


INTRODUCTION: RADICAL AND MODERATE STURM UND DRANG

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In Tom Stoppard's *Travesties* (1974), the Russian revolutionary V. I. Lenin, the Dada artist Tristan Tzara, and the modernist author James Joyce tiptoe around each other in Zurich in 1917. As the Great War rages and revolution ferments beyond the Swiss borders, a communist convert, Cecily (who shares her name and personality with the flippant and flirtatious character from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*), is frustrated by her failure to win the artists Tzara and Joyce over to the cause of the proletariat. Tzara, meanwhile, complains about Lenin's distaste for the Dadaists: 'the odd thing about revolution', he muses, 'is that the further left you go politically the more bourgeois they like their art.'¹ While no one claims the truth of the inverse ratio, it is striking that the radical artists in the play are politically more moderate. Tzara shudders at Lenin's readiness for violence, Joyce lectures on the value of tradition and Wilde is described as 'indifferent to politics. He may occasionally have been a little overdressed but he made up for it by being immensely uncommitted.'² Tzara calls the contrast between avant-garde art and revolutionary politics: 'the contradiction of the radical movement'.³ The mould-breaking artists who scoff at the Bolsheviks' bourgeois taste often end up against the wall after the insurrection.

This paradox does not seem to be limited to the Swiss staging ground of the Russian Revolution or to absurdist English theatre. While the American colonies were rebelling against British tyranny in the 1770s, a ragtag group of young writers upended the established conventions of literary tradition in the German-speaking lands. The so-called Sturm und Drang in fact took its name from a play set during the American Revolution, but the social and political concerns of the colonists never become an issue in the eponymous drama.⁴ F. M. Klinger's *Sturm und Drang* (1776) refuses to conform to the most basic expectations of classical drama such as consistent

¹ Tom Stoppard, *Travesties*, New York 1974, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴ The American Revolutionaries' goals find more sympathetic mention, at least in passing, in some other Sturm und Drang works, for instance in Heinrich Leopold Wagner's *Die Kindermörderin* (see Elystan Griffiths's contribution to this volume).

motivations or logical causality for the action,⁵ but it never overtly questions the justice of the hierarchies and power relations it portrays. In different ways, many other leading works of the Sturm und Drang are also formally rebellious while politically ambivalent or even reactionary. Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), the movement's first publishing phenomenon, is a sprawling epic that violates all the sacred unities of neo-classical theatre, but its title hero's principal motivation is the preservation of aristocratic feudal privilege. The Sturm und Drang seems to exhibit a similar contradiction between conservative politics and progressive art that Stoppard travesties in his play.

However, as the articles collected in this special number show, the formula 'Radical Form and Moderate Politics' is illuminating to some degree, but just as unable as any other short description to fully capture the Sturm und Drang's complexity. What we see emerge from this volume, instead, is a Sturm und Drang that can be politically radical as well as moderate or even conservative, and whose formal experiments, too, are not as unequivocally irreverent as conventional accounts suggest. Despite some shared characteristics in their works, there is no coherent political agenda – or even loose assortment of values – that all Sturm und Drang writers adhere to. Each author and even each work must be evaluated individually for its political valences. The same Lenz who made respectable characters in *Die Soldaten* (1776) offer some shockingly unconventional proposals for military reform also penned *Der Landprediger* (1777), a seeming celebration of a country pastor's moderate reform and conservative agenda. Yet these ambiguities do not make the binary of radicality and moderation irrelevant; quite to the contrary, the complexities only fully come to light against the backdrop of this simple opposition.

The tension between the moderate and radical features of the Sturm und Drang evokes Jonathan Israel's provocative thesis that the European Enlightenment can be divided into two clearly distinguishable camps – one moderate and one radical.⁶ Israel is not interested in aesthetic innovations, however. His designations apply solely to philosophical and socio-political thought. In fact, one of his most trenchant and controversial moves is to link what he calls the 'radical' metaphysics of Spinoza

⁵ See contemporary reactions quoted in Helmut Scheuer, 'Friedrich Maximilian Klinger: Sturm und Drang', in *Interpretationen. Dramen des Sturm und Drang*, Stuttgart 2007, p. 60.

⁶ Israel has produced a series of massive books that trace the intellectual currents of the Enlightenment in great detail, but always along these predetermined trajectories: radical, moderate, or counter-enlightenment. Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750*, Oxford 2001; *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670–1752*, Oxford 2006; *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750–1790*, Oxford 2011; and *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy*, Princeton 2010. The latter volume functions as a condensed and accessible synopsis of the previous three.

with the emancipatory social agendas of the most radical reformers.⁷ The rejection of dualism and of a personified, paternalistic Deity in one-substance monistic philosophies, according to Israel, tends to make thinkers more receptive to progressive ideals of liberty and equality.⁸ But whereas Israel posits a direct correlation between radical metaphysics and radical politics, the connection between radical art and politics is, as suggested in Stoppard's play, more tenuous and complex.

The present introductory article begins by explaining the motivations for exploring the Sturm und Drang in the context of Israel's binary of radical and moderate Enlightenment, focusing specifically on the dominant criticisms levelled against him as well as on his presentation of Goethe as an outlier to Israel's own systematisation of the Enlightenment. All problems with Israel's framework notwithstanding, we argue here for the great potential of his binary for understanding the Sturm und Drang. Taking Israel's binary as an impetus is not meant to discount other recent Enlightenment studies that have provided alternative lenses through which to study the Sturm und Drang in its historical context. The articles in this collection echo, in particular, Ritchie Robertson's emphasis on the importance of literature in his recent *Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness, 1680–1790* (2020). In his insistence on understanding the Enlightenment not only as a period defined by conceptual shifts but also as by a 'sea change in sensibility', Robertson is certainly well attuned to some of the core concerns of the Sturm und Drang.⁹ Though we are interested in embedding the Sturm und Drang in the currents of the wider European Enlightenment, we are also attentive to Dorinda Outram's important reminder to understand the various Enlightenment thinkers firmly within the specific local, political and social environments in which they operated.¹⁰ In what follows, we therefore start off by thinking through Israel's framework in the context of 1770s German culture. Second, we advance an explorative model of how radicality and moderation interact

⁷ See, for instance, Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment* (note 6), p. 11: 'Logically, "Spinozism" always went together with the idea that this man-made morality should provide the basis for legal and political legitimacy – and hence that equality is the first principle of a truly legitimate politics. Always present also is Spinoza's concomitant advocacy of freedom of thought.'

⁸ Incidentally, this association of monism with republican progressivism and dualism with conservatism is by no means new; it already defines, for example, the opposition between the monist Settembrini and the dualist Naphta in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924).

