors of the *Sturm und Drang* who pushed for total autonomy in art. Members of this movement, avid readers of Wieland's translation, admired Shakespeare's astute depictions of characters from all levels of society and his apparent disregard of Aristotle's unities. With Shakespeare as their role model, young authors rebelled against Gottsched's theatre reforms: "Shakespeare's work ran directly contrary to . . . definitions of 'good taste,' and the generation that was in its youth at the end of the eighteenth century used him as their battle-cry in fending off French hegemony and turning the old system of values upside down" (Grundmann 29). Even though Lessing, a theatre reformer of the *Sensibility* movement, had paved the way for the successful reception of Shakespeare's plays as reading dramas, it was the *Sturm und Drang* movement that prevailed over *Neoclassicism* and established Shakespeare's reputation as a playwright. These young authors enjoyed the highly imaginative dramas such as *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that they discovered in *Theatralische Werke*. The objection of theatre reformers to the staging of original versions of Shakespeare's plays thus had unexpected and far-reaching consequences. Instead of confining *Theatralische Werke* to the hypothetical realm, reading Shakespeare's dramas inspired young authors to imagine a different future. They turned thoughts into action, action into a literary movement, and the restrictive formalities of the past into liberal theatrical possibilities. The pendulum swung from one extreme to the other, from applying strict rules to plays that conveyed Christian values and moral conduct to rejecting all

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rules and accepting individualism, a limitless imagination, and the adoration of godlike poets called geniuses. It is an irony of history that Shakespeare's plays, steeped in Christianity and based on Aristotle's teaching, became the antithesis to Gottsched's rules and assisted the *Sturm und Drang* to rebel against *Neoclassicism*.

Wieland's Shakespeare translation was enthusiastically read and shared among young students. It planted the seed of what would become their fully grown veneration of Shakespeare when adults, and evolved into the *Sturm und Drang.* What neoclassical critics had seen as a lack of structure in Shakespeare's dramas was seen by the *Sturm und Drang* as an expression of their own striving for autonomy. Consequently, they rejected the normative aesthetic but embraced Shakespeare's "Fähigkeit der gesteigerten Vorstellungskraft," or heightened imaginative ability (Sulzer qtd. in Sauder 335). Additionally, the flouting of rules was correlated with the belief in the supernaturally gifted artist, the *genius*, whose innate ability could only thrive when unfettered by restrictions. Young authors declared Shakespeare such an artist, a genius whose exceptional creative power superseded that of his contemporaries. Rules became not only unnecessary but an obstacle for these supremely gifted artists who excelled in their creative power and intellectual prowess. Tedious years of study and the honing of the skills and craftsmanship underlying an art form stood in direct opposition to the idea of genius. Shakespeare's education, which included attendance at Stratford grammar school and the study of Latin, was downplayed to only the most basic schooling by the *Sturm und Drang* movement to heighten his status as a creative god. Instead of abiding by rules, young people strove for more autonomy, and as for the "rebellion against the bureaucracy and despotism of German provincialism and political quietism [,] Shakespeare meant for them an intellectual revolution, a liberation of senses, feeling, and imagination" (Grundmann 35). This artistic liberation entailed

mixing Shakespeare's characters or particular scenes with their own storylines:

> These angry young men adopted less Shakespeare's plots than his characters, especially those of his great villains (Richard III, Iago, Macbeth), and used scenes and motifs (the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, the graveyard scene from *Hamlet,* the madness of Ophelia) in their own work for their pictorial as well as their dramatic effect.
>
> (Grundmann 35)

Disregarding the unities also allowed a much more realistic presentation and subverted hierarchical structures.

