"ZUWACHS UNSRER EXISTENZ"
THE QUEST FOR BEING IN J.M.R. LENZ

By

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ABSTRACT

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Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751-1792), whose plays have been acclaimed as the prototype of the modern drama of Brecht and Dürrenmatt, is a controversial figure who rose to prominence on the German literary scene in the early seventeen seventies.

Among Lenz's theoretical writings is the influential essay "Anmerkungen übers Theater," in which he introduces his innovative dramatic theories and describes the independent protagonists he envisions for the German stage. In the same essay, he demands "Zuwachs unser Existenz" (a heightened awareness of existence) from contemporary drama.

However, in marked contrast to the "Anmerkungen," the protagonists of his two most prominent plays, Der Hofmeister (1774) and Die Soldaten (1776), are self-alienated, ontologically insecure individuals who seem victims of the socio-political realities of their times. Not surprisingly, critics are divided in their opinion as to what the contradictions in Lenz's oeuvre signify.

Lenz was a student of Immanuel Kant's between 1768 and 1770, a time when the latter was formulating ideas that would find their full expression years later in his critical philosophy. In 1770, Kant presented his inaugural address "de mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis" (On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World) to the assembled faculty and students of Königsberg Academy, among them J.M.R. Lenz. It is in the inaugural dissertation that Kant introduces his thesis of the individual as an inhabitant of two "worlds," the noumenal and the phenomenal, a central concept in his first critique, Kritik der reinen Vernunft, which would be published in 1781.

This study examines Lenz's thoughts as they surface in his theoretical essays and his major plays and puts forward the thesis that it is Kant's division of the self into an intelligible and a sensible realm which prompts Lenz's call
for "Zuwachs unsrer Existenz." Lenz's quest is fuelled, furthermore, by his acute awareness of the ontological insecurity of the individual self, an awareness which seems to anticipate the thought of Kierkegaard.

The overriding purpose of this thesis is, through a reevaluation of Lenz's theoretical and dramatic works, to elucidate this eighteenth-century writer's quest for authentic being, a quest that he considered to be the individual's most urgent task.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Kant's interpretation of the individual as an inhabitant of two realms, the noumenal and the phenomenal, first presented in his inaugural dissertation, "de mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis" (1770), is rejected by his former student, the Livonian poet and dramatist, Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. It is worth noting that Lenz was not only present on 21 August 1770, the day Kant gave his inaugural address to the Königsberg Academy, but that it was Lenz who wrote and presented a laudatory poem to Kant on the occasion (Rosanow, 54).

By the early seventeen seventies, Lenz asked questions that are more personal than Werther's rhetorical, "Was ist der Mensch, der gepriesene Halbgott?" His important essay "Über Götz von Berlichingen" opens with an account of human life from birth to death: the predictable routine of day to day living, the social and family relationships, and the futility of it all. Summing up the sad biography, Lenz confronts the reader with the question, "Aber heißt das gelebt? heißt das seine Existenzz gefühlt, seine selbstständige Existenzz, den
Funken von Gott?" (Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. Werke und Schriften I, 378).1 Lenz speaks to us from the distance of eighteenth-century Germany, a time when the bourgeois class had yet to ascend to power.

In the following century, Kierkegaard considers the question of authentic human existence; he seems to be echoing Lenz's summation of the human condition when he notes: "To have been young, and then to grow older, and finally to die, is a very mediocre form of human existence; this merit belongs to every animal" (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 311).

Yet regardless of the differences in their socio-political environment and the historical realities that confront them, Lenz and Kierkegaard offer a diagnosis of the human condition that points to the progressive fragmentation and alienation of the self. It is not surprising, therefore, that the quest for authentic being permeates the work of both writers.

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent references to Lenz's writings in the body of this thesis will be to the two vols. of the Titel/Haug edition, prefaced with (I) for the theoretical essays and prose and (II) for the drama.
a. Overview

This study tries to account for the often diagnosed contradictions between Lenz's theoretical writings and his major plays. To that effect, the focus is on the theoretical essays and ideas put forward in Der Hofmeister (1774) and Die Soldaten (1776), and to a lesser degree on Der neue Menoza (1774). In addition, reference is made to his lesser known plays, his prose, and his correspondence.

The following is a short description of the topics addressed:

Chapter I presents a review of the critical literature to date with special emphasis on the scholarly contributions of the past three decades.

The philosophical background is the focus of chapter II. Kant's two worlds, the intelligible and the sensible, as presented in the inaugural dissertation, are considered

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Der neue Menoza was not well received by Lenz's contemporaries (I, 728). Lenz himself was critical of the play; he wrote to Sophie von La Roche in July 1775: "Menoza ist ein übereiltes Stück, an dem nichts als die Idee schätzbar ist" (Briefe I, 115). And according to Rosanow, Lenz claimed, "Der neue Menoza hat nichts als dramatische Einkleidung" (194).
in (b); and finally, a short overview of what constitutes existential thought is given in section (c).

Chapter III looks at Lenz's treatment of the mind/body dichotomy in the theoretical essays (a), the prose (b), and the plays (c).

Lenz's quest for freedom is the focus of chapter IV. In the first section (a), a short historical overview of "free will versus determinism" as a problem in Western philosophy is given. In sections (b) and (c), Lenz's understanding of freedom, its place in human consciousness, and his dialectical approach to the problem of free will versus determinism in the theoretical essays and the plays come under scrutiny. The aesthetic as a mode of existence is examined in section (d), and in (e) the ethical point of view of the subjective thinker is explored.

Chapter V examines the significance of paradox in Lenz's dramas.

In the final chapter, the focus is again on the existential questions that Lenz poses, questions that defy logical analysis but are implicit in his quest for authentic being.
b. Lenz Criticism

There are several dominant approaches to J.M.R. Lenz. There are the studies which focus on social criticism; for example, the pressure exerted upon the individual by his socio-economic status and the father/son conflict. The influence of the philosophical thought of Leibniz, Shaftesbury, and Rousseau and the religious implications of Lenz's thought have also been probed. Lenz's innovative use of language and gestures has received much attention. In addition, the anti-Aristotelian form and the realism of his plays have been acknowledged in recent studies.

However, it is the discrepancy between the dramatic theories put forward in Lenz's "Anmerkungen übers Theater" and the characters in his plays which represents the main thrust of Lenz scholarship in the past decade. In particular, the figure of the independent protagonist portrayed in the "Anmerkungen" comes under close scrutiny and is contrasted with the ineffective and dependent characters that emerge from the pages of Lenz's major plays.

This unsolved dualism, which manifests itself in the discrepancy between ideas put forward in the theoretical essays on the one hand and the drama on the other, is commonly
acknowledged. For example, Werner Preuss comments that only an interdisciplinary study can hope to address this dualism in Lenz's life and work. He writes:


The aim of this review is to facilitate a thematic overview of the critical literature and to indicate the point of departure which led me to probe the philosophical paradigm of Lenz's oeuvre and examine the possibility of reconciling ideas put forward in the theoretical essays with his dramatic writings.

I would like to begin by recognizing two important contributions to the Lenz scholarship of the past two decades. Firstly, there is David Price Benseler's 1971 doctoral thesis which is the only indexed Lenz bibliography to date. Secondly,
the comprehensive account of recent Lenz criticism given in Hans-Gerd Winter's 1987 survey is acknowledged.

From the untimely death of J.M.R. Lenz in the spring of 1792 to the present, the reception of his works has been mixed. There is little doubt that Lenz was well received by the Romantics: Brentano expresses his fondness for Der neue Menoza and Tieck produces the first edition of Lenz's oeuvre.4

The dramatist Georg Büchner takes an interest in Lenz and attempts a psychological interpretation of the writer in his famous 1839 documentary novella Lenz. His source is Pastor Johann Friedrich Oberlin's account of Lenz's bout with mental illness during the latter's visit to Waldersbach in early 1778. Büchner presents Lenz as an individual who suffers existential angst and loneliness, a condition which, although commonly associated with twentieth-century man, is the predominant mood of Büchner's Woyzeck, published in 1886.

Negative reviews of Lenz and his work, prompted perhaps by Goethe's often cited Lenz portrait in book 14 of Dichtung und Wahrheit (X, 7-11), are not unusual in the critical

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3 Clemens Brentano, letter to Achim von Arnau, February 1806, quoted in Hinck, J.M.R. Lenz: Der neue Menoza, 93.

4 Tieck's edition was published in 1828 by G. Reimer in Berlin (Huyssem, Drama des Sturm und Drang, 157).
literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. Erich Schmidt, for example, writing in 1878, bases his Lenz characterization on Goethe's unfavourable comments:


(9)

Lenz's star is in the ascendant at the turn of the century, when the Naturalists, influenced by Max Halbe's 1892 laudatory essay "Der Dramatiker Reinhold Lenz. Zu seinem 100. Todestage," adopt him as their role model. Halbe describes the innovative form of Lenz's plays as an objective reflection of reality and considers it as a blueprint for the "Charakterdrama" of the Naturalists (568-82).

Yet in the first decades of the present century, critical reviews of Lenz and his work were often based on little more than Lavater's physiognomy. For example, M.N. Rosanow--although sympathetic to Lenz--writes in 1909:

5 In his study, Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und der Menschenliebe, Lavater claims that a person's character can be read from his or her facial expressions.
Seinem inneren Wesen haftet die gleiche Unzuverlässigkeit und Unbeständigheit wie seiner äussern Gestalt an. Betrachten wir die bekannten Porträts unseres Dichters: welch weiche, verschwommene, fast noch unfertige Linien und Züge! (441).

While H.A. Korff claims that Lenz's drama is devoid of any ethical component but consistent "mit der grillenhaften Natur ihres Dichters" (Geist der Goethezeit I, 246), Hermann Hettner goes a step further and dismisses Lenz as "Affe Goethes." These two words, attributed to the Duke of Weimar by Hettner (184), are cited and endorsed by Leo Balet in 1973! (223 ff). And Karl Goedeke's summation of Lenz's creative powers, "... in dumpfem Drange verkam er, in Entwürfen und Skizzen blieb er stecken" (774), simply reflects the popular Lenz portrait of the time.

Schmidt, Korff, Hettner, and Goedeke seem to share a bias against all literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that does not subscribe to the classical ideals put forward by Goethe and Schiller. Consequently, literary contributions of writers like Lenz, Hölderlin, and Kleist are considered to be somewhat inferior.

Heinz Kindermann is the first critic to challenge the popular thesis that Lenz was either unwilling or unable to
outgrow his Sturm und Drang period and incapable of following Goethe into the realm of German classicism. In his comprehensive study, J.M.R. Lenz und die deutsche Romantik (1925), Kindermann argues that from the very beginning Lenz's path was not destined to lead to the gates of classicism (viii). In his eyes, Lenz is a precursor of the Romantic movement in Germany. In particular, Lenz's sceptical attitude towards reason as the predominant force in human life is interpreted as diametrically opposed to the philosophy of the Enlightenment and akin to the Weltanschauung of the Romantics.

To support his hypothesis, Kindermann points to the tensions between individual and society which are similarly treated by Lenz and the Romantics. Since Kindermann's primary concern is to establish Lenz as a forerunner of the Romantics, he considers Lenz's philosophical and literary associations; for example, he examines the influence that Shakespeare and Rousseau exerted on Lenz, and the latter's relationship to Goethe, Herder, and Lessing.

Gert Mattenklott examines melancholy as a malaise prevalent among the Stürmer und Dränger of the seventeen seventies in his comprehensive 1985 study Melancholie in der Dramatik des Sturm und Drang. With regard to Der Hofmeister, he observes that melancholy is the dominating mood of the play
until the final scene, when Lenz makes a halfhearted attempt to commit himself on a political and aesthetic level (166-68).

The question of genre is the focus of K.S. Guthke's study *Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie*. According to Guthke, alternation of tragic situations and comic characters produces a tragi-comic effect in Lenz's plays (58-64). Critical of Guthke's classification, René Girard concedes the term tragi-comedy to *Die Soldaten* (*Genèse*, 402-07); however, he regards *Der Hofmeister* as both comedy and tragedy (*Genèse*, 288-89) and *Der neue Menoza* as an experimental tragi-comedy (*Genèse*, 318-20). In conclusion, Girard points to two major impulses that run parallel in Lenz's drama: the search for a harmonious and reassuring world and the critical representation of the world as it is--seen through the eyes of a caricaturist (*Genèse*, 421).

While Horst Glaser views *Der Hofmeister* as a parody (137), Hans Mayer simply categorizes the play as "eine böse Komödie" (809). More recently, Dieter Liewerscheidt, who uses the term "apokalyptische Farce" (144) to describe Lenz's *Der neue Menoza*, wonders if its structure is not an adequate reflection of the "grotesk-apokalyptische Signatur" of the declining nobility of the eighteenth century (148). He claims, furthermore, that the play reveals "den Hass des bürgerlichen Autors auf die historisch überfällige Adelsgesellschaft...."
Wolfgang Kayser is another critic who points to the grotesque elements in Lenz’s work and acknowledges caricature as a characteristic feature of Der neue Menoza (43-44). Kayser describes the beggars' ball scene as a portrait of a dissociated and estranged world, inhabited by puppet-like characters (45). The grotesque, as a common feature in Sterne's Tristram Shandy and Lenz's Der Waldbruder, is also the focus of a study by Lilian Fürst. Comparing the use of satire in both narratives, she acknowledges that "Lenz, by contrast, has a sharper edge to his satire, a more bitter intuition of the absurdity of life and, above all, of its terrifying proximity to the existential abyss" (20). Of Der Waldbruder she writes, "The sense of a chaotic world and of man's total bewilderment in it assumes really frightening proportions here" (19).

Bruce Duncan classifies both Der Hofmeister and Die Soldaten as belonging to the genre of the "dark comedy" since, however negatively, "dark comedy" still attempts to find a raison d'etre for the existing world order, an attempt that is no longer possible within the realm of the grotesque (25). He describes Lenz's characters as automata, as "mere constructs without autonomy, totally defined by their 'Stände'" (217).
The dark side of Lenz's drama is also acknowledged by Allan Blunden who interprets Wenceslaus's character in *Der Hofmeister* as "surely sinister in his absurdity, and not just funny" ("Lenz, Language, and Love's Labour's Lost," 260).

Helmut Arntzen's 1968 study, *Die ernste Komödie*, points to the alienation that exists between the individual and society as the starting point of *Sturm und Drang* comedy (85). With regard to Lenz, Arntzen views the isolation of the individual as central to the conflict in *Der Hofmeister* (89).

Contradiction and paradox are important considerations in John Osborne's study *J.M.R. Lenz: The Renunciation of Heroism*. He sees "the tortured alternation between self-assertion and self-doubt,...[as] characteristic of Lenz" (23). Helga Madland also acknowledges contradictions as recurring phenomena in Lenz's drama and interprets them as a result of "...his vision of the autonomous individual based on a rational approach to problem solving and his simultaneous recognition of man's dependency on nature" (Diss. 320). She believes, furthermore, that "this profoundly disturbing paradox with which mankind is forced to contend creates a dilemma for Lenz which he is unable to resolve and which is reflected in his two major dramas" (Diss. 320). Michael Butler's study, "Character and Paradox in Lenz's *Der Hofmeister*," views the presentation of paradox as the principal source of comic effect in Lenz's
plays (96). More importantly, he notes that paradox is "deeply rooted in the characters' identities and persistently reflected in their words and actions, in the discrepancy between what they say and what they do, or more often between what they wish to do and what they actually achieve" (96).

The majority of Lenz's critics support the thesis that his works constitute a break with the Enlightenment and its idealistic conception of the individual's freedom. For example, Huyssem writes:

Läuffers Seelenheirat mit der Bauerstochter Lise ist in einer körperlichen Verkrüppelung begründet, die schwerlich durch idyllisches Landleben oder geistige Werte wettgemacht werden kann. Ganz und gar unidealistiche Entsagung bleibt somit beider Los, und damit widerlegt das Stück den universalen Anspruch der Aufklärung, Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung der menschlichen Persönlichkeit in der Vernunft begründen und gesellschaftlich verwirklichen zu können.

(Drama des Sturm und Drang, 172-73)

This view is not shared by Ottomar Rudolf, however, who considers Lenz loyal to Enlightenment ideals and, consequently, interprets the final scene in Der Hofmeister as
a tableau which reflects the harmonious world order propagated by the Enlightenment (162).

It is worth noting that, as recently as 1980, Timothy Pope views Lenz's drama as reflecting the optimism of Enlightenment philosophy. In his doctoral thesis, entitled "The Concept of Action in J.M.R. Lenz," He writes:

Lenz's first major drama: Der Hofmeister, brings the idea of metanoia to bear on the fallible nature of human life. The play concerns not so much the cause of the family tragedy: ostensibly the hiring of a private tutor, as the way in which that tragedy is overcome by moral renewal and by the joy of believing that the curse of the past is outweighed by the infinite possibilities of the future. (Pope, iii-iv)

Huyssen sees contradictions between Enlightenment ideology and sentiments and Lenz's radical opposition to them

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6 Pope gives the following definition of metanoia: "Freedom of action is freedom to make mistakes and to profit from those mistakes; this, to Lenz, is the gospel of Christ. At the heart of it is the idea of metanoia, which is the new mentality, the loftier perspective that comes about through the performance of action that is followed by moral evaluation. Metanoia means not the pietistic dwelling on past failures and past wrongdoing...but the sense of freedom to turn those failures to account" (iii).
as a central concern in Der Hofmeister; he rejects, however, enemy or a proponent of the Enlightenment ("Gesellschaftsgeschichte und Literarische Form," 135). Huyssen's position is one that Madland fully endorses. She writes, "Lenz's theory of the drama and his philosophical position are neither an extension of the Enlightenment nor a complete rejection thereof" (Diss. 321).

Several scholars interpret Lenz's writings as stressing the social context of the individual, for example, Guthke (Tragikomödie, 274-86), Schwarz ("Lenz und Shakespeare," 93), Glaser (151), and Duncan (Diss. 217). However, Walter Hinderer takes the position that social conditions serve as a mere backdrop in Lenz's drama against which the individual's right to self-realization is asserted ("Lenz: Der Hofmeister," 73).

Titel observes that Lenz's major concern, the summa summarum of his work and his life, is the realization of the individual's potential for genius on the one hand, and his limited and oppressed condition on the other (Diss. 70). She is also one of the first critics to note that Lenz presents his characters in a sensual manner and that, consequently, his characterization is as dependent on non-verbal communication

7 Here, Titel seems to echo Pascal's thoughts on the "grandeur" and the "misère" of the human condition (Penseés de Pascal, 143; 145; 147).
methods such as mimicry and gestures as it is on the *logos*. Of Lenz's characters she remarks:

> Sie sagen meist recht unbedeutende und alltägliche Dinge; aber sie werden dabei in ihrer sinnlichen Erscheinung lebendig: in ihrer Art zu sprechen, sich zu geben, zu reagieren, in der Gestik der Bewegungen und dem Gestischen der Sprache. (Diss. 178)

As its alliterative title suggests, Blunden's study, "Lenz, Language, and Love's Labour's Lost," compares the language of Shakespeare and Lenz. He notes that Lenz exhibits an awareness of the social and psychological function of language in *Der Hofmeister* akin to Shakespeare's use of language in *Love's Labour's Lost*. He examines the rhetorical world that is inhabited by Wenzeslaus in *Der Hofmeister* and comes to the conclusion that all the schoolmaster's responses are "mechanically conditioned by the rhetoric of his bookish world" (260). He also observes that Lenz is "a pre-incarnation of Wittgenstein" (257), but he does not elaborate on this important insight. He does note, however, that "Shakespeare's paradox--that language is important for the very reason that many people take it to be too important--is one that Lenz makes fully his own" (273).
Höllerer notes that "Sprechsphären" --language registers-- which correspond to the socio-economic status of an individual, are donned as a disguise by the characters in Die Soldaten. To support his thesis, he identifies five different language registers for Mariane alone (133). In addition, he notes that Lenz employs gestures as a technique to continue the action when language fails and that, in the process, language itself becomes "gestische Formulierung" (139). Walter Hinck also considers gestures to be of primary importance in Der neue Menoza. He maintains that practically everything that happens on stage can be gathered from either the stage directions or the gestures of the actors (Der neue Menoza, 90-91). And in a more recent study, Madland credits Lenz with "a sceptical attitude toward language that resembles the linguistic concerns of later generations of writers" ("Gesture....Language Scepticism," 556). Mattenkloß identifies linguistic stereotypes in Der Hofmeister (144-46); their existence was denied by Titel in her 1963 dissertation, "'Nachahmung der Natur' als Prinzip dramatischer Gestaltung bei Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz" (223-24).

Bruce Kieffer's Storm and Stress of Language addresses common linguistic concerns of the period. He claims that an investigation of Sturm und Drang language points to "unity in a philosophical-anthropological area of thought, as opposed to
social-political and literary-technical areas" (143). He further notes that this type of unity has not been sufficiently appreciated in the critical literature (143). With regard to Der Hofmeister, he makes the observation that, as the plot develops, language moves against reason and that, consequently, the double happy ending of the final scene is discredited by its linguistic plot (66).

Claus Lappe's significant discovery that, given the time structure of Der Hofmeister, Lauffer cannot be considered the natural father of Gustchen's child, points not only to the relativity of time in the drama, but seems to indicate that the space continuum not only disrupts the time continuum but that it takes precedence over it. He writes:

Nicht also ordnet das einheitliche Zeitprinzip die Disparatheit der Räume zu Überschaubaren Parallelentwicklungen, sondern das aesthetische Prinzip der räumlichen Kontrastierung zersplittert das zeitliche Kontinuum in gegeneinander verschobene Phasen: der Raum dominiert die Zeit, nicht umgekehrt. ("Wer hat Gustchens Kind gezeugt," 31)

Criticism which proceeds from a philosophical perspective associates Lenz with several of the more important philosophical minds of the eighteenth century. Thus,
Kindermann ventures that Lenz's essay, "Entwurf eines Briefes an einen Freund, der auf der Akademie Theologie studiert," illuminates the differences between the philosophical thought of Bayle and Leibniz (338).

Norman R. Diffey examines the relationship between Lenz and Rousseau and comes to the conclusion that, although Lenz shares aspects of Rousseau's social and cultural criticism, this does not prevent him from mocking Rousseau's "sentimentality" and "naive ideal" in Der Hofmeister (203).

The validity of Blunden's thesis—that Lenz applies the Leibnizian monadology to the social sphere—depends on whether or not one agrees with his interpretation that Lenz's use of the term Standpunkt in the "Anmerkungen" corresponds to the Leibnizian "point de vue" ("J. M. R. Lenz and Leibniz: A Point of View," 3-18).8

Since the fifties, critical literature has acknowledged the modernity of Lenz's drama. Lenz's plays have been compared to the drama of Wedekind and Brecht, among others, and Horst Glaser describes the dramatist as "einen unzeitgemässen Irrläufer der Moderne"(149). Both Walter Höllerer (147) and Volker Klotz (238) see Lenz's anti-Aristotelian drama at the

8 See chapter IV of this study for a reevaluation of Lenz's understanding of Standpunkt.
The beginning of a chain of development that leads to the theatre of Brecht and Dürrenmatt. Their view is shared by Madland who writes:

The existential, psychological, social, and linguistic problems he broaches, together with the novel episodic structure of his dramas, anticipate the theatre of Büchner, Wedekind, Brecht and more contemporary dramatists, Heinar Kipphardt, for example. (Diss. 322)

Hans Mayer's important essay, "Lenz oder die Alternative," considers Lenz's oeuvre as a possible alternative to Weimar classicism and notes that castration, murder plots, and suicide coexist with philosophical reflections as common features in the plays of Lenz and Dürrenmatt (807). He also claims that the seeds of discontent, which surface in Lenz's plays, anticipate Brecht's social criticism (826).