⁹ Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness, 1680–1790*, London 2022, p. xviii. From a different angle, Israel's focus on philosophical concepts has also been criticised by Vincenzo Ferrone. According to Ferrone, Israel underestimates the importance of the emerging sciences (as well as that of the arts) for the Enlightenment. Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Enlightenment: History of an Idea*, with a new afterword by the author, tr. Elisabetta Tarantino, Princeton and Oxford 2017, p. 168.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 4th edn., Cambridge 2019, p. 31: 'The task today is to find a way of thinking about the relations between Enlightenment and monarchy which is more dynamic, less anachronistic, and more sensitive to the pressures of regional and national patterns and situations.'

in the Sturm und Drang by reading two underappreciated mini-dramas by Johann Anton Leisewitz. We conclude with an overview of the articles collected in the present volume to suggest how they further develop, comment on or challenge the binary of radicality and moderation in the Sturm und Drang.

STURM UND DRANG BETWEEN THE RADICAL AND MODERATE ENLIGHTENMENTS

For a long time, the Sturm und Drang was explained as a reaction against the Enlightenment and rationalism. As late as 1978 Christoph Siegrist could write: 'Daß der Sturm und Drang sich konträr zur Aufklärung verhalte und sich in Opposition zu dieser entwickelt habe, gehört zu den meist unkritisch tradierten Topoi der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung.'¹¹ But in recent decades, thanks especially to the work by Andreas Huyssen, Gerhard Sauder, Reiner Marx and Matthias Luserke-Jaquí, the Sturm und Drang has come to be understood as an integral part of the multifaceted complex of overlapping and ongoing projects that make up the Enlightenment. Thus Gerhard Sauder coined, in 1985, the description of the Sturm und Drang as 'Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik der Aufklärung'.¹² Much more recently, Carl Niekerk asked, in the introductory essay to the 2018 volume *Radical Enlightenment in Germany*: 'was the function of the Sturm und Drang not also to remind the Enlightenment of its concrete (and not merely abstract) ambition to reform and restructure society, of its ideals aiming for more social and gender equality?'¹³ Niekerk points out that the Sturm und Drang decade, the 1770s, coincides with the Enlightenment period that Israel characterises as one of 'radical breakthrough'.¹⁴ Niekerk spends several pages recording many of the socially critical gestures in several Sturm und Drang texts: Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) and *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774), Lenz's *Der Hofmeister* (1774) and Schiller's *Die Räuber*

¹¹ Cf. Christoph Siegrist, 'Aufklärung und Sturm und Drang: Gegeneinander oder Nebeneinander?', in *Sturm und Drang: Ein literaturwissenschaftliches Studienbuch*, ed. Walter Hinck, Kronberg 1978, pp. 1–14 (p. 1).

¹² Gerhard Sauder, 'Einführung zu Band I/1', in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens, Münchner Ausgabe*, Munich 1985, 21 vols, ed. Karl Richter *et al.*, I/1, pp. 755–75 (p. 756). See also Matthias Luserke and Reiner Marx, 'Die Anti-Läufer. Thesen zur SuD-Forschung oder Gedanken neben dem Totenkopf auf der Toilette des Denkers', *Lenz-Jahrbuch*, 2 (1992), 126–50. Andreas Huyssen, *Drama des Sturm und Drang. Kommentar zu einer Epoche*, Munich 1980. For an overview of the history of Sturm und Drang scholarship, see Mathias Luserke-Jaquí, 'Zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte des Sturm und Drang', in *Handbuch Sturm und Drang*, ed. Mathias Luserke-Jaquí, Berlin 2017, pp. 8–28.

¹³ Carl Niekerk, 'Introduction: How Radical was the German Enlightenment', in *Radical Enlightenment in Germany: A Cultural Perspective*, ed. Carl Niekerk, Leiden 2018, pp. 1–45 (p. 32). For a discussion of Niekerk's view of the Sturm und Drang, see also Elystan Griffiths's article in this volume.

¹⁴ Niekerk, 'Introduction' (note 13), p. 31.

(1781).¹⁵ But none of the astute essays brought together in his volume focuses primarily on the Sturm und Drang per se or on an individual work of the movement.¹⁶ This special number of *German Life and Letters* intends to complement and push forward the work begun by Niekerk and his collaborators by bringing Israel's categories to bear explicitly on Germany's most iconic literary movement of the eighteenth century.

Though Israel's familiarity with obscure eighteenth-century German writers seems preternaturally complete, he does not discuss the Sturm und Drang or mention any of its major contributors.¹⁷ Nevertheless, we maintain that attending to the Sturm und Drang in probing Israel's dichotomy is important not only to close a simple gap in the historiography of the European Enlightenment but also because it allows one to situate and discuss some of the characteristic interior tensions of the Sturm und Drang within a framework relevant to the Enlightenment more broadly.

Israel's work has received much praise for its astonishingly broad scope that includes comments on countless Enlightenment thinkers from around the globe. Today, he is probably the most widely discussed contemporary Enlightenment scholar. But his claims about the Enlightenment have also generated such a copious and contentious response among historians, philosophers and cultural scholars that one academic borrowed a literature review method usually limited to the sciences to digest it all. John Eigenauer undertook a 'meta-analysis' of the many critical reviews written in response to Israel's works. He sorted the individual critiques into three broad categories (methodology, Spinoza, accuracy), each with three to six specific classes of criticisms. The body of evidence provided by Sturm und Drang texts offers cogent commentary on two of the most frequent critiques: first, that Israel's 'division of Enlightenment thinkers into radical and moderate camps is a false dichotomy', and second, that Israel overly relies on Spinoza. 'Philosophical monism', they say, 'does not necessarily lead to radical politics'.¹⁸ We will take each of these objections in turn to observe how they play out in light of the young German writers of the 1770s.

The vast majority of Israel's critics (72 per cent, according to Eigenauer) think that his categories of radical and moderate are too simplistic or reductive. Thomas Munck, for instance, calls the dichotomisation a

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.

¹⁶ Some articles do contain sections that touch on individual Sturm und Drang texts, such as Monika Nenon's important contribution on gender in German novels, including Goethe's *Werther*. Monika Nenon, 'Gender in Rousseau's *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* and its German Reception: Radical or Moderate', in *Radical Enlightenment in Germany*, ed. Niekerk (note 13), pp. 238–63 (pp. 251–5).

¹⁷ With the exceptions, of course, of Goethe and Schiller, whom Israel regards almost exclusively in terms of their post-Sturm und Drang output. He never mentions J. M. R. Lenz, Johann Anton Leisewitz, Friedrich Klinger or Heinrich Leopold Wagner. He does offer extensive and enthusiastic accounts of the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder, who figures as a kind of avuncular mentor to some of the Stürmer und Dränger.

