

Short Abstract

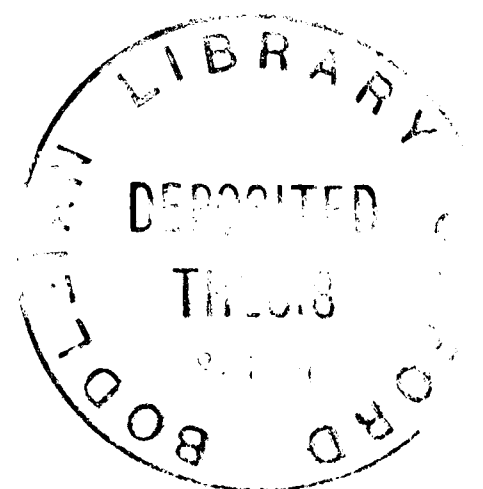
‘Ist einer unter Ihnen, der seine ganze Bestimmung noch nicht fühlt...’:
J.M.R.Lenz - the Writer as Reformer, 1774-76

J.M.Gibbons (Worcester College)

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Hilary Term 2000

The present thesis traces Lenz's development during the decisive period of 1774-76, focusing on his own sense of 'Bestimmung' as a writer. The method adopted has a dual aspect. Firstly, a substantial number of unpublished manuscripts related to Lenz's military reform project, written during his stay in Weimar - widely acknowledged as the 'Wendepunkt' of his career - are edited and analysed for the first time. Secondly, these manuscripts will be read in conjunction with a series of existing texts so as to give an overview of the *process* of Lenz's development. 1774 is a pivotal date, for in *Meinungen eines Laien* Lenz sets what he himself terms the 'Grundstein' of his entire *oeuvre*. A close analysis of this much ignored text is key to an understanding of the ethos which underpins his subsequent development. At its conclusion Lenz also articulates his desire to play a more active role in society than the limitations of literature allow. It is with his military reform project that Lenz hopes to effect such a transition. *Die Soldaten* is read as an initial attempt to voice his ambition of gaining a position in court. Such a reading has only been made possible by the edition of a number of manuscripts from the Kraków *Lenziana*. Thus the thesis seeks to fill a vital gap in Lenz scholarship: an investigation into Lenz's political aspirations as reflected in his writings whilst in Weimar, and particularly during his stay in his Berka 'Einsiedelei'. An understanding of the historical events, particularly those unfolding in France, which gave rise to the project is long overdue and is addressed here in the analysis of the 'lettre à Maurepas'. *Der Landprediger*, written after his expulsion from Weimar following his notorious 'Eseley' of November 1776, is read as an epitaph to Lenz's abortive career of writer as reformer.



Long Abstract

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The resurgent interest in J.M.R.Lenz greatly intensified during the 1990s. The founding of the *Lenz Jahrbuch* in 1991 has been followed by a veritable boom in publications dedicated exclusively to Lenz, one which has continued unabated throughout the decade. Nevertheless there remains a startling gap in Lenz scholarship, one which is at the most basic of levels: the absence of a historical-critical edition of his works. The case of Lenz is not unique in this respect; however, for such an established canonical author the sheer volume and importance of the texts which remain unpublished does make his case exceptional. As Rüdiger Scholz outlined in great detail in a much cited article written nearly a decade ago, manuscript research remains the great ‘Nachholbedarf’ in Lenz scholarship, as is the case with many fields of literary studies.¹ With the exception of a handful of scholars, notably Christoph Weiß and David Hill, there has been little response in the academic community to Scholz’s call for the adoption of a manuscript based approach, despite the plethora of publications on Lenz. It is as a response to the urgent need for archival research that this thesis has been conceived.

The present thesis fills a significant gap in Lenz scholarship in its edition and analysis of substantial proportions of previously unpublished material from the *Lenziana* currently held at the Bibliotheka Jagiellonska, Kraków. More precisely the material concerned is related to Lenz’s military reform project, and as such the research undertaken is a natural continuation of David Hill’s research published earlier this decade.² The manuscripts dealt with in the thesis date from Lenz’s stay in Weimar, a period widely acknowledged as ‘seit eh und je als der Wendepunkt in Lenzens Leben’.³ Whilst this has become a commonplace in the academic community, up to now it has been stated with very little manuscript or textual evidence to back up such an assertion. Indeed it has been made principally on the basis of the notorious ‘Eseley’ which led to his banishment from

¹ R.Scholz, ‘Eine längst fällige historisch-kritische Ausgabe: Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz’, *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 34 (1990), 195-229 (p. 226).

² See D.Hill, ‘Die Arbeiten von Lenz zu den Soldatenehen. Ein Bericht über die Krakauer Handschriften’, in >>Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...<< *Studien zu Leben und Werk von J.M.R.Lenz*, ed. by I.Stephan & H-G.Winter (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 1994), pp.118-37; ‘J.M.R.Lenz: Lettre d’un soldat alsacien’, in *Order from Confusion. Essays presented to Edward McInnes on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. by A.Deighton (Hull: New German Studies, 1995), pp. 1-27; ‘J.M.R.Lenz’ >>Avantpropos<< zu den >>Soldatenehen<<’, *Lenz Jahrbuch*, 5 (1995), 7-21.

³ W.D.Wilson, ‘Zwischen Kritik und Affirmation. Militärphantasien und Geschlechterdisziplinierung bei J.M.R.Lenz’, in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 52-85 (p. 54).

Weimar. The present thesis seeks to fill perhaps *the* gaping hole in Lenz scholarship: a discussion of his feverish activities when in Weimar, or more appropriately in his Berka 'Einsiedelei', during the summer of 1776. For it was during this time that Lenz dedicated himself to the completion of his project, as new manuscript evidence will show. An understanding of the historical and political background which gave rise to the proposal, as well as his personal motivation, is long overdue.

Although a manuscript approach lies at the heart of the thesis, over and above an analysis of such unpublished manuscripts, a broader textual approach will also be adopted, with the 'new' texts read in relation to Lenz's own conception of himself as a writer, or as he himself terms it, his own 'Bestimmung'. The Berka manuscripts will be read as part of a *process* by relating them to a wider framework provided by long established texts, all dating from the period 1774-76. Indeed the thesis will argue that this period constitutes a wider 'Wendepunkt' than has thus far been acknowledged. The link between Lenz's moral-philosophical writings, aesthetics and his actual production as a poet has long been the subject of prolonged academic debate. However, with the lack of textual evidence available, a serious analysis of the links between these established aspects of Lenz's *oeuvre* and his socio-political writings, and by implication his career aspirations, has not been possible. This thesis aims to show that the disparate and often contradictory nature of Lenz's writings do find a focus during the short but crucial period 1774-76. For in the array of different texts which will be discussed chronologically in the thesis it is possible to trace an evolution of Lenz's own attitude *vis-à-vis* his own position as a writer in society. In particular the ethos which underpins Lenz's writing and aspirations will be examined. The dates of such a 'Wendepunkt' coincide with two watersheds in his career: firstly the abandonment of the moral-philosophical, theological and purely literary concerns which dominate his output up to 1774, and secondly, his banishment from Weimar in 1776 which brought his political aspirations to an abrupt end. Only by analysing a number of texts as part of such a *process* will it become possible to gain a legitimate interpretation of the canonical literary texts which have presented such thorny interpretative problems to the wider academic community, the prime example to be treated in this thesis being a reinterpretation of *Die Soldaten*. Thus the method adopted in this thesis takes on a dual aspect, with 'new' texts edited and analysed for the first time, but also read in conjunction with a series of existing texts treated chronologically so as to give an overview of Lenz's evolution as a writer in the period 1774-76.

Although Lenz himself calls *Meinungen eines Laien*, and by implication its complement *Stimmen des Laien*, 'der Grundstein meiner ganzen Poesie, all meiner Wahrheit, all meines Gefühls', this text has attracted, until recently, little critical attention. **Chapter I** of the present thesis will offer a close reading of this key text, focusing on *Stimmen des Laien* with a view of offering a new insight into how this text constitutes such a 'Grundstein'. Undoubtedly these complementary texts amount to a watershed in Lenz's career. On one level they represent the culmination and resolution of many moral-philosophical and theological problems which preoccupy Lenz in the period up until 1774. In what is his last theological work he lays down a cornerstone of faith. The chapter will detail how Lenz sets about defining his 'Grundstein', by giving his own unique exegesis of the Bible, in particular the Gospel, one which, despite its incendiary content, has yet to be

widely discussed in the academic community. Moreover, in asserting his own unique brand of faith which calls on the individual to play an active role on earth, Lenz also articulates a new direction for himself as a writer. On one level he brings the notion of 'Bestimmung' - purpose or calling in life - hinted at in earlier moral-philosophical texts to a conclusion, with the individual bound to work for what can be termed the 'social good'. On another level at the conclusion of *Stimmen des Laien*, he also articulates his own sense of - to extend the term - 'Selbstbestimmung', in which his own role as a writer undergoes a seismic shift. The laying of a 'Grundstein' does not only indicate a resolution of questions of religious faith, it also brings into question Lenz's faith in the ability of literature to effect any change in the real political world. The sense of 'Selbstbestimmung' articulated by the end of *Stimmen des Laien* dictates a shift in his direction as a writer, away from the spheres of philosophy, theology and even literature, towards the more concrete concerns of social, political and above all military, with the professed aim of working for the 'social good' lying at the heart of his notion of 'Bestimmung'. However, such a change in direction is not purely driven by vague idealistic dreams, nor does it languish in the realm of theory, rather it has inextricable links with Lenz's subsequent aspirations for a career at court. However, such a career move is not instantaneous. The conclusions reached in *Stimmen des Laien* only constitute the origins of such a change and its further development will be shown in the rest of the thesis. Such a close textual analysis seeks to define the ethos underpinning Lenz's subsequent texts. To ignore the 'Grundstein' of Lenz as 'Pseudotheolog' is to build a critical house on sand.

Lenz's reputation rests largely on his standing as a dramatist, although, as this thesis aims to show, his own conception of his activities as a writer goes far beyond the stage alone. Taken in isolation his unarguably canonical plays have nevertheless been met with a somewhat problematic critical reception. **Chapter II** will offer a reinterpretation of *Die Soldaten* by placing it in a broader textual context. By reading it as part of an on-going process the critical perspective is radically altered. Firstly, *Die Soldaten* will be read in light of the sense of 'Bestimmung' discussed in Chapter I, particularly with regard to Lenz's misgivings about the impotency of literature. Secondly, the play will also be read in conjunction with his efforts at military reform which follow on from the completion of the drama, most famously in *Über die Soldatenehen*, but more importantly in the Berka manuscripts which appear in this thesis for the first time. By adopting such an approach it will be shown that *Die Soldaten* cannot be taken as an end in itself. Indeed, only by reading the play as part of a process spanning several texts, can the confusion that surrounds its critical reception, when taken in isolation, be dispelled. The play will be shown to be a prelude to Lenz's desired entrance into the world of court politics, with the medium of drama used as a tentative first step in his attempt to gain access to the corridors of power. As such Lenz's reputation as a social critic, at least within the bounds of the theatre, will be challenged in two ways. He will be shown to be neither a radical playwright, nor one content with remaining a critical *littérateur*. Indeed his very standing as a so-called Stürmer und Dränger will also be called into question. For *Die Soldaten* will be viewed as a subversion of the medium of drama, with the dramatic medium shown by Lenz to be an inadequate vehicle for social criticism. Instead a hidden moral and political agenda underpins the play, stemming from the 'Grundstein' and finding its

continuation in the political discourse to which Lenz dedicated himself on arrival in Weimar, as the opportunity to fashion a niche for himself in the absolutist state became a distinct reality. Lenz thereby sought to follow in the tradition that had grown in the eighteenth century of authors advising monarchs, the most notable examples being the *philosophes*, Voltaire and Diderot, who had served in Potsdam and St. Petersburg respectively.

Such a reading of *Die Soldaten* has only been made possible by the manuscript research undertaken for the purposes of this thesis, as **Chapters III** and **IV** and the accompanying Appendices show. Knowledge of a great raft of *Lenziana* related to his military reform plan is by no means new - a catalogue of the archives even appears in Damm's 1987 edition - however, editorial work on these manuscripts remains at an early stage. David Hill in his initial 1994 'Bericht' on the Kraków holdings calls for the manuscripts to be edited, put in the semblance of an order and placed within a precise historical context. This thesis hopes, to a large extent, to have achieved this. In so doing, it also succeeds in dispelling the mysteries surrounding Lenz's activities in his Berka 'Einsiedelei', to which he retreated in the summer of 1776 to formulate the final version of his project. Up to now *Über die Soldatenehen* has largely been regarded in the critical community as merely a curiosity, which is to be dismissed as, in Goethe's words as 'lächerlich, unausführbar [und] phantastisch'. Even serious study into the text, notably that undertaken by W.D. Wilson, has continued to view it as 'das Schlüsseldokument für Lenzens Haltung zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus'. The original manuscript research in the present thesis proves this not to be the case. Indeed, *Über die Soldatenehen* is merely a first attempt at the formulation of his project and indeed was largely written prior to Lenz's arrival in Weimar, and written off as soon as he retreated to Berka. As a result the widely acknowledged 'Wendepunkt' of Lenz's career has, up to now, been based on a text that predates his Weimar stay. By actually looking at the manuscripts available in Kraków, it is clear that Lenz's project, especially in its mature form of the three draft letters addressed to the French minister Maurepas (referred to as the 'lettre à Maurepas'), is the product of considered study and experience of economic and military affairs, with the arguments stemming from political pragmatism, not 'Schwärmerei', as Lenz seeks to fashion a career for himself in the bureaucratic machinery of the absolutist state. However, a valid interpretation of the project is only possible if placed in a precise economic, political and historical context. In particular the project must be related to the political landscape of France, understood both in general terms, as in the state of the military, and hence the nation, at the time, and more importantly by understanding how Lenz's project fitted into the changing political landscape, in terms of policies and personalities, of Versailles during 1776. That Lenz's ambitions, sincerely directed at working for the 'social good' - in line with his sense of 'Bestimmung' - came to grief following his notorious 'Eseley' is not itself enough to denigrate the project out of hand. By editing significant portions of the Kraków *Lenziana*, this thesis has sought to fill perhaps *the* vital gap in Lenz scholarship: an investigation into his stay in Weimar, and enabled a valid judgement of the project which undoubtedly took prominence in what was indeed central to the 'Wendepunkt' of his career.

In **Chapter V**, *Der Landprediger*, subject of much recent critical attention, will also be read as part of the process outlined in the rest of the thesis. In adopting such an approach a new perspective is gained into what remains, when taken in isolation, as with every literary work written by Lenz, a highly problematic text. Viewed as a text written following his expulsion from Weimar, an event which effectively put an end to his political aspirations, *Der Landprediger* will be read not as the 'Wunschbiographie' or Utopia prevalent in established readings, but rather as a form of 'Reuebiographie'. It will be argued that Lenz reverts to the previously maligned literary medium in order to write an epitaph to his aborted aspirations as a 'Dichter' playing the role of reformer in government. It is a work which does not build on the 'Grundstein' which underpins all the other texts dealt with in the thesis, and as such amounts to Lenz's acknowledgement of his failure to fulfil his sense of 'Bestimmung' as a writer. Chronologically this Erzählung also marks a watershed, being the final text written before his mental collapse in 1777.

The present thesis seeks to show that Lenz is more than a literary figure alone. Moreover, even his canonical texts, such as *Die Soldaten*, must be understood as playing a role in the wider process of his conception of himself as a 'Dichter'. An insight into such a process, particularly into Lenz's military project and hence political aspirations, has only been made possible by the manuscript research undertaken in this thesis. Perhaps it is more appropriate to see the period of 1774-76 as the 'Wendepunkt' of Lenz's career, rather than merely his stay in Weimar alone. Certainly it is during this period that he tries, and fails to pursue a new direction as a writer, moving away from theoretical and literary concerns towards the political and social, in an attempt, in his own terms, to fulfil his sense of 'Bestimmung'. As such, the present thesis shows that the 'vorübergehendes Meteor', at least in his own mind, has a career which went beyond 'der Horizont der deutschen Literatur' alone.

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1774-76**

James Gibbons

Worcester College

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Hilary Term 2000

Von Lenz weiß ich kein Wort.

(Sarasin an Lavater, 26 August 1777)



Lenz lenzelt noch bei mir.

(Lavater an Sarasin, August 1777)

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For their unwavering support I am eternally grateful to my parents, who made this all possible. To Clare, who introduced me to Lenz in the first place, and finally to Rachel for everything.

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Abbreviations

1. All references to J.M.R.Lenz's work will be cited from the following edition, by volume and page number, except where otherwise indicated: J.M.R.Lenz, *Werke und Briefe in drei Bänden*, ed. by S.Damm, 3 vols (München/Wien: Hanser, 1987). This edition was a 'Lizenzausgabe für die BRD', granted by the Insel-Verlag, Leipzig.
2. **Titel:** J.M.R.Lenz, *Werke und Schriften*, ed. by B.Titel & H.Haug, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Goverts, 1966-67).
3. **Blei:** J.M.R.Lenz, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by F.Blei, 5 vols (München/Leipzig: Müller, 1909-13)
4. **Müller:** *Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz im Urteil dreier Jahrhunderte: Texte der Rezeption von Werke und Persönlichkeit 18-20 Jahrhundert*, ed. by P.Müller unter Mitarbeit von Jürgen Stötzer, 3 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1995), cited by volume and entry number.
5. **HA:** J.W.Goethe, *Goethes Werke, Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. by E.Trunz, 3 edn, 14 vols (Hamburg: Wegner, 1963).
6. **Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...:** >>Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...<< *Studien zu Leben und Werk von J.M.R.Lenz*, ed. by I.Stephan & H-G.Winter (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 1994).
7. **LJb:** *Lenz Jahrbuch*.
8. **JbdSG:** *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*.

Introduction

Von Lenz weiß ich kein Wort.

(Sarasin an Lavater, 26 August 1777)¹

Lenz lenzelt noch bei mir.

(Lavater an Sarasin, August 1777)²

Ist einer unter Ihnen, der seine ganze Bestimmung noch nicht fühlt -
oder noch nicht zu fühlen Courage genug hat, der bestimme sich für
die Gegenwärtigkeit, für den heutigen Tag, auf das best' er immer
kann.

(*Stimmen des Laien*)³

Confusion and perplexity are more often than not symptomatic of initial reactions to the work of J.M.R.Lenz. In particular the plays, upon which his reputation still undoubtedly rests, throw up a whole array of interpretative problems. A prime example of this, and one which will be tackled in this thesis, is the case of *Die Soldaten*. What possible readings are there to be given of the play's final scene? Are the Obrister's ideas for the institution of state brothels for soldiers as outrageous and perverse as they seem? Or are they to be taken seriously? And, if so, what impact does such a reading have on the rest of the drama, given how inadequate the Obrister's 'solution' appears when projected back on the problems raised in the play? Or does Lenz trap himself, as well as his readers, in an infuriating web of irony and ambiguity from which there is no escape? Many similar questions could equally be levelled at *Der Hofmeister*. Ensuing interpretations have traditionally either played on the apparent ironies and ambiguities, or written off Lenz's efforts as the products of the notoriously 'whimsical' and mentally unstable mind of the 'vorübergehendes Meteor', according to Goethe, of German literature.⁴ Even those

¹ Müller, I, 403.

² Müller, I, 404.

³ II, 615.

⁴ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Eilftes Buch, HA, IX, 495, and Vierzehntes Buch, X, 12.

interpretations which take previously ridiculed aspects of Lenz seriously, such as the Obrister's apparently outrageous plan, reach far from satisfactory conclusions. This thesis will aim to show that, taken in isolation, it is hardly surprising that so many of J.M.R. Lenz's literary works spawn such confusion and thorny interpretative problems. It is my own sense of such initial confusion and subsequent curiosity, when first faced by Lenz some years ago, that gave rise to the present study.

It was only in the twentieth century that Lenz began to emerge from the shadowy prejudices created first by Goethe in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-14) and then by Büchner in his novella *Lenz* (1839). There has been a resurgent interest in Lenz since the 1970s, but such interest has greatly intensified in the last decade, with the founding of a *Lenz Jahrbuch* in 1991. In 1992 bicentennial commemorations of his death were held in Britain and the United States as well as in Germany, setting off an unprecedented boom in publications dedicated exclusively to Lenz. It was a boom that continued unabated throughout the 1990s. Nevertheless there remains a startling gap in Lenz scholarship: the absence of a historical-critical Lenz edition. This remains the case despite several calls for such an edition, from within Germany and from other academic communities. The case of Lenz is not unique in this respect; however, for such an established canonical author the sheer volume and importance of the texts which remain unpublished does make his case exceptional.⁵ There are two reasons why Lenz's works are in such editorial disarray. Firstly, as Lenz faded into obscurity even during his own lifetime, his original manuscripts

⁵ See R. Scholz, 'Eine längst fällige historisch-kritische Ausgabe: Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz', *Jb dSG*, 34 (1990), 195-229.

were not the object of considered conservation. It was only in the nineteenth century that interest in his manuscripts emerged, at which point it was discovered that his papers were scattered across Europe. To this day sections of *Lenziana* are held in Riga, Berlin and Weimar, to name but three locations. Secondly the involved story of the Nazi evacuation of the Preußische Staatsbibliothek in 1941, which led to the ‘disappearance’ of many manuscripts, such as the original scores of sections of Mozart’s *Zauberflöte* and Beethoven’s 5th Symphony, also caused a further fragmentation of Lenz’s ‘Nachlaß’. It was not until the Polish authorities opened the Kraków archives in the late 1970s that the most significant portion of unpublished *Lenziana* re-emerged. But even though she was amongst the first academics to make use of the newly gained access to these archives, Sigrid Damm’s 1987 three-volume *Werke und Briefe* falls way short of a comprehensive historical-critical edition.⁶

The 1990s saw a start made on what has been described as the great ‘Nachholbedarf’ in Lenz scholarship.⁷ Progress has, however, been piecemeal, described by one of the few Lenz scholars to adopt an archival approach as an arduous ‘Puzzlearbeit’ in which it has been possible, in the words of another, ‘zumindest einige Schritte voranzukommen’.⁸ A handful of manuscripts spanning all periods of Lenz’s career have appeared. For example, in the wake of the ‘rediscovery’ in the British Library of an original 1780 edition of the ‘lost’ *Philosophische Vorlesungen für empfindsame Seelen* (a collection of moral-philosophical and theological ‘Abhandlungen’ from the early

⁶ J.M.R.Lenz: *Werke und Briefe in drei Bänden*, ed. by S.Damm, 3 vols (München/Wien: Hanser, 1987).

⁷ Scholz, *JbdSG*, p. 226.

⁸ See respectively: R.Scholz, ‘Zur Biographie des späten Lenz’, *LJb*, 1 (1991), 106-34 (p. 107); C.Weiß, ‘>>Abgezwungene Selbstverteidigung<<: Ein bislang unveröffentlichter Text von J.M.R.Lenz aus seinem letzten Lebensjahr’, *LJb*, 2 (1992), 7-41 (p. 7).

1770s), a facsimile version, edited by Christoph Weiß, has appeared.⁹ The same scholar has also edited a manuscript entitled *Catechismus* held in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, a text dating from the early 1770s, as well as *Abgezwungene Selbstverteidigung*, a text from Lenz's final year in Moscow currently held in Kraków.¹⁰ The British scholar David Hill has also carried out research into the Kraków *Lenziana* linked to Lenz's project for military reform written in the period 1775-76, with the results of his research published in 1994-95: the edition of two texts from the archive, entitled *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien* and the '>>Avantpropos<< zu den >>Soldatenehen<<' as well as an initial 'Bericht', detailing the contents of the archive and the editorial problems they pose.¹¹ However, as yet the number of manuscripts edited in the course of such 'Puzzlearbeit' has not provided a wide enough textual basis to dispel any significant aspect of the confusion and contradictions that still reign in the wider critical community in relation to the established canonical texts. This at a time when, riding on the crest of the Lenz new wave, such confusion is more marked than ever. Faced by all too familiar interpretative problems, this thesis will present a considerable portion of unpublished material, which will hopefully make a significant breakthrough in the on-going puzzle of manuscript research. On a wider scale this thesis also aims to dispel at least some of the confusion which continues to plague the critical

⁹ J.M.R.Lenz, *Philosophische Vorlesungen für empfindsame Seelen* (Faksimiledruck der Ausgabe Frankfurt und Leipzig 1780), ed. by C.Weiß (St.Ingbert: Röhrig, 1994).

¹⁰ C.Weiß, 'J.M.R.Lenz >>Catechismus<<', *LJb*, 4 (1994), 30-67; for >>Abgezwungene Selbstverteidigung<< see note 8, p. 3.

¹¹ D.Hill, 'J.M.R.Lenz: *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*', in *Order from Confusion. Essays presented to Edward McInnes on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. by A.Deighton (Hull: New German Studies, 1995), pp. 1-27; 'J.M.R.Lenz' >>Avantpropos<< zu den >>Soldatenehen<<' *LJb*, 5 (1995), 7-21; and 'Die Arbeiten von Lenz zu den Soldatenehen. Ein Bericht über die Krakauer Handschriften', in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 118-37.

reception of J.M.R.Lenz by placing such ‘new’ texts in a broader context, both textual and historical.

The approach adopted in this thesis works on a dual level. Firstly, the thesis will introduce a number of previously unpublished manuscripts as a result of my own primary research into the Kraków *Lenziana*. Specifically the material edited for the purpose of the thesis relates to Lenz’s military reform plan. As such it obviously builds on the initial research undertaken by David Hill earlier this decade, in the process significantly widening the textual base currently available. The emergence of these ‘new’ manuscripts will enable a reappraisal of Lenz’s project, a project to which Lenz dedicated himself throughout his stay in Weimar in 1776, a period which, as W.D.Wilson says: ‘...ist seit eh und je als der Wendepunkt in Lenzens Leben angesehen worden.’¹² Secondly, over and above an analysis of such unpublished manuscripts, the thesis will also adopt a broader textual approach, with the new manuscripts read as part of a *process* in relation to other long established published texts, be they dramatic, moral-philosophical, theological, socio-political or narrative. As such the thesis will aim to trace Lenz’s development as a writer, with all the texts dealt with in the thesis written in the period 1774-76. This relatively short period is crucial in Lenz’s career. For in the array of different texts which will be discussed, it is possible to trace an evolution in his own attitude *vis-à-vis* his own position as a writer and, more precisely, the ethos behind his writing. A qualitative shift occurs during this period, with Lenz turning his back on the moral-philosophical, theological and

¹² W.D.Wilson, ‘Zwischen Kritik und Affirmation. Militärphantasien und Geschlechterdisziplinierung bei J.M.R.Lenz’, in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 52-85, (p. 54).

literary concerns which dominate his work up to 1774. In *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* (1772-74, published 1775), cryptically referred to by Lenz as ‘der Grundstein meiner ganzen Poesie, aller meiner Wahrheit, all meines Gefühls’, he settles the question of his own faith, but equally also articulates a new direction for himself as a writer. Lenz himself uses the term ‘Bestimmung’ - purpose or calling in life - to describe this process, firstly using it on a general level, but also carrying with it distinct connotations for his own sense of - to extend the term - ‘*Selbstbestimmung*’. As such, the problems of defining the limits of self-determination faced by Lenz can also be related to those faced by many eighteenth-century writers - of both the Aufklärung and the Sturm und Drang - in struggling with the claims of modern subjectivity. But in Lenz’s case such a struggle is by no means a purely theoretical one, it has immediate practical implications. The sense of ‘Bestimmung’, or more precisely ‘*Selbstbestimmung*’, arrived at by the end of *Stimmen des Laien* leads towards a more politicised dimension. Built on a firm religious and moral foundation stone, it underpins the texts subsequently discussed in the thesis. Indeed his own sense of ‘Bestimmung’ dictates the direction which his career as a writer takes from his final year in Straßburg until his enforced exile from Weimar in November 1776. The ‘new’ texts will thus be read in conjunction with a series of existing texts so as to give an overview of the evolution of Lenz’s career in the period 1774-76 and as such his pursuit of ‘Bestimmung’ during this time.

Having given an overview of the dual-level approach which will be adopted in the thesis, the remainder of the introduction will give a brief outline of its structure. Read as part of a process, the texts discussed will necessarily be treated chronologically, with the

thesis divided into five chapters, each dealing with a specific stage in the evolution of Lenz's role as a writer during the period 1774-76.

The focus of **Chapter I** will be an investigation into the origins and formulation of the notion of 'Bestimmung' as it is arrived at in *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*. As such it will also offer an interpretation of Lenz's designation of this text as the 'Grundstein' of his entire *oeuvre*. Despite this designation, these texts have long been ignored in Lenz scholarship, with P.Heinrichsdorf's dismissal of them as 'ein verworrenes Richtungs- und Meinungsbündel' remaining largely uncontested up to the present day.¹³ Undoubtedly these complementary texts form a watershed in Lenz's work. On one level they represent the culmination and resolution of many theological and moral-philosophical problems which preoccupy Lenz in the period until 1774. In what is his last theological, or as he terms it, 'pseudotheologische Abhandlung', Lenz lays his own cornerstone of faith.¹⁴ In so doing Lenz has a distinct aim in mind: to dynamise his faith into being an active force in the struggle against an, at this stage, abstractly defined 'Übel' on this earth. The chapter will detail how Lenz sets about defining his 'Grundstein', by giving his own unique exegesis of the continual 'Offenbarung' of the Bible, in particular in his reading of the Gospel and his resultant redefinition of *Imitatio Christi*. On another level, in asserting his own distinct form of faith, Lenz also brings his notion of 'Bestimmung', discussed in earlier moral-philosophical works, to a distinct conclusion. The formulation of 'Bestimmung', albeit still within a religious framework, does not only have implications in

¹³ P.Heinrichsdorff, *J.M.R.Lenzens religiöse Haltung* (Berlin: Eberig, 1932), p. 95.

¹⁴ *Stimmen des Laien*, II, 616.-

the general scheme of things, defining a sense of moral obligation for the individual to work for the 'social good', but also has deep ramifications for Lenz's own direction as a writer. Indeed it causes him to come to the forthright conclusion:

Ein tätiger Glaube ist aber ein ganz ander Ding als alle Seher, Philosophen, Theologen, Weise, Heiligen, und ich weiß nicht wer, vielleicht dafür halten, es ist nicht meinen, es ist nicht hoffen, wünschen, begehren, es ist nicht reden, träumen, dichten, predigen, Schriften herausgeben, sie mögen Meinungen oder Stimm[ung]en heißen - es ist tun.¹⁵

The laying of a 'Grundstein' does not only indicate a resolution of questions of religious faith, it also brings into question Lenz's faith in the ability of literature to effect change in the political world. The sense of '*Selbstbestimmung*' articulated by the end of *Stimmen des Laien* dictates a qualitative shift in Lenz's direction as a writer, away from the spheres of philosophy, theology and even literature, towards the more concrete concerns of the social, political and above all military, with the professed intention of working for the 'social good'. However, such a change in direction is not purely driven by vague idealistic dreams, it is also inextricably linked to Lenz' aspirations for a career at court, a career that would, unlike literature, also sustain a living. Such an ambition was undoubtedly shared by many of his Straßburg contemporaries, among them Goethe and Klinger. In fact many of the allegedly 'revolutionary' Stürmer und Dränger were rather keen to sign themselves up to the interests of the absolutist state, and thus follow in the footsteps of the *philosophes*, who had done most to promote the eighteenth-century tradition of authors advising monarchs. Lenz is no exception to this. Nevertheless such a career move was not instantaneous. Indeed the conclusions reached in *Stimmen des Laien* only constitute

¹⁵ Ibid., II, 613. For details of the emendation see Chapter I, note 123, p. 63.

the ‘pseudophilosophical’ origins of such a change in direction. Its further development will be shown in the rest of the thesis. But to approach any of Lenz’s texts without considering his own religious ‘Grundstein’ is to run the risk of becoming ‘weniger als ein Meßmusikant’ in the critical arena, as Lenz, in *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, describes any ‘Dichter’ devoid of ‘Religionsbegriffe’.¹⁶ It would be tantamount to building a critical house on sand.

Chapter II will offer a reinterpretation of *Die Soldaten* by placing it in a broader textual context. Firstly the play, on which much of Lenz’s reputation rests, will be linked to the reading of *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* expounded in Chapter I. Secondly it will also be taken in conjunction with Lenz’s efforts at military reform which follow on from the completion of the drama. In reading *Die Soldaten* as part of a process spanning several texts, the chapter aims to dispel the confusion and perplexity which so often accompany its critical reception. More precisely, Chapter II will offer an interpretation of *Die Soldaten* in the light of both Lenz’s misgivings about literature, expressed most notably in *Stimmen des Laien*, and his ambitions for a political career. Yet for all his reservations about the impotency of theatre, devoid of any access to the closed world of court politicking, the only authority open to him is that of being a published playwright. In *Die Soldaten* Lenz carries on, despite his doubts, with the activity of ‘dichten’, but does so within a wider framework of texts. The drama is not an end in itself, but is rather a prelude to Lenz’s desired entrance into the heated debate concerning military reform raging in France during the 1770s. *Die Soldaten* is a play which looks beyond itself, with Lenz projecting his own desire to join the political fray and, by the

¹⁶ *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, II, 667

same token, establish a career at court. As such the play marks a decisive first step in the pursuit of the sense of 'Bestimmung' defined in *Stimmen des Laien*, that is a move away from writing, including creative writing, towards a more politically engaged stance, now understood as partaking directly in the political process. In reading *Die Soldaten* as part of an on-going process, this chapter will also challenge Lenz's reputation as a social critic, at least *within the bounds of the play*. Such a reputation will be challenged in two related senses. Firstly, it will be argued that Lenz is neither a radical nor a revolutionary playwright, since he aims, in true Aufklärung fashion, to enact reform within the bounds of the established social structure of the absolutist state. Secondly, Lenz is not content to remain a mere critical *littérateur*, rather he hopes to gain access to the corridors of power to effect reform from within the governmental machine. Throughout the play the medium of drama is shown to be an inadequate vehicle for social criticism. Indeed it will be argued that Lenz in fact subverts the medium of drama, and even the concerns of his so-called fellow Stürmer und Dränger. But the subversion occurs in the body of the play and not solely in the seemingly problematic final scene. Indeed, it will be argued that the Obrister's desire for an audience at court is closely related to Lenz's own desire for such an opportunity. As Lenz himself expresses his view of the play in a recently edited manuscript from the Kraków archives, he wrote *Die Soldaten*, 'pour exciter la curiosité du public a vouloir faire plus d'attention aux remedes que je vais prescrire a ces maux inevitables et tot ou tard destructive pour tout le genre humain'.¹⁷ The play prepares the ground for social criticism in the form of a policy proposal to be delivered at court, but taken in isolation it does not offer such positive criticism itself. The chapter will therefore

¹⁷ >>Avantpropos<<, *LJb*, p. 14.

seek to show that there is a hidden moral and political agenda which underpins *Die Soldaten*. However, literature is not the ideal vehicle for the elucidation of detailed policy proposals, but it can be used to excite curiosity in the manner Lenz suggests. The Obrister's wish for a court audience was suddenly fulfilled in reality for Lenz himself with the apparent opportunity to travel to Weimar in early 1776, despite not receiving an official invitation. Such an opportunity rendered *Die Soldaten* superfluous for Lenz in his attempt, whether speculative or desperate, to win an audience at court.

The interpretation of *Die Soldaten* as part of a process has only been made possible by my own research into the Kraków *Lenziana*, which will be presented in **Chapters III and IV**, with the former dealing with origins of the his military reform project manifest in *Über die Soldatenehen*, and the latter with its subsequent development, above all during the summer of 1776 in Berka. The thesis aims to show that *Die Soldaten* must be read in conjunction with the military reform project to which Lenz dedicated his energies after completion of the play, particularly during his long stay in Weimar, from April until November 1776. Up to now the textual evidence available for any evaluation of such a reform project has been restricted to *Über die Soldatenehen* (first published 1913), more often than not supported by biographical conjecture, itself mainly based on unreliable third party recollections. Without exception its critical reception has also been overshadowed by a fixation with the infamously unexplained, and probably unexplainable 'Eseley' which led to Lenz's banishment from Weimar.¹⁸ Sigrid Damm was the first editor to include *Über die Soldatenehen* in her 1987 edition of Lenz's *Werke und Briefe*. However, she did not include any of the numerous other texts held in the Kraków archive

¹⁸ J.W. Goethe, *Tagebuch*, Weimar, 26. November 1776, Müller, I, 334.

- running to some two hundred and fifty-one manuscript pages mainly in French - related to Lenz's military reform project. In the first volume of her edition she herself sets the following aim: 'Die vorliegende Ausgabe verfolgt deshalb das Ziel, ein möglichst umfassendes Bild der dichterischen, theoretischen und sozialreformerischen Bemühungen zu entwerfen.'¹⁹ Such ambitions are toned down in the notes given at the end of the second volume, for when it comes to the reform project a more modest approach is adopted: 'Für die Textgenese der großangelegten Reformschrift zwar aufschlußreich, hätte ein Abdruck des disparaten Konvoluts doch den Rahmen der vorliegenden Ausgabe allzuweit gedehnt.'²⁰ Knowledge of such manuscripts is not new, indeed Damm reproduces a catalogue of this particular section of the archive in her notes.²¹ Nevertheless research into these archives remains at an early stage some twenty years after their rediscovery. As has been stated, some sections have been edited and published during the 1990s by David Hill. This thesis aims to build on Hill's research by presenting further substantial sections of the archive. The archival research undertaken provides a far broader textual context in which to read *Die Soldaten*. In turn it will also necessitate a re-evaluation of Lenz's project, thus, to a certain extent at least, demystifying his actions and aims during what has been widely acknowledged as the 'Wendepunkt' of his life. On the basis of fresh manuscript evidence Chapters III and IV will aim to offer a reconstruction of the development and maturing of Lenz's military reform project, by placing it in a distinct historical and political context. Moreover, they will also trace the relationship of the

¹⁹ I, 701.

²⁰ II, 841.

²¹ II, 947.

project to Lenz's pursuit of 'Bestimmung' thus relating it back to the process first articulated in *Stimmen des Laien* and continued in *Die Soldaten*.

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of a substantial number of Kraków manuscripts related to Lenz's military reform proposals, even recent articles, notably that by W.D.Wilson, have only drawn on the textual evidence offered by *Über die Soldatenehen*, which has been deemed 'das Schlüsseldokument für Lenzens Haltung zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus'.²² Invariably such articles are quick to echo Goethe's damning judgement of Lenz's project as 'lächerlich, unausführbar [und] phantastisch' expressed in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Read as an end in itself, or as 'das Schlüsseldokument', *Über die Soldatenehen* may well confirm Goethe's assessment, but it is clear from his description that this text has enjoyed a status in Lenz scholarship which it simply does not merit. Goethe talks of Lenz writing 'ein großes Memoire an den französischen Kriegsminister [...] das schon sauber abgeschrieben, mit einem Briefe begleitet, couvertiert und förmlich adressiert war.'²³ This description bears little resemblance to *Über die Soldatenehen*. It is obvious from even a cursory glance over the catalogue of the Kraków archive reproduced by Damm that Lenz's military writings extend far beyond this solitary text.²⁴ As a result **Chapter III** will approach this text as part of an organic process, thus radically altering the critical perspective. All aspects of *Über die Soldatenehen* point to the fact that it is a transitional piece and moreover one largely written prior to his arrival in Weimar. It will be read as Lenz's first attempt to articulate the plan which the Obrister announces at the end of *Die Soldaten*. Chapter III will attempt to illustrate the difficulty Lenz experiences

²² Wilson, p. 54.

²³ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Vierzehntes Buch, HA, X, 7-10.

²⁴ II, 947.

in effecting the transition from the theatrical to the political stage. The decision to take up a new direction as a writer does not guarantee instant fluency in an unfamiliar political forum. As indeed Lenz himself concludes *Über die Soldatenehen*, he admits that his initial efforts are plagued by hesitancy, to say the least, being ‘mehr gestottert als überredet’.²⁵ When read as part of a process, such hesitancy provides vital evidence of the moral underpinning of his proposal, his struggle with his poetic inclinations, as well as his search for the correct form, content and style in the presentation of his project. It is in Weimar, or more accurately in Lenz’s ‘Einsiedelei’ in the village of Berka, during the summer of 1776, that this process begins.

As a result of my own archival research in Kraków **Chapter IV** will discuss a series of previously unpublished texts concerning Lenz’s military project written, for the most part, in Berka. These texts are transcribed in the Appendices to be found at the end of the thesis. They fall way short of a complete transcription of the manuscripts held in Kraków related to the project; nevertheless the newly transcribed sections have been chosen with an express purpose in mind. From the fresh evidence made available I intend to offer a theory tracing the evolution of the project through its various stages of development, paying special attention to those stages which obtain some form of completion. As such Chapter IV is conceived as a response to at least some of the questions specifically raised by David Hill’s research in Kraków.²⁶ In his 1994 ‘Bericht’ Hill provides a mapping out of the contents of the archive as well as of the editorial and scholarly problems which the manuscripts present. Although the manuscripts’ importance

²⁵ *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 827.

²⁶ See note 11, p. 4.

is beyond doubt, their form - a bewildering mass of drafts, outlines, fragments and notes, some of which are almost indecipherable, jotted on used envelopes and scraps - creates countless editorial headaches, making the edition of the archive, in Hill's words, 'eine kaum übersehbare Rekonstruktionsarbeit'.²⁷ Nevertheless from a cursory view over the contents of the archive it is clear that Lenz was well versed in contemporary military and political affairs, despite the evidence which *Über die Soldatenehen* might seem to offer to the contrary. It also points to the fact that Lenz produced many different drafts as he struggled to find the appropriate form to articulate his ideas, moving from straight political polemics, through epistolary novels, treatises, historical tracts, as well as, most importantly, letters addressed directly - in accordance with Goethe's description in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* - to the French ministers, the Comte de St. Germain and the Comte de Maurepas.

The existence of such a number of unpublished manuscripts calls into question the widely held opinion in Lenz scholarship that Lenz's reform project is the product of a wild and sadly deluded imagination. Chapter IV seeks to show, by reference to extensive sections of the Kraków *Lenziana*, that the mature versions of the project are, in fact, based on cogent and coherent economic and political arguments, formulated in response to specific problems faced by the French state during the 1770s. In conclusion to his initial 'Bericht', Hill comes to the following conclusion: 'Um dieses Feld der Forschung zugänglich zu machen, ist es zuerst notwendig, die Krakauer Handschriften zu entziffern, zu ordnen und in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang zu interpretieren.'²⁸ Chapter IV

²⁷ Hill, *LJb*, p. 7.

²⁸ Hill 'Bericht', p. 128.

has the aim of meeting such a challenge, for an understanding of the historical background which gave rise to the proposal is long overdue in Lenz scholarship. The sources needed for the definition of a historical frame of reference are, however, disparate by nature. Nevertheless they will be broken down into distinct categories for the purposes of the specific task in mind. Although writing in the seclusion of his Berka 'Einsiedelei', Lenz is not, contrary to the majority of critical opinion, as well as to the opinions of the Weimar luminaries Goethe and Wieland, lost in a fantasy world, but engaged in the fierce debate of the 1770s concerning the army and indeed the state of the nation in France. Indeed, as the chapter will seek to show it is perhaps Goethe and Wieland who are lost in their secluded 'Weimarwelt', rather than Lenz being lost in an obscure 'Ideenwelt', as Wieland suggests.²⁹ Lenz's project is not only a response to contemporary events but also draws on the agenda set by other writers of the period. The most significant of these is undoubtedly Guibert with his *Essai général de Tactique* (1772), but from the manuscripts in Kraków, it is clear that Lenz also studied the work of the Physiocrats in some detail. Indeed, later formulations of the project can only be understood as a response to and, to a certain extent, a critique of physiocratic thought. Equally Lenz's project must be measured as a response to the changing political climate in France during the period in question. For Lenz expressly tailors his project according to the rise and fall of political personalities and policy preferences in Louis XVI's administration during this period, thus enabling the precise dating of his successive draft proposals. Particularly relevant in this

²⁹ Wieland an von Gebler, Weimar, 5 Oktober 1776: 'Lenz, ist eine wunderbare, aber im Grunde gute und liebenswürdige Seele. Er lebt meistens zu Berka wie ein Einsiedler - bedarf gar sehr wenig, und ist nur glücklich, wenn man ihn in seiner Ideenwelt ungestört leben läßt.', Müller, I, 317.

process is the assumption of greater power by Maurepas during 1776, as it is to him that Lenz addresses the mature formulation of his proposal: the ‘lettre à Maurepas’.

Over and above locating the evolution of the military project in a specific historical context, Chapter IV will be related to the overarching concept of Lenz’s pursuit of ‘Bestimmung’. For in devoting his energies almost exclusively to his military reform plan, Lenz will be shown to be pursuing the ethos of working for the ‘social good’ set down in the texts discussed earlier in the thesis, as well as obviously trying to fashion a career for himself in the service of an absolutist state. However, such biographical elements in the thesis will be limited solely to the evidence that is to be derived from an historical interpretation of manuscript sources. Only once grounded in a historical as well as a wider textual framework will it be possible to give an informed interpretation of this pivotal period in Lenz’s career. The chapter will unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the activities of the ‘Einsiedler’ at Berka which have been completely obscured in Lenz scholarship, up to now, due to the sensationalist fixation with his so-called ‘Eseley’.

Regardless of the merits of Lenz’s reform plan, the exile which followed his notorious ‘Eseley’ on 26 November 1776 put paid to his political aspirations. Denied access to court, his pursuit of ‘Bestimmung’, which underpins the texts discussed in Chapters I to IV, came to an end. It is no coincidence that the frustration of his political ambitions is accompanied by a reversion to literature. **Chapter V** will therefore analyse the only text written by Lenz after his banishment, but before his mental collapse in 1777: the Erzählung *Der Landprediger*. Again viewed as part of a process, the chapter will offer a reading of *Der Landprediger* as an epitaph to Lenz’s own abortive career as a

writer as reformer. As such it will challenge traditional readings of the work as either a 'Wunschbiographie' or a piece of utopian fiction; rather it will be argued that it is more akin to a 'Reuebiographie' related to his own failed pursuit of 'Bestimmung'. The chapter will seek to illustrate that *Der Landprediger* is not conceived as a continuation of Lenz's previous political concerns: rather in the story there is an underlying detachment from and disillusionment with his own previous efforts in the realm of politics, with the medium of literature used as a means of self-commentary, bordering on self-criticism. Drawing on the fresh manuscript evidence presented earlier in the thesis, Chapter V will also attempt to dispel the notion that there is a seamless continuity from *Über die Soldatenehen* to *Der Landprediger*, as some recent critics have suggested. On the contrary, if there is any link between the two, Chapter V will seek to show that it is one of antagonism. Utopian visions form the focus of *Über die Soldatenehen*, but it is their destruction that is the focus of *Der Landprediger*. By reading *Der Landprediger* as part of a wider textual process, Chapter V will attempt to offer a new critical perspective on, typically for Lenz, a seemingly confused and hence confusing literary text.

In following J.M.R.Lenz's failed pursuit of 'Bestimmung', by reading established texts as part of a process, and drawing on 'new' manuscript sources in the manner outlined above, this thesis aims to dispel some at least some of the confusion surrounding the traces left by the notorious 'vorübergehendes Meteor' of German literature and still very much in evidence today.

Chapter I

‘Stimmen and Bestimmung...’ the
‘Grundstein’ of *Meinungen eines Laien*
and *Stimmen des Laien*

‘Stimmen and Bestimmung...’ the ‘Grundstein’ of *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*

Ein tätiger Glaube ist aber ein ganz ander Ding als alle
Seher, Philosophen, Theologen, Weise, Heiligen, und ich
weiß nicht wer, vielleicht dafür halten, es ist nicht meinen,
es ist nicht hoffen, wünschen, begehren, es ist nicht reden,
träumen, dichten, predigen, Schriften herausgeben, sie
mögen Meinungen oder Stimm[ung]en heißen - es ist tun.
(Dritte Stimme, *Stimmen des Laien*)¹

Ist einer unter Ihnen, der seine ganze Bestimmung noch
nicht fühlt - oder noch nicht zu fühlen Courage genug hat,
der bestimme sich für die Gegenwärtigkeit, für den
heutigen Tag, auf das best’ er immer kann.
(Dritte Stimme, *Stimmen des Laien*)²

In Franz Blei’s edition of Lenz’s collected works there is a solitary sentence, placed under a general heading ‘Notizen und Fragmente aus der Zeit in Straßburg, Weimar und der Schweiz’; where and when it was written is not specified, but in its isolation it runs as follows: ‘Die *Meynungen eines Laien* sind der Grundstein meiner ganzen Poesie, aller meiner Wahrheit, all meines Gefühls, der aber freilich nicht muß gesehen werden.’³ Despite the note’s outward simplicity, how this one work actually constitutes the ‘Grundstein’ of Lenz’s *oeuvre* remains the subject of controversy.⁴ However, the text remains, as Damm rightly asserts, ‘Lenzens theologische Hauptschrift’, split into a ‘zweiteilige Abhandlung’.⁵ The ‘*Meynungen eines Laien*’ mentioned in the note concentrates on the Old Testament and is logically complemented by *Stimmen des Laien*,

¹ II, 613.

² II, 615.

³ Blei, IV, 283-84. In the manuscript there is also a note ‘am Rande’, see note 123, p. 63.

⁴ As has been pointed out: ‘Erstaunlich angesichts einer solchen Aussage ist die Tatsache schon, daß sich die Ignoranz gegenüber den Meinungen/Stimmen seitens der literarischen Öffentlichkeit der Zeit in der Literaturwissenschaft, von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen, bis zur Gegenwart fortsetzt.’ V.Demuth, *Realität als Geschichte: Biographie, Historie und Dichtung bei J.M.R.Lenz* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994), p. 87. See also U.Hayer, *Das Genie und die Transzendenz: Untersuchungen zur konzeptionellen Einheit theologischer und ästhetischer Reflexion bei J.M.R.Lenz* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1995), pp. 9-16.

⁵ See Damm’s note, II, 891-92.

propounding his exegesis of the New Testament, with both parts duly published together by the ‘Weygandsche Buchhandlung’ in 1775. Given the length of the work’s full title it is hardly surprising Lenz limits himself to a shortened form.⁶ That Lenz seeks to place himself in a highly Christian, or more precisely Pietist tradition, is reflected in the decision to adopt the ‘Laie’ persona. By assuming such a role and using it as a pseudonym for publication, Lenz dissociates himself from the work, thereby gaining a certain licence to express his own brand of faith without fear of recrimination. The style of the texts is contrasting: *Meinungen eines Laien* is more formal, aimed at specific Old Testament exegesis, in accordance with the dedication to ‘den Geistlichen’; the *Stimmen des Laien* meanwhile consists of three informal addresses, dealing more haphazardly with the New Testament, thus corresponding to the fictional forum of the ‘theologische Reichstag’. The *Stimmen des Laien* are hence more theatrical, tortuous and, at least outwardly, confused. Certainly confusion has also been the dominant critical response to the text, with Heinrichsdorff’s assessment of the work as a ‘verworrenes Richtungs- und Meinungsbündel’ remaining largely unchallenged, even among more recent critics.⁷

Significantly, as well as being ‘Lenzens theologische Hauptschrift’, these texts bring his moral-theological writings to a close. As such there is every indication that they amount to a watershed in the scheme of Lenz’s work as a whole. The conclusion to theological concerns is marked by the laying of a cornerstone of faith. And at the heart of his faith is the concept of action. As such, *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*

⁶ *Meinungen eines Laien den Geistlichen zugeeignet. Stimmen des Laien auf dem letzten theologischen Reichstage im Jahre 1773*, II, 522-64 and II, 565-618 respectively. This was the title used for the 1775 edition, as journal reviews in the *Gothaische gelehrte Zeitungen* and *Neue Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* also show, see Müller, I, 123 and 164.

⁷ P.Heinrichsdorff, *J.M.R.Lenzens religiöse Haltung*, p. 95.

appear to conform to Martin Rector’s observation that: ‘As if orbiting some unacknowledged center, the work of J.M.R.Lenz revolves around the question of the limits and possibilities of human action.’⁸ Indeed the content of his works, particularly those of the Straßburg period, would seem to support this argument. Certainly the question of action does pervade many of his moral-theological, and, albeit slightly less directly, his aesthetic writings, as many critics have shown.⁹ For example in *Über Götz von Berlichingen* (1774?) Lenz proclaims in his characteristically rhetorical fashion (honed in his many addresses to the Straßburg *Société de Philosophie et Belles Lettres*) that ‘handeln die Seele der Welt sei’¹⁰, whilst in *Anmerkungen übers Theater* (1774) he makes his postulate of human free will quite clear: ‘Wir sind, m.H., oder wollen wenigstens sein, die erste Sprosse auf der Leiter der freihandelnden selbstständigen Geschöpfe’.¹¹ As Unger argues in summarising Pope’s main thesis: ‘all [Lenz’s] theological concepts (for example God, original sin, creation, law, faith) are ultimately joined in a postulate of human action that serves as a concept of salvation; and that offers a chance of salvation.’¹²

⁸ M.Rector, ‘Seven Theses on the Problem of Action in Lenz’, in *Space to Act: The Theater of J.M.R.Lenz*, ed. by A.C.Leidner and H.S.Madland (Columbia: Camden House, 1993), pp. 60-76, (p. 60).

⁹ In addition to Rector, see also, amongst others: T.Unger, ‘Contingent Spheres of Action: The Category of Action in Lenz’s Anthropology and Theory of Drama’, in *Space to Act: The Theater of J.M.R.Lenz*, pp. 77-90, which also gives a brief account of the unpublished thesis: T.F.Pope, *The Concept of Action in the Works of J.M.R.Lenz* (Diss., University of British Columbia, 1980); J-C Chantre, *Les Considérations religieuses et esthétiques d’un>Stürmer und Dränger<: Etude des écrits théoriques de J.M.R.Lenz* (Bern/Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1982). pp. 23-211; and Demuth, pp. 20-139.

¹⁰ *Über Götz von Berlichingen*, II, 638. For a description of Lenz’s theatrical style see J.W.Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Eilftes Buch, HA, IX, 495: ‘Für seine Sinnesart wüßte ich nur das englische Wort whimsical, welches, wie das Wörterbuch ausweist, gar manche Seltsamkeiten in einem Begriff zusammenfaßt [...]’.

¹¹ *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, II, 645. For details of the *Société* see J.W.Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Eilftes Buch, HA, IX, 492-98 and J.H.Jung-Stilling, *Heinrich Stillings Jugend, Jünglingsjahre und Wanderschaft* (München: C.H.Beck, 1982), pp. 254-58. For secondary accounts see J. Froitzheim, *Zu Strassburgs Sturm- und Drangperiode* (Strassburg: Heitz und Mündel, 1888), pp. 33-53; also T.F.Pope, ‘J.M.R.Lenz’s ‘Literarischer Zirkel’ in Strasbourg’, *Seminar*, 20 (1984), 235-45.

¹² Unger, p. 77. In Unger’s footnote (p. 86) Pope is quoted directly: ‘So faith, like every other article of Lenz’s religion, comes down to a principle of human moral development.’ Pope, p. 150.

However, in a slight modification of Rector’s statement, it is perhaps more accurate to say, as the present thesis aims to show, that the problem of action, at least in its theoretical form, is only central to the period up until 1774. This chapter seeks to show that in *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* Lenz achieves a sense of resolution regarding the question of action. In theological terms many of the threads from earlier moral-philosophical as well as aesthetic texts are drawn together and brought to a firm conclusion. Having reached such a watershed, from 1775 onwards Lenz becomes increasingly preoccupied with action now defined within the context of society and politics rather than on a purely theoretical level.

To a certain extent Lenz’s moral-philosophical texts are attempts at ‘spiritual self-orientation’.¹³ They chart his struggle to define his own faith and, from a biographical perspective, his desire to justify his own actions to his father, Christian David Lenz, a Pietist clergyman educated in Halle, a city which had become, especially under the influence of August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), the centre of German Pietism. Indeed as Rector argues, Lenz attempts to come to terms with his the legacy of his Pietist upbringing throughout the early Straßburg period.¹⁴ Lenz’s belief in free will, as expressed in many of his moral-philosophical and aesthetic texts, remains incompatible with Pietist notions of divine grace. In the spirit of Luther, the Pietists opposed the view that divine grace was granted along with forgiveness; rather in their renewal of personal devotion they stressed the active role of God and the passive role of humanity in matters of salvation. Indeed their central concept of ‘Wiedergeburt’ enabled believers to rid

¹³ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁴ For the following section see Rector, pp. 61-63.

themselves of their former sinful nature and become ‘new people’.¹⁵ Like Luther, the Pietists viewed the human will as essentially unfree, furthermore it was considered to be the essence of humanity’s sinful nature.¹⁶ The power of self-determination, sexual desires and man’s ego all stemmed from the human will and were thus deemed the realm of the devil. As a result, Pietism sought to eradicate the desires of the will, and this became the prerequisite for divine grace. Indeed the breaking of the child’s will was at the centre of Francke’s theory of education, a theory which would have acted as a model in Lenz’s own upbringing.¹⁷ Reborn, Pietists were to dedicate themselves to following the example of Christ (*Imitatio Christi*), something which could only be gained, again in the spirit of Luther, through devotional Bible reading.

Taking this background into account, it is clear that Lenz’s assertions to the effect that it is our God-given vocation to exercise our freedom of will and action come into direct conflict with Pietism, touching on ‘explosive tabus [sic]’.¹⁸ However, as Rector goes on to argue, Lenz resists the path of becoming a renegade or heretic. Rather the whole strategy in all the moral-philosophical texts of the early Straßburg period is geared to prove that ~~that~~ his notion of free human action is compatible with Christianity and the will of God. Moreover, this is attempted using precisely the exegetical methods espoused by

¹⁵ Johann Arndt’s chief innovation in *Das Wahre Christentum* (1605-9) (thus before P.J.Spener (1635-1705), the founder of Pietism) which sold several hundred thousand copies, outstripping the Bible, and which sought to inspire readers to cultivate a personal love of God. See also M.Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemberg and Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 23-36, also R.L.Gawthrop, *Pietism and the making of Eighteenth Century Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 93-97. For Lenz’s religious upbringing see (amongst others): Heinrichsdorff, pp. 7-24, and O.Rudolph, *Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz: Moralist und Aufklärer* (Bad Homburg/Berne/ Zürich: Gehlen, 1970), pp. 14-51.

¹⁶ A view put forward most famously in Luther’s *De servo arbitrio* (1525), in which he declared that after the fall of Adam all talk of free will was empty, see Rector, pp. 62-65.

¹⁷ For an overview of Francke’s role in the Pietist movement see Fulbrook, pp. 154-172.

¹⁸ Rector, p. 63.

Pietism: any credal formulation must, indeed can only be, legitimated through recourse to the Scriptures. In a long process of spiritual self-orientation Lenz hopes to remain in the Christian fold. It is in *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* that this strategy is taken to its logical conclusion, for it is in these texts that a reconciliation between the competing demands of human action and his own faith is, in the author's mind at least, achieved. The argument of the two texts as a whole attempts to show that secular and biblical notions of 'Bestimmung' are not incompatible, but that each lends support to the other, and it is in this sense that the 'Grundstein' is put in place. As such *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* constitute Lenz's own effort at reaching a solution to a common eighteenth-century problem of resolving the conflict between the seemingly rival claims of 'Offenbarung' and 'Vernunft'.

Primarily Lenz's 'Grundstein', as I will argue, is to be found in *Stimmen des Laien*, dealing as this text does with what is termed 'unser Testament'.¹⁹ It is here that Lenz, in accordance with Pietism, meets the challenge set down by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Darum, wer diese meine Rede hört und tut sie, der gleicht einem klugen Mann, der sein Haus auf den Felsen baute' (Matthew 7, 24). Indeed it is Lenz's own interpretation of the 'Bergpredigt' which will form the 'Grundstein'.²⁰ On another level it will be shown

¹⁹ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 605.

²⁰ As Demuth states, p. 74: "Der Gott im Menschen" - mit dieser Formel ist im Kontext der Polarität von Politik und Moral, Gesellschaft und Individuum ein Thema angeschlagen, wofür der Sturm und Drang im Mythos von Prometheus eine genaue Präfiguration erkennt und das bei Lenz insbesondere die Interpretation der Gestalt von Jesus prägt, mehr noch, das sein gesamtes Schaffen leitmotivisch durchzieht.'

Despite including a chapter on 'Jesus und Prometheus' (pp. 72-83), Demuth does not analyse Lenz's version of *Imitatio Christi* as set out in *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*, despite its privileged status as the culmination of Lenz's moral-philosophical output. Instead he locates the 'Grundstein' in Lenz's conception of the philosophy of history, see p. 87 and p. 95: 'Somit ist der Bestand, den Lenz in den *Meinungen/Stimmen* schon wie selbstverständlich übernimmt, erarbeitet, und es zeichnet sich ansatzweise ab, weshalb Lenz die *Meinungen* als den "Grundstein meiner ganzen Poesie"

that, in asserting his own distinct form of faith, Lenz also gives his notion of ‘Bestimmung’, hinted at in earlier moral-philosophical texts, a firm definition. Such a definition has implications on both a general, taking the text beyond a mere exercise in ‘spiritual self-orientation’, as well as a personal level, as it has deep ramifications for Lenz’s own ethos, and hence direction, as a writer. But of course a house’s foundations are never visible at first glance. This chapter will therefore attempt to uncover the ‘Grundstein’ by focusing on *Stimmen des Laien*. It will prove a vital component for an understanding of the underpinning given by Lenz to the subsequent texts dealt with later in the thesis.

In approaching Lenz, it is instructive to see how he himself approaches Aristotle in *Anmerkungen übers Theater*. Above all the centrality of religion to the creative process is spelt out in no uncertain terms. Although a tirade is launched against ‘die Worte eines großen Kunstrichters mit einem Bart’, such criticism is tempered later on when he explains his views concerning not only Aristotle, but also any poet from any era.²¹ The poet is inextricably linked to the divine order, he argues with regard to the tension between action and character in drama; thus Aristotle must be, indeed can only be, understood with reference to such a context:

bezeichnen kann. Der “Gesichtspunkt” als methodische Bedingung historischen Erkennens und das Narrativitäts-kriterium im ästhetisch-konstitutiven Akt der Geschichtsverfassung sind für Lenz’ imaginativ-konstruktive Erkenntnisweise gleichermaßen grundlegend.’ Whilst this is the case, it is the application of such a philosophy, through a hermeneutic reading of the Bible, which will lead to a concrete, rather than a theoretical, understanding of the ‘Grundstein’, as will be argued below.

²¹ *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, II, 645. This text was written, revised and most probably delivered to the *Straßburg Société de Philosophie et Belles Lettres* during the same period as *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*, 1771-74, but was published a year earlier, in 1774.

Noch ein paar Worte üben Aristoteles. Daß er gerade im Trauerspiele, wo auf die handelnden Personen alles ankommt, das die Epopee dramatisiert heißen könnte, den Charakteren so wenig gibt, wundert mich, könnt ich nicht reimen, wenn ich nicht den Grund davon tiefer fände, in nichts weniger als dem *ἦθος* der Schauspiele.²²

Aristotle's aesthetics must be read in relation to the religious and ethical context within which the texts arose. The ethos (*ἦθος*) of the texts cannot simply be ignored. Thus, despite the constant jibes, Aristotle in fact escapes censure, as he can only be understood in his own context. This argument is extended to all realms of art, with religion deemed the driving force behind any legitimate form of art, or for that matter existence:

Von jeher und zu allen Zeiten sind die Empfindungen, Gemütsbewegungen und Leidenschaften der Menschen auf ihre Religionsbegriffe gepropfet, ein Mensch ohne alle Religion hat gar keine Empfindung (weh ihm!), ein Mensch mit schiefer Religion schiefe Empfindungen und ein Dichter, der die Religion seines Volkes nicht gegründet hat, ist weniger als ein Meßmusikant.²³

Art is inextricably linked to religion. Hence, any attempt to approach Lenz's *oeuvre* without at least considering his own 'Religionsbegriffe', is to run the risk of becoming 'weniger als ein Meßmusikant' in the critical arena. It would also be tantamount to building a critical house on sand.

It is significant that *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* are Lenz's final moral-philosophical and theological texts, for as such they are his final statement on the central problem which preoccupies him during the period 1770-74: the problem of reconciling his notion of freedom of action with the demands of Pietist faith. Lenz

²²Ibid., II, 666.

²³ Ibid., II, 667. Titel suggests: 'gründen: im Sinne von befestigen, nicht von begründen.', I, 659. There is also the sense of 'ergründen', emphasizing the artist's quest to discover and experience revelation for himself, which is the first definition given by J.C. Adelung, *Versuch eines vollständigen grammatisch-kritischen Wörterbuches der hochdeutschen Mundart*, 5 vols (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1774-86), II, 826.

conceives of action in moral terms, its legitimation stemming from ‘Offenbarung’, with the divine law calling on the individual to work for collective ‘Glückseligkeit’ and the defence of the divine moral order, as he states in *Supplement zur Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnis Gutes und Bösen* (1771/72):

Ohne Gesetz wäre kein Evangelium möglich - folglich auch keine Glückseligkeit. Denn nur das Gesetz zeigt uns die *Verhältnisse* in denen wir uns befinden, und nur *diese* können Handlungen einen Wert und den begleitenden Empfindungen ein Vergnügen beilegen [...] Ein jedes Gesetz also (wir nämlich nennen nur das Gesetz, welches zur allgemeinen Ordnung, Verhältnis und Glückseligkeit etwas beiträgt, mag es so gering scheinen als es wolle, Matth. 5, 19) ist unendlich schätzbar, mag es nun göttlich oder menschlich sein, weil es *neue ethische* Handlungen veranlaßt [...] [Der Geist des Menschengeschlechts hatte sich] durch mannigfaltige lange Erfahrungen ein *allgemeines* Gesetz - eine so ziemliche Idee von den Pflichten jedes Individui zur Glückseligkeit des Ganzen [gebildet].²⁴

Lenz’s concept of ‘Offenbarung’ clearly privileges the interests of society above those of the individual. The moral impetus behind his subsequent literary and social political texts is thus also to be understood in relation to this fundamental principle. In *Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral* (1771/72) Lenz expounds an altruistic form of morality which aims at an ideal condition of happiness, and as such reiterates what amount to commonplaces of the eighteenth-century emphasis on the importance of moral consensus:

Hören Sie was wir tun müssen, hören Sie es, merken Sie es, dies ist der fruchtbarste Teil meiner Prinzipien. *Wir müssen suchen andere um uns herum glücklich zu machen.* Nach allen unsern Kräften arbeiten, nicht allein ihre Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln, sondern auch sie in solche Zustände zu setzen, worin ihre Fähigkeiten am besten entwickeln können, Wenn jeder diesen Vorsatz in sich zur Reife und zum Leben kommen läßt, so werden wir eine glückliche Welt haben. Jeder sorgt bloß für des andern Glück und jeder wird selbst glücklich, weil er um sich herum Leute findet, die für das seinige sorgen.²⁵

²⁴ *Supplement zur Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen*, II, 520. This text was in all probability delivered to the *Société* (see II, 889-90).

²⁵ *Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral*, II, 510.

Happiness is thus no longer attainable by individuals through virtuous action, rather society as a whole is called on to act together. As Unger states: ‘happiness thus depends upon one’s social partners; it is no longer solely determined by God or by the individual’s reason.’²⁶ As a result, Lenz’s piety sets him against philosophies giving primacy to individual freedom, as Demuth describes:

Im Gegensatz nämlich zu dem utilitarischen Maximenpostulat, das Hutcheson im 18. Jahrhundert zuerst entwirft und das Bentham dann ins Zentrum seiner Ethik stellt, geht es Lenz nicht schwerpunktmäßig um die Glücksbilanz von *Einzelhandlungen*, sondern um den Einfluß von *sittlichen und staatlichen Regeln* auf das allgemeine Glück. Durch kollektive Erfahrungen legitimierte Gesetze besitzen demnach eine so erhebliche Bedeutung für das Gemeinwohl, das *social good*, daß sie unbedingt einzuhalten sind, gerade auch dann, wenn widerstrebende “Gefühle” das Handeln in eine anderer Richtung drängen [...].²⁷

Whilst not present in his theological works, the notion of a dissemination of morality and its manipulation through enlightened governance will play a key role in Lenz’s development after his ‘spiritual self-orientation’ is complete. In his own role as a poet, and, at a later stage, as a would-be political reformer, Lenz will dedicate his energies precisely to the ‘sittliche und staatliche Regeln’ which work for the general ‘social good’.

At the beginning of *Meinungen eines Laien* Lenz reiterates the basic premise of the earlier moral-philosophical texts outlined above: ‘Religion soll uns glücklicher machen, sonst nehmen wir sie nicht an. Und soll sie das, so muß sie empfunden werden, denn die Glückseligkeit besteht in Empfindung.’²⁸ In an attempt to reach such a goal Lenz, in accordance with his faith, takes recourse to the Scriptures, and in particular the example which is set by Jesus. However, for all the homiletic tone of the text, Lenz cannot

²⁶ Unger, p. 83.

²⁷ Demuth, p. 47. For a detailed account of the ‘geistesgeschichtliche Zusammenhang’ of Lenz’s moral-philosophy and theology, see Demuth, pp. 7-130, and Hayer, pp. 9-120.

²⁸ *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 526.

disguise the fact that his notion of what such an example entails brings him into direct conflict with Pietism, for Lenz interprets the *Imitatio Christi*, as Rector states, as an appeal to humanity, over and above the individual, ‘to make use of the freedom of the will and the opportunity to act morally’.²⁹ It is in the three *Stimmen des Laien* that the redefinition of *Imitatio Christi* takes place, with Lenz heeding the teaching of Paul: ‘Einen andern Grund kann niemand legen außer dem, der gelegt ist, welcher ist Jesus Christus’ (I Corinthians 3, 11). As Demuth points out, ultimately Lenz’s attitude to pressing political and social questions - as is evident in later works, in particular in *Die Soldaten* and his military reform project (see Chapters II-IV) - will bring him into sharp conflict with the introspection of Pietism and indeed orthodoxy in general:

Die soziale Wirklichkeit mit ihren schneidenden Diskrepanzen von Reichtum und Armut, Rechtsanmaßung und Rechtlosigkeit, Lustbarkeit und Leibeigenschaft, gesellschaftlicher Macht und Ohnmacht, läßt sich für Lenz in ihren skandalösen Mißverhältnissen humaner Lebenschancen nicht mehr einfach abfedern durch das Theologem vom göttlicher Gerechtigkeit in einem Jenseits oder durch das philosophische Credo der bestmöglichen Welt.³⁰

From the very beginning of the *Erste Stimme* there is little doubt about Lenz’s position *vis-à-vis* the question of faith. The existence of a divine force is taken as a given of existence. The fundamental importance of religion, as expressed in *Anmerkungen übers Theater* and the earlier moral-philosophical texts, is echoed in even more forthright terms at the beginning of the *Erste Stimme*:

[...] die lebendige Seele, wie sie Moses nennt, die Gott selbst in unsre Maschine hinabhauchte. Die Theorie dieses Götterhauchs, den wir in uns fühlen - und weh dem, der ihn nicht fühlt! - stellen wir beiseite, so viel wissen wir, daß diese uns belebende Kraft der edelste Teil unseres Selbst ist, daß von ihrer Bildung, Erhöhung, Erweiterung die Bildung, Erhöhung und Erweiterung unserer ganzen Glückseligkeit abhängt, wer das nicht glauben will, der lasse es

²⁹ Rector, p. 65.

³⁰ Demuth, pp. 74-75.

bleiben, die Sache redet von sich selbst, je größer die Sphäre ist, in der wir leben, desto beglückter und würdiger unser Leben, wer aber taub ist, dem wird freilich ewig vergeblich in die Ohren geschrien werden.³¹

The arguments appear dogmatic, with evidence apparently not needed for such an obvious statement: ‘die Sache redet von sich selbst’; such homiletic tones confirm Lenz’s desire to convince himself that his faith is still rooted in a particular tradition, in this case that of Pietism. The pursuit of ‘Glückseligkeit’ alluded to affords religion its *raison d’être*, as is stated at the beginning of *Meinungen eines Laien*: ‘Die Religion soll uns weder fromm noch gelehrt ganz allein machen, sondern glücklich.’³² Such a pursuit, through the activities of ‘die lebendige Seele’ (Genesis 2, 7), is judged for better or worse by God.³³ The parameters of legitimate action for it are those decreed by God, even if negatively: ‘Alle moralischen Gesetze sind negativ, müssen negativ sein, sie zeugen [sic] uns, was wir unterlassen müssen [...] Was wir zu tun haben, kann uns kein Gesetzgeber vorschreiben [...]’.³⁴ Nevertheless Lenz rails against any form of action contrary to the divine law:

Verflucht also die Freiheit, die sich wider ihn empören will, die glücklich sein will auf einem andern Wege, als den er uns vorgezeichnet [...] hat. Ja frei sind wir, aber frei vor Gott, wie Kinder unter den Augen ihres liebevollen Vaters frei scherzen und spielen dürfen, kehren wir ihm aber den Rücken, so rennen wir in den Tod, und die Freiheit, die uns von dort entgegenwinkt, ist kalt und grauenvoll, ist der Wink des Chaos und der alten Nacht.³⁵

Here Lenz appears to align himself to the conventional teachings of Pietism and commit himself to a rejection of certain strands of Enlightenment thought. In accordance with Pietism Lenz must back up his convictions by means of direct evidence from the Bible, not

³¹ *Erste Stimme*, II, 565.

³² *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 530.

³³ *Erste Stimme*, II, 565.

³⁴ *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 550.

³⁵ *Erste Stimme*, II, 566.

by means of abstract philosophical or theological assertions. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), an early and highly influential Pietist, placed great emphasis on the practice of devotional circles of Bible reading amongst the universal priesthood of the people, described in the Bible in same imagery that Lenz associates with his laying of a moral ‘Grundstein’.³⁶ Thus the individual’s only way of putting his ‘lebendige Seele’ into action was by the humble recognition of Man’s dependence on God and subsequent following of *Imitatio Christi*. In principle, Lenz accepts such parameters unreservedly. Hence, in his resultant texts, he believes himself to be writing within the Pietist tradition, even if he appears to claim that he is going to move away from theology: ‘Diese Abhandlung ist noch theologisch, meine Herren, ich hoffe aber, es soll die letzte sein.’³⁷ In fact the aim of such ‘Theologie’ is to reconcile his secular and biblical notions of ‘Bestimmung’. It is in this spirit that Lenz approaches the Bible, as he admits in a letter to Salzmann in October 1772: ‘Wenigstens müssen wir doch suchen in die Ausdrücke der Bibel einen *Sinn* zu legen, der mit unserm Verstande übereinkommt.’³⁸ In *Stimmen des Laien* the substance of ‘unserm Verstande’ becomes clear, as Lenz comes to his own resolution of the conflict between ‘Offenbarung’ and ‘Vernunft’, by amalgamating the two in his own peculiar

³⁶ See I Peter 2, 4-9: ‘Das Gottesvolk des neuen Bundes [...] Zu ihm kommet als zu dem lebendigen Stein, der von den Menschen verworfen ist, aber bei Gott ist er auserwählt und köstlich. Und bauet auch ihr euch als lebendige Steine zum geistlichen Hause und zur heiligen Priesterschaft, zu opfern geistliche Opfer, die Gott angenehm sind durch Jesus Christus. Darum steht in der Schrift: “Siehe da, ich lege einen auserwählten, köstlichen Eckstein in Zion; und wer an ihn glaubt, der soll nicht zuschanden werden.” Euch nun, die ihr glaubet, ist er köstlich; den Ungläubigen aber ist “der Stein, den die Bauleute verworfen haben, der zum Eckstein geworden ist, ein Stein des Anstoßes und ein Fels des Ärgernisses”; denn sie stoßen sich, weil sie an das Wort nicht glauben, wozu sie auch verordnet sind. *Ihr aber seid das auserwählte Geschlecht, das königliche Priestertum, das heilige Volk [...]*.’ See also Fulbrook, chapters 2 and 7.

³⁷ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578.

³⁸ Lenz an Johann Daniel Salzmann [Landau, Oktober 1772], III, 283.

way.³⁹ As we shall see, this particular ‘theologische Abhandlung’ will eventually turn, by Lenz’s own admission, into a ‘pseudotheologische Abhandlung’ in which he mixes secular and religious arguments, tailoring them for his own distinct ends.⁴⁰

The *Stimmen des Laien* constitute more than a simple affirmation of faith. Lenz, in true rhetorical fashion, claims to have the precise aim of stripping away the mystique surrounding faith, or as he puts it more rudimentarily: ‘den Staub und Kot rein abzuwischen, mit welchen alle alte und neue Neuerer seit Konstantins, ja seit der Apostel Zeiten selber sie betragen haben.’⁴¹ Reverence for any other previous interpretation of the Bible, regardless of denomination, is distinctly lacking. By sweeping away such darkness, dust and filth, he engages in what he claims is a fresh interpretation of its very substance, and hence the ‘Grundstein’ on which it is built - the Bible. Yet Lenz believes, as he is at pains to make clear from the outset of the *Erste Stimme*, that his approach to the Bible does conform to the uncontroversial exegetical principles upheld by Pietism.⁴² Indeed he states the commonplace that ‘bei allen Schriften von einiger Vortrefflichkeit’ time is needed to read and reread before ‘die [...] recht hell, erwärmend und belebend werden’.⁴³ His reading, so he sincerely maintains, is thus an extension and a defence of the humility of Pietist Bible reading:

Natürlich muß bei einer göttlichen Offenbarung, die für alle Zeiten, alle Völker und alle Umstände brauchbar sein soll, diese Eigenschaft [the fact that words of the Bible are so open to interpretation] in der höchsten Vollkommenheit angetroffen werden, und müssen wir also, anstatt über die dunklen Stellen derselben uns lustig zu machen, mit vieler Ehrfurcht drüber verweilen, und das ganze enge Maß der Sphäre unsers Verstandes empfinden, der schon am

³⁹ For a detailed account of the theological and philosophical background to this conflict in Lenz see Hayer, pp. 51-120.

⁴⁰ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 616.

⁴¹ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578.

⁴² For details of the hermeneutic tradition, see Demuth, pp. 84-98 and Hayer, pp. 51-59.

⁴³ *Erste Stimme*, II, 570.

Rande so vieler Abgründe zurückbebt, durch deren Tiefen vielleicht schon die nächstfolgenden Geschlechter ohne Wolken schauen werden. Das verhindert uns aber nicht, all unsre Kräfte aufzubieten, in dieser Dunkelheit schon itzt so weit vorzudringen als wir können [...] Aber da gleich beim ersten Schritte umzukehren und zu sagen, das lohnt der Mühe nicht - die Offenbarungen waren nicht göttlich - wahrhaftig! das ist der Weg nicht - [...] man weiß, daß der Herr [...] uns Sachen sagte, die wir nicht gleich auf den Stutz verstunden [...] ⁴⁴

‘Offenbarung’ is not seen as a purely external phenomenon, rather the truths of continual revelation, through both nature and the Scriptures, are accessible to those who actively seek them out. Given his premise that ‘Offenbarung’ is constantly evolving and hence there ‘für alle Zeiten, alle Völker und alle Umstände’, Lenz will attempt, through the course of the *Stimmen des Laien*, to penetrate the darkness by picking up the challenge set down by the Bible.⁴⁵ As such, the mode of argument, despite its apparent lack of coherence in execution, fits Lenz’s posture as a Bible-reading ‘Laie’ offering ‘Meinungen’ and ‘Stimmen’ for debate, albeit one who is trying to prove that his notions regarding freedom of action are compatible with the constraints of Pietism.⁴⁶

Lenz thus stands between the two disciplines of philosophy and theology - hence his term ‘Pseudotheologie’. As many had done before him, most notably Leibniz and Wolff, Lenz tries to bridge the gap between the two by applying philosophy’s secular tools to theological problems. Whilst accepting the Bible as sole authority, he refuses to accept the mystification that has obscured it with ‘Staub und Kot’. Hence, he openly states that

⁴⁴ Ibid., II, 570-71.

⁴⁵ This is the ‘Grundstein’ of method located by Demuth: ‘Wichtig ist ihm [Lenz] in erster Linie, daß die biblischen Geschichten unter historischem Blickwinkel einen neuen Sinn als Offenbarung ergeben.’, Demuth, p. 92.

⁴⁶ That Lenz intends his texts as a starting point for debate is emphasised in the final paragraph of the *Dritte Stimme*: ‘Und so hätt ich denn für heute genug geschwätzt, genug *locos communes* gemacht [...] so lassen Sie sich über den einen oder anderen Punkt mit mir in einen Streit ein, beantworten Sie mich, widerlegen Sie mich, rezensieren, kritisieren, reformieren und satirisieren Sie mich, wo und wieweit ich’s verdiene [...]’, II, 618.

his beliefs stem from the Bible and that he can only adopt others from the same sacred source:

Das ist meine Überzeugung, und ich hoffe, ich werde sie sobald nicht gegen eine andere austauschen, man müßte mir denn ihren Grund und ihre Quelle irgendwo in der Bibel anzugeben wissen.⁴⁷

At the same time he praises the way in which 'Philosophie' has provided a means of overcoming the manipulation of the people by 'gewisse zunftmäßige Theologen' who created a reign of terror, as: 'Diesem Begriffe lehrt uns also die Philosophie, der gesunde Gebrauch unsers Verstandes ausweichen.'⁴⁸ Again in line with the spirit of Lutheran theology and Pietism, an acceptance of biblical authority is therefore not accompanied by an acceptance of the mystification of religion, in other words the dogma of its theology. The 'Geist Gottes' becomes subject to hermeneutic investigation. The authority of the Bible still stands, with a corresponding diminishing of the scope of purely secular philosophy:

[...] warum wollet ihr diese Leute oder ihre Autorität leugnen, weil sie größer waren als ihr, weil sie aus höheren Fenstern sahen? Warum wollt ihr wegen dessen, was euch in ihren Reden und Episteln dunkel ist [...] das mehr als den Stempel des Genies trägt, das eure besten Philosophen nicht halb so kurz, lebhaft und kräftig würden haben sagen können, für bloß menschlich, für Irrtümern unterworfen, für zweideutig halten?⁴⁹

Only the articulation of faith through continual recourse to the Bible can trace a path out of the confusion of life. Beneath the homiletic rhetoric Lenz already has his own answer, which precisely 'kommt zu [seinem] Zweck', as the above passage continues:

⁴⁷ *Erste Stimme*, II, 575. All following references are to the *Erste Stimme* until indicated otherwise.

⁴⁸ II, 572.

⁴⁹ II, 577.

Lernt sie doch erst verstehen, eh ihr so über sie weg urteilt, das Recht gesteht ihr ja dem elendsten Schmierer zu - und kommt ihr nicht zu *eurem Zweck*, so schiebt euer Urteil lieber auf, denn es könnten andere Leute da sein, oder noch erst geboren werden, die sie nun besser verstünden als wir, und da, wo wir nichts als Unordnung und Verwirrung und Labyrinth sahen, den schönsten herrlichsten chinesischen Garten entdeckten - einen Garten Gottes wie Eden, und wir, die wir uns weidlich darüber mokiert hätten, welch eine *Meinung* würden wir unsern Nachkommen von unserm Geschmack hinterlassen.⁵⁰

As part of his rhetorical conceit Lenz may pretend, along with the doubters, to see nothing other than ‘Unordnung und Verwirrung und Labyrinth’ in the Bible as in life, but despite the confusion of his own writing style the seeds of the ‘Zweck’ of his own ‘Meinung’ are discernible from the outset. Lenz employs the common eighteenth-century image of the labyrinth for a distinct purpose. Its appeal in literature on theodicy and general apologetic literature stems from the fact that it connotes, as T.J.Reed argues, ‘both order and confusion - the order of an objective structure, designed by a divine Daedalus, and the confusion of man’s subjective experience within it.’⁵¹

The role that Lenz hopes to play ‘in der geistlichen Republik’⁵² is one which seeks to revitalise faith. Lenz claims that his writings are not driven by a ‘Neuerungssucht’, rather his efforts are aimed at clearing away the rubble of ‘verdrehte und verstümmelte Sprüche’.⁵³ He likens his efforts, even before their full force becomes apparent, to those

⁵⁰ Ibid. My emphases.

⁵¹ T.J.Reed, ‘Paths through the Labyrinth: Finding your Way in the 18th Century’, *PEGS*, 51 (1980-1), 81-113, (p. 83). Reed cites Klopstock’s *Der Messias*, Canto XII, in which the Christian is described as ‘verirrt in dem Labyrinthe der Schöpfung’, p. 82. To name a few further references I have found to back up Reed’s argument: J-J.Rousseau, *Lettres Morales* (1757-8), ‘Lettre Six’: ‘Enfin nous avons un guide dans ce labyrinthe des erreurs humaines [...]’, in *Rousseau’s Religious Writings*, ed. by R.Grimley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 59; J.H.Jung-Stilling, *Heinrich Stillings Jugend, Jünglingsjahre und Wanderschaft* (München: C.H.Beck, 1982): ‘Stilling sahe sich also wiederum ins größte Labyrinth versetzt [...]’, p. 147, also p. 232; J.W.Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, Book I, 12 August, *HA*, VI, 50: ‘Die Natur findet keinen Ausweg aus dem Labyrinthe der verworrenen und widersprechenden Kräfte, und der Mensch muß sterben.’, p. 39; K.P.Moritz, *Anton Reiser* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1959): ‘Er sahe nur keinen Ausweg aus diesem Labyrinthe, in welchen seine eigene Torheit ihn geleitet hatte [...]’, p. 82. also p. 369.

⁵² *Zweite Stimme*, II, 584.

