

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

NCLC

195

Volume 195

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

*Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Philosophers, and Other
Creative Writers Who Died between 1800
and 1899, from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations*

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Preface

Since its inception in 1981, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* (NCLC) has been a valuable resource for students and librarians seeking critical commentary on writers of this transitional period in world history. Designated an “Outstanding Reference Source” by the American Library Association with the publication of its first volume, NCLC has since been purchased by over 6,000 school, public, and university libraries. The series has covered more than 500 authors representing 38 nationalities and over 28,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical reaction to nineteenth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as NCLC.

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NCLC is designed to introduce students and advanced readers to the authors of the nineteenth century and to the most significant interpretations of these authors’ works. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of this period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. By organizing and reprinting commentary written on these authors, NCLC helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in NCLC presents a comprehensive survey of an author’s career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of NCLC is devoted to literary topics that cannot be covered under the author approach used in the rest of the series. Such topics include literary movements, prominent themes in nineteenth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

NCLC continues the survey of criticism of world literature begun by Gale’s *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (CLC) and *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC).

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the list will focus primarily on twentieth-century translations, selecting those works most commonly considered the best by critics. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication. Lists of **Representative Works** by different authors appear with topic entries.

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- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism.
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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Theodor Storm

1817-1888

Danish-born German novella writer, short story writer, and poet.

The following entry presents an overview of Storm's life and works. For additional discussions of Storm's career, see *NCLC*, Volume 1.

INTRODUCTION

Theodor Storm was one of the preeminent figures of nineteenth-century German literature. Although he began his career as a poet, he remains best known as a fiction writer. Over the course of his career, he authored more than fifty novellas, the most acclaimed of which include *Immensee* (1851), *Im Schloß* (1863), *Aquis submersus* (1877), and *Hans und Heinz Kirch* (1883). Written in a style at once lyrical and probing, Storm's fiction chronicles the private and public lives of ordinary people, capturing the subtle, commonplace details of daily existence. Scholars have identified several prominent themes in Storm's work: the transience of human life; the irreconcilable tension between modernity and tradition; and the unstable, at times mystical, nature of love. Above all else Storm's writings seek to describe life as honestly as possible, regardless of whether the truth conforms to conventional notions of beauty. Scholar A. Tilo Alt maintains that Storm's concept of aesthetics is directly tied to reality as the individual experiences it rather than being derived from classical ideals of art.

Storm was admired by such contemporaries as Theodor Fontane and Theodor Mommsen. In a 1930 essay Thomas Mann compared Storm's fiction to the writings of Ivan Turgenev and Charles Dickens. Although not widely read outside of Germany, Storm's work has received increasing consideration among scholars since the middle of the twentieth century. In the eyes of several modern critics, Storm's novellas serve as an indispensable historical record of the vast changes that swept through Germany, and Europe in general, at the height of the industrial age. In Storm's body of work, these critics have argued, the rise of urbanization is tinged with an irrevocable sense of alienation and loss; indeed, Storm's best works are characterized by a melancholy nostalgia for the agrarian past, and his writings on the fading landscape of his homeland are imbued with a wistful, idyllic quality. In this respect a number of commentators regard Storm's work as a vital bridge between traditional and modern literary forms.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Theodor Storm was born on September 14, 1817, in Husum, a small coastal town in the duchy of Schleswig. Although Schleswig later became part of Germany, in the early nineteenth century it was a territory of Denmark; consequently, Storm was born a Danish citizen, and his formative years were shaped by both German and Danish cultural influences. One of thirteen children, Storm was raised to honor the ideals of loyalty and family, values he would hold dear throughout his life. Storm's father, Johann Kasimir Storm, was a prominent lawyer who at one time earned the recognition of the Danish king. Storm's mother, Lucie Woldsen Storm, came from one of Husum's oldest and most distinguished families. According to biographers, Storm's mother instilled in her son a lifelong passion for art and nature, as well as a deep appreciation for his hometown—an appreciation that would later become a constant theme throughout his writings.

