CRITICAL CLIMATES: *STURM UND DRANG* AND THE RADICAL POETICS OF NATURE

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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My dissertation develops a new reading of the status of nature in the *Sturm und Drang* period of the 1770s, in texts by authors ranging from the early Goethe, Schiller, and Herder, to J.M.R. Lenz, Friedrich Müller, and Karoline Flachsland. Against prevailing interpretations that dismiss *Sturm und Drang*'s nature-affinity as outdated, irrationalist, and apolitical, I reframe the period through attention to European colonial geopolitics, emergent natural sciences such as hydrology and meteorology, and innovative material writing practices. I propose a reading of *Sturm und Drang* as an unparalleled attempt to ground modern culture in nature, one noteworthy for its epistemic sensitivities and anti-essentialist commitments. In this way, I not only argue that the poetics of *Sturm und Drang* offers a radical environmental critique of the project of Enlightenment from within—one that speaks directly to pressing contemporary concerns. I also make a new case for the distinctiveness of the period from the episteme "around 1800," highlighting its socio-critical focus and its international outlook.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In his 1774 "alternative" philosophy of the history of humanity (*Auch eine Philosophie zur Geschichte der Menschheit*), Johann Gottfried Herder writes:

> Insect of a clump of dirt, look again at sky and earth! Do you, in the whole universe, as it weaves its work dead and alive *all at once*, find *yourself* the exclusive middle-point towards which everything operates? Or do not *you* yourself cooperate . . . [in the service of] purposes in the service of which the morning star and the little cloud beside it cooperate, as do you and the worm that you are now stepping upon? (*This Too* 336, translation slightly modified)
> (Insekt einer Erdscholle, siehe wieder auf Himmel und Erde! Findest du im ganzen, tot und lebendig *auf einmal* webenden Weltall *dich* den ausschließenden Mittelpunkt, auf den *alles* würke? Oder würkest *du* nicht selbst mit . . . zu Zwecken, zu denen der Morgenstern und die kleine Wolke neben ihm, du und der Wurm mitwürkt, den du jetzt zertrittst?; 4: 81)[1]

Ironically, Herder's philosophy of the history of humanity recommends a departure from *human* history—a re-focusing on "sky and earth" and an extinguishing of the human into nature. The connection between natural and cultural history was not entirely new at the time. Two years earlier, the historian August Ludwig von Schlözer had called for incorporating "revolutions of the soil, which the human being, its inhabitant, caused" into his own "universal history" of human development (10).[2] But Herder's argument inverts Schlözer's. Unlike Schlözer, who subsumes natural history into the human, Herder regards human history as part of a larger encompassing natural history. To achieve this perspective, Herder adjusts the scale, zooming out to an extraterrestrial point of view.

[1] Unless marked otherwise, all translations appearing in this dissertation are my own. Also, unless otherwise specified, all italics that appear in quoted passages also appear in the original.
[2] "Aber Revolutionen des Erdbodens, die ihm der Menſch ſein Bewohner zugezogen, ſind ein Eigenthum der Weltgeſchichte."

The result is a vision of humanity radically different from that of Schlözer. If (human-caused) revolutions of the soil demonstrate the exceptional status of human beings, for Herder humans are, in the grand scheme of things, indistinguishable from worms and clouds: they are (mere) "insects" of a planet that is itself only a "clump of dirt" (*Erdscholle*).

From a contemporary standpoint, we might say that Herder's early philosophy of history involves a focus on environmental, perhaps even planetary, history. Some have recently argued that such thinking of human culture within natural history—a thinking in terms of deep-time—is both unavoidable and necessary in the Anthropocene era we all now inhabit.[3] Only in light of such thinking, the idea goes, can the consequential scope of anthropogenic climate change, among other emergent crises, be imagined; and only in this way can humans be convinced of the limitations to their otherwise limitless-seeming power. Timothy Clark writes about the contribution of environmental history to this anthropocenic awareness:

> Environmental history suggests that the agency of the human is far more circumscribed and saturated with illusion than one might initially suppose. Human beings, regarded on a global scale, may now appear as zombies bent on the destruction of their own conditions of existence, puppets of various ecological, economic, social and population dynamics that seem both to embrace, result from and in many ways override the myriad seemingly free decision of people's day-to-day life and decisions. What might look on one time scale like unqualified success—people living longer, more and more material wealth, an expanding population, increased use of resources, territorial expansion—could even appear on a larger scale graph as the upward sweep of a curve indistinguishable in crucial ways from, say, those tracing the cycles of population growth and collapse in field voles. In relation to climate change it may mean that so vast an issue cannot be adequately understood in terms of given categories of the human or the cultural, but engages thought at a broader, impersonal biosemantic or geo-semantic level at which intentional human agency, even at its most would-be managerial, may be no more than epiphenomenal. ("The Deconstructive Turn" 22)

[3] See, for instance, Chakrabarty, "Climate of History;" Chakrabarty, "Anthropocene Time;" and Clark, "Nature, Post-Nature."

To Clark, it is the reality of climate change that demands a change of scale and scope beyond binary categories of culture and nature. Along similar lines as Herder, he points out that this larger scale challenges traditional notions of individual human agency, and focuses instead on notions of occurrence on the bio- or geosemantic level.

But what could have caused Herder to think of human history this way in the year 1774? *Auch eine Philosophie zur Geschichte der Menschheit* is a paradigmatic text of the so-called *Sturm und Drang* period within German intellectual history. This period's geographical centers were in Frankfurt, Strasbourg, Basel, Göttingen, and Darmstadt, and its members ranged from internationally well-known icons such as Herder, Schiller, and the young Goethe, to lesser-known subversives such as J.M.R. Lenz, Heinrich Füßli, Leopold Wagner, and the Stolberg brothers. Its texts—most of them never translated into English and many of them never published during their author's lifetimes—include many theoretical-philosophical writings, like Herder's early universal history. But first and foremost, and in obvious ways, the focus of the period was with *poetics*, broadly construed. Sturm und Drang texts are aesthetic theories, dramatic works, hymns, epistolary novels, and many letters exchanged by the various central or peripheral authors. At the same time, if less obvious on the surface, intensely *critical* engagement with the assumptions and practices of the European Enlightenment is a hallmark of *Sturm und Drang*. Indeed, much of the modern relevance of *Sturm und Drang* texts comes not only from their aesthetics, but from their sociopolitical themes and perspectives. They attack the privatization of education, condemn modern slavery in its many guises, and call out practices of bigoted cultural othering. They bring to attention largely ignored connections between poverty and infanticide, and between militarism and rape culture.

Though this political dimension of *Sturm und Drang* poetics was both long misunderstood and long overlooked, over the last three decades the consensus among scholars of German literature and culture has emerged that the *Sturm und Drang* period represents, in the words of Andreas Huyssen, "the first and most radical critique of the bourgeois Enlightenment" (*Drama* 43).[4] This emphasis on the politics and radicality of *Sturm und Drang* poetics is a welcome corrective to the many decades (almost two centuries worth) of over-aestheticization and over-sentimentalization that preceded it. But the more recently formed consensus, for all that it succeeds in grasping, has neglected the ecological dimensions of Sturm und Drang criticism. As I argue, this eco-political dimension is nothing superficial or accidental to *Sturm und Drang* texts. Rather, whether taking on "poetic," "theoretical-philosophical," or "poetological" forms (this latter term marking the blending or intersection, very often inhabited by *Sturm und Drang* authors, of two former terms[5]), such texts are profoundly shaped by, and in many cases outwardly oriented towards, natural and environmental themes, processes, and problems.

This dissertation investigates poetological encounters with the non-human natural environment in *Sturm und Drang* thought. More specifically, by attending to such poetological encounters, I carve out and amplify a *Sturm und Drang* critique of anthropogenic environmental politics, and interpret this as the anchor-point of their broader critique of the Enlightenment. The idea that "environmental politics" is a distinct focus of *Sturm und Drang* authors is perhaps another thesis in itself. For whereas nature has long been recognized as important theme of the period, this has usually been read

[4] "Die erste radikalste Kritik an der bürgerlichen Aufklärung."
[5] For more on this terminology of "poetology" (*Poetologie*) or "poetological" (*Poetologisch*) which I shall rely on throughout this dissertation, see representative recent works (on topics mostly outside of *Sturm und Drang*) by Vogl, Kaufmann, Renneke, Wiele, and Kohl.

metaphorically: nature as stand-in for purity, origin, and/or immediacy. Moreover, typical naturally inflected *Sturm und Drang* concepts, such as the "natural genius" (*Naturgenie*), are often seen to reflect the apolitical, if not politically regressive, dimension of *Sturm und Drang* thought. Naturalized tropes are read to indicate nothing literally or materially natural, but rather an aesthetics of immediate truth, an ideology of hyper-individualism, or even a celebration of human hubris.

But Herder's de-centering of the human in nature questions this reading. The reason Herder suggests turning to "deep time"—to come back to my question above—lies in the concrete context of European domination and exploitation of non-human nature. As introduced above, I read the *Sturm und Drang* poetics of nature *eco-politically*, both in general and in its specific engagement with then-ascendant local, global, and colonialist technologies of river-embanking, climate control, and deforestation, among others. This is a poetics of nature that contests the emerging discourse, central to the mainstream European Enlightenment, within which the capacity to cause "revolutions of the soil" is taken as both an identificatory ground and the highest possible achievement. Moreover, these characteristic poetological and environmental trajectories of *Sturm und Drang* are, I argue, not mutually exclusive or insulated from one another. In order to resist and re-envision prevailing Enlightenment conceptions of and relations with the non-human environment, the authors of *Sturm und Drang* also re-envision both the idea of "natural environment" and textual form itself.

1. The Problem of Periodization

During the preparation of a publication related to this dissertation project, the journal editors suggested that I entirely remove the periodization "*Sturm und Drang*" from my submitted manuscript, describing the Sturm und Drang terminology as one of the "straightjackets of German Studies." This suspicion towards a periodized approach to *Sturm und Drang* is indeed quite common in contemporary German-studies scholarship. In his introduction to the 2017 *Handbuch Sturm und Drang*, Matthias Luserke-Jaqui employs similar imagery as my erstwhile editor to describe the problem of periodization, speaking of its "chokehold" (*Würgegriff*) on intellectual history and literary scholarship on the *Sturm und Drang* years ("Einleitung" 25). Whereas periodization has in general constituted a problem in the wake of the postmodern turn, few other periods in German literature seem to be problematized to the same extent as is *Sturm und Drang*. Talk of "Romanticism" or "post-war literature," by contrast, barely faces the same need of justification. Any periodization of *Sturm und Drang* in particular, it would appear, is at especially strong risk of practicing epistemic violence.

Such suspicions are not without a basis, of course. The general problem with period-based scholarly approaches is that they risk occupying a biased standpoint of assumed continuity. This risk is doubled in intellectual histories or scholarly treatments that take *Sturm und Drang* to primarily be a precursor to later developments. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, relevant scholarship tended to explain whatever distinctive value *Sturm und Drang* writing may have been seen to possess from a (more or less overt) teleological valuation of what came after. *Sturm und Drang* has been understood, to name a few of the most prominent cases, as proto-Romanticism, as pre-Weimar Classicism, or as a foreshadowing of nineteenth-century realism. Typical

scholarly accounts have labeled *Sturm und Drang* a "trailblazer" (*Wegbereiter*) or a "vestibule" (*Vorhof*; Kindermann 124). Drawing their logic from nineteenth-century readings of Hegelian dialectics, others have described *Sturm und Drang* as a form of necessary excess, as the "teenage years" (*Flegeljahre*) of German literature (Hettner 6), or as the climactic "ocean swell" (*Stauungswoge*; Schneider 34) of German literature or thought. These characterizations position *Sturm und Drang* as an antithesis of Enlightenment rationalism, whose dialectical strife with the latter yielded the ideal syntheses of Weimar Classicism, Romanticism, German Idealism, or nineteenth-century materialism (see, for examples, Bertram 21; also Luserke-Jaqui, "Einleitung" 25).

Goethe himself is partially to blame. In the fourth part of his autobiography *Poetry and Truth* (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*), written and published between 1830 and 1833, he reflects back upon the early- to mid-1770s, and lays out several of the key points common in later *Sturm und Drang* reception:

> The word *genius* became a universal symbol; and, because one heard it uttered so often, one thought that what was meant by it was habitually at hand. But then, since every one felt himself justified in demanding genius of others, he finally believed that he also must possess it himself. The time was yet far distant when it could be affirmed that genius is that power of the human which, by its deeds and actions, gives laws and rules. At this time it was thought to manifest itself only by overstepping existing laws, breaking established rules, and declaring itself above all restraint. It was, therefore, an easy thing to be a genius; and nothing was more natural than that extravagance, both of word and deed, should provoke all orderly people to oppose themselves to such demeanor.
>
> When anybody marched into the world on foot, without exactly knowing why or whither, it was called a pass of genius; and, when any one undertook an aimless and useless absurdity, it was a stroke of genius. Young people, of vivacious and true talents, too often lost themselves in the limitless; and then older people of understanding, lacking perhaps in talent and in spirit, found a most malicious gratification in exposing to the public gaze their manifold and ludicrous miscarriages. (Goethe, *Autobiography* 307–308, translation slightly modified)

> (Das Wort Genie ward eine allgemeine Losung, und weil man es so oft aussprechen hörte, so dachte man auch, das was es bedeuten sollte, sei gewöhnlich vorhanden. Da nun aber jedermann Genie von andern zu fordern berechtigt war, so glaubte er es auch endlich selbst besitzen zu müssen. Es war noch lange hin bis zu der Zeit, wo ausgesprochen werden konnte: daß Genie diejenige Kraft des Menschen sei, welche durch Handeln und Tun, Gesetz und Regel gibt, damals manifestierte sichs nur indem es die vorhandenen Gesetze überschritt, die eingeführten Regeln umwarf und sich für grenzenlos erklärte. Daher war es leicht genialisch zu sein, und nichts natürlicher, als daß der Mißbrauch in Wort und Tat alle geregelten Menschen aufrief, sich einem solchen Unwesen zu widersetzen.
>
> Wenn einer zu Fuße, ohne recht zu wissen warum und wohin, in die Welt lief, so hieß dies eine Geniereise, und wenn einer etwas Verkehrtes ohne Zweck und Nutzen unternahm, ein Geniestreich. Jüngere lebhafte, oft wahrhaft begabte Menschen verloren sich ins Grenzenlose; ältere Verständige, vielleicht aber Talent- und Geistlose, wußten dann mit höchster Schadenfreude ein gar mannigfaltiges Mißlingen vor den Augen des Publikums lächerlich darzustellen; 16: 802-803[6])

On Goethe's account, the *Sturm und Drang* period was marked by a spirited, but ultimately vain and empty, contrarianism: genius was mistakenly identified with the mere negation of rules, with an overstepping of boundaries and a transgressing of laws. The period is also portrayed as excessively performative: *Sturm und Drang* thinkers supposedly believed, on this account, that mere repeated use of the terminology of "genius" could stand in for a true, authentic (and, for Goethe, rarified and separate) conceptual understanding of and/or grounding within genius itself. In that Goethe locates ideologies of excessive subjectivity and hubris in the authors' young age, which also reflects an alleged lack of maturity and control, his account both mocks and pathologizes *Sturm und Drang* thought. At the same time, Goethe coopts and absorbs whatever might have been of value in the period, seeing it as an early, intuition-reliant stage of what would become mature German thought. This latter, mature standpoint has, for Goethe, its

[6] Unless marked otherwise, volume numbers for Goethe refer to his collected works in the *Münchner Ausgabe*.

own corresponding notion of genius, which, unlike the sham-genius of *Sturm und Drang*, can be reduced to the proper and recognizably Kantian formula that "genius is that human force which, through action and practice, gives law and rules" (4: 19).[7] The two general attitudes towards *Sturm und Drang* present in Goethe's autobiography are representative of the larger and longer history of the period's reception, from the early nineteenth century to today. *Sturm und Drang* literature and thought has, on the one hand, been trivialized as immature, irrationalist, and naïvely naturalist.[8] On the other hand, it has been mythologized as part of various narratives about the formation of the "German nation," most strikingly in readings of the period as the initiation of the German nationalist "movement" (*Bewegung*) itself.[9]

Largely neglected in the history of its reception, in turn, have been the rich connections between *Sturm und Drang* and the periods, places, and figures that preceded it. *Sturm und Drang* authors emerged in dialogue with (and sometimes under the mentorship of) numerous thinkers of the immediately preceding generation, many of whom were deeply rooted in early to mid eighteenth-century European thought, such as

[7] "Genie diejenige Kraft des Menschen sei, welche durch Handeln und Tun, Gesetz und Regel gibt." Compare this to Kant's own very similar formulation: "Genius is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art" (*Critique of the Power of Judgment* 186). Indeed, Goethe's association of the *Strum und Drang* period with ideologies of genius would spur nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars to coin the term "period of genius" (*Geniezeit*) as a paraphrase for the entirety of *Sturm und Drang*. For a critique of this terminology, see Luserke-Jaqui, "Einleitung" 14.

[8] The thesis that *Sturm und Drang* is a form of irrationalism is generally taken to have been falsified within *Sturm und Drang* scholarship in German-studies since at least the 1980s. But it remains a prominent association in more international (particularly English-and French-language) intellectual history or philosophy-rooted scholarship, for instance in Frederick Beiser's *The Fate of Reason* (see especially chapter 1, "Kant, Hamann, and the Rise of the *Sturm und Drang*); or in John Zammito's reference to "the Rousseau cult of the *Sturm und Drang*" (*Kant, Herder* 93), as well as his case for awarding a special, more-rational status to Herder within an otherwise irrationalist *Sturm und Drang* (*Kant, Herder* 145; see also Zammito, Menges, and Menze 670).

[9] As, for instance, in Herman Nohl's treatment of the "German movement" (*deutsche Bewegung*) in works of the 1930s. Luserke-Jaqui is highly critical of Nohl's use of the term "movement," offering as an explanation that "the ethnic-national and national socialist legacy weighs upon it" ("*Das völkisch-nationale und das nationalsozialistische Erbe lasten auf ihm*"; "Einleitung" 8).

Johann Georg Hamann, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn, Johann Joachim Winkelmann, and Albrecht von Haller. The authors of *Sturm und Drang* were multilingual without exception. Their literary influences stretched far beyond and behind the German language and German-speaking regions,[10] and one finds in *Sturm und Drang* texts ample reference to Ovid, Dante, Montesquieu, Lawrence Sterne, Hafez, and the Hebrew Bible, to name just a few. Cutting against the old but nevertheless persistent portrayal of *Sturm und Drang* as a form of German "irrationalism" is the fact that Herder and Lenz, two of the period's key figures, both studied under Kant in Königsberg, in part during what Bert Kasties has called Kant's "early-critical" (*frühkritischen*) stage.[11] In light of this, Goethe's above-cited claim that, in the *Sturm und Drang* period, the "time was yet far distant" (*war noch lange hin bis zu der Zeit*) until an ostensibly better, ostensibly new, and ostensibly Kantian paradigm would appear on the scene seems inaccurate and misleading, perhaps deliberately so.

So, while on the one hand it seems that *Sturm und Drang* has real continuity with the better-known literature and thought of the threshold-period "around 1800," and so should be accounted for as such, on the other hand, one could also argue that *Sturm und Drang* should be subsumed within the broader arc of eighteenth-century German intellectual history, rather than set apart into its own period.[12] Compounded by the fact that the consensus of scholars today is that *Sturm und Drang* belongs to the relatively meager span of a single decade (the 1770s), and in fact to less than those ten years

[10] The *Sturm und Drang* "movement" was in fact itself quite international by standards of the time, with members from Germany, Switzerland, and the Baltic.
[11] See Kasties' 2012 book, *J.M.R. Lenz unter dem Einfluß des frühkritischen Kant: Ein Beitrag zur Neubestimmung des Sturm und Drang*.
[12] For a twentieth-century reading that draws a similar sharp distinction between *Sturm und Drang* (as eighteenth-century) and post-Kantian (as early nineteenth-century) thought, see Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe 33–34.

altogether,[13] it seems legitimate to ask whether the terminology of a distinct *Sturm und Drang* period is in the end useful at all.

Despite these concerns, three results of the research conducted for this dissertation lead me to insist upon holding onto a distinct *Sturm und Drang* periodization. For one, the years associated with *Sturm und Drang* did indeed produce characteristic and distinctive literary forms. The 1770s saw the development and emergence of distinct genres, such as the textual "critical forest" (*Kritische Wald*), the "popular" or "folk song" (*Volkslied*; both in Herder), the German epistolary novel (Goethe), the German ode (Klinger, Goethe), and the German tragicomedy (Lenz). Apart from these novel genre-forms, *Sturm und Drang* thought is even more strikingly marked by its distinct, programmatic language. Characters in *Sturm und Drang* dramas, to give a few examples of this, "weather" (*wettern*) their lines, reflecting a new awareness of the performativity of speech; odes are envisioned as streaming or flooding (strömen, *überschwemmen*); and the activity of criticism is imagined as a sprawling undergrowth (in *Kritische Wälder*). Such language disappears from German literature by the 1780s and 1790s, marking a certain end of *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics. In Klinger's revision of *Die Zwillinge* from 1794 (originally from 1776), for instance, the references to weather-events are either toned down or cut entirely.

On my reading, the environmental, meta-poetic tropes that recent scholarship has classified as later projections onto the period, both are internal to Sturm und Drang poetics and turn out to be among the most distinctive aspects of *Sturm und Drang* texts.

[13] The fixing of the *Sturm und Drang* period to sometime between 1770 and 1780 is, for example, found amongst the following scholars in the following particular ways. For Roy Pascal: 1770–1778, though Schiller during those years has a special position. Gerhard Sauder: the 1770s as such, with the high time being 1776. Georg Lukács: the 1770s Matthias Luserke-Jaqui: 1770–1780.

Rather than shifting attention away from these historically charged naturalistic tropes so as to focus on other dimensions of *Sturm und Drang* thought, as some recent scholarship has suggested, I set out to understand them within their proper context. I investigate their concrete iterations, conceptual logic, and epistemic and political background, showing them to be hallmarks of *Sturm und Drang* thought in a previously unappreciated sense, beyond the teleological bias in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship.

A second reason to hold onto the period-based lens is that *Sturm und Drang* is marked by distinct modes of intertextuality unlike anything that immediately preceded or succeeded it. The writers of *Sturm und Drang* were personally acquainted within and across its different geographic centers (Straßburg, Göttingen, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, and Zürich). Their texts emerged out of the particular collectivist practices specific to that period: their backroom meetings, communal readings, informal letter exchanges, and pooled notetaking in the margins of shared manuscripts.[14] They were also shaped by drastic changes in the technology and culture of visual representation happening during the latter part of the eighteenth century, as well as the fact that the authors of *Sturm und Drang*—even though aware of them—did not always have access to these technologies. The increasing support during this time of both alphabetism and a universalization of reading and writing skills—in part prompted by the Prussian school reforms of 1763—taken together with the growing production of wood-based paper for journals, booklets, and political flyers, fundamentally changed the perception and distribution of textuality, authorship, and interpretation (Stein 38ff).

[14] In some cases these writing processes clash with the individualized assumptions of authorship and prize money, leading to the problem of potentially plagiarized drafts, as in the case of Klinger's *Die Zwillinge*.

This point about intertextuality does not amount to a claim of mutual influence amongst individual authors, but rather argues that there were unique factors of shared time, place, and media that decisively shaped the poetic form of *Sturm und Drang* texts, as well as how *Sturm und Drang* authors reflected upon these poetic forms in their aesthetic theories and poetics. *Sturm und Drang* poetic, theoretical-philosophical, and poetological texts reflect their distinct medial and material conditions and limitations, which are manifested in distinct practices and models of artistic creation (such as co-authorship and the idea of authorless textual forests), as well as in specific genre-forms and styles (such as the *Volkslied* or the "weathering" (*wettern*) device of *Sturm und Drang* drama). A certain periodic unity of *Sturm und Drang* arises out of, allows for, and is organized by this intertextual circulation of materials.

A third and final argument for retaining the periodic framing of *Sturm und Drang* is drawn from the observation that the 1770s stands out as a focal point of what can be called "radical Enlightenment thought." Jonathan Israel, most prominently if not uniquely, has in a series of books argued against monolithic notions of one unified European Enlightenment, and for the peeling apart of different more or less politically progressive and emancipatory, more or less lasting and sustained, strains or strings of Enlightenment. In the strain he calls the "European Radical Enlightenment," there was, Israel claims, a radicalization of the core enlightenment project itself, an intensification of the all-too-often-marginalized kind of theory which is thoroughly, consistently, even uncompromisingly committed to "the principles of universality, equality, and democracy" (*Radical Enlightenment* vi). Thinkers which Israel places in this group mostly have Spinozist leanings and include Rousseau, Helvetius, d'Holbach, Diderot,

Julien Offray de la Mettrie, and Giambattista Vico (Israel *Enlightenment Contested*). In recent years, scholars in German studies, such as Carl Niekerk, have pointed out that Israel's account of when the radical Enlightenment had its "radical breakthrough" in German-speaking regions, beginning after the year 1770, coincides with the period of *Sturm und Drang* (Niekerk 31).

Of course, Israel's conception of "radical enlightenment" can be and has been criticized for its creation of new dichotomies, which has led to the suggestion that the relation between moderate and radical forms of Enlightenment be thought in more "dynamic and relational" terms than Israel himself often does, and with a focus on arguments, rather than authors (25).[15] Criticisms notwithstanding, Israel's work is fruitful in that it allows us to think the internal tensions within the long development of the Enlightenment, and opens the way, in particular and relevant to present purposes, for new readings of *Sturm und Drang*'s international and socio-political aspects. As Niekerk argues:

> Precisely because scholarship has conceived of the *Sturm und Drang* as a uniquely German and therefore isolated movement, its links to European developments, intellectual and political, were left unexamined. The movement's rebelliousness was seen as something that could be explained primarily by generational dynamics, and not as part of a reform program with broader societal ambitions like the Enlightenment. But 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? (32)

The understanding of *Sturm und Drang* as one distinct socio-critical moment within a broader Enlightenment tapestry is, of course, not terribly new (even though this is

[15] Many authors are difficult to neatly place within Israel's scheme, such as Kant and Montesquieu. This contributes to Niekerk's call for a "dynamic and relational interpretation of the terms 'Radical' and "Moderate Enlightenment'" (25).

neglected by Niekerk). Georg Lukács was the first to contend, in his 1936 essay on Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, that *Sturm und Drang* was a "revolutionary period of bourgeois evolution" (132), while Huyssen, as cited above, has described, in 1980, *Sturm und Drang* as "the first and most radical critique of the bourgeois Enlightenment" (43, my translation). In his editorial remarks within a 1985 edition of Goethe's *Werke*, Gerhard Sauder argued that *Sturm und Drang* be seen as a "dynamization" of the Enlightenment and coined the terminology of an "internal criticism" (*Binnenkritik*) of the Enlightenment (756). These readings point to the socially critical thought and potential—even by today's standards—that was formulated and addressed across *Sturm und Drang* texts. Further developing Sauder's notion of an "internal criticism," Matthias Luserke and Rainer Marx, in a 1992 piece, have suggested that *Sturm und Drang* authors were the first German intellectuals to directly criticize the (then emerging) modern bourgeoisie (rather than the nobility, as prior critics), while at the same time operating within and being limited to a modern bourgeois discursive framework ("Die Anti-Läuffer").[16]

With Israel, we can think both the discursive framework and the disciplinary practices of the 1770s in international terms. In Israel's work on the larger European Enlightenment, the international contexts of the American revolution (1765–1783) and of the rapidly expanding imperialist and colonialist systems play a prominent role. I shall likewise focus on these factors when relevant, in general highlighting the underacknowledged geopolitical background of the European Enlightenment (in all its

[16] For example, Luserke and Marx note that while *Sturm und Drang* authors criticize the repression of sexuality, sexual activity in *Sturm und Drang* works seems always to revolve around the production of offspring, in line with modern bourgeois values.

strains) during the 1770s. *Sturm und Drang* thought uniquely and constructively intersects with concurrent broad transformations in the European understanding of the natural world, as reflected in the still-nascent natural sciences, and in international debates concerning how best to of put this knowledge into practice. Drawing upon Luserke and Marx's thesis that *Sturm und Drang* writings are directed against the modern bourgeois regulation of human bodies, my focus will also lie with how *Sturm und Drang* thinkers criticize biopower and its manifestation in eighteenth-century environmental politics. In this way, I seek to challenge two commonly held assumptions about the *Sturm und Drang* period (which I shall now resume calling a period), namely, that its invocation of "nature" evidences some underlying apolitical or even politically reactionary tendency, and that its characteristic modes of stylistic experimentation are merely aesthetic and therefore also not political (and even possibly reactionary). Instead, *Sturm und Drang* is rightfully seen, I concur with Huyssen, Niekerk (and others), as a moment or instance of the "radical Enlightenment," and an especially dynamic and relational one at that. But where my reading goes beyond these cited others is in placing the *Sturm und Drang* re-envisioning of the non-human "natural environment" at the center of this radicalism.

2. Methodology

Methodologically, my approach differs from traditional intellectual history (*Geistesgeschichte*) by thinking beyond the agency of individual authors. It differs from histories of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*) by focusing on the epistemic and historical dimensions of imagery, rather than telling a history of symbols. The overarching motion of this dissertation lies in in the de-metaphorizing of tropes (of flow, vegetal growth, and

weather). Thereby I operate according to the Foucauldian archeological principle, which recognizes that knowledge is always institutionalized, which reads for forms of discourse rather than themes, and which aims at avoiding projections of unity by reading for discontinuity. My argument emerged in an almost empirical manner. After first noting the recurrence of certain tropes (namely overflowing, excessive growth, and storms) in *Sturm und Drang* texts, I spent years digging for related tropes across the long eighteenth century, across various disciplines, genres, and languages. The texts I principally discuss here—texts of the *Sturm und Drang*—are by no means the only places were these tropes occur. To mention only a few examples from the intellectual history on which the authors of Sturm und Drang draw: ancient Greek and Roman critics also employed poetological river-imagery (Worman 141–142); in early eighteenth-century England, Edward Young and Shaftsbury (Anthony Ashley-Cooper) both speak of the vegetal genius (Sambrook 237); and finally, seventeenth-century German baroque poetry also employed thundering (*donnern*) as a mode of speech (Burgard 267, 282). But *Sturm und Drang* texts are the focal point where each of the tropes I have collected accumulate toward and around what may be called, as I do in Chapter II, the central trope of the period: "climate." I depart from classical discourse analysis in two significant and noteworthy ways, each treated in a sub-section below: a) I place greater emphasis on the epistemic importance of the non-human natural environment than traditional, largely human-oriented discourse analysis would; and b) I attend more closely to the material and medial conditions of discourse than is typical, in connection with my aim of understanding *Sturm und Drang* eco-poetics as a specific mode of epistemic-knowledge production.

a. Non-Human Natural Environments

As a subject of, or theme within, eighteenth-century science, politics, and poetics, the so-called "natural environment" is strikingly absent in the *Sturm und Drang* scholarship that has risen to prominence since the 1990s.[17] The comprehensive 2017 reference work *Handbuch Sturm und Drang* (edited by Luserke-Jaqui) does at times address the general significance of "nature" for the period, but only in passing. There is no entry in the *Handbuch* devoted exclusively or primarily to the issue. Individual entries focusing on other topics make reference along the way to *Sturm und Drang*'s new "nature-cult" ("Naturkult"; 41), new "relationship with nature" ("Naturverbundenheit"; 65), new "natural feeling" (Naturgefühl; 499), and new "pantheistic nature-religion" ("pantheistischer Naturreligion"; 141). And yet, "nature" itself (to say nothing of the more recent term "environment" (*Umwelt*) remains by and large unrecognized as an important conceptual feature or marker of the period. Neither the *Handbuch*'s glossary, nor the otherwise very helpful introduction to discursive contexts of the period address the status of non-human natural environment (whether for *Sturm und Drang* figures or for the century more broadly) in any detail.[18]

Perhaps this recent scholarly neglect of nature and naturalistic themes would not be so noteworthy in itself—the *Handbuch*, comprehensive as it is, also devotes little

[17] For the few exceptions see for instance Sebastian Kaufmann's reading of Goethe's "Wandrers Sturmlied" Wallbruch, or Huyssen, "Das Versprechen der Natur".

[18] Entries on "nature" in the *Handbuch*'s glossary usually refer to *human nature*, or to nature in the sense of metaphor for a general original state, such as in "Naturgenie," "Naturzustand" or "Naturrecht." "Naturreligion," and "Naturpoesie." These latter ideas are discussed marginally and always in connection with the analysis of individual works and authors (especially Goethe). The *Handbuch* entry on the "discursive context" of *Sturm und Drang* discusses the background of eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, philosophy, anthropology, medicine, political theory, art history, religious conflict, developments in music, the Ossian, and pressing social issues such as eighteenth-century Infanticide and shifting gender roles. But the reality of a non-human natural environment as factor of importance for *Sturm und Drang* authors seems virtually forgotten.

attention to the important backdrops of eighteenth-century technological development and the emerging natural sciences—were it not for the fact that, in traditional *Sturm und Drang* scholarship (say, earlier than the mid-1990s) the topos of nature is taken up as a central issue worthy of comment and interpretation. Here a certain reverence for nature ("Naturverehrung") is usually listed as a true hallmark, and perhaps the most important single characteristic of all, of *Sturm und Drang* thought. Hence, Herrmann August Korff, in a typical interpretation from 1923, proclaims polemically:

> The quintessential spirit of the *Sturm und Drang* movement was that feeling for nature in the light of which the world appeared as a living unity and organic being, which realized itself in eternal becoming and passing away, in ceaseless creation and metamorphosis. Living Nature! That was the grand idea which divided [their] new humanity as much from the soulless materialism of the French Enlightenment as from the supernaturalism of Christianity (182–183).[19]

Korff identifies a vitalist, ontological organicism as the underlying ideology and true novelty of the period. The passage also illustrates (unknowingly) why "nature" is in fact a touchy subject for *Sturm und Drang* scholarship today. Korff is guilty of overgeneralization and a failure to maintain proper historical distance. On his assumption of *Sturm und Drang*'s supposed vitalism, he bases his nationalist-teleological narrative of a specifically German "spirit" that awakened with *Sturm und Drang* and ultimately finds genuine fulfillment in Hegelian philosophy and Goethe's mature poetics.

Korff's passage shows why, to borrow the words of Kate Rigby, "not all talk of nature is necessarily good for the earth" ("Writing After Nature"). It demonstrates how even ostensibly "neutral talk" about "nature" can often hide political and ideological agendas (cf. Clark "Nature, Post-Nature" 76). Against such ideologically slanted interpretive arguments, scholarship since the 1960s called into question the narrative of a

[19] For similar readings, see Wiegand (253) and Markwardt (423).

drastic shift that Korff and others had drawn between mechanistic worldviews that prevailed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and vitalist world views around 1800 (Blumenberg "Paradigms"). It is with readings such as Korff's in mind that the drift away from engagement with "nature" by more recent scholars of *Sturm und Drang* can be understood. For Jörg Löffler, as evidence of this, the treatment of the topics "natural experience" ("Naturerfahrung") and "natural form" ("Naturdarstellung") is characteristic of an outdated schoolbook reading. For Löffler, scholarly attention to these topics reflects the "prejudices of a long-overhauled literary historiography that discounted *Sturm und Drang* as 'irrationalism'" (76).[20]

Concerned to counter the long-prevailing perception of the period's irrationalism, *Sturm und Drang* scholarship since at least the 1980s has stressed the presence of scientific discourse and scientific concepts in *Sturm und Drang* works. Several studies have, for instance, highlighted the role of botany in 1770s poetry and thought.[21] But mostly, the tendency seems to have been to deflate the appearance of irrationalism by minimizing and/or metaphorizing any reference to the non-human environment in *Sturm und Drang* works. References to "stream" or "flow" have been read as evidence of the *Sturm und Drang* commitments to medicine and anthropology, and also tied to the era's moral-cultural development or its technologically facilitated increase in literacy (Koschorke, *Körperströme*, Luserke, *Leidenschaften*, Kittler). The "storm" or *Sturm* of *Sturm und Drang*, in turn, has been read primarily as a cipher of pietist imagery (Langen, Luserke "Einleitung" 6). And while these readings can and do draw many important

[20] "Vorurteile einer lange überholten Literaturgeschichtsschreibung, die den Sturm und Drang noch als 'Irrationalismus' abtat."
[21] E.g. Arthur Wald in the 1920s and Müller-Sievers more recently (1997) with a focus on epigenesis.

connections, it is surprising to me how mutually exclusive the spheres of human culture and non-human nature are generally taken to be in recent and contemporary *Sturm und Drang* scholarship. To illustrate: in what is probably meant as preventative check against now-outdated (and potentially racist, colonialist, and eugenicist) scholarly emphases on non-metaphorical nature (on nature itself), the popular-academic *Goethezeitportal* asserts for all eyes to see that "storm has nothing to do with wind and weather, but rather symbolically with feelings and passions, which urge forward" ("Goethezeitportal").[22]

An early common source of such rejections of the literally environmental meaning of *Sturm und* Drang natural tropes is fellow Sturm-und-Drang author Heinrich Leopold Wagner's discussion of Klinger's 1777 play *Sturm und Drang*, from which the period derived its name. Wagner latches onto the terminology of "storm," asking rhetorically: "So, so! Storm and stress then! But if I may ask, what does that mean? I cannot think of anything! Is there a storm coming on? That I would not know!" (*Briefe* 132).[23] But scholarly discussions of this passage fail to mention that Klinger's play does actually contain a literal storm, which has quite significant relevance for the plot development, at that (cf. Luserke-Jaqui, "Einleitung" 6–7). Its long history of reception aside, the presence and importance of the literal storm in Klinger's play shows that the poetological and environmental meanings of storm imagery used by *Sturm und Drang* authors (the former being favored by recent scholars, the latter neglected) are in fact not mutually exclusive, but complementary.

[22] "Sturm hat dabei nichts mit Wind und Wetter zu tun, sondern eher symbolisch mit Gefühlen und Leidenschaften, die sich nach außen drängen und sich äußern in Gefühlsausbrüchen und Kraftausdrücken."
[23] "So, so! Sturm und Drang also!—Aber wenn ich bitten darf, was heißt das wol? ich kann mir nichts dabey denken! Kommt etwa ein Sturm drinn vor? –das ich nicht wüßte!"

On my reading, the exclusion of nature as a topic of scholarly concern is ultimately driven by scholarly bias. The natural environment has long been considered a trivial, cliché, even sophomoric subject for both poetry and literary scholarship—a bias that itself reaches back to the Enlightenment.[24] But, as I show in different ways across the chapters that follow, the poetic subject of "nature" in the years after 1770 was neither a mere symbol of cultural processes, nor a naïve-irrationalist specter, nor an apolitical (or dangerously reactionary) clearing house. Instead, I argue, the *Sturm und Drang* turn to nature was substantially shaped by, and directed in response to, both eighteenth-century natural scientific discourse and concurrent domestic and international geopolitical developments.

b. Materiality and the Knowledge of Literature

Scholarship in literary studies has long focused on how discursive contexts manifest themselves in literary texts. More recently, it has been claimed that classical historical epistemology has neglected the role of poetics as a factor that determines discourse.[25] "Science and Poetry," Gilles Deleuze suggests in his reading of Foucault's archeology, anticipating this epistemic recovery of poetry, "are equal forms of knowledge." And yet, Foucault himself gives only little consideration to so-called literary texts. In response to this perceived deficit, more recent approaches have thus attended explicitly and extensively to the poetological production of knowledge. Mindful not to distinguish too harshly between "poetic" and "non-poetic" writings, and also not to neglect the

[24] Cf. Friedrich Schiller's Argument in "Matthissons Gedichte".
[25] E.g. Latour, Vogl, Renneke.

historicity of literature as an institution in its own right, this approach acknowledges the epistemic awareness operative in many poetic texts. This is an awareness not in the sense of the author of the text being aware of the epistemic function of their work (which may or may not be the case), but in the sense that texts we call poetic often operate of themselves in knowledge-producing or epistemic ways. On this reading, poetic texts tend to materially reflect upon their own institutional and medial conditions of possibility. This playing with and through the form and matter of poetic discourse can undermine and rewrite discourse itself, and is not bound to operate merely within its limitations. Poetics, this approach emphasizes, produces knowledge, too.

The works of *Sturm und Drang* are known for their self-referential, poetological tendencies. They include "poems about poems" (such as F. L. Stolberg's "Genius" or Goethe's "Wanderer's Stormsong"), theories about theory (such as Herder's *Critical Forests*), plays about plays (such as Lenz's *Pandaemonium Germanicum*), and anthologies about anthologies (Herder's *Collection of Folk Poetry* [*Volksliedsammlung*]). My dissertation seeks to bring this tendency to light across multiple registers, figures, texts, and topics. For, indeed, modes of self-referentiality with the effect of producing epistemic awareness mark most of the texts of *Sturm und Drang*, across all genres. And, as I seek to highlight in every case, the poetic self-reflections that take place in these texts explicitly and constitutively draw upon "natural" imagery, such as rivers, wildflowers, storms, forests, and clouds.

It is precisely the tendency of *Sturm und Drang* authors to describe what appear to be obviously cultural poetic processes in naturalistic terms that has been read as a sign of

their regrettable essentialism and "irrationalist" tendencies.[26] But if read as poetologies of knowledge, *Sturm und Drang* texts have the capacity to produce strong epistemic awareness: of how epistemes function, and of the role that material and medial conditions, such as the stage apparatus and the book format, play in the constitution of poetic works, and in the constitution of all knowledge. On my reading, *Sturm und Drang* poetics do not draw upon natural imagery to pit "the unrefined ingenuity of natural expression against the 'false embellishments' of art and rhetoric" (Schneider 95). Instead, they engage, productively and creatively, with earlier and concurrent eighteenth-century ideological, material, and technological discourses on the so-called natural environment: with botany and deforestation, hydrology and river management, meteorology and the invention of the lightening rod, and with climate theory and the colonial politics of climate. If it is true that poetics determines the discourse, then it is also true that poetics can shift our relation to the so-called natural environment itself.

3. *Sturm und Drang* and the Environmental Humanities

It is pretty clear what the environmental humanities as an interdisciplinary theoretical approach can bring to *Sturm und Drang* scholarship. The field has sparked the conceptual impetus to retrieve "nature" from the bias of triviality (cf. Buell 6-7), an impetus in large part based on the reality and urgency of anthropogenic climate change. But what, to turn the question around, can *Sturm und Drang* bring to the environmental humanities? I

[26] This idea will be further explained throughout each of the individual chapters. Some examples of readings of nature tropes as irrationlist tendency are: The reading of a critical forest is a "fiction" of planlessness (Adam 256), the reading of Herder's *Volkslied*-project as flower picking as an obvious "failure" (Althaus 166) and of "thundering language" (*Sprachgewitter*) as projected stereotype (Löffler 76).

propose that there are two main potential contributions. First, *Sturm und Drang* has the unique distinction of being temporally located at the very dawn of both the anthropocenic era and the bourgeois Enlightenment alike, and as such presents unique, perhaps adaptable models for contesting or differently inhabiting both of these. Second, and more ambiguously, there is value in studying the looming, never entirely extinguishable potential of *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics as a precursor to aesthetic and political fascism.

To speak to the first point: being among the "first responders" to the problems generated by modern bourgeois society (Huyssen; Luserke and Marx), *Sturm und Drang* authors offer early critiques of the "enlightened mastery of nature" that later thinkers in the critical theory tradition would also devote themselves to critiquing, from angles both similar and different (Horkheimer and Adorno, xviii). During the *Sturm und Drang* years, anthropogenic self-understanding was still in flux. The first lightening rod in Germany, to give one concrete example of the dramatic shifts taking place within human-nature relations during the *Sturm und Drang* period, was installed in the spring of 1770, and amidst heated debate. The observations articulated in *Sturm und Drang* texts come from a standpoint in which the modern Enlightenment, in its technological, ideological and material forms, was still perceived as (and still largely was) a potential, and not yet as a norm and reality. Accordingly, *Sturm und Drang* criticism is marked by both a sharp and perceptive analysis of its time, and by the capacity to imagine alternatives to the modern episteme.

Equally importantly, to address the second point, is that *Sturm und Drang* texts allow us to examine and think through the often-obscured connections between environmentalism and fascism. It is striking that the emergence of climate theory in the

eighteenth century also coincided with, built upon, and contributed to the "invention of race" during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment (Bernasconi 11-36, Shell, Larrimore). By contributing new ideas of naturalized peoples (*Völker*) and by pushing for a cultural shift in German-speaking areas towards an embrace of a "northern" identity, *Sturm und Drang* thought in part laid, some have previously argued, the conceptual groundwork for Nazism (Schnurbein, See, Fink). Both fascist ideologies of "blood and soil" (*Blut und Boden*), and the euphemistic paraphrasing, under Nazism, of imperialism and genocide as the predictable and proper migratory activity of the better adapted species (as "expanded living space" or *Lebensraumerweiterung*) are naturalizations of the (all-too) cultural.

In contemporary Europe, environmentalism is not always limited to the political left, as it is in North America. For one, the conservation of a landscape is traditionally a conservative value. In German-speaking countries, such conservation is envisioned as the patriotic protection of "home" (*Heimat*). Secondly, right-wing political parties in Europe have a long history of tying appreciation for the non-human environment (in its purity and locality) to xenophobic and racist politics. Climate protection, in these cases, goes hand in hand with seeking to eliminate "foreign" elements from what are claimed to be native environments. In North America, a history of genocidal settler-colonialism has given rise to a different sort of relationship between national identity and the non-human environment: the extraction and exploitation of natural resources is inscribed as standard, and environmental protection is hence generally perceived as a leftist concern. But nascent connections between environmentalism and fascism are visible in the whiteness that haunts environmentalism where it is visible as a theme or discipline in the North American academic context. Structurally and institutionally, eco-fascism today plays out

in environmental racism—in new taxonomies of environmental harm and hostility, drawn along old lines of imperialist and colonialist oppression.

At the end of the day, the data of environmental history need to be interpreted. Any environmental criticism or ecocriticism working at the bio- or geo-semantic level must ask itself how and when its commitments to the "health" or "purity" of climate and nature might not themselves reproduce oppressive cultural structures. The *Sturm und Drang* engagement with climate around 1770 offers a rich historical ground from which to explore the political and ideological implications and risks of various forms of naturalizing culture. The fact that *Sturm und Drang* is precisely not a monolithic "movement" here proves to be an advantage. Its pluralistic rhetoric of naturalization (and re-naturalization) allow us to trace the exact points at which even a well-intentioned, well-conceived turn to natural environments and natural climates risks collapsing into a totalizing political agenda The greatest achievement of *Sturm und Drang*'s distinctive environmental poetics, on my reading, lies in its figuring of poetics as a potent site of epistemic and political production: where nature and culture meet, and where their relationship is fundamentally reimagined.

4. Dissertation Overview

In its mode of organization, my dissertation follows what I consider to be a key method of environmental analysis. Allowing the subject (Sturm und Drang texts) to guide my reading, my thesis is organized around four common tropes in texts of the 1770s: climate, vegetation, flow, and weather.

a. Climate (Chapter II)

The first core chapter (Chapter two in the dissertation overall) functions as the theoretical basis for the three chapters that follow. It lays out the context of European geopolitical activity around 1800 and shows how the "moderate" wing (to borrow Israel's terminology) of the European Enlightenment equated Enlightenment activity with human-induced climate warming. The rise of eighteenth-century climate theory with Montesquieu, I argue, responds to calls for large-scale climate-alterations in colonialist contexts. In this way, I read eighteenth-century climate theory as a way of exploring the dependence of human culture on the non-human environment, and of cautioning against reducing climates to mere tools of "progress." The authors of *Sturm und Drang* eagerly take up and significantly develop climate theory across the board, although with quite different outcomes. Nearly all *Sturm und Drang* authors experiment with climate as a possible ground for national identity and, while most of them reject it, members of the *Göttinger Hain* embrace a "northern" climatic identity.

Especially unique is the *Sturm und Drang* figuring of climate as the principal dynamic relation between natural and cultural history. Rather than representing the grounds for taxonomic differentiation of different climatized species (human and non-human), climate, on this view, came to epitomize the impossibility of taxonomical categorization and comparison (and thus also of static notions of race and people [*Volk*]). Furthermore, this chapter lays out the neglected centrality of climate to *Sturm und Drang* aesthetic theory and philosophy of history. The work of art is defined by its engagement with climatic contexts. Similarly, the Prometheus figure frequently appearing in *Sturm und Drang* works must, on my reading, be read as a variation upon prior figurations of

Prometheus as a geological human agent, by moderate Enlightenment figures such as Schlözer. Against Schlözer, *Sturm und Drang* poets claimed a Prometheus who strikes and holds a balance with his natural habitat. With a look at various works by Lenz, I explain how *Sturm und Drang* poetics embraced climate, and yet at the same time rejected most re-naturalization projects stemming from climate theory as dogmatic and reductionist. I end by sketching the idea (elaborated more fully in the chapters to follow) that *Sturm und Drang* texts envision poetics as that proper point where culture (as consciousness or authorial intent) is reintegrated into bio- and geosemantic activity beyond individual agency (as nature or textual materiality).

b. Vegetation (Chapter III)

Chapter III offers a new take on eighteenth-century notions of the vegetal work of art. In the past, *Sturm und Drang* has been read as a precursor to the later organicist episteme. The predominant notion here is that the paradigmatic organicist work of art emerged around 1800—and within German thought in particular. Typically, "organicism around 1800" describes a philosophy of art according to which individual parts of a work are seen to be formally organized via the whole of their unified parts. By extension, the formal structure of a play or poem, on this view, is seen to emerge organically and in a necessary way from a creative vision, rather than through the application of an external poetic formula. Offering a discussion of Herder's work, of the technological-intellectual backgrounds of botany and forestry, and of the then-current processes of literary manufacturing, I sketch a pluralistic picture of vegetal poetological tropes of the 1770s.