⁵³ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578.

of ‘Bienen an der alten lieben Wahrheit, die so treuherzig noch immer durch alle den Efeu, Unkraut und Brombeer durchschimmert, zu saugen, und lautern Honig, Götterspeise für die Menschen daraus zu bereiten [...]’.⁵⁴ In line with the humility demanded by Pietism, Lenz does not seek to replace the foundations of Christianity with values ‘die eben so bitter und trostlos sind [...]’, but rather with a ‘Götterspeise’ derived from the Bible. With this promise comes the first intimation of what it might involve:

Ein Spruch in seiner vorigen Lauterkeit wiederhergestellt, sollte uns schätzbarer sein als ein neues System, das uns die Bibel überflüssig machen will, die doch älter als alle Systeme und ohne Zweifel auch besser ist, denn sie führt das System Gottes. Und wenn wir das auch nicht ganz übersehen, laßt uns doch mit einer Ecke von dem herrlichen Gebäude zufrieden sein [...]⁵⁵

Here Lenz identifies the method which will fashion his own ‘Grundstein’: he sets out, in exegetical tradition, literally to restore (‘wiederherstellen’) certain aspects of Christian teaching, a process which will entail the reinterpretation of Christ’s example. Analysis, philological and semantic, of specific biblical verses will be required. As becomes clear in the course of the *Stimmen*, in Lenz’s case he will concentrate on the ‘Bergpredigt’, the reinterpretation of which will form part of his own ‘Grundstein’, or as it is stated in the above quotation, the ‘Ecke’.

Despite their pretensions of piety, the *Stimmen des Laien* are bound to be controversial, to say the least, especially given Lenz’s notion of free will. As Rector states, if exaggerating Lenz’s stance somewhat: ‘Because he [Lenz] knew very well that he was himself guilty of the mortal sin of superbia, and because he could not - and did not want to - risk a final break with his own father or what he represented as the image of God

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578-79.

the Father, he did not assume the attitude of a renegade or heretic.’⁵⁶ Instead Lenz adopted the stance of the use of the ‘Laie’ persona, thus distancing himself to a certain extent from the views expressed in the texts.⁵⁷ The role as a ‘Laie’ enables Lenz a freedom to argue in broader and less defined terms than the rigours of theological discourse would allow. Equally the ‘Laie’ is a representative of the people and hence a voice both from and for the people, giving him an immediate social context for his arguments.⁵⁸ However, the ‘Laie’s’ assertions go far beyond the comprehension of any normal lay preacher, but not beyond the capabilities of a theological student who happened to have enthusiastically attended Kant’s lectures whilst in Königsberg⁵⁹, and who also happened to be a son of a Pietist pastor destined for the highest ecclesiastical office, that of the ‘Superintendent’ in Livland. As a result Lenz attempts to distance himself from the authorship within his family circle, indicating that the substance of his quasi-theological arguments stray some way from Pietism. In a letter to his brother Johann Christian on 7 November 1774, he happily draws attention to his forthcoming

⁵⁶ Rector, p. 63.

⁵⁷ Damm, like Titel and Haug before her, suggests that the fiction of the layman may have been inspired by Herder’s adoption of a similar persona in the ‘Dritte Sammlung der *Fragmente*’ (1767). A link is also suggested between Klopstock’s *Die deutsche Gelehrtenrepublik* (1774) and Lenz’s fictional ‘theologische Reichstag’, II, 892 and Titel, I, 698.

⁵⁸ As Demuth states: ‘So tendiert der Laienbegriff zu einer sozialen Konzeption hin, die die Dialektik von Fortschritt und Bewahrung letztlich vermittelt. Lenz greift dabei neben dem wissenschaftlichen und geistlichen Aspekt ein drittes traditionelles Bedeutungsmoment des Laienbegriffs auf, das auch Zedler vermerkt: ‘Es ist aber das Wort Laye eigentlich von Griechischer Abkunfft in dem es von *λαος* herkommet, welches so viel als das Volck heisset.’ (J.H.Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon* (Leipzig/ Halle, 1737)) Der Laie ist einer aus dem Volk, aus der Gemeinde der Gläubigen [...].’, Demuth, p. 110, see also, pp. 99-112.

⁵⁹ Lenz was a theology student in Königsberg, where a strong Pietist influence was present (see Fulbrook, pp. 162-169), from 1768-71. However, Lenz’s interest was rapidly drawn away from theology, see Damm’s essay, III, 709-11, also her notes, III, 783: ‘Lenz besuchte sehr bald nach seiner Immatikulation ausschließlich Kants Vorlesungen. Er hatte auch persönliche Kontakte zu Kant, er beriet sich mit ihm über seine Zukunftspläne [...]’. Lenz also wrote a poem on Kant’s election as a professor, ‘Als Sr. Hochedelgebornen der HERR PROFESSOR KANT den 21sten August 1770 für die Professor-Würde disputierte’, III, 83-84.

publications, the *Lustspiele nach dem Plautus* and *Der Hofmeister* amongst others. After exhorting his brother to buy them all, he talks about a further publication, the author of which wishes to remain anonymous:

Auch werden herauskommen Meinungen eines Laien zum Besten der Geistlichen [*sic*]: und Stimmen eines Laien auf dem letzten theologischen Reichstage. Die Du Dir anschaffen sollst. wovon [*sic*] aber der Verfasser unbekannt bleiben will.⁶⁰

A year later he asks his father: ‘Haben Sie ein klein Büchelgen gelesen: Meinungen eines Laien zum Besten [*sic*] Geistlichen. Der Verfasser ist nicht bekannt.’⁶¹ Even in his circle of friends the author’s identity remains uncertain, casting doubt whether Lenz did indeed present the *Stimmen des Laien* to the *Société*. Lavater, hardly a man likely to be pleased by any departure from the faith, sends an exuberant letter to the author of *Meinungen eines Laien* via its publishers, not to Lenz himself, as he is ignorant of the writer’s identity. Lavater’s wishes for clarification from the author of such a wonderful but confusing text go unanswered:

Donnerstags abends nach 3 Uhr. An den Verfasser der *Meinungen eines Laien* schleunigst - abzugeben. Eine und viele der seligsten Stunden meines Daseins hab ich Ihnen, sein Sie wer Sie wollen, zu danken [...] das ist ein Ziel meiner Bitte, daß Sie mir bald eine Zeile schreiben und zu mir sagen: >Lavater! hier und dort hast du geirrt; das Ziel nicht erreicht, vorbei geflogen - bist angeprellt. Vor dem hüte dich! da ist Quell deines Irrtums! [...] < Dann will ich auch sagen, welche *Zeilen* Ihrer Schrift unter die Gottesgeistigkeit herabsinken, hinausgleiten, nach meinem Sinn.⁶²

⁶⁰ Lenz an seinen Bruder Johann Christian, Straßburg d. 7. Novbr. 1774, III, 303-5. See also, II, 892.

⁶¹ Lenz an seinen Vater, Den 18ten November [17]75, III, 349-52. By early 1776 Lenz’s authorship was known to the family, or at least to two of his brothers, see Johann Christian Lenz an Christian David Lenz, ?, 20. Januar 1776: ‘Die Meinungen eines Laien hat er selbst geschrieben, und so viel ich als selbst Laie finden können, hat er die Partei wider die heterodoxen Neuerer mit Eifer (doch alles im Herderschen Style) ergriffen [...]’, Müller, I, 156. For details of Lenz’s father see, amongst others, I.Jürjo, ‘Die Weltanschauung des Lenz-Vaters’, in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 138-52.

⁶² Johann Kaspar Lavater an Lenz, Den 20 April 1775, III, 310-11.

Only Herder manages to wring an answer out of Lenz: ‘Hast du die Meinungen eines Laien geschrieben? Ich bitte Dich um Deines Herzens willen, sag mirs.’ Yet, even to his confidant Herder, Lenz’s admission is a timid one, limited to the last line of his reply: ‘Die Meinungen - sind von mir.’⁶³

Nevertheless to whom the texts are addressed is made clear by the ‘Laie’: the ‘Theologen in meinem Vaterland’, in this case presumably the Pietists in Livland, and in particular his father. The next step will be ‘die Anwendung [...] auf die ganze Welt’.⁶⁴ Equally the ‘Laie’ is under no delusions when it comes to the possible consequences of his method and conclusions:

Meine Hauptfrage ist also die: Kam Christus auf die Welt, uns ein moralisch [*sic*] System zu lehren [...] ? Nehmen Sie hier ja wohl in Acht, daß ich hier bloß frage, bloß nur mich will belehren lassen [...]. Weil ich als Frager aber auch eine Stimme habe, so will ich jetzt so meine Gedanken darüber und dafür and dawider Ihnen ganz nackend aufstellen, vogelfrei, eben so bereitwillig kanonisiert, als exkommuniziert oder keins von beiden oder etwas von beiden zu werden, wie sie's verdienen werden.⁶⁵

Revelling in the freedom his adopted persona affords, he lets his ideas loose out into the world at large, and although they may lead to his canonisation, Lenz is also aware that he runs the risk of being outlawed- ‘vogelfrei’ - from the Christian fold. This again indicates the perilous nature of presenting his interpretation of the Bible, as he fears the kind of reception that it will receive from his family. For by redefining Jesus’ example in order to

⁶³ Herder an Lenz, 9 Mz. 1776, III, 400 and Lenz an Herder, Darmstadt [Ende März 1776], III, 417. Lenz also confesses his authorship to Goethe, Lenz an Goethe [Berka, Sommer 1776] III, 479, when he asks Goethe to push for a review of his work in the *Teutscher Merkur*, illustrating Lenz’s continued interest in the text even when drafting his plans for military reform.

⁶⁴ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578.

⁶⁵ *Zweite Stimme*, II, 584.

reconcile it with his own more secular notions of ‘Bestimmung’, in effect Lenz is meddling with a central tenet of Pietism, that of *Imitatio Christi*.

Rhetorically at least, the boldness of this endeavour is acknowledged, with Lenz employing the word ‘kühnlich’ to describe his approach to Scripture. Although taken as indisputable in its authority and authenticity, it remains, again in line with the conventions of biblical hermeneutics, open to interpretation:

[...] so sollen wir als freie, und von niemand als der Gottheit allein beschränkte Bürger unsers Planeten uns der vor uns liegenden frohen Botschaft getrost und herzlich nahen, sehen, was für Vorteile fürs menschliche Geschlecht daraus zu holen sind, ihren innern Wert *kühnlich untersuchen*, und wenn wir ihn schwer und wichtig finden, zu Dank und Anbetung gegen den bereit sein, der sie mit uns geteilet hat.⁶⁶

Lenz is looking for the advantages which will accrue to his and humanity’s ‘Zweck’.⁶⁷

The exegetical investigation begins with the very first word of Jesus’ teaching, ‘μετανοείτε’ (Matthew 4, 17, Mark 1, 15). Lenz adds to an earlier dispute as to the word’s philology, now emphasising the positive, forward-looking rather than negative implications of ‘repentance’: ‘μετανοείτε - herüber mit eurem Gemüte, höher, höher, arme Sterbliche, oder ihr lernt die Gottheit nie kennen, nie in eurem Busen fühlen.’⁶⁸

From the outset Lenz’s hermeneutic approach is free and sweeping.

⁶⁶ *Zweite Stimme*, II, 583. My emphasis.

⁶⁷ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578. See note 50, p. 36.

⁶⁸ *Zweite Stimme*, II, 585. The earlier dispute occurs in *Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen*, II, 521: ‘-μετανοείτε- nicht tut Buße (das Wort hat ein böser Dämon in unser deutsches Wörterbuch gebracht) sondern verändert euren Sinn, erhebt ihn, trachtet von ganzem Herzen, das Geschehene zu verbessern [...]’ In her notes Damm still translates the phrase as ‘Tuet Buße’, II, 899. The dispute continues II, 595 and II, 606. Interestingly Goethe also picks up on the term in connexion with his idea for a drama on Socrates: ‘[...] oder vielmehr den göttlichen Beruf zum Lehrer der Menschen, die εξουσίαν des μετανοείτε [...]’ Goethe an Herder, Frankfurt Anfang 1772, in *Goethes Briefe in vier Bänden, Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. by K.R.Mandelkow, 2nd edn, 4 vols (Hamburg: Wegner, 1982), I, 129-31.

This ‘kühnlich[e]’ form of biblical interpretation is given more sense of method, and hence rigour, when Lenz tackles the ‘Bergpredigt’ immediately after this first dispute. Again issue is taken with both the translation and interpretation of Jesus’ words, this time with Jesus’ pronouncement: ‘ihr müßt nicht glauben, ich sei gekommen, euer Gesetz, eure Propheten aufzulösen, sondern zu erfüllen’ (Matthew 5, 17). In this altercation Lenz reiterates his belief in the established principles of hermeneutics:

[...] liegt in diesen wie in allen Reden Christi nicht ein tieferer, ein zweifältiger, ein Doppelsinn, der aber auf eins hinauskommt, der in einem ganz anderen Verhältnisse als der Doppelsinn der heidnischen Orakel, anstatt zu betrügen und verwirren, vielmehr, je länger man ihm nachdenkt, mit desto schönern, fruchtbarern, seligern Entdeckungen uns belohnt, ein Doppelsinn, der für die hier hinhörende Menge vollkommen zulänglich und zuträglich - zugleich aber für die nach ihnen kommenden Nachkommen ihrer nachkommenden Nachkommen ebenso zulänglich, ebenso zuträglich sein konnte und sein sollte.⁶⁹

The time and patience called for in the *Erste Stimme* as regards Bible reading begins to bear fruit. The scope for reinterpretation, which ‘Doppelsinn’ allows, is firstly expressed in lay terms before any recourse to the technicalities of translating the biblical Greek of Matthew 5, 17 is undertaken:

Wie wär’s also, wenn es zugleich hieße, die vorige Bedeutung nicht ausgeschlossen, ich bin nicht gekommen, euch das Gesetz und die Propheten zu erklären, euch euer Moralsystem herauszudreheln, sondern zu erfüllen, zu tun und wer’s Herz dazu hat, der tue mir nach. Sehen Sie den Zusammenhang, Sie werden diesen seligen Doppelsinn fortgesetzt und durchgeführt finden.⁷⁰

He may well find the beginnings of a thread in the Bible’s ‘Doppelsinn’, which gives forth a whole kaleidoscope of ‘meaning’: ‘Doch ist hier immer Doppelsinn doppelter, zwiefacher, dreifacher Sinn, vielleicht hundertfacher in jedem Worte, und das ist eben das

⁶⁹ II, 586.

⁷⁰ II, 587.

Vortrefflichste der ganzen Predigt.’⁷¹ But as yet he is not trying to give any definitive answers, rather he is testing out ideas, as is possible in his role as a ‘Laie’.

When Lenz does try to dispute the technicalities of Luther’s translation he comes unstuck. His philological investigations of the Greek are inconclusive; in this case *κατα* in the word *καταλύω* can mean either *contra* or *versus*, and so he can gain no more legitimacy than Luther in his version.⁷² In fact his musings on the true significance of the Greek are undermined by the frank admissions which Lenz makes as regards his linguistic competency. He acknowledges that his philological analysis rests on the insight provided by one dictionary.⁷³ Given that this is a Greek-Latin dictionary doubt must be cast on his capabilities when it comes to using such a reference work, especially after his frank, self-deprecating confession: ‘[...] und Griechisch verstehe ich auch nicht viel (doch das unter uns)’, as he is in the midst of his first philological investigation. Such comments hardly inspire confidence, either in the audience, or in Lenz himself. This becomes manifest when he loses the thread of his argument: ‘- o das ist übel, nein, ich muß so aufrichtig nicht sein, ich will die andern Komposita still durchgehen, und wenn ich etwas für mich finde, dann erst laut werden. -’⁷⁴ The scouring of the Bible for something ‘für mich’ must go on elsewhere.

Nevertheless the ‘failure’ of one argument is used as a rhetorical device. Lenz indulges himself in an increasingly theatrical delivery in an attempt to draw his audience in.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² For the full dispute, the content of which is less important than the outcome, see II, 587-88.

⁷³ That of Schrevelius: *Lexicon manuale Graeco - Latinum et Latino - Graecum* (Amsterdam, 1685); he says he does not possess Scapula’s *Lexikon Graeco - Latinum novum* (Basel: 1605), II, 588; see also Damm’s notes, II, 897.

⁷⁴ II, 588-89.

Having seemingly ground to a halt, he slips in a passing reference to a further two Greek words. With them comes a hint regarding the identities of the ‘Sprüche’ fleetingly mentioned in the *Erste Stimme*, and which Lenz will use as examples to support his conviction that his secular notions of ‘Bestimmung’ are not incompatible with Pietism, but rather that each lends support to the other. In re-establishing the ‘vorige Lauterkeit’ a reinterpretation of these two words will play an important role:

Unterdessen, meine Herren [...], denn ich muß Ihnen sagen, ich habe darüber noch ein wenig viel auf dem Herzen - von dem Worte πληρόω wollte ich Ihnen auch noch eine philologische Untersuchung und von dem Worte ἀν[θ]ίστημι und von vielen andern Wörtern, doch man muß seine Gelehrsamkeit nicht all auf einmal ausschütten, weil die edle Bescheidenheit - weg Schrevelius!⁷⁵

Both of the Greek words mentioned here appear in the ‘Bergpredigt’. The first - πληρόω (Matthew 5,17) - which is crucial in defining Christ’s relation to the Law of the prophets is subject to an inconclusive philological investigation at the end of the *Zweite Stimme* (see below). The second word - ἀν[θ]ίστημι - is subject to an altogether more rigorous philological investigation in the *Dritte Stimme*. It appears in a different verbal form, in a verse of the ‘Bergpredigt’: ‘μη ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ’, or, in Luther’s German translation: ‘ich sage euch, daß ihr nicht widerstreben sollt dem Übel’ (Matthew 5, 39). Along with an interpretation of Christ’s teaching on adultery (Matthew 5, 27), these two teachings become the prime examples used for his ‘Grundstein’ in order to show that free human action is compatible with Pietism.

⁷⁵ II, 589. The lexical form (1st person indicative, present active) is ἀνθίστημι, not ἀντιστήμι as it stands in Damm. Lenz himself uses the analogous lexical form πληρόω, therefore for consistency it would seem more than likely that he would also use ἀνθίστημι.

However, just as is the case during the *Erste Stimme*, Lenz only makes a passing comment, shying away, as yet, from any further elucidation. Instead he carries off his audience on a wave of frenzy, digressing at every opportunity, indulging in empty rhetoric. Lenz openly admits as much: 'Schon wieder deklamiert er, das ist nicht auszuhalten. Deklamation, wo Vernunft gelten soll. Aber verzeihen Sie mir, meine Herren! ich bin jung [...].'⁷⁶ He toys with his audience, reiterating the same questions posed in the *Erste Stimme*, but assiduously avoiding any attempt to answer them:

Also frage ich jetzt [...] ob ein allgemein moralisch [*sic*] Ideal möglich ist? für alle Zeiten - für alle Völker - für alle Umstände - bedenken Sie selber [...] Doch das lassen wir stehen, es ist hier der Ort noch nicht, das auszumachen.⁷⁷

In effect during the *Zweite Stimme* the 'theologische Abhandlung' becomes a performing philosophical monologue. It declares its own stylistic resemblance to Sterne and Wieland, it also bears more than a passing resemblance to *Le Neveu de Rameau* (started 1760, published 1803), yet the two distinct voices in Diderot's work - *Moi* and *Lui* - are united in Lenz's, brought together in the single narrative of Lenz himself. One narrator goes off on wild tangents, whilst the other seeks to rein in the first's senseless, if amusing, ramblings. He transports his audience to the barbers', with thoughts triggered off in his head by each stroke of the barber's comb described in intimate detail, as the theatricality of the address takes over: '[...] ich habe mich frisieren lassen, und da ist mir bei diesem Kammstriche Sterne durch den Kopf gefahren, bei jenem Abbt, beim dritten Wieland, beim vierten [...]'; the other narrator tries to stem the flow: '- ja was soll ich Ihnen mit all den hundert

⁷⁶ II, 594.

⁷⁷ II, 590.

Kamm- und Gedankenstrichen das Papier verderben.’ But he is doomed, for the time being at least, to failure, as the performance breaks down, leaving Lenz hoping for inspiration of an electrostatic nature:

Ich setze mich an den Tisch! nicht mehr der vorige, nehme die Feder, sehe sie an - - denke an Gottscheden, sage: Laie, du bist ein kleines Genie, aber leider! auch das will nicht mehr helfen. Wo seid ihr schönen Gesichter alle! holde Geister, die ihr mich eurer gnädigen Influenzen würdigtet. Aus ist das Licht - und ich sitz in der *Camera obscura*, und beweine meinen Unverstand [...] Jetzt sieht es schlimm in meinem Kontra aus, ich will mich anziehen und zu Tische gehen, und fressen, weil ich nicht denken kann [...]⁷⁸

The enthusiasm, for all its energies, appears to lead nowhere fast and indeed can be seen as offering further evidence of his anxiety when it comes to presenting his own biblical readings. But such drama and apparent confusion can also be viewed as a contrived rhetorical tactic.

Drama produces passion. Lenz’s approach to the ‘Geist Gottes’ assumes a far more fiery aspect. The text assumes a more aggressive attitude. As such it is reminiscent of the ideas expressed in his earlier moral-philosophical texts, such as *Meine Lebensregeln* (1771/72), in which, as Rector states, Lenz ‘equates his notion of action as a particularly human vocation with the Christian ideal of a life that pleases God’⁷⁹:

Daß wir also vorzüglich unserm Geist die tätige Kraft in uns bilden, nicht die leidende - höchstens empfindende und genießende Materie denn das tut das Tier auch von dem wir doch um eine so herrliche Stufe erhöht sind um zur Gottheit emporzusteigen. Also tun ist unsere *Hauptbestimmung*, nicht bloß Eindrücke empfangen sowohl körperliche als geistliche durch die Türen der Seele die Sinne - tun, handeln, tätig sein mit Geist und Leib wo es am meisten nützlich sein, Heil bringen kann zur Ehre Gottes und der Menschen und so von Form zu Form übergehen ins ewigen Leben.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ II, 590-91.

⁷⁹ Rector, p. 61, see also p. 61-62 for following section.

⁸⁰ *Meine Lebensregeln*, II, 497. My emphasis.

As Rector argues: 'The homiletic tone of this confession cannot obscure the rather aggressive act of mind that it recommends. Lenz [...] knows very well that he is using rhetoric to combine the uncombinable [free will and Pietist notions of divine grace] in an effort to to ease his own conscience.' In the *Zweite Stimme* Lenz picks up on this notion of his sense of 'Bestimmung' as action and identifies himself with a 'wir' who are active in their faith:

Und sollen wir denn ruhen, meine Herren? - Verflucht sei die Ruhe und auf ewig ein Inventarium der tauben Materie, aber *wir*, die *wir* Geist in Adern fühlen, ruhen nur dann, wenn wir zu noch höherem Schwunge neue Kräfte sammeln, wenn wir freiwillig zu sinken scheinen, um weit über den Gesichtskreis der gewöhnlichen Sterblichen emporzusteigen.⁸¹

What form such commitment should take is not specified. However, it has to be legitimated through the Bible if Lenz wants to stay within the Christian fold, as is clearly his intention. In an attempt to find such legitimation, Lenz asks a whole host of questions, running to some two pages, once again concerning the content, meaning and applicability of the 'Bergpredigt'.⁸²

The penultimate question takes up the thread of 'Doppelsinn', dropped when Lenz pushes his Schrevelius to one side. He returns to the Greek word *πληρόω*, mentioned, if only fleetingly, as being of significance in his philological investigations. Once again Lenz's reading of the Bible, or more correctly his dictionary, proves inconclusive:

Ob das *πληρόω* ausüben, *implere* oder vervollkommen, *supplere*, oder alles beides zusammen heiße, und ob die Absicht der Zukunft Christi mehr gewesen, uns die leichteste Art zu zeigen, wie wir die Gebote Gottes erfüllen können, oder mehr [...]?⁸³

⁸¹ II, 594. My emphasis.

⁸² See II, 596-98.

⁸³ II, 597. See note 75, p. 44.

Nonetheless the audience is reminded of Lenz's penchant for trying to wrestle some other meaning from the biblical Greek. It will only be done to telling effect in the *Dritte Stimme*. For the time being the audience is left more frustrated than ever, as he indulges in yet more rhetorical games. However, the staged nature of the performance becomes increasingly obvious; having made an allusion to Job's indefatigable spirit, he himself is overcome with tiredness:

[...] oder - hier habe ich noch nicht recht überlegt, was ich fragen wollte, der Abend tritt herein, meine Geister legen sich, die Feder sinkt mir aus der Hand - nehmen Sie vorlieb, und glauben nur ja nicht alles, was ich Ihnen gesagt habe -⁸⁴

Unsurprisingly such convoluted rhetorical games have led to an unfavourable critical reception; as one contemporary review of *Meinungen eines Laien* put it:

Mit einem Wort, es verlohnt sich der Mühe das Buch zu lesen, wenigstens eben so sehr, als jemand in der Arlequins Jacke die Metaphysik docieren zu lassen.⁸⁵

Such an attitude, until recently, has continued to characterise the critical reception of Lenz's 'Grundstein' text.

It is not until the *Dritte Stimme* that Lenz draws the strands of his argument together by means of giving precise, and in his mind conclusive, examples from the 'Bergpredigt' resulting from his hermeneutic investigation. 'Paradox' gives way to a desire for elucidation and clarification.⁸⁶ At its conclusion, Lenz brings the *Stimmen des Laien* into sharp perspective, providing a context within which they are to be understood.

⁸⁴ II, 598.

⁸⁵ M.Claudius, Rezension in *Der Deutsche, sonst Wandsbecker Bothe*. Hamburg/Wandsbeck, Juni 1775, Müller, I, 102.

⁸⁶ As Lenz terms his previous mode of questioning, see *Dritte Stimme*, II, 598.

Whereas he terms the first two *Stimmen* ‘theologisch’, in the third he redefines them as ‘meine pseudotheologischen Abhandlungen’.⁸⁷ For once, what such a shift entails is lucidly explained - it revolves around the definition of ‘Bestimmung’:

Denn die eigentliche Theologie beschäftigt sich mit unserm Zustande nach dem Tode und unserer *Bestimmung* dahin, die weltliche Theologie oder der Naturalismus, den ich Ihnen predige, beschäftigt sich mit unserer *Bestimmung* in dieser Zeitlichkeit, und diese beiden Theologien müssen auf ein Haar zusammenpassen, wenn sie echt sein wollen. Wir müssen den Himmel weder ganz allein auf unsere Erde einschränken, noch auch unsere Erde ganz und gar davon ausschließen wollen [...]⁸⁸

‘Pseudotheologie’, or as he terms it here ‘weltliche Theologie oder der Naturalismus’, seeks to redefine the place of religion in ‘dies[e] Zeitlichkeit’. Lenz asserts that his belief in free human action and faith are indeed compatible, indeed one supports the other, as he hopes to prove conclusively in *Stimmen des Laien*: ‘Aber Glaube ist ganz ein ander Ding, Glaube beschwingt, befacht, entzündet unsere Kräfte alle [...] Ein tätiger Glaube [...] ist tun.’⁸⁹ The concept of ‘Naturalismus’, although still grounded in faith, gives Lenz the leeway to unravel his proof in his own particular way.

The anxiety of the previous two *Stimmen*, whether rhetorical or not, is swept away by a supreme confidence at the beginning of the *Dritte Stimme*. The barrage of ‘paradoxe Fragen’ concerning the possibility of ‘ein allgemeines Moralsystem’ raised at the end of the *Zweite Stimme* is met with a curt reply:

In der heutigen [Abhandlung] tret ich mit einer ebenso paradox scheinenden Antwort auf. Es ist nicht allein möglich, sondern es ist auch da. Seit Anfang der Welt ist's dagewesen, in allen Weltteilen, unter allen Völkerschaften.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 616. All following references are to the *Dritte Stimme* until indicated otherwise.

⁸⁸ II, 616-17. My emphasis.

⁸⁹ II, 612-13.

⁹⁰ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 598. All following references are to the *Dritte Stimme* until indicated otherwise.

Initially Lenz moves his focus away from the Bible. Having criticised the limitations of philosophy, now, after his failures in the previous two *Stimmen*, he assumes the mantle of a philosopher, even though beneath the homiletic rhetoric he has been engaged on passages of philosophical argument all along; as the previous quotation continues: ‘Lassen Sie uns diesen Satz erst als Philosophen, dann als Theologen ohne alle vorgefaßten Meinungen untersuchen.’ As a ‘Philosoph’ Lenz is able, to a certain extent at least, to sidestep major theological issues which had preoccupied him in previous moral-philosophical texts. A simple appeal to the concept of ‘Natur’ allows him the freedom to circumvent, for example, the problem of Original Sin, which had preoccupied him in to such an extent in *Supplement zur Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen* (1771/72), and simply assert that the individual is entirely responsible for his actions:

In der Tat - warum wollen wir aus Liebe zum Sonderbaren uns ein ander System erklügeln, als uns aus allen Zeiten und Orten, aus der ganzen Natur zuwinkt [...] Wir werden alle gut geboren, und das Bessere und Schlimmere unserer Handlungen und unseres Zustandes hängt lediglich von uns selber ab.⁹¹

Nature is in fact the same as ‘Offenbarung’; indeed, the jump from the trials and tribulations of a weary would-be theologian to embracing Nature is as easy as donning the

⁹¹ II, 600. As Rector points out (pp. 63-64), in the introduction of *Meinungen eines Laien* Lenz freely admits: ‘Sie wissen z.B. wie sehr ich immer am Dogma von der Erbsünde zweifelte’ (II, 524), and he had indeed treated the fall of Adam extensively in his *Supplement zur Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen*. Lenz reinterprets the command in Genesis not to eat the tree of knowledge in ‘an entirely unmetaphorical way: as the creator’s demand that his creation not obey his hunger blindly’. Lenz claims that man is to establish himself above all as freely acting human beings, rather than merely followers of sensual desires and natural drives. It is God who creates space for our will and hence our ‘Platz zu Handeln’, as it is termed in *Über Götz von Berlichingen* (II, 628): ‘Es war dies der erste Stoß, 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 entgegenwirkenden Kräfte konnte sich seine Freiheit im Handeln, seine Selbstwirksamkeit, seine Velleität äußern.’ (II, 516). Lenz maintains that God’s warning contains permission to exercise free will.

hat of a ‘Philosoph’. Away from the Bible Lenz is free to reassert his convictions concerning the freedom of human action. Only in the *Dritte Stimme* does he aim to prove that such convictions are indeed compatible with his faith: ‘Ich rede jetzt als Philosoph, das heißt, ich reiße Sie mit meinem System fort, schwimmen Sie eine Weile mit mir, hernach sollen Sie Ihre Freiheit wieder haben.’⁹² With such licence Lenz quickly makes clear his conception of the ‘nature’ of man. Agonising over the Bible is temporarily forgotten, with Schrevelius, at least for the time being, well and truly ‘weg’. New avenues are opened up with ease: ‘In der Einrichtung unserer Natur lagen die *stamina* zu allen unsern heutigen Gesetzen, woher würden wir sie sonst bekommen haben?’⁹³ Such ‘*stamina*’ also imply a sense of justice:

[...] überall Ordnung und Verhältnis stabilisiert sein müsse, um alle in einer gewissen Proportion gleich glücklich zu erhalten, und das Gefühl dieser Proportion heißt die Gerechtigkeit, die jedem Erdenbürger angeboren wird.⁹⁴

Justice and equality are thus located not only in heaven, but also in each and every individual. Because of this their fate is bound up with the actions of each and every individual: justice can be upheld, or destroyed by individuals. Justice is conceived of Platonically, and thus the individual is bound to uphold it:

[...] [die Gerechtigkeit] stimmt alle die Gegenstände um ihn herum, oder vielmehr seine Empfindungen für alle die Gegenstände um ihn herum, die denn beständig Musik in ihm machen würden, mit all ihren Konsonanzen und Dissonanzen, wenn seine Gerechtigkeit nur aufrichtig gestimmt hätte.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ II, 600-1.

⁹⁵ II, 601. See the earlier formulations outlined on pp. 27-29.

‘Naturalismus’ may provide ‘Platz zu handeln’, it does not, however, at least in Lenz’s eyes, provide any sense of how specifically to act. Guidance only comes through ‘Offenbarung’:

Wir finden ein Leeres in uns, unsere Kräfte, unser ganzer Geist, elastisch wie die Luft, dringt ihm nach und erweitert sich die Sphäre. Sie kann aber nicht erweitert werden als mit Hilfe der Offenbarung, alle sonstige anscheinende Erweiterungen sind es nicht in der Tat [...] und da wird denn in der Progression Tod draus.⁹⁶

Philosophy can only take Lenz so far; having argued the case of ‘Naturalismus’, he turns on any moral system devoid of biblical legitimation. Any ‘sonstige Erweiterung’, that is to say ‘menschlich[e] Moralität oder natürlich[e] Moralität’, is condemned out of hand. Thus, although Rousseau - the ‘hartnäckige Genfer Diogen’ - may be of use in discussing human nature, his emphasis on a return to ‘Einfalt’ is dismissed by Lenz as insufficient in practice, since it is unable to secure happiness. For all the ‘advances’ made as a ‘Philosoph’ Lenz returns, bringing his audience with him, to square one: ‘[...] und da stehen wir wieder -’, seemingly no nearer a solution.⁹⁷ However, when his argument as ‘Philosoph’ breaks down he is still able to make a direct appeal to the Bible, as he reaffirms its sole authority: ‘Komm, komm uns zu Hilfe, göttliche Offenbarung [...]’.⁹⁸ ‘Offenbarung’ must complement, not contradict, Lenz’s philosophical convictions.

Lenz returns to ‘Offenbarung’, but now seeks to prove that it is compatible with his own concepts of ‘Natur’, and thus to create his ‘Grundstein’. ‘Offenbarung’ leads not

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ II, 602.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

only forward to the future Kingdom of God in the New Testament, but also backwards, taking us back to our law of ‘nature’ in the Old Testament:

Zur Hauptsache. Die Offenbarung konnte nichts weiter tun, als das in uns liegende Naturgesetz näher bestimmen, die Linien höher ausziehen zu dem Hauptzwecke der in uns gelegten Wünsche und Verlangen nach größerem Umfange von Glückseligkeit. Die Grundlinien aber sind immer dieselben, können nicht verändert werden, oder Gott müßte seiner Schöpfung widersprechen.⁹⁹

In his cameo as ‘Philosoph’, Lenz defined the concept of ‘Naturgesetz’, with its foundation both the existence of, and an active commitment to ‘Gerechtigkeit’. He therefore sets about creating biblical backing for his philosophical arguments, one ostensibly based on the Old Testament patriarchal view of justice:

Es ist also die Offenbarung des göttlichen Willens oder des Gesetzes, denn das ist einerlei, nichts als die Fortsetzung der Schöpfung, Regeln, nach welchen Gott uns geschaffen, weiter ausgedehnt, nach welchen wir uns itzt selber fortschaffen und unsere Existenz erhöhen können. 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.¹⁰⁰

The musings of the ‘Philosoph’ are thus shown to run in parallel with the ‘Theologe’s’ conception of ‘Offenbarung’, with Lenz’s reading of the Bible henceforth informed and directed by his concept of ‘Natur’. If it is our ‘Natur’ to be born good with a Platonic ‘Gerechtigkeit’ which each individual must uphold, then, so his argument, this must be the point of ‘Offenbarung’. Lenz makes starts to make progress in his aim to show that his sense of ‘Bestimmung’ and his faith do not contradict each other, rather that each lends support to the other. Theologically he is able to make categorical assertions without needing to substantiate his claims, as any questions as to the proof of his assertions are

⁹⁹ II, 602-3.

¹⁰⁰ II, 603.

met with the standard reply, ‘Der Beweis liegt in der Sache selber’ - that is to say in ‘Offenbarung’. So armed, he is able to redouble his efforts to come up with a new reading of the Bible and, moreover, with a vigour that has a distinct end in mind - the biblical legitimation of his broadly secular notion of ‘Bestimmung’ through precise examples from the ‘Bergpredigt’.

The ‘Naturalismus’ of the ‘Philosoph’ transmutes into the ‘Geist’ of the Bible. There is no one ‘Ideal’ ‘für alle Umstände’, but there is ‘Der Geist dieses Ideals’, one relative to particular historical and social circumstances.¹⁰¹ It is such a ‘Geist’, informed by his concept of ‘Natur’, which Lenz now seeks in the ‘Bergpredigt’. Even in his introduction to what will amount to the long promised ‘Götterspeise’ the implications of Lenz’s ‘Pseudotheologie’ on *Imitatio Christi* are palpable:

Und wie glänzend wird mir die Bergpredigt! ha hier ist gut sein, hier auf diesem heiligen Berge, hier am untersten Saum des Berges, wo Staub von den Schuhsohlen meines Jesu herabrollt. Wallt über mir Heilige, wallt hoch über mir Apostel, ich will in euerm Schatten stehen und glücklich sein. Ja glücklich sein in einer Welt, die Gott zu betreten wert hielt, glücklich unter Geschöpfen, zu denen Gott hinabzurufen würdigte: selig! selig! achtmal hintereinander. Noch sind viel solcher Seligen da, verborgen, versteckt, dem großen Haufen unbekannt. Kommt, meine Brüder, daß ich euch umarme, daß ich mich an der himmlischen Ruh in euern Gesichtern letze und ganz die Wonne fühle, da zu sein.¹⁰²

Although Christ is fittingly designated - for a Pietist - ‘mein Jesu’, the teachings derived from his words will bring Lenz, for all the homiletic tone of the text, into conflict with Pietist theology.

It is only half way through the *Dritte Stimme* that Lenz finally dedicates his energies to the details of biblical interpretation.¹⁰³ Even here he sets limitations on the

¹⁰¹ II, 607.

¹⁰² II, 605.

¹⁰³ See II, 607-11.

ensuing discussion, admitting that he has ‘noch keine Antwort’ to the question of whether Christ’s ‘Ideal’ really is: ‘[...] das höchste, das gedacht werden kann, für alle Zeiten, Umstände und Individuen das höchste?’¹⁰⁴ Instead Lenz pursues the ‘Geist dieses Ideals’ as it manifests itself in his reading of the ‘Bergpredigt’. More precisely he picks out two teachings which are used as examples through which Lenz seeks to prove that his ideas of free human action are indeed compatible with his faith: firstly, Christ’s teachings on adultery (Matthew 5, 27-30), and secondly his pronouncement on ‘turning the other cheek’ (Matthew 5, 38-39). Both teachings are reinterpreted, in accordance with hermeneutic method, to fit Lenz’s contemporary context.

Lenz summons Christ’s teaching on adultery in reaction to the debauched state of his own contemporary society, as he points out in no uncertain terms:

Bei der erstaunenden Steigerung unserer Begierden, Fertigkeit unserer Phantasie, sich Bilder zu erschaffen und auszuschmücken, Fertigkeit all unserer Konkupiszenz, sich für diese Hirngespinnste zu interessieren, sie mit Armen des Geistes stärker zu fassen, als zwei verzweifelte Gladiateurs auf den Kampfplätzen zu Rom - könnte man das Gebot: Du sollst nicht ehebrechen, sollte man es, müßte man es für unsere Zeiten nicht näher bestimmen, als: wer dies, das Weib ansieht, ihrer zu begehren - *das Phantom, wär es auch ein Weib, das nie existiert, in seinem Gehirne erschafft und seiner begehrt z.E.*--¹⁰⁵

The ‘Geist’ of Christ’s ideal is interpreted, in accordance with the practice of homiletics and thus corresponding to Lenz’s posture as a ‘Laie’, as being an extension of the literal meaning of the biblical passage. The sin ‘ihrer zu begehren’ does not even require the individual to look at a woman, rather any ‘Begier nach unerlaubtem Genusse’, even if purely imagined, is morally condemned.¹⁰⁶ Such a reading is uncontroversial and would

¹⁰⁴ II, 607.

¹⁰⁵ II, 607-8.

¹⁰⁶ II, 608.

not conflict with the Pietist morality of his upbringing. The pious moral concern with sexual mores will become central to the underpinning of the subsequent texts to be dealt with in this thesis. In *Die Soldaten* and the ensuing texts concerning military reform there are clear moral principles which can be traced back to the stance adopted in the *Dritte Stimme*.¹⁰⁷ However, although present in such subsequent texts, as part of the ‘Grundstein’, true to Lenz’s word, it ‘aber freilich nicht muß gesehen werden’.

As well as the example of Christ’s teaching on adultery, Lenz also summons a second example: his reading of Matthew 5, 38-39. That it is alluded to earlier in the *Stimmen* also suggests that its appearance has been anticipated all along. In contrast to the interpretation of Jesus’ teaching on adultery, this second example does bring Lenz into more direct conflict with the teachings of Pietism and goes some way to explaining Lenz’s anxiety regarding his family’s reception of the text. As has been stated, Lenz seeks to interpret the *Imitatio Christi* as ‘an appeal to humanity/make use of the freedom of the will and the opportunity to act morally’¹⁰⁸, an interpretation which challenges the authority of Pietist theology directly. But Lenz goes to great lengths in an attempt to prove that the communal upholding of ‘Glückseligkeit’ and ‘Gerechtigkeit’ through the exercise of free will are in fact supported by his own faith and thus to win God’s grace. His interpretation of Matthew 5, 38-39 is offered as an example of how this can be done.

Lenz picks up a thread which appears, however cryptically, in the first two *Stimmen*. He gives an example of a ‘Spruch in seiner vorigen Lauterkeit wiederhergestellt’ and exhibits the ‘Gelehrsamkeit’ (despite evidence to the contrary) of

¹⁰⁷ It is also a theme which preoccupies Lenz in his previous moral-philosophical texts, from *Catechismus* onwards, as well as more famously being explored in *Der Hofmeister*.

¹⁰⁸ Rector, p. 65.

‘noch eine philologische Untersuchung [...] von dem Worte ἀν[θ]ιστῆμι’.¹⁰⁹ The trepidation which Lenz freely admits to before offering his interpretation is indicative of the realisation that his ‘pseudo-philosophische’ arguments do in fact, however hard he tries to conceal it, run counter to fundamental beliefs of Pietism:

Weiter, ums Himmels willen! Auf was für Materien laß ich mich ein! Sie müssen diesmal mich nehmen wie Sie mich finden, m. H.! Ich suche niemand zu gefallen, wo es drauf ankommt, der Wahrheit bis in die tiefsten Felsenritzen nachzuspüren, wo Licht durchfällt. Vielleicht liegt dort mehr Gold, als Sie glauben.¹¹⁰

Immediately the identity of the ‘Spruch’ in question is revealed, Matthew 5, 38-39:

Ist unter unsern heutigen Umständen die Regel noch für buchstäblich unveränderlich zu halten:
So jemand dir einen Streich gibt auf den rechten Backen, so biete ihm den andern auch dar?

Lenz extracts the words of Christ from their context, words which, as he previously argued, were delivered ‘unter gewissen Umständen, zu gewissen Zeiten an gewisse so und so charakterisierte Personen [...]’.¹¹¹ He then goes on to pursue the ‘Geist’ of Jesus’ words.

Lenz disputes Luther’s translation of Matthew 5, 39, a verse which constitutes a dominant strand within Christian teaching: the renunciation of force, in its most extreme case in the doctrine of quietism so prevalent in his own time. Luther translates the Greek ‘μη ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ’ in the following way: ‘ich sage euch, daß ihr nicht widerstreben sollt dem Übel.’¹¹² The tentative philologist of the *Zweite Stimme* suddenly

¹⁰⁹ *Erste Stimme*, II, 578 and *Zweite Stimme*, II, 589 respectively. See note 55, p. 37 and note 75, p. 44.

¹¹⁰ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 609. All following references are to the *Dritte Stimme* until indicated otherwise.

¹¹¹ II, 604.

¹¹² II, 609. All following references: II, 609, until indicated otherwise. Although Zierath picks up on the connexions of this passage to *Über Götz von Berlichingen* and to Lenz’s dispute with Luther, he does not

becomes assertive. No longer wrestling with his Schrevelius, Lenz comes straight to the point: ‘Mich deucht, er hat hier den Sinn ganz unrecht gefaßt, ἀντιστῆναι heißt entgegenstellen [...]’ He regards ‘widerstreben’ as simply wrong and replaces it with ‘entgegenstellen’. In so doing he replaces an intransitive verb with a transitive one, thus creating room for a direct object in his translation. An added, imagined object is then supplied, transforming the sense of the passage. Despite his previous acknowledged deficiencies in Greek, his investigations go on to detail the nature of the object to be inserted: ‘[...] und mich deucht, es leidet hier der Text nicht die geringste Gewalt, wenn man hier eine grammatische Figur, die ich nicht mehr mit Namen zu nennen weiß, annimmt [...]’ Conveniently Lenz forgets the name of the particular grammatical construction (in fact it does not exist, underlining the shaky nature of his argument), but by invoking it in his investigation, the doors of ‘Doppelsinn’ are blown wide open. Ironically Lenz’s interpretation will gain rather than lose ‘Gewalt’, in more ways than one. The construction, which, according to Lenz, ‘[...] bei den Morgenländern sehr üblich war’, entails the following: instead of repeating the same word twice, a shorter form could be employed in the case of enunciations, such as those in the ‘Bergpredigt’, whereby any word repeated orally needed only to be expressed once in written form. Hence Lenz offers a variant on the sense of the original Greek: ‘[...] statt eines Worts in einer Enunziation doppelt gesetzt, dasselbe kürzshalber nur einfach zu setzen, statt ἀντιστῆναι πονηρὸν τῷ πονηρῷ, ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ allein [...]’ Rather than using the word ‘πονηρον’, ‘evil or the Evil One’, twice, in the accusative and dative forms, Matthew uses

explain the substance of the dispute, nor its value or implications for the ‘Grundstein’. See C. Zierath, *Moralität und Sexualität bei J.M.R.Lenz* (St.Ingbert: Röhrig, 1995), pp. 61-62, and pp. 66-67.

it only once, in the dative. When it comes to translation, what is rendered by one word in Greek must be translated in full - that is to say by both a direct and an indirect object - in the final version. A significant change in meaning takes place:

[...] und hieße es (Matthew 5, 39) alsdann nicht, wie alle Herren Übersetzer hinschlendern, *non obsistere malo*, sondern dem Übel kein Übel entgegenzustellen, das Übel nicht zu erwidern, und macht dies, mit Erlaubnis dieser Herren, einen gewaltigen Unterschied in dem ganzen Sinne dieses Spruchs.

The difference is indeed ‘gewaltig’. The ‘vorige Lauterkeit’ becomes clear. Instead of Luther’s ‘daß ihr nicht widerstreben sollt dem Übel’, Lenz offers ‘dem Übel kein Übel entgegenzustellen’. That is to say one *may not* actively resist evil *with* evil, with ‘Übel’ providing both the indirect and direct object of the sentence. Gone is the Old Testament teaching of an ‘eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’, which Jesus seeks to overturn. But it is to be replaced, in Lenz’s version, by the implicit teaching that one *may* actively set oneself against evil in any way, as long as one’s actions are themselves *not* evil. One cannot simply repay evil with evil, but one *can* counter evil with good. Lenz is led to reinterpret Matthew 5, 39 by his own independent moral conviction that it cannot be wrong to resist evil and duly comes up with his own theological backing for such a position. Thus Lenz summons this example in an attempt to prove, in his own mind at least, that his belief in free human action is compatible with the Christian faith and thus with the will of God.

At first sight St. Paul appears to say much the same in his Epistle to the Romans: ‘Vergeltet niemand Böses mit Bösem’, but it becomes clear in his subsequent elaboration

that this is not the case. For St. Paul the reward will come in the afterlife.¹¹³ Lenz, on the other hand, looks for the applicability of Jesus' teaching in this life. 'Pseudotheologie' requires action for and commitment to 'Glückseligkeit' in this world.¹¹⁴ Lenz's exegesis legitimates freedom of action sanctioned by God in the present, a freedom not recognised in Pietism:

Denn hätte unser Herr Christus gradzu verbieten wollen, dem Übel nicht zu widerstreben, gütiger Gott, was würde aus allen braven Leuten werden, die schon durch ihre herzhafte und mutige Widerstrebung so manches Übel in der Welt abgewendet haben?

Moreover, in one last translation dispute, Lenz gives the sense of struggle a wider framework of reference, giving a gloss of 'Übel' as it appears in his version:

Anfangs hab ich das τῷ πονηρῷ erklärt: dem Übeltäter, aber ich fand da auch nicht Trost bei, denn ich will mit Hilfe meines Gottes jedem Übeltäter fest widerstehen im Glauben bis in den Tod, und halte das für die Pflicht jedes rechtschaffenen Biedermanns.

The final sentence of the exegesis gives an insight into its motivation. Lenz's interpretation of the Bible is undertaken precisely to find 'Trost' for his desire to prove that his sense of 'Bestimmung' and faith in fact complement each other.

Lenz continues his 'philologische Untersuchung' in giving a broad definition of the words τῷ πονηρῷ. Rather than translating the Greek as 'the evil one', i.e. Satan, or as an abstract neuter, 'evil', as Luther does, Lenz gives a rendition which is far wider in its range as he states it is '*jedem* Übeltäter', i.e. every evildoer, not just '*dem* Übeltäter', i.e. Satan or evildoer in the singular. Through his interpretation of the Greek, Lenz gives

¹¹³ See Romans 12, 17-21 (Although admittedly the Greek uses quite a different word here: κακὸν not πονηρὸν).

¹¹⁴ See note 99, p. 53.

theological, or perhaps more accurately ‘pseudo-theologische’, backing to the moral duty which he constructs earlier as a ‘Philosoph’ and indeed in his previous moral-philosophical texts. It becomes a duty to fight for ‘Gerechtigkeit’, a key prerequisite for ‘Glückseligkeit’, which itself is deemed the rationale of religion at the beginning of *Meinungen eines Laien*, on earth even until death.¹¹⁵

That this is so is also clear from Lenz’s reading of the second half of Matthew 5, 39, as he so eloquently puts it: ‘so dir jemand Ohrfeigen gibt, so halt ihm den andern Backen auch dar.’¹¹⁶ Lenz dispenses with his philological investigations and endeavours to situate Jesus’ words in their context. He takes his audience back to Jesus’ Mount and tries to describe the prevailing morality of the time. The teaching ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’, originally a ‘Gebot Gottes’, was one elevated to the status of a moral ideal by the Pharisees. Revenge and violence were thus legitimate activities: ‘[...] und der Pöbel glaubte, sprach und handelte den heiligen Leuten ganz sicher und ohne einige Gewissensregung, ja gar mit Beifall ihres Gewissens nach.’¹¹⁷ To bring his teaching into sharper relief, Lenz argues that Jesus expressed himself in seemingly diametrically opposed terms:

Was konnte Christus besser tun, um diesen Götzen umzustürzen und ein heiligeres, frömmere, natürlicheres Ideal an dessen Stelle zu setzen, als ihnen eine Großmut mit dem hellsten Kolorit schildern, zu der weit mehr Herzhaftigkeit, weit mehr Stärke des Geistes gehört, als zum Wiederschlagen? Und was kann er auch für uns besser tun? Nur der sich stärker als der andere fühlt, kann mit kaltem Blute ihm den andern Backen auch darreichen.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Here Lenz picks his arguments concerning altruistic morality expressed in earlier moral-philosophical texts to a conclusion, see pp. 27-29.

¹¹⁶ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 610.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Lenz claims that Jesus only employs the cheek image to exaggerate his message. It is used deliberately to illustrate the strength that one needs to fight evil with good, thus corresponding with Lenz’s translation. But in trying to destroy the ‘Götzen’, or idols, of the past by using rhetorical ruses, Jesus also obscures his message for the other form of ‘Götz’ to be found in Germany in the 1770s - Goethe’s protagonist and those like him. In his interpretation of the Bible Lenz thus seeks to legitimate the ‘Kraftmensch’ or the ‘Promethean figure’, yet within a Christian context, as the above extract continues:

Jede Beleidigung vergessen und einstecken, in so fern sie nur Beleidigung ist, und keine weitere Folgen hat. Aber mit eisernem Arme dazwischenschlagen wie Götz, wenn’s nottut und der Adler mehr zu fangen hat als Mücken.¹¹⁹

Lenz heeds the warning given by Lese at the end of Goethe’s play and, moreover, justifies Götz’s actions.¹²⁰ Pure revenge is superseded by the defence of the ‘Christian’ principles drawn up by Lenz in his guise as a ‘Philosoph’. As a ‘Theologe’ he keeps his promises to approach the Bible in order to see, ‘was für Vorteile fürs menschliche Geschlecht daraus zu holen sind, ihren innern Wert *kühnlich* [zu] untersuchen’.¹²¹ The bold examination leads to bold results, as Lenz picks up the word in connexion with the struggle that the ‘turning the other cheek’ passage signifies for him:

[...] denn wer stark genug ist, den andern Backen auch hinzuhalten, von dem wird vorausgesetzt, daß er sich der Gefahr, einen Backenstreich zu erhalten, ausgesetzt, *kühnlich* entgegengestellt habe [...] ¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Such passionate rhetoric is similarly to be found in *Über Götz von Berlichingen*, II, 637-41

¹²⁰ *Götz von Berlichingen*, V, xiv. Lese: ‘Wehe der Nachkommenschaft, die dich verkennt!’

¹²¹ *Zweite Stimme*, II, 583. My emphasis. See note 66, p. 41.

¹²² *Dritte Stimme*, II, 611. My emphasis.

Lenz’s interpretation of *Imitatio Christi* is placed in a Sturm und Drang context, with the ‘Kraftmensch’s’ exercise of his free will in moral action against tyranny is given ‘pseudo-theologische’ legitimation. Moreover, the identity of the so-called ‘evil ones’ is further specified, with the moral impetus of the struggle made clearer, even if couched in abstract terms:

[...] denn zehnmal lieber sähe ich’s, einer erwiderte in der ersten raschen Jugendhitze Wunden und Beulen (NB. besonders bei unsern veränderten, galanten, polierten und schläfrigen Zeiten), als daß er’s Unrecht billiget und seinen Herrn Christum in irgend einem seiner Glieder zu der Zeit verleugnete, wenn er gefangen und gebunden vor der rasenden Gewalt der Tyrannei stünde.¹²³

It is those responsible for ‘d[ie] rasend[e] Gewalt der Tyrannei’ who will become the target of such action. As a writer this is a path Lenz will also take, as he says, in a less tempestuous manner, in 1776: ‘[...] lieber ein Ungeheuer scheinen, als zu den Ungerechtigkeiten meines Vaterlandes stillschweigen.’¹²⁴

For all the homiletic rhetoric, the interpretation of Christ’s teachings in *Stimmen des Laien* does constitute a significant departure from Pietism. In his exegesis of the ‘Bergpredigt’ Lenz interprets the *Imitatio Christi* as an appeal to humanity to make use of God-given free will and as such is at odds with the Pietist understanding of Christ’s example. Nevertheless the argument is meticulous in its desire to stay within the Christian

¹²³ Ibid. Such a fervent Sturm und Drang attitude is also palpable in the note scribbled in the margin next to the ‘Grundstein’ quotation, as it runs in the manuscript: ‘Die *Meynungen eines Laien* sind der Grundstein meiner ganzen Poesie, aller meiner Wahrheit, all meines Gefühls, der aber freilich nicht muß gesehen werden. [am Rande:] mein Ohrkissen. Doch liegt bei Empfindungen allezeit die Stärke oder Schwäche, Freiheit oder Eingeschränktheit des Gefühls zum Grunde. Eine Seele ohne starken Trieb zum Laster ist nicht wert, fromm und gut zu sein. Ihre Güte ist Federlosigkeit, ihre Bescheidenheit Niederträchtigkeit, ihre Frömmigkeit Furcht vor den Folgen böser Handlungen auf sich, nicht auf andere. Ein Bösewicht ist allezeit von einer gewissen Konsistenz und Größe, ein Guter ist nichts, wenn ers nicht aus einem Bösewicht geworden ist. Dagegen ist die Größe eines solchen Guten auch zur Größe des Bösen, wie tausend zu zehn. Der ohnmächtig Gute ist zero.’ Blei, IV, 283-84.

¹²⁴ *Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken von dem Verfasser der Wolken*, II, 724.

fold: Lenz seeks a renewal of faith, not its destruction. In the *Dritte Stimme* the ‘Grundstein’ is one which claims to be decidedly Christian. After all the religious preoccupations of his early writings, a watershed is reached:

So läßt sich die ganze Bergpredigt analysieren und verstehen, und je länger man sie liest und sich mit ihrem Geist bekannt macht, und *quod bene notandum* den Anfang macht, sie auszuüben, desto herrlicher lernt man sie verstehen, desto mehr Trost findet man darin, *desto felsenfester wird das Haus, das man auf diesen Grund baut*, und trotz allen möglichen und nicht möglichen Stürmen des Schicksals von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit.¹²⁵

Here Lenz returns to the main thesis of *Meinung eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*, in that he reiterates the continued force of the ‘Bergpredigt’ and thus of the Bible. The two examples that he takes from the ‘Bergpredigt’ serve to illustrate how his ‘pseudo-theologische’ approach to the Bible has enabled him to illustrate his main objective in writing these texts: that secular and biblical notions of our ‘Bestimmung’, in particular in the freedom of human action, are not incompatible, but that rather each lends support to the other. In his own mind, Lenz arrives at a definitive ‘spiritual self-orientation’ after which he can draw a line under the theological concerns which dominate his work up unto this point, and thus he is in a position to lay what is his ‘Grundstein’.

That his new sense of commitment will be founded on such a ‘Grundstein’ is left in no doubt when Lenz differentiates between ‘Glaube’ and ‘Hoffnung’, as he extends his own spiritual calling into an invitation for others to join him. Abandoning direct reference to the Bible, he employs his favoured ship motif to reinforce his notion of ‘Bestimmung’.¹²⁶ In the penultimate paragraph of the *Dritte Stimme* Lenz uses the image

¹²⁵ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 611. My emphasis. See also Matthew 7, 24-27 and I Corinthians 3, 10-11.

¹²⁶ The ship motif recurs throughout Lenz’s work: it is employed extensively in the *Erste Stimme*, II, 569, 571. See also A. Schöne, *Säkularisation als sprachbildende Kraft. Studien zur Dichtung deutscher Pfarrersöhne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), pp. 103-105; also Hayer, pp. 63-65.

of the shipwrecked individual to relate the reason for writing his texts in the first place. The *Stimmen des Laien* are to be seen as coming to the aid of those in distress, or, as he terms it, those suffering from an ‘Unbestimmtheit’ no doubt experienced by the author himself, as is intimated by his universalisation of such a position:

[...] es [gibt] gewisse Situationen unseres Lebens [...], 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.¹²⁷

However, when in such a situation ‘de[r] zerrüttet[e] Schiffbrüchig[e]’ is implored to resist taking the means of rescue offered by the first plank to float by. For this impoverished sense of reality will only suck him, as if lured by a siren, into a whirlpool ‘dessen Mitte Untergang ist’. Lenz’s voyage through the turbulent waters of the *Stimmen des Laien* uncovers a faith to combat such situations, a faith which he hopes to share with ‘allen meinen Freunden gleichfalls’, if not to foster it among them, for ‘Nichts als Mangel der Courage ist diese *Unbestimmtheit*, Mangel des Glaubens, der einzigen Federkraft unserer Seele. Und was ist eine Seele, wenn sie schlaff wird?’¹²⁸ In the context of *Stimmen des Laien* the voyage is thus one of both discovery and rescue by means of the articulation of a specific sense of ‘Bestimmung’. Lenz underlines the fact that freedom of action and faith must and indeed do support each other. Stuck on a sandbank, or between ice floes, hope is simply useless; active commitment through faith is the only way forward: ‘Wir müssen dran, wir müssen arbeiten, wir müssen losrammeln. Hoffen läßt den Leidenden leiden, Glauben setzt ihn in Bewegung [...]’¹²⁹ Furthermore the bond between

¹²⁷ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 617. My emphasis.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* My emphasis.

¹²⁹ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 612.

his concept of ‘Natur’ and his ‘Glaube’ is cemented, as Lenz comes to his own resolution of the conflict between ‘Offenbarung’ and ‘Vernunft’:

Eben das uns anerschaffene Moralgesetz, die in allen Menschen liegende *stamina* und Anfangsbuchstaben der *δικαιοσύνη* legitimieren unsern Glauben aufs herrlichste, und machen ihn zur einzigen wahren Vernunft.¹³⁰

In this one sentence Lenz’s desire to maintain a religious grounding is clear: faith and reason support one another, with his own brand of faith a culmination of a complex interaction between two complementary sources of authority. It is his philosophical belief in an essential justice (*δικαιοσύνη*) that legitimates his faith. His faith is further bolstered by the word of God, or the Bible, which enables him to engage in direct action on earth. Despite difficulties as to how such faith can be put into practice, Lenz is convinced of its capabilities. Again he takes over the words of Jesus for his own ends, to spread his own form of evangelism, one which has ‘Bestimmung’ as its message:

Statt des Hirsekorns möchte ich Ihnen, meine Herren, gern ein Senfkörnchen Glauben einpfropfen, und denn, mein ich, wollen wir am Ende Berge versetzen. Ist einer unter Ihnen, der seine ganze *Bestimmung* noch nicht fühlt - oder noch nicht zu fühlen Courage genug hat, der *bestimme sich* für die Gegenwärtigkeit, für den heutigen Tag, auf das best’ er immer kann. Die Aussicht in die Zukunft bleibt ihm unverwehrt, sie ist aber so vast, so immens, so dem allesumwölbenden Himmelsbogen ähnlich, daß dahin zu verweisen immer ein sehr trostloser Rat sein würde.¹³¹

Again a conclusion to the concerns expressed in earlier moral-philosophical texts is reached. In *Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral* Lenz stresses that:

[...] die Moral die Lehre von der *Bestimmung* des Menschen und von dem rechten Gebrauch des freien Willens um diese *Bestimmung* zu erreichen ist [...] Diese Moral muß aber auf gewissen festgesetzten unumstößlichen Gründen beruhen, sonst wird das Gebäude schwankend.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid., 614.

¹³¹ Ibid., II, 615. My emphasis. See Matthew 17, 20.

¹³² *Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral*, II, 499.

In the previous quotation what such a ‘Bestimmung’ entails has, however abstractly, been defined; it is to be geared ‘für die Gegenwartigkeit’, following the example laid out by the ‘Grundstein’ of Lenz’s interpretation of *Imitatio Christi*.

Still what the ‘Pflicht jedes rechtschaffenen Biedermanns’ actually means - beyond ‘dem Übel widerstreben’ - remains hazy, to say the least.¹³³ But that this is the case is hardly surprising. Lenz is true to his own contempt for the systematisers of this world. What he offers is the start of a long thread, not a universal morality. Morality, as is clear from his reading of the ‘Bergpredigt’, is relative to particular historical and social circumstances, with ‘Offenbarung’ a constantly evolving phenomenon. Although still dependent on God and ‘Natur’ Lenz also places great demands on the individual’s distinct way of being. ‘Natur’ is not abstract, but something that resides in each human being, to which one must keep faithful. In a direct attack on any artists or philosophers seeking to place themselves, *Genie*-like, on the same level as God, Lenz reasserts that the autonomy of ‘Bestimmung’ can only exist within a divine framework:

Denn die Natur ist es nicht, die uns auf krumme Wege führt, die Supernatur ist es, die schöne Natur, die das Ding besser verstehen will als Gott und alle seine Propheten: die Kunst. Der Mensch ist nicht zur Kunst gemacht (wie das Wort heut zu Tage mißbraucht wird), das heißt, viele Menschen sind nicht gemacht unter eine Kunst zu passen, oder es sind Flickhölzer, die allenthalben hinpassen, jeder Mensch hat seine Kunst in sich. Seine Kunst zu leben, seine Kunst, andern Menschen nützlich zu werden, denn den Trieb fühlen wir doch alle in uns, und je unschuldiger wir ihm Tapfe vor Tapfe nachgehen, desto sicherer leitet er uns zum Ziel. Und sind wir noch ungewiß, zweifelhaft in unserer *Bestimmung*, so liegt es bloß darin, daß wir oder unsere Erzieher und Freunde diesen Trieb in Entwicklung aufgehalten haben; auch wird unsere *Bestimmung* niemals ganz dieselbe bleiben, sondern in Ewigkeit immer durch die Umstände modifiziert werden, welchen wir uns dann freilich stoisch überlassen müssen [...]¹³⁴

¹³³ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 609.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 613-14. My emphasis.

The reference to ‘Bestimmung’ works on two levels: one general, in reference to the primacy of the originality of each individual’s way of being human over any elaborate but ultimately destructive ‘system’; the other individual, in reference to himself, as Lenz’s calling as a writer ‘wird [...] niemals ganz dieselbe bleiben’. Earlier in the same section of the *Dritte Stimme*, he makes a specific reference to his own activities and direction as a writer:

Ein tätiger Glaube ist aber ein ganz ander Ding als alle Seher, Philosophen, Theologen, Weise, Heiligen, und ich weiß nicht wer, vielleicht dafür halten, es ist nicht meinen, es ist nicht hoffen, wünschen, begehren, es ist nicht reden, träumen, dichten, predigen, Schriften herausgeben, sie mögen Meinungen oder Stimm[ung]en heißen - es ist tun.¹³⁵

Lenz’s ‘*Selbstbestimmung*’ as a writer therefore also reaches a decisive turning by the end of the *Dritte Stimme*. He pointedly calls the value of writing into question and not only emphasises the limitations of the ‘Meinungen’ and ‘Stimmen’ of moral-philosophy and theology, but also betrays his disillusion with the power of ‘dichten’, or literature. It would seem that *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* are written for Lenz himself as much as for any audience. Through these texts he arrives at the definition of a new direction for himself as a writer in an as yet undefined way, although armed with firm moral principles of the need for social ‘Glückseligkeit’ and ‘Gerechtigkeit’. As is stated in *Meinungen eines Laien*, biblical law, be it Moses’, Christ’s or the Apostles’: ‘bildet den Menschen bis zu dem Punkte, da er zu leben anfängt - und darnach läßt es ihn laufen.’¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Ibid., II, 613. In Daunicht’s 1970 edition of *Meinungen eines Laien*, on which Damm claims to have based her own (II, 891), ‘Stimmen’ not ‘Stimmungen’, as in Damm (II, 613), is given, as makes logical sense, considering the work’s title. See Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz: *Werke und Schriften*, ed. by R.Daunicht (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1970), p. 239, see also textual note, p. 247. Blei also gives ‘Stimmungen’, IV, 182, as do Damm, and Titel, I, 565.

¹³⁶ *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 551.

Having reached his own understanding of biblical Law Lenz charts his own way forward. The first years of his career as a writer can thus be seen as an attempt to confront his religious inheritance. His preoccupation with religious matters is a testimony to this struggle. He confronts two aspects of existence which crucially matter to him, faith, through ‘Offenbarung’, and his conviction that humans are free to act. The rift between the two would seem unbridgeable, but in *Stimmen des Laien* Lenz himself believes that he has indeed proved that he has been able to reconcile his secular notion of ‘Bestimmung’ with the tenets of Pietism.

In actual fact Lenz’s final biblical exegeses are all somewhat dubious. For example the interpretation of Matthew 5, 38-39 is, philologically speaking, wrong. Not only is his citation of the ‘grammatische Figur’ at best suspect, but the Greek ἀντιστῆναι is intransitive, and thus cannot be translated as Lenz does, or rather, wishes to. Of course at the end of the *Dritte Stimme* Lenz draws attention to the fact that everything he has just said is merely an opinion, a ‘Meinung’ or a ‘Stimme’, and hence there to be debated, torn to pieces or simply mocked.¹³⁷ Regardless of the merits of the translation and the ‘Meinungen’ that stem from it, one certainty remains: *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* do mark the end of Lenz’s output as far as theology and moral philosophy are concerned. Although he claims merely to be offering opinions for debate, the two works taken together in fact amount to his final word on the substance of his faith. The ‘Standpunkt’ alluded to in *Anmerkungen übers Theater* is taken up: ‘Der wahre Dichter [...] nimmt Standpunkt.’¹³⁸ That this is a highly exigent standpoint, to say the

¹³⁷ See the concluding paragraph of the *Dritte Stimme*, II, 618.

¹³⁸ *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, II, 648.

least, is confirmed in *Über die Natur unsers Geistes*: ‘[...] er [Christus] hatte sich in einen *Standpunkt* gestellt das Elend einer ganzen Welt auf sich zu konzentrieren und durchzuschauen. Aber das konnte auch nur ein Gott -’¹³⁹ It is also this sense of religious ‘Standpunkt’ to which Lenz refers in his letter complaining about the declining standards of the *Société*: ‘Daher fing ich an *ut vates* den Leuten *Standpunkt* ihrer Religion einzustecken [...].’¹⁴⁰

Therefore in *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* a turning point is reached in Lenz’s *oeuvre*. Together these texts amount to the resolution of Lenz’s religious dilemmas, based on his interpretation of *Imitatio Christi*. From the moment the ‘Grundstein’ is laid the pursuit of ‘Bestimmung’ begins. However, as Lenz says in his note the principles of the ‘*Meynungen*’ are to all intents and purposes invisible in the rest of his work, although they do underpin it.¹⁴¹ Lenz, as we shall see, moves away from the religious, theoretical and literary spheres towards the more concrete concerns of the social, political and, above all military. After all:

*Ein tätiger Glaube...ist nicht reden, träumen, dichten, predigen, Schriften herausgeben, sie mögen Meinungen oder Stimm[ung]en heißen - es ist tun.*¹⁴²

¹³⁹ *Über die Natur unsers Geistes*, II, 622. My emphasis.

¹⁴⁰ Lenz an Goethe, Straßburg, Februar 1775, III, 306. My emphasis.

¹⁴¹ As Lenz says in a letter to Lavater, some two to three years after he has written *Meinungen des Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*, and a few months prior to his departure for Weimar armed with his initial drafts of his military reform plan: ‘Mein bester Lavater! Eben habe ich ein paar Seiten in Deiner Gastpredigt gelesen. Auch ich hoffe ich baue auf dem Grunde in welchem Jesus Christus der Eckstein ist. Alle Verschiedenheiten aber wird und muß Gott einigen.’ Lenz an Johann Kaspar Lavater [Straßburg, Januar 1776], III, 369. Interestingly Lenz does not employ the term ‘Grundstein’ in relation to Christ’s teachings here, but rather uses the term ‘Eckstein’, as is the case also in the Bible (see Ps. 118, 22, Is. 8, 11, Matt. 21, 42, Acts 4, 11, Eph. 2, 19-22, I Pet. 2, 5-8), for by building on the cornerstone left by Jesus, Lenz lays the first ‘Grundstein’ of his own ‘Poesie [...] Wahrheit [und] Gefühl.’

¹⁴² *Dritte Stimme*, II, 613.

Chapter II

Politics and the playwright: J.M.R.Lenz
and *Die Soldaten*

Politics and the playwright: J.M.R. Lenz and *Die Soldaten*

Hier, Hierophant! in Deinen heiligen Händen das Stück,
das mein halbes Dasein mitnimmt. Es ist wahr und wird
bleiben, mögen auch Jahrhunderte über meinen Schädel
verachtungsvoll fortschreiten. Amen.

(Lenz an Herder [Straßburg] den 23 Julius 1775)¹

Sub iuramento mysterii

Ich will Dir alles sagen Herder! [...] Die >Soldaten< [...] ich [habe] das Ganze zusammengelogen.

(Lenz an Herder Darmstadt [Ende März 1776]
[on the journey to Weimar])²

The ‘Grundstein’ that Lenz lays has deep ramifications for his activities as a writer. His growing disillusionment with the limitations of writing is clearly expressed at the end of *Stimmen des Laien*, as we have just seen: ‘Ein tätiger Glaube [...] ist nicht reden, träumen, dichten, predigen, Schriften herausgeben, sie mögen Meinungen oder Stimmen heißen - es ist tun.’³ The bluntness of these observations, in spite of their evident self-subverting rhetoric, does not, however, lead to a complete abandonment of literature. Instead the sense of ‘*Selbstbestimmung*’ articulated in *Stimmen des Laien* spurs Lenz on to develop a more directed and politically engaged form of writing. It is in the broad range of texts devoted to his military reform project that this progression is manifest, despite the fact that, for all the energies invested in it, the project falls short of completion. In *Die Soldaten*, as this chapter will argue, Lenz carries on the castigated activity of ‘dichten’, but does so within a wider framework of texts. The drama is not an end in itself, but rather a prelude to his entrance into the heated debate concerning military reform, when he moves beyond the confines of literature to engage the medium, or forum, of political

¹ III, 329.

² III, 416-17.

³ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 613.

discourse. *Die Soldaten* is conceived as a drama which looks beyond itself, with Lenz projecting his own desire to join the political fray, an ambition he harbours until his expulsion from Weimar in November 1776. Most famously the play's concerns are continued in *Über die Soldatenehen*.⁴ However, even this text is only a fraction of Lenz's writings on the subject, complemented as it is by two hundred and fifty-one manuscript pages containing reflections and proposals, in varying degrees of draft form, on the subject.⁵ These fragments, for the most part unpublished, offer a context within which the development Lenz alludes to in the *Dritte Stimme* - that is, a move away from writing, above all creative writing, towards a politically engaged stance - can be traced. *Die Soldaten* amounts to the decisive first step in this process.

Disillusionment with literature does not prevent Lenz from continuing his activities as a playwright, especially since it is his standing as a published and publishable playwright that offers him his only sense of authority in the public domain. In *Die Soldaten*, as a close textual analysis will seek to show, he recognises the limitations of drama and manipulates them for his own distinct ends in an attempt to win himself a platform or an invitation to join the political debate on military reform. As he is fully aware of the inadequacies of drama's links to the political arena, Lenz plays on such deficiencies throughout the play. Indeed Lenz never sets out to write a political, in the sense of a reformist, play, as he recognises the inability of drama to cope with the complexity of the problems he wishes to tackle.⁶ Over and above the play's becoming, in Hill's words,

⁴ *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 787-827. The text was first published in 1913, see Damm's note, II, 945.

⁵ For the development of Lenz's reform plans, see Chapters III and IV.

⁶ Contrary to Hill's reading: 'Lenz, it seems, set out with the plan of writing a play that would be, in his sense of the term, 'political,' but gradually discarded this approach as he realised the complexity of the

‘more a general condemnation of the world in which he lived’, it is also more tellingly a startling illustration of Lenz’s general condemnation of drama, both of the ‘bürgerliches Trauerspiel’ and of the Sturm und Drang. The disillusionment expressed in the *Dritte Stimme* concerning the effectiveness of writing is born out in Lenz’s awareness of the impotency of drama, his own as well as much as anyone else’s, to offer positive solutions. Drama can only work in the limited sense of stimulating debate and setting an agenda for that debate; it is not, however, the forum in which such debate can be carried out. *Die Soldaten* amounts to a watershed in Lenz’s literary output in its recognition of this, with his authority as a playwright now used as a springboard for his political aspirations. As such, despite striking similarities, it is in stark contrast to *Der Hofmeister* (see below). The play also opens up an intriguing perspective on the Sturm und Drang in general. Written at the peak of Sturm und Drang, that is to say 1775, *Die Soldaten* can be seen as a critique of the movement later designated as occurring in this period, and of which he is still considered a leading figure. To extend Gerhard Sauder’s definition of the Sturm und Drang as ‘[...]gleichermaßen Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik der Aufklärung’, perhaps in *Die Soldaten* we witness ‘gleichermaßen Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik des Sturm und Drang’ as well.⁷

Considering the lengths that Lenz goes to in his reinterpretation of the Bible, it is hardly surprising that he breaks the mould of his own previous dramas, as well as those of the Sturm und Drang in general. For the sense of social commitment reached in *Stimmen*

problems he was presenting [...].’ D.Hill, ‘Das Politische’ in *Die Soldaten*, in *Orbis Litterarum*, 43 (1988), 299-315 (p. 313). Henceforth cited as Hill, *OL*.

⁷ G.Sauder: ‘Einführung’, in J.W.Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke, Münchner Ausgabe*, (München/Wien: Hanser, 1985-), vol. 1/1, ‘Der junge Goethe 1757-1775’, p. 756.

des Laien is in direct contrast to the prevailing sense of desperation, despite appearances, of the Sturm und Drang, or, within his own work, at best *impasse* as is the case in *Der Hofmeister*. To evaluate the Sturm und Drang as revolutionary in the political sense is to adopt a post 1789 perspective which, as Matthias Luserke and Reiner Marx convincingly argue, ignores the prevailing political circumstances of the 1770s. As a result, in their opinion, even to ask the question ‘wie revolutionär war der Sturm und Drang?’ is a non-starter.⁸ This may be so if, as Luserke and Marx indicate, one is looking for concrete socio-political changes which the Sturm und Drang precipitated, but when one is seeking to ascertain how *unrevolutionary* the drama of this movement is, then the question remains a legitimate and fruitful line of inquiry, as is the case when, for example, it is directed at *Der Hofmeister*.⁹

Rather than being a play of revolution, the prevailing mood of *Der Hofmeister* is one of resignation. As Helmut Schmiedt points out, the audience may well become increasingly aware of the worsening plight of Läufer, but it is never directly confronted with the concrete day-to-day circumstances in which this occurs. Although the first act establishes a clear picture of the Hofmeister’s position in society, the play does not concern itself with the detailed description of his subsequent exploitation. At best the play offers indirect accounts of the process, and even these are blown away by the whirlwind plot. Nowhere is this more evident than in the final scene. Läufer is not even present at the play’s own peculiar *dénouement*, or rather, to coin a more apt description, *renouement*, or a further complication of an already confused plot. The happy end can be

⁸ M.Luserke und R.Marx: ‘Die Anti-Läufer - Thesen zur SuD-Forschung oder Gedanken neben dem Totenkopf auf der Toilette des Denkers’, *LJb*, 2 (1992), 126-50 (p. 129). Henceforth Luserke/Marx, *LJb*.

⁹ See H.Schmiedt: ‘Wie revolutionär ist das Drama des Sturm und Drang?’, *JbdSG*, 29 (1985), 48-61.

seen as a sarcastic comment on the absurdity of the preceding action which, far from overcoming all the previous catastrophes, in fact emphasises the complicity of all the characters in the very same catastrophes, as they join together in the most unconvincing of family reunions. Such an ending stems from a deep sense of resignation, as Schmiedt says:

[...] Der Autor bekennt mit der Absurdität seiner abschließenden Konstruktion, daß er einen plausibel wirkenden Ausweg aus den plausibel vorgeführten individuellen und sozialen Nöten nicht darzustellen vermag.¹⁰

The ending distances the play still further from a direct, let alone a 'revolutionary' attack on society. Given the play's full title, *Der Hofmeister oder Vorteile der Privaterziehung*, the final scene betrays the bankruptcy of Lenz's own ideas and, tellingly, the inability of the dramatic form to articulate any solutions when it comes to answering the questions which such a title doubtless begs to be answered. He assiduously avoids direct confrontation. In no way is drama conceived of as a vehicle for direct social criticism. Indeed the details which a more realistic account of his protagonist's degradation would bring out, as for example is the case in Wagner's *Die Kindermörderin*, are simply absent. Whether the drama reaches a melancholic sense of resignation, verging on desperation, or summons the energy to be sarcastic is very much a secondary consideration. Either way the chosen medium of the Sturm und Drang, the drama, becomes locked into the overriding concern with the evocation of failure. As Luserke and Marx point out:

Die Komödie wird zur Gattung des Scheiterns von Hoffnungen, die bishin das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel artikuliert hatte. Die bürgerliche Aufklärung bedient sich des Trauerspiels, um ihre emanzipatorischen Hoffnungen zu artikulieren, der Sturm und Drang bedient sich der Komödie, um deren Scheitern vorzuführen.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹ Luserke/Marx, *LJb*, p. 141.

For all the bravado of Sturm und Drang, most evident in the defiance of any number of ‘Kraftmenschen’, as well as in Lenz’s own *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, the ‘Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik der Aufklärung’, which it is able to affect through the medium of drama, is primarily negative in function. Certainly there is no proffering of ‘solutions’.

Whilst *Der Hofmeister* represents an end in itself, *Die Soldaten* does not. *Der Hofmeister* picks up on themes expressed in earlier and contemporary moral-philosophical texts.¹² It is in the drama that these concerns are brought to their conclusion, or more accurately their non-conclusion. In *Die Soldaten* the sequence is reversed. The drama precedes the further elucidation of the problems in socio-political texts. In this way Lenz breaks free of the limitations which the Sturm und Drang imposes, at least in Luserke and Marx’s definition. They maintain that Sturm und Drang limits itself to pursuing ‘Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik der Aufklärung’ solely in the realm of drama. Any form of ‘einheitliches systematisch-theoretisches Konzept’, expressed through other modes of discourse, including those of anthropology, history and theology, is described as being consciously rejected: ‘[...] dies aus der Erkenntnis heraus, daß Diskurse Repressionen schaffen und nur der literarische Diskurs das der Repressionskritik angemessene Ausdrucksmedium ist.’¹³ When applied to Lenz, this might well be the case as far as *Der Hofmeister* is concerned. But with his ‘Grundstein’ to be found in a theological tract, albeit a rhapsodic ‘pseudotheological’ one, it would be difficult to argue that his

¹² As expressed in the recently rediscovered and edited texts *Catechismus* and *Unverschämte Sachen*. See C.Weiß, ‘J.M.R.Lenz >Catechismus<’, *LJb*, 4 (1994), 30-67 and J.M.R.Lenz, *Philosophische Vorlesungen für empfindsame Seelen*, ed. by C.Weiß (St. Ingebert: Röhrig, 1994), pp. 51-72.

¹³ Luserke/Marx, *LJb*, p. 133.

subsequent texts continue to exhibit the characteristics of Sturm und Drang, as Luserke and Marx understand them. Nonetheless the methodological approach that they espouse, putting to one side its questionable status as a Sturm und Drang text, will prove useful when reading *Die Soldaten*:

Die Erfahrung der SuD-Autoren erweist sich als dauerhaft geprägt von der schmerzhaften Einsicht, daß Aufklärung immer gleichzeitig Heil *und* Katastrophe bedeutet. Das bedingt ihre Zugehörigkeit *und* ihre Opposition zur Aufklärung. Jeweils genau zu benennen, wo in diesem Geflecht ein SuD-Text steht, wäre Aufgabe einer Literaturwissenschaft, die dieser Einsicht folgt.¹⁴

To locate the position of *Die Soldaten* in such a 'Geflecht' is indeed an essential starting point, before embarking on a discussion of Lenz's military project. Although ostensibly a drama of the Sturm und Drang, in fact *Die Soldaten* is conceived as a prelude to an entrance into the world of politics, with Lenz hoping to partake in the politicking of enlightened absolutism. It is to be read as part of a wider textual process. The drama will, ultimately, be superfluous to any political argument; Lenz merely utilises his authority as a playwright in a speculative attempt at securing himself an opportunity to voice his plans directly to those in power at court, something many other authors, notably the *philosophes*, had succeeded in doing during the eighteenth century.

The type of questions Schmiedt asks of *Der Hofmeister* will also prove a rewarding line of inquiry when applied to *Die Soldaten*. Asking rudimentary questions, such as 'what happens?' and, more importantly, 'what do we actually see?', will provide some clue as to the play's position in the 'Geflecht'. It will also further emphasise how *unrevolutionary* the play is in a different sense, as Lenz now moves decisively away from

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 147-48.

the attitudes of resignation, sarcasm and failure so dominant in *Der Hofmeister*. The 'Heil und Katastrophe', is now viewed from an ironic perspective. Even the play's title indicates a significant shift in focus: it is no longer the exploited character that assumes central importance, as is the case in *Der Hofmeister*, rather it is the agents of exploitation that are awarded the top billing, hence, *Die Soldaten* and not *Mariane Wesener*.¹⁵ From the beginning the army is Lenz's focus. Although the play unarguably revolves around the seduction and subsequent disgrace of a bourgeois girl, the interest shown in the detail of this process is negligible compared to his contemporaries. The dominant, even obsessive, themes associated with the erring daughter - from *Miß Sara Sampson* (1755) onwards, with pregnancy, infanticide and subsequent death of the female protagonist representing a later radicalisation of the initial theme during the 1770s - are for the most part absent in *Die Soldaten*.¹⁶ If they are present then they play very much a secondary role. Lenz does follow Goethe and Wagner in the graphic depiction of infanticide in the *Erzählung Zerbin oder die neuere Philosophie* (1775) - written shortly after *Die Soldaten* - but it is conspicuous by its absence in the drama. Lenz implies a critique of contemporary theatre and its preoccupations, and in so doing forges a new direction for his own form of drama, that of putting his ideas onto the political agenda surrounding the pressing need for military reform. However, aware of drama's inherent limitations, Lenz limits himself to making the audience aware that, although he has proposals to offer, they can only be expressed in a forum outside the theatre.

¹⁵ 'Marie' is to be found in the first printed version of the play; however, as 'Mariane' is used by Damm in her edition, this is the name I shall use.

¹⁶ See G. Saße, *Die aufgeklärte Familie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1988), pp. 5ff., also B. Sørensen, *Herrschaft und Zärtlichkeit* (München: C.H. Beck, 1984), pp. 11-65.

Just as in *Der Hofmeister*, Lenz does not overly concern himself with the depiction of seduction. To be sure there is a discernible change in Mariane's character, above all in her use of language and demeanour.¹⁷ But the change from the girl who stumbles over the spelling of 'Madame' in the first scene, through her fluttering eyelid flirtation (I iii), to her humiliation of Jungfer Zipfersaat, prior to her cavorting with Desportes (II iii) is rapid but, in terms of seduction, uneventful. As is the case in *Der Hofmeister*, again Lenz is not concerned with the realistic portrayal of a character's psychological degradation, in stark contrast to *Die Kindermörderin* (1776) or *Urfaust*. In *Die Soldaten* any interaction between the willing Mariane and Desportes is minimal, confined as it is to the end of one scene (II iii). Even here actual physical contact between the two happens behind closed doors. Whereas we see Läufer and Gustchen sitting on a bed together, all that the audience is aware of in *Die Soldaten* is the 'Geschrei und Gejauchz' of the two, which at most becomes 'Geschöcker'(II iii).¹⁸ In effect all the flirtatious activities, ranging from ink fights, as Mariane tries to write to Stolzius, to the baiting of the Jungfer Zipfersaat, only lead to yet more flirting, at best caressing and fondling. Even though these activities may go on for the duration of Grandmother Wesener's foreboding 'song', the full stage directions being, '[...] *derweil das Geschrei und Gejauchz im Nebenzimmer fortwährt [...]* *Indessen* [during the song] *dauert das Geschöcker im Nebenzimmer fort.*', as it all takes

¹⁷ For critical discussion of *Die Soldaten*, see e.g.: W.Höllerer, 'Lenz. *Die Soldaten*', in *Das Deutsche Drama*, ed. by B.von Wiese, 2 vols (Düsseldorf: August Bagel, 1962), pp.127-46. Also B.Duncan, 'The comic structure of Lenz's *Soldaten*', *MLN*, 91 (1976), 515-23. G.M.Martin, 'A note on the major plays of J.M.R.Lenz', *GLL*, 31 (1977-78), 77-87. H.Madland, *Non-Aristotelian Drama in the Eighteenth Century Germany and its Modernity: J.M.R.Lenz* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1982), pp. 173-262. B.Kieffer, *The Storm and Stress of Language* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1986), pp. 72-81.