What appeared to most members of the *Sturm and Drang* as breaking with the unities had been to Shakespeare a deliberate extension of existing rules. Thus, even though Shakespeare and his contemporaries took their liberties with time, location, and action, their plays were still embedded in a Christian worldview that included a belief in hierarchical order. The beauty of Shakespeare's poetry and his apparent refusal at times to take political or moral stances contributed to the imaginative power and universality of his plays. The very ambivalence of Shakespeare's language, and the fact that Shakespeare avoided political stances concerning monarchy or religion, however, were due to the evasive narrative style which he employed to circumvent any form of political confrontation. What had been a necessary precaution to protect theatrical productions and poetic freedom from censorship and political retribution was adored by the *Sturm und Drang* for its apparent disregard of any rules or hierarchical order. The *Sturm und Drang* rejected any limitation or order imposed by ancient theatrical theories and contemporary conventions. In addition, dramas of the *Sturm und Drang* period lacked the moral guidance of neoclassical tragedies and the Christian belief in almighty God that may be found in

Renaissance theatre. At that time, God stood at the pinnacle of the great chain of being of which

humans perceived themselves a part. All formed a greater whole and higher order to which

humankind was subject. In the *Sturm und Drang* era individualism and personal freedom

undermined this Christian determinism. Moreover, the concept of nature seems to have been

appropriated for every artistic agenda. Nature was elevated to the status of a deity and praised for

her perpetually evolving essence. Decadent forms of existence and the man-made urban

landscape were condemned by a young generation who positioned themselves in direct

opposition to both (Koschorke 430). These were not new ideas, having been addressed as early

as 1729 by Haller, who bemoaned the loss of a life in harmony with nature due to the

increasingly artificial life in modern cities. Imagination had become reality and replaced a

deficient mimetic representation (430). The fact that the art world remained artificial was

forgotten (430). The concept of nature as a divine being was incorporated into art while the

natural world, destroyed by modern life, was degraded to a pale imitation of the true nature now

only found in art.

The *Sturm und Drang* "elevated nature and direct experience to such absolutes" that it

"was in more ways than it ever cared to acknowledge the successor to the European

Enlightenment" (Paulin *Critical* 133). In Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*, nature alone

can form the artist while the limits imposed by civilization — utility, conformity, and moderation

— are rejected (Fleming *Intro* 3). Shakespeare's realistic character depictions aroused Goethe's

admiration: "Nature! Nature! . . . no people so close to Nature as Shakespeare's!" (qtd. in

Williams 19). Echoing Aristotle's understanding of nature as a dynamic process, Renaissance

playwrights had been generous in their application of the unities. A lifetime could fit into an

hourglass, the vast fields of France onto a wooden stage. In addition, characters were three-

dimensional and developed in front of spectators' eyes. For example, Richard III evolves from a disadvantaged youth into a mighty and evil sovereign; noble Edgar, conversely, grows into a vigilant man with leadership qualities while he still remains a morally good person. He defeats the temptation to become bitter and hateful despite the betrayal, abuse, neglect, and homelessness he endures. Echoing Aristotle's teachings and the Renaissance theatre, nature, human nature, and thus, finally, reality were again understood as an ever evolving, dynamic process. Unlike the Elizabethan theatre, however, the *Sturm und Drang* rejected the Renaissance belief in a God who punishes humans, sometimes through the unleashing of natural forces, for wrongdoing. Spectators in Shakespeare's time also believed in an afterlife and thus transcendence. Writers of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, on the other hand, vouched for the experience of transcendence through imagination. For example, Goethe believed that Shakespeare's art exceeded and transcended reality. He described the moment of his first contact with *Theatralische Werke* as a revelation; Shakespeare was like a "spiritual awakening and creative intuition" (Paulin *Critical* 165). In his speech „Zum Shäkespear Tag" (1771), he recounted that extraordinary experience: he felt like „ein blindgeborener, dem eine Wunderhand das Gesicht in einem Augenblicke schenckt" (*Goethe's Werke* 224). In opposition to the implied Christian belief of Renaissance plays, Shakespeare becomes a saviour for the *Sturm und Drang* movement, and "Christ - Shakespeare delivers, not everlasting life . . . but an expansion of vision, an opening up ('erweitert') into an infinity of things that are unknown" (Paulin *Critical* 165). Shakespeare, the artistic god, appeared to disregard Aristotle's unities because they would have limited his creativity and imagination. This convinced Goethe to disengage from contemporary theatre practice: "Es schien mir die Einheit des Ortes so kerckermäsig ängstlich, die Einheiten der Handlung und der Zeit lästige Fesseln unserer Einbildungskrafft" (*Goethe's*