At the conclusion of his 1970 dissertation, "Dark Comedy in Eighteenth Century Germany: Lessing and Lenz," Bruce Duncan detects in both Der Hofmeister and Die Soldaten, "an attitude analogous to that which we today associate with such writers as Beckett and Ionesco" (217).

Modernity in literature is perhaps best characterized as the movement towards the destruction of traditional literary
forms. With regard to the drama, the traditional drama as prescribed in Aristotle's *Poetics* had to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Furthermore, the structure of the plot had to be rational, with each part developing logically from the preceding part. But most importantly, the drama had to observe the three unities: the unity of time, place, and action.

Modern drama represents the voice of a world in which Christian religion and morality are in the process of dissolution. Thus the breakdown of the classical Aristotelian form of the drama coincides with the loss of faith in those aspects of human existence that extend beyond the physical world. On stage, the anxiety that the loss of the metaphysical realm creates in the individual is portrayed by protagonists who no longer have a fixed abode and are alienated from the world and themselves.

The term "modern consciousness" is often used as an indicator to gauge the modernity of a work of art or literature. It is a term that is difficult to define, however. Perhaps Lionel Trilling comes close when he terms it "disintegrated consciousness" (*Sincerity and Authenticity*, 26). He claims that the dissociated nature of modern consciousness in literature can be traced back to the eighteenth century, to the dialogue between Lui and Moi in
Diderot's *Le neveu de Rameau*. Trilling claims that on one level the dialogue between the composer Rameau (moi) and his rascal of a nephew (lui) describes the inauthentic mode of life of an individual (lui) who, forced into role-playing by society, becomes alienated from his self (30 ff). But he grants that on another level, by introducing the reader to a self that is confronted by the dichotomies of its very existence—which embrace good and evil, ethics and aesthetics, authenticity and inauthenticity—Diderot presents us with a consciousness that challenges the self to embrace seemingly irreconcilable positions (32-33). Diderot's dialogue, published in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, points to the gradual dispersion of the self.

In the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud's new therapy of psycho-analysis with its emphasis on the important role that the subconscious plays in the life of the individual, and Carl Jung's discovery of the collective unconscious, have resulted in the realization that there are, indeed, multiple layers to the human psyche.

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9 *Le Neveu de Rameau*, written between 1761 and 1774, was not published during Diderot's lifetime and reached Germany in 1805 only with Goethe's translation (Trilling, 27).
A review of critical literature shows that modern is the term most often used to describe the plays of this eighteenth-century dramatist. The Non-Aristotelian form alone is, of course, indicative of the modernity of Lenz's drama. However, the renewed critical interest in Lenz over the past three decades can be attributed to the fact that this eighteenth-century writer's awareness of the fragility of human existence is analogous to concerns that modern and post-modern writers and playwrights have voiced. Thus this study puts forward the thesis that Lenz's quest for "Zuwachs unserer Existenz," a quest for authentic being, anticipates the dissociation in modern consciousness which surfaces in the art and literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although Lenz's years at Königsberg have earned Kant the occasional footnote in most biographical notes on Lenz, the influence of Kant's philosophy on Lenz has received only cursory attention in the critical literature to date. Hans Mayer represents one of the few exceptions to this rule. Commenting on Lenz's understanding of the interdependence of beauty and truth in "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," he remarks that Lenz appears to him "ein zu früh gekommener Kantianer" (795-96).

Since Rudolf views Lenz as an eighteenth-century moralist, his primary motive is to examine his position on
ethics. To this effect, he considers the influence that Shaftesbury, Rousseau, and Kant had on Lenz (52-66). In probing common philosophical ideas that Kant and Lenz share, Rudolf perceives in Lenz's attitude a reflection of the former's thoughts on altruism (174); he also senses something akin to Kant's "categorical imperative" in Lenz's essay, "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral" (203, 233 fn.). Not surprisingly, he sees Wenceslaus's "asketisches Pflichtmenschentum" in a positive light (168). Preuss, whose recent study Selbstkastration oder Zeugung neuer Kreatur considers the problem of moral freedom in Lenz's life and work, concedes that Kant may have served as a model for both, 'der Geheime Rat' and Wenzeslaus in Der Hofmeister, but maintains that Lenz intends an implicit criticism of Kantian ethics here (113, Anm. XX).

The contradictions inherent in Lenz's theoretical and dramatic writings were the point of departure for my research. In addition, Lenz's early years in Königsberg and the intellectual stimulus he received from being exposed to Kant's thought at a formative stage of his development led me to probe the underlying philosophical paradigm of his work.

With regard to the impact of Kant's pre-critical thought on Lenz, examining the relationship between Kant and Lenz is not only a prerequisite for coming to terms with Lenz's
position within the literary and philosophical spectrum of eighteenth-century Germany, but central to an appreciation of his writings. In fact, Kant must be considered the impetus that led to Lenz's awareness of the potentially tragic consequences that an absolute separation between the two aspects of human existence, the intelligible and the sensible, has for the individual.

Most importantly, the antinomies which surface in Lenz's oeuvre point to the fact that he was indeed searching for an alternative to the idealism which characterized the drama of the Enlightenment. It is my intention to examine whether Lenz's demand for "Zuwachs unserer Existenz" ultimately leads him to adopt a materialistic point of view, as suggested by the majority of his critics, or whether he is, in fact, moving towards the so-called "third" position, a position that seeks to reconcile mind with body, consciousness with reality.  

10 In his essay "Existentialism," Lukacs objects to the philosophical position of existentialism, which he terms the "third" position as not plausible, "since one either believes that being is independent of consciousness or that it is not. In the former case, one subscribes to materialism, in the latter, to idealism. Or to put it another way, the fundamental principle of materialism is the independence of being from consciousness; of idealism, the dependence of being on consciousness" (Marxism and Human Liberation, 245).
CHAPTER II
THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

a. Kant's Two Worlds

The splitting of human experience into one's awareness and the world one is aware of, leads to two separate realms of existence: thinking and feeling, the intelligible and the sensible world. This view of human consciousness had its origin in René Descartes (1596-1650); his "cogito, ergo sum" not only pointed to thought as the ultimate proof of the individual's existence but confirmed that thinking takes precedence over being.

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) claimed that one could have objective knowledge of the world, independent of the observer (Letter to de Volder, June 30, 1704, Philosophische Schriften Vol. II, 270). However, his claim was refuted by David Hume (1711-1776) who pronounced that—since "all our ideas are derived from sense impressions"—we can have objective knowledge of nothing (A Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part 4).

Thus rationalism holds that all knowledge is derived from the exercise of reason and that a description of the world is possible independent of the view of the observer. Empiricism
Thus rationalism holds that all knowledge is derived from the exercise of reason and that a description of the world is possible independent of the view of the observer. Empiricism claims, however, that--since ideas stem from sense impressions--it is not possible to separate knowledge from the subjective condition of the observer.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) taught the rational philosophy of Leibniz which--built into a system by Christian Wolff (1679-1754)--had become the orthodox metaphysics of the German Enlightenment. However, sometime after 1770--the year Kant delivered his inaugural lecture entitled "de mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis" at the Königsberg Academy--his belief in the ability of reason "to move within the metaphysical realm" was shaken somewhat through his

11 The term "Enlightenment" has received much critical attention. Kant's often quoted reply "sich aus der beinahe zur Natur gewordenen Unmündigkeit herauszuarbeiten" to the question: What is Enlightenment? points to the individual's confidence in his rational faculties (Kant's Gesammelte Schriften, AA, Vol. VIII, 36). Kant's interpretation is echoed by Adorno who writes, "Seit je hat die Aufklärung im umfassenden Sinn fortschreitenden Denkens das Ziel verfolgt, von den Menschen die Furcht zu nehmen und sie als Herren einzusetzen." Adorno further states that the goal of the German Enlightenment was "die Entzauberung der Welt" (Dialektik der Aufklärung, 19).

12 All subsequent references to Kant's inaugural dissertation will be to its abbreviated title: "de mundi sensibilis atque et intelligibilis."
acquaintance with Hume's scepticism. In fact, he acknowledged that it was Hume's sceptical thought which first interrupted his dogmatic slumber and gave his philosophy a new direction (AA, Vol. XX, 36).

In his inaugural lecture, Kant takes the position that neither intellect nor sensibility alone can provide knowledge. The first provides form without content, the second content without form. Consequently, he distinguishes between two realms: an empirical realm which concerns itself with phenomena and an ideal, non-empirical realm which deals with noumena. He writes:

Sinnlichkeit ist die Empfänglichkeit eines Subjekts, durch die es möglich ist, daß sein Vorstellungszustand von der Gegenwart irgendeines Objekts auf bestimmte Weise affiziert wird.

Verstandesausstattung (Vernunftausstattung) ist das Vermögen eines Subjekts, durch das es vorzustellen vermag, was, aufgrund seiner Beschaffenheit, nicht in seine Sinne eindringen kann. Der Gegenstand der

13 Here, Kant has not, as yet, made the distinction between Vernunft and Verstand, a distinction he is to make in his first critique, Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1781).
Sinnlichkeit ist sensibel; was aber nichts enthält, als was man durch die Verstandesausstattung erkennen kann, ist intelligibel. Das erstere hieß in den Schulen der Alten Phaenomenon, das letztere Noumenon. Die Erkenntnis, sofern sie den Gesetzen der Sinnlichkeit unterworfen ist, ist sinnlich sofern der Verstandesausstattung, intellektuell oder rational. ("de mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis," II, 3 Schriften zur Metaphysik und Logik, 29)

With this epistemological background, Kant approaches the two realms. According to Kant, desire falls into the domain of the empirical realm and is the result of external causes. However, since moral action involves a certain independence of external causes, moral concepts cannot be known by experience but only by the intellect. Thus morality falls within the noumenal realm. Furthermore, since the two realms are carefully separated, it follows that moral concepts are only recognizable by the pure use of the intellect. In section II, paragraph 7, Kant adds that, although it may be easier to acknowledge geometry as belonging to the sensible realm than to recognize metaphysics as belonging to the intelligible
realm, there are, nevertheless, recognizable signs that point to their respective origin. He writes:

Nichtsdestoweniger bewahrt jedoch eine jede
dieser Erkenntnisse das Zeichen ihrer Herkunft,
so, daß die ersteren, wie deutlich sie auch sein mögen, ihres Ursprungs wegen sinnlich heißen, die letzteren, mögen sie auch noch so verworren sein, intellektuell bleiben: dergleichen sind z. B. die moralischen Begriffe, die nicht auf dem Wege der Erfahrung, sondern durch den reinen Verstand selber erkannt werden. (Schriften zur Metaphysik und Logik, 37)

Since Kant considers ethics as belonging to the noumenal sphere, his conception of moral freedom stands in absolute opposition to causality which he regards as a purely mechanical reaction to an external sensible stimulus. It follows that the self as phenomenon is determined in all its actions, while as noumenon it is free. What Kant creates is a divided individual: one side is turned toward the phenomenal world of causation, and the other faces the noumenal side and the realm of reason. Consequently, the individual's empirical self is involved in the phenomenal world, while the intelligible self is living in the noumenal world of ideas, unaffected by the laws of the former. It follows that human
nature is both determined and free, determined by the
necessity of the phenomenal aspects of existence, and free in
its noumenal capacity.

Kant further argues that since there are two worlds,
there are also two principles of form and order: the order of
the intelligible world is God and that of the sensible is
space and time ("de mundi sensibilis atque intelligible," III,
9. *Schriften zur Metaphysik und Logik*, 39). However, he
grants that there exists an unsolved "dissensus" between the
two faculties, since the sensible faculty is subject to
certain conditions to which the intelligible faculty is not.
Therefore, the concept of the individual presented in the
inaugural dissertation is that of a being based on a double
origin who lives in two separate worlds.

By submitting the phenomenal realm to the laws of
causality and exempting the noumenal realm from these laws,
Kant places morality outside the world of human experience,
and thus outside of nature. In addition, while the first
critique, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), centers on Kant's
belief that the pure use of the intellect as a source of
metaphysical knowledge must be ruled out, in the inaugural
dissertation he still held that reason could provide
metaphysical knowledge ("de mundi sensibilis atque
Kant was not satisfied with certain sections of the inaugural dissertation, and in an often quoted letter to Marcus Herz of 21 February 1772, he disclosed that he was writing a new work which would provide the key to the whole secret of metaphysics. The short work was to be entitled "Die Grenzen der Sinnlichkeit und der Vernunft" and would be ready for publication in about three months (Briefwechsel. Vol. I. Gesammelte Schriften. AA X, 129). Nine years later the first of the three volumes on the limits of sensibility and reason would be published as Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1781).

b. Lenz and Kant

In August 1768, Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751-1792) and his younger brother Christian left their native Dorpat for the Königsberg Academy. Following the wishes of their father, Jakob registers for theology while Christian becomes a law student. It appears that Christian is reading logic and metaphysics with Immanuel Kant (postscript of letter, dated 14 October 1769). In the same letter, Jakob voices his
disappointment with some of the theological classes offered at the Academy. He writes:


One can only speculate that it may have been the lack of enthusiasm for the classes of his theology professors that prompted Lenz to attend Kant's lectures almost exclusively during the years 1769 and 1770. His academic pursuits at Königsberg are described by Johann Friedrich Reichardt, a contemporary of Lenz and a fellow student at Königsberg:

In den Jahren 1769 und 70 studierte ich zugleich mit ihm, in meiner Vaterstadt Königsberg. Nur selten kam er in die Vorlesungen einiger Professoren; bald fast nur ausschließlich dann und wann in die Vorlesungen unsers verehrungswürdigen
Lehrers Kant. ("Etwas über den deutschen Dichter Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz," 113)

It is customary to divide Kant's philosophy into a pre-critical and a critical period. The inaugural lecture of 1770 is commonly considered to be Kant's last pre-critical work, and his letter to Marcus Herz of 21 February 1772 is recognized as the beginning of his critical period. Thus Lenz was a student of Kant's when the latter was formulating ideas that would change the focus of his philosophy and would find their full expression in his three critiques, the first of which would be published in 1781 as *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

That Kant's philosophy exerted a strong influence on Lenz emerges from the fact that the former's pre-critical theories on aesthetics and metaphysics are reflected in Lenz's writing. For example, in "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral" Lenz echoes Kant's thoughts on the interdependence of aesthetics and ethics, first laid out in Kant's "Beobachtungen über das Schöne und Erhabene" (1764). He writes: "Sehen Sie nun, dass die Linien des wahren Schönen und des wahren Guten, im strengsten Verstande in einem Punkte zusammenlaufen" (I, 489).

In "Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik" (1766), Kant is critical of what he terms "die
Spitzfindigkeit des Vernünfteln" and declares, "Wo ich empfinde, da bin ich." Lenz follows in Kant's footsteps when he confesses: "meine Empfindung führt mich...richtiger als meine Schlüsse" (Briefe I, 24, 59).

As noted earlier, it is documented that Lenz presented Kant with a laudatory poem on the occasion of the latter's inaugural address at the Königsberg Academy on 21 August 1770 (Rosanow, 54). In addition, there are indications that Kant may have tried to secure a post for Lenz in Danzig. A letter of the elder Lenz to his sons states, "Nachricht, so ich gehöret, dass Prof. Cant ihn nach Rehbinder in Danzig recommendiret" (Briefe, I, 8, 14). In the letter, he advises his son (Jakob?) not to accept the position. The letter is dated Easter 1771, and shortly after that date Lenz abruptly left Königsberg.

Lenz was only eighteen when he first attended Kant's lectures, yet thoughts that surface in his prose and drama suggest that the dissensus between the individual's sensible and intelligible faculties provided the impetus which led to

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14 Kant follows Rousseau's parole: "La sentiment est plus que la raison." By Kant's own admission, Rousseaus's influence on him during this time was not negligible: "Rousseau hat mich zurecht gebracht" (AA XX, 44).

15 According to Rosanow, Lenz was introduced to Rousseau by Kant (53).
Lenz's quest for authentic and meaningful existence that permeates his work. Thus the potentially tragic consequences of Kant's absolute separation between the individual's intelligible and sensible nature are reflected in the suffering of the individual self in Lenz's work.

In the theoretical essays, Lenz's approach to the problem is dialectical, as he alternates between subjugating one faculty to the other. While his dramatic characters seem to capitulate in the battle between their sensible and intelligible faculties, Lenz struggles with Kant's pre-critical concept of the two diametrically opposed realms of phenomena and noumena in his theoretical essays. Recognizing the fragile and finite nature of human existence, Lenz advocates the quest for authentic existence as the foremost task of the individual and as a means of coming to terms with the opposing claims of nature and consciousness.

Within the *Sturm und Drang*, existential thinking, thinking which seeks to address the individual as a being that is comprised equally of rational and irrational faculties, represents a challenge to the philosophy of the Enlightenment,

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16 "Irrational" is not used in a pejorative sense here; it simply refers to the non-rational side of man's psyche, i.e. the emotions.
which advocated the primacy of rational thought. Scholars are divided over whether the Sturm und Drang, as a literary epoch, represents a continuation of the Enlightenment or whether the literary production of the Stürmer und Dränger breaks with the rational philosophy of the Enlightenment. On the side of those who subscribe to the latter theory is Andreas Huyssen who writes:

Was die Stürmer und Dränger erfaßten, war die Abstraktheit und Einseitigkeit eines für individuell menschliche Praxis blinden Rationalismus, der die aufklärerische Theorie in Deutschland bestimmte. (*Sturm und Drang*, 57)

Lukács, writing from a marxist perspective, was the first critic to claim that the Sturm und Drang firmly belonged to the age of the Enlightenment (Huyssen, 28). More recently, Werner Krauss insisted, "Sturm und Drang ist, wenn man so will, die Vollendung der Aufklärung, in keinem Falle aber eine gegenaufklärerische Bewegung gewesen" (Krauss, 81).

Existential thinking surfaces during the Sturm und Drang in Hamann and to a lesser degree in the writings of his pupil Herder. And although their literary and linguistic theories
differ, their essays on aesthetics and language became the 
credo of the young writers of the *Sturm und Drang*. 17

It must be acknowledged that Königsberg and Kant represented a focal point in the intellectual development of Hamann, Herder, and Lenz. 18 Both Herder and Lenz attended Kant's lectures on metaphysics, logic, and moral philosophy. Hamann was never a student of Kant's but the two men knew each other well and corresponded with each other on a regular basis (Hamann, *Briefwechsel* 4, 498). It is worth noting that it was Hamann who voiced the first strong dissent against Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. 19 If one takes into consideration

17 In particular, Hamann's *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (1759) and his "Aesthetica in nuce" in *Kreuzzüge des Philologen* (1762); Herder's "Über die neuere deutsche Literatur" (1766-67), "Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache" (1770), and his "Shakespeare" essay (1773). The latter was published in the leaflet, *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773) and included Goethe's "Von deutscher Baukunst," which had been published independently a year earlier.

18 Hamann attended the Königsberg Academy from 1746-52; he first read theology, then law, but left in November 1752 without a degree. Herder enrolled as a student of theology in 1762; he attended Kant's lectures and became Hamann's friend. Lenz arrived in Königsberg in August 1768, but although he registered for theology, he attended Kant's lectures almost exclusively in the years 1769 and 1770.

19 Hamann wrote a review of Kant's first critique in Juli 1781.
Hamann's important contributions to the linguistic and literary tenets of the *Sturm und Drang*, one may well argue that it was Hamann who was the catalyst that prompted an existential mode of thinking to surface during the second half of the eighteenth century. The influence of Hamann's existential thought extends far beyond the eighteenth century; he is acknowledged as the greatest influence on Kierkegaard, for example (Thomas, 54-56). However, the existential questions Lenz raises have yet to be fully explored.

c. Existential thought

Since the focus of this thesis is the existential quest that Lenz embarks on, a short exposition of what constitutes existential thinking seems appropriate.

Existentialism has many faces and there are representatives of all major religions as well as agnostics and atheists who profess to be its proponents. However, notwithstanding the differences between them, there are central concerns which unite existentialists. They are:

(a) a keen awareness of the human condition, i.e., the individual's fragile and finite position in the universe;

(b) the struggle for authentic being; and
(c) a belief in the freedom of the individual to choose his or her own destiny regardless of social conventions and restrictions.

In the nineteen fifties and sixties, the term "existential" suffered from overexposure; for example, it was quite fashionable to label contemporary drama "existential" as a matter of course, without elaborating on the existential aspects of the work.

Existentialism is commonly associated with Heidegger's philosophy and Sartre's writings. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that existential thought is the exclusive property of twentieth-century writers and philosophers such as Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus, to name only the most influential among them. An existential approach to life surfaces as early as Socrates and is reflected in subsequent centuries in the writings of St. Augustine, Pascal, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dostojewski, Tolstoy, Unamuno, and Ortega y Gasset, among others.

In Kant's pre-critical thought, the distinction between the intelligible and the sensible world, which was to become the focus of his later "critical" philosophy, is already made. In addition, the realization that mortal man exists alone in a vast universe and the alienation and anxiety this realization triggers in the individual--one of the central concerns of
existential thought--is eloquently expressed by Kant in his "Trostbrief an Frau Funk." He writes:

So aber mengt sich der größte Haufen der Menschen sehr begierig in das Gedränge derjenigen, die auf der Brücke, die die Vorsehung über einen Theil des Abgrundes der Ewigkeit geschlagen hat, und die wir Leben heißen, gewissen Wasserblasen nachlaufen und sich keine Mühe nehmen auf die Fallbretter Acht zu haben, die einen nach dem andern neben ihnen in die Tiefe herabsinken lassen, deren Maß Unendlichkeit ist, und wovon sie selbst endlich mitten in ihrem ungestümen Lauf verschlungen werden. (Gesammelte Schriften, AA, II, 39)

Kant, it is true, was not the first philosopher to be aware of the existential abyss that awaits man. A century and a half earlier, Blaise Pascal had expressed the anxiety he experienced upon contemplating the finite nature of his existence on earth:

Quand je considère la petite durée de ma vie, absorbée dans l'éternité précédant et suivant, le petit espace que je remplis et même que je vois, abîmé dans l'infinie immensité des espaces que j'ignore et qui m'ignorent, je m'effraie...Qui m'y a mis? (Pensées de Pascal, 64)
Yet although the individual self seems dwarfed by the vastness of the universe, Pascal holds firm in his belief that each individual is created in the image of God. And it is this belief in the divine nature of man, coupled with his finitude, that prompts Pascal to ask, "Que deviendra donc l'homme? Serait-il égal à Dieu ou aux bêtes? Quelle effroyable distance! Que serons nous donc?" (Pensées de Pascal, 153).