¹⁸ *Die Soldaten*, I, 191-246. Damm gives 'Geschöcker', whereas Herbert Krämer in *Erläuterung und Dokumente: J.M.R.Lenz: Die Soldaten* (Reclam: Stuttgart, 1974), gives 'Geschecker: Geschäcker, Getändel, Gekose', p. 15. E.McInnes' edition also has 'Geschecker', *J.M.R.Lenz, 'Die Soldaten': Text, Materialien, Kommentar* (München: Hanser, 1977), p. 30.

place behind closed doors, we cannot be sure of the full extent of physical contact between the two, limited as it is to sound effects. With the Grandmother's entrance all commotion is brought to an end: '*Die alte Frau geht hinein, sie zu berufen.*' Like children, the two are brought to order. The interruption is hardly as catastrophic as in the corresponding scene in *Der Hofmeister* (II v); rather it resembles more the Geheime Rat's interruption of Fritz and Gustchen (I v), perhaps further suggesting that the interaction between Desportes and Mariane is rather less serious than that between Gustchen and Läufer, who have had three quarters of an hour together, bringing with it tangible results in the form of a baby.¹⁹ But like the corresponding scene, this 'seduction' represents both the climax and finale of Desportes and Mariane's involvement with each other. The 'seduction' is brought to an end before consummation, with Desportes' running away from his debts, as well as from Mariane.

In this light Desportes' later assessment of Mariane has to be treated with caution: 'Wie ich dir sage, es ist eine Hure vom Anfang an gewesen [...]' (V iii). When placed in context, however, the word 'Hure' is linked more to the strains Mariane puts on his wallet than on sexual gratification, as he continues:

Desportes: [...] und sie ist mir nur darum gut gewesen, weil ich ihr Präsenten machte. Ich bin ja durch sie in Schulden gekommen, daß es erstaunend war, sie hätte mich um Haus und Hof gebracht, hätt ich das Spiel länger getrieben. (V iii)

¹⁹ Despite some critics doubting whether Läufer is indeed the father of Gustchen's child due to the twelve month duration of the pregnancy (notably C.O. Lappe, 'Wer hat Gustchens Kind gezeugt? Zeitstruktur und Rollenspiel in Lenz Hofmeister', *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 54 (1980), 14-56, and 520-21), Schmiedt's observation that there is one of a similar length in *Die Buhlschwester* would perhaps indicate that 'Lenz war sich offenbar über die Dauer einer Schwangerschaft nicht im klaren.' (*JbdSG*, p. 52), exposing the question of paternity as a red herring.

The game, in the context of the play, only leads to ‘Geschrei, Gejauchz und Geschöcker’ (II iii), and not to the sexual relationship Desportes would regard as victory in any such game. ‘Hure’ thus becomes a mere term of abuse, not used in the sense of the woman’s willingness to prostitute herself, indeed one might say quite the reverse. It may well be that it is because there is *no* sexual contact that Desportes brands Mariane a ‘Hure’. With the rest of society assuming that Mariane is a ‘Hure’, in the conventional sense of the word, the irony Lenz seeks to establish *vis-à-vis* his contemporaries, as well as within the play itself, becomes clear. Whilst his contemporaries portray the loss of virginity leading to death, via pregnancy and infanticide, Lenz presents us with a character whose virginity may well be intact. Certainly he does not rush Mariane towards the tortured ends which await any number of other unlucky young women of this period. As Silvia Hallensleben points out, the inevitable abyss Mariane falls into is not as deep, even bottomless, as those into which Emilia Galotti, Sara Sampson, Evchen Humbrecht, Luise Millerin, ‘und wie sie alle heißen’ (one might add Gretchen) fall. Nor does an obsession with innocence drive Lenz to kill off his protagonist. It is true that in *Die Soldaten*, ‘Das Massensterben [or killing] von Frauen im Rahmen literarischer Fiktion [...] hat endlich Einhalt gefunden’.²⁰ In fact it is the men that die. Instead of evoking the desperation of pregnancy, infanticide, and psychological disintegration, it is the limited scope of expression which these dramas offer that is emphasised. Their overwhelming sense of resignation, whatever the violence

²⁰ See S.Hallensleben, ‘>Dies Geschöpf taugt nur zur Hure...<. Anmerkungen zum Frauenbild in Lenz’ *Soldaten*’, in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 225-42, (p. 227), quoting S.Weigel, *Die verborgene Frau. Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft* (Berlin: Argument, 1983), p. 141.

of their expression, is abandoned by Lenz, who in writing *Die Soldaten* is already looking beyond the limitations of the dramatic form towards playing a role in the political world.²¹

Of course the outward similarities of *Die Soldaten* to other Sturm und Drang plays can still lull the reader into seeing it through Sturm und Drang tinted glasses:

In diesem Stück hatte er [Lenz] unter anderem die fatalen Auswirkungen der Ehelosigkeit der Soldaten dargestellt, vor allem die uneheliche Schwangerschaft, die häufig zum Kindermord führte.²²

It is these elements precisely which are conspicuous by their absence from Lenz's play. There is no illegitimate pregnancy, not a mention of infanticide, nor its ensuing grisly judicial punishments. That Lenz's concerns are in stark contrast to those of his contemporaries is betrayed by his relative lack of interest in Mariane in these terms. *Die Soldaten* is not conceived as the outlet for the expression of anguish and desperation. Mariane Wesener is no Evchen Humbrecht. The drama of expression and self-consciousness is not replicated in *Die Soldaten*. But nor does Lenz reproduce the tangled confusion of *Der Hofmeister*. An extended form of irony is produced, one which reaches out beyond the play itself, in the process exposing the limitations of a dramatic form which confines itself to self-conscious expression. In so doing he ironizes not only his own work, but more importantly that of his contemporaries. In terms of locating *Die Soldaten*

²¹ Even though it was published after *Die Soldaten*, the final scene of H.L. Wagner's *Die Kindermörderin* (1776) - written by another member of Lenz's 'Deutsche Gesellschaft' - illustrates a fundamental difference in the sense in which the politicking of court is conceived. The desperation of von Gröningseck is in direct contrast to Lenz's own plans: 'Und ihnen nebst ihrer ganzen kriminalischen Unföhlbarkeit zum Trotz, mein Herr! will ich mich heut noch auf den Weg nach Versailles machen, bey der gesetzgebenden Macht selbst Gnade für sie auszuwürken, oder-' (VI). Lenz too has a desire to go to Versailles, as we shall see in Chapters III and IV, but it is with a complete reform project that he intends to make such a journey, rather than on a tide of emotion. See: *Sturm und Drang: Dramatische Schriften*, ed. by E.Lowenthal, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1963), II, 605.

²² W.D.Wilson, 'Zwischen Kritik und Affirmation. Militärphantasien und Geschlechterdisziplinierung bei J.M.R.Lenz', in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 52-85 (p. 59).

in any 'Geflecht' between Sturm und Drang and Aufklärung, Lenz, whilst keeping the veneer of the former in drama, takes a decisive step towards engaging the political and, above all, practical discourse of the latter, as he will do initially in *Über die Soldatenehen* and most importantly in those texts written whilst in Berka during the summer of 1776. *Die Soldaten* constitutes the first decisive step in this process of his pursuit of 'Bestimmung'.

Any sense of desperation - which undoubtedly features prominently - is undercut by the fact that the play is conceived as a prelude to a more rigorous engagement in the world of court politics, as the framework provided by the final scene indicates (see below). Equally any sense of inevitability is offset by the fact that the play looks beyond itself. Mariane is saved from the brink, whilst Stolzius' anguish drives him to murder and suicide. Once again Lenz reverses the pattern of the 'bürgerliches Trauerspiel', with the male and not the female victim being killed off, perhaps, as has been suggested, not for any 'moralische Endzweck,' but rather as an enactment of 'eine Lenzsche Selbstvernichtungs- und Rachephantasie'.²³ Mariane's survival scotches any sense of inevitability. More importantly the absence of pregnancy - let alone infanticide and prison - breaks the intensity of impending doom during the course of the play itself, a doom which without fail overcomes Mariane's contemporaries. Thus a distance is created even before Lenz sharpens the play's focus in the final scene, with the discussion between the Obrister von Spannheim and the Gräfin de La Roche reaching beyond the play itself. The chosen

²³ S.Hallersleben, *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, p. 228. See also C.Zierath, *Moral und Sexualität*, pp. 159-65, for a different reading, based on Stolzius' 'Stolz'. See Lenz an Herder Darmstadt [Ende März 1776], III, 416-17, for his own explanation of the influence of the oft cited Cleophe Fibich - von Kleist episode and other biographical elements on the play.

medium of drama provides the Sturm und Drang with a forum for the expression of anguish at the type of inevitability Mariane's counterparts face. But ultimately such an expression is limited to a resignation to that inevitability. The inherently limited nature of drama offers no other outlet. For Lenz, however, the actions and words of those who take part in Mariane's degradation after the climax of the 'Geschöcker' (II iii) assume a role in the ensuing web of irony, rather than playing their part in the unravelling of an inevitable path towards death. The charting of a realistic downfall, unbroken in its intensity, is not Lenz's interest. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the words and actions of the Gräfin de La Roche.

In two short scenes (III x and IV iii) the Gräfin's dramatic swing between caring for and casting out Mariane, heightens the sense of irony. In an even more loquacious manner than Wenzeslaus in *Der Hofmeister*, the Gräfin projects her own image of the fallen woman onto Mariane. Her initial warmth is reminiscent of Löffler's overtures to Lise (*Der Hofmeister*, V x) and, more significantly, echoes the earlier eulogising description given by her officer son (III viii) :

Gräfin: Ich liebe Sie mein Engel! ich kann mich nicht enthalten, es Ihnen zu zeigen. *Mariane küßt ihr inbrunstvoll die Hand.* Ihr ganzes Betragen hat so etwas Offenes, so etwas Einnehmendes, daß mir Ihr Unglück dadurch doppelt schmerzhaft wird. (III x)

Whereas Wenzeslaus drives Löffler to a sense of desperation over a long period of time, a similar state is achieved by the Gräfin in just this one scene. The Gräfin is able to break the resolution of Mariane in a matter of minutes. Her projection of the 'Hure' image, even if in supposed good faith, brings Mariane literally to her knees, as is indicated by the final stage direction: '*Geht schnell ab, sieht noch durch die Tür hinein nach Marianen, die*

noch immer wie im Gebet liegt.' The Gräfin reduces Mariane to such a state by drawing her own conclusions from the gossip she has heard on the street (III xiii). Her help is based on the most general of assumptions, as Lenz lets the Gräfin reel off a lengthy analysis of Mariane's situation, one which on the ironic level, reaching beyond the text, amounts to a pastiche of the concerns of the 'bürgerliches Trauerspiel' and plays of the Sturm und Drang: Mariane's reading of Richardson's *Pamela*²⁴; the inevitable consequence of Mariane's alleged beauty (both charges vehemently denied by Mariane): 'Schönheit ist niemals ein Mittel, eine gute Heurat zu stiften [...]'; as well as her missed vocation as a quiet 'bürgerliche' wife:

Armes Kind! wie glücklich hätten Sie einen rechtschaffenen Bürger machen können, wenn Sie diese furtreffliche Gesichtszüge, dieses einnehmende bezaubernde Wesen mit einem demütigen menschenfreundlichen Geist beseelt hätten [...] (III x)

Mariane's simple plea, '*weint auf ihre Hand: Er liebte mich aber.*', goes unanswered, as the Gräfin produces a 'solution' worthy of Wenzeslaus. Läufer's self-castration, so warmly applauded by Wenzeslaus, is not literally replicated, but the Gräfin's coercion of Mariane to join her household, thus withdrawing from male company for a year's rehabilitation, amounts to a form of social castration, or as Mary designates it, a form of

²⁴ Evidently Mariane's literary knowledge is not as broad as Gustchen's in the 'passionless seduction', 'Hast du die Neue Heloïse gelesen?' (II v). In the first version of *Der Hofmeister*, however, there is a similarity, although Gustchen is still the more curious: '- Aber sage mir wie ging es dem Abä - Abard - wie hieß er? was war das für einer.' (II, 714) (II iv Handschrift). Mariane's denial that she has read *Pamela* deflates the notion that literature is an agent of social subversion as well as - surely for the spectator - deflating the Gräfin and her supposed concerns at this point. Interestingly the Magister's wife is ruined by Richardson's *Grandison* in Klinger's *Das Leidende Weib*, published in the same year and by the same publishers as *Die Soldaten*, see I i, *Magister*: '[...] Bleib du bei deinem Gesangbuch, liebes Suschen, und deiner Bibel, da wirst du eine gute Frau. Die hängen dir den Kopf voll, und das taugt nichts, ein für allemal nichts [...] Wirst doch so keinen Belletristen haben wollen? Sei gut lies mir nichts! Wie hat mir's deine Mutter gemacht; denk', Fikchen, da hatte sie ein Buch gelesen, den Grandison nennen sie's, das hat ihr den Kopf verrückt; sie hatte ein Romanfieber, ein verfluchtes Grandisonenfieber.' See, *Sturm und Drang: Dramatische Schriften*, II, 15-16.

‘Kloster’ (IV iii). That it is coercion is suggested by the Gräfin’s hasty offer of money to pay off the Wesener’s family debts, an offer which finally breaks Mariane’s resistance as well as that of her mother, who carries on her husband’s preoccupation with financial security (IV x). However, the Gräfin does not fulfil her pledge, as it is the Obrister who claims to have paid off the family debts, as well as offering the sum of one thousand Taler as compensation (V v).

The speed with which the Gräfin takes Mariane under her wing is matched by the speed with which she washes her hands of her (IV iii). Although she hears Mariane say all the right things, as once again her register adapts to yet another social setting, the mere fact that a rendezvous has taken place leads to Mariane’s immediate expulsion. To compound the irony, the Gräfin’s judgement echoes that voiced by Haudy when he says of Mariane, ‘daß sie keine von den sturmfesten ist’ (II ii). The Gräfin picks up and extends the image: ‘Mädchen du bist wie das Bäumchen hier im Abendwinde, jeder Hauch verändert dich.’ (IV iii). Again, as in the list of faults which the Gräfin discerns in Marie’s character, there would appear to be a subversive literary allusion to the ‘bürgerliches Trauerspiel’. The imagery used to describe Mariane bears more than a passing resemblance to that used by Emilia Galotti and echoed by Odoardo to describe her death ‘Eine Rose gebrochen, ehe der Sturm sie entblättert [...]’ (V vii & viii).²⁵ Significantly, however, the sapling representing Mariane does not break, but merely bends with the

²⁵ An even more explicit allusion is made by Klinger in *Das leidende Weib: Gesandtin: (nach einigem Schweigen)* Von meinem Busen weg! Eine Rose! Ich habe die Rose gepflückt, ehe sie der Sturm entblättert. Es steht in einem Trauerspiel, glaub’ ich, der Vater erstach seine Tochter, eh’ der Sturm kam. Ach, die Rose entblättert? Der Sturm, der grausame Sturm! Die Rose entblättert, so entblättert (*zerreißt die Rose*) und zertreten, im Staube zertreten’ (V i). Indeed such is the frequency of contemporary literary allusion in *Das leidende Weib*, that the self-referential nature of the play becomes self-parody, with allusions also made to *Minna von Barnhelm*, *La nouvelle Héloïse*, *Der Hofmeister*, and *Romeo and Juliette* amongst others. See, *Sturm und Drang: Dramatische Schriften*, II, 58.

wind. As she is not deflowered, in either sense, and bearing no mental scars akin to Emilia's, Mariane's desperation on leaving the Gräfin works on two levels: '*Gräfin*: Ich verzieh es dir niemals wenn du wider dein eigen Glück handelst. Geh! *Mariane geht ganz verzweiflungsvoll ab*.' It is a desperation Mariane does genuinely feel as to her plight, one undoubtedly exacerbated by the Gräfin, as is manifest in her next appearance on stage: '*Mariane: Kontorsionen*. O das quält - - nun ein Bettelmensch [...] Ich will kriechen, so weit ich komme, und fall ich um, desto besser'(V ii). Yet beneath this there is another sense of desperation, or rather exasperation that, although not completely unsullied, she is still cast into the role of a 'Hure', even by those claiming to protect her. That Lenz limits her further degradation to the space of these two short scenes, further emphasises that the expression of desperation alone is not his primary concern. Rather he is concerned with creating a sense of detachment which seeks to move beyond desperation alone, towards his own personal engagement in the political process. Underpinned by irony, the Gräfin's degradation of Mariane achieves this distance, thus breaking the chain of inevitability.

The sense of dramatic irony reaches its peak in the final scene between Mariane and her father (V iv). The scene amounts to a microcosm of the preconceptions which precipitate Mariane's fall. When he is confronted by a veiled woman he immediately assumes that he is being solicited, before she even utters a word: 'Laß Sie mich - ich bin kein Liebhaber von solchen Sachen.'²⁶ In fact Mariane is merely seeking 'ein klein Almosen', but with her '*halb unvernehmlicher Stimme*', she is, as throughout the play, not

²⁶ Interestingly it was originally Lenz's intention for Wesener to find that Mariane was prostitute, as is supported by some of the early notes made on the scene: 'Der Vater trifft sie als Hure an; eben da das geschieht, kommt Stolzius in besoffenem Mut - will sie hernehmen - da er sie gleichfalls erkennt, stirbt er in ihren Armen.', Titel, II, 738. However, in the revised version it seems rather to be the case that Wesener merely assumes that she is a prostitute, rather than her actually being one.

understood. In no way is she offering her sexual services, again as throughout the rest of the play. Only in mistaking his daughter for a 'Hure', as all the other characters in the play have done, but now pushing that designation to its limits, using the word in its literal sense of a street prostitute, does Wesener finally manage to break the vice-like grip of the dramatic irony. A dramatic irony which has already, in the previous scene, led to the deaths of Stolzius and Desportes; as the former says at his moment of triumph: '[...] ich bin Stolzius, deren Braut du zur Hure machtest'(V iii). Only after shouting his insult: 'Geht, lauft Euren Soldaten nach. *Weibsperson geht fort ohne zu antworten*', does Wesener become aware of the false 'Hure' image which undercuts the play. He becomes conscious of the implications of his words when he suddenly remembers the individual case of his own daughter. Even then his soul searching initially gives rise to a donation, which, despite its worth, almost causes Mariane to faint at its insignificance: '*fängt an zu weinen*. O Gott! *Nimmt das Geld und fällt halb ohnmächtig nieder*. Was kann mir das helfen?' Lenz substitutes the conventional familial confrontation of the 'bürgerliches Trauerspiel', invariably leading to death, or the judicial horrors of his contemporaries, with an uneasy but exhausted reunion. There is no drama equivalent to the episode between Odoardo and Emilia, rather something more akin to intentional bathos, as Lenz seeks to redirect the focus of his play beyond the limitations of conventional drama.

The reconciliation reaches its climax in the curious stage direction: '*Beide wälzen sich halb tot auf der Erde*.' Whether the bodies are degraded to the status of animal-like objects or, in another possible sense, indeed laughing as they roll about, or writhe on the ground, is secondary in importance to the subsequent stage direction: '*Eine Menge Leute*

*versammeln sich um sie und tragen sie fort.*²⁷ An anonymous crowd appears from nowhere to carry the father and daughter off the stage. Whether carried off as props, or triumphantly as heroes, the fact remains that Lenz literally evicts the pair of characters from his stage. The speed with which this is done further emphasises his relative lack of interest in the evocation of any sense of anguish and despair. The Weseners are removed from the stage as they do not form the focus of his concerns, at best they are merely an example. In *Die Soldaten* Lenz is not faced by the bankruptcy of ideas which characterises *Der Hofmeister*. He attempts no elaborate *dénouement*, or *renouement*; rather the plot lines, such as they are drawn out, work to undermine the concerns of the ‘bürgerliches Trauerspiel’ and its radicalisation in the Sturm und Drang, most obviously with Mariane surviving and Desportes dying. Nevertheless the moral significance of such an outcome is consciously underplayed, as Lenz banishes the surviving characters from the stage as rapidly as possible. The perceptive observation made by Schmiedt as regards *Der Hofmeister* no longer holds water when it comes to *Die Soldaten*.²⁸ It is no longer Lenz who is incapable of finding an ‘Ausweg’, rather he recognises that it is the medium of drama that is incapable. *Die Soldaten* amounts to a ‘Binnenkritik’ of the Sturm und Drang in that Lenz uses superficial genre and plot similarities, but subverts and then converts them to his own ends so as to undermine the attitude of exasperation, desperation and resignation which permeate his own previous plays as much as those of his

²⁷ E.Oehlenschläger, ‘Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz’, in *Deutsche Dichter des 18 Jahrhunderts*, ed. by B.von Wiese (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1977), pp. 747-81. ‘Marie schließlich - bieder, kokett, naiv - bleibt zwar ebenso am Leben wie ihr Vater, beide werden am Ende, beinahe zu Gegenständen deformiert von der Bühne getragen.’, p. 773. See also B.O’Regan, *Self and Existence: J.M.R.Lenz’s Subjective Point of View*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 61.

²⁸ See note 10, p. 76.

contemporaries. He also provides 'Dynamisierung' in so far as, in recognising drama's limitations, he no longer seeks a solution within the confines of the play. In writing a play which points beyond itself, Lenz re-evaluates the position of his drama in the 'Geflecht', rendering it a speculative act of self-publicity. He consciously directs his play from within against the prevailing dramatic medium. In so doing *Die Soldaten* heralds a break away from the self-conscious and politically marginalised, if not impotent stance of Sturm und Drang. In writing *Die Soldaten* Lenz, using drama as a means of self-publicity, takes his first steps towards entering the arena of political discourse, or the discourse of Aufklärung, in which 'solutions' can at least be offered. It does not follow from the mere fact that drama is inadequate, if not bankrupt, that, by necessity, the dramatist is.

Even within the play itself there is a strong element of self-reflexive questioning of the limitations of drama and discussion concerning the impact of the theatre. The critique Lenz launches against theatre does not only manifest itself in his manipulation of form, it also springs from within. The conscious recognition of the counter-productive and ultimately self-defeating nature of theatre comes to the fore through the character of Eisenhardt, the steely Feldprediger to the soldiers. His views on theatre (I iv) resonate throughout the play.²⁹ Its bluntness is encapsulated in Eisenhardt's opening line: 'Ich sehe nicht ab, wo der Nutzen stecken sollte'(I iv). This remark does not limit itself to a direct response to the Hofmeister's liking of French theatre: rather all forms of theatre, not just

²⁹ The scene is more than the simple dramatisation of Rousseau's dispute voiced in *Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les Spectacles*, which H. Wolff argues it is in his article, 'The controversy over the theatre in Lenz's *Die Soldaten*', *The Germanic Review*, 14 (1939), 159-64.

the French, are now implicated.³⁰ Despite liking the theatre, Eisenhardt admits to its inherent impotency as an institution for moral improvement, or political reform:

Eisenhardt: Ich liebe das Theater selber und gehe gern hinein ein gutes Stück zu sehen, aber deswegen glaube ich noch nicht, daß es ein so heilsames Institut für das Corps Offiziers sei. (I iv)

When provoked by Haudy, Eisenhardt extends his criticism, arguing that the theatre, treated as it is, that is to say as a 'Zeitvertreib', is responsible for the copy-cat replication of all the 'Unordnungen' of the stage in real life. The view that the stage can be used as a platform for education, is exposed as pure self-delusion. Even the connexion between 'lernen' and the theatre is met with derision, as Mary responds to what Eisenhardt considers a simple question: 'Ei was, muß man denn immer lernen, wir amüsieren uns ist das nicht genug' (I iv). Eisenhardt's response emphasises the counter-productive effect of the theatre; as if treating the theatre as mere amusement were not enough, perversely theatre positively encourages the type of actions it claims to be fighting against:

Wollte Gott daß Sie sich bloß amüsierten, daß Sie nicht lernten! So aber ahmen Sie nach was Ihnen dort vorgestellt wird und bringen Unglück und Fluch in die Familien. (I iv)

Suddenly Mariane's clandestine sortie with Desportes to see either of the ominously entitled *La chercheuse d'Esprit* or *Le Deserteur* (I iii), becomes more sinister. On another level Lenz openly expresses his misgivings about the limited political scope of conventional drama, betraying his desire to manipulate his own drama for express political purposes.

³⁰ Demuth argues that it is just the French form that is targeted, p. 264.

Eisenhardt's role is not solely confined to a critique of drama in general; his words also have profound implications for the play in which he himself is a character, albeit one removed from the main action. Far from the voice of dissent only appearing in the 'zweite Fassung' of the final scene, through the chastened mouth of the Gräfin, Eisenhardt provides a critical perspective before, or rather just as the degradation of Mariane begins.³¹ His retort to Haudy's insistence that: 'Eine Hure wird immer eine Hure, gerate sie unter welche Hände sie will [...] *Eisenhardt*: 'Eine Hure wird immer eine Hure, kennen Sie das andere Geschlecht so genau?', is directly echoed by the Gräfin. In addition Eisenhardt offers a telling insight as to the mechanism of the ensuing irony, which underpins Lenz's subversion of drama: 'eine Hure wird niemals eine Hure, wenn sie nicht dazu gemacht wird.' Mariane, whilst branded a 'Hure' by society, and even her own father, will indeed never become one. Thus informed by the internal director, Eisenhardt, the audience gains a critical distance as the ensuing action unfolds and thus an insight into the manipulation of the dramatic form being undertaken by Lenz.

Eisenhardt's argument against the theatre amounts to an articulation of precisely what Lenz does not wish to replicate in his own drama. His withering attack on the theatre reaches a peak, just after the Obrister has intervened to stop the Feldprediger, in true Lenzian Christian spirit, from challenging Haudy to a duel. The dangers which Eisenhardt perceives in the 'den neuesten Komödien' will not be repeated by Lenz in his own play:

³¹ Hill argues that it only appears in the 'zweite Fassung' (V v2), when the 'authoritative voice of the Gräfin goes from approval to dissent' in the line 'Wie wenig kennt ihr doch das Herz und die Wünsche eines Frauenzimmers', Hill, *OL*, p. 304.

Eisenhardt:[...] Aber werden ihm [dem Offizier] nicht in den neuesten Komödien die größten Verbrechen gegen die heiligsten Rechte der Väter und Familien unter so reizenden Farben vorgestellt, den giftigsten Handlungen so der Stachel genommen, daß ein Bösewicht dasteht als ob er ganz neulich vom Himmel gefallen wäre. Sollte das nicht aufmuntern, sollte das nicht alles ersticken was das Gewissen aus der Eltern Hause mitgebracht haben kann. Einen wachsamen Vater zu betriegen oder ein unschuldig Mädchen in Lastern zu unterrichten, das sind die Preisaufgaben, die dort aufgelöst werden. (I iv)

By the mere fact of raising such vehement objections Eisenhardt puts an end to the possibility of disguising the heinous crimes perpetrated in the theatre with 'so reizenden Farben'. Moreover, Lenz meets all of Eisenhardt's objections at the basic level of the plot. Lenz does not let any 'Bösewicht' escape unpunished, in fact even Desportes' father will assume a degree of responsibility, with the Obrister employing the same term to describe Desportes: 'Hernach will ich sehen, was ich bei dem Vater des Bösewichts für diese durch ihn verwüstete Familie auswirken kann.' (V v1&2 [first and second versions]). Rather than passing over the worst aspects of any action - 'den giftigsten Handlungen so der Stachel genommen' - Lenz sharpens the 'Stachel' of the main action of the play, the 'Geschöcker' between Mariane and Desportes. Mariane's reputation as a 'Hure' is in itself ironic given Desportes' frustration at having lost his 'Spiel' of actually having his way with her.³² It perversely renders the 'Stachel' not only more venomous, in that it pricks every character in the play, but also more visible to the audience. Eisenhardt's concern that the theatre positively encourages, despite its best intentions, the violation of 'die heiligsten Rechte der Väter und Familien', also betrays Lenz's realisation not only of conventional drama's limitations but also of its inherently self-defeating nature and thus his crafting of a drama which looks beyond itself. It is no coincidence that Eisenhardt's outburst comes precisely when Mariane is, against her father's wishes, at the theatre. As

³² See pp. 87-88.

such he offers a caveat to the audience before any action actually takes place. In stoking expectation, Lenz also pre-empts it in the audience. Through Eisenhardt Lenz enacts an intense self-questioning of his own method as well as the focus and capabilities of his own drama. The doubt expressed gives drama a new lease of life in that it redefines the way in which it is to be regarded: as a prelude to an engagement in political discourse, not an end in itself.

When the plot seems perilously close to following the path condemned by Eisenhardt, with Mariane hearing of Desportes' absence, Lenz again uses the Feldprediger as an internal director to undercut the undoubtedly effective realism of the main plot. In attacking the verbose philosophising of Pirzel, Eisenhardt repeats the forthright views he first expresses to the assembled officers (I iv), this time literally amplifying them:

Eisenhardt, bei Seite: Weh mir, wie bring ich den Menschen aus seiner Metaphysik zurück -
Laut. Um den Menschen zu kennen müßte man meines Erachtens bei dem Frauenzimmer
anfangen. (III iv)

With Pirzel left shaking his head, Eisenhardt expands on his previous statement, taking a further step back, offering a perceptive insight into the workings of the play itself: '*bei Seite:* Was die anderen zuviel sind ist der zu wenig. O Soldatenstand, furchtbare Ehlosigkeit, was für Karikaturen machst du aus den Menschen' (III iv). In the first line Eisenhardt does, as Hill states, make clear how the obsessive womanising of the officers is complemented by Pirzel's crazed philosophising.³³ However, in what follows Eisenhardt again utters a line which comments on the direction of the play itself. Just as he argues against the theatre in general, now he makes a direct comment on the theatrical scene of

³³ Ibid., p. 309.

which he now finds himself an observer. Eisenhardt focuses his attention on a wider problem, a problem which forms the central focus of Lenz's military reform texts, given its first airing in Lenz's reinterpretation of Jesus' teaching on adultery and then given more concrete form in *Über die Soldatenehen*, before its subsequent development in Weimar: that of 'Ehlosigkeit'.³⁴ Underneath the actions of any one 'Bösewicht', lies the far thornier issue of the unmarried status of soldiers, which in the context of both the play and reality turns people into 'Karikaturen'. This is precisely the path which Lenz takes his own characters down in the ensuing plot. Rather than emphasising the realistic portrayal of character, Eisenhardt sounds another warning regarding Lenz's desire to deviate from the conventional course of drama through the depiction of caricature.³⁵ In so doing he further ensures that he will not succumb to the traps which Eisenhardt points out in his earlier attack on the theatre. The distance created by caricature becomes immediately obvious as soon as he slips the audience back into the mainstream of the play with Pirzel's retort: 'Sie meinen beim Frauenzimmer - das wär grad als ob man bei den Schafen anfinge. Nein, was der Mensch ist - *Den Finger an der Nase*' (III iv). Eisenhardt's 'conversations' with Pirzel further emphasise the fact Lenz's preoccupations go beyond what the form of drama conventionally allows him to present. The detrimental effect which 'Ehlosigkeit' has on the performance of the army - the main concern of *Über die Soldatenehen* and related texts - only finds room in the drama as a comic interchange, but one with far more tangible fatal consequences than that of the main play itself. The soldiers' obsession with womanising, as with Pirzel's obsession with thinking, render the soldiers mere automata,

³⁴ See Chapter I, pp. 54-56, and Chapters III and IV.

³⁵ A path of course advocated in *Anmerkungen übers Theater*: '[...] nach meiner Empfindung schätz ich den charakteristischen, selbst den Karikaturmaler zehnmahl höher als den idealischen [...]', II, 653.

in Pirzel's words: 'Das geht alles mechanisch' (III iv). The consequences of such a state of affairs is sharply pointed out by Eisenhardt's allusion to the fate of the French army in the Seven Years War: 'Ja aber Sie laufen auch mechanisch. Die preußischen Kugeln müssen Sie bisweilen sehr unsanft aus Ihren süßen Träumen geweckt haben. *Gehen weiter*' (III iv). His concerns for the well-being of 'bürgerliche Mädchen' are superseded by his fears for the ability of the army to defend 'la patrie'. As they exit the stage for good, so must the concerns which they give voice to, until they resurface in a different guise, in the final scene. In the meantime the plot destined for the 'Karikaturen' remains to be unravelled, following an apparently mechanistic route.

Eisenhardt provides, literally, a 'Binnenkritik' of theatre, voicing it from within. His last scene also furnishes 'Dynamisierung', in so far as he evokes, however fleetingly, the political implications beyond the drama surrounding the 'Karikaturen' who are about to push him off the stage. Nevertheless, despite all Eisenhardt's aiding and abetting of Lenz's efforts to stress the limitations of theatre, and his desire to move beyond such limitations, his role is not sufficient to explain Lenz's enigmatic remark to Herder: 'Ich freue mich himmlische Freude, daß Du mein Stück gerade von der Seite empfindest auf der ichs empfunden wünschte, von der politischen.'³⁶ What this statement actually means in relation to *Die Soldaten* has been the subject of much controversy. With sole reference to the final scene of the play, Hill correctly takes issue with the understanding of the word 'politisch' in one of its twentieth century meanings, that is to say being indicative of a total rejection of the prevailing political order, in the sense of 'that which questions whether or

³⁶ Lenz an Herder, [Straßburg, den 20. November 1775], III, 353. Hill gives '[...] von der Politischen.', quoting from: *Briefe von und an J.M.R. Lenz*, ed. by K. Freye and W. Stämmler, 2 vols (Leipzig: Wolff, 1918), I, 145.

not the system itself represents the best possible organisation of society'.³⁷ Understood as such, the Obrister von Spannheim's inability to offer a significant contribution to a political debate which attempts to deal with the problems presented in the play is interpreted as exemplifying the bankruptcy of the overall political system. Hill's suggested alternative reading, with reference to the letter and the final scene of the play offers a different understanding of the word 'politisch':

It is clear in the detailed discussion that follows that Lenz, like Adelung who offers 'Staatsklugheit' as a synonym of 'Politik', was referring thereby to the application of reason to ensure the most successful functioning of a given system.³⁸

Far from a complete rejection of the political system, the play is seen to advocate the corrective reform of such a system.

Both these readings, in limiting themselves to a discussion of the last scene of the play, pass over the additional comment which Lenz adds to the his exuberant opening line of his letter: 'Doch es konnte nicht fehlen, *überall* auf Deine Meinungen und Grundsätze gepfropft.'³⁹ The political stems from the moral and religious underpinning of the whole

³⁷ See Hill, *OL*, pp. 300-2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 300. Guibert, the military tactician and reformer, who had a great influence on Lenz (see next chapter), comes up with his own definitions of 'la politique' which are as illuminating, if not more so, than Adelung: 'Si l'on entend par 'Politique', l'art de négocier, ou plutôt d'intriguer; celui de fomenter sourdement quelque révolution, de lier ou de rompre, dans l'obscurité des cabinets, quelques traités d'alliance, de paix, de mariage ou de commerce; nous sommes, sans doute, à cet égard, supérieurs aux anciens; nous y apportons plus de finesse et plus d'esprit qu'eux. Mais si la politique est la science vaste et sublime de régir un Etat, au-dedans et au-dehors; de diriger les intérêts particuliers vers l'intérêt général; de rendre les peuples heureux, et de les attacher à leurs gouvernemens: convenons qu'elle est totalement inconnue à nos administrateurs modernes, que nos Richelieu, nos Colbert, nos d'Ossat, nos Estrades, ne peuvent se comparer aux Licurgue, aux Péricles, aux Numa, aux grands hommes d'état de la Grèce et de Rome. Convenons que le sénat Romain, dans le temps de sa splendeur, nous rappelle cet Atlas fabuleux, qui soutenoit le fardeau du monde; tandis que nos gouvernemens ne sont que des machines frêles et compliquées; auxquelles la fortune et les circonstances impriment des mouvemens irréguliers, incertains et passagers comme elles.' J.A.H. Guibert, *Essai général de Tactique*, 2 vols (London: Librairies Associés, 1772), I, v-vi.

³⁹ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, den 20. November 1775], III, 353. My emphasis. See also *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, II, 667. See Chapter I, note 23, p. 27.

play, not solely from the final scene and any subsequent alterations Lenz makes to it. Although Lenz dedicates a large section of the letter to an attempt to meet Herder's criticisms of the final scene, rather than overturning his previous position in the alterations made, he seeks to clarify what is fundamentally the same position.⁴⁰ Even his recollection of what actually happens in the first version appear to be hazy to say the least: 'Was die letzte Szene betrifft, *so viel ich mich auf sie zurückerinnere*, deucht mich könnte allen verdrießlichen Folgen durch Weglassung oder Veränderung einiger Ausdrücke des Obristen begegnet werden.'⁴¹ Lenz even goes as far as to suggest that Herder might just as well rewrite the scene for him, having been given the briefest of outlines as to how it could be altered: 'Wenn Du anstehst Teurer, so schick mir die letzte Szene abgeschrieben zu, daß ich sie ändere. Doch könntest Dus so leicht tun [...]'.⁴²

In his excitement that Herder has actually picked up on the 'politische Seite', Lenz admits that it not limited to the final scene, but rather extends throughout the play.⁴³ The debt acknowledged to Herder is also expressed at the beginning of Lenz's own religious 'Hauptschrift', *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien*, in which, as we have already seen, Lenz comes to formulate his own distinctive 'Meinungen und Grundsätze', or more appropriately 'Grundstein', one which enables Lenz's own 'Bestimmung' to take on a more politicised aspect.⁴⁴ The pseudotheological formulation of faith made in Lenz's exegesis of the Bible now becomes the concrete 'politische' underpinning of his

⁴⁰ Herder voices his objections in a letter which has unfortunately been lost (Hill, *OL*, 302.).

⁴¹ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, den 20. November 1775], II, 353-54. My emphasis.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ As quoted above, see note 39, p. 98

⁴⁴ 'Ich danke Ihnen für die zugesandte älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts. Sei auch der edle große Verfasser wer er sei, er ist ein Mann von Gott kommen!', *Brief eines Geistlichen, Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 522.

subsequent drama, replacing the resignation which lies behind *Der Hofmeister*. In addition, progressing from the formulation that ‘Ein tätiger Glaube ist nicht [...] dichten [...] es ist tun’, Lenz now sees writing, in this case his activity of ‘Komödienschreiben’, as a means by which he can initiate the beginnings of a political dialogue with those in power.⁴⁵ How he hopes to achieve this is intimated in a letter to Sophie von La Roche, written in July 1775, a full four months before Lenz’s correspondence with Herder. *Die Soldaten* is to be read as being part of a process, which makes, at this stage, a direct appeal to the ‘Göttlichkeit’ of the political classes:

Sie sollen einmal ein Stück von mir lesen: die Soldaten. Überhaupt wird meine Bemühung dahin gehen, die Stände darzustellen, wie sie sind; nicht, wie sie Personen aus einer höheren Sphäre sich vorstellen, und den mitleidigen, gefühlvollen, wohltätigen Gottesherzen unter diesen, neue Aussichten und Laufbahnen für ihre Göttlichkeit zu eröffnen. Dazu gehört aber Zeit und Experimente.⁴⁶

In the final qualifying sentence Lenz expresses his reservations as to the ability of drama actually to achieve this goal. Despite his best attempts to write a play which is overtly critical of the certain forms of drama, both in basic plot and through the views on theatre voiced by Eisenhardt, Lenz is still not confident of theatre’s effectiveness as a forum for the publicity of his own political ambitions. Time and experimentation in different discourses are called for. Nevertheless later in the same letter he makes it quite clear that he has embarked on an expressly political mission:

Ich will aber nichts, als dem Verderbnis der Sitten entgegen arbeiten, das von den glänzenden zu den niedrigen Ständen hinab schleicht, und wogegen diese die Hülfsmittel nicht haben können, als jene.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See Chapter I, pp. 66-70.

⁴⁶ Lenz an Sophie von La Roche [Straßburg, Juli 1775], III, 325-26.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

It is a mission, which rather than challenging the system, is intent on reform from within, as *Realpolitik* tempers the fiery Sturm und Drangesque formulations of *Stimmen des Laien*, but corresponds to the ethos of working for the 'social good' at the heart of Lenz's notion of 'Bestimmung'.⁴⁸ The cultivation of a line of communication becomes his aim. Although still writing within the limitations set by the Sturm und Drang's chosen medium of theatre, in subverting that medium Lenz attempts to shape the agenda for, and his own role in, a political debate which reaches far beyond the boundaries of the theatre. In terms of the 'Geflecht' spanning Sturm und Drang and Aufklärung, he makes a decisive break with the resignation and frustration of the former, in order to try and win himself a position from which he is able to partake in the matter of practical governance of the latter, thus sharing with many of his contemporaries the ambition of serving the interests of the absolutist state in the process.⁴⁹ The energy with which Lenz devotes himself to the development of his own military and economic reform plan during 1776, in particular during his time in Berka, is indicative of the fact that a hidden agenda underpins *Die Soldaten*.⁵⁰

Despite his undoubted knowledge of military affairs,⁵¹ Lenz's ability to enter into any serious form of political debate, that is to say as an active participant in the process of 'Staatsklugheit', is severely hampered by his complete lack of political credibility and lowly social status. Hence, he does not hesitate to make full use of the limited authority

⁴⁸ See Chapter I, pp. 54-64, and pp. 27-29 respectively.

⁴⁹ See note 14, p. 78.

⁵⁰ See Chapters III and IV.

⁵¹ A knowledge built up through first hand experience in Fort-Louis and Landau in his service under the von Kleist brothers and also attested to by Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Vierzehntes Buch, HA, X, 7-10. Lenz had grounds for proclaiming himself 'Kenner des Waffenwesens' for, as Goethe points out, 'auch hatte er wirklich dieses Fach nach und nach studiert'.

he does have, that is to say, to use Lenz's own description, as 'ein elender Komödienschreiber und Bibellisten'.⁵² Regardless of the doubts he harbours regarding the capabilities of drama, it remains his principal source of authority, in terms of being published and thus entering, in however a limited sense, the public domain. As such drama remains the most effective tool open to him in any attempt to force an opening into the closed world of politicking, by publicising his own credentials for entering such a forum. It is essential to bear this in mind when approaching both versions of the final scene between the Obrister von Spannheim and Gräfin de La Roche.

The extent to which Lenz undermines the medium of drama throughout *Die Soldaten*, realism included, must put the reader on guard when approaching either of the two versions of the final scene between the Obrister and the Gräfin. In removing Mariane and Wesener from the stage so forcibly it might appear that he is clearing the decks for the voice of reason to comment on the preceding action. But in a play intent on undermining convention, the chances that such a voice will guide the audience to the proper conclusions, in either version, would appear remote.⁵³ The ambiguous endings of Lenz's earlier plays hardly provide grounds for any such optimism as regards a straightforward ending in either version. As the Bürgermeister says to his son, Zierau, in *Der neue Menoza* (1774) in relation to drama: 'Ich weiß nicht, es tut mir immer weh in den Ohren,

⁵² Übersetzung einer Stelle aus dem *Gastmahl des Xenophons*, II, 749. An address conceived towards the end of 1775 (in the same period as Lenz's letter to Herder) and delivered to his newly formed 'Deutsche Gesellschaft' on 1 Feb. 1776 (see II, 934). It is a self-estimation echoed in Lenz's description of himself in a fragment from the *Lenziana* held in the Biblioteka Jagiellonska, Kraków: 'Le comte de Saxe étoit un grand homme, pour moi qui ne suis qu'un petit faiseur de Comédies ou l'on pleure et des Tragédies ou l'on rit [...]', D.Hill, 'Die Arbeiten von Lenz zu den Soldatenehen. Ein Bericht über die Krakauer Handschriften', in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 118-37 (p.125), IV, ii, 2v.

⁵³ Contrary to the view taken by Hill, *OL*, pp. 299-300.

wenn ich den Fratzen so räsonnieren höre.’⁵⁴ Even when Lenz is capable of finding an ‘Ausweg’ out of the preceding dramatic action, he has no faith in drama’s ability to express it. This is not to suggest that the scheme for ‘Konkubinen’ (V v1) or the more refined, but ultimately euphemistic, second version ‘Pflanzschule von Soldatenweibern’ (V v2) is at any stage ironized. The plan itself for the institution of state brothels or, in its more sophisticated guise, military marriages based on the coercion of women is not in itself absurd, at least not for Lenz himself. Rather it is the attempt to communicate any such vision within the limitations of the theatre which is made to look absurd. Drama is shown to be an inadequate vehicle for social criticism, understood as the offering of precise solutions offered in the form of a detailed policy proposal. Any judgement as to the workability of such a plan, as perverse and distasteful as it may seem from a twentieth century perspective, will have to take into account its expansion in *Über die Soldatenehen* and, decisively, in the mature formulations of the project written in Berka during the summer of 1776 (see Chapters III and IV). Certainly the far less suspect character of Prinz Tandi, in *Der neue Menoza*, is prepared to advocate brothels, furthering suggesting Lenz’s support for such institutions.⁵⁵

Both versions of the final scene serve as a starting point for the elucidation of the proposal for reform in a different discourse, the difference being that what is implicit in the

⁵⁴ *Der neue Menoza*, V ii, I, 188.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, II vi, when in conversation with the academics Beza and Zierau, I, 148:

Prinz: Genuß und Liebe sind das einzige Glück der Welt, nur unser innerer Zustand muß ihm den Ton geben.

Beza: Ei was Liebe, Liebe, das ist eine saubere Religion, die uns die Bordelle noch voller stopft.

Zierau: Ich wünschte, wir könnten die Jugend erst lieben lehren, die Bordelle würden bald leer werden.

Prinz: Aber es würde vielleicht um desto schlimmer mit der Welt stehn. Liebe ist Feuer, und besser ist’s, man legt es zu Stroh als an ein Ährenfeld. Solang da nicht andere Anstalten vorgekehrt werden-

Zierau: Wenn die goldenen Zeiten wiederkommen.

Prinz: Die stecken nur im Hirn der Dichter, und Gott sei Dank.

‘erste Fassung’ becomes explicit in the ‘zweite Fassung’. There is a distinct shift in emphasis between the two versions, but both serve to stress the limited scope of drama. By definitively superseding the ‘realism’ of the dramatic action, both scenes serve to meet Eisenhardt’s objections to the ‘neuesten Dramen’(II ii) by initiating a debate with a particular agenda, but with no solution to that debate reached within the confines of the play itself. In rewriting the final scene Lenz clarifies the confrontational content of his conclusion, with the express desire to continue his argument elsewhere and advertise his own ability to do so in the world of court politics. The move from the cosy mutual agreement of the ‘erste Fassung’ to the silence of disagreement in the ‘zweite Fassung’ does not reflect a fundamental shift in Lenz’s purpose, rather a clarification of purpose. That the Gräfin’s voice moves from assent to dissent does not provide any element that is not previously existent in the play, even if it does alter the dynamics of the final scene. The dissent the Gräfin voices is a direct echo of Eisenhardt’s concerns earlier in the play. His observation: ‘O Soldatenstand, furchtbare Ehlosigkeit, was für Karikaturen machtest du aus den Menschen’(III iii), is echoed by the Gräfin, now humbled by bitter personal experience, as she says in both versions: ‘Das sind die Folgen des ehelosen Standes der Herren Soldaten’(V v1&2). The ‘zweite Fassung’ succeeds in amplifying Eisenhardt’s other acute observations concerning the other sex. As Eisenhardt says to Haudy: ‘Eine Hure wird immer eine Hure, kennen Sie das andere Geschlecht so genau?’(I iv), and then to Pirzel: ‘Um den Menschen zu kennen müßte man meines Erachtens bei dem Frauenzimmer anfangen’(III iv). As a result the Gräfin’s curt critical response to the Obrister’s scheme: ‘Wie wenig kennt ihr Männer doch das Herz und Wünsche eines

Frauenzimmers'(V v2), does not offer a wholly new perspective, but does sharpen the awareness as to the existence of a possible criticism of the Obrister's scheme, both in the final scene and the play taken as a whole. Furthermore the amplification of the voice of dissent also meets Eisenhardt's criticisms of the theatre; there is to be no mistaken belief that the 'Stachel' of the preceding action has been smoothed over, as the Gräfin's comments also provide a prompt for Lenz to articulate his wish to go to court to explain his plans in more depth. Rather than the 'zweite Fassung' amounting to a 'condemnation of the world in which Lenz lived',⁵⁶ the insertion of a critical attitude on the part of the Gräfin clarifies Lenz's condemnation of the theatre's inability to deliver tangible results in the real, political world.

The changes in the two versions also serve to clarify the political nature of the play. Lenz's inclusion of a critique of the Obrister's scheme does not have the effect of 'removing his play from the world of political discourse'⁵⁷, as the limitations of drama prevent Lenz from ever entering any form of political discourse, in the sense of 'Staatsklugheit', in the first place. As such neither scene is capable of presenting 'clear solutions'.⁵⁸ What Lenz does clarify in the 'zweite Fassung' is his express desire to join the world of political discourse; his conception of *Die Soldaten* as a prelude to this becomes more explicit. Lenz's delight that his play has prompted Herder to think in reformist terms - rather than simply swallowing its apparent message as Eisenhardt

⁵⁶ Hill, *OL*, p. 313.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 304-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306: 'The first version of the play was political in Lenz's sense, at least in its conclusions. The second version presents no clear solutions. Instead it relativises the words of the Graf (and indeed of the Gräfin), presenting them more realistically as the utterances of these particular people in this particular situation.'

criticises (I iv) - explains his initial exuberance: 'Ich freue mich himmlische Freude, daß Du mein Stück gerade von der Seite empfindest auf der ichs empfunden wünschte, von der politischen.'⁵⁹ However, that Herder's reaction is somewhat wide of the mark does prompt Lenz to rework the final scene. The coarseness of the Obrister's vocabulary in the 'erste Fassung' is toned down in an attempt to avoid the 'verdrießlichen Folgen', of which Herder's knee-jerk reaction - in all probability at least - is a fine example.⁶⁰ Lenz berates Herder in answer to his criticisms: 'Ordentliche Soldatenehen wollen mir nicht in den Kopf. Soldaten können und sollen nicht mild sein, dafür sind sie Soldaten.' The simplistic solution drawn by Herder, that is to say the extension of civilian marriage into the military, does not represent, in Lenz's eyes, a viable solution. Lenz's personal experiences of the military have taught him as much, as he continues in his argument with Herder:

Hektor im Homer hat immer recht gehabt, wären der Griechen Weiber mit ihnen gewesen, sie hätten Troja nimmer erobert. Ich hab einige Jahre mit den Leuten gewirtschaftet in Garnisonen gelegen gelebt hantiert.⁶¹

This view is carried over from the 'erste' to the 'zweite Fassung' through the Obrister. It would appear that the Gräfin's reaction to the preceding action bears a striking resemblance to what appears to have been Herder's: '*Gräfin*: Das sind die Folgen des ehlosen Standes der Herren Soldaten.' The Obrister's retort echoes Lenz's own response, as expressed in the letter: '*Obrister, zuckt die Schultern*: Wie ist dem abzuhelfen? Schon Homer hat, deucht mich, gesagt, ein guter Ehemann sei ein schlechter Soldat' (V v2). Just

⁵⁹ Lenz an Herder, [Straßburg, den 20. November 1775], III, 353-54.

⁶⁰ See notes 40 and 41, p. 99.

⁶¹ Ibid. In fact Lenz's Homer allusion is bogus, see S.Schmalhaus, *Literarische Anspielungen als Darstellungsprinzip* (Münster/Hamburg: Lit, 1994), pp. 10-11.

as Lenz backs his own view in the letter by citing his personal experience of military life, in the 'zweite Fassung' so does the Obrister: 'Die Erfahrung bestätigt's' (V v2).

In effect the objections raised by Herder in the letter are replicated in the critical stance the Gräfin assumes in the 'zweite Fassung'. Meanwhile Lenz further identifies himself with the proposals for reform put forward by the Obrister, with his language in the letter almost identical to the Obrister's speech in the play. Nevertheless, Lenz also clarifies the fact that the Obrister's position is not a finalised solution, but one that is, not to put too fine a point on it, in embryo. The inadequacies of theatre only allow the opening up of a line of communication with the powers that be. Hence the penultimate line of the play calls for an opportunity for the elucidation of such ideas at court: 'O ich wünschte, daß ich nur einer fände, diese Gedanken bei Hofe durchzutreiben, ich wollte ihn schon Quellen entdecken' (V v2). This line is again closely identifiable with Lenz's own position when he insists that Herder must make one crucial amendment above and beyond all others: 'Doch könntest Dus so leicht tun, nur in den *einen* Dialog des Obristen einschieben pp Laß mich die Fürsten erst fragen, ich will Ihnen mein Projekt schon deutlicher machen.'⁶² This proviso amounts to a direct appeal in the text itself for the role Lenz himself seeks to play in the political sphere.⁶³ Although Lenz may well aspire to join the politicking, in Hill's sense of 'Staatsklugheit', he is not in a position to do so as yet, being a mere dramatist. The final words of the play in the 'zweite Fassung' are not left 'floating in an imaginative world of ironies and ambiguities'⁶⁴ but remain the genuine expression of Lenz's hopes for the plan he has in mind:

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ As Hill points out, *OL*, p. 303, also with a reference to Goethe's account in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 305.

Obrister: Die Beschützer des Staats würden sodann auch sein Glück sein, die äußere Sicherheit desselben nicht die innere aufheben, und in der bisher durch uns zerrütteten Gesellschaft Fried und Wohlfahrt aller und Freude sich untereinander küssen. (V v2)

If anything the exuberant language the Obrister uses to express the envisioned results of his scheme is slightly toned down in comparison to the 'erste Fassung'.⁶⁵ But in dramatising the epistolary dispute with Herder, Lenz both clarifies and strengthens the link *Die Soldaten* has with 'das Politische' rather than severing it.⁶⁶ He uses his authority as a playwright in an attempt to invite himself to court.

Despite reworking the final scene to shore up the play's link to the political, Lenz still harbours deep misgivings as to the wisdom of pursuing his political ambitions through the medium of drama. Even before he receives Herder's long overdue response to *Die Soldaten*, he expresses doubts as to whether the play should indeed be published, and even if it is, he seeks to ensure that the work appear anonymously.⁶⁷ When Lenz's pipe dream of going to a court suddenly becomes a distinct possibility, his anxieties heighten, especially as regards the last scene of the play: 'Die letzte Szene in den Soldaten muß

⁶⁵ *Obrister*: Und Millionen Unglückliche weniger. Die durch unsere Unordnungen zerrüttete Gesellschaft würde wieder aufblühen und Fried und Wohlfahrt aller und Ruhe und Freude sich untereinander küssen. (V v1).

⁶⁶ Hill: 'The most important consequence of the revision of the last scene of *Die Soldaten* is that with it Lenz is in effect decided to remove his play from the world of political discourse. Certainly it remains crucially concerned with the real world but it no longer engages with the world in the same way; the author's voice which had attached it like an umbilical cord to the realm of political activity, is gone and it now floats in an imaginative world of ironies and ambiguities [...] [Lenz decides] to end on a more open note: a solution is proposed which is at the same time shown to be inadequate.', *OL*, pp. 304-5

⁶⁷ Lenz's desire to postpone publication of *Die Soldaten* is evident as early as September 1775, see Lenz an Herder [Straßburg,] den 29 September [1775], III, 339-40. He sent the only manuscript copy of *Die Soldaten* to Herder on 23 Julius 1775 (III, 329). Having heard nothing for two months, Lenz desperately asks Herder if he ever actually received the document (an Herder den 29 September [1775], III, 339-40): 'Herder! Ich will und muß ein *Recepisse* haben, ob Du die >Soldaten<, eine Komödie, erhalten hast. Ich habe sie Dir schon seit acht Wochen unterm Couvert der Jungfer König über Darmstadt zugeschickt, wie das *Pandaemonium*. Es ist mein einzig Manuskript, und wenn es verloren ist, so ist mein Leben mit verloren.' The following day (an Herder den 30. September 1775, III, 342) his sense of desperation reaches new depths: 'Ach wenn Du meine >Soldaten< hast, wenn Deine Frau ihn Dir vorliest - genug.'

nicht gedruckt werden, wenn ich mein Ding selbst bei Hofe durchtreiben kann.’⁶⁸ The revelation of Weimar as an ostensibly welcoming court renders *Die Soldaten* superfluous as a means for Lenz to push his way into politics. Hence his even more feverish desire to distance himself from the play just before he sets off for Weimar, as well as his paranoia as regards the destruction of all known copies of his satirical attack on Wieland, *Die Wolken*. Lenz sends two letters on the same day to Zimmermann, his contact with the Weidmanns Erben und Reich publishing house and for the first time he acknowledges the fact that the scheme sketched out by the Obrister has in fact been the subject of elaboration in the form of a political discourse. In asking for both the pseudonym ‘Herr Steenkerk in Amsterdam’ and for a delay in actual publication until the next ‘Michaelismesse’, he admits that the play is but prelude to a far greater project, and moreover has been so for some time: ‘Über die Soldaten habe ich auch nachgedacht [...] Ich habe etwas (nicht seit gestern) im Kopfe, das allem diesem ein größeres Gewicht und einen ganz andern Ausschlag geben soll.’⁶⁹ That the publication date came at the most inopportune of moments, since the Obrister’s desire for an audience at court is perversely fulfilled in reality even before *Die Soldaten* appears, is also evident in Lenz’s final letter to Herder before his departure. Thanking Herder for his help in delaying publication, he expands on the nature of the project he has

⁶⁸ Damm, in citing this line, gives an incorrect reference - to the letter an Herder 20.11.1775, I, 730. In fact Hill comes up with a hypothesis that this interesting transitional note was written before Lenz’s stay in Weimar (contrary to Blei’s placing of it in that period; the actual text is in Blei, III, 462). Damm subsequently corroborated this view, see Hill, *OL*, p. 314, footnote 15. I would also agree, for it was during the process of publication (proofs and copy) (See Herder an Lenz 9 Mz. [1776], III, 399-400.) that Lenz was preparing his journey and his ideas for Weimar (See Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776, III, 400-1]).

⁶⁹ Lenz an Johann Georg Zimmermann [Straßburg, Ende Februar 1776; empfangen 6. März 1776], III, 388 and an Zimmermann [Straßburg, Ende Februar 1776; empfangen 6. März 1776], III, 387-88. See also an Zimmermann [Straßburg, Anfang März, 1776; empfangen 14. März], III, 395.

in mind, one which mirrors the concerns of the play but expands on them, with Lenz himself assuming the role of the Obrister in characteristically theatrical fashion:

Ich habe eine Schrift über die Soldatenehen unter Händen, die ich einem Fürsten vorlesen möchte, und nach deren Vollendung und Durchtreibung ich - wahrscheinlich wohl sterben werde.⁷⁰

The project alluded to was far from completion before the journey to Weimar was undertaken. Indeed as the Kraków *Lenziana* and his correspondence from the period amply illustrate, Lenz dedicated much of his stay in and around Weimar to the elaboration of the scheme presented at the end of *Die Soldaten*.⁷¹ In his working notes he gives further elucidation as to his own understanding of *Die Soldaten* as a prelude to further debate.⁷² In the >*Avantpropos*<, a foreword to a proposed treatise on military reform, Lenz confirms the view that *Die Soldaten* was conceived as a way of putting a distinct scheme onto the political agenda of the 1770s. Military reform during this period was the subject of intense debate, especially in France, and it was a debate Lenz was eager to join. *Die Soldaten* is not to be seen as an end with its own conclusions and solutions to the problems it doubtless presents, rather it is the starting point for his intended career change

⁷⁰ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776], III, 400. Further identification with the Obrister is manifest in an Zimmermann [Kehl] d. 15ten März 1776, as Lenz describes his journey to Weimar: 'Eine Reise deren Folgen für mein Vaterland wichtiger als für mich sein werden [...]' III, 407. This last statement is perhaps, as P.Hacks points out, to be understood as part of a 'Schorrbrief', which Lenz was adept at writing, 'Lenzens Eseley. Warum wurde J.M.R.Lenz aus Weimar vertrieben? Späte Lösung eines literarischen Kriminalfalles anhand Goethescher Dichtung', Müller, III, 109. Lenz desperately sought money for the trip to Weimar, with the fees paid for *Die Soldaten* to be used for this end, see III, 734.

⁷¹ A great proportion of Lenz's time in Weimar was spent away from the court in a cottage in Berka, as he sought solitude to bring his project to a conclusion ready for presentation to court. See next chapter.

⁷² As D.Hill's more recent research has brought out. In addition to his 'Bericht' on the Kraków *Lenziana* (see note 50, p. 52). Hill has also edited two texts from the *Lenziana*, see 'J.M.R.Lenz' >>Avantpropos<< zu den >>Soldatenehen<<', *LJb*, 5 (1995), 7-21 (henceforth *Avantpropos*) and 'J.M.R.Lenz: *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*', in *Order from Confusion: Essays presented to Edward McInnes on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. by A.Deighton (Hull: New German Studies, 1995), pp.1-27 (henceforth *Order...*).

- effectively from 'elender Komödienschreiber und Bibillisten' to military advisor. Acknowledging the fact that religion is no longer in a position to unite an army into an effective unit, as had been the case under Gustavus Adolphus, Lenz recognises his need to replace religion with something else:

Il faut donc songer a substituer quelque chose a l'opinion universelle qui soit tout aussi efficace que celle de la Religion et je n'en connois aucune equivalente, que celle de la felicité, et de la felicité la plus sensuelle et la plus comprehensible qu'elle peut etre depeinte a l'imagination des gens sans moeurs et connoissances. Et cependant la moins prejudicieuse au bienetre des autres citoiens. Un soldat heureux ne sera jamais vaincu pourvuque ce bonheur soit de façon a ne le pas enerver.⁷³

As we have seen Lenz's whole 'Grundstein', his own conception of religion, rests on a strikingly similar formula, with the 'Bestimmung' of every individual such that he or she must work for the 'social good'. As Lenz begins *Meinungen eines Laien*: 'Religion soll uns glücklicher machen, sonst nehmen wir sie nicht an. Und soll sie das, so muß sie empfunden werden, denn die Glückseligkeit besteht in Empfindung.'⁷⁴ *Die Soldaten* is thus conceived as a prelude to his own entrance into the world of 'Staatsklugheit' in which working for the 'social good' becomes a distinct possibility, as the >Avantpropos< continues:

Toutes ces considerations m'ont donné lieu a écrire une piece theatrale, ou j'exposois avec les couleurs les plus vives les desordres que les militaires introduisent imperceptiblement et comme un mal epidemique dans notre société civile, pour exciter la curiosité du public a vouloir faire plus d'attention aux remedes que je vais prescrire a ces maux inevitables et tot ou tard destructive pour tout le genre humain.⁷⁵

⁷³ *Avantpropos*, p. 14 [13r]. The French is as in the original. See Lenz an Herder [Straßburg Anfang März 1776], III, 390 for Lenz's continued faith: 'Ich arbeite jetzt in mancherlei Strömen wider den Strom. Habe Licht und Hoffnung im Herzen, die durch Deine Offenbarung auf Ewigkeit hinaus gemehrt worden [...] Ist denn die Regierung Gottes arm? Oder fehlts ihm an Werkzeug und Mittel.'

⁷⁴ *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 526, see Chapter I, pp. 27-29.

⁷⁵ *Avantpropos*, p.14. [13 r]

The 'reizenden Farben' which Eisenhardt objects to 'in den neusten Komödien' (I iv), because they deflect from the true horrors of the play, are not used by Lenz in the same way.⁷⁶ 'Les couleurs vives' are used to expose the imperceptible way in which the military corrupts civil society. The solutions Lenz has in mind are not to be found in either version of the final scene, only 'la curiosité du public' is to be directed to a distinct agenda, of which only an inkling is given in the final scene. Both versions of that scene are conceived as a means by which Lenz can introduce the central idea behind his proposal. More importantly, he attempts to overcome the shocking aspects of a proposal which amounts to the state-sanctioned conversion of marriage into an economic trade-off between sex and money. The details of such a trade-off are to be elucidated outside the theatre, as he duly does in his subsequent writings.

Die Soldaten is not a drama of resignation as *Der Hofmeister* is, yet nor does it reach a point which makes it a fully-fledged 'political' play, in any sense of the word - modern or eighteenth-century. Lenz continually acknowledges his awareness of the inadequacy of drama when it comes to presenting political views. In *Die Soldaten* he undermines the realism of his own play through the internal self-criticism of Eisenhardt and the use of irony. He also calls the drama of his contemporaries into question, lucidly aware of the blind alley which the drama of mere expression - the drama of the Sturm und Drang as well as the tradition of the 'bürgerliches Trauerspiel' - was heading up with great speed in 1775-76, thereby enacting a 'Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik' in relation to both forms of drama. With his authority in terms of actual publication restricted primarily to

⁷⁶ See pp. 93-95.

drama, Lenz is bound to rework drama as a tool to gain access to the politics and shape the political agenda.⁷⁷ In the ‘Geflecht’ between Sturm und Drang and Aufklärung, he prepares the way for an entry from the former to the latter. The alterations made to the final scene of the play amplify his use of the theatre as a means to that end. As a result *Die Soldaten* must be read as part of a process. The dramatisation of the epistolary dispute with Herder in the ‘zweite Fassung’ consolidates his conception of drama as self-publicity, with Lenz identifying if anything more strongly with the Obrister, whose express intention, like his own, is to gain an audience at court, whichever court that may be. In reality time caught Lenz unawares. Before *Die Soldaten* was even published, his wishes came true. The opportunity, if not the invitation, to go to the court of Weimar beckoned. Having assumed a political stance, yet frustrated by drama’s inadequacies, suddenly an opportunity to join in the process of ‘Staatsklugheit’ seems within his grasp. *Die Soldaten* became superfluous in its guise as a vehicle of self-publicity. In the summer of 1776 Lenz attempted to make the most of this sudden opportunity, frantically working on the presentation of his reform plan, so as to be able to make a direct, and in his mind, telling contribution to a debate of the utmost importance to the governments of 1770s Europe, that concerning military reform. As Lenz confides to Herder whilst on his way to Weimar, perhaps *Die Soldaten* was a means to an end, rather than unreservedly ‘wahr’:

Sub iuramento mysterii

*Ich will Dir alles sagen Herder! [...] Die>Soldaten< [...] ich [habe] das Ganze
zusammengelogen.*⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Reviews of his other works were hardly complementary, see Chapter I, note 85, p. 48. Lenz also became frustrated with the limitations of his Straßburg circle, see for example Lenz an Goethe Straßburg, Februar 1775, III, 306.

⁷⁸ Lenz an Herder Darmstadt [Ende März], III, 416-17. Compare with his letter nine months before, an Herder [Straßburg] den 23 Julius 1775, note 1, p. 72.

Chapter III

Über die Soldatenehen:
Lenz's reform plans in embryo

Über die Soldatenehen: Lenz's reform plans in embryo

Den Tag [...] kam mir Göthens Brief aus Weimar [...] Der Herzog hat feierlich bei mir angefragt, ich sage Ja u. nun stockts wieder - stockts! Gott wird mir helfen. Und Du, was zitterst Du, wie ein Irrlicht zu erlöschen. In Dir ist wahrlich Funke Gottes, der nie verlöscht u. verlöschen muß. Glaube!

(Herder an Lenz, 9. Mz. [1776])¹

Mir gehts wie Ihnen, ich bin arm wie eine Kirchenmaus; von verschiedenen Sachen, die teils unter der Presse, teils noch in Göthens Händen sind, hab ich gar keine Abschrift; die andern sind noch nicht gestaltete Embryonen, denen ich unterwegs Existenz geben will.

(Lenz an Merck Den 14ten März [1776])²

Ich geh aufs Land, weil ich bei Euch nichts tun kann.

(Lenz an Goethe, Weimar, 27 Juni 1776)³

Nachmittags Oberstallm Künste. Conseil. Im Garten gessen [sic]. Abends nach Bercka. Lenz. Einsamkeit. Schweigen.

(Goethe *Tagebuch* 17 Juli 1776)⁴

Lenz ist eine wunderbare, aber im Grunde gute und liebenswürdige Seele. Er lebt meistens zu Berka wie ein Einsiedler - bedarf gar sehr wenig, und ist nur glücklich, wenn man ihn in seiner Ideenwelt ungestört leben läßt.

(Wieland an von Gebler, Weimar, 5 Oktober 1776)⁵

General introduction to Chapters III and IV

Of course Lenz's decision to turn away from literature and theology in attempt to pursue a political career at court also has a broader context, namely the tradition which had grown in the eighteenth century of authors playing an advisory role to monarchs.⁶ Most notably

¹ III, 399.

² III, 406.

³ III, 472.

⁴ Müller, I, 277.

⁵ Müller, I, 317.

⁶ See T.J.Reed, 'Talking to Tyrants: Dialogues with Power in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 63-79; also H.M.Scott, 'The Problem of Enlightened Absolutism' and D.Beales, 'Social Forces and Enlightened Policies', both in *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in late Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by H.M.Scott (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 1-35 and pp. 37-53 respectively.

precedents had been set by the *philosophes*. Voltaire had been invited to Frederick II's Potsdam court, residing there from 1750 until his famous quarrel with Maupertuis in 1753. D'Alembert was also flattered by the attentiveness of Frederick and duly returned the compliment. At a later date Diderot too accepted patronage, from Catherine the Great of Russia, albeit in part in order to provide a dowry for his daughter. In 1773 he stayed at the St. Petersburg court for several months, before disillusionment with Catherine's reforms set in, as is manifest in *Mémoires pour Catherine II* (1773). German precedents had also been set, with authors reflecting on government as well as on the problem of advising the monarchy, such as was the case in Wieland's *Der goldene Spiegel* (1772). It was through this novel that Wieland had hoped to gain a position at the conservative court of Joseph II in Vienna. Unsurprisingly he was not successful, although he did at least arouse the interest of Anna Amalia, the Regent (1759-1775) of the Duchy of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach; Wieland was duly invited to become tutor to Carl-August. Thus there was an established pattern of writers playing a part in court politics which many of the Sturm und Drang generation tried to follow. Goethe had been the first to try to make such a transition and Lenz, among many others, was keen to follow his example.

It therefore comes as no surprise that even prior to his arrival in Weimar, at the beginning of April 1776, Lenz had been working on the formulation of his military reform project. The result of this first stage in a long and complex process is *Über die Soldatenehen*. Once at the 'Mushof' Lenz dedicated himself to a complete overhaul of the project, with the mature form of the plan to be found in a series of unpublished manuscripts, currently held in Kraków. As a result the project as a whole deserves to be

taken more seriously than it has been up to now, thanks in the first instance to the negative pronounced on it by Lenz's rather more famous contemporaries. The reclusive existence Lenz opted for during his stay in the Duchy of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, shut away in the solitude offered by a cottage in Berka, deliberately removing himself from the comings and goings of court life, left Goethe and Wieland perplexed and bemused. The impenetrable 'Einsamkeit' and 'Schweigen', or the obscure 'Ideenwelt' to which the two Weimar luminaries allude, are also characteristic of Goethe's judgement of the main focus of Lenz's feverish writing activities during his time in Berka: his various essays concerning military reform. Goethe's reminiscences thereof in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* crystallise a standpoint which remains largely unchallenged in contemporary criticism. In his autobiography, written thirty-eight years after the events of the summer of 1776, Goethe concedes that Lenz was very familiar with military affairs, and a self-professed 'Kenner des Waffenwesens', an assertion not to be ridiculed, built as it was on intensive and ongoing study of the subject: 'auch hatte er wirklich dieses Fach nach und nach so im Detail studiert.'⁷ Such rigorous application bore fruit later, undoubtedly in Weimar, and subsequently Berka, with the result: 'daß er, einige Jahre später, ein großes Memoire an den französischen Kriegsminister aufsetzte, wovon er sich den besten Erfolg versprach.' Despite Lenz's apparently solid grounding in military affairs, it is Goethe's assessment of his proposals that lives on: 'Die Gebrechen jenes Zustandes waren ziemlich gut gesehn, die Heilmittel dagegen lächerlich und unausführbar.' In the next sentence the work is marginalised still further, consigned to the realms of fantasy, 'dieses phantastische Werk', where it has languished ever since. Furthermore, according to Goethe, Lenz was

⁷ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Vierzehntes Buch, HA, X, 7-10 for this and the following extracts.

persuaded to withhold and burn a work, 'das schon sauber abgeschrieben, mit einem Briefe begleitet, couvertiert und förmlich adressiert war', and with which Lenz hoped to win 'dadurch bei Hofe großen Einfluß'. Whether he followed such advice, as Goethe claims, is uncertain; either way, Lenz continued work on his project during his self-imposed exile in Berka.⁸

Regardless of the validity of Goethe's judgement, it is clear that he makes it on the basis of a bound work written with an express readership in mind: the French Minister for War, a position occupied in 1776 by the Comte de St. Germain. The 'Memoire' alluded to was in all probability one written in French, an argument supported by Lenz's decision to write in that language; as he states in a letter to Zimmermann at the end of May 1776, seven weeks after his arrival in Weimar:

Ich arbeite jetzt an einem Werk über die Soldatenehen das ich wohl französisch schreiben und die Reise werde nach Paris machen lassen. Ein Gegenstand den ich schon bei drei Jahren in meinem Kopf herumgewälzt.⁹

From this letter it also becomes clear that the text to which Goethe refers is the end-product of an organic process lasting some three years - hence starting before *Die Soldaten* was written - during which time the project has undergone a series of transformations, not only in the language in which Lenz elects to write, but also in its form, content and style. After the most superficial of comparisons, it is obvious that the text Goethe dismisses bears little resemblance to *Über die Soldatenehen*. First published

⁸ See Damm's note, II, 946.

⁹ Lenz an Johann Georg Zimmermann [Weimar, Ende Mai 1776], III, 459. In a letter to his publishers at the beginning of May he also expresses the same intention: Lenz an Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Weimar den 6ten Mai 1776, III, 444: 'Ich sehe mich genötigt französisch zu schreiben werde also nicht allein längere Zeit sondern auch weniger Raum brauchen, da man französisch vieles kürzer sagen kann [...] Der Titel wird *Sur les mariages des soldats*.'

in 1913, this German text remains the sole basis upon which latter-day critics have made their own assessments, eagerly echoing the negative aspects of Goethe's judgement, viewing the plans as 'lächerlich, unausführbar [und] phantastisch'. Nevertheless even Goethe does not condemn Lenz's efforts out of hand, as simply the product of a sick man's warped imagination. In fact he intimates that there may well have been method to his madness:

[...] ihm konnte nicht wohl werden, als wenn er sich grenzenlos im Einzelnen verfloß und sich an einem unendlichen Faden ohne Absicht hinspann. Vielleicht wird es dereinst möglich, nach diesen Prämissen seinen Lebensgang, bis zu der Zeit da er sich in Wahnsinn verlor, auf irgend eine Weise anschaulich zu machen; gegenwärtig halte ich mich an das Nächste, was eigentlich hierher gehört.

Critics that have followed have been quick to pick up on Goethe's first assessment, whilst ignoring his second, no sooner uttered than dropped.

Departure from the dismissive Goethean line only came in the 1960s, with Lenz unconvincingly heralded as a 'progressive' counterpart to the 'Staatsmann' Goethe.¹⁰ By the mid-1970s this 'progressive' line of inquiry was taken still further, but the net effect with regard to his efforts as a social reformer was increasingly to discredit them. Scherpe employs the pejorative term 'Projektmacherei' to describe such efforts.¹¹ Even Goethe does not attack Lenz for a lack of grounding in military affairs, but Scherpe even casts doubts on this, accusing him of taking a naive, amateurish and haphazard approach, one that is indeed 'lächerlich':

Lenz' Reflexionen auf dem Niveau der zeitgenössischen Gesellschaftslehre in Deutschland, seine

¹⁰ Especially in H.Mayer, 'Lenz oder die Alternative', in Titel, II, 795-827.

¹¹ K.R.Scherpe, 'Dichterische Erkenntnis und „Projektemacherei"', in *Sturm und Drang*, ed. by M.Wacker, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 279-314. First published in *Goethe Jahrbuch*, 94 (1977), 206-35.

Kenntnisse auf dem Gebiet der Moralphilosophie, der Pädagogik, der Agrarökonomie und des Militärwesens sind eher zufällig erworben und, was leicht festzustellen ist, mehr konventionell als originell entwickelt.¹²

Where Scherpe does see any notion of 'Fortschrittlichkeit' is in the notion of 'dichterische Erkenntnis', not in terms of social reform.¹³ At best Lenz is erroneously treated as an unwitting seer of changes effected after 1789.¹⁴ More recent articles have reverted to type, following Goethe's assessment in varying degrees. As H.A.Glaser concludes in his brief article on *Über die Soldatenehen*:

[...] die Triebregulierung unvermittelt zum Ausgangspunkt von Heeres- und Gesellschafts-reformen zu machen - es konnte nur einem Autor beifallen, dem der eigne Sexualität aufs unglücklichste mißraten war.¹⁵

Drawing, as Goethe does, on Lenz's later biography - one overshadowed by his mental illness - Glaser argues that the project is the result of his own tortured sexual identity and his stunning lack of success with women. In the most recent article on Lenz's military project, W.D.Wilson reaches a similar, if less scathing conclusion.¹⁶ He argues that Lenz's prime motivation in writing his 'Soldatenschrift' was to gain a high-ranking military post, so as to be in a position to win the hand of Henriette von Waldner, the latest in a long line of infatuations. Supporting his apparently persuasive thesis with a host of specific historical events, biographical sources, and literary representations, Wilson offers a more

¹² Scherpe, p. 283.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 313-14.

¹⁴ This is to adopt an untenable post-Revolutionary perspective. See Scherpe, p. 302; or more fully, L.Kreutzer, 'Literatur als Einmischung: J.M.R.Lenz', in *Sturm und Drang: ein literaturwissenschaftliches Studienbuch*, ed. by W.Hinck (Kronberg Ts.: Athenäum, 1978), pp. 213-29.

¹⁵ H.A.Glaser, 'Bordell oder Familie? Überlegungen zu Lenzens „Soldatenehen“', in *J.R.M.[!] Lenz als Alternative? Positionsanalysen zum 200. Todestag*, ed. by K.A.Wurst, (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 1992), pp. 112-22.

¹⁶ W.D.Wilson, 'Zwischen Kritik und Affirmation. Militärphantasien und Geschlechterdisziplinierung bei J.M.R.Lenz', in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 52-85.

broadly contextualized reading of *Über die Soldatenehen*, spinning out an argument in which 'das Projekt wird noch schrulliger', with Lenz falling prey to self-deluding fantasies.¹⁷ He views Lenz as a victim of his age, as again Goethe's terminology is employed, even if the blame is shifted to historical circumstance: 'Die Ungeheuerlichkeit liegt jedoch in der Zeit selbst, in der Lenz lebte, und es ist nicht verwunderlich, daß ein so labiler Mensch wie Lenz dieser Ungeheuerlichkeit erlag.'¹⁸ Nevertheless in substance Wilson's analysis shares much with Glaser's view that *Über die Soldatenehen* was written as a means by which Lenz would be able to fulfil his own his sexual fantasies and ambitions. Time and again it is Goethe's 'lächerlich, unausführbar [und] phantastisch' verdict that is entrenched still further.

Understandably such interpretations are based, unlike Goethe's, on a reading of *Über die Soldatenehen*.¹⁹ Understandably insofar as, until recently, it remained the sole example of Lenz's military writings available, or as Wilson states: 'das Schlüsseldokument für Lenzens Haltung zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus.'²⁰ In fact, as Chapter III will argue, *Über die Soldatenehen* is but a constituent part of an organic process. The 'project' does not begin and end with this text, rather it is only one of a series of attempts at the presentation of his reforms. In no way does it constitute a finished article, the text itself being incomplete.²¹ Indeed it is more than plausible that much of it was written prior to

¹⁷ Wilson, p. 67.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 75.

¹⁹ Although Wilson draws on manuscript evidence, provided by D.Hill, he does so only to support his own biographical reading.

²⁰ Wilson, p. 54.

²¹ D.Hill, 'Die Arbeiten von Lenz zu den Soldatenehen. Ein Bericht über die Krakauer Handschriften' in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 118-37, p. 118: 'Es fehlen zwei Blätter, von denen sich eines in der Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin befindet, und der Schluß des Textes. Weil der Text plötzlich am Ende einer Seite abbricht, kann man nicht sicher sein, ob der Schluß jemals voll ausformuliert war, aber auch wenn es zutrifft, daß er für Lenz zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt als

Lenz's departure for Weimar, and hence was conceived, as was *Die Soldaten*, during a period in which he was desperate for an opening to court life, as so clearly expressed by the Obrister in the play's final scene. Lenz's need and desire for a post can be seen as the prime motivation for his military project, especially considering his dire financial situation.²² As he says in characteristically theatrical fashion to Herder in March 1776, just before leaving Straßburg: 'Ich habe eine Schrift über die Soldatenehen unter Händen, die ich einem Fürsten vorlesen möchte, und nach deren Vollendung und Durchtreibung ich - wahrscheinlichst wohl sterben werde.'²³ That the work was in all likelihood largely completed before his arrival in Weimar is given further credence by the fact that he asks his publishers about the possibility of finding a translator for it.²⁴ Once in Weimar it soon becomes clear that Lenz not only takes the decision to write in French himself, but also sets about reworking the project's form and content, retreating to the solitude of Berka to complete his 'noch nicht gestaltete Embryonen'.²⁵ As he tells Zimmermann at the end of

abgeschlossen galt, wurde er später zum Status eines Entwurfs degradiert, indem verschiedene Passagen aus- oder unterstrichen oder mit Zusätzen versehen wurden.' Many amendments made to the text are not reproduced in the edition produced by Damm, despite acknowledging them in her notes, II, 947; the most accurate edition available is still that of E. McInnes, *J.M.R. Lenz, Die Soldaten: Text, Materialien, Kommentar*. (München: Hanser, 1977) pp. 138-69.

²² See Lenz an Merck, den 14ten März [1776] 'Mir gehts wie Ihnen, ich bin arm wie eine Kirchenmaus [...]', III, 406. For Lenz's hopes for a post in the 'Staatsdienste' see Wilson pp. 52-54. That Goethe later held Lenz's plan in such contempt is surprising considering that his own great-uncle von Leon, and the Darmstadt Chacellor K.F. von Moser had both written books on the opportunities open for able men from undistinguished backgrounds to make substantial reforms within absolutist governments, see N. Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 194-95.

²³ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776], III, 400.

²⁴ Lenz an Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Weimar [!] den 1 April 1776: 'Wollen Sie eine Schrift, die ich unter Händen habe >Über die Soldatenehen< drucken? Ich verlange weiter nichts als 2 Dukaten den Bogen und saubern Druck und Papier, weil sie sich in Versailles und an andern Höfen produzieren soll. Die Sache hat Eile und ich sähe gern wenn sie sobald als möglich im Meßcatalogus angezeigt werden könnte. Wüßten Sie mir allenfalls einen guten Übersetzer ins Französische vorzuschlagen? Lenz Verfasser der Soldaten.', III, 421.

²⁵ Lenz an Merck Den 14ten März [1776], III, 406. The 'Embryonen' mentioned refer not only to Lenz's reform plans, but possibly also to various literary pieces he was working on, such as the unfinished *Der Waldbruder*. However, Lenz increasingly sees his literary endeavours, which are very much a secondary priority whilst in Berka, as a money spinner, see Lenz an Boie [Kehl] d. 11ten März [17]76, III, 402-3

May 1776: 'Ich werde wohl bald den gar zu reizenden Hof verlassen und in eine Einsiedelei hier herum gehen meine Arbeit zu Stande zu bringen, zu der ich hier nur Kräfte sammle.'²⁶ *Über die Soldatenehen* is superseded by a new work, or set of works, written in French and, what is more, written under very different circumstances, with Lenz now enjoying life in a 'gar zu reizenden Hof'. The prospects of gaining a position in the 'Staatsdienste' suddenly began to look bright. Failing that, at least Lenz now enjoyed access to a court in which it seemed he would be able to make himself heard.

The view that the majority of Lenz's proposals for military reform were written in French does not have to rest on the evidence offered by correspondence added to biographical conjecture. Two hundred and fifty-one pages of manuscript, the majority of which are in French, is proof enough to dispel any theoretical doubts. They deal with a far greater array of subjects than those covered by the thirty-four pages of the supposed 'Reinschrift' of *Über die Soldatenehen*. That such manuscripts exist, in the *Lenziana* held by the Biblioteka Jagiellonska, Kraków, is by no means a revelation.²⁷ In her 1987 edition Sigrid Damm draws extensively from the Kraków *Lenziana*, previously held by the former 'Preußische Staatsbibliothek' in Berlin, but only made available to scholars by the Polish authorities, along with countless other holdings, in the late 1970s.²⁸ However, when it

and his hard bargaining with his publishers come November 1776, see, Lenz an Weidemanns Erben und Reich Weimar [Mitte November 1776], III, 512, and Berka, d. 23sten 9br 1776, III, 513-14.

²⁶ Lenz an Zimmermann [Weimar, Ende Mai 1776], III, 460. Furthermore Lenz asks Zimmermann whether he knows of any publisher in Hannover who would be prepared to print a work written in French, as Reich has already turned him down 'wegen der Schwürigkeit des Umsatzes'.

²⁷ For a description of the 'Soldaten' section of the Kraków *Lenziana* see, Hill, *Bericht*.

²⁸ For a journalistic account of the long and politically contentious story surrounding these 'lost' manuscripts see N.Lewis, *Paperchase: Mozart, Beethoven, Bach - the search for their lost music*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981). Alternatively, the regular propaganda brochures brought out by the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin provide a more prosaic and culturally biased version of events, in which the diplomatic refrain 'ZU BEKLAGEN IST...' cries out for the return of these manuscripts and other miscellaneous holdings.

comes to editing the manuscripts related to military affairs she only includes *Über die Soldatenehen*, proudly asserting that hers is the first 'Werkausgabe' to include this 'Abhandlung [...], die dem Verfasser außerordentlich wichtig war'.²⁹ However, she shies away from including any of the other military texts, as they fall beyond the scope of her edition. Nevertheless she does reproduce Köpke's nineteenth-century catalogue of the contents of Box IV of the *Lenziana* now in Kraków.³⁰ This list is also given by Scholz, who supplements it with a footnote: 'Ohne die Veröffentlichung dieser 8 Handschriften bleibt das Urteil über Inhalt und Bedeutung von Lenz' Reformvorstellungen vorläufig.'³¹ The existence of a great number of unpublished manuscripts also necessitates a suspension of judgement on the content and significance of the project.