Werke 224). In the same vein, Herder praised Shakespeare's imagination and finds a higher

order in the bard's imaginative abilities: "ein Genie, voll Einbildungskraft, die immer ins Große

geht, die einen Plan ersinnen kann, über dem uns beim bloßen Ansehen schwindelt" (qtd. in

Blinn 96). Herder believed that Aristotle's rules were not applicable to non-Greek drama. He

emphasized the differences in the historical-geographical context of Greek tragedy and

Renaissance theatre, and insisted that the "discourse cannot be the same for Sophocles and

Shakespeare," since the principles of the more uniform Greek and the multitudinous Nordic

would oppose each other (qtd. in Paulin *Critical* 154). Mirroring life, Greek theatrical plots had

been much simpler in comparison to Shakespeare's highly involved storytelling (Kob 110).

Herder, too, recommended experiencing Shakespeare through reading. More importantly, he

was convinced that only reading could bring Shakespeare's poetry to life and transcend reality:

"Mir ist, wenn ich lese, Theater, Akteure, Koulisse verschwinden" (Herder *Von Deutscher Art*

und Kunst 509). Hence, a performance onstage would only hinder the free reign of imagination.

Goethe and Herder shared the neoclassical view that Shakespeare's dramas should not be

staged because they believed that the stage was not suitable for Shakespeare's poetry. The

problem was not that Shakespeare fails to meet the standards of the stage, but that the modern

stage impedes the imaginative power of Shakespeare's plays. They both agreed that the

imagination should not be limited by stage productions which only depict the interpretations of

directors. Goethe even went so far as to claim that Shakespeare's plays were primarily poetry: "So

gehört Shakespeare nothwendig in die Geschichte der Poesie; in der Geschichte des Theaters tritt

er nur zufällig auf" (*Shakespeare und kein Ende* 65). Thus, Goethe turned the art world on its head

when he claimed that Shakespeare as *Lesedrama* superseded highly esteemed theatre productions,

and that reading or listening was the best way to engage with the supreme qualities of

Shakespeare's poetry.

Imagination played a crucial role in Goethe's argument. Whereas Goethe emphasized the importance of Aristotle's *mimesis* in classical dramas, he was convinced that the *opsis* (the "spectacle") of theatre directly opposed the poetry of theatre (B. Menke 38). He preferred exposure to poetry "mit gesschloss'nen Augen" (Goethe *Shakespeare und kein Ende* 67) because a performance was heteronomous and therefore limited and subject to current taste (B. Menke 38). A performance curbed an imagination that had been stirred by poetic literature. "Das klassische Drama ist nur eine Möglichkeit des Theaters," because theatre is a structurally limited form (B. und C. Menke). Poetry and classical theatre thus stood in direct opposition to each other in the late eighteenth century. On one side was "die innere Vorstellungskraft," or imagination, and on the other "die äußere Vorstellung," or performance, which constrains poetry (B. und C. Menke). Goethe explicitly mentions Shakespeare's drama in this context because he wished to save Shakespeare's poetry (*Shakespeare und kein Ende* 65). In addition, Goethe emphasized the different qualities of experiencing a theatrical performance versus reading the script of a play. To Goethe, reading Shakespeare was not subject to the contemporary restrictions on staging Shakespeare in the original, and therefore offered the enjoyment of an unaltered experience. Whereas neoclassical critics determined that, to protect current theatre practice, Shakespeare should not be staged, Goethe turned this apparent vice into a virtue, and pointed out that it was Shakespeare's boundless imagination that could not be accommodated by an inhospitable neoclassical German stage. It seemed that Shakespeare's appearance onstage would therefore be further delayed, not by noncompliance with rules, but by the limiting possibilities of the

theatrical form itself, since all stage productions interfere with the seemingly limitless

envisioning offered by reading the plays.