Storm attended primary and secondary schools in Husum and Lübeck until 1837, when he entered the University of Kiel to study law. A year later, at the urging of his friend Ferdinand Röse, he transferred to the University of Berlin. During this period he began to write poetry; according to A. Tilo Alt, Storm's earliest verse was influenced by Eduard Mörike, Heinrich Heine, and Joseph von Eichendorff. In 1839 Storm returned to Kiel, where he became friends with Theodor Mommsen (who would become one of the leading classical historians of nineteenth-century Germany, as well as one of the first recipients of the Nobel Prize for literature) and his brother, Tycho. The Mommsens exerted an important early influence on Storm's literary development, and the three remained close friends for the remainder of Storm's life. In 1843, shortly after completing their studies, Storm and the Mommsen brothers coauthored a collection of poetry, *Liederbuch dreier Freunde* (1843).

Upon earning his law degree in 1842, Storm returned to Husum to enter his father's law firm. He established his own practice the following year. In 1846 he married Constanze Esmarch, the daughter of his mother's sister, with whom he would have seven children. Over the next several years Storm practiced law while continuing to write poetry and prose. A year after his first work of fiction, *Immensee*, appeared, he published his first important collection of poetry, *Gedichte* (1852). As a num-

ber of scholars have noted, these early works exhibit Storm's interest in the lyrical possibilities of language while also reflecting his preoccupation with the vulnerability and impermanence of everyday life—themes that would soon prove central to his developing literary sensibility.

During these years Denmark and Prussia were engaged in a bitter conflict over possession of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein that became known as the First Schleswig War. Although Storm deeply distrusted what he perceived as the expansion of Prussian military aggression, he became an avid supporter of Schleswig's independence and spoke out against Danish rule throughout the struggle. When Denmark reasserted control over the provinces in 1851, Storm was banned from practicing law in Schleswig, and he was forced to seek employment elsewhere. In 1853 he moved with his family to Potsdam, where he served for a brief period as a district judge. The position was unpaid, however, and Storm was forced to ask his wife's parents for financial assistance. While in Potsdam, Storm became associated with the city's elite literary circles, where he met Joseph von Eichendorff and Theodor Fontane and published his second major novella, *Im Sonnenschein* (1854).

In 1856 Storm accepted a judgeship in Heiligenstadt, a small town in central Germany. There he edited the poetry anthology *Deutsche Liebeslieder seit Johann Christian Günther: Eine Codification* (1859) and authored two important novellas, *Im Schloß* and *Auf der Universität*, both published in 1863. That year Storm also wrote several fairy tales, which were later published in the volume *Drei Märchen* (1866). In 1864, following the Prussian victory in the Second Schleswig War, Storm returned with his family to Husum. A year later Constanze died in childbirth. Although Storm remarried in 1866, he never fully recovered from his first wife's death; according to some biographers, Storm's profound sense of loss set the tone for many of his subsequent writings and was largely responsible for the melancholy and pessimism that characterized his work from the 1870s and 1880s. Scholar Eva Merrett Friedman has pointed out that Storm's problematic relationship with his eldest son, Hans, who struggled with alcoholism for many years before his premature death in 1886, also contributed to the solemn tenor of his later novellas.

As he grew older, Storm became an outspoken critic of the Prussian state, which he had come to regard as a threat to traditional German values of family and community. His later novellas, notably *Der Herr Etatsrat* (1881), contain damning commentary on the decline of these established ideals in the face of Prussian militarism. Storm's last decade saw the publication of many of his most enduring works, among them *Carsten Cu-*

rator (1878) and *Hans und Heinz Kirch*. In 1886 Storm was diagnosed with abdominal cancer. During the last two years of his life, in the midst of his battle with the disease, Storm managed to write some of his most accomplished novellas, including *Ein Doppelgänger* (1887), *Ein Bekenntnis* (1888), and *Der Schimmelreiter* (1888). He died of cancer on July 4, 1888, and was buried in his family's mausoleum in Husum.