Not until the early 1990s was any serious research into these manuscripts undertaken. Hill's initial 'Bericht' of 1994 provides a mapping out of Box IV of the archive, as well as of the editorial and scholarly problems which the manuscripts present. He offers a tentative dating of the majority of these manuscripts, stating that they were probably written between early 1776 and the summer of 1777.³² Although the manuscripts' importance is beyond doubt, their form - a bewildering mass of drafts, outlines, fragments and notes, some of which are almost indecipherable, jotted on used envelopes or scraps - creates countless editorial headaches. But even a cursory glance over the contents of the archive listed by Damm and Scholz backs up Goethe's assertion

²⁹ II, 841-42.

³⁰ It is not certain that Köpke actually catalogued the 'Nachlaß' during the nineteenth century, see Hill, *Bericht*, p. 120. For the full list of Box IV and the rest of the archive, see Appendix contents, also II, 947.

³¹ R.Scholz, 'Eine längst fällige historisch-kritische Ausgabe: Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz', *JbdsG*, 34 (1990), 195-229 (p. 204).

³² Hill, *Bericht*, p. 120.

that Lenz was well versed in contemporary military and political affairs - despite the evidence which *Über die Soldatenehen* might offer to the contrary - and shows his interest extended to the intense economic debates raging in France during this period, which amounted to the final attempt to save the *Ancien Régime* from impending financial ruin. It also confirms that Lenz struggled to find the appropriate form to articulate his ideas, moving from straight political polemics, through epistolary novels, treatises, historical tracts, as well as letters addressed directly to the French ministers, the Comtes de St. Germain and de Maurepas. Hill's initial reaction leads him, in line with Scholz's suggestion, to begin to doubt the validity of the traditional condemnation of Lenz's proposals: 'In diesen Handschriften findet man in erster Linie Bruchstücke eines *teilweise* phantastischen, aber sachlich geführten Arguments über die ökonomischen und sozialen Zustände in Frankreich.'³³ Hill acknowledges, to a greater extent than any previous critic, that Lenz's ideas are not simply the product of a wild and sadly deluded imagination, but grounded in a specific historical context, as well as a wider textual framework. In conclusion to his initial 'Bericht' Hill calls for the following approach to be adopted:

Um dieses Feld der Forschung zugänglich zu machen, ist es zuerst notwendig, die Krakauer Handschriften zu entziffern, zu ordnen und in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang zu interpretieren.³⁴

Hill himself embarks on the process of editing extracts from the Kraków *Lenziana*, with both '*Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*' and the >>*Avantpropos*<< zu den >>*Soldatenehen*<<

³³ Ibid., p. 128. My emphasis.

³⁴ Ibid.

appearing in 1995.³⁵ In the latter article he concedes that a thorough edition of the complete archive, because of its fragmentary state, would amount to 'eine kaum übersehbare Rekonstruktionsarbeit'.³⁶ He also states that there are a number of 'mehr oder weniger geschlossene Texte' which would be possible to edit and are undoubtedly worthy of scholarly attention, as they will widen the base for textual interpretation and considered evaluation of the project. Just the fraction of the archive which Hill publishes - twenty-five manuscript pages - serves to illustrate the unrepresentative nature of *Über die Soldatenehen* within the wider context of Lenz's project. The *Avantpropos* is an introduction to a treatise on military reform in general, whilst the *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien* is addressed directly to St. Germain, dealing with the specific issue of the organisation of Les Invalides. In it there is also a cross reference to a letter sent by 'un de mes amis un Auteur' to another important figure in government, the Comte de Maurepas, containing 'un projet' for military reform.³⁷

Nevertheless the appearance of these two texts does not offer sufficient material to meet Hill's demands voiced at the end of his 'Bericht'. An evaluation of Lenz's military and social writings within an historical and a textual framework remains as elusive as ever. As a result of my own primary research in Kraków I have been able to add significantly to a further widening of the textual base to enable such an evaluation.³⁸ In particular the

³⁵ D.Hill, 'J.M.R.Lenz: *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*', in *Order from Confusion. Essays presented to Edward McInnes on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. by A.Deighton (Hull: New German Studies, 1995), pp. 1-27; D.Hill, 'J.M.R.Lenz' >>Avantpropos<< zu den >>Soldatenehen<<', *LJb*, 5 (1995), 6-21. Extracts from Box IV, folders vi and iv respectively. Henceforth cited respectively as *Order...* (unless text, then *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*) and *LJb* (unless text, then *Avantpropos*).

³⁶ Hill, *LJb*, p. 7. This despite saying in *Order...*: 'No doubt the edition of these manuscripts will in due course add a great deal to our knowledge and understanding of Lenz.', p. 6. A full edition has not been forthcoming.

³⁷ Hill, *Order...*, p. 24.

³⁸ See Appendices A-F.

transcription of sections of folder iii, Box IV - drafts of letters to Maurepas - provides fresh evidence for an attempt to reconstruct both the chronology and the evolution of Lenz's project.³⁹ Although many of the manuscripts are fragments, notes, sketches and such like, two of these letters, which begin as 'Reinschriften', do reach distinct conclusions. Even though they are obscured by an increasing number of amendments, an editorial reconstruction has been possible. With the evidence offered by these transcriptions, Chapters III and IV will seek to meet at least part of the challenge set by Hill. However, the 'geschichtliche Zusammenhang' must precede and inform any attempt to place the manuscripts into any semblance of a chronological order, not vice versa. Lenz's plans are not plucked out of thin air, conjured up in an isolated 'Ideenwelt' which Wieland does not understand; rather all the relevant military texts, *Über die Soldatenehen* included, are grounded in specific historical circumstances. The substance and evolution of these ideas can only be judged by first of all relating them to a wider context.

The sources needed for such a 'geschichtliche Zusammenhang' are, however, necessarily disparate by nature. Nevertheless they can be broken down into distinct categories for the specific task in mind. Although writing in the seclusion of his Berka 'Einsiedelei', Lenz is in fact engaged in the fierce debate in the 1770s concerning the army and indeed the state of the nation in France. His is not only a response to contemporary events, but also to the agenda set by other writers in the period. The most significant of these is undoubtedly Guibert, whose *Essai général de Tactique*⁴⁰ proved so controversial

³⁹ Catalogued by Köpke as: 'Brief an den Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit, Frankreich durch ackerbauende Militär-Kolonien zu heben. Verschiedene Entwürfe. 36 Blätter, französisch.' *Lenziana*, IV, iii.

⁴⁰ J.A.H. Guibert, *Essai général de Tactique*, 2 vols (London: Chez les Librairies Associés, 1772). Henceforth *Guibert*. Hill touches on the links between Lenz and Guibert, *Order...*, p. 10.

that the author sought sanctuary in Prussia prior to its publication in 1772, returning to public life in 1775.⁴¹ The rise and fall of Turgot, *Contrôleur des Finances* from August 1774 until May 1776, is also essential to an understanding of the historical context, and is so in more ways than one.⁴² On one level the ascendancy of the leading Physiocrat to such a position in government gave new credibility and legitimacy to the fundamental tenets of that system; moreover, it is a school of thought with which the Berka manuscripts have a striking affinity. Hence Lenz's continual discussion of the merits of free markets for grain, the tax system, and the *corvées*, to name but three points of debate. As a result the evolution of Lenz's project must be understood in the context of the changing political climate of 1776, both in terms of personalities as well as policies.

In particular two political figures play an even more significant role than Turgot in the project's later drafts. St. Germain was made a State-Secretary for War in October 1775 and with his appointment the prospects for much needed extensive military reform reached new heights.⁴³ As *Der Teutsche Merkur* reports in its December issue:

Der Entusiasmus [*sic*], den man für den neuen Kriegsminister (Grafen St. Germain) gefaßt hat, nimmt täglich zu; und man muß gestehen, er zeigt sich dessen würdig durch seine persönlichen Vorzüge, seine Liebe zum Militaire, und sein leutseliges Bezeugen gegen jedermann.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Biographie Universelle*, ed. by E.E. Michaud, 45 vols (Paris: Desplace, 1842-65), vol. 16, pp. 86-90. Henceforth *Biographie*...

⁴² See Wilson, who draws substantially on historical sources to support his thesis.

⁴³ *Biographie*..., vol. 37, pp. 321-23. Not until May 1776 did St. Germain become Minstre de Guerre. See also *Teutscher Merkur*, November 1775 and Juni 1776.

⁴⁴ *Teutscher Merkur*, Dezember 1775, p. 292. Edited of course by Wieland. Only from the November of 1775 onwards does a section entitled 'Politische Nachrichten' appear at the end of each issue. No longer than four or five sides, the section gives brief and at times idiosyncratic accounts of events in the various European courts. It was doubtless read by Lenz, even if not when it came hot off the press; see Wieland an Lenz [Weimar, Oktober 1776]: 'ich weiß nicht wieviel Merkure Dir fehlen - komm und hole sie selbst...', III, 506.

The other statesman to play an important role in the project's formulation is Maurepas. A minister without portfolio, making any latter day opportunist pale in comparison, Maurepas, as mentor and chief advisor to the newly crowned Louis XVI, was undoubtedly at the centre of all governmental activity. This became abundantly evident after Turgot's fall in May 1776. That Lenz addresses letters to both these men, but not to Turgot, provides further evidence for a hypothesis concerning the time scale in which the Kraków manuscripts were written.

Once in place, it will be possible to draw on further sources to supplement such a historical frame of reference. In addition Chapter IV will also introduce another historical aspect overlooked by critics: the state of prostitution in the eighteenth century. It is easy to dismiss Lenz's scheme for the conscription of women as purely a blueprint for the legalisation of a state-run prostitution racket.⁴⁵ Indeed the Obrister's simplistic assertions at the end of *Die Soldaten* would seem to invite such a view.⁴⁶ However, Lenz's proposals must be measured against his contemporary environment, not from a twentieth-century perspective. For example, even a cursory comparison with Restif de la Bretonne's *Le Pornographe ou Idées d'un Honnête-Homme sur un projet de règlement pour les Prostituées* (1769) or other literary and historical sources, will provide a valid perspective with which to approach Lenz's own project.⁴⁷

By interweaving the various historical strands outlined above, the evolution of both the form and content of Lenz's military 'project' will start to become clear. Chapter

⁴⁵ Wilson, pp. 61-65.

⁴⁶ *Die Soldaten*, (V v 1&2), in either version. See Chapter II.

⁴⁷ R. de la Bretonne, *Le Pornographe ou Idées d'un Honnête-Homme sur un projet de règlement pour les Prostituées*, 2nd edn. (London: Nourse, 1776) (first published 1769).

IV will offer a possible reconstruction of this process, using the evidence provided by previously unpublished sections of the Kraków *Lenziana*. Then, and only then, will an assessment of Goethe's judgement of Lenz's proposals as 'lächerlich, unausführbar und phantastisch' be possible. The first step must be to ground them in a historical framework so as to dispel the confusion so frankly expressed by Wieland:

Daß Lenzchen bey Euch gewesen, und viel Liebs und Guts von uns gesagt hat, wie er denn auch mit gutem Gewissen thun konnte, war mir lieb zu vernehmen. Der wunderliche träumerische Mensch ist von hier verschwunden, wie er erschienen war - ich wußte eben so wenig, wohin er gieng, als woher er kam.⁴⁸

Chapter III

Über die Soldatenehen: Lenz's reform plans in embryo

Despite choosing to cut himself off from court life in Weimar, Lenz does not retreat into an isolated 'Ideenwelt', but throughout seeks to contribute to a debate raging fiercely in the court of Versailles. In dedicating himself to the completion and, equally importantly, the presentation of his proposals during the summer of 1776, Lenz's self-imposed exile amounts to a concerted effort to prepare his entry into the world of politics, with the hope of using the authority offered by Weimar to enter a court of far greater significance.⁴⁹ By the 1770s the state of the army had become a focal point of growing dissatisfaction within France.⁵⁰ Of all sections of government, none had had its shortcomings more

⁴⁸ Müller, I, 349.

⁴⁹ As Lenz makes clear in a draft letter as late as the autumn of 1776: an J.D.Salzmann, Kochberg, den 23sten Oktober 1776: 'Vielleicht sehen Sie mich einmal in sächsischer Uniform wieder. Doch das unter uns.', III, 505.

⁵⁰ For the following section see W.Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 13 and pp. 30-32. Henceforth Doyle, *Revolution*. Also M.S.Anderson, *War*

spectacularly exposed than the army. Routed in 1757 by the Prussians at Rossbach during the Seven Years' War,⁵¹ the French had also lost most of their overseas possessions, including Louisiana and Canada; in short the French army's performance had been pitiful. Humiliation on the battlefield coupled with the strain burgeoning military expenditure placed on the state's finances, in peacetime as well as war, resulted in intense pressure for drastic military reform. Such conditions were unparalleled elsewhere in Europe, with the result that ideas pertaining to root and branch military reform were largely confined to France. With the army consisting of the dregs of society in combination with a large number of foreign mercenaries, a new link between soldier and society had to be fostered. Any vision of a new army, especially one infused with a genuine patriotic spirit, required a fundamental reengineering of not only the army but also the society it was supposed to protect. This logical deduction was most dramatically made by Guibert in his *Essai général de Tactique*, which appeared in 1772, thus two years before Louis XV's death. He looks forward to the accession of a new monarch as the chance to enact reform. By the time Lenz reads Guibert intensively, as various letters from 1776 illustrate, such a time has come, with the coronation of Louis XVI accompanied by a great wave of optimism.⁵²

and Society in Europe of the Old Regime 1618-1789, (Glasgow: William & Collins, 1988), pp. 158-64. and pp. 196-201. Henceforth Anderson, *War and Society*.

⁵¹ A defeat alluded to in *Die Soldaten* (III iv), see Chapter II, pp.95-97.

⁵² Lenz borrowed *Essai générale de Tactique* from the 'Straßburg Stadtbibliothek' and even took this copy with him to Weimar, only returning it (much the worse for wear: 'Den Guibert hab' ich empfangen, ich glaubte er sei im Getümmel vom Schlachten herum getragen worden-' Röderer an Lenz, Strasb. den 23t. Mai 1776, III, 451) at the request of Salzmann (Salzmann und Röderer an Lenz, Straßburg den 16te April 1776, III, 429). By this time Lenz had gained access to another copy for his use in Berka, that of Goethe (see Lenz an Goethe und Seidel [Bei der Abreise nach Berka, 27. Juni 1776], III, 472-74 and Goethe an Lenz [Juli 1776], III, 477: 'Hier ist der Guibert [...] Da ist ein Louis d'or [...] leb wohl und arbeite Dich aus wie Du kannst und magst.'). If Goethe had read, or even merely possessed Guibert's *Essai*, it makes his subsequent determination to denigrate Lenz's serious study and understanding of these matters even more unfathomable. Guibert was not only appealing to 'a *Sturm und Drang* writer of Lenz's temperament', (Hill, *Order...*, pp. 9-10), but also to all sections of society: 'Ce discours [...] fut lu par les femmes avec avidité [...], prôné par les gens de lettres, répandu dans les armées, enfin connu dans l'Europe

Writing prior to 1774, Guibert was therefore doing so in anticipation of a seismic shift in the political landscape which he hoped would accompany the advent of a new monarch. What Guibert calls 'fantasy' in one extract from his work has, to a certain extent, become reality, or at the very least a distinct possibility, by the time Lenz comes to read him.⁵³ The accession of Louis XVI gave fresh impetus to Lenz's project, especially considering his desperate financial situation.⁵⁴ The prospect of an opening at Weimar, via the influence of Goethe, suddenly offered Lenz a possible forum for his ideas, or at least an opportunity to gain a position which would give his project credibility in any attempt to present it elsewhere, for example at Versailles. His project is not the product of a deluded imagination, but can be seen as a response to events in France, and specifically to a call voiced by Guibert. At the end of the second volume of his *Essai général de Tactique*, Guibert comes to the following conclusion:

Les gens de lettres n'ont pas, en général, cette haute idée de la science de la guerre. Ils la croient vague et dénuée de principes positifs. Ce malheureux préjugé est répandu même chez beaucoup de militaires. Faute d'avoir assez étudié leur art, ils ne font point assez de cas de leur profession. Je retirerai de mon travail un grand prix, si j'ouvre les yeux à quelques uns d'eux. Il est si encourageant, quand on cultive une science, de la voir acquérir de l'estime et de l'importance dans l'opinion des hommes.⁵⁵

entière.' *Biographie...*, vol. 18, p. 88. For an account of the optimism surrounding the accession of the new king, see J. Hardman, *Louis XVI* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 17-56. Also F. Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe 1768-1776*, trans. by R. Barr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 359-64.

⁵³ See Guibert, I, lxii: 'O ma patrie! ce tableau ne sera peut-être pas toujours un rêve phantastique. Tu peux le réaliser: tu peux devenir cet Etat fortuné. Un jour peut-être, échappant aux vices de son siècle et placé dans des circonstances plus favorables, il s'élèvera sur ton trône qui opérera cette grande révolution.'

⁵⁴ See, for example, Lenz an Merck Den 14ten März [1776], III, 406; Lenz an Zimmermann [Kehl.] d. 15ten März [1776], III, 407-8

⁵⁵ Guibert, II, 349-50.

In drawing social and military form together Guibert also opens up a field of debate which must draw on thinkers from all disciplines. 'Hommes de lettres' are encouraged to take part in the process of effecting such change. Indeed Guibert singles out writers for a complete lack of attachment to the nation:

La moitié de l'Europe est habitée par des artistes, des rentiers, la plupart célibataires, gens qu'aucun bien n'attache au sol sur lequel ils vivent, et qui affichent hautement cette maxime dangereuse: *Ubi bene, ibi patria*.⁵⁶

This being a fairly accurate description of Lenz at this time, it is indeed, as Hill points out, 'tempting to wonder' how such an appeal to men of letters for the cause of the nation would have affected him.⁵⁷ After all Lenz's disillusionment with his activities as a writer is already abundantly clear in *Stimmen des Laien* as he lays the 'Grundstein' for his new sense of 'Bestimmung', and he now turns his attention to the levers of political power in an attempt to effect change for the 'social good'.⁵⁸ *Die Soldaten* also emphasises his desire to become politically, and equally, professionally active, drawing on his experience of the military - as a veritable 'Kenner des Waffenwesens' - to meet the need for military reform in France. At the very least Guibert's definition of a whole new field of discussion encouraged Lenz to formulate his proposals, especially given contemporary political events and, more significantly, the apparent prospect of the court audience at Weimar, longed for by the Obrister in *Die Soldaten*.

But Lenz's political ambitions are not driven by mere material considerations alone, a deep-seated moral concern underpins the transition. Equally, Guibert shares a

⁵⁶ Ibid., I, 22.

⁵⁷ Hill, *Order...*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ See Chapter I, pp. 27-29.

desire to effect a fundamental change in the political and moral culture, with a reassessment of the role and ethos of government a prerequisite to any reform. In the closing section of the 'Discours préliminaire' he laments the policies of successive governments towards the armed forces. Attaching little or no importance to 'la science de la guerre', they have deprived the armed forces of 'des hommes de génie'. Such men, writers and philosophers included, have been diverted into the pursuit of 'des sciences frivoles ou moins utiles'.⁵⁹ Meanwhile the army has fallen prey to the venality of a system run by and for the aristocracy. The upshot of such neglect is moral degeneracy and a loss of patriotic identity:

Si enfin un peuple s'amollit, se corrompt, dédaigne la profession des armes, perd toute l'habitude des travaux qui y préparent: si une nation étant dégradée à ce point, le nom de PATRIE n'y est plus qu'un mot vide de sens: si ses défenseurs ne sont plus que des mercenaires, avilis, misérables, mal constitués, indifférens au succès, ou aux revers.⁶⁰

For Guibert the government is to blame for this, society being a reflection of its own corruption. Only by taking an active role can government hope to effect moral renewal and hence patriotism:

[...] car le gouvernement doit veiller sur ces mœurs, sur les opinions, sur les préjugés, sur les courages. Avec la vertu, l'exemple, l'honneur, le châtement, il peut être plus puissant que le luxe, que l'abus, que les vices, que les passions, que la corruption la plus invétérée.⁶¹

Reversing the dramatic decline of the French state can only be achieved through a root and branch policy initiative led by the intellectual élite whom Guibert calls upon to join him in a moral as much as political crusade.

⁵⁹ Guibert, I, cix-cx.

⁶⁰ Ibid., I, cx.

⁶¹ Ibid., I, cx-cxi.

But for all his fervour Guibert shies away from detailed policy proposals. Instead he offers an elaborate outline for a more general book, as he terms it 'Plan d'un ouvrage intitulé La France Politique et Militaire'. Guibert never developed this proposal into a fully-fledged *magnum opus*. Its purpose within the context of the *Essai* is, however, clear; it is to act as an encouragement for others to contribute to the debate that he hopes to have set in motion, as he concludes his sketch:

Enfin en donnant ce plan, j'imite ces élèves des arts; c'est une grande *étude* que je presente au concours, et que je soumets à mes juges. Puisse-t-il s'élever un homme plus capable que moi, auquel ce plan en fasse un meilleur, ou dont l'exécution du mien tente le génie!⁶²

Future leaders may well be addressed in the 'Discours', but the plan is aimed at stimulating contribution from other intellectuals. This plan may well have been the inspiration of Lenz's own plans for tying soldiers to their 'patrie' through marriage. For in the third part of the plan, entitled 'Constitution Militaire de la France', Guibert identifies this as a line of inquiry worth pursuing:

Chapitre VIII: Célibat introduit dans presque toutes les Troupes de l'Europe, et en France plus qu'ailleurs, plaie funeste à la population. Mariages des Soldats doivent être encouragés. Enfants mâles provenans de ces mariages, classés en naissant; élevés par le Gouvernement, et formant ainsi, en quelque sorte, une nation militaire au milieu de la nation.⁶³

At another point Guibert also argues that soldiers should work the land.⁶⁴ The link between marriage and land is not made by Guibert, but will become the crux of Lenz's own project. Lenz does not just jump on the bandwagon set in motion by Guibert and given fresh impetus by the accession of Louis XVI, but also makes his own original

⁶² Ibid., I, clix-clx.

⁶³ Ibid., I, cxli-cxlii. Also pointed out by Hill, *Order...*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid., I, cvi.

contribution.⁶⁵ Even in *Der Teutsche Merkur* the 'Politische Nachrichten' from France are dominated from late 1775 onwards by St. Germain's projects for military reform.⁶⁶ That Guibert was central to this process, and no fringe player, is amply shown by St. Germain's decision to appoint him to his ministry in 1775.⁶⁷ To write 'ein großes Memoire an den französischen Kriegsminister' was not as ridiculous a proposition as it seemed to Goethe nearly forty years later. By 1775, within the space of three years, the incendiary contentions of the *Essai générale de Tactique* had been incorporated into mainstream politics. With the elevation of such a young and controversial figure to a position of power - Guibert was only in his early thirties - Lenz was given further incentive to apply himself wholeheartedly to his project, as he duly did from late 1775 onwards. The first stage in this process resulted in the text known as *Über die Soldatenehen*, which gives an initial indication of the direction, or 'Embryonen', of Lenz's thought, but in no way constitutes his final word on the subject. Only in Weimar, as Chapter IV will show, does his project reach a state of completion.

The form, content and style of *Über die Soldatenehen* all suggest that it is an early attempt by Lenz to formulate his ideas. That it is mainly written prior to his departure to Weimar is also clear from his intimations to Herder, and as a result it is a manuscript which undergoes extensive change in Berka.⁶⁸ Its authority as a text depends on its place

⁶⁵ He is not purely derivative in the manner which Scherpe describes, see note 12, p. 119-120.

⁶⁶ For example: *Der Teutsche Merkur*, Februar 1776, p. 198: 'Man redet hier von nichts als den Verbesserungen und neuen Anordnungen des Grafen von St. Germain...' See note 44, p. 128.

⁶⁷ See W. Doyle, *Venality, the Sale of Offices in Eighteenth Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 134-35., see also p. 65.

⁶⁸ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776], III, 400. See note 23, p. 122. See also Lenz an Weidmanns Erben und Reich Weimar [!] den 1 April 1776, III, 421, note 24, p. 122.

in the subsequent reworking of many ideas which may be found in it, but which are not solely confined to it. In many ways *Über die Soldatenehen* is highly unrepresentative of the project's eventual tone, style and form. Nevertheless the text has remained the sole source of authority upon which critical judgements have been based. However, it must be addressed by placing it into a wider context, initially in relation to Guibert's *Essai générale de Tactique*.

That Lenz takes his cue from Guibert is made clear from the beginning of *Über die Soldatenehen*, with the work's motto taken from him: 'l'opinion du moment fait tout à la guerre.'⁶⁹ In form, style and even imagery he owes much to Guibert. He shares his overriding concern with France and identifies himself with that country in no uncertain terms: 'Wie sehr bedaure ich eine Nation, die ich, ungeachtet ich Deutscher bin, so sehr liebe.'⁷⁰ Stylistically Lenz also offers a sweeping overview of history, from the Ancients to the present. Flitting from one thought to the next, there is little cohesion beyond the passion and fervour of both writers' desire to effect some form of change. Cogency of argument is very much a secondary consideration. Therefore that *Über die Soldatenehen* lacks rigour, to such an extent that it may well be deemed 'lächerlich', is unsurprising. In form it has much in common with Lenz's Straßburg addresses. It shares their sense of incompleteness, their collation of random thoughts, all given the customary theatrical treatment, as he is ready to admit: '...da diese Schrift keine systematische Schrift sein soll', rather each thought is termed, 'noch eine andere Ausschweifung'.⁷¹ In the surviving

⁶⁹ *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 787, henceforth all references are to this text, unless indicated otherwise. There are also a number of other direct references to Guibert: II, 794, 803, 817, 823 and 791 in a footnote: '* de la Tactique. Ein Buch das von jedem Fürsten, der sein Bestes liebt, gelesen werden sollte.'

⁷⁰ II, 797. However, the plan is not limited to France, see, II, 812.

⁷¹ II, 809.

fragment of the conclusion, the whole tenor of the treatise is brought sharply into focus: it does not set out to present polished policy proposals. Instead it is a first attempt to articulate his ideas, with Lenz anxious to defend himself against any potential detractors, as he enters the previously uncharted waters of political discourse:

Man wird es [...] *{hoffentlich eingesehen}* haben, daß [...] *{nicht}* oder mit der prahlenden Unverschämtheit eines Projektenmachers, sondern mit der Blödigkeit und Bescheidenheit eines wirklich leidenschaftlichen Liebhabers mehr gestottert als überredet, mehr zu vermuten gegeben und dem eigenen Nachdenken überlassen als in dem neufränkischen Ton meine Unfehlbarkeit und Untrüglichkeit auszukramen gesucht habe.⁷²

Lenz openly admits his work's distinct lack of fluency and hence persuasiveness. Instead of presenting a formal proposal, he offers the beginnings of a discussion, with the 'Nachdenken' called for equally applicable to the author as well as any potential audience.

Throughout *Über die Soldatenehen* a desire to seize the moment is made clear.

Guibert's sense of anticipation gives way to Lenz's excited, but well-grounded, optimism:

Jetzt scheint der glückliche Zeitpunkt zu sein, da durch eine wunderbare Vereinigung der Umstände, vielleicht durch höhere Ratschlüsse, als die wir einzusehen im Stande sind die hohe See der Politik der Höfe Europens eine Windstille erhalten hat [...].⁷³

The historical circumstances alluded to are obvious: the coronation of Louis XVI also led to the appointment of various reform-minded ministers, such as Turgot and St. Germain. Interestingly he also links the opening of new avenues of opportunity to a divine plan, as the striking use of 'höhere Ratschlüsse' would appear to indicate. Indeed, in stark contrast to subsequent drafts, Lenz emphasises the religious and moral underpinning to

⁷² II, 827. The two [...] appear in Damm's edition, denoting gaps in the original text as the manuscript falls away at this point. Italicised words in {} indicate possible missing phrases and are intended to clarify the syntax. Clearly 'ich' must be understood in relation to the final 'habe'.

⁷³ II, 789.

Über die Soldatenehen and, by implication, to the project as a whole, in line with his sense of 'Bestimmung'.⁷⁴

Far from wishing to overturn the *status quo*, Lenz seeks to strengthen the power of the absolutist state. The eagerness to join such a process partly explains his fervour, based on feelings expressed in reaction to the call of history. However, now that the time has come, Lenz is faced by the different problem of finding a forum for his proposals. At the heart of *Über die Soldatenehen* is Lenz's attempt to gain a place as an indispensable part of the governmental machine, a role as policy-advisor and consultant, his ambitions perhaps heartened by Goethe's success in Weimar, with the Herzog Carl August of a similar age to Louis XVI. By invoking his undoubted knowledge and experience through graphic descriptions of military life - gleaned from his own first hand experience in the French garrisons of Fort-Louis and Landau, outside Straßburg (from 1771-74) - he tries to display his qualifications for such a position and to justify what would be, in effect, a new type of governmental post:

Es ist niemand da, der den Fürsten alles dies im Gemälde weist, und wer kann das auch, sie müßten selber sehen und fühlen um sich von der Wahrheit alles dessen überzeugen zu können.⁷⁵

As Wilson argues, Lenz tries to appeal to the feelings of those in power, in an attempt to carve himself a niche in the political administration of the absolutist state, thereby following the eighteenth-century tradition of authors advising monarchs.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ See pp. 146-155, below. As Guibert had also done, see pp. 132-35, above.

⁷⁵ II, 810, see also II, 809-12. for other instances of Lenz invoking his first hand experiences of military life. Also Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, den 20. Novemeber 1775], III, 353; in response to Herder's knee-jerk reaction to the first ending of *Die Soldaten*, Lenz retorts 'Ich habe einige Jahre mit den Leuten gewirtschaftet in Garnisonen gelegen gelebt hantiert.' See Chapter II, pp. 106-10.

⁷⁶ Wilson, pp. 55-59.

The effort which Lenz expends in justifying his self-styled role in fact betrays his lack of confidence when it comes to presenting his proposals in a political forum. The treatise is an inherently speculative work, speculative in that a specific addressee is not targeted. This is plain from the opening paragraph:

Ich schreibe dieses für die Könige, ohne zu wissen ob jemals einer von ihnen mich lesen wird. Unglück für sie, wenn sie mich nicht lesen, denn ich schreibe um ihrent- nicht um meinetwillen.⁷⁷

From correspondence it is evident that initially Lenz intended to publish his treatise, with a target audience of ministers and bureaucrats as well as rulers.⁷⁸ However, publication alone does not guarantee any designated form of readership, and by so doing Lenz limits himself to being yet another pamphleteer. In later formulations he will dispense with the notion of publication, preferring to address letters directly to specific individuals holding specific public offices in the French administration. When compared to the later Kraków manuscripts it becomes clear that in *Über die Soldatenehen* Lenz is struggling to find both a suitable form and voice to convey his proposals. What is also evident, more than in any of the subsequent drafts written in French, is his struggle with his poetic persona. The hesitancy of a poet daring to enter the alien world of politics is also discernible in the opening paragraph. Indeed a self-reflexive anxiety about his position as a writer permeates the whole text. The decision to take up a new vocation does not imply an

⁷⁷ II, 787.

⁷⁸ See Lenz an Zimmermann, note 9, p. 118, and Lenz an Weidmanns Erben und Reich, note 24, p. 122. Also Wilson, pp. 55-56.

instant fluency when it comes to selling himself. As Lenz concludes his initial efforts, he acknowledges they are, 'mehr gestottert als überredet'.⁷⁹

Throughout, *Über die Soldatenehen* is addressed to an unspecified group. In the opening paragraph Lenz talks of writing 'für die Könige', at some points he berates 'Ihr Monarchen', whilst at others he appeals to 'Ihr Fürsten'.⁸⁰ On only one occasion is an individual singled out: Herzog Carl August von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach. Even then, when compared to the tone of the opening paragraph it would appear to be a later addition, one in all likelihood written just before or shortly after Lenz's arrival in Weimar: '[...] mein Fürst, dem ich dieses Blatt widme.'⁸¹ In this paragraph alone does Lenz voice his hope that his proposals might be adopted in Weimar, with the result that that Duchy would become 'das Muster von Europa'.⁸² This despite the fact that he earlier pledges his love for France and places his hope in 'die Weisheit eines Titus', an obvious allusion to Louis XVI, who is to be the 'Erretter' of France when working in tandem 'mit den vereinigten Kräften ausgewählter großer Minister'.⁸³ Although he argues that his ideas are applicable to all the states of Europe, Lenz devotes his attentions solely to France and does not directly address the needs of Weimar. Indeed manuscript sources would further support the opinion that the dedication to Carl August was inserted as an after-thought in

⁷⁹ II, 827.

⁸⁰ II, 787, 798, 799 respectively, there are many other instances of such addresses.

⁸¹ II, 807.

⁸² As the army at the Herzog's disposal only amounted to a standing force of 666 men, it is hardly thinkable that Lenz's plan was directly aimed at reform in the relatively impoverished Duchy, as Hohoff suggests. See C. Hohoff, *J.M.R. Lenz* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1977), p. 103. See also Boyle, *Goethe*, p. 236 and p. 254.

⁸³ II, 797. Such ministers as Turgot and St. Germain are plainly alluded to here.

Über die Soldatenehen - future drafts are dedicated to St. Germain, and only written under the protection of Carl August.⁸⁴

Despite finding a 'Fürst' he can, temporarily at least, call his own, the tone Lenz adopts suggests that *Über die Soldatenehen* was written from an outsider's perspective. Hence the desperation to win himself the 'Ohr' of those in power. As Wilson points out, this becomes a recurrent metaphor in the work and encapsulates the problems faced by any would-be reformer in an absolutist state - the problem of getting oneself heard.⁸⁵ For Lenz there is the additional preoccupation of shedding the poetic persona of which he is acutely aware. When there is mention of the need for an 'Ohr', more often than not it is accompanied by a self-reflexive anxiety concerning his status as a poet:

Man zucke hier nicht die Schultern über Platonische Träume. Noch ist es nicht Zeit, ich habe euch vorher für meine Idee einnehmen müssen, eh ich euch beweisen konnte, daß sie möglich ist. Beides soll mir nicht schwer werden wenn ich nur euer Ohr finden kann. Und wie wenn ich euch bewiese, daß sie mehr, daß sie nicht allein nützlich sondern auch notwendig, nicht allein möglich, sondern auch leicht auszuführen sei. Wolltet ihr mich noch als einen Schwärmer, als einen bloßen Poeten von euch weisen?⁸⁶

This passage encapsulates Lenz's struggle with the requirements of a completely different form of writing. Haunted by his reputation as a poet, he is initially more concerned with defending his right to speak on military matters, rather than expounding the details of his proposals. Yet perversely he still retains faith in his powers of persuasion as a poet,

⁸⁴ See Appendix A. p. 3, IV, iv, 30r (see also reproduction, Appendix F, p. 59): 'Sur les mariages de Soldats par un Allemand. écrit sous la protection de Son Altesse serenissime le Duc de Weymar et Eisenach.' In another version in the same folder, all reference to Carl-August is dropped, see Appendix A, pp. 6-9, IV, iv, 32r-36r. For Appendices referencing, see contents and editor's note.

⁸⁵ Wilson, pp. 56-57. For the problematic relationship of the intellectual to court see T.J.Reed, 'Talking to Tyrants...', *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 63-79.

⁸⁶ II, 798. An interesting comparison can be drawn with a letter of 1772, in which a similiar defensive attitude is present: 'Nicht wahr, Sie lächeln über meine stolze platonische Sprache...', Lenz an Salzmann [Fort Louis, 31. August 1772], III, 265

despite continually expressing his desire not to be taken 'als junger Mensch' and to defend himself against inevitable criticism: 'Ich sehe hier runzelnde Stirnen [...] Jugendliche poetische Grillen! sagen sie [...].'⁸⁷ The slightest hint of a proposal is interrupted by the desire to deny any possible accusation that it is nothing but a poetic pipe-dream. As a result it might well appear that, as Wilson says: 'er kalkuliert das Scheitern der intendierten Botschaft also bewußt ein, daß man den Eindruck hat, er sabotiere sie selber.'⁸⁸ Lenz's over-insistence on distancing himself from his poetic background actually emphasises it still further. In his anxiety his tactics would appear to backfire.

If one accords *Über die Soldatenehen* the authority of a finished text, the view that Lenz sabotages his own efforts is indeed a tenable one. However, it is plain from the Kraków manuscripts that, even if at one stage he did consider it the finished 'Schrift [...] unter Händen, die ich einem Fürsten vorlesen möchte [...]', it was subsequently downgraded it to the status of a draft.⁸⁹ Indeed the Kraków 'Reinschrift' of *Über die Soldatenehen* has sections crossed out and many amendments made to it. These amendments have not been fully incorporated into any edition, least of all Damm's, with the result that the text has erroneously enjoyed a status it does not merit.⁹⁰ Taking *Über die Soldatenehen* as part of an organic process, the critical perspective is radically altered. Lenz does not consciously sabotage his own proposals; his insistence on their non-poetic substance is symptomatic of the process of defining a new role for himself in the political world. In later drafts this overriding preoccupation with defending himself disappears, for

⁸⁷ II, 796 and 801 respectively.

⁸⁸ Wilson, p. 57.

⁸⁹ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776], III, 400, see note 23, p. 122.

⁹⁰ Hill, *LJb*, p. 10.

in choosing to write anonymously to St. Germain and Maurepas, Lenz can dispense with the problems of legitimacy he faces throughout *Über die Soldatenehen*. Similarly the obsession with finding an 'Ohr' for his proposals is also overcome by addressing letters to those directly responsible. In the initial draft this, however, remains a dominant preoccupation, leading to great frustration: ' - ach könnte ich nur das Ohr der Fürsten finden, zu ihrem Herzen sollte mir der Weg nicht schwer werden.'⁹¹ *Über die Soldatenehen* amounts to an initial attempt to overcome these problems.

Despite all his protestations that his ideas should not be dismissed as 'poetische Grillen', Lenz finds it hard to refrain from breaking into poetic fervour. Again, if the treatise is treated as a finished text it would appear legitimate to view the proposals as 'lächerlich' and 'phantastisch'. The naive manner in which he tries to persuade Carl August of the validity of his arguments hardly amounts to an apposite tone for the world of politics. Overcome with excitement, Lenz slips back into the height of poetic excess:

[...] wenn Sie zu einem Vorschlag, der nicht in meinem Häuptlein ausgeheckt worden, sondern der der Vorschlag der Natur ist, deren Dolmetscher ich bin [...] mir Ihre Einwilligung geben [...] welche beneidenswürdige Träne würde mir das ins Auge treiben, wie unbegrenzt mein Glück, meine Freude sein.⁹²

Taken in isolation such poetic excesses, further exacerbated by the vehement denials that they are such, would appear to confirm to the view that the whole text is the product of a crazed and deluded mind. However, far from symptomatic of quite overwhelming naiveté, Lenz employs his abilities to conjure up a poetic vision as a considered rhetorical tactic, even if a misguided one. He still has faith in his lyrical powers when it comes to the

⁹¹ II, 806.⁹² II, 807.

elucidation of the core proposals of his project. Rather than writing anonymously, Lenz hopes to use his skills as a poet to articulate a new vision, for only the intellectual is capable of filling such a role:

Es muß eine Idee da sein die den Soldaten begeistern kann, zu stehen. Da in unsern kalten nervenlosen Zeiten eine solche Idee fast ein Unding ist, so muß der Philosoph auf ein Mittel denken, alle diese flüchtigen Leute an einem Bande festzuhalten.⁹³

The 'Mittel' Lenz opts for is that of a poetic vision. He gambles on the power of his poetic voice since as yet he is not attempting to present a detailed policy proposal. The technical aspects of his proposal will be glossed over in this treatise, they are only given solid grounding in subsequent texts. Lenz is well aware that it is a gamble, which explains his anxiety to distance himself from his reputation 'als einen Schwärmer' or 'einen bloßen Poeten'.⁹⁴ When it comes to intimating the substance of his reform proposals he therefore consciously opts for a poetic register, despite the evident pitfalls, as he sees this register as being the most effective for providing both the 'Mittel' to bind the nation together and means of attracting the attentions of court. A strange juxtaposition of poetic vision and political substance is the result:

Ist es ein Gedicht das ich jüngsthin las, oder ein Gesicht das ich sah, daß alle die Bürger, alle die Bauern, alle die Edelleute selbst von allen bürgerlichen Abgaben oder von den Zöllen befreit waren, die ihre Töchter an Offiziere oder Soldaten verheuratet hatten [...]⁹⁵

Detail is eschewed, with Lenz preferring to bring immediacy to the essential elements of his vision, or 'Mittel', unencumbered by the rigorous demands of a more political style.

⁹³ II, 798.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ II, 798-99.

Indeed he actually reports what he says he might have read as a poem, or seen in a vision. The proposal takes the form of the barest of outlines imaginable: all married soldiers will spend winter with their families and summer on duty; as a result their fathers-in-law, exempt from tax as a result of 'giving' their daughters to the state, will be obliged to provide for the soldiers' wives (their daughters), but it will be the king's responsibility to pay for the upbringing of any male offspring, who will be trained by the state as soldiers; female offspring will either be provided for by the state or be placed in the charge of their own parents or grandparents. A more prosaic description of a plan hardly free of contention is scarcely imaginable, nor a more concise one, apparently sanctioned by all sections of society. In reporting what might have been a poem Lenz takes one step back from complete poetic fervour, but he is still inextricably linked to it. He remains acutely aware of the disparity between the evocation and implementation of a political vision, especially one related, albeit second-hand, from the world of poetry. The form that comes so easily to the poet eludes him in the real world of politics, as he concludes this initial description of the central tenets of his reform: 'Ach wenn es ein Gedicht war, wie nah war es der Wahrheit und wie kurz der Weg es zu realisieren.'⁹⁶ Lenz's continued struggle to find the correct voice and form for the presentation of his proposals is obvious.

As *Über die Soldatenehen* is primarily concerned with the communication of a vision it is a logical continuation of the Obrister's plea in *Die Soldaten*. His call also centres around the presentation of ideas: 'O ich wünschte, daß sich nur einer fände, diese Gedanken bei Hofe durchzutreiben, ich wollte ihm schon Quellen entdecken.'⁹⁷ The

⁹⁶ II, 799.

⁹⁷ *Die Soldaten*, (V v2). My emphasis.

exercise in self-publicity serves as a prelude to further detailing of such a plan in the subsequent political treatise. But the treatise itself employs a similar poetic register, in what amounts to little more than a fleshing out of the Obrister's idyll. Unlike the Obrister, however, Lenz does attempt to address potential criticisms of his proposals. The idyllic fervour is supplemented by a concerted attempt to ground the scheme in reality. Lenz is aware of the criticisms that will inevitably be levelled at him, sharply bringing the recurrent phrase 'Ich sah nun...' ⁹⁸, with which he introduces his proposals, into a different tense to suit a different arena, that of politics: 'Ich *sehe* hier runzelnde Stirnen genug die sich bei diesen gar nicht überladenen einfältigen Bildern zu einem höhnischen Lächeln entfalten. Jugendliche poetische Grillen! sagen sie [...]'. ⁹⁹ He throws up his nebulous vision fully aware that it must be defended against derision not only on the general level of style, but also on the specific point that experience has shown, 'daß die verheurateten Soldaten gemeinhin im Dienst die schlechtesten waren'. ¹⁰⁰ Lenz invites such criticism, but does so with an express purpose in mind. His subsequent answer reveals the moral crusade which underpins the whole scheme. Lenz's reforms must be understood in a wider context of morality, as he answers the specific objection concerning the poor performance of married soldiers: 'Freilich, m.H., bei unsern Sitten? wie kann es anders sein.' ¹⁰¹ In stark contrast to subsequent drafts, the rawness of *Über die Soldatenehen* exposes the moral basis of Lenz's radical scheme. Although it appears that Lenz abandons his moral principles by ostensibly making women prostitute themselves for the greater good of the state, his

⁹⁸ Repeated some seven times during the idyllic description, II, 799-801.

⁹⁹ II, 801. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

scheme does in fact have firm moral foundations; the desire to find practical application for moral principles is the essence of his sense of 'Bestimmung' as defined above.

Indeed, before Lenz speaks of financial and economic benefits for the state, he makes clear that the driving force of his plan is a moral one. Only a governmental sanction and promotion of marriage is capable of regenerating the moral fibre of society. The plan becomes: 'das einzige *Mittel* [...] die Sitten des ganzen Staats zu verbessern.'¹⁰² In a letter to Sophie von La Roche, written in July 1775 (therefore after the composition of *Die Soldaten*, which he recommends she read, but prior to any serious attempt to formulate his proposals for military reform) he admits to having a definite moral mission, even if he has yet to find a medium for it: 'Ich will aber nichts, als dem Verderbnis der Sitten entgegen arbeiten, das von den glänzenden zu den niedrigen Ständen hinab schleicht, und wogegen diese die Hülfsmittel nicht haben können, als jene.'¹⁰³ When it comes to formulating his military proposals his audience is no longer 'das ganze Volk', as he states is the case for his theatre, but targeted at the ruling élite, as the most effective means for Lenz to carry on his fight against moral decay - from the top down in the theatre of court politics.¹⁰⁴ Again, Lenz's disillusionment with the power of drama as a means of effecting change in the real world is more than palpable.

In comparison with subsequent drafts *Über die Soldatenehen* reveals the relationship between the moral concerns voiced in the *Stimmen* and his military proposals. Turning away from orthodox religion, Lenz seeks to effect a change in the moral climate

¹⁰² II, 802. My emphasis, see note 93, p. 145.

¹⁰³ Lenz an Sophie von La Roche [Straßburg, Juli 1775], III, 325. See Chapter II, pp. 99-101.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

by resorting to the levers of state power.¹⁰⁵ Traces of the 'Grundstein' are, however, still visible, despite the change in form and subject matter. One of central tenets of *Stimmen des Laien*, Lenz's reinterpretation of Matthew 5, 39, reaches the abstract conclusion: '[...] denn ich will mit Hilfe meines Gottes jedem Übeltäter fest widerstehen im Glauben bis in den Tod, und halte das für die Pflicht jedes rechtschaffenen Biedermanns.'¹⁰⁶ In *Über die Soldatenehen* Lenz makes constant reference to the various concrete forms of 'Übel' which his proposals aim to counter, thus giving 'Bestimmung' the definition lacking in *Stimmen des Laien*. Primarily they are of a sexual nature, thus relating back to the second example Lenz summons from the 'Bergpredigt', his interpretation of Jesus' teaching on adultery (Matthew 5, 27). Initially they are described in quasi-religious fashion:

Die Frage ob es uns mit unsern besser diziplinierten Soldaten darum auch besser gehe, habe ich kaum das Herz zu beantworten. Man sucht diese Unordnungen heut zu Tage besser zu verstecken, das Übel schleicht heimlicher aber eben deswegen gefährlicher.¹⁰⁷

But the sources of such 'Übel' are quickly singled out: 'Die verdorbenen Sitten entnerven Bürger und Soldaten, die Schamhaftigkeit ist von unsern Weibern gewichen [...] die Ehen werden selten und die Nachkommenschaft elend [...].'¹⁰⁸ Sexual depravity is seen as the greatest factor in the degeneration of the state and hence the army's performance on the battlefield. Whilst pleading not to be taken as simply a 'ein junger Mensch [...] dem die

¹⁰⁵ Religion's inability to unite the people is recognised in the *Avantpropos*, see Chapter II, pp. 110-12.

¹⁰⁶ *Dritte Stimme*, II, 609. See Chapter I, pp. 54-70.

¹⁰⁷ II, 795-96.

¹⁰⁸ II, 796, Lenz details the 'Verderbnis der Sitten' mentioned in the letter an S.von La Roche, notes 103 and 104, p. 148. See also the views on marriage expressed in *Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen Die Wolken*, II, 732-33.

Keuschheit die erste und einzige Tugend scheint'¹⁰⁹, Lenz does attribute the blame for France's disastrous performance during the Seven Years' War firmly to moral degeneracy, which, as Guibert concurs, is at its worst in France because of the corrupting influence of culture: 'Je geschwinder die Begierden mit den zunehmenden Künsten und Wissenschaft reifen, desto gefährlicher ihre (the soldiers') Ehlosigkeit.'¹¹⁰ A footnote to this bold assertion further underlines Lenz's disillusionment with the power of literature, so evident in *Die Soldaten*, as well as producing an historical precedent for his own proposals: 'Die Spartaner hatten ihre großen Ursachen, die Künste zu verbieten und dagegen allen ihren Soldaten Weiber zu geben. Wir machen's umgekehrt.'¹¹¹

Lenz's own version of the Spartan example expressly aims to combat the 'Übel' of extra-marital sex, in particular prostitution, so rife in the eighteenth century: 'Und glaubt ihr, daß die ehlichen Freuden den Körper mehr entmergeln als die verbotenen oft tötenden Vergnügungen des *lüderlichen* Kützels?'¹¹² In particular Lenz singles out the rapidly expanding urban areas as hotbeds of vice:

Der Mangel und die Unmöglichkeit zu heuraten treibt diese Leute herdenweise zusammen um in dem Getümmel großer Städte und dem Rausch viehischer Ausschweifungen die Bedürfnisse des Lebens zu vergessen.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ II, 796. This would seem to be a fairly accurate description of the writer of *Catechismus*, however, Lenz has progressed beyond such a state by this point. Indeed Restif de la Bretonne comes to very much the same conclusions, *Le Pornographe*, p. 233 and p. 239, see Chapter IV, pp. 230-32.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Such a view echoes that of Eisenhardt's in *Die Soldaten* (I iv), see Chapter II, pp. 93-97.

¹¹¹ II, 796. Restif de la Bretonne also draws on the Spartan example in his attempt to integrate prostitutes into society, *Le Pornographe*, p. 19 and pp. 163-64.

¹¹² II, 802. My emphasis.

¹¹³ II, 822. A sentiment which is strikingly similar to one expressed in *Catechismus* (1772?): 'Es zeigt eine grosse Armuth an Scherz und Witz an wenn man Sachen zu ihrem Gegenstande macht, die nicht ernsthaft und wichtig genug können behandelt werden, die Adam und Heva schon aus Furcht vor Gott mit blättern [*sic*] bedeckten, und die ewig bedeckt bleiben sollten, wenn wir nicht mit aller Galanterie zum Vieh herabarten wollen, das sich ohne Ordnung und Regel bespringt wo es sich antrifft und in heisser Brunst seine Geister verhaucht eh sie noch Zeit haben, sich zu Verrichtungen eines Geistes zu entwickeln. So geht es ja jetzt schon dem größten Hauffen der menschlichen Thiere gleichfalls.' The text was first fully edited by C. Weiß in 1994: 'J.M.R.Lenz' >>Catechismus<<', *LJb*, 4, 42.

Far from Wilson's contention that 'Zum Kern der >Vision< gehört es, daß die Frau zur Prostituierten für den Staat wird [...]', Lenz in fact launches a polemic against prostitution for both its corruption of morals and its fatal consequences in the form of venereal disease.¹¹⁴ Whilst there may be some irony, in that in Lenz's scheme women are indeed co-opted and subjugated by the state in order to perform a sexual function, it is a role far removed from that of a prostitute. Enforced monogamy dedicated to reproduction is clearly distinct from enforced prostitution. The intensity of Lenz's insistence on monogamy is clear from a fragment in Kraków entitled 'Loix des femmes soldates': 'Toute femme qui fera un enfant dans l'année que le mari est dans la frontiere et qu'il la voit pas, est punie de mort, sans accorder jamais de graces.'¹¹⁵ Indeed prostitution and its corruption of morals becomes the primary 'Übel' which Lenz fights against. As he appeals to his 'Fürsten':

Warum also, wenn ihr glücklich machen wollt, glücklich machen könnt, gezögert? - Warum nicht so geschwinde ausgeführt als beschlossen, besonders da das Übel wie alle gefährliche Übel eine schnelle Kur erfordert, eh es unheilbar wird.¹¹⁶

However, the cause of such 'übele Folgen' does not lie with the prostitutes themselves, but is rather seen as a direct result of 'die Ehlosigkeit der Soldaten'.¹¹⁷ A corrupted military is the root cause of society's degeneracy. As such Lenz is able to give concrete form to the 'Übel' alluded to earlier, a form, moreover, based on observation of the sexual depravity of everyday life:

Wievell zerrissene Ehen, wieviel sitzengebliebene Jungfrauen, wieviel der Population so gefährliche Buhlerinnen, wieviel andere schreckliche Geschichten, Kindermorde, Diebstähle,

¹¹⁴ Wilson, p. 59, see also pp. 63-65.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix A, p. 2, IV, iv, 55r.

¹¹⁶ II, 802.

¹¹⁷ II, 805.

Giftmischereien, die dem Nachrichter so viel zu schaffen geben [...] wie sollte in solche Menschen göttliche Begeisterung kommen [...].¹¹⁸

Yet Lenz is not interested in detailing such commonplace events, merely suggesting that his readers look at 'ein Gemälde [...] von einem gewissen Hölländer [*sic!*] Steenkerk' - *Die Soldaten*.¹¹⁹ Instead his proposals amount to an attempt to restore 'göttliche Begeisterung' to society and thus reverse its rapid disintegration, for 'alle Bande des Staats gehn auseinander'.¹²⁰ The moral underpinning of Lenz's project is clear.

Even when Lenz launches into a cost-benefit analysis for the purpose of selling his project to those in power, he becomes side-tracked by his moral concerns, couching the ethos of the project in terms of a struggle against the power of 'Übel', understood very much in the terms set out in the *Dritte Stimme*. It is described as an ever-multiplying force, undermining society over a period of time: 'Sehr oft schleichen Übel fort und vermehren sich durch Einrostung alter Vorurteile und Gewohnheiten...', with the result being that those in authority perpetuate 'das Elend von Millionen'.¹²¹ Lenz sees it as most virulent in the military and as such the main agent in the destruction of the body politic: 'Der Staat, besonders das Kriegswesen ist in einer Fieberhitze [...] ist ihm wie die Konvulsionen der aufgeregten Nerven eines Kranken nur um so gefährlicher und

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. In the manuscript this sentence is actually crossed out, suggesting Lenz's desire to distance himself from the drama. Damm does not acknowledge this, nor is it noted by McInnes, p. 152, see Hill *LJb*, p. 10. In *Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken* (1776) Lenz has severe reservations about the writer's ability to present such events, as he uses the same artistic image: 'Nehmen Sie die unzähligen Schlachtopfer der Notwendigkeit und die furchtbaren Geschichten, die, so wie sie wirklich geschehen, und wie ich deren hundert weiß, keine menschliche Feder aufzuzeichnen vermag.', II, 733.

¹²⁰ II, 805.

¹²¹ II, 809. Such a formulation is reminiscent of the Obrister's proud boast in the final speech of the first version of the 'Schlußszene' of *Die Soldaten*: 'Und Millionen Unglückliche weniger. Die durch unsere Unordnungen zerrüttete Gesellschaft würde wieder aufblühen und Fried und Wohlfahrt aller und Ruhe und Freude sich untereinander küssen.' (V v 1).

fürchterlicher, da dadurch das Übel immer größer wird.'¹²² To mask the radical nature of his moral crusade, as it is conceived within the parameters of enlightened absolutism, Lenz must try to sell his vision as means of bolstering the power of his putative audience - those in power. By setting an example through the armed forces he seeks to revitalise the ruling élite's flagging legitimacy by urging them to take a moral lead:

Im Ganzen was ist eine Menge Stroh in Kot getreten - das wahre Bild unsers heutigen Volks - gegen eine Nation, die den göttlichen Lebenshauch der Natur in ihren Adern fühlt, nicht arbeitet, um zu dulden, sondern um zu genießen und zu sein und zu preisen und zu jauchzen dem, der sie geschaffen hat!¹²³

The religious underpinning of Lenz's scheme is clearly visible; the struggle against 'Übel' will take as its weapon 'den göttlichen Lebenshauch der Natur', something clearly defined in his previous theological and pseudo-theological deliberations, but becoming increasingly masked in progressive incarnations of his project.

When Lenz actually tries to describe his 'Soldatenehe' he is only able to do so in two ways. Firstly, in accordance with his moral stance, he sets his poetic vision against the present state of military marriages. The sexual depravity of such marriages is deliberately set against his idyll. The moral fibre of the armed forces is seen to be under threat not only from prostitutes, but also from the sexual appetites of their wives: 'Wo das Weib dem Kerl überall nachschlendert [...] Wo sie durch die Sitten unserer Zeit zu einer unbändigen Geilheit erhitzt, seinem Körper eben so zusetzt als seinem Geiste [...].'¹²⁴

¹²² II, 820. The parallels with Guibert are striking: 'En général les gouvernemens des grandes peuples sont loin de faire et de connoître seulement tout ce qui est en leur pouvoir [...] ils n'osent porter ni le fer, ni les remèdes aux plaies qui les dévorent; ils s'agitent sans succès, comme des mourans dans les convulsions d'agonie.', I, cxi.

¹²³ II, 825.

¹²⁴ II, 801.

Such an exaggerated picture, despite his protestations to the contrary, is used as a rhetorical device by which he can distinguish his own 'Soldatenehe':

Ach ich beschwöre Sie, wenden Sie Ihre Augen von diesen schändlichen Ehen, die nichts als die Mißgeburt des äußersten Elendes sind und nehmen Sie sie nicht unglücklicher Weise zum Muster der Ehen, die Soldaten geziemen.¹²⁵

The second form of description, meant to supplement the initial idyll, merely replicates its poetic style, offering no more substance to the form of marriage which the treatise - after all entitled *Über die Soldatenehen* - purports to espouse. The practicalities of arranging such marriages are glossed over as Lenz jumps straight to an idyllic description of the family life resulting from the enlistment of women 'zum Dienst des Staats'.¹²⁶ Whereas Lenz initially puts faith in the power of his poetic visions as propaganda, giving a strong political vision to governmental policy in the manner of a spin doctor, by the time he comes to the end of his second, more plainly utopian description, he begins to question the effectiveness of such visions in the real world of politics:

Der Mensch ist keine Maschine, die sich nach den Ideen eines einzigen Kopfs zusammen setzen läßt, er muß aufs höchste in einen willkürlichen Tanz komponiert werden, selbst wenn man was zu seinem Besten bewürken will.¹²⁷

The blunt instruments of political propaganda and moralistic fervour are seen to be too crude to effect real change. Lenz realises that a more subtle approach is needed. Rather than assuming a dictatorial role, in the manner of Guibert, government must subtly pull the strings behind the scenes to effect reform. The subsequent texts will concentrate on the

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ II, 808.

¹²⁷ II, 818-19. Musical metaphors are also present in the *Dritte Stimme*, II, 601, see Chapter I, note 95, p. 51. See also *Supplement zur Abhandlung vom Baum des Erkenntnisses Gutes und Bösen*, II, 520.

ways and means by which government can accompany society in 'einen willkürlichen Tanz'. The rhythm of such a dance will be set by the planning and manipulation of the economic and legal systems. As such Lenz will abandon his two-pronged attack of 'poetic political' visions and a call to a moral crusade; instead he will attempt to sell his plans on the basis of their economic merits.

Were *Über die Soldatenehen* a finished text such inconsistencies would completely undermine the substance of Lenz's argument. However, it must be understood as a text in which he experiments with form, content and style. It is no coincidence that in the second half of a treatise, which after all is 'keine systematische Abhandlung', attention turns to the economic implications of his ideas, if only fleetingly. Having appealed to their emotions, Lenz changes tack by appealing to the financial and economic benefits which those in power will reap from the implementation of his proposals. At this point economic arguments are evoked for the purposes of selling his project rather than as seeing them as the actual motors of social change, or the tools for implementing his proposals. They come as secondary considerations, as another means of finding the 'Ohr' of those in authority:

Ich will Ihnen also beweisen, meine Fürsten, daß - durch meinen Vorschlag Ihre Kasse und die Kassen Ihrer Untertanen gewinnt, daß Ihrer Ausgaben weniger, Ihrer Einküfte mehr werden, daß dessen ungeachtet bei der neuen Einrichtungen Ihre Untertanen sich besser befinden [...].¹²⁸

For all the promises made to those in power his subsequent calculations fall way short of fulfilling these extravagant claims.

¹²⁸ II, 806.

Even though he realises a pressing need to substantiate his arguments, the presentation of his calculations hardly inspires confidence in their validity. The numerical data give a concise, yet involved breakdown of the financial benefits of his plan for the French state. This despite the fact he has conspicuously avoided giving any intimation of the details of his proposals in the body of the text, more concerned as he is with his political vision and moral crusade. However, the details are limited to the payments made by the state to the military, not to the precise nature of the obscure, elusive 'Soldatenehe'. That Lenz is suddenly able to produce a string of figures, based on the detailing of the amount of leave and pay granted to recruits, soldiers, officers and foreign regiments (who will be offered French citizenship in return for a 33% pay cut!), as well as passing criticism of expenditure on Les Invalides, does indicate that he has thought about the economic implications of his plans.¹²⁹ At this stage Lenz does not place the weight of his argument on economic factors, even if he comes to realise that this will be both the way to sell his argument to those in power as well as the only means by which the people can be made to accept the plan: via economic coercion. Hence the flippant presentation of his audit of the French army:

Nun wollen wir zum Scherz zusammenrechnen [...] zusammengenommen 17 Millionen 748 120 Livres; wollen wir zweimalhunderttausend Livres von den Invaliden noch dazurechnen, so haben wir gegen 18 Millionen. Ein artiger Fonds, aus dem denen Bauern, die ihre Enkel für den König zu Rekruten auferziehen, trefflich könnte aufgeholfen werden: wenn wir zugleich bedenken, daß sie während dieser Zeit soviel Arme gewinnen, die ihnen den Feldbau bestreiten helfen.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ II, 812-14. Spending on Les Invalides will become one of the issues which Lenz takes up in his 'web' of letters, most obviously in *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*. See Chapter IV, pp. 178-81, and pp. 191-92.

¹³⁰ II, 814.

The would be 'economiste' is still overshadowed by the poet and moralist. Therefore as soon as Lenz reaches this figure, his uncertainty when it comes to playing that role is evident, as he says before launching his second utopian vision: 'Ich weiß wohl daß alles das nicht mit einer Umwendung der Hand verändert wird, es gehört auch zu diesem wie zu allen ausführbaren Vorschlägen Zeit -'¹³¹ Such ideas are still in embryo.

Lenz does not return to the economic aspects of his proposals until the conclusion, insofar as it has one, of *Über die Soldatenehen*. Even here his tone is speculative and superficial. There is no sense of completion to his calculations, rather it is as if he has just begun on an economic analysis of the impact of his project. He raises new policy proposals, such as reform to inheritance laws, restructuring of the tax system and the limiting the tax burden of farmers to 'die Fronen', the infamous *corvées*, but all these are merely mentioned in passing.¹³² It is precisely these aspects which will become central in the subsequent texts written in French. In *Über die Soldatenehen* there is no sense of resolution to the economic implications of his fledgling proposals, as Lenz's final words on the subject tellingly illustrate: 'Diese beiden letzten Stücke liegen mir noch zu beweisen ob.'¹³³ The end of one text sets the haziest of parameters for those that will follow.

All aspects of *Über die Soldatenehen* point to the fact that it is a transitional piece. It is Lenz's first attempt to articulate the plan which the Obrister proposes in the final scene of *Die Soldaten*. As such it amounts to an experimentation with form, content and style, as the poet tries to enter the world of the court. The transition to the register of

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² II, 825-26.

¹³³ II, 827.

political discourse is far from smooth. The resultant text is far from coherent and assiduously avoids the finer points of detailing his proposals. More importantly it is not a complete text. Despite this, within the bounds of literary criticism it has enjoyed the status of being the sole and hence authoritative text as regards Lenz's military writings. In fact it is the tentative first step in this process and highly unrepresentative of the direction the subsequent drafts will take. Nevertheless, taken as experimental in form, *Über die Soldatenehen* offers revealing insights into the origins of Lenz's project, if not its development. In this text, as in *Die Soldaten*, he draws heavily on first-hand experience of military life, but his thoughts remain those of a speculative outsider. This is evident from the opening paragraph, which speaks as much for the desperation as for the vigour of the appeal to those in power. The fact that Lenz is writing for publication, rather than addressing his plans to specific individuals, as he will do later, is indicative of the learning process undergone in this text. It is indeed symptomatic of the residual faith Lenz holds in his own standing as a poet, a faith steadily eroded during the course of the text. Although keen to dissociate himself from being regarded as a mere 'Schwärmer', and, it must be remembered, from being named as the author of *Die Soldaten*, he still relies on his powers and authority as a poet both for describing current conditions and evoking a political vision.¹³⁴ The vision offered at first as a propaganda tool ends up as purely utopian in substance, despite all protestations to the contrary. He also still has faith in the theatrical and overly rhetorical style of argument honed in the Straßburg 'Gesellschaft'; it is one

¹³⁴ Lenz writes a string of letters from the end of February 1776 onwards, addressed to Zimmermann, Boie and Herder, amongst others, in which he desperately tries to dissociate himself from the authorship of *Die Soldaten*, indeed Lenz persuaded Klinger to claim authorship of the play. A similar series of letters also exists along the same lines, with Lenz trying, unsuccessfully, to destroy all copies of his satirical attack on Wieland, *Die Wolken*. See Chapter II, pp. 108-109.

wholly unsuited to the task in hand, as is admitted in the conclusion, where he concedes he has 'mehr gestottert als überredet'.¹³⁵ In addition to the evident struggle and subsequent disillusionment with his poetic persona, the experimental nature of *Über die Soldatenehen* also reveals the moral and religious impetus behind the whole project. Lenz echoes Guibert's outrage at the insidious corruption, above all the sexual debauchery of society. Although the experimentation with morality and the role of poet as propagandist conspicuously fail, one aspect of the treatise lives on in later incarnations of the project: the importance of economic rigour. For the main advance made in *Über die Soldatenehen* is the recognition of the overwhelming importance of economics, a discipline still very much in its infancy in 1776, not only in terms of selling his project but also in its implementation. Such a monumental shift in the foundations of his project necessitates a complete revision of form, content and above all style. It is in Weimar that this process begins. As Lenz writes to Zimmermann a month after his arrival there:

*Ich werde wohl bald den gar zu reizenden Hof verlassen und in eine Einsiedelei hier herum gehen meine Arbeit zu Stande bringen.*¹³⁶

¹³⁵ II, 827.

¹³⁶ Lenz an Zimmermann [Weimar Ende Mai 1776], III, 460.

Chapter IV

The ‘Einsiedler’ at Berka: the summer of
1776 and the ‘lettre à Maurepas’

The ‘Einsiedler’ at Berka: the summer of 1776 and the ‘lettre à Maurepas’

Ich bin hier verschlungen vom angenehmen Strudel des Hofes, der mich fast nicht zu Gedanken kommen läßt, weil ich den ganzen Tag oben beim Herzog bin. Aber mein Herz bleibt immer dasselbe und kann seine Richtungen nicht ändern.

(Lenz an Lavater, Weimar d. 14ten April [1776])¹

Ich geh aufs Land, weil ich bei Euch nichts tun kann.

(Lenz an Goethe, Weimar, 27 Juni 1776)²

Leb wohl und arbeite Dich aus, wie Du kannst und magst.

(Goethe an Lenz [Juli 1776])³

Ich finde einen unaussprechlichen Reiz an der Einsamkeit, sie allein befriedigt alle meine Bedürfnisse [...].⁴

(Lenz an Zimmermann, Berka Juli 1776)

Lenz ist hier. Leb wohl. Es wird uns allen noch gut gehen.

(Goethe an Kayser, Weimar, 15 August 1776)⁵

Zu Weymar habe ich Göthe *auch* und Lenz *auch* kennen gelernt. Was gab es da nicht für Gelegenheit zu Anmerkungen. Mich soll wundern, ob sich die Scene dort wie eine lahme Farce oder wie ein Trauerspiel endet?

(Bode an Boie, Hamburg, 31. August 1776)⁶

Lenzens Eseley.

(Goethe, *Tagebuch*, Weimar, 26. November 1776)⁷

Despite being initially overwhelmed by the ‘angenehmen Strudel des Hofes’, Lenz was not to be deflected from ‘seine Richtungen’. Indeed his arrival in Weimar gave fresh impetus to his reform project, as he says to Zimmermann only a few weeks after his arrival he has a desire, ‘...meine Arbeit zu Stande zu bringen’. Lenz decided to retreat, as the same letter continues, from the bustle of court life to an ‘Einsiedelei hier herum’ - a cottage in Berka - to do so.⁸ The sheer weight of the Kraków manuscripts related to the project is proof of

¹ III, 427.

² III, 472.

³ III, 477.

⁴ III, 484.

⁵ Müller, I, 292.

⁶ Müller, I, 297.

⁷ Müller, I, 334.

⁸ Lenz an Zimmermann [Weimar, Ende Mai 1776], III, 460. See Chapter III, note 136, p. 159.

the complete overhaul it underwent during the summer of 1776. However, what the 'Einsiedler' actually wrote in the seclusion of his Berka hide-out has, up to now, remained a mystery. This despite the fact that the period in question is widely acknowledged as the pivotal point of his whole career. As Wilson iterates what has become a commonplace:

Der achtmonatige Aufenthalt in Weimar vom April bis zu seiner Ausweisung Ende November 1776 ist seit eh und je als der Wendepunkt in Lenzens Leben angesehen worden. Man hat auch gebührend erkannt, daß ein abstruses Projekt Lenzens Denken und Handeln in dieser Zeit geleitet hat: Die Schrift über die Soldatenehen [...] [wir] müssen diese Schrift vornehmen, denn sie ist das Schlüsseldokument für Lenzens Haltung zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus. Auch die Rolle dieses Projekts in Lenzens Scheitern in Weimar ist zu wenig beachtet worden.⁹

However, as this chapter will show, Wilson is wrong to assert that *Über die Soldatenehen* is 'das Schlüsseldokument' of such a 'Wendepunkt'. Rather such 'Schlüsseldokumente' are in fact those written whilst in Berka, not a text written largely *before* Lenz's arrival in Weimar. In its mature form - the drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas'- the project is transformed beyond measure, as will be shown through a detailed analysis of unpublished *Lenziana* manuscripts from Kraków. As such, this chapter will seek to fill, at least partially, *the* gaping hole in Lenz scholarship, by unravelling the mystery of Lenz's 'Einsiedler' existence during the 'Wendepunkt' of his career.

However, before such an analysis it must be stressed that Lenz's interest in military affairs, and indeed the idea of composing a policy proposal in the first place, is not as wild a proposition as it may seem from a twentieth-century perspective. Lenz's interest is not some random fixation; it is a subject to which he devoted thought over an extended period of time.¹⁰ Therefore, when he seeks to make himself eligible for positions at court, it is

⁹ Wilson, p. 54.

¹⁰ See Chapter III, pp. 116-19.

only logical that he plays to his strengths, as well as remaining loyal to his sense of 'Bestimmung', by working up his proposal, the aim of which is precisely to work for the 'social good'. Nor was Lenz alone in harbouring ambitions for a career in the service of an absolutist state. The tradition of authors advising monarchs had become well established during the eighteenth century, with the most famous examples being the activities of the *philosophes*. The so-called 'revolutionary' Stürmer und Dränger of the Straßburg circle were in fact rather keen to sign themselves up to the interests of the absolutist state in return for a secure position. Goethe had been the first to do so, albeit without sharing the financial hardships of his contemporaries, and once accepted, and subsequently, on June 11 1776, appointed *Legionsrat*, set a precedent for others to follow.¹¹ Klinger and Lenz duly did so, both arriving in Weimar in 1776, with the former rapidly becoming 'wie ein Splitter im Fleisch' to Goethe, before becoming, later on in life, a lieutenant-general in the Russian army.¹² Viewed in this light, Lenz's project cannot be dismissed as simply the product of deluded mind, rather it constitutes an attempt to market his undoubted knowledge and innovative thought to the various European courts. Once

¹¹ His appointment signalled a end to the rampant hedonism which characterised Goethe's first few months with Carl-August, as the serious matters of governance took priority. Therefore, that Lenz left Weimar at the end of June to complete his own reform plans is hardly surprising. See N.Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, pp. 231-56 & 281-87. Whilst hardly adopting an attitude of 'jobs for the boys', Goethe sought to aid *some* of his Straßburg contemporaries, see Goethe an Herder, Weimar d. 12 Dezember and an Herder 5 Juli 1776, complete with a floor plan on Herder's new lodgings. It should also be remembered, as M.N.Rosanow points out: '[...] wie Herder sich mit dem Gedanken trug, das Vertrauen Katharinas II. zu gewinnen, damit durch diese mächtige Herrscherin Rußlands zu einem Musterstaate gemacht werde. Wollen wir deshalb Lenz etwa verurteilen...', *Jakob M.R.Lenz: der Dichter der Sturm- und Drangperiode*, trans. by C. von Gütschow (Leipzig: Schulze, 1909), p. 344. There is no record of Lenz himself ever receiving an invitation to Weimar, *ibid.*, pp. 344-45.

¹² Goethe an Lavater, Weimar 16 September 1776, Müller, I, 308. For Klinger's initial wonderment at Goethe's new position see Klinger und Lenz an Kayser, Mittwoch, Weimar [26. Juni 1776], III, 467-68.

Weimar offers an opening to court politics, Lenz sets to work on a complete overhaul of his proposal, undertaken in his Berka 'Einsiedelei'.

The view that *Über die Soldatenehen* is only the first attempt by Lenz to formulate his project is amply supported, as has been said, by the sheer weight of manuscripts in Kraków. The bewildering mass of notes, fragments and heavily corrected and amended drafts does not allow for a precise dating of each section of the archive, nor is it possible from currently published manuscript sources to offer even a semblance of a reconstruction of the project's development during Lenz's stay in Berka.¹³ As a result of my research in Kraków I, however, have been able to transcribe and edit further sections of the 'Nachlaß' (see appendices). These 'new' texts fall far short of a complete transcription of even one of the files of Box IV, the edition of which, whilst not quite 'eine kaum übersehbare Rekonstruktionsarbeit', is not far off being so.¹⁴ Nevertheless the newly transcribed sections were chosen with an express purpose in mind. From the fresh manuscript evidence I intend to offer a theory concerning the progression of the project through its various stages.¹⁵ The texts selected appear to fall into a coherent order, which will allow their provisional dating, and also into a discernible pattern of progression. In particular, in the later texts there is a distinct change in emphasis towards economic and agricultural concerns, with Lenz's original idea of the 'Soldatenehe' becoming part of a far larger

¹³ Hill suggests the manuscripts were perhaps written between early 1776 and summer 1777, basing his conjecture on the evidence offered by the fact that two letters, one to Neukirch in first six months of 1777 (IV, v, 9v/III, 527-28) and one to the Herzogin Amilia in 1776 (IV, vi, 22v/III, 507, Damm suggesting (III, 890) that the letter might have been aimed at Carl August) were also used by Lenz as jotting pads for the purposes of his military projects, *Bericht*, p. 120.

¹⁴ Hill, *LJb*, p. 7, and *Order...*, p. 6.

¹⁵ With the lack of a complete edition, any attempted reconstruction must be labelled a theory.

project. I will pay particular attention to those stages which attain some form of completion - the drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas'.

That Lenz came to the realisation that *Über die Soldatenehen* required both a substantial and substantive overhaul is not based on mere conjecture; even a fairly precise dating is possible. The decision to publish in French is taken before he arrives in Weimar, as a letter to his publishers illustrates, when he inquires about the possibility of finding a translator.¹⁶ By early May 1776, after neither the name of, nor the money for a translator had been forthcoming, Lenz took the decision to write in French himself.¹⁷ Therefore, just after his arrival in Weimar, armed as we know with 'ein Schrift unter Händen', in all probability the manuscript copy of *Über die Soldatenehen*, Lenz decided to switch to writing in French, logically enough, considering that his proposals are primarily aimed at the ailing French state.¹⁸ Archival evidence strongly suggests that his initial efforts in French centred around a direct translation of *Über die Soldatenehen*.¹⁹ Despite Hill's reservation concerning the status of this fragment, it would appear logical that Lenz's first attempts to write in French would be guided by a text he had already composed in German, especially as it had even been the subject of correspondence concerning its publication in German, before any mention is made of the need for a translation.²⁰ The

¹⁶ Lenz an Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Weimar [!] den 1 April 1776, III, 421. See Chapter III, note 24, p. 122.

¹⁷ See Lenz an Zimmermann, Weimar Ende Mai 1776 and an Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Weimar den 6ten Mai 1776, III, 444. See Chapter III, note 9, p. 118.

¹⁸ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776], III, 400. See Chapter III, note 23, p. 122.

¹⁹ This attempted translation of *Über die Soldatenehen* has wrongly been placed by Köpke in Kasten IV, Konvolut iv, entitled 'Notizen zu dem Buche: *Über Verbesserung der Französischen Armee* [56 Blätter]'. For transcription see Appendix A, pp. 11-14, IV, iv, 39r-42r.

²⁰ Hill, *Bericht*: 'Insofern ist die handschriftliche Anmerkung von Freye, >>Bruchstück einer (zusammengefunden) Übersetzung der deutschen Reinschrift<< (IV, iv, vor 38), problematisch; es ist nicht einmal sicher, welcher Text dem anderen zugrundegelegen hat.' pp. 129-30.

French version, which does not follow the German rigidly, soon tails off, thus indicating that no sooner had Lenz arrived in Weimar than *Über die Soldatenehen* was discarded as a valid template. It appears that the text was downgraded at best to the status of a first draft, but in effect it was written off as a failed experiment. In translating his own work Lenz becomes painfully aware of its deficiencies. This spurs him on to experiment further with the form, content and style of his project, writing from at the latest the beginning of May 1776 onwards, but more probably from April, solely in French. In Kraków there is also manuscript evidence of Lenz's criticism of *Über die Soldatenehen*. As Hill points out, Lenz writes of it: 'mais quel fatras de déclamations.' On the same page as an attempted translation of the opening line, Lenz crosses out the following remark: 'Je voudrais pour tout or du monde n'avoir écrit qu'une déclamation dont il y a quantité en France.'²¹

In early May Lenz wrote to his publishers informing them of his intention to write a tract entitled *Sur les mariages des soldats*.²² There are several rough drafts of possible title pages with variations of this title. At least one of them bears the exact title *Sur les mariages des soldats*, suggesting that it was written prior to the letter Lenz sent to his publishers, that is to say in late April or early May.²³ Regardless of the precise dating of this manuscript, the actual title page reveals significant changes in the formulation of the project. Underneath the title Lenz originally put his own name to the work; however, he later crossed it out, inserting the anonymous 'par un Allemand'. The significance of this

²¹ Quoted in Hill, *Bericht*, p. 123. IV, i, vor 2r, and IV, vii, 32v.

²² Lenz an Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Weimar den 6ten Mai 1776, III, 444. See Chapter III, note 9, p. 118.

²³ See Appendix A, p. 3, IV, iv, 30r. See also the reproduction, Appendix F, p. 59.

amendment cannot be underestimated in terms of the direction the project will take from this point onwards. In deleting his name, Lenz is able to dissociate himself from his identity as a poet. All the poetic baggage which undermines *Über die Soldatenehen* is simply discarded with the assumption of anonymity. The amendment also illustrates that he no longer seeks to channel his lyrical powers into a propaganda campaign for the government; rather than leading from the front, Lenz will start to advocate a set of policies which will pull the strings behind the scenes. Poetic fervour gives way to considered policy making. The self-reflexive anxiety displayed in *Über die Soldatenehen* concerning his entry into the world of politics, both as a poet and an outsider, is also dispelled in this title page. Established, however precariously, in court,²⁴ Lenz is able to assume the authority and legitimacy of a reformer writing under the protection of Carl August.

Another decisive change in the same early draft is the fact that it is targeted at one specific individual, St. Germain. Whereas *Über die Soldatenehen* was intended to be published as an open address, even the earliest of the Weimar drafts suggests that publication had been discounted, with Lenz preferring to channel his efforts into writing directly to specific individuals in specific ministerial posts. At this point the work is only dedicated to St. Germain, but the precedent is set.²⁵ St. Germain was an obvious addressee as he had been summoned by Louis XVI to impose economies on the costly French military establishment, which he duly did with great energy.²⁶ From the moment of his appointment in October 1775 he became the focus of hopes for a complete overhaul of

²⁴ As P.Hacks describes Lenz's existence in Weimar: 'Daß er uneingeladen war, war es keineswegs, was Lenz störte. Seine eigentliche Schwierigkeit war, sich das Reisegeld zu leihen [...] Lenz war von Kind an zum Geldverdienen unlustig, ein Pumpgenie und geborener Schmarotzer...', Müller, III, 109

²⁵ Appendix A, p. 4, IV, iv, 31r.

²⁶ See W.Doyle, *Venality*, p. 134.

the armed forces. However, by June 1776, despite having just been named *Ministre de Guerre*, his policies fell steadily out of favour, especially after the dismissal of Turgot. He became increasingly marginalised, with Maurepas doing his best to sideline him by offering him the post of *Maréchal* in September 1776.²⁷ The reports of the *Teutscher Merkur* relay the sense of excitement which greeted his efforts at reform throughout the first half of 1776: for example, in February 1776 the Parisian correspondent reported: 'Man redet hier von nichts als den Verbesserungen und neuen Anordnungen des Grafen von St. Germain...'²⁸ Thus St. Germain was at the peak of his power precisely during the time this initial draft was written and therefore presented himself as the obvious target for Lenz's proposals in April or May 1776.

In the short text which follows the dedication to St. Germain, further significant changes to the formulation of the project become clear.²⁹ The opening sentence points out the single most important flaw of *Über die Soldatenehen* - the fact that the means of implementation are never discussed: 'Tous les innovateurs pechent ordinairement en ce qu'ils n'enseignent pas les moyens les plus faciles proches et imperceptibles, pour executer leurs idees chimeriques.' Lenz recognises the need for detail and precision if his plan is not to remain a mere pipe-dream and, moreover, the need to appeal to those in power: '...c'est a Vous Monseigneur qui un aveu pareil se peut faire sans reserve parce Vous seul [etes en tat d'en sentir la sincerité en sentez] la verité...' Rather than remaining a speculative affair, the project assumes an exclusively personalised form. Nevertheless, despite the adoption of anonymity, Lenz still has difficulty in holding back his poetic

²⁷ See *Teutscher Merkur* reports of his declining power, from Juni 1776 onwards.

²⁸ *Teutscher Merkur*, Februar 1776, p. 198. See also earlier reports, Chapter III, note 44, p. 128.

²⁹ See Appendix A, pp. 4-5, IV, iv, 31r.

inclinations, likening, as he does, his project to the production of an artist and 'genie' as the text descends into unbridled self-aggrandisement.³⁰ Even in this short text, in all probability written shortly after his arrival, a number of significant changes are made to the project. The assumption of anonymity, the authority of court sanction, and an address to St. Germain are three significant departures from the project as it stands in *Über die Soldatenehen*, further indicating that Lenz himself quickly found that text 'lächerlich'.

The manuscript discussed above is just one of many draft title pages, no sooner started than abandoned. Subsequent drafts have an array of titles, perhaps suggesting that they were written after 6th May 1776, when Lenz informed his publishers of his intended working title.³¹ Regardless of their precise dating, such alterations illustrate the number of experimental stages the project undergoes. The addition of further elements to the title illustrate that the project, as even in its original *Über die Soldatenehen* form, stretches far beyond a tract centred on marriage: ultimately the project will encompass the whole of state, economy and society. Another draft opening is an acknowledgement of the project's widening scope: 'Sur le mariage des Soldats et sur l'éducation militaire en France.'³² Furthermore this draft is testimony to another transformation, with the work, termed an 'ouvrage', no longer dedicated, but actually '*présenté* a Monsieur le Comte de St. Germain'.³³ The address turns into a direct petition to the minister. As such the project begins to take on the trappings which Goethe remembers in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: 'ein großes Memoire an den französischen Kriegsminister...'³⁴ In the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See Chapter III, note 9, p. 118.

³² See Appendix A, p. 6, IV, iv, 32r.

³³ Over two pages, see Appendix A, p. 6, IV, iv, 32v. My emphasis.

³⁴ See Chapter III, pp. 116-19.

accompanying text, Lenz's struggle with register is once again evident.³⁵ Having dispensed with the problems of his poetic identity, Lenz is faced by a new series of challenges as he strives to find the appropriate register for formal correspondence, even if it is in the form of an 'ouvrage'. Poetic licence gives way to ineffectual brusqueness, equally damaging to the reception his reforms would receive: 'S'il {en} est digne il sera agréé {de lui meme}{,} s'il ne l'est pas, tant pis pour l'Auteur.' Unsurprisingly the fragment ends with this unequivocal line as another experiment with form is cast aside, for although the fragment is directly addressed to St. Germain the inherent tone of the piece remains speculative. There are also other putative titles in the archive, a fine example of Lenz's attempts to market his proposals being the dramatic: 'La France sauvée ou pensées sur les mariages des Soldats et l'éducation militaire.'³⁶ The fact that such titles are variants on the working one of early May would seem to suggest that they were conceived within a relatively short timespan. That none of them reaches any stage of completion, not even completion of an opening paragraph, does not render them superfluous. In their own right the title amendments signify a radical change of direction when compared to *Über die Soldatenehen*. The assumption of anonymity, writing from the court of Weimar and, now, the targeting of St. Germain all amount to the first distinct phase in the project's development.

There are also other prose sketches to be found in the archive which are not epistolary in form. A section of the archive contains a list entitled 'Loix des femmes

³⁵ See Appendix A, p. 7, IV, iv, 33r.