In the eighteenth century the nature of human existence was pondered by Goethe's Werther who asks the rhetorical question, "Was ist der Mensch, der gepriesene Halbgott?" Kierkegaard puts it more poignantly when he writes at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

I stick my fingers into existence - it smells of nothing. Where am I? What is this thing called the world? What does this word mean? Who is it that has lured me into the thing, and now leaves me there? Who am I? (Repetition, 114)

It is the cosmic alienation man feels as a creature that is thrust into being, which gives rise to the anxiety and dread diagnosed by Kierkegaard and aptly described by Heidegger a

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20 For an existential interpretation of the modalities of human anxiety, see Kierkegaard's The Concept of Dread.
This anxiety is echoed in Rilke's lament: "Wie ist es möglich zu leben, wenn doch die Elemente dieses Lebens uns völlig unfasslich sind" (letter to Lotte Hepner dated 8 November 1915, Briefe, 510).

The philosophical problem of free will versus determinism is a subject that has divided philosophers from the early Greeks to the present. A firm belief in the freedom of the will lies at the heart of existential philosophy. For existentialists, freedom is not merely an abstract concept. On the contrary, existential thinkers consider human freedom as the quality which sets the individual human being apart from other beings in the universe. However, while freedom is a potential for all, it is a reality only for those who have the courage to live their freedom. In this sense, freedom does not refer to changing the world around us, but to transforming ourselves. Existential freedom allows the individual to make choices about his or her existence. And although the possibility of authentic being is always open to the individual, he or she is not always aware of this potential.

Heidegger uses the term "Geworfenheit" to describe the process by which the individual self is being 'thrown' into existence. (Sein und Zeit, 1927)

See chapter four of this study for a brief chronology of the philosophical problem of free will versus determinism.
freedom. Not unlike the man who spent his life waiting in vain to gain entrance to "the law" in Kafka's parable, "Vor dem Gesetz" only to be told before his death that the entrance had been kept open for him and no one else (Kafka, Der Prozess, 226), the individual who waits at the threshold that leads to authentic being is ignorant of the fact that the key is his alone. The danger of conforming to the dictates of the impersonal "one," of sacrificing one's self to others, constitutes a constant threat to the individual's quest for authentic being and is a central concern in Heidegger's Sein und Zeit (1927). The peril of relinquishing one's self is also understood by Kierkegaard, who cautions that the individual who abdicates his independence and opts for inauthentic being, allows the impersonal "one" to charter the course of his life. Thus the quest for self-knowledge, described as "die Höllenfahrt der Selbsterkänntnis" as early as the eighteenth century, constitutes a mandatory first step towards authentic being (Hamann, Sämtliche Werke II, 164).

The quest for the self is, of course, implicit in the Socratic know thyself! In the early seventeen-seventies it

23 In the Phaedrus, Socrates is asked his opinion on a current interpretation of a Greek myth. He responds that he does not have the time to think about such things as he must first follow the Delphic oracle's dictum, "know thyself!" (229b-230a 2).
was Socrates who became the philosopher par excellence of the circle that gathered around the actuary Salzmann in Strassburg—among them, Lenz and Goethe. The latter expresses his enthusiasm for the Greek philosopher in a letter to Herder in the spring of 1772 (Goethes Briefe I, 57, 130). Lenz's admiration for Socrates is reflected not only in the dialectics of his prose, but in the many references to the philosopher in his correspondence and writings.

At the same time, Socrates was the patron saint of the German Enlightenment and was hailed for his rational philosophy. In fact, Frederick the Great claimed that Socrates, in search of the truth, would not accept any propositions which were not strictly rational. In his crusade against the Prussian king and Enlightenment philosophy, Hamann presented the Greek philosopher as the sage who showed his

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24 Goethe writes that he is now studying the life and death of another hero, "den Sokrates, den Philosophischen Heldengeist," who opposes "die Eroberungswuth aller Lügen und Laster besonders derer die keine scheinen wollen; oder vielmehr den göttliche Beruf zum Lehrer der Menschen...." And he adds, "Wür ich einen Tag und eine Nacht Alzibiades, und dann wollt ich sterben."

25 Lenz addresses the actuary Salzmann as "Sokrates" and signs himself "Alcibiades" in several of his letters during 1772 (Letters I, 15, 29; 16, 29-30; 25, 60; and 26, 63). Also compare the homage Lenz pays to the philosopher in his essay, "Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken" (I, 437-38).
Socratic dictum "know thyself," a central tenet in Hamann's philosophy, becomes a focal point in Lenz's thought.

The emergence of existential thinking during the Sturm und Drang manifests itself in the rejection of abstract thought in the literature of the day. While Aristotle had interpreted the rational self as the real self (Nic. Ethics, X. 7, 305), existential philosophy no longer accepts the primacy of abstract thought over the emotions, but considers the individual as a being that consists equally of rational and irrational elements--hence, the existentialists' concern for the integrated human being, what Hamann called "den ganzen Menschen." It follows that the canons of Enlightenment

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27 In a lecture entitled "Paganism and Christianity in Sören Kierkegaard," Drachmann, one of Kierkegaard's editors, put forward the thesis that it was the latter's relation to Socrates and the "socratic" that constituted the decisive influence on Kierkegaard (Subjectivity and Paradox, 106)

28 Rousseau's philosophy with its emphasis on the irrational, i.e. the emotional nature of man, is instrumental in the rejection of abstract thought in the literature of the Sturm und Drang.
wisdom by acknowledging his ignorance (Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten)\textsuperscript{26}. It is not surprising, then, that the Socratic dictum "know thyself," a central tenet in Hamann's philosophy,\textsuperscript{27} becomes a focal point in Lenz's thought.

The emergence of existential thinking during the Sturm und Drang manifests itself in the rejection of abstract thought in the literature of the day.\textsuperscript{28} While Aristotle had interpreted the rational self as the real self (Nic. Ethics, X. 7, 305), existential philosophy no longer accepts the primacy of abstract thought over the emotions, but considers the individual as a being that consists equally of rational and irrational elements--hence, the existentialists' concern for the integrated human being, what Hamann terms "den ganzen

\textsuperscript{26} According to James Flaherty, Hamann's interest in Socrates was prompted by the Jesuit scholar Réné de Rapin's respectful treatment of the philosopher in a history of philosophy which Hamann translated during the time that he was employed as a private tutor in the Baltic (Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia, 58).

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\textsuperscript{28} Rousseau's philosophy with its emphasis on the irrational, i.e. the emotional nature of man, is instrumental in the rejection of abstract thought in the literature of the Sturm und Drang.
philosophy, which glorify man's rational and cognitive powers while subjugating his non-rational faculties, are no longer considered tenable by the generation of young writers who burst upon the literary scene in the early seventeen seventies.29 Existential thought with its emphasis on the "whole man" 30 surfaces during the Sturm und Drang, and challenges the central place which reason held in the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

Existentialism does not constitute a formal system of philosophy which claims to have rational answers to the mystery of human existence, but instead acknowledges the fragility and finiteness of the human condition and presents the individual with the option of choosing an authentic mode of being. Existential thought represents an attempt to come to terms with what authentic human existence demands of the

29 Huyssen interprets the Sturm und Drang as a critique of the Enlightenment, a critique that is not directed against reason itself but against a concept of man which is based on reason alone. He writes, "... so richtet sich die Kritik der Stürmer und Dränger nicht gegen Vernunft per se, sondern nur gegen ein einseitiges auf Ratio allein gegründetes Menschenbild...." (Drama des Sturm und Drang, 48).

30 William Barrett defines existential philosophy as an attempt "to grasp the image of the whole man, even where this involves bringing to consciousness all that is dark and questionable in his existence" (Irrational Man, 22).
individual and as such it is always contemporary, as the following excerpt of a letter Hamann wrote to Jacobi demonstrates. The letter was written in 1784:

To be, or not to be? That is the question - Seyn ist freylich das Ein und Alles jedes Dings. Aber das To Ov der alten Metaphysik hat sich leider! in ein Ideal der reinen Vernunft verwandelt, deßen Seyn und Nichtseyn von ihr nicht ausgemacht werden kann. (Briefwechsel, 5, 271)

Above all, it is the existential voice of Hamann, a voice that finds its full resonance in the writings of J.M.R. Lenz, which represents a powerful challenge to the rational thought propagated by the German Enlightenment.
CHAPTER III
THE DIVIDED SELF

a. The Theoretical Essays

A critical look at J.M.R. Lenz's theoretical essays written between 1770 and 1776 reveals that the dissensus between the individual's sensible and intelligible faculties is a concern that Lenz addresses again and again. In his essay, "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral" (1772/73), written for and presented to the Strassburg Sozietät, Lenz considers the individual as a being that is both spirit and matter. He begins by acknowledging that human beings are, indeed, "zusammengesetzte Wesen," beings composed of a strangely mixed substance:

Wir sind einmal zusammengesetzte Wesen und eine unendliche Reihe von Begriffen aus einem ersten, einzigen Begriff herzuleiten, wird uns vielleicht erst dann möglich sein, wenn unsre

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31 Some of the so called Stürmer und Drängen were members of the "Société de philosophie et de belles-lettres," a weekly Tischgesellschaft, that centered around the actuary Johann Daniel Salzmann in Strassburg; Herder, Goethe, Jung-Stilling, Lersé, Wagner, and Lenz were all members of this group at one time or another.
He further claims that there are those who conceive of man as a being that is either pure spirit or pure matter: "Ich weiss wohl, dass gewisse Psychologen uns gern überreden möchten, wir wären entweder ganz Geist, oder ganz Materie" (I, 486). As a case in point he cites Newton's attempt at a purely rational and mechanical interpretation of the world, an attempt that ultimately failed (I, 468). He claims, furthermore, that reason is severely handicapped in its assessment of human nature (I, 485) and expresses a growing scepticism about the ability of reason to move within the realm of metaphysics in a letter to the actuary Salzmann (Briefe I, 25, 62). While he acknowledges that God's direct intervention in the lives of the apostles and saints falls within the sphere of metaphysics, he claims that reason (Vernunft) is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for this intervention and adds that, in any case, reason would regard with suspicion any phenomenon, "welches nicht die dazu erforderlichen Kennzeichen bei sich hat" (Briefe I, 25, 62). The letter is dated October 1772, and it is worth noting that Lenz dismisses as questionable the ability of reason to provide metaphysical knowledge at a time when Kant seemed to
hold firm in his belief that reason had the ability to move within the metaphysical realm. In the same letter, Lenz employs the Icarus myth to make the point that mind (Geist) is unable to establish its priority over nature within the domain of the latter:

Zusammen mögen sich die Fittige des Geistes halten, und im Thal ruhen, ehe sie, wenn sie der Sonne zu nahe kommen, in zerlassenen Wachs heruntertröpfeln und den armen Geist, welcher auf dem Lande so sicher und lustig hätte einher gehen können, aus der Luft in das Meer herab wirft! (Briefe I, 25, 62)

In the conclusion of "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral" Lenz reiterates his position that all aspects of human life are based on a double origin: "Kurz meine Herren wir sind Hermaphroditen, gedoppelte Tiere sowohl in unserm Wesen, als in unsern Kenntnissen und den Prinzipien derselben" (I, 486). He then proceeds to identify the quest for happiness and the quest for perfection as basic human pursuits, which

32 As previously stated, in "de mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis" (1770), Kant still holds that reason can transcend the veil of appearances and provide metaphysical knowledge of reality.
can only be realized, however, through the full integration of man's faculties (I, 493-94).

In "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," Lenz addresses the dangers that invariably result from an individual's devotion to a partial self. As an example, he cites the plight of a seducer who, completely absorbed in his sensual pursuits, remains ignorant of his non-sensible nature and consequently experiences nothing but his sensuality (I, 493). Lenz demands that any attempt to operate from a partial identity is to be abandoned. In addition, he attributes the preoccupation with a partial and diminished self to ignorance of the self (I, 493). He concedes, however, that nothing is more difficult to gain than self-knowledge (I, 489).

In contrast to the dialectical approach he takes in "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," Lenz opts for a somewhat different strategy in his essay "Vom Baum der Erkenntnis Guten und Bösen" (1771/72). He begins by

33 This one-sidedness applies to the tutor in Der Hofmeister, to the soldiers in Die Soldaten, and to Zerbin in "Zerbin oder die neuere Philosophie."

34 First published in 1780 as "Philosophische Vorlesungen für empfindsame Seelen" (Rosanow, 475-76). In Rosanow as "Meine Lebensregeln," 548-55; Titel I, 501-09 (Supplements only); Blei IV, 31-78.
examining the value of human sexuality and comes to the conclusion that sexual gratification is a gift that enhances the marital state (Blei IV, 56). But he cautions that concupiscence (erotic desire) is only acceptable within the bonds of marriage (Blei IV, 62-63). In addition, Lenz provides itemized rules to alert readers to the first symptoms of erotic desire to enable them to avoid "die Verirrungen der Liebe und der Zärtlichkeit" (Blei IV, 62-63). Lenz assumes the tone of a moralist, here, and seems to uphold the scholastic approach to the mind/body dichotomy by endorsing the mortification of the flesh, "Überhaupt ist's gut das Fleisch zu kasteien und zu kreuzigen, damit der Geist wachsen und sich bilden könne...." (Blei IV, 63). Lenz also anticipates Wenceslaus's sermon in Der Hofmeister, as cited by Läuffer: "So müsse unser Geist auch durch allerlei Kreuz und Leiden und Ertötung der Sinnlichkeit für den Himmel zubereitet werden" (II,V.ix, 90).

The above seems to decide the argument in favour of the individual's intelligible faculties, but the supplements to this essay carry a somewhat different message. Here, he acknowledges concupiscence as God's most perfect gift and as the basis for the individual's happiness (I, 501) and argues that Adam and Eve's sexual awakening, although contrary to
God's commandments, provided the impetus the individual needed in order to evolve as a moral being (I, 502-503).35

In "Stimmen des Laien," Lenz claims that only prohibition causes sin, since it is impossible to sin without a desire for prohibited pleasures. To support his thesis he relates the story of the Christian virgins who died during the sack of Rome. He objects to St. Augustine's view that those virgins who escaped by drowning themselves in the Tiber should be held in lesser esteem than their sisters who suffered rape at the hands of their captors. Lenz holds that, on the contrary, the virgins who chose death by drowning should be singled out for praise, since they did not trust themselves not to be tempted by their captors. Lenz's position here is based on the gospel of St. Matthew (I, 559).36

In his attempt to come to terms with the concept of human sexuality, Lenz assumes a moralistic tone, but at the same time he does acknowledge the limitations of reason, i.e. its

35 See also Blei IV, 88-90, "Meynungen eines Laien, den Geistlichen zugeeignet."

36 Matthew 18: 8-9: And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.
inability to have absolute mastery over the individual's sensible nature. Thus he considers human beings in their totality, as beings which are rooted in both worlds: the sensible and the intelligible.

b. The Prose

The mind/body dissonance is also a recurring theme in Lenz's prose. In "Zerbin oder die neuere Philosophie" (1776), the reader is introduced to young Zerbin, a Magister of philosophy, well versed in the ethics of the so called "neuere Philosophie." Although passionately in love with Marie, a young servant girl, he contemplates a marriage of convenience with his landlord's daughter. Consequently, he divides his life into two spheres: a sensual and a rational. This careful division extends to his academic pursuits, since it is noted that "ein Kollegium über die Moral" and "eins über das Jus naturae" are equally favoured by him (Blei, V, 97). Not surprisingly, it takes all his ingenuity to maintain a precarious balance between his passionate love for Marie and

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37 See Kant's "Untersuchungen über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral" (1764).
his dutiful courtship of Hortensie. However, he tries to rationalize his behaviour as follows:

Der Trieb ist allen Menschen gemein; er ist ein Naturgesetz. Die Gesellschaft kann mich von den Pflichten des Naturgesetzes nicht lossagen, als wenn diese den gesellschaftlichen Pflichten entgegenstehen.... Liebe hat ihre eigene Sphäre, ihre eigenen Zwecke, ihre eigenen Pflichten, die von denen der Ehe himmelweit unterschieden sind. (Blei V, 96-97)

Zerbin manages to carry on with both relationships until Marie bears a stillborn child, is subsequently charged with manslaughter and put to death. Only then does he realize that dividing one's life into a rational and a sensual realm is not only untenable but unethical. In the end, suicide seems the only option left to him. The irony of dividing Zerbin into a noumenon and a phenomenon is not lost on the attentive reader.

In "Das Tagebuch" (1774),\(^{38}\) an autobiographical account of Lenz's passion for Cleophe Fibich, the poet is torn between platonic love and erotic desire and accuses fate of juggling with his mind and senses, "Grausames Schicksal spielst du

\(^{38}\) Originally written in either English or Italian, it was not intended for publication (I, 629-32).
immer Ball mit unserm armen Kopf und Sinnen" (I, 242). Kindermann describes the diary as "die Geschichte einer pathologischen Leidenschaft" (194) and considers the struggle between love and erotic desire as its most important theme. He comments:

\[
\text{Der Kampf des Prinzips der Liebe mit dem der Begierde ... wird ... hier überhaupt zum dominierenden Faktor alles Geschehens.... Dabei wird Liebe und Begierde mit Pflicht und Neigung identifiziert.}
\]

(195)

Although the first part of Kindermann's analysis is to the point, his interpretation of Lenz's understanding of duty within the framework of the Kantian "categorical imperative" should be approached with some caution. For although the "sollen" and "wollen" aspects of Kant's ethics are established by 1774, the "categorical imperative" as such is stated for the first time in *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797).\(^\text{39}\)

"Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten" (1775), a sequel to "Das Tagebuch," examines the poet's relationship with two

\(^\text{39}\) It is, of course, referred to in the first critique, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), and in *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785)
women. The first is "C," a flirt and seductress, who becomes the focus of his erotic phantasies, while the second, Cornelia, symbolizes true friendship and platonic love. In the first monologue, there is an ongoing struggle between the poet's devotion to Cornelia and his obsession with "C," as love and desire are still diametrically opposed. In the second monologue, the scales seem to be tipped in favour of the former as Cornelia, addressed as "himmlische Freundin" (I, 265) and "Werkzeug der Gottheit" (I, 266), is asked to deliver the poet from his erotic phantasies. As the struggle continues, he concedes that only the thought of Cornelia's love can bring peace to his "dissociated" faculties:

Du Du - ach der grosse Gedanke, sie liebt mich,
schenkt allen meinen dissonierenden Kräften
Ordnung und Ruhe wieder.... (I, 266)

However, in the fourth monologue he grants that reason is defenceless in the face of a full onslaught of the emotions, "denn ich kann für meine Vernunft nicht stehen, wenn mein Herz das Übergewicht bekommt" (I, 269). Finally, a synthesis seems

_____40 Written between the end of April and the end of July 1775, it was published for the first time by Weinhold, Goethe Jahrbuch X (1889), 46-70 (I, 635).

41 Titel notes that the cipher "C" stands for Cleophe Fibich, while Cornelia is Goethe's married sister, Cornelia Schlosser (I, 635).
to have been achieved as the poet exclaims: "O Du erste die mich vernünftig lieben lehrt, Du erste-" (I, 270). However, at this point a third woman appears on the scene who, in turn, becomes the object of his erotic phantasies. In the end, he contemplates self-alienation as the only means of coming to terms with his fate: "Cornelia ich fühle der einzige Rat sein Los in der Welt zu tragen ist daß man sich ganz aus sich heraussetzt, sich für einen fremden und andern Menschen als sich ansieht" (I, 280).

It appears that Lenz has come full circle here. While in the essay "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral" (1772/73) he seems confident that self-realization leads to a synthesis between the individual's intelligible and sensible nature, in "Moralische Bekehrung eines Poeten" (1775) self-alienation appears to be the only means of escaping the relentless struggle between one's dissociated faculties.

42 The relationship with a third woman may represent Lenz's hapless passion for Henriette von Waldner which he refers to in Der Waldbruder (I, 640).
c. The Drama

**Der Hofmeister**

As in the theoretical essays, the conflict between the individual's intelligible and sensible nature emerges as a major theme in Lenz's two best known plays: *Der Hofmeister* (1774) and *Die Soldaten* (1776). The characters who inhabit Lenz's dramatic world suffer the consequences of not being able to come to terms with their double inheritance, and their self-alienation not only bears witness to Lenz's consistent treatment of the mind/body dichotomy, but emphasizes the thematic unity of his work. In *Der Hofmeister*, the problem is introduced in the opening monologue with Läuffer's assertion, that he is ill-suited to become a parson because he is physically too well endowed (II,I.i, 11). Forced by the conditions of his employment to forego the company of the opposite sex, he has no choice but to suppress his erotic desires. The subjugation of Läuffer's sensuality hastens his self-alienation which is described as follows: "Il est l'incarnation de l'individu aliéné qui n'a même pas conscience de son aliénation" (Girard, *Genèse*, 233). In contrast to Girard, I would like to suggest that, since Läuffer refers to his self-alienation on several occasions, he must be conscious of it. For example, he pleads with Wenzeslaus, "Lassen Sie mich erst zu mir selber kommen" (II,III.ii, 51). Unfortunately
for Läuffer, Wenzeslaus ignores his plea and gives notice, instead, that he intends to do his best to further the tutor's self-alienation: "Ich will Euch nach meiner Hand ziehen, daβ Ihr euch selber nicht mehr wieder kennen sollt" (II,III.iv, 61). Wenzeslaus's comment indicates that Läuffer's earlier aside, "Euer Gnaden setzen mich außer mich," is not simple rhetoric but suggests that the tutor's self-alienation is progressing. (II,I.iii, 14). Furthermore, Wenzeslaus's threat serves to remind the reader that the tutor's chances for self-realization have not improved under the schoolmaster's tutelage.

The tutor's progressive self-alienation is commented on throughout the play (II,I.iii, 14; II.ii, 51; III.iv, 61), but perhaps the most telling comment is made by Wenzeslaus immediately after Läuffer's castration has taken place. On this occasion, the tutor's general countenance prompts Wenzeslaus to remark: "Als ob er jemand tot geschlagen hätte" (II,V.iii, 80). Not long after this incident, Läuffer announces his self-castration as a fait accompli and voices the hope of being reincarnated as his mentor Wenzeslaus, "Vielleicht könnt ich itzt wieder anfangen zu leben und zum Wenzeslaus wiedergeboren werden" (II,V.iii, 82). While these words indicate to Mattenklott that Läuffer shares Wenzeslaus's hope for a spiritual reincarnation (156), one may conclude
that Läufer's comment suggests, in fact, that he has sacrificed his identity as an independent self. The tutor's words also anticipate Wenceslaus's sermon, which he summarizes as follows: "so müsse unser Geist auch durch allerlei Kreuz und Leiden und Ertötung der Sinnlichkeit für den Himmel zubereitet werden" (II.V.iv, 90).