Botanical conceptions of tree and forest serve Herder as a model for his version of an arboreous criticism. This notion of criticism, I argue, is modeled on the textual composition distinctive to his singular text *Critical Forests* (*Kritische Wälder*), which is itself composed (or grown) out of the remainders of older texts. Forest and criticism, in this way, come into metonymical relation in the *Critical Forests*. The critical forest as a literary form demonstrates how criticism, while in some part orbiting around authorial intention, is in fact embedded within, conditioned by, and contributing to intertextuality, coincidence, and textual materiality. Herder's old-growth aesthetics of productive decay and decomposition in this text differs significantly from the aesthetics of the English garden, or from the cultural forest (*Kulturwald*) typically associated with eighteenth-century organicism. Herder propagates old-growth reforestation, by re-envisioning criticism from a deep-time perspective.

The wildflower (*Wildblume*) or heather rose (*Heidenrose*), by contrast, models Herder's notion of people's poetry, or the *Volkslied*. "People" here must be understood in the twofold sense of a culturally or ethnically distinct group, on the one hand, and of a "low-brow" level of culture, on the other. For Herder, the wild flower models the constitution of a whole set of literary forms: editorial work towards his anthology is described as "flower picking."[27] And what is perhaps the most famous exemplar of a *Volkslied* in the anthology—Herder's poem "Rose of the Heather" ("Röschen auf der Heide")[28]—tells the story of a plucked heather rose. Complementing a long historiography of symbols that reads the flower as a stand-in for a young woman, and the

[27] A play on the literal meaning of "anthology."
[28] This poem was written collaboratively with Goethe, and it is unclear exactly which parts were authored by whom.

flower-picking as the loss of her virginal purity, I show that the wildflower, to Herder, is anything but purely natural. Considering the shifting role of wild plants in eighteenth-century models of botanical classification, I portray the heather rose as a prime example of a natural/cultural hybrid form that complicates the distinction between wild and cultivated, and between native and foreign. As a poetological trope, the heather rose interests Herder as a "native" German form of a plant originally cultivated in the Middle East. The wildflower thus does not entail any fiction of immediacy, but rather a thinking of poetry as a material process of intersubjective and intercultural transmission. Herder's notion of the *Volkslied* as wildflower re-envisions the natural environment, beyond the idea of nature as that which is uncultivated. His aesthetics of the small and petty also carry a clear political gesture.

c. Flow (Chapter IV)

In the fourth chapter, I investigate the almost stereotypical trope of the "stream of genius" found in *Sturm und Drang* thought. The plentiful tropes around streaming and flowing have been read as constituting an aesthetics of immediacy and, within eighteenth-century medical and anthropological discourse, as supplying an image for notions of the unhindered expression of affect. But a focus on eighteenth-century discourses on river constitution and management suggest a different interpretation. Eighteenth-century science was then beginning to understand the dynamic relation between riverbed and water, between moments of stagnation and flows of current. Stream and flow are thus not irrational topoi, but instead material concepts deeply embedded in a rapidly changing scientific and environmental context. Contrary to the thesis of immediacy, such river

imagery helps bring the material aspect of language and creativity into focus. Drawing arguments from hydrology, *Sturm und Drang* authors claimed that German language can flow, not in spite of, but because of its lack of vowels and its stagnating sentence structure. The idea of the "river" also served authors as they reflected upon distinct cultural currents that were in dynamic tension with, and productively depended upon, foreign influence.

Turning to two odes by Goethe, "Song of Mohammad" ("Mahomets Gesang") and "Wanderer's Storm Song" ("Wandrers Sturmlied"), I identify several specific features of the rivers of *Sturm und Drang*. If later poetological river-poems (such as Hölderlin's "Neckar") aim for continuity and wholeness, Goethe's early rivers are at times drying up, at times overflowing, and frequently losing sight of their own tributaries. I read these images as poetological justifications of the poem's composition out of ellipses and partially absurd allusions. With its narrative and thematic attention to rain, "Wanderer's Storm Song" invokes the notion of an all-encompassing whole into which the poem's individual parts are integrated. But that unity is redistributed through processes of material recirculation, ultimately to bodies of water beyond the constitution of the river. Goethe's poetological odes explore, on my reading, the role of literary reception as a "naturalizing" moment where poetry becomes subject to natural law. The impetus for an aesthetics of overflow and stagnation is to be found in late eighteenth-century practices of river management, damming, and de-swamping. The irregular streaming odes of *Sturm und Drang* are always also a way of writing against the modern compulsion of navigability and the economic utilization of fluid environments.

d. Weather (Chapter V)

The final chapter addresses the phenomenon of *Wettern*: of weathering or thundering in German drama of the 1770s, with a focus on works by Goethe, Klinger, Lenz, and Herder. By the standards of contemporary scholarship, the poetological weather metaphors of *Sturm und Drang* (such as *Wettern* or the "storm of language" [*Sprachgewitter*]) are best not mentioned at all (Jörg Löffler), and certainly cannot be associated with literal meteorological phenomena.[29] Indeed, even a cursory look at German history shows that adopting a generally critical stance towards the meteorization of human action is wise: as a staple topos of Nazi terminology, anything storm-related was long used as a pseudo-archaic euphemism for and totalization of military aggression (as with the term "onslaught" [*Ansturm*] or with the Nazi military rank of "storm-leader" [*Sturmführer*]). My fifth chapter shows, for one, that the poetological weather-imagery of *Sturm und Drang* cannot be ignored. Its terminology and programmatic character is too central and integral to the broader poetics of *Sturm und Drang*. At the same time, I argue that poetological weather topoi of the 1770s do not represent irrationalist fantasies of potency and immediacy. On the contrary, they were deeply informed by the emerging science of meteorology and its figuring of weather as a networked object of knowledge.

The *Wettern* of *Sturm und Drang* is first and foremost a poetological mode of speech, and of dramatic speech in particular. But as metadramatic concept it is quite fundamental for a dramatic theory of Sturm und Drang. I show how *Sturm und Drang* drama meteorologizes tragic form, too. In Klinger's tragedy *Die Zwillinge,* impending

[29] Recall the clarification, cited above, from the *Goethezeitportal* webpage, that the "storm [of *Sturm und Drang*] has nothing to do with wind and weather, but rather symbolically with feelings and passions, which urge forward."

storm and tragic action become indistinguishable. In dramatic works by Lenz and Goethe, key characters imply that weather might provide the logic of plot. To further my case that literal weather is programmatic for *Sturm und Drang* poetics, I explicate the overlooked role of weather in Herder's early theory of language. Herder makes a plea for "real fog" ("wirklicher Nebel") as subject of poetic representation. More fundamentally, he makes the case that weather played a constitutive role in the development of human language. Not only does human language, for Herder, originate in the onomatopoetic imitation of individual weather events, but language also involves the imitation of how ostensibly separate weather events, such as lightning and thunder, themselves are interrelated.

I locate the reason for the turn to weather by *Sturm und Drang* authors within a larger, longer-standing Enlightenment sentiment to the effect that weather, in the modern world, has become redundant. The growing technological independence from weather is reflected in mid eighteenth-century dramatic theories of Gottsched and Lessing, who ban the use of stage-weather on grounds that weather is only ever an accidental, and never a necessary, element. In that *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics reintroduces weather to the stage, it also postulates the existential quality of weather for human life. Their conception of weather was informed, to a depth that extant scholarship has almost entirely overlooked, by then-emerging meteorological science, and not by a sentiment of "melancholia," as Gert Mattenklott had presumed.[30] Eighteenth-century meteorology synthesizes formerly separate phenomena (lightning, clouds, sunlight, storms, and more) into continuous processes with internal material dynamics. On this account, the meteorological dynamization of weather into a material process sparked a dynamization of rhetorical

[30] This interpretation is defended in Mattenklott's 1968 book *Melancholie in der Dramatik des Sturm und Drang*.

formulas. This led to a new focus on materiality and performativity of speech, and to novel dramatic forms, such as the tragicomedy. I conclude that *Wettern*, as poetological device, involves no fantasy of omnipotence, but rather an embrace of agency (human and otherwise) as only ever partial.

CHAPTER II: CLIMATE

"In our century," Herder writes in 1774 in *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, "there is, unfortunately! So much light! (4: 51). The exclamation mark following the interjected "unfortunately" ("leider") underlines Herder's disapproving stance towards this increase of "light" in his century, which, for Herder, has been a negative development. Herder's statement can be read in several ways. Clearly, "light" as the feature of a century here refers to the era of enlightenment and its standardized figuration through metaphors of light and clarity (as in the German word for enlightenment, *Aufklärung*). Hence Herder's statement could be—and has been—read as evidence of the counter-enlightenment tendencies that have been associated with the period of *Sturm und Drang*, as a rejection of scientific knowledge (see, e.g., Dupré 219). One arrives at a different evaluation, however, through a more literal reading that pays attention to the growing awareness of the effects of increasing light radiation around 1770. One such consequence, as eighteenth-century science began to understand, is the increased warming of the earth's atmosphere through stronger impacts of sunlight—impacts capable of changing climatic conditions themselves. Indeed, this chapter argues that human-induced climate change, though not often associated with thought of this period, is in fact a central category of the moderate or mainstream enlightenment (see Israel). This is the enlightenment that the *Sturm und Drang* generation engages and from which its members will distinguish their own views.

The fact that climate—if not climate change—is a factor of human culture as it is understood by *Sturm und Drang* thinkers, often within philosophies of history, has been both recognized and criticized by previous scholarship. Herder's turn to climate in *Auch eine Philosophie zur Geschichte der Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) might be the most famous embrace of climate from the period. "Nothing is developed," he states, rejecting the disembodied tendencies of standard philosophies of history of his day, "than what time, climate, need, world, and fate, initiates" (4: 35).[31] But Herder is far from being the only one. His contemporaries and friends J.M.R. Lenz, Johann Caspar Lavater, and Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart each declare climate a neglected key factor of human culture. To Schubart, climate offers the key to explaining the distinct traits of both individual differences amongst humans, and of what he calls "national character" (1776):

> Already Aristotle knew, and a thousand said it after him, that every state, just as every human being, has its distinct character. Climate, education, form of government—each contributes its own, to maintain, define, or even occlude and destroy this character.
>
> (Schon Aristoteles hat's gewusst, und tausende sprachen's ihm nach, dass jeder Staat, wie jeder einzelne Mensch, seinen besonderen Charakter habe. Klima, Erziehung, Regierungsform—alles trägt das seine dazu bei, diesen Charakter zu erhalten, zu bestimmen, oder gar zu verfinstern und zu vernichten. ("Vom Nationalcharakter"; 196)

Climate, on Schubart's account, ranks alongside the impact of education on human life. Such examples confirm the observation of scholars that *Sturm und Drang* writings play a significant role in developing theories of climate in the late eighteenth century. "Only with its adoption in *Sturm und Drang* circles," Gonthier-Louis Fink argues, "did climate theory gain a certain importance" ("Winckelmann bis Herder" 168).[32] *Sturm und Drang*

[31] "Man bildet nichts aus, als wozu *Zeit, Klima, Bedürfnis, Welt, Schicksal Anlaß gibt*."
[32] "Erst im Umkreis des *Sturm und Drang* erlangte die Klimatheorie [in Deutschland] eine gewisse Bedeutung."

thought, on this reading, was not only influenced by previous (and largely French) climate theory, but marks the first attempt to develop a theory of climate as a factor of human culture within German thought in particular.

Strikingly, scholarship that has highlighted the role of climate during the *Sturm und Drang* period has emerged within cultural histories of German fascism and the *Volksgedanke.* With their turn to climate, Herder and his contemporaries have, on several historical accounts, laid the grounds for an environmental determinism and purism, leading all the way through nineteenth- and twentieth-century pseudo-scientific accounts of race and racial hygiene, to an ideology and politics of "Blood and Soil" (*Blut und Boden*), and to genocide. It has rightfully been observed that the attention paid to climate as ground for culture around 1800 historically overlapped with the emergence of modern notions of race, and introduced essentialist and unscientific attempts to naturalize cultural difference. As a corollary to this overlap we find the related claim that the *Sturm und Drang* period introduces a thread of irrationalism into modern German thought. In the tradition of critical theory especially, fascism is also seen as an ideology of irrationalism and its turn to climate as one of its aspects (See "Germanen-Idelogie", "Barbar"; Schnurbein; Fink, "Diskriminierung"; Bernasconi).

But from the standpoint of 2019, where attention to climate as an essential factor in human life is becoming ever more crucial, the situation is more complex. When Greta Thunberg entered the US and complained about "too much air conditioning, not enough science" in the US, she contrasted the knowledge of science with a neglect of—not a turn to—climate, driven by short-sighted and overly self-assured abuses of technology (qtd. in Sengupta). Thunberg's criticism is motivated by the idea that air conditioners contribute

to climate change through the energy they use. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, her point is also that air conditioning detaches humans from their climates through indoor "climate-control," to such an extent that they lose knowledge of climate's irreducible role in human life. Considering climate to be an irreducible condition of human history and culture, then, would appear to be an essential step in fighting climate change in the twenty-first century, and hence of moving towards a more genuinely "enlightened" stance.

If it is true that modern western humans must regain a relation to climate in order to understand its importance, then the late eighteenth century can teach important lessons. It can teach what a human relation to climate can, should, and should not look like. If *Sturm und Drang* thought articulates a theory of climate, does it do so responsibly? If so, how? For if the *Sturm und Drang* turn to climate does, as some critics argue, open onto fascist tendencies of racism, ableism, masculinism, and imperialism, then it is crucial to investigate—for the sake of contemporary relations to climate—precisely where and how this development occurs. The following chapter seeks to examine and expand upon the scholarly observation that climate theory (*Klimatheorie*) was developed by the authors of *Sturm und Drang*. The result of my analysis is a complex picture that does not reject the theory outright on ideological grounds as the accounts offered by Schnurbein, Fink, and others do. The key to understanding the radicality of the *Sturm und Drang* turn to climate, I argue, lies in understanding climate change as a central ideology of the eighteenth-century enlightenment—an ideology that *Sturm und Drang* thinkers are quick to critique. Alongside recent scholarship's focus on the role of climate theories in enlightenment thought and politics, I show that *Sturm und Drang*'s attention to climate

developed against eighteenth-century imperialist efforts to alter certain global climates through human intervention. I argue that *Sturm und Drang* authors create a poetology of climate which is both radically anti-colonialist and anti-anthropocentric. The development of theories of climate within *Sturm und Drang* by authors such as Herder, Goethe, and Lenz, is not evidence of an irrationalist tendency, but of an internal critique of enlightenment. At the same time, I show that *Sturm und Drang* thought is not uniform as regards climate. Members of the *Göttinger Hain*, for example, do in fact clearly work towards a problematic climate-determinism.

I will make my argument the following way. In part one, I lay out the ancient origins of climate theory and its development through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Part two turns to enlightenment efforts to control the effects of climate and to utilize climate for imperialist ends. Here, I show how the intellectual and political enlightenment as a form of emancipation from self-imposed immaturity, to use Kantian terms, must be seen in relation to the concurrent attempt to gain independence from and control over world climates. In a third part, I make the case that *Sturm und Drang*'s focus on climate and their take on climate theory is a radical criticism of such efforts of the moderate enlightenment. Against efforts to change global climates, they view dependency to climate as a marker of humanity, and argue for the necessity of a diversity of world-climates. In a fourth part, I argue that this turn to climate is more fundamental to *Sturm und Drang* than is usually acknowledged. Through a series of close readings, I show that a relation to climatic conditions is a neglected but essential aspect of the aesthetic theory and poetology formulated during the 1770s by Lenz, Herder, Goethe, and others, often most apparent, interestingly, in their interpretations of the mythological

figure Prometheus. Central to this part of the chapter is a new reading of Gothe's seminal poem, "Prometheus," which I take to offer a vision of cultural activity as the species-specific dialogue of the human-animal with its climatic conditions—a vision that is antithetical to more mainstream enlightenment interpretations of Prometheus as an anthropogenic and imperialist ruler over climate. In part five, I engage critically with the role of climate in *Sturm und Drang*'s search for a German national identity. It is fairly well-known that many *Sturm und Drang* authors use the notion of a "northern" climate as a basis for establishing the common identify of German national arts and literature. Addressing the essentialist and nationalistic dimensions of this vision of a "northern" German identity, I once again draw a connection to broader developments in eighteenth-century climate science. On the one hand, I show that, especially among members of the *Göttinger Hain*, climate theory is taken in a problematic direction directly involving a dogmatic and racist environmental determinism. On the other hand, I highlight the (largely neglected) consensus around 1770 that climatic zones are in fact subject to history, which complicates the idea that climate, for *Sturm und Drang* thinkers, constitutes an immediate and natural ground of national unity. In a sixth and final part, I illustrate how key *Sturm und Drang* literary texts take up, rework, and critique climate theory, and in particular how these texts challenge Montesquieu's highly influential, and highly essentialist, approach to climate. Examining in turn three literary works by Lenz ("Abschiedsode," *Pandemonium Germanicum*, and *Der Landprediger*), I conclude that at least one important string of *Sturm und Drang* thought rejects *climate science* as the most legitimate way of connecting humans to their non-human environment, favoring instead an approach to this connection through what can be called a "poetics of climate."

Subsequent chapters will track the status of this poetics of climate across the treatment by *Sturm und Drang* authors of the three elements or conditions that, as defined by Hippocrates and as echoed by these thinkers, make up the climate: soil, water, and air.

1. *Klimatheorie* and the German Enlightenment

Theories of climate (from κλίμα = inclination [of the solar altitude]) have been debated since antiquity within two originally separate traditions. A largely geographical understanding of climate as region was made popular by the works of Aristotle in particular. In his *Meteorology* (ca. 350 BCE), he divides the world known to Antiquity axiomatically and based upon relative location to the equator. This yields two ideal moderate climates (the temperate zone, which includes Greece), two southern climates (the torrid zone) and two northern climates (the frigid zone). Before Aristotle, Hippocrates had coined a medical definition of climate in *De aere aquis locis* (ca. 400 BCE). Here, climate describes the specific effects of the air (dry or humid), ground (mountainous or flat, barren or arborous), and water (hard spring-water or soft swamp-water) of a region on the human body and its health.

Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notions of climate received interest within humanist traditions. Climate theory became especially prominent within French thought, which tended to extend Aristotle's ideal moderate climate beyond the Alps so as to also encompass French territory (Jean Bodin in 1577 and Pierre Charron in 1601). Over the course of the eighteenth century, with Abbé Dubos's *Réflexions critiques* (1719) and, perhaps most influentially, with Montesquieu's widely read, monumental work *De l'esprit des lois* (1748) climate began to take on its modern

meaning in a synthesis of the two former definitions (geographical and medical). Montesquieu understands climate as a set of natural conditions including wind, precipitation, temperatures, nearby bodies of water, vegetation, and conditions of ground and soil, as these are typical for a specific latitude. By incorporating into this geographical picture claims about the effects of climate on the human body drawn from the medical tradition, Montesquieu is able to hypothesize connections between climate and human cultural development. Montesquieu concludes that climate leads to differences in a wide variety of human traits, ranging from physical appearance and dress, to arts and language, to ethics and religion, to governmental form—the latter of which constitutes the main focus of Montesquieu's project (Mauelshagen 48, Fink "Winckelmann bis Herder" 159).

Owing to the Francocentric character of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century climate theory—wherein France is usually portrayed as the ideal temperate climate between an effeminate orient and a barbaric north—the stance towards climate in eighteenth-century German-speaking lands was initially hesitant, if not hostile (Debos 259). Leibniz criticizes Francocentric climate theory for its inconsistencies, pointing out that the French had themselves once been less "civilized." "For if the air along with other elements did it" he asks skeptically, "why were these nations so long barbaric, unless the heavens have been altered in the meantime?" Against climate theory, Leibniz asserts his own cultural constructivist stance that "education [and not climate] overcomes everything" ("Exhortation" 24). Lessing, in turn, declares theories of climate to be an openly practiced prejudice and an enemy to his vision of an enlightened humanism, according to which "no people in the world has any gift of the spirit ahead of other

peoples." "Who made this classification?" Lessing asks rhetorically about cultural traits, and responds himself: "certainly it was not nature."[33]

Bodmer und Winckelmann are the first German-speaking enlightenment thinkers who draw on climate theory positively, and both support the thought that Germany is situated to the north of the more ideal climate. Winckelmann, a Hellenist, thus advances an appreciation for antiquity and for the Mediterranean world in the 1750s ("Gedanken über die Nachahmung" 29). Bodmer, in turn, wants to challenge the looming cultural dominance of Gottsched and his native Saxony, and so highlights the favorable climates of both Switzerland and southern Germany in the 1740s (*Critische Dichtkunst* 2: 2ff; Schriften 8: 3ff). By the late 1750s, the only German enlightenment figure to both embrace climate theory and take a favorable view of the German climate is Kant (cf. Fink "Winckelmann bis Herder" 167). In his (at the time unpublished) lectures on physiological geography (which were a strong influence upon Herder, who was Kant's student in the 1760s), Kant takes as his point of departure Buffon's approach to climate, which had already circumvented the Francocentric nature of climate theory by extending the ideal, moderate climate to the north (9: 153ff). The German-speaking world, to Buffon and Kant, also belongs to the temperate zone. Indeed, in the geography lectures Kant would go so far as to claim that the temperate zone produces "perhaps the tallest and most beautiful people of the mainland" (9: 311).[34]

[33] The full German quote in the 81st essay of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*: "Denn ich bin sehr überzeugt, daß kein Volk in der Welt irgend eine Gabe des Geistes vorzüglich vor anderen Völkern erhalten habe. Man sagt zwar: der tiefsinnige Engländer, der witzige Franzose. Aber wer hat denn die Teilung gemacht? Die Natur gewiß nicht, die alles unter alle gleich verteilt" (6: 585).

[34] "[V]ielleicht die größten und schönsten Leute des festen Landes" As Fink points out, Kant wavers back and forth in his definition oft he temperate zone between the 1770s and 1780s. He includes Germany in the temperate zone during the 1750s, but limits it to the 31st and 32nd latitude degree in his 1775 essay on race. In the Academy Edition of that essay, the temperate zone reaches up until the 52nd latitude. In his

From a contemporary standpoint, as is well visible with Kant, eighteenth-century climate theory is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has been praised as an essential stimulus for anti-universalist critique and for a turn to concrete contexts, embodiment, materialist approaches, and alterity. Moreover, it has been identified as a precursor of Marxist thought, postcolonial theory, and environmental criticism alike (Müller, "Montesquieu" 19, Niekerk 27). On the other hand, eighteenth-century climate theory has been located at the root of modern-day notions of race, along with their many normative and essentialist dimensions. Not differentiating between correlation and cause, using mostly anecdotal evidence, and drawing sometimes arbitrary distinctions between climates, eighteenth-century climate theory does not, by almost any means, hold up to contemporary scientific standards. Yet is has offered the pseudo-scientific basis for modern categories of race, for the determinist association of those categories with cultural traits, and for the normative placement of whiteness—as a belonging to the temperate zone—as the ideal and norm. Common assumptions about cultural difference fabricated within climate theory associate the south with a lack of reason and discipline, with overt passions and sensuality, laziness, and dependence. The north is, in turn, linked to a lack of empathy, emotions and articulateness, and with being brute, slow, and despotic. At its worst, eighteenth-century climate theory has functioned as a justificatory myth for imperialist colonialism, modern slavery, and genocide (Fink "Diskriminierung"; see also Schnurbein, Bernasconi). In these ways, following the distinction offered by Jonathan Israel, eighteenth-century climate theory contains tendencies of both the

Anthropologie, Kant drops the importance of climate and temperature entirely. Interestingly Kant never includes Königsberg, his own location at a latitude of 54, in the temperate zone.

politically progressive "European radical enlightenment"[35] and the more conservative or regressive "moderate enlightenment" (vi). We shall see that the *Sturm und Drang* relation to climate theory, though arguably more representative of the former, on the whole reflects elements of both modes of enlightenment.

2. Enlightenment, Anthropogenic Climate Change and Colonialism

The radical potential of *Sturm und Drang* climate theory arises when it is understood as a reaction to, and a stance against, both the incrementally increasing, widely celebrated perception of the independence of western populations from the effects of climate, as well as the simultaneous employment of climate as tool for controlling colonialized non-western populations. Beginning with the agricultural revolution from around 1750 onwards, technological innovations such as dikes, irrigation systems, and new models of fertilization lead to greater independence of the harvest from climatic conditions (rain, soil, etc.) and a general increase in production. Climatic conditions therefore become an object for management (Behringer 212ff). This newly found human control over particular climate conditions lead to the hypothesis that humans might be able to exert control (management) over the climate writ large—that is, the thesis that entire climatic zones could be altered long-term. In many ways, the realization of this possibility during the late eighteenth century could be taken to mark the beginning of the "anthropocene era" as the "point when a species became [through its cultural productions] a planetary powerhouse and also became aware of that situation" (Revkin).

[35] This Radical enlightenment "demolished all legitimation of monarchy, aristocracy, women's subordination to man, ecclesiastical authority, and slavery, replacing these with the principles of universality, equality, and democracy" (Israel vi).

In the past few years, scholarship has highlighted the long-neglected role of anthropogenic climate change in the context of colonialism (Grove, Arnold, Barton, Golinkski "American Climate", Meyer, Fleming "Historical Perspectives" Siiskonen). With the colonialization of North America, possibilities of climate warming, in particular, came into focus. (Meyer). Since the late seventeenth century, theories had been circulating that sought to a) mark "colonies" as unfavorable climates and b) speculate on means of climatic improvement so as to shore up European colonial gains. Typically, climate theory of those years mingles fantasies of deliberate climate manipulation with an increasing scientific understanding of the mechanisms of climate warming. In his 1664 work *Sylvae*, John Evelyn, a counselor of the British Royal Society, attributed the high humidity levels he observed in both Ireland and North America—at the time both English colonies—to the presence of overgrown forests in these regions, and proposed that deforestation of these areas might decrease precipitation, and so improve the soil (Fleming "Historical Perspectives"). A century later, Buffon recorded observations on the warming effects of deforestation, on the climatic effects of canalization and of the draining of swamps, and speculated on possible techniques for making climates in colonies of the "new world" more similar to those of central Europe. The goal was to improve the climates of regions seen to have "harsh climates," and so to make them more habitable, and profitable, for Europeans. The wish to technologically alter colonial climates and adjust them to a European standard was a clear outgrowth of the colonial enterprise.

Attention to eighteenth-century associations of the trope of "light" with climate warming illustrates how integral the idea of anthropogenic climate change was to the idea

of enlightenment in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Albert Ludwig von Schlözer—one of late eighteenth-century Europe's most prominent intellectual figures—gives the following account, in his 1772/1773 attempt at a universal "world-history" (*Weltgeschichte*), of enlightenment progress:

> This powerful demi-god [the human being] shoves rocks off the course, digs out lakes, and ploughs where one once navigated ships. Through canals he separates parts of the world and provinces from each other, has streams flow together, and guides them to sand-deserts, which he hence transforms into pleasant meadows; he pillages products from three parts of the world and relocates them to the fourth part. Even climate, air, and weather obey his power. By uprooting forests and drying out swamps, so will there be a cheerful sky above him, moisture and mist dissipate, the winters become more tender and short, and the rivers don't freeze over any more. (Schlözer 10–11).[36]

Here the common enlightenment-era metaphor of light takes on a literal dimension: it refers to the creation of warmer, sunny climatic conditions, through the removal of dense vegetation and cloudy skies. The passage evidences the extent to which the notion of an intellectual enlightenment, by the late eighteenth century, goes hand in hand not only with the dogma of human-induced climate change, but also with those of colonialism and modern capitalist utilitarianism. According to Schlözer, the enlightened land is agriculturally or otherwise economically utilizable, and can be identified by an absence of deviations from the ideal, temperate zone. The process of enlightenment therefore stands, to Schlözer, for the technological alteration of the *zona frigida* or frigid zone (clouds, mist, cold temperatures, dense vegetation and swampy, agriculturally non-

[36] "Dieser mächtige Untergott [der Mensch] schafft seine Wohnung um, räumt Felsen aus der Bahn, gräbt Seen ab, und pflüget, wo man sonsten schiffte. Durch Kanäle trennt er Welttheile und Provinzen von einander, leitet Ströme zusammen und führet sie in Sandwüsten hin, die er dadurch in lachende Fluren verwandelt; er plündert dreien Welttheilen ihre Produkte ab und versetzt sie in den vierten. Selbst Klima, Luft und Witterung gehorchen seiner Macht: indem er Wälder ausreutet, und Sümpfe austrocknet; so wird ein heiterer Himmel über ihm, Nässe und Nebel verlieren sich, die Winter werden sanfter und kürzer, und die Flüsse frieren nicht mehr zu."

utilizable land and bodies of water) to a moderate zone, complemented by the import and export of products beyond their native climates ("he pillages products from three parts of the world and relocates them to the fourth part").[37]

For Schlözer, this enlightened transgression of the laws of climate (for the sake of transitioning the earth into an ideal, all-encompassing, moderate zone) is celebrated as a Promethean ability. The alteration of climates is what occasions the (European) human being to ascend to the status of a "powerful demi-god" ("mächtige Untergott"), a type of Prometheus. In this alignment of Prometheus and human climate-control, Schlözer does not stand alone. Kant questions Benjamin Franklin, with his experiments aimed at gaining control over lightening, referring to him as the "Prometheus of our times" (1: 472) and evoking Prometheus' stealing of fire from the gods. During the 1760s in particular, Prometheus achieves unique status as a symbol of the climate-controlling enlightenment, of the enlightenment as anthropocene.

Germany thereby had a special status within eighteenth-century accounts of climate. To figures like Schlözer, the assumed historical manipulation of Germany's climate was proof of the success of enlightenment in the literal sense of a bringing more sunlight, and was identified as the hallmark of successful colonization. The passage above evidences Schlözer's envisioned development of the once ancient and barbaric Germanic "north" into a properly civilized, and properly climatized society. In this as well, he does not stand alone. Indeed, Germany was, across Europe, considered as the strongest proof of various hypotheses concerning the possibilities and effects of human-

[37] Compare Dubos' view that Germany and England's unpreferable climates and subsequent lethargy of its populations could be countered through the import of products from warmer climates, such as coffee, chocolate, citrus fruit and wine (2: 259).

induced climate change. Such hypotheses were made on the basis of several observations. As pointed out above, Buffon had made the very idea of anthropogenic climate change intellectually popular in his time, and had highlighted the effects of deforestation and river management in particular. In addition to this, theories about a former ice age started to form by the mid-eighteenth century, which lead to an increasing awareness about the historicity of climatic zones. Building on the observations of local villagers, Pierre Martel hypothesized in 1744 that the glacier of Chamonix had once been much larger (Krüger 442). Without knowing how long ago exactly the last ice age had taken place, Martel's speculations seemed to confirm and add validity to the above-mentioned, widespread theory about the ancient Germanic "north."

This theory was also fueled by another sort of evidence altogether: depictions of pre-Romanized Europe in several more-or-less fictional texts dating to (or thought to be dating to) antiquity. The two most influential of these, at least for the German context, were Cornelius Tacitus' *Germania* and James Macpherson's *Works of Ossian*. Tacitus' description of supposedly primordial and native Germanic tribes north of the Roman border, published in 98CE, had received renewed interest since early modernity as an image of pre-Roman German life. Given the rising interest in all things climate-related, the descriptions of Germania's harsh climate, detailed in the second book, received considerable attention in the eighteenth century. According to Tacitus, Germania was barely suitable for agriculture and marked throughout by "terrible forests or repulsive swamps" (*silvis horrida aut paludibus foeda*; 8).[38] Similarly, Macpherson's widely read

[38] Book IV: "Für Strapazen und Mühen bringen sie nicht dieselbe Ausdauer auf, und am wenigsten ertragen sie Durst und Hitze; wohl aber sind sie durch Klima und Bodenbeschaffenheit gegen Kälte und Hunger abgehärtet" (9). Book V: "Das Land zeigt zwar im einzelnen Unterschiede; doch im ganzen macht es mit seinen Wäldern einen schaurigen, mit seinen Sümpfen einen widerwärtigen Eindruck." (9).

Works of Ossian—in fact a fictional creation of Macpherson's own, but taken at the time to be an authentic historical document from pre-Roman, Celtic life—evoked a landscape that was plagued by extreme weather conditions, including fogs, icy winds, barren landscapes, and wild streams. "A rock he seemed," the *Ossian* describes Kind Fingal in a typical passage, "grey over with ice, whose woods are high in wind. Bright streams leap from his head, and spread their foam on blasts" (206). The ice age, as both the *Ossian* and *Germania* seem to suggest, took place less than 2000 years ago. Without any other existing climate records to compare these accounts to, this picture was easy enough to accept. Deforestation and the widespread agricultural use of land in post-Roman times were, in turn, seen as the driving factors behind the warming of the German climate beyond this early historic "ice age."

The apparent human production of Germany's warmed climate since the time of Tacitus and Ossian came to be seen as proof of the possibility of large-scale anthropogenic climate change more generally. The 1787 *Krünitz Encyclopedia* documents the sense in which this perceived warming over several centuries was seen as a positive development:

> Experience has tought us, that a climate can change over the course of time significantly. Germany itself is the best-known example. How rough, foggy and infertile must it have been during Tacitus' days; and how much warmer has it become since then! The draining of the swamps, the cut-down forests, and the spreading of culture have diffused the fogs, and given the warming sun rays space to operate. The cold and rough climate of North-America will very likely be subjected to this same transformation in the future.
>
> (Überdies lehrt die Erfahrung, daß ein Klima in der Folge der Zeit sich sehr ändern könne. Deutschland selbst ist das bekannteste Beyspiel. Wie rauh, nebelig und unfruchtbar muß dasselbe zu Tacitus Zeiten gewesen seyn; und wie sehr viel wärmer ist es seit der Zeit geworden! Die Austrocknung der Sümpfe, die niedergehauenen Wälder, und die allenthalben weit ausgebreitete Cultur, haben die Nebel zerstreuet, und den erwärmenden Sonnen-Strahlen Raum gegeben, zu

> wirken. Eben die Veränderung wird wahrscheinlicher Weise auch das noch kalte rauhe Klima von Nord-Amerika leiden; Entry "Klima" 451)

Even more clearly than in Schlözer's account, the enlightenment light-metaphor is here applied to the process of human-induced climate warming. Enlightenment is the process of making "room for the warming sun-rays to operate." The two principle obstacles in the way of this process are a pair of climatic conditions that feature heavily in both the *Germania* and in modern descriptions of "New World" colonies: forests and swamps. The *Krünitz* entry, echoing Buffon, envisions a similar future of climate warming for both Russia and, especially, for North-America.[39] Here too, climate-control is envisioned as a tool of colonization. Climate warming, on such accounts, is an important step in what many eighteenth-century European thinkers considered to be the universal process of civilization through imperialism.

Even if the connection Buffon draws between deforestation and climate warming is correct, contemporary science has debunked the idea that there was significant warming of the climate in Europe between antiquity and the 1800s. From the perspective of present-day climate science, these eighteenth-century accounts do not think globally enough. Indeed, recently analyzed climate data shows that eighteenth-century Germany was in fact colder than it was during Tacitus' lifetime owing to the effects of the "little ice age" of the late sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. This "little ice age"

[39] In the same article German climate-warming is, similarly, seen as prototype for a future warming of Russia: "Kann sich auch ein und eben dasselbe Klima in Absicht auf seine Wärme und Kälte selbst ändern, wie wir davon ein einleuchtendes Beyspiel an unserm Deutschlande haben. So lange es noch mit Wäldern bewachsen, und mit Sümpfen und Morästen angefüllt war, so lange herrschte in demselben das rauhe Klima, welches die alten Geschichtschreiber uns so fürchterlich schildern. Seit dem es aber von Waldungen entblößt ist, die Sümpfe und Moräste ausgetrocknet sind, und überhaupt dasselbe angebauet worden ist, ist es weit gelinder geworden. Rußland, Sibirien und die große Tatarey, befinden sich noch in dergleichen Umständen, daher ist auch ihr Klima weit kälter, als das Klima der europäischen Länder, die mit ihnen zwischen eben den Parallelen liegen" (447).

appears to have been caused by the rapid regrowth of previously cultivated forests due to the colonial genocide of indigenous peoples in the Americas (Koch et. Al. 30). The image of an extremely harsh Germanic "north" can be attributed to the relative and subjective experience of climatic differences and to the fictional or embellished dimension of the *Germania,* whose purpose was to exoticize "barbarian lands" for a Roman audience.[40] Macpherson's depiction of an icy Scotland, in turn, can, for one, be explained by the more northern and coastal location of Scotland relative to most German-speaking areas.[41] But, first and foremost, Macpherson's depictions of a harsh "northern" climate can be read as a strategy for lending the work authenticity. Indeed, the fact that its depicted landscapes were icy and barren was exactly what some commentators at the time pointed to as evidence of Macpherson's poems being translations of ancient Gaelic materials (Blair 53).

The *Sturm und Drang* attention to climate taken up in the next section must be read against the above background. Tacitus and the *Ossian* both appear to confirm hypotheses about the warming effects of deforestation and swamp-draining that were made by Buffon and others. The alleged ability to warm entire climates—especially the climate of North America—was celebrated as the ultimate achievement of enlightenment by representatives of its "moderate" wing. This endorsement was closely connected to embracing colonialist goals of further expanding the long-admired "moderate zone" further northward within Europe and North America. The emergent consensus was that

[40] These regions were simply colder than Rome at the time. Also the fact that Tacitus likely never traveled to Germania points to the text's fictionality. Tacitus' figuring of Germanic Tribes as noble savages can be seen as political choice, in line with the Augustan politics of a "moral renewal" in the early Roman Empire, and its strong push for family values

[41] As See argues, the trend in German thought to regard Scots and Germans as one people lasted until around the 1790s (*Barbar*).

climatic differences should be minimized as much as possible, around the central-mean of a moderate, European ideal. The popularity of the thesis of a historically warmed German climate by figures such as Schlözer can also be explained by the fact that this idea would prove to be useful for those, such as Kant, interested in adding Germany to the ideal moderate climate. Germany's belonging to the "northern" zone, as French climate theory had largely maintained, would, in this way, be relegated to ancient history. Put in other terms, which will be important for my argument later on, but which has usually been neglected by scholars: it appears that, during the 1770s especially, climate came to be understood as subject to historical change, as having *historicity*.

3. A *Sturm-und-Drang*-Critique of Climate-Colonialism

In his 1780 medical dissertation, "Essay on the Connection Between the Animal and Spiritual Nature of the Human" ("Versuch über den Zusammenhang der tierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen"), Schiller, a *Sturm und Drang* late-comer, cites Schlözer's above-mentioned celebration of human-induced climate change and European imperialism. Schiller writes,

> "The Human Being", says Schlözer, "that mighty demi-god, clears rocks from his path, drains lakes, and ploughs where once were ships. He divides continents and provinces with canals, joins rivers and brings them to deserts that he thus transforms into smiling medows. He robs three continents of their resources and transports them to the fourth. Even climate, air and weather obey his might. Because he clears forests and drains marshes, the sky grows bright above him, mist and damp vanish, winters grow milder and shorter, rivers no longer freeze." And the mind becomes more refined as the climate grows milder. ("Essay" 268-269)

Schiller initially seems to agree with Schlözer: humanity's god-like ability lies in its ability to dominate nature. For Schiller as for Schlözer, the ability to change climates

("even climate, air and weather obey his power") marks humanity's final transcendence of its animal condition, so that enlightened humans are no longer animal-divinity hybrids (à la Haller[42]), but instead now take on the promethean status of "undergods."

However, Schiller adds to Schlözer's picture one crucial twist, claiming that "spirit refines itself along with its climate" ("der Geist verfeinert sich mit dem seinem Klima"). By altering climates, humans will, on this account, be affected in their capacity as animals, which will in turn affect their spiritual natures (i.e. their individual characters and their collective cultures). By adding the medical voices of Hippocrates and Albrecht von Haller to Schlözer's geographical vision of climate, Schiller performs a similar synthesis as does Montesquieu in his definition of climate. Climate, on this synthetic somewhat "bio-cultural" account, is a means for the development of human culture, but also a determining factor for human physical life. Climate affects not only the body, but the intellect as well. The effects of climate change are, for Schiller, thereby not uniformly or universally positive: climate warming and climate "refinement" are not synonymous. Shortly thereafter in his essay, he notes that one potential negative effect of climate warming is the "poisoning of the atmosphere" ("die Atmosphäre verpested"), which can lead to new "epidemics" ("Seuchen") on the physical level and an incapacitating obsession with comfort on the intellectual-cultural level (an incapacitating obsession that, around 1800, is commonly referred to as "decandence").

With this claim, Schiller rings in a new relation of human and non-human nature—"the humanization of the earth or the earthing of the human" (Tang 4)—which scholars have observed to emerge around 1800, and in the thought of the early Herder in

[42] Albrecht Haller had earlier coined the dictum that humans were a "hybrid between animal and angel" (*Mittelding von Engel und Vieh*; *Ursprung des Übels* 63).

particular. In that this stance formulates a potential backlash of the role of the human as a "planetary powerhouse" (Revkin 4), it constitutes an early criticism of anthropogenic climate change from within the enlightenment. Speaking in terms of Kant's concept of the enlightenment, human control over climate would, according to Schiller, constitute the entering into a new level of heteronomy or immaturity, rather than a departure from it.[43] Schiller's point, in his 1780 dissertation, is that a relation to, and dependence upon, climate is nothing from which humans can be entirely freed. A relation to climate is a marker of the human condition.

Whereas Schiller's dissertation highlights some potential pitfalls of anthropogenic climate change, but is otherwise not morally opposed to it *per se*, a stronger criticism is voiced in his play *Die Räuber*, written covertly at around the same time. Here it is suggested not only that the European enlightenment cannot in fact control climates, but also that it should not do so even if it could. The words of Schlözer's that Schiller cited in his medical dissertation are here put almost literally into the mouth of the play's villain, Franz Moor:

> Have I sacrificed my nights for this? Levelled mountains and filled in valleys? Rebelled against all human instinct, finally to have this this lazy tramp crashing through my most artful currents? Quietly, quietly now—all that's left to come is child's play. I have waded up to the ears in mortal sin—it would be a nonsense to swim back, when the bank lies so far behind me. Not to be thought of. Divine Mercy itself would be reduced to beggary, and Eternal Redemption bankrupted, if they tried to atone for my sins. So forward, like a man!" (*The Robbers* 145, translation slightly altered).
>
> (Hab ich darum meine Nächte verpraßt – darum Felsen hinweggeräumt und Abgründe eben gemacht – bin ich darum gegen alle Instinkte der Menschheit rebellisch worden, daß mir zuletzt dieser unstete Landstreicher durch meine künstlichsten Wirbel tölple – Sachte! Nur sachte! – Es ist nur noch Spielarbeit

[43] Fittingly, Schiller's final suggestion to deal with the negative effects of climate change in his medical dissertation is to increase the intake of opium or the "precious juice from the oriental poppy" ("Essay" 269).

> übrig – Bin ich doch ohnehin schon bis an die Ohren in Todsünden gewatet, daß es Unsinn wäre, zurückzuschwimmen, wenn das Ufer schon so weit hinten liegt – Ans Umkehren ist doch nicht mehr zu gedenken. 1: 572)

The passage equates the anthropogenic changes to the earth's geography and waterways that Schlözer had praised as crown of the enlightenment with Franz Moor's clearly immoral conspiracies against his brother Karl. Scholars have called the figure of Franz Moor a "reversed" enlightenment figure, who usurps enlightenment ideals to justify immorality. In Wolfgang Riedel's words, he is, through his level of self-awareness, "evil itself" (19).[44] Franz evaluates his own actions in the monologue cited above: he ignores "all instinct" and racks up "mortal sins" ("Todsünden"*)*. Strikingly, the passage above seems to identify in Franz's conspiracies a certain tendency for moderate efficiency: both mountain tops and ravines are leveled. *Die Räuber,* in other words, equates Franz's self-serving conspiracies with the enlightenment vision of economic enrichment through the intentional manipulation of climatic conditions.

Die Räuber condemns the moderate wing of the enlightenment in strong terms. If Moor is a type of Schlözer, then the history of the European enlightenment is told not only as a story of moral decay, but also as one of self-destruction. The enlightenment's—or Franz's—only self-justification for continuation, according to the passage above, is having reached a point-of-no-return ("daß es Unsinn wäre, zurückzuschwimmen, wenn das Ufer schon so weit hinten liegt – ans Umkehren ist doch nicht mehr zu gedenken"). Ultimately, Franz's path will culminate in his suicide. *Die Räuber* thus offers a dystopian diagnosis of western modernity that displays an uncanny resemblance with contemporary

[44] "Mit Franz Moor hat Schiller eine Figur erschaffen, die das Böse selbst repräsentiert. Schiller zeichnet einen Charakter eines umgekehrten Aufklärers, der die philosophische Bildung usurpiert, um sie dem Zweck einer intellektuellen und moralischen Vervollkommnung des Menschen zu entfremden und damit sein Lastersystem stütz" (Riedel 19).

ecopolitical views of climate change: the enlightenment obsession with technological dominance over nature has, from this vantage, transformed into a dangerous, self-annihilating force exceeding human control.

Goethe, in his play *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), also puts forth a literary strike against the equation of climate warming with progress. The character Götz develops the notion that the true climate of modernity is a poisonous atmosphere, with the same negative effects on the body and spirit that Buffon diagnosed in non-western climates. "Himlische Luft.—Freiheit! Freiheit!" (heavenly air.—Freedom! Freedom!) are his last words, and complement earlier complaints about his inability to breathe (1.1: 653, cf. 651).[45] The play is usually read as thematizing the progression (or regression, depending on one's perspective) from an (imagined) chivalric pre-modern to the modern-absolutist order (cf. Neuhaus, "Götz" 93-94). What has gone unnoticed about *Götz von Berlichingen*, though, is that it links this progression to a gradual and unfavorable decline of Germany's air quality over the same period. Clearly, the play challenges the then-dominant narrative that anthropogenic climate warming has caused Germany to be more civilized.

A similar point is made by the character Prince Tandi in Lenz's *Der neue Menoza oder Geschichte des cumbanischen Prinzen Tandi.* Tandi is even more dismissive in his interpretation of anthropogenic climate change as a form of regression. The titular hero, from the fictional, non-western kingdom of "Cumba," travels through a German town, eager to meet and learn from German people, whom he has somehow come to think of as

[45] "Götz: Meine Liebe, wenn du den Wächter bereden könntest mich in sein klein Gärtgen zu lassen auf eine halbe Stunde, daß ich der lieben Sonne genösse, des heitern Himmels und der reinen Luft" (651). – Himmlische Luft – Freiheit! Freiheit! *Er stirbt*".

the "most-enlightened" of all Europeans. Over the course of the play, Tandi comes to reevaluate his stance on the German enlightenment, which he eventually derides as hypocritical:

Prince: I'll be on my way, but not forward, backward! I have seen and heard enough; it's becoming repulsive.
Herr v. Biederling: To Cumba?
Prince: To Cumba, to breathe once more. I believed I was in a world in which I would encounter nobler people than at home, great, all-embracing, widely active—I am—suffocating.
Herr v. Biederling: Do you want a bloodletting?
Prince: Are you moking me?
Herr v. Biederling: No, really, you are so full of blood, I thought, something had happened to you while you were speaking so hurriedly—
Prince: I am suffocating in your morass—can't continue—By my soul, I can't! This, the enlightened part of the world! Wherever one sniffs, there is idleness, lazy impotent desire, babbling death instead of fire and life, chatter instead of action—This, the famous part of the world! Pshaw!
Herr v. Biederling: Well, excuse me! You are still young, and a foreigner, so of course you know all about fitting in with our customs. This is saying nothing!
Prince: (*grasps him by the hand*): Without predjudice, my friend! Completely cool blooded—I am afraid to go any further if my displeasure keeps increasing as it has so far—But do you know the reason your manners are so striking only to foreigners?—Oh, I don't want to talk; I would have to make such long explanations. I will leave you in peace and travel home to enjoy my father's possessions in innocence. I will reign over my country and build walls around it so that everyone coming from Europe would at first be quarantined before he spreads his plague sores among my subjects. (*Selected Works* 102)

(Prinz: Ich reise, aber nicht vorwärts, zurück! Ich hab genug gesehen und gehört, es wird mir zum Ekel.
Herr v. Biederling: Nach Cumba?
Prinz: Nach Cumba, einmal wieder Atem zu schöpfen. Ich glaubt in einer Welt zu sein, wo ich edlere Leute anträfe als bei mir, große, vielumfassende, vieltätige – ich ersticke –
Herr v. Biederling: Wollen Sie zur Ader lassen?
Prinz: Spottet Ihr?
Herr v. Biederling: Nein in der Tat – Sie sind so blutreich, ich glaubte im hastigen Reden wär Ihnen was zugestoßen –
Prinz: In eurem Morast ersticke ich – treib's nicht länger – mein Seel nicht! Das der aufgeklärte Weltteil! Allenthalben wo man hinriecht Lässigkeit, faule ohnmächtige Begier, lallender Tod für Feuer und Leben, Geschwätz für Handlung – Das der berühmte Weltteil! o pfui doch!
Herr v. Biederling: O erlauben Sie – Sie sind noch jung, und denn sind Sie ein Fremder

und wissen sich viel in unsere Sitten zu rücken und zu schicken. Das ist nur nichts geredt.