³⁶ Transcribed by D.Hill, *Bericht*, p. 121, IV, viii, 1r, and thus in the section entitled 'Auszüge und Studien zu Julius Cäsar.' [11 Blätter], further illustrating the difficulty in ordering the manuscripts.

soldats', which would appear to be destined for some form of prose presentation.³⁷ Hill also draws attention to the barest of outlines, which he suggests 'für das Werk drei Bände vorsieht':

Dans le 1er tome je ne veux rien demontrer que tout ce que les grandshommes ont désiré dans la guerre peut s'accomplir par mon projet, voilà assez fait. dans le 2 tome jen veux demontrer la possibilité et la facilité. le 3ème tome devient le principal.³⁸

In fact the French word 'tome' does not necessarily correspond to the German 'Band', and it is clear that in this sketch 'tome' merely means a 'chapter' or 'section' of a single treatise.³⁹ As a result, rather than being a three-tome *magnum opus*, this extract sets out an outline that merely attempts to order the most basic of the arguments to be found in *Über die Soldatenehen*. The *Avantpropos* is also a draft of a piece of prose bearing striking similarities to that text. Conceived as an introduction, the manuscript shows none of the advances made in the sketches examined above. It is unclear whether the *Avantpropos* was to appear anonymously, but there is certainly no specific addressee, unlike in those drafts either dedicated or presented to St. Germain. Lenz does drop his appeal to the 'Könige' favouring the more neutral 'lecteurs' in his opening line: 'Je prie très instamment mes lecteurs de vouloir bien agreer de lire l'Avantpropos avant d'entrer dans la lecture de mon livre.'⁴⁰ The similarities with *Über die Soldatenehen* are more than stylistic, with specific details transferred directly into the French introduction.⁴¹ Nor does Lenz state whether or not he is writing under the protection of the Weimar court. The

³⁷ See Appendix A, pp. 1-2, IV, iv 55r-55v. The folder contains further 'Loix des soldats...'.
³⁸ Hill, *Bericht*, p. 123, IV, iv, 43r.

³⁹ Hill, *Bericht*, p. 123, IV, iv, 43r.

³⁹ *Le Petit Robert*: 'Tome. (1530; lat. tomus., gr. tomos, proprem. <<portion>>). Division d'un ouvrage, prévue (comme le livre ou le chapitre) par l'auteur ou l'éditeur, et ne correspondant pas forcément au volume [...].'

⁴⁰ *Avantpropos*, p. 12, IV, iv, 14v.

⁴¹ Hill details the parallels, *LJb*, p. 9, before listing some discrepancies as well.

combination of these factors suggest that such prose texts were written very early on in the project's reformulation, possibly even before his arrival in Weimar, at the latest in the period immediately following his attempted translation of *Über die Soldatenehen*.

Although a precise dating is not possible, Lenz did at some stage begin to adopt a different approach to the one which stems from *Über die Soldatenehen*, as outlined above. Another draft title page indicates that he experimented with the presentation of his proposals in the form of an epistolary novel. Indeed Lenz would have been far from unique in adapting that popular form for advocating reforms in the eighteenth century.⁴² The manuscript is amended in stages, as is discernible from the different styles of hand used. It is possible - as 'Sur' has a definite capital - that Lenz added to the initial title of 'Sur le mariage des Soldats', strikingly similar to the drafts of early May. His first amendment is the insertion of the word 'Projet' and more importantly the subtitle: 'proposé par un etranger en lettres de differentes personnes.' Although this is later crossed out, it would seem that the idea of writing an epistolary novel was conceived as the next distinct phase of the project's formulation. The final amendment to the manuscript, written hastily and in a different ink - indicating it is a later revision - 'Kann der letzte Brief werden', suggests that Lenz had come up with a revised scheme for this epistolary approach. The final letter would provide the platform for the presentation of proposals which might well, as Hill argues, have offered solutions to the causes of pain

⁴²Appendix A, p. 7, IV, iv, 34r (see also the reproduction, Appendix F, p. 60). For example C.M. Wieland had written *Der goldene Spiegel* (1772) in the hope of securing an invitation to the court of Joseph II in Vienna. D.Diderot, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* (1748) and Restif de la Bretonne, *Le Pornographe* (1769), are both written with the aim of presenting reform proposals. It should also be remembered that during his stay in Berka Lenz almost certainly wrote his own 'Pendant zu Werthers Leiden', as Lenz (and later Schiller) called *Der Waldbruder* (see Lenz an Boie [Kehl,] d. 11ten März [17]76, III, 402-3). However, Lenz's literary activities, contrary to Damm's claims (III, 737-49), were very much of secondary importance during his stay in Berka.

combination of these factors suggest that such prose texts were written very early on in the project's reformulation, possibly even before his arrival in Weimar, at the latest in the period immediately following his attempted translation of *Über die Soldatenehen*.

Although a precise dating is not possible, Lenz did at some stage begin to adopt a different approach to the one which stems from *Über die Soldatenehen*, as outlined above. Another draft title page indicates that he experimented with the presentation of his proposals in the form of an epistolary novel. Indeed Lenz would have been far from unique in adapting that popular form for advocating reforms in the eighteenth century.⁴² The manuscript is amended in stages, as is discernible from the different styles of hand used. It is possible - as 'Sur' has a definite capital - that Lenz added to the initial title of 'Sur le mariage des Soldats', strikingly similar to the drafts of early May. His first amendment is the insertion of the word 'Projet' and more importantly the subtitle: 'proposé par un etranger en lettres de differentes personnes.' Although this is later crossed out, it would seem that the idea of writing an epistolary novel was conceived as the next distinct phase of the project's formulation. The final amendment to the manuscript, written hastily and in a different ink - indicating it is a later revision - 'Kann der letzte Brief werden', suggests that Lenz had come up with a revised scheme for this epistolary approach. The final letter would provide the platform for the presentation of proposals which might well, as Hill argues, have offered solutions to the causes of pain

⁴²Appendix A, p. 7, IV, iv, 34r (see also the reproduction, Appendix F, p. 60). For example C.M. Wieland had written *Der goldene Spiegel* (1772) in the hope of securing an invitation to the court of Joseph II in Vienna. D.Diderot, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* (1748) and Restif de la Bretonne, *Le Pornographe* (1769), are both written with the aim of presenting reform proposals. It should also be remembered that during his stay in Berka Lenz almost certainly wrote his own 'Pendant zu Werthers Leiden', as Lenz (and later Schiller) called *Der Waldbruder* (see Lenz an Boie [Kehl,] d. 11ten März [17]76, III, 402-3). However, Lenz's literary activities, contrary to Damm's claims (III, 737-49), were very much of secondary importance during his stay in Berka.

and suffering set out in 'eine Reihe von fiktiven Briefen'.⁴³ Hill also points out another draft title for such an epistolary approach, written as a side note: 'tableau des mariages tant d'officiers que de Soldats en différentes lettres des femmes Soldats.'⁴⁴ That Lenz considers adopting an epistolary approach is indicative of the difficulties he faces in the transition from the literary to the political discourse. The assumption of anonymity distances him from his own reputation as a poet, but not from his own poetic tendencies. In a distinct third phase of development, in particular the later draft letters to Maurepas, Lenz dispenses completely with his poetic voice, which further suggests that his epistolary concept is an early formulation, possibly May to June.

One fragment of the epistolary novel is of particular interest in tracing the project's development: the dedicatory letter to St. Germain from the anonymous 'Auteur'.⁴⁵ The opening line of the letter picks up on the 'Ohr' metaphor recurrent in *Über die Soldatenehen*. Whereas in the earlier text Lenz laments the fact he cannot find an ear which is open to his reforms, he has now worked out that, compared to direct lobbying, a published pamphlet is ineffectual. An ear is singled out, one that may not be that of the king, but one that at least enjoys unrivalled access to the him when it comes to military affairs: 'C'est {en meme tems} au Roi que j'adress[rois] la presente {sachant} que Votre Excellence *ayant l'oreille de ce prince* {ayant les memes vues et les memes sentiments} {qui caracterisent ce grand homme}, cela vaille autant.'⁴⁶ However crudely it is couched at this stage, again suggesting an early dating, the shift is obvious when compared with the

⁴³ See Hill, *Bericht*, p. 123.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, iv, 2v.

⁴⁵ For following section see Appendix A, pp. 7-9, IV, iv, 35r-36r.

⁴⁶ My emphasis.

speculative opening of *Über die Soldatenehen*. In this letter Lenz also clarifies the motivation behind his concern for the interests of France, despite being 'Allemand de nation Livonien de patrie' and declaring his allegiance to 'un prince que j'aime', an obvious allusion to Carl August, confirming that the manuscript dates from the Weimar period. For in this fragment he explains that the inspiration for his study and ensuing project is: 'l'amour, l'amour que je portois pour une Francaise.' Such an admission would seem to support the widely held view that Lenz's fixation with Henriette von Waldner was the driving force behind the project. However, in this fragment he seems to accept that he has lost her and thus the prime aim of his scheme is not to gain an officer's position and thus be able to win back Henriette's hand, as Wilson suggests.⁴⁷ Rather the project is conceived as a way for Lenz to devote his life to the cause of France and by so doing to honour 'la mémoire d'une femme que peut etre la posterité regardera comme sa liberatrice et en meme temps la victime de sa felicité(.)' There is a realisation that any chance of a relationship is doomed, as he intimates in dedicating himself instead to, 'le bonheur et la gloire d'une nation qui renfermant la cause de tous mes desastres'. The theatrical desperation of Lenz's letter to Herder prior to his departure for Weimar, in which he says that having presented his 'Schrift über die Soldatenehen [...] ich wahrscheinlichst wohl sterben werde', seems to be replicated in the despairing tone of this fragment.⁴⁸ However, such biographical parallels cannot be taken at face value. In the fragment Lenz himself

⁴⁷ Wilson, pp. 67-74, for example: 'Aber das Projekt wird noch schrulliger; Lenzens Gedanken bewegten sich nicht nur auf der Ebene militärischer Reformaktivitäten [...] Er malte sich in seiner Phantasei die Gewinnung der Henriette von Waldner durch eine glänzende militärische Laufbahn aus.' For accounts of the Henriette von Waldner/Oberkirch story, unconnected to Lenz's military project, see, amongst others: Rosanow, *Lenz*, chapters XI and XII; also Hohoff, *J.M.R. Lenz*, pp. 31-32 and pp. 98-113. It is, however, possible that this is a reference to another of Lenz's infatuations, Cleophe Fibich, see I, 731-32.

⁴⁸ Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, März 1776] III, 400.

calls his motivation 'un peu romanesque' before stating that it is, as a result, 'd'autant plus convenable a me donner ces dispositions necessaires de coeur et d'esprit que demanda l'exposition d'un projet aussi vaste et complique que celui que je vous dedie(.)' In effect a failed romance, be it imaginary or not, is deemed a suitable vehicle for the express purpose of elucidating the plan to St. Germain. It also lends itself perfectly for the form of a novel, in this case an epistolary one, with the dedicatory letter leading into 'cette petite collection de lettres'.

The view that Lenz uses his unrequited love as a ploy to introduce his proposals is given further credibility in the section following the supposed outpourings of his heart. He immediately explains why he has chosen the medium of the epistolary novel to present his projet: 'Je l'ai exposé {tantot en raisonnements} tantot en lettres pour en rendre la lecture plus amusante(.) l'execution plus facile.' As Hill argues, such a statement indicates more precisely the form the novel would take: a series of fictitious letters interspersed with an authorial opinion, anonymous or otherwise.⁴⁹ Furthermore this line illustrates a continued faith in the ability of emotion, conjured by his poetic powers, to convey the essential elements of his proposals: 'Car aussitot que le sentiment s'y mêle les choses les plus difficiles en apparence ne sont que tres aisès a obtenir.' Lenz persists in trying to shoehorn his political proposals into a literary form, retreating to the discourse he feels comfortable with after the acknowledged failure of *Über die Soldatenehen*. The extent of the proposals, and the length to which Lenz seems to be prepared to defend them, suggest that at this point in time, the early summer of 1776, the project was conceived as a

⁴⁹ Hill, *Bericht*, p. 123. Hill's view that the author's stance would have been 'im eigenen Namen geführt[e] Argumentation' is debatable considering the early decision to adopt anonymity.

complete entity, rather than as a short letter, written in the hope of an invitation to court in person: 'J'ai pris même la liberté de feindre des lettres de Votre excellence pour pouvoir plus aisément prévenir tous les doutes et objections dont je m'attens de votre part.' They are to stand in their own right. As Hill argues, Lenz experiments with the epistolary form in attempt to find a livelier and more flexible means of presenting his proposals.⁵⁰ However, the style and register of the draft letter of dedication betray his continued naiveté when it comes to presenting his proposals. Its form may well be more flexible and lively, but it will not sit easily in the in-tray of any high-ranking minister in Paris, least of all St. Germain, however open he may be to reform. Moreover, the emphasis on emotion and the idea that his proposals should be presented in an amusing manner are further examples of Lenz's struggle to emerge from his poetic shadow. The concept of an epistolary novel must also be seen as a failed experiment, with the poetic form, content and style all suggesting that it figured early on in the project's reformulation. It will, however, trigger a different form of epistolary approach later on in the summer of 1776, particularly in the letters addressed to Maurepas (see below), as it is more likely than not that Lenz used the 'Postpapier' he expressly requests Seidel, Goethe's servant, to send to him in Berka at the end of June, for real, rather than fictional, correspondence, since this, as Lenz will come to realise, will be the sole way of advancing his project.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Hill, *Order...*, p. 15. For full texts see Appendix A. However, I dispute the view that the '*Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*' is 'the only surviving example of how he might have set about constructing the text (of the epistolary novel)': see below, p. 179.

⁵¹ See Lenz an Goethe und Seidel [Bei der Abreise von Weimar nach Berka, 27. Juni 1776], III, 472-74. See also other Seidel letters, III, 480, 481, 492, complete with wine and lemons as fuel for Lenz's writing!

The papers preserved in Kraków suggest that the project enters a third phase, which is clearly distinct in form, content and style from the fragments treated thus far. The manuscript evidence drawn on to support my theory that Lenz undertook a radical rather than a superficial reworking of his project whilst in Berka comes from box IV, folder iii of the 'Nachlaß'. On the first page Köpke gives the folder the following name, writing it in pencil across the right hand top corner: 'Brief an den Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit Frankreich durch ackerbauende Militärcolonien zu heben.'⁵² Comprising thirty-six previously untranscribed sheets, all of which are written in French, the folder, especially in comparison with others, does actually correspond to its catalogue title. In particular there are two sections of the folder in which the 'lettre à Maurepas' comes near to a state of completion.⁵³ Both begin as fair copies only to be subject to later amendments. Nevertheless letter III reaches a definite conclusion, although it is added at a later date, in a different coloured ink and written with a more rapid hand. A third section offers the fragment of an alternative opening, again written in a fair hand, even if on rougher paper, suggesting it is an earlier composition.⁵⁴ The two later drafts are written on different types of paper, but both are of very high quality in comparison with that to be found in the rest of the archive, and far superior to the paper Lenz used for normal correspondence, or even for his 'Reinschrift' of *Über die Soldatenehen*. The size of the manuscripts is also significantly greater than normal, letter III measuring 22cm. by

⁵² Appendix D, IV, iii, 1r. In Damm the title is slightly modified, II, 947. In his overview of the Box IV of the archive Hill interestingly does not mention Maurepas' name in relation to folder iii, *Bericht*, p. 121.

⁵³ See Appendix C, IV, iii, 20r-25r, henceforth referred to in the text as 'letter II' (see reproductions, Appendix F, pp. 57-58), and Appendix D, IV, iii, 1r-6v, henceforth 'letter III' (see reproductions, Appendix F, pp. 54-56).

⁵⁴ Appendix B, IV, iii, 26r-28r, henceforth 'letter I'.

32.5cm., with letter II of even higher quality and greater size, 24cm. by 38cm.. In both manuscripts the script is confined to either the left or right hand sides, often leaving margins wider than the text itself; in the appendices the texts will be justified to the left only. Such material characteristics, especially considering Lenz's financial position, would seem to suggest that the 'lettre à Maurepas' was intended as a real rather than a fictional letter, a conjecture which will be supported by an analysis of its contents. On the basis of the fresh evidence offered by these manuscripts I will offer a theoretical reconstruction of how Lenz's project advanced during his stay in Berka and offer a version of *part* of its possible finalised form - Lenz's letter of introduction.

The third phase is distinctive on two counts. Firstly, Lenz adopts a direct approach in all the various drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas'. Dispensing with the idea of an epistolary novel, he decides to address a letter personally to the minister concerned. The adoption of such tactics is a logical extension of the evolution from *Über die Soldatenehen* onwards. In the second phase poetic speculation gives way to an assumption of anonymity and the dedication of an 'ouvrage', or an epistolary novel, to St. Germain. By the third stage literary register and form is dispensed with, as Lenz writes in a consciously non-poetic manner with the aim of sending a letter directly. In fact he may well have decided to send a web of letters to various ministers in Paris. In letter III, addressed to Maurepas, a cross reference is made to a letter concerning the administration of Les Invalides, saying of his proposals: 'dont j'ai plus complètement traité dans la lettre que j'ai pris la liberté d'adresser à M. le Comte de St. Germain(.)'⁵⁵ Meanwhile there is also a cross reference in a letter to St. Germain to one addressed to Maurepas containing

⁵⁵ Appendix D, letter III, p. 44, IV, iii, 5v.

the details of 'un project' concerning inheritance laws: 'Si le project qu'un de mes amis un Auteur dernièrement {a formé et qu'il m'a dit d'avoir} [a] communiqué a Monseign. le Comte de Maurepas.'⁵⁶ In letter II there is another cross reference to a third addressee: 'je me rapporte a ce que j'ai écrit sur ce sujet a Msgeur le Prince de Montbarey.'⁵⁷ It is possible, as Hill argues, that the *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien* 'is the only surviving example of how he [Lenz] might have set about constructing' an epistolary novel.⁵⁸ However, as there is a distinct cross reference to a letter which in no way fits that medium, it seems more likely that Lenz decided to launch a concerted campaign using various personae, for example that of a 'soldat alsacien' in relation to the issue of Les Invalides, but that of an 'Auteur' for the main body of his project as it is detailed in the 'lettre à Maurepas'. The primary aim of such campaign is an invitation to Versailles so that his case can be made in person. This is made clear at the end of letter III:

Mais tout cela exigeroit un entretien plus long et personnel avec V.E. que je me reserve si cela peut etre le bon plaisir de V.E. Alors je m'etendrai sur plusieurs matieres que les termes d'une lettre qui je n'ai que trop transgressé ne m'ont permis d'effleurer.⁵⁹

The letter does not allow Lenz to explain his proposals in full and he therefore seeks a personal meeting. In this third phase he acknowledges that his proposals must be presented in person and not communicated through a speculative treatise or the literary medium of an epistolary novel. Coming full circle, Lenz arrives at a similar conclusion to

⁵⁶ *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*, p. 24, IV, vi, 4v.

⁵⁷ Appendix C, letter II, p. 33, IV, iii, 25v. On retiring due to ill health in 1777, St. Germain nominated Prince de Montbarey as his successor to carry out his reforms, see J. Hardman, *French Politics 1774-1789: From the Accession of Louis XVI to the fall of the Bastille* (London/New York: Longman, 1995), p. 53.

⁵⁸ Hill, *Order...*, p. 15, see pp. 11-16 for his full argument.

⁵⁹ Appendix D, letter III, p. 48, IV, iii, 6v. See Hill, *Order...*, p. 12, note 20: 'There is no positive evidence that Lenz did ever actually write to Maurepas, but the Kraków manuscripts contain drafts of several letters addressed to him, IV, iii, 1, 14, 16 [...].'

the Obrister at the end of *Die Soldaten*, with the letter, like the play, becoming a way in which Lenz attempts to procure an invitation to court, but of course in a more formal manner.

Secondly, the third phase is distinctive in terms of substance. Unlike the Obrister's vague plans for 'eine Pflanzschule von Soldatenweibern', by the time of the 'lettre à Maurepas' the substance of the proposals has changed beyond recognition.⁶⁰ Although economic factors do feature towards the end of *Über die Soldatenehen*, they remain very much an afterthought. All three drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas' are dedicated exclusively to economic arguments. The scope of the project widens enormously. Whilst still termed 'le point principal de mon projet' the concept of the 'Soldatenehe' is placed in a complete economic scheme, appearing only towards the end of the letter.⁶¹ Lenz rejects the fervent, poetic style, form and content, partly derived from Guibert, and sets about tackling the major economic problems facing France in the 1770s. In so doing the project enters the mainstream of political debate, the agenda of which was set, above all, by the Physiocrats. Shortly after his accession on 24 August 1774, Louis XVI nominated the leading Physiocrat Turgot to the post of *Contrôleur-Général des Finances*. It was a position he was to hold until the 12 May 1776, six weeks before Lenz's retreat to Berka. The agenda set by his administration is reflected in all three drafts: the management of national debt, banking reform, inheritance laws, the notorious *corvées*, tax revenue, the grain trade and, above all, the moribund state of French agriculture. The Physiocrats recognised, as did Lenz, that all economic progress was ultimately dependent on a breakthrough in

⁶⁰ *Die Soldaten*, V v 2.

⁶¹ Appendix D, letter III, pp. 44-45, IV, iii, 5r. An interpretation of the letter will come below.

agriculture.⁶² Lenz therefore fuses his plans for military reform with a plan for an agricultural revolution, if not quite in the quasi-Stalinist style which Köpke's term 'Militär-Kolonien' would seem to suggest. The project takes on far greater proportions and constitutes a complete departure from the concerns of all the earlier drafts. A project of greater scope also necessitates a change in its presentation. Lenz realises at this point that any long treatise is unlikely to be read by his addressee. Hence he decides to write a letter which will serve as an outline of his project, but which will need further elucidation in a personal audience. In short, the form, style and presentation all show signs of increasing maturity. The radical change in content would also seem to be the product of an extensive period of study, attested to by the numerous notes mentioning leading Physiocratic thinkers to be found in the same file as the three draft letters.⁶³ However, changes in form and substance do not provide a sufficient basis for a dating of these manuscripts which would cement their place as a distinct and definitive third phase. A more precise dating will come by relating the letters in the first place to specific historical events and personalities, in the second to an evaluation of the proposals as a response to the severe economic problems faced by France in the 1770s. Finally an analysis of the content of Lenz's proposals will show how his ideas are clarified during his time in Berka. In particular, the 'lettre à Maurepas' exhibits the details of the 'Soldatenehe' so conspicuous

⁶² See W.Doyle, *The Old European Order*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992): 'Not until agriculture is able to feed and sustain large towns can economic life diversify, specialise, and bring forth productive innovations. Not until towns are substantial does capital tend to accumulate fast enough to finance these expensive but ultimately beneficial changes. Not until population is concentrated in large towns is a work-force not tied to agriculture available in sufficient numbers to diversify production. Without an agricultural revolution, in fact there could be no industrial revolution.', p. 28. Henceforth *Old Order*.

⁶³ See Appendix E. Some of these jottings, mentioning Quesnay, Mirabeau, Mercier, are reproduced in this appendix: IV, iii, 8r-8v and 10r.

by their absence in all previous drafts and so point to a mature formulation of the project. It becomes one that is a meticulously detailed, researched and considered response to prevailing political circumstances, one which is far from the product of a deluded mind. For rather than Lenz being lost in the 'Ideenwelt' of his 'Einsiedelei', it will be shown that perhaps Goethe and Wieland were lost in an insulated 'Weimarwelt' of their own making.

That Lenz chooses to address his letters to Maurepas offers significant evidence for a dating of these manuscripts, for it was towards the end of May 1776 that Maurepas started to take an increasingly active and high profile role in the French administration. Under Louis XV Maurepas had been the *Ministre de la Marine* until, in 1749, he was disgraced and exiled for writing lewd verses about Madame de Pompadour, the most favoured of the King's many mistresses.⁶⁴ Ironically this 'épigramme' against a reviled favourite was to prove advantageous by the time Louis XVI succeeded his grandfather. In 1774 Maurepas was rescued from the political wilderness. Determined to rule well, Louis summoned a man of whom his tutor had always spoken highly, but did not give him an official position. He was not made 'chief minister', nor does Hill's description of him playing 'something of the role of prime minister' capture the extent of his power. Maurepas's role was far more wide-ranging: 'Il n'eut point de portefeuille, mais il présida le conseil d'Etat, et tous les ministres allaient travailler avec lui.'⁶⁵ As a minister without

⁶⁴ *Biographie Universelle*, ed. by E.E. Michaud 45 vols (Paris: Desplaces, 1842-65) vol. 27, pp. 336-37, henceforth *Biographie*.... For further information on Maurepas, see Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 27-53.

⁶⁵ For first description, see Doyle, *Revolution*, p. 42., the second, Hill, *Order*..., p. 7, note 11, the third, *Biographie*..., vol. 27, p. 337. Wilson (note 48, p. 80), is wrong to suggest that it is only after Turgot's fall that Maurepas became Louis XVI's mentor; he enjoyed unprecedented access to and influence over the king before Turgot was even appointed. When Turgot joined the government on 24 July 1774 he was initially given the post of *Ministre de la Marine* by Maurepas, so that Turgot could not implement any of

portfolio Maurepas in effect played the role of mentor and chief advisor to the young king, drawing on his political knowledge and experience gained a generation before, when the problems facing the government had been far less acute.⁶⁶ Yet bereft of any official title that would sanction him as a form of prime minister, Maurepas' power was chiefly derived from his physical proximity to the king, by virtue of his living arrangements. Lodged directly above the king's apartments in Versailles, Maurepas enjoyed sole use of an internal staircase linking his quarters directly to those of the monarch. In the morning Louis would consult his mentor before holding court. As such Maurepas had unprecedented access to and influence on the king and hence the makeup of his administration. Until his death in 1781 he played a key role in the nomination for and dismissal of all personnel in the top ministerial posts; he also was integral in shaping policy initiatives, keeping a close eye on all ministerial activity. He was mentor to the king, enforcer and, with Louis' refusal to appoint anyone to such a position, he was also *de facto* prime minister, all in one.⁶⁷

In the public eye, he remained, like a latter day minister without portfolio, a shadowy figure, pulling the strings of government from behind the scenes, from the heart of the palace of Versailles. Even though it would not have been Lenz's sole source of information, the fact that the *Teutscher Merkur* does not even mention his name once in any of its 'Politische Nachrichten' dispatches between November 1775 and April 1776 is indicative of his lack of public prominence. The reports are dominated by news of the

his radical policies. Turgot lasted only a month in that position before being appointed *Contrôleur-General des Finances*. See Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 27-56.

⁶⁶ For this section see Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 39-53.

⁶⁷ For details of the power vacuum in Louis' court see Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 27-56.

reforms advocated by St. Germain and Turgot, heads of the war and finance ministries respectively. That Lenz should latch onto St. Germain's name for the purposes of his earlier proposals, centred around the military is unsurprising, since he had been appointed in October 1775 with the express purpose of reforming the armed forces. Meanwhile Turgot published his six edicts, which aimed at a complete overhaul of government, publicly announced in the second week of February 1776, after they had been sent to the king the month before.⁶⁸ Two edicts in particular gave rise to heated debate: the abolition of the *corvées* and a subsequent suggested imposition of a tax on nobles and the Church; and the abolition of the guilds. Previously nobles and the Church had been exempt from all tax, therefore it was hardly surprising that Turgot found himself in a weak position when it came to taking his proposals to a more than hostile *Parlement*.⁶⁹ In fact opponents of Turgot had been preparing for over six months in expectation of such a reform programme, and led a concerted attack against him. It was only through the personal intervention of Louis XVI that five of the edicts were passed in a *lit de justice* on 12 March 1776.⁷⁰ The partisan reporter of the *Teutscher Merkur* fervently championed the content of Turgot's reforms in the April Heft:

Die Vorberichte zu diesen neuen Gesetzen sind Meisterstücke von Gesetzgebung und allein genug, den hellen Verstand und die Weisheit Ludewig des 16ten und der Minister, die ihn umgeben, unsterblich zu machen. Alles athmet da Liebe der Unterthanen, Achtung für die Menschheit, die so oft von den gewöhnlichen oder von tyrannischen Gesetzgebern gemißhandelt und unterdrückt worden. Man entdeckt da philosophische Grundsätze, erhabene weite

⁶⁸ See Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 43-54. Also D.Dakin, *Turgot and the Ancien Régime in France*, (London: Methuen, 1939), pp. 231-51.; W.B.Hodgson, *Turgot: His life, times and opinions, two lectures*, (London: Trübner, 1870), pp. 26-31.

⁶⁹ The six edicts were first reported in the März Heft 1776 of the *Teutscher Merkur*, pp. 286-87, and as Wilson argues, Lenz would have learnt of these reforms at the latest shortly after his arrival in Weimar in April 1776, p. 78, but considering he was coming from France a February date is more than likely. The *corvées* were a form of forced labour. In lieu of tax peasants would be summoned for the construction and maintenance of France's road system, taking them away from the fields for substantial periods.

⁷⁰ See also Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 49-54.

Absichten, und es herrscht da eine Sprache, die vielleicht bis jetzt noch unbekannt bey den Thronen war.⁷¹

He also tells of the euphoria with which the people greeted news of the adoption of five of the edicts, with the people of one canton taking to the streets, shouting: 'Es lebe der König! es lebe Herr Turgot! es lebe die Freiheit!'⁷²

In fact the *lit de justice* of the 12 March was to be Turgot's last triumph whilst in office, and in the end was a Pyrrhic victory. Actual implementation or continuation of his reforms became rapidly bogged down from April 1776 onwards, with Turgot an increasingly embattled and isolated figure. By May the eulogising report in the April Heft of the *Teutscher Merkur* gave way to the sober realisation that Turgot's position was far from secure:

Im Departement des Herrn Turgot, Generalcontrolleurs der Finanzen, hat sich nichts neues zugetragen. Dieser Minister kann in seinem Antheil nur sehr langsam und mit der äußersten Vorsicht zu Werke gehn, wegen der Hindernisse, die er von allen Seiten erfährt, sowohl von den Großen des Staats, als den Parlamentern.⁷³

Louis XVI had overruled Maurepas' reservations about the reformer Turgot by installing him on the 24 August 1774 as *Contrôleur-Général des Finances*, seeing him as the man to win the allegiance and love of the French people for the monarchy.⁷⁴ Turgot was moved from the post of *Ministre de Marine*, where Maurepas had installed him in the hope of keeping his reformist ideas under control. However, by April 1776 Louis XVI began to

⁷¹ Reporting on political events of March 1776, *Teutscher Merkur*, April Heft 1776, p. 116.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁷³ *Teutscher Merkur*, Mai Heft 1776, p. 216.

⁷⁴ *Biographie...*, vol. 42, pp. 273-74.

withdraw his support, fearing the radical nature of Turgot's proposals, as the *Teutscher Merkur* report continues:

Es scheint sogar, daß der König über die hastigen und vielleicht zu allgemeinen Verbesserungen erschrocken sey, die dieser Minister auf einmal in allen Zweigen der Verwaltung einzuführen unternahm [...]

It is no coincidence that Maurepas is mentioned for the first time in connection with Louis XVI's cooling towards Turgot.⁷⁵ Suddenly his role becomes clear, as the report concludes:

[...] deßfalls versichert man, daß S.M. ihm [Turgot] bey einer der letzten Rathsammlungen gesagt habe, er möge seine Plane zu Verbesserungen länger verdauen, bevor er sie vorträge, und insonderheit vorgängig des Urtheils und der Genehmigung des Herrn Grafen Maurepas versichert seyn.

Maurepas had become increasingly alarmed by Turgot's activities. The lack of consultation and the plethora of independent policy initiatives set Maurepas against him. A series of crises, from the widespread riots of the 'Guerre de Farine' in the spring of 1775 onwards, culminating in the *lit de justice*, enabled Maurepas to outmanoeuvre and ultimately discredit Turgot, consolidating his own position in the process.⁷⁶ In May 1776 Turgot's position had become untenable, and bereft of the King's support he was duly sacked, two hours after reciting a long 'mémoire' to Louis XVI, which he had listened to 'avec humeur'.⁷⁷ The Juni Heft of the *Teutscher Merkur*, after registering shock at the dismissal of Turgot, laid the blame squarely on one specific individual: 'Uebrigens ist die allgemeine Meinung, daß der Herr von Maurepas die Ursache der Ungnade des Herrn

⁷⁵ See Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 52-54.

⁷⁶ For details of 'La Guerre de Farine' see pp. 201-3, below.

⁷⁷ *Biographie...*, vol. 42, p. 279.

Turgot ist.'⁷⁸ Moreover, the report gives backing to this rumour, as it continues: '...und was zu ihrer Wahrscheinlichkeit beyträgt, ist, daß der erste sogleich zum Präsidenten im Rath der Finanzen ernannt worden.' Maurepas assumed a titled position in the government for the first time with an express purpose in mind:

Diese Stelle war seit der Ungnade des Herzogs von Praslin nicht besetzt; und die Absicht, weswegen man dieselbe dem Herrn von Maurepas ertheilt, ist gewesen, ihn dem neuen Generalcontrolleur zum Aufseher zu setzen, um ihn einzuschränken, und zu verhindern, daß er nicht auch soweit gehe, als sein Vorfahr.⁷⁹

From May 1776 onwards Maurepas took on a higher profile in order to stamp his authority on government; having finally persuaded the king to dismiss Turgot, he made sure that he would not repeat the same mistakes and hence assumed a more active role in government. The extent of Maurepas' powers now became public knowledge, as the *Teutscher Merkur* report illustrates: 'Man sagt sogar, daß alle die andern Minister, jeder in seinem Fache, sich zuvor mit dem Herrn von Maurepas wegen aller Entwürfe verabreden sollten, ehe sie dieselben im Rath vorbrächten.' The strength of his relationship with the king and the way in which he conducted his politics from his Versailles apartments also became the focus of media attention: 'Der König setzt in diesem Mentor ein Zutrauen ohne Schranken; er bringt beynah alle Abrede bey ihm zu, und erweist der Frau von Maurepas die Ehre Piquet zu spielen [...].' The relationship which had been in place since 1774 was cemented by the political events of early 1776. Its strength only became known

⁷⁸ *Teutscher Merkur*, Juni Heft 1776, p. 308. See also, Dakin, *Turgot*, 252-65.

⁷⁹ Turgot's successor was Herr von Clugny, previously 'Aufseher von Guienne', and described less than generously in the *Teutscher Merkur*, Juni Heft 1776, p. 307: '[...] der, wie man sagt, Geist und Talente hat, aber dem man vorwirft, zu sehr alle Vergnügen zu lieben [...]' He did little until his death in October - apart from allegedly installing his three sisters at the *Contrôle-Générale* and living incestuously with them - when he was succeeded by Necker.

to the public in May 1776, after Maurepas had brought about the demise of his rival Turgot.

Having recounted the Piquet-playing anecdote, the *Teutscher Merkur* report on Maurepas tails off with the comment, '- doch was geht uns das andre an?'. For Lenz's own project it is a vital development. What is more, for a firm dating of the 'lettre à Maurepas' the revelation of Maurepas' extensive power is crucial. Lenz would have learnt of Turgot's demise by the end of May 1776, when a letter from Röderer arrived, giving him the news of political upheavals in France which he had requested.⁸⁰ Röderer relates how unreceptive the French Court is to 'alle auswärtigen Angelegenheiten', a piece of information of particular significance to any would-be reformer, before telling Lenz of Turgot's dismissal, caused, in his opinion, by the hostility he roused as a result of 'verschiedene Edikte'. He also offers the judgement that Turgot's economic 'Projekte (die an den meisten Orten bis zur Ausführung reif waren)', were simply not suited to the state and demands of the French economy. Finally he underlines Louis XVI's withdrawal of support: 'Der König selbst soll, wie man mich zuverlässig versichert hat, sein letztes *Lit de justice* bereuen', the *lit de justice* in question being the one detailed above. Well before Lenz's departure for Berka at the end of June 1776 Turgot had become yesterday's man. Röderer's later, incorrect report that Turgot's economic plans were to go ahead, regardless of his fall from office, would not have deflected Lenz from the certain knowledge that Maurepas was firmly in command of the future direction of governmental

⁸⁰ Röderer an Lenz, Strasb. den 23t. Mai 1776, III, 448-54, especially 450. Lenz's reply to this letter does not exist, but from Röderer's next letter, Röderer an Lenz, Strasb. den 4t Junius 1776, III, 462-63, one was sent, on rather special paper: 'Ich danke Dir für den Brief auf dem roten Papier, jeder Brief von Dir ist mir unendlich lieb, und wann er auf Kaiserpapier geschrieben wird kann ers nicht mehr sein aber ich küsse Dich doch daß mir damit Freude machen willst.'

policy.⁸¹ Even St. Germain, who had enjoyed such a high profile in the *Teutscher Merkur* dispatches up until April 1776, prompting Lenz to dedicate his early revisions of his project to him, was clearly under Maurepas' thumb by the end of May 1776. It was no coincidence that St. Germain was made a minister just as Maurepas assumed a position from which he could control all ministerial activity. A potentially loose cannon was tied firmly to the governmental machine, a fact reflected by his relegation to the last section of the May report, in which it is made clear that Maurepas has assumed control: 'Der Graf von St. Germain ist heute Minister geworden, und hat in dieser Würde schon Sitzung im Staatsrath genommen. In seinem Fache hat sich nichts neues begeben [...].'⁸² Consequently, for any aspiring reformer armed with an 'auswärtige Angelegenheit', it would have been abundantly clear by June 1776 that, to have any chance of success, the only way to penetrate the closed world of the Versailles Court would be to appeal directly to the man at its centre - Maurepas.

By addressing a letter to Maurepas Lenz appears to have been reacting directly to the political upheavals of May 1776. As such the letter could not have been written before June at the earliest, but, considering the number of drafts in Kraków, a later date is far

⁸¹ Röderer an Lenz, Strasb. den 4t Junius 1776, III, 462: 'Ich widerrufe die Nachricht von Mr. Turgot in sofern: Er hat zwar seine Dimission ist aber nicht in Ungnade, sondern hat nur des Lärms wegen seine Entlassung bekommen, übrigens aber wird der Ökonomieplan fortgeführt werden.' This is a hinge of Wilson's 'fantasy' argument, pp. 66-75.

⁸² *Teutscher Merkur*, Juni Heft 1776, p. 308. St. Germain became increasingly isolated in government, and reviled in the ranks for his desire to implement Prussian discipline, sword beating included. After Tugot's demise he had to rely solely on the monarch's support against a hostile court, eventually offering his resignation in September 1777, to be replaced by the Prince de Montbarey, Maurepas' favoured candidate, see Hardman, *French Politics 1774-1789*, p. 53, also *Biographie...*, vol. 37, pp. 322-23. See also *Teutscher Merkur* Oktober Heft 1776, in which further attempts are made to sideline St. Germain, p. 93.

Such basic questions would seem to suggest that the *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien* was just a concept in mid-July 1776 and yet to reach even a draft version, thus making it part of a definitive third stage. From May 1776 onwards the main thrust of the project had, in all logic, to be directed at Maurepas, and Lenz duly does so, with any other proposal very much of secondary importance.⁸⁶

Even a cursory reading of the three drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas' reveals the extensive revision the project underwent in Berka.⁸⁷ Its reworking did not happen overnight; it was not merely a matter of changing the names on the front of an envelope. The project is transformed beyond recognition. Lenz's correspondence in the run-up to his departure further supports the theory that the move to Berka was taken with the express intention of starting afresh. He does not underestimate the application he will need, as he intimates that the project's revision will be far from superficial tinkering with existing drafts, as he says at the end of May:

Ich werde bald den gar zu reizenden Hof verlassen und in eine Einsiedelei hier herumgehen
meine Arbeit zu Stande zu bringen, zu der ich hier nur Kräfte sammle. Sodann bin ich für die
ganze Welt und für alle meine Freunde tot.⁸⁸

Having dispensed with his poetic experiments, Lenz sees the need to bring his project into the mainstream of political debate. In the resultant 'lettre à Maurepas' he displays

⁸⁶ Especially as the text is incomplete. I will hence dispense with a detailed analysis of *Lettre d'un soldat alsacien*. See Hill's introduction to the text for the historical detail surrounding reform of Les Invalides, pp. 1-17. Interestingly, Lenz chastises the temptation of prostitutes, p. 23 (IV, vi, 4v), and general debauchery, p. 25 (IV, vi, 5v).

⁸⁷ Letter III (Appendix D) is the most complete, and, taking its form, style and content into account, the most mature, and as such will be of most importance in any analysis (see below). However, the earlier letters I and II (B and C respectively) are also plainly complete overhauls of the original project.

⁸⁸ Lenz an Zimmermann [Weimar Ende Mai 1776], III, 460, my emphasis. Although at this point in time Lenz is still thinking of publication, as his ensuing questions as regards the possibility of having a French text published in Hannover confirm.

remarkable political acumen, especially considering his previous efforts were so woefully out of touch. It is easy to see with hindsight that the fall of Turgot signalled the death knell of the last possible attempt to save the *Ancien Régime* through a root and branch reform of the state.⁸⁹ Lenz was quick to realise *at the time* one of the main reasons for that failure: the fact that the blueprint constituted too much of an attack on the ruling classes for its radical proposals ever to be adopted. In hatching his own proposals, Lenz adapted uncannily quickly to the complete change in the political climate in Versailles, despite being seemingly cut off in deepest rural Saxony. Particularly in letter III, most probably the latest of the three drafts, he fashions his arguments with the express purpose of not infringing on the jealously guarded rights and privileges of the ruling classes. Whilst drawing on ideas put forward by the Physiocrats, such as Quesnay, Mirabeau and Le Mercier de la Rivière,⁹⁰ Lenz is careful to use them only to the extent of constructing a proposal which will keep the *status quo* as much as possible, as he says toward the end of letter III: 'Tous les autres droits resteront comme ils ont été.'⁹¹ His plan is inherently conservative, in substance, and more surprisingly, in tone; it is borne of pragmatism more than 'Phantasei'.

During his self-imposed Berka exile Lenz's struggle with form enters its final stages, as he realises his need to tailor his project to the political agenda set by Maurepas. It was, however, a long process. Leaving Weimar at the end of June, Lenz stayed in Berka until mid-September, when he was sent to enjoy the delights of Charlotte von Stein's company in Kochberg by Goethe, before returning to Berka at the beginning of

⁸⁹ Venturi, *Old Regime*, pp. 351-76.

⁹⁰ All mentioned in his notes, for example, see Appendix E, pp. 50-51, IV, iii, 9r-10r.

⁹¹ Appendix D, letter III, p. 47, IV, iii, 6r.

November.⁹² Nor was the process an easy one, as Goethe's *Tagebuch* entries and correspondence relate the impenetrable atmosphere surrounding Lenz whilst in Berka: 'Abends nach Berka. Lenz. Einsamkeit. Schweigen.'⁹³ Only after a month does Lenz revert to a state of near normality: 'Lenz war endlich gar lieb und gut in unserm Wesen, sitzt jetzt in Wäldern und Bergen allein, so glücklich als er seyn kann.'⁹⁴, before reverting to type in August, 'Nachts Lenz'.⁹⁵ Lenz's own correspondence, at least that which survives, is reduced to a bare minimum throughout his stay in Berka. When he does write it is almost exclusively in connection with the development of his project. In addition to requesting for specific information, as in the letter to Pfeffel above, Lenz also asks Goethe about the possibility of setting up links between Weimar and France: 'Sag mir doch, ob ein Utopisches Projekt wäre eine Handlung zwischen Frankreich und Weimar anzuspinnen.'⁹⁶ However, in August all correspondence ceases, with the sole exception of a letter to Boie. In this letter Lenz pleads once again for the publication of *Die Soldaten* to be halted, for obvious reasons considering his activities at that time: 'Verzeihen Sie mein langes

⁹² Goethe an Frau von Stein, an 10. September 1776: 'Ich schick Ihnen Lenzen, endlich hab ich's über mich gewonnen...', Müller, I, 302. See also, III, 736.

⁹³ Goethe, *Tagebuch*, 17 Juli 1776, Müller, I, 277.

⁹⁴ Goethe an Merck, Ilmenau 24 Juli 1776, Müller, I, 280.

⁹⁵ Goethe, *Tagebuch*, Weimar 28 August 1776 (Müller, I, 294). Goethe would go to Berka at regular intervals, with Lenz occasionally leaving his cottage for Weimar (Goethe an Kayser, Weimar 15 August, Müller, I, 292), or Kochberg, even staying the night (*Tagebuch*, 5 September, Müller, I, 298), but increasing strain is evident (see, an Charlotte von Stein, Weimar 30 August, Müller, I, 296, also *Tagebuch*, 10 September, Müller, I, 301, and an Charlotte von Stein Weimar 16 September 1776, Müller, I, 309: 'Lohn's Gott was Sie für Lenzen thun.') Wieland takes a less involved, but equally puzzled attitude, see, for example, an Merck 5 Juli (Müller, I, 271): 'Lenz ist seit 8 Tagen in Eremum gegangen, wo er vermuthl. Heuschrecken und Wildhonig frißt, und entweder ein neues Drama, oder ein Projekt die Welt zu verbessern macht, das seit geraumer Zeit seine Marotte ist.' (See also an S.von La Roche, Weimar 14 Juli, Müller, I, 276, and an Lenz, Weimar 27 August, Müller, I, 293). Wieland did become irritated with Lenz after the appearance of *Apologien des Hr. W.*, see Wieland an Lavater, Weimar 26 Juli 1776, and consequently Lavater an Wieland, Zürich 9 August 1776, (Müller, I, 283 and 291 respectively).

⁹⁶ Lenz an Goethe [Berka, Juli 1776], III, 478-79. At this point Lenz was thinking of a trade fair to foster commercial links between the Duchy and France. There are also two sketch 'pencil' letters to Luise König and Henriette von Oberkirch, in all likelihood never sent.

Stillschweigen, ich habe viel sehr viel zu tun und mich deswegen von aller menschlichen Gesellschaft abgesondert.'⁹⁷ Even in early August he feels that his project is far from complete, again offering a possible dating of the last month of his stay in Berka for the 'lettre à Maurepas'.

The process is long and painful because the 'Soldatenehe' idea is reworked into a far wider reform plan. Lenz links his plans for marriage not only to a renewal of the armed forces but to a fundamental overhaul of the French agricultural system. The link is not plucked out of thin air but is made in response to the acute problems facing the French state in the 1770s. He brings his unique concept into the mainstream political debates of the time. In drawing the link between the problems of the military (its cost, financial and social, and performance) and those of agriculture Lenz saw a way of killing two birds with one stone, what is more in truly original fashion. Whilst his arguments may have been derivative, the way in which he fuses them in the 'lettre à Maurepas' is truly innovative.⁹⁸ However, an understanding of the problems facing the French state in 1776 is indispensable for any legitimate evaluation of the 'lettres à Maurepas', as it provides the 'geschichtliche Zusammenhang' in which his proposals are conceived. It will show that Lenz's plan is a considered one, not a product of fantasy.

⁹⁷ Lenz an Boie [Berka, Anfang August 1776], III, 489-91. Interestingly in a side note on the second side Lenz claims the authorship of one scene: 'Der Verf. der Soldaten heißt Steenkerk, [darüber geschrieben:] soll und muß so heißen, ich darf auch meinen Namen nicht länger hergeben da ich zuviel Verdrüsslichkeiten dadurch geraten würde und man von mir auf ihn raten könnte, nur eine Szene ist von mir.' See Chapter II, pp. 108-10 for Lenz's concerns over the publication of *Die Soldaten*.

⁹⁸ Contrary to Scherpe's comments, Chapter III, note 12, pp. 119-20. Lenz may well draw from the Physiocrats (agriculture, economics) and Guibert (military, marriage), but the fusion is hardly derivative.

Financially the French state was in chaos by the 1770s.⁹⁹ Government expenditure had spiralled out of control, crippled by the burgeoning debts left as an unwelcome legacy by Louis XIV and Louis XV. Those in governmental circles were well aware of the precarious state of France's financial position. In particular the flaws of the chaotic tax system became the subject of heated debate: in the *Conseil d'Etat*, the *Parlements*, all branches of the administration, and amongst intellectual circles, the 'philosophes' included, with the ideas of the Physiocrats - the school of thought that set the study of economics in motion - gaining in popularity. The reason for such popularity was their apparent willingness to tackle the financial ills of the state head-on, but most of all because they 'promised' wealth. It was on the back of such willingness that the leading Physiocratic light, Turgot, was summoned by Louis XVI in 1774. Having been appointed *Contrôleur-Général*, in his letter of acceptance Turgot made it quite clear to the monarch the extent of reform and, above all, budgetary restraint needed to fend off impending financial ruin:

Point de banqueroute, point d'augmentation d'impôt, point d'emprunts. Pour remplir ces trois points, il n'y a qu'un moyen: c'est de réduire la dépense au-dessous de la recette, et assez au-dessous pour pouvoir économiser, chaque année, une vingtaine de millions, pour rembourser les dettes anciennes.

If the state's financial health was not restored in this way, Turgot foresaw, prophetically as it would turn out, dire consequences: 'Sans cela, le premier coup de canon forcerait l'Etat à la banqueroute.'¹⁰⁰ It was for this reason that in May 1776, during his last few days in

⁹⁹ For the following section see C.B.A.Behrens, *Society, Government and the Enlightenment, the Experiences of Eighteenth Century France and Prussia*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 68-78, henceforth Behrens, *Society*; also Doyle, *Revolution*, pp. 1-65. and Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 27-56.

¹⁰⁰ *Biographie...*, vol. 42, p. 274. As the letter goes on, Turgot appeals for the King's support to draw all ministries into close co-operation with the *Contrôleur Général* for the plan to have any chance of success.

office, Turgot condemned foreign minister Vergennes' proposal to intervene in America, as the sheer cost of any intervention would ruin any prospect of financial reform and furthermore not guarantee any weakening of England. He was to be proved correct.¹⁰¹

Centre stage in such debate was the chaotic state of the tax system. In order to service burgeoning debt and spiralling public spending, above all in time of war, the government was in need of a coherent tax system, moreover one which was not prone to widespread arbitrariness and abuse. As things stood, the overwhelming tax burden was placed on agriculture and the rural community. The *taille* was a personal tax levied on all peasants and workers in the countryside, with the task of deciding how much each individual should pay devolved to a 'collector' elected in each parish, acting as a governmental 'agent'. Corruption and evasion was rife, especially considering that it was the most impecunious who were forced to take on such a role.¹⁰² City-dwellers, the nobility and the Church were all exempt from this form of taxation. In 1749 the nobility had been coerced into paying a land tax, the *vingtième*, which was levied after a survey had been carried out on the land, the *cadastre*. The right of imposition of the *vingtième* had to be renegotiated after a set period, the third one expiring in 1786, helping to precipitate a further worsening of the state's financial health just before the Revolution.¹⁰³

Nonetheless Turgot was well aware of the fierce opposition he would face, as the rest of the letter shows. He saw that he would be lost without the support of the monarch, as was the case come May 1776.

¹⁰¹ Doyle, *Revolution*, p. 66. Of course in the event it did weaken England, if only temporarily, thus restoring some sense of French military prestige; however, the cost was enormous.

¹⁰² For a more detailed account of the French taxation system see Behrens, *Society*, pp. 70-78, also Doyle, *Revolution*, chapters 1-3. As Boisguilbert put it in the reign of Louis XIV: 'There is no-one, even the most miserable, who would not sell his shirt to escape this servitude.' In the central regions the *taille* was a personal tax, but in the outer provinces, such as Languedoc, it was on land. In one district in 1767, 10% of collectors were reduced to beggary after a year in office, this would not have been unique. Behrens, *Society*, p. 74.

¹⁰³ Doyle, *Revolution*, pp. 68-69.

The Church, which owned over a quarter of the land, successfully fought off attempts to include it in this regime and remained exempt from all tax, as did the those engaged in business or financial activities, as there was no means of assessing their incomes. Even if the spreading of the tax burden had become patently unjust, the readiness of any of those groups who were in a position to shoulder a greater portion of it was undermined by the prevailing attitude towards taxation. For the right of the state to levy direct income tax was far from being accepted as legitimate during the period in question. The extension of direct taxation was thus inconceivable, as Adam Smith maintains in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), when he says that any attempt at a formal assessment of an individual's income would involve such intrusive questioning that it, 'would be a source of such continual and endless vexation as no people would support'.¹⁰⁴ Turgot was to run into such opposition even when he tried to impose a new tax on the nobles in place of the *corvées*.

As a result central government never had direct control over its financial affairs. Taxation was at best a random affair. The arbitrariness of the system was exemplified by the manner in which government set the *taille*. Never in possession of any data which would enable an estimation of what could be reasonably raised, a sum was simply fixed by the government and it was this sum which was to be extracted from the peasants, regardless of their ability to pay. The crippling effects on agriculture were obvious.¹⁰⁵ To all intents and purposes the government was blind to the severity of its own situation, devoid as it was of any meaningful statistical data. Taxation became an annual rear-guard

¹⁰⁴ A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. by E. Cannan, 2 vols, 6th edn (London: Methuen, 1950), II, 333, first published of course in 1776. Quoted in Behrens, *Society*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁵ The scope for corruption was huge, see J.F. Bosher, *French Finances 1770-1795*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 6. Quoted in Behrens, *Society*, p. 77.

action, one forever trying to plug ever widening gaps in public finance, but with each action amounting to a shot in the dark, since there was no way of running an even half accurate fiscal policy. Even the king was aware that budgetary planning was at best a lottery, at worst a perverse form of blindman's buff.¹⁰⁶ In effect the government was never in a position to see what its financial situation was, let alone legislate for it; by 'its very nature France's financial system defied planning and control.'¹⁰⁷ There was no concept of national debt, and no national state bank in the mould of the Bank of England, founded in 1694.¹⁰⁸ The monarch was forced to raise capital from private *financiers* who opposed any efforts to concentrate the handling of credit, which would have saved vast overheads, unsurprisingly as the majority of them made up the *financiers'* profits. The one attempt to break their stranglehold had taken place in 1720 when the Scottish adventurer John Law set up his 'Royal Bank', which collapsed when the paper notes used to issue the king's debt fell prey to speculation.¹⁰⁹ This disaster was to haunt future generations and when a public discount bank was set up in 1776 the public refused to invest in it and it too fell prey to speculation.¹¹⁰ Lenz himself was to contribute to the debate surrounding state banking in letters I and II, before dispensing with a proposal which would have been too radical for the conservative Maurepas.

¹⁰⁶ As Louis XVI wrote in 1779: 'The registers of the Royal Treasury ought to have details of the entire body of receipts and expenditure, but in fact they have no record at all of the business done in many *caisses* [...] because only after a great number of years are all the individual accounts rendered and audited, and also because these are divided among all the chambers of accounts of our Kingdom, so that only by an immense labour could the total results be formed, and this work, always too late and confused, would never be useful.', Boshier, *French Finances*, p. 153.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁸ See Behrens, *Society*, p. 70 and Doyle, *Old Order*, pp. 37-39.

¹⁰⁹ Doyle, *Revolution*, p. 133, also Doyle, *Old Order*, pp. 38-39. Discussed by Lenz in letters I and II.

¹¹⁰ Doyle, *Old Order*, p. 39.

It was against this background of impending financial disaster that a new school of thought, Physiocracy, came to prominence.¹¹¹ The founders of the 'science' of economics saw the need for the king to increase the taxable wealth of his subjects. Under the current tax regime, the Physiocrats argued, too much capital was being squeezed out of the peasants, with the logical consequence that too little investment was being put back into the land. The net effect was ever diminishing yields from the land, which led to the ever increasing and inescapable impoverishment of the peasants, which in turn led to lower tax revenue, further diminishing the state coffers. The Physiocrats argued that to continue with the same regime would be suicidal - they were to be proved right by the events of 1789. Only through investment in seed, livestock, tools, buildings and above all people, by paying them a real living wage, could agricultural output be boosted and hence boost tax revenues. The fortunes of the peasants were thus directly linked to the fortunes of the ruling classes; in strangling agricultural growth with huge tax burdens, the ruling élite were in fact strangling themselves. As Quesnay said in his *Maximes Générales*: 'PAUVRES PAYSANS, PAUVRE ROYAUME'.¹¹² Far from undermining the position of the ruling classes, the Physiocrats sought to make them see their real interests in order to avert the impending financial ruin of France.

The promotion of agricultural growth therefore became a major policy objective of the French administration. In fact all economic progress depended on a major advance in

¹¹¹ For following section see Behrens, *Society*, pp. 131-52, Doyle, *Old Order*, pp. 21-36, and *Revolution*, pp. 57-65.

¹¹² F. Quesnay, *François Quesnay et la Physiocratie*, ed. by A. Sauvy & L. Salleron 2 vols (Paris: Institut National d'Études Démographiques, 1958), II, 973. Lenz studied the ideas of the Physiocrats whilst in Berka, as his references to Quesnay's entries in the *Encyclopédie* (1756) and then his anonymous *Tableau Économique* (1758) testify, see Appendix E, also Appendix C, letter II, p. 29, IV, iii, 24v.

agriculture, as had been shown in England, where the essential element of agrarian evolution had been the creation of 'enclosures', a development which had yet to take place in France.¹¹³ Industry could only develop when labour had been freed from the land and when the agrarian sector could provide for large urban settlements, where such industrial production took place, and thus fuel the division of labour. England's own rise as an imperial power during the eighteenth century, at the expense of France, had, at least in part, been the result of its own agricultural revolution, or more properly, evolution, during that time. By the 1760s the cause of England's wealth and international prestige, her 'splendeur' (Mirabeau), was evident: her flourishing agriculture.¹¹⁴ The state of French agriculture in the latter eighteenth century was far from flourishing. Backward and unenterprising, agriculture became increasingly incapable of supplying the needs of the nation. Despite its outmoded methods and relatively low productivity, French agriculture had prospered up until the 1760s, meeting the demands of a growing populace with a string of good harvests. However, from the late 1760s onwards harvests began to fall away, with yields becoming increasingly erratic from year to year, with only three bumper harvests across France between 1770 and 1789. In many areas agricultural development reached little more than subsistence levels.

One of the main reasons for the moribund state of French agriculture was the continued 'morcellation' of land and subsequent strip farming. This was the result of the French inheritance laws, which were at variance with most other European countries. In every legal system across France some form of partible inheritance was mandatory.

¹¹³ See Behrens, *Society*, pp. 131-52, and Doyle, *Old Order*, p. 9.

¹¹⁴ Behrens, *Society*, pp. 131-52. For following section see Doyle, *Revolution*, pp. 9-43.

Property was divided between heirs of successive generations, with the predictable result that estates became smaller with each new generation, whereas in other countries they were kept intact, by passing to the eldest male heir. About a quarter of the kingdom's land, belonging to peasants, was therefore cultivated in small, inefficient strips ('cultivation en triche' as it will appear in Lenz's 'lettre à Maurepas'). Tenant farmers rented out much of the rest of the land, which was similarly divided into small plots through a similar generational process. Nor was enterprise encouraged by a tax system which seemed to be designed to stifle any desire to increase productivity. As Quesnay pointed out, the tax system killed any incentive to change antiquated practices:

In the conditions of uncertainty, in which the arbitrary *taille* keeps the peasant, he can hope for nothing from his work. He does not even dare to work for fear that the gain which it will be supposed he will derive from it will subject him to increased taxes [...] Given the existing arbitrariness every peasant [...] will be sure that if he increases his production he will draw on himself an inordinate surcharge [...] which will ruin him.¹¹⁵

Inheritance laws, strip farming and the tax system were all responsible for squeezing the life out of agriculture and hence diminishing the state's tax base. The forced labour of the *corvées*, a 'tax' whereby peasants had to build and maintain France's impressive road system, was also detrimental to agriculture, taking men away from the fields for extensive periods of time, as Louis XVI was well aware when he abolished that 'barbarous law'.¹¹⁶

Evidence of agricultural crisis in France was plain to see in 1775, only a year before Lenz's 'lettre à Maurepas', with the civil unrest shortly before Louis XVI's coronation - the 'Guerre de Farine'. In an attempt to stimulate agricultural production as

¹¹⁵ Originally an article on 'Hommes' written for the *Encyclopédie*, but never published, in *François Quesnay et la Physiocratie*, II, 540-41 and 604, quoted in Behrens, *Society*, p. 135.

¹¹⁶ See Venturi, *Old Regime*, p. 366.

the best way of preventing food shortages, and so bring prices down over the longer term, Turgot established a free trade in grain on 13 September 1774.¹¹⁷ However, the timing could not have been worse, as that year's harvest had been poor. Since bread made up the diet of the majority of the poor, also taking up a significant portion of their income, any wild price fluctuations inevitably led to a breakdown in public order. Turgot's *arrêts de conseil* - declarations to the effect that grain was expensive and should remain so - had hardly helped to quell unrest or to bolster his free marketeering cause. By the spring of 1775 bread prices in Paris had risen by over fifty per cent and rioting duly broke out on the 27 April in Beaumont-sur-Oise, just north of the capital, spreading across France to many provincial towns, such as Lille, Dijon and Amiens. In Paris itself an angry mob descended on the gates of Versailles in protest, as if in a dress rehearsal for 1789.¹¹⁸ Turgot's reaction was to implement a full scale military operation across the country in an attempt to put down the uprising, hence the name the 'Guerre de Farine'.¹¹⁹ He was forced to abandon his free trade law. Its disastrous consequences signalled the beginning of Turgot's end, with the king's faith in him, and indeed in the Physiocratic movement as a whole, starting to waver.¹²⁰

By the time Lenz retreated to Berka and sat down to write his 'lettre à Maurepas' in the summer of 1776 none of these problems facing the French state were any nearer resolution. The obstacles to agriculture - strip agriculture, divided inheritance and communal farming - persisted. The tax system continued in a state of chaos, further

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 364. For following section, Doyle, *Revolution*, pp. 21-22, Hardman, *Louis XVI*, pp. 43-47.

¹¹⁸ Contrary to some accounts, Louis XVI did not confront the crowd himself, Hardman, *Louis XVI*, p. 44.

¹¹⁹ For full details of this and Maurepas' role in it see *Biographie...*, vol. 27, pp. 275-78, also Dakin, *Turgot*, 252-65.

¹²⁰ As has been outlined above, pp. 183-87.

preventing agricultural innovation or reform. Turgot's attempt to impose a new tax on the nobility had contributed to his downfall, with his acceptance letter promise, '*...point d'augmentation d'impôt*', reading like an eighteenth-century 'read my lips' and having similar consequences. Burgeoning debt continued to debilitate an already ailing state. Military reform had also reached a standstill after the abolition of the sale of offices in April 1776, with St. Germain pushed to the political sidelines.¹²¹ The need for a plan to counter France's plunge to financial and social ruin was more pressing than ever and Lenz, in his 'lettre à Maurepas', duly steps into the breach, attempting to revise his project with the precise aim of tackling the chronic economic problems that still beset the French state, by fusing his plan for military reform with a new concept of agricultural renewal. Moreover, he also tries to tailor his project to the new conservative political climate, embodied by the minister Lenz hoped to convince, Maurepas.

As has been detailed earlier, there are three distinct drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas', in varying stages of completion, to be found in folder iii, Box IV of the Kraków *Lenziana*.¹²² They are all in sharp contrast to every previous incarnation of the project. They are distinctly non-poetic, there is no florid literary description, nor any wild rhetoric, nor even any appeal to the emotions of those in power. If anything the tone of all three drafts, especially letters II and III, is a timorous one, whilst their style is concise, with clipped sentences centred solely on economic and political arguments. Indeed in comparison with any other text written by Lenz, whose hallmark is one of confusion and

¹²¹ See the *Teutscher Merkur* reports, Juni - Oktober 1776.

¹²² See Appendices B (letter I), C (letter II), and D (letter III).

the ensuing myriad of interpretative problems, the three drafts are astonishingly lucid, sober and straight-forward. He exhibits great restraint and maturity in reining in his tendency towards excess, and there is evidence, even in the most complete draft, of his battle to control such urges, which he nevertheless does in all three to great effect: '...mais permettez que je prenne ici haleine - Voila le point principal de mon projet [...] je ne vois presque pas de moiens de me moderer lorsque je traite ce sujet.'¹²³ The main point is Lenz's concept of the 'Soldatenehe' which is finally given substance in letter III. However, given such a political and economic grounding the result bears scarcely any relation to the 'project' put forward in *Über die Soldatenehen*. All three draft letters bear testimony to Lenz's intensive application as he tries to rework his central 'Soldatenehe' idea into the wider framework of reference detailed above, taking in all aspects of the economy of France and her perilous financial position, thereby bringing his original proposal into the heart of contemporary political debate. Even within the three drafts there is a discernible development of form, content and style. In each subsequent draft original ideas are refined, or new ideas are introduced. Such a progression enables a possible dating of the manuscripts. The insertion of certain new elements in the letter also relates to contemporary political developments in Paris in the summer of 1776, which were then reported in the August Heft of the *Teutscher Merkur*, illustrating that Lenz's plan evolves in reaction to events happening miles away from his seemingly isolated Berka 'Einsiedelei'.

Just a cursory comparison of the three introductory paragraphs reveals what Lenz came to consider the appropriate form and register in which to write a personal

¹²³ Appendix D, letter III, p. 44, IV, iii, 5r.

correspondence to Maurepas. The openings of letters I and II betray a lack of confidence, as Lenz excuses himself for his poor command of the French language, in so doing emphasising the speculative nature of his project; as letter II begins:

Monseigneur(.) Voila un proietteur nouveau {faiseur des proiets}, et pour comble de disgrâce, qui ne sait pas même Votre langue; mais suis sur que l'amour de la France m'inspirera un langage, qui ne peut pas manquer de se rendre intelligible a Votre Excellence.¹²⁴

In letter I the opening paragraph even plays down the significance of the proposals, sent in response to appeals in 'les feuilles publiques': 'Voila pourquoi j'ose porter ma petite obole avec assurance dans le tresor public, quoique la langue dans laquelle je dois la proposer, me soit peu connue [...].'¹²⁵ It is only in letter III that Lenz finds an appropriate register for the introduction of his project. Its clarity of purpose and degree of formality suggest that this draft is close to completion, as does its presentation.¹²⁶ There is, however, a glaring lack of logic to the draft. In the first sentence Lenz points out that it is 'une lettre anonyme', yet in the penultimate paragraph of the letter he tries to solicit an invitation to court, which would logically necessitate him to put his own name to the project.¹²⁷ However, this is a superficial inconsistency and does not undermine the fact that letter III is the sole draft to reach a state of completion and is a mature formulation of those ideas introduced in the preceding sketches.¹²⁸ For the purposes of the study in hand a brief

¹²⁴ Appendix C, letter II, p. 21, IV, iii, 20r.

¹²⁵ Appendix B, letter I, p. 15, IV, iii, 26r. Of course there is also the obvious pun on 'obole' considering the argument's subsequent preoccupation with taxation, debt and banking.

¹²⁶ See Appendix D, letter III, p. 35, IV, iii, 1r.

¹²⁷ See Appendix D, letter III, p. 48, IV, iii, 6v. See pp. 178-81.

¹²⁸ Although there is no direct evidence that Lenz actually sent a letter to Maurepas, the existence of a near complete draft would strongly indicate that it was more than possible that he did in fact do so; substantiation of this conjecture must await archival research in Paris. See Hill, *Order...*, p. 12, note 20. In conversation (April 1997) Hill concurred with the suspicion that there is a distinct possibility of there being a 'Reinschrift' "of something" in Paris.

overview of letters I and II will precede a detailed analysis of letter III, since the former illustrate the genesis of ideas later incorporated into the mature formulation of the latter.

The shortest of the three drafts, from its content letter I would also appear to be the earliest. The enormity of the project which Lenz sets himself betrays his naiveté when it comes to formulating his ideas into a formal address. His promises as regards the effects of his proposals are wildly over-ambitious:

C'est a dire, pour resumer ces points importants(.) d'abolir ce qui lui reste d'abus des institutions feodales, d'approcher l'etat de ses armées a ces grands modèles des Armées d'un Scipion et Caesar, mettre par la un poids immuable dans la balance de l'Europe, donner au meilleur des Rois des moiens surs, pour faire le bonheur de ses peuples ranimer le commerce par de nouvelles sources de credit dont le decroissement ne doit pas etre attribué au système mais seulement a la maniere {incertaine} dont on l'a traité a cause de sa nouveauté et de se faire enfin de la perception plus reguliere des impots(.) un garant perpetuel tout du credit publique de l'excitation de l'agriculture et des arts - et en continuant et achevant ainsi avec la fermeté ce que les grands hommes du tems de Louis 14 ont commencé ou en presentant ce qui est arrivé dans la suite on va arriver au grand but dont il s'approchoit tous par des routes diverses(.) c'est a dire au bonheur de l'etat dont les maux alors cesserant d'eux même.¹²⁹

Lenz seems to be offering nothing short of a panacea for all France's many ills. It is unsurprising that in letter II his ambitions are somewhat reined in: 'La seule chose que j'ose mettre devant les yeux de Votre Excellence, c'est le revenu publique et le credit de la France.'¹³⁰ Efforts to provide such a panacea are given up in short order. Nevertheless in this extravagant outburst it is clear that the project takes on a far broader scope than was ever evident in *Über die Soldatenehen* or the subsequent epistolary novel drafts. The abolition of the vestiges of feudalism; the creation of a secure financial base for the king through a reform of the arbitrary tax system; the promotion of investment in agriculture as

¹²⁹ Appendix B, letter I, p. 16, IV, iii, 26v.

¹³⁰ Appendix C, letter II, p. 21, IV, iii, 20r.

a prerequisite for the growth of commerce - all these concerns are fused with Lenz's ideas for military reform, thereby bringing his project for that into the arena of contemporary political debate.

Even if a wildly ambitious goal is set, in the remainder of the fragment his means of trying to fulfil it are far from 'phantastisch'. In stark contrast to his previous efforts Lenz tackles the most contentious issues of political debate of 1776 head-on. He launches a critique of Turgot's free grain policy, undermining, as it does, 'le nerf de la France' - its agriculture - with the simplest of economic arguments:

Le commerce extérieur des bleds n'est rien sans l'intérieur et sans les encouragemens nécessaires des entrepreneurs des fermes [et] agricoles. Comment veut on exporter ce qui ne se trouve pas(?)¹³¹

Indeed the promotion of agriculture becomes Lenz's primary concern, for, as he is aware, it is the motor for all other economic progress:

L'effet le plus important est l'encouragement de l'agriculture(,) l'ame de tous les arts et de tous les richesses d'un Etat qui par des prix incertaines des denrées dont aujourd'hui les monopoleurs seuls [?] decident, et par des impots prelevés sur les avances les plus nécessaires detruisans donc la culture dans son origine - languit dans la poussière.¹³²

A pithier analysis of the contemporary state of French agriculture would be hard to imagine. The rest of the draft is dedicated to a reengineering of the French banking system, or more correctly the institution of a national bank to cope with national debt. France, unlike many other European nations, had no state bank, and was still recovering from the failure of John Law's 'Royal Bank' in 1720. Lenz draws on the supposed 'génie'

¹³¹ Appendix B, letter I, p. 16, IV, iii, 26v.

¹³² Ibid., letter I, p. 18, IV, iii, 27r.

of Law's original plan,¹³³ before criticising its execution as a prelude to his offering his own plan for the restructuring of government debt, whereby it is to be converted into 'actions' or bonds. Managed with distinctly teutonic rigour, such a restructuring will be an effective means of boosting the economy, thus providing for 'le bonheur de la nation'.¹³⁴ Lenz's desire to work for the 'social good', in accordance with his notion of 'Bestimmung', transmutes from the abstract theorising of the earlier moral-philosophical texts and assumes an altogether more practical nature, as he tries to exert influence on the direct levers of political power. Even a cursory examination of letter I offers ample evidence of the complete overhaul of Lenz's project. The transformation is such that it bears scarcely any relation to any of the previous incarnations. Poetic fervour is replaced by earnest discourse on agriculture, tax and the restructuring of government debt, banking and bonds; in short in substance and coherence of argument, the letter is about as far removed from the world of 'Phantasei' as is possible - it is a straightforward economic tract, even if it breaks off in mid-flow, with Lenz tantalisingly promising 'une route nouvelle'.¹³⁵

Letter II goes some way to further charting the course of such a route. Lenz introduces a series of new ideas which will come to a state of fruition in letter III; for example, the reform of inheritance laws, and the tying of soldiers to the land, are new additions to the purely economic arguments of the first draft. The opening of the second paragraph of letter II gives some clue for a possible dating of the fragment. Whereas there

¹³³ A view shared by none other than Voltaire. See Appendix C, letter II, note 4, p. 21, IV, iii, 20v.

¹³⁴ See Appendix B, letter I, the penultimate paragraph of p. 20, IV, iii, 28r, 'Il faut qu'une banque...'.
¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 20, IV, iii, 28r.

is no mention of impending war in letter I, by the time of the subsequent draft it has become more than a distinct possibility: 'On ne parle partout que d'une guerre nouvelle.'¹³⁶ In all likelihood this is a reference to foreign minister Vergennes' proposal for intervention in America, as means of exacting retribution against the English. Turgot had fiercely opposed such a plan on grounds of financial cost when it was tabled in April 1776. Although conflict was not to break out until 1778, preparations escalated during the summer of 1776, with military exercises carried out in France as a show of strength to the English. More than coincidentally the August Heft of the *Teutscher Merkur* dedicates its opening paragraph of its French report to precisely the growing tensions between the two powers.¹³⁷ With such news the relevance and marketability of Lenz's plan became even more apparent, as he well recognises in the comment after mentioning the prospect of war:

Je laisse aux lumieres superieurs de Votre Excellence a decider, si la position actuelle de la France l'en peut dispenser; mais comme avec de l'argent on peut toujours faire des conquêtes, mais les conquêtes ne donnent pas toujours de l'argent; sondons un peu les ressources [...]¹³⁸

Lenz is able to tie his long term project to a specific political development - the problem of funding a possible intervention in the American conflict at the same time as avoiding the accumulation of yet more crippling government debt.

The initial arguments of letter II are elaborations of his call for state banking, voiced in letter I. The mobilisation and investment of capital is rightly seen as the key to economic take-off and hence increased tax revenues: 'Le credit est l'ame du commerce;

¹³⁶ Appendix C, letter II, p. 21, IV, iii, 20r.

¹³⁷ See *Teutscher Merkur*, August Heft 1776, p. 190.

¹³⁸ Appendix C, letter II, p. 21, IV, iii, 20r.

lorsque l'Etat et des particuliers marchands unissent leur credit cela ne peut qu'avoir des suites les plus salutaires pour le total [...]', with a reformed tax system and a state bank both prerequisites:

[...] et lorsque l'Etat par la distribution plus regulière des impots et par consequent par le payement plus exacte et regulier des interets et des arrérages peut encore une fois parvenir a disposer ses créanciers par le moien d'une banque, a entrer dans son commerce, cela ne peut qu' 'avoir les suites les plus heureuses' tant pour son commerce que pour l'augmentation de son credit même.¹³⁹

As well as this call for the mobilisation of credit, there is another clue in letter II which would seem to confirm its dating as August 1776 at the earliest. Lenz dismisses the ability of lotteries to free up capital:

Deterrer ces tresors cachés et les faire rentrer dans la circulation ne peut être l'effet des Lotteries qui ne regardent que les pauvres qui {aiment a} risquer ni des Tontines et rentes viagères, tant que les impôts(.) le seul fonds des interêts et du credit public(.) sont distribués d'une inegalité qui les rend destructifs a eux mêmes et prejudicieux tant aux avances primitives et a la reproduction [...] qu'a l'industrie et au commerce même.¹⁴⁰

It was in July that Turgot's successor, Clugny, instituted a royal lottery, precisely with the aim of raising capital for the state. The development was duly described in a damning report in the August Heft of the *Teutscher Merkur*:

Die einzige Arbeit, die Herr von Clugny seit seiner Erhebung zur Generalcontrolle gethan, ist die Unterdrückung der errichteten Lotterien, und die Errichtung einer neuen königlichen Lotterie von Frankreich. Der Vorwand zu dieser Umkehrung ist, zu verhindern, daß das Geld nicht aus dem Königreiche gehe, und die geheime Ursach ist, ein immerwährendes Kapital zu finden, welches selbst das Geld der Fremden herbeyziehe, und das man zur Noth angreifen könne.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 22, IV, iii, 21r. Although Lenz's French is far from perfect, he obviously mastered the necessary technical vocabulary for his project, e.g. here 'arrérages', providing further evidence of intensive study of the subject.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 23, IV, iii, 21v.

¹⁴¹ *Teutscher Merkur*, August Heft, p. 191.

Letter II can therefore be seen as a direct retort to the policy-making going on in the summer of 1776, as such giving the manuscript a firm dating of August.

The most significant development in letter II is Lenz's incorporation of his military plan into a wider economic framework presenting it, thus, as the key to the liberation of capital for agriculture. Government is to intervene through the manipulation of existing law, in order to dynamise agriculture and thus boost its own revenues. His timidity in taking such a huge step betrays the fact that this is an earlier draft than letter III:

Voilà le seul noeud qui arrête actuellement les operations les plus salutaires du Gouvernement, permettez Monseigneur! que je m' {en} approche, en tremblant, pour vous montrer un coin negligé d'ou j'espere que par des lumieres et des forces superieures aux mienes la dissolution sera la seule possible [...]¹⁴²

In pointing to 'un coin negligé' Lenz actually makes a connection which will form the crux of his whole project. Aware of 'les calamités de la petite culture', he proposes that one sector of society can 'lever le fardeau commun sans frais et sans despenses' - the military.¹⁴³ In the manner of the Romans, soldiers will be guaranteed land in recompense for their services rendered to the crown; however, even during active service, 'on permet aux soldats de se repandre a la campagne'.¹⁴⁴ In effect, at no extra cost, the government will promote agriculture whilst at the same time have an army at its command that has a personal interest in fighting for the country, attached as it is to the land. Recalling arguments from *Über die Soldatenehen* and Guibert's 'Discours Préliminaire', Lenz laments the current state of the army, due precisely to this lack of commitment to the

¹⁴² Appendix C, letter II, p. 25, IV, iii, 22v.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 26, IV, iii, 22v.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 27. IV, iii, 23r.

cause for which they are supposed to fight, as he says towards the end of the fragment, in point four of his proposal:

J'arrive au point principal, au but ou {menent} toutes mes {perspectives} [...] Permettez que je supplie {les mains levées} pour toute une armée découragée [...] et impuissante(.) si les choses restent comme elles sont[,] d'opérer jamais quelque chose de {grande} conséquence. Il ne reste mais un soldat qui n'a point d'attachemens au sol de son pays est toujours un déserteur(.) un soldat qui ne sera citojen en meme tems ne fera jamais - jamais des merveilles pour la patrie.¹⁴⁵

Lenz then goes on to detail the financial package which his plan would offer each soldier and thus provide the investment for the land. For the military reform becomes tied inextricably to agricultural renewal, as he concludes this fragment with a summary of his new aim: 'Voilà ce qui s'appelle attirer les richesses à la campagne, voilà le grand problème du gouvernement dissous(:) de faire {rentre} ses dépenses {même dans la circulation} pour les premiers besoins de l'Etat(.)'¹⁴⁶ However, as yet there is no mention of how the 'Soldatenehe' concept fits into this scheme; this only becomes apparent in letter III (see below) and this is the crucial missing link to the project as it stands in the draft of letter II.

Nevertheless there is an indication of how Lenz will come to fit the marriage of soldiers into his project: through a change in the partible inheritance laws.¹⁴⁷ Appearing as at best an afterthought in *Über die Soldatenehen*, by August 1776 inheritance laws take centre stage in the 'lettre à Maurepas'; for it is this last vestige of feudalism that is regarded as: '[...] le germe de tous les maux publics dont nous ressentons tous les effets

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 32-33, IV, iii, 25r-25v. The lack of syntax is testament to the rapidity with which Lenz will have written this draft, as towards the end of this fragment, his hand becomes rapidly smaller and more indecipherable.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 34, IV, iii, 25v.

¹⁴⁷ See Doyle, *Revolution*, p. 9, also pp. 48-49.

funestres [*sic*], sans en avoir pû jusqu'ici demeler la cause cachée.'¹⁴⁸ The reform Lenz suggests is not a simple adoption of the law as it stood in most other European states, with the eldest son as sole heir; sensationally, he calls for the inclusion of women in the inheritance process. Far from enslaving women in glorified prostitution, Lenz actually advocates their empowerment by giving them the sole right to land:

Si Sa Majesté {vouloit donc} commencer a une de ses domaines d(e) donner exemple, de constituer dorenavant la fille {ainée seulement unique} heritiere de tous biens amovibles du père, tandis que les frères et les autres descendants n'auroit chacun que sa legitime; quels maux en resulteroient ils?¹⁴⁹

Indeed, one of the primary motivations behind such an enfranchisement of women is to combat prostitution, which was rife in the late eighteenth century, with one contemporary estimate putting the figure at 20,000 in Paris alone, which at the time had a population of only 600,000.¹⁵⁰ As Lenz says of the current inheritance law: '[...] et quoi bon donc un droit qui dans le libertinage actuel de nos moeurs expose les pauvres filles de rester a jamais sans maris, les tente au libertinage elles même.'¹⁵¹ His proposal seeks to rescue women from being forced into prostitution. For prostitution is also seen to have a highly damaging effect throughout society, and is blamed for disrupting marriage and even the

¹⁴⁸ Appendix C, letter II, p. 27, IV, iii, 23v. The 'Embryonen' of these ideas are evident near the end of *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 825-26, see Chapter III, note 132, p. 157.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 28, IV, iii, 24r.

¹⁵⁰ This figure is derived from several sources. Firstly there is the incredibly thorough first hand survey(!), undertaken by Restif de La Bretonne for *Le Pornographe*, he claimed: 'I have visited public women in 1755, 6,7,8,9, in 1761, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 in order to write *Le Pornographe*', quoted in M.Poster, *The Utopian Thought of Restif de la Bretonne* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 36. Secondly from F.Henriques, *Prostitution and Society*, 3 vols (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1962-68), II, 131: 'A manuscript document, in the form of a memorandum presented by an unknown lieutenant of police, exists in the Paris Prefecture of Police. Its approximate date is 1762. In it the lieutenant estimates the number of prostitutes as 28, 000.' Thirdly see N.Roberts, *Whores in History - Prostitution in Western Society* (Grafton: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 178.

¹⁵¹ Appendix C, letter II, p. 28, IV, iii, 23v.

accumulation of capital for agriculture, as the above quotation continues: '[...] et empêche par là les mariages, la population et toute acquisition régulière et solide des richesses {a la campagne} toute reunion des biens demembrés et mutilés de notre petite culture(.)'

A change in the inheritance laws will act as both a moral and an economic lever. By splitting land and liquid capital, Lenz hopes to encourage a form of marriage which will aid the accumulation of sufficient capital to exploit the resources offered by ever larger tracts of land, no longer debilitated by continual morcellation. As he tries to persuade Maurepas: 'Considerez M. que cette reunion des interets si indispensablement necessaire dans un etat agricole qui doit se relever de la poussière [...].' Whilst there is some sense of coercion in such a plan, it is not to be done in quasi-Stalinist fashion, but rather through the rather more effective enforcers of capitalism: the law and monetary incentives. As he continues:

La defiance est universelle(.) prenez les difficultés du caprice et des diversités des caractères qui ne peuvent etre obligés a l'avenir pour un but commun que par des alliages pareilles. Et quels biens en resulteront et quels maux infinis se succederont lorsqu'on neglige ce point le plus important du gouvernement.¹⁵²

By empowering women, Lenz also hopes to bolster the institution of marriage, thus countering the corruption of society's *moeurs* by rampant prostitution, itself the result of women's disenfranchised position in society. The moral underpinning of the project is clear, as Lenz attempts to act on his sense of 'Bestimmung' to work for the 'social good' and fight the debauchery he perceives as endemic in eighteenth-century society.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 31, IV, iii, 25r. Compare also *Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen Die Wolken*, II, 732-33: 'Sehen Sie weiter die meisten unserer Ehen an. Verträge sind sie, einander gegen gewisse anderweitige Vorteile, die, gleich als ob man sich mit seinem ärgsten Feinde verbände, mit der größten Behutsamkeit von der Welt obrigkeitlich müssen gesichert sein, alles zu erlauben.'

Despite these major developments in the substance of the project, they fall short of completion. Although the decisive link between the inheritance laws and military reform is made, the detail of the 'Soldatenehe' remains elusive, despite the presentation of a series of calculations aimed at providing soldiers with sufficient capital to plough back into the land. There is also evidence of a struggle for form. Although ostensibly writing a letter, Lenz strays far outside the parameters set by that form. He is still engaged in an attempt to present his project in its entirety; as he says to Maurepas, his letter will do the talking: '...quels maux en resulteroient ils? Je m'en vais Monseigneur! Vous les enumerer et laisser la chose après entièrement a Votre decision.'¹⁵³ As a result the draft becomes overloaded with detail: an attempt is made to encompass all aspects of his project, which proves detrimental to the chances of it ever being read. This could well be the reason for the abandonment of this draft, one that is as long, if not longer than letter III. It is only in this later manuscript that Lenz finds the appropriate way of presenting his project.

Of the three drafts, letter III is the only one to reach a definite conclusion, even if it is one that defies logic.¹⁵⁴ Although it is 'une lettre anonyme', at its conclusion Lenz tries to gain a personal audience with Maurepas in order to take matters further, thus illustrating his creative process. Lenz comes up with the idea of a face-to-face meeting in the course of writing letter III, also suggesting the reason for its final status as a draft, despite its advanced state of completion. In terms of content as well as presentation, Lenz makes considerable advances on the scheme as it exists in the two other drafts. He is able

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 28., IV, iii, 24r.

¹⁵⁴ As already outlined above, p. 205.

to develop and define his original idea of the 'Soldatenehe', by placing it in a wider context. His style is succinct and lucid, as he dispenses with the detail of overly elaborate arguments which encumber letters I and II. Lenz also exhibits a greater sensitivity and realism when it comes to introducing his plan into the conservative political climate, amending his plans for grain and tax to fit the agenda set by Maurepas. The letter breaks down into two distinct sections: the first dealing with the present problems facing France, particularly debt and the state of her agriculture; the second contains the proposals for dealing with such problems.