MAJOR WORKS

Many scholars regard Theodor Storm as one of the great novella writers of nineteenth-century European literature, expressing admiration for both the honesty and realism of his depictions of middle-class life and the poetic, lyrical beauty of his prose style. Storm's first major work, the novella *Immensee*, the story of a solitary, aging artist who reflects on an unrequited love from his youth, offers a somber meditation on the underlying frailty of human relationships, as well as an incisive critique of the arbitrary and unjust nature of social class. Storm explored similar themes in *Im Schloß*, an account of a failed romance between an aristocratic young woman and a middle-class tutor, and *Aquis submersus*, the story of a doomed love affair set in a seventeenth-century German village. As Storm advanced in age, his work began to explore darker, more fatalistic themes, and his mature fiction exhibits an increasing preoccupation with the psychological complexity of his characters. Most critics consider Storm's later novellas his most important work. His most notable pieces from this period include *Carsten Curator*, the portrait of a middle-class man whose dutiful allegiance to his son, the dissolute and untrustworthy Heinrich, ultimately ruins him; *Hans und Heinz Kirch*, the tragic story of a father and son who become irreconcilably estranged after a bitter dispute about the son's future; and *Der Schimmelreiter*, a haunting depiction of a village's efforts to repair a damaged dike.

In addition to his fiction, Storm also achieved renown for his poetry, particularly the 1852 volume *Gedichte*. Most scholars consider the haunting, lyrical qualities in Storm's early verse to be the foundation of his mature prose style. A. Tilo Alt believes that Storm's poetry is one of the last significant examples of the "Sturm und Drang" tradition, a movement that prized emotion and subjectivity over more classical, intellectual forms of poetic expression. Among the most famous poems collected in *Gedichte* is "Die Stadt," a nostalgic reflection on Storm's hometown of Husum. Storm also edited two influential anthologies of lyrical poetry, *Deutsche Liebeslieder seit Johann Christian Günther: Eine Codification* and *Hausbuch aus deutschen Dichtern seit Claudius: Eine kritische Anthologie* (1870).

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Storm enjoyed critical and popular acclaim throughout much of his career. Because the greater part of his work glorifies bourgeois values of family and community, Storm naturally attracted a wide readership among the German middle class. His novellas frequently alienated members of the Prussian elite, who objected to the criticism of aristocratic ideals implicit in Storm's writing. A number of contemporary critics found Storm's work too quaint and narrow to be considered important literature; indeed, Storm's good friend Theodor Fontane coined the term "Husumerei" to describe the provincial focus of some of the novellas.

Storm began receiving increased attention from American and English critics in the 1940s and 1950s. Frederick E. Coenen was among the first scholars to undertake in-depth studies of Storm's work; Coenen explored some of the central themes of Storm's major novellas while also examining some of the real-life influences behind his fiction. Walter Silz included a groundbreaking analysis of Storm's final novella, *Der Schimmelreiter*, in his 1954 work *Realism and Reality: Studies in the German Novelle of Poetic Realism*. In *Theodor Storm's Novellen: Essays on Literary Technique* (1964), E. Allen McCormick evaluated the genesis and evolution of Storm's approach to narrative forms. More recent commentators, notably Mark G. Ward, Brent O. Peterson, and Jennifer Drake Askey, have examined the social and political contexts underlying the later novellas. Scholars like David S. Artiss and Margaret T. Peischl, on the other hand, have focused on elements of myth and symbol in Storm's fiction. Important biographical and critical evaluations of Storm's life and work include E. O. Wooley's landmark *Studies in Theodor Storm* (1943) and David A. Jackson's *Theodor Storm: The Life and Works of a Democratic Humanitarian* (1992).