Prinz: *faßt ihn an die Hand.* Ohne Vorurteil, mein Freund! ganz mit kaltem Blut – ich fürchte mich, weiter zu gehen, wenn mein Mißvergnügen immer so zunimmt wie bisher – Aber wißt Ihr, was die Ursache ist, daß eure Sitten nur Fremden so auffallen? – O ich mag nicht reden, ich müßt entsetzlich weit ausholen, ich will euch zufrieden lassen und nach Hause reisen, in Unschuld meine väterlichen Besitztümer zu genießen, mein Land regieren und Mauren herumziehn, daß jeder, der aus Europa kommt, erst Quarantäne hält, eh er seine Pestbeulen unter meinen Untertanen vervielfältigt; 1: 140)

Contrary to the enlightenment consensus, Tandi sees Germany's supposedly improved climate as near-uninhabitable—as miry, smelly, and short of oxygen. Europe is depicted as breeding ground for epidemics that, on Tandi's account, the rest of the World needs to protect itself from. The satirical irony of *Der neue Menoza* stems, of course, from the fact that this criticism of the bad German climate comes from the inhabitant of one or more climate zones that are figured as undesirable within eighteenth-century European climate theory. Other characters in the play describe Tandi interchangeably as coming from "Asia," as an "Arab," a "Kalmukprinz," or an "Indian," or simply as from "a different world." Tandi embodies the generic cultural Other. The name "Tandi" (*Tand* in German meaning useless-ornamental) also associates him with eighteenth-century emerging orientalist stereotypes of the overly "ornamental east." When Tandi describes Germany's artificially enlightened climate as a swamp with poor air quality, its inhabitants lazy and unfree, he deploys the very imagery that eighteenth-century travel reports usually use to describe the "non-enlightened" southern climates and their inhabitants.[46] *Der Neue*

[46] The *Krünitz* Encyclopedia, for instance, claims that idleness, softening of character and superfluous passions are results of warmer climates, citing Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from the East Indies*, Georg Forsters *Reise um die Welt* and *William* Robertson's *History of America:* "Ein sehr gewöhnlicher Fehler in heißen Ländern ist, ferner Müßiggang"; "Luxus und Weichlichkeit sind Töchter einer überspannten Empfindlichkeit und Trägheit, und aus dieser Ursache vornehmlich in heißen Ländern einheimisch"; "mannigfaltige Begierden und Leidenschaften unter einem heißen Klima, wo das Gefühl und der Hang zur Sinnlichkeit stärker, und die Fähigkeit ihm Widerstand zu leisten geringer ist" ("Klima") Buffon sees high humidity levels in the New World as ground for physiological weakness, from which even animals of the

Menoza parodies and corrupts the essentialist and racist connections drawn between warmth and idleness within many eighteenth-century theories of climate. In this, Lenz both makes a case against these theories' Eurocentric—and, largely in practice, Francocentric—notions of ideal climate, and lays bare the hypocrisy of the European enlightenment more broadly. Noticeably, Tandi's point of critique is not directed against enlightenment ideals as such, but against the enlightenment's apparent inability to implement the very values it preaches, including an embrace of freedom and a striving for objectivity.

Perhaps the most foundational contrast between the radical-enlightenment *Sturm und Drang* and moderate-enlightenment approaches to climate lies in the refusal of *Sturm und Drang* thinkers to understand climates as mere means to the universal ends of human history, whatever those ends might be. To Schlözer, events within natural history (such as changing climates) count as events within "world history" only where they have an anthropogenic origin and purpose, and are otherwise contingent trivialities (10). *Sturm und Drang* authors, by contrast, principally assume that climatic differences have some direct bearing on cultural and historical development, and so reject the binary distinction between a pure, trivial nature, on the one hand, and a historical, purposeful nature, on the other. Goethe, in his essay "Zum Schäkespears Tag" (1771), argues in this vein that

New World are supposedly affected: "Dans cet état d'abandon, tout languit, tout se corrompt, tout sétouffe: l'air et la terre, surcharges de vapeurs humides et nuisables, ne peuvent sépurer ni profiter des influences de l'astre de la vie; le soleil dared inutilement ses rayons les plus vifs sur cette masse froide, elle est hors d'état de répondre a son ardeur; elle ne produira que des etre humides, des plantes, des reptiles, des insects, et ne pourra nourrir que des hommes froids et des animaux faibles."
"In this state of abandonment, all languishes, everything is corrupted, everything stifles: air and earth, overloaded with damp and harmful vapors, can not seperate or profit from the influences of the star of life; the sun dared uselessly its sharpest rays on this cold mass, it is unable to respond to its ardor; it will only produce wet beings, plants, reptiles, insects, and will only nourish cold men and weak animals" (*Histoire Naturelle* 283).

climates are more than technologies, and must be protected in their natural variety. Going against the prominent thesis that only Europe's moderate climate is truly desirable (and so should be implemented in other parts of the world), he defends the necessity of there being a variety of climates for the sake of the functionality of the global climate (cf. Winkelmann "Gedanken" 1; Falconer 69). [47] It is precisely such an embrace of the value of diverse climates that Goethe sees implemented in Shakespeare:

> That which we call evil, is only the other side of the good, which is as necessary for its existence, and belongs to the whole, as zona torrida must burn and Lapland freeze, for there to be any moderate climate.
>
> He [Shakespeare] shows us the whole wide world, but we coddled unexperienced humans scream with every foreign grasshopper that we see: lord, it wants to eat us.
>
> (Das was wir bös nennen, ist nur die andre Seite vom Guten, die so nothwendig zu seiner Existenz, und in das Ganze gehört, als Zona torrida brennen, und Lapland einfrieren muß, dass es einen gemäßigten Himmelsstrich gebe.
>
> Er [Shakespeare] führt uns durch die ganze Welt, aber wir verzärtelte unerfahrne Menschen schreien bei ieder fremden Heuschrecke die uns begegnet: Herr, er will uns fressen; 1.1: 414).

Like Schiller in *Die Räuber*, Goethe identifies the issue of moderation as the central problem of the enlightenment. That the *Sturm und Drang* generation makes a case for the "whole" human, and is accordingly uniquely inclusive of the importance of strong emotions, has been widely recognized by scholars (cf. Luserke, "Bändigung"). Largely overlooked, however, though visible in passages like the above, is the fact that, in a great many cases, it is climate, and the role of climate in human culture and physiology, that

[47] Falconer: "The intermediate climates have always been esteemed, both in ancient and modern times, to be the most favorable to human nature" (69). Further: "But the Greek nation, being in a middle situation between the two foregoing, partakes of the good qualities of both ; for it is both brave and animated, and intelligent and ingenious ; on which account it always preserves its liberty, and maintains a good administration of the affairs of government, and might rule all nations, could it but acquire one uniform form of government within itself. To this we may add, as instances, the greatest part of the rest of modern Europe, part of North America, the northern coast of Africa, bordering on the Mediterranean, and part of Asia Minor. This is probably the cause of that superiority which these countries, Europe particularly, have so long maintained over the rest of the world."

serves as the model for the comprehensive *Sturm und Drang* poetics of affect and character. Goethe assigns particular climatic differences a purpose within the larger system of a world-climate, which then serves as a model for his vision of variety of both human character and good drama. Goethe's point might also be read as a commentary on the formal inadequacy of then-common arguments for inducing a global moderate climate. Those interested in imposing such "moderation" on the rest of the earth fail to see that without the planetary existence of climate extremes any "moderate zone" would in fact cease to exist. In the passage above, Goethe sees a fear of the unfamiliar (xenophobia) as the root cause of the widespread preference of European thinkers for moderate climates. Far from courting "irrationalism," he addresses the internal contradictions and hypocrisies within enlightenment thought.

By thinking climatic differences as purposeful, *Sturm und Drang* authors employ climate in a novel way. For them, climate is not—as it is for Kant or Montesquieu—a way of categorizing territories and populations according to their deviations from an assumed, moderate ideal. Displaying an opposite tendency, climatic differences serve, in *Sturm und Drang* texts, to highlight the limits of such categorization. In Wilhelm Heinse's words, the very existence of different world climates disrupts any attempt of organizing the manifold of nature, which, on the contrary, resists stratification: :

> Regarding the whole human race, separated by seas, mountains and climate, customs and languages, which head wants to order it? Nature seems to be eternally in love with the manifold, like a child, and therefore wants at all times all around the world skythens, Persians, Atens and Sparta.
>
> (Was das ganze menschliche Geschlecht betrifft, durch Meere und Gebirge und Klima, durch Sitten und Sprachen abgesondert, welcher Kopf will es in Ordnung bringen? Die Natur scheint ewig wie ein Kind in das Mannigfaltige verliebt und

> will zu jeder Zeit deswegen rund um die Erdkugel Skythen, Perser, Athen und Sparta; *Ardingello* 352).[48]

Already in 1768 (in his *Hamburgischen Dramaturgie*), Lessing had called out eighteenth-century climate theory for its prejudice, which he took to be in tension with core enlightenment principles (Fink "Diskriminierung" 168). As I have shown, *Sturm und Drang* authors, though sharing Lessing's concern, reject his rejection of climate theory. For them, attention to climate can be a way of negating prejudice, and does not necessarily fuel it. Climate appeals to *Sturm und Drang* thinkers as a referential framework for cultural characteristics and as a justification for difference, which comes to be seen as irreducible principle of nature. Climates and the cultures of those who naturally inhabit them, on this logic, remain beyond comparison and ought each to be considered equal in their own right. *Sturm und Drang* writers turn to climate as a vehicle for critiquing the enlightenment treatment of climate as a mere means towards a (European) human end. In this, they reject the enlightenment assumption of the value of the human technological dominance over nature, along with the elements of Eurocentric, anthropocentric, and imperialist climate-universalism built into this assumption. It has also been shown that the embrace of climatic differences by authors of the *Sturm und Drang* does not mark an anti-enlightenment stance *per se*, but rather a stance targeted against the internal contradictions and hypocrisies of enlightenment thought and politics. The *Sturm und Drang* approach to climate assumes that climatic variety is purposeful and valuable in itself. In this way, climate is not only taken as the explanation and

[48] Whether Heinse belongs to the *Sturm und Drang* period is a matter of debate. Luserke describes him as "Randfigur." Björn Vedder argues against this placement, an argument that goes along with his general critique of the periodization of *Sturm und Drang* (267).

justification of cultural difference, but also (as shown in the next section) comes to embody a new interpretive framework for cultural artifacts.

4. A *Sturm-und-Drang*-Aesthetic Theory of Climate

The *Sturm und Drang* interpretation of climate as a referential framework for difference gave impetus for new experiments in aesthetic theory and hermeneutics. This can especially be seen with Herder. The notion of climate is especially key for his development of a "popular art" (*Volkskunst*), as attention to climate allows Herder to ground, justify, and otherwise define the cultural characteristics of any given population as a bottom-up development, rather than the top-down development of already well-recognized high culture. Herder is especially interested in how the distinguishing features of different popular art traditions develop historically through the crossing of climatic zones. His history of art in the *Fragments on Recent German Literature* (1767-68) is a story of migrating imagery and sound, and their adaptation to differences in air, water, and soil. On Herder's view, the mythologies of different human cultures may contain a shared common core—such as attention to good and evil, creation, or love—but will always differ in accordance with the climates and natural environments in which they first emerged. Scandinavian skálde-songs depicting the creation of the world from frost, the indigenous American trope of the world-bearing turtle, or the hell and paradise imagery of Arabian Muslims are each, on Herder's view, painted with "local colors" (*Lokalfarben*) that originate in climate (*Klima*), soil (*Boden*) and the corresponding mindset (*Denkart*; 1: 283).

For Herder, mythology and *Volkslieder* are carriers of climatic data. Throughout the 1770s, Herder develops a climate-oriented hermeneutics that works in two distinct but related ways. On the one hand, this hermeneutics insists that in order to understand a work of art one must appreciate it in light of its climatic context. To properly interpret the Biblical creation myth, he argues in *On the Oldest Document of the Human Race* (*Zur Ältesten Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*, 1774–1776), one has to imagine oneself in the landscape of a middle-eastern desert (5: 200-213). In his *Correspondance on Ossian*, Herder speculates that the *Ossian* only had the great impact on him that it did because he read it whilst travelling on a ship through the north sea, being exposed to the scenery in which the tales contained in the volume (according to Macpherson if not in actuality) originated:

> In a vital and swaying nature, floating between heaven and the abyss, surrounded daily by the same expanse of elements, and then only once in a while encountering an unknown, distant coastline, a new cloud, an idyllic region of the world … now, with the songs and deeds of the ancient singers of the Old Norse poems in hand, opening the soul entirely to the places in which the songs and deeds took place. ("Correspondence" 150)

On the other hand, Herder's climate-oriented hermeneutics embraces the idea that careful and imaginative readings of cultural artifacts themselves, even without foreknowledge of their regions of origin, can offer insights into the climatic conditions in which any given artifact originated. In the *Correspondance on Ossian*, Herder describes what he calls "Scandinavian" poetry in this vein. "Its step," he claims, "is entirely on stone and ice, and on the frozen earth" ("Correspondance" 146; translation adjusted).[49] Peruvian poetry, to Herder, tells of the presence of droughts and heavy rain (*152*), whereas the *Ossian* itself, songs of the Innuit, and the Norse Edda are each animated by a "magical sound of the

[49] "Ihr Tritt ist ganz auf Felsen und Eis und gefrorner Erde."

North" (nordischen Zauberton, "Correspondance" 160). Mythology and *Volkslieder*, on Herder's view, function as mediators between humans and their non-human environments, and document the extent to which cultural production is naturally embedded. Furthermore, an attention to climate inspires in Herder a new language of literary criticism. Experiences of climatic environments—such as steps "on rock and ice"—deliver the vocabulary to "discursify" the lived experiences that Herder takes to underlie any *Volkslied.*

As other *Sturm und Drang* authors of the 1770s focused more and more on the cultural role of climate, climate-appropriateness achieved the status of the primary aesthetic principle that characterizes the work of art. This is apparent in Goethe's account of German architecture. In "On German Architecture" (*Von Deutscher Baukunst*; 1772), Goethe reflects upon the differences between the cathedral of Strasbourg and the ancient Greek temple. Goethe sees the columns of the temple and the solid wall of the cathedral as two separate architectural principles emerging from the universal need of art to respond to different climatic conditions (1.2: 417-418). Each, to Goethe, are works of genius, comparable not in themselves but rather in how they relate to their climates. As he sums up the argument of "On German Architecture" in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1814), his literary autobiography:

> It could not be compared with the architecture of the Greeks and Romans, because it sprang from quite another principle. If these, living under a more favorable sky, allowed their roof to rest upon columns, a wall, broken through, arose of its own accord. We, however, who must always protect ourselves against the weather, and everywhere surround ourselves with walls, have to revere the genius who discovered the means of endowing massive walls with variety, of apparently breaking them through, and of thus occupying the eye in a worthy and pleasing manner on a broad surface. (*Literary Essays* 13)

> (Daß man sie [die deutsche Baukunst] nicht mit der Baukunst der Griechen und Römer vergleichen dürfe, weil sie aus einem ganz anderen Prinzip entsprungen sei. Wenn jene, unter einem glücklicheren Himmel, ihr Dach auf Säulen ruhen ließen, so entstand ja schon an und für sich eine durchbrochene Wand. Wir aber, die wir uns durchaus gegen die Witterung schützen, und mit Mauern überall umgeben müssen, haben den Genius zu verehren, der Mittel fand, massiven Wänden Mannigfaltigkeit zu geben, sie dem Scheine nach zu durchbrechen und das Auge würdig und erfreulich auf der großen Fläche zu beschäftigen; 16: 542–543).

Relocating Greek architecture in neoclassicist fashion beyond the Mediterranean world is, on Goethe's view, tasteless: it does not meet the criteria of embedding architecture in its natural environment. Art is thereby figured as a natural activity, an activity therefore not categorically distinct from craftsmanship. Goethe considered works of art to be most truly artistic, though, when they engaged with their climatic conditions without being entirely determined by them. The Strasbourg cathedral, for example, is a work of genius because, a) its principle form, the solid wall, responds to the regional climatic needs rather than merely copying the column of antiquity, and b) the solid wall is constructed in a way that creates a "manifoldness" ("Mannigfaltigkeit") in conversation with the climate, which "engages the eye."[50] Climate-appropriateness as a key aesthetic principle entails neither a disregard for climate nor a climate determinism. Rather, the climate aesthetics of *Sturm und Drang* stress how cultural artifacts emerge in a conversation with their climatic conditions.[51]

Goethe's rejection of climate determinism while at the same time in some way embracing the role of climate poses the question of whether and, if so, to what degree this

[50] The full quote: "Unsre Häuser entstehen nicht aus vier Säulen in vier Ecken; sie entstehen aus vier Mauern auf vier Seiten, die statt aller Säulen sind, alle Säulen ausschließen, und wo ihr sie anflickt, sind sie belastender Überfluß" (1.2: 417-418).

[51] To Herder, similarly, *Ossian*'s poetry (which would turn out to be a fraud) trumps Scandinavian poetry in that it is not "entirely" determined by climate but is rather a "belaboring" ("Bearbeitung") of these conditions (2: 453)

"belaboring" of climate as a criterion for true art might in fact be an anthropocentric ideology. The language of the "genius" used in "On German Architecture" and across *Sturm und Drang* aesthetic theory has often been associated with notions of anthropogenic dominance and the detachment of human subjectivity from non-human nature. The main point to notice in this regard is that *Sturm und Drang* authors are well aware of the problem. The question of the appropriate power-dynamic between humans and their climates is, for instance, treated by Goethe in his own rendering of the Prometheus myth. On my reading, Goethe's famous poem is a response to the popular employment of Prometheus as symbol for the heroic value of anthropogenic climate change (as I described above in section 2 of this chapter).

The two opening stanzas of Goethe's poem (from 1772–1774) read:

Cover thy spacious heavens, Zeus,
With clouds of mist!
And like the boy who lops
The thistles' heads,
Disport with oaks and mountain-peaks!
Yet thou must leave
My earth still standing

My cottage, too,
Which was not raised by thee;
Leave me my hearth,
Whose kindly glow
By thee is envied. ("Prometheus" 210)

(Bedecke deinen Himmel Zeus
Mit Wolkendunst!
Und übe Knabengleich
Der Disteln köpft,
An Eichen dich und Bergeshöhn!
Musst mir meine Erde
Doch lassen stehn

Und meine Hütte

Die du nicht gebaut,
Und meinen Herd
Um dessen Glut
Du mich beneidest; 1.1: 229-230) [52]

Goethe, in this period-defining poem, figures Prometheus as the one who, through cultural innovation, can dwell even in unpleasant climates (clouds and storms). Clearly, the point made in "On German Architecture," that human genius is a matter of conversing with or "belaboring" climatic conditions, is present here. Even the gods envy Prometheus for his heated hut, which allows him to adapt to colder climates. In the background is also, no doubt, the thesis from eighteenth-century anthropology and climate theory that the ability to adapt to all climates is what separates humans from non-human animals.[53] Keeping this in mind, we can see that Prometheus' adaptable relation to the non-human environment is, in Goethe's poem, species-specific to human beings, rather than marker of a super-human genius.

With the heated cot, Goethe has not chosen an advanced technology by eighteenth-century standards, but rather a minimum condition for survival. The hut as an ideal dwelling is an almost stereotypical trope of the *Sturm und Drang* generation. Both the protagonists in Goethe's *Werther* and Lenz's *Waldbruder* dream of living in a simple hut. Herder reconnects this trope back to the *Ossian*, describing, in a letter to Karoline Flachsland, an "old Celtic hut on a rough mountain," as his personal "Eden."[54] To scholars, the trope of the hut has been read as evidence of the period's "primitivism,"

[52] Compare Klopstock's "Frühlingsfeier": "Aber nicht unsre Hütte!/ Unser Vater gebot/ Seinem Verderber/ Vor unsrer Hütte vorüberzugehn!" (180). In Goethe's "Prometheus", the cot is human-made, and not a divine protection.
[53] See, for instance, Krünitz: "Ob gleich der Mensch das einzige lebendige Geschöpf ist, welches in allen Klimaten leben, und sich an alle verschiedene Temperatur der Luft und des Erdbodens gewöhnen kann." ("Klima" 447).
[54] "Aber das fühle ich doch stets, mein Eden ist mehr eine alte Celtische Hütte auf einem rauhen Gebürge, zwischen Frost und Sturm und Nebel" (*Briefwechsel* 270).

influenced by Rousseau, and based on a false binary of corrupt civilization versus pure nature. However, reading the hut of Goethe's "Prometheus" in light of earlier interpretations of the Prometheus figure as a climate changer, Goethe's association of Prometheus and hut proves to be more complex.

With Prometheus, Goethe chooses a character who is widely associated with transcendence and technology, and, around 1770, with climate control as well. Against this background, Goethe's "Prometheus" can be read as a statement about technology and climate change. Unlike Schlözer's "undergod," Goethe's Prometheus aims not to control weather entirely, but to withstand it just enough to survive—while still feeling its presence. Goethe's "Prometheus" strikes a difficult balance: Prometheus braves, but does not dominate, the climates he inhabits.[55] The fact that Zeus displays envy of Prometheus heated cot, rather than rage about his transgression of stealing divine fire, displays an interesting variation on the prior figuring of Prometheus. The gods envy Prometheus for what he has made out of what he stole: a technology of striking simplicity which seems unavailable for the gods themselves. Zeus' envy, we might say, is directed against Prometheus' human ability to maintain a connection to the non-human environment. Once more, it is the ability to create cultural artifacts and technologies *in conversation with* the non-human environment that, for Goethe at the time of writing "Prometheus," marks the Promethean condition and the human ideal.

By recalling the climate-specific process of cultural innovation, *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics formulates an aesthetic program that values traces of climate in art and that

[55] Compare also "Wanderer's Storm Song," discussed in Chapter IV ("Flow"). The genius strives to brave the weather, and is inspired by this dynamic, but does not dominate it. The poem ends on the humble note of a "wading" back to the cot for protection from the storm.

sees art as an outgrowth of climatic distinctions. This aesthetics also postulates a humanity that exists within nature, and that must sustain the tension between culture and nature, as a matter of survival and self-preservation. Art and culture, on this view, have a very important task. As will be shown in greater detail in the chapters that follow, an embrace of the poetic value of climatic conditions (air, soil/vegetation, and water) will become one of the primary bases through which *Sturm und Drang* authors create their own poetic works. This vision of poetics as defined by the distinct climate(s) from which it emerges will also play a substantial role in the attempt to identify, during this period, a distinct "German" literature. As I will address in the next section, the claim that there is a specific German climate was widely debated amongst *Sturm und Drang* thinkers, and was not uniformly embraced as a common ground of cultural identity. The authors of *Sturm und Drang* who do embrace the idea of a distinctly German climate must navigate two complicating factors: a) the difficulty of defining a unified German geography and, b) the historical variability of climate itself, and of the German climate in particular.

5. The German "North" and the Problem of Nationalism

The *Sturm und Drang* generation may conceive of climate in global terms, but they do nonetheless, as a group, have a clear climatic focus point: the "north." In stark contrast to Kant, they tend not to see themselves as inhabitants of, or heirs to, a temperate zone. Turning the originally derogative designation of the German-speaking "north" to their advantage, they embrace the promise and potential of a "northern" identity. The impulse for this reevaluation of the "north" originates, like eighteenth-century climate theory more generally, in French thought. Fink speaks of a "double paradigm shift through

Montesquieu and Rousseau" towards a "rehabilitation of the north as stronghold of culture" during the latter-half of the eighteenth century ("Diskriminierung" 46).[56] Already in the fourth century BCE, Aristotle had associated the "north" with freedom, a point reinstated in Tacitus' *Germania* several centuries later, and eventually taken up by Rousseau. Montesquieu acknowledges the cultural contributions of Copernicus and Linnaeus, and proclaims that Scandinavians were the only "source of freedom" (*la source de la liberté de l'Europe*) still present in the Europe of his time.[57] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, climate theory increasingly recognized "northern" contributions to culture, associating the "north" with freedom on the one hand, and with science on the other.

As regards poetic achievements, however, the "north" was seen as an inferior backwater through the 1770s, even on Montesquieu's account. In 1781, William Falconer, a fellow of the Royal Society and a propagator of climate theory, proclaims:

> Whilst sensibility and imagination distinguished the literary productions of warm climates, judgment, industry, and perseverance were no less remarkable in those of the northern. Hence it is easy to conceive, why poetry should be little cultivated in northern countries; and indeed I know of scarce any poems that have appeared there, that deserve that name. (64)

This view of a scientific but non-poetic north is shared within the German speaking world. Winckelmann famously declares the Mediterranean climate as the ideal ground for arts and poetry, and anything to its north as adverse to poetic thought. Representatives of this theory usually point to arguments that originate in the medical tradition of climate theory. According to some voices of this tradition, cold temperatures inhibit the flow of

[56] "Doppeltem Paradigmenwechsel durch Montesquieu und Rousseau zu einer Rehabilitierung des Nordens als Hortes der Kultur."
[57] "La source de la liberté de l'Europe" *(De l'Esprit des Lois* 11: 6; cf. 17: 5).

passions or restrict to a minimum the opening of the mouth. Others argue that harsh climates generally require a focus on areas of life deemed more crucial for survival than the arts with their largely "ornamental" function.

Against this, the *Sturm und Drang* generation sets out to collect evidence of "northern" artistic aspirations, and to prove that artistic expression is an essential element of the human condition. Herder's attention to the *Volkslieder* of Latvian peoples or the Sami, Goethe's "On German Architecture," and Schubart's history of music can each be read in this vein. Building on the idea of climate as an aesthetic principle and framework for cultural difference, Herder, in his 1773 essay "Shakespeare," carved out a distinctive space for "northern" drama:

> In Greece, drama developed in a way that it could not develop in the north. In Greece it was what it could not be in the north. In the north it thus is not, and must not be, what it had been in Greece.
>
> (In Griechenland entstand das Drama, wie es in Norden nicht entstehen konnte. In Griechenland wars, was es in Norden nicht sein kann. In Norden ists also nicht und darf nicht sein, was es in Griechenland gewesen war; 2: 499)

To Herder, the climatic difference between "north" and "south" both explains and justifies the differences between Shakespeare's plays and those of classical antiquity. Hence the drama of antiquity is not superior—as Winckelmann had argued—but of a different kind and to be judged by different criteria. The quality of Shakespeare's drama lies, on Herder's account, precisely in the fact that it does not simply imitate Greek works but accepts and responds to the different climatic conditions in which it emerges.

During the 1770s, a specifically German national *epos* (or epic mythology) was still lacking. The *Nibelungenlied,* which was rediscovered during the eighteenth century, would only be claimed as national epos over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. In further contrast to nineteenth-century attempts, the focus of *Sturm und Drang* authors was not on the Scandinavian world, and the works revived during the "Scandinavian renaissance" of the early eighteenth century. Instead, the authors of *Sturm und Drang* heralded British traditions, and especially Shakespeare and *Ossian*, as evidence of a "northern" poetic style. *Sturm und Drang* authors saw German identity as closely related to Celtic culture: a proximity supported both the latitudinal similarity of the British Isles and Germany and by the perception of a shared heritage, among British and German peoples, of only *partial* Romanization.

In their search for a distinctively "German" artistic style, some *Sturm und Drang* thinkers turned to the history of music. Schubart, perhaps the best example of this, contests Winkelmann's notion of the ideal Mediterranean climate for the arts, pointing to the existence of Germany's great composers:

> It has been remarked that a favorable climate would produce greater musicians than an unfavorable one; yet our northern Germany has much limited this statement: Because we have produced musicians who not only compete with the foreign ones, but who surpass them in genius and wealth of invention.
>
> (Man hat zwar die Bemerkung gemacht, daß ein günstiges Klima grösere Musiker erzeuge, als ein ungünstiges; doch hat unser nördliches Deutschland diesen Satz sehr eingeschränkt: denn wir haben Musiker hervorgebracht, die nicht bloß mit den welschen wetteifern, sondern sie an Genie und Reichthum der Erfindung überflogen; *Tonkunst* 60).

Schubart's statement—written during his imprisonment in the early 1780s—employs a newly emerging trope: the "northern genius." As the passage reveals, the claim that there exists a "northern genius" can quickly turn into the claim that such "northern" geniuses are superior to their counterparts from other climate zones. Schubart bases the link he draws between "genius" and "north" on the proto-evolutionist claim that it is precisely

harsh climatic conditions that demand superior human adaptability and thus that spur superior artistic creativity ("an Genie und Reichthum der Erfindung überflogen").

Surveying the imagery of genius at the time, it is striking how often *Sturm und Drang* writers depict the "genius" artist as surrounded by elements of harsh climate. Herder, in his characterization of Shakespeare, writes: "If any man brings to mind that tremendous image of one 'seated high atop some craggy eminence, whirlwinds, tempest, and the roaring sea at his feet, but with the flashing skies about his head,' that man is Shakespeare!" (*Selected Writings* 293). In this passage, which is in turn inspired by *Ossianic* imagery, Shakespeare stands on a rock surrounded by storm, thunder, and a roaring ocean, all of which only add to his strength (Gerhard Schmidt, *Ossian* 309–311). He remains remarkably unaffected. From a contemporary perspective, the trope employed here appears kitsch and cliché. The "northern" hero on a weathered rock will later become a staple of popular and pulp fiction, and will reoccur frequently in twenty-first-century television series that draw upon a "northern" aesthetics, such as *Game of Thrones* and *Outlander*. Though well-played-out today, the trope only emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century out of readings of the *Ossian* and other supposedly "northern" mythological works, all of which were read through the lens of eighteenth-century climate theory.

From a contemporary vantage, this figuring of the "northern genius" has many problematic aspects, many of which are especially visible in the *Göttinger Hainbund*, a Göttingen-based *Sturm und Drang* sub-group active during the first half of the 1770s and centered around their admiration for Klopstock. There are many examples of texts written by members of this group—such as the Stolberg brothers, Voß, Hölty, and Johann Martin

Miller—that feature the figure of the storm-braving "northern genius." Perhaps the primal embodiment of this figure is the mythological Hermann, the earliest of German folk-heroes, and based on the historical figure of Arminius (17BCE–21CE). Klopstock, in his 1769 drama *Hermanns Schlacht*, had celebrated Hermann as the first true German, and the members of the *Göttinger Hainbund*, who were acquainted with Klopstock, took this celebration still further. Herman's victorious defense against Roman invaders was, according to his mythologization in the late eighteenth century, attributable to the Germanic tribes' supposedly natural ability to withstand harsh, northern climates. Voss, along similar lines, describes in a 1772 text the ability to withstand the storm as the defining trait of Herman's "seed" (i.e. the German people): "Noch sproßt von Hermanns Stamme Saat, Und höhnt den Sturm!" (113). Friedrich Leopold Stolberg, in turn, describes Hermann as himself a storm, borrowing heavily in this from the *Ossian*, and thus blending both Herrmann and Fingal into one "northern" heroic proto-identity: "Und Dein Hermann vernahm's! Sturm war sein Arm!/ Sein Schwert/ Wetterflamme! Betäubt stürzten die trotzigen/ Römeradler, und Freiheit/ Strahlte wieder im Lande Teuts" (7).[58]

Within this turn to a supposedly authentic "northern" mythology, the earlier pietistic usage of "storm" ("Sturm/Ansturm") as a religious trial by God is taken up more literally and mixed with imagery of actual weathers and storms (cf. Langen). Moreover, within the *Göttinger Hainbund*, this storming and braving of storms took on a militaristic meaning. To brave the storm, in the sense used by F. Stolberg and Voß, means to all at once brave inner turmoil, climatic conditions, and foreign peoples. Ultimately, the topos

[58] The connection to the *Ossian* becomes especially apparent with an eye to Friedrich Leopold Stolberg's translation thereof from 1806. Here it is said about King Fingal: "Dein Arm war dem Sturm/ Dein Schwert dem Strahle des Himmels gleich" (1: 58).

of the storm idealizes the act of proving oneself to be supremely adapted to harsh climates, and in this way envisions the bio-geographically defined "northern peoples" as the rightful heirs to the climates they have braved and continue to brave, physiologically, intellectually, and militarily.

On this level, it is correct to say that *Sturm und Drang* thought does at times lend itself to fascist ideology and that certain strains of *Sturm und Drang* thinking directly laid the foundation for the imagery, aesthetics, and biopolitics of Nazi Germany. The militaristic dimension of "storm" would become a key Nazi topos, driving the terminology of "Sturmabteilung," "Sturmführer," and "Sturmtruppen," which have in turn gone on to permeate areas of contemporary mainstream popular culture, such as the "Stormtrooper" villains in the *Star Wars* film franchise (cf. Herrmann 108-112). The extent to which the military notion of "storm" was during the Nazi-era wedded to an ideology of climate is clear from the so-called "*Tank Song*" ("Panzerlied") by Kurt Wiehle (1935), a prominent German military song sung by the *Wehrmacht* and by the German military up until 2017, when it was banned from military song books. Its first lines read:

> In blizzard or storm, or in sun warm and bright,
> The day hot as hell or bone-chilling the night,
> Our faces may with dust be laid,
> But spirits never fade, never fade;
> Relentless, our tank Thunders out in the stormwind.
>
> (Ob's stürmt oder schneit, ob die Sonne uns lacht,
> der Tag glühend heiß oder eiskalt die Nacht:
> bestaubt sind die Gesichter,
> doch froh ist unser Sinn, ist unser Sinn
> es braust unser Panzer im Sturmwind dahin; Wiehle, cited in Funk-Hinnings and Jäger 100)

Under terms such as "extension of living space" (*Lebensraumerweiterung*) the *Völkisch* (or ethno-populist) movement, which was on the ascendency in Germany from late nineteenth century through the Nazi era, euphemistically figured visions and practices of imperialist colonialism and genocide as the migration of a better adapted "northern" species to other parts of the globe. The supposed ability to withstand harsh climatic conditions of the "northern" people—first made popular in Germany by authors of the *Sturm und Drang*—was central to the politics and ideology of the "northern"—and, with the 19th century, "Arian"—"race".

The *Sturm und Drang* generation was seminal in establishing another long-enduring German national symbol: the Oak tree. Its emerging prominence as an inherently "German" tree during the late eighteenth century can also be explained with reference to the idea of perceived climatic adaptability. The Baron of Blumenthal, a character in Johann Martin Miller's "Geschichte Karls von Burgheim und Emiliens von Rosenau" (1778), writes the following in his letter to the protagonist, Burgheim:

> Storms are good, my friend . . . because they make us strong. A little tree, which has been grown in a garden between four walls, where no storm can reach, will succumb to the smallest wind on the free field; The oak tree, in contrast, which has been raised in storm and weather from youth on, braves the rampaging north wind and does not fall.
>
> (Stürme sind gut, mein Lieber…den sie machen stark. Ein Bäumlein, das in einem Garten zwischen vier Mauern, wo kein Sturm hin kommen konnte, aufgezogen ist, erliegt auf freyem Feld dem kleinsten Winde; Da hingegen der Eichbaum, der von Jugend auf in Sturm und Wetter aufgewachsen ist, dem wüsthenden Nordwind trotzt und nicht sinkt"; 212).

The Baron of Blumenthal praises the oak tree for its ability to withstand the "northern" wind. On his account, it outlives the pretty, planted tree of the Renaissance garden and in this way provides the model for a "northern" philosophy of education. On one reading,

one might say that Miller's text stresses the merits of resilience and independence, while cautioning against the dangers of too much protection or support. But it is hard to deny the inherently ableist, militaristic tone of this vision (as in the line, "auf freiem Feld erliegen, trotzt und nicht sinkt," 212). This vision of the long-standing oak tree strengthened by "northern" winds also plays a role in the vision of the "northern" mythological hero touched on above. Towards the end of his letter, the Baron of Blumenthal recommends a set of readings to strengthen Burgheim's spirit as he undergoes his difficult experiences. Among them are both the *Ossian* and Klopstock's *Herrmanns Schlacht* (215). This confirms the earlier observation that the eighteenth-century notion of harsh climates as beneficial was equally projected, by *Sturm und Drang* authors, onto the *Ossian* and onto the mythologized Herrmann. Additionally, it becomes clear that, in this context, poetry is idealized as a testimony to survival in harsh conditions. The *Ossian* is seen itself to function like a harsh climate and, as a text, bears the potential to strengthen the "northern" spirit alongside harsh weather.

Masculinist and nationalist tendencies are especially visible in the common contrasting of supposed "northern" strength with supposed "southern" fragility, which was associated with anything French (despite parts of France having a higher latitude than parts of Germany). Besides members of the *Göttinger Hainbund*, Schubart would take an especially strong nationalistic stance. In 1776, he writes the following on the subject of "national character" (*Nationalcharakter*):

> Tacitus would still find many of those steadfast traits amongst us, with that he put shame on his degenerated Rome. Nothing is more ridiculous, hermaphrodite-like, than when nations mix that had been antipodes for centuries. The solid, masculine Brit—and the unsteady, fashionable Frenchman! —Which freaks of nature and ridiculous caricatures had to follow from the mixing of these two characters! Just now they have been created. Paris is London, and London is Paris. The otherwise

> coarse Englishman now babbles as well as the Frenchman. French superficiality rules in his societies, amusements, even his writings. Oh Shakespeare, Milton, Newton, oh you honorable Shadows in Westminster, your times are over; deranged are your grandchildren, and degraded to women in the school of their neighbors.
>
> (Tacitus würde unter uns noch viele von jenen festen Zügen finden, womit er sein ausgeartetes Rom beschämt hat. Nichts ist possierlicher, zwittermäßiger, als wenn sich Nationen miteinander vermischen, die seit Jahrhunderten Antipoden gewesen. Der solide, der männliche Britte! –und der schwankende, modische Franzose!—Welche Mißgeburten und lächerliche Karrikaturen muß nicht die Vermischung dieser beiden Charaktere hervorbringen! Eben jetzt hat er sie hervorgebracht. Paris ist in London, und London ist in Paris. Der sonst so derbe Engländer faselt nun so gut, als der Franzose. In seinen Gesellschaften, Ergötzlichkeiten, selbst in seinen Schriften herrscht französischer Leichtsinn. Oh Shakespeare, Milton, Neuton, oh ihr ehrwürdigen Schatten in Westmünster, Eure Zeiten sind vorbei; ausgeartet sind eure Enkel, und in der Schule ihrer Nachbar beinahe zu Weibern herabgemodelt!; *Deutsche Chronik*, 96)

The passage richly illustrates a number of points I have made so far: Tacitus' depiction of Germanic tribes is heralded as an authentic image of ancestral, pre-Roman life and is contrasted with a decadent French heritage. The contrast with France is hyperbolic and paradoxical: France is thought of both as a "neighbor" and as an "antipode." The passage displays strong masculinist and proto-Darwinist-ableist tendencies, and anticipates the future vocabulary of Nazism, figuring foreign (here French) influence as "degenerating" ("entartet"). Unlike the employment of climate that we see in Herder, Schubart's is driven by an obsession with purity, emphasized in his call against the "mingling" of French and British peoples. One might say that Schubart applies stereotypes about the "orient" then-prevalent in eighteenth-century French climate theory to France itself. The conclusion implied is highly problematic. It tells the story of a Europe that has been overly orientalized and feminized, and that is poisoned by a slowly northward-creeping decadence. The narrative of decadence would be a commonplace in anti-Semitic

narratives of the Nazi era as well. More recently, the same narrative has resurfaced in ethno-populist anxieties about the looming "Islamization" of Europe.

The strange thing about such claims is that, around 1770, the category "German" was not at all easily and clearly defined, whether geographically, politically, culturally, or climatically. It is often remarked that the impetus to develop a German national literature and cultural heritage during the late eighteenth century emerged from the apparent lack of political unity among German-speaking peoples and from the perception, among these same peoples, of French cultural (and with Napoleon also political) dominance. "Germany" during the late Holy Roman Empire of pre-Napoleonic times consisted of thousands of territories under different rulers. Certainly, this must also be understood as a lack of geographical and temperature-based unity. Taken as a whole, Germany was not simply "north" by any definition, a fact that the authors of *Sturm und Drang* were well aware of. If climate was determined geographically in terms of latitude—as in the tradition of Aristotle—German regions of the 1770s might have been called "north." However, large parts of ostensibly "non-northern" France would, by this logic, have to be considered as "northern," too. If climate is understood in its medical, more temperature-based mode, it is also difficult to maintain the notion of a distinct German climate. The differences between the medium temperatures of Britain, France, and Germany were smaller than the temperature differences across the Holy Roman Empire at the same period. Germany, according to the standards of most eighteenth-century climate theory, could in fact not be considered to be either strictly north, nor strictly temperate.

In fact, "Germany"—more so than any other European country—was marked by its intermediary climatic position. As detailed above, Germany was at the time believed

to have undergone a significant change of climate in recent centuries. Its no longer uniformly belonging to a "northern" zone was seen as a purely historical outcome and as proof of the very possibility of anthropogenic climate change. Buffon locates the border between the modern temperate and northern zones at the 50th latitude. Following Buffon, the climate of Germany in 1770 would in fact be multiple: whereas Frankfurt belonged to the temperate zone, Weimar did not (cf. Fink "Diskriminierung" 79). Last but not least, it is worth noting that the *Sturm und Drang* movement was itself characterized by its integration of different climatic zones, its adherents sourcing from and embracing both the southern and northern edges of Germany. Herder and Lenz both grew up in Riga (in contemporary Latvia), at a latitude of approximately 58° N. Johann Georg Hamann, who is seen as an inspirational figure for the period, operated, like Kant, in Königsberg (contemporary Kaliningrad, Russia, latitude ca. 54° N) and would eventually be called the "magnus of the north"[59] in recognition of this high latitude. His "northern" ideas were, however, quite seamlessly exported to the much more southern Strasbourg (contemporary France, ca. 48° N). And it was here, in the "temperate" Strasbourg, that one of the central loci of the *Sturm und Drang* period would emerge.

Due to its geographical spread, complex political alliances, and the still not-so-distant impacts of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), Germany had also seen a significant influx and migration of populations and cultures both across the middle ages and in the modern period. In short, the recipe for "the German" as one part Hermann's seed and one part people adapted to harsh, "northern" climates did not hold, even by eighteenth-century standards. The non-consistency of the specifically German climate did

[59] "Magnus des Nordens"

not go by unnoticed by *Sturm und Drang* thinkers. Lenz remarks, in a defense of his play *Der Neue Menoza*, that German identity is marked by hybridity if it is marked by anything. Accordingly, any distinctively "German" literature must therefore involve hybrid genres, such as tragicomedy. This is because "the people for whom they [the poets] write—or for whom they at least should write—is such a hudgpodge of culture and crudity, morals and savagery" (*Selected Works* 295).[60] Contra Schubart, Lenz claims that the concrete reality and true defining feature of German identity is hybridity.

To summarize this section, it can be said that all *Sturm und Drang* authors turn to climate in one way or another. The commitment to a specifically "northern" climate, and to the specifically "northern" culture growing out of this—with the *Ossian* and Shakespeare being its most admired representatives—is a true hallmark of *Sturm und Drang* poetics and aesthetic theory. However, the question whether modern Germany is in fact "northern"—a view typically associated with German Romanticism—is not answered by *Sturm und Drang* thinkers as univocally as one might think. Whereas poets belonging to the *Göttinger Hainbund* clearly self-identify as both German and "northern," members of the Strasbourg *Sturm und Drang* are more hesitant. Herder, reflecting the belief that Germany's climate had recently significantly warmed, proclaims that Shakespeare was the last bard. Lenz, in turn, defines modern German culture as hybrid, and so as only partially "northern." For Herder and Lenz, at least, climatic belonging does not of itself solve the question of what lies at the core of "German identity."

[60] das Volk, für das sie [unsere deutschen Komödienschreiber] schreiben oder doch wenigstens schreiben sollten, ein solcher Mischmasch von Kultur und Rohigkeit, Sittigkeit und Wildheit ist" (2: 703–404).

6. J.M.R. Lenz: Northern Poetics and the Limits of Climate Theory

A look at three pieces of different genres by Lenz (a poem, dramatic fragment, and prose work) will demonstrate how his work, in particular, criticizes prevailing theories of climate while at the same time emphasizing the connection to climate as an essential factor of human existence.

a. "Schauervolle und süss tönende Abschiedsode"

On the whole, Lenz's writings from the 1770s circumvent the reductionism of most climate theory at the time by turning instead to alternate poetic connections to climate. This dual relation can be readily observed in his humorous poem "Schauervolle und süss tönende Abschiedsode"—written on the occasion of his departure from Strasbourg in 1776 and delivered to the "Deutsche Gesellschaft." The poem includes the familiar identification of Germanness with an exposure to harsh climatic conditions. The first stanza reads:

> A parenthyric song I would like to sing now
> A powerful, an omnipotent song
> That pulls down sun and moon from the sky
> And towards which the stars leap.
> High up to the Olymp I would like to urge
> A German Icarus with featherless wings
> Only that the weather is too rough
> And my muse, a woman
> Would freeze green and blue in these conditions.
>
> (Ein parenthyrsisch Lied möcht ich itzt singen
> Ein mächtig, ein almächtig Lied
> Das Sonn und Mond vom Himmel zieht
> Und dem die Stern' entgegen springen.
> Hoch zum Olymp möcht' ich mit federlosen Schwingen
> Ein deutscher Ikar dringen:
> Allein das Wetter ist zu rauh
> Und meine Muse, eine Frau
> Erfröre drüber braun und blau; 3: 176)

Lenz presents a humorous "German" version of the myth of Icarus—Prometheus' less successful boundary-crossing counterpart. According to the ancient myth, the youthful Icarus attempts to transcend human limits but, in contrast to Prometheus, fails in his attempt. Refusing to follow his father Daedalus' stipulated path and instead flying too close to the sun, Icarus' wings of wax melt and he falls to his death. Already in antiquity, Icarus was employed as a poetological figure invoked in discussions of more or less successful attempts at poetry (see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book VI), and at imitating great poets (Horaz, Carmen 4.2). Lenz, too, employs the trope this way: the "German" Icarus ("ein deutscher Ikar") is a reference to Lenz the author himself. And it is specifically "northern" climatic conditions that define his "Germanness": the German Icarus fails not because of too much heat, but because of the rough ("rauh") weather that the northern poet is exposed to. The classical muses, the poem claims, would freeze under such conditions.

The passage plays on the central claim of Francocentric climate theory—promulgated in Germany by Winckelmann—that "northern" climatic conditions inhibit poetic expression. In line with the typical argumentative logic of the *Sturm und Drang* generation, Lenz turns this supposition to his advantage. If cold climates make an imitation of ancient poetry (or of the French interpretation of ancient poetry) impossible, his own attempt must necessarily lead to some novel innovation, to a completely different form of the poetic. On this view, Icarus' fault lies in his failure to take his proper climatic context into account. Lenz's poem, not committing the same mistake, portrays itself as the evidence that extreme or uncomfortable climates can spur true creativity, rather than

hinder it. The poem itself demonstrates, on this view, the possibility of a "northern" poetics.

But the poem also twists the narrative of a "northern" poetic style in various ways. Icarus, for one, is not a successful poetic role model to strive after, but is rather an exemplar set up for failure. A counter-Prometheus-tale, the myth tells the story of unsuccessful acclimatization. In that the narrator pronounces the intention of singing a "parenthyrsic song" ("parenthyrsisches Lied")—a style that Winckelmann had used as technical term for failed poetic attempts to depict the sublime in antiquity—our impression that failure may in fact be Lenz' goal is furthered. Even if Lenz's version of Icarus stands as a successful "northern" recasting of the Greek original, his success would only be to recreate a "northern" form of poetic failure. The paradoxical quality of the poem's subtitle also undermines its claim to offering an authentically distinctive "German" ode. The subtitle reads, "which consists of an allegro, an andante and a presto from a *German poet*" ("*bestehend aus einem Allegro, einer Andante und einem Prästo von einem* deutschen Dichter"; 3: 176, Lenz' emphasis). The subtitle employs at titular form from the "temperate zone" (Italian terms and an Italian style) to describe a "northern" style. Lenz' suggestion seems to be, then, that borrowing from other cultural traditions (an act of mimesis)—in this case the borrowing of "northern" poetics from the temperate zone—may in fact be unavoidable.

b. *Pandemonium Germanicum*

Lenz' 1775 dramatic fragment *Pandemonium Germanicum* ("All German Daemons" or "German Hell") also tackles the question of whether a distinctively

"northern" German poetic identity actually exists. The *Pandemonium Germanicum* also exhibits strong poetological tendencies: the characters are various German poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Lenz himself, Goethe, Herder, Lessing, Klopstock, Wieland, La Roche, Michaelis, Klotz, and Hagedorn. The plot unfolds across three short acts. In Act one, Goethe and Lenz literally climb the mountain of poetic fame, a reference to the Greek mountain Parnassus, home of poetry and the muses. In Act two, Goethe and Lenz, now at the top of this mountain, encounter the "who's who" of German poets in the "temple of fame" ("Tempel des Ruhms"). A brief third act features various spirits ("Geister")—such as the world spirit ("Weltgeist") and the eternal spirit ("ewiger Geist")—debating the futures of virtue ("Tugend") and the arts and sciences ("Künst und Wissenschaft"), as well as the potential role that German poets might play in these futures. The fragment ends with Lenz awakening and realizing that it had all been only a dream.

The question of German poetic identity is brought up across all three acts. On one level, Lenz follows the common pattern of praising "northern" authors (Goethe, Herder, Klopstock, and Shakespeare) at the expense of French literature and influence. The ghost of Shakespeare walks arm in arm with Lessing, Herder, and Klopstock. Lessing condemns the imitation of Greek and French drama by his contemporary Christian Felix Weisse, and both Goethe und Lenz challenge the German-ness of other poets. "Das sollen Deutsche sein?" asks Lenz (266). Goethe, meanwhile, presents his Francophile contemporaries with a human bone fragment, waving it in front of their faces and exclaiming: "Ihr Deutsche?—Hier ist eine Reliquie eurer Vorfahren. Zu Boden mit euch und angebetet was ihr nicht werden könnt" (261). At first glance, the *Pandemonium*

Germanicum appears to perform a mythologization of the pre-Romanic "north" as the true German homeland. After all, it distances French and Mediterranean influences and places emphasis on German physiological ancestry (Goethe's bone). Goethe, carrying the remains of ancestral Germans and self-tasked with creating a German literature for the contemporary German population (269–270), seems to represent the link of promised continuity between the actually great German past and the potentially great German future.

It is crucial to keep in mind, however, the satirical angle of Lenz' text. For ultimately, the *Pandemonium Germanicum* mocks its depicted hyperbolic German nationalism just as much as it does eighteenth-century Francocentrism. The character Lenz, though quick to voice his dissatisfaction with Francophile German authors and with the pettiness of the bourgeois tragedy, is in the end unable to propose any alternatives. Following Herder's challenge that he should "try it once" ("probiert's einmal"; 269), Lenz first replies that he needs to be alone ("Ja da müßt ich einen Augenblick allein sein") and then, after his stint of solitude, produces characters that the others are not satisfied with. Herder calls him out: "Mensch, die sind viel zu groß für unsere Zeit" (269), while Lessing proclaims, ambiguously: "Eure Leute sind für ein Trauerspiel" (249). Goethe, meanwhile, is busy being followed around by hordes of female admirers, until he promises, with an air of generosity, that he will devote himself to accomplishing the task of creating a genuine German poetics, which Lenz had failed so miserably at: "Ich will's leisten" (270). Tellingly, the fragment will end before Goethe is actually able to get to the task.