In Der Hofmeister, Lenz puts forward the thesis that the subjugation of one's sensual nature leads to self-alienation. Läufer's path takes him from self-alienation to an attempt at self-annihilation. In the opening scene, the audience is presented with a man who does not hesitate to don a mask of servility in order to further his interests, and as the drama progresses it becomes evident that role-playing, pretending to be someone he is not, has become second nature to him. For example, he plays the lackey to the Major's wife, Romeo to Gustchen's Juliet, a disciple to Wenzeslaus, and a lover to Lise. In fact, Läufer is presented as constantly oscillating between his self and the roles he assumes. In addition, the name Läufer (German: runner, messenger) attests to the servile position he occupies in the von Berg household (II.I.i, 11). What emerges from Läufer's opening monologue is, firstly, the tutor's unrealistic perception of himself and secondly, his constant posturing, i.e., his willingness to assume another identity on the spur of the moment. In fact,
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Lenz's stage directions at the end of Läuffer's soliloquy, "Geht dem Geheimen Rat und dem Major mit viel freundlichen Scharrfüssen vorbei," reveal the "false self" the tutor presents to the world. Here "false self" must be interpreted in the sense that Pascal understands it:

Nous ne nous contentons pas de la vie que nous avons en nous et en notre propre être: nous voulons vivre dans l'idée des autres d'une vie imaginaire, et nous nous efforçons pour cela de paraître. Nous travaillons incessamment à embellir et conserver notre être imaginaire, et négligeons le véritable.  
(Pensées de Pascal, 88-89)

As the plot develops, there is every indication that Läuffer's self-alienation is progressing. In the third scene of the first act, he is presented in his role as fop to the Majorin, a role he abandons temporarily, when he tries to take part in a conversation between the Majorin and Count Wermuth. Unfortunately, this "aus der Rolle fallen" is not appreciated by his employer, and he is told in no uncertain terms that his servant status does not entitle him to converse with people higher up on the social register (II, I.iii, 15). Thus scolded and humiliated, Läuffer retreats once more into his lackey role.
Again, it is role-playing that introduces the intimate encounter between the tutor and his charge. As their language reveals and in contrast to their role models, Romeo and Juliet, Läufer and Gustchen are uncertain of their feelings for each other. The description of Läufer's absentminded and inappropriate reaction to Gustchen's laconic "Ich dachte, du liebest mich" clearly indicates that there is no strong emotional bond between the two. In addition, Läufer's body language speaks for itself:

Läufer: stützt sich mit der andern Hand auf ihrem Bett, indem sie fortfährt seine eine Hand von Zeit zu Zeit an die Lippen zu bringen: Laß mich denken... Bleibt nachsinnend sitzen.

(II,II.v, 41)

The discrepancy between thought and feeling, reason and sentiment, is revealed by their short verbal exchange. Läufer's "Laß mich denken..." followed by the stage directions (Bleibt nachsinnend sitzen), not only implies that he has abandoned his role "in der beschriebenen Pantomine" (II,II.v, 41) but suggests that he is an absent-minded individual who prefers abstract thought to action. Läufer's anxious remark, "Es könnte mir gehen wie Äbelard," in response to Gustchen's "göttlicher Romeo" points to the impending sexual intimacy of the two and foreshadows the tutor's
eventual fate. Finally, the short alliterative phrase, "Läuffer läufft fort" announces his imminent flight from the von Berg household (II,II.v, 41).

Upon his arrival at the village schoolmaster's house, the tutor introduces himself as Mandel. It is noteworthy that he adopts the name Mandel at the precise moment that he is about to start a new life. The question is: what does the name Mandel signify? To Mattenklott, who sees the almond tree as a symbol for the imitation of Christ, his death and resurrection, the tutor's choice of the name Mandel suggests that he shares Wenceslaus's hope for a spiritual rebirth. He writes:

Einmal als Sinnbild des Opfers Christi, das Tod und Auferstehung in einem bedeutet, ist der Mandelbaum zum andern Symbol von Christi Nachfolge. Seine Bitterkeit ist die Verheissung seiner Süße und befällt Läuffer nach seiner Tat auch Todesfurcht, so hat er doch wie der Schulmeister Hoffnung auf seine geistige Wiedergeburt. (155-56)

43 Abélard, a medieval scholastic and private tutor, fell in love with his charge Héloïse and secretly married her; he was subsequently castrated by members of her family. Rousseau's novel, La nouvelle Héloïse also describes a tutor/student relationship.
Mattenklott's interpretation fails to take into consideration, however, that the tutor, whom the schoolmaster acknowledges as his "spiritual" son, wants to be reincarnated not as himself but as Wenzeslaus! One can only conclude, therefore, that the sacrifice of his self is the price the tutor pays for this "spiritual" reincarnation (II,V.iii, 82).

In addition, the choice of the name Mandel is hardly accidental. In view of the fact that the almond blooms twice a year and bears both sweet and bitter fruit, the tutor's new name may be read as a symbol for the dichotomy that exists between the individual's intelligible and sensible faculties. A point in favour of this interpretation is Wenzeslaus's assertion that the name Mandelblüte would be even better suited to the tutor. He comments "Sie heißen unrecht Mandel; Sie sollten Mandelblüte heißen; denn Sie sind ja weiß und rot wie Mandelblüte" (II,III.ii, 52). While the white and red colour symbolism suggests to Mattenklott "das blutige Lamm Gottes und die Dornenkrone Christi" (154), I would like to propose that in the schoolmaster's vocabulary the term "Herren weiss und rot"--with which he addresses the tutor on several occasions--refers to the involuntary blushing of the young in the presence of the opposite sex. For example, white and red are the colours of Lise's complexion during her amorous tête-à-tête with the tutor (II,V.x, 93). In addition, there is
Wenceslaus's assertion that he would not dare look upon a woman in the same manner as "ihr Herren weiß und rot" (II,III.ii, 54). Since white and red are the colours associated with youthful blushing and sexual arousal in Lenz's other plays, we may interpret them here as a symbol for the tutor's youth and virility.44

As noted earlier, the time for the name change from Läuffer to Mandel is important, for the tutor changes his name to Mandel after his flight from the von Bergs. This seems to suggest that the tutor, no longer forced to suppress his sensible nature, can now take a first step towards self-realization. Furthermore, Wenzeslaus's suggestion that Mandelblüte would be better suited than Mandel as name for the tutor seems to indicate that there is still hope for his self-realization.45 However, considering the asexual propagation of some species of almond (Encyclopedia Britannica, I, 659),

44 For example, in Die Freunde machen den Philosophen (1776): "Strephon (über und über rot)" (II,I.v, 292); in Der Engländer (1776): "Robert: Ich war jung, ich war schön! o schön! schön! ich war zum Fressen, sagten sie - Sie wurden rot, wenn sie mit mir sprachen, sie stotterten, sie stammelten, sie zitterten...." (II,V.v, 351).

45 "The almond is the first tree to awake to life in winter" and "the almond flowering is a symbol of hope" (Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols, 71).
the name *Mandel* as a symbol for both fertility and sterility seems to point to the fact that the tutor's future is at best doubtful.

Not surprisingly, the tutor's attempt to establish himself as an independent self is thwarted by Wenzeslaus who considers him his disciple and threatens to foster his self-alienation (*II,II.iii*, 61). The tutor's discipleship comes to an abrupt end, however, with Wenzeslaus's reaction to his self-castration.

In order to arrive at a motive for Wenzeslaus's absurd reaction to the tutor's castration, a second look at Wenzeslaus's psychological make-up seems warranted. The reader is introduced to the schoolmaster as he is sits at his desk drawing straight lines on a piece of paper (*II,III.ii*, 51), a first indication that he subscribes to an orderly approach to life. It further transpires from Wenzeslaus's longwinded first speech that his life is disciplined and well regulated (*II,III.ii*, 58). Rudolf interprets the schoolmaster's spartan life in a positive light. He comments, "Dieser Schulmeister, der neben seiner Schularbeit auch das Amt des Dorfpredigers innehat, lebt das einfache Leben, kennt die Kardinaltugend Mäßigkeit" (172). To him, Wenzeslaus's ascetic life style seems not only laudable, but reveals "die Kluft zwischen einem
As noted in the review of the critical literature, Preuss is another scholar who compares Wenzeslaus's pedantic and ascetic life style to Kant's well documented daily routine (44). However, Preuss does not believe that it is Lenz's intent to portray either Kant or Wenzeslaus in a positive light. He writes:

Wie der Philosoph ist Wenzeslaus ein Pedant, der selbstgenügsam lebt: "Aufstehn, Kaffeetrinken, Schreiben, Kollegienlesen, Essen, Spazierengehn, alles hat seine bestimmte Zeit" so beschreibt Heinrich Heine den Tagesplan des Philosophen. (44)

To Rosanow, Wenzeslaus seems a goodnatured and likeable fellow. In addition, he considers him something of an armchair philosopher (202). However, it is difficult to see the schoolmaster's constant philosophizing and moralizing in a positive light, since his lengthy verbal outpourings, freely sprinkled with Latin, prompt Läuffer's fear that he will be lectured to death. (II,III.iv, 61). In addition, Lenz is fairly consistent in his negative portrayal of philosophers, professional or otherwise; among the most prominent are: Pirzel in Die Soldaten; Zierau in Der neue Menoza; and Zerbin in Zerbin oder die neuere Philosophie.
Furthermore, Wenzeslaus's addiction to tobacco (II,III.iv, 58-59) can only be interpreted as a serious character flaw since smoking is, according to Lenz, contrary to the concept of Christian freedom, since it enslaves man to his senses and renders him incapable of great and noble deeds (Rosanow, 553). As Preuss notes, the justification Wenzeslaus offers for his pipe smoking would certainly have been of interest to Freud (45). For although the schoolmaster believes that his constant smoking wards off "böse Begierden," his comments reveal that his pipe smoking is, in fact, a substitute for sexual gratification:

Ich habe geraucht, als ich kaum von meiner Mutter Brust entwohnt war; die Warze mit dem Pfeifenmundstück verwechselt. He he he! Das ist gut wider die böse Luft und wider die bösen Begierden ebenfalls. (II,III.iv, 58)

A further indication that there is something amiss in Wenzeslaus's character is given in the shooting incident in IV.iii. Läuffer has just been shot and is in urgent need of medical attention, but the schoolmaster, more concerned with his civil rights than with Läuffer's wound, has to be asked repeatedly to fetch the surgeon (II,IV.iii, 66).

The schoolmaster's absurd and inappropriate reaction to Läuffer's self-castration also deserves further attention.
Following Läufer's ordeal, Wenzeslaus offers his congratulations. But while he acknowledges Läufer as his spiritual son, he ignores his physical and mental suffering. It is clear from the schoolmaster's reaction that his concern is not with the victim but with the ideological aspects of the castration. One can only assume that his purely rational response to the tragedy prevents him from responding with the appropriate compassion to the tutor's suffering. Since caritas is the noblest of all Christian virtues in Lenz's eyes, one may conclude that the description of the schoolmaster's lack of compassion for his disciple constitutes Lenz's most serious criticism of Wenzeslaus.46

The tutor's description of a painting that allegedly distracted him from Wenzeslaus's Sunday sermon is another indication that his discipleship is nearing its end. The painting, which depicts St. Mark and St. Matthew, is described as follows:

46 See Lenz's comments on St. Paul's letters to the Corinthians (Cor: 13:14): "Wenn ihr mit Menschen- und Engelzungen redt, und könnt weissagen, und lasset euren Leib brennen - und habt der Liebe nicht, so seid ihr tönendes Erz und klingende Schellen, alles ist euch unnütz, denn ihr werdet gerichtet werden und seid schon jetzt gerichtet vor Gott, nicht nach dem, was ihr geträumt habt, sondern was ihr gehandelt habt bei Leibes Leben, es sei gut oder böse" (I, 509).
Ich muss bekennen, es hing ein Gemälde dort, das mich ganz zerstreut hat. Der Evangelist Markus mit einem Gesicht, das um kein Haar menschlicher aussah als der Löwe, der bei ihm saß, und der Engel beim Evangelisten Matthäus eher einer geflügelten Schlange ähnlich sah. (II,V.ix, 90)

How is one to interpret this unusual description of the evangelists? Madland sees aspects of the grotesque in Läuffer's description of the painting. She writes:

The faces Läuffer describes are Lenzen's "Fratzengesichter," which here are not limited to the temporal world but have been extended to include aspects of the divine. The distorted faces of the saint and the angel become chillingly threatening: not even the divine, a traditional anchor and source of security, can be depended on any longer. (Diss. 228)

Whether one disagrees with Madland's interpretation or not, one has to admit that the description of the painting is extraordinary: the face of St. Mark is described as no more human than that of the lion. Since this is an unusual portrayal of the saint, one can only assume that Lenz uses a symbolic representation here. Together, the winged lion as a symbol for Saint Mark (Penguin Dictionary of Saints, 226) and
the animal-like features of the saint may suggest a union of the seemingly diametrically opposed forces of spirit and nature and, as such, they could point to a possible resolution of the dissensus that exists between the individual's intelligible and sensible nature. Furthermore, if one is willing to accept the serpent in the Garden of Eden as a symbol for evil, one could venture that a winged serpent points not only to the nature/spirit dichotomy, but to the coincidentia of good and evil. Therefore, one may conclude that Läuffer's description of the painting points to the coincidentia oppositorum. In addition, since angel and serpent represent the opposing forces of good and evil, a creature that seems to be serpent and angel, at once, calls to mind the Fall: God's prohibition to eat from the tree of knowledge, Eve being tempted by the serpent to eat of the forbidden fruit, and Adam and Eve's subsequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden by the Cherub with the flaming sword. As a direct result of the Fall, both spiritual and physical death were transmitted to the entire human race through Adam (Rom 5, 12-14).

47 This term is first used by John de Cusa to describe the coincidence of all opposites in God. See also Hamann's interpretation of this concept (Sämtliche Werke II, 189-193).
Lenz's interpretation of the Fall is different. Firstly, he states that he does not believe in original sin, i.e., that the sin of Adam and Eve was imparted to the whole human race (I, 550), and secondly, he claims that it was not concupiscence itself but only its hasty consummation that precipitated Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise (I, 501). In addition, Lenz takes issue with the belief that it was Christ's mission to rectify the Fall. In his view, the Fall must be considered as God's plan to awaken the feeling of sensuality in humans. Sensuality, in its turn, serves to make human beings conscious of their existence and propels them towards ethical and autonomous action. Lenz's rather unusual interpretation of the Fall warrants full quotation:

Das heißt er mußte essen und sich gatten. Daher setzte Gott einen Garten um den Baum...so setzt' er Bäume mit reizendem Obst hin, mit dem Befehl: esset. Sie versuchten's, der sinnliche Genüß setzte sie in ein gewisses Vergnügen,48...da man seine Existenz ganz fühlt und itzt gern etwas haben möchte seine Kräfte anzuwenden und tätig zu sein. Sie dazu zu bringen, mußten sie notwendig

48 In his account of the Fall, Hamann claims that the sexual awakening of Adam and Eve was prompted by the sensual beauty of the garden; he also comments on their need for food (*Sämtliche Werke* I, 16).
Since Lenz regards concupiscence as the condition *sine qua non* for arriving at autonomous and ethical selfhood, Läuffer's prospects for self-realization must be regarded as extremely doubtful after his self-castration.

Läuffer recovers from his self-inflicted ordeal and not long afterwards he discovers his sudden passion for Lise, a young country girl. Wenzeslaus, who suspects his disciple's interest in Lise, admonishes him not to return to the "fleshpots of Egypt" but to save his immortal soul. However, Läuffer and Lise are determined to become husband and wife. Considering the fact that they are entering into a sterile union, one may well ask: why would a desirable young girl opt for a marriage with a castrate? The answer is simple: Lise does not realize the full implications of marrying an impotent man because of her extreme youth. That she is still a child, is revealed by the fact that she attends Sunday school.
(Kinderlehre) on a regular basis (II,V.x, 93). She is also described as innocence personified (II,V.x, 93).

Yet although Lise is only a slip of a girl, there is an erotic aura about her. For example, her seductive and careless way of arranging her hair is commented on by Wenzeslaus (II,V.ix, 92) and Läuffer (II,V.x, 93). In addition, there is every indication that she is very much aware of the opposite sex. She blushes easily (II,V.x, 93) and when asked about her experiences with men, she freely admits to having had several beaus. By her own admission she has a preference for clerics and academics, but this does not stop her from being fond of the soldiers in their colourful coats. Irresistible, according to Lise, would be a combination of the two: clerics dressed in the colourful coats of the soldiers. She enthuses: "ganz gewiß, wenn die geistlichen Herren in so bunten Röcken gingen wie die Soldaten, das wäre zum Sterben" (II,V.x, 94). It would not be without irony if Lenz intended the casual remark of a naive young girl to point to the dichotomy between the intelligible (the clerics) and the sensible (the soldiers) and the finite nature of human existence.

In spite of the tutor's handicap, Lise is determined to marry him, and not even the prospect of a childless marriage perturbs her. On the contrary, children represent only an additional responsibility to her. She exclaims:
Not surprisingly, Lise is described as "einfältig" (II,V.x., 93); her advocacy of a childless marriage is naive indeed. And even though she is susceptible to the sensual promise of the soldiers' colourful uniforms, Lise is much too young to understand the full implications of her decision to sacrifice her sensuality on the altar of a sterile marriage.

In establishing the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious as stages in human development, Kierkegaard makes the following distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical consciousness: "The aesthetical in a man is that by which he is immediately what he is; the ethical is that whereby he becomes what he becomes" (Either/Or II, 150). If one were to apply Kierkegaard's distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical, one could argue that young Lise is still at the aesthetic stage of her life. Child that she is, she lives for the pleasurable moments of life.

But what of the tutor, a grown man who in the past seemed tormented by the demands of the flesh? His rhetorical question, "Und ist's denn nötig zum Glück der Ehe, daß man tierische Triebe stillt" (II,V.x, 96), seems to indicate that
his priorities have changed. He assures Lise, furthermore, that his love for her is independent on any physical disability he may have (II,V.ix, 95). Considering Läuffer's emasculated state, Wenzeslaus's reluctant blessing, "So kriecht denn zusammen meinetwegen; weil doch Heiraten besser ist als Brunst leiden," is not only superfluous but highly ironic (II,V.x, 97). The biblical text the schoolmaster refers to reads: "But if they cannot exercise self control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion "(I Cor: 8-9). Surely, a castrate aflame with passion is a contradiction in terms!

Der Hofmeister concludes with a family reunion. However, the comment that the play is concerned with "the disruption and ultimate re-establishment of the familial unit" (Harris, 87) is inappropriate, since it does not account for the tutor's absence from the final scene. It is also difficult to agree with Mann's interpretation that "the tutor's prospects brighten" at the end of the play (254), since Läuffer is not only absent but there is no reference to either his castration or his impending marriage to Lise.

While the end of the play is described as "spiritually confident and optimistic" by Pope (245), the negative aspects of the ending are noted by Mayer (823), Girard (280), Madland (Diss., 256), and Preuss (54), among others. However, if one
reads Rudolf's comments, one is left with the impression that the tutor has, indeed, ceased to exist, since he does not even note Läufer's absence from the final scene. Rudolf writes:

Jede handelnde Person der letzten Szene ist durch eine moralische 'Reinigung' gegangen, hat eine 'Wiedergeburt' erfahren; die völlig negativen Charaktere, die Majorin und Pastor Läuffer treten am Schluß nicht mehr auf. (174)

It is tempting to speculate on the significance of Läufer's absence from the final scene, and a step by step review of Läufer's progress may shed some light on the matter:

Step 1: The tutor is forced by society to lead a celibate life.

Step 2 The suppression of his concupiscence begins the process of self-alienation.

Step 3 The tutor's self-alienation is manifested through his roleplaying. For example, it is as Läuffer/Romeo that he seduces Gustchen/Juliet.

Step 4 His subsequent escape from the von Berg household is a flight from an untenable position.

Step 5 The tutor's attempt at self-realization and moral autonomy, indicated by his
adoption of the name Mandel, is thwarted by Wenzeslaus, the village schoolmaster. 

Step 6 Prompted by guilt and despair, the tutor actively moves against the self; consequently, his self-castration must be interpreted as an attempt at self-annihilation.

Step 7 Through the active sacrifice of his sexuality, the tutor has forfeited his existence as an authentic self. Thus his subsequent union with Lise is sterile in the physical and the moral sense.

Step 8 The tutor's absence from the final scene is another indication that he is no longer simply alienated from his self but has ceased to exist as an independent self.

In the tutor's opening soliloquy, we are presented with a man who--forced by society to suppress his authentic self--adopts a false self. This flight from the self renders him fragmented and alienated. However, when he makes his final appearance (V.ix), his alienation is no longer induced by society but self-inflicted. In the end, the tutor's castration
amounts to nothing less than an annihilation of the self, and his absence from the last scene suggests that he has ceased to function as an independent self.

There are, however, indications that for a while the tutor was aspiring towards a synthesis of his dissociated faculties. For example, upon his arrival at Wenzeslaus's school he not only has changed his name to Mandel, but he voices a desperate plea for self-realization (II,III.ii, 51). Unfortunately Wenzeslaus, who subscribes to the interpretation of the sensual as evil and of the spiritual as good (Girard, Genèse, 273), ignores the tutor's plea and threatens to recreate him in his own image. Wenzeslaus's position, that sensuality is the enemy which has to be subjugated, not only reflects the orthodox teaching of the Christian churches, but stands diametrically opposed to Lenz's belief that isolation or exclusion of any of our faculties leads to onesidedness and ultimately to sin, a state which is born out of the ignorance of the self. As one of many examples, he cites the case of a seducer who experiences nothing but his sensuality and consequently remains ignorant of his other faculties (Blei IV, 13). Again, Lenz's portrayal of the seducer anticipates the description of the seducer in Kierkegaard's Either/Or.

With regard to the motive for the tutor's self-castration, the time of the actual act is of crucial
importance. The castration, which is prompted by remorse and despair, follows almost immediately upon his encounter with the old woman who is holding Gustchen's child. In V.iii, Läuuffer's next scene, the castration is a *fait accompli*. It is worth noting that Wenzeslaus establishes a connection between the two incidents with his comment that the tutor has been repeatedly ill since the day the old woman came to see him:

> Daß Gott! was gibt's schon wieder, daß Ihr mich von der Arbeit abrufen lasst?
> Seid Ihr schon wieder schwach? Ich glaube, das alte Weib war eine Hexe- Seit der Zeit habt Ihr keine gesunde Stunde mehr. (II,V.iii, 80)

In his essay, "Wer hat Gustchens Kind gezeugt," Claus Lappe maintains that the chronological data given in the play—Läuuffer's claim that he has not seen Gustchen since he left the castle a year earlier, and the fact that Gustchen has lived with the old woman for a full year—support his thesis that Läuuffer cannot be considered as the biological father of Gustchen's child. In addition, Lappe regards Läuuffer's reaction to the child as a further indication that his paternity is questionable. However, the tutor's immediate reaction to the child seems to suggest otherwise.