¹⁸ John D. Eigenauer, 'A Meta-Analysis of Critiques of Jonathan Israel's Radical Enlightenment', *The Historian*, 81/3 (2019), 448–71 (454).

'bi-polar view of the Enlightenment' that 'pigeon-holes' writers without requisite nuance.¹⁹ By contrast, Niekerk, whose essay collection is not included in Eigenauer's meta-analysis, holds that Israel's categories nevertheless inspire an innovative and productive re-evaluation of old debates about the historical accomplishment and future potential of the Enlightenment project. He sees in Israel's distinctions an 'intellectually daring' way to stimulate new understandings of the complexities of what he calls the 'relational, dynamic, and situational' currents of the broader European Enlightenment.²⁰ While admitting that the crossover between descriptive and prescriptive uses of the terms 'radical' and 'moderate' can become problematic, Niekerk ultimately concludes that 'Israel's program [...] allows for a broad and multifaceted understanding of what the term 'Enlightenment' stands for'.²¹ The rich readings of eighteenth-century German works in Niekerk's collected volume are testimony to the truth of this assertion. Even when scholars offer strident challenges to Israel's claims – most noticeably, for instance, in Gabriela Stoicea's compelling critique of his somewhat glib assumptions about gender²² – it is the distinct clarity of Israel's divisions that allows the more nuanced complexities to become visible.

The *Sturm und Drang*, we contend, provides equally constructive commentary on Israel's seemingly simplistic binary. Johnson Wright decries the radical/moderate categories as a mere 'narrative device, permitting Israel to stage a Manichean contest whose conclusion is given in advance'.²³ But this critique reads like a plot summary of many *Sturm und Drang* plays. The 'radical' and 'moderate' in Israel's dense genealogical discourse analyses often appear as estranged brothers in mortal conflict. Though born from the same parents (rational inquiry and a desire for social improvement), they diverge dramatically in methods, timelines and willingness to compromise in accomplishing their aims. As in Klinger's *Die Zwillinge* (1776), Leisewitz's *Julius von Tarent* (1776) or Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1781), the fraternal rivals of radicality and moderation vie with each other in a contest to the death. Like the battling brothers in these popular melodramas, Israel's categories make clear the high stakes of the contest between radical revolutionaries and moderate reformers, and they lend suspense to the machinations of the players on either side.

In fact, the brothers Franz and Karl in Schiller's play can almost be read as caricatures of radical and moderate Enlightenment positions. Franz is a thorough-going materialist who rejects unjust social conventions such

¹⁹ Quoted in Eigenauer, 'Meta-Analysis' (note 18), 457.

²⁰ Niekerk, 'Introduction' (note 13), p. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 7.

²² Gabriela Stoicea, 'When History Meets Literature: Jonathan Israel, Sophie von La Roche, and the Problem of Gender', in *Radical Enlightenment in Germany: A Cultural Perspective*, ed. Niekerk (note 13), pp. 211–37.

²³ Quoted in Eigenauer, 'Meta-Analysis' (note 18), 458.

as inheritance laws. But far from being the progressive democrat Israel associates with this radicality, Franz is a villain who manipulates existing social mores in order selfishly to pursue his own egoistic ends. Like the Marquis de Sade, Franz spouts radical ideas only to justify his own rapacious cruelties. He starts from one foundational principle of the radical Enlightenment, but fails to recognise the other-directed, emancipatory morality it entails. Karl's enthusiastic commitment to freedom, meanwhile, motivates him to found an independent band of outlaws. But the violent crimes to which this rebellion leads ultimately convince him to submit to the legal authority of the state. Like Franz, he starts from a radical position, but he ends up pledging loyalty to – and accepting death for – moderation. Perhaps the brothers' tragic ends are a result of each insisting on only one of two important tenets of Israel's radicalism: materialism and freedom, respectively. Franz's materialist metaphysics without Spinoza's doctrine of freedom lead to exploitative criminality.²⁴ Karl's reverence for freedom without Spinoza's monist ontology ultimately results in compromising moderation and a resigned acceptance of the status quo.²⁵

The brothers' arguably selective Spinozism brings us to a second common critique of Israel's position. Many reviewers (52 per cent of Eigenauer's meta-analysis) are sceptical about the direct line Israel draws between substance monism and radical politics.²⁶ They adduce examples of politically moderate materialists (e.g. Albrecht von Haller) and 'imagine' radicals who come to their politics by routes other than atheism or substance monism²⁷ (though not mentioned by Eigenauer, the feminist thinker Mary Wollstonecraft – whom Israel firmly classes among the radical Enlightenment – was an avowed theist and relied on God in many of her arguments for the equality of women's capacity to reason). What these criticisms overlook, however, is that although Israel repeatedly talks about the connection between the two, he never claims that Spinozism is a necessary or sufficient precondition for a commitment to democratic values. In fact, he confronts head-on one of the most glaring counter-examples to his linking of Spinozism to radicality, one who happens to be the superstar of the Sturm und Drang.

²⁴ We do not wish to suggest that Franz's crass materialism should be equated with the pantheistic metaphysics of Spinoza's one-substance monism, but Israel places materialism and monism among a constellation of related characteristics of the radical Enlightenment. Famously, though controversially, Sade was one of the paradigmatic representatives of the Enlightenment for Adorno and Horkheimer. To be clear, Jonathan Israel does not consider Sade representative of the Enlightenment. See Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1944) as well as Ritchie Robertson's critical discussion of the identification of the Enlightenment with the Marquis de Sade (Robertson, *The Enlightenment* (note 9), p. 775). See also Jonathan Israel, *The Enlightenment that Failed: Ideas, Revolution, and Democratic Defeat*, Oxford 2020, p. 927.

²⁵ For a different analysis of the dynamic relations between these brothers, see Thiti Owlarn's contribution to this volume.

²⁶ Eigenauer, 'Meta-Analysis' (note 18), 454.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 456.