In the final act, the "eternal spirit"—the all-knowing voice of universal cosmic history—ends its speech by praising, while at the same time profoundly misjudging, Herder as the real future of the German arts: "schaut an den Herder, der jene Labyrinthe mit einem ebnen Wege durchschnitt die nur immer um Künste herum, nie zur Kunst selbst führten" (1: 271). The "eternal spirit" casts Herder as a new Theseus (the mythological conqueror of the Minotaur's labyrinth), a modern hero enmeshed in the old ways. The historical Herder, however, stood for the exact opposite of this. In his *Kritische Wälder*, Herder envisions his own ideal form of criticism as entering and dwelling within, rather than conquering, the labyrinth (see Chapter II of this dissertation). Similarly, Herder's writings, which are largely theoretical, never lead themselves to art, but instead circle around it. The "eternal spirit" has thus produced an inaccurate sketch of Herder, one that is out of sync with its time. Taken as a whole, then, the *Pandemonium Germanicum*, undermines its own call for a new German mythology. It uses the question of modern German identity as material for comedy, rather than for an heroic epos in the style of the *Ossian* or of Klopstock's odes to Herrmann. The *Pandemonium Germanicum* reinstates Lenz' earlier evaluation that German writing must necessarily be a tragicomic hybrid, so as to reflect the hybridity of the German climate.

The opening scene of the fragment's first act explicitly situates the question of German identity in relation to climate. Goethe and Lenz represent two different positions on climate: a universalism that neglects climate (Goethe), and a particularist localism that overemphasizes it (Lenz). Goethe's way up the mountain remains hidden from the audience. He first "disappears" ("verschwindt"), then reappears on top of the Parnassus, where he effortlessly "jumps upwards" ("springt 'nauf") the rest of the way, and is

eventually discovered by Lenz standing "on a rock*" ("auf einem Felsen;* 249") and praising the view (248).[61] Goethe resembles the poet envisioned in Herder's description of Shakespeare on the mountain top. In his upward ascent, Goethe also represents the German Icarus that Lenz, in his "Abschiedsode," figures as an unachievable model (as in "Hoch zum Olymp möcht' ich mit federlosen Schwingen/ Ein deutscher Ikar dringen") (3:176). Goethe, the modern Shakespeare, appears to make the possible impossible and to defy even the basic laws of physics.

In contrast with this climate-defying characterization of Goethe, the figure of Lenz himself in the *Pandemonium Germanicum* seems to confirm the generative role of climate as "rough weather" defined in the "Abschiedsode" ("Allein das Wetter ist zu rau"). Lenz is continuously rained upon as he climbs. When he finally arrives on top, worn out and wet, Goethe greets him as a German: "Lenz, German, what are you doing here?" ("Lenz was Teutscher machst du denn hier?"), and continues to ask:

Goethe: "Where do you come from?"
Lenz: "From way back north. Even though I feel like I was born and raised with you. Who are you?
Goethe: I was born here. What do I know about where I am from. What does any of us know about our origins?
Lenz: You noble boy.

(**Goethe**: "Wo kommst du den her?"
Lenz: "aus dem hintersten Norden. Ist's mir doch als ob ich mit dir geboren und erzogen wäre. Wer bist du den?
Goethe: Ich bin hier geboren. Weiß ich wo ich her bin. Was wissen wir alle wo wir herstammen?
Lenz: Du edler Junge; 1: 249).

Lenz, defining himself by way of his origin "way back north" *("aus dem hintersten Norden"*), represents localism inflected by climate-determinism. In contrast to this stands

[61] The best part of which he finds the ability to look down at others attempting to climb up less successfully.

Goethe's universalist stance: speaking in the royal "we" to refer to humankind, Goethe suggests that origin is meaningless in the creation of art.

However, Goethe's stance appears to be self-contradicting. His insistence that origin is meaningless clashes with his inquisitive questions about Lenz' background, as well as his own declaration that he was "born here." Goethe's universalist position is also undermined by Lenz' seemingly more realistic ascent up the mountain. Working his way through rain ("Aber weh! Es fängt mir wieder an zu regnen"), rough vegetation, and muddy soil (i.e. through the three Hyppocratic elements of climate), and crawling at times on all fours, Lenz articulates the true labor involved in achieving a poetic voice, exclaiming: "Das ist böse Arbeit" (248). His arduous path raises the question of how Goethe, out of sight of the audience, really got up to where he is.

The *Pandemonium Germanicum* is often read as a laudation of Goethe, celebrating him as the future of a national German literature. But Lenz's dramatic fragment also utters a justified criticism of Goethe's already-then celebrated genius—a fact that might explain why the real, historical Goethe vehemently attempted to prevent the fragment from being published, even after Lenz's death (see I: 739). Read biographically, the character Goethe's magical appearance in the temple of fame points to the historical Goethe's privileged upbringing and his family's ties to nobility. Read as poetological commentary, the scene identifies Goethe's universalist epistemology as metaphysically suspicious (magically-appearing). Seen as statement on "national literature," the *Pandemonium Germanicum* offers further reasons why the context of climate in fact matters: climate can only be ignored by the privileged; localism is the more egalitarian stance, and the more truthful method of representation. In sum, the

Pandemonium Germanicum exposes the essentialist flaws of eighteenth-century climate theory, while nonetheless stressing the importance of an appreciation of climate to the enlightenment ideals of equality and objectivity.

c. *Der Landprediger*

Lenz' critique of the prevailing ideologies of climate in his time, as well as his embrace of alternative conceptions of the same, is also on view in his 1776/1777 novella *Der Landprediger* (*The Country Pastor*). Here, the possibility of a modern "northern" German identity is put on trial. Written after his falling out with Goethe and his departure from Weimar, the novella focuses on the career of the protagonist Johannes Mannheim (literally "man-home," an evocation of the topic of origin and spin on Herrmann). Mannheim begins the narrative as a simple small-town pastor but eventually rises to the status of respectable reformer and influential citizen. Mannheim is an ideal enlightenment figure. He is a modern Götz von Berlichingen in nearly all respects: he brings political, technological, economic, and intellectual-aesthetic reform to his district, while at the same time being firmly grounded in his region. His virtues—the key to his success—are the "northern" virtues extolled by conservative *Klimatheorie,* Tacitus' *Germania*, and the protestant ethos alike. Mannheim favors locally sourced beer over imported coffee and tobacco, lives a performatively monogamous, heterosexual married life[62] and advances economic, agricultural, and scientific awareness among his region's peasants. His strong and incorruptible sense of virtue makes Mannheim the ideal middle ground between nobility and peasantry: He represents a new German bourgeoisie.

[62] A feature which Tacitus' had highlighted as especially Germanic and contrasted with Roman "decadence."

Der Landprediger has often been read as a regressive text, replacing the *Sturm und Drang* call for revolution with Mannheim's mild reformism. Mannheim has been read as a monument and concession to Lenz' father, a protestant pastor whose authoritarianism Lenz had previously both fought with and suffered under (e.g. Sigrid Damm, in Lenz 2: 874–875). And yet, as with any literary text, it is important to not conflate the narrator's voice with the overall message of text. The key to *Der Landprediger* is the underlying discrepancy that the story highlights: between, on the one hand, the narrative of Mannheim's organic, climate-based, German becoming (or becoming German), and, on the other hand, the actual curating of this becoming by Mannheim.

In *Der Landprediger*, Mannheim's biography is said to have been articulated in his notebook, found by his son after Mannheim's death (who would inherit his fame and fortune), and published as a broadsheet hardback edition. Mannheim, who had sworn off writing poetry early on, succeeds at mastering two supposedly more factual (and supposedly more "northern") genres: the biography, and the climate treatise. Mannheim's climate theory is positioned as the new *a priori* science, the future of all thought, and a new modern mythology. Ostensibly designed as a "guide" and "protective spirit" for his son to inherit, it is described as follows:

> All this notwithstanding, some excellent treatise were found after the death of our Johannes Mannheim, which have all been published in a collection of his writings in octavo format in Amsterdam. Among them were *A Treatise on the Cattle Plague, on Horse Cures, on the Growth of Meadows and the Use of English Fodder Plants, on the Climate and Its Influence on Men, Animals, Plants, and in Particular on the Population,* in which insights into the human nature and, generally, into organic nature could be found that would have made a Montesquieu blush. He discovered the great secret of the similarity between humanity and its entire surrounding creation; yes, he discovered—which Montesquieu himself wouldn't have looked for—that even the differences of

> government were based in the nature of the soil and its influences on the character, manners, and opinions of its inhabitants. With this key he explained, in a manner that left no room for doubt, the strangest phenomena in history and even in current conditions. Rested on the premise that he counted trade and the transformation of the soil and its products among the causes and that he subtracted what wandering nations, for instance initially the Romans and later the Lombards, Goths, Alemanni, and even Franks, had brought from their soil and their manners, which later mixed with the newer fashion of thinking" (*Selected Works* 238-239, translation slightly adjusted).

> (Nichts desto weniger hat man nach dem Tode unsers Johannes Mannheim einige fürtreffliche Traktate gefunden, die in einer Sammlung seiner Schriften sämtlich zu Amsterdam in groß 8 vo herausgekommen sind. Darunter war eine *Abhandlung von der Viehseuche, von den Pferdekuren, von dem Wieswachs und dem Nutzen der englischen Futterkräuter, von dem Klima* und dessen Einfluß auf Menschen, Tiere und Pflanzen, besonders der *Bevölkerung*, worinnen Blicke in die Menschennatur und in die allgemeine organisierte Natur waren, die einem Montesquieu würden haben erröten machen. Er fand das große Geheimnis der Ähnlichkeit des Menschen mit der ganzen Schöpfung, die ihn umgibt, ja er fand, welches Montesquieu selbst nicht gesucht haben würde, selbst die Unterschiede der Regierungsform in der Natur des Bodens und dem Einfluß desselben auf Charaktere, Sitten und Meinungen seiner Bewohner. Durch diesen Schlüssel erklärte er die wunderbarsten Phänomene in der Geschichte und noch Erscheinungen, die heutzutage sich ergeben, auf eine Art, die keinen Zweifel übrigließ. Vorausgesetzt, daß er Handel und Veränderungen dieses Bodens und seiner Produkte mit zu den Ursachen rechnete, ferner, daß er abrechnete, was herumziehende Nationen wie z. B. die Römer selbst anfangs, wie hernach die Longobarden, die Goten, die Alemannen und Franken selber, von ihrem Boden und von ihren Sitten mitgebracht, das sich hernach mit der neueren Denkart vermischt; 2: 445-446)

This climate treatise is ambitious: it is meant to provide the basis for anthropology, zoology, botany, history, political science, economy, and inquiry into human nature alike. Each and every phenomenon, Mannheim presumes, can be explained according to the laws or the "key" of climate.

And yet, the summary provided of Mannheim's work is full of contradictions: it is said to be valid with "no room for doubt" but at the same time determined by countless immeasurable variables, such as the impacts of trade, agriculture, and travel ("rested on

the premise that…"). Its mathematical methodology—evident in terms such as "count" ("rechnen") and "substract" ("abrechnen")—does not match the immeasurability of its objects: culture, human nature, and history. Mannheim's manuscript ultimately lays bare the reductionism and faulty methodology of climate theory:

> From the raw climate of the Germans and their beer he deducted their steadfastness –at which point, however, he made the qualification that this steadfastness had been reduced much of late because of the frequent use of warm water, especially of coffee, and had degenerated into a womanly softness and lack of resolution, which could change the nation's entire character, were it not for the fact that, occasionally, soil and sky still overruled the new influence." (*Selected Writings* 239)
>
> (Von dem rauhen Klima der Deutschen und dem Bier [haben sie] ihre Festigkeit, wobei er jedoch die Einschaltung machte, daß seit dem häufigen Gebrauch des warmen Wassers, besonders des Kaffee, diese Tugend sehr abgenommen und in eine weibische Weichlichkeit und Unentschlossenheit ausgeartet wäre, die, wenn sie nicht noch bisweilen vom Boden und Himmel überstimmt würde, den ganzen Nationalcharakter verändern könnte; 2: 446)

On Mannheim's view, the three markers of climate in the Hyppocratic tradition (water, soil, and air) determine "national character" (*Nationalcharakter*) and offer the key to a moral life. But his claim that the use of "coffee" and even "hot water" risks "overruling" Germany's natural national character is both naive and self-contradicting: If climate is subject to history, and if water can overrule "natural character", then it is unclear what the basis of this climatic nature could possibly be. Mannheim's turn to climate ends up conjuring up an imagined past, rather than attending to existing conditions. Indeed, his attempted climate theory nicely matches Herder's characterization of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* (1748) as the "history of all peoples and times, the great, living work of God *also in its succession*, a ruin-pile of three tips and caps" (Herder 4: 88).[63]

[63] "Geschichte aller Völker und Zeiten, dies große lebendige Werk Gottes *auch in seiner Folge*, ein Ruinenhaufen von drei Spitzen und Kapseln"

Mannheim's view of climate, the novella seems to ultimately suggest, gives head to a dogmatism that is anything but natural.

Most importantly, *Der Landprediger* depicts the project of climate theory not only as inaccurate, but also as violent. Mannheim's central trait is a need to control. His supposed organic character is built on the violent suppression of what he considers to be false instincts within himself and others. His educational lessons are based on a "thorough humiliation" ("durchdringende Demütigung") of his son, whenever the child develops a sense of individuality (which Mannheim deems to be pride). When Mannheim develops the urge to write a novel ("Die Begierde ein Romanschreiber zu werden, drückte und folterte ihn Tag und Nacht"), he is only able to suppress it with great effort, calling the urge a "temptation by the devil" ("der Teufel hat mich versucht"; 444). When his wife Albertine begins to write poetry (which Mannheim takes to be overly naïve) and eventually receives an offer of publication, Mannheim springs to action. He first ignores and then destroys her poems. Then, after opening her mail (even though the narrator insists that Mannheim never opens his wife's mail), he ridicules her, and eventually threatens to kill her if she should keep writing.

But Mannheim seems to believe that the danger lurking behind these supposedly false (literary) sentiments is more severe than mere artifice. The ultimate danger of poetics, on his view, lies in the potential loss of control over nature, which he equates with death. Albertine's poetic creations assume a strong connection between poetics and the non-human environment, and it seems to be this connection that Mannheim fears most. Albertine writes her first poem when she is on a walk, in the fashion of a natural idyll. The passage reads:

> One beautiful summer evening, as the small spotted clouds hung around the receding sun wistfully and heartrending like angels, she couldn't resist her heart; she shruddered, took her little coat and cap, and went all alone to the small meadow behind the house, where the brook wound itself in voluptuous slowness in the reflection of the sky. She threw herself into a shrubbery next to the brook, and, almost like the original mother Eve, who bore, according to Gessner's description, her first child without any pain, her first poem was here bestowed on her, and she dedicated it—with a warm and beating heart, and with tears chasing each other on her cheeks—to her husband and her friend." (*Selected Works* 240)
> (An einem schönen Sommerabend, da die kleinen gefleckten Wolken, wehmütig und rührend wie Engel, um die scheidende Sonne hingen, konnte sie ihrem Herzen nicht widerstehen; sie zitterte, nahm ihr Mäntelchen und ihre Kappe und ging ganz allein in die kleine Wiese hinten am Hause hinaus, wo der Bach sich im Widerschein des Himmels wollüstig langsam dahin wand. Sie warf sich in ein Gesträuch, das neben ihm stand, und, fast wie der Allmutter Eva, nach Geßners reizender Beschreibung, ihr erster Sohn ohne Schmerzen geschenkt ward, ward ihr hier das erste Gedicht verliehen, das sie, mit warmem schlagendem Herzen und sich jagenden Tränen auf den Backen, ihrem Mann und ihrer Freundin machte; 2: 447)

The poem evokes the picturesque aesthetic tradition of sentimentalism, which is indicated by a carefully framed world of diminiutives ("kleine Wolken, Mäntelchen, kleine Wiese"). The mention of Geßner, an eighteenth-century master of idyllic poetry and landscape painting, deepens this impression. The narrator of *Der Landprediger* never passes judgment on the quality of Albertine's poetry, but does associate it both with curated sentimentality and with the idyllic, beautiful landscapes by which it is heavily framed. Mannheim, though, mocks this type of poetry for its repetitiveness and formulaic structure.

Mannheim's initial ridicule of Albertine does not stop her. She continues to write in secret after Mannheim has voiced his distaste, and even attracts a potential publisher. Mannheim's next intervention consists in demonstrating to Albertine the eventual ruinous consequences of a committed poetic existence. To accomplish this, Mannheim lays out for Albertine not an idyllic landscape, but a harsh, *Ossianic*, and "northern" one:

> Everything went as hoped for. The area was one of the wildest and most terrifying in the neighboring mountains, more even than the productive imagination of someone like—could have ever conceived of for a *Macbeth* painting. There was a ruined castle on a peak of a rock from which one couldn't look down without feeling vertigo. The spruce trees below, which without doubt appeared immeasurable at their feet, looked like small, compressed bushes from here. Below, a waterfall rushed down from remarkable heights; up here, its mighty rushing hardly equaled the hum of a beehive. Albertine looked down and felt death under foot. Without her keen power of imagination, which carried her along and which transmitted a certain strength to all her senses, she would never have borne this sight." (Selected Works 241-242)
>
> (Alles ging erwünscht. Die Gegend war eine der furchtbarsten und wildesten im benachbarten Gebirge, die die schöpferische Einbildungskraft eines——sich je zu einem Macbethsgemälde hätte erfinden können. Es war ein zerstörtes Schloß auf einer Felsenhöhe, von der man ohne Schwindel nicht hinabsehen konnte. Die untenstehenden Fichten, die an ihrem Fuß unabsehbar sein mußten, erschienen hier wie kleine gedrückte Gebüsche. Unten stürzte sich ein Wasserfall von einer merklichen Höhe, dessen Rauschen hier kaum dem Summen eines Bienenschwarms gleichte. Albertine sah hinab und fühlte den Tod unter ihren Füßen. Ohne die gespannte Einbildungskraft, die sie mitnahm und die allen ihren Sinnen eine gewisse Stärke gab, würde sie diesen Anblick nimmer haben ertragen können; 2: 449)

Alluding to Shakespeare, the narrator calls the mountainous terrain, waterfalls, and evergreens that Albertine has entered a "Macbeth-painting" ("Macbethsgemälde"). In contrast to idyllic nature, the "northern" landscape is a climatic setting that stirs emotions so strongly that the effect is not pleasure, but existential dread. Albertine feels the "death under her feet." This terrifying nature, building on Edmund Burke's distinction from 1756, is not beautiful, but sublime. Even so, Albertine is able to bear the threat, flexing her power of imagination like a muscle ("die gespannte Einbildungskraft").

Having reached this point, Mannheim lifts his wife up into his arms and pretends to be intent on throwing her down, exclaiming that death would be the true end-consequence of her poetics: "Very well, if you want to act the role of the poet, you have to play it to the end, just as the Kreek poetess did a long time ago. Throw yourself down

from this rock" (Selected Works 243, translation slightly modified).[64] In the end, it is revealed that Mannheim intended to teach Albertine a lesson. If you want to write, he argues, you must be willing to die. Under shock, Albertine returns to the safety of their bourgeois home. From there on, they only read, but never write. Their reading is restricted to a canonical set of plays selected by Mannheim, including "Hagedorn, Uz, and Gleim again. From time to time, they also read an ode by Klopstock or they played through Goethe's *Erwin*" (*Selected Works* 243). Besides, they perform parodies of what they perceive as "overly sentimental works" (243). In the face of the risk of unnatural sentimentality, Mannheim puts forth the ideal of an equally "unnatural" mediocrity, one reinforced by threats, censorship, and cynicism. Poetry, in this way, is set up as the antithesis of climate theory. According to Mannheim, at least, the poetic apprehension of nature opens humans up to death, whereas the writing of climate treatises, coupled with ridicule of the "naively natural," is a safe mode of control over nature. *Der Landprediger* thus figures the poetic relations to the non-human environment as an opening up of human vulnerabilities that do not fit easily with modern bourgeois life.

Der Landprediger may be read as Lenz's literary experiment exploring what living according to the laws of climate theory would entail. But the experiment fails. Mannheim's attempts to distinguish good nature from bad nature, imported products from indigenous ones, and real emotions from false ones leads only to arbitrary and unconvincing distinctions. Both Mannheim's biography and climate treatise are in the end themselves the kinds of fictional work that, on Mannheim's view, are out of sync with his natural character. The novella exposes Mannheim's "northern" genius,

[64] "Wohlan, wenn du die Rolle der Poetin spielen willst, so mußt du sie ganz spielen, wie sie ehemals die Griechin gespielt hat. Stürz dich herab von diesem Felsen" 2: 450).

supposedly organic in origin, to have been as carefully and violently curated as his biography. [65] The novella ends with Mannheim becoming his own myth. His climate treatise is published in a large, widely-distributed edition, and the inhabitants of his region celebrate him, virtually to the point of deification, in a carefully curated and bombastic festival, primarily organized by his son. *Der Landprediger* therefore does not portray the becoming of a modern "northern" genius so much as the making of a modern "northern" mythology for the then-rising German bourgeoisie. Its climate-based distinctions are prophesized to provide the "guiding spirit" of the time.

7. Conclusion

Scholars have preciously argued that the *Sturm und Drang* generation helped make climate a popular topic for German audiences, and contributed significantly to the development of new theories of climate. However, as this chapter has shown, while all *Sturm und Drang* thinkers take up climate, different *Sturm und Drang* figures engage with climate theory in substantially different ways. Members of the Strasbourg *Sturm und Drang* group (including Herder and Lenz) confronted the achievements of climate theory especially critically. The key achievement of these latter figures lies in conceiving of climate as a relative conditioning framework while also articulating the balance of "braving" but not overcoming climate as ideal. For them, attending to the climatic origins of cultural artifacts works against the enlightenment tendencies of abstraction and pseudo-universalist generalization. Foregrounding climate in this way inserts embodied

[65] In a narrative frame to the story alone, the novella screams fiction under the guise of biography It is introduced as written from Mannheim's notes into a biography post partum by his own son, and retold on the basis of this, which again form the basis for the narrator of *Der Landprediger*.

context, envisions the human as a natural being in communication with its non-human natural surroundings, and emphasizes the vital necessity of difference. That this standpoint departs from the late-enlightenment consensus becomes all the more clear by turning to what is perhaps the most prominent aesthetic concept mediating human relations to non-human nature in the eighteenth century: the sublime. Experiences of threatening nature were, throughout the century, debated in terms of the sublime (Shaftsbury, Burke, Kant). Mannheim's association, in *Der Landprediger*, of horror and death with mountains and waterfalls documents the legacy of this connection in *Sturm und Drang* works

Some have argued that the sublime is, ultimately, a deeply anthropogenic concept, which is in fact more about control over non-human nature than its appreciation. Albrecht Koschorke, for instance, arrives at this conclusion in his delimitation of four steps in the development of the sublime. This sequence can be summarized as the development, over the course of the eighteenth-century aesthetics, from a Baroque aesthetics of enclosure ("Begrenzung") to an aesthetics of dynamic limitation ("dynamische Grenzüberschreitung"). As an aesthetic concept, the sublime therefore stands in close connection with colonialist politics, as "the general attempt, to move the border of civilization deeper and deeper into the unknown" (*Horizont* 129).[66] The steps towards the sublime are as follows:

> 1. Towards the end of Baroque aesthetics, nature is recognized to exceed the human ability to represent it.
> 2. The view that nature can be apprehended successively becomes dominant (as narrative, but not as image).

[66] "Im 18. Jahrhundert aber nimmt sie (die Erhabenheitserfahrung) eine Schlüsselstellung ein als ästetisches Kompliment zu den allgemeinen Bestrebungen, die Zivilisationsgrenze immer tiefer in den Bereich des Unbeherrschten vorzuschieben."

> 3. An aesthetics following the "logic of the threshold stimulus" emerges: nature is now thought as that which resists human self-assertion. This stage marks a power balance between human and non-human nature.
> 4. The final and bourgeois stage of the aesthetics of the sublime comes as a visual exercise of power over nature. The natural sublime, as it is used by Kant, for instance, designates a human greatness (of apprehension), not of nature (128–129).

On this account, the anthropogenic tendencies of the sublime are revealed only in the final step. Buffon's or Schlözer's celebrations of human control over nature, as discussed above, also reflect the ideology of this fourth and final stage: the power of nature really only serves as a proving ground for the superior Promethean power of humanity.

The *Sturm und Drang* attempt to re-ground humanity in climate corresponds, rather, with Koschorke's third stage. It is an explicit attempt to halt the sublime at the tension between human and non-human nature. Goethe's Prometheus in his heated cot aims to strike a power balance in which nature remains an unknown force. The character Lenz in Lenz's *Pandemonium Germanicum*, who crawls up the rainy hills on all fours, exhibits this halting balance even more strongly: the climate remains absolutely determining, but in ways that are unknown. Mannheim, from *Der Landprediger*, cannot bear the tension of this stance. He prefers climate theory over the sublime threat revealed through any poetic relation to non-human nature. But his very existence, the novella suggests, is built on violence and betrayal. The theories of climate operative in *Der Landprediger* do not deliver the sort of engagement with climates that authors of *Sturm und Drang* deem characteristic and necessary for the human condition. We never hear what would have become of Albertine's nature-writing if Mannheim would not have initiated the pretense of a certain death. But *Der Landprediger* raises the question of how a modern poetics of climate might look, were it to claim to be neither a mere vehicle for

human progress, nor the mere accounting of a reductionist climate-determinism. In the following chapters, I further investigate this promise of a *Sturm und Drang* poetics of climate by taking up, in turn, the three basic elements of climate (or climate conditions) delimited by Hippocrates: soil (vegetation), water (flow), and air (weather).

CHAPTER III: VEGETATION

"It alone is unendingly rich," Goethe's Werther remarks about nature ("Natur"), "and it alone shapes the great artist" (Sie allein ist unendlich reich, und sie allein bildet den großen Künstler; 1.2: 205). The association of nature with artistic creativity and genius is a well-known feature of *Sturm und Drang* thought. Traditionally, the association has been read as a testament to what has been read as a *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics of immediacy, artistic exceptionalism, or pastoralism. Such a reading reflects Goethe's own assessment, given later in his life, according to which the naturalist genius of *Sturm und Drang* lacked depth and authenticity.[67]

In the last few decades, scholarship has attended to the origins of the modern concept of genius in botanical thought. Read in this light, *Sturm und Drang* notions of genius turn out to be more complex and substantial than Goethe acknowledged and, at the same time, to be more grounded in science rather than the dismissal of *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics as a mere ideological doctrine would allow. Highlighting the epigenetic principles manifest even within the very terminology of genius, Helmut Müller-Sievers speaks of the "Epigenius" in German thought around 1800 (63). The botanical background of genius is also prominent in recent histories of German philosophy (Mensch; Zammito, *German Biology*). However, the alignment of botany and genius in

[67] To quote a passage also discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, as Goethe puts it in his autobiography *Truth and Poetry* [*Dichtung und Wahrheit*]: "The word *genius* became a universal symbol; and, because one heard it uttered so often, one thought that what was meant by it was habitually at hand. But then, since every one felt himself justified in demanding genius of others, he finally believed that he also must possess it himself. The time was yet far distant when it could be affirmed that genius is that power of the human which, by its deeds and actions, gives laws and rules" (*Autobiography* 307).

these accounts tends to revive old, problematic arguments in the tradition of Korff (see introduction), according to which *Sturm und Drang* is really only the early stage of and catalyst for the more fully realized organicist thinking of Kant and/or Hegel. A botanical and epigenetic approach to *Sturm und Drang* risks positioning *Sturm und Drang* figures in this position of subordination even when, eschewing the outmoded invocation of quasi-religious sentiments, the interpretation is grounded in a deeper, more accurate understanding of the interrelationship between science and poetics in eighteenth-century Europe.

In this chapter, I approach several key *Sturm und Drang* texts and figures from a botanical perspective, informed by recent work on epigenesis and plant-life in the early modern content, and continuing with the thesis of the dissertation as a whole that *Sturm und Drang* thinkers and authors on the whole were far more embedded within and responded to discourses of the non-human natural environment than has traditionally been recognized. But before I am able to lay out exactly how I shall proceed, it is important for me to establish both what I do, and what I do not, agree with regarding this recent turn in the scholarship.

I agree generally with the highlighting of botany as an essential context for intellectual life in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and for evolving discourses on plants in this period especially. There is clear evidence that eighteenth-century thinkers were themselves aware of this relevance. Albrecht von Haller highlights the rising prominence of botany in his preface to the first German translation, from 1750, of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* (1749): "Botany at present advances its lead over all other sciences. Not only is it nearest to completion, and has little by little determined the nature

of almost all its classes and resemblances; it has [also] imparted its laws to the entire Kingdom of Nature" ("Preface" 303). However, to this notion that botany was considered the central science by the mid 18th century, I want to add the importance that poetics then played and can still play as an experimental ground for notions of the vegetal. Eighteenth-century organicist thought was not only *adopted by* the aesthetic theories or poetic practice of *Sturm und Drang* in the sense that *Sturm und Drang* figures incorporated it into their work as an abstract or formal paradigm. Rather, organicist ideas of life emerged from the beginning in connection with artistic creativity. Eighteenth-century poetics (as a key locus of artistic creativity) was itself increasingly relying and reflecting upon the vegetal materiality of its own mediality, with regards to its manifestation on and through wood and paper in particular. [68]

It is thus no accident that notions of epigenetic originality seem to precede notions of biological epigenesis, such as in Jean-Baptiste Dubos's claim, in his 1719 volume *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting*, that "genius is therefore a plant which shoots up, as it were, *of itself*" (32, trans. Thomas Nugent 1748, my emphasis).[69] And later, more famously, in Edward Young's notion of the original work of art. In Young's words, from the 1759 work *Conjectures on Original Composition*, the true or "original" work of art "may be said to be of *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it *grows*, it is not *made*: *Imitations* are often a sort of *manufacture* wrought up by those *mechanics*, *art* and *labor*, out of pre-existent materials not their own" (7). The

[68] For Foucault, the notion of life emerges only around 1800, with the modern episteme and the rise of biology (*The Order of Things* 175). Scholarship on epigenesis has challenged this timeline, showing that the eighteenth century had already developed dynamic notions of species in the vein of organicist thinking (Morton, *History of Botanical Science* 259f).
[69] The French original of this text was translated into English in 1748 and into German in 1760.

emphasis here on "not made" can be read as an anticipation of the botanical criticism of theories of preformation, such as that formulated the same year (1759) by Caspar Friedrich Wolff. On Wolff's account of the origins of new organisms, the generation (or "conception") of an organism is generally an original activity, whereby the organism emerges out of its own, unorganized matter (Müller-Sievers 38; also Roe).

The procedures of reproduction recognized in theories of epigenesis—generating, as a reorganization of more-or-less pre-existing materials—were crucial and urgent questions for eighteenth-century literary production. Within aesthetic theory, the tension between production and reproduction discussed within the so-called mimesis debate—the debate concerning whether literature was production (as neo-Platonic theories suggested), or re-production (as the Aristotelean tradition suggested).[70] *Sturm und Drang* thinkers were chronologically situated right in the middle of that debate, and were affected by it in practical experience. With increasing translations or adaptations of classical texts into the German language—a major enterprise of *Sturm und Drang* authors—the nature of genius was often more a subject for experimental knowledge than abstract theory. It was the rising importance of copyright during the late eighteenth century—rather than an ideal of authorship—that necessitated the drawing of firm lines (legally and conceptually) between original and copy. When Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentlemen*—a work formerly singled out as "a masterly original" by German literary critics like Mendelssohn (Gammon 576)—came under fire for plagiarism during the early 1770s, this sparked a heated and urgent debate about the meaning of

[70] For more on the history of the mimesis debate, see Schmidt's *Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens in der deutschen Literatur*.

originality.[71] Last but not least, questions of the relationship between originality and vegetal materiality—the questions of botany—took on a literal meaning in literary praxis. "The rhetorician's metonymy, 'leaf/leaf' ['Blatt/Blatt']," Friedrich Kittler observes in this regard, "was taken literally in the writing system of 1800" (85), following the increasing proliferation of wood-based paper as literary medium.

Grounded in these observations, I challenge the ideas that, for one, notions of epigenesis were adopted within the aesthetic theory and practice of *Sturm und Drang* in the sense of the uni-directional absorption of a pre-figured abstract paradigm. I also contest the idea that German thought of the late eighteenth century saw the development of one unified notion of the "organicist work of art."

Typically, the notion of "organicism around 1800" (or the like) describes a philosophy of art, heavily associated with Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (whose definition of artistic genius, we saw in the introduction, was parroted virtually verbatim by the late Goethe), according to which individual parts of a work are seen to be formally organized via the whole of their unified parts. The formal structure of a play, poem, or artistic work of any kind, on this view, is seen to emerge organically and in a necessary way through the process of creative vision, rather than through the application of any fully cognizable external poetic formula (as the more rationalist aesthetics of early-eighteenth-century thinkers such as Christian Wolff, Johann Christoph Gottsched, and Alexander Baumgarten had suggested).[72]

[71] Sterne was accused of plagiarism in the early 1770s, which was discovered shortly after his death in 1768. Indeed, *Tristram Shandy* word-by-word includes many passages from Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Francis Bacon's *Of Death*, Rabelais, and others.
[72] For a treatment of eighteenth-century German "aesthetic rationalism," see Beiser, *Diotima's Children*.

But when attention is paid to the literary *practices* of *Sturm und Drang*, it becomes clear that they do not uphold the strict dualism opened by Young (and finalized in German "organicism") between the organicist original work of art, and the mechanical imitation. The poetic productions of the *Sturm und Drang* generation differ from that of Young or his German pendant (Klopstock) in that they explicitly turn to forms of art that were purposefully unoriginal. This includes Herder's attempt to merely "collect" folk-poetry, Gerstenberg's retelling of Dante's account of *Ugolino*, Lenz's translations of plays by Shakespeare and Plautus, as well as the new value put on multiple secondary forms of literary critique and review. *Sturm und Drang* thought, then, challenges the strict line between a vegetal original and a mechanical imitation.

In what follows, I will present an alternative vision of "organicist art" within *Sturm und Drang* thought, developed in large part in conversation with Herder's notion of vegetal poetics. Through attention to Herder, to the technological-intellectual backgrounds of botany and forestry, and to then-current processes of literary manufacturing, I offer a pluralistic picture of vegetal poetological tropes of the 1770s. Over roughly the first half of what follows, I shall explore how then-emerging botanical understandings of tree and forest served as models for Herder biosemantic vision of arboreous criticism or *Kritik*—developed in his 1769 methodological treatise and critical review *Critical Forests* (*Kritische Wälder*). In the latter half, I show how the wildflower (*Wildblume*) and heather rose (*Heidenrose*), along similar but distinct lines, each model Herder's notion—also biosemantic—of the "people's song," or the *Volkslied*. Herder's unique approaches to *Kritik* and the *Volkslied* reimagine what it means for something to be "vegetal." On both registers—and at the levels of both concept and literary practice—

Herder foregrounds the role of intertextuality, coincidence, and (inter)textual materiality over the work's unity, thereby minimizing the role of authorial contribution and attending to material-epigenetic forms of artistic, literary, and cultural production.

1. *Critical Forests*: Herder's Vegetal Authorship in the Age of *Kritik*

Herder's 1769 text *Critical Forests* (*Kritische Wälder*) capture the project of literary critique in an apparent oxymoron. The title of the essay compilation (containing altogether four diminutive forests or *Wäldchen*) features vegetative life (*forests*) alongside discourse (*Kritik*) which, in the eighteenth century as much as today, is generally regarded as the opposite of what is "natural." Against readings that understand Herder's vegetal poetological metaphors as essentialist "fictions" of immediate cultural production (Adam 256), I argue that Herder's *Critical Forests* enacts a biosemantic theory of literary criticism that is modeled after the organizational form of the forest, in conversation with eighteenth-century forestry or forest-botany (*Forstbotanik*). Herder's notion of the critical forest challenges the paradigm of the critic as "weeder" prevalent in eighteenth-century hermeneutics, whose task it is to cultivate a critical literary discourse through the removal of improper readings. *Critical Forests*, by contrast, envisions critique as an interdependent and material cycle of productive overgrowth, accumulation, residue, and decay—with *Zufall* (roughly translatable as "chance," "coincidence," or "accident") as the condition of its vitality.

Taking Herder's model of *Kritik* as a central case in point, my reading differentiates the vegetal aesthetics of *Sturm und Drang* from later organicist models (such as Kant's), which *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics are usually seen to anticipate. I show

how Herder draws from botany to reimagine existing notions of criticism or critique that, already well-before Herder, built on vegetal metaphors. Herder's vision of the critical forest is more radically vegetal, I argue, than either the ideal forest postulated by the *Forstbotanik* of his time or the organicist work of art typically associated with German classicism. Moreover, I suggest that Herder is radical—but not irrational—in situating the activity of *Kritik*—then and now seen as a hallmark of Enlightenment thought—within processes of residue and waste. I make my argument, first, by situating Herder's *Critical Forests* in the context of visions of the proper forest in eighteenth-century *Forstbotanik* and hermeneutics and, second, by highlighting the concrete, historical composition of Herder's text as a collection and recycling of discarded materials from former projects.

a. Tree and Forest in Eighteenth-Century *Forstbotanik* and Hermeneutics: Old-Growth and *Kulturwald*

The terminology of the textual forest has a long literary tradition. As a poetological trope, it originates in the writings of the first-century Roman poet Publius Papinius Statius, whose book of occasional poetry bears the title *Sylvae*, meaning "forest" in Latin. Traces of the *lyrical* or *poetic forest* would later appear in neo-Latin poetry of late antiquity (Ausonius, Claudianus, Sidonius Appolinaris), in Italian poetry of the Middle Ages (Angelo Poliziano), and in the seventeenth-century German poetry of Martin Opitz, Ulrich von Holstein, Paul Fleming, and Georg Neumark (Adam 18–20). Wolfgang Adam, in his seminal study of the topic, characterizes *Sylvae* as an umbrella term for textual corpora that contain materials without any clearly determined topic and for materials that lack an affiliation to genre. Their character, in other words, is fundamentally collective. The common denominator of *Sylvae* lies, for one, in their

composition from unclassifiable oddments and, secondly, in their grouping together via an editorial and material assembling process (Adam 15).

When considering Herder's use of the term as a title for one of his own works, it is important to note that *Sylvae* was a largely forgotten genre by the mid-eighteenth century, known only to those closely familiar with antique or baroque poetry. By introducing his own form of textual forest, Herder is therefore, on the one hand, invoking a long-decayed literary past. On the other hand, he is presenting his readers with a novel variation on the traditional form: the *lyrical* or *poetic* forest becomes a *critical* forest. The historical genre of *Sylvae* is recycled into the "genuine age of critique" ("eigentliche Zeitalter der Kritik; Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* 5: 9). The ascription of vegetal imagery to cultural processes was common around 1800. In Germany, it was made popular by Edward Young's notion of the original work of art, which, in Young's words (once more), "may be said to be of *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it *grows*, it is not *made*" (*Conjectures* 7). Young's concept of vegetal genius figures the role of author or artist as that of an ingenious "medium" who merely channels natural processes. From the standpoint of recent scholarship, such a naturalization of art would constitute an essentialist fiction, in denial of the historical and material conditions at work in cultural production.[73]

According to this logic, Herder's *Critical Forests* would likely amplify essentialist tendencies in Young's vegetalization of genius, by extending vegetal genesis into the reflective activity of *Kritik*. Echoing Young, and reflecting Herder's decision to publish the text anonymously, Herder declares that the *Wälder* are insulated from the

[73] See, for instance, Schneider, "Nature" 92–95.

synthesizing power of the author. "The forest itself," he writes, "has no name" ("der Wald selbst aber hat keinen Namen"; 2: 245). Herder justifies this claim with an eye to what he understands to be the marker of forest-forms, which he then sees, in turn, captured in the word for forest across different languages. "In mehr als einer Sprache," he adds in the conclusion to his first "Wäldchen," "hat das Wort *Wälder* den Begriff von gesammelten Materialien ohne Plan und Ordnung" (2: 245). With this he evokes the twofold meaning of the latin *Sylvae* and the Greek ὑλη, as both forest/woodland and material/matter. In other words, Herder attributes to forests—and subsequently to his vision of criticism—the unintentional or auto-poetic organization of material. Even if this might be an accurate observation for vegetal forests, though, given the intentional authorial and editorial processes underlying the composition of a text like *Critical Forests*, stressing their autopoiesis seems inaccurate, even absurd. Wolfgang Adam, in a reading that is representative of the text's scholarly reception to date, sees a "fiction of an unintentional presentation of disorganized materials" (256)[74] at work in Herder's description of the composition of *Critical Forests*.

A look at eighteenth-century understandings of the collective unity of forests, however, sheds light onto Herder's notion of autopoietic criticism. The epistemic importance that botany played around 1760 applies even more so to *Forstbotanik* and its agricultural ends. Indeed, botanist Candidus Huber claimed in 1791 that "today botany, and forest-botany especially, has become, mainly because of its economic applicability, almost the universally most popular subject of study" (221).[75] Typically, when

[74] "Fiktion der planlosen Präsentation von ungeordneten Materialien."
[75] "heut zu Tage die Botanik, besonders Forstbotanik, theils wegen der angenehmen Naturkunde, größtentheils aber wegen der ökonomischen Nutzanwendung faßt zum allgemeinen Lieblingstudium geworden ißt."

approached through the lens of historical epistemology, arboreal or *Sylvaean* imagery is not differentiated from that of other vegetal or organicist metaphors. It is important to note, though, that the specificity of the forest as a vegetal form matters in Herder's case in at least three distinct ways. First of all, trees, unlike flowers, were popular study-objects for naturalists operating according to newly-emerging morphological criteria of botanical classification. Secondly, forests offered insights into how nature was internally organized across individual plants and species, as an eco-system or—to use eighteenth-century terminology—as "the forest-whole" (*das Waldganze*). Lastly, with the long reception and influence of Tacitus' *Germania*, with its description of ancient German lands as covered in forests, the forest became, in modern German history, an important imagined ground of cultural identification.

The increasing interest in trees as scientific objects around this time evinces a paradigm shift in methodologies of classification. In his theory of the metamorphosis of plants, the French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort had argued that the blossom is the final stage and climax of vegetative development, concluding that it contains the plant's essence. This position was later endorsed by Linnaeus, and found a parallel in eighteenth-century rhetoric, where the language of fruits and blossoms is typically used to describe an artwork's true and final aesthetic quality and beauty (Patey 9). But other schools of classification, following the English botanist John Ray, developed taxonomies that afforded importance to both the vegetative (stocks, leaves, trunks) as well as the generative (flowers, blossoms, stamens) parts of the plant (Töpfer 445–446). With this ascendance of morphological criteria in botanical taxonomies, trees—whose flowering parts do not have the "striking" character with reference to which Tournefort had justified

his sole focus on a plant's generative blossoms (Töpfer 577)[76]—took on a significance they had not previously had. Continuing to rise in poetological importance toward the year 1800 and reflecting this shift in botanical methodology, the images of the tree and the forest would replace the dominant idea of works of art as beautiful products with the idea that art is a continuous morphological process.

This turn can be observed in a 1766 exchange of letters between Herder and his mentor Johann Georg Hamann. Hamann responds to a manuscript from Herder's "Fragments On Recent German Literature" ("Fragmente über neuere deutsche Literatur"; published in 1767), writing: "mit der Ordnung, dem Reichthum, der Schönheit des Entwurfes sowohl als der Ausführung bin ich im Ganzen zufrieden, und freue mich über den Schatz der Einsichten und Einfälle, der Keime, Blüthen und Früchte" (Hamann 3: 353). Here, Hamann draws upon the established eighteenth-century rhetorical image of fruit and blossom as signifiers of the aesthetic quality of the final product. Yet Hamann is also critical of Herder's style and, in a separate letter from the same year, writes that: "der Stil [ist] an einigen Stellen zu pétillant, und die periodische Form durch Fragen, Ausuferungen, Interjectionen gar zu zerrissen" (3: 360). In his response, Herder attempts to beat Hamann at his own vegetal game, recasting the blossom as merely one element of a tree among others. For Herder, it is precisely what Hamann praises about Herder's work—its flowers and fruits—that justifies his making use of an unconventional style. Herder acknowledges that "Die Anmerkungen, die Sie über meine Schreibart säen, sollen auf ein gutes Laub fallen," but goes on to defend his style nonetheless:

> My studies are like branches that sprouted all of a sudden after a storm: my poems belong to the period of high style, which all of a sudden soared from the chaos,

[76] Tournefort justified his focus on the generative part of the plants for his system of classification with the claim they would be more "striking" and thus more appropriate.

> and which didn't know grace yet; But do you also know that I am not yet in the age of *maturity* but of *blossom*; each one contains a whole fruit, but many must fall to the ground. Do you rather want to trim a young tree, or graft onto it? Encourage me to draft plenty, but not to elaborate as author in the face of eternity.
>
> (Meine Studien sind wie Zweige, die durch Ungewitter *mit einmal* ausgetrieben worden: meine Gedichte gehören zur Zeit des hohen Stils, der sich plötzlich aus dem Chaos emporschwang, und die Gratie noch nicht kannte; aber wißen Sie auch, daß ich noch nicht im Alter der *Reife*, sondern der *Blüthe* bin: eine jede hält eine ganze Frucht in sich, aber viele fallen freilich auf die Erde. Wollen Sie an einem jungen Baum lieber abschneiden, oder einpropfen. Spornen Sie mich an, vieles zu entwerfen; nicht aber, als Autor vor die Ewigkeit ausführen zu wollen; *Briefe 1*: 46).

Herder's vegetal imagery is plentiful: critique is "seeded" onto "fertile leaves". Herder himself is "not ripe", but rather a "young tree". His written works, by contrast, are "like branches that have suddenly sprouted after a storm". Herder's imagery takes Hamann's fruit references in a direction the latter did not intend for them. For Hamann, "blossom" and "fruit" both stand for an aesthetic bounty at the end of a causal chain. Hamann's nature is, to employ a Spinozist contrast, a *natura naturata*, or a nature that has in essence already been created in advance. For Herder, though, the blossom, appearing earlier in the reproductive process, can be likened to an unripe apple. Flower and fruit mark different stages along the same path of organic development—neither is an end unto itself. Nature, for Herder, is essentially in-process or actively self-generative: it is *natura naturans*.

Herder's notion of an arborous writing technique parallels, in striking ways, the increasing attention to morphological criteria in eighteenth-century botany. Paralleling theories of epigenesis, it denotes a development that entails not a mere unfolding according to rules external to itself—which would be mechanistic—but the successive unfolding of its own form—which is organic. But Herder's vision of critique is not

merely a precursor to later notions of organicist formation (*Bildung*). In contrast to the developmental organicist aesthetics of German classicism, his aesthetics of productive dropping and decay envisions vegetal and literary development as interdependent cycle rather than a progression. According to Herder, blossoms, like manuscript drafts, will fall unfertilized to the ground, but will in turn become the fertile soil ("gutes Laub") required by all new growth, including Hamann's own criticism. According to this logic, many blossoms must fall unfertilized for the production of any single fruit, just as many drafts must be cast aside for a successful manuscript to emerge. Unfertilized and overabundant, decaying blossoms are not ugly rejects, but an integral part of the tree's vitality, just as unsuccessful drafts are an integral element of the work (*Studie*) as a whole, which in this sense always exceeds the final, published text. According to Herder's logic of understanding vegetal tropes within a larger, more literally-botanical framework, seeded fruit (the manuscript) would, moreover, eventually itself constitute the material for another tree.

Essential to this concept is that Herder's approach ascribes a material and not merely a conceptual core to the creative process. This becomes apparent with an eye to the metonymic relations of *Blatt* to *Blatt* (leaf to page) and *Buch* to *Buche* (book to beech) in the German language, which Herder plays on in the analogies he draws between drafts and petals. On this reading, the common basis for the analogies Herder draws between fertile (but potentially productive) written drafts and unfertilized (but potentially fertile) blossoms is the formation, literal in each case, of abundant piles of seemingly useless material: of wood-based pages of paper, being discarded and accumulating on the floor during the process of writing. It is also in this literal sense that

Herder's claim that his *Critical Forests* accounts for the "material" aspects of forests should be understood.

Herder's focus upon the *material* and disorganized aspect of the forest ultimately diverges from the emerging botanical consensus of his time. The increasing shortage of firewood in mid-eighteenth-century Western Europe went along with an emergent realization that these scarcities were caused by excessive clear-cutting and the destruction of "Wiederwachs," or naturally grown young trees. The forest progressively attracted interest as more than the sum of its individual trees: it came to be seen as a complex organizational entity, constituted by a multitude of forest-dwelling organisms and species linked by complex environmental factors. Hans Carl von Carlowitz's *Sylvicultura Oeconomica* (1713)—which articulated one of the first strong arguments against clearcutting and in favor of "sustainable" (*nachhaltende*) forestry—was a pivotal text in this regard (106). Carlowitz offered a proto-ecological model of the forest as system, attending to the co-habitation of individual trees and plants in relation to climate, soil, and animal life. With Carlowitz, the prevailing view of forests as deposits of material resources began to be replaced by the notion that humans ought to engage in harmonious development and maintenance of the forest-whole, initiating the tradition of the German "cultivated forest" (*Kulturwald*).