According to Goethe, the experience of imagining Shakespeare's dramas, whether as a

reader or a listener, superseded the experience of watching the play's performance. Everyone

who imagined *Theatralische Werke* could become director, actor, costume maker, stage

manager, and audience all at once. Whereas Enlightenment theatre productions orchestrated the

arousal of feelings and the pedagogic manipulation of the spectator's moral conduct,

Shakespeare's poetry, his evasive narratives, and his fantastic plots became an individualistic,

unaltered, and uncensored experience in the minds of readers and listeners. In their imagination,

"in motion of no less celerity than that of thought" (*Henry V* 3.0.2-3), they could cross the

English Channel, "jumping o'er times" to bridge one hundred and fifty years (1.1.29), or

populate a foreign country with Shakespeare's villains, heroes, fools, and lovers. Imagination

fostered an escape from a highly regulated social life, but even more importantly, art could unify

the division experienced by modern individuals. Members of the bourgeoisie, expected to

comply with current values, attitudes, and moral conduct, lived a life that in many ways did not

offer self-recognition and development. The transcendence of Early Modern Theatre, which was

still based on eternal rules and a holistic worldview, became untenable. Unprecedented

possibilities to determine one's own life, combined with a yearning for individualism, replaced

the ancient belief in fate and duty. For spectators of the Globe Theatre's productions who

believed in a Christian afterlife, Shakespeare's plays transcended reality, and his stories became

timeless and universal tales. The star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet, and flawed characters like

Macbeth, Iago, and Richard III, were forever preserved as the acme of romantic love or the

essence of villainy and thus became immortal. In a certain sense, Shakespeare's poetical

storytelling evolved into the mastery of nature, or the real world. The coopting of the concept of

nature, however, remains highly problematic when boundaries between the artificial world of art

and nature/reality are blurred. It becomes difficult to discern what is real and what is not. To

elevate a poet or the art world to the position of master of nature is an inversion of a holistic view

that determines humans' understanding not only of their own existence but also of the

relationship between the individual and the natural world. Humans become almighty in a self-

created universe that knows no humility or gratefulness.

The *Sturm und Drang* movement was not monolithic. For example, the writer and

playwright Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz saw in Shakespeare a role model for a new form of

theatre. Like Goethe and Schiller, Lenz rejected Aristotle's teachings; unlike both, Lenz

embraced Shakespeare as a playwright and thus preferred performance over reading (Kob 111).

Regarding Aristotle's unities, he suggested that, as a genius, Shakespeare did not need to abide

by any rules because his plays have an inner order that remains unsurpassed (114). Yet, while he

defended Shakespeare's dramas, he also distanced himself from young authors who adored

Shakespeare for his apparent disregard of the unities, "[Junge Schriftsteller die] uns glauben

machen wollen, Shakespeare's Schönheiten bestünden bloß in seinen Unregelmäßigkeiten"

(Lenz *Amerkungen über das Theater* 105). Lenz perceived himself as someone who understood

Shakespeare's theoretical approach, and, in his view, Shakespeare was "der größte aller neueren

dramatischen Dichter" (363). Shakespeare's plays had, according to Lenz, great advantages

compared to traditionally structured plays because they better illustrated causal connections and

left a deeper impression on the spectators' mind (Inbar *Lenz* 54). Lenz incorporated

Shakespeare's compositional structure, later to be known as the 'Open Form in Drama', into his

own plays (definition by Volker Klotz[16]). He dismissed the unities of action and location, which

allowed him to include characters from various social backgrounds and multiple points of view (Inbar *Lenz* 255). Furthermore, in disregarding the unity of time, Lenz was able to show the development of a character over time, which would be impossible under the time, constraint of neoclassical theatre practice (255). An example is Lenz's play *Der Hofmeister* with three-dimensional characters from across the social strata and a plot that spanned months.