Even the opening paragraph is indicative of the maturing of the project. There is no uncertainty, no overly poetic appeal to the emotions, nor any arrogance, with Lenz assuming the stance of a detached observer, one moreover who comes straight to the point: 'Je ne fais point d'excuses Mons. de Vous interrompre dans Vos occupations respectables [...].'¹⁵⁵ In stark contrast to the panacea offered, but never delivered, in letter I, Lenz modestly puts forward the credentials of his own perspective: as he is not caught up in the day-to-day affairs of government he is in a position to offer a more considered vision:

Enchainé par une infinité de details qui ne peuvent qu'empêcher et embarrasser le coup d'œil libre, toujours le gouvernail en main pour prévenir aux dangers les plus pressans, V.E. ne me saura mauvais gré de quelques combinaisons nouvelles de l'avenir avec le present [...] Je suis sûr que V.E. les a déjà faites elle même, mais il y a quelquefois de l'utilité publique d'avoir ses vues justifiées et confirmées de celles des personnes qui avec le dernier des interressement personnel, se passionnent pour l'interêt de la nation et de leur Roi.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Appendix D, letter III, p. 35, IV, iii, 1r.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Such an opening is altogether more sober than in previous drafts, as Lenz finally finds a tone more apposite for the form of an official letter, one which is deferential, modest, with the aim of ingratiation. All trace of emotion is eradicated, with any reference to unrequited love replaced by a sincere pledge of allegiance to king and country. Of course the final line of the introductory paragraph can be read as an unconvincing attempt to hide emotions made so explicit in previous drafts; nevertheless Lenz realises by this point the need to write in the appropriate register for his specific addressee.

The body of the argument begins with exactly the same line as is to be found in letter II: 'On ne parle partout que d'une nouvelle guerre. Je laisse aux lumieres superieurs de V.E. a decider si la position actuelle de la France [...].'¹⁵⁷ Whereas letter II launches into a plan for the conversion of government debt into bonds issued by a state bank, drawing on the catastrophic Law plan as a precedent, in letter III Lenz wisely limits himself to an account of the current state of government debt. He changes tactics completely: rather than bombarding Maurepas with a contentious plan from the outset, Lenz calmly lists the debts run up by Law's failed 'Royal Bank' and gives a detailed breakdown of the cost of servicing the debts incurred during the Seven Years War.¹⁵⁸ A description of the dire state of France's finances will ease the way for any plan that follows. Indeed his idea for a state bank, so dominant in letters I and II, is only mentioned in a short comment at the end of the letter, included only as a means of putting the subject onto the agenda at the suggested audience which Lenz hopes to gain from his letter.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 35, IV, iii, 1r. Compare Appendix C, letter II, p. 21, IV, iii, 20r, also note 138, p. 209.

¹⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 35-38, IV, iii, 1v-2r.

¹⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 47-48, IV, iii, 6v: '[...] on pourroit peut etre penser a une maniere plus solide de rebattre les dettes d'Etat en les tournant comme il semble avoir été la premiere intention du Regent en Actions et faire donc Banque [...] mais tout cela exigeroit un entretien plus long et personnel avec V.E [...].'

Only in letter III does he recognise the limitations of writing a formal letter, desisting from his earlier attempts to explain his project in its entirety. Instead he redirects his energies into winning an audience.

In addition to the mounting debt crisis, the crippling effect of the French tax system on the economy is also succinctly outlined:

[...] il est pourtant a ce qu'il me semble moralement impossible de rescherir encore sur les impositions extraordinaires celles ci ayant deja pour ainsi dire detruit chez la nation tout ce qui est capable d'impot(.) je veux dire les avances primitives tant de l'agriculture que de l'industrie n'etant plus en aucune proportion avec leur produits nets.¹⁶⁰

Interestingly Lenz indicates that there is a moral as well as an economic problem with the tax regime as it stands. For beneath the economic and political arguments, he retains his sense of moral justice, or 'Bestimmung', made clear in *Stimmen des Laien* and still visible in *Über die Soldatenehen*.¹⁶¹ But rather than placing his faith in writing, he opts for economic manipulation of society as the only effective means of fighting for his moral cause. However, for his plan, and thus his hidden agenda, to have any chance of adoption, he must present in such a way that it would appeal to the powers that be, or, in this case, Maurepas. Therefore, whilst Lenz undoubtedly draws on Physiocratic thinking, he deviates from it for this purpose, showing considerable political acumen in the process. Undoubtedly he does follow the progressive Physiocratic line of seeing agriculture *and* industry as the only true activities of production: 'Et comme le commerce et le credit public même ne roule que sur la reproduction solide tant des produits de terre que que

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 37., IV, iii, 2r.

¹⁶¹ See Chapter III, pp. 148-55.

ceux de l'industrie [...].’ He also agrees that government must play an interventionist role in their promotion for the future security of the nation, financially and militarily:

[...] je ne vois aucun moyen de retablir l'un et l'autre pour pourvoir aux besoins actuels de l'état, qu'en restituant en quelque façon aux premiers ressorts de l'état leurs forces anciennes pour les faire agir après et se reposer(,) pour ainsi dire(,) pendant la paix des ressources valides pour en subvenir un jour aux extrémités.¹⁶²

Despite seeming to toe the Physiocratic line, in the next section of the letter Lenz launches into an attack on Turgot and his free grain laws, sarcastically referring to 'la sagesse inimitable du Ministère Francois', currying Maurepas' favour in the process.¹⁶³ According to the argument, Turgot's decision to liberalise the grain trade missed the point completely, as it neglected the real problems of French agriculture:

Il n'y a qu'une chose à regretter(,) c'est qu'il ne peut pas avoir tout l'effet désirable, tandis que les services personnels et la dernière misère des agriculteurs de S.M. continuent et qu'ainsi(,) pour trancher net, il n'y aura rien à exporter.¹⁶⁴

Governmental manipulation of the markets is no substitute for direct intervention where it counts - in the actual fields.

Lenz therefore advocates a far more wide ranging form of governmental intervention, one which will form the basis of his own project: 'Attirer les richesses à la campagne restera toujours le plus haut point de vue pour l'homme d'état qui ne veut pas construire des projets en l'air.'¹⁶⁵ This notion is not new in the context of the project - it

¹⁶² Appendix D, letter III, p. 37, IV, iii, 2r.

¹⁶³ Turgot is also attacked in letter I, see Appendix B, p. 16, IV, iii, 26v, and to a lesser extent in letter II, see Appendix C, pp. 23-25, IV, iii, 21v-22v.

¹⁶⁴ Appendix D, letter III, p. 38, IV, iii, 2r-2v.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 39, IV, iii, 3r. See Chapter III, pp. 156-58. In *Über die Soldatenehen* a set of questionable figures is also summoned '[...] um nicht in die Luft zu bauen [...]', however, the rigour of Lenz's application in this draft illustrates the complete overhaul which his project undergoes.

features at the end of letter II - it is, however, given a far more concrete form in the proposals which follow.¹⁶⁶ Lenz recognises agriculture as the source of the majority of tax revenue, and clearly illustrates why it must be encouraged for the well-being of the nation, as it is the motor of the economy:

Plus ces cultivateurs de terre sont capables de reproduire, {d'autant} ils payeront d'impôts(.)
{d'autant} plus le credit public renouvella ses forces et ranimera en même temps le commerce et l'industrie.¹⁶⁷

Aware of the political climate, Lenz steers clear of advocating a radical overhaul of the manifestly unjust tax system, as this had been one of the decisive factors in Turgot's fall; instead he fashions his policy to please the conservative palate of Maurepas: 'Je sais bien que l'état actuel des affaires empeche absolument de changer les taxes arbitraires en taxes proportionnées au produit net [...].'¹⁶⁸ Prophetically aware of an impending 'coup mortel pour les revenus du Roi', Lenz suggests incremental change to the tax regime, starting with the imposition of an indirect tax on the sale of grain:

On pourroit pour cet effet commencer a changer une partie des impositions indispensables {arbitraires} dans un pèage etablie en chaque ville pour la vente du bled [...] Voila une taxe qui s'etendrait egalement sur tous les branches de l'état et n'en prejudicieroit aucune.¹⁶⁹

The more financially secure England and Prussia raised far greater proportions of their revenues via indirect taxation than the French and Lenz's idea seeks to replicate such stability in France by using similar methods.¹⁷⁰ As well as being easier to enforce and

¹⁶⁶ See Appendix C, letter II, p. 34, IV, iii, 25v.

¹⁶⁷ Appendix D, letter III, p. 39, IV, iii, 3r.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 39, IV, iii, 3r.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 39-40, IV, iii, 3r-3v.

¹⁷⁰ See Behrens, *Society*, p. 74.

hence more reliable, it was also spread across society, without being an affront to the nobility, which Turgot's plan for the introduction of a direct tax on the nobles in place of the *corvées* undoubtedly was.

Whatever the merits of such taxation proposals, they are very much of secondary importance to the subsequent explanation of his project. For any such meddling with the tax regime makes one obvious supposition, as Lenz introduces the core of his letter: 'Mais tout cela {suppose} des moyens de pouvoir fournir du bled. Nous voila au point principal.'¹⁷¹ Government intervention must reach into the actual fields, rather than concentrating solely on the market place, if supply is to reach such a level as to make exports viable, and hence a revised tax regime effective. Again the argument is couched in simple, but lucid terms:

Il n'y a que la quantité du bled qui puisse favoriser son commerce en dehors. D'où la tirer. Il faut que le Gouvernement s'y mele, il faut qu'il entremette du moins son credit(,) ce qui vaut quelquefois plus que l'argent même.¹⁷²

The state is to provide a portion of the capital to dynamise France's moribund agriculture into action. Lenz outlines the familiar problems of French agriculture, discussed at length in letter II.¹⁷³ However, whereas in the latter a detailed account is given, complete with numerical evidence, in letter III he condenses these arguments into a manageable and easily comprehensible form:

C'est l'indigence des cultivateurs, la petitesse de leurs terres qui augmente la raison de leurs dépenses annuelles sans cependant augmenter leur profit, le manque de population(,) c'est à dire d'une population capable à se soutenir(,) par conséquent l'accroissement continuel des terres en triche et tous les autres inconvénients de la petite culture telle qu'elle est actuellement en France.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Appendix D, letter III, p. 41, IV, iii, 3v-4r.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 41, IV, iii, 4r.

¹⁷³ Appendix C, letter II, pp. 28-32, IV, iii, 24r-25r. See pp. 209-15, above.

¹⁷⁴ Appendix D, letter III, p. 41, IV, iii, 4r.

In sketching out the economic malaise of France, Lenz is able to fit his own innovative plan into a wider scheme in the second half of the letter. He advocates a form of government intervention which does not limit itself to the markets, or even direct investment purely of the monetary kind; instead he looks to the economic levers offered by the legal structure, which are hence of little or no cost to the state. It is through changes to marriage and inheritance laws that agriculture is to be dynamised. The logic is simple:

S'il étoit possible de lier ces gens entre eux par des mariages considerables(.) d'aggrandir et d'arondir par consequent leurs fonds(.) leur bétail, leurs valets pour que cela ne fit qu'une masse, ces secours mutuels les mettroient bien, tout en état de faire des choses en grand le reste de ces misérables(.) au lieu de se nourrir misérablement à deux pommes de terre(.) iroit se procurer par des travaux mercenaires de quoi s'acheter dans la suite des fonds considerables ou seuls ou en associations ce qui ne pourroit manquer de leurs réussir pourvu qu'ils y fissent diligence [...]¹⁷⁵

In short, marriage is to be rationalised amongst the landed peasants, with the result that labour will be freed from the fields and from subsistence, thus sparking a new wave of capital accumulation, and freeing a new workforce for industrial expansion and diversification through the division of labour. The pooling of resources will lead to a huge boost in production, as farms will be of a viable size. This is all very well in theory, but the projection of such economic logic on to the real world is altogether less certain.

Lenz never suggests coercion for the implementation of his plan, instead he opts for the subtler forces of capitalism to implement it for him. Having made clear the logic of linking capital and land through marriage, the plan for the reform of the inheritance laws, first expressed in letter II, is summoned. Indeed the corresponding paragraphs in the two drafts show striking similarities, sharing the same opening line.¹⁷⁶ In comparison to the

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 42, IV, iii, 4r.

¹⁷⁶ Compare Appendix D, letter III, p. 42, IV, iii, 4r-4v. with Appendix C, letter II, p. 27, IV, iii, 22r.: 'Ayant aboli [...].'

previous draft, in letter III Lenz places even more emphasis on how the inheritance law as it stands has a detrimental effect on the moral fabric of society:

Le libertinage universel des mœurs ecarte les jeunes gens de bien {richards} du mariage, pour les autres il serait plus souhaitable qu'ils ne se mariassent pas, les voila en possession des terres pendant que leurs pauvres soeurs desespantes d'avoir d'epouse propre a les soutenir ou s'abandonnent au libertinage ou trainent leur vie miserablement en service etranger(.)¹⁷⁷

Lenz makes more explicit the limited career options open to women. Marriage is treated as an economic, rather than a romantic, union, with the alternatives being prostitution or menial work. As such the logic of the subsequent arguments, although they may be distasteful to a twentieth century reader looking for a 'Liebesehe', becomes easier to comprehend; rather than seeking to enslave women, Lenz aims to give them a vital place in the economic structure.¹⁷⁸ He therefore repeats the appeal made to the king in letter II, but this time makes it directly to Maurepas himself:

Quel mal en resulteroit il, si par un arret universel on etablissoit que dornavant les heritages des fonds paternels ne resteraient que pour la fille ainée tandis que le frere aurait la legitime et iroit chercher a gagner la vie le mieux qu'il pourroit. Je {vai} Vous enunier ces maux Mons. et laisse exprès la chose entierement a Votre decision -¹⁷⁹

Lenz again calls for inheritance law reform, making the eldest daughter heir to the land while the males inherit the capital, which, he predicts, will encourage the union of the land and capital via marriage.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Appendix D, letter III, p. 43, IV, iii, 4v. See also Appendix C, letter II, pp. 27-28, IV, iii, 23v.

¹⁷⁸ See Wilson, pp. 61-65 for his notion that 'Lenz versteckt sich hinter der Fassade einer bürgerlichen Liebesehe, die keine ist'.

¹⁷⁹ Appendix D, letter III, p. 43, IV, iii, 4r. Compare with letter II, note 149, p. 213.

¹⁸⁰ The same arguments have been rehearsed in letter II, see pp. 209-15.

In his subsequent elucidation of the possible benefits of such a policy initiative, the proposals for agricultural reform are fused with those for the military. Lenz summons the familiar arguments regarding the shambolic state of the French army, already recounted in *Über die Soldatenehen*, for example:

En voila [the army] actuellement {presque rien qu'}une grande foule - de deserteurs si non en tems de paix(.) encore beaucoup plus pernicieusement en tems de guerre. Et pourquoi cela? Parce que l'attachement au sol leur manque.¹⁸¹

But now such arguments are placed into an altogether broader context, moreover, one in which solid solutions for the attachment of soldiers to the 'patrie' are offered rather than airy poetic visions. Firstly Lenz evokes the example set by the Romans, the practice of giving each soldier a plot of land at the end of his service as a loyalty payment for services rendered:

Comme il y a longtems que le militaire demande une reforme solide, c'est a dire qu'on lui inspire l'esprit des anciens veterans chez les Romains(.) qui autrefois faisait trembler la terre [...] Chaque soldat aura un refuge après avoir vielli sous armes.¹⁸²

Secondly, he finally gives his original concept of the 'Soldatenehe' concrete form: 'Dans le tems de leurs congés ils ir{a} [sic] s'introduire dans les maisons des paysans(.) ils travailler{a} [sic] pour eux, il se choisira une femme.'¹⁸³ Soldiers are thus to form a secondary workforce, paid for by the state, to help in the cultivation of the land. Their self-interest in such work stems from the prospect of marriage, and the ensuing possibility of land, stemming from the possibilities created by the new inheritance laws, to add to

¹⁸¹ Appendix D, letter III, p. 44, IV, iii, 5r, e.g. II, 794-95.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 44, IV, iii, 5r.

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. 44-45, IV, iii, 5r.

their own promised refuge. Economic logic will gently force the hand of the peasants. At the same time the soldier will be tied to the land, rendering him more effective on the battlefield. However, rather than their being forced into a state of glorified prostitution, as seems to be the case in all previous incarnations of the project, from the 'Schlußszene' of *Die Soldaten*, through Lenz's description of the drawing of lots in his letter to Herder, to the glossing over of such detail in the poetic haze of *Über die Soldatenehen*, he stipulates that the consent of women is a prerequisite of any union: 'Lorsqu'elle *consent* [...] il ne travaille que pour elle.'¹⁸⁴ If anything it is the man who might be deemed to be enslaved, not the woman. Any charge that Lenz advocates prostitution is unfounded when considered in light of this mature formulation of the 'Soldatenehe' concept. Moreover, there is no mention at this stage of using any offspring from such marriages as automatic recruits for the army, nor of any tax breaks for such women's fathers as in earlier incarnations. The plan is simplified, with such further detailing awaiting, possibly, a future explanation at court.

By August 1776 the original concept is incorporated into a wider economic project. For in his reorganisation of marriage Lenz also stipulates that it is the man who is to pay a dowry, rather than the woman, as was traditionally the case. Be it for the purpose of civilian or military wedlock, the fiancé must work for his intended: '[...] jusqu'a ce qu'il seroit en etat de déposer chez le tuteur de la fille la valeur de deux boeufs d'un cheval pour le moins sans quelle condition il ne peut l'épouser.'¹⁸⁵ In the case of the

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 45, IV, iii, 5r. My emphasis. As such, Lenz's plan is radically different to that sketched out for Herder for the end of *Die Soldaten*, Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, den 20. November 1775], III, 353-54. See Chapter II, pp. 97-99 & 103-108.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 43, IV, iii, 4v.

'Soldatenehe' such a dowry is to be guaranteed, although not paid for, by the army: '[...] le chef du Regiment sera garant chez le pere ou le tuteur de la fille pour les avances requises de 2 beufs [*sic*] et d'un cheval.'¹⁸⁶ During time spent away from the army working the land the soldier will still receive his pay and thus be able to invest it in the land. In effect the army will become the means by which government can provide the capital and the manpower needed to promote agriculture and hence boost tax revenues, as Lenz concludes:

Voila donc un fonds vivant que le Ministere assigneroit a l'agriculture, voila qui [*sic*] s'appellerait aussi bien attirer les richesses a la campagne, que lorsque le Roi feroit distribuer des especes aux agriculteurs Deux cent mille tous emplois [the number of troops in the French army] tout d'un coup a la culture des terres y doivent faire un changement sensible.¹⁸⁷

In harnessing the army as the motor for economic progress, Lenz simultaneously effects a thorough reform of the army, in finally tying it to the land, through the institution of marriage, which itself also becomes geared to create the conditions for economic growth. It is only in letter III that he cogently fuses his plans for military reform with those for agriculture. In so doing he is able to construct a link by which government can redirect existing resources, without any additional expenditure, in a concerted effort to restore its financial situation to health:

Voila enfin resout le grand probleme economique(:) de faire retourner les depenses publiques au profit de ceux même qui y contribuent. Et tout cela affectué sans que l'Etat en eut pour un denier plus de depenses qu'il n'en a actuellement.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 45, IV, iii, 5r.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 46, IV, iii, 5v.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 46, IV, iii, 6r.

Lenz shows his sense of political awareness in tailoring his project to fit the conservative agenda of Maurepas: it will not impinge on government expenditure, nor effect any drastic legal changes beyond peasant inheritance: 'Tous les autres droits resteront comme ils ont été.'¹⁸⁹

Beyond the further development and refinement of ideas already in embryo in the previous drafts, letter III stands out in the manner of its conclusion. Rather than attempting to fit his entire project into one letter, Lenz uses his 'lettre à Maurepas' as a means of introduction, for both himself and his proposals, with the aim of soliciting an invitation for a future meeting. Whilst listing the problems of the French state, and their possible resolution, he deliberately holds back the precise means of implementation: 'Les moiens de realiser cette idée sont des plus aisées du monde et les circonstances actuelles n'en demanderoit que trop la precipitation(.)'¹⁹⁰ Just as the Obrister does at the end of *Die Soldaten*, albeit in the ineffectual public forum of the stage, Lenz launches a new form of self-publicity, a direct appeal for an audience with Maurepas to explain his project in full:

Mais tout cela exigeroit un entretien plus long et personnel avec V.E. que je me reserve si cela peut etre le bon plaisir de V.E. Alors je m'etendrai sur plusieurs matieres que les termes d'une lettre qui je n'ai que trop transgressé ne m'ont permis que d'effleurer.¹⁹¹

The letter is written as a prelude to a further meeting in which his project can be fleshed out, perhaps in the form of a 'mémoire' read to the king or Maurepas. This still would appear to be the case after Lenz later amends the letter, by adding the final paragraph,

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 47, IV, iii, 6r.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 47, IV, iii, 6r.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 48, IV, iii, 6v.

written in a quicker hand with different ink, with a hint of defiant frustration appearing for the first time: 'Considerez avant que de jeter cette lettre, que Rome [...] n'a peri que par des conquêtes infructueuses.'¹⁹² The form of such a letter would seem to correlate with his express desire to travel to Versailles in some capacity akin to a 'weimarischer Militärattaché' in order to sell his plan in person. His chances of gaining such a position would have been bolstered, at least in his own mind, after he had rescued Carl August from a ditch following a riding accident.¹⁹³ It is this plan which Goethe records in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, with reference to 'ein großes Memoire an den französischen Kriegsminister', perhaps the full piece to present in person: 'Er aber hielt sich überzeugt, daß er dadurch bei Hofe großen Einfluß gewinnen könne.'¹⁹⁴ It is a desire expressed as late as October 1776, in a letter to Salzmann: 'Vielleicht sehen Sie mich einmal in herzoglich sächsischer Uniform wieder. Doch das unter uns.'¹⁹⁵ Indeed up until three days before his expulsion from Weimar Lenz is unsure whether he will return to Straßburg, with his military projects still in mind, further suggesting they had reached a state of near completion.¹⁹⁶ In any event a letter similar to the final draft of the 'lettre à Maurepas' would undoubtedly have been a more credible and likely means of gaining an invitation and a reason for a subsequent mission to Versailles than a speculative tract. It was in

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 48, IV, iii, 6v.

¹⁹³ Wilson, p. 67, see Lenz an Salzmann, Kochberg, den 23sten Oktober 1776, III, 504-5. Also Rosanow, *Lenz*, p. 365, and C.Hohoff, *J.M.R.Lenz*, p. 108.

¹⁹⁴ See Chapter III, pp. 116-19.

¹⁹⁵ Lenz an Salzmann, Kochberg, den 23sten Oktober 1776, III, 504-5. There are also several references made to Lenz's compatriot the Geheimer Rat Vietinghof (Lenz an Zimmermann [Weimar Ende Mai 1776] III, 460; Lenz an Salzmann, III, 505) in which Lenz hopes to use this connection as a means of entry to Versailles. However, by December 1776, after he himself has been banished from Weimar, Lenz learns that 'Hr. von Vietinghof ist schon lange hier durch und hat seinen Sohn (a student in Straßburg) mitgenommen.' See Salzmann an Lenz, Strasburg d. 20 Dezbr. 1776, III, 522, also Wilson, p. 67.

¹⁹⁶ Lenz an Anna Maria oder Susanna Margaretha Lauth, Weimar d. 23ten Novbr. 1776, III, 513.

August 1776, during the final weeks of his last extended period in Berka, that Lenz, the enigmatic 'Einsiedler', dedicated himself to the completion of his project in the form of his 'lettre à Maurepas'.

In the three drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas' Lenz's plan is finally given a coherent economic grounding, reaching a maturity unprecedented in comparison with all previous formulations. The project takes on far greater proportions and relevance, dealing as it does with the acute problems facing the French state in 1776. The means for agricultural renewal are not plucked from some obscure 'Ideenwelt' but drawn from the thinking of the Physiocrats. Their fusion with Lenz's plan for military reform is not 'lächerlich' or 'unausführbar', but instead tailored to the constraints of the conservative regime of Maurepas. However, the sanitised version of the 'Soldatenehe' is still open to the charge of being utopian. For although Lenz makes it clear that his notion of marriage within the scope of his scheme is based on consent, whether the appearance of soldiers all across the French countryside would be welcomed by the newly empowered women folk is open to question, prompting continued suspicion that even the mature plan is, to use Goethe's description, somewhat 'phantastisch'. However, even a cursory comparison of Lenz's project with prevailing historical circumstances would seem to suggest that it should not be dismissed as wildly idealistic. Prostitution was rife in eighteenth century society, remaining largely stigma-free, to such an extent that public opinion remained ambivalent in face of the social problems associated with it. Even a cursory reading of Restif de la Bretonne's *Le Pornographe* (1769) reveals the extent of the problem. His reform plan calls for state run brothels to cement social stability, detailing the creation of various corridors

to house girls from the age of twelve upwards.¹⁹⁷ Evoking the precedent set by Sparta, he attempts to transform the status of prostitutes by integrating them into the social structure.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, like Lenz in *Über die Soldatenehen*, Restif advocates the state upbringing of any offspring resulting from prostitution:

J'ai avancé que les Garçons feraient d'excellens soldats, parce que dès l'enfance ils seraient élevés dans la soumission et dans une dépendance aussi absolue qu'aveugle pour un Étranger; ils n'ont point de Parens ni de liaisons; leur Père, c'est l'État; leur patrie, le Royaume [...]¹⁹⁹

Uncontrolled prostitution is seen as the prime reason for the moral degeneracy of society, giving further credence to Lenz's own views:

Eh quoi! la débauche attaque la génération dans sa source, en diminuant le nombre des mariages, ou en mettant des entraves à la propagation dans ceux qui sont faits; (car les courtisanes qui en général ne produisent point, font que les femmes mariées produisent moins); et le Gouvernement lui donneroit une protection tacite!²⁰⁰

However, one does not have to resort to the graphic and lurid descriptions and prescriptions of a renegade such as de la Bretonne. The reason for such rampant prostitution lay in the lack of vocational opportunities open to women, limited as they were to being a servant, seamstress or wife.²⁰¹ Indeed even to raise a dowry women often resorted to prostitution, with the lower end of the sex market being flooded to such an extent that a living wage was far from certain. Even in small-town Germany such activity was far from absent, with one estimate offering a figure of thirty-one per cent of women working as prostitutes in the poorest quarter of Mainz.²⁰² Lenz's own plan for the

¹⁹⁷ Restif de la Bretonne, *Le Pornographe*, pp. 54-93, for the full extent of a meticulously detailed plan.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86 and p. 139. See also Chapter III, pp. 146-47.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 232.

²⁰¹ For the following section see N. Roberts, *Whores in History*, pp. 163-85.

²⁰² See Doyle, *Old Order*, p. 131. 'Admittedly, those who provide the figures tended to include a very wide range of women, young widows, for instance were often stigmatised as whores on suspicions hardly

promotion of marriage must thus be read within this context. The empowerment of women through land rights and their resultant elevation in the social and economic structure must be seen as a step towards the liberation of women, not to their further enslavement. Far from being 'phantastisch' Lenz's proposals constitute a reaction to real social needs as well as economic ones, with the prospect of marriage to a soldier not as horrific a proposition as it may seem from a twentieth century perspective, or even from the closed 'Weimarwelt' of Goethe and Wieland. Therefore even to mention the Nazis' Lebensborn project in the same sentence as Lenz's own, as Wilson does, is surely wide of the mark.²⁰³

justified by the evidence.' Other contemporary accounts, such as Boswell's infamous diaries, provide further evidence of the scale of European prostitution in the latter eighteenth century.

²⁰³ See Wilson p. 64.

Conclusion to Chapters III and IV

It is obvious from even a cursory glance over the contents of the Kraków archive that Lenz's military writings extend way beyond the one text of *Über die Soldatenehen*, although this seems to have aroused little active response from the academic community. The editing of substantial sections of Box IV of the *Lenziana* solves at least some of the mysteries surrounding Lenz's stay in Weimar, or more accurately his reclusive existence in Berka. Matters of politics, economics and law, which appear as afterthoughts in the German text, assume centre stage in the French drafts which follow. Moreover, using evidence provided by specific historical events and personalities it has proved possible to offer at least a hypothetical reconstruction of the project's development from the winter of 1775 through to the autumn of 1776, the most intensive period spanning May to August of that year. There are three distinct stages of development discernible from the evidence offered by these newly transcribed texts, with the fervour of *Über die Soldatenehen* bearing very little resemblance to the final drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas'. Of course the texts which appear in the appendices to this chapter are only portion of what exists in Kraków, falling way short of a full edition. Nevertheless they do amount to a significant addition to the limited number of texts which have appeared up to now. Despite the continued need for a comprehensive edition of even this one section of the Lenz holdings, little inclination for archival research has been evident in Lenz scholarship. The appearance of such an edition is a necessary and logical extension of the research undertaken in this thesis.

However, from the sources made available by my own research, it is clear that *Über die Soldatenehen* must have its textual status re-evaluated. Not even a completed text in its manuscript form, since its publication in 1913 it has enjoyed sole authority when it comes any evaluation of Lenz's military proposals. From the overwhelming evidence provided by the Kraków manuscripts, it is startlingly obvious that it has been granted such a status erroneously. *Über die Soldatenehen* is just the first step in a prolonged process. It must not be treated as a definitive text, but rather, at best, as a transitional one. When read as part of an on-going process, like *Die Soldaten*, it offers a new perspective on Lenz's struggle to shed his poetic persona and move into the world of politics. His naiveté is evident throughout, offering valuable insight into the original moral concerns which underpin his decision to attempt the formulation of such a proposal. The preoccupations with the 'Übel' of society and the erosion of its *moeurs* provide a firm link to the sense of 'Bestimmung' evoked firstly in *Stimmen des Laien* and subsequently in the, as he then decided, ineffectual forum of the theatre in *Die Soldaten*, the origin of all his subsequent military texts. As such *Über die Soldatenehen* undoubtedly has its merits as a 'teething' text, with Lenz coming to grips with the painful transition from poet to would-be salaried policy advisor or spin doctor. In the scheme of his own subsequent work, Lenz himself deems its form, content and style a failure; it would seem that he comes to this conclusion shortly after his arrival in Weimar and in any event before his departure to Berka. As a result of this, backed up by the sheer weight of subsequent texts written whilst in Berka, any reading which relies solely on a reading of *Über die Soldatenehen* as the basis of an analysis of Lenz's military writings, and the 'Wendepunkt' of his stay in

Weimar, and indeed his career, can only be illegitimate. It becomes, at best, highly contentious. Hence, to take but one example, Wilson's elaborately argued article, giving an apparently persuasive account of *Über die Soldatenehen*, linking its ever 'schrulliger' project to a whole array of historical, biographical and textual sources, whatever its merits, loses credibility as it is confined to that one text. Wilson's claim that it is 'das Schlüsseldokument für Lenzens Haltung zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus' no longer holds water. Indeed, until now, the 'Wendepunkt' has been judged on the merits offered by a text largely written before Lenz even set foot in Weimar.

'New' texts must force an extensive revision of received critical opinion. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the 'lächerlich, unausführbar [und] phantastisch' verdict cast on Lenz's plans for military reform. It must be remembered that Lenz was not alone in his ambitions for a career in the service of an absolutist state. Many of the allegedly 'revolutionary' Stürmer und Dränger, Goethe and Klinger (also in Weimar during the summer of 1776) among them, were indeed rather keen to sign themselves up to the interests of the absolutist state in return for professional security, thus following in the tradition of authors advising monarchs which had grown in the eighteenth century. Viewed in this light, Lenz's idea of writing a proposal cannot be dismissed, however tempting it may be to do so from a twentieth century perspective, as the product of a deluded mind. Instead Lenz was, as a 'Kenner des Waffenwesens', playing to his strengths and, what is more, responding to precise political upheavals of the period in an attempt to advance his career. That he set his sights so high - at Versailles - has less to do with some megalomaniac competition with Goethe, already established in his own way at

Weimar, and more with the fact that France presented itself as the natural target for his proposals. The final drafts of the 'lettre à Maurepas' are ample testimony to the maturing of his initial ideas into a considered and meticulously researched project. Lenz places his innovative proposals firmly in the mainstream of political debate and presents them with the express intention of winning himself a position at court. The substance of his arguments, based on a more than superficial understanding of the problems facing the French state in the 1770s, display a sophisticated awareness which is conspicuous by its absence in *Über die Soldatenehen*. State banking, the management of government debt, the causes of a depressed agricultural sector, the state of the military, the manipulation of inheritance laws, all these subjects hardly belong to the realm of 'fantasy'. Couple these concerns to an acute sensitivity to the political upheavals which coincided with his time in Weimar and Berka, from Turgot's fall onwards, and it would appear that it was not Lenz that was lost in an 'Ideenwelt' of his own, but that it was the rather more famous luminaries of Weimar, Wieland and Goethe, who were lost in a 'Weimarwelt' of their own making, unable - as is clear in Wieland's letter to Goethe's mother - to make head or tail of the 'Einsiedler' and his ideas for reform.²⁰⁴

These 'new' texts offer the opportunity for a more balanced evaluation of Lenz's military project. They do not, however, tell a complete story. Goethe's allusion to 'ein großes Memoire', written to St. Germain and allegedly burnt, remains unaccounted for. It is possible that Lenz indeed destroyed what would have been the complement to any introductory letter, perhaps that to Maurepas; certainly there is no trace of it in Kraków. However, as one passage in *Der Landprediger* intimates, Lenz in all likelihood did send

²⁰⁴ See Chapter III, note 5, p. 115.

something to Paris. Lenz the narrator satirises the efforts of a friend of his protagonist's father, perhaps targeting his previous attempts in the process:

[...] Er las dannhero zu seiner Gemütsergötzung alles, was jemals über Staatswirtschaft geschrieben worden war, schickte auch oft Verbesserungsprojekte ohne Namen, bald an den Premierminister, bald an den Präsidenten von der Kammer, auf welche er noch niemals Antwort erhalten hatte. Indessen schmeichelte er sich doch in heitern Stunden mit der angenehmen Hoffnung, daß sie für beide nicht könnten ohne Nutzen gewesen sein und daß unbemerkt zum Wohl des Ganzen mitzuwirken der größte Triumph des Weisen wäre.²⁰⁵

Either way the project ended in failure. Even though Lenz held out hope right up until the end of November of actually returning to France armed with his plan on a mission blessed by Carl August, or via an introduction to court by using the connection offered by his compatriot Vietinghof, his project was brought to a sudden end with the infamous 'Eseley' committed on the 26th of November 1776. The banishment from court, for whatever misdemeanour, signalled the end of any realistic hope of taking his project and hence his political career any further. The pursuit of his 'Bestimmung' was brought to a halt just as Lenz's project to work for the 'social good' through the medium of politics had come a state of completion. By the winter of 1776 Lenz found that he had come full circle, back to the inadequate form of literature, which he now turns to negative effect in *Der Landprediger*, reflecting back on his own failed political aspirations, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The failure of Lenz's project in reality and the academic fixation with his 'Eseley', have, however, adversely prejudiced its critical reception. The complaint which Guibert

²⁰⁵ *Der Landprediger*, III, 414-15. Written between December 1776 and April 1777, this Erzählung, as Chapter V will show, is a rueful epitaph to the demise of Lenz's military projects. Only further research into archives in Paris will be able to verify whether Lenz did actually send a full proposal, but there is a strong possibility that he did. Initial inquiries have been promising.

makes in his *Essai général de Tactique* still holds true today: 'Les gens de lettres n'ont pas, en général, cette haute idée de la science de la guerre. Ils la croient vague et dénuée de principes positifs.' In a slight amendment to the following sentence a statement can be made about literary criticism's attitude towards Lenz's own project, based as it is solely on *Über die Soldatenehen*:

Ce malheureux préjugé est répandu même chez les *critiques littéraires*. Faute d'avoir assez étudié leur art, ils ne font point assez de cas de leur profession. Je retirerai de mon travail un grand prix, si j'ouvre les yeux à quelques uns d'eux. Il est si encourageant, quand on cultive une science, de la voir acquérir de l'estime et de l'importance dans l'opinion des hommes.²⁰⁶

The 'science' of archival research is much underestimated. Nevertheless the failure of Lenz's project, both in literary and political history, and its subsequent dismissal as 'lächerlich, unausführbar [und] phantastisch' is perhaps not so surprising after all - as Raphael Nonsenso says in Thomas More's *Utopia*:

*What do you suppose would happen if I started telling a king to make sensible laws, or trying to expel the deadly germs of bad ones from his mind? I'd be promptly thrown out, or merely treated as a figure of fun.*²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Guibert, II, 349-50, see Chapter III, note 55, p. 132.

²⁰⁷ T. More, *Utopia*, trans. by P. Turner (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 57.

Chapter V

Prose as self-commentary: The
'Landläufer' and *Der Landprediger*

Prose as self-commentary: The ‘Landläufer’ and *Der Landprediger*

Freilich traurig genug, kaum gesehen und gesprochen, ausgestoßen
aus dem Himmel als ein Landläufer, Rebell, Pasquillant [...] Hätt
ich nur Goethens Winke eher verstanden. Sag ihm das [...] Wie soll
ich Dir danken für Deine Vorsprache beim Herzog. Er wird mein
Herr immer bleiben, wo ich auch sei, ohne Ordres und Ukasen [...]
Umarme und segne Deine Gattin [...] - vergißt mich. Lebt wohl!
(Lenz an Herder, Weimar, 29. oder 30.
November 1776)¹

Ich schwärme in der Schweiz herum [...]
(Lenz an Boie d. 26ten Mai 1777)²

Right up until the infamous ‘Eseley’ on the 26 November 1776, an event which signalled an abrupt end to his stay in Weimar, Lenz harboured ambitions for the military proposals on which he had been working so feverishly during his time in Berka.³ In a letter to Pfeffel written shortly before his banishment, in which he thanks him for his help in providing answers to his ‘fürwitzigen Fragen’ regarding the Ecole Militaire and Les Invalides, Lenz makes a passing comment concerning his continuing political ambitions: ‘Ich weiß nicht welchen Anteil ich an Frankreich nehme, dem ich doch keine Verbindlichkeiten habe.’⁴ Although his political ideas have developed beyond measure he is faced by the same problem that has dogged him throughout, from the writing of *Die Soldaten* until the end of his stay in Weimar: the lack of a receptive audience or a means of gaining entry to court. Even if he did send his letters to Maurepas or St. Germain, there is still no sign of

¹ III, 517-18.

² III, 529.

³ For details and conspiracy theories regarding the ‘Eseley’ incident, which has overshadowed any serious research into Lenz’s Weimar stay, see: P.Hacks, Müller, III, 109; W.H.Preuß, ‘Lenzens Eseley’: *Der Tod der Dido*, *Goethe Jahrbuch*, 106 (1989), 53-90; E.Menz, ‘Lenzens Weimarer Eselei’, *Goethe Jahrbuch*, 106 (1989), 91-105; and U.Kaufmann, ‘>>Ich geh aufs land weil ich bei Euch nichts tun kann.<< Zu einigen Aspekten des Aufenthalts von J.M.R.Lenz am Weimarer Musenhof’, in *Unaufhörlich Lenz gelesen...*, pp. 153-66.

⁴ Lenz an Pfeffel [Ende November 1776], III, 514, see Lenz an Pfeffel [Mitte Juli 1776], III, 486-87 for the ‘fürwitzigen Fragen’ mentioned in the November letter.

an invitation to Paris. Nevertheless this state of limbo was to be short-lived. Lenz's expulsion from Weimar, just a few days after his letter to Pfeffel was written, put paid to his political aspirations. Indeed he acknowledges an end of ambition on all fronts in his farewell letter to Herder: 'Ich dachte nicht daß es so plötzlich aus sein sollte und hatte mir meine süßesten Arbeiten aufgespart. Diese Gelegenheit ist hernach für mich verloren. Nur ein einziger Tag -'⁵ Exiled from court life, Lenz is deprived of the possibility of entering the political fray, with his pursuit of 'Bestimmung' brought to an abrupt end.

As this chapter will argue on the basis of a close textual analysis, the end of Lenz's political aspirations triggers a reversion to the previously castigated activity of 'dichten' in *Der Landprediger*.⁶ By tracing the precise course of the narrative, and arguing that it steadily gains ironic force as the story unfolds, this chapter aims to illustrate that *Der Landprediger* also marks a definitive break with the rest of the texts treated thus far. The common driving force of a will to political action, which manifests itself in the logical progression between the texts of the period 1774-76, will be shown to be broken in *Der Landprediger* as it becomes subject to intense, and increasingly ironic scrutiny. The politicised sense of 'Bestimmung' defined in *Stimmen des Laien* leads to Lenz's desire for a platform from which he can voice his views, the first step of which is to try to gain an invitation to court, as is evident in *Die Soldaten*. Having gained a foothold in court, Lenz develops his political ideas beyond measure, as the Berka manuscripts illustrate. *Der*

⁵ Lenz an Herder [Weimar, 29. oder 30. November 1776], III, 518.

⁶ See Chapter I, pp. 64-70: 'Ein tätiger Glaube ist [...] nicht reden, träumen, dichten, predigen, Schriften herausgeben, sie mögen Meinungen oder Stimm[ung]en heißen - es ist tun.', *Dritte Stimme*, II, 613. Of course Lenz also wrote other works whilst in Weimar and Berka, such as *Der Waldbruder*, and the 'Pasquille' that may or may not have contributed to his banishment (see articles cited, note 3, p. 239), but by far the greater portion of his time would have been spent on his military writings, as the sheer weight of manuscripts in Kraków proves.

Landprediger, it will be argued, is not conceived as a continuation of such political concerns, rather there is an underlying detachment and disillusionment with his previous political aspirations. The expulsion from Weimar leads to a retrospective acknowledgement of failure, as his bridges to court are well and truly burnt, with the literary medium of prose becoming a vehicle for self-commentary, and, ultimately, self-criticism. Written between the end of 1776 and early 1777, whilst staying in Emmendingen with Cornelia and Johann Schlosser, this story also amounts to his last work prior to his mental breakdown.⁷ From the tone of the *Erzählung* it would seem that Lenz himself is aware of an era coming to a definitive end, as it is somewhat ironic that Johannes Mannheim, the protagonist of *Der Landprediger*, is 'Pfarrer von Großendingen'.⁸ For Lenz too, as will be argued, *Der Landprediger* marks an end to what he had originally perceived to be 'great things', written as an epitaph to his own abortive career of writer as reformer.

Nevertheless, despite, or perhaps precisely due to the timing of its composition - after his expulsion from Weimar - *Der Landprediger* has been critically received in two ways. Surprisingly, considering the slippery nature of Lenz's literary endeavours, both of these approaches assume that the *Erzählung* is unquestionably positive, free from any sense of irony, let alone an irony which is self-referential.⁹ Firstly *Der Landprediger* has

⁷ See Damm's note, II, 874. The story appeared in three instalments in the *Deutsches Museum* in 1777, much to Lenz's consternation, see Lenz an Boie Emmendingen. d. 9ten April [1777]: 'Die Zerstücklung des Landpredigers war mir nicht die angenehmste Neuigkeit.', III, 527. See also Lenz an Boie d. 26ten Mai 1777, III, 529-30.

⁸ II, 456. All other references to *Der Landprediger* unless otherwise stated.

⁹ K. Wurst was the first critic to argue that 'the moments of instability that destabilise the text', are not to be dismissed as formal inconsistencies, testimony to artistic weakness as is maintained in received interpretations. Rather they are key to an understanding of the text. See: 'Contradictory Concepts? The Artist as Reformer. J.M.R. Lenz's *Der Landprediger*', in *Order from Confusion: Essays presented to*

been read as what is termed a 'Wunschbiographie', one written after the failure of his sojourn in Weimar.¹⁰ In Klaus Scherpe's view *Der Landprediger* amounts to an attempt by Lenz to make up for the bitter experience of failure, both in his personal life and in his reform projects, by using the freedom offered by fiction to create a vision of how his life should have or could have been; literature becomes the medium of dreamy self-fulfilment:

Der Realitätsgehalt dieser Erzählung erschließt sich, wenn man die Glücksfälle und Erfolgserlebnisse des Joseph [*sic*] Mannheim jeweils als positive Wendungen gegenüber Lenz' eigenen Fehlversuchen im praktischen Leben erkennt: seinem Zerwürfnis mit der Familie und der Auflehnung gegen die väterliche Autorität, seinen Liebesverwirrungen und erfolglosen Werbungen, seinen zum Scheitern verurteilten Reformprojekten und den nur in der Einbildung befriedigenden Ideen für eine ständeübergreifende Erziehung und Versittlichung. Ausgehend von den negativen Erfahrungen in der eigenen Lebenspraxis schreibt Lenz die Geschichte eines bürgerlichen Lebens, wie es sein soll.¹¹

That such self-fulfilment should take the form of a bourgeois existence 'wie es sein soll' appears questionable when measured against the actual course of events in *Der Landprediger*, as the detailed textual analysis of the text offered in this chapter seeks to show. Scherpe's alleged model 'bürgerliches Leben' is one prone to constant temptation, upset, conflict, rocky marriages, reaching, according to the narrator, a definitive

Edward McInnes on his sixtieth birthday, ed. by A. Deighton (Hull: New German Studies, 1995), pp. 28-52. (p. 29)

¹⁰ K.R. Scherpe, 'Dichterische Erkenntnis und Projektmacherei': Widersprüche im Werk von J.M.R. Lenz', in *Sturm und Drang*, ed. by M. Wacker (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 279-314. See p. 285: 'Die Erzählung der Lebensgeschichte des Landpredigers Joseph [*sic*] Mannheim, der aus seinem Familienkreis heraus vorbildlich in die Gesellschaft wirkt, liest sich wie eine Wunschbiographie des Autors Lenz.'

¹¹ Scherpe, p. 286. By the mid 1980s such a reading was referred to as a commonplace, see M.E. Müller, 'Die Wunschwelt des Tantalus'. Kritische Bemerkungen zu sozial-utopischen Entwürfen im Werk von J.M.R. Lenz', in *Literatur für Leser*, 3 (1984), 148-61: 'Mit dem <Landprediger> dagegen hat er sich, wie mehrfach bemerkt worden ist, eine Wunschbiographie geschrieben.', p. 149. An astonishingly naïve earlier incarnation of such a reading, nevertheless along similar lines, is offered by R. Girard, *Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz: Gèneses d'une Dramaturgie du Tragi-Comique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968): 'Trois ans plus tard, dans un écrit intitulé *Sur les Mariages des Soldats* (*Ueber die Soldatenehen*), Lenz aborde le problème de l'armée de métier à l'époque même où il envisage de faire une carrière militaire. L'année suivante, en 1777, il écrit *Le Pasteur de Campagne*, un récit dans lequel il imagine ce que pourrait être son existence s'il retournait auprès de son père et acceptait de devenir pasteur.' pp. 112-13.

'Katastrophe'¹², before the bizarrest of endings elevates the Mannheims, despite their troubled existence, to cult status. These hardly appear the ingredients for model bourgeois living, nor the substance of some dreamy 'Wunschbiographie'. Indeed even the opening lines of *Der Landprediger* act as a form of caveat against such a reading. Although the protagonist of the following story, it is made clear that Mannheim is unwittingly so, and, even in his own eyes, hardly a heroic figure:

Ich will die Geschichte eines Menschen erzählen, der sich wohl unter allen möglichen Dingen dieses zuletzt vorstellte, auf den Flügeln der Dichtkunst unter die Gestirne getragen zu werden.¹³

From the outset the ironic phrase 'auf den Flügeln der Dichtkunst' sets a tone which will, as it gains in force, ultimately render Mannheim a questionable hero. On another, more autobiographic, level, this phrase is also indicative of Lenz's ironic attitude in reverting to literature after the failure of his political ambitions.

The second strand in its critical reception views *Der Landprediger* as utopian. Ignoring the evidence of the Mannheims' less than harmonious Großendingen existence, the Erzählung has been taken as a form of 'Pfarrer-Utopie', with Lenz adopting the form of the *conte morale*:

In der Erzählung geht es weniger um den idealen Staat als um den idealen Menschen. Hier wie in anderen utopischen Entwürfen Lenzens, vor allem der Schrift *Über die Soldatenehen* [...] ist nicht an einen grundsätzlich alternativen Staat gedacht, sondern das dahinter sichtbar werdende Konzept eines 'partnerschaftlichen' Ausgleichs zwischen den Klassen fordert eine Umbesetzung

¹² II, 451.

¹³ II, 413. One of the reviews of *Der Landprediger* plays on this opening to denigrate the Erzählung: 'Der Landprediger, eine Erzählung von Lenz, die die Geschichte eines Menschen enthält, der sich wohl unter allen möglichen Dingen dieses zuletzt vorstellte, auf den Flügeln der Dichtkunst unter die Gestirne getragen zu werden. Herr Lenz hat die Ahndung seines Helden nicht widerlegt, sondern geht mit ihm so tief an der Erde weg, daß vermuthlich keiner von beiden den Gestirnen sonderlich nahe kommen wird.' (Christian Felix Weiße, *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*, Leipzig, 24 Band, 1. Stück 1780), Müller, I, 511. Weiße also makes an appearance in *Pandämonium Germanicum*, I, 265-67 (II, v).

der Funktionsstellen, den Austausch von unmoralischen durch moralische Subjekte.¹⁴

The 'Modellcharakter' is presented, according to a number of critics - regardless of the caveat in the first line of the *Erzählung* - so as to convey an unquestionably utopian vision:

Konzipiert als exemplarisches Modell, zielt er [*Der Landprediger*] unmittelbar auf Nützlichkeit [...] Unter dem Aspekt der Lehre aufgeboren, kann er theologische, politische, philosophische, agronomische und literarische Themen versammeln [...] Darüber hinaus aber versteht sich die *Erzählung* vom Landprediger selbst ja als Beispielgeschichte mit Modellcharakter [...] Worauf das Werk seiner Intention nach zielt, ist offenkundig konkrete Handlungsanweisung.¹⁵

Judged in purely monetary terms it is indeed tempting to see Mannheim as providing the 'Handlungsanweisung' to ensure the certain prosperity worthy of any utopia, but such a reading skates over the moral concerns also associated with utopias. Indeed his performance as a clerical agrarian management consultant cannot be faulted; his decision to transform the traditional 'Vesper des Sonntags nachmittags' into 'eine ökonomische Gesellschaft' brings startlingly rapid results: 'So ward in kurzer Zeit das Dorf eines der wohlhabigsten in der ganzen Gegend.'¹⁶ However, with the dividends reaped so quickly, with the sketchiest of outlines of how such wealth was actually created, and taking the balance of the narrative into account, it is tenuous to view *Der Landprediger* as a serious blueprint for economic and agricultural reform. The path towards utopia is hardly the focus of an *Erzählung* of which only a tiny fraction is in any way connected with the topic

¹⁴ J. Stötzer, *Das vom Pathos der Zerissenheit geprägte Subjekt: Eigenart und Stellung der epischen Texte im Gesamtwerk von Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1992), p. 151. An alternative utopian reading is offered by C. Zierath, *Moral und Sexualität bei Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 1995): 'Während *Der Landprediger* eben ein Märchen über das Funktionieren einer idealen Philosophie ist...', p. 88.

¹⁵ H. Dedert, *Die Erzählung im Sturm und Drang: Studien zur Prosa des 18. Jahrhunderts*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), pp. 91-92.

¹⁶ II, 423-24.

of economic and social reform. As this chapter will argue, the narrative focus is not trained on the evocation of any utopian vision, but rather on the human interaction of various characters, which being far from harmonious are also far from exemplary, let alone utopian, as the increasingly ironic tone of the narrator suggests.

The one-sided view of *Der Landprediger* as an unquestionably idyllic Erzählung has been compounded by an equally questionable perception of its relationship to Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). In trying to support a utopian reading of *Der Landprediger*, certain critics have drawn on Goldsmith's novel:

Lenzens Erzählung *Der Landprediger* (1777) reiht sich in der Tradition jener idyllisierenden Landpfarrer Erzählung ein, die im Gefolge des genreprägenden Romans *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) von Goldsmith entstanden sind und Möglichkeiten bürgerlicher Lebenspraxis fernab von Hof und Stadt reflektieren.¹⁷

The utopian reading of *Der Landprediger* is projected back onto the earlier English novel, with the word 'Tradition' summoned to give further credence to Schmalhaus' conviction that Lenz too is offering some form of idyllic vision. It would appear contentious to talk of any 'Tradition' after such a short period of time, but there was an established Goldsmith cult by the 1770s, and there are a number of Goldsmith references in Lenz's work.¹⁸ The apparent ease with which a comparison can be made also lures an English critic into the same trap:

¹⁷ S. Schmalhaus, *Literarische Anspielungen als Darstellungsprinzip: Studien zur Schreibmethodik von J.M.R. Lenz* (Münster/Hamburg: LIF Verlag, 1994), p. 157.

¹⁸ In conversation with the Spezialesuperintendent in the 'Anhang' to *Der Landprediger*, Mannheim mentions how he recites passages 'aus einem guten Roman von Goldsmith' as means of instructing his parishioners, II, 463. By this stage, however, Mannheim's reliability is subject to scrutiny, as will be discussed below. Lenz's own knowledge of Goldsmith's novel dates back to the early 1770s. In a letter to Salzmann, Lenz recounts of how he gave a sermon in Sesenheim, making a reference to 'die Soutane eines Pfarrers von Wakefield'. (Lenz an Salzmann [Fort Louis, 31 August 1772], III, 266) In her notes Damm states that Goldsmith's novel had become famous in Germany in 1776, with Goethe sending a copy to Lenz whilst he was in Kochberg so that he might read it together with Charlotte von Stein as part

In *Der Landprediger* the moral purpose of the story is stated less baldly; the reference to Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (*Der Landprediger von Wakefield*) in the title awakens a specific expectation, and this expectation is confirmed by an opening sentence which begins to show, rather than tell, that the central character is an exemplary character [...]¹⁹

True, Dr Primrose is an exemplary character, in almost always acting according to his highly noble sense of morality; this despite the catastrophes it brings on his family, or, as chapter twenty-four is entitled, 'Fresh calamities'. But the whirlwind plot is undercut by the subtlest of ironies, with the first person narrative offering both a critique and a defence of the protagonist. Dr Primrose is not an unconditionally exemplary character. Just as Lenz provides a caveat in his opening paragraph, so too does Goldsmith in the form of an epigraph which admonishes the reader about any putative idylls to be found in the novel which follows: '*Sperate miseri, cavete faelices.*'²⁰ Throughout the novel any form of happiness is, in keeping with the second clause of the epigraph, at best fragile. The Vicar's rural existence is far from idyllic, and his moral virtue is shown to be battered from all sides in a decidedly unidyllic world. It is only the advice offered in the first half of the epigraph, not without irony itself, that offers any solace: the faith in Providence is the only way to counter the trials and tribulations of life. And sure enough faith in Providence, through the magistrate Sir William Thornhill, eventually triumphs, bringing about a harmonious family reunion in the contrived *dénouement* of the novel. If there is any cue

of his English instruction, II, 881. J.Froitzheim points out that a translation of the *Vicar of Wakefield* was recited at meetings of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* - set up by Lenz as a successor to the *Société* in 1775 - on more than one occasion, see *Zu Strassburgs Sturm- und Drangperiode 1770-76* (Strassburg: Heitz & Mündel, 1888), pp. 37-39. In fact Herder had read his own translation of Goldsmith to, amongst others, Goethe during his time in Straßburg in 1771, see below.

¹⁹ J.Osborne, *J.M.R.Lenz: The Renunciation of Heroism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), p. 85.

²⁰ The epigraph is taken from Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), two sentences from the end. It can be translated: 'Take heart you who are miserable; take heed you who are happy.' See O.Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ed. by S.Coote (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1982), p. 200.

for Lenz to take from Goldsmith it is not that of replicating a simple rural idyll. That the characters in *Der Landprediger* are confronted with a series of tests, as in Goldsmith's novel, might hint at some form of similarity between the two, but in such a case any utopian vision or victory of faith in Providence is firmly out of the question, with Lenz, as in his dramas, meticulously describing an ending which is anything but a *dénouement*. Certainly the simple unironic reading of *The Vicar of Wakefield* prevalent in Lenz scholarship is not one shared by Goethe. Despite enduring Herder's 'ernst und schlicht' recital of his own translation whilst a student in Straßburg, Goethe says of the novel:

Die Darstellung dieses Charakters [...] macht diesen Roman zu einem der besten, die je geschrieben worden; der noch überdies den großen Vorzug hat, daß er ganz sittlich, ja im reinen Sinne christlich ist, die Belohnung des guten Willens, des Beharrens bei dem Rechten darstellt, das unbedingte Zutrauen auf Gott bestätigt und den endlichen Triumph des Guten über das Böse beglaubigt, und dies alles ohne eine Spur von Frömmelei oder Pedantismus. Vor beiden hatte den Verfasser der hohe Sinn bewahrt, der sich hier durchgängig als Ironie zeigt, wodurch dieses Werkchen uns ebenso weise als liebenswürdig entgegenkommen muß.²¹

As this chapter seeks to show, whilst the benevolence of Providence does not feature prominently in *Der Landprediger*, the use of irony, identified by Goethe as the underpinning of Goldsmith's novel, also plays a large role in Lenz's work. Given the unironic readings of the text which have thus far dominated the *Erzählung*'s reception, it will be necessary to trace the course of the narrative in detail by means of a close textual analysis. Only by so doing will it be possible to illustrate how the irony of the narrative gains in momentum, reaching a point verging on parody by the *Erzählung*'s conclusion. But the irony also works on two levels, one autobiographical and one literary: certain elements of the *Erzählung* appear to carry strong autobiographical traits, whilst in other

²¹ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Zehntes Buch, HA, IX, 427-29. On Herder's delivery, Goethe tries to be charitable: 'Ohne monoton zu sein ließ Herder alles in einem Ton hintereinander folgen [...]', 426.

places Mannheim, viewed as a purely literary character, is the subject of more distant irony. There is, however, no clear cut distinction between the two levels of irony, rather one plays off the other, with the text, as a close reading will seek to establish, oscillating between the two.

Der Landprediger has also been cast as an autobiographical, or more accurately a 'Wunschbiographie' text on the basis of its misperceived relationship with another text, *Über die Soldatenehen*. Read as a natural progression of the first draft of Lenz's military reform project - mainly written, it should be remembered, before his arrival in Weimar - it becomes tempting, to some critics at least, to view *Der Landprediger* as another part of a 'pragmatic blueprint' for root and branch social reform, even though Lenz had already been expelled from Weimar when he wrote it. In banding the two texts together Madland, in one of the most recent appraisals of *Der Landprediger*, reaches the following conclusion:

Lenz's utopian vision in these two major reformatory texts is elicited by his study of and reflection on military history and contemporary economic theory [...] The proposed marriages for soldiers and the rural reforms instituted by Johannes Mannheim, like the physiocrats' economic model, are intended to have beneficial repercussions ultimately encompassing all of society. The result of Lenz's reforms will be an ideal society which can be achieved by carefully adhering to his scheme. He is as certain of this as Plato in *The Republic* and Thomas More in his *Utopia*. The skepticism of his plays *Der Hofmeister* and *Die Soldaten* cannot be found in these texts. It has been replaced by messianic fervour, by devout faith in the individual and in the power of the family as society's moral nucleus.²²

Certainly there would appear to be superficial similarities between the two texts. In particular the idyllic blooming of Großendingen into the most prosperous parish in the region appears to have much in common with the rural idylls presented in *Über die*

²² H. Madland, *Image and Text: J.M.R. Lenz* (Amsterdam - Atlanta: Rodopi B.V, 1994), pp. 99-100.

Soldatenehen.²³ However, the utopian images conjured up in the political text are not simply replicated in the more problematic medium of literature. On an autobiographical level, Lenz's reversion to the literary medium also signifies a transformation in his attitude towards his earlier reform projects. Rather than affirming the vision expressed in *Über die Soldatenehen*, after his failure in Weimar, a critical stance towards the substance of his own thwarted political aspirations is taken. In *Der Landprediger* 'messianic fervour' is replaced not merely with 'skepticism', but by a sense of delusion. Instead of sharing the strength of conviction of a Plato, Lenz comes to realise the folly of his efforts at entering the political arena.²⁴ Any affinity to Thomas More's *Utopia* is perhaps best reflected by Raphael Nonsenso's realisation:

What do you suppose would happen if I started telling a king to make sensible laws, or trying to expel the deadly germs of bad from his mind? I'd be promptly thrown out, or merely treated as a figure of fun.²⁵

It should not be forgotten that prior to writing *Der Landprediger*, Lenz too had been 'promptly thrown out', having been a 'figure of fun' once too often. There is a definitive break between the composition of the Berka plans and *Der Landprediger*, not merely in time, but also in attitude, with Lenz learning Nonsenso's lesson the hard way, his notion of 'Bestimmung' left in ruins.

Treating *Über die Soldatenehen* as the definitive text on military reform, it is possible to understand the desire to draw parallels with *Der Landprediger*, written later in

²³ Compare the poetic visions of *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 799, 818-19, and the 'Wirtschaftswunder' of Großendingen, II, 422-24.

²⁴ Interestingly Lenz would be none too happy with the comparison with Plato, even in his *Über die Soldatenehen* incarnation, see *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 798: 'man zucke hier nicht die Schultern über Platonische Träume...', see Chapter III, note 86, p. 142.

²⁵ T. More, *Utopia*, p. 57. See Chapter IV, note 207, p. 237.

the same year of 1776, at the latest in early 1777. However, in between the composition of these two texts, there comes Lenz's stay in Weimar and, more specifically, his rapid development of his military project away from its naïve first incarnation in *Über die Soldatenehen*, a work which Lenz himself denigrates.²⁶ Written in the wake of his expulsion, it is difficult to conceive that Lenz would revert to a dreamy and vague literary portrayal of a supposed utopia to illustrate the wisdom of his proposals seriously. Rather it would seem that an attitude of detachment, and thus an opportunity for self-commentary, is made possible by the reversion to literature. The existence of the considerable array of texts related to military reform currently held in Kraków puts paid to any notion that there is a seamless continuity from *Über die Soldatenehen* to *Der Landprediger*. On the contrary, if there is any link to be made between the two it is one of antagonism. Utopian visions may form the focus of *Über die Soldatenehen*, but it is their ironic presentation that is the focus of *Der Landprediger*. Even without the context offered by new manuscript evidence, a rigorous analysis of the *Erzählung*'s narrative focus will call into question any utopian reading. The narrator is not concerned with the creation of a pastoral idyll, as his brief description of the Großendingen 'Wirtschaftswunder' indicates.²⁷ If there is a 'blueprint' of reform to be found in *Der Landprediger* then it is one which charts the way to failure, rather than towards utopia.

At the beginning of the *Erzählung* it is possible to see close autobiographical elements in the narrative. Without reducing *Der Landprediger* to pure autobiography, it is possible to see a strand of self-commentary which relates back to Lenz's misplaced hopes

²⁶ See Chapter IV, note 21, p. 166.

²⁷ See II, 422-24.

in Weimar. Early on in *Der Landprediger*, given 'zum Vorschub' to save 'meine Kollegen manches Kopfbrechen über meinen Helden', the narrator briefly elucidates the achievements of Mannheim's mentor, who is one of his father's friends.²⁸ His voracious study of economics mirrors Lenz's own strenuous efforts whilst in Berka: 'Er las dannhero zu seiner Gemütsergötzung alles, was jemals über Staatswirtschaft geschrieben worden war...' The similarities between the two are even more striking when reference is made to letters sent to governmental ministers: '[er] schickte auch oft Verbesserungsprojekte ohne Namen, bald an den Premierminister, bald an den Präsidenten von der Kammer, auf welche er noch niemals Antwort erhalten hatte.' However, the optimism with which Lenz drafted, and, in all probability, sent his letters to Maurepas and St. Germain is replaced by a mocking of the self-delusion involved in such an exercise:

Indessen schmeichelte er sich doch in heitern Stunden mit der angenehmen Hoffnung, daß sie für beide nicht könnten ohne Nutzen gewesen sein und daß unbemerkt zum Wohl des ganzen mitzuwirken der größte Triumph des Weisen wäre.²⁹

The self-delusion of 'dieser glückliche Mensch [...] mit all diesen kameralistischen Grillen' is, in this sense, a self-commentary on Lenz's own delusions of grandeur during his own bout of feverish activity in Berka, with the medium of literature allowing him the distance required for such retrospection.³⁰ In tone such a passage would not appear to match the material of any putative 'Wunschbiographie': if there is any sense of 'Biographie' than it is more a form of 'Reuebiographie'.

²⁸ II, 414, and following references until indicated otherwise.

²⁹ II, 414-15.

³⁰ II, 415.

When it comes to the presentation of Mannheim's own reformist ideas, the narrative tone begins to become more markedly ironic, as the protagonist develops more as a literary than an autobiographical character. Mannheim's formative education again shares some elements of Lenz's own experience, such as his university education, his relationship with his father, the study of agriculture and the realisation of the shortcomings of 'die Theorie der Ökonomen',³¹ to the rumours that reach Mannheim's father of his son's desire 'sich adeln zu lassen' whilst he is living amongst army officers.³² However, such sporadic autobiographical elements are meshed into a far wider and more distant self-commentary on the futility of Lenz's own reform projects, presented through the medium of literature. According to the narrator, the profundity of Mannheim's reformist ideas only comes to light posthumously, with a number of 'fürtreffliche Traktate' published in Amsterdam.³³ Just as with Mannheim's mentor's endeavours, a number of parallels can be drawn between Mannheim's writings and Lenz's preoccupations in the 'lettre à Maurepas'; amongst the tracts:

[...] war eine Abhandlung von der Viehseuche, von den Pferdekuren, von den Wieswachs und dem Nutzen der englischen Futterkräuter, von dem Klima und dessen Einfluß auf Menschen, Tiere und Pflanzen, besonders der Bevölkerung [...]³⁴

The upshot of such detailed studies is surely not without irony, as the narrator goes on to laud Mannheim's efforts: '...worinnen Blicke in die Menschennatur und in die allgemeine organisierte Natur waren, die einem Montesquieu würden haben erröten machen.' Not

³¹ II, 417.

³² II, 418, For comparisons, such as the opportunity for non-nobles like Lenz, 'sich adeln zu lassen', during 1774-76 see Wilson, pp. 67-71.

³³ II, 445.

³⁴ Ibid.

satisfied with causing Montesquieu to blush, the praise heaped on Mannheim's alleged 'achievements' is couched in an increasingly ironic tone:

Er fand das große Geheimnis der Ähnlichkeit des Menschen mit der ganzen Schöpfung, die ihn umgibt, ja er fand, welches Montesquieu selbst nicht gesucht haben würde, selbst die Unterschiede der Regierungsform in der Natur des Bodens und dem Einfluß desselben auf Charaktere, Sitten und Meinungen seiner Bewohner. Durch diesen Schlüssel erklärte er die wunderbarsten Phänomene in der Geschichte und noch Erscheinungen, die heut zu Tage sich ergeben, auf eine Art, die keinen Zweifel übrig ließ.³⁵

Mannheim's exaggerated powers of insight, all derived from the humble farmyard, cannot be taken at face value. Rather than lauding his protagonist, the narrator undercuts the credibility of his profound insight. By extension, as the narrative oscillates between a more autobiographical and a more fictional stance, Lenz seems to be offering a damning self-commentary on the delusion to which he himself fell victim as he became lost in the complexity of his own economic theorising whilst in Berka, with a tone of regret running parallel to that of irony. Whilst the narrator may state that there is 'keinen Zweifel' left as to the wisdom of Mannheim's philosophy, the events detailed in the course of the *Erzählung* in fact sow ever more seeds of doubt about the alleged idyll's credibility.

It is more than significant that ideas for agricultural and economic reform are not detailed in the course of the *Erzählung*. The sudden flourishing of Großendingen, as a result of Mannheim's self-styled consultative surgery and economic preaching, is little more than a plot device, achieved with incredible narrative economy if *Der Landprediger* were to be read as a reformist tract.³⁶ Indeed there are striking parallels between central

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ See II, 422-24.

tenets of Mannheim's philosophy and Lenz's own project as it stands in the Berka drafts, such as the links between marriage, land and poverty:

Er warnte sie eben sowohl vor Ausschweifungen und Lüderlichkeiten als vor den frühen Heiraten und Zerstückelungen ihrer Grundstücke, welches alles Verwirrung und Armseligkeit in ihre Haushaltungen brächte.³⁷

However, whereas these ideas featured so prominently in the 'lettre à Maurepas', here they are dismissed in one sentence; their elucidation or credibility is not deemed relevant to the story at hand. Instead the aspect so conspicuously overlooked in Lenz's Berka projects, the importance of personal happiness, becomes the focus of *Der Landprediger*. Ostensibly 'happiness' had been at the heart of the sense of 'Bestimmung', as is simply expressed in *Meinungen eines Laien*: 'Religion soll uns glücklicher machen, sonst nehmen wir sie nicht an.'³⁸ However, the abstract economic ethos to which Lenz fell victim in Berka in pursuit of his own sense of 'Bestimmung' conspicuously ignores the importance of personal happiness. It is as if, put to the test in *Der Landprediger*, Lenz acknowledges such serious flaws. The narrative is concerned with the meticulous detailing of the series of troubles which plague the Mannheims rather than a serious test of the economic model or idyll. As Maria Müller points out 'die Mannheimische Wirtschaft wird folgerichtig nicht der geringsten Friktion ausgesetzt'; there are no droughts, crop failures, 'Fehlspekulation', calling the credibility of Mannheim's 'fürtreffliche Traktate', which after all provide the theoretical underpinning of the idyll, into question.³⁹ Even given

³⁷ II, 423.

³⁸ *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 526. See Chapter I, pp. 27-29.

³⁹ Müller, *Literatur für Leser*, p. 152. Furthermore, Müller is right to take issue with Scherpe's interpretation of *Der Landprediger* as an 'in sich konsistente Vorstellung eines gesellschaftlichen Reformprojekts'. Scherpe acknowledges the given nature of Mannheim's 'Wirtschaftswunder', but still pursues his own utopian/Wunschbiographie reading: 'Der Pragmatismus der agrarökonomischen

unshakeable economic prosperity and stability - undoubted aims of Lenz's Berka projects - the true tests come in the realm of personal relations; wealth alone does not sustain the illusion of utopia.

Although there are undoubtedly autobiographical elements to *Der Landprediger*, the whole narrative tone is far more problematic than 'Wunschbiographie' or utopian readings would appear to allow. Viewed as a literary piece, another form of irony becomes clear, one which complements the ironic sense of autobiographical self-commentary discussed thus far. From the beginning Mannheim's position, when judged as a purely literary character, is shown to be one of a would-be rather than genuine hero, as is illustrated in the comic opening scene: as his father and a whole host of 'Landpfarrer' return home, they catch the young Mannheim dressed in his father's wig and gown performing sermons to himself.⁴⁰ This notion is then picked up by the narrator and extended during the course of the 'Erster Teil', as an increasingly ironic tone is adopted, with Mannheim shown to be trying to perform a role he is not capable of, nor comfortable with. In a pastiche of the romance form, Mannheim is whisked through a whole array of formative experiences in society, going to balls 'wo er die große Welt kennen lernen konnte', travelling far and wide gaining all forms of business acumen and *savoir-faire*, but nevertheless keeping his distance from the temptations of such a world, coming to firm convictions about society. A commitment to the creation of a society in direct contrast to the falseness of 'die große Welt', one in which class relations are harmonious, with merit

Unternehmung (die Unbestimmtheit und Vorläufigkeit des Vorschlags zur landwirtschaftlichen Autarkie muß hier außer Betracht bleiben) wird als Sachinformation übermittelt.', p. 289. Scherpe's use of the term 'Unbestimmtheit' acknowledges the inadequacy of *Der Landprediger* as any kind of socio-economic blueprint.

⁴⁰ II, 413.

recognised irrespective of class, becomes the basis of his own avowed ethos. As such Mannheim's aspirations are representative of a common eighteenth-century enlightened ideal, rather than revolutionary:

Er war einigemal [...] auf Bällen gewesen [...] wo er die große Welt kennen lernen konnte, nicht um in ihr nach etwas zu streben, sondern um sich den falschen Firnis zu benehmen, den die Imagination der geringern Stände gemeinhin sich um die höheren lügt und der dem Gefühl ihres eigenen Glücks so gefährlich ist [...] Er fühlte das große Prinzipium der Gleichheit alles dessen, was gleich denkt, das durch alle Stände und Verhältnisse geht und nur dem Neide und der Unwissenheit durch äußere Dekorationen entzogen wird.⁴¹

Such detached observations of the imbalances of society, however worldly, are nevertheless treated with increasing irony as the narrative unfolds.

For example, initially Mannheim's continued attachment to his childhood sweetheart Luzilla seems to be a genuine sentimental attachment. The belittling image employed by the narrator to refer to Mannheim's relationship contributes to the gradual undermining of the protagonist's credibility. On his departure Luzilla gives Mannheim 'einen schönen rotseidenen Geldbeutel'.⁴² In choosing such an unambiguous motif and employing it on several occasions, the aim of ironizing Mannheim's affections becomes more manifest each time. Tired of waiting for Mannheim, Luzilla moves to the city and quickly is mixing with the '*beau monde* [...] wounter verschiedene Offiziere waren, die unsern herumschweifenden Johannes mit seinem roten Geldbeutel bald aus ihrer Imagination verwischten.'⁴³ The absurdity of Mannheim's lack of emotional insight - for all his worldly knowledge and experience - is picked up just a few lines later by extending the image still further: '...so blieb doch das Innre seines Herzens ein Heiligtum, worin für

⁴¹ II, 417.

⁴² II, 414

⁴³ II, 419.

seine wunderschöne Beutelstrickerin das heilige Feuer unauslöschlich brannte.'⁴⁴ Indeed his passion is of such intensity that the mere thought of the ironically named 'Beutelstrickerin' renders him incapable of learning the ways and means of business and economics. In the ensuing episode, when Mannheim finds Luzilla with a fashionably dressed young Abbé the day before their wedding, the motif is used for the last time, in an even more heavily ironic tone, as it is now as if Mannheim himself adopts it: 'Das Gespenst da [the young Stadtpfarrer], das häßliche Gespenst in dem runden, gepuderten Haar, mit seidenem Mantel an ihrem Metier - wo sein Beutel geklopft war.'⁴⁵ The sense of bathos is more than palpable. Therefore, whilst seeming to gain invaluable worldly knowledge and to draw his own mature conclusions from such experiences, Mannheim does not develop emotionally, in the process becoming a rather less certain figure than the 'bürgerliche Selbsthelferfigur *par excellence*' which Scherpe claims him to be.⁴⁶ In choosing to focus the narrative on the Luzilla episode, by employing the register and imagery he does and, moreover, by illustrating the disjuncture between Mannheim's theoretical and emotional understanding, Lenz begins to undermine the credibility of his protagonist and, by implication, the basis of his philosophy.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ II, 420.

⁴⁶ Scherpe, p. 288, see also pp. 286-88, summarised by Müller, *Literatur für Leser*, p. 151: 'Mannheim sei, so Scherpe, 'eine synthetische Kunstfigur', ein 'vorbildlicher Stratege bürgerlicher Emanzipation' der verschiedene 'Elemente konzeptiver bürgerlicher Ideologie - vom Physiokratismus und dem philanthropischen Erziehungsprogramm bis zur Frage nach der gemeinnützigen Staatsverfassung' verkörpere. Im *Landprediger* sei eine projektive Idee geradsinnig auf den Begriff gebracht und 'ersatzweise für die erfahrbare widersprüchliche Wirklichkeit zum literarischen Gegenstand erhoben.'

⁴⁷ Again it is possible, of course, to draw parallels with Lenz's own experience of women, highlighting another aspect of self-commentary in *Der Landprediger*, as Lenz acknowledges the self-delusion to which his protagonist falls victim.

After this emotional trauma Mannheim returns to his father's and enters the priesthood. In describing this episode, the narrator exhorts the reader to believe in his protagonist's fortune, whilst at the same time now creating ironic doubt in relation to his own story, and with it the medium of literature, amplifying what he had initially stated in the opening lines of the *Erzählung*:

Er bekam eine mittelmäßig gute Stelle. Viele meiner Leser werden stutzen und einen Roman zu lesen glauben, wenn sie finden, daß es ihm, ungeachtet seiner Inorthodoxie, doch mit seiner Beförderung geglückt sei.⁴⁸

Subsequently Mannheim devotes all his energies to masterminding the economic boom in Großendingen. As a result of his experience of trade, Mannheim is able to foster, if not force, economic links 'mit benachbarten Edelleuten'; as such a business 'Genie' he is hardly a humble 'Landprediger'.⁴⁹ However, despite his position as a clergyman, his use of his newly derived wealth, presumably in consultant's fees given the convenient label of tithes, is, as becomes increasingly clear, not put to the most Christian of purposes.⁵⁰ Elevated to king-like status by his own parishioners, Mannheim falls victim to a decidedly (or at least ideally) unclergyman-like temptation: 'Sobald sein Vermögen ansehnlicher ward, richtete er alles in seinem Hause mit einem Geschmack ein, der die Nacheiferung des Adels selber erweckte.'⁵¹ Rather than setting up an idyll or utopia in direct opposition to the superficial and corrupting materialism he saw on his travels, it is revealed that

⁴⁸ II, 422

⁴⁹ II, 424. Mannheim certainly shows considerably more business acumen than his supposed counterpart in Wakefield, Dr Primrose, who is hapless at market.

⁵⁰ Indeed at his induction into the priesthood, the narrator makes Mannheim's duplicity clear, II, 422: 'Er ließ sich aber auch nur nicht einfallen, sich aus dem Eide einen Gewissenskrupel zu machen, mit dem er sich zu symbolischen Büchern verband.' This could be read as a positive feature, signalling Mannheim's lack of dogmatism, but this is not the case, as will be argued below.

⁵¹ II, 424.

Mannheim, for all his protestations of disapproval, buys wholeheartedly into the very same materialism, one hardly characterised by 'Gleichheit'.⁵² It is only when his wealth has given him a questionable source of security that Mannheim dares to reconsider his lack of an emotional life. But his ability to win and retain a wife is seen in material, not emotional terms: 'Nun war es Zeit, auf die höchste Zierde desselben zu denken, auf die Königin, die aller dieser Vorteile froh mit ihm werden sollte.'⁵³ He desires an object, literally an ornament, to complete his self-made idyll, not an emotional attachment with a woman.

The tone adopted to describe the search for his 'Königin' further undermines Mannheim's credibility. For having rapidly established a financially secure 'idyll', the emphasis of the narrative would seem to suggest that it is primarily on his relationship with Albertine that he is to be judged. The subsequent quest for love shows him to be an unconvincing, indeed hapless romantic hero. Mannheim may well be seeking a conventional ideal of domesticity, yet his motivation is rather suspect when compared to that of Dr Primrose.⁵⁴ Once again Mannheim's emotional shortcomings are laid bare by a narrator who is given to presenting his protagonist in an increasingly ironic light. Whilst worldly in the field of economics, Mannheim is gauche to the point of parody in his pursuit

⁵² See note 41, p. 256.

⁵³ II, 424-25.

⁵⁴ By no means does Dr Primrose desire a 'Zierde' or 'Königin', nor does he boast of 'Vorteile' he has to share with an ornamental wife, as he takes pains to explain in the opening paragraph of *The Vicar of Wakefield*: 'I was ever of the opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family, did more service than he who continued single, and only talked of population. From this motive, I had scarce taken orders a year before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife as she did her wedding gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well. To do her justice, she was a good-natured notable woman; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could shew more. She could read any English book without much spelling, but for pickling, preserving, and cookery, none could excel her. She prided herself also upon being an excellent contriver in house-keeping: tho' I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness encreased as we grew old. There was in fact nothing that could make us angry with the world or each other.', p. 37.

of a wife. His decision to return to his old mentor to seek out one of his daughters - who will have benefited from 'eine vollkommen feine und geschmackvolle Erziehung, verbunden mit allen möglichen häuslichen Geschicklichkeiten' - hardly bodes well for the future of the relationship, despite the heroic, but at the same time ironic, description of Mannheim's decision to act, 'Er tat es'.⁵⁵ Mannheim's first 'action' is, however, to fall under the spell of a young woman he has only just met: 'die Augen der jüngsten der Töchter seines Freundes nahmen ihm in der ersten Stunden die Freiheit.'⁵⁶ As was the case with his 'Beutelstrickerin', he falls victim to his own self-deluding fantasies, projecting his ideal onto the unsuspecting Albertine. The narrator's description of his proposal to Albertine now ridicules the protagonist, as he will admit himself in the 'Zweiter Teil'.⁵⁷ The reversal of the 'König' image would appear to compromise Mannheim's integrity in what is now a clear-cut fashion. Knowingly revered as a 'König' in his parish and boasting at least aristocratic wealth - which gives him enough confidence to find his 'Königin' in the first place - Mannheim plays a disingenuous sympathy card in order to win Albertine, ending up in a dishevelled heap on the ground:

Albertine, sagte er, indem er sich zu ihr herüberzog, daß ich ein König wäre! Was fehlt Ihnen? rief sie hinter ihrem Schlupfer, mit einer Stimme, deren Zauberklang er nicht länger widerstehen konnte. Ach! ich habe Ihnen weiter nichts als eine Pfarre anzubieten, schrie er, indem er sich plötzlich vom Schlitten loßriß und sich mitten in dem Schnee vor ihr niederwarf.⁵⁸

For the remainder of the 'Erster Teil' the narrative focus is trained on the enfeebled Mannheim. Even when the practical joke of Albertine's phantom fiancé is resolved, with

⁵⁵ II, 425.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ II, 442, see note 77, p. 268.

⁵⁸ II, 426.

Albertine declaring her love for Mannheim, the love is one born of pity. The narrative does not dwell on romance, rather there is a distinctly sceptical view of their future union. The trappings of happy engagements and romantic weddings are deemed irrelevant for the purposes of the story in hand. It is the return to Großendingen and marital life there that will form the focus of the narrative, not the description of a fairy tale wedding.⁵⁹ Instead the narrator reserves his energies for the meticulously detailed description of increasingly haphazard events.

The ironic tone of the narrative gains momentum in the 'Zweiter Teil'. Its opening sets the tone which will dominate the rest of *Erzählung*. Life in the purported idyll is not to be the bed of roses which an overly romantic wedding description would have led the reader to believe. Albertine's reaction to leaving home is far more indicative of the troubled marital life she will enjoy in Großendingen: 'Angst', accompanying 'Tränengüsse', and an inability to communicate with her new husband, despite all his 'bekümmerten Fragen'.⁶⁰ The ensuing portrayal of the Mannheims' marriage is hardly congenial, regardless of all the outward trappings of wealth in the rural 'idyll'. In fact their relationship is characterised by a series of domestic arguments of escalating intensity, with the sense of conflict reaching the climax of a near fatal 'Katastrophe'. The uneasy footing of the marriage is apparent at Albertine's arrival. Employing the same regal imagery associated with Mannheim's search for a wife, the narrator underlines the

⁵⁹ See II, 429.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

disjuncture between the inner and outer worlds of the 'idyll'. Albertine's ability to win the admiration of the people is in conflict with her isolation and deep seated 'Angst':

Sie hoben sie beim Heraussteigen aus dem Wagen; ihre Freundlichkeit schlug in dem Augenblick, als die rauhen Kerle sie sahen, einen monarchischen Thron in ihrer aller Herzen auf.⁶¹

A 'queen of hearts' maybe, but she soon becomes as isolated from her husband as her modern day counterpart once was.

Far from finding herself married to a man with nothing but a 'Pfarre' to offer, as Mannheim pleaded in the snow, Albertine quickly discovers that the so-called 'Landprediger' has an unending and unforgiving business schedule. She finds that she is literally a quickly forgotten 'Zierde' in a purely materialistic 'idyll':

Der Mann hatte sein Amt; er hatte vor allen Dingen seine wirtschaftlichen Angelegenheiten, die ihn oft den ganzen Tag foderten, so daß er nur wenige Abendstunden der Erholung in dem Schoße seines Weibes widmen konnte.⁶²

Even though Mannheim is aware of the detrimental effect such a state of affairs is having on his marriage, his efforts to rectify the situation further undermine his credibility. When he does make 'Verfügungen' for his wife it is on the sly - 'ingeheim'⁶³ - his actions are hardly those of an idealised figure. Mannheim steals - the verb expressly used by the narrator, who throughout selects his words with the utmost consideration - a letter from his wife's open bureau. The content of Albertine's letter to her childhood friend, Liesgen, clearly exposes the void at the heart of the marriage. There is no material want in the rural idyll, but Albertine, as loved as she feels she is, is profoundly struck by a sense of

⁶¹ II, 430.

⁶² II, 437.

⁶³ Ibid.

incompleteness in her marriage: '...fehlt mir doch immer ein Herz, das mein Glück, selbst das Glück so geliebt zu sein, als ich bin, mit mir teilt, sich mit mir freut [...] liebes Liesgen das bist Du.'⁶⁴ The marriage rapidly hits the rocks. The subsequent direction of the narrative does not seek to solicit sympathy for Mannheim, rather he is presented in an increasingly ironic manner. Just as Mannheim has read the letter, by a more than remarkable coincidence - despite his arranging of her arrival 'ingeheim' - Liesgen's carriage draws up, even though the letter was never sent. The narrator leaves it up to the reader to imagine the scene in full - giving the self-conscious prompt 'Man stelle sich vor...' - but even in the barest of outlines given, Mannheim is to be imagined rushing, or even falling down the stairs, holding the letter which he is guilty of stealing, as his wife, arm in arm with Liesgen, bounds up to him. His position is now compromised both literally and metaphorically.⁶⁵

This episode sets up a chain of events in which life in the rural 'idyll' reaches a number of conflicts, with the irony of the narrative gaining force with each confrontation. Mannheim's marriage to 'the queen of hearts' becomes 'rather crowded' with the advent of Liesgen, and in turn he is driven to seek other distractions: 'Das Bedürfnis seiner Frau war befriedigt; aber nachdem dieses kleine Trio eine Zeitlang gedauert, fühlte er, daß sich für sein Herz ein ähnliches anhub.'⁶⁶ His founding of 'eine Akademie der Künste und Wissenschaften', for vulnerable young people, scholars and artists, proves to be his outlet.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Wurst points out the 'anticipation of filmic quality' in the narrative, with the 'text inviting the mental eye of the reader's imagination to flow across a scene that itself is in the process of developing at this moment...', p. 48. Certainly the narrative style is theatrical, with emotions described in actions rather than words, as the invitations to the reader indicate.

⁶⁶ II, 437.