Against this background, Herder's approach to the forest as a collection of material seems, at first glance, provocative and questionable—perhaps even ecologically regressive. Even so, we can better understand Herder's materialist account of the forest by highlighting the paradox that *Forstbotanik* had, by the mid-eighteenth century, created for itself with its vision of a forest-whole. With the emergence in Carlowitz of the idea of

a harmonious forest-whole as more than the sum of its parts, the forest, though appreciated as a living system, was no longer considered self-sustaining. The deliberate study and protection of forests by human beings now became a requirement.

This change is apparent in one of the most internationally influential approaches to forests of the eighteenth century, that developed by Georges-Louis Buffon and the botanic school of the *Jardin du Roi* that he directed. This school observed the reproduction, life cycles, and co-habitation of trees in a systematic and empirical way. Buffon's detailed account of different tree species in the *Histoire Naturelle,* along with multiple independent treatises on the practice and benefits of forestry produced under his direction, were a product of the tree breeding experiments that Buffon conducted on the royal tree farm. Like many of his contemporaries, Herder—introduced to Buffon by Kant in the early 1760s—was profoundly impressed by Buffon's unorthodox empirical methodology, which starkly contrasted with the methods of more traditional French schools.[77] At the same time, Buffon's view of the forest includes a twofold evaluative vision that is both in tension with itself and distinct from the perspective Herder would develop in *Critical Forests*. On the one hand, Buffon's work inaugurates one of the earliest conservationist efforts to confront the large-scale deforestation of the European continent. On the other hand, Buffon actually advocated for the deforestation of large areas of the "new world," and he proposed replacing old-growth forests with heavily managed second-growth plantations.

[77] Buffon would be an important influence on Herder's 1784 *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* [*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*] in particular, even though Herder was familiar with his work from the earliest stages of his writing (Sauter 91). This sustained influence is, for instance, clearly articulated in Herder's "Thomas Abbt's Writings" [*Thomas Abbts Schriften*] (1768). See also Zammito *Kant, Herder*, in which it is argued that Buffon was crucial for the development of Herder's anthropological approach.

Buffon's dismissive view of old-growth forests is nowhere articulated more clearly than in the introduction to the *Histoire Naturelle*:[78]

> He embellishes Nature itself; cultivates, extends, and refines it; suppresses its thistles and brambles, and multiplies its grapes and roses. Look upon the solitary beaches and sad lands where man has never dwelt: covered—or rather bristling—with thick black woods on all their rising ground, stunted barkless trees, bent, twisted, falling from age; near by, others even more numerous, rotting upon heaps already rotten,—stifling, burying the germs ready to burst forth. Nature, young everywhere else, is here decrepit. The land surmounted by the ruins of these productions offers, instead of flourishing verdure, only an incumbered space pierced by aged trees, loaded with parasitic plants, lichens, agarics—impure fruits of corruption. In the low parts is water, dead and stagnant because undirected; or swampy soil neither solid nor liquid, hence unapproachable and useless to the habitants both of land and of water. Here are swamps covered with rank aquatic plants nourishing only venomous insects and haunted by unclean animals. Between these low infectious marshes and these higher ancient forests extend plains having nothing in common with our meadows, upon which weeds smother useful plants. There is none of that fine turf which seems like down upon the earth, or of that enameled lawn which announces a brilliant fertility; but instead an interlacement of hard and thorny herbs which seem to cling to each other rather than to the soil, and which, successively withering and impeding each other, form a coarse mat several feet thick. There are no roads, no communications, no vestiges of intelligence in these wild places. ("Nature" 1696)

For Buffon, untouched nature is useless and ugly, and requires human intervention to render it either beautiful, as with roses, or useful, as with vinyards. Only human intervention can elevate the status of nature above that of mere material. Buffon believed the superiority of cultivated second nature was demonstrated by what he regarded to be the pitiful state of the old-growth forest. With its topography of pits and mounds and its decaying ground layer, the old-growth forest is described as malfunctioning ("already rotten", "decrepit"). To Buffon, it is emblematic of a variety of nature that is essentially self-destructive. Buffon is often considered a vitalist counterpoint to mid-eighteenth-

[78] The passage was translated into German by Georg Forster for his Kassel lectures in the early 1770s, though it had already been circulating widely in French by that point (cf. Foster 29-30).

century mechanism, for whom nature itself is vital and contingent, rather than strictly mechanical and determined by external laws (Reill). Yet, as the passage above shows, it is precisely the contingency of nature that justifies human control over it. "Wild nature," he states shortly later, "is hideous and dying; it is I, I alone, who can make it agree-able and living ("Nature" 1696)."[79] By the mid- to late-eighteenth century, the emerging consensus was that the forest's wild growth requires continuous human maintenance in order for its self-organization to function and flourish. And this maintenance was seen to consist primarily in the removal of unnecessary, accidental material.

Buffon's vision of the cultivated forest has a parallel in the English garden, which is typically associated with the aesthetic, political, and epistemological program of German classicism and idealism (with its notion of the organicist work of art), and is therefore generally regarded to be in contrast to the Baroque garden. The central rule for cultivated nature, as it appears in both the English garden and the Buffonian cultivated forest, is the internal coherence and functionality of its parts, and an inner necessity defined as a lack of the accidental (or *Zufall*). "Gärten in der wahren Bedeutung," Christian Hirschfeld writes in *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, his seminal 1775 work on the English garden, "erheben sich über den blinden Einfall . . . und folgen nur dem Zuruf der Vernunft" (156). Carlowitz, in a similar vein, dedicates a large chapter of *Sylvicultura Oeconomica* (the chapter titled, "Von den schädlichen Zufällen") to techniques for avoiding what he considers to be the damaging, "accidental" elements of the forest, which do not, in this view, properly belong to it. Whereas there is room for debate in some cases, such as that of mosses (Carlowitz 69), many factors of the forest-system are

[79] "La nature brute est hideuse et mourante; c'est moi, moi seul qui peux la rendre agréable et vivante" (*Historie Naturelle, Volume 12*, 363).

distinctly "accidental," such as mistletoe or harsh weather, and must be removed or safeguarded against in order to sustain the forest's harmony.[80] This attitude will be echoed in the widely read *Zedler-Universal-Lexicon* a few years later, which advises readers to differentiate between essential and inessential elements of the forest.[81] Nature, read through eighteenth-century German models of the English garden or the cultivated forest, is idealized, characterized both by a supposed lack of external rules and by an inner harmony with reason. A lack of *Zufall* is the condition for a well-functioning relationship between the whole of nature and its parts.

Essentially, the merit of foresters is their capacity to differentiate between those elements that are essential and beneficial to the forest-whole and those that are inessential, damaging, or useless. This capacity of differentiation brings together the relation between *anthropos* and nature, expressed in eighteenth-century visions of *Forstbotanik*, and the relation between critic and artwork, expressed in eighteenth-century hermeneutics. Critics, Gottsched declared in his *Handlexicon* a few years prior to the publication of Herder's *Critical Forests*,

> Are those scholars that commit themselves to the most exact knowledge of the free arts, who have internalized their most secret laws, and who are therefore capable to differentiate and judge the good from the bad, the correct from the wrong, beyond what it initially seems to be. Their work thus is to explain the old writers correctly, to improve and restore the damaged passages.
>
> (sind diejenigen Gelehrten, die sich auf die genauere Kentniß der freyen Kuenste einlassen, ihre geheimsten Regeln inne haben, und daher im Stande sind, das Gute vom Boesen, das Richtige vom Falschen, so scheinbar es auch sein moechte, zu

[80] Carlowitz counts following elements amongst "schädliche Zufälle": strong wind, snow, drought, cold temperatures, moisture, sheet lightening, fog, grasshoppers, butterflies, caterpillars, deer, forest-fires, winter green and mismanaged logging (*Sylvicultura Oeconomica,* 53–77). Carlowitz deems mosses harmful in some cases, but also acknowledges their protective function for tree bark (*Sylvicultura Oeconomica*, 69).
[81] From the *Zedler-Universal-Lexicon*: "Daß die Bäume sowohl als die menschlichen Leiber vielen Zufällen und Krankheiten unterworfen sind, solches ist bekannt genug . . . es hat uns aber die Natur Mittel genug gegeben, denselben entweder vorzubeugen, oder abzuhelfen, dahero nun wenn solches von uns nicht geschieht, wir selbst die Verantwortung und dessen Schuld haben" (Zedler 735).

> unterscheiden, und zu beurtheilen. Ihr Werk ist es also, die alten Schriftsteller recht zu erklaeren, die verderbten Stellen zu verbessern, und wieder herzustellen; 461–462).

The quality of critics lies, on Gottsched's account, in their ability to differentiate between good and bad, correct and incorrect, damaging and beneficial. As the forester protects trees from parasitic, inessential plants, the effective critic preserves, protects, and recovers works of art from poor criticism. Even before the composition of *Critical Forests*, eighteenth-century *Forstbotanik* modeled hermeneutics along similar lines. *Kritik*, in this view, is analogous to landscape conservation.

Herder's visions of the *critical forest*, of criticism as forest, and of the forest itself all depart from the idea of an organicist whole. It is noteworthy that Herder's contemporary critics objected not to his conception of criticism *as* forest, but rather to his favored form of forest management. Responding to the scathing review Herder had written of his work in *Critical Forests*, Christian Adolf Klotz retaliated by using his own vehicle of criticism – the *Deutsche Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften.* He condemned the *Critical Forests* as too speculative, too anecdotal, too interdisciplinary, and too unsubstantiated to count as science (*Wissenschaft*). In Klotz's view, Herder's many "errors" in *Critical Forests* disqualified him as a critic: his overtly non-literal translations from the Greek and Latin, his many spelling mistakes, and his inaccuracy in recounting historical events ("Kritische Wälder").[82] Klotz formulates his disapproval by also drawing upon the imagery of the forest. At the beginning of his review, Klotz references the dedication (*Zuschrift*) found within Christian Gryphius' *Poetische Wälder*

[82] Klotz often signed his contributions with the abbreviation "VR," which is why the review is sometimes falsely attributed to an anonymous author.

(1698), using this earlier text to lampoon Herder's 1769 work. "Gryphius," Klotz writes, "setzte folgende Zuschrift für sein Buch":

> Here grows a forest within your boarders, / --- that carries bad trunks/ The caterpillars that have attached to almost every tree/ Take its leaves, and because it lacks of the shine/ of the high sky, it is only a withered grove,/ In which malformation rules, and which only carries pines/ Into which bad weather strikes almost every day,/ And thus it can't please you right.
>
> (Hier stellet sich ein Wald in deinen Gränzen ein, / ---- der schlechte Stämme traget / Die Raupen, die sich fast an jedem Baum geleget, / Benehmen ihm das Laub, und weil es an dem Schein / Des hohen Himmels fehlt, so ists ein dürrer Hain,/ In dem der Miswachs herrscht, und der nur Kiefern traget / In die fast jeden Tag ein schweres Wetter schläget, / Und also kann er Dir nicht recht gefällig sein; 336).

Klotz then adds:

> Can there be anything more fitting to Herder's forest than this description? Truly, I have been straying through these forests since a few days; I believe I did hear the howling of night-owls: other than that I saw nothing but withered pines, caterpillars, spiders, and parched branches.
>
> (Kann etwas auf die herderischen Wälder wohl passender sein, als diese Beschreibung? Wahrhaftig ich bin schon seit einigen Tagen in diesen Wäldern herumgeirrt; das Geheule von Nachteulen und Uhus glaube ich gehört zu haben: allein sonst habe ich auch nichts gesehen als dürre Kiefern, Raupen, Spinnenweben, und verdorrte Äste; 336).[83]

Herder's *Critical Forests*, in Klotz's account, exemplify the malfunctioning forest depicted by Buffon: they are ruled by "malformation" (Miswachs), parasitic infestation ("Raupen, Spinnweben"), dead wood ("dürre Kiefern"), and a general inaccessibility for humans (336).

Gryphius' dedication addresses his sovereign, Balthasar Friedrich von Logau. The malfunctioning, dying forest serves as the backdrop of his dedication, which expresses hope that the forest will come back to life through von Logau's intervention: "Doch wenn

[83] Klotz's omission reads "Hochwohlgeborener Herr" in Gryphius' text, referring to Balthasar Friedrich von Logau und Altendorf (Gryphius, title page).

sich nur ein Strahl von Deiner Güte zeigt / So wird der öde Wald / der merklich abgenommen / In gar geschwinder Frist zu neuen Kräften kommen" (Gryphius, title page). By referencing Gryphyus, Klotz suggests that Herder's forest lacks the authorial sovereignty needed to make both nature and text operational. Rather, Herder's forest is what Buffon had called dysfunctional "wild nature." In Klotz's view, Herder's criticism, like Buffon's "dying" old growth forest, has no means of keeping inessential elements in check.

b. The Material Composition of *Critical Forests*

Over the course of his exchange with Klotz, Herder remarkably never disagrees with Klotz's claim that *Critical Forests* is full of errors, nor that it is full of malformations *per se*. His dispute with Klotz is grounded in a programmatic disagreement about the proper form of the forest. Klotz had asserted, "Ich merke, dass ich mich in diesen Wälder fast verirrt habe. Ich muss sehn, dass ich an meinen alten Ort zurückkommen kann, so schwer es auch wird, durch Dornen, Hecken und Disteln den Weg zu finden" ("Kritische Wälder" 354). But Herder in fact preempts this criticism in the text itself, using similarly analogous terms:

> But I have almost completely forgotten how to find my way back out of my critical grove. How I have strayed about! How manifold were the vistas that presented themselves to me! How many right and wrong thoughts must I have entertained as I dreamily went on my way! So be it! Lessing's Laocoön has furnished me with material to ponder. (*Aesthetics* 174)
>
> (Doch ich vergesse aus meinem Kritischen Wäldern beinahe gänzlich den Rückweg. Wie habe ich in demselben umhergeirret! Wie verschiedenen Aussichten boten sich mir dar! Wie manchen richtigen und irrigen Gedanken mag ich auf meinem träumerischen Pfade gedacht haben! Es sei! Lessings Laokoon hat mir Materie zum Nachdenken verschaffet; 2: 242–243).

Herder, drawing on the etymology of "irren"—which entails both "making a mistake" and "taking the wrong path"—approaches error in a positive way. Error becomes the condition for novelty and innovation, for change of perspective, and for true aesthetic experience. "The inventor," Herder states in a fragment from the same period ("Attempt at a History of Lyrical Poetic Art" ("Versuch einer Geschichte der lyrischen Dichtkunst"; 1766), goes "for a walk, without intentions or with other purposes" (1:25). Once again, Herder emphasizes the role of contingency or *Zufälligkeit* in living systems. Indeed, by rejecting the aesthetics of the cultivated forest, Herder celebrates *Zufälligkeit* as the key characteristic of his mode of *Kritik*:

> Then what are my Critical Forests? They were written as chance dictated and more in keeping with my reading than through any systematic development of general principles. They show, however, that we can go astray unsystematically, too, that we can just as easily take a false step not only when we deduce anything we want in the most beautiful order from a few postulated definitions, but also when we do so from several tornout passages in the most beautiful disorder. (*Aesthetics* 175)
>
> (Was sind denn meine kritischen Wälder? Sie sind zufälliger Weise entstanden, und mehr durch die Folge meiner Lectüre, als durch die methodische Entwicklung allgemeiner Grundsätze angewachsen. Sie zeigen indessen, daß sich auch unsystematisch irren lasse, daß nicht bloß, wenn man aus ein paar angenommenen Worterklärungen, in der schönsten Ordnung, sondern auch, wenn man aus einigen ausgerißnen Stellen in der schönsten Unordnung alles, was man will, folgert, man dem Fehltritte gleich ausgesetzt bleibe; 2: 245).

Zufall is the origin and didactical end of Herder's critical project. It is essential to both the genesis and the exemplary function ("sie zeigen indessen") of *Critical Forests*. The passage above imagines its role in criticism not abstractly (as mental activity), but as an embodied, experimental activity in an arboreal laboratory. In this passage, *Critical Forests* appears to function as a control group in a larger experimental setup, designed to

demonstrate the necessity of so-called failed attempts ("Fehltritte") in the process of criticism and forestry alike.

Typically, as noted above, scholars have seen in Herder's dictum of *Zufälligkeit* an unachievable fictional unintentionality. Herder's very deliberate tackling of the project contradicts this notion, some contend. But, considering the compositional history of *Critical Forests*, it seems that the assumption of intentionality is, in fact, justified. Herder wrote his four "Wäldchen" very fast—in a period of less than a year.[84] Their "planlessness," we might say, is fictional in that Herder did plan early on to create—and then created—four diminutive "forests." It is not fictional, however, in so far as *Critical Forests* emerges from a condition of disorganization and contingency that, for Herder, is intrinsic to the material processes of writing and publishing itself. The publication of *Critical Forests* in 1769 was due to the fact Herder had accumulated a large amount of material by the summer of 1768. Herder incorporated fragments left over from the second part of his *Torso* on Thomas Abbt and from his revisions to the second of his *Fragmente*—remainders that did not fit easily into the texts from whose composition they emerged. It is in this sense that Herder's claim that the *Critical Forests* were written "without plan" should be understood. With an eye to the actual composition of the *Critical Forests*, Adam's categorization of Herder's poetological program as a "fiction of an unintentional presentation of disorganized materials" (Adam 256) is only partially correct.

[84] Herder began work on *Critical Forests* in the summer of 1768. The first "Wäldchen" was in print, and the second ready to print in October of the same year. The third "Wäldchen" was completed by the end of 1768. The second and third "Wäldchen" were both published in January 1769, the third "Wäldchen" in the following summer. Herder wrote the fourth "Wäldchen" in Janury 1769, but never published it during his lifetime.

Herder's account of the genesis of *Critical Forests* highlights the discrepancy between thought and writing, initial intention and eventual use. But whereas German aesthetic theories around 1800 tend to celebrate the freedom of thought and bemoan its reduction in writing,[85] Herder takes this discrepancy to be a productive tension. For Herder, the scope of a written project reflects the overabundance of thought, producing a surplus of material that does not fit the project's initial limitations. Herder's treatment of Lessing in *Critical Forests*, when initially composed, did not fit the content- and space-related bounds of his memorandum to the work of Thomas Abbt. In this sense, the limitations of any given written project ground the possibility of new projects. Herder's prior work had already acknowledged the fundamentally incomplete character of criticism, appearing, as it did, in the form of a "Torso" and a "Fragment."[86] The *Critical Forests*, in turn, formalize this reflection. They demonstrate just how the materiality of one project can carry over into another in an interdependent system of *Kritik*, drawing upon the vitality of residue.

To wrap up this portion of this chapter, Herder's vision of vegetal critique does not pit "the unrefined ingenuity of natural expression against the 'false embellishments' of art and rhetoric" (Schneider, "Nature" 94–95), as previous readings of organicist trends in the eighteenth century suggest. With his notion of the critical forest, Herder does not attempt to eliminate mediacy, but to foreground it. For Herder, the vegetal genius channels authorship not as a demiurgic force, but as a collaborative process reliant upon accident and materiality.

[85] See Koschorke "Schriftliche Unmittelbarkeitsphantasien," 206–208.
[86] I am referring to Herder's *Über Thomas Abbts Schriften—Der Torso von einem Denkmal, an seinem Grabe errichtet* (1768) and his *Fragmente, als Beilagen zu den Briefen, die neueste Literatur betreffend* (1767).

Herder's *Critical Forests* present a meta-criticism that is quite radical on several levels. Herder redirects the focus of *Kritik* away from authorship (both of the critic and the author) and towards a critical fabrication on the biosemantic scale. With this, Herder is not implying that texts can be written without intent. Rather, he is trying to account for the fact that, at large, criticism is built upon and itself produces an interplay of material and conceptual byproducts. His critical forests are the attempt to methodologically embrace the mutual conditioning of each work and its critical composition and reception, which Herder takes to be central to the material process of *Kritik*.

In that Herder envisions *Kritik* as an accidental, and therein also unavoidable, byproduct, he ends up undermining the notion that critique is limited to the European Enlightenment—or at least he rejects the notion that the "age of critique" is an intentional intellectual achievement. Last but not least, Herder's poetic reforestation produces forests quite distinct from those idealized by the moderate-Enlightenment thinkers of his time. While prevailing eighteenth-century *Forstbotanik* embraced the properly cultivated forest as a natural whole that is more than its individual material elements (thereby in important ways misunderstanding what forests are, as we know now), Herder privileges the materiality of the forest and, with this, appreciates the old-growth forest as a functioning system. Importantly, the forest that his criticism proudly inhabits—filled with error, bugs, and dead wood—is in this way not a predecessor to the nationalistic narratives around the wholesome "German Forest" that would gain popularity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

2. Herder's *Volkslied* Anthologies*:* Migrating Literatures and Native Plants

Even though Herder's interest in the *Volkslied* dates back to his encounter with Latvian poetry growing up in Riga, he first formulates and defines the term (adopted from Percy's notion of the "popular song") in 1773. In his "Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Older Peoples" ("Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker") Herder describes Ossianic poems as *Volkslieder*, which he takes to mean the "songs of an uneducated, sensual people": "Ihnen wollte ich nur in Erinnerung bringen, daß Ossians Gedichte *Lieder*, *Lieder des Volks*, *Lieder* eines ungebildeten Volks sind" (Surphan 5:160). Herder explains that a genuine *Volkslied* must meet three basic requirements.[87] It must, first of all, be a song—a rhythmical form of oral production. This idea has its roots in Hamann, who argues that poetry (rhythmic speaking) is the "mother tongue" of the human species (*Aesthetica in Nuce* 81-82)[88]—an argument that would also inform the *Sturm und Drang* appreciation of the ode (see the chapter on "flow"). Secondly, the *Volkslied* must be a popular song, a song known to an entire population or people. But among these it must be known to a certain specific category of people—hence the third requirement that the *Volkslied* arise from people who are "uneducated," "unformed," or "uncultured" ("ungebildet"). Later in the text, Herder will refer to this type of a people as "wild" or, in an alternative translation, "savage" ("wild"; cf. 2: 452). Referencing Montaigne, Herder summarizes his view with the claim that the *Volkslied* is "entirely natural" and yet comparable in beauty to the "most absolute, artificial poetry" (3: 71).[89]

[87] The *Ossian* is, we now know but Herder was unaware, not a "genuine" ancient myth, but an amalgamation written by Macpherson.
[88] "Poesie ist die Muttersprache des menschlichen Geschlechts; wie der Gartenbau, älter als der Acker."
[89] "Die Volkspoesie, ganz Natur, wie sie ist, und Reize, durch die sie sich der Hauptschönheit der künstlichvollkommensten Poesie gleichet."

Herder's notion of the *Volkslied* matches several aspects of *Sturm und Drang* aesthetic theory I laid out in Chapter II (on climate). This theory envisions art as a species-specific human activity that is not principally separated from craft (which is also what distinguishes Herder from Edward Young). It appreciates the regional variations of artistic form, along with the bottom-up developments of cultural traits. At the same time, Herder's concept of the *Volkslied* displays certain potential essentialisms at the heart of his vision of climate-specific poetics. In what seems to be an uptake of Rousseau's notion of the "noble savage," Herder's vision of the *Volkslied* invokes scenes of natural peoples living natural lives. This vision is at times clearly racially coded, along the lines of eighteenth-century climate theory. Herder's interest in his *Correspondence on Ossian* lies in his attunement to the historical European "North." But here he also speculates that indigenous North American peoples represent a "wild" people in the northern Ossian spirit.[90] The question about Herder's exact understanding of "wild" seems especially urgent. The obvious interpretation would be to read it as a German pendant to the Rousseauian savage—an undeniably racist trope that draws a strict binary between Western civilization and non-Western wilderness, and charges the latter with naiveté and backwardness, however glorified this projection is.

Herder develops the idea of the *Volkslied* as the natural outgrowth of a natural people in terms that are themselves heavily naturalistic. In the introduction to the 1779

[90] Full quote: "Just go through Ossian's poems. In every case of the bardic songs they resemble those of another people who are still singing and going about their lives today. Without predilection or prejudice I can sense in their narratives the history of Ossian and his ancestors, which has more than once been given life. Here I refer to the Five Nations of North America: songs of death and songs of war; songs of battle and songs for the grave; historical songs about the ancestors and addressed to the ancestors. … I find all these common to Ossian's bard and to the Indigenous peoples of North America" ("Correspondance" 148).

anthology *Volkslieder*,[91] he describes the process of assembling the poetic works in his anthology as a form of "flower picking" ("Blumenlese"):

> Book and register themselves may direct to what other pieces have hidden in this collection. They appear under the *most modest* name "folk songs" ["*Volsklieder*"]; more like materials for poetry, than they themselves being poetry. With many I did not remember where they are written? Or how they came to me. The unnamed name of their author or their motherland, and, generally, of the collector of this humble, poor flower-collection [Blumenlese/ Anthology]—honorable father, is not a sin. I ask for the good in it, from the plenty places and times it may come, not a word of praise and thanks, just as little as I forbid a word of reproach or criticism.
>
> (Was sich für andre Stücke in diese Sammlung verborgen haben, mag Buch und Register selbst weisen. Sie erscheinen unter dem *bescheidensten* Namen, "Volkslieder"; mehr also wie Materialien zur Dichtkunst, als daß sie Dichtkunst selbst wären. Bei vielen wußte ich nicht mehr, wo sie stehen? oder woher sie mir zugekommen waren, der ungenannte Name ihrer Verfasser oder ihres Vaterlandes, so wie überhaupt des Sammlers dieser demüthigen, armen, Blumenlese – ehrwürdiger Herr Pater, ist keine Sünde. Ich erbitte mir über das Gute in ihr, aus so mancherlei Orten und Zeiten es sein mag, kein Wörtchen Lob oder Dank, so wenig ich mir Ein Wort Tadel oder Kritik…verbitte; 3: 246)

The idea that *Volkslieder* are the natural products of a people, and not artistic-cultural productions *per se*, surfaces here on several levels. The question of the authorship of any particular *Volkslied* is dismissed. Purposefully, the contributions of neither authors nor translators are to be recognized ("kein Wörtchen Lob oder Dank"), which is said to eliminate any worry over plagiarism ("keine Sünde"). What makes Herder's rejection of authorship consistent is that he even denies his own authorial contribution. As the anthology's editor, Herder denies himself any role in the creation of the works presented, beyond having collected them—plucked like flowers, in his words.

As scholarship has long pointed out, the actual content of Herder's 1779 anthology quite obviously contradicts the idea that *Volkslieder* are "all nature." In

[91] Posthumously published in 1807 as *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern.* The first edition (withdrawn before publication in 1774), was published in 1778 and 1779.

addition to initially oral songs translated from their language of origin (German, Danish, English, Lithuanian, Greek, Spanish, Dutch, French, Latvian, Sami, and others), the collection contains pieces authored by Percy, Shakespeare, Klopstock, and others. Many of the included works are also the product of translation. Moreover, Herder himself on multiple occasions transgresses his position as a "mere" collector. He is believed to have authored several pieces that in the volume are presented as originating from various oral traditions.[92] As in the case of *Critical Forests,* Herder's claim about autopoiesis seems to clash with the reality of the genesis of his text. Furthermore, if his *Volkslied* collection also contains recognizable "high art," such as works by Shakespeare, then the question emerges of whether and how the concept of the *Volkslied* can be defined, if at all.

Scholars have seen in the tension between Herder' purified account of the *Volkslied* and the mixed origins of the works he in fact assembled the ultimate failure of his *Volkslieder* project. Herder, on these interpretations, is believed to have conceded his failure within his statement in the introduction to the second part of the *Volkslieder* volume, where he states that much of what he presented there constituted "material of/for poetry" rather than "poetry itself." Thomas Althaus's reading, for instance, falls into this vein:

> The poems do not deliver what the commentary on un-artificial sentiment promises to deliver. Already in the second part to his anthology "Volkslieder" of 1779, Herder has to reinterpret the title's genre [the *Volkslied*]—in fact disastrous for his project—and continuously lower the artistic standard [that he originally projected on the *Volkslied*].
>
> (Nun leisten die Gedichte eben nicht, was die kommentierenden Sätze über unerkünstelte Empfindung sich von ihnen versprechen wollen. Herder muß schon selbst im zweiten Teil seiner Sammlung "Volkslieder" von 1779 den Gattungstitel—für sein Unternehmen im Grunde katastrophal—umdeuten, darin einen immer weiter zurücknehmenden Dichtungsanspruch hineinlesen; 166)

[92] The most prominent example of such case is Herder's "Heather Rose" [*Röschen auf der Heide*].

I will respond to these interpretations by looking at Herder's rendering of the poem "Heather Rose" ("Röschen auf der Heide"), in the creation of which he had an authorial role to at least some extent. The best known, later version of the poem—the "Heideröschen"—is usually attributed to Goethe, but the question of authorship remains a matter of debate to this date. Typically, a version of the poem is included in both Herder and Goethe's collected works. Drafts of the poem can be found at the earliest stages of Herder's exploration of the *Volkslied* concept in the early 1770s, and it appears in both the 1774 and 1779 *Volkslieder* anthologies.

a. "Röschen auf der Heide"

The first recognizable version of the "Heather Rose" was published by Herder in the 1773 *Correspondence on Ossian* under the title "Fabelliedchen." Herder labels the poem an "old German song," thereby illustrating a further element of the *Volkslied*: its "childish" character. Herder writes:

> Once a boy a Rosebud spied,
> Heathrose of the field
> It was so fresh and beautiful
> And he stopped to see it near
> And stood with abundant joy
>
> I supply this sequence only from memory, and now the childish ritornello follows on each stanza:
>
> Little rose, little rose, little rose red,
> Little rose of the field!
>
> Said the boy, "I'll now pick thee,
> Little Rose etc.
> Little rose spoke: "I'll prick thee,
> So that thou'lt remember me,
> So that I won't suffer!
> Little Rose etc.

Still the wild boy picked the rose
Little Rose etc.
The lightle rose defended herself and pricked
But he forgot thereafter
As he indulged the suffering!
Little Rose etc. (Translation adapted from Bowring, in Tuyl Simmons 62)

(Es sah' ein Knab ein Röslein stehn
Ein Röslein auf der Heiden.
Er sah, es war so frisch und schön
Und blieb stehn, es anzusehen
Und stand in süßen Freuden.

Ich supplire diese Reihe nur aus dem Gedächtnis, und nun folgt das kindische Ritornell bei jeder Strophe:

Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot,
Röslein auf der Heiden!
Der Knabe sprach: ich breche dich!
Röslein etc.
Das Röslein sprach: ich steche dich,
Daß du ewig denkst an mich
Daß ichs nicht will leiden! Röslein etc.
Jedoch der wilde Knabe brach,
Das Röslein etc.
Das Röslein wehrte sich und stach,
Aber er vergaß darnach
Beim Genuß das Leiden![93]
Röslein etc.

Ist das nicht Kinderton? '…'; 5: 193-194, cf. 3: 331). [94]

The role of the poem within the *Correspondence on Ossian* is to illustrate the relation of the *Volkslied* to the children's song. "In our times," Herder introduces the song, "there is so much talk about *songs for children:* would you like to hear an older, German one?"

[93] Compare to Goethe's version here: "denn wer sich die Rosen, die blühenden bricht, den kitzeln fürwahr nur die Dornen."
[94] With the exception of leaving out the article ("das Röslein" becomes "Röslein") Herder's *Volkslied* anthologies from 1774 and 1779 will contain the same poem under the title "Röschen auf der Heide," here with the remark "from oral legend" [*aus der mündlichen Sage*].

The common feature of both *Volkslied* and children's song, Herder specifies, is not that both contain a moral lesson, but rather that both exhibit a certain childishness: "It may not contain a transcendent wisdom and morale, with which children are deluded easy enough—it *is* nothing but childish."[95] After reciting the poem, Herder repeats this point: "Is this not the tone of a child?" ("*ist dies nicht Kinderton? 5:194"*). "Heather Rose," in other words, is not a *Kinderlied* insofar as it is intended for children (for it is not), but, rather, insofar as it is itself child-like.

Contrary to Herder's own categorization of "Heather Rose," the poem has commonly been understood to be adult in theme. In nineteenth and twentieth-century anthologies, Goethe's later rendering of the "Heidenröslein" (published in 1789) is classified as "love poetry."[96] Franz Magnus Böhme, in his *Volkslied* anthology from 1895, comments that the poem treats "under the image of a rose the fate of a young girl who has to surrender to a passionate boy, in spite of attempted resistance" (Böhme, *Volksthümliche Lieder* 95–97).[97] In more recent scholarship, there is consensus that the poem thematizes an asymmetrical sexual encounter of some sort, either the consensual "deflowering" of a woman, or her rape. As Christine Künzel has shown, this sexualized interpretation has been fostered in large part by the history of the poem's illustration,

[95] "Zu unsern Zeiten wird so viel von *Liedern für Kinder gesprochen*: wollen Sie ein älteres Deutsches hören? Es enthält zwar keine transcendente Weisheit und Moral, mit der die Kinder zeitig genug überhäuft warden es "ist" nichts als ein kindisches."

[96] The exact genesis of Goethe's "Röschen auf der Heide" is not known, following steps, however, are: the "Heideröslein" in its contemporary form was published by Goethe after his *Sturm und Drang* years in 1789, and indicating that he himself was the author. However, earlier version of a similar song sketched in his *Correspondance on Ossian* under the title "Fabelleidchen" and published by Herder in his *Volkslied* books (1773, 1779, and 1807) under "Röschen auf der Heide," as well as several texts in Flachsland's *Silver Book* indicate that Herder was either the author, or the first one to transcribe the text from a third source. Also possible is a shared authorship by herder and Goethe during their time in Strasbourg.

[97] "unter dem Bilde eines Rösleins das Geschick eines jungen Mädchens, das einem von leidenschaftlicher Liebe entbrannten Jünglinge, trotz versuchter Gegenwehr sich ergeben muss."

particularly in the wake of the 19th-century Goethe cult.[98] On these readings, it seems that the various versions of the tale introduce similar binaries of a pure (vs. impure) nature. Furthermore, it seems that the theme of nature's purity and impurity is charged with cultural phantasies of sexual violence.

One might suppose that Herder's "Heather Rose" should also be read in this vein, insofar as it is often seen as the template for Goethe's later version. There are, however, important and mostly overlooked differences between Herder's and Goethe's versions of the poem. Consider the following stanza:

Herder:
Still the wild boy picked the rose
Little Rose on the field;
The lightle rose defended herself and pricked
But he forgot thereafter
As he indulged the suffering.
Little red rose, little red rose,
Little red rose on the field

(Doch der wilde Knabe brach
Das Röslein auf der Haiden;
Röslein wehrte sich und stach,
Aber er vergaß darnach

[98] For a history of controversies around the question of consent in the poem, see Künzel's "Knabe trifft Röslein auf der Heide." On one popular reading, the poem narrate's Heather Rose's seduction and leading to her "deflouring" that is seen to equal her destruction. A different interpretation that was established by Franz Magnus Böhme in 1895 understands it as a scene of rape. Christine Künzel concludes that the poem conveys a "fatalist acceptance of sexual violence against girls ["fatalistische Akzeptanz Sexueller Gewalt gegen Mädchen"] (56). Looking at the song's genesis, there are, first of all, indeed good reasons to speak of an interpretation of "heather rose" as a woman. Sources for the Röschen auf der Heidemotiv include Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*, which was a popular book at the time, well known to Herder and mentioned by him. The *Silver Book* contains a poem based on the thirty-fourth letter of the first volume of *Clarissa*, in which the heroine is described in terms of a "rose-bud" whose "simplicity and innocence" must not be ruined. Herder's *Lied*, titled "Das Rosenknöspchen. Lovelace an Belford" (October 1771) also speaks of a "small, cute girl" [*Ein Kleines süsses Mädchen*] which is a flower to the entire area [*der ganzen Gegend eine Blume*] and utters the warning: "boy, don't break the little bud" [*Nur Bube brich das Knöspchen nicht*]. The chorus/refrain "Röslein auf der Heiden," in contrast, is believed to be a citation from Paul van der Aalst's 1602 songbook *Bluom vnd Außbund Allerhandt Außerlesender Weltlicher/ Züchtiger Lieder und Rheymen*. Here, a woman is likened to a rosebush ("Sie gleicht wohl einem Rosenstock") and repeatedly called "little rose on the field" [Rößlein auff der Heyden] (Althaus 170).

Beim Genuß das Leiden.
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot,
Röslein auf der Haiden; 3: 331)

Goethe:
Now the wild boy must pick
Heathrose fair and tender;
Rosebud did her best to prick,–
Vain 'twas 'gainst her fate to kick–
She must needs surrender [suffer]
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Heathrose fair and tender

(Simmons 62, translation adjusted)

(Und der wilde Knabe brach
's Röslein auf der Heiden;
Röslein wehrte sich und stach,
Half ihm doch kein Weh und Ach,
Mußt es eben leiden.
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot,
Röslein auf der Heiden; *Werke*, Frankfurter Ausgabe 1: 278)

Goethe's version describes the rose's suffering at being plucked. In Herder's version, it is the boy who is said to suffer from the rose's sting, though only temporarily.[99] Goethe's final stanza emphasizes the fated-ness of the rose's suffering: "Half ihr doch kein Weh und Ach, Musste es eben leiden." Herder, by contrast, thematizes the volatility or unpredictability of life, with the poem's end invoking the phenomenon of forgetfulness. When considering Herder's use of the metaphor of a picked bud in other texts from the same time, the question arises whether the feminization of the rose is not rather a product of the poem's reception, and of the reception of Goethe's version in particular. Indeed, Herder will, in various letters, refer to himself as a bud that is not yet ready to be picked (I: 46).

[99] It is also possible to offer an interpretation whereby it is her suffering that the boy forgets—although the fact that he gets pricked suggests that the boy's suffers to some extent as well.

With the theme of volatility, Herder's "Heather Rose" explores a circumstance that, according to Herder, is characteristic of the *Volkslied* as such. In the introduction to his 1779 anthology, Herder sets a citation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* directly under the title:

> Volkslieder
> – A violet in the youth of primary nature,
> Forward not permanent, sweet not lasting,
> The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
> No more.

(WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*, act 1, scene 3)

> (Volkslieder.
> – Sind Veilchen in des Jahres Jugend, sind
> Erstlinge der Natur, früh und nicht daurend,
> Süß, aber bald dahin: der Duft, die Blüte
> Von wenigen Minuten –
> *Shakespeare's Hamlet;* 3: 69)

If the *Volkslied* is a short-lived violet, and if the activity of assembling the *Volkslieder* is a sort of flower-picking, then it becomes possible to read "Heather Rose" as a) a poetological account of the emergence and passing of *Volkslieder* themselves, and b) in reference not to female purity, but to the question of the "purity" of a literal, vegetal flower.

b. The Wild Flower in Eighteenth-Century Botany

Herder draws upon flower imagery to speak about poetics—and especially the historical development of aesthetics—quite frequently. Typical are formulations of "naturalness" that move between "wild" and "cultivated" states. In his prize-winning 1775 essay "Causes of the Diminishment of Taste Among Different Peoples" ("Ursachen des gesunknen Geschmacks bei den verschiedenen Völkern"), Herder considers the wildness

of Greek poetry: "Greek drama was a natural flower of its time" ("Das griechische Drama war eine Naturblume der Zeit"). Latin poetry, on the other hand, is evaluated more harshly:

> The poetic art only emerged late, i.e. it was transplanted from Greek seed into the garden of an emperor, where it stood as beautiful and idle flower, and bloomed.
>
> (Die Dichtkunst entstand nur spät, d.i. sie ward aus Griechischem Samen in den Garten eines Kaisers verpflanzt, wo sie als schöne müßige Blume dastand und blühte; 4:127)

The imagery employed here anticipates Herder's 1779 preface to the *Volkslied* anthology. Whereas Greek poetry represents the ideal of a wild flower, Latin poetry cultivates the once natural flower with a result that lacks the former's vitality: Latin poetry is idle. What is revealed in this passage is that the transformation from wild flower to garden flower has a long history and, more importantly, that a flower's naturalness is rarely taken to be an absolute value. Greek poetry was a wild flower "of its time." The status as wild flower is thus not defined in terms of its taxonomic species, but in relation to its environment.

The fact that Herder's exemplary *Volkslied*—"Heather Rose"—treats the heather rose (also known as the calluna plant), of all plants, evidences Herder's understanding of the complex, non-linear trajectory that connects wildflower to garden flower. Of course, the rose must be grasped as a plant with a long history of symbolic attribution. Besides its symbolic role in Christianity, marking either Mary or the baby/child Jesus, it holds special status for many *Sturm und Drang* writers not the least due to their admiration of Shakespeare and Klopstock, both of whom frequently invoke roses in their writings.[100]

[100] For Klopstock: "Rosen knospen dir auf, dasz sie mit süszem duft dich umströmen" ("An Cidli"). For Shakespeare: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo and Juliet), and for Hegel in the *Science of Logic*, the definition of "rose" is treated as exemplary for all judgments.

Over and above this, the "wild rose" understood as botanical species has characteristics that makes it particularly interesting as a poetological metaphor. As the Grimm's dictionary documents, an important attribute of the rose around 1800 is seen in its history of development towards a native German species: "Rose—refers, first, to the well-known garden-decorative plant ("Garten-Zierpflanze"), which came from its home Persia to Greece, und through them into the occident."[101] In that the rose is believed to have originated in Persia, but to have been properly developed in Greece, before becoming "occidental," the account of the heather rose parallels mid-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century theories of the origin of Western culture and language. One of the key features assigned to the rose as a species at the time was therefore its long history of passage from the Middle East.[102]

The heather rose (*Heidenrose*) stands for the cultivated rose's "wild" counterpart. The Grimm's dictionary defines it in a separate entry according to Linnaean nomenclature as "Rosa Canina" ("dogrose"), "Heckenrose" (hedge-rose), and "Feldrose" (field-rose). In other words, what Herder observes about Latin poetry (the wild flower's becoming a garden flower) is inverted in the heather rose: it is a native form of a plant that has come from the orient, through various stages of cultivation. The genesis of the *Volkslied* anthology, in turn, is again envisioned as a form of cultivation. Herder remarks in the preface to the 1779 anthology that the poems resemble "the good field flower" ("die gute Feldblume"), in a "garden bed of white paper" ("im Gartenbeet des weissen Papiers"). "Heather Rose," then, is the cultivated form of a wild variant of a formerly

[101] "Rose bezeichnet zunächst die bekannte Garten-Zierpflanze, die aus ihrer Heimat Persien zu den Griechen und durch diese in das Abendland kam."
[102] For more on this history, see Olender.

cultivated plant. The plot of "flower picking" in the poem adds one further layer to this cycle.

Herder's relative rather than absolute notion of native-ness can, for one, be rooted in developments within eighteenth-century botany. On many levels, eighteenth-century botany departed from the rigid separation between wild and cultivated plants that had been a fixture of botany at the beginning of the century. John Ray (1627–1705), one of the most influential botanists of his time, had argued at the turn of the eighteenth century that cultivated plants should not be accounted for in attempts to determine plant kinds—believing their features to be merely external and accidental to God's system. Decorative Plants, fruit and vegetables were to be "excluded from degree and dignity of kind" (qtd. in Jahn 204). This distinction between proper und improper, natural and artificial kinds was founded on the preformationist belief that God had created all possible organisms at the beginning of time, and that their preexisting nature only had to be developed (through birth, life, etc.).

Against this notion, proponents of theories of epigenesis argued, beginning in the 1740s, that organisms had the potential to self-generate, rather than only to mechanically unfold (*entwickeln*) their own kind (Müller-Sievers, Mensch). In 1781, with Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's publication *Über den Bildungstrieb und das Zeugungsgeschäfte*, epigenesis would become the "undisputed model of thought in the life sciences" (Müller-Sievers 42) centered on the idea of a *formative drive* (*Bildungstrieb*). In the early-nineteenth century, and in the work Wilhelm von Humboldt in particular, *Bildung* would mainly come to signify the self-driven development of individuals (*ontogenesis*). Within eighteenth-century botany, the broad adoption of epigenetic theories caused the neglect of

those botanical methodologies that rigidly distinguished wild plants from cultivated ones, such as Ray's. On this view, native plants were not seen as pure and untouched by human influence, but rather as the products of spatial long-term development, in which cultural history also played a part. It is this qualified sense of the wild flower that we see at play in Herder's imagery. For Herder, the wild and the cultivated plant are not mutually exclusive forms, but are rather relative modifications of one another. Herder's interest in things "native" or "wild"—be they plants, poetry, or peoples—is certainly not an essentialist phantasy of purity, but must be located in the tension between the self-generated and the historically descended.

c. The Material Genesis of "Heather Rose"

Herder's poetological account of wildflowers and poetry alike as hybrids of natural and cultural history is ultimately also an account of the concrete material genesis of "Heather Rose." The productive tension between the self-generated and the historically descended here plays out on the level of materiality. Above, I briefly explained that the "Röschen" transformed from a pricking rose bush under Herder to a more sensitive, thorn-less flower under Goethe. The oldest known written version appeared, however, in the *Silver Book* (*Silbernes Buch*)—an early *Volkslied* collection that Herder's fiancée Karoline Flachsland assembled from poems Herder sent in his letter correspondence with her during the late 1760s. Flachsland's *Silver Book* is therefore, so to speak, the very first *Volkslied* anthology, and Herder would base large parts of his own anthology on this collection. The process of assembly for the *Silver Book* had a certain resemblance to the activity of "flower picking": the individual poems had earlier arrived by mail, and were

written and transcribed by Herder in his correspondence with Flachsland, who then copied the poems from the letters. Flachsland selected and bound the individual pages, producing something quite akin to a bouquet of *Volkslieder* (Spoerhase "Format" 419-448, "Das Silberne Buch").

The *Silver Book* contains an early draft of "Heather Rose." The poem, then titled "The Blossom" ("Die Blühte"), evidences the extent to which "Heather Rose" has its roots in Herder's engagement with botanical thought. And yet, again, it shows that Herder's rose bush is in fact the mutated remainder of an earlier, arboreous form:

> A boy saw a little bud,
> On his favorite tree,
> It looked so fresh and beautiful,
> And he remained there to take a look,
> And he stood in sweet peace:
> Little bud, little bud, fresh and beautiful,
> Little bud on the tree.
>
> The boy spoke: I'll pick you,
> You little bud of sweet scent.
> The little bud pleaded: spear me
> Otherwise I will wither soon
> And never bear you fruit.
> Boy, boy, let it be
> The little bud of sweet scent.
>
> Still, the wild boy did pick
> The little bud from the tree,
> The little bud died soon after.
> But all fruit failed
> Him on his tree.
> Sadly, sadly he searched and searched,
> But found nothing on his tree.
>
> Don't break to soon, oh boy,
> The hope for sweet fruit.
> Because soon it will wilt
> And you will never see
> The fruit of your blossom.
> Sadly, sadly you will search,

Too late, for both fruit and blossom.

(Es sah ein Knab' ein Knöspgen stehn
Auf seinem liebsten Baume,
das Knöspgen war so frisch und schön
und blieb steh es anzusehn
und stand in süssem Traume.
Knöspgen, Knöspgen frisch und schön
Knöspgen auf dem Baume.

Der Knabe sprach: ich breche dich
Du Knöspgen süsser Düfte.
Das Knöspgen bat: verschone mich
Denn sonst bald verwelke ich
Und geb dir nimmer Früchte.
Knabe, Knabe, laß es stehn
Das Knöspgen süsser Düfte.

Jedoch der wilde Knabe brach
die Blüthe von dem Baume,
Das Blüthchen starb so schnell darnach.
Aber alle Frucht gebrach
ihm auf seinem Baume.
Traurig, traurig sucht´ er nach
Und fand nichts auf dem Baume.

Brich nicht o Knabe nicht zu früh
die Hoffnung süsser Blüthe.
Denn bald ach bald verwelket sie
und dann siehst du nirgends nie
die Frucht von deiner Blüthe.
Traurig, traurig suchst du sie
zu spät, so Frucht als Blüthe;

Silbernes Buch, cited in Herder 3:1140-1141, commentary).

With its dialogue between boy and bud ("I break you/ bud pledges: spare me") and its repetitive refrain of "bud" ("Knöspgen"), the text is clearly recognizable as a predecessor of "Heather Rose." At the same time, this version is more strongly rooted in vegetative processes. The boy experiences pain at the loss of fruit, not the rose's sting. From a

botanical perspective, the blossoming flower is merely one functional part of the overall fruit-bearing tree.

The *Silver Book* certainly simplified the editorial process for Herder, once he produced his own version. Thus, when Herder writes, in his introduction to the anthology, that he will leave unnamed the "collector of this humble, poor, anthology/ bouquet" ("Blumenlese"; 3:245), and that he speaks "through received pieces of paper" (3:26).[103] this does not necessarily man that Herder denies his own editorial touch. It might simply indicate that one collector could not be identified in a process in which even the collecting activity is itself collective. The fact that Flachsland, who appears to have contributed to the *Volkslied* project and anthology in many ways, remains largely unacknowledged as editor of the *Volkslied* anthology by contemporary literary scholarship is, on my view, more concerning than Herder's insistence upon "authorless" texts. This is especially the case if this exclusion of Flachsland happens within arguments that stress that Herder's editorial work must be seen to have equated to authorship. As with his vegetative composition of *Critical Forests*, Herder's assembly of the *Volksleider* was, in important ways, an open, autopoetic process. It is perfectly in keeping with the genesis of these texts, as well as with the principles of vegetal epigenesis as material self-creation, to regard the issue of their authorship openly.

[103] As Herder states in the preface to the second *Volkslied* book: "Ich spreche bloß aus mir zugekommenen Papieren eines unbekannten jetzt schon weitentfernten Freundes. Unter den hundert klein und großen Stücken, Flicken, Fragmenten und Versuchen…fanden sich auch kleine Zettel—Anfänge, Zeilen, Lieder… (3: 26).