Despite such admiration for Shakespeare's plays and their standing as role models for young authors, these plays in their original versions were generally not to be found on the stages of the *Sturm und Drang*. Instead, Shakespeare's highly involved narratives, holistic and rooted in a Christian context, metamorphosed during the era of the *Sturm und Drang* into texts for self-exploration and individualism. The new striving for creativity and liberty entailed a "narcissistic fascination with one's mirror image" and led to an "unprecedented interest in the notion of the self in German literature between 1750 to 1830" (Mathäs 9). Imagination developed from fictional encounters with other worlds, engagements with philosophical concepts of sensory experience, and the ability to imagine a different future into "the search for the boundaries of a self and a yearning for self-expansion, or self-dissolution" (9). Whereas imagination became a tool for self-discovery, a concept of nature offered transcendence. Nature was most intensely experienced through encounters with poetry and assumed, in addition to its impenetrable and untamed wildness, a god-like existence within the art world. Imagination turned into a self-serving tool that quenched the thirst for self-discovery and exploration through artistic works like Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. Not surprisingly, "narcissism came to be regarded as

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[16] Klotz, Volker. *Geschlossene und Offene Form im Drama,* Hanser, 1960. p. 226

a serious threat both to the spiritual wellbeing of individuals and to society as a whole" (13). To avoid narcissism, self-observation was "employed to serve an ethical purpose," and the concept of nature as a deity led to transcendence and a "spiritual ascent that allows the self to merge with divine forces of nature" (9). Some of the literary output of Goethe, Schiller, and Herder mirrored this balance between "the subject's inner expansion" and "a need for self-recognition and its dependence on definite borders that delineates the self" (9). The poem *Prometheus* by Goethe is one such work:

. . . Hier sitz ich, forme Menschen

Nach meinem Bilde,

Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,

Zu leiden, weinen,

Genießen und zu freuen sich,

Und dein [Gott] nicht zu achten,

Wie ich.

Likewise, Shakespeare's psychologically astute character depictions offered self-recognition, whereas the existential crises and greater contexts of his plays provided clear boundaries of individual agency.

The yearning for "self-recognition and self-idealization can be understood as both an attempt to preserve the post-Enlightenment individual's unity and an expression of a fundamental inner division that arose from the emancipation of the modern individual" (Mathäs 9). Nevertheless, knowing that "human imagination, creativity, and empathy depend on sensory perception as well as emotional sensibilities" (10), how could one avoid vanity and selfishness in the desire for self-experience? Alexander Mathäs argues that "the differentiation between the

sublime and the beautiful can be regarded as an attempt to protect a spiritual inner (male) self

from a superficial indulgence in worldly delights" (10). Shakespeare's psychologically acute and

insightful depictions of a character's suffering, as well as his mirroring of inner and outer

experience, offered such sublime encounters as the matching of the fury of a storm with the inner

turmoil of a monarch in *King Lear*. Wrapped in biblical images (*Psalms* 29:3-9), Lear's speech

conveys both the inner and outer rage and energy through monosyllabic words: "Blow, winds,

and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!" (*King Lear* 9.1). This "reciprocity between inner and outer

nature" was adopted by authors like Goethe in his "early poetry of the 1770's, where outer nature

mirrors the inner nature of the feeling and creating subject" (Mathäs 11). Pity and sympathy,

core values of *Neoclassicism* and the *Sensibility* movement, became an oscillation between

"radical individualism and the compassion compulsion of the age of sentimentalism" (13). While

German society was still rooted in Christianity at the end of the eighteenth century, this belief

was constantly under attack by bourgeois affluence, self-determinism, and social mobility. These

cultural transformations challenged post-Enlightenment poets who strove for transcendence in

art.

In the Christian worldview of European culture at Shakespeare's time, one's life did not

end with death, and thus earthly life in Renaissance England was merely the first stage of a

greater journey. Human existence was transcendent, and Shakespeare's plays reflected this.