> Gebt es mir auf den Arm - O mein Herz!-
> Daß ich's an mein Herz drücken kann - Du
gehst mir auf, furchtbares Rätsel! (Nimmt das Kind auf den Arm und tritt damit vor den Spiegel) Wie? dies wären nicht meine Züge? (Fällt in Ohnmacht; das Kind fängt an zu schreien). (II, V.i, 77)

We do not know what causes Läuffer to faint. Does he recognize the newborn as his and faint, or does he, as Lappe suggests, faint because the features of the child are not his? As Läuffer's monologue reveals, he does recognize the child as his initially. It seems reasonable to assume that Läuffer would only acknowledge his child, if he recognized it as such. If we presume, however, in agreement with Lappe, that the tutor realizes his mistake the moment he looks into the mirror, there are questions that need to be answered. For example, why does he faint at the precise moment he looks at the reflection in the mirror, and more importantly, why does he castrate himself shortly afterwards, citing remorse and despair as the motives for his castration?

It is irrelevant whether it is, in fact, Läuffer's child, since his subsequent self-castration indicates beyond any doubt that he believed the child to be his and acted accordingly. Consequently, there is only a motive for his castration as long as he does recognize the child as his. For why, indeed, would Läuffer castrate himself for the sake of a
stranger's child? While Lappe demonstrates beyond any doubt the disunity of time in Der Hofmeister, his conclusion that Läuffer's paternity is a myth, although perfectly logical, takes away the motive for the tutor's self-castration and is, therefore, difficult to support.

Yet if we do accept the tutor's paternity, we are faced with the dilemma of having to account for a 'mythical' child that is described as both female (II,V.i, 77) and male (II,V.xii, 101). Furthermore, since the gestation period for this asexual creature was a full twelve months, it cannot belong to the genus homo sapiens. It seems possible, however, that Lenz employs this "neue Kreatur" (Preuss, 52), as deus/dea ex machina, to suggest that only beings born outside of the human race are exempt from suffering. One may interpret, therefore, in Der Hofmeister Lenz employs the relativity of time as a dramatic tool to indicate that only a being which has a gestation period of twelve months, i.e., a being that cannot possibly be human, would be exempt from the suffering that the struggle between the opposing forces of mind and body inflict upon the individual human being. In other words, authentic human existence is inseparable from, and dependent on, reconciling one's "dissociated" faculties. Therefore, being human means having to come to terms with one's double inheritance.
The tutor in Der Hofmeister is initially coerced by society into suppressing his sexuality, but with his self-immolation he actively undertakes the sacrifice himself. With his castration, he has committed an act of self-annihilation and sacrificed his potential as a moral self. Furthermore, if one considers concupiscence as a source of morality, an individual who does not embrace his or her sexuality must be considered impotent in the ethical as well as the physical sense.

Since the tutor cites remorse and despair as motivating forces for his act (II,V.iii, 81), the sacrifice of his sexuality suggests that he recognizes the need to be punished for his past erotic deeds. The tutor's sacrifice best serves to resolve his conflict and is also a fitting retribution for the original crime of impregnating Gustchen, since his castration ensures that it cannot happen again.

In the Concept of Dread, Kierkegaard writes that there is a moment of choice, a moment when the self chooses being or non-being. Läuffer's position at the instant he recognizes his child could be described as such a moment. At that moment in time, he does have the option of acknowledging his child before the world and, thus, of regaining his moral autonomy, but he faints instead. And immediately after regaining consciousness, he castrates himself. As a result of his self-
castration he becomes both physically and morally impotent. It is worth noting that Kierkegaard's description of the individual who lets the crucial moment of choice pass seems to be applicable to Läuffer's situation. Kierkegaard writes:

He whose eye chances to look down into the yawning abyss becomes dizzy.... Thus, dread is the dizziness of freedom which occurs when the spirit would posit the synthesis: and freedom, then gazes down into its own possibility, grasping at finiteness to sustain itself. In this dizziness, freedom succumbs.... That very instant everything is changed, and when freedom rises again, it sees that it is guilty. Between these two instances lies the leap...freedom swoons...the fall into sin always occurs in impotence. (Concept of Dread, 55)

Contrary to Läuffer, Prince Tandi in Der neue Menoza chooses being when faced with the decision between being and non-being. He relates an incident where, through no fault of his own, he was put in an untenable position from which he escaped by taking a leap into the unknown:

Stellen Sie sich eine Tiefe vor, die feucht und nebligt alle Kreaturen aus meinem Gesichte entzog. Ich sah in dieser fürchterlich-blauen Ferne nichts
Here, Lenz—like Kierkegaard after him—uses the "abyss" as a metaphor for coming face to face with the self.

It is tempting to interpret the tutor's self-alienation, his flight from the self, and his subsequent castration in the light of the theories of a twentieth-century psychologist, Ronald D. Laing. For Laing, an individual who flees from the self is mad. He grants, however, that this type of madness is a common phenomenon, since we are all split off from our authentic selves. Forced into role-playing by others or ourselves, we are put into an untenable position (Laing, *Self and Others*, 107). According to Laing, when the self constructs a "false self"—which he defines as "one way of not being oneself" and as a way of "living inauthentically" (*The Divided Self*, 100)—it puts itself into a false existential position. He further maintains that it is only common sense that an individual, who is put into a false existential position, would attempt to annihilate himself. While for Kierkegaard the estrangement from the self and from God constitutes the depths of despair (*Concept of Dread*), for Laing, being in that
position is madness. He writes:

It has always been recognized that if you split Being down the middle, if you insist on grabbing this without that, if you cling to the good without the bad, denying the one for the other, what happens is that the dissociated evil impulse, now evil in a double sense, returns to permeate and possess the good and turn it into itself.

(Politics of Experience, 63)

Laing's position here seems to echo Lenz's thoughts. For Lenz refers more than once to the need to incorporate one's evil in order to become an authentic self, but he does so most emphatically in the following excerpt of a short prose fragment.

Eine Seele ohne starken Trieb zum Laster ist nicht wert, fromm und gut zu sein. Ihre Güte ist Federlosigkeit [sic] ihre Bescheidenheit Niederträchtigkeit, ihre Frömmigkeit Furcht vor den Folgen böser Handlungen auf sich, nicht auf andere. Ein Bösewicht ist allezeit von einer gewissen

49 For a comparison between Kierkegaard's concept of sin and Laing's interpretation of madness, consult Sugarman's Sin and Madness.
Konsistenz und Größe, ein Guter ist nichts, wenn er nicht aus einem Bösewicht geworden ist. Dagegen ist die Größe eines solchen Guten auch zur Größe des Bösen, wie tausend zu zehn. Der ohnmächtige Gute ist zero.

(Blei IV, 284)

The necessity to incorporate one's evil is also acknowledged by Hamann who writes:

Ohne die Freiheit böse zu seyn findet kein Verdienst, und ohne die Freyheit gut zu seyn keine Zurechnung einiger Schuld, ja selbst keine Erkenntniss des Guten und Bösen statt.

(Sämtliche Werke III, 38)

In Der Hofmeister, Lenz's concern is for the individual who, forced by the conditions of his employment to suppress his sexuality, becomes alienated from his authentic self and chooses to castrate himself. Läufer's fate suggests, furthermore, that adhering to a partial self ultimately leads to the annihilation of the self.

50 The necessity to incorporate one's dark side is a recurring theme in German literature: it is a central concern in Goethe's Faust, the focus of Nietzsche's Also sprach Zarathustra, and a major theme in Hermann Hesse's novels.
Die Soldaten

In Der Hofmeister the quest for the self is the task sine qua non that the protagonist is asked to fulfill. A measure of the importance of this thesis for Lenz is that he adopts it, with only minor changes, for the plot of his next play. As in Der Hofmeister, the interdependence of concupiscence and ethical autonomy is the philosophical paradigm that is superimposed on Die Soldaten.

Again, it is the subjugation of sexuality, brought about by a prohibition to marry while in the military service, which has a devastating effect on the lives of the soldiers and the civilian population of a small French garrison town. In I.iii, Mariane, a local merchant's daughter, is invited to the theatre by Desportes, a young officer and nobleman. Ironically, the two plays he has selected, La chercheuse d'esprit and Le déserteur, prove to be prophetic.51

Although in love with Stolzius, a cloth merchant from Armentières, Mariane is flattered by the attentions of the young nobleman (II.I.vi, 197). But as their relationship

51 The title of the first play foreshadows Mariane's unsuccessful quest for happiness, while the second points to Desportes's imminent desertion.
develops, Mariane affects strange airs and graces that do not go unnoticed. In fact, her strange behaviour prompts a friend to remark, "Ich weiss nicht, wie du bist, Marianel" (II,II.iii, 208). This statement is, in fact, the first indication that Mariane has embarked on a course of self-alienation.

Lenz's portrayal of Desportes is not flattering. On leave from the army under false pretences (II,I.iii, 185), he disguises himself in civilian clothes (II,I.iii, 187). Described as "false" (II,I.iii, 185) and deceitful (II,III.vii, 221), he honours neither his debt to Mariane's father, nor the promesse de mariage he has given to her (II,III.iii, 16). And in an effort to rid himself of Mariane, he encourages one of his servants to dishonour her (II,V.iii, 240). Not unlike the seducer in "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," Desportes is single-minded in his pursuit of erotic conquests and has no concern for the consequences of his immoral conduct.

Although Mariane's father shows concern for his daughter, he cannot help being flattered by the attention the young officer pays to her. It is both ironic and tragic that old Wesener interprets the first line of a poem which Desportes has sent to his daughter as an indication of the young
nobleman's honest intentions towards her. The poem reads:

Du höchster Gegenstand von meinen reinen Trieben
Ich bet dich an, ich will dich ewig lieben.
Weil die Versicherung von meiner Lieb und Treu
Du allerschönstes Licht mit jedem Morgen neu.

(II,I.vi, 196)

What the poem does reveal is that Desportes, a member of the nobility, manipulates language to cajole Mariane into believing that his affections for her are genuine. Mariane, in her turn, is duly impressed by what she perceives as Deportes's facility with words and tries rather unsuccessfully to mimic his language.53

Among Desportes' fellow officers, Hauptmann Pirzel is perhaps the most humane character of a poor lot. However, like the schoolmaster in Der Hofmeister, Pirzel is an armchair philosopher whose lengthy pseudo-philosophical discourses are not appreciated by his fellow soldiers. The chaplain's aside, "Der philosophiert mich zu Tode" (II,III.iv, 217) not only sums up his opinion of Pirzel, but calls to mind Läuiffer's

52 This line seems to suggest that Desportes looks upon Mariane as a sex object.

fearful "der wird mich noch zu Tode meistern" in response to Wenzeslaus's constant philosophizing (II,III.iv, 61).

Unlike his comrades, however, Pirzel is not attracted to the opposite sex. On the contrary, he considers women to be at the level of sheep and as such unworthy of his attentions (II,III.iv, 217). He makes only two appearances and both times he advocates "thinking" as a cure-all for human ills (II,II.ii, 200 and III.iv, 217). When Eisenhardt, the army chaplain, expresses his concern that too much "thinking" may interfere with Pirzel's competence as a soldier, Pirzel counters: "Ganz und gar nicht, das geht so mechanisch" (II,III.iv, 217).

There is something distinctly comical about the figure of Pirzel. This is equally true of the other abstract thinkers in Lenz's plays; for example, Wenzeslaus in Der Hofmeister and both Zierau and Magister Beza in Die Soldaten. If one considers the behaviour of all four characters, Kierkegaard's description of abstract thinkers seems appropriate. He writes:

Such an abstract thinker, one who neglects to take into account the relationship between his abstract thought and his own existence as an individual, not

54 Läuffer's absent-minded behaviour is stressed in the second act (II,II.v, 40-41).
careful to clarify this relationship to himself, makes a comical impression upon the mind even if he is ever so distinguished, because he is in process of ceasing to be a human being...Such an abstract thinker is a duplex being: a fantastic creature who moves in the pure being of abstract thought, and on the other hand, a sometimes pitiful professorial figure which the former deposits, about as when [sic] one sets down a walking stick.

(Postscript, 268)

Since Pirzel's preoccupation with abstract thinking renders him incapable of authentic human existence and moral action, he has become an automaton. With regard to his fellow soldiers, Pirzel informs the reader that they, too, perform their duties automatically, since their attention is focussed on the young women of the town. (II,III.iv, 217). Thus a one-sided mode of life, whether it be the absent-mindedness of an abstract thinker like Pirzel or the soldier's unabashed sexual overtures to the young women in town, supports Lenz's thesis that it is impossible to evolve into an ethical self unless one lives and acts in accordance with one's fully integrated faculties.

The soldiers' favourite entertainment--besides their visits to the comedy and a preoccupation with the opposite
sex—is the taunting and ridicule of humble people. For example, there is something sinister in the manner that Haudy and his fellow officers humiliate Stolzius in scenes II.i and II.ii. The incident where the officers terrify an elderly Jew is another occasion where they display a complete lack of moral responsibility (II.i). Finally, there is the scene where Rammler, in a drunken stupor, ridicules an old woman (II,IV.ii, 230). In all three incidents, the officers' conduct is gratuitously cruel by any moral standard. But while the officers inflict suffering upon others, they themselves are victims of a society which demands celibacy as a condition of service. Consequently, they are put into an untenable position. They look for female companionship to the daughters of the local burghers, but these liaisons often prove to be disastrous for the young women, since the officers have no intention of marrying their unsuspecting paramours and often leave them to an uncertain future. For instance, Mariane's fate is sealed after Desportes abandons her. Identified only as "das unglückliche Schlachtopfer" (II,V.v, 244) and "die Weibsperson" (II,V.iv, 243), she is mistaken for a common prostitute by her own father.

Given the fact that Desportes and his fellow officers are responsible for Mariane's tragic fate, it is surprising, indeed, that Pope divides the responsibility for the unhappy
ending of the play equally between society on the one hand, and Mariane and her father on the other; however, he does not attach any blame to Desportes or his fellow officers. He writes:

In Die Soldaten, the painful and saddening consequences of erring action are barely overcome. But though blame for the disaster is laid at society's door, it is again the individual that is morally responsible. Since it is Marie's and Wesener's actions that are at fault, there is the possibility of their learning from the consequences and experiencing some degree of metanoia. (iv)

Mann's impression that "Mariane's future appears genuinely hopeful after her bittersweet reunion with her father" (254) must also be rejected, since the stage directions at the end of the scene destroy any illusion the reader may have that a "happy ending" is still a possibility: "Beide wälzen [my italics] sich halb tot auf der Erde. Eine Menge Leute versammlen sich um sie und tragen sie fort" (II,V.iv, 243). Not only are Mariane and her father rolling around on the ground, but they are carried away by an anonymous crowd. In addition, the verb "wälzen" does not suggest the dignity of upright human posture but is more often
associated with the movement of animals; the fact that it is used here may well suggest that Mariane is no longer functioning as an independent self.

It is important to note the similarity in the structure of the plot in the two plays under discussion. In *Der Hofmeister*, the tutor's self-alienation is initially induced by society; however, in the end he must assume responsibility for his constant posturing and his self-castration. Although Mariane, the sacrificial lamb of *Die Soldaten*, seems to be the innocent victim of a government policy which attempts to regulate human sexuality, she, too, is accountable for her fate. Young and playful, she is attracted to the glitter and the social privileges of the nobility. Desportes seduces her with frivolous jewellery, flowery rhetoric, and visits to the local theatre. The theatre plays an important part in Desportes' seduction of Mariane. Not surprisingly, the army chaplain claims that the seductions that take place on the local stage serve as a blueprint for the officer's unethical conduct (II, I.iv, 193). The point is also made that Mariane is the younger daughter of a *Galanteriewarenhändler*, a man who deals in frivolities and vanities. Thus there is every indication that aesthetics and ethics stand diametrically opposed in *Die Soldaten*. 
In fact, to the very last Mariane is attracted to an aesthetic mode of life, to the diversions and the glamour the life style of the privileged few has to offer. Homeless and reduced to begging in the streets, Mariane still yearns for the extravagances of the life she has become accustomed to:

O hätt ich nur einen Tropfen von dem Wein,
den ich so oft aus dem Fenster geworfen - womit ich mir in der Hitze die Hände wusch - (Kontortionen.)
O das quält--nun ein Bettelmensch--(Sieht das Stück Brod an) Ich kann's nicht essen Gott weiß es. Besser verhungern. (Wirft das Stück Brod hin und rafft sich auf) Ich will kriechen, so weit ich komme, und fall ich um, desto besser.

(II,V.ii, 239).

Thus Mariane is portrayed as an aesthete, as someone who lives to the very end for the pleasurable moments of life (II,V.iv, 242). It follows that Mariane--not unlike the tutor in Der Hofmeister who enters foolhardily into a sterile union with a naive country girl--has little hope of gaining insight into her suffering. Thus she, too, forfeits her potential as an autonomous and ethical self.

In the "Anmerkungen übers Theater" Lenz advances the concept of an autonomous and ethical individual who comes to terms with his double inheritance and acts out of his fully
integrated faculties. However, in the plays, the quest for authentic and ethical selfhood is countered not only by adverse social conditions, but by the fragility of human nature. Thus the quest for authentic being, a quest implicit in Lenz's question, "Aber heißt das gelebt? heißt das seine Existenz gefühlt, seine selbstständige Existenz, den Funken von Gott?" (I, 378), seems all but impossible to fulfill.

Lenz portrays the human face of existence by presenting his protagonists and their struggle for authenticity and self-realization. While the struggle is presented in a dialectical fashion in the theoretical writings and prose, the protagonists of Der Hofmeister and Die Soldaten ultimately fail in their quest for the self and, thus, the concept of the authentic and ethical self is presented ex negativo in the drama.

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55 Huyssen notes that the Sturm und Drang advances a particular human face of existence, "die Individualität des einzelnen Menschen, seine Sinnlichkeit, die Totalität von Herz und Kopf, von Vernunft, Phantasie und Gefühl" (Drama des Sturm und Drang, 56).
a. Free Will versus Determinism as a Philosophical Problem

The quest for the self, implicit in Lenz's demand for "Zuwachs an Existenz," is closely linked to the potential freedom of the individual, since authentic and ethical existence is only a possibility, if the individual is free to choose such an existence. Lenz spent much energy trying to come to terms with the problem of free will versus determinism, and Preuss goes so far as to suggest that Lenz's search for a synthesis between the concept of human freedom and God's constant interaction is a central concern in the theoretical essays. He writes:

Denn diesen Widerspruch zwischen der für die Theodicee notwendigen Monadenhaftigkeit oder Freiheit des Menschen und der fortwährenden Wirksamkeit Gottes zu vermitteln, bildet das zentrale Anliegen der gesamten theoretischen Anstrengung von Lenz. (Preuss, 14)

One may not fully agree with the above interpretation, but there is little doubt that the question of the
individual's freedom features prominently in Lenz's thought and is central to his concept of ethics. Naturally, when one considers the possibility of human beings having a free will, the question that arises is precisely the question that Lenz addresses; namely, how can the individual have a free will if all his or her actions are foreseen by an omnipotent and omniscient God? Before examining Lenz's thoughts on the subject, it seems appropriate to consider briefly the historical development of the problem of free will versus determinism in the West.56

For the early Greeks, the belief in an unalterable fate stood opposed to the concept of free will. Consequently, the concept of freedom only applied to the political sphere. The pre-Socratic school of Pythagoras advocated both freedom and determinism since their theory of "metempsychosis" implied that an individual's former life influences his or her present life. It is worth noting, here, that Lenz expresses a belief in the transmigration of souls in "Vom Baum der Erkenntnis Guten und Bösen" (Blei IV, 48).

56 I am indebted to the New Catholic Encyclopedia for the following account of the problem of free will versus determinism; in this section, all subsequent references, which consist of page numbers only, are to this work (VI, 89-106).
With the onset of the classical Greek period, however, the concept of freedom was no longer used within the political context only. Socrates was one of the first philosophers to state the need for individual and subjective freedom. For Socrates, "know thyself!" was the first human responsibility and, consequently, the autonomy of the self was more important than external authority (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229b 1 - 230a 2).

The great homage paid to Socrates during the *Sturm und Drang* and the many references to the Greek philosopher in the writings of both Hamann and Lenz are acknowledged here, and will be addressed later in the study.57

Divine providence and human freedom were equally upheld within the Jewish religion. Deuteronomy states that human beings have "the ability to choose between good and evil," while Josephus claims that the Sadducees, in order to protect the individual's freedom, denied God's involvement in their actions (94).

With the arrival of Christianity and its belief in the metaphysical aspects of human existence, the influence of predestination on human action was reexamined. The Gnostics rejected human responsibility, while the Manichaeeans renounced

57 See chapters V and VI.
the possibility of human freedom. The difficulty of coming to terms with the concept of free will is expressed by St. Augustine, who describes the two diametrically opposed positions of his contemporaries as follows: "some so defend the grace of God that they deny man's free will, and others so defend man's free will that they deny the grace of God" (94). He maintains, furthermore, that the "divine precepts of the Old and New Testaments would be worthless without freedom" (94).

The distinction that man is free "with respect to finite goods" but "determined to the infinite good" was made by St. Thomas Aquinas. He argued that an individual would not be free to act if he encountered an infinite good, but could "accept or refuse a finite good" (90). Another important consideration for St. Thomas Aquinas was that, since God is outside of time, the past, the present, and the future are always present to him. Human beings, on the other hand, exist only in time. Consequently, human choice and God's foreknowledge can be reconciled (90).

With regard to God's foreknowledge, Lenz takes a similar position as Saint Thomas Aquinas when he writes:

Ob er aber vorherwissend sein kann, ist eine ganz überflüssige Frage, da in Gott keine Zeit stattfinden soll, da bei ihm alles Gegenwärtigkeit
ist, und der Begriff von Zeit nur von Menschen erfunden ist, um in unsern Verstand Licht und Ordnung zu bringen. (Blei IV, 24)

Following the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants disagreed sharply over the doctrine of free will. The Council of Trent confirmed that man lost his original innocence with the Fall, but it pronounced that "the will, although weakened, remained free" and that, under the influence of grace, "it could consent or dissent" (95).

Among Protestant theologians, both Martin Luther and John Calvin rejected the doctrine of freedom of the will. But while Luther held that human beings are predestined not to control their own fate, Calvin declared that the individual cannot perform a good act unless he is prompted by God to do so.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries voices for a deterministic interpretation of the universe included Thomas Hobbes who claimed that to conceive of a human being as a free subject was "as absurd as to imagine a round quadrangle" (90). Spinoza saw human beings as being strictly determined in all their actions, while the writings of Descartes and Hume "contain elements of both determinism and freedom" (91).

Leibniz believed in free will, and for him freedom was not only a question of the individual's being free of external forces, but it implied the integration of the external world
into the interiority of the monad. Therefore, in the
Leibnizian monadology freedom does not exclude moral
determination but embraces it. It seems as if Lenz comes close
to the Leibnizian concept of freedom when he notes that God's
omniscience and the individual's moral freedom are not
necessarily contradictory concepts (Blei IV, 23-24).

While Blaise Pascal claimed that freedom could not be
known by the individual unless he had "a subjective religious
experience," Malbranche pronounced that "religion and morality
were only meaningful as long as the individual was free" (91).

As shown in chapter II, in Kant's philosophical thought
the two separate realms of human existence, the noumenal and
the phenomenal, make it possible for the individual to act
freely as a noumenon but not as a phenomenon.