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Liederbuch dreier Freunde* [with Theodor and Tycho Mommsen] (poetry) 1843
Immensee [*Immensee, or the Old Man's Reverie*] (novella) 1851
Gedichte (poetry) 1852
Im Sonnenschein [*In the Sunlight*] (novella) 1854
Deutsche Liebeslieder seit Johann Christian Günther: Eine Codification [editor] (poetry) 1859
Auf der Universität (novella) 1863; also published as *Lenore*, 1865
Im Schloß (novella) 1863

- Drei Märchen* (short stories) 1866; also published as *Geschichten aus der Tonne*, 1873
In St. Jürgen (novella) 1868
Hausbuch aus deutschen Dichtern seit Claudius: Eine kritische Anthologie [editor] (poetry) 1870
Viola Tricolor [*Viola Tricolor, The Little Stepmother*] (novella) 1873
Aquis submersus [*Beneath the Flood*] (novella) 1877
Carsten Curator [*Curator Carsten*] (novella) 1878
Renate (novella) 1878
Der Herr Etatsrat; Die Söhne des Senators: Novellen [*Die Söhne des Senators* translated as *The Senator's Sons*] (novellas) 1881
Hans und Heinz Kirch (novella) 1883
John Riew' (novella) 1885
Ein Doppelgänger (novella) 1887
Ein Bekenntnis (novella) 1888
Der Schimmelreiter ["The Rider on the White Horse"; published in *The German Classics of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Volume 11] (novella) 1888
The Rider on the White Horse, and Selected Stories (novellas) 1964

CRITICISM

Frederic E. Coenen (essay date February 1940)

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[In the following essay, Coenen examines some of the major themes Storm explored in his novellas. Coenen asserts that Storm's approach to fiction arose directly out of his own life experiences.]

Theodor Storm began his literary career as a lyricist, his chief concern being the expression of a mood in a poem. In his early Novellen, likewise, he sought to express mood. Even in his later Novellen lyric expression of mood is conspicuously successful.

In a letter to Fontane,¹ Storm compares his development with that of a plant, which grows and develops unconsciously.² Storm was no dramatist. Soul-stirring inner conflicts and struggles were unknown to him, especially during the first half of his creative activity. Universal problems are rare in Storm's early Novellen. Of his later works only a few were written merely to treat such problems.³ Nevertheless, Storm has, in his fiction, treated many questions of universal concern. The subjectivity with which he wrote leaves us little doubt that he was expressing his own views.⁴

The manner, then, in which Storm solves these universal problems proves extraordinarily revealing of his philosophy. The problems he dealt with may be somewhat arbitrarily classified as follows: 1) love, matrimony, filial love; 2) class distinctions; 3) greed; 4) intolerance and superstition; 5) the church; 6) mercy killing; 7) dipsomania and heredity.

1) Love, matrimony, filial love.

The man frustrated in love and resigned occurs frequently. Reinhard in *Immensee* (1849)⁵ is followed six years later by Ehrhard in *Angelika* (1855),⁶ eleven years later by Christoph in *Drüben am Markt* (1860),⁷ and twenty-one years later by the Vetter in *Eine Halligfahrt* (1870).⁸ The reader feels that something is lacking in the characters of these four men, and that they meet with defeat for this reason rather than for the reasons they themselves advance. Reinhard's lack of aggressiveness as well as circumstances beyond his control seem to be to blame. Ehrhard is overscrupulous. Given to excessive brooding, he hesitates, vacillates, feels he cannot afford to marry Angelika. Later, after the death of the man to whom she had become engaged during his absence, Ehrhard—now well able to support a wife—feels that only now he has really lost her.⁹ Dr. Christoph, the tailor's son, feels socially inferior to Mamsell Sophie, the mayor's daughter. Only many years later the poet, when fifty-three years old, clearly gives what may be considered the reason for the failure of all these men. The Vetter, reminiscing about his unrequited love, says that Nature, of which Eveline (the girl who had scorned him) is only a part, cannot give us life richer than it is our nature to strive for and to accept.¹⁰

There are differences as well as similarities between the Vetter of *Eine Halligfahrt* and Richard of *Waldwinkel* (1874).¹¹ They both fall in love with girls who are their juniors by many years. But while the Vetter has never been loved by any woman, Richard's previous life has left his soul deeply scarred. Imprisoned for a number of years as a result of the political events of 1848, he had killed the man with whom he had found his wife in love. A long lawsuit had resulted in divorce. After years of solitary travel and study he meets and falls in love with a young orphan, who seems to return his love and is willing to marry him. But repeated illness and his hesitation and scruples concerning both his health and the difference in age cause him to lose the love of his ward to a younger and more vigorous rival. Although Richard's scruples and vacillation seem more justified than the Vetter's, Storm's solution of the problem is the same, arrived at in his fifties, namely, that man cannot obtain more from life than he puts into it. His characters lack the vigor necessary for the happiness they desire. All of them resign themselves to their lot. Christoph adds a sense of humor to his resignation.