Personal failings were seen within a much larger context. When characters gain wisdom and

insight just before their death, it heightens the feelings of the audience and incites fear and pity,

but beyond providing a moral lesson, it displays that individual's readiness for the continuing

journey. Erich Auerbach refers to this concept of transcendence as "ripe for knowledge and

death" (326). For example, Macbeth's speech after he receives the news of his wife's death

reflects this ripeness:

> To -morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
>
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
>
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
>
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
>
> The way to dusty death.
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . It is a tale
>
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
>
> Signifying nothing. (*Macbeth* 5.5.18-27)

Auerbach describes this soliloquy as the transformational moment when the villain, ready for

both death and knowledge, has a moment of "self-acquired wisdom which has arisen for him

from his own destiny" (326). Shakespeare "goes far beyond the representation of reality in its

merely earthly coherence; he embraces reality but he transcends it" (327). *Sturm und Drang*

writers saw the supreme qualities of Shakespeare's plays. They strove to retain such moments of

self-acquired wisdom and spiritual transcendence (in form of an experience of awe based on the

sublime) for a modern, more uniform, and materialistically oriented middle-class audience.

When Wieland translated Shakespeare's dramas, he saw a significant difference between

reading and staging plays. He saw that translation for the stage was more challenging than

translation for the page because it required the creation of an illusion. Readers only needed their

imagination. As he stated in his review of *Götz von Berlichingen* (1774), "Sobald ich ein Drama

für die Schaubühne schreibe, wird alles was die Illusion hindert zum Fehler. Schreib' ichs bloß

für Leser, so ist die Rede nicht von Illusion" (qtd. in Ranke 164). Even though he referred

specifically to *Götz von Berlichingen*, this explanation encapsulated the difference between reading and stage performance. In addition, the dramatist translating for the stage had to consider the practicality of the plot and theatre conventions included in the term 'illusion'. These considerations were, according to Wieland, obviated when writing for readers who theoretically had the unrestricted use of their imagination.

In 1781, Johann Friedrich Schink, "a Shakespeare devotee in the Lessing tradition" (Ranke 165), developed a theoretical framework for this situation. He described the differences between a translation of Shakespeare's plays for readers and one for the stage. He agreed with Wieland that a translation for the stage was challenging, yet unlike Wieland, he believed that the dramas in *Theatralische Werke* belonged on stage. Schink acknowledged that for theatrical productions the challenges were "evidently greater than those encountered in an ordinary translation for the reader" because the "translator for the stage has to decide where to *omit* . . . and where to substitute" (165) when dealing with the discrepancies between Renaissance theatre and German eighteenth-century aesthetics. For example, Shakespeare's language was often baroque and passionate, and, as a result, substitutes had to be found. In contrast, passages where Shakespeare's thoughts and language were considered too English should be Germanized by imagining how a German Shakespeare would have expressed himself, or "wie es Shakespear gesagt haben würde, wenn er ein Teutscher gewesen, und teutsch gedacht und geschrieben hätte" (Schink qtd. in Ranke 165). Therefore, a theatre adaptation of Shakespeare at the end of the eighteenth century became a combination of translation, omission, substitution, and cultural appropriation.

Whereas earlier adaptations moulded Shakespeare's plays into a neoclassical form and undermined Shakespeare's boundless ingenuity, stage versions at the end of the century

following the *Sturm und Drang* period evolved into a combination of adaptations to meet

contemporary theatre conventions and expressions of very personal conceptions of theatre

through unique translations. Although still adapted, Shakespeare finally entered the German

stage with splendour, richness, and ambiguity. The former persona non grata was invited to

entertain welcoming audiences who knew his plays from Wieland's translation. For example,

the theatre world was invigorated by productions of *Macbeth* imagined and rendered as a classic

tragedy, a *Volkstheater* drawing on Renaissance theatre practice, and a *Sturm und Drang* version

aimed at heightening feelings. Complexity and diversity were embraced by these approaches

that allowed imagination to thrive. Humans could again transcend the boundaries of earthly life,

not through Christian belief and hierarchical order, but through a cosmos of possibilities. Thus,

theatre at the end of the century playfully engaged with traditional theatre practices and

worldviews while developing multifarious forms of expression and belief. In the following

examples, we will see *Macbeth* as a Greek tragedy in which the witches act as chorus, a folk tale

reminiscent of village theatres, and, using a text closest to the original, a modern version that

was thought to bring a performance of Shakespeare's time back to life through the creation of an

illusion.