Again there would appear to be altruism in such an act, however, it is undermined by the turbulent nature of Mannheim's private life which continues to form the main focus of the narrative. Indeed the narrator deliberately shifts the reader's attention away from the content of discussions in Mannheim's 'Akademie', thereby passing up a golden opportunity to integrate any reform-minded philosophising, once again suggesting that such is simply not part of the narrative strategy in *Der Landprediger*. Instead the narrative veers off on a bizarre tangent in order to relate the state of bickering to which the Mannheim marriage has been reduced: 'Vielleicht wird es einige meiner Leser interessieren, zu erfahren, wie Albertine ihrem Manne den Rauchtabak und er ihr zur Dankbarkeit den Kaffee abgewöhnt.'⁶⁷ In these incidents, which the narrator relates in great detail, and with no little humour, the lack of reciprocity, equality or understanding in the relationship becomes manifest. Albertine enjoys her opportunity to belittle her husband by holding a 'Gardinenpredigt' after Mannheim catches his two year-old son with his pipe in his mouth and finally acknowledges his need to give up, so as not to set a bad example.⁶⁸ The content of Albertine's lecture also takes on a more sinister aspect, which further destroys any lingering optimism as to the authenticity of the supposed idyll. After castigating Mannheim for his addiction - one which rivals that of the decidedly unidealised character of Wenzeslaus in *Der Hofmeister* - Albertine launches into a tirade which

⁶⁷ II, 439. Such an episode has evidently not proved 'of interest' (unsurprisingly) to critics committed to a utopian or a 'Wunschbiographie' reading. That Lenz was not quite as virulent an anti-smoker as Goethe is perhaps indicated by a jotting reproduced by Blei: 'Immer hab' ich bemerkt, daß unter den Tobakrauchern die gutartigsten Leute sein. Das setzt eine gewisse Stille und Zufriedenheit des Geistes voraus, in der man sich bloß hinsetzt um zu genießen, und jede Pause in unsrer Seele ist uns heilsam, in der sie ein wenig zurechtlegen kann und Ordnung in ihre Begehrungskräfte bringen...', Blei, IV, 286.

⁶⁸ II, 439. The son is already two years old but only mentioned in connexion with this negative incident for the first time, further supporting the view that the narrative focus is firmly centred on a negative portrayal rather than an evocation of possible happiness in an idyll. When Johannes Sekundus does take centre stage he comes into his own in a grotesque manner (see below).

amounts to the first serious erosion of the rural idyll, as its uncaring nature is explicitly revealed.

Underneath the comic façade, it is shown that rather than motivated by a deep felt sense of altruism, the parish of Großendingen is driven by a desire to dissociate itself from others' suffering, and exist in an oblivious vacuum which its wealth allows, a simple retreat from the realities of the world. Sentiments akin to the Christian brotherhood of man are conspicuous by their absence in Albertine's outburst, as they are, in all probability, in Mannheim's economic plans:

Überlassen wir das Rauchen den Unglücklichen, die keine andere Freude haben, den Walfischfängern in Grönland, oder den Negern in Zuckerplantagen, die ein Opium brauchen, um sich gegen ihr Elend zu betäuben, aber du, im Schoße des Glücks, in meinem Schoße - hier faßte sie ihn mit unaussprechlicher Schmeichelei unter das Kinn. Er ging trotzig fort.⁶⁹

Mannheim's response is hardly idyllic, as he seeks, 'trotzig', a decidedly unchristian means of revenge. The 'Landprediger' is shown once again, as he was in stealing his wife's letter, resorting to devious means. In order to exact revenge, Mannheim forges a letter 'vom Präsidenten'. The concocted letter announces that the use of coffee is to be forbidden 'bei schweren Geldstrafen' unless an expensive (and very Germanic) 'Erlaubnis' is bought permitting personal consumption.⁷⁰ Mannheim utilises his position as breadwinner to reassert his power over his caffeine-addicted wife. The narrator chooses to concentrate his highly ironic description on his protagonist's petty smugness, with the 'Landprediger' just smiling when the desperate Albertine and Liesgen ask him to pay for such an 'Erlaubnis'. The dominant Mannheim is shown to enjoy exacting puerile

⁶⁹ II, 440.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

retribution in humiliating his wife and, having brought her to tears, he reasserts his patriarchal authority by throwing the words of her previous 'Gardinenpredigt' back in her face:

Und so weinst du denn, meine liebe Frau, sagte er laut und triumphierend, und meinst, der Kaffee sei keine Kette, kein Opium, das dich für alle andere Vergnügungen taub und ungestimmt macht [...] Der Kaffee ist in der Tat nur eine galante Unreinlichkeit [...]⁷¹

By spinning off on such a tangent the narrator is able, for all its comedy, to destroy any idyllic illusions which may remain regarding the Mannheims' marriage.

Later the narrator expands on Mannheim's fabricated diatribe on caffeine to ironize his protagonist still further. The very philosophy upon which Mannheim has created wealth in Großendingen is now more conclusively undermined in the account of his 'fürtreffliche Traktate' published posthumously in Amsterdam.⁷² In the description of Mannheim's thoughts - which are boldly stated to be beyond even the conception of Montesquieu, and indeed beyond any 'Zweifel' whatsoever - the narrator picks up on the 'Kaffee' incident. The intention becomes one of ridicule, with, on a more autobiographical level, Lenz also taking a self-derisory stance towards the ethos of his own Berka projects in the process. The narrator details the historical backing to Mannheim's thought, with particular reference to the 'Sitten' which underpin any nation, summoning the Roman example as Lenz himself did during various stages of his project.⁷³ However, Mannheim's credibility is punctured by his thoughts on the German nation, one which is apparently in grave danger:

⁷¹ II, 441.

⁷² For the following see II, 445-46. See pp. 251-54.

⁷³ See Chapter IV, p. 224.

So leitete er [...] Von dem rauhen Klima der Deutschen und dem Bier ihre Festigkeit, wobei er jedoch die Einschaltung machte, daß seit dem häufigen Gebrauch des warmen Wassers, besonders des Kaffee, diese Tugend sehr abgenommen und in eine weibische Weichlichkeit und Unentschlossenheit ausgeartet wäre, die, wenn sie nicht noch bisweilen vom Boden und Himmel überstimmt würde, den ganzen Nationalcharakter verändern könnte. Aus dieser Festigkeit und Mannheit leitete er die ganze Verfassung des H. Römischen Reichs her und zeigte, daß sie in ihren Grundfesten nicht zu erschüttern wäre, es müßten denn die Sitten der Nation ganz umgegossen werden.⁷⁴

By reviving the reader's memory of the preceding 'Kaffee-Krise' immediately the dubious origins of such an idea - a forged letter - is recalled, indicating that there is a distinct narrative strategy of irony which starts to reveal itself as underpinning the *Erzählung*. The use of the term 'weibische Weichlichkeit' further emphasises the association. In the second half of the above quotation the narrator's ironic tone intensifies, with the use of 'Festigkeit' springing from the previous wild assertion providing the shakiest of bases for what follows. The term 'Mannheit' pours further scorn on the increasingly insufferable protagonist. On another level, the final idea of altering 'die Sitten der Nation' was undoubtedly the driving ethos behind Lenz's own sense of 'Bestimmung'. That it is now placed in a ridiculous context indicates that there is also a measure of self-commentary, or rather, self-deprecation, one which reflects back, intermittently, on Lenz's own abortive efforts whilst in Weimar.

The tobacco and coffee episodes merely serve as a prelude to the wilful destruction of the 'idyll' as the narrative reaches a new stage of irony. Indeed the ironic tone of the *Erzählung* starts to become more of a parody of utopian visions. The Mannheims' marital relations become more strained as life in the 'idyll' becomes riven with increasingly sinister

⁷⁴ II, 446.

and violent exchanges. Having focused on petty marital frictions, the narrator's subsequent descriptions of life in Großendingen have to be read with some caution. Immediately after Mannheim has exacted retribution on Albertine by his coffee ruse, the narrator returns to an ostensibly idyllic description of the marital home: 'Tausend Veränderungen, tausend drollige Szenen jagten einander in diesem glücklichen Hause...'⁷⁵ Whether the house is really all that happy would seem to be debatable from what has been recounted thus far, and the elaboration of the 'drollige Szenen' further undermines the happiness enjoyed in Großendingen. The staging of plays and pilgrimages up the nearby mountains are quickly superseded by more sinister activities, such as the playing of shepherd and shepherdesses Versailles-style, jovially helping during the 'Heumacherzeit'.⁷⁶ Such 'happiness' is undermined by the increasing awareness of a current of ill-feeling bubbling beneath the surface. This is manifest in Mannheim's own parodying of his proposal to and hence love for Albertine:

Oder, es wurden im Winter Schlittenfahrten angestellt, wobei Johannes Mannheim seine erste Deklaration oft widerspielte* und sich dafür von der ganzen Gesellschaft weidlich auslachen ließ.⁷⁷

His own marriage becomes the object of mirth and derision and, tellingly, this is exactly how Mannheim wishes to present it in his re-enactment. On this ironic note the narrator

⁷⁵ II, 442.

⁷⁶ An activity which will form part of Johannes Sekundus' cult celebration of his parents, see below and II, 456: 'Weil sie (die Mädchen) alle als Schäferinnen gekleidet und angesehen waren, so fielen hier, während daß die Feierlichkeiten daureten, alle Erinnerungen des Standes weg, und ward bloß auf die Reize der Person gesehen, wo jede sich bemühte, es der andern zuvor zu tun.'

⁷⁷ II, 442. The narrator expressly draws attention to Mannheim's reference back to the previous incident: '* Siehe den ersten Teil.'

draws the portrayal of life 'in diesem glücklichen Hause' to a hasty conclusion with a reversion to a now unconvincing idyllic description of a harvest festival dance.

As the story progresses, Lenz once again manipulates it in such a way that a serious self-commentary on his previous efforts as a writer and would-be reformer comes to the fore. The narrative focus oscillates back, to a certain extent, to more autobiographical concerns. The very act of writing corrupts both Mannheim and Albertine in ways that have distinct resonances of Lenz's own experience and disillusion. The optimism for his own military and social reforms during his stay in Weimar becomes the object of thinly veiled self-criticism. Mannheim too falls victim to self-deluding visions of grandeur with the act of writing portrayed in ever more fabulous and exaggerated terms. Initially a 'Wurm der Begierde', the temptation to write, quickly transmutes into 'dieser Lindwurm mit so unheilbaren Bissen'.⁷⁸ The fantastic imagery is brought to an exaggerated climax, with Lenz ridiculing not only his protagonist, but also himself: 'Kurz es war - der schlimmste Sauerteig, der seit Adams Fall im menschlichen Herzen gegärt hat - es war der Autor, der das Haupt in ihm empor hob.'⁷⁹ Mannheim's attraction to writing has strong parallels with Lenz's own initial optimism, not only in the field of military and social reform, but also during his Straßburg years:

Aber die Autorschaft - andern Leuten Brillen zu schleifen, wodurch sie sehen können, ohne welche ihnen tausend Sachen verborgen blieben. - Es ist doch groß das, meinte er.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ II, 443.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Lenz himself used exactly the same image to describe his own vision of theatre, which derives its power precisely from its capacity 'ändern Leute Brillen zu schleifen' in *Anmerkungen übers Theater*.⁸¹ In *Der Landprediger*, however, the image is employed to emphasise the delusions to which his protagonist and, more importantly, he himself fell victim.⁸²

In the description of Mannheim's experience as a writer of 'einen Roman im Geschmack des Richardson oder Fielding' Lenz takes up a scathing attitude towards his own literary endeavours. Although no novelist, the faults of Mannheim's approach are equally applicable to Lenz's own, especially during his time in Berka. Like Mannheim, Lenz cut himself off from the world for 'ein ganzes Vierteljahr' to write with similar distorting consequences for his grip on reality.

Der gute Mann bedachte nicht, daß durch seine freiwillige Entfernung von dem, was man große Welt nennt, und überhaupt von dem Gange der menschlichen Angelegenheiten in Städten und an Höfen, so wie von dem Ton der Gesellschaften und dem Hervorstechenden in Charaktern und Sitten, sich ihm alles nur durch das Prisma seiner Korrespondenz, oder des Hörensagens, oder gar gewisser Bücher, bald - dreieckig, bald - rautenförmig, bald - vieleckig, bald spitz, bald stumpf, bald platt weisen würde, was sonst schlechtweg rund oder gerade war, und umgekehrt.⁸³

⁸¹ See *Anmerkungen übers Theater* II, 647: 'Die Sinne, ja die Sinne - es kommt freilich auf die spezifische Schleifung der Gläser und die spezifische Größe der Projektionstafel an, aber mit alledem, wenn die *Camera obscura* Ritzen hat -'. Indeed optical metaphors are central to Lenz's aesthetic and theological discourses, see M Rector, 'Optische Metaphorik und theologischer Sinn in Lenz' Poesie-Auffassung', in *Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz: Studien zum Gesamtwerk*, ed. by D.Hill (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), pp. 11-26.

⁸² Mannheim's perception of the state of the book market also bears parallels to Lenz's own decision to abandon religious writing in order to gain a wider audience through literature during the early Straßburg years, see II, 443: 'Vor alten Zeiten schrieben die Prediger Postillen; als der Postillen zu viel waren, ward darüber gelacht und gespottet, da setzten sie sich auf ihre Kirchhöfe (die mehrstenmale freilich nur in Gedanken) und lasen den unsterblichen Engländer den erhabenen Young [...] Die Buchhändler wollten deren auch nicht mehr, und warum sollte ein Prediger nicht auch durch Romanen und Schauspiel nützen können, wie durch Predigten und geistliche Lieder? Der Nutzen müßte noch weit größer sein, weil dergleichen Bücher in weit mehrere Hände kommen, weit begieriger gelesen werden, wenn es dem Verfasser an Witz nicht mangelt und -'.

⁸³ II, 444.

Lenz acknowledges that his own retreat from the 'große Welt' had a detrimental affect on his own writing during his stay in Berka. The mature formulations of his military project, although they seem to offer a coherent economic argument that would be beneficial for society, fail to take into account the rather important aspect of people. Lenz too fell victim to 'das Prisma seiner Korrespondenz', which during the summer of 1776 was limited almost exclusively to letters concerning military affairs and information on aspects of the French establishment.⁸⁴ Alongside such correspondence Lenz dedicated himself to lengthy study of the maligned 'gewisser Bücher' in the passage above, the economic and military tomes which triggered his own theoretically logical, but, as he had finally come to realise, in practice - after his exile - unworkable, blueprint for reform. As such *Der Landprediger* acts, in part, as a vehicle for self-commentary, as Lenz reverts to the medium of literature to acknowledge his own failings. In retrospect he is able to acknowledge his own position in Weimar, as again the image selected by the narrator stands out: 'der arme Mann saß beständig in seiner fröhlichen Gesellschaft da, wie ein Elefant mit einem Ring in der Nase -'⁸⁵

The narrative focus is not, however, solely autobiographical, as Lenz again moves away from pure self-commentary and back to the more distant, albeit escalating, ironizing of his protagonist. The undercurrent of ill-feeling in the Mannheim marriage is taken one step further in Mannheim's admission that he has been tempted by the devil himself in wanting to write. The malicious attitude in making his wife give up the pleasures of coffee

⁸⁴ See Chapter IV, pp. 193-94.

⁸⁵ II, 444.

is replaced by an overtly hostile one when it comes to writing, as he says over the dinner table:

Aber laßt uns von was anders sprechen, und wer unter euch sich untersteht, mir von dem Roman auch nur mit einer Silbe wieder zu erwähnen, den erkläre ich für den allertödlichsten Feind, den ich in meinem Leben gehabt habe.⁸⁶

With Albertine also falling prey to the 'temptations' of writing, in her case poetry, the threat of violence is transformed into reality, as the happiness of the Mannheim marriage is yet more ironically undermined.

In relating the episode of Albertine's penchant for writing romantic, or even distinctly Sturm und Drang-esque odes, the narrator begins to take every opportunity to ironize and even ridicule his characters and their 'idyll'. For example, against her husband's advice Albertine continues to write poetry, as Mannheim soon realises on discovering a 'dithyrambischer Brief' addressed to his wife from a friend of Liesgen who is, we are told, 'ein schöner Geist'.⁸⁷ The description of Mannheim's discovery is laced with irony: '...und, da Mannheim in der Geschwindigkeit nicht nach der Aufschrift sah (denn er pflegte niemals Briefe an seine Frau aufzumachen)...'⁸⁸ The reader has already seen that Mannheim 'stole' a letter written by Albertine earlier in the 'Zweiter Teil', and also forged one 'vom Präsident'. As the quotation continues the reference made to the Garden of Eden, in the description of Mannheim's writing activities, is picked up again: '...fiel ihm dieser Schlangenkopf gerade in die Augen, als er (the 'schöner Geist') seinem

⁸⁶ II, 445.

⁸⁷ II, 448.

⁸⁸ II, 448-49.

Weibe den giftigen Apfel reichte.'⁸⁹ The allusion to the Garden of Eden under serious threat reflects the fact that the narrative too is becoming increasingly focussed on the discord threatening the 'idyll' of Großendingen. That the narrative takes on an increasingly ironic tone is underlined by the subject of Albertine's ode, on which she is working when Mannheim decides to confront her, one which encapsulates life in the 'idyll': 'über die Einsamkeit'.⁹⁰

The description of the subsequent confrontation between the two reveals the true nature of life in Großendingen. Given the evidence offered by a detailed reading of the text, it is scarcely what Scherpe terms 'bürgerliches Leben, wie es sein soll'. The choice of imagery and detail also suggest a that a blacker sense of irony has been part of the narrative strategy all along. 'Alles ging erwünscht', we are told, as Mannheim leads Albertine into a wild and dangerous area of the nearby mountains.⁹¹ The allusion to Macbeth sets the confrontation in violent context, as is later confirmed by the violent imagery associated with the landscape. A ruined castle perched on monstrous cliffs, vertigo, waterfalls sounding like swarms of bees, all combine to isolate Albertine, according to Mannheim's plan, with the narrator making her feelings unequivocally clear: 'Albertine sah hinab und fühlte den Tod unter ihren Füßen.'⁹² Having physically intimidated his wife, Mannheim launches into a prolonged assault, initially limited to a verbal attack:

Ungetreue! in dem Augenblick da ich dir mein ganzes Leben aufopfere, täglich eine Last nach der andern wegwälze, damit das Gebäude unsers Glücks fest und dauerhaft stehen könne, mir

⁸⁹ II, 449, see note 79, p. 269.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

Ruhe und Erquickung bis ins Alter versage, nur damit auch nach meinem Tode du und meine Kinder einen Witwensitz, eine Felsenburg haben, damit die jungen Adler hernach mit den ererbten väterlichen Fittichen auf ihren Raub herabschießen können - in dem Augenblick empfängst du Briefe mit der schwärmerischsten unsinnigsten Leidenschaft geschrieben von einem Menschen, der nicht wert ist, daß er unsere Kühe melkt [...]⁹³

Any notion of Großendingen as an 'idyll' is left in tatters. Initially the outburst appears to be similar to the fury of an overworked businessman, not a man of God, and as such comic. However, alongside the comic elements in the passage, it now also becomes evident, from his language and tone, that all Mannheim's efforts have, from the start, been less than Christian in their motivation. The 'idyll', even in purely economic terms, is conceived of as an exclusive affair. It is a 'Felsenburg', a remote bastion to be defended against the outside world.⁹⁴ In its siege mentality Mannheim's creation is far from a blueprint for universal economic and social reform; on the contrary it becomes the home of aggressive self-interest, as the description of his offspring as eagles primed to descend on their prey indicates. The violent imagery quickly sparks off a physical attack on his own wife. A man possessed, he lifts Albertine off the ground and holds her perilously above the sheer drop of the cliff willing her to her death, as befits a would-be classical poetess, an action which is somewhat more than a bourgeois tiff.

At the height of the dramatic confrontation between the two, Mannheim's decidedly un-Christian credentials are definitively exposed by the narrator. Liesgen, of

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ The use of the name 'Felsenburg' perhaps also carries with it a passing allusion to J.G. Schnabel's Utopian novel *Insel Felsenburg* (1731-43), the subject of much imitation in the course of the eighteenth century, see F.J. Lamport, 'Utopia and 'Robinsonade': Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* and Bachstrom's *Land der Inquiraner*', *Oxford German Studies*, 1 (1966), 10-30. However, Lenz's 'utopia' does not fail due to any cultural contact with outside forces, such as yet more shipwrecked sailors, or subversive European travellers. Rather the seeds of dystopia are in Mannheim himself, with *Der Landprediger* a subversion of the utopian tradition.

whom there is no mention in the rest of the episode, manages to make a desperate plea for mercy, yet the supposed 'Pfarrer' emphatically refuses to acknowledge the existence of the most fundamental of Christian teachings:

Hier hob er sie höher; Liesgen, der Sehen und Hören verging, warf sich hinter ihm auf die Knie, hielt ihn am Zipfel des Rocks und schrie mit aufgehobenen Händen: Barbar, kennst du keine Verzeihung -
Nein, ich kenne keine, rief er sehr nachdrücklich - indem er sich umkehrte und die Frau vom Berge herabtrug - weil ich niemals gezürnt habe [...] Albertine warf sich auf die Knie und bat ihn bei seiner Verzeihung, er möchte sie dieses Wort nicht mehr wieder hören lassen.⁹⁵

Mannheim's hypocrisy is unmasked by Liesgen: the 'Pfarrer' is nothing more than a 'Barbar'. The remnants of an 'idyll' based on equality, community and love are decisively destroyed, despite Mannheim's unconvincing claims never to have been angry. Although his economic innovations have led to the village's and his own personal wealth, in his personal relationships distrust and inequality prevail, with almost fatal consequences. Indeed it is with this 'Katastrophe' that the descriptions of the Mannheims' life in Großendingen come to an abrupt end.⁹⁶ The narrative is focused throughout on that aspect so conspicuously overlooked in Lenz's Berka reform projects: personal happiness. A detailed reading of the text shows that the orthodox reading of the text as unquestionably unironic and part of a utopian tradition must be called into question. As the narrative unravels its ironic underpinning becomes clearer, with Mannheim shown to be morally bankrupt as the final episode on the cliff top shows. He is not presented as a model character, rather, he is presented as absurd and ridiculous, and also unmasked as a hypocrite.

⁹⁵ II, 450-51.

⁹⁶ II, 451.

With an end brought to the Mannheims' role in the story, the narrative takes a fresh turn. An atmosphere of black humour replaces the ironic perspectives presented thus far, as is manifest in the narrator's account of Mannheim's legacy, left in the hands of his 'Söhngen', Johannes Sekundus, who enters as a most dubious heir in the closing section of the *Erzählung*.⁹⁷ Lenz's portrayal of Mannheim's lasting impression on the world - bearing at least some relation to his own frustrated political aspirations - descends to corruption in the cult led by Johannes Sekundus. Lenz reduces his protagonist, and by implication his own political aspirations, to what amounts to, on a close analysis of the text, a perverse caricature. *Der Landprediger* is now revealed as a cruel parody, with self-commentary verging on self-derision.

When detailing Mannheim's posthumous 'vortreffliche Traktate'⁹⁸ concerning anything and everything from grazing to universal truth, the narrator, whilst already implicitly subverting their content, also explicitly sets up Mannheim's ethos for the test which occurs when Johannes Sekundus assumes control of the Großendingen legacy:

Alle diese Sachen aber verhehlte Johannes Mannheim sorgfältig den Seinigen, weil er den Schatz seiner Erfahrungen und seiner drüber angestellten Meditationen seinem Sohn als ein Erbstück hinterlassen wollte, das ihm noch nach seinem Tode zu einer Art von Führer und Schutzgeist durch die Welt dienen könnte. Wir werden in der Folge sehen, wie sein Sohn sich gegen das Andenken seines Vaters dankbar erwiesen.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Curiously the name given to Mannheim's son also corresponds to the Dutch writer Johannes Secundus (1511-36) who gained fame in Europe for his cycle of poems 'Basia' (The Kiss) and for his Elegies. In November 1776, during the period in which Lenz had been staying on and off with Charlotte von Stein, Goethe wrote the poem 'An den Geist des Johannes Secundus', a poem later to be found amongst Charlotte's letters. See *HA*, I, 140-41, and the Trunz's notes, I, 553-54.

⁹⁸ II, 445-47, see pp. 252-53 and note 74, p. 267.

⁹⁹ II, 447.

The way in which Johannes Sekundus - unreservedly the product of Mannheim's personal education - perverts his father's legacy confirms the moral bankruptcy of the Erzählung; this despite his status as 'einer der ersten Köpfe seines Jahrhunderts'.¹⁰⁰ After all the crises which beset the Mannheims there is no reversion to any pre-existing sense of idyll or harmony as there is for example in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, in which faith in Providence, via Sir William Thornhill in his capacity as magistrate, is shown to win through. Instead Johannes Mannheim founds a sinister religious cult on the basis of his parents' legacy, drawing on their wealth rather than their achievements. Under his direction the cult has the sole purpose of satisfying his own egoism and voyeuristic sexual needs. Whereas Goldsmith, in Goethe's words, achieves a novel which is 'sittlich, ja im reinen Sinne christlich...', with good triumphing over evil, all couched in ironic tones, *Der Landprediger* reaches no such conclusion. Rather the previously ironic tone of the narrative becomes increasingly black towards its conclusion, thereby illustrating the fact that it is devoid of any 'sittlich[e]' or 'christlich[e]' pretensions.

In his melodramatic description of Albertine and Mannheim's death the narrator deliberately glosses over the volatile events which have characterised their interaction throughout. The last recorded interaction between the two had led to a definitive 'Katastrophe', but in death the couple reach a state of serenity which had eluded them throughout their married life. The description of their final minutes reaches the peak of hyperbole and in its overly sentimental detail pushes the narrative tone towards parody:

Er [Johannes Sekundus] erhielt Nachricht, seine Eltern wären krank; er kam und fand sie wirklich mit den heitersten Gesichtern einander gegenüber liegen und sich von Zeit zu Zeit noch mit den Händen winken und Küsse zuwerfen. Ihrer Krankheit schien mehr die Ruhe zweier

¹⁰⁰ II, 452.

ermatteten Pilger, die beide unter der Last, die sie trugen, auf einem Wege niedergefallen [...] Er warf sich wechselweise, bald dem einen, bald dem andern zu Füßen; sie konnten nicht sprechen, sondern legten beide nur die Hand auf das Köpfchen, durch das so viel gegangen war, und segneten ihn mit ihren Blicken. Ob es die Freude über sein Wiedersehen war, sie starben beide desselben Tages.¹⁰¹

Thus anointed, Johannes Sekundus, on receiving the wealth and wisdom of his father's 'fürtreffliche Traktate', proceeds to elevate the Mannheims into a self-perpetuating cult.

In the wake of the Mannheims' death a small chapel is built in their honour, at the gates of which 'standen die beiden Büsten dieses unvergleichen Paars aus Marmor'.¹⁰²

Incomparable they may well have been, but the ironic intent of such a comment becomes clear when we learn that such busts were actually commissioned by Johannes during the Mannheims' own lifetime and were sculpted 'von einem der ersten Künstler des Landes'.¹⁰³

The moral bankruptcy of the 'idyll' is confirmed by the elaborate set of rituals initiated by Johannes Sekundus as an ostensible act of remembrance. The narrator makes it clear that such festivities held triennially on the Mannheims' 'Todestag' are born of material ostentation rather than spiritual commemoration. Details of the celebrations are given in such punctilious fashion that the *Erzählung* degenerates into a black parody. The wealth created by Mannheim's initial and unexplained economic miracle spawns an absurd cult of self-promotion and self-gratification. The activities of Johannes Sekundus undermine the very moral precepts that his father, at least superficially, seemed to stand for. Their cult is used with the express aim of gaining power and influence in the very

¹⁰¹ II, 452-53.

¹⁰² II, 453.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

society which his father viewed with detachment and, more importantly, without ambition, as was made clear in the 'Erster Teil':

Er war einigemal [...] auf Bällen gewesen [...], wo er die große Welt kennen lernen konnte, nicht um in ihr nach etwas zu streben, sondern um sich den falschen Firnis zu benehmen [...]¹⁰⁴

The ethos, based on harmonious class relations and mutual respect, espoused by Mannheim is betrayed by Johannes Sekundus, with the discrepancy made explicit by the narrator, suggesting his strategy has now become to dispel any lingering utopian notions.¹⁰⁵ The lavish celebration of Johannes Sekundus' parents' death links him inextricably with the 'große Welt' as his own 'falsche Firnis' becomes explicit. Indeed, in Johannes Sekundus' case his falsity is not just a veneer, rather it penetrates him, and as such the Mannheim legacy, to the core. The 'berühmtesten Gelehrten', even from neighbouring provinces, are offered a ride on the richest of gravy trains to help in the celebration, with Johannes Sekundus presiding over the ritualistic pilgrimage in which his heartily fed guests appear in black robes bearing their 'Myrtenzweige' of remembrance. The hyperbolic description of the 'Prozession' with its 'traurige Feierlichkeit' exacerbates the sense of parody. Johannes Sekundus' appearance centre stage confirms the egotistical nature of the self-perpetuating cult, a cult which has its only underpinning in Mannheim's undisputed wealth, not in the example set by his troubled personal life:

[...] hierzu kamen die Kräfte der Musik und der schmelzende Anblick kindlicher Zärtlichkeit, den ihnen Johannes Sekundus gab, der bei Endigung der Musik mit zerstreuten Haaren vor dem Bilde seines Vaters und seiner Mutter kniete, sie um ihre Fürbitte und um ihren Schutz und Begleitung durchs Leben mit den ungeschminktesten Worten ansprach, und gewiß sein konnte

¹⁰⁴ II, 417. See note 41, p. 256.

¹⁰⁵ Certainly there is little trace of Dedert's '...sichtbar werdende Konzept eines 'partnerschaftlichen' Ausgleichs zwischen den Klassen...', see note 15, p. 244.

der Tränen, die die ganze Gesellschaft umher dem Andenken seiner Eltern geschenkt hatte.¹⁰⁶

The prospect of being 'fürstlich bewirtet' for the following week might well suggest that such tears have more of the crocodile about them.

The sinister nature of the cult becomes most explicit in the second half of the celebrations, to which the narrator devotes his most detailed descriptions. Johannes Sekundus personally scours the country a full 'Vierteljahr' before this part of the celebration to ensure that he invites 'die schönsten Mädchen mit ihren Müttern' to his dubious 'Mädchenfeier'. The atmosphere of this festival is far from a joyous *fête champêtre* in true Rousseauistic spirit, in which a 'free and festive gathering' is dedicated 'to the end of loving ourselves', à la Woodstock 1968, in an attempt to return to 'le sentiment de l'existence'.¹⁰⁷ On the contrary, Johannes Sekundus uses the material wealth of his parents' legacy to indulge his voyeuristic sexual demands. He installs himself as the ringmaster of a bizarre sexual circus, summoning a whole parade of 'Jungfrauen' for his pleasure. However, his actions are shown to have their roots in Mannheim's own conception of the 'idyll' at Großendingen. At the height of the 'Katastrophe' scene between the 'Landprediger' and his wife, Mannheim makes it quite clear that all his strenuous efforts have been aimed at creating a 'Felsenburg', from which 'die jungen Adler' as he terms his offspring, will be able to prey on the outside world.¹⁰⁸ The narrator

¹⁰⁶ II, 454.

¹⁰⁷ See L. Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 65. See also Osborne: 'From the beginning to the end of the story *Der Landprediger* has a utopian character, in that the hero meets no obstacles to his good intentions; in the main body of the story we are already on, if not already beyond, the borders of the possible; in such a context the formal 'Steigerung' into the totally unreal world of the *fête champêtre* is stylistically necessary to indicate a break, to establish the otherness of the idyllic conclusion [...] He renounces or postpones the idyll as far as the real world is concerned and decisively places it in an aesthetic or religious beyond.', p. 99.

¹⁰⁸ II, 449, see note 94, p. 274.

extends this image in the name given to Johannes Sekundus' cult celebrations of the 'Mädchentanz'. The spectacle of 'das Johannisfest zu Adlersburg' confirms its status as a continuation of Mannheim's own desired legacy rather than a mere perversion as a result of his son's actions in creating his own eighteenth-century version of 'The Eagle's Nest'.¹⁰⁹ The 'Tanz' is shown to be a gratuitous opportunity for Johannes to satisfy his own sexual desires rather than serving the wider community his father is said to have created. True to his father's wishes he acts as an 'Adler' using the paternal 'Fittichen'¹¹⁰ to prey on the outside world:

Nach Endigung dieses Tanzes, wobei jede Schöne, wie natürlich, ihre zaubervollsten Stellungen sehen ließ, hielt Johannes Sekundus ihnen eine Rede, worin er ihnen dankte, daß sie Balsam in seine Wunde gegossen.¹¹¹

The sexual overtones of such 'zaubervollsten Stellungen' are quickly made clear by the narrator in his description of the ensuing festivities laid on by Johannes Sekundus for his newly formed harem, as we are told that the 'Mädchen' enjoy another eight days of 'Feierlichkeiten', although some seem not so keen to do so: 'wenn anders nicht einige von ihnen nach Hause eilten.'¹¹² The perversion of the spectacle is confirmed by the detailed description of the extraordinary lengths to which Johannes Sekundus goes in order to ensure that he is the only man able to mix with the women so publicly flaunted. Other men are restricted by armed force when it comes to their participation in the festivities, confined as they are in the most sinister of manners as the sexual circus carries on

¹⁰⁹ II, 455.

¹¹⁰ II, 449.

¹¹¹ II, 455. Interestingly the Goethe poem 'An den Geist des Johannes Secundus' ends with the following lines: 'An meines Herdes treuem Feuer vereinigt./Der soll mir helfen! Wahrlich, er hilft nicht./Denn von der Liebe alles heilendem/Gift-Balsam ist kein Tröpfchen drunter.', *HA*, I, 141.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

ostentatiously in front of their goggling eyes. The narrative reaches a point of what has now become grotesque parody:

Keine Mannsperson aber ward anders als zum Zuschauer hinzugelassen, für die, wie besagt, ein eigenes Gerüst bei der Kapelle und ein anderes am Eingang des Gehölzes erbaut war, an dem bei jeder Reihe Bänke zwei Mann Wache mit scharfgeladenem Gewehr stunden, die Befehl hatten, auf jeden zu feuern, der nicht in den Schranken, die mit allen möglichen Bequemlichkeiten dazu erbaut waren, bleiben würde.¹¹³

'Das große Prinzipium der Gleichheit', which the narrator identifies as Mannheim's salient principle in the 'Erster Teil' is explicitly unmasked as hollow communitarian rhetoric.¹¹⁴ The product of his father's education, Johannes Sekundus exposes the 'idyll' as the playground of an individual's egotism. The cult's endemic corruption is merely an extension of Mannheim's own. It is not a mis-appropriation of the Mannheim legacy, rather it reveals the hypocrisy that undermines the protagonist throughout.

Such hypocrisy is blatant in the final scene relating to the 'Johannisfest zu Adlersburg', in which 'die reizendsten Schönheiten des Landes' are said to willingly flock to Großendingen to partake in the festivities. The cult rituals would appear to indicate that a blissful state of equality and happiness is possible, even if as a result of Johannes Sekundus' frenetic scouting for talent:

Weil sie alle als Schäferinnen gekleidet und angesehen waren, so fielen hier, während daß die Feierlichkeiten dauerten, alle Erinnerungen des Standes weg, und ward bloß auf die Reize der Person gesehen, wo jede sich bemühte, es der andern zuvor zu tun.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ II, 455-56. Whilst W.H.Preuß quotes this same passage, he only offers the following gloss: 'Ein Versöhnungsfest unter Waffen! Das Bild der Harmonie entgleitet Lenz.', p. 100. It also does not prevent him from asserting: 'Der Landprediger stellt schließlich Lenz' bedeutendes materialpädagogisches Werk dar.', *Selbstkastration oder Zeugung neuer Kreatur; zum Problem der moralischen Freiheit im Leben und Werk von J.M.R.Lenz* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1983), p. 96.

¹¹⁴ II, 417, see note 41, p. 246.

¹¹⁵ II, 456.

This passage has been taken as being an unequivocal championing of the joys of life, with the cult festivities instituted by Johannes Sekundus attaining some form of utopia.¹¹⁶ Yet such a reading simply ignores the preceding precisely detailed description of the hordes of spectators crammed into the stands and supervised by the guards each brandishing their 'scharfgeladene[s] Gewehr'. Not only that, the way in which the crowds are treated is in direct contrast with the illusion of equality conjured up in the dreamily romantic dallings of the shepherdesses. The surveillance carried out by the guards is not limited to their work in the stands. The spectators, given food and wine at Johannes Sekundus' expense, are strictly distinguished precisely according to class. Indeed in the most formally bureaucratic of ways, each spectator is required to obtain 'eine gewisse Marke seines Standes' from Johannes Sekundus' 'Kastellan', or appointed steward, with the result that they are entertained as their social standing befits.¹¹⁷ The hypocrisy of the 'idyll' is fully exposed by the narrator, who appears to draw the *Erzählung* towards what amounts to a nihilistic conclusion, bereft of any of the 'sittlich[e]' or 'christlich[e]' qualities that Goethe sees in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.¹¹⁸

However, it is in the curious 'Anhang' that the *Erzählung* finally reaches its definitive conclusion and it reverts to one which is once again ironic in tone. Ostensibly the narrator introduces a first person perspective through the inclusion of extracts from a letter written by Mannheim himself, recounting a visit paid to the parish by a

¹¹⁶ As Madland does: '[...] in *Der Landprediger*, a scene depicts a ritual that Mannheim's son holds annually [*sic*] in the village which his father had served so well, in which all the participating young women who belong to different social classes are classed as shepherdesses so that during the festivities all class differences disappear.', p. 113.

¹¹⁷ II, 456. Again somewhat contradicting Stötzer's notion 'eines 'partner-schaftlichen' Ausgleichs zwischen den Klassen...', see note 14, p. 244.

¹¹⁸ See note 21, p. 247.

'Spezialsuperintendent' sent to investigate the 'Landprediger's' unorthodox activities.¹¹⁹ However, the narrative tone is uneasy, if not inconsistent, as it is an amalgam of Mannheim's account and the narrator's editing. Given its privileged position at the end of the *Erzählung*, the tone of the first person narrative clarifies the convictions of Lenz's protagonist, as well as his own failings. Mannheim's belligerence in emphasising the need for religion to deliver results on this earth bears a striking similarity to Lenz's own view stated in *Meinungen eines Laien* that 'Religion soll uns glücklicher machen, sonst nehmen wir es nicht an', which, like Mannheim's preaching, is lambasted for its 'Inorthodoxie'.¹²⁰ Mannheim's sermon entitled 'die beste Art, die Wiesen zu wässern', which so shocks the Superintendent, also echoes Lenz's agricultural concerns which play such a pivotal role in the Berka manuscripts. His insistence that Christ's example is aimed at 'die Verheißung dieses - und des zukünftigen Lebens' are also identical to Lenz's conception of faith in *Stimmen des Laien*.¹²¹ As such Mannheim would seem to be fulfilling the sense of 'Bestimmung' arrived at in that text. Indeed, like Lenz, Mannheim insists that own 'Bestimmung' consists in the following: 'Diese Stimmung in ihnen [his parishioners] hervorzubringen, ist meine einzige Absicht.'¹²²

However, the manner in which Mannheim defends his position betrays the disillusionment felt by Lenz with regard not only to his protagonist, but also to his own efforts, as a black epitaph is conferred on both. Coming as the letter does after all the turbulent events of Mannheim's marital life, and after the perverted climax of Johannes

¹¹⁹ *Zerbin* also concludes with letters 'found' after the writer has finished his narrative and, similarly, the protagonist's morality is subject to illumination from a different perspective.

¹²⁰ *Meinungen eines Laien*, II, 526.

¹²¹ II, 459. See Chapter I.

¹²² II, 460. Such a calling is elucidated further on, see, II, 462-63.

Sekundus' cult celebrations, the defiant words with which Mannheim confronts the Superintendent ring hollow. By the 'Anhang' the protagonist's credibility has long since been destroyed, thus compromising his words and teachings as set out in the letter. Nowhere is this more clear in the story Mannheim relates concerning one of his parishioners, a guardian, who has embezzled a large amount of land from his ward but is subsequently overcome by overwhelming pangs of remorse.¹²³ In typically violent manner Mannheim terrorises his parishioner into fainting, with such dire consequences that the parishioner, who has come to seek his 'Landprediger's' Christian advice, becomes bed-ridden, not thinking he will survive the night. Only after such physical intimidation does Mannheim see fit to offer him advice:

Hier hielt ich's für Zeit ihm zu predigen, daß die Gerechtigkeit nichts als die Austerlerin der Liebe sein darf, daß keine Liebe ohne Gerechtigkeit bestehen könne, daß es aber eine Gerechtigkeit ohne Liebe gäbe, in die sich der Teufel kleidet, wenn er als Engel des Lichts erscheint.¹²⁴

With the benefit of the view offered into Mannheim's own marital home, his hypocrisy is clear. There is no correlation between this preaching on equality and love and the reality of his own personal relationships. Mannheim is guilty himself of implementing a superficial 'Gerechtigkeit' which is precisely devoid of love. Not only does the narrator place Mannheim's first person perspective in an 'Anhang' so as to reveal the 'Landprediger' as a fraud, there is also a far more revealing admission that Mannheim unwittingly makes. Despite his own deceptive appearance as an 'Engel' (a disguise which appears to have beguiled modern day critics), Mannheim's working for economic

¹²³ For details of this 'ganz frisches Exempel' see, II, 460-61.

¹²⁴ II, 461.

'Gerechtigkeit' within his own 'Felsenburg' is far more sinister: according to Mannheim's own criteria it is the work of the 'Teufel' himself.¹²⁵ By the same token, a veiled self-critical attack on the deficiencies of Lenz's own reform plans is palpable. Conceived without regard to 'Liebe', Lenz dismisses, through the ironic medium of literature, his own blueprint in the process.

The last work written prior to the onset of mental illness, the *Erzählung* set in Großendingen also marks a definitive end in Lenz's own career as a writer and, in a manner of speaking, is seen as such by the author himself. Moreover, it also constitutes a recognition of his failed pursuit of 'Bestimmung'. The return to the previously denigrated medium of literature in *Der Landprediger* is a bleak, if not nihilistic, one. Far from its being some form of 'Wunschbiographie', as has been maintained in the established reception of this text, it is a sense of disillusion which dominates, as a detailed analysis of the text, showing how the ironic aspects of the narrative gain in momentum, has sought to illustrate. If anything Lenz writes a 'Reuebiographie' reflecting back on the futility and fundamental oversights of his own reform plans. As such *Der Landprediger* is not a seamless continuation of the reform plans which have their germ in *Die Soldaten*, before passing over into political discourse, initially in *Über die Soldatenehen*, and finding their eventual form in Berka. Rather the *Erzählung* is written in reaction against such texts. Ideas for agricultural and economic reform play a minimal role, one simply peripheral to the narrative focus. Even when Großendingen is a runaway material success, grounds for

¹²⁵ As such the premonition of the narrator's description of Mannheim's induction into the priesthood is fulfilled, see note 50, p. 258.

viewing it as some form of utopia remain highly questionable. Trials and tribulations of the Mannheim marriage overshadow any attempt to give any economic masterplan - as conceived, for example, in the 'lettre à Maurepas' - any serious form of literary representation. As such *Der Landprediger* acts as a black epitaph on Lenz's own activities as a writer during the period 1774-76 and in particular with reference to his time in Weimar, which, as Wilson states: '...ist seit eh und je als der Wendepunkt in Lenzens Leben angesehen worden.'¹²⁶ The desire to fulfil his own sense of 'Bestimmung' which characterises this period, from the laying of the 'Grundstein' in *Meinungen eines Laien*, through the plea for a voice at court in *Die Soldaten*, to the subsequent channelling of all his energies into the formulation of his project whilst in Berka, all ends in the nihilism of *Der Landprediger*, with Lenz deriding the fallacy of his former political aspirations and hence of his notion of 'Bestimmung'. The self-commentary reaches a definitive point of self-negation. The final image of *Der Landprediger* is indicative of such an attitude: the victim of another unbroken tirade of Mannheim's preaching - unbroken by anything but commas for twenty-one lines - the Spezial decides to take his leave of the 'Landprediger' and thinks better of reporting him to the higher ecclesiastical authorities: 'Hier nahm der Spezial seinen Hut und ging fort...'¹²⁷ So too Lenz abandons his political ambitions, writing them off, literally and metaphorically, and assuming a new existence as 'Der Landläufer', bereft of any sense of 'Bestimmung', as he says in the spring of 1777:

*Ich schwärme in der Schweiz herum...*¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Wilson, p. 54.

¹²⁷ II, 463.

¹²⁸ Lenz an Boie d. 26ten Mai 1777, III, 359.

Conclusion

Ich arbeite jetzt in mancherlei Strömen wider den Strom.
[...] Ich hoffe ich glaube ich lebe. Komm bald Herr Jesu!
(Lenz an Herder [Straßburg, Anfang März 1776])¹

That confusion reigns in Lenz reception, even in established scholarship, is unsurprising, given that his works, especially the established canonical texts, have primarily been taken in isolation. The present thesis has adopted a broader textual and historical approach with the aim of dispelling at least some of that confusion. In Lenz's case, as has been argued, his works must be read as part of a *process* if one is to avoid becoming entangled in the web of interpretative problems which his literary works, when taken in isolation, undoubtedly pose. A valid critical response must draw on a variety of textual sources. With the critical editions available so inadequate in Lenz's case, the edition of unpublished archival material is vital for such an approach. As has been shown archival research is rather more than a mere 'Puzzlearbeit' in which it is possible 'zumindest einige Schritte voranzukommen'. In Lenz scholarship, as in many other fields of literary studies, it remains the great 'Nachholbedarf'.²

The present thesis has aimed to trace the path of the notorious 'vorübergehendes Meteor' of German literature by unravelling the sense of 'Bestimmung' that underpins Lenz's career during the pivotal period of 1774-76. The texts discussed are all reflections of the changing role of Lenz as a 'Dichter', as he sets off in his pursuit of fulfilling his sense of 'Selbstbestimmung'. The 'Dichter' is now bound to work for the 'social good'. In this sense *Meinungen eines Laien* and *Stimmen des Laien* must be regarded as the

¹ III, 390.

² See Introduction, p. 3.

‘Grundstein’ of such a process. The resolution of the moral-philosophical and theological problems provides the foundations for his future direction as a writer. More importantly, these texts also show that Lenz adopts an increasingly sceptical attitude towards literature and its ability to effect change in the real political world. To disregard the religious ‘Grundstein’, whether derived through theological and philosophical chicanery or not, really is to become ‘weniger als ein Meßmusikant’ in the critical arena, as Lenz, in *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, describes any ‘Dichter’ devoid of ‘Religionsbegriffe’.³ It provides the underpinning of all the texts dealt with in the thesis and, as such, the key to Lenz’s ethos as a ‘Dichter’.

Given the context provided by *Meinungen eines Laien*, and supplemented by an understanding of the content and extent of Lenz’s military reform project, the present thesis provides a textual base which is wide enough to dispel the confusion endemic in the reception of *Die Soldaten*. As has been argued, Lenz’s faith in the theatre was already wavering before this canonical play had been written. Subsequently the interpretation offered in the thesis challenges the perception of Lenz as a great social critic, at least within the bounds of the theatre. He is neither the radical or revolutionary playwright, nor content to remain a critical *littérateur*, as readings of the play in isolation have maintained. In line with his sense of ‘Bestimmung’, Lenz seeks to enact reform within the existing structure of the absolutist state, moreover, by partaking in that process himself. Access to the corridors of power becomes his professed and sincere aim, as expressed by the Obrister in the final scene. *Die Soldaten*, when read as part of a process, is revealed as an opening gambit in an effort to open a dialogue with those in power. Lenz uses the only

³ *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, II, 667.

authority open to him, as a published and publishable playwright, with the aim of, speculatively or otherwise, forging an opening into the world of court politics. The reading of *Die Soldaten* made possible by placing in a broader context also necessitates a reassessment of Lenz's reputation as a leading Stürmer und Dränger. Indeed *Die Soldaten* can be seen as a subversion of the concerns and form of such a movement. Lenz provides a 'Dynamisierung und Binnenkritik' of Sturm und Drang by expressly writing a play which looks beyond itself, as Lenz himself, in pursuit of his 'Bestimmung', looks to work for the 'social good'.⁴

However, such a reading of *Die Soldaten* has only been made possible by relating it to the wider context of Lenz's military reform project. By editing significant portions of the Kraków *Lenziana*, the thesis has sought to fill perhaps *the* vital gap in Lenz scholarship: an investigation into his stay in and around Weimar, long considered the 'Wendepunkt' of his career. In his pursuit of his 'Bestimmung', the military project to which Lenz dedicates himself throughout 1776 is paramount. It must also be understood as the means by which Lenz tries to gain a career in court, an aim shared, and achieved, by many of his contemporaries was only following in the established eighteenth-century tradition of authors advising monarchs. It is by playing to his strengths, that is to say to his knowledge of military affairs, undoubted even by Goethe, that he hopes to gain employment in the service of an absolutist state. To dismiss Lenz as a mere pipe-dreamer disregards the fact that Herder, Wieland, and Klinger, amongst others, were also engaged in a search for positions at court. In the academic community Lenz's project has, at best, been considered a curiosity and more often than not dismissed out of hand, the product of

⁴ To adapt G.Sauder's phrase, see Chapter II, note 7, p. 74.

a deluded imagination. However, as the thesis has shown, to view *Über die Soldatenehen* as ‘das Schlüsseldokument für Lenzens Haltung zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus’ simply no longer holds water.⁵ Indeed the ‘Wendepunkt’ of Lenz’s career has been, up to now, judged on a text written prior to his having set foot in Weimar and on the notorious ‘Eseley’ incident which has attracted, and diverted, so much critical attention. By actually looking at the manuscripts available in Kraków it is clear that Lenz’s project, especially in its mature form of the ‘lettre à Maurepas’, is the product of considered study and experience of economic and military affairs, with the arguments stemming from political pragmatism, not ‘Schwärmerei’. However, a valid interpretation of the project is only possible if placed in a precise economic, political and historical context. In particular the project must be related to the political events and changing personalities in Versailles. Although such events seem so distant from the ‘Weimarwelt’ of Goethe and Wieland, to Lenz, in his Berka ‘Einsiedelei’, they are of crucial importance. An understanding of the historical background to the project has been long overdue in Lenz scholarship. As such this thesis aims to have met, at least in part, the challenge set down by David Hill in his initial ‘Bericht’ on the Kraków *Lenziana*, thereby opening up a new field of research.⁶ The extent of the ‘new’ manuscripts must lead to a serious questioning of the view, widespread both in Lenz scholarship and in literary history, that the reform project is merely the product of a sexually frustrated, paranoid and ultimately unstable mind. That Lenz’s ambitions, sincerely directed at working for the ‘social good’, came to grief following the unexplained, and probably unexplainable, ‘Eseley’ is not in itself enough to

⁵ Wilson, p. 54.

⁶ See Chapter III, note 34, p. 124.

denigrate the project out of hand. The present thesis has thrown new light on the mystery surrounding the activities of the 'Einsiedler' in Berka, which in themselves provide the key to an understanding of the 'Wendepunkt' of Lenz's career.

Lenz himself acknowledges his failure in the pursuit of 'Bestimmung'. Banishment from Weimar effectively put an end to all his political prospects. Given the context offered by the Berka manuscripts, and read as part of a process, it becomes possible to disentangle the confusion surrounding the problematic literary text *Der Landprediger*. Subject of much recent critical attention, this Erzählung is cast in a new light when read in relation to the broader context of Lenz's career during the period 1774-76. Rather than some form of 'Wunschbiographie' or utopia, Lenz writes what amounts to a 'Reuebiographie', as an epitaph to his aborted aspirations as a 'Dichter' playing the role of a reformer in government. It is a work which is not built on the 'Grundstein' that underpins all the other texts dealt with in the thesis. Its relationship is one of antagonism, with Lenz acknowledging his failure to enact the transition from 'Dichter' to reformer.

Perhaps it is more appropriate to see the period 1774-76 as the 'Wendepunkt' in Lenz's career as a 'Dichter', as this thesis has aimed to show. Certainly it is during this period that he tries, and fails to pursue a new direction as a writer, away from theoretical and literary concerns towards the political and social. It is a shift best summed up by Lenz himself in *Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken*, written as the opportunities at Weimar became a reality in 1776:

Man erlaube mir doch hier, allen künftigen Dichtern oder Nachtretern und Nachbetern unserer Dichter, wenn es möglich wäre mit der Stimme des Mars, als er verwundet war, oder wollen sie lieber mit der Stimme Silens des Eselreiters zuzurufen, daß *Uneigennützigkeit* der große, der ewige Probierestein aller wahren Dichter gewesen ist, ist und bleiben wird.⁷

⁷ *Vertiedigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken*, II, 718.

'*Uneigennützigkeit*', at least on a theoretical level, is at the heart of Lenz's notion of 'Bestimmung', even if the 'Nachbeter' of literary criticism have failed to acknowledge it as the only valid 'Probierstein'. But his achievements in the political world, and consequently the impressions left in history, or more precisely the in the minds of literary critics, are rather less than he would have hoped, as the passage concludes:

Und was kann wohl erbärmlicher sein, als einen Dichter, der doch, wenn er echt sein will, durch so vieles gegangen sein muß, am Ende seines Lebens einen Karren ziehen, oder ein Mühlrad umdrehen zu sehen wie Plautus. Ach, daß die Liebe zur Unsterblichkeit den Sporn für die Fürsten nie verlieren möge, nicht sich Schmeichler zu dingen, wie Horaz war, sondern um ihr Vaterland verdiente Männer zu belohnen, die höchste Schmeichelei, die sich selber machen können.

Despite his lofty ambitions, Lenz has been left as a curious 'Karrenzieher', with no compliments for his broader conception of the 'Dichter' paid by either a 'Fürst' in his own life, nor even by his latter day 'Nachbeter'. The 'vorübergehendes Meteor', at least in his own mind, had a career which went beyond the 'Horizont der deutschen Literatur' alone, with the lost 'Spuren' to be found in the legacy of neglected manuscripts, as this thesis has sought to show.⁸

⁸ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Vierzehntes Buch, HA, X, 12.

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Appendices

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A catalogue of the Biblioteka Jagiellonska Lenziana in Kraków

The following list was kindly provided for me by the staff of the Biblioteka Jagiellonska, in particular I would like to thank Mrs. E.Burda and Mrs. Koslowska of the manuscript department for their invaluable help during my time in Poland and Dr M.Zwiercan for his warm welcome on a cold November's morning.

- Box I: Originale:** a) aus der russischen Jugendzeit (2 Aufsätze)
b) aus der letzten russischen Zeit, deutsche Gedichte und Aufsätze, Französisches und Russisches. Beiliegend *Philotas* etc. Nicht von Lenz.
- Box II: Originale:** Aufsätze besonders aus der Straßburger Gesellschaft, Übersetzungen, Aphorismen, Skizzen zum *Waldbruder* und *Landprediger*, *Tripon* und *Dalaskus*, Lyrica (eigenhändig und abschriftlich)
- Box III: Originale:** Dramatische Entwürfe, auch ein Fragment der Übersetzung des Oldcastle. Abschriften: *Czarlot*, *L'homme de glace* drame, *Brouillon du Roman* (Vergl. K.Weinhold, *Dramatischer Nachlaß von J.M.R.Lenz*, Frankfurt a.M., 1884)
- Box IV: Originale:** Über Soldatenwesen, deutsch und französisch. (see separate sheet for full content)
- Box V:** Briefe seit 1772, meist Originale, namentlich an die Angehörigen; 2 Briefe von R. de Cabonnière; Abschriften namentlich der Briefe von Boie; ein veraltetes Briefregister.
- Box VI:** *Pandaemonium Germanicum* (Original); ferner Abschriften von Dramatischem wie Plautus *Miles Glorios*; *Sic quae nocent dacent* [!]; *Le Couple Innocent*, *Czarlot*; von Übersetzungen wie Oldcastle, *Coriolan*, *Ossian*....; Aufsätze und Fragmente.
- Box VII:** Lenzens Aufsätze und Erzählungen in Abschriften von W. von Maltzahn u.a.
- Box VIII:** Briefwechsel W. von Maltzahns (+1889) mit J. von Sivers (+1879) u.a.
- Box IX:** *Die sizilianische Vesper*, ein historisches Gemälde von Lenz, in Abschrift.

- Box X:** J.M.R.Lenz, *Meynungen eines Layen den Geistlichen zugeeignet. Stimmen des Layen auf dem letzten theologischen Reichstage im Jahre 1773*. Leipzig 1775. Abschrift.
- Box XI:** J.M.R.Lenz, *Der Hofmeister*. Vergleichung der ältern handschriftlichen Gestalt mit dem ersten Druck (K.Weinhold).
- Box XII:** *Der grosspralerische Officier und der Truculentus* von Plautus, übersetzt von J.M.R.Lenz. Abschrift K.Weinholds.
- Box XIII:** *Coriolan*, Trauerspiel von Shakespeare teilweise übersetzt von Lenz. Abschrift.
- Box XIV:** Briefe von 1771-1775, Abschriften von J.v.Sivers, W.v.Maltzahn, K.Weinhold, u.a..
- Box XV:** Briefe 1776 in Abschriften verschiedener, chronologische geordnet.
- Box XVI:** Briefe 1777-1778 in Abschriften.
- Box XVII:** Briefe 1779-1792 und jüngere Correspondenzen.
- Box XVIII:** Excerpte zu Lenzens Lebensgeschichte.
- Box XIX:** Studien zu einzelnen Werken Lenzens, auch Notizen von Köpke.
- Box XX:** Dumpf und Petersen über Lenzens Nachlaß.
- Box XXI:** Fragment einer Biographie Lenzens von Dumpf. Dannach Biographie von R.Köpke.
- Box XXII:** Nachweise und Urteile über Lenzens Schriften.
- Box XXIII:** Rezensionen und Notizen über den Nachlaß Lenzens.
- Box XXIV:** Zu Lenzens Lyrik mit einem Aufsatz R.Reickes (1867)
- Box XXV:** Sprachliche Sammlung zu Lenzens Werken von K.Weinhold.

A list of Köpke's Box IV folder headings

I <i>Über die Soldatenehen</i> , original and Abschrift.	34 sides German
II Über die Umbildung der französischen Armee zu Legionen durch Soldatenehen.	32 sides French
III Brief an den Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit, Frankreich durch ackerbauende Militär-Kolonien zu heben. Verschiedene Entwürfe.	36 sides French
IV Notizen zu dem Buche: <i>Über Verbesserung der französischen Armee</i> .	56 sides mostly French
V Materialien zu einer Abhandlung über die französischen Armee.	43 sides mostly French
VI <i>Lettre d'un soldat Alsacien</i> à S.Exc Mr. le Comte de St. Germain sur la retenue de la paye des Invalides.	21 sides French
VII Auszüge für die Landwirtschaft und Finanzgeschichte besonders Frankreichs.	43 sides German
VIII Auszüge und Studien zu Julius Cäsar.	11 sides German
IX Auszüge zur Geschichte Berhards von Weimar	9 sides German.

Editor's note on the texts transcribed in Appendices A to E

The following appendices contain previously untranscribed texts from Box IV of the Kraków *Lenziana*. In the subsequent editing of these texts I have tried to render them as free from obstructive notation as is possible, with the aim of making them readable as texts, unimpeded by all manner of brackets and arrows. However, there are of course some symbols used which readers must be aware of. For in all the texts, both the quality of the language and script do tend to deteriorate, with increasing numbers of amendments made by the author.

- a) Roman numerals, refer firstly to the box number, e.g. IV and then the folder number, e.g. iii and then the Box number. Arabic numbers then refer to page numbers, with recto and verso to indicate the side of the folio, (r or v).
E.g. IV, iii, 1r-6v.
- b) { } indicates that the word or phrase in brackets has been inserted by Lenz.
- c) In the footnotes a word in square brackets [word] indicates that it has been crossed out in the text. [oblit.] indicates that the word has been completely crossed out, whilst [illeg.] indicates that the word is illegible. [?] indicates that the transcription given is somewhat uncertain.
- d) Where appropriate I have also inserted an apostrophe where Lenz leaves it out, to make the text more fluid, e.g. 'qu'il' goes to 'qu'il' etc., where Lenz uses one 'm' with a line on top to indicate a double, the text has 'mm'.
- e) (,) or (.) or (?) indicates an insertion by the editor, as often only long pen strokes are as near as the texts come to having any form of punctuation.

In all the appendices I have retained Lenz's original spacing, hence the variable sentence lengths. In the manuscript the text is justified to the right on the first side and right on the second. Here the texts will be justified to the left. All amendments and thoughts made by Lenz in the margin of the manuscript will be incorporated into the body of the text when it is clear from the text where they are to be inserted, otherwise they will be footnoted.

NB

The standard of Lenz's French is uneven, perhaps suggesting the rapidity of the texts' composition; syntax is also sometimes lacking. It would also seem that his knowledge of the language was primarily oral/aural rather than formal, and hence there are a many orthographic errors as well as grammatical ones, in particular verbal and adjectival agreements only evident in the written form. The texts presented below are as in the manuscript with the original spellings and grammatical errors kept, hence no [*sic*] will be employed unless absolutely necessary. Any other mistakes in transcription are entirely my responsibility.

Appendix A

Folder IV, Box IV: Notizen zu dem Buche: Über Verbesserung der Französischen Armee [56 Blätter]

The following texts are selective transcriptions from Folder iv, Box IV of the Kraków *Lenziana*. The title given to it by Köpke suggests the contents are linked to one project. In fact there are many different drafts linked to the wide variety of means through which Lenz planned to set out his ideas for military reform. The notes for an epistolary novel feature prominently in these extracts, but are not necessarily representative of the file as a whole, a full judgement of which would require a complete edition.

TEXTS:

Loix des femmes soldats

1. Elles ne plaindront jamais sans quelque pretexte 55r
que ce soit même de maladie leurs maris lorsqu'ils
iront changer de garnisons ou aller aux frontieres
{les plus loins} meme a la guerre - sous peine de separation parceque ça
amollit les ouvrages(.)
2. Elles ne logeront jamais d'hommes dans leur
maison sous quelque pretexte que ce soit meme les plus proches
parens de leurs maris excepté leur beaufreres soldats ou passans leur
peres et leurs freres sous peine de separation. Non plus les
oncles(.) et cousins germains(.)
3. Elles ne recevront ni ecriront jamais des lettres sous quel
pretexte que ce peut etre excepté a leurs maris, pas même a leurs
peres ni freres, ce qui elles peuvent faire mander.
4. Elles n'iront jamais a aucune dance ou noce ou {aux} gingettes
[pas même aux promenades publiques] et a d'autres parties de plaisir qu'en
trois accompagnées d'un de leurs peres ou meres, car [?] de trois femmes
soldats une aura toujours pere ou mère oisiva a [?] cela, pour oter tout
pretexte aux jalousies, sous peine de separation, si le mari. veut pour
toujours, s'il ne le veut pas pour quelques tems, que leurs signes d'honneurs
leur soient otées. Aussi ne danseront elles que sous l'inspection de leurs peres
et jamais plus¹ d'une heure. On aura pour cela un garde
qui les avertira, d'abord qu'elle danse davantage separation - car

¹ [d'une heure de]

pour la danse il leur en faut permettre pour la conservation de leur
santé comme de leur beauté. Lorsque leurs maris sont presans elles peuvent
danser lors qu'elles voudront, car il faut absolument **55v**
y faire de distinction, ça donne aux personnes, toujours les circonstances
s'unissent[?] avec nos idées des personnes
Si un soldat irraisonnablement jaloux, sans les raisons allegués sera se-
paré pour quelque tems, il aura sa dimission - si la femme le veut
pour toujours.

6.² Toute femme qui fera un enfant dans l'année que le
mari est dans la frontiere et qu'il la voit pas, est punie de
mort, sans accorder jamais de graces.

7. Les femmes soldats seront distinguées en toute maniere
des autres femmes paysannes, elles auront une place separée
aux eglises et dans toutes assemblées sans contestations
le premier rang. {Aussi} [Mais] leurs soeurs lorsqu'elles ne sont
maries a des soldats sont regardes comme les autres payasannes
pour ne les pas degouter tout a fait des autres mariages. Avec
tout ça elles n'osent jamais traiter les autres paysannes avec
fierté Voilà porquoi leurs soeurs sont regardée tout comme les autres³

8. Les...

² There is no number five in the text.

³ [illeg.]

30r

[Des] {Sur les} mariages
de Soldats

[par]
par
[Lenz] un
[Auteur] Allemand

[ecrit sous la protection de Son
Altesse serenissime le Duc de Saxe
Weymar et Eisenach.]

Dedicace

31r

a

Monsieur

Le Comte de St Germain⁴

Tous les innovateurs pechent ordinaire-
ment en ce qu'ils n'enseignent pas les
moyens les plus faciles⁵ proches⁶
et imperceptibles⁷,

pour executer leurs idees chimeriques.

Comme cela ils accouchent sans peine
et douleur, mais leurs projets meurent
aussitôt qu'ils voyent le jour. Pour moi

j'aimerois plutôt mourir⁸ moi

même, et c'est a Vous Monseigneur⁹ qui

un aveu pareil se peut faire sans reserve

parce Vous seul [etes en tat d'en sentir

la sincerité en sentez]¹⁰ la¹¹ verité

Je pense que tout projet raisonnable

ne¹² devrait etre¹³ conçu que¹⁴ {de l'heureux}

concours de moyens qui s'offrent¹⁵

comme de soi même et¹⁶ {n'attendent que les forces du} genie

¹⁷ homme {pour} les combiner.

Alors on peut regarder son projet comme

la production d'Artiste¹⁸ qui a su

¹⁹ profiter des forces de la nature

pour obtenir²⁰ {des buts au dela de sa portée.}

En tout autre cas le projecteur comme les projets devroient etre bannis de la

²¹ société comme les maux les plus

31v

⁴ Appointed to reform the army in October 1775, and named Ministère de la Guerre in May 1776.

⁵ [les plus]

⁶ [les plus]

⁷ [pour ainsi dire]

⁸ [mille fois]

⁹ [a]

¹⁰ Kept for syntax.

¹¹ [possibilité]

¹² [doit]

¹³ [pris]

¹⁴ [du cet heureux]

¹⁵ [comme]

¹⁶ [ne demande que le]

¹⁷ [d'un heureux mortal de]

¹⁸ d'[un grand] Artiste

¹⁹ [assembler plusiuers] [combiner]

²⁰ [le but qu'ils s'est proposé]

²¹ [republique]

²² dangereux a un etat bien composé.
[...]

²² [envenimés de l'état la société]

32r.

Sur
le mariage
des Soldats
et
sur l'education
militaire
en France

Ouvrage [dedié] présenté
a²³

32v

a Monsieur
le Comte
de S. Germain.

²³ A line trails off down the page from this point.

33r

Je ne vous dedie pas ceci pour {avoir une occasion de vous etaler}²⁴ des elogues, vous vous passeriez aisement²⁵ {les applaudissements} [...] ²⁶ de tout le monde pourvu que celui de votre coeur vous reste[nt et] ce serait abuser de votre tems que de vous les²⁷ {rechauffer}, et encore plus [abuser] de votre caractère qui d'esperer en ²⁸ {me} procurer une reception plus favorable de mon ouvrage. Si il {en} est digne il sera agréé²⁹ {de lui même}{,} s'il ne l'est pas, tant pis pour l'Auteur.³⁰

34r.

[Projet] Plan
Sur le mariage des Soldats
en France
[proposé]
[par un etranger]
[en lettres]
[de differentes personnes]

kann der letzte Brief werden³¹

35r

Lettre
de l'Auteur a
Monseigneur le Comte de St. Germain
Servant pour Dedicace

C'est ³² {en meme tems} au Roi que j'adress[rois] la presente
³³ {sachant} que Votre Excellence ayant
l'oreille de ce prince {ayant les memes vues et les memes sentiments} {qui caracterisent ce
grand homme³⁴}, cela vaille autant.
Il n'y a rien que le motif le plus pur qui me

²⁴ [faire ici] [Vos] [?]

²⁵ [de celles]

²⁶ [illeg.]

²⁷ [repeter]

²⁸ [de m'en]

²⁹ [sans cela]

³⁰ In the lower part of the manuscript: 'das geht itzt immer so fort ohne abzusetzen...'

³¹ Written in afterwards, sideways on to the main title, see reproduction of the original.

³² [plutot]

³³ [Si je ne savais pas]

³⁴ Insertion in margin.

peut donner cette assurance. Allemand de nation
 Livonien de patrie le bien-etre de la France
³⁵ {qu'} il l'est a la plupart des etrangers
 me pourrait etre ³⁶ {aussi} indiffèrent, surtout
 me trouvant dans un pays eloigné et sous
 la protection d'un prince que j'aime³⁷: mais
 cet attachement, pourquoi le vous cacher, cet etude continuel que je me suis fait³⁸
 depuis quelque tems³⁹ des interets de la France **35v**
 derive ⁴⁰ {de toute une} autre source un peu romanesque peut
 etre mais d'autant plus convenable a me donner
 ces dispositions ⁴¹ {necessaires} de coeur et d'esprit que demanda
 l'exposition d'un projet aussi vaste et complique {que celui que je vous dedie}{.}
 C'est l'amour, l'amour que je portois pour
 une Françoise qui m'a été a jamais ravie
 et qui pour tout dedommagement d'une
 perte que je⁴² {payerai de ma vie}
 ne m'a laissé que cet⁴³ amour pour la patrie
 que je regarde actuellement comme la mienne.
 Je ⁴⁴ {consacrerais donc pour remplir} le reste de ma vie et de ⁴⁵
 mes forces a travailler en quelque façon pour⁴⁶
 son bien et de ⁴⁷ {rendre} par la au moins immortelle
 la mémoire d'une femme que peut etre
 la posterité regardera comme sa liberatrice et en même tems {comme}
 la victime de sa felicité(.)
 Pour moi que jusqu'a mon nom soit oublié
 car a quoi bon de se ressouvenir⁴⁸ des {infortunés}
⁴⁹ determiner a quitter la vie ⁵⁰, pourvu que mon projet reussisse
 et que mon maleur put avoir occasionné
 le bonheur et la gloire d'une nation qui
 renfermant la cause de tous mes desastres.
 m'est la plus estimable et la plus chere de la terre. **36r.**

³⁵ [comme]³⁶ [absolument]³⁷ Weimar and Herzog Carl-August respectively.³⁸ At least 3 years, see Lenz an Zimmermann, Ende Mai 1776, III, 459.³⁹ [sur]⁴⁰ [d'une]⁴¹ [heureuses]⁴² [suis determine de ne pas survivre]⁴³ [m'a inspiré de]⁴⁴ [sacrifierai]⁴⁵ Above: 'ma carriere et n'avoir plus en vain vecu'⁴⁶ Illegible phrase.⁴⁷ [faire]⁴⁸ [des malheureux]⁴⁹ [pourquoi?]⁵⁰ [qui leur est insupportable], above [a change]

Je l'ai expose {tantot en raisonnements tantot} en lettres pour en rendre la lecture plus amusante(,) l'execution plus facile. Car aussitot que le sentiment s'y mêle les choses les plus difficiles en apparence ne sont que tres aisès a obtenir. J'ai pris même la liberté de feindre des lettres de Votre excellence pour pouvoir plus aisement prevenir tous les doutes et objections⁵¹ dont je m'attens de votre part.

Permettez qu'avec l'attachement et l'estime le plus desinteressé je me remette sur le sort de cette petite collection de lettres qui comme vous pouvez presumer me tiennent forts a coeur entierement a votre grandeur d'ame et a votre amour universillement reconnu pour le bonheur public.⁵²

⁵¹ [que]

⁵² At this point the script stops in French and a section written in German appears underneath.

The following extracts appear on two scrap notes:

36v

Il n'y a pas même
un animal quelque
bete qu'il soit qui peut
etre reduit par quelque
force ou violence possible
a employer ses forces
sans avoir l'esperance
d'un etat meilleur
de la fin de ses peines
[et qui ne l'augmente pas]⁵³ des jouissances agreables
de l'oisiveté du repos
du manger
Voila la raison pourquoi
les chevaux courent plus vite
aussitôt qu'il voit la fin
de sa course
et quel but - quel interet pour
les soldats si leur non plus ultra
est l'hopital

27r

dans les vers sur l'Art Tactique de Guibert
Voltaire dit que nous
n'avons pas besoin des
soldats pour tuer
le monde que les chirugiens
et les maladies le font
assez mais⁵⁴
nous faisons pis, nous ne
nous contentons pas de tuer
les gens pendant la guerre
les soldats leur donnent
encore les maladies
pendant la paix.⁵⁵

⁵³ This phrase appears in the margin.

⁵⁴ [si l ne pense]

⁵⁵ A possible reference to sexual diseases.

An attempt by Lenz at a direct translation of *Über die Soldatenehen* into French:⁵⁶

C'est aus Rois que j'ecris cela, quoique
je ne sache si quelqu'un d'eux daignera
me lire. Malheur a celui qui ne me lit
pas, car j'ecrivois pour lui et non pour
moi.

39r

Si les passions des grands et l'indolence des petits ne m'avoient⁵⁷ pas
dissolu cet enigme, je serais stupefait que dans nos jours une matiere
de telle importance pourroit etre entierement oublié et aban-
donnée de nos meilleurs ecrivains. Mais les princes n'avoient pas le temps d'y refle-
chir et les savans toujours plus propres
a etaler des connoissances qu'a les em-
employer n'avoit pas le courage et par conse-
quent etoient trop sages pour se sacrifier aux besoins de l'etat.

39v

Dans les tems les plus reculés le citoyen
et le soldat etait inseparables et pourquoi
les separer. La nature apprit a tous les animaux a se defendre aussi bien
qu'au se conserver⁵⁸, elle partagera a chacun son
espece d'armes, tantot c'etait la force
tantot l'adresse, tantot la velocité. Comme
Anacreon⁵⁹ d'une verité aussi generalement reconnue⁶⁰ fit le refrain d'une chanson
a boire. Elle en fit le même de l'homme
et la reunion de tous ces dons de la
nature formeroit la force defensiva la
plus irresistible. Nous en voyons l'exemple
dans les relations d'Homere {aux tems de la grece} ou chacun
⁶¹ contribuoit de sa propre maniere
et de ses talens particuliers a l'eminence
miraculeuse de la puissance des Grecs par les autres relations de l'Antiquité.
Regardons les barbares du Nord sans culte sans discipline comme ils inondoient
⁶² {d'une rapidité inconcevable} toute l'Europe policée
et instruite. D'ou auroient pu resulter
les evenemens miraculeuses, si ce n'etoit du
grand ressort de toutes operations humaines
qui doivent etre de quelque efficace, de
l'interêt que chacun trouvoit dans
la guerre, de cette idée sublime et tout-

40r

⁵⁶ Suggesting the date of April-May 1776. The project was quickly abandoned.

⁵⁷ [auroient]

⁵⁸ [qu'a se defendre] Also cross reference to 36v.

⁵⁹ See *Über die Soldatenehen*, II, 787 and II, 948.

⁶⁰ [en]

⁶¹ [de ses heros]

⁶² [comme un torrent deborde]

puissante que le soldat etait au meme
 tems defenseur et deffendu, but et moyen, Soldat et Citoyen.
 Croyes vous que ce courage soit disparu de la terre
 que ces sortes de gens n'existoient que dans les histoires.
 Il est vrai que dans nos tems des guerriers aussi derterminés
 et braves sont plus rares, mais la faute en est dans notre **40v**
constitution politique non pas dans la physique. Faites jouer le même
ressort et vous verrez les memes
 effets, la voix de la nature est toujours la meme
 mais jamais elle ne fut si suprrimée que dans
 nos jours. Peut etre pour un coup decisif du bonheur
 general, car tous les grands coups de l'intelligence
 suprême ont été preparés ainsi.⁶³

Voyez les voleurs de grand chemin
 {Voyez les deserteurs meme toujours ils montrent
 un courage qui les abandonne soudain}, dont tous nos
 procès de justice criminels et tous les prisons abondent. A-t-on
 jamais vu dans l'antiquité des gens s'exposer
 avec plus de contenance [?] a tous les dangers possibles
 même ceux qui surpassent la mort la plus cruelle,
 la torture et le prison éternel. Et quel est l'avan-
 tage qui en tirent. Des miseres dont la jouissance [⁶⁴] leur
 prix que des perils qui ont couté chers ces
 miseres appartiennent a eux(,) ce sont des citoyens
 guerriers des hommes qui sentent qu'ils bravent la
 mort pour leur propre interet...

Un soldat le plus digne de tous les membres
 d'etat, celui qui sacrifie [vie] repos aisance
 {la liberté} la vie, tout a la patrie n'est il pas etonnant que
 dans nos jours il soit regardé comme le rebut de la
 societe comme des fainéans nourris seulement aux **41r**
 depens {leur tombe a charge} des autres sans leur etre de la moindre utilite(.)
 Qui est l'opinion commune que tous les autres etats
 et conditions en portent. Ne seroit ce pas parce que reellement
 il leur tombe a charge a {faute} cause des premiers institutions
 sans en etre neamoin plus heureux. N'est il pas vrai
 que tous le sujet de cet ordre le plus digne parmi les hommes soit ordinairement
 des miserables qui reellement
 ne sont porté que par le desespoir ou par ⁶⁵ le dereglement
 a ce genre de vie.⁶⁶ Ne sont
 ils pas déplacés sans ces frais qui ne louent que

⁶³ The script starts to degenerate from this point onwards.

⁶⁴ [illeg.]

⁶⁵ above: 'cet excès de' [?]

⁶⁶ [Mais quelle defense ou quelle effets [?] en attend on donc de telles gens?]

des deserteur ou des laches qui dans le moment
de la crise manquent sont ce qu'on étoit proposé
avec eux. N'est il pas injuste, pour dire davantage,
n'est il pas folie, decorer tous les citoyens pour
fournir des frais a l'entretien des misérables(,)
qui ne font que tromper tous ce qu'on s'attendoit
d'eux. Le Comte de Saxe tous les grands hommes
dans le metier de la guerre l'ont dit publiquement
que notre facon de combattre ne vale rien qu'il
faut s'approcher a celle des anciens mais comment
s'y approcher n'ayant pas les memes hommes a commander(.) **41v**

Cette canaille qui forme actuellement nos armées
ne peut etre menée que par des pedantries eternelles
pour ne pas se deffendre extierement, les princes la voyent
ils ne peuvent pas s'en desesperer [?]
n'ayant pas d'autres a les remplacer il tachent donc
d'effectuer par la qualité intrinsique de leurs
troupes ⁶⁷ chacun fait l'exemple des autres sans cependant atteindre leur but,
cependant le projet en souffre et le prince immediatement pas
moins car qu'est ce qu'un prince sans citoyens
[...] heureux de lui pouvoir fournir ce dont
il a besoin, c'est une tete d'un cadavre. Si quelquun
d'entre eux avoit seulement le courage de
se resteindre a une petite quantité des troupes
mais des gens comme il faut, d'en donner la premier
exemple. Ce seroit l'Alexandre de nos jours je lui
assurerais la monachie.

Il faut que le soldat soit heureux, il faut
qu'il connaisse de patrie il faut qu'il ait de l'interet
en la guerre qu'il fait, il faut qu'il soit exempt
de tous(,) soins de toutes idees qui puissent le distraire sous
les armes il faut qu'il soit lui meme le but et le moyen, pour
etre invincible. Je ne demand pas des impossibilité. Je le demontre[?].
Il faut que ce bonheur ne soit pas partager **42r**
ou imaginaire, il faut qu'il soit fixé et
solide. Chaque homme a ce grand desir en soi
le plus deregle ne l'est souvent que par desespoir
de le pouvoir atteindre cherchant a chasser
ou au moins a le [...]. Mais prenez bien
garde de juger des hommes après ce qu'ils paroissent
ou de les juger avec d'autres sentimens et desirs
que vous n'avez. Tous les hommes sont egaux dans
ces articles dont leur bonheur depend et ils ne sont
differens que dans les moyens qu'ils choisissent pour

⁶⁷ [cepend]

l'exprimer ou [...] Chaque homme veut avoir
un bonheur resure [?] pour sa soustrain a des peines ou a des perils.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ The text becomes indecipherable at this point.

Appendix B

Folder III, Box IV: Brief an Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit Frankreich durch ackerbauende Militär- Kolonien zu heben. Verschiedene Entwürfe. [36 Blätter]

Letter I

Monseigneur

Les feuilles publiques ont annoncé que le Ministère de France se signalisant toujours parmi toutes les puissances cretiennes d'une tendresse paternelle envers ses etats, agréeroit les idées d'un quelconque qui croiroit autorisé de lui en communiquer de bonnes et utiles pour subvenir aux maux publiques et pour ouvrir à sa patrie de nouvelles ressources du commerce et du credit. Voila pourquoi j'ose porter ma petite obole¹ avec assurance dans le tresor public, quoique la langue dans laquelle je dois la proposer, me soit peu connue, esperant que l'amour de la chose dont il est question ne peut pas manquer a se faire comprendre a V. Excellence² de toute maniere qu'elle s'exprime (.)³

26r

J'ose donc soutenir que ce ne sont ni les guerres de Louis 14, ni les grandes depenses quelles ont occasionées dans la suite, ni le colbertisme⁴ prejudiciable a l'agriculture, ni même le Systeme et la Banque de Law qui ont epuisé la France - toutes des choses, necessaires en soi, dans le tems qu'elles sont arrivées, ont été également necessaires a ce qui arrivera de nos jours et que tous ces evenemens⁵ {semblent nous avoir}⁶ amené et preparé c'est a dire a un changement total de la face de l'Europe dont la France donnera le modèle. Reconnoissons la main de la Providence, - c'est la France qui la premiere abolit le gouvernement feodal, mit sur le pied des troupes regulieres, etablit l'equilibre de l'Europe, assura la Dignité d'un souverain Roi, excita le commerce en associant

¹ A very small coin, 'un demi-denier'.

² written in the margin.

³ [a Votre Excellence]

⁴ Colbert, Jean-Baptiste (1619-83).

⁵ [nous ont]

⁶ [semblé]

⁷ aux interets de ses agens aux (ceux)
 de l'état même, facilita ensuite la perception
 des impots publics par les fermes generalles en
 quoi elle fut imitée de toute l'Europe. Ce sera de
 même a la France de subvenir aux depenses que toutes
 ces grandes operations ont occasionnées et de les mettre,
 elles même sur le pied des perfections sous lequel elles ne
 pourroit pas exserer leur utilité. C'est a dire, pour
 resumer ces points importants(,) d'abolir ce qui lui
 reste d'abus des institutions feodales, d'approcher
 l'état de ses armées a ces grands modèles des Armées
 d'un Scipion et Caesar, mettre par la un poids immuable
 dans la balance de l'Europe, donner au meilleur
 des Rois des moiens surs, pour faire le bonheur
 de ses peuples ranimer le commerce par de nouvelles
 sources du credit dont le decroissement ne doit pas
 etre attribué au système mais seulement a la
 manière {incertaine} dont on l'a traité a cause de sa nouveauté
 et de se faire enfin de la perception plus reguliere des impots(,) 26v
 un garant perpetuel tant du credit public que de
 l'excitation de l'agriculture et des arts - et en continuant
 et achevant ainsi avec de la fermeté ce que les grandhommes
 du tems de Louis 14 ont commencé ⁸ ou en presentant ce qui est
 arrivé ⁹ {dans la suite} ¹⁰ on va arriver au
 grand but dont il s'approchoit tous par des routes
 diverses(,) c'est a dire au bonheur de l'état dont les maux
 alors cesserant d'eux même.

Pour commencer des impots, il est etonnant qu'on
 ait etabli des aides et des fermes¹¹ sur tous les articles payables
 excepté le seul qui peut ramener le commerce de la France et qui
 en est pour ainsi dire le nerf, je veux dire les bleds. On crierà
 d'abord ¹² {la} paradoxe¹³ mais je n'ai qu'a m'expliquer. Le commerce
 exterieur des bled n'est rien sans l'interieur et sans les encourage-
 mens necessaires des entrepreneurs des fermes [et] agricoles. Comment veut
 on exporter ce qui ne se trouve pas(?) Et croira-t-on que les voisins
 de la France qui de toutes partis ne font que mediter journellement
 sur l'amelioration de leur agriculture laisseront toujours la balance

⁷ [les interets de l'Etat]

⁸ Above the line is an incomplete amendment: 'ont moins preparé ayant un..'

⁹ [depuis]

¹⁰ [ont du moins preparé]

¹¹ *Le Petit Robért*: 'Ancienn. Système de perception des impôts indirects dans lequel le fonctionnaire (v. Fermier) traitait à forfait pour une somme déterminée à remettre d'avance au roi, se réservant pour salaire la différence entre cette somme et les sommes effectivement perçues.'

¹² [des]

¹³ [s]

du commerce des bleds du coté de nos monopolains on peut parler plus net, nous acheterons toujours des bleds racheris par speculations de nos marchands de bleds. Supposons meme une mauvaise annee est ce qu'elle ne se trouvera jamais de notre coté? Q'en arrivera-t-il les prix des bleds n'en seront pas moins hautes et ces marchands s'enrichiront sans que l'agriculteur en ait tiré le moindre profit ce qui achevera de le decourager(.)

L'affermissement d'une aide regulierement precise de tout sac de bleds qui entre dans un marché ou dans un Magasin quelconque n'aura pas les inconvenients que tous les autres aides occasionnent c'est une denée dont personne ne peut se passer et en mettant sur ce compte quelques autres charges actuelles arbitraires qui par leur variabilité et incertitude detruisent tous les calculs tant des agriculteurs que des commercans même on produira deux effets de la derniere importance c'est a dire(:)

27r

1) on gagnera cette precieuse egalité des prix des denrées qui fait le base de tout {le} bonheur d'un Etat bien administré parce que par elle seule il se peut faire¹⁴ toute entreprise ou toute speculation¹⁵ avec assurance, d'abord qu'on s'est bien imaginé l'etat veritable de la fertilité et de la reproduction de notre royaume, le seul germe possible de tout¹⁶ commerce¹⁷ solide et le moins equivoque, comme de toute entreprise dans l'agriculture et dans les arts(.)