In Hegel's philosophical system reason and freedom
develop in a logical fashion. Since all reality is of the
spirit (Geistiges), the world constitutes the will of the
spirit (Geist) which, in its turn, manifests itself as
absolute freedom. Hegel claimed: "Hiermit ist der Geist als
absolute Freiheit vorhanden;...und alle Realität ist nur
Geistiges; die Welt ist ihm schlechthin sein Willen, und
dieser ist allgemeiner Willen" (Phänomenologie des Geistes II,
450). Hegel further held that each concept is developed in
response to contradictions developed by the concept that
preceded it; thus, the moral individualism of the eighteenth century is the result of a logical progression from the pursuit of pleasure to the concept of the Romantic ideal of "die schöne Seele," to the concept of duty implicit in Kant's "categorical imperative" (Phénoménologie des Geistes II, 484 f).

Arthur Schopenhauer granted the existence of free will in retrospect only and claimed that a human being cannot foresee future acts. Thus, human beings only think they are free (Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, 650).

The concept of free will is a central tenet of existentialist thought. For Kierkegaard--who criticized Hegel's abstract and universal concepts because they could not stand for individual existence--free will is at the centre of human existence, and his doctrine of the primacy of the will suggests, furthermore, that human beings choose for themselves one mode of existence rather than another (Either/Or).

Karl Jaspers held that each individual is a "unique being who goes beyond what he already is and locates his new state of being in the process of exercising his freedom" (91). Martin Heidegger claimed that, given certain limits, "man can be responsible for his destiny by freely choosing his possibilities" (91). For Jean-Paul Sartre, freedom is a "distinctive" human characteristic, and the essence of freedom
consists in the act of choosing one's self (91). But for Sartre as for Heidegger, there is the constant danger of becoming someone other than we are. Therefore, existential freedom—which is an absolute choice—is often a question of saying "no" (91).

Existentialism holds that it is more important to exercise one's free will than to go along with the opinions of others and become false to one's self. Thus the existential individual is a free subject who resists any attempt to transform him into anything objective. It follows, that freedom is not limited by other people or things, but by the exercise of the individual's autonomous choice. Thus it is the individual's task to separate himself from these objective circumstances and become an autonomous self.

While existentialists affirm the concept of free will, materialists deny it. In "Materialism and Revolution," Sartre wrote that materialism "eliminated subjectivity by reducing the world and man in it to a system of objects linked together by universal relationships" (Existentialism versus Marxism, 87). In defense of existentialism, it has been argued that "the supreme merit of existentialism" is "its capacity to explain and safeguard man's freedom," since it "does not subject men to determinism which robs them of free choice and
moral responsibility for their deeds" (Existentialism versus Marxism, 329).

b. The Theoretical Essays

There is little doubt that the thesis that the individual's free will is a prerequisite for ethical autonomy is an important consideration for Lenz, since he addresses it in several of his theoretical essays. In "Entwurf eines Briefes an einen Freund, der auf der Akademie Theologie studiert" (1772), he introduces the topic by distinguishing between "moral" and "metaphysical" freedom. He writes:

Metaphysische Freiheit wäre, wenn ein endliches oder geschaffenes Wesen außer den ewigen und notwendigen Gesetzen denken und handeln könnte, die der Schöpfer denkenden und handelnden Wesen vorgeschrieben. (Blei IV, 22)

Here, Lenz claims that metaphysical freedom cannot possibly be a human attribute, since finite human beings cannot act outside the laws of nature. In addition, Lenz's position seems to contradict Kant's belief that freedom belongs to the
metaphysical realm. Lenz proceeds to examine the concept of moral freedom which he defines as:

Die Stärke, die wir anwenden können, den Trieben der Natur nach den jedesmaligen Erfordernissen unserer bessern Erkenntnis und unserer Situation zu widerstehen. Wir können also moralisch immer freier, immer willkürlicher werden. (Blei IV, 23)

Lenz claims that—since God exists outside of time and space—there is no conflict between the concepts of an omniscient God and the moral freedom of the individual:

Da Gott also die Kraft kennt, die er in uns gelegt hat, da er alle die Gesetze durchschaut, nach denen diese Kraft sich vermehren oder vermindern kann, da er die Wirkungen und Folgen derselben zugleich mit diesen ewig notwendigen Gesetzen auf einmal übersieht – so kann er allwissend sein ohne unserer moralischen Freiheit Eintrag zu tun. (Blei IV, 23-24)

58 Kant writes in the Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1781): "Es gibt ein Übersinnliches 'in uns' (Freiheit), 'über uns' (Gott), 'nach uns' (Unsterblichkeit) (III, 346). Kant further argues that, since man is one of the "Erscheinungen der Sinneswelt," he must have an empirical character and that consequently with regard to his empirical character, there is no freedom (III, 372-73) but that with regard to his intelligible character, man's actions are brought about by pure reason and as such he acts freely (III, 374 f).
In *Meinungen eines Laien*, human freedom is again interpreted as being in accordance with God's grace. Lenz writes: "Ja frei sind wir, aber frei vor Gott, wie Kinder unter den Augen ihres liebreichen Vaters frei scherzen und spielen dürfen" (Blei IV, 131). And in "Über die Natur unsers Geistes," he introduces the problem of free will versus determinism as follows:


With an anxiety that is best described as existential, Lenz proceeds to ask the rhetorical question, "Wie denn, ich nur ein Ball der Umstände? ich -?" (I, 572). However, he then acknowledges a drive in the human psyche which propels the individual towards freedom:

Dieser Stolz - was ist er? wo wurzelt er?
Sollte er nicht ein Wink von der Natur der menschlichen Seele sein, dass sie eine Substanz, die nicht selbstständig geboren, aber ein Bestreben ein Trieb in ihr sei, sich zur Selbstständigkeit hinaufzuarbeiten, sich gleichsam von dieser großen Masse der ineinander
In identifying a strong desire for independence and freedom in human nature, Lenz firmly renounces a deterministic conception of the world and challenges those that subscribe to a "mechanistic" model of the universe to deny this striving:

Können die Helvetiusse und alle Leute die so tief in die Einflüsse der uns umgebenden Natur gedrungen sind, sich selbst dieses Gefühl ableugnen das das aus ihnen gemacht hat was sie geworden sind? (I, 573)

Concupiscence occupies a central place in Lenz's ethics and is, furthermore, closely linked to the individual's free will. In fact, Lenz establishes concupiscence as the stimulus (die Triebfeder) for all human action (I, 501-502). He also suggests that God awakened Adam and Eve's concupiscence in order to motivate them to act with moral autonomy. How did God accomplish this? According to Lenz, it was the conflict between God's prohibition and their concupiscence that propelled Adam and Eve to act freely:
Es war dies der erste Stoß gleichsam, den Gott freien Wesen gab, die handeln sollten: denn dem Tier kann ich keine Handlung zuschreiben, eine Handlung aus Instinkt ist immer noch ein Leiden. Es war dies Verbot die vis centrifuga die Gott dem menschlichen Wesen eindrückte, da die Konkupiszenz gleichsam seine vis centripeta war, und nur bei dem Streit dieser beiden entgegen-wirkenden Kräfte konnte sich seine Freiheit im Handeln, seine Selbstwirksamkeit, seine Velleit äußern. (I, 502)

In his essay "Meine wahre Psychologie," which holds the basic tenets of his thought, Lenz carefully distinguishes between an involuntary physical sensory system and a voluntary Empfindungsvermögen. It is important to note at this point that, according to Lenz, the latter resides in the body and enables the individual to choose freely between good and evil (Blei IV, 29). Lenz further claims that the will and concupiscence are identical as he refers the reader to an earlier essay of his which had examined the place of concupiscence in human nature:
Die begehrenden Kräfte zusammengenommen haben den Sitz im Unterleibe vorzüglich und in dem Samen und heißen der Wille....(siehe meine Abhandlung vom Baum der Erkenntnis des Guten und Bösen und der Konkupiszenz). (Blei IV, 30)

In the following century, Schopenhauer would claim that the sexual urge is the "focus of the will" and that, consequently, the will reveals itself as the "in-itself" of our phenomenal being (See his essay, "Über die Freiheit des Willens" in Über die Grundlegung der Moral).

Lenz's treatment of the will as part of the sensible rather than the intelligible realm also calls to mind Hamann's claim that reason was made to have an erotic component, "Da unsere Vernunft vom Saamen des göttlichen Worts geschwangert werden sollte" (Sämtliche Werke I, 52). And in response to Kant's division of man into an intelligible and a sensible realm, Hamann declared, "Und meine grobe Einbildungskraft ist niemals im Stande gewesen, sich einen schöpferischen Geist ohne genitalia vorzustellen" (Briefwechsel 2, 415). Lenz, like Hamann, employs sexual imagery to clarify his position. For example, in Meinungen eines Laien Lenz writes, "Wer aus Gott geboren ist, der tut nicht Sünde, denn sein Same bleibt bei
ihm" (Blei IV, 177). And in his essay, "Vom Baum der Erkenntnis Guten und Bösen" he maintains:

... da der Same der Menschen eigentlich das Vehikel ihrer Geister ist und die Sammlung dieser Geister von der Vernunft, dem Funken, dem Hauch den die Gottheit in uns gelegt, regiert, das Wesen ours Genius oder innern Menschen ausmacht....

(Blei IV, 33)

Lenz shares Hamann's admiration for Socrates and the socratic. The question is, to what extent was he influenced by Hamann? During his years in Königsberg, Lenz would have had access to Hamann's Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten (1759) and Kreuzzüge eines Philologen (1762). According to Rosanow, Lenz corresponded with Hamann prior to his departure from Riga; Rosanow also suggests that the two men may have met in Königsberg (55 and 463/464, fn 11 and 12). There are also numerous references to Lenz in Hamann's letters. It is worth noting that Hamann attributed Lenz's "Anmerkungen übers

59 See also 1 John, 1:9: No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.

60 See Briefwechsel 4: 122, 123f, 126, 131, 132, 138, 141, 164, 167, 204, 250, 257, 324, 333, 424; Vol. 5: 140, 169, 171; Vol 7: 9. Hamann also notes that Lenz wrote to him (Briefwechsel 4, 131).
Theater" to Goethe and that he thought highly of Lenz. He wrote:


(Briefwechsel 3, 122)

In the past three decades, Lenz scholarship has, for the most part, interpreted the point of view presented in Lenz's prose and drama as thoroughly deterministic. Not surprisingly, then, the opening paragraph of his "Götz von Berlichingen" is often quoted in support of this thesis:

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

Granted this passage describes a determined universe; however, in the next paragraph Lenz renounces such a mode of life as an existence unworthy of human beings and points to the individual's potential for authentic and autonomous being:

Kein Wunder, das die Philosophen so philosophieren, wenn die Menschen so leben. Aber heißt das gelebt? Heißt das seine Existenz gefühlt, seine selbstständige Existenz, den Funken von Gott? Ha, er muß in was Besserm stekken, der Reiz des Lebens; denn ein Ball anderer zu sein, ist ein
Heightened consciousness of existence and self-realization are what Lenz demands from literature. In the words of Roy Pascal, "Lenz fordert von der Poesie 'Zuwachs an Existenz'" (Wacker, *Sturm und Drang*, 64). Indeed, Lenz is critical of contemporary French drama because it leaves the audience with nothing more than the pleasant feeling a good bottle of champagne produces (I, 380). Instead, he praises the Promethean spark of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*:

Wo ist der lebendige Eindruck, der sich in Gesinnungen, Taten und Handlungen hernach einmischt, der prometheische Funken der sich so unvermerkt in unsere innerste Seele hineingestohlen, daß er, wenn wir ihn nicht durch gänzliches Stillliegen in sich selbst wieder verglimmen lassen, unser ganzes Leben beseligt.... (I, 380)

Freedom and morality are closely linked in Lenz's thoughts. In the opening paragraph of "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," Lenz gives the following definition of morality. Morality, he assures the reader, is the discipline
that teaches the individual to use his free will in a manner conducive to fulfilling his human potential:

Da die Moral die Lehre von der Bestimmung des Menschen und von dem rechten Gebrauch seines freien Willens um diese Bestimmung zu erreichen ist, so sehen wir klar, dass sie die Zeichnung zu dem ganzen Gemälde unsern Lebens enthält.... (I, 483)

In the first supplement of "Vom Baum der Erkenntnis Guten und Bösen," he ascertains that God intended man to be a free agent, a little creator who follows in his footsteps, "...aber er sollte auch frei, ein kleiner Schöpfer, der Gottheit nachhandeln" (Blei IV, 71). 61

In Meinungen eines Laien (1775), Lenz elaborates on what he conceives to be the principle of original sin--namely, human nature (Blei IV, 92). He further claims that only when the aims of nature and those of a freely acting individual coincide, do they lead to perfect unity: "Die Natur hat ihre Zwecke, der wahrhaftig freie Mensch die seinigen, und die

61 With this definition, Lenz comes close to the Leibnizian concept of the artist who follows in the creator's footsteps. See Allan Blunden's important essay, "J.M.R. Lenz and Leibniz: A point of view."
According to Martini, the focus of Lenz's dramatic theory in the "Anmerkungen" is the dramatization of the modern "Selbstbewusstsein des zu seiner vollen individuellen Freiheit gelangten Ich." This self is further described as "ein Ich, das aus seiner eigenen Entscheidung und Verantwortung handeln und aus seinem eigenen kritischen Denken und Gewissen fragen und urteilen will" ("Die Einheit der Konzeption in J.M.R. Lenz' 'Anmerkungen übers Theater,'" 262).

c. The Drama

In marked contrast to the independent characters described in the "Anmerkungen," the protagonists in Lenz's plays appear to be impotent and despondent inhabitants of a determined universe. Individual freedom is at best a topic for academic speculation, but has no place in the day to day life of Lenz's dramatic characters. The question that remains to be addressed is: does the dissonance between Lenz's dramatic theories and his drama suggest nothing more than the dichotomy that exists between his vision of an ideal world and the socio-political realities of eighteenth-century Germany?
If one starts from the premise that the passivity and dependence displayed by the characters in Der Hofmeister and Die Soldaten are symptomatic of a mentality that renders them incapable of acting as autonomous and ethical individuals, it seems warranted to explore the nature of their malaise.

In Der Hofmeister, freedom is the banner under which der Geheime Rat and Wenzeslaus are united. Both indulge in philosophizing about human freedom; however, the former is not able to venture much beyond his theories, and the latter's daily routine serves to demonstrate that abstract concepts have no concrete application in his life. If one were to apply Kantian categories, one could, perhaps, consider the councillor as the noumenon. As such, he would be impotent, since his influence does not extend beyond his immediate sphere. Wenzeslaus as the phenomenon, on the other hand, could not but be determined in all his actions.

One may well ask, what degree of freedom, if any, the protagonist in Der Hofmeister enjoys. As his name suggests, Läuffer is essentially a servant in the von Berg household. Due to financial restraints, he is condemned to involuntary celibacy for the duration of his employment. In fact, Läuffer is forced to suppress his sexuality in exchange for his position. Thus alienated, he enters into a sexual relationship with his charge Gustchen. As a result of this liaison, he is
forced to flee from the household and seek refuge with Wenzeslaus, the village schoolmaster, who promptly tries to recruit him as his disciple. In the meantime, there is circumstantial evidence that Gustchen has drowned herself after giving birth to Läuffer's child. Läuffer promptly castrates himself when he recognizes the child as his. Shortly afterwards and despite the prospect of a sterile union, Läuffer marries a young peasant girl. However, the happy ending of the play, which has puzzled critics, lacks credibility, and one is left with the uneasy feeling that with his self-castration, Läuffer has ceased to exist as an authentic and ethical self. Perhaps the irony of the title, *Der Hofmeister oder Vorteile der Privaterziehung*, has not been sufficiently explored. Since in the final analysis it is the tutor who loses his identity as an independent self, one may well ask what advantages there are to private tutoring from the point of view of the tutor?

The prominent place that concupiscence plays in the individual's struggle for freedom and moral autonomy in Lenz's drama cannot be ignored. For Lenz, concupiscence is more than a biological function that guarantees the survival of *homo sapiens*; it is the prerequisite for self-realization and moral action. Considering the central place that concupiscence holds
in Lenz's thoughts on ethics, the important place which Blaise Pascal attributes to concupiscence is worth noting. He writes:

Grandeur de l'homme dans sa concupiscence même, d'en avoir su tirer un règlement admirable, et d'en avoir fait un tableau de la charité. Les raisons des effets marquent la grandeur de l'homme, d'avoir tiré de la concupiscence un si bel ordre.

(Pensées de Pascal, 138)

In Lenz's plays, characters who suppress or abuse their sexuality are unable to function as autonomous selves and seem condemned to a life of passivity and moral lassitude. This is true of Läufer in Der Hofmeister, who with the self-inflicted destruction of his genitalia—which, according to Lenz are the seat of the human will (Blei IV, 30)—has sacrificed his potential as an authentic and ethical self. It follows that, if one acknowledges concupiscence as being identical with the individual's free will, concupiscence becomes the source of human ethics. Thus the individual who sacrifices or abuses his concupiscence is no longer capable of ethical actions. One could interpret, therefore, in the final scene of Der Hofmeister, Läufer is absent because he is impotent in the physical as well as in the moral sense and thus no longer capable of functioning as an autonomous self.
The officers in Die Soldaten share a similar fate. Coerced into giving up their right to marry, they find themselves in an untenable position. In order to escape the burden of enforced celibacy, they court the daughters of the local bourgeoisie without, however, taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Furthermore, since they are incapable of moral actions, they are no longer autonomous individuals but reduced to mere automata.62

d. The Aesthetic as a Mode of Existence

Lenz makes the distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical as modes of human existence in both prose and drama. Since Kierkegaard, the prototype of the individual who lives exclusively for the pleasurable moments of life is the seducer whose compulsive erotic pursuits provide a case study of an aesthete's despair in "The Diary of the Seducer" (Either/Or). It seems an extraordinary coincidence that Lenz, more than

62 As pointed out in chapters III and IV, there are many instances where the aesthetic is contrasted with the ethical in Lenz's plays. Again, the treatment of the aesthetic and the ethical as stages in human life--described by Kierkegaard half a century later--seems to be anticipated by Lenz.
half a century before Kierkegaard, chooses the example of a
Don Juan who feels nothing except his sensuality, to
demonstrate the point that adhering to a partial identity
results in ignorance of the self which, in its turn, leads to
an unethical mode of life. Lenz writes:

Ich will aber versuchen, Ihnen die ganze
Schwürigkeit mit zween Worten zu heben. Aus der
unrichtigen Kenntnis seiner selbst. Der Wollüstling fühlt
bloß seine Sinnlichkeit. Er würde erschrecklich böse werden, wenn man ihm anschauend
und lebendig zu erkennen gäbe,
daß er höhere Fähigkeiten habe, deren Gefühl ihn
unendlich mehr belustigen würde. (I, 493)

Whether it be the amorous pursuits of a Don Juan or the
cerebral self-absorption of philosophers, a purely aesthetic,
one-sided approach to life, constitutes a flight from the
self. An indication of the importance of this realization for
Lenz is the fact that the aesthetic as a theme surfaces in all
of his major plays.

63 If one examines the extent of Hamann's influence
on Kierkegaard (See fn 72) and considers the fact that
the former's ideas are reflected in Lenz's writings, one
may venture that it is Hamann's existential thought
which surfaces in the writing of both Lenz and
Kierkegaard.
In *Der neue Menoza*, Prince Tandi complains, "Das bloße Genießen scheint mir recht die Krankheit, an der die Europäer arbeiten" (II, II.vi, 130), and Baccalaureus Zierau, whose very name identifies him as an aesthete, unwittingly stresses the aesthetic aspects of his abstract way of life when he exclaims, "Die echte Vernunft lehrt uns glücklich sein, unsern Pfad mit Blumen bestreuen" (II, II.vi, 131). In responding to Zierau, Prince Tandi chooses words which clearly indicate that the spectre of death is part of the aesthetic garden, "Aber die Blumen welken und sterben" (II, II.vi, 131). However, Zierau's off hand remark: "So pflückt man neue," indicates that the significance of Prince Tandi's comment is lost on him (II, II.vi, 131).

The aesthetic is confronted with the spectre of death more than once in *Der neue Menoza*. On one occasion, Wilhelmine is in an unhappy frame of mind because she has reason to believe that Prince Tandi, her fiancé, is her brother. Baccalaureus Zierau arrives on the scene to take her to a masked ball. His motivation is--in his own words--to provide "ein klein Divertissement" (II, IV.i, 166). Wilhelmine responds to his invitation by pointing to her embroidery, which depicts Hymen extinguishing his torch, and exclaiming, "hier ist mein Divertissement." Lenz makes an existential statement here by
contrasting the image of death with the pursuit of empty diversions.

A purely aesthetic approach to life which dismisses the question of ethics is advocated by Magister Beza, the second academic in Der neue Menoza. He goes so far as to suggest to the Prince that a marriage between siblings would not be immoral since it is not contrary to natural law and therefore acceptable to God (II,III.xi, 161-62).

In Der Engländer (1777), Lenz contrasts the aesthetic aspects of human existence with the reality of death. Robert Hot, a young English nobleman, is encouraged by his father to surrender to the charms of a lady of the demi-monde. The father hopes that the pursuit of pleasure and empty diversions will cure Robert's passionate love for Armida, an Italian princess, and thus render him receptive to an arranged marriage with Lord Hamilton's daughter back in England. He pleads with Robert to come to his senses and assures him that he will be happy only if he is "vernünftig" (II,V.i, 339), but Robert, rather than go along with his father's wishes, commits suicide. As he lies dying, he makes it quite clear that his choice of Armida was an ethical decision:

...so viel Augen haben nach mir gefunkelt! so viel Busen nach mir sich ausgedehnt! ich hätte so viel
Vergnügen haben können – nein, das ist nicht dankbar...Sie wurden rot, wenn sie mit mir sprachen, sie stotterten, sie stammelten, sie zitterten – nur eine, sagte ich, nur eine – und das war mein Lohn! (II, V.i, 351)

With death imminent, a priest is summoned to Robert's bedside. He admonishes Robert to repent and forego the memory of Armida and surrender himself to the will of God. In response to the priest's lecture, Robert presses Armida's portrait to his lips and in dying exclaims: "Armida! Armida... - Behaltet euren Himmel für euch" (II, V.i, 353).

Like Robert in Der Engländer, Meursault in Camus' novel L'Etranger faces a similar decision shortly before his death. A priest visits him in his cell and urges him to prepare for his afterlife. The priest suggests to him that he should look for, and seek solace in, the face of Christ, which many have seen reflected on the stone walls of the prison in their last hour. Meursault counters that the only face he wished for during his long imprisonment was the sun-lit face of Marie, his girl. Despite Meursault's lack of interest in his well-rehearsed homilies, the priest does not give up. As Meursault becomes more and more irritated by the priest, his anger gets the better of him and he shouts that all the priest's certainties "are not worth one strand of a woman's
hair" (Camus, 151). In the end, alone and reconciled to his past and present, Meursault faces his death with a certain amount of exhilaration.

Kierkegaard claims that only in the face of death, does the individual become subjective and make an ethical commitment to himself, the existing subject. In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* he writes:

We wish to know how a man's conception of death will transform a man's entire life...The question must be raised of the possibility of finding an ethical expression for the significance of death...