CHAPTER IV: FLOW

In a mid-1770s fragment, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg satirically remarks on the status in his time of the figure of speech "stream of genius" (*Strom des Genies*):

> So far as is known, no nation takes the word genius so often in the mouth as the Germans since the last six to eight years. It would be possible to collect a library of German books where the word would appear on every page, though the thing itself not at all. The executioner comes to his limits, where one compares genius with a firestorm, whose waves rush inexorably and whose shine and sound spread blindness and deafness over the lineage of wrens. As soon as a sincere man learns from the newspaper that he is a genius, it is not possible that he begins to make his little remarks quietly, like Leibniz, Locke, Hartley. Instead, he bubbles, foams, pours himself, ripping scythe-seeds and nonsense-rocks like houses away wtih itself, swelling and roaring and echoing powerfully from Strasbourg to Königsberg. If I had something to say, I would say it should be forbidden and punished by hanging to compare the genius with a stream, or, at the least, that it ought only be compared with one that is very quiet, slow, and deep.
>
> (Soviel ist gewiß, keine Nation führt das Wort Genie so oft im Munde als die deutsche seit 6 bis 8 Jahren. Es ließe sich eine Bibliothek von deutschen Büchern sammeln, wo das Wort auf jedem Blatt, die Sache aber selbst gar nicht vorkommen müßte. Der Henker halte sich da in Grenzen wenn man das Genie mit einem Feuerstrom vergleicht, dessen Wellen unaufhaltbar dahinbrausen und durch seinen Glanz und Lärm Blindheit und Taubheit über das Geschlecht der Zaunkönige verbreitet. Sobald ein ehrlicher Mann, der es aus der Zeitung weiß, daß er ein Genie ist, und ein paar kleine Bemerkungen gemacht hat, soll er sie etwa eben so dünne sagen wie Leibniz, Locke, Hartley, das ist nicht möglich, er sprudelt, schäumt, ergießt sich, reißt *Sense*-Körner und *Nonsense*-Felsen wie Häuser mit sich fort, und schwillt und braust und schallt mächtig von Straßburg bis Königsberg. Wenn ich etwas zu sagen [hätte], so ließ ich bei Strafe des Stranges verbieten künftig das Genie mit einem Strom zu vergleichen, oder wenigstens einen ganz stillen, langsamen und tiefen dazu zu nehmen; 448).

The prevalence of the metaphor of the raging river is surprising. Even more striking is the fact that, already by the 1770s, the theme epitomizes many of the often unfavorable characteristics later associated with the so-called "time of genius" (*Geniezeit*) of the period of *Sturm und Drang*. The ideology of the "stream of genius" stands, on

Lichtenberg's account, for hubris (the hubris of the wren, or "fence-king" [*Zaunkönige*]), incommunicable subjectivity and ignorance (as blindness and deafness), and destructivity (the ripping away of "scythe-seeds" [*Sense-Körner*]). The references to Strasbourg and Königsburg relate the notion of the stream of genius fairly explicitly to *Sturm und Drang* circles. Lichtenberg's account is critical: the river-topos, to him, represents a prevailing ideology of lawless strength, ruthless noise, destruction, and intellectual lack.

Even if by the mid 1770s, as Lichtenberg seems to suggest, the "stream of genius" had become a commonplace, it must nevertheless be understood as a topos of recent origin, one differing drastically from the role of water common in mid-eighteenth-century aesthetics. Indeed, aestheticians of that mid-century period seem unimpressed with the idea of flow. In 1753, for instance, Michael Conrad Curtius argued that metaphors of flow invoke a lack of force:

> Germany has only become all too flooded with these sorts of poems, which pretend that the shallowness and faintness of their thought and expression is beauty, and which are supposedly called flowing.
>
> (Deutschland ist nur mehr, als zu sehr, mit dieser Art von Gedichten überschwemmt, die wohl gar das Seichte und Matte ihrer Gedanken und Ausdrücke für eine Schönheit ausgeben, und fließend heißen wollen; 295).

The value of "flowing" (*fließend*) poetry, Curtius observes, is almost the opposite of what it will be a few decades later. Here, "poetic flow" is feeble, faint, and shallow. Later, as we shall see, it will be torrential and violent. The generation of *Sturm und Drang* writers lies in the space between Curtius's and Lichtenberg's observations. This generation embraced the topoi of the raging "stream" and of "flow," making them a hallmark of the period.

Lichtenberg's account of the image of the "stream of genius" reveals something unusual, which has received little attention in the history of *Sturm und Drang*'s reception. While the notion of a "stream" (*Strom*) or "flow" (*Fluss*) of genius has been largely understood to be a *figurative* expression of passion and affect, Lichtenberg explicitly links the image to *literal* bodies of water. With its capacity to tear away seeds along its way, and to flow from southwestern Strasbourg to northeastern Königsberg, the "stream of genius" follows the path of a river. The poetological flow-topos, read this way, formulates the possibility of a river-like artistic process. Read against the *Sturm und Drang* aesthetic ideal of climatic traces in art (detailed in Chapter II), such poetological river imagery can also be read as an environmental poetics, attempting to write nature into art, in conversation with the climatic conditions of artistic creation.

This chapter develops these points across seven sections. I first offer an overview of existing scholarship on the stream topos, where I conclude that the topos has been read overly metaphorically, as immaterial movement. Then, in section two, I highlight the poetological functions of river imagery within the ancient tradition of Pindar and Horace, which both align poetry and flowing rivers. In a third section, I turn to understandings of flow as currency within eighteenth-century discourses on rivers and river management. This allows me to draw out the aesthetic and epistemological implications of *Sturm und Drang* poetologies of flow, and to debunk the common conception that this flow stands for an irrationalist ideology of immediacy, whether of emotion or of concepts. In section four, I show how *Sturm und Drang* authors employ hydrological river imagery to think about poetic materiality as condition of flow, and argue against the assumption that German language is too bulky and thus unfit for poetry. *Sturm und Drang* authors, on my

reading, hold that both "river" and "language" are always more than mere vehicles for (semantic) transportation. Section five examines the stream image in Herder in particular, and serves to think through some seemingly paradoxical aspects of *Sturm und Drang* poetics, such as the notion of "original imitation" and the role of influence in distinct national poetic currents. By foregrounding an aesthetics of jamming and overflow, I observe in section six, *Sturm und Drang* authors seek an alternative to the then-rising aesthetics of canalization, which sought to straighten rivers so as to increase navigability. *Sturm und Drang* authors' written rivers flow *against* the advances of canalization and of human populations moving into what were once natural floodplains. In the seventh and final section, I summarize and illustrate all of these points (developed mainly by Lenz, Stolberg, and Lenz) through a close reading of two early poems of Goethe, "Song for Mohammed" ("Mahomets Gesang") and "Wanderer's Storm Song" ("Wandrers Sturmlied"*)*.

1. Rivers of Feeling: On More and Less Literal Readings of "Flow"

Within scholarship explicitly engaging the topos of the stream around 1800, various threads can be observed, only a minority of which investigate the river metaphor. On one common account, the "stream" (*Fluss*) is one element within the more general topos of bodies of water, which is also represented by images of lakes or seas. On this reading, water is understood as an Other to the rational enlightened subject, insofar as it exhibits a lack of form, a condition associated with femininity or eros.[104] Here, water is seen as a

[104] See, for instance, Hartmut Böhme (208–233). Böhme, however, does not differenciate between the distinct topoi of river, pond, etc., as I shall attempt to do here.

characteristically Romantic or proto-Romantic metaphor. As Lichtenberg's mockery shows, however, the "stream of genius" indicates an almost violent directionality and determinism that clashes with the shapelessness usually associated with the water topos. This provides grounds for treating the *Sturm und Drang* variation upon the topos of flow as distinct from its use among the Romantics a few decades later.

In another corner of scholarship, the image of the raging mountain stream, and of the water fall, has been connected, in its appearance within German thought around 1800, to the Kantian sublime.[105] On this reading, the mountain stream gains popularity in literature precisely at the time when most bodies of water no longer pose any real danger to Western civilization. This mirrors Kant's suggestion, in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, that the water fall represents a danger that seems threatening, though it is not actually so, and in this offers a sublime experience.[106] Here, the raging stream is seen to belong to an aesthetic repertoire that celebrates human mastery in the face of technologically tamed waterways. As I discussed in Chapter II, *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics develops against the ideology of dominance over nature, and strives for a balance of "braving" climates, expressed in the *Sturm und Drang* figuring of Prometheus. It remains to be clarified whether the *Sturm und Drang* vision of raging waterfalls and genius streams follows this environmental formula or, whether it is, more in the vein of Kant, an ultimately anthropogenic vision of sublime (human) nature.

A further important interpretation of the stream metaphor has developed in response to Jochen Schmidt's intellectual history of genius. Schmidt roots the notion of

[105] Cf. readings by Martus, Kaufman, Jolle.
[106] First developed in the 1764 text *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. In the third *Critique*, Kant explicitely mentions, among many other examples of sublime entities in nature, "the boundless ocean set into a rage" and "a lofty waterfall on a mighty river" (144).

the "stream of genius" in the eighteenth-century reception of the Pindaric ode, and in eighteenth-century responses to Horace's ode 4.2 in particular, where both Pindar and the tradition of odes that followed him (including those of Horace) are compared to a "raging" Tiber river (Schmidt, *Genie-Gedanke* 179-183). But whereas Schmidt's connection of the stream metaphor to the Pindaric ode is convincing, these accounts assume that the ancient river metaphor has been simply adopted by eighteenth-century poets, failing to account for the sense in which modern, eighteenth-century understandings of rivers may have significantly altered the meaning of the topos.

Even those scholarly camps that succeed in situating the *Sturm und Drang* topos of flow within an intellectual and technological-historical context often neglect concurrent discourse related to river formation and management. Albrecht Koschorke, in what is perhaps the most extensive analysis of the stream-of-writing topos around 1800, argues that a conceptual "liquidization" ("Verflüssigung") of writing took place during the period of *Sturm und Drang*, attributing this development to changes in anthropology, medicine, and public morality, including mesmerism and attitudes towards bodily fluid (Koschorke, *Körperströme*). For Koschorke, the "flow of writing" emerges during the eighteenth century as a morally acceptable substitute for the outpouring of immoral bodily fluids, such as semen, sweat, or saliva. Similarly, Friedrich Kittler observes an increase in the prominence of the idea of "fluent" speech or writing beginning in the 1770s (Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme* 121).[107] This turn to fluency has also been documented by Jacques Derrida, who reads it as evidence of a reevaluation of orality around 1800 (Derrida, *Grammatology*). Derrida and Kittler both read the "fluent" as a

[107] Genauer gesagt; typisch für Empfindsamkeit, *Sturm und Drang* und Romantik.

minimization of mediality—whether referring to the role of language, writing, or conceptuality itself. "Fluency," on this account, allows for the expression or deciphering of pure meaning.[108] Derrida, Koschorke und Kittler, it can be said, each read the "stream of genius" as a fiction of immediacy. The extent to which this is the case, whether "flow" as poetological metaphor during the 1770s in fact indicates an imagined *erasure* of language, speech, writing and other media ought to be a central question for any account of *Sturm und Drang* thought.

A distinct, and perhaps more basic, question that emerges from the state of scholarly interpretations of poetic flow in *Sturm und Drang* is whether it is legitimate to understand the "stream of genius" or the "flow of writing" as stand-ins for emotional and cognitive processes. If flow or fluidity is taken in the indeterminate, formless sense, images of flowing nature might become mere placeholders for reflections on anthropology and epistemology. In 1795, Schiller will defend precisely this view of poetic representation of the non-human environment, arguing that true art must seek a route "by which inanimate nature can come to symbolize human nature: either as a representation of emotions, or as a representation of ideas" ("Matthisson's Poems" 607). Such an aesthetics is often projected back onto the *Sturm und Drang* period, as in the claim that the "storm [in *Sturm und Drang*] has nothing to do with wind and weather, but rather symbolically something with emotions and passions that urge forward"

[108] Kittler claims for sentimentalism, Sturm und Drang, and Romanticism alike that poetic words immaterialize, dass "poetische Worte die Liquidation sinnlicher Medien sind. Nicht genug, daß auf ihrem Feld der fliehende Ton statt des Buchstaben herrscht, sie liquidieren und d.h. verflüssigen Steine und Fraben, Klänge und Baustoffe, Materialitäten und Körpertechniken jeder Art bis 'Einbildungskraft alle Sinne ersetzen kann" (121).

(*Goethezeitportal*),[109] or, similarly, in the claim that *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics involve adherence to something like the Kantian sublime.

Against such interpretations, I hope to show in what follows that *Sturm und Drang* authors are best understood with reference to neither the naive proto-Romantic naturalism that is often projected onto them, nor the conceptually mediated relation to the non-human environment characteristic of German classicism. Instead, the *Sturm und Drang* understanding of rivers and flow is scientifically informed. As I show, it is the eighteenth-centry debate on the origins of rivers which gives the impetuous for the multi-directional flow and water topoi employed by *Sturm und Drang* authors. In that it propogates an aesthetics of overflow, meandering, and stagnation, the *Sturm und Drang* poetics of flow take a scientifically informed stance against the economics of navigability that regards rivers as mere means of transport. Against the increasing canalization of their time, *Sturm und Drang* authors explore rivers as imagery of a regular irregularily. This allows them to think several tensions they are interested in. First, it allows them to think of a particularly German type of "flow" that eighteenth-century climate theory would otherwise deny to the "stagnant" propeties of German language (consonants and sentence structure). This opens the possibility of a modern German poetics that shows traces—within its language—of its *de facto* climatic conditions. Secondly, the *Sturm und Drang* embrace of regular irregularty allows for an approach to culture and history as organic, bottom-up developments, that are themselves flows marked by interruption and in-fluence. This is especially visible in Herder's use of the metaphor in his accounts of history, but also plays out in Goethe's odes.

[109] "Sturm hat dabei nichts mit Wind und Wetter zu tun, sondern eher symbolisch mit Gefühlen und Leidenschaften, die sich nach außen drängen und sich äußern in Gefühlsausbrüchen und Kraftausdrücken."

2. Streams of the Ancients: Horace and Pindar‘s Poetological Rivers

Beginning with the 1750s, the ode experienced a stellar revival, promising—by definition, since an odé means singing or song—a quasi-orality, and emerging as the epitome of “streaming” genius between 1760 and 1770. The odes of Pindar and Horace were in particular perceived as “streaming” forms of poetry.[110] However, it is not the case that the idea of singing as a natural and immediate poetic form was *applied* to the theory of the ode. Rather, the eighteenth-century aesthetics of flow drew upon poetological knowledge already articulated within the classical ode. Indeed, Horace himself, in his poetological homage to Pindaric poetry, depicts the Pindaric ode as a raging stream:

> Whoever strives to rival Pindar,
> O Iulus, is flying on wings
> fastened with wax by Daedalean artifice
> destined to lend
>
> his name to a crystal sea.
> Like a river descending from a mountain
> swollen by rains beyond its usual banks,
> so Pindar’s song
>
> foams and precipates and dashes down
> boundless and profound: worthy to be
> garlanded with Apollo’s laurel,
> unswirling
>
> new words through daring dithyrambs
> borne along by rhytms and by measures
> untrammeled by rules (Horace 155)
>
> (Wer Pindar nachzueifern strebt,
> Iullus, den tragen Dädalus’ wächserne Schwingen,

[110] Besides Shakespeare and Middle High German poetry, it was especially the antique writings of Homer, Pindar, and Horace that served as poetic role models for the 1760s and 1770s. The period saw a increased philological interest in Pindar, in particular, to an extent that it has been suggested to speak of a “pindarization” of poetry taking place in England, Italy, and Germany at the time (Fantoni, *Deutsche Dythramben* 76).

> Der wird dem kristallnen Meere
> Namen geben
>
> Wie vom Gebirge der Strom stürzt,
> den Regengüsse über sein Bett anschwellten,
> So brauset, so stürmet des unerreichbaren Pindars
> Vollströmender Gesang
>
> Er verdient den Lorbeer des Apollos,
> Wenn er neue Worte durch kühne Dithyramben
> Fortwälzt und in regellosen
> Rhythmen dahinrauscht
>
> (German translation by Herzlieb, 1787-1791, cited in Schmidt, *Geniegedanke* 181).

The river (*amnis*) in Horace's ode functions as an extended metaphor. It is implied that, besides the fast, downward movement of pouring ("rushing down" or *ruit*, "hasting" or *fertur*), river and ode share at least three other qualities. Both are unruly—in terms of their spilling over and their irregular meter (*lege solutis*)—and both have the capacity to carry away or spin off (*devolvit*) unwieldy items, such as neogolisms in the case of the dithyramb (*nova dythrambos verba*). In that river and ode "glow" (*fervet*) and are "immense," they also share greatness. As becomes clear, the Horacian ideal of river and ode anticipates many aesthetic ideals traditionally associated with *Sturm und Drang* thought, such as a neglect of rules and a glorification of the artist.

However, if Horace's image of the Pindaric ode epitomizes poetic flow, it is also the case that this "flow" is not one of uninterruptedness but, on the contrary, an *excess* that always entails a certain simultaneous resistance. Horace depicts the Pindaric flow as one that is always a flowing-over, a carrying-away, and a rushing-down. It is precisely this excessive flow that we see alluded to across many writings of the second half of the eighteenth century. Klopstock, speaking of his own strategies of poetic production in

1747, announces his plan to "plummet lawless Dithyrambs . . . in the fashion of Pindar's songs" (Klopstock, "Auf meine Freunde").[111] Taking Horace's Pindar as the epitome of genius, Lessing announces in 1758 that "true genius works out its own path through the biggest obstacles, like a raging stream" (Lessing, "Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend").[112] In England, Edward Young's influential *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) celebrates Pindar as an original genius while Young claims to himself "despair breaking through the frozen obstructions of age, and care's incumbent cloud, into that flow of thought" (338). In 1764, Herder describes the "spirit of the ode" as "a stream that tears away everything that moves in its current" (Herder, "Fragmente" 78f).[113] Gerstenberg, referring to both literary characters and readers as river sediment, suggests in 1767 that "the spirit of the poet tears . . . [the reader of Homeric texts] directly amongst the assembled characters" ("Briefe über die Merkwürdigkeiten" 397).[114] Lenz calls his poetry "land-flooding ("landüberschwemmend"; Anmerkungen"), and Friedrich Stolberg, leaving the realm of aesthetics, goes as far as to see in the over-spilling stream an image of freedom itself: "The stream of freedom! It pours itself over Germany" ("Freiheitsgesang").[115] The stream image in this sense never entails a mere flowing in the sense of uninterruptedness. The "stream" is dynamic. It contains force and opposite force. The flow of excess relies not on continuity, but on interruption and barriers to develop itself fully.

[111] "Pindar's Gesängen gleich . . . Satzungslos Dithyramben (zu) donnern."
[112] "Das wahre Genie arbeitet gleich einem reißenden Strome sich selbst seinen Weg durch die größten Hindernisse."
[113] "Der Geist der Ode ist . . . ein Strom, der alles Bewegbare in seinem Strudel fortreisst"
[114] "der Leser ist . . . bey den Versammlungen und Streitigkeiten der Homerischen Helden nicht etwa bloße Partey, die sich durch einen dritten etwas erzählen läßt; der Geist des Dichters reißt ihn mitten unter die Versammelten."
[115] "der Freiheit Strom! Er ergießt sich über Deutschland."

Of course, scholars have long recognized excess as a core element of the aesthetic program of *Sturm und Drang*. The aesthetics of jarring and the subsequent breaking free one finds in the period is frequently taken as evidence of the period's empty oppositionalism.[116] More recent accounts engaging with eighteenth-century anthropology and medical discourse read images of overflow as indicator for Sturm-und-Drang's subjectivism, as "excess of subjectivity" (Huyssen, "The Confusions of Genre" 399). As images for affect-expression overflow-topoi have been read as a "climbing feeling to conflicting excess" ("Gefühlssteigerung bis zum konfliktträchtigen Exzess"), as "uncontrollable affect dynamic" ("unkontrollierbare Affektdynamik"), or as "affect intoxication" ("Affektrausch"; Hajduk 434). However, if we regard the logic of swelling and overflow from the standpoint of scientific knowledge about rivers at the time, a different reading emerges. The flow of a river differs from the flow and circulation of blood in arteries and veins in important ways. In particular, in the mid-eighteenth century there emerges the realization that riverbeds are subject to change over the course of time, and, furthermore, that they have been shaped by the interplay of forces of water and soil itself.

3. Form-Content-Matter: The Question of River Formation in Eighteenth-Century Science

From mid-eighteenth century on, several important steps towards a better understanding of rivers were taking place—often motivated by the desire for utilization of rivers for the shipping of goods. With the dissemination of Newtonian law, it was understood that flow

[116] Isaiah Berlin, "Counter Enlightenment"

emerges through the law of gravity. As long as springs continue to flow, water must spread somewhere, and it will spread towards lower regions. At the same time, this knowledge seemed insufficient to explain the specific constitution of waterways in several respects, inviting further speculation. Unresolved questions included the fact that water flows in beds—rather than disgorging indiscriminately across the land from their elevated springs—as well as the fact that most river beds meander rather than taking the most direct, straight course. Also mysterious were the facts that many rivers flood on a regular basis or, on the other extreme, that many rivers dry out. And while calculating the current and water movement for canals and artificial water courses became increasingly achievable (though never entirely predictable), for natural rivers, with their irregular terrain, this was not possible. The discipline of hydrodynamic, as Oliver Darrigol puts it, emerged from a "split between the ideal and practical worlds of flow" posed by the insight that mathematical formulas on fluid motions "forbade the soaring of birds and made water rush at unreal velocities in channels or conduits" (vi).

In general, anything experienced as non-calculable ("irregularities") raised the question of whether the natural constitution of rivers was faulty in itself and had to be corrected, or whether it followed from an unknown set of natural laws. The scientific question regarding river formation and organization thus had larger implications concerning theological questions about the relation of God and natural law, as well as philosophies of history. Kant, in the second part of his 1763 book *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, draws on river

movements to demonstrate his point that nature is purposive and yet not supernaturally instituted.[117] First, he recites existing observations that rivers seem intentionally arranged:

> The entire surface of the earth not covered by water is threaded in the most beneficial fashion by the courses of rivers as by furrows. However, there are also so many inequalities, so many valleys and plains covering the surface of the earth that, at first sight, it looks as if the courses, in which the waters of the rivers flow, must of necessity have been especially constructed and ordered to that end. Otherwise, it is argued, the waters flowing from the heights would, of necessity, have strayed far and wide in all directions, following the regularities of the land, flooding many areas, converting valleys into lakes, and rendering the land wild and useless, rather than beautiful and well-ordered. Who can fail to notice the strong appearance of a necessary and extraordinary arrangement here? (169)

Kant recites the then long-established argument that the fact that rivers move in beds at all suggests their supernatural institution. Riverbeds, on this view, would exist prior to rivers. Against this, Kant proposes that the courses of rivers emerge in a process internal to rivers themselves:

> I think I can now reduce the entire mechanics governing the formation of the channels of rivers to the following simple principles. Spring-waters and rain-waters, flowing from the heights, initially poured down in an irregular fashion, following the gradient of the ground, filling up many valleys and spreading out over many flat regions. Where the water flowed most quickly, it was not so well able, because of its speed, to deposit its sediment [*Schlamm*]; instead, it deposited it far more plentifully on both sides. In this way the height of river-banks was raised, the strongest current of water staying within its channel. With the passage of time, when the supply of water was itself diminished (something that was bound to happen for reasons that are familiar to geologists), the river no longer overflowed the banks which it had itself built up. Regularity and order emerged from wild chaos [*wilden Unordnung*]. (170)

For the Kant of the 1760s, the river stands for nature's capacity to self-direct or self-determine.[118] Rivers raise their own beds in relation to the strength of their currents so

[117] Connected to this issue was also the larger question of whether river courses and behavior waere externally designed. Thomas Burnet's widely read 1681 treatise *Telluris Theoria Sacra* [*Sacred Theory of the Earth*, English edition in 1684) still interpreted floods both teleologically and theologically.
[118] Later, in the third *Critique*, Kant will argue that the purposiveness of nature is purely regulative, i.e. that it only *appears* as "self-directing" to the human mind.

that, over the course of time, originally equally spread water flows within a self-formed bed. It is also noticeable that even seemingly "chaotic" or interruptive events like waterfalls,[119] floods, or dried out rivers are seen as a necessary to the internal logic of river-formation. In fact, river formation entails the apparent paradox that, in order for a channel to emerge, its own boundaries must first be breached.

Like Kant, Buffon attempts to address the uncertainty surrounding river formation and organization. He observes in his influential *Histoire Naturelle* (1749) that "the motion of the waters in rivers is quite different from that supposed by authors who attempt to give mathematical theories on this subject" and admits that "on the whole, the theory of motions of running waters is still subject to many difficulties" (306). And yet, he argues for the importance of observing global river movement, mainly to prevent future disasters (294). Buffon's finding is that flooding and erosion are not random occurrences (or intentional divine events), but lawful:

> The steepest hills are diminished by the rain acting upon them with a greater degree of force, proportionate to their height, and consequently carry away sand and gravel in more considerable quantities, and with greater violence; the river is then constrained to change its bed, and seek the lowest part of the valley: to this may be added, that all rivers overflow at times, they transport and deposit mud and sand in different places, and that sand often accumulates in their own beds, and causes a swell of the water, which changes the direction of its course. (*Natural History 1: 294*)

In the seventeenth century, Bernhard Verenius had argued that stronger currents (resulting from stronger inclines) create a stronger water force, and cut more forcefully into stone, which offered a possible explanation for the existence of deeper river beds (and ultimately valleys) in mountain regions (*Geographia Generalis*)—a suggestion which would be taken up by Johann Georg Sulzer (*Kurzer Entwurf*, 1747) and proven

[119] Kant states that "waterfalls must have been frequent occurances in the initial state of chaos" (171).

only in 1774 by Jean-Étienne Guettard (Darmstaedter 188). Building on this thesis, Buffon develops the image of a self-organizing process in which steeper hills lead to stronger currents, which leads to stronger erosion, which leads to stronger sediment, which, in turn, leads to flooding, and which ultimately forces the stream to change "the direction of its [own] course," causing the river to meander. All elements, elevated springs, strong currents, river sediments, and flooding are necessary steps in the internal development of a river's course. "Obstacles" to a river's flow are being radically reinterpreted, no longer indicating a mere negative, a suspension of force. In the Newtonian sense, the obstacle here is itself a force or counter force, itself part of a dynamic process.

As is manifest in these texts, the understanding of rivers toward the latter part of the eighteenth century moved away from the idea of water flow as a mainly passive, shapeless phenomenon. Rivers were increasingly understood to have a shaping, determining capacity, capable even of creating deep valleys over time. But neither is it the case that this capacity was conceived as a lawless, destructive force. In many ways, the notion of the river must be seen to have emerged as *the* notion of an entity with a specific capacity to self-regulate the course of its movement and to determine its own directionality over the course of a long period of time. The river, seen this way, constitutes an ideal image for the ode's "lawless meter" (described by Horace), only that this idea is now given a specifically scientific grounding.

4. The Jarring Flow of German Language

When applied to the *Sturm und Drang* aesthetic of fluid excess, this perspective opens new interpretive possibilities for the metaphor of poetic overflow and the role of language therein. Where images of overflow are traditionally read to indicate a discharge of passions in spite of constraints against them, language is seen to embody the smallest possible, irreducible form of this constraint. On this reading, the thought, the spoken, and the written word—in this order—may be the means of any poetry, yet they ultimately inhibit natural expression. At best, language here functions as a mere "channel" for meaning.[120] Rivers, however, as they were understood within hydro- and geo-graphical accounts of the mid-eighteenth century, are never mere "channels" of either water or meaning.

At first look, the poetologies of artistic flow of *Sturm und Drang* seem to involve hierarchies in which the "flow of language" is seen as inferior to meaning. Stolberg's lyrical speaker, for instance, declares in the poem "Genie":

> When already the souls of expectant songs hover
> around the head, before the imitative
> Garment of language flows around them,
> Without inhibiting the spiritual flight!
>
> (Wenn schon die Seelen werdender Lieder mir
> Das Haupt umschweben, eh das nachahmende
> Gewand der Sprache sie umfließet,
> Ohne den geistigen Flug zu hemmen!; *Gesammelte Werke* 12)

At first sight the poem opens a hierarchical dualism between the flight of the spirit, on the one hand, and the merely imitative flow of language, on the other. At best, language does not hinder this flight ("keine Hemmung"), being quasi-non-existent. On the level of the function of the poem, however, a different understanding of the role of the language-

[120] Cf. Kittler about discoursive networks around 1800: "Erstens sind Sprachen ineinander übersetzbar und zweitens ist Sprache überhaupt bloßer Kanal" (129).

barrier emerges. It is important to note that, one the one hand, the "vestment" [*Gewandt*] of language is reduced to the activity of a mimicking "flowing around" [*umfließt*] "the souls of becoming songs" or odes. On the other hand, these songs are already emerging [*werdender*] as the lyrical voice streams. The overlapping of various temporalities [*Wenn schon*, *eh*, *nach-ahmend*, *ohne*] suggests a simultaneity and interdependence of the flow of language and the flight of the spirit, of "mimesis" and "original." Indeed, the mention of an inhibition [*hemmen*] is curious, even if it occurs in the negative sense, because it implies that this flow of language would be jarring under other circumstances. On the level of the function of the poem itself, the flow of language is freed or disobstructed *after* the fact, retroactively imposing a previous jamming as the grounds on which poetry can take place.

Such a function of the postpositional in language use is theorized by Lenz. Lenz locates creative flow in what he believes to be a characteristic feature of the German language in particular: the interplay of implication and retrospection resulting from the—typical in German—positioning of the verb at the end of a relative clause-sentence structure. Lenz first contrasts French and German versions of the same passage from Rousseau's *Emile*:

> With our foolish and pedantic methods we are always preventing children from learning what they could learn much better by themselves, while we forget what we alone can teach them. ("Emile, Or Education" 185, translation adjusted)
>
> (Notre manie enseignante et pédantesque est toujours d'apprendre aux enfants ce qu'ils apprendraient beaucoup mieux d'eux-mêmes, et d'oublier ce que nous aurions pu seuls leur enseigner; *Émile* 428).

Then quotes in German (ostensibly his own translation):

> Unsere unterrichtende pedantisierende Raserei bleibt immer den Kindern das, was sie viel besser von sich selber lernen würden, zu lehren, und das, was sie nur von

> uns lernen können, zu vergessen (2:780).

And interprets:

> See how the main word [the verb pairs "learning"/"teaching" ("lernen"/ "lehren") and "teaching"/ "forgetting" ("lernen"/ "vergessen")] here always integrates the minor concepts, tears them along with it, whereas main word and minor concepts in the French seem to be mingled randomly. Or at least the connection amongst the main words (this is what I call the temporal words, verbes) is torn through the minor concepts that have been placed amongst them.
>
> (Sehen Sie wie hier das Hauptwort immer die Nebenbegriffe mit einschließt, mit fort sich reißt, da beim Franzosen Hauptwort und Nebenbegriffe fast willkürlich untereinander vermengt zu stehen scheinen, wenigsten alle Verbindungen unter den Hauptwörtern [so nenne ich die Zeitwörter (verbes)] durch die dazwischengestellten Nebenbegriffe zerrissen ist; 2: 780).

Lenz develops a completely novel interpretation of the flow of language. He employs the topos of the raging stream in a sense that neither indicates being swept away by passion, nor the quasi-non-existence of language for the sake of the immediacy of expression. Rather, he suggests that it is the first, accrued part of a sentence which, only with the appearance of the verb at the end of a sentence, is carried away. Fluent, carrying language, according to Lenz, must jam itself—just as the river, on Buffon's account, builds up and then overflows its own sediment. Both flow and that which it carries away, on Lenz's account, emerge from the internal dynamics of German sentence structure. Its uneven terrain and jarring character are evaluated positively, as the capacity to create currents. In this, the German translation surpasses the original: whereas the former tears itself away in a current ("fortreißen"), the other one remains motionless and torn apart ("zerreißen"). The apprehension of the meaning of the text (Rousseau's self-driven education) is aided by the jarringness of the German flow of language, which resembles the stagnating form of a German mountain stream. German language hence does not hinder expression, but grounds its distinct flow.

In that Lenz suggests that German language is "fluent" or "streaming," his text contributes to the question of the possibility of the modern German ode—a question that is discussed by *Sturm und Drang* authors in the context of the more general debate at that time concerning the nature and operation of mimesis (*Nachahmungsdebatte*). Mainstream eighteenth-century climate theory had claimed that "northern languages" such as German lacked both vowels and the capacity to flow, and were accordingly unsuitable for poetic expression (see Chapter II). Herder, skeptical of the possibility of the modern German ode, also claims that a poetic stream like that of Pindar was principally not possible in German. In his *Fragments of a Treatise on the Ode* (1765) he thus calls the German ode a "Unding," meaning both a "non-thing" as well as something that is offensive (1: 89). In his early writings at least, Pindar remains, for Herder, an unachievable ideal, lost for modern Germans.

Herder's differenciation between the mediterreanean ode and the German non-ode can be related to his views about the differences between Menditerreanian and German bodies of water. The Pindaric river, on his acccount, is a grand Mediterreanian current:

> When Pindar seems to lose sight of his point in the power of imagination; so he finds his way back with even greater pomp, here with a universal high statement, there with an invocation of the muses etc. And so there flows on a majestic stream in its wide bed, plentiful enough to let out tributaries and economical to draw them back in, and rolls roaring down from the rock with a thousand hands, in order to gather again in the valley: a great, powerful stream, the name of its area;--but a rain shower that poured down from clouds into the sand, trickles away in the sand with a hundred branches without stem: it loses itself without name, and is no more.
>
> (Wenn Pindar sich von seinem Punkte in der Einbildungskraft zu verlieren scheint: so findet er sich mit desto größerem Pomp, hier mit einem allgemeinen hohen Spruche, dort mit einer Anrufung an die Muse etc. zurück: So fließt ein majestätischer Strom, reich um Arme auszulassen, und sparsam, sie wieder an sich zu ziehen, in seinem breiten Bette fort, und wälzt sich mit hundert Händen brausend vom Felsen herab, um sich im Thale zusammen zu finden: ein großer

> gewaltiger Strom, der Name seiner Gegend; – aber ein Regenguß, der sich aus den Wolken auf Sand ergoß, zerfließt mit hundert Aesten ohne Stamm im Sande: er verliert sich namenlos und ist nicht mehr; 1: 341).

Whereas Pindar's odes resemble a large river (possibly the Tiber with its tributaries), the modern German poet's attempted odes trickle away like rain on sand. The former are capable of bringing together different associative strings, just as a river unites different branches; the latter, however, is lost in the subjectivity of interpretation.

On my reading, then, the German ode is, for Herder, a "non-thing" not so much because it cannot exist, but because it does not exist. The Pindaric stream has long been flowing in its bed and has created, over time, a current strong enough to pull along its tributaries. Even bestowing its name upon its region, it has been an integral part of the region's development. In contrast to this stands the singular, top-down attempt of modern German poets to create rivers from rainfalls, lacking the embedding of interpretive traditions and culture. Where rain hits individual grains of sand rather than riverbeds in the singular event of a rain shower, no stream can possibly emerge. The German ode is an "Unding" in so far as the formation of rivers—like that of poetic traditions—takes more time and repetition then there has in Germany been occasion for.

However, even though Herder denies the possibility of a modern German ode in the style of a Pindaric river, he sees a potential compromoise between the subjectivist rain shower and the mythological stream: the lyrial creak. In his discussion of Klopstock's odes (1771), Herder stylizes Klopstock as the best possible approximation of a modern German ode-writer, calling him—if not a Pindaric stream—a "Bach" (creek): "Wie fliessend! Wie singend!," he describes the beginning of Klopstock's ode, and observes: "Aber nun, geräth der Bach mit einmal über Stein und Fels" and asks "wo scheint hier

Fortfluß, allmähliche Entwicklung, und das prophetische Fortleiten des Ohres zu bleiben?" (2: 787). But Herder is aware of the potential criticism that can be leveled at Klopstock and so reinterprets the jarring aspect of his poetry, mirroring Lenz, as the potential for something great: "Es wäre also Thorheit zu denken, daß man hier für Kl. Kritisierte," because "auch die verflochtensten, sich stemmendsten Strophengänge sind hier theils mit einer Macht durchgetrieben, daß die Worte mit ihrem Klange gleichsam wie Orpheus Steine und Fels folgen müssen" (*358*). Herder, it becomes clear, takes jarring poetic moments to be integral parts of a specific German type of streaming. Precisely because Klopstock's stanzas—in an allusion to Horace's image of the unwielding dithyramb—are bulky, the fact that they make it forward at all is even more impressive. The true force of poetry only unfolds where cumbersome words grind against language's uneven terrain. Essentially, Herder's message is similar to that of Lenz: there exist a German language-flow that, contrary to traditional understandings of flow, must chafe itself on itself. This type of flow replaces the more conceptually grounded "Fortfluß, allmähliche Entwicklung, und das prophetische Fortleiten des Ohres" of the slow-flowing, large streams of the ancients (*358*).[121] Hesistantly, Herder identifies this flow with the movement of an alpine creek.

5. National Currents and Foreign Influence

[121] Cf. Klopstock's Poem "The Creek" [*der Bach*]: "Es wendet nach dem Strome des Quells/ Sich der Lautenklang des wehenden Bachs./ Tief, und still strömet der Strom; tonbeseelt/ Rauschet der Bach neben ihm fort.// Inhalt, den volle Seel', im Erguss/ Der Erfindung, und der innersten Kraft,/ Sich entwirft,/ strömet; allein lebend muss,/ Will es ihm nahn, tönen das Wort."

River and stream topoi, in Herder's thought of the 1770s, do not so much develop theories of flow as do they conceptualize Herder's notion of cultural processes more broadly. The river helps Herder to think through a tension that all *Sturm und Drang* authors take an interest in: the relationship between continuous flow and influence, between originality and mimesis, or between what is one's own and what is foreign. Images of "streams" and "floods" line Herder's account of cultural history from antiquitiy to modernity in his 1778 text *On the Effect of Poetic Art on the Ethics of Peoples in Ancient and Modern* Times (*Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf Sitten der Völker in alten und neuen Zeiten*). Recycling theological accounts of the great flood, he propagates the idea that European cultural history moved from a state of initial flooding to the emergence of early trickles, to the emergence of larger currents. Crucial for the development of distinct currents, on Herder's account, was the contribution of migratory influences. Herder sees the high point of the cultural currents of the European middle ages to be when "northern" people moved south "like the waves of the sea" (*wie die Wellen des Meeres*; 4: 184), whilst "Arabs" "flood parts of Europe" (*einen Theil Europens überschwemmten*) in the other direction (4: 189).[122] Similarily, in his *Fragments on Newer German Literature* from the mid 1760s, Herder speaks of a "sarazenic flooding" (sarazenische Überschwemmung" 1: 284) which brought the "seed of poetic fables" ("Samen poetischer Fabel") onto the European continent (1: 284-285).

Against others, Herder evaluates this overstepping of streams and their confluences entirely positively. Taken together, diverse migratory influences, new

[122] And further: "Sowol Dichtkunst als Sitten der Völker Europens war damals ein so wunderbares Gemisch und zusammengesetztes Gebäude, daß wir von allen Seiten der Welt Materialien zusammenholen müssen, um den Einfluß des Einen ins Andere zu zeigen" (4:188).

currents, and the overflooding of existing water-ways lead, somewhat paradoxically, to the formation of individual and increasingly large streams over time. Only when the occident and orient became distinctive streams, and only once these distinct streams converged, did European culture emerge, and with it a distinct European mode of the poetic song, both unique and, at the same time, conditioned by non-European influences:

> Now stories, miracles and lies of a third continent flowed into it, too; North, Africa, Spain, Sicily, France, the holy and the fairy land were paired; The European knightly spirit became oriental and spiritual, there emerged *heroic*, *adventure*, and *miracle-epics*.
>
> Nun flossen Erzählungen, Wunder und Lügen noch eines dritten Welttheils dazu; Norden, Afrika, Spanien, Sicilien, Frankreich, das gelobte und das Feenland wurden gepaaret. Der europäische Rittergeist ward morgenländisch und geistlich; es entstanden *Heldengesänge*, *Abenteuer*- und *Wundererzählungen*; 4: 192).

European history until the Middle Ages, on Herder's account, follows the logic of a continuous river formation. If Herder regards the European middle ages as a high-time of poetic currents, his use of stream and flow metaphors declines, in this text, with his account of modernity. With modernity, Herder sees internal processes of river-formation displaced by top-down attempts to create culture. From here on, rivers are restricted in their development through overflow and influence. And, along with this curtailing of flow, the ode also went into decline.

6. Eighteenth-Century Efforts of Canalization

Stürmer und Dränger formulated a new appreciation for irregular types of flow and overflooding. This appreciation was especially relevant in the context of increasing attempts to straighten the courses of natural bodies of water so as to maximize their economic utility. Large canalization projects had been undertaken since the seventeenth

century and had rapidly increased during the eighteenth century, especially in France. The most prominent canalization project was the *Canal du Midi*, initiated in 1667 by Louis XIV, and finished over a hundred years later. In 1777, the *Canal* was connected to the Rhône, extending the reach of the *Canal* to Geneva. In 1787, the *Canal de Jonction* was built and connected to the already existing *Canal de la Robine* section of the *Canal du Midi*, offering a shippable passage from the Atlantic, across Narbonne and Port-la-Nouvelle, all the way through to the Mediterreanean sea. Parallel canalization projects across Euorpe focused on the facilitation of trade and commerce, the drainage of swamps to increase agriculturally utilizable areas, and the building of dykes to utilize flood plains (Cotte 65-78).

In this context, the *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics of a flooding and jamming type of flow appears as an attempt at *renaturalization* of these efforts to artificially modify European water ways. At times, *Sturm und Drang* authors make their stance against canalization efforts quite explicit. Lenz, for instance, describes his poetics as a kind of land-flooding measurement in the face of new dykes and redrawn banks, which he associates with French poetics:

> Is it not for this reason that you perceive a certain similarity in the plot in all French plays (as in the novels), which becomes indescribably disgusting when one has read or seen many of them? A clear proof of mere handicraft. For nature is manifold in all its effects, but handicraft is simple, and it is the breath of nature and the spark of genius that still compensates us from time to time with a bit of variation to bring us solace. Have no fear, dear audience, no matter how wide you open the damns and set the boarders, of being flooded with wood-be poets. They don't care for the open field; they prefer to crouch before the fortification of handiwork." (*Selected Works* 275).
>
> (Ist's nicht an dem, daß Sie in allen französischen Schauspielen (wie in den Romanen) eine gewisse Ähnlichkeit der Fabel gewahr werden, welche wenn man viel gelesen oder gesehn hat, unbeschreiblich ekelhaft wird. Ein offenbarer Beweis des Handwerks. Denn die Natur ist in allen ihren Wirkungen

> mannigfaltig, das Handwerk aber einfach, und Atem der Natur und Funke des Genies ist's, das noch unterweilen zu unserm Trost uns durch eine kleine Abwechselung entschädigt. Fürchte nicht, liebes Publikum, wenn du die Dämme so hoch aufziehst, die Grenzen so weit steckst, von Dichterlingen überschwemmt zu werden. Sie lieben das freie Feld nicht, sie befinden sich besser hinter den Außenwerken des Handwerks; 2: 643).

Lenz equates French poetry with French canalization and dyking. He sees such efforts as ignorant of the complex organizational structure of nature (in which floods and flood-planes have a definite purpose). The kind of flow that emerges post-canalization and post-dyking (poetic or otherwise) is, on Lenz's account, predictable, monotone, and unable to affect the audience.

Along similar lines, Werther, the titular character in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*), laments the loss of unpredictable streams in his times. Werther ascribes this loss to an overuse of damming, driven by an obsession with control:

> O my friends! Why is it that the torrent of genius so seldom bursts forth, so seldom rolls in full-flowing stream, overwhelming your astounded soul? Dear friends, because, on either side of this stream, respectable persons have taken up their abodes, and, forsooth, their garden-houses, tulip- and cabbage-beds would suffer from the torrent; wherefore they dig trenches, and raise embankments at the right time, in order to avert the impending danger.
>
> (Oh meine Freunde! Warum der Strom des Genies so selten ausbricht, so selten wie hohe Fluten heranbraust, und eure staunende Seele erschüttert. Liebe Freunde, da wohnen die gelaßnen Kerls auf beiden Seiten des Ufers, denen ihre Gartenhäuschen, Tupenbeete, und Krautfelder zu Grunde gehen würden, und die daher in Zeiten mit dämmen und ableiten der künftig drohenden Gefahr abzuwehren wissen; 1.2: 206).

Modern bourgeois society, for Werther, irrationally fears the stream of genius. Measurements to prevent it from occurring include the erecting dykes and the channeling off of strong currents. What is lost in such efforts (streams of genius, above all) is not at

all made up for by that which is gained, namely, the curated, petit-bourgeois nature of "tulip-beds," "cabbage-fields," and "garden sheds."

7. Goethe's Odes

Scholars have often read Goethe's *Sturm und Drang* odes as responses to Herder. The fact that Goethe writes in dithyrambs has in particular been highlighted as an explicit engagement with Herder's skepticism regarding the possibility of a modern German ode.[123] Though I agree with this interpretation, I also want to complement it with attention to the themes of "stream" and "flow," which has been under-developed in previous scholarship, but which I believe lays at the heart of the *Sturm und Drang* conversation around the ode. This conversation, as shown above, is also about rivers, and the question of "influence" in the emergence of national literatures. In service of this aim, in what follows I interpret two early, 1770s-era poems of Goethe ("Mohammed-Song" or "Song for Mohammed" ("Mahomets Gesang" or, in more recent interpretations "Mahometsgesang"; cf. commentary 1.1:945) and "Wanderer's Storm Song" ("Wandrers Sturmlied"), focusing in each case on their relation both to Herder's view of the od, and to the *Sturm und Drang* conception of the river.

a. "Mahomets Gesang"

Here is the full text of "Song for Mohammed," first published in 1773:[124]

[123] Birthe Hoffmann's "Strahl und Strom" shows that Herder was never entirely against the German dithyramb.

[124] The Carl-Hanser Edition (Münchner Ausgabe) lists the text only under dramatic works in its dialogue form between Ali and Fatema (1.1:518-519, cf. commentary 1008). I use the *Frankfurter Ausgabe* here, which prints the text as poem based on the edition in Goethe's first *Weimar Gedichtsammlung.*

SEE the rocky spring,
Clear as joy,
Like a sweet star gleaming!
O'er the clouds, he
In his youth was cradled
By good spirits,
'Neath the bushes in the cliffs.

Fresh with youth,
From the cloud he dances
Down upon the rocky pavement;
Thence, exulting,
Leaps to heaven.

For a while he dallies
Round the summit,
Through its little channels chasing
Motley pebbles round and round;
Quick, then, like determined leader,
Hurries all his brother streamlets
Off with him.

There, all round him in the vale,
Flowers spring up beneath his footstep,
And the meadow
Wakes to feel his breath.

But him holds no shady vale,
No cool blossoms,
Which around his knees are clinging,
And with loving eyes entreating
Passing notice;—on he speeds
Winding snake-like.

Social brooklets
Add their waters. Now he rolls
O'er the plain in silvery splendor,
And the plain his splendor borrows;
And the rivulets from the plain,
And the brooklets from the hillsides
All are shouting to him: Brother,
Brother, take thy brothers too,
Take us to thy ancient Father,
To the everlasting ocean,
Who e'en now with outstretched arms,
Waits for us,—

Arms outstretched, alas! in vain
To embrace his longing ones;
For the greedy sand devours us,
Or the burning sun above us
Sucks our life-blood; or some hillock
Hems us into ponds. Ah! brother,
Take thy brothers from the plain,
Take thy brothers from the hillsides
With thee, to our Sire with thee!

Come ye all, then!
Now, more proudly,
On he swells; a countless race, they
Bear their glorious prince aloft!
On he rolls triumphantly,
Giving names to countries. Cities
Spring to being 'neath his foot.

Onward, with incessant roaring,
See! he passes proudly by
Flaming turrets, marble mansions,
Creatures of his fulness all.

Cedar houses bears this Atlas
On his giant shoulders. Rustling,
Flapping in the playful breezes,
Thousand flags about his head are
Telling of his majesty.

And so bears he all his brothers,
And his treasures, and his children,
To their Sire, all joyous roaring,
Pressing to his mighty heart. ("Song for Mohammed," trans. Bowring)

(Seht den Felsenquell
Freudehell
Wie ein Sternenblick!
Über Wolken
Nährten seine Jugend
Gute Geister
Zwischen Klippen im Gebüsch.

Jünglingfrisch
Tanzt er aus der Wolke
Auf die Marmorfelsen nieder

Jauchzet wieder
Nach dem Himmel

Durch die Gipfelgänge
Jagt er bunten Kieseln nach,
Und mit frühem Führertritt
Reißt er seine Bruderquellen
Mit sich fort.

Drunten werden in dem Tal
Unter seinem Fußtritt Blumen
Und die Wiese
Lebt von seinem Hauch.

Doch ihn hält kein Schattental
Keine Blumen
Die ihm seine Knie umschlingen
Ihm mit Liebesaugen schmeicheln
Nach der Ebne dringt sein Lauf
Schlangewandelnd.

Bäche schmiegen
Sich gesellig an
Nun tritt er
In die Ebne silberprangend
Und die Ebne prangt mit ihm
Und die Flüsse von der Ebne
Und die Bäche von Gebürgen
Jauchzen ihm und rufen: Bruder!
Bruder nimm die Brüder mit!
Mit zu deinem Alten Vater
Zu dem ewgen Ozean
Der mit weitverbreiten Armen
Unsrer wartet
Die sich ach vergebens öffnen
Seine Sehnenden zu fassen
Denn uns frißt in öder Wüste
Gier'ger Sand
Die Sonne droben
Saugt an unserm Blut
Ein Hügel
Hemmet uns zum Teiche!
Bruder!
Nimm die Brüder von der Ebne
Nimm die Brüder von Gebürgen
Mit zu deinem Vater mit.

Kommt ihr alle! –
Und nun schwillt er
Herrlicher, ein ganz Geschlechte
Trägt den Fürsten hoch empor
Und im rollenden Triumphe
Gibt er Ländern Namen, Städte
Werden unter seinem Fuß.

Unaufhaltsam rauscht er weiter
Läßt der Türme Flammengipfel
Marmorhäuser seine Schöpfung
Seiner Fülle hinter sich.

Zedernhäuser trägt der Atlas
Auf den Riesenschultern, sausend
Wehen über seinem Haupte
Tausend Segel auf zum Himmel
Seine Macht und Herrlichkeit.