2 i) en rehaussant ainsi les prix des bleds le seul article taxable dont les hommes ne peuvent pas se passer on excitera de la maniere la plus efficace l'industrie et les manufactures et en augmentant les salaires on effectuera une plus grande circulation des especes¹⁸ que les arbitres reprennent sur les riches particuliers - et par consequent un commerce plus florissante. Preuve convainquante que le cherté des denrées {puisse etre}¹⁹ profitable au comerce ce sont les pays bas, parce que ce n'est pas la cherté²⁰ des Manufactures mais la concurrence qui²¹ fait fleurir²² la commerce, les Manufacturiers ne manquent pour cela pas de mettre leur {paresse} et libertinage sur le prix de leurs

¹⁴ [avec illeg.]

¹⁵ [de consequences] and above, 'importance'.

¹⁶ [notre]

¹⁷ Above: [le plus]

¹⁸ Above:[par] [ce]

¹⁹ [est]

²⁰ Above: 'le bon marché'.

²¹ [en ait]

²² In the manuscript Lenz has: 'feurir'.

marchandises, quoique le prix des denrées soit ²³ baissé
[tel] qu'il voudrait.

3) L'effet le plus important est l'encouragement de l'agriculture (,) l'ame
de tous les arts et de tous les richesses d'un Etat qui par des prix incertaines
des denrées dont aujourd'hui les monopoleurs seuls [?] decident, et par des
impots prelevés sur les avances les plus necessaires detruisans donc la
culture dans son origine - languit dans la poussière.

Pour ce qui regarde le commerce et le credit public il est evident
qu'une nation qui ne fait qu'emprunter ne peut pas conferer son
credit d'abord que les interets des emprunts qui roulent sur les
impots ne sont pas payé avec regularité et qu'il n'y a pas moien
d'empecher par des amortissements de quelques fonds qui d'autres
nations qui dans le payement des interets sont plus exactes et pour
ainsi dire scrupuleux ne l'emportent sur nous. Il est donc
tems d'y songer avec le plus grand zèle du monde, parce que
negligant le point important, principal, le credit ne peut se racheter par
aucune operation des finances tant subtile qu'elle put etre, ni reconquerir
par aucune conquête, parce que les guerres ne peuvent pas se faire sans
argent et qu'elles coutent plus qu'ils ne rendent. L'Empire Romain n'est tombe
que par des conquêtes infructueuses. Et accordans tout, il nous faut des sources
pour l'entretien des troupes. Cela ne se recompense pas, meme si on veut
faire accidens des[...]²⁴

La banque de Law etoit une des operations dans les Finances ou il y avoit le plus
de profendeur de genie. Ce n'est qu'a son execution a la quelle²⁵ {que} doit {etre} attribus
toutes les suites, funestes en apparence de son issue. Ce n'est qu'a l'impatience
(qui gate tout) de voir amorti toutes les dettes d'un seul trait, ce
qui n'est pas une chose aisée. Il est demontré par les plus habiles
Financiers que du tems du fameux arret de²⁶ {21 Mars} 1720 le
danger n'etoit pas si pressant qu'il paraissoit, que la perturbation
d'ame des entrepreneurs de cette banque les²⁷ fit [²⁸], seduits
par le prejuge, que le credit d'une banque roula sur la possibilité
²⁹ {de l'echangeement subit} des billets de banque en³⁰ {ecus} a l'instant {même} que
les coïnteressés le demandassent - ³¹ au lieu qu'ils esstimissent bien posé dans
même sur lesquelles cette banque fut etablie

²³ Above: [aussi]

²⁴ [illeg.]

²⁵ [on]

²⁶ [20 May]

²⁷ [le]

²⁸ [illeg.]

²⁹ [de pouvoir echanger]

³⁰ [monnaies]

³¹ [et non sur la surete des fonds]

Je m'expliquerai. Examinons l'origine {et la nature} de la banque
 On s'associe pour établir un fonds sur le credit duquel on distribue
 des billets qui ont la valeur de la somme marquée contre
 des hypotheques sures sur les quelles l'autre veut emprunter telle
 et telle somme a tel et tel interet. C'est donc la banque qui gagne
 des interêts pour la sureté de ces fonds et qui n'en donne pas
 parce qu'elle ne donne que du papier, voila le seul profit de
 la banque (,) il consiste dans la sureté de ses premiers fonds et des
 hypotheques sur les quelles elle prête et dans l'interet qu'elle gagne
 pour un argent imaginaire {qu'elle ne donne pas, qu'elle n'a pas laissé emprunter} mais
 qui est assuré dans ses premiers
 fonds. Comment peut on pretendre donc, que le credit de la banque
 tombe lorsqu'elle n'est pas en etat d'echanger ses billets distri-
 buées en especes a la premiere requisition des debiteurs. N'est
 ce pas le point principal sur le quel roule la nature
 de la banque et de son profit de n'avoir pas besoin d'echanger
 ses billets en especes et d'en gagner neanmoins les memes interets.
 Pourquoi est ce qu'on fit d'une tomber la {valeur}³² des billets
 de banque le 21 May 720 [*sic.* = 1720]. Sur la moitié et par consequent le
 credit de la banque des compagnies et de la nation sur
 une peur {vaine et tout a fait} chimerique de n'avoir pas assez {d'especes}
³³ racheter ses billets.

Je suppose le cas le plus critique, que la balance du commerce
 ce soit du coté des pays voisins et qu'elle ait besoin d'etre
 payée en especes courantes. Je veux illustrer ce cas par un exemple(:)
 supposons un Proprietaire de terres qui doit payer une somme a laquelle
 ses rentes ne suffisent. Qu'est ce qu'il fera alors. Il empruntera sur la
 sureté de ses fonds. Ces fonds dans une Banque d'Etat sont les hypotheques
 sur les quelles on distribue les billets, les capitaux que les interessé de la
 banque ont déposés ou garanties, enfin pour trancher le mot l'impot
 et le revenu public de la perception reguliere du quel depend le payement
 exacte de l'interet, la conservation du credit et tout le salut de l'Etat.
 Voila alors le tems des emprunts très bien employées, des tontines des rentes
 viagères, par la conversation du credit d'une banque qui renferme en
 même tems le credit de toute la nation et de tous ses commercans.

La Banque de Law³⁴ eut cela de particulier et c'est dans cet endroit
 la que se manifesta l'effort de son genie ou plutot du genie de l'illustre
 Administrateur qui s'en servi comme instrument
 qu'il sut³⁵ engager les créanciers de l'etat même de s'associer
 en son commerce et d'ajouter le credit même qu'ils avoient³⁶ [donc]

28r

³² [credit]³³ [pour ob..]³⁴ [avoit]³⁵ [oblit.]³⁶ [dans]

³⁷{accorde} a l'état, au fonds publics ³⁸ de ³⁹ {cette} nation debitrice, le seul et unique moyen de les payer un jour sans faute et même avec un profit considerable de deux cotés. Voila une chose qu'il me semble ne peut pas manquer de pousser le credit d'une nation au plus haut point possible, si elle n'avoit {echoué} par pure inadvertance et faute de fermeté(.) On se soucia peu, comme dans ces cas d'extremité cela auroit été indispensablement necessaire, de favoriser le commerce interne par des emprunts et d'encouragemens d'agriculture et des manufactures afin de [...] ⁴⁰ la balance du commerce a la faveur de la nation, on eut de nouvelles guerres a faire on omit d'avoir soin de lever l'impot des sujets d'une maniere regulière et modérée afin d'en payer les interêts avec exactitude, on exigea de grosses sommes, on voulut tout a la fois, on fit des amortissemens des equitiaux au lieu de songer a la paye des interets - l'impatience et l'empressement gatent tout. Ces actions, depot precieux d'esperances de toute une nation, furent montées trop hautes - survint la mefiance - et tout ce batiment superbe d'un genie du premier rang comme ce fut le Duc d'Orleans s'ecroula mais l'abus n'en a pas detruit l'usage.

Il faut qu'une banque pareille ait toujours une caisse d'emprunts en reserve ⁴¹ ⁴² en cas d'accident - et elle fera pour toujours le bonheur de la nation. Mais aussi voit on l'impossibilité et le danger supreme de {convertir} ⁴³ les dettes de l'état même en actions de banque et les mettre un profit de soi {propre} commercé, sans la perception la plus regulière et la moins destructive de l'impôt, sans le paiement {le plus} exacte et scrupuleux des interets pour les emprunts qu'on se voit obligé de faire, sans enfin l'encouragement le plus vive de l'agriculture et des arts aux qu'elles elle a donné la naissance.

Permettez Mons. d'ebaucher pour cela une route nouvelle. J'ai parlé de ce que ⁴⁴ restoit d'abus des tems feudaux [...]

³⁷ [eux même]

³⁸ [obilt.]

³⁹ [une]

⁴⁰ [illeg.]

⁴¹ A cross refers to the following footnote in the manuscript: 'ainsi peut elle [changer] payer l'interet des especes qu'elle doit sur ces billets mais jamais elle n'ose faire tomber le credit ou la valeur de ces billets même Et personne ne se refusera de faire des prets a cette banque, d'abord que ses fonds sont assurés {ou negligées} je veux dire l'impot et l'interet.'

⁴² [pour]

⁴³ [changer]

⁴⁴ [illeg.]

Appendix C

Folder III, Box IV: Brief an den Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit Frankreich durch ackerbauende Militär-Kolonien zu heben. Verschiedene Entwürfe [36 Blätter]

Letter II

¹ Monseigneur(,)

20r

Voila un proietteur nouveau {faiseur des proiets}, et pour comble de disgrace, qui ne sait pas même Votre langue; mais suis sur que l'amour de la France m'inspirera un langage, qui ne peut pas manquer de se rendre intelligible a Votre Excellence.

On ne parle partout que d'une guerre nouvelle.² Je laisse aux lumieres superieurs de Votre Excellence a decider, si la position actuelle de la France l'en peut dispenser; mais comme avec de l(')argent on peut toujours faire des conquêtes, mais les conquêtes ne donnent pas toujours de l'argent; sondons un peu les ressources, que la France se peut avoir managées pour cette besogne. Je laisse aux personnes du cabinet le soin autrefois crú si necessaire, de s'attacher parmi ses autres Alliés les Princes de l'Empire, ou je sais qu'il y auroit encore des petites dettes a rembourser qui en cause du credit tirent quelquesfois a consequences, surtout contractées comme elles sont dans la dernière guerre. La seule chose que j'ose mettre devant les yeux de Votre Excellence, c'est le revenu publique et le credit de la France.³

Convertir les dettes de l'Etat en Actions⁴
de Banque, ne pouvoit etre que le plus sur et

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¹ [Voila]

² Possibly a reference to the prospect of war with England, perhaps in the form of intervention in America as proposed by Vergennes the foreign minister in May. During the summer of 1776 the French army performed a number of excercises as a show of strength.

³ There are faint, but not very convincing crossings out across the whole of this page.

⁴ A note above the main body of the text in scratchy writing. 'Voltaire a deja [dit] remarqué qu'on faisoit tort en France a la memoire de Law. Je n'ose pas decider en cette matiere, cependant considerons la nature de son projet source de toutes les operations de l'Administration suivantes telle qu'il ne l'avoit pas commis peut etre mais qu'elle auroit pu etre s'il avait su alors ce que le monde aspire a d'apres appris de son exemple des fautes de son execution'

{j'ose le dire} peut être l'unique moien de s'en acquiter dans un Etat commerçant; le debiteur tant que le créancier ne s'en trouva que mieux, le credit public en augmenta, le commerce en fleurit; malheureusement l'impatience de s'en voir quitte par un coup d'eclat, prit ⁵ {ceux qui en avoient l'administration}, on paya les créanciers de monnoie dont la valeur changeoit a tout moment, on diminua pour cet effet le credit des billets de banque qu'on auroit dû tacher a conserver jusqu'a ce que toutes les actions auroient été vendues et qu'ainsi les dettes et le credit de l'Etat auroient fait les fonds de tout son commerce - enfin c'etoit cette même impatience, qui après pour reparer les playes que le credit de la France avoit reçues, au lieu de tacher par une distribution égale et uniforme des impôts payer avec une regularité les interets des sommes dues qui seule peut restituer le credit chancelant d'un Etat marchand, voulut amortir des grandes sommes pour faire place a des nouveaux emprunts reussit ⁶ {souvent} mal dans l'un comme dans l'autre et laissa a la fin plus d'un milliard de dettes encore du tems du système de Law, a la charge du revenu public.

21r

Le credit est l'ame du commerce; lorsque l'Etat et les particuliers marchands unissent leur credit cela ne peut qu'avoir les suites les plus salutaires pour le total, et lorsque l'Etat par la distribution plus regulière des impots et par consequent par le payement plus exacte et regulier des interets et des arrérages peut encore une fois parvenir a disposer ses créanciers par le moien d'une banque, a entrer dans son commerce, cela ne peut qu'⁷ {avoir les suites les plus heureuses} tant pour son commerce que pour l'augmentation de son credit même. Il n'aura pas a craindre une seconde fois ⁸ des cointerressés {qui prennent l'avis subit d'echanger} des⁹ billets de banques en espèces, parce que son plan

⁵ [le Ministre]

⁶ [toujours]

⁷ [être le plus profitable du monde]

⁸ [l'échange subit]

⁹ [L]es

sera dressé plus solidement et ses mesures prises

¹⁰pour cela de toute autre manière. Pour ces mesures¹¹ je m'en vais les détailler a la fin de cette piece et je me flatte qu'elles seront agréées du ministre(.) le plus éclairé qui ait jamais présidé au gouvernail de de vaste Royaume.

Il faut qu'il y ait encore une immensité d'argent en France dans les coffres des particuliers et qui n'entre pas dans la circulation. Du tems de Law même il n'y avoit que 336 millions 11050 livres qui entrèrent dans la Banque, cependant il y avoit plus de 1200 millions de livres dans la France. La defiance universelle causée par son discredit au lieu de diminuer ne peut que s'être augmentée depuis ce tems là (.)

Deterrer ces tresors cachés et les faire rentrer dans la circulation ne peut être l'effet des Lotteries qui ne regardent que les pauvres qui ¹² {aiment a} risquer ¹³ ni des Tontines et rentes viagères¹⁴, tant que les impôts(.) le seul fonds des interêts et du credit public(.) sont distribués d'une inegalité qui les rend destructifs a eux mêmes et prejudicieux tant aux avances primitives et a la reproduction (chose principale dont les Proprietaires doivent être jaloux) qu'a l'industrie et au commerce même.

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Voila pourquoi je me felicite d'être tombé dans un periode ou le Ministère de la France veillant en père pour la cause commune, a trouvé bon enfin de permettre l'exportation des bleds libres.¹⁵ J'en prevois les suites heureuses. Pour remplir enfin le grand objet du point de vue de tous ¹⁶ Oeconomistes¹⁷ expérimentés, je veux dire l'egalité des prix des denrées conformés aux besoin de l'Etat et du commerce; et pour regler enfin la façon ¹⁸ {penible}, ¹⁹ de la perception des impôts toujours variante et incertaine, qui par consequent détruit tous les calculs tant des agriculteurs que des gens de metier et des commerçans même - je prevois que d'abord que

¹⁰ The note in the margin, is located here in the manuscript.

¹¹ This line has been added at a later date.

¹² [peuvent]

¹³ Above is the insertion: 'pourvuqu'ils risquent peu de'.

¹⁴ The rent paid by tenancy peasant farmers.

¹⁵ A reference to Turgot's plan for a free market in grain.

¹⁶ [oblit.]

¹⁷ Aka the Physiocrats.

¹⁸ [cruel]

¹⁹ [le]

l'agriculture aura pris un nouvel essor
on ira dresser un Tarif d'après lequel
chaque sac du bled a l'entrée d'une
ville d'un port de mer ou d'un Magasin quel- 22r
conque, payera une partie du Total de
toutes les impositions extraordinaires reparties²⁰
sur le produit nêt; tel qu'ayant évalué le
produit nêt sur les dixmes que chaque arpent²¹
de terre pay {deduction fait des avances annuelles} on fasse le calcul de la ma-
nière suivante: Telle et telle quantité de me-
sures²² {en} produit nêt paye telle et telle
somme en impôts fixes attachés a telle et
telle quantité de pieds de Frances en terrain
qui a rapporté le dit produit; telle et telle
somme extraordinaire est exigée, combien est
ce que cela feroit²³ {repartir sur} la même quantité
de mesures et par consequent²⁴ {sur} une me-
sure simple.²⁵ {Il est evident que} cela monteroit le
prix des denrées prodiguesement, {mais} il est
{egalement} constaté²⁶ {par observation} des plus
habiles Oeconomistes (que par l'experience
des pays bas, ou les manufactures sont
des plus chères de l'Europe et le commerce
²⁷n'en fleurit pas moins, que²⁸ {la} cherté,
au lieu de celle²⁹ {que les} monopoleurs, ne³⁰
peut être³¹ qu'egalement profitable tant
aux agriculteurs qu' {alors} au commerce en gros
même, pouvant prendre des mesures plus
³²{surs} et faire des speculations³³ plus
{solides} au moien de l'egalité des prix; aux in-³⁴

²⁰ Note in margin of manuscript: 'sans néanmoins favoriser par la gêne cruelle des reglementaires qui veulent contraindre les paysans de vendre tout sur les marchés cet esprit de système gate tout(.)'

²¹ *Le Petit Robert*: 'Ancienne mesure agraire qui valait cent perches, de 20 à 50 ares.'

²² [de]

²³ [pour]

²⁴ [pour]

²⁵ [Quoique]

²⁶ [tant par les raisonnements]

²⁷ Note in margin: 'generale et uniforme de toutes denrées.'

²⁸ [cette]

²⁹ [des]

³⁰ introduissent sur

³¹ In between lines as a correction: 'actes de violence seulement dans le dessin de s'enricher.'

³² [solides]

³³ [sures]

³⁴ Above: 'pourvuque qu'il y ait la quantité requise des productions, ce que ne peut jamais arriver dans la position actuelle des choses.'

dustrieux, qui par là sont excités au travail

³⁵et par³⁶ rehaussement de ³⁷{ces} marchandises,

parce qu'ils {f}ont³⁸ {sortir} plus d'argent des coffres des³⁹

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propriétaires, ⁴⁰{circulation qui s'⁴¹etend jusqu'} au même peuple ⁴²meme qu'il

en retire ⁴³{des salaires considerables et a cause de ceci redoublera}.⁴⁴

⁴⁵{Il est donc egalement}, que tout cela suppose un ⁴⁶

produit nêt {des plus} considerables et ces ⁴⁷{des ces nouveaux} essor

de l'agriculture dont je viens de parler.

Voila le seul noeud qui arrête actuel-

lement les operations les plus salutaires

du Gouvernement, permettez Monseigneur!

que je m'⁴⁸{en} approche, en tremblant, pour

⁴⁹vous montrer⁵⁰ un coin negligé d'ou j'espere que

par des lumieres et des forces superieures aux mienes

la dissolution sera la seule possible et qui sera d'une utilité sans lui

meme si ce que nous avons assuré de l'abolition des taxes arbitraires

³⁵ Side note: '[illegible word] parce que neanmoins de tout cela ils ne manqueroient pas de mettre leurs oisiveté et leur luxe sur[?]/ le prix des choses imaginaires alors / mais qui actuellement se changera /en prix necessaire.'

³⁶ [le]

³⁷ [leurs]

³⁸ [circuler]

³⁹ Above: 'enfin profitable a la circulation et par consequent aux richesses d'Etat.'

⁴⁰ [enfin]

⁴¹ [obliterated word]

⁴² [parce]

⁴³ [un plus grand salaire]

⁴⁴ [mais aussi]

⁴⁵ [est il evident] This is also the starting point for the extended side note, which spreads to the margins of 23r: 'Preuve convainquante de tout cela sont les pays bas ou les manufactures sont d'une cherte excessive et ou le comerce n'est pas moins le plus brillant de l'Europe parce ses forces principals roulent sur la quantité et qualité des productions et la concurrence qu'elle operent. En supposons quels prix des dernées montera comme nous l'avons proposé, l'exportation et l'importation tout a fait libre, qu'en seroient les suites. Les pays adjacens surtout les marchands de l'Allemagne diroientvoila un pays ou le prix des dernées est haut, il sauvroit quelque chose a fine car neanmoins qu'ils feroient des peages plus grands, ils en retireroient un profit d'autant plus grand; c'est de l'argent content qui leur en regle les marchands de France au contraire seroient des grandes entreprises, + (see endnote, ed.), surtout lorsqu'ils seroient animés come en Angleterre par quelques gratifications mais qui au fond ne seroient pas même necessaires parce qu'elles seroient supplée par la quantité des grains que le sol de la France produiroient et qui a la fin en feroit faciliter l'achat par la plus grande concurrence des vendeurs. Mais tout cela suppose comme je viens de dire une abondance en bléds(.)

(endnote)+ sur ces lieux d'ou le desir du gain auroit evacué les provinces pour en pourvoir la France qui l'acheteroit a meilleur marché parce qu'ils ne payent point de droits d'entrée(.).'

⁴⁶ Above, an illegible amendment.

⁴⁷ [meme]

⁴⁸ [y]

⁴⁹ [le disoudre]

⁵⁰ The following paragraph, up to 'c'etait un reg. Prusse', appears as a side note in the main text. As it is amounts to a full amendment, it is included here in the body of the text. In the manuscript, the note spills over onto the next page, being written in folio.

et d'une taxe constante de lacties sur les denrées trouverait trop de difficultés.
j'aimais s'excecuter quoique j'ose l'affirmer que
les taxes arbitraires et indeterminées font encore plus de tort
a l'agriculture que toutes les gens possibles de commerce
des blés parce qu'ils en detruisent le germe
je pouvais prouver cela a V.E. par des empeuples
tous recentes en Alsace a Colmar ou le Directeur
voulut traiter des soldats en mercenaires, qui travailleroient
pour leur paye a loyer et les battre {les} a presque
tous revolté contre lui c'était un reg. Prusse.
Les calamités de la petite culture,
{l'abattement, l'impuissance, l'indigence} des ⁵¹ {agricoles}, qui, epuisés par des
conjonctures⁵² desastreuses, ne peuvent pas même fournir
aux avances annuelles qui vont toujours
en augmentant, et ⁵³ {beaucoup} moins aux {encore} avances
primitives si necessaires {indisputablement}, {au produit des terres} ont depuis long-
tems attiré l'attention du Ministère
qui occupé de trop de depenses en dehors,
est encore, et pourroit rester toujours, dans
⁵⁴ l'impossibilité de mettre ces fondamens
du royaume sur le pied requis {necessaire}. Preuve
de cela fut l'Arrêt⁵⁵ precipité par
un effort de demence, de l'abolition
des services personnels. Mais **Mon-**
seigneur ⁵⁶ que cette clemence ne se refus pas d'après la premiere tentative
prematuré, ou le coeur de nos
peres fachi par les {nombres} sollicitations de nos
misères l'avoit emporté sur la sagicité de leurs propres
conseils.(,) il vous reste encore une partie
de vos sujets à employer pour lever le fardeau
commun sans frais et sans depenses et en constituer
le mobile et le paix necessaire pour cette grande
marchée qui actuellement n'étant pas agitée par
tous ses ressorts ne peut qu'extenuer aux qu'il a
fait jouer jusqu'ici.⁵⁷ [Vous avez]⁵⁸ des Soldats -
Monseigneur les forces {principales} du royaume -
des Soldats a qui, pour assurer leur bravoure

23r

⁵¹ [paysans]

⁵² In the manuscript the line comes to an end with 'conjonctures'.

⁵³ [encore]

⁵⁴ Note in the margin of the manuscript: 'Schiffladung[...]les droits d'entrée ou de sortie des péages et les autres exactions de cette sorte. douanes Zoll des spectations [...]'

⁵⁵ [oblit. trop]

⁵⁶ Start of amendment, which spreads across onto the margin of 23r.

⁵⁷ End of amendment, which spreads across onto the margin of 23r.

⁵⁸ [Vous avez] crossed out in manuscript, included here for syntax.

en tems de crise, il faut⁵⁹ assurer a l'exemple des vieux⁶⁰ {Romains} des retraités dans leur vieillesse, des refuges en cas d'être estropiés pour la patrie, des sepultres même en cas de mourir. Dans tout le monde après le tems d'exercice, pour fortifier leurs corps, pour degourdir leur ame, on permet aux soldats de se repandre a la campagne pour travailler. La peur des desertion en empeche au moins le tiers des Armées de sa Majeste pour les autres on n'a pas tiré ce profit de leurs travaux qu'ils peuvent fournir a l'homme d'Etat, d'abord qu'on estimeroit cet objet assez considerable pour en faire des speculations. Il y a eu quelques uns qui ont proposé d'⁶¹{assigner} les troupes aux travaux publics, j'abhorre ce projet comme tout a fait contraire a l'esprit militaire et au sentiment d'honneur qui caracterise les troupes Francoises et qui ne peut qu'avilir la façon de penser de tout homme qui va s'exposer pour la patrie.

Ayant aboli dans nos jours tout ce qui nous a resté d'abus des tems feodaux et prejudiciable a nos arrangemens actuels, il ne nous en est resté que precisement le germe de tous les maux publics dont nous ressentons tous les effets funestres, sans en avoir pû jusqu'ici demeler la cause cachée. C'est le fameux droit d'ainesse, qui de loi feodale necessaire dans ce tems pour assurer la sucession des Rois et pour indemniser l'ainé de la famille des depenses qu'il etoit obligé de faire en entrant au militaire, a passé dans nos loix civiles aujourd'hui que la succession des Rois est assurée {aujourd'hui}, que ce n'est plus l'ainé mais ordinairement le cadet de famille qui entre au militaire⁶² {aujourd'hui} que les fonds ou on vouloit attacher les vassaux dans ce tems⁶³ {de servitude personelle}, sous la jurisdiction du meme

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⁵⁹ Changed from 'faut'.

⁶⁰ [veterans]

⁶¹ [admettre]

⁶² [et]

⁶³ [la]

Seigneur⁶⁴, payent toujours leurs droits
 Seigneurieux soit qu'ils⁶⁵ {puissent etre} administrés
 par l'ainé ou par le cadet, par le fils ou
 la fille de la famille, et quoi bon donc
 un droit qui dans le libertinage actuel
 de nos moeurs expose les pauvres filles
 de rester a jamais sans maris, les tente
 au libertinage elles même et empêche
 par là les mariages, la population
 et toute acquisition regulière et solide
 des richesses {a la campagne} toute reunion des biens
 demembrés⁶⁶ et mutilés
 de notre petite culture(.)⁶⁷

Si Sa Majesté {vouloit donc} commencer a une de ses do- 24r
 maines d(e)⁶⁸ donner⁶⁹ exemple, de⁷⁰ constituer dore-
 navant la fille ainée {seulement unique} heritiere de tous les biens a-
 movibles du père, tandis que les frères et les autres de-
 scendants n'auroit chacun que sa legitime; quels
 maux en resulteroient ils? Je m'en vais Mon-
 seigneur! Vous les enumerer et laisser la chose
 après entièrement a Votre decision.

Imo Cette heritiere seroit peut etre dans l'im-
 possibilité de rembourser ses coheritans {sur le champ} en argent
 content, {tant mieux} cela les empecheroit, tout mecontens qu'ils⁷¹
 {en puissent être}, d'emigrer {du pays}, ils⁷² {se ressoudront}⁷³
 plutôt d'attendre jusqu'a ce que leur soeur{s} ainée{s}
 soi{en}t en etat de les payer, ils iroient même pour
 cet effet leurs vendre leurs secours, faire la fonc-
 tion de valets chez elles, ce qui dans la gran-
 de culture vaut infiniment les seviles merce-
 naires qui sont un des plus grands obstacles
 des progrès de notre agriculture; ou⁷⁴ les

⁶⁴ [a qui ils payoient des services personnels]

⁶⁵ [soient]

⁶⁶ [a la campagne?]

⁶⁷ A later addition to the manuscript.

⁶⁸ d[en]

⁶⁹ Above: 'une seconde fois a ses vasseaux [...]

⁷⁰ Above and in the margin of the maunscript: 'de la justice de l'ordre, comme il l'a faite dans le tems de la servitude personnelle.'

⁷¹ [fussent au commencement]

⁷² [voudront]

⁷³ Note in the margin of the manuscript: 'au reste tous ces germes d'emeutes populaires sont très faciles a extirper lorsqu'on se donne la peine d'instruire la peuple de son propre bien avant que de lui donner la loi qui y rend ce qui auroit ete a desirer qu'on ne l'auroit pas negligé tant de fois a des emeutes occasionées par la cherté des bled et la liberté de l'exportation s'il y avait des hommes qui au lieu de faire imprimer se melassent eux même parmi la peuple.'

premières reflexions {faites} ils tacheroient {j'espere} ⁷⁵
 au lieu d'emigrer⁷⁶ de gagner eux même telle et telle riche
 heritière, ils lui presenteroient leurs services en
 valets, tous comme les garçons de metier le
 font aux veuves de leurs maitres; jusqu'a ce qu'ils
 soient en etat ⁷⁷ {de quitter après avoir} déposé chez le tuteur de
 [cette heritière]⁷⁸ {leurs fortunes} a valeur d'un fonds ⁷⁹ {d'interet}
⁸⁰ {pour dix années} proportionné⁸¹ aux avances primitives
 c'est a dire pour l'achat des bêtes de trait et⁸²
 des utenciles necessaires a la culture de tant et
 tant d'arpents de terre ce qui d'après le calcul des⁸³
 auteurs du Tableau Economique est très facile a
 trouver ⁸⁴ estimant les avances annuelles ⁸⁵
 la cinquième partie des avances primitives. Ainsi
 outre que notre heritière auroit tout du commen-
 cement de son menage les avances ⁸⁶ {requisies} avec
 son valet, ce qui ⁸⁷ {pour la plupart actuellement lui est impossible} de
 se l'acquérir {sur le champ}, elle feroit annulement l'epargne
 des interêts de l'achat des bêtes de trait et des
 utenciles, ce qui fait un objet pour les avances
 primitives considerable. +⁸⁸

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⁷⁴ [après]⁷⁵ [plutôt que]⁷⁶ Above, an obliterated, indecipherable word.⁷⁷ [de]⁷⁸ Left in for syntax.⁷⁹ [d'avances]⁸⁰ [annuelles]⁸¹ [es]⁸² To the bottom left of the main text is an indecipherable calculation concerning the purchase and/or maintenance of 'betes de trait'.⁸³ Note in the margin if the manuscript: 'il faudrait donc [sotien] donner de chaque bien dont la [propriété] fermiere voudrait se marier un etat exacte 1) de ce qu'elle serait obligée annuellement [d'abaisser] depenser pour avances annuelles et foncieres 2) de son produit total et par consequent abstention faite de tous les impôts qui ne nous regardent pas - apres le tableau economique des requises annuelles qui lui resteroient de ces avances il faudrait deduire les services de valet qu'il lui fait pour le reste il faudrait qu'il depensat chez son tuteur. Mais comme en toutes choses il faut avoir une regle certaine {un ideal pour faire ses calculs} premis un bien moyen des un pays tout a fait agricole, duquel j'ai eu accussit d'avoir l'etat des avances et du provenu.'⁸⁴ [qui]⁸⁵ [oblit]⁸⁶ [necessaires]⁸⁷ [parfois coute bien de la peine]⁸⁸ In the margin of the manuscript: + 'Un bien de 34 Facken Allemagne coute en avances annuelles 838fl* a de produit 1097 (ce qu'on peut savoir de l'etat/des dixmes) par consequent de reprises/annuelles d'apres le tableau economique 3/5 658fl Dans le meme bien on evalue la (sum 658 -120 = 538) depense d'un valet annuellement a 120fl rebatu qu'il en faudrait, a present les avances primitives sont: betes/de trait 160fl + meubles et reparation 65 +edifice s 300 = 525 voila donc la somme qui fournit 525/d'avances

En Allemagne un arpent de terre de 3600 pieds geometriques (ce qu'ils apellent Juchardt) d'un⁸⁹ crú mediocre a besoin de 15½ Louis d'avances primitives par consequent de 3 Louis et environ 2 livres d'avances annuelles, ordinairement les biens des paysan sont de sa dix Jouchardt prenons 8 le nombre moien, la somme des avances annuelles sera donc environ de 25 Louis(.)⁹⁰

En Allemagne⁹¹ un bien {le plus petit possible} de 9 Jouchardt ({non d'} un arpent de 3600 pieds geometriques par consequent⁹² fois plus grand que l'arpent de France) {en champs prés et vignobles}⁹³, [a d'avances]⁹⁴ annuelles⁹⁵ {d'après des etats qui je m'en suis fait donner} 17 Louis. {c'est a dire 221} florins d'Allemagne. Pour dix ans ce servient⁹⁶ {200} Louis ou⁹⁷ {4050} Livres la cinquieme partie en revient a 816 Livres. Il est vrai que dans nos temps cette somme semble exorbitante pour un agriculteur qui commence aussi n'a t il besoin que d'⁹⁸ avoir dequoi en payer les interets a 10 p.c. ce qui ferait 81 Livres, accordans lui en même la moitié c'est a dire 40 Livres ce qui demande un fonds de 400 livres, parce qu'on y comte⁹⁹ l'achat des bêtes de trait et des utenciles seulement a 576# argent de France et les batimens 648. - elle lui sera difficile (je suppose que ce ne soit un richard avec sa legitime) mais cela vaudra d'autant mieux. Cela l'obligera de servir un peu plus de tems chez Sa maitresse ou ses parents en valet pour s'aquerir cette somme(,) cela empechera les mariages prematurées ruine de toute agriculture et germe¹⁰⁰ du mal le plus grand d'un royaume de la petite culture. {Ces gens s'epousent} avant de savoir de quoi se nourrir encore moins de quoi nourrir leurs valets et paysannes.¹⁰¹

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primitives, comme le [...] mari donne des annuelles la 5ieme partie 658-129 fl ainsi, il serait obligé de fournir en depot la cinquieme partie des avances primitives est? a des 105 florins en fonds ou 9 Louis, v.216# (unidentifiable page ref.) de France.' (side link to bottom of p.14.)

⁸⁹ In the margin of the manuscript: 'Les autres freres les cadets p.e. iroient travailler aux chemins publics et faire des services mercenaires jusqu'a ce qu'ils fassent en Etat d'entrepont[?] aussi leur propre menage. Les avances sont très different selon les forces des cultivateurs.'

⁹⁰ There are two lines put through this paragraph in the manuscript.

⁹¹ [les avances annuelles d']

⁹² Gap for figure left unfilled.

⁹³ [ce qui y fait un bien mediocre]

⁹⁴ For syntax.

⁹⁵ [et primitives les]

⁹⁶ [oblit.]

⁹⁷ [1680] In margin of manuscript: $70 \times 24/280 \ 140(0) = 1680$.

⁹⁸ [en]

⁹⁹ [les betes]

¹⁰⁰ A note at top of manuscript: 'voila ce qui peut tenir tous des familles des Anglais...'

2) Lorsqu'un heritier n'aura point de soeurs il epousera une heritiere avec des biens fonds, ces deux fermiers uniront leurs biens, de quelle utilité cela est pour l'encouragement de l'agriculture je n'ai j'espere pas besoin d'expliquer a une administration aussi éclairée. D'autant plus que l'impossibilité d'une union pareille la cause de defiance mutuelle en tant de l'indigence de nos cultivateurs est une des principales causes du dechet de notre agriculture. Lorsqu'un d'entre eux dans la constitution actuelle a des champs s'il manque des près par consequent il n'a point de betes de trait, par consequent il ne peut pas engraisser ses champs, par consequent ses recoltes sont des plus moins entre les miseres de la petite culture, surtout lorsque les petites champs sont dispersés et et longeurs¹⁰² demembré l'un de l'autre la même chose arrivera.

¹⁰³Considérez M. que cette reunion des interets si indispensablement necessaire dans un etat agricole qui doit se relever de la poussière, que cette reunion est tout a fait impossible a notre constitution actuelle. La defiance est universelle(.) prenez les difficultés du caprice et des diversités des caractères qui ne peuvent etre obligés a l'avenir pour un but commun que par des alliages pareilles. Et quels bien en resulteront et quels maux infinis se succederont lorsqu'on neglige ce point le plus important du gouvernement.

3) Il est inconcevable combien l'indigence abat ces gens et detruit toutes les germes de la conservation propre et de l'[...] ¹⁰⁴ pour s'en procurer les moiens¹⁰⁵ [que tous] ¹⁰⁶ {biens en propre}. Je connais¹⁰⁷ {une infinité} des paysans qui prefe{roi}¹⁰⁸ de faire les corvées en personne que de s'en rançonner a moderer de quelques contribution. Ce qu'ils manquent tout a fait d'idée d'une autre¹⁰⁹ {sorte} de richesse ¹¹⁰ {excepté} ¹¹¹ {ce} qui consiste en quelques gens qui infructueux portent¹¹² dans leurs poches {ou qu'ils risquent a la lotterie}. Voila pourquoi le nombre des mercenaires augmente de jours en jours au grand prejudice de l'agriculture et au grand risque des grands chemins des voyageurs, car d'abord que ces gens manquent de travail il est naturel ¹¹³ qu'ils s'abandonnent a la paillardise¹¹⁴(.) Pourquoi¹¹⁵ pas employer ces faineans aux

¹⁰¹ This line is a later addition.

¹⁰² 'et longeurs' in the margin.

¹⁰³ From this point onwards the manuscript becomes increasingly difficult to decipher.

¹⁰⁴ [illeg.]

¹⁰⁵ In the margin.

¹⁰⁶ [proprietes]

¹⁰⁷ [la plupart]

¹⁰⁸ prefer[ent]

¹⁰⁹ [illeg.]

¹¹⁰ [que]

¹¹¹ [lui]

¹¹² [infrachaussement]

¹¹³ In the manuscript three crosses marked at this point refer to a side note: 'de cela lorsque nous voulons donner de nouveaux lois. Autrement le gouvernement n'auroit rien a faire que de laisser aller leurs choses leurs train ordinaire et ne faire jamais des innovations.' The note continues, but it becomes hard to read.

¹¹⁴ 'Paillardise: 1: Débauche, grivoserie. 2: Action ou parole paillarde.'

travaux publics ¹¹⁶ au lieu ¹¹⁷ d'y employer les agricultures qui d'abord qu'ils auront du courage et des vues ouvertes n'aimeront certainement pas de payer les corvées plutôt en personnes qu'en argent. Aussi c'est leur dernier et il le feront avec plus de joie comme cela leur coûte uniquement à leur propre profit parce qu'ils peuvent par là faciliter la vente de leurs bleds. Mais il est naturel qu'ils puissent être en état d'en récolter une grande abondance pour le former l'idée d'un commerce et de tous ces moyens desquels il se le peuvent faciliter, ce qui néanmoins demandera de l'instruction. On veut employer cet argent pour faire travailler les soldats en mercenaires. ¹¹⁸ On cite ¹¹⁹ pour cela l'exemple des Romains. Ce n'est ce que me regardent les Romains, qu'est ce que me regarde l'exemple du canal de Priare d'abord que cela contredit à l'opinion d'aujourd'hui et avilit le sentiment d'honneur qui seulement fait nos soldats lorsqu'il doit mourir pour la patrie lorsqu'il doit endurer toutes les fatigues pour la prolonger il veut être récompensé et un salaire mercenaire est une récompense infame pour un homme qui doit s'exposer. Ces temps ont changé, les besoins ont multiplié, de grâce M. faisons considération(.) ¹²⁰

¹²¹ La nature de mon projet même rend le trop grand nombre des mercenaires superflu par conséquent la concurrence entre eux [sera] ¹²² plus grande par conséquent {la réparation} des chemins publics (en cas que le gouvernement voudrait ¹²³ {continuer} en jours l'abolissement ¹²⁴ des corvées personnelles) seront rescurés par conséquent) aux moins de frais - et peu à peu ses mercenaires tâcheront d'acquiescer ¹²⁵ des biens en fonds par des mariages profitables pour gagner la vie plus gracieusement.

4) J'arrive au point principal, au but ou ¹²⁶ {menent} toutes mes ¹²⁷ {perspectives}. Le Roi de France a une armée de deux cent mille hommes. Tous ces gens là dans l'attente d'être un jour ou estropiés, ou expatriés ou réduits à mendier sans avoir aucun refuge dans ¹²⁸ {une} vieillesse {épuisée et impuissante} - ¹²⁹ quel abattement Monseigneur quelle défaillance du nerf de l'Etat {la plus grande} de la patrie la plus importante sur laquelle repose le bonheur de la France. Permettez

¹¹⁵ [ne]

¹¹⁶ [illeg.]

¹¹⁷ From 'au lieu' the text is a side note in the manuscript to be incorporated here.

¹¹⁸ End of side note.

¹¹⁹ A further note in the margin refers to a cross marked against the previous note and again is included here, from 'On cite'.

¹²⁰ End of note in margin.

¹²¹ [ce mal seroit vendu] [parce que]

¹²² In the manuscript this is crossed out twice, but for syntax it is left in place here.

¹²³ [abolir]

¹²⁴ In the margin in the manuscript.

¹²⁵ Above the is an illegible phrase [preneront.....], for syntax the crossed out [tacheront d'acquiescer] is restored.

¹²⁶ [tendent]

¹²⁷ [preparations]

¹²⁸ [la]

¹²⁹ A scrawled sideways note appears in the manuscript at this point: 'car de quelle ressource leur pouvait être ces petites augmentations de solde, qui dans un temps ou tout a augmenté ou le sont plus, et qui voudroit au moins vices de l'avenir et comparé à ce que produisent les oiseaux Notre temps ne peuvent [sic.] être corrompé de rien...'

que je supplie {les mains levées} pour toute une armée decouragée par l'effet du tems et des dessins et impuissante(,) si les choses restent comme elles sont(,) d'operer jamais quelque chose de {grande} consequence. Il ne reste mais un soldat qui n'a point d'attachemens

au sol de son pays est toujours un deserteur un soldat qui ne sera 25v
citoyen en meme tems ne fera jamais - jamais des merveilles pour la patrie. Heureux si on peut le contenir dans les termes d'une subordination momentanées l'effet d'une peur servile qui cesse au moment du danger commun.

La sage repartition que M. le Comte de Algera a fait des Regimens approche de celle que Cesar fit un jour de ses legions, mais¹³⁰ je le repete elle lui approcher et il ne seroit pas une idée extravagante d'affirmer qu'il y en auroit une possible qui en lui rapprochant de plus rapprocheroit d'autant plus a l'execution d'un projet qui ne peut pas manquer de donner a toute la France un changement dont les biens les plus reculés ne peuvent pas manquer de benir les auteurs en ressentant les suites bienfaisantes ce ne sont pas de provinces, chaque province peut avoir ses regimens qui se relient mutuellement, qui lui seront attachés pour toujours, qui consisteront¹³¹ sa legion. Et qu'on permette alors a ces soldats de s'y assurer un refuge pour leur vieillesse, et il ne peut pas manquer ce seront des gens invincibles parce qu'ils combattront pour leurs propres¹³² foyers.

Il n'y aura pas qu'aucun soldat dans les troupes qui ne recoit pas a son engagement vers les 100# - apres six ans ecoules il a 120# de rengagement apres 16 ans de service il a ses invalides, c'est a dire la demi solde qui fera environ 73# par an¹³³ s'il a servi 24 ans il l'a toute entiere coutons qu'un homme soit entré au service a l'age de 24 ans il en sortira a l'age de 48 ans il vivra 24 apres, il aura donc en tout.(.)

1) dans la supposition qu'il ait seulement servi 6 ans

100# d'engagement
120 de rengagement
2336 sa mi solde pour 32 ans
2556# 134

2) dans la supposition qu'il ait servi 24 ans

100# d'engagement
120 de rengagement
3504 sa solde pour 24 ans a 6 sols par jour
3724 135

¹³⁰ A cross in the text refers to the following note, further suggesting the existence of a whole raft of letters sent to the Establishment in Paris: 'je me rapporte a ce que j'ai ecrit sur ce sujet a Msgeur le Prince de Montbarey.'

¹³¹ In the manuscript: 'constileront', probably means 'consisteront'.

¹³² [biens]

¹³³ [obliterated]

¹³⁴ A sum in the margin: $73 \times 32 / 146 = 219(0) = 2336$.

¹³⁵ Three sums in the margin $146 \times 24 / 584 = 292(0) = 3504$

Voila il me semble ¹³⁶ {en tout une somme} considerable, rabattons encore 10 ans de sa vie et ne le faisons vivre que 62 ans, age très frequent, cela feroit néanmoins un fonds de 2264# qu'on peut evaluer avec la plus grande assurance pour la comptabilité de chaque soldat qui a servi le Roi 24 ans, exempté la solde qu'ici ne nous regarde pas. Et cet argent ou reste-t-il (?) il se consomme dans le Royaume, oui mais ce sont les [...] ¹³⁷ les garces ¹³⁸ qui le consomment au lieu que cela pourroit entrer dans la masse publique et faire le bien être de toute une armée de tout un etat.

D'abord que l'Extraordinaire de la guerre garantit pour cette somme retenue avec la bonne volonté du soldat pour lui assurer un menage, quelle riche heritière ne voudroit pas a bras ouverts recevoir un tel mari qui avec cette somme [lui] seroit en etat de payer 226# d'interets annuellement c'est a dire tout ce que demanderoient ses avances annuelles et primitives

Voila ce qui s'appelle attirer les richesses a la campagane, voila le grand probleme du gouvernement dissous(:) de faire ¹³⁹ {rentrer} ses depenses {meme dans la circulation} pour les premiers besoins de l'Etat(.) ¹⁴⁰

$$146 \times 14/584 \quad 146(0) = 2044$$

$$220 + 2044 = 2264$$

¹³⁶ [une somme]

¹³⁷ [illeg.]

¹³⁸ 'fille de mauvaise vie.'

¹³⁹ [circuler meme]

¹⁴⁰ At this point the third sheet, comprising four pages, draws to a close, leaving the text in a far more incomplete state than Letter III.

Appendix D

Folder III, Box IV: Brief an den Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit, Frankreich durch ackerbauernde Militär-Kolonien zu heben. Verschiedene Entwürfe [36 Blätter]

Letter III

Je ne fais point d'excuses
Mons. de Vous interrompre dans
Vos occupations respectables par
une lettre anonyme. Enchainé
par une infinité de details qui
ne peuvent qu'empêcher et embaras-
ser le coup d'œil libre, toujours
le gouvernail en main pour
prevenir aux dangers les plus
pressans, V.E. ne me saura mauvais
gré de quelques combinaisons nou-
velles de l'avenir avec le present,
nécessités pour ainsi dire par les
circonstances actuelles et dont
je m'attribue la moindre part.
Je suis sur que V.E. les a déjà faites
elle même, mais il y a quelquefois
de l'utilité publique d'avoir ses
vues justifiées et confirmées de celles
des personnes qui avec le dernier dés-
intéressement personnel, se passion-
nent pour l'intérêt de la nation
et de leur Roi.

On ne parle partout que d'une
nouvelle guerre. Je laisse aux lumières
supérieures de V.E. à décider si la
position actuelle de la France la
demande indispensablement, cependant
comme avec de l'argent on peut
toujours faire des conquêtes
mais les conquêtes ne donnent
pas toujours de l'argent, son-

1

1r

1v

¹ In pencil, in Köpke's hand, the following title appears in the top right hand corner: 'Brief an den Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit Frankreich durch ackerbauende Militaircolonien zu heben.'

dons un peu les sources d'ou
il faudra puiser pour ces nou-
velles depenses extraordinai-
res dans un Royaume
ou il y a presque encore un Milli-
ard de dettes seulement du sy-
stème de Law² a la charge du
revenu public³, ou depuis ce
projet funeste quoiqu'il le
soit devenu uniquement
par l'inadvertance et la
precipitation de coeux
qui etoient a son adminis-
tration, on a été obligé
d'employer toutes sortes
imaginables de moiens vio-
lens tantôt pour ne pas
faire expirer entièrement
le credit de la France
tantôt pour subvenir aux
depenses d'une nouvelle
guerre tout de suite au
commencement du regne de Louis
XV. - je veux dire qu'on a
fait des emprunts a l'infinité
toujours sur de nouvelles
impositions extraordinaires
ainsi que leurs interêts l'an
63., deduit les contributions
extraordinaires dans les années
de guerre 56 - {jusqu'à} 63⁴ qui montoient
a 521 millions, pour rembourser
les fonds empruntés dans ces 8 années
montant {ainsi a} 579 millions⁵ {faisoient}

2r

² In 1720 the scottish adventurer John Law tried to set up a state bank, secured by overseas trading profits made in Louisiana, paying the king's debts in paper banknotes. Initially a success, the 'Royal Bank' quickly collapsed, leaving thousands of families desititute.

³ A note in the margin of the manuscript: '...pour ce projet - il faut des nouveaux ressorts du credit pour cela la conservation du credit veut qu'on paye les {regulierement} interets pour paier les interets reguliers il faut mettre de la regularité dans la perception des impots et des revenus publiques pour mettre cette perception sur un pied fixe il faut les proportionner au produit net pour ne pas detruire toutes les sources de l'impot - pour rendre le produit net et ses taxes proportionnées, satisfaisantes aux besoin d'Etat il faut augmenter les avances primitives, attirer les richesses dans la campagne - la France dormirat elle toujours - et quand arriveront dans ce jours fortunés s'il n'arrivent pas actuellement ou tout les exiges. Ecoutez mon plan M. et decidez apres...'

⁴ The Seven Years War, in which the French army, at great expense, performed disastrously.

annuellement déjà {plus de} 41 millions
 ajoutons y la somme des dépenses extra (-)
 ordinaires, {et faisant ça} repartition⁶ a un an 65 millions
 qu'ainsi jusqu'à la paix⁷ de {1763}⁸
 la France payoient déjà en impôts
 extraordinaire annuellement 41 millions

65

106

supposons même que les tontines⁹
 et les emprunts sur des lotteries retombent
 au fisque, il est pourtant a ce qu'il me
 semble moralement impossible de res-
 cherir encore sur les impositions ex-
 traordinaires celles ci ayant déjà
 pour ainsi dire détruit chez la nation
 tout ce qui est capable d'impôt (,) je veux
 dire les avances primitives tant de
 l'agriculture que de l'industrie
 n'étant plus en aucune proportion
 avec leur produits nets. Et comme
 le commerce et le credit public même
 ne roule que sur la reproduction
 solide tant des produits de terre
 que que de ceux de l'industrie
 je ne vois aucun moyen de retablir
 l'un et l'autre pour pourvoir aux
 besoins actuels de l'état, qu'en resti-
 tuant en quelque façon aux premiers
 ressorts de l'état leurs forces an-
 ciennes pour les faire agir après
 et se réserver(,) pour ainsi dire(,) pendant
 la paix des ressources valides pour
 en subvenir un jour aux extrémités.¹⁰

⁵ [rapportoient]

⁶ repart[ies]tion

⁷ [de Aachen]

⁸ Note in the margin of the manuscript: taxes apres la paix {63} pour rembourser pais conté les frais extraordinaires de cette derniere guerre+ pas conté les actes de violence qu'on a fait aux creanciers en leurs fermont pas la caisse d'armes iussemens[?] les lotteries ne peuvent aucunement que comme des impôts sous une autre forme seulement(.) + vid supra. ces taxes font 68 millions apres les frais [p] des acquisitions des taxes precedentes 40 mill aux invalides et l'hotel militaire 7 - 300 000...

⁹ *Le Petit Robért*: 'Tontines: Associations de personnes qui mettent leurs capital en commun pour jouir d'une rente viagère; cette rente elle-même (reportée, à chaque décès, sur l'ensemble des survivants).'

¹⁰ A note in the margin of the manuscript: '[...] deduire les avances et faciliter les moiens en faisant et cultiver les champs non par des mercenaires mais par des valets ([illegible] de leurs mains) par de l'engrais propre qui demanda du betail propre - ce qui demande de l'argent que l'amant donnera de bon coeur a sa future, de sa legitime voila or pour le reste des freres et soeurs il se trouvera toujours des

Tel a été Monseigneur le dernier
Arret preuve incontestable de la sagesse
inimitable du Ministère Francois¹¹, con-
cernant l'exportation libre du bled.

Il n'y a qu'une chose a regretter(,)

c'est qu' {il}¹² ne peut pas avoir

2v

¹³ tout l'effet desirable, tan-

dis que les services person-

nels et la derniere misere

des agriculteurs de S.M.

continuent et qu'ainsi(,)

pour trancher net, il n'y

aura rien a exporter. Ce-

pendant je n'ai pu assez

m'etonner de la hardiesse des

representations des proprietaires

contre l'Arret de l'abolition

des corvées¹⁴ quoiqu'elles pussent

etre necessités par leur po-

sition actuelle. C'est a dire

qui propoioient a S.M. de

faire travailler ses troupes

aux chemins publics, sans

considerer que ces sortes

de travaux ne conviennent

en aucune façon les troupes

et sont tout a fait contraires

a l'esprit d'honneur qui doit

toujours {faire} le principal aiguillon¹⁵

des militaires. Les travaux publics

sont pour les mercenaires, pour

les criminels, et non pas

mercenaries pour l'amelioration des chemins M. parce que s'il n'a pas assez pour faire ces sortes d'achats il doit tacher le gagner en mercenaire. Je sais bien que la seule raison qui empeche la repartition uniforme des taxes est la penurie du produit net - mais comme les depenses {avances} annuelles augmentent toujours ces proportion des negligences des avances primitives? il faut tacher par l'augmentation de ceux à hausser le produit net.'

¹¹ A reference to Turgot's introduction of a free grain trade.

¹² [elle]

¹³ Note in the margin: 'on pourrait avec beacoups d'aisiance calculer le produit actuel d'après les dixmes (methode de Shl[?] et par la prendre sa resoures)'

¹⁴ The *corvée* was enforced labour for the construction and maintenance of France's impressive road system. It did, however, take hands away from the fields for substantial periods every year. Under Louis XVI it began to be commuted, with the cost assed to the tax bill.

¹⁵ *Le Petit Robért*: 'Aiguillon - long bâton muni d'une pointe de fer servant à piquer des boeufs, stimulant 'L'amour, l'aiguillon tout-puissant de nos activités' (Voltaire).'

un emploi digne d'un defen-
seur d'etat dont l'esprit, pour
le malheur de nos dernieres
guerres, n'est deja que trop
avili. Mais ces sortes de propo-
sitions sont excusables lorsqu'elles
sont suggeré par un espece de
desespoir de pouvoir satisfaire de toute
autre maniere a la besogne de l'Etat
d'avoir les grands chemins reparés
au profit du commerce. Si on tachoit
de trouver d'autres expedients je ne
doutes nullement que les proprietaires
qui en tirent le plus grand profit
ne consentissent très volontiers que
leurs vassaux et fermier payassent
leurs corvées en argent, pourvu qu'ils
en ayent[.]

3r

Attirer les richesses a la cam-
pagne restera toujours le plus
haut point de vue pour l'homme
d'etat qui ne veut pas construire
des projets en l'air. Plus ces
cultivateurs de terre sont capables
de reproduire,¹⁶ {d'autant} ils payeront
d'impots(,) {d'autant} plus le credit public
renouvellera ses forces et ranimera
en même tems le commerce et l'in-
dustrie. Je sais bien que l'etat
actuel des affaires empeche abso-
lument de changer les taxes
arbitraires en des taxes¹⁷
proportionnées au produit net, mais
du moins on pourroit commencer
de longue main a s'y prêter
ou a preparer s'il est possible de nou-
veaux chemins pour prevenir le coup
mortel pour les revenues du Roi je
veux dire l'impossibilité de ses
sujets de rien donner. On pourroit
pour cet effet commencer a chan-
ger une partie des impositions
indispensables {arbitraires} dans un pèage

¹⁶ [de le plus]¹⁷ [produit]

etablie en chaque ville ¹⁸

¹⁹pour la vente du bled

3v

sur le marché proportionné

aux cadastres²⁰ des produits nets

de tout le gouvernement qu'on

se seroit fait donner,²¹ par

les preposés des villages. Voila

une taxe qui s'étendrait egalement

sur tous les branches de l'état

et n'en prejudicieroit aucune. Car

quoique le prix des bleds en hausseroit

il ne s'ensuit pas que le prix des

productions des Manufacturiers

en dut hausser aussi, parce que ce

n'est pas la chereté de la subsistance -

mais la concurrence qui le deter-²²

mine.²³ Et celle ci continuera toujours

dans un etat ou il est plus

dangereux de faire les industriels

consolider leur oisiveté et pro-

digalité au prix de leurs travaux

que d'exciter leur diligence

par la cherté des vivres et a la fin²⁴ qu'ils fassent même

hausser les prix de leurs manufactures

(;) dans les pays bas les manufactures

sont des plus cheres de l'Europe et

le commerce n'en fleurit pas moins

contez avec cela l'avantage inexprimable de l'égalité

des prix a tout occurrence parce qu'en mauvaise saison le marchand

aimera plus tot a vendre dedans que dehors ou il doit payer des taxes

et en meme tems la certitude des

taxes ce qui peut mettre l'industriel

de faire des arrangements et ses plans

a l'avenir avec certitude - tous les autres obstacles seront bientôt

levés(.) Il travaillera pas comme a present en incertitude et desespoir,

mais avec soin et assurance de trouver du gain malgré la chereté

¹⁸ [proportionné a]

¹⁹ Note in the margin: 'Difficulté a cause de la minceté du produit net seule qui empeche la distribution equitable des taxes une espace d'aide taxé établie sur la vente de la premiere main...'

²⁰ Eighteenth century land survey, upon which part of the tax system was based.

²¹ [et oblit.]

²² Indecipherable comment for 4-5 lines in German.

²³ Note in margin: 'Son avantage inestimable a cause de l'égaité des prix de laquelle depend la surété des contrats T.11. p.25.26' (the final numbers being page references to an unspecified book).

²⁴ A side note from 'et a la fin...' to 'leur marchandises' is incorporated into the main text at this point, marked clearly by a cross to indicate its reference point with the main text.

des vivres pourvu qu'il fasse diligence. Voila l'avantage qu'ont les pays agricoles et commercants en même tems et qui manque aux {seul} commercants, parce qu'a raison de vivre ils ne peuvent jamais fixer le prix de leur marchandises.

Mais dira t on ces paysans
iront vendre leur bled en
secret aux marchands ou ils
n'ont pas besoin de payer
des taxes. Ca revient toujours
au meme. Les marchands etant
obligés de payer aussi des
taxes a l'exportation, leur
donneront moins. Supposons
de la disette aux pais voisins
on pourroit augmenter cette
taxe proportionnellement a la
quantité qui sera exporté, de même
si s'en trouve a une province de
Royaume. Mais tout cela arrive
de lui même, aussi d'après les
institutions actuelles.

Mais tout cela ²⁵ {suppose}
des moyens de pouvoir fournir
du bled. Nous voila au point
principal. Il n'y a que la quantité du
bled qui puisse favoriser son commerce²⁶
en dehors. D'ou la tirer. Il faut que
le Gouvernement s'y mele, il faut qu'il
y entremette du moins son credit(,) ce qui
vaut quelquefois plus que l'argent même.
Recherchons les principaux obstacles de l'agri-
culture telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui.

4r

C'est l'indigence des cultivateurs, la
petitesse de leurs terres qui augmente la
raison de leurs depenses annuelles sans
cependant augmenter leur profit, le man-
que de population(,) c'est a dire d'une popu-
lation capable a se soutenir(,) par con-
sequent l'accroissement continuel des terres
en triche et tous les autres inconvenices
de la petite culture telle qu'elle est

²⁵ [demande]

²⁶ A very scratchy note in margin: 'le cri de tous les economiques tant Anglais que Francois d'etablir l'egalité des prix des bleds - ne peut jamais etre examiner qu'en mettant en oeuvre les ressorts que je propose'

actuellement en France. Les vivres n'en sont pas moins cher le prix du bled pas plus bon marché²⁷ et tous les autres etats de la France languissent avec celle la premiere et la fondamentale du Royaume.

S'il etoit possible de lier ces gens entre eux par des mariages considerables(,) d'aggrandir et d'arondir par consequent leurs fonds(,) leur betail, leurs valets pour que cela ne fit qu'une masse, ces secours mutuels les mettroient bien, tout en etat de faire des choses en grand le reste de ces miserables(,) au lieu de se nourrir miserablement a deux pommes de terre(,) ²⁸ iroit se procurer par des travaux mercenaires de quoi s'acheter dans la suite des fonds considerables ou seuls ou en associations ce qui ne pourroit manquer de leurs reussir pourvu qu'ils y fissent diligence - voila des ouvriers pour les grands chemins - ou s'ils se trouvoient nés pour quelque autre negoce ou ²⁹ {metier} ils les embrasseroient, ou s'ils avoient la hauteur requise ils s'enroleroient au service.

Mais comment engager ces paysans riches de se marier d'unir leurs familles. Et dispersés come ils sont par ci par là comment les rassembler. (?)

Ayant aboli jusqu'ici tout ce qu'il nous restoit d'abus des tems feodaux et prejudicieux a nos arrangements actuelles. Il ne nous en est resté que le principal le germe de tous les maux public dont nous sentons tous les effets funestes sans jusqu'ici avoir pú en demeler la cause cachée. C'est l'institution des heritages qui fait le fils ainé heriter ³⁰ universel et en payant la legitime aux autres enfans le ³¹ exclut en quelque facon des fonds paternelles. Dans le tems des services personnels cela n'etoit qu'inconsistablement juste {sage} bel et bon pour contenir ces gens par l'attachement au

4v

²⁷ An example of Lenz's self confessed weakness in French.

²⁸ In the eighteenth century potatoes were still treated as animal fodder, the staple being bread.

²⁹ [oblit.]

³⁰ [de]

³¹ le[s]

sol sous le service du meme Seigneur
dans nos tems ou tout fonds paye sa
portion tant en droit seigneuriaux
qu'au Roi, cela n'est plus ni bon
ni necessaire. Le libertinage universel
des moeurs ecarte les jeunes gens de bien {richards}
du mariage, pour les autres il serait
plus souhaitable qu'ils ne se mariassent
pas, les voila en possession des terres pendant
que leurs pauvres soeurs desesperantes d'avoir
d'epouse propre a les soutenir {ou} s'abandon-
nent au libertinage ou trainent leur
vie miserablement en service etranger(.)
Quel mal en resulteroit il, si par un
arret universel on etablissoit qui dor-
navant les heritages des fonds paternels
ne resteraient que pour la fille ainée
tandis que le frere aurait la legitime
et iroit chercher a gagner la vie
le mieux qu'il pourroit. Je {vai} Vous
enumerer ces maux Mons. et laisse
exprès la chose entierement a Votre
decision -

1. Les paysannes seroient beaucoup soula-
gées au sujet des avances annuelles comme par
ex. concernant les frais pour payes des merce-
naires ou pour l'entretien d'un valet
elles seroient tres mediocre lorsqu'ou le frere
de la soeur ainée feroit {cette} fonction jusqu'
a ce qu'il seroit lui même en etat d'epou-
ser une heritiere pareille, ou l'amant
de l'heritiere lui même s'engageroit pour
quelques annés (tout comme chez les voeuvres des
ouvrier)³² a la servir jusqu'a ce qu'il seroit
en etat de deposer chez le tuteur³³ de la
fille la valeur de deux boeufs³⁴ ³⁵
d'un cheval pour le moins, sans quelle condition
il ne peut l'epouser. Aussi cette somme est
presque mediocre si l'on considere
qu'outre ce qu'il peut gagner journellement

³² Lenz's brackets.

³³ As in 'guardian'.

³⁴ [oblit.:et]

³⁵ In margin: 'des avances annuelles requises'.

il a sa legitime(.)

2. Comme alors la besogne des mercenaires 5r
cesseroit la concurrence entre eux feroit abaisser
le prix de leur payement, et par consequent les
travaux publics moins couteuses - aussi avec
le tems ça diminueroit le nombre des frais
et effectueroient qu'ils s'avanceroient a quelque
profession fix ce qu'il augmenteroit les revenus
du roi.

3. Comme beaucoup de ces freres ainés apprendroient
des metiers, des chemins etont aussi facilitées
par la sagesse du Gouvernement, ces gens pourroient
retourner dans leurs villages et tacher d'epouser une
pareille heritiere {ou veuve}, ces deux fonds unis faciliteroient
les avances annuelles et les feroient entreprendre quelque
chose en grand p.e. l'achat des biens adjacentes M.³⁶

4. D'autres epouseroient des Soldats - mais permettez
que je prenne ici haleine -

Voila le point principal de mon projet. Comme
il y a longtems que le militaire demande une re-
forme solide, c'est a dire qu'on lui inspire
l'esprit des anciens veterans chez les Romains(,) qui autrefois faisoient trembler la terre -
je ne vois presque pas de moiens de me moderer
lorsque je traite ce sujet. S'il y avait personne au
monde dont le Ministre devoit avoir plus
de soin ce seroit le Soldat, la personne publique
qui coute le plus au public qui est nourri
de son travail de son sang, qui doit verser
son sang pour lui. En voila actuellement {presque rien qu'} une grande
foule - de deserteurs si non en tems de paix(,) encore
beaucoup plus pernicieusement en tems de guerre.
Et pourquoi cela? Parce que l'attachement au sol
leur manque. La plus rigoureuse discipline militaire
ne peut effectuer la même chose, ou plutot la discipline
n'est rien sans cela. Ce sera un joug affreux qu'a
la premiere occasion ils chercheront a³⁷
secouer. Et que sont donc les forces d'un Royaume
lorsque les forces militaires lui manquent(?)

En voila des expedients. Chaque soldat aura
un refuge après avoir vielli sous les armes.
Dans les tems de leurs congés ils ir{a}³⁸ s'introduire

³⁶ 'Monseigneur'.

³⁷ [rejeter]

³⁸ 'ir[ont]a', Lenz fails to change the preceeding 'ils' to 'il'.

dans les maisons des paysans(,) ils travailler{a}³⁹ pour eux, il se choisira une femme. Lorsqu'elle consent et il doit y être attaché quelque honneur on passeroit p.e. inventer des signes distinctives pour les femmes soldats, il ne travaille que pour elle. Seulement sous la condition qui se soit très bien conduit dans le Regiment et qu'il fasse son service avec une exactitude signalisée, le chef du Regiment sera garant chez le pere ou le tuteur de la fille pour les avances requises de 2 beufs [sic] et d'un cheval mais bienentendu après qu'il ait servi avec la même approbation vingt cinq ans de suite alors on le congédie avec cet argent qu'on a retenu.

1 de son argent ce qui revient actuellement 20-30 livres at après huit ans est doublé triplé même, ainsi pourroit monter a trois 4 Louis.

5v

2 de sa pension lorsqu'il reçoit l'ordre militaire qui fera autant(.)

3 de sa pension en Invalide {dans la supposition qu'il fut blessé} aussi pour le militaire Avec celle il n'est pas infructueux lorsqu'il se retire de cette maniere. Ce sera son fils qu'il instruira⁴⁰ même pour se faire honneur pour pouvoir entrer au militaire. Et ces instructions seront superflues bien d'autres et l'esprit de subordination {lui} sera pour ainsi dire inné matière dont j'ai plus amplement traité dans la lettre que j'ai pris la liberté d'adresser a M. le Comte de St. Germain(.)⁴¹

Sous ces conditions il peut le pouser tout {de} suite (supposé qu'il a la recommandation et la garantie du colonel) et elle ne l'empêchera aucunement a son service, ne la voyant que dans le tems des vacances après la grande revue et tous les deux ans {seulement} comme je me suis plus étendu sur ces matières plus amplement dans la lettre a Mr. le Co. de St G.

Il n'y aucune puissance en Europe qui n'usât a peu près de la même clemence avec ses troupes. Le Roi de Prusse dont la Discipline militaire par ce qu'il a passé dans la dernière guerre peut servir de modele a toute l'Europe congédie presque la moitié

³⁹ 'travailler[ont]a'.

⁴⁰ [lui]

⁴¹ A cross reference to Lenz's 'Lettre d'un soldat alsacien', addressed to St. Germain which deals specifically with the reform of Les Invalides.

de ses troupes après la revue et n'aime rien tant que les garçons soldats dans ses troupes parce que naturellement ils sont plus habiles pour les armes que les garçons paysans.

Il n'est pas nécessaire que le Regim.⁴² étant garant pour ces avances requises les lui fournisse en entier, il suffit qu'il lui en fournisse une partie par ce qui j'ai mentionné de ces gratifications a tout recrú. Pour le reste il est obligé de se procurer lui même par le congé que le Regt. lui donne pendant quelques mois ce qui peut être regardé comme une gratification en argent surtout lorsqu'il garde sa paye, ce que le Roi de Prusse très mal a propos fait garder par ses capitaines

Voilà donc un fonds vivant que le Ministère assigneroit a l'agriculture, voilà qui s'appellerait aussi bien attirer les richesses a la campagne, que lorsque le Roi feroit distribuer des especes aux agriculteurs Deux cens mille tous emplois tout d'un coup a la culture des terres y doivent faire un changement bien sensible.

Voilà au reste un depot assuré au cas d'une guerre que ses maux ne peuvent plus être si funestes suites. Tout ce que les soldats gagneront en dehors sera au profit du Royaume. Ils rapporteront leurs proyes et économes les mettront a profit au lieu qu'actuellement ce ne sont que des libertins gourmands qui mangent tout leur bien dehors.

Voilà enfin résout le grand problème économique(:) de faire retourner les dépenses publiques au profit de ceux même qui y contribuent.

Et tout cela affectué sans que l'Etat en eut pour un denier plus de dépenses qu'il n'en a actuellement.

6⁴³ Si les biens de la soeur et de frere ou du⁴⁴

⁴² 'Regiment'.

⁴³ Lenz omits the number 5 in his list.

⁴⁴ Unclear note in the margin: 'de commencer par les domaines du Roi mit dem neuen[?] Projekt der größten Landpflicht[...]

beaufrère se touchoient, ils s'associeroient plus facilement de s'acheter en commun du bétail pour les cultiver, cela leur fourniroit de grandes secours de toute part, pour ne pas conter l'engrais qu'autrement ils sont obligés d'acheter. L'un pe. a du bois, l'autre des prés, le troisième des vignes, leurs secours mutuelles, d'abord qu'ils sont associés leur feront des épargnes immenses⁴⁵ et ces associations seront plus fréquents comme il y aura plus de parentage, car d'abord que le frère sert sa sœur en valet il se cherchera une épouse dans le même village, au lieu qu'actuellement les pauvres filles vont par ci par là où le sort leur donne un mari ou un seigneur.

7 Comme les biens de la fille sont en partie à considérer comme leur dot dont le mari n'a que l'usufruit[?] il est vrai pour la vie, après le mort de la femme sans enfants, ce sera le frère et les sœurs qui l'hériteront, au cas qu'un d'eux⁴⁶ ait un fonds à soi il lui sera permis d'aggréger celui au sien que par là il aggrandira et de rembourser les autres frères et sœurs. Au cas de négative il le vendront au voisin qui en aggrandira et arondira le sien. Voilà donc la fin de la petite culture et en avenir de toutes terres en friche que de plus riches propriétaires cultiveront défricheront avec plus d'aisance.

Tous les autres droits resteront comme ils ont été.

Les moyens de réaliser cette idée sont des plus aisés du monde et les circonstances actuelles n'en demanderoient que trop la précipitation(.) Considérez Monseigneur quelles secousses terribles le crédit de la France a essuyée considérez que si on excitait l'agriculture, si l'on faisait reflourir le commerce dont elle fait le principal fondement qu'on rouvrirait ces sources du crédit de Dehors que les opérations de Law⁴⁷ et les nécessités des circonstances qui les ont suivies avoient presque bouchées

6v

⁴⁵ Note in margin: 'pour les avances primitives qu'annuelles.'

⁴⁶ [est]

⁴⁷ See note 2 above.

qu'alors on pourroit peut etre penser
a une maniere plus solide de
rebattre les dettes d'Etat en les
tournant comme il semble avoir été
la premiere intention du Regent
en Actions et faire donc une Banque
plus solides des fonds des dettes
du Roi, qui ranimeroit les creanciers
de la France.

Mais tout cela ⁴⁸ exigeroit un entre-
tien plus long et personnel avec V.E. ⁴⁹
que je me reserve si ⁵⁰

cela peut etre le bon plaisir de V.E.

Alors je m'etendrai sur plusieurs matieres
que les termes d'une lettre qui je n'ai
que trop transgressé ne m'ont permis
que d'effleurer.

51

Considerez avant que de jeter cette
lettre, que Rome la plus grand de
tous les monarchies n'a peri que par
des conquêtes infructueuses qui
ne lui rapportait pas ce qu'elle
y avoit employé. ⁵²

⁴⁸ [des]

⁴⁹ 'Votre Excellence'.

⁵⁰ [V.E. voudroit]

⁵¹ A note written sideways to the main text, most likely added at a later stage: 'Les Anglais visent toujours a l'exactitude de payer les interets, les Francois ne cherchent que rembourser les fonds et font souvent tort aux interets voila pourquoi les premiers ont plus de credit que les derniers, mais une Banque aux actions les indemniserait.'

⁵² This final paragraph is written in fresher and a different colour ink, suggesting that it is a later addition, as reflected also by its tone.

Appendix E

The following texts are extracts from Folder III, Box IV: 'Brief an
Minister Maurepas über die Möglichkeit, Frankreich durch
ackerbauende Militär-Kolonien zu heben. Verschiedene Entwürfe
[36 Blätter]

Comprising mainly random notes jottings and even sums, not necessarily linked directly to the letter, the extracts that follow are nonetheless of some interest. Page numbers follow those of the folder, though their logic has to be cast into doubt, for reference they will be used here.

mais il faut que des grandes avances
pour l'achat des bestiaux
c'est pourquoi
le Gouvernement doit
plus attirer les
richesses a la campagne que les hommes.

8r

(C'est par le moien des bestiaux qu'on obtient
le produit net qui fournit le revenu et l'impot
que par le travail des hommes, qui seul rendroit
a peine les frais de leur subsistance.)

On n'y manquera pas d'hommes s'il y a des richesses
mais sans richesses tout y deperit, les terres tombent
en non valeur et le Royaume est sans ressource
et sans forces.

(half way down) 8r

parce que la France est un Royaume agricole
et commercant en même tems je propose donc
qu'on etablit une nouvelle taxe sur chaque
sac de bled qui sort hors de Royaume
supposé qu'on ait permis sans la moindre restric-
tion en l'entière exportation pour exciter de
nouveau l'agricultur agonisante qu'en
même tems, pour y parvenir plus rapidement,
on sache peu a peu decharger les fermiers
et les industriels des taxes destructives et de
subvenir a la besogne de l'Etat par celles qui sont
posés sur le produit net. On obtiendra par là
deux choses de la Derniere importance....¹

¹ The text does continue from this point.

(half way down) 9r

(Auteur du table economique)² -
or il est demontré qu'indépendamment
du debit a l'Etranger et d'un plus haut prix
la seule egalité constante du prix augmente
de plus d'un dixième le revenu a des terres.
qu'elle accroît et assure les avances de la
culture, qu'elle evite les chertés excessives
qui diminuent la population etc.

Contez que le grand probleme de tout oeconomie
de faire circuler les depenses publiques au profit de
ceux qui y contribuent {par là} dissous...

...une grande partie des tailles est au profit des troupes
comme les fourages et utenciles - coeux ci refournent au profit
des taillés parce que les paysans et les soldats ne font
qu'une même famille³

² Quesnay, François (1694-1774), 'Royal doctor and founder of a group of theorists, calling themselves the 'Economistes'. He argued, in a number of articles in the *Encyclopédie* in 1756 and then in his *Tableau Économique* (1758), that there existed a natural benevolent economic order which had been distorted by ill-judged and artificial human intervention. Economic wealth could be unlocked by removing all natural burdens, particularly on agriculture, which was the only true productive activity. These ideas were developed by a number of authors in the 1760s, including Mirabeau, Le Mercier de la Rivière, and Dupont de Nemours, whose book *Physiocracy* (1768) gave the Economists an alternative name.' (Doyle, *Revolution*, p. 57) Lenz, as the following extracts show, seems to have studied the great luminaries of the Physiocratic movement. Their policies came to the political fore when Turgot was appointed *Contrôleur-Général* in 1774 until his fall from power in May 1776, just after Lenz's arrival in Weimar, further suggesting that his 'lettres à Maurepas' were written after Turgot's dismissal.

³ The text becomes increasingly illegible at this point

Mirabeau⁴

10r

la theorie de l'impot

philosophie rurale, ou oeconomie generale
et politique de l'Agriculture, reduite a l'ordre
immuable des loix physiques et morales qui assu-
rent la prosperité des empires et les elemens
de la philosophie rurale

Mercier de la Riviere conseiller au parlement
de Paris, puis intendant de la Martinique
auteur de l'ordre naturel et essentiel des
sociétés politiques.

il a été apellé après par l'Imperatrice de Russie
a sa cour.

L'auteur anonyme (et inventeur) du Tableau⁵
economique, de qui Mirabeau et la Rivière ont
puisé
le bon prix des productions, le bled p.e. a 18tt? le septier

.....il faut que le soldat soit attaché au sol...⁶

11v

⁴ Mirabeau, Vistor Riquetti, Marquis de (1715-89). A leading Physiocrat, see note 2 above.

⁵ Quesnay, François.

⁶ Pages 7-17 follow a similar, if even more indecipherable pattern.

Possibly another attempt at the beginning of the letter to Maurepas:

Ce n'est pas a l'homme d'etat que 29r
j' {adresse}⁷ cette lettre, c'est a l'homme, au
grand homme qui touche a son tombeau
Je vais vous lever le rideau du passé, je
Vous leverai {celui}⁸ de l'avenir, vous
aurez a choisir.⁹ Consultez Votre coeur, c'est
le meilleur parti que Vous puissiez prendre
lorsque je Vous aurai démontré que la poli-
tique¹⁰ {dont} Vos predecesseurs ont¹¹ {fait usage}
etait fausse, honteuse a leur memoire
et contagieuse a jamais pour l'etat.
Consultez votre coeur je vous le repete, car
le terme des maux de la France est arrivé
ils sont montés a¹² {leur} plus haut degré, la gloire sera
toute a Vous de les avoir ecarté heureuse-
ment¹³ {au} moment de {la} crise; ou si Vous
ne m'ecoutez pas,¹⁴ {ce sera}¹⁵ sur Vous seul qu'en
tombera toute la charge.

Pardonnez [moi] ce preambule Monseigneur uniquement 29v
prefixé a ce que j'ai a Vous dire pour exciter votre attention...¹⁶

⁷ [ecris]

⁸ [le rideau]

⁹ This phrase corresponds closely to one used in *Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken*: 'Erlauben Sie, meine Herren Sokraten, daß ich Ihnen den Vorhang vor unserer gegenwärtigen Welt aufziehe, und dann lachen Sie noch, wenn Sie das Herz dazu haben.', II, 732.

¹⁰ [que]

¹¹ [consulté]

¹² [on]

¹³ [dans le]

¹⁴ [c'est]

¹⁵ [sont]

¹⁶ The text becomes steadily more indecipherable at this point.

Appendix F

Some sample reproductions of manuscripts from the Kraków *Lenziana*

Je ne fais point d'excuses
 d'avoir de vous interrompre dans
 vos occupations respectables par
 une lettre anonyme. Enchaîné
 par une infinité de détails qui
 ne peuvent qu'empêcher et embarras-
 ser le coup d'œil libre, toujours
 le gouvernail en main pour
 prévenir aux dangers les plus
 pressants, j'ai ne me faire mauvais
 gré de quelques combinaisons nou-
 velles de l'avenir avec le présent,
 nécessités pour ainsi dire par les
 circonstances actuelles et dont
 je n'attribue la moindre part.
 Je suis sûr que V. E. l'a déjà faite
 elle-même, mais il y va quelquefois
 de l'utilité publique d'avoir ses
 vues justifiées et confirmées de celles
 des personnes qui avec le don des
 intérêts personnels de passion
 nent pour l'intérêt de la nation
 et de leur Roi.

On se parle partout que d'une
 nouvelle guerre. Je laisse aux lumières
 supérieures de V. E. à décider si la
 position actuelle de la France lui
 demande indispensablement, cependant
 comme avec de l'argent on peut

toujours faire des conquêtes
 mais les conquêtes ne donnent
 pas toujours de l'argent, son,
 donc un peu les sources d'où
 il faudra puiser pour ces nou-
 velles dépenses extraordinai-
 res dans un Royaume
 où il y a presque encore un mili-
 arde de dettes, seulement du Sy-
 stème de Lait - à la charge du
 revenu public, ou depuis ce
 projet funeste quoiqu'il le
 soit devenu uniquement
 par l'inadvertance et la
 précipitation de ceux
 qui étoient à son adminis-
 tration, on a été obligé
 d'employer toutes sortes
 imaginables de moyens vio-
 lents tantôt pour ne pas
 faire expirer entièrement
 le crédit de la France
 tantôt pour subvenir aux
 dépenses d'une nouvelle
 guerre tout de suite au
 commencement du règne de Louis
 XVIII. - je veux dire qu'on a
 fait des emprunts à l'étranger
 toujours sur de nouvelles
 impositions extraordinaires
 ainsi que leurs intérêts l'an
 65. Deduit les contributions
 extraordinaires dans les années
 de guerre 56-83 qui montent

pour ce projet - il faut de
 nouvelles sources de crédit
 pour cela
 la suppression de ^{certains} ~~certains~~
 veut qu'on projette l'intérêt
 pour payer les intérêts réguliers
 il faut mettre de la régularité
 dans la perception de l'impôt et de
 revenus publics pour mettre
 cette perception sur un pied
 fixe il faut la proportionner au
 produit net pour ne pas dévorer
 l'impôt le produit de l'impôt
 pour garder le produit net
 et les taxes proportionnelles
 satisfaire aux besoins d'Etat
 il faut augmenter le revenu public
 tout en réduisant les dépenses
 de la Couronne - la France domine de
 l'Europe - il faut donc donner
 et jeter fort l'impôt sur les revenus
 pour atteindre au but
 l'impôt sur le revenu et
 l'impôt sur le revenu

qu'on souvenait ces jours du 22 de
 de hors que les opérations de Louis et les
 nécessités des circonstances qui les
 ont suivies avaient presque bouchés
 qu'along on pourroit peut être penser
 à une manière plus saine de
 rabattre le detty d'Etat en les
 tournant comme il semble avoir été
 la première intention de Roy et
 en actions et faire donc une banque
 plus saine de fonds de dettes
 du Roi, qui ranimerait les créanciers
 de la France

Mais tout cela doit exiger un acte,
 le plus long et personnel avec G. E.
 que je me réserve si G. E. voudrait
 cela peut être le bon plaisir de G. E.
 alors je m'attendrai plus plus: ces notions
 que les termes d'une lettre que je n'ai
 que trop d'ingratitude ne m'ont permis
 que de pleurer.

Considérant avant que de jeter cette
 lettre, que donc la plus grande de
 tout les monarchies n'a pu que par
 des conquêtes infructueuses, qui
 ne lui rapportent rien ce qu'elle
 y avait employé.

Les Anglais ont toujours
 les activités de pays les
 intérêts, les Français ne des
 cherchent que rembourser les
 fonds et font souvent sort
 aux intérêts vides pour que
 les premiers ont plus de profit
 que le dernier. Mais une
 banque aux actions les
 indemniserait

Voltaire a déjà dit remarqué qu'on faisoit tout en France à la manière
 de la loi, de nos pays de la même manière regardant la nature
 de son projet, l'usage de l'argent, les opérations de l'administration, des fonctions
 de la justice, ne l'aurait pas en tout, mais qu'elle aurait pu être si il avait
 fait, en l'usage de la monnaie, de l'argent, de l'usage de l'argent, de l'usage de l'argent.
 Convertir les dettes de l'Etat en actions
 de Banque, ne pouvoit être que le plus sûr et
 peut-être l'unique moyen de s'en acquitter dans
 un Etat commerçant; le débiteur tant que le
 créancier ne s'en trouva que mieux, le crédit
 public en augmenta, le commerce en fleurit;
 malheureusement l'impatience de s'en voir quitte
 par un coup d'éclat, prit le ^{ministère} ~~ministère~~, on paya
 les créanciers de monnaie dont la valeur chan-
 geoit à tout moment, on diminua pour cet
 effet le crédit des billets de banque qu'on
 auroit dû tâcher à conserver jusqu'à ce que
 toutes les actions auroient été vendues
 et qu'ainsi les dettes et le crédit de l'Etat
 auroient fait le fond de tout son commerce -
 enfin c'étoit cette même impatience, qui
 après pour réparer les playes que le crédit
 de la France avoit reçues, au lieu de tâcher
 par une distribution égale et uniforme des
 impôts payer avec une régularité les inte-
 rêts des sommes dues qui seule peut res-
 tuer le crédit chancelant d'un Etat mar-
 chand, voulut amortir des grandes sommes
 pour faire place à des nouveaux emprunts
 neussit toujours ^{soient} mal dans l'un comme

Voltaire a déjà dit remarqué qu'on faisoit tort en France à la nation
 de l'Etat. de nos payements et de la nation regardant considérer la nature
 de son point source de l'Etat, les opérations de l'administration de l'Etat
 celle qui ne l'aurait pas en tout, mais qui elle aurait pu être si il avait
 fini par le monde entier à l'égard de son exemple de l'Etat de l'Etat.

Convertir les dettes de l'Etat en actions
 de Banque, ne pouvoit être que le plus sûr et
 peut être l'unique moyen de s'en acquitter dans
 un Etat commerçant; le débiteur tant que le
 créancier ne s'en trouva que mieux, le crédit
 public en augmenta, le commerce en fleurit;
 malheureusement l'impatience de s'en voir quitte
 par un coup d'éclat, prit ^{ceux qui se querellent l'administration} le ministère, on paya
 les créanciers de monnaie dont la valeur chan-
 geoit à tout moment, on diminua pour cet
 effet le crédit des billets de banque qu'on
 auroit dû tâcher à conserver jusqu'à ce que
 toutes les actions auroient été vendues
 et qu'ainsi les dettes et le crédit de l'Etat
 auroient fait le fond de tout son commerce -
 enfin c'étoit cette même impatience, qui
 après pour réparer les playes que le crédit
 de la France avoit reçues, au lieu de tâcher
 par une distribution égale et uniforme des
 impôts payer avec une régularité les inte-
 rêts des sommes dues qui seule peut resti-
 tuer le crédit chancelant d'un Etat mar-
 chand, voulut amortir des grandes sommes
 pour faire place à des nouveaux emprunts
 nussit toujours ^{souvent} mal dans l'un comme

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Projet Plan.
 pour le mariage des Soldats
 en France

par
 les
 lettres

de différentes personnes