There are three interesting points we can glean from the appearances of Goethe in Israel's history. First, Goethe features as a kind of *casus mirabilis* – a phenomenon that does not fit into Israel's explanatory scheme and for which he has to invent a new category. Early on in *Democratic Enlightenment*, he brings up the anomaly: 'Goethe was a passionate Spinozist [...] resolved to reject all accepted opinions and traditions about the divinity, providence, nature, science, and the human condition; but', Israel concedes, 'he did so in a completely different way from the revolutionary democrats.'²⁸ Several times in the course of the 1,000-page tome, Israel returns to this phenomenon with the language of wonder. A typical example is Goethe's appearance at the close of a chapter on his and Schiller's plays about the sixteenth-century Dutch revolt against Spain. Israel again repeats the common connection of Spinozism and 'revolutionary consciousness'. Then he begins the next paragraph with an uncharacteristically short sentence: 'But there was another path.'²⁹ The following passage is unique because what is usually an assertion becomes a question: 'What does it mean to strip divine providence from one's view of nature and acknowledge that man's body and soul constitute a single substance?' Israel's oft repeated explanation of the consequences of this philosophical stance suddenly does not work anymore. As if discomfited by the unfitness of his pat answers, Israel poses yet another question soon after: 'Does the oneness of body and spirit not really mean that the eternal and the transitory, as Schiller expressed the point, however contradictory in appearance, must somehow be unified in what is human and in human life?'³⁰ Rhetorical questions are rare in Israel's assured style, but with these two queries in quick succession, he heralds the anomaly of Goethe for his system.

Although Israel does not try to hide this prominent evidence against his prevailing thesis, his solution stands in need of elaboration. He tries to account for the aberration by positing an 'inward revolution', a turn away from politics and toward the self somehow parallel to the radical outrage at social inequities that other Spinozist materialists evinced. Israel points to the 'inner transformation' that Goethe sought for the 'higher individual', such as himself. Israel still insists that even this kind of elitist inward turn and self-edification counts as progressive: 'everyone, democratic republican or not, rejecting providence, divinely delivered morality, and belief that God created the world was implicitly a forward-looking revolutionary'.³¹ Goethe, no doubt, would have cringed at being classed with these 'revolutionaries' were he to have read this assessment from the desk of his ducal appointment. Israel's designation of this apolitical 'other path' raises more problems than it solves. The retreat to an

²⁸ Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment* (note 6), p. 21.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 755.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

'aloof, quiescent, politically passive' focus on 'artistic self-emancipation'³² is no novel explanation for the aesthetics of Weimar Classicism, and scholars have pointed out the limits of this idea of an apolitical retreat. Jonathan Hess, for instance, demonstrated how tenuous this fiction of autonomous art really is by revealing the political realities to which its theorisers are responding.³³ Instead of looking to Goethe's retrospective asseverations from 1790s and beyond, it would be helpful to observe the first impact of Spinoza's ideas on Goethe.

Earlier on, Israel's own narrative had hinted at the reason for such a turn and the direction in which it would need to look, which brings us to the second important point of his work for a fresh approach to the Sturm und Drang. By far the most extensive part of his chronicle of Spinoza in Germany concerns the famous 'Pantheismustreit' of the 1780s, in which Lessing's deathbed confession of Spinozism became an all-consuming scandal in the public sphere.³⁴ But as Israel notes, Goethe at one point 'remarked in the middle of the furore' that:

the public dispute about Spinoza that erupted in [...] all of Germany in the 1780s, far from being an essentially new development, merely brought to the surface for the first time a tangle of previously concealed intellectual encounters and relations that all the participants in the public drama had been privately wrestling with for decades.³⁵

Israel himself takes this suggestion as an excuse to look all the way back to 1671, when Leibniz first introduced Spinoza's ideas to Germany (which makes Goethe's words sound, perhaps unsurprisingly, like a justification for Israel's entire trilogy of Enlightenment histories). But one could take the remark rather less drastically as a clue to viewing the previous decade in which Goethe himself was first 'captured' by Spinozism. In other words, it leads us to enquire how the public debates of the 1780s and political positionings of the 1790s were prepared for by the Sturm und Drang.

Israel's narrative thus suggests a fruitful avenue of investigation, though he himself does not undertake the task: to understand the first foundations of Goethe's radicalism or moderation, one should observe his initial reception of Spinoza. It is likely that Goethe was introduced to Spinoza's name and ideas during his frequent visits to the invalidated Herder in Strasbourg in 1771. Goethe first read and enthused about Spinoza at the latest by 1774, the year after *Götz* had brought him to the attention of the German-speaking readership and the year in which *Werther* would boost him to superstardom. In his autobiography much later, he muses, 'Dieser Geist,

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 755–6.

³³ Jonathan M. Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic: Enlightenment, Public Culture, and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy*, Detroit 1999.

³⁴ Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment* (note 6), pp. 684–720.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 688.

der so entschieden auf mich wirkte, undder auf meine ganze Denkweise so großen Einfluß haben sollte, war Spinoza'.³⁶ In the following year, he gushes about Spinoza under a midnight moon to a new-found (if short-lasting) soulmate, Friedrich Jacobi.³⁷ By Goethe's own admission, Jacobi was much more fluent in Spinoza's philosophy than he at that time. But already in that moonlit inn in 1775, Goethe responded to Jacobi's critique of Spinoza's soulless, rationalist atheism by rapturously defending him 'as a mystic and a moralist of unique intellectual independence'.³⁸ Goethe would not dedicate himself to the assiduous, systematic study of Spinoza until the 1780s, by which time he had settled down in Weimar and taken up the serious duties of the ducal court. By then, he had also begun his lifelong interest in the scientific investigation of botany, and his reading of Spinoza deepened his engagement with the natural world.³⁹

This timeline shows that Goethe would not have had a firm understanding of Spinoza's metaphysical commitments during the heady days of the Sturm und Drang, and by the time he came to read and appreciate Spinoza more closely, he was firmly committed to courtly life and autocratic rule. To be sure, as W. Daniel Wilson has demonstrated, Goethe's personal journey is not a simple tale of youthful rebelliousness broken by a sudden turn to conservatism after accepting Karl August's invitation to Weimar.⁴⁰ Instead, Wilson combs through the evidence of Goethe's early writing to reveal that the young poet was quite timid at the prospect of resistance and circumspect in what he allowed to reach the public. Wilson does, however, uncover the politically incendiary potential of Goethe's earliest version of what would eventually become *Götz von Berlichingen*. In this Ur-Götz of 1771, the peasants are presented in a much more sympathetic light in their oppression under their feudal lords, who are tyrannical and cruel. But Goethe suppresses this implicit critique of the persisting autocratic system when he eventually publishes the play in 1773. Wilson speculates that angling for a job as an advisor to a court could have motivated Goethe's self-censorship.

But the timing and self-characterisation of Goethe's encounter with Spinoza could present a possible supplementary explanation for his

³⁶ *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit*, book 3, in *Goethes Werke*. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen, 55 vols, Weimar 1890, 1/28, p. 288.