Und so trägt er seine Brüder
Seine Schätze seine Kinder
Dem erwartenden Erzeuger
Freudebrausend an das Herz.

Frankfurter Ausgabe 1: 193-195)

The poem follows the course of a stream, from its source through the mountains (stanzas 1–3), through a valley (4–5), into the plain (6–9), and finally into the ocean (10). Most scholars are in agreement that the stream here represents some form of development, either of human life in general (Wellbery, *Specular Moment*), of human genius in particular (King), of unlimited subjectivity (Nicholls), or of religion (Hegel, *Ästhetik 1:* 523).[125] Some commentators have pointed toward the poetological meaning of the image, finding in it an account of poetic progression (Jølle; Hegel, *Ästhetik*).

[125] Hegel uses "Song for Mohammed" to explore the extended metaphor [*ausfuuhrliche Metapher*], in which meaning is not spelled out, but contained within the exchange between figure and ground. To Hegel the river in the poem corresponds allegorically to the rise of Islam (*Ästhetik*).

Though development is clearly a theme, it should also be observed that the poem breaks with its own linear development, establishing vertical temporal connections across the different stanzas and stages. Where the river passes the valley, it already is no longer there, because "no shady vale" holds it back ("Doch ihn hält kein Schattental").[126] Where it hits the plain, it already anticipates the ocean ("Der mit weitverbreiten Armen/ Unsrer wartet"). Both retrospective and proactive moments in the poem occur whenever the river is called for by its tributaries or it, in turn, calls on them. As the river passes through the valley, the tributaries from the mountains address him: "brother! Ah! Brother,/ Take thy brothers . . . /With thee" ("Und die Bäche von Gebürgen/ Jauchzen ihm und rufen: Bruder!/ Bruder nimm die Brüder mit!"). The river then shouts in return: "Come ye all, then!" ("Kommt ihr alle!"), but at a point where it has already been revealed that not all tributaries will make it to the ocean ("Die sich ach vergebens öffnen/ Seine Sehnenden zu fassen"). Strikingly, the larger part of the sixth stanza is dedicated to impeded tributaries. At a point when the river has already been joined by other streams and is already "rolling—in splendor" ("silberprangend"), those streams that have become lakes, or are trickling away, shout out to "take them along" in what seems a hopeless attempt. It is not only that there is a mutual draw between earlier and later stages of the river to the effect of creating a semantic current across the poem. This current is also and especially created by those elements that long to be a river, but likely never will: the inhibited lakes and lost trickles in the sand. The notion of flow developed here is thus remniscient of that of Lenz: failed attempts and hemming moments are an integral part of a river's flow.

[126] Note that both the river [*der Fluss*] and the stream [*der Strohm*] are masculine nouns in German, and so the poem does not necessarily personalize and maculinize the river by referring to it as "he."

In those few cases where "Song for Mohammed" has been connected by scholars to Herder's theory of the ode, and in particular to Herder's text "Pindar und der Dithyrambensänger" (1767), Goethe is said to have "disproven" Herder effectively by creating modern German odes.[127] I do not want to contest this point per se. But I do find it incomplete as regards "Song for Mohammed." Here, Goethe's engagement with Herder's image of the Pindaric stream is more specific: it is the key reference on which Goethe bases his stream-poem. When "Song for Mohammed" is read as a response to Herder's claim that only in Pindar there "flows a majestic stream, rich enough to stretch arms out, and provident enough to draw them in" ("So fließt ein majestätischer Strom, reich um Arme auszulassen, und sparsam, sie wieder an sich zu ziehen"; 1: 341), the full poetological implication of "Song for Mohammed" comes to the surface. "Song for Mohammed" emerges not only as evidence of a German stream in the Pindaric style, but also as a poem *about* the ode.

Several aspects point towards this poetological interpretation. For one, there is the title, which has been the source of debate amongst scholars. For Hegel, "Mohammed" [*Mahomet*] refers to the prophet Mohammed, and Goethe's ode therefore to the rise of Islam. "Gesang," one possible translation of "ode," can in turn be read as reference to the genre of the ode, so that Goethe's poem would be a German ode that thematizes middle Eastern odes. In light of the fact that Herder connects the emergence of the "song" in European literary history with the rise of, and exchange with, Islam during the Middle Ages, the title "Mohammed's Song" can be read to refer to the phenomenon of poetic influences and developments across times and cultures. More specifically, it refers to

[127] Birthe Hoffmann engages with this argument, and also shows that Herder was never entirely against the German dithyramb.

"oriental" currents or odes as the condition for the possibility of "Western" or "Northern" poetry. Goethe's river as image for the ode explores the possibility of a German ode in the tension between distinct currents and influences. On this account, any German ode (such as "Song for Mohammed") would not be separate from the larger currents of world literature (as Herder might have it), but would instead be connected to them in a river-like system of intertextuality.

Other parallels with Herder's theory of the ode are even more pressing. The fact that Goethe describes the letting go and drawing-in of tributaries mirrors the technique that Herder takes to be characteristic of Pindar (see discussion above). The trickling away of sand, in turn ("For the greedy sand devours us") mirrors Herder's description of modern poetry as "a shower of rain, which pours down from the clouds into sand, [and] diffuses with a hundred branches without a stem into the sand: it peters out namelessly, and is no longer"(see discussion above).[128] Goethe's river, then, combines elements that, for Herder, ought to belong exclusively to either German modernity or to Mediterranean antiquity. Goethe's vision of the river entails that small trickles are not without impact, but contribute to larger streams as well. Figuratively speaking, Goethe emphasizes the potential that any poetic attempt has to become a cultural current, as well as the larger roles that individual poetic acts can play in the ever-developing history of world literature and of emerging local poetics.

A striking parallel emerges, furthermore, from the fact that Herder names "invocation" ("Anrufung") as one of Pindar's major strategies for maintaining flow. "Song for Mohammed" also employs this technique when the river depicted there is in

[128] "ein Regenguß, der sich aus den Wolken auf Sand ergoß, zerfließt mit hundert Aesten ohne Stamm im Sande: er verliert sich namenlos und ist nicht mehr" (1:341).

danger of halting. However, while Herder argues that it is Pindar who "finds his way back" through "invocation," in Goethe this is accomplished by the river itself. Here it is the tributaries calling to each other to be "taken" or, alternatively, to "come" along, thereby creating a flow across moments of stagnation. And while Herder describes the Pindaric stream as "a great, violent stream, the name of its region" ("ein großer gewaltiger Strom, der Name seiner Gegend"), the river in Goethe's poem "gives lands names" ("Gibt er Ländern Namen").

David Wellbery, who also reads the poem poetologically, has suggested that the river in "Song for Mohammed" represents a patriarchical logic of creation and relation. As he points out, the river will eventually be taken in by the ocean, which the poem calls the "generator" ("*Erzeuger*"; Wellbery, *Specular Moment*). Goethe's river, on this reading, would fit those traditional interpretations that align the *Sturm und Drang* period with notions of subjective genius and of the great [male] individual. Against this, I contend that this river should instead be seen as alternative to the genealogical, vertical logic of a family tree. As highlighted above, its striking feature is its horizontal connectivity, which augments whatever vertical development it may also have. The final stanza ("Und so trägt er seine Brüder/ Seine Schätze seine Kinder/ Dem erwartenden Erzeuger/ Freudebrausend an das Herz") leaves it purposefully open who "he" is, as well as which tributaries and flotsam are "brothers," "treasures," and "children." In the end, generator and children are interchangeable and imply the logic of a self-regulating stream and water-cycle consisting *of* and *as* all of its parts (including those inhibited trickles).

More suitable, therefore, is Cornelia Blasberg's interpretation of *Sturm und Drang* river-imagery as a purposeful alternative to the cult of a solitary, genius creator. Blasberg

reads stream imagery in the lyrik of the *Grove of Göttingen* (*Göttinger Hain*; a *Sturm und Drang* splinter group) as a vision of literary production that recognizes and celbrates the roles of intersubjective labour and intertextuality. The stream topos represents, on her reading, "a streaming, swirling, jumbled drifting of literary texts, the circulating of creative energy" (168).[129] Blasberg reads the stream as poetological account of the text as event ("Textereignis") beyond the assumption of an ineffable force or "ingenium est ineffabile" (ibid.). This understanding matches my observations above regarding the phenomenon of linguistic flow in Lenz and Herder. For Lenz and Herder, too, flow is an effect emerging dynamically *within* material poetic practice. Goethe's attempt to relocate Herder's focus on the Pindaric genius to the workings of the stream itself further supports this interpretation, and at the same time offers a more consistent conception of textual flow than that offered by Herder.

b. "Wandrers Sturmlied"

Goethe's engagement with Herder's river-ideal is continued in his poem "Wanderer's Storm Song" (likely from 1772), written within a year or so of "Song for Mohammed" (1773). "Wanderer's Storm Song" is regarded as both one of Goethe's most difficult poems, and as one of his most *Strum und Drang* works. The dithyrambic hymn's formal structure is elliptic, associative, and full of allusions, most of them to aspects of Greco-Roman mythology. The poem's exact topic has long been the subject of controversy, but it has often been read in light of sentiments typically associated with *Sturm und Drang* thought. Scholars have observed in the poem a poetics of heightened

[129] Ein "vom jeweiligen Autor unabhängig strömendes, strudelndes Durcheinandertreiben literarischer Texte, das Zirkulieren kreativer Energie."

subjectivity, autonomy, genius, and a promethean "competition with the gods" ("Sich-Messen mit den Göttern"; Selbmann 654; see also Schmidt, *Gelehrte Genialität* 166). Along these lines, the poem has also frequently been seen as an exploration of human/non-human nature relationships (Kaufmann; Kaiser "Wandrer und Idylle").

At the center of the poem stands the progression of the lyrical narrator through a storm-ridden landscape, who calls out to both "Genius" and "muses" for support. The first two stanzas of the earliest version (probably written around 1772) read:

> He [or that] whom thou ne'er leavest Genius,
> Feels no dread within his heart
> At the tempest or the rain
> He whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
> Will to the rain clouds,
> Will to the hailstorm,
> Sing in reply
> As the lark sings,
> O thou on high!
>
> Him whom thou ne'er leavest Genius,
> Thou wilt raise him above the mud-track
> With thy fiery pinions
> He will wander,
> As with flowery feet
> Over Deucalion's flood-mud,
> Python-slaying, light, glorious,
> Pythius Apollo
> Him whom thou ne'er leavest Genius,
>
> (*Poems* 227-228, translation slightly modified)
>
> (Wen du nicht verlässest Genius
> Nicht der Regen nicht der Sturm
> Haucht ihm Schauer übers Herz
> Wen du nicht verlässest Genius,
> Wird der Regen Wolke
> Wird dem Schloßensturm
> Entgegensingen wie die
> Lerche du dadroben,
> Wen du nicht verlässest Genius.

Den du nicht verlässest Genius,
Wirst ihn heben übern Schlammpfad
Mit den Feuerflügeln
Wandeln wird er
Wie mit Blumenfüßen
Über Deukalions flutschlamm
Python tötend leicht groß
Pythius Apollo
Den du nicht verlässest Genius; 1.1:197).

With its recurring invocations of a "genius," "Wanderer's Storm Song" develops one of the key concepts of the *Sturm und Drang* period. In that the lyrical speaker evokes "genius" in order to "sing against" ("entgegensingen", above translated as "sing in reply") the storm, the poem has been read to juxtapose humanity with nature, celebrating anthropogenic independence from natural circumstance (Schmidt 197; Witte 97; Schärf 28; Kemper 171). On this reading, "Wanderer's Storm Song" portrays a sublime nature that no longer poses a real threat, but is rather a stimulus for human creativity. Furthermore, the reference to genius, muses, and, later on, to poets, including Pindar, evidences the poetological quality of the poem (Kaufmann; Hoffmann; Wellbury, *Work*). On this reading, poetic genius makes humanity, to borrow a line from the poem, "raise above the mud-track" ("Wirst ihn heben übern Schlammpfad") in the sense of making humanity independent from its natural circumstances.

A different reading emerges, however, if "Wanderer's Storm Song" is read in regard to the river as a poetological topos. On this reading, the "Storm Song" appears as an attempt to embed poetry within non-human nature, rather than lifting poetry up above it. The value of this reading emerges, especially, when the "Storm Song" is read alongside "Song for Mohammed." Even though both poems are often grouped together as

hymns stemming from the same phase of Goethe's authorship, the dialogue evoked across them and through their shared imagery has been largely overlooked.[130]

In the "Storm Song," the hypothetical subject (hypothetical since it is formulated as a conditional: "he whom" and "him whom") is raised above a mud-track ("Schlammpfad"), that shortly later is revealed to be connected to extensive flooding ("Deukalions Flutschlamm"[131]), floral growth, and transformation ("wandeln"), "wandeln" meaning both to wander, and to transform. In "Song for Mohammed" we have a similar combination of flower and foot. Here flowers are said to grow under the river's "footstep" ("Fußtritt"). "Wanderer's Storm Song," moreover, states that a "he" will "wander"/"transform" ("wandeln)" across flood-muds ("Deukalions Flutschlamm") passing the mythological serpant Python ("Python tötend leicht groß"). In "Song for Mohammed," with very similar imagery, the river is described as as wandering or transforming in a way that is itself snake-like, or snake-related ("schlangenwandelnd"). The "snake" in "Song for Mohammed" refers quite clearly to the river meander ("winden oder schlängeln"). This opens the question whether the "they whom" (in German "wen" and "den" are not gendered) in "Wanderer's Storm Song," might not also refer to an impersonal stream. If the poem is read as poetological account of artistic creation, as has been suggested by scholars, then "they" or "who" would not represent the poet or lyrical subject as much as the less individualized, intersubjective poetic flow itself, which is seperate from the speaker. That "who" would, on this account, represent the poetic

130 Scholars who have pointed to "poetic flow" as a shared topic amongst the two poems, while not developing these similarities it in depth, include Wellbery and Jølle.
131 In the survey of ancient mythology told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, Deukalyon and Pyrrha are the only survivers of a great flood sent to punish humans (a story similar to the narrative of the book of *Genesis*).

materiality of water, and genius its flow or its form. “Wanderer’s Storm Song,” on this reading, enacts the “stream of genius” (*Strom des Genies*) that Lichtenberged had mocked in the quote that this chapter opened with.

This reading of the “stream of genius” as the real protagonist of the “Storm Song” is also supported by the presence of a more obviously poetological stream topos midway through the poem. The full stanza in question reads:

> Why doth my lay name thee the last?
> Thee, from whom it began,
> Thee, in whom it endeth,
> Thee, from whom it flows,
> Jupiter Pluvius!
> Thee, thee streams my song,
> Jupiter Pluvius.
> And a Castalian spring
> Runs a fellow brook,
> Runs to/for the idle ones,
> Mortal, happy ones,
> Apart from thee,
> Jupiter Pluvius
> Who coverest me around,
> Jupiter Pluvius! (*Poems* 229)

> (Warum nennt mein Lied dich zuletzt?
> Dich von dem es begann
> Dich in dem es endet
> Dich aus dem es quoll
> Jupiter Pluvius.
> Dich dich strömt mein Lied
> Jupiter Pluvius.
> Und Castalischer Quell
> Quillt ein Nebenbach,
> Quillet müßigen
> Sterblich Glücklichen
> Abseits von dir
> Jupiter Pluvius
> Der du mich fassend deckst
> Jupiter Pluvius; 1.1: 199)

The stanza connects to the theme of tributary/main-stream relations addressed in both "Song for Mohammed" and in Herder's praise of Pindar's odes as "a majestic stream, rich in letting its arms out, and economical in drawing them back in"[132] But in contrast to Herder, the "Storm Song" breaks with the expectation that tributaries –representing a poem's continuous element—should flow back into a main stream in order to create a poetic whole. Indeed, scholarship has observed that the tributary in the "Storm Song" is not scrutinized any further after this stanza, and thus remains a dead end, if not, on one reading, a "danger" ("Gefahr") to poetic flow (Selbmann 65; Kaufmann).

It is important to note, however, that the subcategorical "offside" ("abseits") and "side" ("neben") of the main stream occur alongside imagery of surplus and overflow, neither of which fit the notion of the large majestic stream. The stanza also "gushes" ("quoll"), "streams" ("ströhmt"), "trickles" ("rinnt", at least in the later version], mentions a "castalic spring" ("castalischer Quell"), and, finally, addressed the covering capacity of a flood-like Jupiter Pluvius—the god of rain. The stanza as a whole, then, is positioned against the ideology of economic navigability, and propagates instead the loosening of tracks and tributaries as a principle of natural and poetic form. In this sense, the poem also takes a stance against Herder's dismissal of modern odes as impact-less rainfalls. Rain and river, in the "Storm Song," are not exclusive catageories, but are in fact part of the same water cycle. Jupier Pluvius—the god of rain—is, in the stanza above, identified as locus of both "beginning and end" ("Dich von dem es began/ Dich in

[132] "Ein majestätischer Strom, reich um Arme auszulassen, und sparsam, sie wieder an sich zu ziehen" Compare this to Lenz, who, in the "Anmerkungen," says this about the structure of dramatic plot: "Bei uns ist's die Reihe von Handlungen, die wie Donnerschläge auf einander folgen, eine die andere Stützen und heben, in ein großes Ganzes zusammenfließen müssen (2: 655–656).

dem es endet") and of "everything" ("alles"). The lines recall the ocean in "Song for Mohammed" as receiving "producer" ("Erzeuger") of the river, and claim the same status and title for rain. The lines:

> Thee, thee streams my song,
> Jupiter Pluvius.
> And a Castalian spring
> Runs a fellow brook,
>
> (Dich dich strömt mein Lied
> Jupiter Pluvius.
> Und Castalischer Quell
> Quillt ein Nebenbach; 1.1:199)

equate stream [*strömt*], song [*Lied*], and rain [*Jupiter Pluvius*] into a single cycle.

This circular strategy is also reflected in the formal structure of the poem. A common strategy is to place the grammatical object of one verse, enblembmatically, in a separate verse, making it the potential object (and sometimes grammatical subject) of another. Quite ambiguously, the speaker's "song," "streams" Jupiter Pluvius. But a reading according to which the tributary instead "gushes" Jupiter Pluvius is also possible. Here are just a few of the relevant statements contained within the lines above:

> a) My Song Streams You (*Mein Lied strömt Dich*)
> b) My Song Streams Jupiter Pluvius (*Mein Lied strömt Jupiter Pluvius*)
> c) To you, Jupiter Pluvius and Castillian Spring (*Dich, Jupiter Pluvius und Castalischer Quell*)
> d) My Song and [my] Castillian Source Stream Thee (*Mein Lied und castilischer Quell strömt Dich*)
> e) A Tributary Gushes Thee (*Dich quilt ein Nebenbach*)

The "Storm Song" thus evokes a circular economy on the level of both content and form. However, this is a circularity that lies beyond the grasp of the lyrical subject. Figuratively speaking, "Wanderer's Storm Song" presents an elyptic or fragmentary stream, whose flow is situated within its larger system of reception, impact, and influence. This concept

of flow matches Blasberg's interpretation of the stream topos as a poetological account of the material, intersubjective, and intertextual aspects of artistic creation.

The final stanza ends with a suprising turn to the lyrical subject and a surprisingly explicit exploration of human/non-human environment relationships. This exploration comes in the form of a a variation of lines from Horace's Pindaric ode, which reads "Like a river descending from a mountain/ swollen by rains beyond its usual banks,/ so Pindar's song/ foams and precipitates and dashes down/ boundless and profound" (Horace 155). The "Storm Song," in turn, concludes with an image of bad weather [*Kieselwetter*] having reached the valley, upon which it gushes down in Pindaric fashion:

> And dust rolls,
> As from the mountain fall
> Bad weather in the valley,
> The dangers of your soul glowed, Pindar,
> Courage. – Glowing? –
> Poor heart!
> There, on the hill,
> Heavenly power!
> Just enough glow,
> Toward my hut,
> Thither to wade!
>
> (Und sich Staub wälzt
> Wie von Gebürg herab sich
> Kieselwetter ins Tal wälzt
> Glühte deine Seel Gefahren Pindar
> Mut Pindar – Glühte –
> Armes Herz –
> Dort auf dem Hügel –
> Himmlische Macht –
> Nur so viel Glut –
> Dort meine Hütte –
> Zu waten bis dort hin; 1.1: 199-200)

The lyrical subject hopes to "wade" back to its hut, questioning its courage and fitness for a comparison with Pindar. Whereas one string of scholarship has interpreted this concession as Goethe's breaking with concepts of genius (e.g. Gerhard Kaiser, Klaus

Weimar), Sebastian Kaufmann suggests that the ending offers a corrective to eighteenth-century accounts of the subjectivity of genius. The ending of the "Storm Song," for Kaufmann, marks "a decicive rejection of the creative subject's striving to emancipate itself from nature" (89).[133] Kaufmann sees in the "Storm Song" an articulated vision of the sublime, one that contrasts with that of Kant, and that propagates an "especially intensive relationship with nature" as the ground for art, rather than its "overcoming" (51–52).[134]

To this I want to add a remark on the terminology of the hut [*Hütte*] alongside the "just enough glow" [*nur so viel Glut*] and the "heavenly power" [*Himmlische Macht*]. All of this recalls Goethe's "Prometheus," which, in Chapter II, I read to represent the *Sturm und Drang* ideal of a balance between human and non-human nature. As I also argued in that chapter, this promethean balance differs both from late-stage, anthropocentric visions of sublime nature, and from the figuring of Prometheus as climate-changer common in mainstream Enlightenment discourse around 1770. "Wanderer's Storm Song" further supports this reading of *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics. The poem envisions poetics as a point of contact between humans and their non-human environments.

More strongly than Kaufmann, therefore, I would like to stress that the lyrical narrotor's final words are not a defeat. The wading, the comparably dim glowing ember, and the hut—each surely contrast with the "heavenly power" and "flowing" associated with genius. But they also form a telos that is desirable and accepted, as is clearly

133 "Eine entschiedene Absage an das Bestreben des kreativen Subjekts, sich von der Natur zu emanzipieren."
134 My (selective) translation of: "nicht die Fähigkeit zur Überwindung der Natur und damit der 'Grenzen der Menschheit,' sondern ein privilegiertes, besonders intensives Verhualtnis zur Natur, das Bedingung für seine künsterische Kreativität ist."

expressed in yearning "Thither to wade" [zu waten bis dort hin]. My earlier observation that stagnation and hemming were, in the 1770s, developed as integral elements of flow suggests a reading of Goethe's poem according to which poetic "winding" [*winden*] and the lyrical subject's "wading" [*waten*] are not juxtaposed, but related. We might even say that the "Storm Song" develops a *poetics of climatic exposure*, in contrast to the standard view of poetry as fortification against climatic conditions.

In conclusion, then, the "Storm Song" illustrates several characteristic features of the ideas of "flow" and "stream" in the *Sturm und Drang* years. As I have shown, poetic images of flowing and streaming should be more firmly placed alongside scientific discourses on rivers and river management than they have thus far been. Drawing from and responding to both the poetological river imagery of antiquity and to eighteenth-century understandings of river formation and management, *Sturm und Drang* authors developed poetological rivers and explored the "flow" of the material qualities of German language in the tension between cultural currents of influence and novelty. Rivers, streams, and waters of all kinds serve *Sturm und Drang* authors to think poetry as both climatically specific, and as shared across climates. In striking ways, the *Sturm und Drang* poetics of flow is directed against anthropogenic river management and channeling. This notion of poetic flow is marked by its lack of and resistence to navigability. In the end, the result of the "stream of genius" discussed here turns out to differ significantly from Lichtenberg's association of the stream-of-genius topos with hubris, incommunicability, and destructivity. The stream and flow of genius, in its *Sturm und Drang* usage, serves rather to divert power away from the artistic subject and towards materiality and the gravity of language, towards interrextuality and interpretation

across time and cultures, and towards non-human environments as self-directing wellsprings of artistic creativity.

CHAPTER V: WEATHER

> "Well, well! Storm and Urge it is!—But, if I may ask, what does it mean? I can't think of anything! Is there a storm in it?—Not that I know of!"
>
> ("So, so! Sturm und Drang also!—Aber wenn ich bitten darf, was heißt das wol? Ich kann mir nichts dabey denken! Kommt etwas ein Sturm drinn vor?—Das ich nicht wüßte!; Wagner 1777, 132)

Belonging to the generation following the authors of *Sturm und Drang*, Georg Büchner (1813–1837) imagines Lenz's poetry to originate from a foggy and wet landscape. The first lines of his novella *Lenz* (1835) read:

> On the 20th Lenz went through the mountains. The peaks and high slopes in snow, grey rock down into the valleys, green fields, boulders, and pine trees. It was cold and damp, water trickled down the rocks and sprang over the path. Pine branches hung down heavily in the moist air. Grey clouds moved across the sky, but everything so dense, and then the fog steamed up, and trailed, oppressive [heavy] and damp, through the bushes, so sluggish [inert], so shapeless. (84)[135]
>
> (Den 20. ging Lenz durch's Gebirg. Die Gipfel und hohen Bergflächen im Schnee, die Täler hinunter graues Gestein, grüne Flächen, Felsen und Tannen. Es war naßkalt, das Wasser rieselte die Felsen hinunter und sprang über den Weg. Die Äste der Tannen hingen schwer herab in die feuchte Luft. Am Himmel zogen graue Wolken, aber alles so dicht, und dann dampfte der Nebel herauf und strich schwer und feucht durch das Gesträuch, so träg, so plump; Büchner 31)

According to Büchner's novella, bad weather is the "environment" in which the *Sturm und Drang* movement took shape. This environment is characterized by a cold wetness that penetrates everything. Water is present in solid [*Schnee*], liquid [*Wasser*] and gaseous forms [*Nebel*, *Wolken*], melting and dripping onto stones and trees and steaming into the air. Calling these processes "träg" (inert) gives Büchner's description a realist

[135] Translation by Henry J. Schmidt, my literal translations given in square brackets.

tone, at once distinct from the ideal of natural beauty, and connected to the terminology of 18th-century scientific discourse (*Trägheitsgesetz* or the "law of inertia"). Büchner's materialist invocation of weather, and his projection of this onto the *Sturm und Drang* period, as this chapter will show, nicely captures the distinctive *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics of weather. For the evocation of rainclouds, mists, and thunder is a distinguishing feature of *Sturm und Drang* texts, which sets them apart from the dominant aesthetic idylls of their time. Büchner's use of scientific terminology is also apt, since the *Sturm und Drang* poetics of (bad) weather is grounded in the novel conception of physical weather that emerged in 18th-century meteorology. For *Sturm und Drang* authors, fogs, storms, and other weather-related occurrences are understood not metaphorically, as they had often been treated before, but as literal physical phenomena embedded within larger global and meteorological processes.

The thunderstorm, for instance, is one of the most common meteorological phenomena found in *Sturm und Drang* texts. Klinger's *Die Zwillinge* (1776) provides what might be the most striking example. The tragedy develops alongside the brewing of a major thunderstorm. The storm is anticipated in the first two acts, and rummages its way through the third act, striking down Ferdinando's favorite tree the night before he is struck down at the hands of his own brother. Lotte and Werther in Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774), in turn, first become close in the midst of a thunderstorm. As the guests at the social gala they attend panic in fear of being struck by lightning, Lotte distracts the group with a counting game. Later, Lotte and Werther watch the passing storm together through a window, echoing Klopstock's depiction of a thunderstorm in "Die Frühlingsfeier" (1759), a poem that was a formative influence for many *Sturm und*

Drang figures. Rain, fog, and mist also make regular appearances in *Sturm und Drang* works. Goethe's *Sesenheimer Liebeslyrik* of 1771 evokes foggy landscapes that are forlorn, but nevertheless beautiful: "Ein grauer trüber Morgen/ Bedeckt mein Liebes Feld,/ Im Nebel tief verborgen,/ Liegt um mich her die Welt" (1.1: 196). A character in Lenz's 1775 satire *Pandaemonium Germanicum* complains repeatedly about the rain: "Aber we! es fängt wieder an zu regnen. Himmel!" (1: 248).

Extant scholarship has tended to approach such stormy and foggy elements primarily with an eye to key literary-historical precursors, framing this dimension of *Sturm und Drang* as a reflection of nostalgia. Shakespeare (especially *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*) and Klopstock are each rightly seen to have shaped the role of weather in *Sturm und Drang* drama (e.g. Hurlebusch; Alt 153-154, Leuschner 47). James Macpherson's (1736-1796) assembled cycle of pseudo-historical Scottish Gaelic epic mythological poems, ostensibly authored by the ancient poet Ossian—the first of which were published in 1760, with the collection *The Works of Ossian* appearing in 1765—is also recognized as an important influence on the *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics of weather and, in particular, on the *Sturm und Drang* interest in fog (e.g. Schulz 271–273; Schmidt, "Nebeldämmer" 58-61). Hugh Blair (1718–1800), one of the most prominent contemporary defenders of the authenticity of Macpherson's collection, identified both storms and fog as key features of Ossian's works and a marker of their "northernness": "We meet with no Grecian or Italian scenery but with the mists and clouds, and storms, of a northern mountainous region" (1763, 53). With explicit reference to Ossian, Herder would later declare, in a letter to Caroline Flachsland (1750–1809), a mountain landscape

"between frost and storm and fog" to be his personal aesthetic preference (1777, 270).[136] Goethe's Werther also refers to Ossian's formula of storm and fog, praising the text for carrying him off into a world "blown over by the storm wind, which leads the spirits of the fathers in steaming fogs" (1.2: 264).[137] As discussed from a different angle in Chapter I of this dissertation ("Climate"), with their depictions of storms and mists, some *Sturm und Drang* authors do indeed re-imagine the aesthetic ideal of the northern landscape portrayed in the *The Works of Ossian*. In this vein, the *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics of storm and fog could be read as a marker of nostalgia for a lost, fictional past—the ancient north—and of a commitment to an irrationalist natural-religious ideology that departs from the modern, scientific conception of nature becoming more and more institutionalized around them.

While many readings take the *Sturm und Drang* relation to weather as evidence of the period's embrace of nationalism and irrationalism, others contend that this relation must be understood in purely figurative terms. The expression "*Sturm und Drang*" itself, on this reading, must not be mistaken as having anything to do with weather in a literal sense. Rather, the phrase is taken to stand for inwardness and the movement of emotions, particularly as these were debated in theories of affect around 1800. Heinrich Leopold Wagner's contemporaneous commentary on Klinger's 1777 play *Sturm und Drang* (which would eventually give the period its name) is often pointed to in support of this interpretation. As cited in the epigraph to this chapter, Wagner first formulates, then

136 "Aber das fühle ich doch stets, mein Eden ist mehr eine alte Celtische Hütte auf einem rauhen Gebürge, zwischen Frost und Sturm und Nebel."
137 "Ossian hat in meinem Herzen den Homer verdrängt. Welch eine Welt, in die der Herrliche mich führt. Zu wander uuber die Heide, umsaust vom Sturmwinde, der in dampfenden Nebeln, die Geister der Väter im dämmernden Lichte des Mondes hinführt."

speculates upon, and finally settles his rhetorical question of what Klinger's *Sturm und Drang* means: "But, if I may ask, what does it mean? I can't think of anything! Is there a storm in it?—Not that I know of!" (1777, 132). Following Wagner, commentators in recent decades have taken *Sturm und Drang* to be, in the words of Matthias Luserke-Jaqui, "a formula for the characterization of a specific psychological and mental condition" ("Einleitung" 6).[138] The popular-interest *Goethezeitportal* website states even more explicitly that *Sturm und Drang* must be understood figuratively, and so dissociated from the actual weather: *Sturm und Drang* has "nothing to do with wind and weather, but rather symbolically with feelings and passions, which push outwards und articulate themselves in emotional outbursts and expletives" ("Sturm und Drang. Einleitung").[139] Weather imagery, according to this set of readings, is a stand-in for emotion and its expression, drawing upon the histories of rhetoric and religion, and situated within the broader turn to affect in the 18th century (Campe; Langen). In contrast to those readings mentioned above that see the *Sturm und Drang* treatment of weather as backward-facing, nationalist, and irrationalist, the figurative interpretation does not challenge the modernity of *Sturm und Drang*, but instead firmly situates the period within the German enlightenment. Here, *Sturm und Drang* is taken to be connected to the broader project of 18th-century science, in particular historical anthropology, in its emphasis on affect and emotion; however, owing to the rejection of any literal reading of weather phenomena in *Sturm und Drang* works, no substantial connection to 18th-century meteorology is drawn.

138 "Formel zur Charakterisierung einer bestimmten psychischen und mentalen Befindlichkeit."
139 "Sturm hat dabei nichts mit Wind und Wetter zu tun, sondern eher symbolisch mit Gefühlen und Leidenschaften, die sich nach außen drängen und sich äußern in Gefühlsausbrüchen und Kraftausdrücken."

This chapter is an attempt to reconcile these two predominant readings. By highlighting the growing importance of meteorological science immediately prior to and during the 1770s and demonstrating the link *Sturm und Drang* authors themselves drew between the literal-environmental and figurative-poetological meanings of meteorological phenomena, I hope to establish that the *Sturm und Drang* poetics of weather is *both* thoroughly modern and mediated by contemporary natural science (as recognized in the latter reading) *and* committed to the importance of meteorological phenomena as literal, historically consequential events.

To show this, I use as my primary example the appearance within multiple *Sturm und Drang* dramatic works of the term and concept *wettern*, which literally means "weathering," as, for instance, in a "thundering" delivery of speech. *Wettern*, I will argue, is paradigmatic of the dramatic language of *Sturm und Drang* as such.[140] It most often occurs in the form of a crude cuss or exclamation of surprise in connection with the archetype of the *Kraftgenie* (forceful genius) or *Kraftkerl* (forceful guy), as in "Was tausend Hagelwetter" ("What in a Thousand Hailstorms") from Lenz's *Die Soldaten* (1776; 1: 203), "Sackerment und all das Wetter!" ("Zounds and all the weather!") from Lenz's *Der Hofmeister* (1774; 1: 82), "Blitz und Donner!" ("Lightning and Thunder!") from Wagner's *Die Kindermörderin* (1776; 35), or "ey wetter!" ("Oi weather!") from Friedrich Müller's *Golo und Genovefa* (1776; 38). Though these cases employ *wettern*

[140] The word *wettern* was rarely used before the 18th century (amongst others by Luther, probably in the style of biblical language), and seems, prior to the 18th century, to have never been conceptualized. The first dictionary *mentioning* wettern as a type of swearing is Steinbach's *Vollständiges deutsches Wörterbuch* (1734), under "gewettert." "Häftige Worte aus stoßen" (987) is given as a secondary meaning. The *Grimm* dictionary already documents a complete metaphorization in its definition of "wettern": "in heutiger Sprache fast nur noch in übertragenem Sinne geläufig; insbesondere 'fluchen, schimpfen'" ("wettern"), similar to their definition of "donnern" as "laut und heftig reden in edler und in gemeiner Entrüstung" ("donnern").

for the sake of comical relief and as marker of the outsider-status of the *Kraftkerl*, it is employed with more pathos in other instances. In Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1773–1780), for instance, the character Franz Moor calls out, "dass dich der Donner stumm mache!" (1: 582), while in Klinger's *Die Zwillinger*, Guelfo proclaims, "will kein Donner Nieder" (2: 74). These are desperate, serious appeals in the rhetorical tradition of the *exsecratio*. I will also attend to cases where *Sturm und Drang* use of *wettern* has a meta-fictional function. This will in turn reveal the sense in which *wettern* is a programmatic element of *Sturm und Drang* drama. Sickingen's announcement, in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), that "ich will kommen wie ein Hagelwetter" (1.1 628) addresses media-related conventions surrounding the theatrical weather machine. Similarly, the opening lines of Klinger's *Sturm und Drang* ("Heyda! nun einmal in Tumult und Lärmen, daß die Sinnen herumfahren wie Dach-Fahnen beym Sturm" (5), can be read self-referentially, implying a weather-like transfer of sensation from the stage to the audience.

I argue that the different types of *wettern* found within *Sturm und Drang* works enact a type of speech modeled on the contemporary meteorological notion of weather, which was a still-emerging object of knowledge at the time. The dynamization of weather in meteorological science from the mid-18th century onward supplied the basis for the dynamization of dramatic language in *Sturm und Drang*. My reading poses a direct challenge to the figurative-metaphorical understanding of weather-imagery in *Sturm und Drang*, such as that offered by Marianne Willems, who, in her typology of the archetype of the *Kraftkerl*, reads instances of *wettern* in *Sturm und Drang* works as typical of a "linguistic emotional outburst" ("wortreicher Wutausbruch"; 158). My reading also contests the tendency to see *Sturm und Drang* weather imagery as a return to earlier

historical forms, whereby, for example, the storm is read in pietistic terms (Langen), clouds, sun, or lightning are seen as baroque allegories (Mattenklott; Baum 413), and wind or thunder are taken to be remainders of the rhetorical tradition (Till 181; Campe 123).[141] A closer consideration of developments in the history of meteorology around this time, and of the impact of these developments on *Sturm und Drang* authors, reveals that instances of *wettern* in *Sturm und Drang* dramatic works must be read both literally and poetologically insofar as the hallmark of then-emerging meteorological science was the synthesis of formerly separate phenomena (e.g. lightning, clouds, sunlight, and storms) into a continuous process with a unified internal dynamic. On this account, the dynamization of weather in modern meteorology sparked a parallel dynamization of dramatic language in *Sturm und Drang*. *Wettern* is thereby shown to be prototypical of the dynamic speech which, as others have observed, first appears in 1770s German drama and survives into later dramatic periods. I show that instances of *wettern* function, on the one hand, as attempts to reconnect poetic language with actual weather (in line with the *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics of climate detailed in Chapter I) and, on the other hand, as evidence of the broader, modern meteorologization of language underway during the *Sturm und Drang* period.

In the sections that follow, I begin with a brief overview of developments in 18th-century meteorological science (section 1). I then outline (in section 2) the impact of these developments both within prevailing dramatic theory immediately prior to the

[141] For examples of individual weather phenomena as rhetorical formula see for instance Georg Phillip Harsdörffer's (1607–1658) *Poetischer Trichter* (1653): "Der Donner bedeutet Gottes Zorn und die Gefahr" (169, section on "Donner"); "Der Blitz hat die Deutung des unerwarten Schreckens" (152, section on "Blitz"). "Die Wolke hat die Deutung der Unbeständigkeit aller irdischen Sachen" (492, section on "Wolke").

Sturm und Drang period and in dramatic works by Goethe and Lenz. I argue that metafictional weather-related moments in these works reveal the significance of the meteorological turn for the theatrical stage of the 1770s. I then outline the general characteristics of *wettern* as a dynamic form of speech, examining works by Lenz and Klinger (section 3). Turning then to clouds in particular (section 4), I track similarities between cloud-reading in meteorological science and the poetic function of clouds in several *Sturm und Drang* dramatic works. Finally, I explore the role of weather in Herder's early theory of language (section 5), which other scholars have shown to have been a key influence upon the authors considered here. Herder's claim that weather played a formative role in the development of human language further demonstrates both the programmatic function of *wettern* within *Sturm und Drang*, as well as the idea, defended across this chapter, that the use of weather imagery in *Sturm und Drang* has both an environmental and a poetological basis.

1. The Rise of Meteorology and Weather-Management Around 1770

For good reasons, scholars have referred to the period around 1800 as the "heyday of meteorology" (Farnsworth 23). If in the mid-18th century thunderstorms are still generally believed to be a willful punishment by god—Christian Wolff (1679–1754) was, on one reading, ousted from the academy because he thought otherwise in 1723—by the early 19th century, "Himmel" ("heaven" or "sky") would primarily come to mean the meteorological sky (Möhring 46–47). The modern notion of weather developed in the period between 1750 and 1780, in competition with the simultaneously emerging idea that meteorological phenomena have neither theological nor scientific significance but

are rather completely meaningless coincidences. Insights into the physical and chemical properties of air (Carl Wilhelm Scheele, Antoine Lavoisier), atmospheric electricity (Johann Heinrich Winkler, Benjamin Franklin, Louis-Guillaume Le Monnier), and thermometry (Fahrenheit und Celsius) had accumulated over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. But starting in the mid-18th century, these perspectives came together in "weather" as a networked object of knowledge. What had previously been considered separate phenomena (such as lightning, wind, or cloud formations) began to be understood as elements of a larger continuous process with its own internal dynamic (Gamper 238).

The 1770s were a turning point for the understanding of weather in Germany. In the spring of 1770, Germany's first lightning rod was installed atop the Jacobi church in Hamburg. Just a few years before, in 1756, in the aftermath of the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) had still dismissed the lightning rod, rightly or wrongly seen to have recently been invented by Benjamin Franklin, as a "promethean" overestimation of power:

> The aspirations from the Prometheus of the recent times on, Mr. Franklin, who wanted to disarm the thunder, up to the one who wants to extinguish the fire in the workshop of Vulcan, are all proof of the audacity of humanity that stands in little relation to its capability. Eventually they are the humbling reminder, which should always be the point of departure, that he is never more than a human.
>
> (Von dem Prometheus der neuern Zeiten, dem Hrn. Franklin, an, der den Donner entwaffnen wollte, bis zu demjenigen, welcher das Feuer in der Werkstatt des Vulkans auslöschen will, sind alle solche Bestrebungen Beweisthümer von der Kühnheit des Menschen, die mit einem Vermögen verbunden ist, welches in gar geringer Verhältniß dazu stehet, und führen ihn zuletzt auf die demüthigende Erinnerung, wobei er billig anfangen sollte, daß er doch niemals etwas mehr als ein Mensch sei (1: 472).

Prometheus—who would later become both a symbol of the Enlightenment and an identificatory figure for the *Sturm und Drang* period (see Chapter I)—is here still seen in a negative light. Kant critiques Franklin's invention as human hubris par excellence. But by 1774, Kant would seemingly revisit this earlier evaluation, offering his support for a proposal to install a lightning rod in Königsberg.[142] In the decade following Kant's revised position, it was no longer possible within European science to interpret lightning as either divine punishment or meaningless coincidence. These theories were refuted by the consensus that meteorological phenomena are bona fide objects of science (hence displacing theology), and as such are subject to complex natural laws (hence disproving the supposition of lawless coincidence).

It has been noted that with the emergence of modern meteorology 18th-century European literature faced a crisis of signification. When lightning came to be understood as mere electrical discharge, rather than a form of divine punishment, the status of signs as such was thrown into question. Bernd Hamacher has argued in this vein that, following the secularization of lightening, "it is not just that signs have become ambiguous or arbitrary, but it is now unclear whether they mean anything. Whether they are signs at all" (41).[143] Writ large, this depletion of heavenly meaning represented a threat to the very possibility of poetics. Indeed, Herder draws a connection between the secularization of the heavens and the (im)possibility of poetics in his "Fragmente" of 1767. Contrasting the poetic thought evident in the bible with the scientific thought of his times, he argues:

> For us the fables are half-lost, or foreign, or death; because our more scientific and relective way has exterminated or chastened them. The dreadful storms from

[142] In 1774 Kant helped Physics professor Carl Daniel Reusch with his assessment of installing Königsberg's first lightning rod. See Möhring 2005, 146–157, 162.
[143] My translation of "die Zeichen warden nicht nur zwei- oder mehrdeutig, sondern es wird unklar, ob sie im unterstellten Sinne überhaupt etwas bedeuten. Ob es überhaupt Zeichen sind."

> the sea passing over their land to Arabia were thundering steeds in their eyes, drawing the chariot of Jehovah through the clouds…even if children and women still believe what our poet (David in Psalm 29) sings: "God reigns as he thunders in the clouds." But, since Prometheus [Benjamin Franklin] stole the electric spark from the heavens, the cosmopolitan scholar and his brother, the philosophical poet, will rather sing of electric lightening-sparks than of the long repeated images…what is the stronghold of the heavens, where god's throne rests? Air! What the rainbow that arches to his feet…a play of colors?
>
> (Für uns sind die Fabeln halbverloren, oder fremde, oder todt; da unsere mehr wissenschaftliche und denkende Art sie ausgetilget, oder geläutert hat. Die schrecklichen Donnerwetter, die an dem Meere auffstiegen, und über ihr Land nach Arabien hinzogen, waren in ihren Augen Donnerpferde, die den Wagen Jehovas durch die Wolken zogen…noch glauben zwar Kinder und Weiber das, was unser Dichter singt (David in Psalm 29): 'Gott fährt in den Wolken, um Donnerpfeile zu schleudern', der Weltweise aber und sein Bruder, der philosophische Dichter, wird, seitdem Prometheus den elektrischen Funken vom Himmel stahl, eher den elektrischen Blitzfunken, als so oft wiederholte Bilder singen…was ist die Feste des Himmels, wo der Thron Gottes ruhet? Luft! Was der Regenbogen, der sich zu seinen Füßen wölbet…ein Farbenspiel?; 1: 282–283).

Like the early Kant, the early Herder sees the invention of the lightning rod as a Promethean move, and likewise evaluates it negatively. The process of meteorologization, from this angle, indicates a loss—Franklin "stole" lightning—robbing the skies of their meaning. Here, the enlightened sky stands for arbitrariness and poses a threat to the very possibility of poetics. Looking ahead based on Herder's 1767 view alone, we might predict that the function of weather imagery in German literature and thought of the 1770s would be nostalgic and anti-scientific, consistent with the first general strategy of *Sturm und Drang* reception outlined above.

2. The Enlightenment Stage and its Weather: Thunder-Effects and Cloud-Machines

The notion that meteorological phenomena stand for arbitrariness and, by the mid-18th century, constitue a threat to the integrity of aesthetics, can also be confirmed if we

consider the declining evaluation of weather in the dramatic theory of Gottsched and Lessing. Throughout the 18th century, performative arts in the German-speaking world were still largely dominated by Baroque opera, in which weather and weather-effects played a central role. Acoustic effects (such as wind, rain, and thunder), gods hovering in the clouds, and quaking stages were a fixture in the big opera houses of Vienna, Hannover, Braunschweig, Dresden, Ludwigsburg, and Kassel.[144] On the Baroque stage, the court of divine retribution played out in technological terms, made manifest through the intervention of in-house weather-machines.[145]

Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766), rebuking this Baroque trend, classifies the audience's expectation that "something must come down from the sky [*nur ja etwas vom Himmel herunter komme*]" as a sure marker of bad taste (1973, 240). Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), who too adheres to the rule of dramatic probability and is accordingly dismissive of stage technology playing any prominent role, also bans weather from the stage (Lessing 6: 580–585).[146] Lessing's rejection of stage-weather was connected to his broader rejection of the intelligibility of meteorological events (whether scientific or divine), as is evident in his 1747 poem "Die Wetterpropheceiung" ("The Weather Forecast"):

> The weather is inconsistent,
> Inconsistent as my beauties.

[144] As Johann Friedrich Schütze describes in his *Hamburgische Theater-Geschichte*: "Es wurden immer neue Flugwerke, Geräthe und Vehikel mancher Art und Form gefordert, um die Luftwesen und alles, was vom Himmel herab und vom Abgrund heraus in den Bezirk des Operraritätenhaftens spediert werden sollte, an Orte und Stelle zur Schau zu bringen" (1794, 147).

[145] See Meyer (319–340) for the role of weather machines during the 1770s and in the theatrical education of the authors of *Sturm und Drang*.

[146] A few years later, the dramatic theory of *Sturm und Drang* would see a reaffirmation of the value stage technology and props. As Lenz remarks in his *Anmerkungen übers Theater* (1774): the dramatic poet needs "die Sinne nicht mit Witz und Flittern zu fesseln, das tut der Dekorationenmaler für ihn, aller Kunstgriffe überhoben, schon eingeschattet von dem magischen Licht, auf das jener so viel Kosten verschwendet, führt er uns dahin, wo er wollte" (2: 648).

> In vein, oh friend, one attempts
> To accustom both to laws.
> Therefore, give up the weather prophecy,
> Like I give up my trusty loving. (1989, 102, my translation).
>
> Das Wetter ist veränderlich,
> Veränderlich, wie meine Schönen.
> Umsonst, o Freund, bemüht man sich,
> Nach Regeln beide zu gewöhnen.
> Drum laß dein Wetterprophecein,
> Wie ich mein treues Lieben, sein; 1: 101–102).

Already in the title, meteorology is aligned with the mystic practice of "prophecy." The poem portrays the weather [*Das Wetter*] as lawless, adhering to no rules of probability. Following the claim that "the weather is changing" and that "in vein, oh friend, one attempts/ to accustom both to laws" the speaker recommends that "therefore, give up the weather prophecy" (1: 102). In both Lessing and Gottsched, meteorological phenomena are stripped of their divine-revelatory meaning. But rather than seeing these phenomena as nonetheless intelligible in secular terms, they are declared accidental coincidences, reflecting the prevailing (though short-lived) scientific view of meteorological phenomena around 1750.

Contra both Gottsched and Lessing, during the *Sturm und Drang* years, the weather-filled heavens of the Baroque stage would be received anew. This renewal of attention is in evidence in Goethe's *Bildungsroman* of 1795–1796, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Even if the text itself does not belong to the *Sturm und Drang* period, the titular character Wilhelm's reflections on his production of puppet theatre reflects the dramatic theory and practice of the 1770s:[147]

> It was natural that the operas, with their manifold adventures and vicissitudes, should attract me more than any thing beside. In these compositions I found stormy seas, gods descending in chariots of cloud, and, what most of all delighted

[147] For the relation of *Sturm und Drang* drama to 18th-century puppet theatre, see Mattenklott 67–68.

> me, abundance of thunder and lightning. I did my best with pasteboard, paint, and paper: I could make night very prettily; my lightning was fearful to behold; only my thunder did not always prosper, which, however, was of less importance. ("Apprenticeship" 28-29)
>
> Auch war es natürlich, daß mich die Oper mit ihren manichfaltigen Veränderungen und Abenteuern mehr als alles anziehen mußte. Ich fand darin stürmische Meere, Götter, die in Wolken herabkommen, und, was mich vorzüglich glücklich machte, Blitz und Donner. Ich half mir mit Pappe, Farbe und Papier, wußte gar trefflich Nacht zu machen, der Blitz war fürchterlich anzusehen, nur der Donner gelang nicht immer, doch das hatte so viel nicht zu sagen; 5: 23.)