Although based on Wieland's translation and Eschenburg's revision, all three versions of

Macbeth by Heinrich Leopold Wagner (1779), Gottfried August Bürger (1783), and Friedrich

Schiller (1800), "might be considered as translations for the stage" (Ranke 166). Wagner, an

advocate of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, aspired to work closely with the original text and

was determined to stage an almost uncut version of a translation that was true to the original

(166). Bürger, in turn, was an author of ballads and was inspired by Herder's notion "of

Shakespeare as a *Volksdichter* or popular poet" (167). Bürger and Schiller had especially

disparate theatrical conceptions. Bürger attempted to create the illusion of real life whereas Schiller's classic tragedy adaptation was aesthetically detached from the audience (167). Wagner's and Bürger's versions were in prose, but Schiller applied the features of high tragedy and translated into blank verse, ignoring Shakespeare's passages in prose (167). Bürger's and Schiller's versions of *Macbeth* were well received in many German cities over the following decades. Wagner's more faithful but detached adaptation proved to be a commercial debacle as we will see (167).

The performance of *Macbeth*'s gruesome plot in front of audiences who were not accustomed to the realistic depiction of violence posed a challenge that these authors each attempted to solve in different ways. For example, Bürger's conception of illusionistic theatre omitted murder onstage, and took issue with breaking the fourth wall because it disturbed the spectators' identification with the action (Ranke 170). Shakespeare's soliloquies were thus considered unnatural, and, in his attempt to be close to nature, Bürger decided to have Macbeth read aloud a letter containing one of his soliloquies instead of having Macbeth directly address the audience (169). Wagner, on the other hand, wanted to increase the emotional impact of the moment when Macduff's son is murdered, "and in doing so, he may well have overstepped the bounds of what the audience was prepared to tolerate" (171). Obviously, Wagner's wish to please his audience partly conflicted with his overwhelming desire to present *Macbeth* as closely as possible to the original text (171). Eighteenth-century German audiences, however, accustomed to empathy-stirring plays such as classic tragedies and Lessing's *Bürgerliches Trauerspiel,* refused to see such cruelty onstage and soon stayed away. Schiller, whose version emphasized social hierarchy and the state's power, deleted the complete scene (172).

Other examples of the various approaches in the adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are to be found in the staging of the witches' scenes. Bürger embraced the supernatural, connected the scene to Walpurgis night, and had the witches speak in Lower Saxon dialects. Wagner used the verbal patterns of nursery rhymes analogous to Shakespeare's original. Again, Schiller avoided any horror effects, and so his witches, reminiscent of a Greek chorus, were "played by men in Grecian robes" (176). Schiller rejected Bürger's concept of *Volkspoesie* because it did not live up to "contemporary cultural and philosophical standards" (177). Whereas Wagner's version did not diverge much from Wieland's translation and was thus "merely a compromise between a play for stage and a drama for readers" (178), Bürger's *Macbeth* was an example of an antirationalist version of a popular play (*Volks-Schauspiel*). At the same time, Schiller departed the furthest from the original because he strove for an enlightened version that nevertheless flouted customs of family drama and current bourgeois theatre practice (178). These three late-century adaptations of Shakespeare reflect various aesthetic concepts in interpreting the same play and show how authors applied personal conceptions of theatre to their translations. Wagner's approach shows the challenges Wieland's Shakespeare posed for the German audience of the eighteenth century, and therefore emphasizes again the clear advantages of its introduction as literature. Altogether, these new adaptations encompassed contemporary as well as traditional theatre conventions such as Schiller's use of classical tragedy's Greek chorus. Bürger's staging of *Macbeth* as an old folktale is another example in which traditional theatre practice was combined with the separation of the stage and the spectators to create an illusion.