³⁷ Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben* (note 36), p. 289. See also the account in Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, Vol. 1, *The Poetry of Desire (1749–1790)*, Oxford 1991, pp. 160–1, 183.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

³⁹ For an excellent account of the influence of Spinoza on Goethe's epistemology, see Eckart Förster, 'Goethe's Spinozism', in *Spinoza and German Idealism*, ed. Eckart Förster and Yitzhak Melamed, Cambridge 2012, pp. 85–99. For a more optimistic reading of Goethe's engagement with Spinoza in the political realm, see Michael Mack, *Spinoza and the Specters of Modernity: The Hidden Enlightenment of Diversity from Spinoza to Kant*, New York 2010, pp. 139–92.

⁴⁰ W. Daniel Wilson, 'Der junge Goethe – ein politischer Rebell? Opposition versus Fürstendienst in *Götz von Berlichingen* und kleineren Frühwerken', in *Goethe: Neue Ansichten – neue Einsichten*, ed. Hans-Jörg Knobloch and Helmut Koopman, Würzburg 2007, pp. 11–35.

reticence. By Goethe's own description, the discovery of Spinoza, sometime before 1774, had a calming effect: 'Was ich mir aus dem Werke mag herausgelesen, was ich in dasselbe mag hineingelesen haben, davon wüßte ich keine Rechenschaft zu geben, genug ich fand hier eine Beruhigung meiner Leidenschaften.'⁴¹ Instead of feeding Goethe's outrage at the unjustifiable inequities of the prevalent social system, Spinoza seems to have lent him a kind of quietude about the ways of the world. It redirected any of his impulses of rebellion against the prevailing system to the private realm. Intersubjective responsibility to the immediate and singular (rather than distant and aggregate) Other would now demand Goethe's attention:

Was mich aber besonders an ihn fesselte, war die gränzenlose Uneigennützigkeit, die aus jedem Satze hervorleuchtete. Jenes wunderliche Wort: Wer Gott recht liebt, muß nicht verlangen, daß Gott ihn wieder liebe, mit allen den Vordersätzen worauf es ruht, mit allen den Folgen die daraus entspringen, erfüllte mein ganzes Nachdenken. Uneigennützig zu sein in allem, am uneigennützigsten in Liebe und Freundschaft, war meine höchste Lust, meine Maxime, meine Ausübung, so daß jenes freche spätere Wort: Wenn ich dich liebe, was geht's dich an? mir recht aus dem Herzen gesprochen ist.⁴²

This quotation, at least when read slightly against the grain, helps explain some of Goethe's more questionable interactions with women. In fact, far from making Goethe more cognisant of the systemic injustices in which he may be complicit, reading Spinoza gave him an excuse to treat others more cavalierly.

But what is perhaps most interesting in this account is that Spinoza had this powerful effect on Goethe even before he had taken the time and effort properly to understand the complexities of his metaphysics. Pay attention to how accurately Goethe claims to interpret Spinoza at this point in the 1770s: 'Was ich mir aus dem Werke mag herausgelesen, was ich in dasselbe mag hineingelesen haben, davon wüßte ich keine Rechenschaft zu geben.'⁴³ Of course reader-response literary theorists such as Hans-Robert Jauss or Wolfgang Iser will later claim that every act of reading is constituted by such an amalgam of subject and object, but Goethe here is remarkable in stressing the indeterminacy of what comes from the text and what from himself. It is the self-professed vagueness and imprecision of his encounter with Spinoza – he teases the reader with the confession that he may have read much of himself into the text – that provides a key to the nature of reception and influence in the Sturm und Drang. These authors are no fusty academics careful to cite their sources and provide evidence for

⁴¹ Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben* (note 36), p. 288.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

their conclusions. Instead, it is the very looseness and the liberties of their engagement with texts that allow them to shape such fresh and innovative creations.

This creative reception, emblematised by Goethe's description of his first encounter with Spinoza, is repeatedly highlighted in the intertextual readings undertaken in the articles collected here. Whether it is a misreading of Aristotle (Ellwood Wiggins) or of theologians and physiocratic economists (Mary Helen Dupree and Ian McLean), each case reveals how Lenz choreographs productive generations of meaning out of his encounters with texts. Anna-Lisa Baumeister demonstrates how multiple Sturm und Drang authors creatively reinterpret Montesquieu and August Ludwig von Schlözer on climate theory and Elystan Griffiths does the same with other authors' readings of Rousseau on childhood and pedagogy. Veronica Curran shows how reading Lenz in turn is a productively creative act for Büchner and Brecht. Arguably, Thiti Owlarn shows that Schiller's *Die Räuber* is the tragedy of what happens when each brother tries to articulate his own truth without doing so collaboratively through the reading of another. Martin Wagner's essay can be seen as a meditation on this theme of deviant reception at its most basic, since Luther's *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* (1520), which he introduces as a key to understanding the seeming contradictions between the radicality and moderation of the Sturm und Drang, is ultimately a scene of creatively obedient reading.

LEISEWITZ'S THEATRICAL SKETCH DIPTYCH AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF STURM UND DRANG RADICALITY

It may well turn out that Israel's strict dichotomy is unable to account completely for some important complexities of late eighteenth-century German social, artistic and intellectual contexts. And yet this same dichotomy can still help make visible the obstreperous realities that refuse to fit neatly into either of Israel's columns. By considering the ways in which the Sturm und Drang, with its peculiar tension between radicality and moderation, can – or cannot – be explained in terms of Israel's binary, we stand to gain a more precise understanding of German literature of the 1770s, in a language that can prove meaningful to Enlightenment scholars more broadly.

To illustrate the potential of Israel's dichotomy for the Sturm und Drang we turn here to Johann Anton Leisewitz's rarely discussed dramatic dialogues 'Die Pfandung' and 'Der Besuch um Mitternacht' (both appeared in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach auf das Jahr 1775*). These texts have been suggested as two of the exceptional works of the Sturm und Drang that present an outright critique of the power relations then in place

in German lands.⁴⁴ However, a more careful reading of Leisewitz's texts suggests a more nuanced interpretation. Alongside their pointed critique, the dialogues present highly self-conscious aesthetic experiments that combine radically realistic elements with the oddest hyperbole. In the end, the social critique is carried so far that it takes on an absurd undertone that not only foregrounds the formal and stylistic over the directly political but also undermines the presumably intended critique: where Leisewitz's short texts turn radical, that radicality appears, paradoxically, as an invitation to call the political criticism into doubt.