And furthermore, it is evident that when the subject thinks his own death, this is a deed. For a man in general, for an absent-minded individual like Soldin or a systematic philosopher, to think death in general is indeed no act or deed; it is only a something in general, and what such a something in general really is, is at bottom a very difficult thing to say. But if the task of life is to become subjective, then the thought of death is not, for the individual subject, something in general, but verily a deed. For the development of the subject consists precisely in his active
interpenetration of himself by reflection
concerning his own existence.... (150-51)

Strephon, the hapless philosopher of Die Freunde machen den Philosophen has by his own admission become what other people see in him (II,V.i, 323). In a suicidal mood, Strephon laments the loss of his self and attributes it to his vanity:

Der Mensch ist so geneigt, sich selber zu betrügen; hat er Verstand genug, sich vor seiner Eigenliebe zu bewahren, so kommen tausend andere und vereinigen ihre Kräfte, seine entschlafene Eigenliebe zu erwecken, um den Selbstbetrug unerhört zumachen. - Also ein Philosoph? - Und nichts weiter? (II,IV.iii, 319)

Strephon loads his pistol to make an end to what he considers a wasted life. A philosopher, he describes his chosen profession as "beobachtende Untätigkeit" and regrets that his vanity and self-importance have led him to live an inauthentic existence:

Ein Mensch, der allen Rechten der Menschheit entsagt, um sich bei andern in ein töriches Ansehen zu setzen. So einer war ich freilich, Mezzotinto, wie jeder Mensch gern das wird, wofür andere ihn halten. Seraphine hat meine Eitelkeit
zuerst überwunden und mich überzeugt, daß ein bloßer Beobachter nur ein halber Mensch sei.

(II,V.i, 322-23)

However, as Strephon prepares for what he perceives to be his final hour, he acknowledges that his death is the first good deed of his life: "Dieser Tod ist des wahren Philosophen würdig, dieser Tod ist die erste gute Handlung meines Lebens" (II,V.i, 323).

A reflective aesthete, Strephon has spent his entire life as "ein halber Mensch" (II,Vi, 323). Preoccupied with abstract thinking and distracted by the constant demands of his friends, he has become a stranger to his own self. For Strephon it is the sudden encounter with death that leads him to examine his past life and realize its futility.

In *Die Soldaten*, the aesthetes are divided into two groups: the aesthetes proper and the reflective aesthetes. The former are in the majority; they are the soldiers who seduce the local girls, frequent the theatre, and daydream while on duty. The latter spend their time preoccupied with abstract thinking. Among the reflective aesthetes is Hauptmann Pirzel, an armchair philosopher, whose demeanour epitomizes the speculative thinker's detachment from life. He claims, furthermore, that the unethical conduct of the soldiers can be attributed to their reluctance to engage in thinking, "Wie ich
In *Der Hofmeister*, the aesthetic as a mode of existence is somewhat less pronounced. However, Läuffer's and Gustchen's constant role-playing points to the aesthetic attitude they share. And although they adopt the roles of the immortal lovers Romeo and Juliet, their love remains a figment of their imagination. Furthermore, the constant posturing of Läuffer and Count Wermuth—the latter's name attests to the fact that he subscribes to a somewhat decadent life-style—may be interpreted as the multiple perspectives that characterize the aesthete's point of view.

Thus, while in the theoretical writing and prose the struggle between the aesthetic and the ethical is presented dialectically, Lenz's dramatic characters initially court and ultimately succumb to the aesthete's perspective on reality. In the end, it is their singular passion that renders them incapable of ethical commitment and ultimately results in despair and resignation.
e. The Ethical "Point of View" of the Subjective Thinker

Diametrically opposed to the aesthetic mode of life stands the ethical. In "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," Lenz makes the point that ethics determines our whole life since it leads us to make the right use of our free will so that we may fulfill our human potential. He writes:

Da die Moral die Lehre von der Bestimmung des Menschen und von dem rechten Gebrauch seines freien Willens um diese Bestimmung zu erreichen ist, so sehen wir klar, daß sie die Zeichnung zu dem ganzen Gemälde unsers Lebens enthält, welcher wir, jenachdem sich bei reiferem Alter und fruchtbaren Umständen unsere Fähigkeiten entwickeln, Licht Schatten und Kolorit geben. (I, 483)

But although Lenz acknowledges the importance of ethics in human existence, he questions whether an objective and universal ethical ideal or code is possible for all times, for all people, and under all circumstances (I, 538) and comes to the following conclusion:

Jeder Mensch bringt sein Maß von Begierden und Kräften, seine Harmonie und Übereinstimmung von Begierden und Kräften, sein Moralsystem mit sich auf die Welt, und nach Maßgabe des Gebrauchs den
er von denselben macht, erhöhet und verbessert sich
dasselbe unaufhörlich. Wir werden alle gut
tgeboren, und das Bessere und Schlimmere unserer
Handlungen und unseres Zustandes hängt lediglich
von uns selber ab. (I, 550).

There is little doubt that the above passage negates the
claim that an objective system of ethics is possible. Instead,
it considers ethics as the subjective concern of the
individual. As Titel points out, Lenz's position is quite
heretical and contrary to the teachings of the Christian
church on original sin (I, 702). In his essay Stimmen des
Laien, Lenz describes original sin as ontological anxiety. He
notes:

...daß es gewisse Situationen unseres Lebens gibt, 
wo alles für uns verloren zu sein scheint, wo wir
uns so gar nichts mehr dünken, wo wir unsere ganze
Unbestimmtheit, das traurige Los der
Menschheit, ich möchte das ihre Erbsünde nennen,
aufs höchste fühlen. (I, 569).

Thus Lenz is not interested in proposing a universal
system of ethics. On the contrary, he stresses again and again
that he is neither a philosopher nor a moralist and does not
intend his writings to be didactic (I, 384, 385, 386). He
cautions, furthermore, that any individual who has a
"moralischen Endzweck" would necessarily disqualify himself from being a poet (I, 386). The question is, what does he ask of the poet? The answer is given by Lenz himself:

Wo bleibt aber da der Dichter?... Große Philosophen mögen diese Herren immer sein, große allgemeine Menschenkenntnis, Gesetze der menschlichen Seele Kenntnis, aber wo bleibt die individuelle? (I, 341)

For Lenz, subjectivity and inwardness and not objectivity are the primary characteristics of a poet. And he goes even further when he assures the reader that "der höchste Vorzug eines Dichters für die Ewigkeit ist ein edles Herz" (387). In the "Anmerkungen übers Theater" he advocates subjectivity as the most desirable characteristic of a true poet when he writes: "Ich sage, der Dichter malt das ganze Stück auf seinen eigenen Charakter" (I, 352). In addition, he urges poets to be more critical and ascribes the objectivity of contemporary writers to nothing more than a lack of subjectivity and individual initiative:

In der Tat ist keine Fertigkeit in unsern Urteilen nirgends mehr anzutreffen und man beschönigt das mit dem saubern Namen der Unparteilichkeit, da man es doch viel wahrer Unvermögen nennen sollte.... Die Übereilung im Urteilen ist im Grunde nichts als
He also maintains that the individual crosses over from the aesthetic to the ethical stage, when no longer silent, he chooses himself, his role in the world, to the best of his abilities. In "Über Götz von Berlichingen," Lenz further considers the aesthetic and the ethical as stages in the development of the individual self:

...denn meine Herren Sie sind jetzt Männer - und ich hoff ich habe nicht mehr nötig, Ihnen den Ausspruch des Apostels Pauli zuzurufen: Als ich ein Kind war tat ich wie ein Kind, als ich aber ein Mann ward, legt ich das Kindische ab. Wenn jeder in seine Rolle ganz eindringt und alles draus macht was draus zu machen ist--denken Sie meine Herren! welch eine Idee! welch ein Götterspiel! (I, 382)

Again, he uses the stage as a metaphor and claims that human beings are only silent inhabitants of the world until they are called upon to play their roles and fulfill their human potential to the best of their ability:

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64 "Überhaupt, m. H., muß man handeln um reden zu können" (I, 456).
Wir sind alle, meine Herren! in gewissem Verstand noch stumme Personen auf dem großen Theater der Welt bis es den Direkteurs gefallen wird uns eine Rolle zu geben. Welche sie aber auch sei, so müssen wir uns doch alle bereit halten in derselben zu handeln, und jenachdem wir besser oder schlimmer, schwächer oder stärker handeln, jenachdem haben wir hernach besser oder schlimmer gespielt, jenachdem verbessern wir auch unser äußerliches und innerliches Glück. (I, 381)

For Lenz, subjectivity extends to all aspects of human existence, even to religious faith. For, he argues, since faith is subjective, it is the task of the individual to live his faith:

der Gerechte wird und muss seines Glaubens leben.

Merken Sie wohl, seines [my italics]-- denn nach Massgabe seiner Individualität hat jeder seinen individuellen Glauben. (I, 565)

Lenz claims, furthermore, that the more subjective the individual becomes, the more of a *virtuoso* he becomes in his faith and the more autonomous in his actions:

Das gibt denn hernach die Virtuosen, die es in dieser, jener Individualität weit gebracht haben, und ihrer Ernte so unbekümmert genießen können,
mag die Welt sie nun mit Dreck oder Blumen bewerfen, sie auf- und niederzerren, die Länge und die Breite, sie - ich weiß nicht was? (I, 565)

It is evident not only from his endorsement of subjectivity in the "Anmerkungen übers Theater" but from the subjective approach he advocates in his other writings, that the concepts of ethics and subjectivity are interdependent in Lenz's thought. Most importantly, subjectivity is closely associated with Standpunkt and Gesichtspunkt, terms he uses frequently in both his theoretical writing and his correspondence. How is one to interpret Lenz's use of the term Standpunkt in the following, often cited passage from the "Anmerkungen übers Theater?":

Der wahre Dichter verbindet nicht in seiner Einbildungskraft, wie es ihm gefällt, was die Herren die schöne Natur zu nennen belieben, was aber mit ihrer Erlaubnis nichts als die verfehlte Natur ist. Er nimmt Standpunkt--und dann muss er so verbinden. (I, 336-37)

Firstly, what are the ethical implications of his understanding of the terms Standpunkt and Gesichtspunkt? Since the term Standpunkt nehmen is central to an appreciation of Lenz's concept of ethics, a short review of the critical
literature which concerns itself with the term \textit{Standpunkt} in Lenz seems appropriate.

Leidner begins his essay, "The Dream of Identity: Lenz and the problem of \textit{Standpunkt}," by suggesting that Lenz's conception of the term \textit{Standpunkt nehmen} relates to the issue with which the "Anmerkungen übers Theater" begin--namely, "the weakness of national identity in late eighteenth-century Germany" (388). He grants, however, that "here and in several other locations Lenz gives the word an additional burden of meaning that he never explicitly defines" (387). Leidner, then, uses the following Lenz quote: "So gründet sich all unsere Selbstständigkeit all unsere Existenz auf die Menge...." to substantiate his claim that:

Lenz does not conceive of individual autonomy as viable against an infinitely open ground of freedom: as horrible as it is to be a cog in a machine, the opposite extreme "the autonomous being, dependent on no one" is clearly an impossibility. As he states above, "the foundation of our autonomy is the collectivity."

(Leidner, 391)

However, it is difficult to attribute the statement, "the foundation of our autonomy is the collectivity," to Lenz, since the complete sentence that Leidner refers to indicates
that *Menge* can hardly be translated as "collectivity" here. Lenz writes:

So gründet sich all unsere Selbstständigkeit all unsere Existenz auf die Menge den Umfang die Wahrheit unserer Gefühle und Erfahrungen, und auf die Stärke mit der wir sie ausgehalten, das heißt über sie gedacht haben oder welches einerlei ist, uns ihrer bewusst geworden sind. (I, 575)

Edith Braemer was one of the first to comment on Lenz's use of this term, arguing in 1959 that the term *Standpunkt* is emblematic of a social development in the eighteenth century that saw a "Standpunkt-Einnehmen gegenüber den gesellschaftlichen Fragen" of the bourgeois class in a positive light (64-65). Titel considers the term *Standpunkt nehmen*—in the sense that Lenz uses it—as "den Standort des Malers, von dem aus sich ihm ein Gegenstand in bestimmter Weise darbietet...," and as such it signifies "nicht mehr und nicht weniger als eine Garantie für objektgemäße Darstellung" (Diss. 15). Titel emphasizes, moreover, that the term bears no relationship to the Leibnizian *point de vue*. She writes, "mit dem 'point de vue' der Leibnizenschen Monade ... hat die Vorstellung nichts zu tun...." (footnote 337, I, 653). Fritz Martini interprets Lenz's use of the term *Standpunkt nehmen* as
exercising selective creativity (1970). And in his 1978 essay, Blunden suggests that *Standpunkt* and *Gesichtspunkt* are "quasi-technical terms in which the world-view of the Leibnizian Monadologie is implicit" ("J. M. R. Lenz and Leibniz: A point of view," 3-18).65

In his 1980 doctoral dissertation, Pope claims that Lenz's use of *Standpunkt nehmen* implies that, in order "to adopt the right 'standpoint,' the poet must put himself in the position of his object and adopt its [my italics] own point of view" (174). The question is: does Lenz suggest an *objective* point of view when he makes use of the term *Standpunkt nehmen*?

Lenz's theoretical writing and his personal correspondence seem to suggest that the terms *Standpunkt* and *Gesichtspunkt* are interchangeable and synonomous with taking a *subjective* position. In a letter to Lavater of 8 April, 1775, Lenz expresses his appreciation of Lavater's *Standpunkt* in the following words, "Dich, deinen Standpunkt, deinen Wirkungskreis nach Würden erkenne und ausmesse" (*Briefe* I, 42).

65 For the preceding review of the scholarly contributions which examine Lenz's use of the terms *Standpunkt* and *Gesichtspunkt*, I am indebted to Alan Leidner.
In the "Anmerkungen übers Theater" Lenz notes that, since the ancient Greeks looked upon the world as wholly determined and believed their fate to be controlled by the Gods, fear of the Gods and not admiration for the hero was the primary emotion to be aroused in the spectator (I, 358). Consequently, subjectivity or free will was not an option for either actors or spectators of the Greek drama. However, the dramatic characters that Lenz envisions for the German stage of his day are not puppets that are moved mechanically by an external device or force, but human beings who "selbstständig und unveränderlich die ganze grosse Maschine selbst drehen, ohne die Gottheiten in den Wolken anders nötig zu haben, als wenn sie wollen zu Zuschauern" (I, 343). Lenz grants that this requires Gesichtspunkt, a point of view, which the ancient Greeks could not possibly have had. He writes, "Ha aber freilich dazu gehört Gesichtspunkt, Blick der Gottheit in die Welt, den die Alten nicht haben konnten, und wir zu unserer Schande nicht haben wollen" (I, 343). While Lenz excuses the ancient Greeks for not having a point of view, he accuses his contemporaries of not taking a position.

Therefore, when Lenz states that the true poet "verbindet nicht in seiner Einbildungskraft, wie es ihm gefällt. Er nimmt Standpunkt--und dann muß er so verbinden" (I, 337), one may interpret this to mean that once the poet or
dramatist takes an autonomous position vis-à-vis a certain issue, he no longer proceeds arbitrarily but commits himself to a specific course of action. Furthermore, if one examines Lenz's use of the word *Standpunkt* in "Über die Natur unsers Geistes," one may conclude that the term *Standpunkt nehmen* refers to taking a moral position. For "sich in einen *Standpunkt* stellen" is the term used to describe the position that Jesus Christ took in choosing death on the cross. He writes:

> Seine Gefühle müssen unaussprechlich gewesen sein, er hatte sich in einen *Standpunkt* [my italics] gestellt das Elend einer ganzen Welt auf sich zu konzentrieren ....Er handelte--er veränderte seine Lage. (I, 576)

It is worth noting that Lenz describes Christ's determination to take upon himself the sins of the world in the following manner: "Er handelte--er veränderte seine Lage." These words suggest strongly that Lenz sees the death of Christ as brought about by the Saviour's free choice and action. Furthermore, he venerates Christ for maintaining his Selbständigkeit in the face of death, for standing alone in the face of adversity:

> Da seine Selbständigkeit [sic] zu behalten, im Tode selbst der nun alles mit Schimpf beschliesst
mit der heitersten Gegenwirkung zu rufen: Es ist vollbracht--und so rette ich meinen Geist in deine Hände. (I, 577)

A passage from the same essay, quoted in part earlier, attests to the fact that Lenz uses the term Selbstandigkeit to express the thought that an individual's autonomy is dependent on the extent of his self-awareness, his subjectivity:

So gründet sich all unsere Selbstständigkeit [sic] all unsre Existenz auf die Menge den Umfang die Wahrheit unsrer Gefühle und Erfahrungen, und auf die Stärke mit der wir sie ausgehalten, das heißt über sie gedacht haben oder welches einerlei ist, uns ihrer bewußt geworden sind. (I, 575)

He argues, furthermore, that there is a close relationship between Selbstandigkeit and handeln, and that the former depends on the latter. Therefore, an individual can become truly independent only by taking action and thereby changing his circumstances, his relationships, and his emotions, according to his own free will. Lenz also maintains that, while thinking leaves things as they are, action leads the individual to change his circumstances. He notes:

Unsere Unabhängigkeit zeigt sich aber noch mehr im Handeln als im Denken, denn beim Denken
nehm ich meine Lage mein Verhältnis und Gefühle wie sie sind, beim Handeln aber verändere ich sie wie es mir gefällt. (I, 575)

The important place that autonomous and moral action occupies in Lenz's thought is central to his concept of ethics. In Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral, Lenz emphasizes that only when we act do we experience our existence, our abilities, our self to the fullest:

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

Lenz emphasizes, furthermore, that it is man--as the
first step in the hierarchy of "freihandelnden,
selbstständigen Geschöpfe[n]"--who bears witness to the
existence of an eternal and autonomous Being and, at the same
time, feels within himself a strong drive to emulate the free
actions of this eternal Being:

Wir sind, m. H., oder wollen wenigstens sein, die
erste Sprosse auf der freihandelnden
selbstständigen Geschöpfe, und da wir eine Welt hie
da um uns sehen, die der Beweis eines unendlich,
freihandelnden Wesens ist, so ist der erste Trieb,
den wir in uns fühlen, die Begierde 's ihm
nachzutun; da aber die Welt keine Brücke hat, und
wir schon mit den Dingen, die da sind, begnügen
müssen, fühlen wir wenigstens Zuwachs unserer
Existenz.... (I, 333)

It is Lenz's call for "Zuwachs an Existenz"--a demand for
a heightened awareness of being--that leaps from the pages of
his essays. This quest for authentic being becomes the
individual's most important task, for being takes precedence
over everything. According to Lenz, the revelation of the
divine will, identical with the natural law, provides the individual with rules that enable him to realize his authentic self and, thus, experience a heightened awareness of being (Blei IV, 171). Loss of authentic being, on the other hand, is a fate too terrible to contemplate for Lenz:

Abweichung von diesen Regeln ist Abweichung von unserer wahren Existenz, und das Finale derselben die Aufhebung von unserer Existenz. Weh mir! das ist eine harte Rede! wer mag die hören.

(Blei IV, 171)

Like his contemporary Hamann, Lenz is critical of abstract thinkers. On one occasion, he describes abstract philosophy as "beobachtende Untätigkeit" (II,II.iii, 302). In another instance, he argues that philosophers are blinded by an inflated ego (II,IV.ii, 319). And as noted earlier, in Lenz's three major plays, academics and abstract thinkers are portrayed as morally impotent. In Der Hofmeister, it is Wenzeslaus, a man whose sermons focus on the evil of erotic desire and the virtues of celibacy, who lacks compassion for the suffering of his disciple. In Der neue Menoza, the two academics, Baccalaureus Zierau and Magister Beza, are portrayed as ineffective and morally deficient. And in Die Soldaten, Lenz presents us with Hauptmann Pirzel, the reflective aesthete, who places abstract thought above
everything and, thus distracted, becomes an automaton. Hence, Lenz presents abstract thinkers and philosophers as dependent individuals whose lack of moral autonomy condemns them to remain impotent spectators of life.

In summing up, Lenz renounces the primacy of the Cartesian `cogito` by positing the free will within the sensible realm. But Lenz also rejects materialism. Therefore, his ontological position must be recognized as one that gives precedence to existence while at the same time acknowledging the freedom of the will. Most importantly, by positing the will within the sensible sphere, Lenz not only challenges the rational philosophy of the Enlightenment and its belief in the primacy of man's intelligible faculties, but rejects Kant's division of man into a free noumenon and a determined phenomenon. Thus, in Lenz's thought the individual's free will and nature no longer represent separable aspects of human existence.
CHAPTER V

THE PARADOX OF EXISTENCE

In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard writes:

> The subjective thinker has a form, a form for his communication with other men, and this form constitutes his style. It must be as manifold as the opposites he holds in combination. The systematic *eins, zwei, drei* is an abstract form, and must therefore fail when applied to the concrete. In the same degree that the subjective thinker himself is concrete, his form will become concretely dialectical....His form must first and last relate itself to existence.

(319)

Kierkegaard himself chose a dialectical style to convey his existential truths and he more often than not employs paradox to communicate his religious insights.

The style of Lenz's theoretical essays could certainly be called "concretely" dialectical. This is especially true of his important essay, "Anmerkungen übers Theater," which he
describes as "rhapsodienweis" (I, 329). Arguments are not presented in a logical order but in an episodic fashion as Lenz proceeds by elucidating a certain point and then quickly moving on to consider another, often unrelated, topic. Lenz's prose stands in marked contrast to the formal discourses favoured by Enlightenment writers, but language fulfills its function of communicating his non-linear mode of thinking in a lucid manner.

With regard to the drama, Lenz contrasts his own dramatic practice with that of the classical Aristotelian drama in a single paragraph entitled "Theorie der Dramata." He writes:

Es gibt zweierlei Art Gärten, eine die man beim ersten Blick ganz übersieht, die andere da man nach und nach wie in der Natur von einer Abwechselung zur andern fortgeht. So gibt es auch zwei Dramata, meine Lieben, das eine stellt alles aufeinmal und aneinanderhangend vor und ist darum leichter zu

66 It is worth noting that Hamann describes his "Aesthetica in nuce" as "Eine Rhapsodie in Kabbalistischer Prose" (Sämtliche Werke II, 195). In the endnotes of the work, Hamann justifies his description by citing Leibniz who wrote:"...man hat die Kabbala oder Zeichenkunst nicht nur in den hebräischen Sprachgeheimnissen, sondern auch bey einer jeden Sprache, nicht zwar in gewissen buchstäblichen Deuteleyen, sondern im rechten Verstand und Gebrauch der Worte zu suchen" (Sämtliche Werke II, 408).
übersehen, bei dem andern muß man auf- und abklettern wie in der Natur. Wenn nun die Rauhigkeit der Mühe nicht lohnt, so ist das Drama schlecht, sind aber die Sachen die man sieht und hört wohl der Mühe wert seine Phantasie ein wenig anzustrengen, dem Dichter im Gang seiner vorgestellten Begebenheiten nachzufolgen, so nennt man das Drama gut. (I, 466)

Here, Lenz distinguishes between the traditional form of the drama, where each part is a logical progression from the part that precedes it, and the open form of his own dramatic writing. While he grants that the former is easy to follow and therefore easier to interpret, in the latter, it becomes the spectator's task to use his creativity to integrate scenes, characters, plot and subplots. One may interpret, in order to follow in the poet's footsteps, the reader must be conscious of his voice.