Conclusion

The reading public found a new way to experience the transcendence of reality through Shakespeare's poetry. In its incompleteness, Wieland's dialectical translation approach invited various interpretations, renderings, and, thus, individual experiences of each play. *Theatralische Werke* was read in solitude or in groups by book lovers who employed their vivid imagination that had been trained for decades by devouring countless novels, especially many first-person narratives crafted by English writers. In addition, the new valorization of imagination by Baumgarten and Hume undermined neoclassical rationality and placed poetry in opposition to neoclassical theatre practice.

Wieland's approach took advantage of the enhanced imaginative ability of readers to lead them on an exploration of the various ways that Shakespeare's plays could be interpreted. Instead of promoting the determinacy of the neoclassical plays of the eighteenth-century stage, Wieland's comments and explanations encouraged his readers to analyze rather than simply condemn the strangeness and ambivalence of Shakespeare's dramas. His translation methods situated *Theatralische Werke* between the Renaissance author, the eighteenth-century German reader, and the translator as narrator. Through this narrativization of the plays, Wieland established a close relationship with the reader.

Theatralische Werke was dismissed by neoclassical literary critics for the omission of passages and translation into prose, and Wieland was rebuked by partisan Shakespeare lovers for his interventions in and objective handling of the text that lacked the awe and reverence they thought were owed to Shakespeare's genius. What appeared to critics as weaknesses, however, were to prove the very strengths of Wieland's translation. Wieland's impartiality and disregard for mainstream opinion let him engage with Shakespeare on his own terms. Reflecting

Shakespeare's background as a theatre director, businessman, and poet, Wieland imagined Shakespeare's plays, circumvented neoclassical censorship, and transformed them into novel-like prose reading dramas. As a result, by wedging the plays between existing theatrical and literary forms, Wieland's *Theatralische Werke* blurred the distinction between literature and theatre. Like a novel, the plays gave free reign to imagination; as in preparations for staging a theatrical script, readers read stage instructions and explored both the play's historical context and textual interpretations; and, like a full theatrical performance, both solitary and dramatic readings in the privacy of a home aroused the feelings and moments of awe in the reader or audience.

The relationship between Wieland as narrating translator and his readers was especially important considering that contemporary theatre performances did not offer the unifying experience of the socially cohesive events of the past. Even though Lessing established an intellectual and emotional deep connection between author, actors, and audience, the proscenium stage separated the latter two both physically and psychologically. The fourth wall, the physical distance between audience and stage in modern theatres, and the realistic dialogue facilitated the illusion that the novel-like action on stage was real, not imaginary. Lessing's *Bürgerliches Trauerspiel* softened the distinction between attending a performance and the imagining of literature and expanded the structural possibilities of performativity and interiority.

The valorization of imagination by Hume and Baumgarten had made imagining possibilities not only permissible but also desirable, freeing eighteenth-century readers to travel in their imagination throughout the world and its history. The combination of the knowledge provided by Wieland and the unencumbered imagination of his readers was a powerful force. *Theatralische Werke* as reading dramas emphasized the agency of the reader, who could imagine

the plays without any limitations imposed by performances that expressed only a director's interpretation. Wieland's Shakespeare thus became a mise en abyme of countless interpretations. Leaving the printed pages of *Theatralische Werke* behind, readers could overcome cultural, linguistic, and even religious boundaries in the safety and reclusiveness of their homes. *Theatralische Werke* established Shakespeare as a 'German' playwright and poet and profoundly influenced German culture in the last three decades of the century and far beyond.

As for Germany's first major novelist, admired poet, and creative translator whose artistic and methodological decisions were so crucial to the acceptance of Shakespeare and the future of the German stage, Christoph Martin Wieland was a figure whose importance is aptly summarize by Walter Benjamin's description of him as one of those authors whose "Fermente sind für immer in den Mutterboden, in ihre Muttersprache eingegangen" (405).

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