Leisewitz's 'Die Pfandung' presents us with a male peasant joining his wife in bed (or perhaps he awaits her in bed; the wording remains ambiguous) and asking whether he may put out the light. It is quite an unusual setting; indeed, if we see this correctly, we are here confronted with the first approximation of pillow talk in the history of German drama. As the married couple lie side by side, they anticipate the looming confiscation of that very bed by the local prince on the following day. 'Der Mann' asks: 'Frau, liegst du? So thu ich das Licht aus. Dehne dich zu guter letzt noch einmal in deinem Bette. Morgen wird's gepfandet. Der Fürst hat's verpraßt.'⁴⁵

This opening is followed by a series of short but intense reflections on the injustice of the feudal system, the importance of the bed to the peasants, and the possible course of action: the husband contemplates suicide by hanging himself with a garter on the bedframe – but that option is quickly ruled out by the couple for fear of eternal damnation. Passive acceptance of their unjust fate remains as the only way forward. However, the man remains intrigued by the thought of his wife's sighs and his son's cries that would likely emerge in response to his self-annihilation. As the dialogue closes, husband and wife wish each other a good night, bemoaning only the fact that, the following day, they will have to wish each other a good night while sleeping on the ground. 'Die Frau' is allowed the last word: 'Gute Nacht! Ach, morgen Abend sagen wir uns die auf der Erde!'⁴⁶

Leisewitz's short text, just about three pages long, is remarkable – but in ways that are not simply reducible to its political critique. Scholarship so far has overstated the dialogue's political radicality, while neglecting its aesthetic transgressiveness.⁴⁷ Theo Buck connects the two by declaring 'Die Pfandung' a prototype of 'den modernen Einakter der offenen Form'

⁴⁴ Mathias Luserke-Jaquí, 'Sturm und Drang als Programm', in *Handbuch Sturm und Drang*, ed. Mathias Luserke-Jaquí, Berlin 2017, pp. 1–8 (p. 2).

⁴⁵ Anonymous [Johann Anton Leisewitz], 'Die Pfandung', *Göttinger Musenalmanach auf das Jahr 1775*, 65–8 (65).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁷ For an emphasis on the radicality of 'Die Pfandung', see Luserke-Jaquí, 'Sturm und Drang als Programm' (note 44), p. 2; and Désirée Müller, 'Die Pfandung', in *Handbuch Sturm und Drang*, ed. Luserke-Jaquí (note 44), pp. 372–4 (p. 372).

that has 'eingreifende Sozialkritik' as its goal.⁴⁸ But the novelties of this short form of drama can cut both ways, especially when considered as a pair with the other dramatic fragment published in the same edition of the *Musenalmanach*. One might even go so far as to think of the aesthetic innovation of the text to be working at the expense of political criticism.

For what is peculiar about this text is not only the harsh critique of the prince's injustice (the peasants estimate the bed to be barely worth the price of one drink for the prince), but the setting, the style and the language. Who in 1775 would have shown a peasant couple chatting in bed after they put out the light? Quite possibly, contemporary readers of the text (performance was almost certainly not envisioned) would not have recovered enough from their shock at the setting to pay attention to anything actually being said. Moreover, both the prince's injustice and the peasants' reactions are shown in such odd hyperbole that it is hard to take them literally: why would the prince confiscate the peasants' bed⁴⁹ (even considering that the bed was probably among the more valuable objects in a peasant's home⁵⁰)? And what do we make of the peasant's plan to hang himself on his own bedpost: an exercise that does not appear easy – and an idea that in its very brute concreteness actually invites some sceptical questions about the construction of a bed that would permit such an endeavour. Leisewitz's dialogue, in other words, pushes, in typical Sturm und Drang fashion, the emotionality and realist attention to detail to such a degree that the text begins to draw more attention to its own poetic gestures than to the underlying social problems that the text decries. In this manner, the form of the dialogue counteracts the political force also at work in the text. In the final analysis, the aesthetic radicality of the dialogue steals the limelight from the political implications and indeed takes the edge off the critique.

A similar dynamic can be observed in Leisewitz's 'Der Besuch um Mitternacht', a short dialogue that functions as a companion piece to 'Die Pfandung', now focusing directly on the prince's immorality. 'Der Besuch um Mitternacht' shows us a prince engaged in a nocturnal chess game with his chamberlain while apparently awaiting the arrival of a mistress. As the two speak disparagingly both of the prince's wife and the institution

⁴⁸ Theo Buck, "Die Szene wird zum Tribunal". Zu Johann Anton Leisewitz' Kurzdrama Die Pfandung', in *Théâtre, Nation & Société En Allemagne Au XVIII E Siècle*, ed. Roland Krebs and Jean Marie Valentin, Nancy 1990, pp. 153–66 (pp. 163, 161).

⁴⁹ For it is the bed only that is in question in this scene. The dialogue repeatedly and exclusively mentions the bed as the object of the titular 'Pfandung'. There is no indication in the dialogue to read the bed as a synecdoche of the peasants' entire belongings, as Desirée Müller appears to do: 'Im Laufe des Gesprächs zwischen den beiden offenbart sich, was an ihnen am kommenden Tag bevorstehen wird: die Pfandung ihres gesamten Hab und Guts durch die Gefolgsleute des Fürsten.' Müller, 'Die Pfandung' (note 47), p. 372.

⁵⁰ Beds were one of the few pieces of furniture of value in commoners' homes in early modern Europe. Shakespeare, for instance, carefully detailed who should inherit his beds in his will (famously, the only thing he left his wife was the second best bed!).

of marriage, the ghost of the Germanic hero Arminius appears, chiding the prince for suppressing free speech and for being 'der Tyrann von Sklaven, und der Sklave einer Hure'.⁵¹ The prince is accused of a life in luxury while reigning over a land of misery, and he receives the striking admonition: 'Despotismus ist der Vater der Freiheit.'⁵² The warning of a revolution and the promise of freedom make this Sturm und Drang dialogue a strikingly radical text. And yet we can hear a certain absurdity in this dialogue that may not be the sole product of our twenty-first-century ears. The abrupt appearance and disappearance of the ghost is rather hard to swallow and his earnest tone borders on the ridiculous. Moreover, the dialogue's ending, which culminates in a joke, raises the question of how seriously we are to take the entire work. As the ghost disappears, the prince asks his chamberlain for Hungary Water (a perfume and fashionable medicine), thus suggesting that a shock may have been suffered, but certainly only a mild one. When the chamberlain admits to not having the requested remedy ready at hand, the annoyed prince closes the dialogue with a teasing reprimand: 'Sie sind ein Freygeist und haben in der Gespensterstunde kein ungarisch Wasser!'⁵³ To be sure, the callousness of the prince, who remains largely unmoved by the ghost's fierce accusations can be seen to intensify the dialogue's critique of despotism. However, in his near-total disregard for the ghost and in his readiness to change the topic, the prince also distracts the audience from the social and political criticisms to direct it instead to a wholly unrelated question: why exactly should freethinkers carry Hungary Water at midnight? Even if one were to suggest a plausible answer to this question, it does not change the fact that the explanation still leads us astray from the main political criticisms voiced in this dialogue. The sentiment that might stay with us most once we close the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* is that we have just perused a highly odd work of art.