It is not unusual for scholars to comment on the presence of paradox and contradictions in Lenz's writings. For example, Butler acknowledges that the presence of paradox in Der Hofmeister is "deeply rooted in the characters' identities

67 See the review of the critical literature in chapter I.
and persistently reflected in their words and actions, that is, in the discrepancy between what they say and what they do" (96).

The origin of the word "paradox" goes back to the Greek words para and doxos. While para translates into 'beyond,' the etymology of doxos, in its turn, can be traced to the Greek verb dokein (to think) (Webster's Third New International Dictionary); thus, one could hypothesize that the word "paradox" suggests an activity or a state that is, in fact, unthinkable.

In light of the above definition, I would like to reconsider the case of Pirzel in Die Soldaten. Pirzel, a man who places thought above existence, attributes all human frailties to the individual's reluctance to engage in thinking. It seems paradoxical indeed that Lenz would choose Pirzel--a character whose language deserves to be dismissed as empty rhetoric (Höllerer, 137)--to advocate what is essentially an existential position. There is little doubt, however, that Pirzel tries to find an answer to the rhetorical question, "Was ist der Mensch?" He engages in a somewhat confused monologue which at first glance bears little relationship to the question under scrutiny:

Denken, denken, was der Mensch ist, das ist ja meine Rede. (Fasst ihn an die Hand) Sehen Sie,
das ist Ihre Hand, aber was ist das, Haut, Knochen, Erde, (klopft ihm auf den Puls) da, da steckt es, das ist nur die Scheide, da steckt der Degen drein, im Blut, im Blut - (Sieht sich plötzlich herum, weil Lärm wird).

(II,II.ii, 199-200)

The fact that it is Pirzel, who earlier had proclaimed the importance of "thinking" as the cure all for human ills, who endorses the primacy of existence is ironic. For Pirzel's character embodies the absent-minded mode of life that Lenz associates with academics and abstract thinkers (Blei IV, 185); so absent-minded is he, in fact, that he admits to doing everything mechanically (II,iii.iv, 217). He is a man who considers existence only in an objective manner and as such it does not relate in any meaningful way to himself, the existing subject. Therefore, it is ironical, indeed, that Lenz would use the voice of an abstract thinker to make an existential statement, a statement which is paradoxical since it tries to communicate an existential truth which cannot be expressed through language. If one considers the implications of Pirzel's speech, it is impossible to deny that his words do, in fact, acknowledge the primacy of existence. After all, what is man, if not a creature of flesh and blood whose bones will be covered by dust one day?
The presence of paradox in the drama also attests to the difficulty of communicating in a meaningful manner within the limitations of time and place, a difficulty that is diagnosed by Hamann and acknowledged by Wittgenstein in our century. Both Hamann and Wittgenstein express the thought that people have trouble communicating with each other and that "the speaker himself may have trouble in understanding his own words due to the variables of space and time" (German, 97). For both writers, the result of this discovery is a choice of style that does not limit itself to logical and consistent arguments but expresses itself in seemingly unconnected paradoxical reflections (German, 142). That the similarity in style between Wittgenstein and Hamann is more than a coincidence is revealed by German who claims that, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations is heavily dependent upon Kierkegaard's Stages on Life's Way, which, in its turn, defends a good deal of its methodology upon the writing of Hamann" (97). It has also been put forward that "Kierkegaard's use of the category of paradox in the broader
sense as the category for all religious assertions can safely be said to derive from Hamann" (Thomas, 104). The dichotomy between speech and gesture in Lenz's dramas is noted by Madland who comments that "Lenz ...uses gesture to contradict dialogue, resulting in a conflict between the gestural and narrative systems of communication, which again questions the reliability of language" ("Language Scepticism in Lenz," 556). One could venture that the ontological insecurity of the characters is reflected in the ambiguity of their speech which points to the ambiguity of human existence, which, in turn, is multifaceted and not accessible through reason alone. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the language of Lenz's rational characters is as ambiguous as the speech of their less rational colleagues.

Blunden, who compares the language of Lenz's dramatic characters with those of the characters in Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost, describes their speech as mere rhetoric to fill the void, as verbal games that people play:

68 Thomas cites the following references to Hamann in Kierkegaard's writings as proof of Haman's profound influence on Kierkegaard: Either/Or I; Fear and Trembling, motto after title page; Repetition, 34f; Stages upon Life's Way, 100, 111, 122, 138, 146, 187; Concept of Dread, 85, 145n; Fragments, 42 f; Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 223f, 258n, 495; Journals, 121, 141, 196, 404, 659 (Subjectivity and Paradox, 56).
The use of rhetoric to fill the void left by impoverished being; the belief that verbal games provide a true index of feelings...--all these things are presented and criticized in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and all these things are repeatedly explored, in a realistic social context, in Lenz's important dramas. Shakespeare's paradox—that language is important for the very reason that many people take it to be too important—is one that Lenz makes fully his own. (273)

Lenz uses the medium of language to unmask the comforting routines of daily life and intricate self-deceptions that are safeguards against the void that threatens the individual. And in his essay, "Verteidigung des Herrn Wieland gegen die Wolken," Lenz aptly describes the threshold of the void that threatens the individual. He writes:

Wer kann das namenlose, ängstige Gefühl, für welches wir doch immer nur Zerstreunungen vergeblich aufsuchen, dunkel genug ausmalen, das alle unsere Fibern tödlich durchschauert, wenn wir, bei Erschöpfung unseres inneren Sinnes, das ganze Irdische und Sterbliche unserer Substanz inne werden.... (I, 446)
Only in extreme situations, when the individual has no other option but to face the self, does rhetoric collapse and language realize its task of standing in truth vis à vis existence. Yet although neither Lauffer nor Mariane Wesener reach this stage, and their quest for authentic being remains elusive to the end, it is nevertheless the existential task the individual is asked to fulfill.

When language no longer discloses aspects of the self to others, the self becomes hermetically sealed. From a psychological perspective, such a denial of the self may have disastrous consequences for the individual self. R. D. Laing claims that the individual who cannot reveal his self to others through words, gestures, or acts, may turn in despair to other modes of self-disclosure in "trying to overcome that haunting isolation and loneliness of one who feels his 'real' or 'true' self has never been disclosed or confirmed by others" (Self and Others, 112). Laing further maintains that only:

when a man's words, gestures, acts, disclose his real intentions, one says they are genuine and not counterfeit as coin is genuine and not counterfeit. His frown of disapproval, his word of encouragement, his smile of pleasure, are the true and genuine currency of himself.
However, when language and gestures do not relate to one's existence, they no longer communicate aspects of one's self to others. Nowhere is this demonstrated more effectively and more economically than in II, 3 of Die Soldaten in the few words that express Jungfer Zipfersaat's confused reaction to Mariane Wesener's strange comportment: "Ich weiss nicht wie du bist Marianel" (II,II.iii, 208). Mariane's relationship to the written word is problematic as well, since the words she puts to paper seem devoid of meaning. In fact, one can gauge the extent of her self-alienation by her manner of speech. As she assumes the role of Desportes' "göttliche demoiselle," she affects a style that mimics the language of the nobility. Consequently, her language has no relationship to her, the existing subject. In light of Mariane's progressive self-alienation, Walter Hinderer's comment "im Sinne der Lenzschen Anthropologie bedeutet totale Anpassung totalen Existenzverlust," is to the point (Hinck, Die Deutsche Komödie, 76).

As noted earlier, Lenz's dramatic characters do not have a sense of self, a sense of identity; in short, they lack a Standpunkt. To compensate for their lack of identity, they

69 Consult chapter IV, for a reevaluation of Lenz's understanding of the term Standpunkt.
create new identities for themselves by engaging in role-playing. Instead of embarking on a quest for self-realization, they shun the self and assume a false identity, which more often than not corresponds to the image other people have of them. In Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, Strephon puts it this way: "wie jeder Mensch gern das wird, wofür andere ihn halten" (II,V.i, 322-23). Strephon's opening speech in the first act of Die Freunde machen den Philosophen, "Ich bin allen alles geworden - und bin am Ende nichts," sums up best the lack of Standpunkt that Lenz's characters display (II,I.i, 281). It must be acknowledged, here, that the chameleon-like identity which Lenz reveals in his letters seems to correspond to the posturing of his dramatic characters. As Blunden comments, "Lenz feels himself to be a different person in each epistolary relationship" ("A Case of Elusive Identity," 112-13); "he changed, he adapted, he postured; and in his perennial self-irony he took refuge from the need to establish his identity" (125).

While there is no need to comment further on the social function of Lenz's dramatic language--it has been documented in the critical literature\(^{70}\)--its psychological function has

\(^{70}\) See chapter I.
received only marginal attention. Blunden is one of the critics who point to Lenz's awareness of the psychological function of language. For example, he notes that Wenzeslaus is portrayed as "a man imprisoned within the confines of his own rhetorical world" ("Lenz, Language, and Love's Labour's Lost," 258). On the whole, one cannot but agree with Blunden's observation. However, there are times when, despite the carefully constructed rhetoric that is his trade mark, Wenzeslaus unwittingly discloses aspects of his self which differ markedly from the picture of the ascetic and celibate village schoolmaster he presents to the world. For example, when he surprises Läuffer kissing Lise, he cites part of a passage from Valerius Maximus which relates the story of a slave who received the death penalty because he had kissed his master's daughter. At the end of the cautionary tale the schoolmaster asks Läuffer: "Riecht Ihr das? Schmeckt Ihr das?" (II,V.x, 95). Wenzeslaus's comment is revealing. By choosing words which make specific reference to the senses, he discloses that behind the rhetoric hides a man made of flesh and blood who is no stranger to the temptations of the flesh. That there is another side to Wenzeslaus's character is also suggested by the account he gives of his cure for suppressing erotic desire: "Ich habe geraucht, als ich kaum von meiner Mutter Brust entwöhnt; die Warze mit dem Pfeifenmundstück
The schoolmaster's words reveal that he has not come to terms with his concupiscence despite concentrated efforts to lead a celibate life. Again, it is language which indicates his fragmentation. Using modern psychological terminology one could venture that, in Wenzeslaus's case, the subconscious is suppressed and the persona takes over but the shadow breaks through. There are many instances—as Bruce Duncan among others notes—when language becomes detached from character in Lenz's drama (Diss. 185-86). However, the linguistic mask donned by a character can also disclose thoughts and feelings that are unconscious and therefore hidden. Lenz's language not only serves to shroud but to lay bare the psyche of a character. Thus it is left to the ingenuity of the reader to unravel the thread that Lenz so carefully spins through numerous changes of time and place. Ultimately, it is this ability to involve the reader in exploring the psychology of the language games people play and, thus, take an active part in the interpretation of the drama that distinguishes Lenz as a modern dramatist.

One could venture that the presence of paradox in Lenz's drama reflects the enigma of human existence in time. It is highly probable, therefore, that Kierkegaard's insight that, "Existential reality is incommunicable, and the subjective
thinker finds his reality in his own ethical existence" could have been pronounced by Lenz. Equally, Wittgenstein's final words in the Tractatus: "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen" (Schriften, 83 ), which express his belief in the unspeakable mystery of human existence, would have been fully endorsed by Lenz. What both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein acknowledge is a mystery which is not communicable through the logos. Yet, the fact that words cannot express the enigma of human existence does not imply that life is meaningless. On the contrary, the failure of language to express this mystery acknowledges the fact that there are aspects of our existence that are hidden from us. More recently, this view has been endorsed by Sheriff. As part of his argument against the validity of deconstructionist literary theory, he presents the following point of view:

My belief that human values and choices and language and reality are interdependent is what makes me critical of a theory that can only treat form. Saussure inspired his followers to survey meticulously the island of linguistic signs; whatever they looked at, literature, criticism, or philosophy, they found only formal sign relations. Others such as Heidegger, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein, chose rather to survey the boundary
of the ocean; they saw literature as a manifestation of that about human experience which cannot be put into words. (The Fate of Meaning, 141)

It goes without saying that literature is not devoid of "meaning," i.e. that literature goes beyond form and signs and deals with substances. However, in some quarters to raise the question of "meaning" is no longer fashionable. In Sheriff's words: "After Jonathan Culler and Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, how can one raise the overwhelming question of the meaning of a text?" (xii)

The presence of paradox which characterizes Lenz's dramatic writings reflects the fragility and the mystery of human existence. It is the function of paradox to confront the unspeakable mystery and to bear witness to the fact that existential reality cannot be communicated adequately through the logos within the limitations of time and space. Thus the conclusion John Sheriff draws from reading Heidegger, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein is equally applicable to Lenz.

Yet it is the distinctive voice of Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, the poet and dramatist, that speaks to us from the pages of his work. In other words, there is a presence, there is the voice of the poet who urges the reader to embark on his own quest for authentic being when he demands "Zuwachs an
Existenz" from literature. And since neither poet nor reader operate in a vacuum but bring themselves, the existing individuals, to the text, one may venture to add that in reading, the reader reads his self into the text. Therefore, Titel's observation that "die Moralität einer Dichtung ist nicht ein durch sie zu demonstrierendes Lehrsystem, sondern das persönliche Sein des Dichters selbst" (I, 669), also describes the reader's contribution to the literary text.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Lenz struggles to find an answer to the question that Kierkegaard asks himself half a century later: "But what, then, is this self of mine?" (Either/Or, II, 180). For Kierkegaard, it is the individual's freedom, and freedom is the will. According to Kierkegaard, it is the will that is at the center of the self and not the intellect as Aristotle had held (Nic. Ethics, X.7, 305).71

Lenz identifies the free will as a human potential which lies dormant until it is acknowledged by the individual. Only if the individual becomes subjective, does he realize his potential for freedom and ethical autonomy.72 However, if he fails to acknowledge his freedom, he remains enmeshed in the

71 It is worth noting that Wittgenstein expresses a similar thought when he writes in the Tagebücher, "Wäre der Wille nicht, so gäbe es auch nicht jenes Zentrum der Welt, das wir das Ich nennen und das der Träger der Ethik ist" (Schriften, 172).

72 Again, autonomy is not understood as rational autonomy, here, but as the autonomy of the ethically existing individual, in the sense that Kierkegaard uses the term.
routine of his daily life and the pursuit of aimless diversions. 73

As the "Anmerkungen übers Theater" show, Lenz is a "subjective" thinker in the Kierkegaardian sense of the word. 74 For Lenz subjectivity does not mean being concerned exclusively with one's thoughts or feelings, but having one's own being as one's primary concern. And although Lenz admits that nothing is as difficult as getting to know one's self, "da aber nichts so schwer ist, als sich selbst ganz kennen zu lernen" (I, 489), knowledge of the self remains the key to authentic being.

As the review of literature shows, Lenz's drama has been acknowledged as the alternative to the classical drama of Goethe and Schiller, 75 as the prototype of the plays of Büchner and the Naturalists, and more recently, as the precursor of such modern playwrights as Brecht, Dürrenmatt, 76

73 See the account of the monotonous routine of daily life given in the opening paragraph of Lenz's "Über Götz von Berlichingen": "Wir werden geboren--unsere Eltern geben uns Brot und Kleid...." (I, 378).

74 In Kierkegaard's ethics, to become subjective is the individual's foremost task; it is the duty to "become himself." Thus the "real subject is the ethically existing subject" (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 281).

75 See Hans Mayer's essay, "Lenz oder die Alternative" (Titel II, 795):
and Ionesco. However, while the modernity of Lenz's drama is undisputed, a word of caution seems appropriate to those who read into Lenz's drama an overture towards a materialistic interpretation of life. There is no doubt that Lenz distances himself from the idealism of the Enlightenment by positing the will within the sensible realm. However, in claiming freedom of the will as a prerequisite for authentic and ethical existence, Lenz also refutes one of the central canons of materialism. Hence, Lenz's philosophical position is that he rejects both absolute idealism and materialism.

For the existentialist, to exert one's free will and to commit oneself to one's self for better or worse is the ethical imperative. It is the freedom to become progressively more subjective, and as a free subject the individual must resist every attempt to transform him into something objective.

Notwithstanding his erstwhile efforts to effect a rapprochement between existentialism and marxism, Sartre presents extensive arguments against marxism in his essay, "Materialism and Revolution." He writes:

It seems as though its first step is to deny the existence of God and transcendent finality; the second, to reduce the action of mind to that of matter; the third, to eliminate subjectivity by
reducing the world and man in it, to a system of objects linked together by universal relationships. (*Existentialism versus Marxism*, 87).

While subjectivity, which starts from the premise that the individual has a free will, is central to existential thought, it is clearly renounced by the proponents of materialism. As noted earlier, Lenz himself criticizes the materialist position and challenges materialists to deny the subjective striving for independent and ethical existence within human nature:

*Sollte es nicht ein Wink von der Natur der menschlichen Seele sein, daß sie eine Substanz die nicht selbstständig geboren, aber ein Bestreben ein Trieb in ihr sei sich zur Selbstständigkeit hinaufzuarbeiten, sich gleichsam von dieser großen Masse der in einander hangenden Schöpfung abzusondern, das sich mit derselben nur soweit vereinigt, als es mit ihrer Selbstständigkeit sich vertragen kann....Können die Helvetiusse und alle Leute die so tief in die Einflüsse der uns umgebenden Natur gedrungen sind, sich selbst dieses Gefühl ableugnen das das aus ihnen gemacht hat was sie geworden sind? (I, 573)*
Lenz further claims that moral autonomy expresses itself in independent actions which separate the individual self from the masses of machine-like creatures:

So sondert sie [die Seele] sich aus dem machinenhaftwirkenden Haufen der Geschöpfe ab und wird selbst Schöpfer, mischt sich in die Welt nur in so fern als sie es zu ihrer Absicht dienlich erachtet, je größer ihre Stärke, desto größer ihre freiwillige Teilnehmung, ihre verhältnismäßige Einmischung, ihr nachmaliger Schöpfungs- und Wirkungskreis.

(I, 575)

Thus, when Lenz writes to Sophie von La Roche in July 1775, "Wer nur eines jeden Menschen Gesichtspunkt finden könnte; seinen moralischen Thermometer; sein Eigenes; sein Nachgemachtes, sein Herz," one may interpret, morality is not conceived of as an objective concept, but as the subjective point of view of the individual self. It follows,

76 "Nachgemachtes" may be interpreted, here, as 'molded after something.' Lenz uses the term to express his view that the poet follows in the footsteps of the creator and thus becomes a creator himself. Also see Blunden's article, "J.M.R. Lenz and Leibniz: A Point of View," for a discussion of Lenz's views on "the poet as the creator," a popular concept during the Sturm und Drang.
that an individual's point of view is ethical only if it is subjective. For while the aesthetic has multiple perspectives, the ethical has only one, a subjective point of view.\footnote{Hamann believed that an individual's present point of view is always the most powerful influence upon his experience; he grants, furthermore, that in previous works he had made claims that he no longer remembered from his present Standpunkt (Briefwechsel 6, 338).} We may interpret, therefore, Lenz's understanding of the terms Standpunkt and Gesichtspunkt translates into the position the ethically existing self takes.

Blunden's assessment that the term "point of view" is understood by Lenz as a restriction, as something that is predetermined by an individual's environment or social conditions, is therefore debatable, even though Läuffer in Der Hofmeister and Mariane in Die Soldaten seem to subscribe to Blunden's point of view (Sprachkunst, 1-15). As noted earlier, Blunden rightly points out that thoughts expressed in Lenz's theoretical writings are influenced by the rational philosophy of Leibniz; however, his argument that Lenz's terms Standpunkt and Gesichtspunkt correspond to the Leibnizian "point de vue" is valid only if one accepts his reading of Lenz's concept of the self as analogous to that of the Leibnizian monad.
In their quest for authentic being, Lenz and Kierkegaard follow in Hamann's footsteps, of whom it has been said that his "importance lies in the field of philosophy," and that "his greatest achievement in this area is the manner in which he surmounts the difficulty posed by the subject-object dualism" (O'Flaherty, *Socratic Memorabilia*, 45). While the striking similarities between Hamann's thought and Kierkegaard's philosophy have been acknowledged by the critical literature, ideas common to the writings of Kierkegaard and Lenz have yet to be accounted for.  

Hamann, Lenz, and Kierkegaard are subjective thinkers who advocate the quest for the self as the individual's task *sine qua non*. In addition, they share a common admiration for Socrates and the socratic. Therefore, it is hardly coincidental that the question of authentic being is a central concern for all three writers. More importantly, all three tried to follow in the footsteps of their idol Socrates and live subjectively. For instance, it is documented that both Hamann and Kierkegaard made personal sacrifices to live an  

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78 Although a full comparison between Lenz's existential thinking—as it surfaces in his theoretical and dramatic writings—and Kierkegaard's philosophy is beyond the scope of this study, there is every indication to suggest that both writers are greatly indebted to Hamann.
authentic and subjective existence.\textsuperscript{79} In Lenz's case, his prose and letters bear witness to his great admiration for Socrates,\textsuperscript{80} and his correspondence shows, furthermore, that he, too, was prepared to suffer the consequences of following in the footsteps of the Greek philosopher. He wrote to Herder in August 1775:

> Ach so lange ausgeschlossen, unstet, einsam und unruhvoll! Den ausgestreckten Armen grauer Eltern, all' meinen lieben Geschwistern entrissen, meinen edelsten Freunden ein Räthsel...Das hatte ich um Sokrates verdient. (\textit{Briefe I, 64, 124})

While for David Hume the self consists of little more than a passive bundle of sense impressions, Lenz—like Hamann before and Kierkegaard\textsuperscript{81} after him—tried to strengthen the ethical autonomy of the self in the face of the world. Lenz's call for "Zuwachs unsrer Existenz" is a demand for heightened

\textsuperscript{79} Hamann opted for a common-law marriage despite the moral code of his times, while Kierkegaard chose not to marry his fiancée, Regine Olsen, in order to follow in the footsteps of his idol Socrates and dedicate his life to making things more 'difficult' by questioning commonly held doctrines.

\textsuperscript{80} Lenz pays homage to Socrates in his essay, "Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken" (I, 437-38).

\textsuperscript{81} In his \textit{Concluding Unscientific Postscript}, Kierkegaard declares: "The ethical reality of the individual is the only reality" (291).
consciousness of what it means to exist as an autonomous and ethical self. Hence, the quest for the self, advocated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (478) more than two thousand years ago, implicit in the "That, thou art" of the *Upnishads* (101), the Sacred books of the ancient Vedic religions, and echoed in Polonius's advice to Laertes

\[
\text{This above all--to thine own self be true} \\
\text{And it must follow, as the night the day} \\
\text{Thou can'\text{st} not then be false to any man.} \\
(\text{Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I.iii, 1013})
\]

becomes the existential imperative for Lenz. One may conclude, therefore, that Lenz's ethics is not an ethics of duty or consequences but an ethics of self-realization, and as such, it stands diametrically opposed to Kant's "categorical" ethical imperative.
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