Wilhelm embraces stage-weather more enthusiastically than the conventions of the emerging national theatre would dictate: for him, the technologically supplied appearance of weather is quintessential to the theater-experience. At the same time, though, Wilhelm's assessment also alters the conventions of the baroque stage. For one, Wilhelm's stage-weather, crafted from cardboard, paper, and paint—a reference to the many improvised productions of the 1770s—is less technologically advanced than that produced on the proper Baroque stage (Meyer 322–323). Wilhelm's production of stage-weather also departs from Baroque representational conventions by suggesting that stage-thunder "had not much to say" after all.. Wilhelm thus denies weather its divine-revelatory function while at the same time marking it as an essential element of the theatrical stage. With this double gesture, Wilhelm in 1795–1796 reasserts the status weather had had in *Sturm und Drang* drama two decades before.

Several moments within dramatic works of the *Sturm und Drang* period self-consciously address the problem of the meteorologization of the heavens—of the rise of meteorological science and its displacement of the divinely governed sky. Like the instances of *wettern* examined in the next section, these metafictional moments evidence *Sturm und Drang*'s distinctive relationship to weather. But whereas those later instances

show how the emergent scientific understanding of weather dynamically transformed dramatic language itself (one of the legacies of *Sturm und Drang* passed down to future periods), these moments show *Sturm und Drang* authors deploying meteorologization as a vehicle for an aesthetic anxiety of their time. A first revealing example appears in a monologue of the character Marie in Lenz's *Die Soldaten* (1776). Torn between the option of a pragmatic marriage with a man of her social status, and her ambitious but risqué affair with a member of nobility, she states:

> Good Night Papa! – *As he has left, she sighs deeply, and steps to the window, unlacing herself.* My heart is so heavy. I think there is going to be a thunder storm tonight. What if lightning would strike – *Looks up, crossing her hands over her open chest.* God, what did I do wrong? – Stolzius – I do still love you – but if I can do better for myself—and Papa himself advises me to. *Closes the curtain.* If it hits me, it hits me, I die nothing but gladly. *Turns off her light*."
>
> (Gute Nacht, Pappuschka! – *Da er fort ist, tut sie einen tiefen Seufzer, und tritt ans Fenster, indem sie sich aufschnürt.* Das Herz ist mir so schwer. Ich glaub es wird gewittern die Nacht. Wenn es einschlüge – *Sieht in die Höhe, die Hände über ihre offene Brust schlagend.* Gott was hab ich denn Böses getan? – Stolzius – ich lieb dich ja noch – aber wenn ich nun mein Glück besser machen kann – und Papa selber mir den Rat gibt. *Zieht die Gardine vor.* Trifft mich's, so trifft mich's, ich sterb nicht anders als gerne. *Löscht ihr Licht aus*; 1:204).

The scene illustrates the revolutionary potential of the secularization of the heavens. Marie's moral values are unsettled, shifting from obedience (with regards to norms of social class and gender) to self-assertion ("mein Glück machen," the striving for happiness). She momentarily takes the pending storm to have some potential relation to these values, but quickly dismisses the idea, allowing her decision (whatever it will be) to stand independent of the weather and the divine judgment it might represent. The interpretation of divine punishment ("Gott was hab ich denn Böses getan") is displaced by the interpretation of coincidence ("trifft mich's, so trifft mich's"). Weather, Marie decides, really has no bearing on her moral life. That this displacement is felt as

liberating is suggested by the loosening of her tight corset. But Marie's shift also seems to have fatal consequences for the institution of the theatrical stage: the curtain is closed and the lights turned off.

Marie's monologue anticipates the thesis that G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) would later formulate on modern drama—namely, that modern drama dissolves into subjectivity or into the clashing of mere opinions (Ästhetik 3: 532, 536). In *Die Soldaten* this development appears as a consequence of meteorologization and conditioned by the stage as a medium. It is with the loss of the divine lightning strike that the modern theatrical stage loses its status as divine court, its objectivity and ultimately its purpose. This means that even though lightning can no longer be taken to represent divine revelation, weather is considered too fundamental to the theatrical stage to be simply shunned, as Gottsched and Lessing had done. Rejecting the theological view of the heavens while still holding onto some idea of the meaning of the sky, *Sturm und Drang* drama, read this way, becomes a testing ground for a modern poetic relation to weather.

In Goethe's *Götz*, the meteorologically interpreted sky (intelligible to science) is framed as the rightful successor to the divine heavens. In the fourth act, Götz's ally Sickingen appears in the town hall of Heilbronn to free Götz from unjust imprisonment. Describing his plan for dealing with the traitor Weislingen, Sickingen then proclaims: "Trier and Pfalz do rather expect an intervention of the heavens, than that I should come over their head. And I shall come like a hailstorm!" ("Trier und Pfalz vermuten eher des Himmels Einfall, als daß ich ihnen übern Kopf kommen werde. Und ich will kommen wie ein Hagelwetter!"; 1.1: 628). Sickingen's lines suggest that a meteorologization of the heavens will secure Götz's future, along with the future of drama more generally. The

hail storm as a substitute of heavenly interference comes to the rescue: of Götz, on the one hand, and of the quality of the dramatic action on the other, which is less predictable than a deus ex machina in the clouds ("vermuten eher"), but more probable at the same time. For as Sickingen remarks, his sudden, hailstorm-like appearance has a purely natural explanation. When Götz asks: "This was help from heaven. How do you come here so wished-for and expected?" ("Das war Hülfe vom Himmel. Wie kommst du so erwünscht und unvermutet, Schwager?", Sickingen replies: "Without magic. I had sent two or three messengers to hear how you are doing. As I received news of their [Weislingen's men's] false oath, I took to the road." ("Ohne Zauberei. Ich hatte zwei drei Boten ausgeschickt zu hören wie dirs ging. Auf die Nachricht von ihrem Meineid macht ich mich auf die Wege"; 627). For Sickingen, the hailstorm is neither divine in origin nor unpredictable. It is rather an anticipated consequence of the messengers' report, and so subject to laws of calculation and probability. In a later version of the play, Götz notes the calculability of weather even more clearly. In the third act, facing the difficulty of finding allies for his defense, he remarks: "My luck begins to be changeling like the weather. But I anticipated it." ("Das Glück fängt mir an wetterwendisch zu werden. Ich ahnt's aber"; Weimarer Ausgabe 8: 106). Against both Gottsched and Lessing, *Götz* depicts meteorological phenomena as law-governed events. This makes weather suitable for poetic representation, and for lending drama and dramatic justice a coherent structure. If the abandonment of theological interpretations of the heavens engendered a crisis in poetics around 1800, it appears that, at least in the drama of *Sturm und Drang*, the meteorological sky offered a way of coping with the anxiety of this lapse, and of repopulating the depleted heavens with new meanings. As the next section will argue,

wettern in *Sturm und Drang* dramatic language performs a similar coping and repopulating function.

3. *Wettern* [Weathering]: Linguistic Storms and Partial Agency in the Drama of *Sturm und Drang*

The first characteristic feature of *wettern* in *Sturm und Drang* is that it accumulates, rarely manifesting in a single utterance. Instances of *wettern* generally reoccur across a single scene, and stand in a dynamic relationship with each other. *Wettern* confirms the observation that the concept of "weather" emerged around 1770 through the networking and dynamization of previously held-to-be-separate phenomena. In *wettern*, rhetorical and religious formulae with prior separate meanings (wind, storm, cloud, precipitation) are connected in complex puns. For instance, in Lenz's *Die Soldaten*, when the *Kraftkerl* Haudy exclaims, as the jealous Stolzius enters: "Oh, hello my friend! Come, I've ordered a glass of punch for us; the wind was blowing right through us now" (*Selected Works* 156, "Ach, mein Bester kommen Sie, ich habe ein gut Glas Punsch für uns bestellen lassen. Der Wind hat uns vorhin so durchgeweht") Stolzius responds with weather-imagery: "There is such hard wind outside, I think we are going to get some snow" (*Selected Works* 156; "Es geht ein so scharfer Wind draußen, ich meine wir werden Schnee bekommen"; 1: 208). Eventually all of these weather references erupt in Haudy's weather-curse: "Weather element, why's our punch taking so long—Madame Roux!!!" (Selected Works 157; "Wetter Element, wo bleibt unser Punsch denn—Madam Roux!!!"; 1: 210). Noteworthy is the triad of a) observation ("der Wind hat uns . . . durchgeweht"), b) forecast ("es wird Schnee geben"), and c) culmination and discharge ("Wetter

Element"). *Wettern* in this way develops an internal dynamic expanding as language across the scene.

The scene from *Die Soldaten*'s use of weather-imagery is reminiscent of the traditional rhetorical formula of "stirring the winds" as expression of emotional uproar—in particular, in how the jealous Stolzius is agitated. But the scene represents a variation of the formula in certain ways: its gesture is more forceful, the extended weather-imagery more foundational to the scene than it traditionally would be. In other words, given that the weather motif is associated with the outsider milieu of the coffee house and being a soldier, and in that it culminates with a curse, the wind-movement of sensualism becomes a storm, and the rhetorical formula its own infringement. Additional semantic levels furthermore demonstrate the more fundamental meaning weather imagery has taken on in its use during the *Sturm und Drang* period. Stolzius's "I think we are going to get some snow" also refers to the inevitable tragic catastrophe that, like the weather, can be predicted but not prevented. *Wettern* in *Die Soldaten* literalizes und makes dynamic the rhetorical weather formula and thus performs a countermotion to the metaphorization of *wettern* in everyday language noted to occur around the time (Harsdörffer 168–169; Grimm, "Wettern").

A second example of this accumulative aspect can be found in the opening scene of Klinger's *Sturm und Drang.* Midway through the scene, the character Blasius erupts in the typical weather-curse: "Daß dich der Donner erschlüg, toller Wild! Was hast du wieder gemacht?" (7; "The thunder shall strike you down, madcap Wild! What have you done now?"). But the curse does not come from nothing. Other weather-events lead up to Balsius' thundering. The names "Wild," "Blasius," and "La Feu" are reminiscent of a

wild, blowing, even fiery movement of weather: together they make a thunder storm. Then there is the opening line with which *Kraftkerl* Wild enters the stage and summons a noisy wind: "Heyda! Nun einmal in Tumult und Lärmen, daß die Sinnen herumfahren wie Dach-Fahnen beym Sturm" (1; Hey there! With turmoil and noise now, so that the senses blow around like wind cones in the storm"). This is followed by a moment of still air, when Blasius remembers his pastoral past, and the insufficiency of a tame, pastoral wind to cool down his emotional state:

> Lived on the alps, grased the goats, layed day and night under the infinite dome of the sky, cooled by the winds and burnt by inner fire.
>
> (Lebte auf den Alpen, weidete die Ziegen, lag Tag und Nacht unter dem unendlichen Gewölbe des Himmels, von den Winden gekühlt und von innern Feuer gebrannt. Nirgends Ruh, nirgends Rast; 9).

The wind's insufficiency to cool, once articulated, only enhances the weather movement, eventually erupting in the *wettern* of both La Feu and Blasius. La Feu's "Zum Orkus! du Ungestüm!" may be read as a reference to both the mythological god of the underworld and a hurricane [*Orkan*], doubled in the word "ungestüm" (from *stürmen*—to storm).[148] Wild's subsequent *wettern* "May the thunder strike you down" (Daß dich der Donner erschlüg") then adds thunder to the scene. In this way, *Sturm und Drang* plays with traditional rhetorical formulae for affect movement, marking them first as insufficient, and then replacing them with a more dynamic weather process.

The second striking feature of *wettern* is that it takes place in the context of an assumed powerlessness of language. Wettern may be typical for the *Kraftkerl*, but is usually an expression of impotence, not power. Generally, instances of wettern lament a

[148] Orkus is the Roman mythological god of the underworld. But already Philipp von Zesen connects Orkus with the word *Orkan*, known since the 17th century, suggesting the German word "Höllensturm" as a translation of it (Zesen 133).

general incapacity of linguistic signs to signal impending action. The characteristic grammatical modes (modus) of *wettern* are subjunctives and negatives. This concerns both the cursing in the rhetorical tradition of *exsecratio*—as in Guelfos desperate exclamation: "won't the thunder strike!" ("will kein Donner nieder!") in *Die Zwillinge*—and the more comical *wettern* (2: 74). In that Haudy, in the example above, is not even able to order a drink—in spite of crude swearing—even mundane requests are denied any impact. The character Otto in Klinger's play of the same name encapsulates this characteristic of *wettern* formulaically:

> If I had the powerful thunder, I would thunder against you, wretched world, and you, viper-breed of human-kind, I would thunder against.
>
> (Hätt ich den mächtigen Donner, ich wollt dich zusammen wettern, verdammte Welt, und dich, Ottergezücht von Menschengeschlecht, dich wollte ich wettern; 1: 49).

Formally, *wettern* is a performative contradiction: it is realized in the vociferous exclamation, not to have any ability to cause weather. Ultimately, this is the same formula that Wilhelm Meister had also used to characterize his view of stage-weather: a success in failure.

One way to interpret this feature is with regard to linguistic performativity, which has been observed to conceptually emerge around 1800 (Jaeger und Willer 22–25). Scholarship has noticed a dynamization of language with *Sturm und Drang* drama—through Herder's influence in particular (Kühn 48-53, Graham).[149] With regard to

[149] In the sense of what Stephan Jaeger and Stefan Willer call the "Vollzugscharakter von Sprache" (24), which they see emerging around 1800: Hier "tritt die Dynamik des sprachlichen Prozesses selber in den Vordergrund. Proposition und Performanz überlagern sich. Sprache geschieht; statt über etwas eine Aussage zu machen, vollzieht sich die sprachliche Äußerung als Handlung selbst" (ibid). Ilse Graham, in turn, has observed a dynamization of the originally more discursive language in the development from Goethe's *Urgötz* to the second version of the play, between 1771 and 1773. Graham points to Herder as the key influence on this development.

wettern, this development can also be related to developments in meteorology. In the *wettern* of *Sturm und Drang*, meaning is shifted to the process of articulation and thereby created especially on an onomatopoetic level. Besides the insult "Ottergezücht," Otto's statement turns into thundering on the level of sound, through the repetition of sibilants, plosives, and consonants that imitates the sound of thunder—as in the pairs "hätt ich"—"mächtig," "zusammen wettern"—"verdammte welt," and "Ottergezücht—Menschengeschlecht." Similarly, Wild's exclamation "Heyda! Nun einmal in Tumult und Lärmen, daß die Sinnen herumfahren wie Dach-Fahnen beym Sturm" fulfills its own speculative promise through onomatopoesis, by initiating wind in the aspiration of the "heyda."

These cases of onomatopoetic *wettern* presuppose a contradiction with the propositional content as productive friction, and thus go beyond the rhetorical exclamation of passionate despair through weather-metaphors on the functional level. In the articulation of despair, despair is also overcome, at least partially. Otto's *wettern* is ultimately a defiant self-assertion. Against his powerlessness, he sets the purported power of sensually-concrete speech. *Wettern*, in these examples, epitomizes a new attention to linguistic materiality and performance, but also emphasizes the partial agency of "natural" expressions. If weather is a typical feature of the *Kraftkerl*, but also expresses the limits of the individual, then this would mean that, against traditional interpretations reading the *Kraftkerl* as "heroic man of power" (Pascal 157), the *Kraftkerl* as archetypal figure and ideal is ultimately quite limited in his power—and well aware of this.

4. Cloud-Semiotics

As scholarship in literary methodology has shown, it was especially clouds and their scientific apprehension that gave new impulses for models of representation around 1800 (Guldin, Hamblyn, Weber, Vogl, "Wolkenbotschaft"). Goethe's engagement with Luke Howard's (1772–1864) stratification of clouds from 1802 has been the subject of several studies on the relationship between poetics and weather.[150] Moreover, the question whether clouds were or were not meaningful was central for the development of meteorology itself. Until the mid-16th century, clouds were considered to be made from the same material as angels, i.e. they were seen as manifestations of heavenly non-material (Guldin 93). It is in the context of this history that 18th-century attempts to predict the weather through cloud interpretations were ridiculed and taken to evidence the metaphysical nature of meteorology. As detailed above, Lessing, at least by the mid-18th century, was critical of the signifying function of clouds, depicting meteorological forecasts as prophecies, and meteorologists as "cloud-seers" in his poem "Die Wetterprophezeiung."

Against this view, supporters of scientific meteorology emphasized the hydrous constitution of clouds, which they saw supported in theories about the unity of clouds and of the much better explored phenomenon of fog. First hypothesized by Descartes in 1637, the theory of the sameness of fogs and clouds was further advanced by figures such as Otto von Guericke (1602–1686) and Charles Le Roy (1727–1779) (Möller, "History" 18–22), while being supported by Christian Wolff (1739, 120). The increasing institutionalization of mountain hiking played an important part in this development. French physicist Edme Mariotte (1620–1684) remarked that what seemed like a cloud on

[150] Begemann 225–242; Ford 297–305; Schuller 249–260; Vogl, "Luft" 45–53.

top of a mountain from a distance was revealed to be nothing but a fog once having reached the cloud's elevation in his posthumously published *Traité du mouvement des eaux et des autres corps fluides* (1686, 19). Almost 100 years later, in 1783, Horace Bénédict de Saussure (1740–1799), lead an expedition to the Mont Blanc, detailing the experience of walking in clouds, while in 1786 Swiss naturalist Jean-André Deluc (1727–1817) formulated a physical theory of evaporation, based on the first-hand experience of alpine clouds as fogs (Möller "History" 18–22). The equation of cloud and fog allowed for conclusions about causal connections between environmental conditions, cloud formations and precipitation. Only in 1803, with Howard's publication of his theory of cloud stratification, would the dispute around the readability of clouds finally be settled in favor of meteorology.

A pro-meteorological voice of the mid-18th century can be found in the treatment of clouds in the *Zedler* encyclopedia of 1748, the year following the publication of Lessing's poem. The unusually long entry of 34 pages "Wolcke—Nebel in der Höhe" ("clouds—fog on high") discusses clouds as objects of mythology, religion, and science. The subtitle "fog on high" reveals that the author takes a scientific position: it refers to the then-controversial claim, which it sees represented by Descartes, Mariotte, and Wolff, that "a cloud is nothing else but a fog" (Wolff 1739, 120).[151] The *Zedler* implements its science-oriented reevaluation of clouds in two steps: cloud-prophecies that mostly pay attention to shapes are first rebutted as superstition. Subsequently, the prophetic reading

[151] "Weiter davon sehe man die Dünste gleich einem Nebel aufsteigen, nachdem sie sich aber über den Berg in freye Lufft erhoben, verwandelte sich der Nebel in eine Wolcke; woraus erhellet, daß eine Wolcke nichts anderes isst, als ein Nebel" (Wolff 120, from the section "Von dem Auffsteigen der Dünste").

is substituted by a proper reading of clouds that takes factors other than shape into account and that is interested in a cloud's material constitution.

According to the *Zedler,* only "unknowing and superstitious people [see] strange faces and miraculous signs" in the clouds (316).[152] Amongst many other examples, the *Zedler* lists the detection of "sabers, blood, and other dangerous things" in the clouds, as well as the reading of red-illuminated clouds as omens of death and war (331). Against these false prophecies, the *Zedler* recommends paying even greater attention to clouds and their surrounding factors: "Es würde sich aus dem Ansehen der Wolcken vieles von ihnen urtheilen lassen, wenn man auf alles genauer Acht zu geben gewohnt wäre, als jetzt geschieht" (310). Under the sub-heading "cloud-signs of prospective weather [*Wolcken-Zeichen künftiger Witterung*]" the author then lists different types of clouds and their meaning (317). The red cloud, read properly, has prophetic meaning after all according to this view, because "Schwarze, finstere oder wasserfärbige Wolken, die auf einen feuerrothen Untergang der Sonne folgen, bedeuten Regen und unbeständiges Wetter. Braune dunkel-rothe, oder blau-röthliche Wolken, die im Sommer bei warmer und schwülstiger Luft erscheinen, pflegen grausame und gefährliche Donnerwetter zu verkündigen" (317). It is on the material composition of clouds that the *Zedler* differentiates their potential for signification apart from that of other meteorological phenomena. As the author explains: "the cloud belongs amongst the true, that is watery air-signs" (309).[153] As carrier of its future form, the rain cloud is assessed as a true prophet by the *Zedler*. The tradition of regarding the cloud as natural sign—coined

[152] "Demnach sind es „unwissende und abergläubige Leute [welche] seltsame Gesichter und Wunder-Zeichen" in den verschiedenen Wolkenformen sehen."
[153] "es gehöret die Wolcke unter die wahrhafften und zwar wasserichten Luftzeichen."

already by the Stoics and later by Augustine—was thus revived with the emergence of modern meteorological insights into weather processes. The cloud may be read as a herald, not owing to conventionalized symbolic attribution, but because it is assigned material attributes which are integrated within complex natural interdependencies, which it helps to predict.

The dramatic works of *Sturm und Drang* display a similar dual strategy. Past readings have seen in the analyzed plays—especially in Klinger's *Die Zwillinge*—a baroque commitment to symbolism and allegory (Baum 413; also Mattenklott).[154] Against this interpretation, it is important to point out the internal criticisms that the plays formulate against the thesis of the readability of meteorological phenomena. Superstitious cloud-readings are often debated in the plays, but are ultimately rejected and substituted by meteorological readings focused on the materiality of clouds, leading directly to the language of *wettern*. This can be observed in Goethe's *Götz*, in a dialogue between Götz and his companions:

> **George**: These are wonderful times! For eight days a dreadful comet has been seen—all Germany fears that it portends the death of the emperor, who is very ill.
> **Goetz**: Very ill! Then our career draws to a close.
> **Lerse**: And in the neighborhood there are terrible commotions; the peasants have made a formidable insurrection.
> **Goetz**: Where?
> **Lerse**: In the heart of Swabia; they are plundering, burning and slaying. I fear they will sack the whole country.
> **George**: It is a horrible warfare! They have already risen in a hundred places, and daily increase in number. A hurricane too has lately torn up the whole forests; and in the place where the insurrection began, two fiery swords have been seen in the sky crossing each other. (*Works* 3: 57)
>
> **(Georg**: Es sind bedenkliche Zeiten. Schon seit acht Tagen läßt sich ein fürchterlicher Komet sehen, und ganz Deutschland ist in Angst es bedeute den Tod des Kaisers der sehr krank ist.

[154] "[P]lakativ symbolische Bilder" (Baum 2017, 413).

> **Götz**: Sehr krank! Unsere Bahn geht zu Ende.
> **Lerse**: Und hier in der Nähe gibt's noch schrecklichere Veränderungen. Die Bauern haben einen entsetzlichen Aufstand erregt.
> **Götz**: Wo?
> **Lerse**: Im Herzen von Schwaben. Sie sengen, brennen und morden. Ich fürchte sie verheeren das ganze Land.
> **Georg**: Einen fürchterlichen Krieg gibt's. Es sind schon an die hundert Ortschaften aufgestanden und täglich mehr. Der Sturmwind neulich hat ganze Wälder ausgerissen, und kurz darauf hat man in der Gegend wo der Aufstand begonnen zwei feurige Schwerter kreuzweis in der Luft gesehen; 1.1: 633).

The passage confronts a pre-modern, magical interpretation of heavenly signs with a natural explanation of the same. The emperor's death can be concluded from his sickness, and the fiery sword read in a cloud-formation can be related to the stormy conditions. As potentially random (though still naturally intelligible) occurrences, comet and sword lose their signifying character in the strict sense. Their meaning is portrayed as the effect of a cause, and thus is of an indexical, and not a symbolic, nature (Peirce 134–155).

Similarly, in the first 1776 edition of *Die Zwillinge*, Guelfo's symbolic interpretation of meteorological events is challenged. Seeking an omen in the storm, he proclaims:

> I fear Guelfo's line is threatened by great disaster. Terrible signs have occurred last night. The guard believes he heard the death-bells from the nearby monasteries. They carried corpses past him, and black-veiled men mourned thrugh the storm.
>
> (Ich fürchte, Guelfos Haus bedroht großes Unglück. Es sind fürchterliche Zeichen diese Nacht geschehen. Der Wächter will die Todtenglocken von den nächsten Klöstern her gehört haben. Man trug Leichen an ihm vorbey, und schwarz verhüllte Männer wegklagten durch den Sturm; 2: 170)

Again, the magic interpretation of the storm proves itself to be wrong, and is given over to a more probable explanation. By reading the death bells as prophetic signs of looming disaster, Guelfo denies what they do, in fact, signify: the death of victims of the storm. The storm is for Guelfo a sign of the catastrophe, rather than the catastrophe itself.

Guelfo's twisted logic and his self-positing as addressee of the universe is flawed and marked as a feature of an earlier generation. Guelfo admits as much himself, in the second 1794 edition of the play: "Ich bin alt, dem Grabe nah, und deute diese Zeichen nur auf mich" (2: 171).[155] Ultimately, Guelfo's reading of the clouds performs its own refutation of the proclaimed symbolic character of the heavens. In this sense, neither *Götz* nor *Die Zwillinge* celebrate the revelatory aesthetics that have in the past been closely associated with the *Sturm und Drang* period.

The counter-model to Guelfo's superstition is presented by his son, the young anti-hero and *Kraftkerl* Guelfo. Just as the *Zedler* recommends, the young Guelfo pays attention to the clouds not as symbols, but as the material elements of larger weather processes. In the well-known window scene—a reference to the window scene in Goethe's *Werther* (1774), young Guelfo reads red clouds as heralds of the storm. As becomes clear, this meteorologically-oriented reading of clouds projects a new vision of dramatic language itself:

> **Kamilla:** Come to the window! It is a glorious red sunset; the sun is setting marvelously. Rejoice with me!
> **Guelfo:** "The last sun rays through the trees—
> I want to throw myself into the fiery-hall, ride on those clouds with their golden hem!—Kamilla! (grasps her hand) Oh! I am again so carried away—
> I want to clutch these fireclouds, excite storm and weather, and to throw myself shatt ered into the chasm!"
>
> **(Kamilla**: Kommen Sie ans Fenster! Es ist prächtig Abendroth; die Sonne geht herrlich unter. Freuen Sie sich doch mit mir!
> **Guelfo**: Die letzten Sonnenstrahlen durch die Bäume her – Ich möchte mich in die Feuerhelle dort schwingen, auf jenen Wolken reiten mit vergoldetem Saume! –
> **Kamilla!** *Faßt sie an der Hand.* Ach! und ich bin wieder so hin – ich möchte diese Feuerwolken zusammenpacken, Sturm und Wetter erregen, und mich zerschmettert in den Abgrund stürzen!; first edition, 2: 106).

[155] "I am old, close to the grave, and apply those signs only to myself."

At first glance, the thesis of weather as a mere metaphor for affect seems to be evidenced here. On this view, the storm would represent the arousal of young Guelfo's passions for Kamilla. But with an eye to the meteorological redefinition of cloud-signs around 1800, two things stand out in contradiction of this interpretation: young Guelfo's weather forecast, and the mimetic relation between weather and its linguistic apprehension. Kamilla reads the clouds in accord with physico-theological thought (i.e., the belief that the non-human environment evidences the existence of God), as "glorious" [*prächtig*] and "lordly" [*herrlich*]. Young Guelfo, in turn, is the only one to interpret the clouds—correctly—as precursors to the fatal storm. Young Guelfo abides to the meteorological reading of dark clouds following red sunsets as heralds of a storm, just as the *Zedler* had suggested. The perspectival movement of young Guelfo's forecast is striking. The sight of the clouds stirs his desire to leave the observational frame of the window and to become himself the object of his own observation: weather. In his wish to "bundle" [*zusammenpacken*], "stir" [*erregen*], and "crash down" [*herabstürzen*], weather-processes including cloud-formation, wind-movement, and precipitation are anticipated and enacted linguistically.

The speculative-performative momentum of dramatic *wettern* is further revealed by contrasting the above scene with the famous window episode in Goethe's *Werther*, which had been released two years prior. In Goethe's epistolary novel, Werther and Lotte first become close through the poetically mediated witnessing of a thunderstorm through the frame of a window. Here it is Lotte's whispered "Klopstock"—an inter-textual reference to Klopstock's 1759 ode "Frühlingsfeier"—which makes the sublimity of nature both sensible and intersubjectively communicable (2.2: 369). The temporal mode

is backward-facing: the thunderstorm has already passed by and is no longer a threat—its apprehension takes place through the memory of a poem of a thunderstorm. Read as poetological commentary, the *Werther* scene thus is about prosaic-discursive representations of nature. In *Die Zwillinge*, Kamilla cites Werther and Lotte's physico-theological vocabulary. To her as well, the red sunset is "lordly" ("herrlich"; 2.2: 369), that is, nature is judged and reduced to a value. But young Guelfo's apprehension of the sunset is antithetical to both that of Kamilla and that found in the *Werther* episode. He envisions the weather forward-facing—speculatively as a future storm. His intent is not to communicate a sublime experience of nature, but to become nature. Within the medium of dramatic language, the separation of object and subject of (re)presentation is challenged. In young Guelfo's *wettern*, language itself becomes the focus of the dramatic performance and a new meteorological understanding of heavenly phenomena as material processes is tied to a non-representative model of dramatic language. The connection that the scene draws between affect and weather ultimately resists an allegorization of weather. Rather, weather here functions as a poetological concept: in the linguistically evoked weather-process, the relation of affect to expression is formulated as the relation of weather to cloud.

5. Onomatopoetic Lightening: Weather in Herder's Philosophy of Language

The theories of language articulated in the *Sturm und Drang* milieu also turn to weather as a linguistic prototype. Old-testament depictions of the meteorological phenomena serve as a particular inspiration for such theories, which often search for "natural expression" (*Naturausdruck*) and the origin of language, whether as animalistic instinct

or divine inspiration (cf. Lifschitz). According to Herder's *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts* (1774), the sun—seen by him as especially vital to the environmental context of the middle-eastern landscape—inspires the notion of goodness (5: 52), while the night sky in the desert is the origin of the concept of the biblical *Tohuwabohu* (5: 50). Even the idea of nothingness, on this view, is no pure abstraction, but instead a concept originating in the sensible and material natural world. Herder's thought on the subject is the most extensive, but not singular. According to Friedrich (Maler) Müller's (1749–1825) poetic adoption of the second biblical creation myth in the long-form poem *Adams erstes Erwachen und seelige Nächte* (1778), even human consciousness (the concept of self) emerges as an effect of wind on skin:

> The storm whirled through the tree tops, it blustered down, it cooled my chest…Now I looked around, walked, leaped, stood again, examined by limbs…The hair blew around my forehead, I grasped it, and thus held myself captive..now I laughed…I felt my cheeks tensening…I screamed, the odem became too powerful in my bosom, I screamed again and was astounded at my voice…Now a shudder drove through my bones, tore heavy night from my soul; there my inside awoke, too, and mightily it urged inside me: Who are you? How are you? Who made you? Brought you here? Put the beating inside your chest? The scream in your throat? The stretching and reaching into your arms? Into your ears the sound?
>
> (der Sturm wirbelte die Wipfel, das brauste herunter, das kühlte meine Brust . . . Nun schaut' ich um mich, ging, sprang, stand wieder, betrachtete meine Glieder . . . Die Haare wehten mir um die Stirne, ich griff darnach, hielt mich so selbst gefangen . . . nun lacht' ich . . . ich fühlte das Anspannen meiner Wangen . . . ich schrie, der Odem ward mir im Busen zu mächtig; ich schrie wieder und verwunderte mich ob meiner Stimme . . . Jetzt fuhr Schauer durch alle meine Gebeine, riß schwere Nacht von meiner Seele; da erwacht auch mein Inneres und gewaltig drang's in mir darnach: Wer bist du? Wie bist du? Wer hat dich gemacht? hierher gebracht? wer das Klopfen in deine Brust gelegt? den Schrei in deinen Hals? das Recken und Strecken in deine Arme? in deine Ohren den Schall; 23–24).

The storm causes a chain reaction of events. In the interplay of the effect of weather on his body (experienced mainly through the senses of touch and hearing), amplified by his

echoing of these effects, Adam comes to grasp himself as the subject of his experience. As the storm is swirling and roaring, and ruffling through his hair, Adam jumps, twists, pulls his hair, and roars and laughs into the storm, until he is able to hear and feel himself. Listening to and feeling himself act, he comes first to the realization that the roaring of the storm and his voice have different sources ("ich schrie wieder und verwunderte mich ob meiner Stimme"), and then that hearing and heard voice, or feeling and felt body, come together in one consciousness ("Wer bist du"). Weather and language, on this view, are closely related and share a non-representational epistemic value that engenders conceptual thought.

Herder's extensive discussion of the origin of human language shows that his project of naturalizing language is not a claim about linguistic immediacy. In the *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772), Herder notoriously draws a categorical distinction between the indexical signs of non-human animals and the human being's animalistic predisposition for conceptual speech. He locates the origin of the latter in what he sees as the natural human capacity to isolate a key characteristic of an object from the manifold of sensual perceptions and to connect it, as a "memory cue" ("Merkwort"), with the perceived object, both for oneself and for communication with other human animals. This process of original abstraction, for Herder, takes place through linguistic performance, in and through onomatopoeias of the non-human environment. Based on his assumption that sensual perception is always synesthetic, Herder assumes that all things have—to the human animal, at least—a sound, which is both reproduced and brought to light in language. Language is, on Herder's view, one of the key features separating humans from non-human animals. It is also that which imbeds humans in their

environment: it at once requires them to listen to that environment and to bring it to sound. Over time, Herder claims, languages typically became more and more abstract. However, the onomatopoetic principle of multi-sensual concretization as the distinct human predisposition is, for him, continued in poetic expression.

Herder's example of a baaing sheep, which names itself to humans as "the baaing one" ["das Blökende"], is well-known. Mostly unnoticed, however, is the role that Herder ascribes to weather in human language development. In the *Abhandlung*, Herder seems mainly interested in the lightning strike as stimulus for human language. The German word for "lightning strike" ("Blitz") demonstrates that the principle of onomatopoetic mimesis applies equally to visual, soundless events:

> The flash does not sound, but when it needs to be expressed, this Harold of midnight! . . . of course a word will do it, which, with the help of an accompanying feeling, gives the ear the sensation of the all-of-a-sudden-fast, which the eye had."
>
> Der Blitz schallet nicht, wenn er nun aber ausgedrückt werden soll, dieser Bote der Mitternacht! . . . natürlich wirds ein Wort machen, das durch Hülfe eines Mittelgefühls dem Ohr die Empfindung des Urplötzlichschnellen gibt, die das Auge hatte – ‚Blitz'!" (1: 745–46).

In that the linguistic expression produces the experience of the "all-of-a-sudden-fast" ("des Urplötzlichschnellen") onomatopoetically, the lightning flash, at first only sensually perceived, comes to its full force and meaning only in linguistic imitation.[156] A striking aspect of this example is that the lightning strike does not simply "name itself" by being so "all-of-a-sudden," as was the case with the baaing sheep. Above and beyond this, the relationship of language to the lightning strike itself borrows from the internal

[156] Compare this Herder's claim, in the *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*, that the biblical line "Es werde Licht" ("Let there be light") does not capture the "fast, suddenness" ["Schnelle, Urplötzliche"] of the more performative language he discerns in the Hebrew original (5: 213). Just "Blitz" thus would seem a better translation, to Herder.

dynamic of weather as understood in the 18th century—i.e. the relationship of lightning to thunder, its tonal appearance (and also a signum of divinity).[157] As the word "Blitz" gives sound to the visually appearing lightning, human language plays a role akin to thunder vis-a-vis lightning. Weather itself, on this account, has the structure described in Herder's view of original abstraction: it is a temporalizing reverberation that, in bringing phenomena to their full force and meaning, is dynamic. "Donnern" and "blitzen," on this view, are more than the application of rhetorical formulae. Rather, language is principally a type of *wettern*.

At other times, in texts spanning from the late-1760s to the mid-1770s, Herder explores the relation of hydrometeors to language. The 1770s see a new aesthetic appreciation of fogs, mists, and clouds, which can be related back to the new appreciation of "northern" aesthetics discussed in Chapter II of this dissertation. The reception of Tacitus' description of Germania as "rough, foggy, and barren" ("rauh, nebelig und unfruchtbar"; Tacitus 9), early theories of a past ice age from the mid-1750s, and Macpherson's plentiful deployments of foggy landscapes in *The Works of Ossian* surely all played their part in the association of the "north" with fog. Attention to his language theory makes clear that Herder is interested in fog and mist for more than their scenic and setting-establishing value. They not only interest him as backgrounds, but as the fundamental inspiration for poetic form, the "how" of poetic representation.

The first instance of Herder's engagement with fog as a representational mode occurs in his 1769 *Kritische Wälder*. Again, Lessing is the major point of departure and

[157] Even though the exact relation of thunder and lightning was not known at that point, a causal relation between thunder and lightning was assumed (cf. Gess 186).

disagreement. In Lessing's *Laokoon*, published just a few years earlier (1766), Lessing had criticized the practice of translating Homeric fogs into clouds in painting, insisting upon a difference between fog and cloud. Lessing argues that the fog hiding Hector from Achilles in book 20 of the *Iliad* was a mere epistemic aid used to represent an unrelated, abstract phenomenon: godly rapture. Lessing reads Hector's hiding in the fog with the help of Apollo this way:

> Achilles saw no actual cloud. The whole secret of this invisibility lay not in the cloud, but in the god's swift withdrawal of the imperilled hero. In order to indicate that the withdrawal took place so instantaneously that no human eye could follow the retreating form, the poet begins by throwing over his hero a cloud; not because the by-standers saw the cloud in the place of the vanished shape, but because to our mind things in a cloud are invisible. (*Laocoon* 81)
>
> (Keinen wirklichen Nebel sahe Achilles nicht, und das ganze Kunststück, womit die Götter unsichtbar machten, bestand auch nicht in dem Nebel, sondern in der schnellen Entrückung. Nur um zugleich mit anzuzeigen, daß die Entrückung so schnell geschehen, daß kein menschliches Auge dem entrückten Körper nachfolgen können, hüllet ihn der Dichter vorher in Nebel ein; nicht weil man anstatt des entrückten Körpers einen Nebel gesehen, sondern weil wir das, was in einem Nebel ist, als nicht sichtbar denken; 5.2: 107).

Homer's fog, for Lessing, does not veil, but, on the contrary, represents an originally invisible act. When painters translate fog into clouds, then, the misinterpretation is doubled:

> But who does not perceive that this veiling in mist and darkness is only the poet's way of saying that the hero became invisible? It always seems strange to me, therefore, to find this poetical expression embodied in a picture, and an actual cloud introduced, behind which, as behind a screen, the hero stands hidden from his enemy. This was not the poet's meaning. The artist in this exceeds the limits of painting. His cloud is hieroglyphic, a purely symbolic sign, which does not make the rescued hero invisible, but simply says to the observers, — You are to suppose this man to be invisible. It is no better than the rolls of paper with sentences upon them, which issue from the mouth of personages in the old Gothic pictures. (*Laocoon* 81)
>
> (Wer sieht aber nicht, daß bei dem Dichter das Einhüllen in Nebel und Nacht weiter nichts, als eine poetische Redensart für unsichtbar machen, sein soll? Es hat mich daher jederzeit befremdet, diesen poetischen Ausdruck realisieret, und

> eine wirkliche Wolke in dem Gemälde angebracht zu finden, hinter welcher der Held, wie hinter einer spanischen Wand, vor seinem Feinde verborgen stehet. Das war nicht die Meinung des Dichters. Das heißt aus den Grenzen der Malerei herausgehen; denn diese Wolke ist hier eine wahre Hieroglyphe, ein bloßes symbolisches Zeichen, das den befreiten Held nicht unsichtbar macht, sondern den Betrachtern zuruft: ihr müßt ihn euch als unsichtbar vorstellen. Sie ist hier nichts besser, als die beschriebenen Zettelchen, die auf alten gotischen Gemälden den Personen aus dem Munde gehen; 5.2: 107)

Within the *Laokoon*, this example serves to illustrate Lessing's claim that object and the artistic medium of its representation are inherently connected: visual arts cannot portray the invisible process of rapture without becoming discursive and crossing the limits of visual arts through a discursive "shouting" ("zurufen"). Lessing's argument is fully in the fashion of a protestant apprehension of metaphoric language: the painted cloud epitomizes, to Lessing, a mistaken literalization of metaphors (cf. Luther 35: 188). With his interpretation of clouds in particular, Lessing stands in the long tradition of reading clouds as metaphors of metaphors, as symbols of arbitrariness. Along these lines, clouds and fog became popular images in 18th-century hermeneutics (such as that of Gottsched), while Lenz wrote an adaptation of Aristophanes' 5th-century BCE comedy *The Clouds*, a play that Wieland later translated.[158] According to Wieland's translation, clouds here stand for "Göttinnen, die uns Verstand und Witz und die Künste verleihen, womit wir andere täuschen, beschwatzen, umspinnen und fangen" (99).[159] Lessing's dismissal of meteorology is continued in the *Laokoon*: wherever the meaning of clouds is derived from their material properties, he sees a return to superstitious symbolism.

158 Gottsched: "Gewisse Leute verstecken sich in ihren Metaphern so tief, dass sie endlich selbst nicht wissen, was sie sagen wollen. Man sieht alle ihre Gedanken nur durch einen dicken Staub und Nebel" (278).

159 The more recent German translation by Ludwig Seeger is closer to the original: "Gedanken, Ideen, Begriffe, die uns Dialektik verleihen und Logik und den Zauber des Wortes und den blauen Dunst, Übertölpelung, Floskeln und Blendwerk" (317–318).

The vehemence with which Herder defends the signifying power of clouds in his *Kritische Wälder* shows both the extent of Herder's break with Lessing and the key role played by clouds and cloud-reading in the aesthetic debate around natural signs at that time. For Herder in *Kritische Wälder*, the cloud epitomizes not symbolic representation, but the concrete, sensual, and non-representational workings of poetic language:

> But what would remain if we read Homer after this fashion, if with a "that is to say" we also rendered his gods, their heaven, their attributes, and so on, into prose and turned everything into hollow poetic phrases?
>
> No, Homer knows nothing of empty metaphorical expressions. In his work, the mist in which the gods enshroud mortals is real mist, a veiling cloud that is an integral part of the wonder of his fiction, of his epic *μνθος* of his gods. (*Aesthetics* 119)
>
> (Was käme aber heraus, wenn man so bei Homer läse, und auch seine Götter, ihren Himmel, ihre Geräthe u.s.w. durch ein solches *das ist*: prosaisirte, und alles zu Poetischen Phrasibus machte.
>
> Nein! Homer weiß von Redarten nichts, die nichts als solche wären. Der Nebel, in den die Götter hüllen, ist bei ihm wirklicher Nebel, eine verhüllende Wolke, die mit zum Wunderbaren_seiner Fiktion, mit zum Epischen *μνθος* seiner Götter gehört; 2: 164).

Lessing sees the artistic cloud as a mistranslation of fog. Herder, in turn, sees poetic clouds as documents of the origin of poetics in the non-human environment. A pivotal point in Herder's argument is the idea that fog and cloud are synonymous. By conflating the "real fog" with a "veiling cloud," Herder adopts the meteorological position developed by Descartes, Mariotte, and Wolff that, again, "the cloud is nothing else, but a fog" (Wolff 120).[160]

In the 1774 *Älteste Urkunde*, Herder formulates this point even more clearly. In his analysis of poetic clouds in biblical language, he suggests translating the Hebraic אֵד (Dunst) hovering over the earth with the unusual expression "Druck der nasse Dunstwolke," justifying his translation as follows:

[160] "daß eine Wolcke nichts anderes isst, als ein Nebel."

> The critics have much argued about the אֵד, whether it means *fog, cloud, mist, vapor, steam*, and, as usually, they have not seen that each is correct. The notion of the *heavy, pressing* characteristic of the cloud lies in the root of the word, which unites all opinions.
>
> (Die Kritiker haben über das אֵד sehr gestritten, obs *Nebel, Wolke, Dunst, Brunne, Dampf* bedeuten soll, und, wie meistens, nicht gesehen, daß hier alles recht sei. Der Begriff des *Schweren, Drückenden* der Wolke liegt in der Wurzel des Worts . . . [das] alle Meinungen vereinigt; 5: 498).

The scientific tone of Herder's language is striking. So as to insist, against Lessing, that fog, mist, and clouds are in fact manifestations of the same phenomenon, Herder stresses their chemical properties, approaching each as hydro-meteorological event. His reference to the "heavy, pressing" ("Schwere, Drückende") aspects of fog moreover echoes the then-still-active scientific debate on *gravitas aëris* (or "Luftdruck"), which emerged in the late 17th century in connection with Otto von Guericke's (1602–1686) production of mist in an experimental setting.

In a sense, the perspective of modern science is, on Herder's account, already anticipated in poetic language. For him, the biblical אֵד is no mere word, but contains the chemical apprehension of fog, the idea of cloud and mist as hydro-meteorological events, as well as the physical apprehension of these events as gravitational phenomena in space and time. But poetic language, for Herder, has two advantages over strictly scientific language. For one, it brings forth the procedural nature of the natural world, rather than regarding that world as dead matter and object. Secondly, it regards nature as a complex, networked whole in which language itself has a part.[161] Despite their differences, Herder's onomato-poetic language is not incompatible with that of science. Indeed, he seems to highlight, along the lines that Gaston Bachelard would later suggest, that

[161] Cf. *Werke* 2: 204, 250–253.

"mythology is a primitive meteorology" (196). Herder locates the reason for this not so much in meteorological themes within mythological texts, but in the structure and origin of the poetic language itself, which he assumes to be environmental-meteorological. Language, on this view, is by definition and originally a *wettern*, a lightning or thundering, depending on the climatic context in which it emerges and evolves. Herder in this way envisions language in relation to and in conversation with climate, though without being determined by it. Unlike historically oriented climate theorists, he understands weather not as a setting of limits for linguistic expression,[162] but as a more productive ground—a "language teacher"[163] (1: 735).

6. Conclusion

Scholars have documented the impact of Herder's theory of language on the development of the dramatic language of *Sturm und Drang*, in particular for its development of a dynamic form (Graham). But the importance of *wettern* in *Sturm und Drang* drama has been neglected. The relation of these two aspects can be observed by turning to the third act in Klinger's *Die Zwillinge.* The storm young Guelfo had predicted in the second act has now arrived. Located at its epicenter is the play's climax. During "storm and night" young Guelfo looks, again, out of the window, exclaiming:

> "*Look through the window* Ha! The bloody beams through the night! The terrible ghosts! The howling and roaring! —How the clouds hang dark, bloody throughout! It storms on terribly. Crash! There it burst in. Hu!

[162] See, for example, William Falconer's claim that cold climates produce languages with fewer vowels: "The ferreted clothe way of speaking of the northern nations, may be owing to their reluctance to open their mouths wide in cold air, which must make their language abound in consonants. Whereas from a contrary cause, the inhabitants of warmer climates opening their mouths wider, must form a softer language, abounding in vowels" (Falconer116).
[163] "Sprachlehrerin."

> ("*Sieht durchs Fenster* Ha! Die blutigen Strahlen durch die Nacht! Die erschrecklichen Gespenster! Das Heulen und Gesaus! – Wie die Wolken schwarz hängen, blutig durch! Es stürmt erschrecklich fort. Krach! da brach's ein. Hu!" (2: 160, 1776 edition).

The storm itself is not visible to the audience, a) because it is night and b) because young Guelfo describes his view through the window—turning to the then-shunned "prosaic" mode of narrative, which Herder also wanted to avoid (9.2: 125; 2: 164). The reason for this reliance on narration, though, was that, in order for *Die Zwillinge* to be produced at the Hamburg theatre, Klinger was forced to accept the condition that the stage apparatus be kept to a minimum (Harris, Haak, and Hartmann xv–xvi). The Hamburg theatre may have been one of the most advanced theatre stages of its time, but, unlike opera stages, it was not equipped with cloud and thunder machines. Read with Herder, Klinger can be therefore seen to have made a virtue out of necessity in a twofold way.

First, the onomatopoetic enactment of weather typical for *wettern* can be read as the superior stage technology. Thunder and lightning, according to Herder, can not only be realized in language, but are in fact most fully realized in language. For only in speech do thunder and lightning come to their full concrete, multi-sensual effect, at least for the human animal. Envisioned this way, the restriction to dramatic language allows young Guelfo and his "crash" "Hu!" to show, and not merely tell. Following Herder's account, linguistic *wettern* is also superior to the weather machine in that it puts human language into conversation with the non-human environment. Herder and others deemed the traces of climate important for the development of poetic language, and defined art as a conversation of cultural artefacts with their non-human environment (see Chapter III and section 2 of this chapter). *Wettern* can be read as bringing this principle onto the stage. Here it neither glorifies a mystical "northern" landscape, nor the *Kraftkerl* as the one who

braves his ”northern” environment (cf. Chapter II). As the performative-materially functioning language of “weathering” enters the stage, language becomes, itself, an element of the “environment.”

Sturm und Drang wettern, I have argued in this chapter, borrows from the meteorologically apprehended sky, from the weather of science. Some prior readings have considered weather-imagery as it appeared in the drama of Klinger, Goethe, or Lenz as reflections of isolated imagery—such as clouds, lightning, thunder, or storms—each with a distinct symbolic meaning. As I have shown, these dramatic works’ novel employment of such imagery lies in the envelopment of previously separate formulae into one dynamic dramatic process, one modeled after weather. Along with Herder’s account of weather as a mode of *Darstellung* (re-presentation), the meta-referential treatment of the meteorologization of the heavens in *Sturm und Drang* works evidences *wettern*’s programmatic character. This chapter has attempted to challenge the postulated exclusion of environmental and poetological aspects of weather-imagery in *Sturm und Drang*, and to demonstrate the important role of weather in the development of German drama. We can conclude by stating that the play Wagner describes in the epigraph to this chapter (Klinger’s *Sturm und Drang*) does, contra Wagner’s implied denial, contain a storm after all—a raging one with a crucial role to play.

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