What becomes apparent when comparing these two short dramas is the way they knowingly nod to the generic excesses of Sturm und Drang dramaturgy. The two scenes seem to present the internal contradictions of the lower and upper classes. 'Die Pfandung' demonstrates the untenable position of the poor in the face of the unjust, rapacious policies of the ruling elite, while 'Der Besuch' reveals the unrepentant, insensitive debauchery of the nobility who impose debilitating demands on their peasants. The two scenes obliquely reference each other to create a clear diptych, even though they appear over one hundred pages apart in the *Musenalmanach*. The peasants complain about the 'Fürst' in a house in which the only named sounds are 'Seufzen and Schreien', while the Fürst

⁵¹ Anonymous [Johann Anton Leisewitz], 'Der Besuch um Mitternacht', *Göttinger Musenalmanach auf das Jahr 1775*, 226–9 (227).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 228–9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 229.

is reprimanded by the ghost that ‘man in keinem Hause lacht, als in deinem’.⁵⁴ These inarticulate sounds are signs of misery and pleasure, respectively, and in both cases are contrasted with articulate speech that is declared either unique or iterative. The ghost in ‘Besuch’ says he has come ‘Um zu reden! Hier hat noch niemand geredet!’ while the wife concludes ‘Die Pfandung’ by predicting that she will repeat the same words in a poorer house in the future: ‘Gute Nacht! Ach, morgen Abend sagen wir uns die auf der Erde!’⁵⁵ In the noble’s house, laughter has replaced honest speech, while in the peasant’s home, justified sighs and screams will be suppressed by formulaic utterances.

But the clear potential for social critique in both cases is delivered in a way that summons our attention to the dialogues’ own formal exaggerations. Leisewitz’s short plays, in other words, do not simply display formal transgressions, they also potentially call the value of these very transgressions into doubt. At the very centre of ‘Die Pfandung’, the peasant imagines the reactions of his son and wife beholding his own melodramatic suicide by stocking and bedpost: ‘Wenn ich so stürbe, so würdest du doch wenigstens einmal seufzen! [...] Und unser Jung würde schreyen! Nicht!’⁵⁶ The husband fantasises a theatrical scene: the effect the spectacle of his suicide will have on its audience. The site of the famous ‘bed trick’ of early modern comedy has morphed into a mock-horror fantasy. The peasant’s vision is precisely the kind of impropriety for which Sturm und Drang playwrights were admonished by respectable critics. In the ‘Pfandung’, however, the husband and wife ultimately reject the envisioned spectacle in favour of quiet resignation.

Similarly, in ‘Besuch um Mitternacht’, an early modern stage convention makes a generic transformation. Ghosts do not appear in most Sturm und Drang plays of the 1770s,⁵⁷ despite their writers’ enthusiasm for the ghosts in Shakespeare’s tragedies.⁵⁸ Leisewitz seems to be making good on that approbation for spectral visitations with this little piece, in which the ghost of Hermann (Arminius), the Germanic tribal leader who defeated the Romans at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE, comes to the modern German ‘Fürst’ to admonish him for profligacy and tyranny. But instead of inculcating guilt, like the ghosts of the victims of Macbeth or Richard III’s victims in Shakespeare, or even triggering doubt and philosophical ruminations like Hamlet’s ghost, the spectral Hermann’s effect on the

⁵⁴ Leisewitz, ‘Die Pfandung’ (note 45), 66–7; ‘Der Besuch um Mitternacht’ (note 51), 228.

⁵⁵ Leisewitz, ‘Die Pfandung’ (note 45), 68; ‘Der Besuch um Mitternacht’ (note 51), 228.

⁵⁶ Leisewitz, ‘Die Pfandung’ (note 45), 66.

⁵⁷ One exception is Heinrich Leopold Wagner’s farce *Voltaire am Abend seiner Apotheose* (1778), in which the ‘Genius des neunzehnten Jahrhundert’ is in dialogue with Voltaire.

⁵⁸ Cf. Goethe’s ‘Rede zum Shakepeare-Tag’ (1771), Herder’s ‘Shakespear’ (1773) and Lessing’s discussion of stage ghosts in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (Stück 11, 1767). See also Lenz’s poem ‘Shakespears Geist’, which was not published until 1828, but was probably composed during the 1770s.

'Fürst' is a deflating joke. Once again, a generic trope lauded by Stürmer und Dränger is pushed to its extreme only to be revealed as comically insufficient.

As with the emphatic indeterminacy of Goethe's engagement with Spinoza, Leisewitz's short dramas are most remarkable for their ambivalence. These examples help make clear a central characteristic of Sturm und Drang aesthetics as they pertain to politics. Though they stage themselves as intensely affective, the ultimate effect of the aesthetic experience is not determinable solely by the formal shaping of the content: Leisewitz's plays could be understood just as well as powerful literary forays into radical social drama, as exaggerated avant-garde formal experiments, or as sophisticated second-order dramas that problematise the Sturm und Drang's own aesthetic *modus operandi*. As the example of Goethe reading himself into Spinoza suggests, the potential for radicality in Sturm und Drang art seems to be a factor of the audience's receptivity as much as a feature of the artwork itself.

OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Leisewitz's short dialogues, while certainly not directly representative of the Sturm und Drang in every aspect, help attune readers to the oscillation between the radical and the moderate that seems to be a hallmark of the Sturm und Drang more broadly. The eight articles in this special number swing through a range of peaks and troughs in this oscillation, revealing the progressive as well as the reactionary aspects of the Sturm und Drang. A quick glance at the table of contents may give the impression that J. M. R. Lenz, whose name appears in four out of eight titles, looms as the major figure in the Radical and Moderate Sturm und Drang. While a focus on Lenz was not an intended goal in inviting and selecting articles for this collection, we find his centrality in the volume neither surprising nor regrettable. The same contradictions of form and content we point out in Leisewitz's sketches are constitutive of Lenz's entire oeuvre: representations of class and gender dynamics with the potential for stringent social critique couched in formal innovations that are sometimes at odds with the works' critical valency. This dynamic of formal radicality in surprising contrast with its political implications is characteristic of Lenz's forays into multiple genres, as reflected in the variety of articles dedicated to his works below: narrative (Mary Helen Dupree), tragedy and comedy (Veronica Curran), dramatic theory (Ellwood Wiggins), and economic and military policy (Ian McLean). Though we make no claim for Lenz's leadership role among contemporary writers of the Sturm und Drang, in retrospect his works and life are emblematic of the explosive power and inner contradictions that current scholars identify in the literary currents of the 1770s.

The most direct call for an appreciation of the political criticism advanced in the Sturm und Drang appears in the articles by Elystan Griffiths and Ian McLean, which open our collection. Griffiths emphasises the Sturm und Drang's central (albeit simultaneously somewhat hidden) concern with social inequality – a concern that Griffiths traces to the works of Rousseau, notably his *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (1755). While this text is not explicitly discussed by Sturm und Drang writers, they echo its rhetoric and concerns, and their deliberations can thus fruitfully be understood as participating in larger Enlightenment debates. Notably, through readings of Friedrich Maximilian Klingler's *Die Zwillinge* (1776), Heinrich Leopold Wagner's *Die Kindermörderin* (1776) and Maler Müller's *Pfälzische Idyllen* (1775ff.), Griffiths argues that Sturm und Drang writers saw in social inequality, with Rousseau, a crucial source of inauthenticity and violence. While their texts never quite name disparity as a wrong in need of reform, Griffiths convincingly shows that the plots they present point to inequality as a root evil.

An even more radical side of the Sturm und Drang is suggested in Ian McLean's striking reinterpretation of Lenz's manuscripts on social reform. McLean suggests that Lenz introduced in his reception of French physiocratic writings a labour theory of value, in which the farm workers replace the landowners as the crucial drivers of economic growth. In an intriguing speculative turn, moreover, McLean contends that the society Lenz envisions is held together by desires for sociability and companionship that escape heteronormative frameworks and are more akin to contemporary understandings of queerness, which he derives from Lenz's unique theological appreciation of concupiscence.

McLean's reflections on Lenz's suggestive reappraisal of gender relations find a certain echo in the subsequent two contributions in this volume, which both emphasise progressive gender politics as a hallmark of Lenz's writings. Mary Helen Dupree turns to Lenz's 'Der Landprediger' to show the extent to which that narrative critically highlights attempts to reign in female agency. Importantly, however, Dupree also stresses that Lenz's alertness to gender questions makes him more an outlier than a typical representative of the Sturm und Drang: Lenz's 'Landprediger' points a finger to the very oppression that women faced in the Sturm und Drang generation and beyond. Indeed, as Veronica Curran shows in her essay, Lenz's awareness of gender dynamics was lost again in Brecht's reception of the Sturm und Drang writer, even as Brecht radicalised Lenz's politics in other aspects.

The subsequent two articles in this collection show us a politically even more ambiguous Sturm und Drang. Anna-Lisa Baumeister's exploration of the poetics of climate stresses that although Sturm und Drang writers were prompted by Enlightenment-era climate theories which were deeply chauvinistic and Euro-centric, they take their climatic musings in a much more cosmopolitan direction. The Sturm und Drang largely rejects the

idealisation of a temperate European climate and the colonialist values that this ideal entails. In fact, though previous scholars lump the whole Sturm und Drang together with the proto-nationalist rhetoric of north European exceptionalism (as evident, for instance in Christian Schubart's writings), Baumeister shows how more prominent authors (Herder, Lenz, Goethe, for instance) celebrate a diversity of climates and cultures. While Baumeister thus reveals the differentiation between the various Sturm und Drang writers, Thiti Owlarn highlights in his contribution the political ambiguities that are at work within a single text, Schiller's *Die Räuber*. On the one hand, Owlarn urges us to discover in Karl's band of robbers a serious, quasi-democratic alternative to the contemporaneous absolutist regimes. On the other hand, Owlarn also insists that Schiller ultimately rejects that alternative – not, however, as is often claimed, in favour of the old order, but in favour of a utopian society that is held together by bonds of unconditional love, which Owlarn sees embodied in the character of Amalia.

The final two articles, by Ellwood Wiggins and Martin Wagner, focus on the performance of critique through formalistic innovations of the Sturm und Drang. Wiggins arrives at his exploration of form by way of a re-examination of the relationship between Lenz's *Anmerkungen übers Theater* and Aristotle's *Poetics*. Complicating the established view of Lenz as anti-Aristotelian, Wiggins highlights the remarkable affinities between the two works, notably in their rather open form and their almost enigmatic circumvention of a clear central thesis. Building on Joe Sachs's recent interpretation of the *Poetics*, Wiggins sees in the form of Lenz's *Anmerkungen* a subversive potential in that it calls on readers to visit and revisit the text in a searching, critical attitude. While Wiggins thus emphasises the capacity for critique inherent in Sturm und Drang form, Wagner suggests a more cautious reading of the Sturm und Drang's aesthetics. Crucially, building on a passage from Johann Georg Hamann's *Fünf Hirtenbriefe das Schuldrama betreffend*, he argues that Sturm und Drang writers conceived of the break with neo-classical rules of dramatic composition in ways that are analogous to the Paulinian and Lutheran break with laws and good works as a central feature of Christians' relationship to God. As in the religious paradigm, this break thus does not entail a fundamental questioning of authority.

These last two articles indicate the parameters of Sturm und Drang radicality as limned by the entire collection. On the one hand, the hidden catharsis of Lenz's *Anmerkungen übers Theater* seems to open up possibilities for subversive critique and emancipatory poetics. But this potential liberty is qualified and limited by the paradoxical nature of freedom thus sought. Just as Luther's Christian is simultaneously free and servant to all, the 'knocking away' of social conventions tantamount to Lenzian catharsis relies on a tacit acceptance of the central tenets of the same – uncritically patriarchal – moral universe that underlies conventional society. The structure of this dynamic is revealed and spelled out in detail

from multiple perspectives by the articles collected here. The Sturm und Drang abhorrence of inequality relies on the moderating compromises of Rousseauian rhetoric (Griffiths). Likewise, the rejection of colonialist climate fantasies leads to advocacy for both cosmopolitan and nationalist values (Baumeister). Lenz's sensitivity to gender inequities evidenced in his dramas is echoed with peculiar repercussions in his own narrative writing (Dupree) and his later Brechtian reception (Curran). The potential for queering the heteronormative force of Lenz's otherwise transgressive work ultimately derives from a neo-Augustinian notion of sin (McLean). Schiller's *Die Räuber*, meanwhile, can be seen as a conflict between two revolutionary orders (Owlarn), but there is perhaps no better illustration of Luther's *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* than Karl's voluntary submission to the existing social order with which the play ends. Ultimately, we might close with three takeaways that precede the final curtain in Stoppard's *Travesties* and seem equally applicable to the aesthetic avant-garde of the 1770s:

CARR: [...] Firstly, you're either a revolutionary or you're not, and if you're not you might as well be an artist as anything else. Secondly, if you can't be an artist, you might as well be a revolutionary...

I forget the third thing.

(BLACKOUT)⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Stoppard, *Travesties* (note 1), pp. 98–9.