In *Eine Malerarbeit* (1867)¹² we encounter a similar philosophy. Storm deals with the problem of rejected love for those who are physically deformed. The hunch-backed painter Edde Bruncken¹³ plans suicide when he realizes the hopelessness of his love. But the sight of even greater unhappiness in others brings Bruncken to the noble decision to devote his life to the happiness of others. Once more we see realistic resignation in Bruncken's words: "Man muß sein Leben aus dem Holze schnitzen, das man hat."¹⁴ Again tragedy is averted; life is rendered bearable through resignation. Two further elements are significant: Bruncken's devotion to the happiness of others, and the sense of humor which Bruncken has, like Christoph of the group discussed above.

It has been said that Theodor Storm's literary horizon did not go beyond the boundary of the family.¹⁵ Family relations, especially subjects relating to matrimony are, indeed, central in many of Storm's Novellen.

In *Späte Rosen* (1865)¹⁶ the author pays homage to his wife Constanze. Only after many years of matrimony had he found complete happiness. His eyes had gradually opened to his own intolerance toward her peculiarities of character. In *Späte Rosen*, Rudolf, a sober merchant, after years of strenuous work is suddenly imbued with a romantic spirit. He realizes his wife's quiet devotion, her womanly sacrifice, her purity, all of which he has never fully appreciated. The realization of the spiritual beauty of the woman whose physical beauty has vanished raises his love for her to a higher level and at the same time intensifies his passion for her. He feels that only now he has found perfect happiness.

With profound psychological penetration Storm treats the problem of the second wife in *Viola tricolor* (1873),¹⁷ namely, from the point of view of the second wife. Ines accuses her husband Rudolf of infidelity with a shadow, that of his deceased first wife, and resents her stepdaughter's reserve toward her. But a change comes over Ines after the birth of her own daughter. Now she understands her husband and her stepdaughter. For, so she reasons, should she herself die, she would not like to be forgotten by those who are closest to her.

Storm was very definite in his opinion that complete confidence between husband and wife is the only basis for happiness in married life. This theme is poetically treated in *Schweigen* (1882-1883),¹⁸ where the universal problem is solved in a very unusual case. Before his marriage Rudolf von Schlitz had become temporarily insane through the strain of overstudy. Now the thought of the deceit of not telling his wife before their marriage leads him within a hair's breadth of suicide. We are not concerned here with the fact that this Novelle suffers artistically because it ends happily when the silence is broken, whereas the reader is prepared for a

tragic end by a masterful psychological treatment of the ever-increasing torment in Rudolf's heart.¹⁹ The solution has the greatest significance for our study: absolute confidence brings about happiness and understanding, but the lack of it is not sufficient reason for tragedy.²⁰

Storm treats the filial attachment of the child of racially and culturally dissimilar parentage in *Von Jenseit des Meeres* (1863-1864).²¹ Jenni, a beautiful and sensitive girl, is the natural daughter of a German planter and a half-breed woman in the West Indies. The lack of a mother's love and the fact that the relationship between her and her rather reserved father has never been close, cause Jenni to flee to her native island, St. Croix. To her dismay she finds in her mother a coarse, illiterate woman who keeps a boarding house for negroes. Jenni returns to Germany imbued with affection for her father and appreciation of his wisdom in taking her from her mother's surroundings.²² Storm arrives at a common-sense answer: the child's affection is greater for the parent with whom it shares the greater affinity.

2) Class distinctions.

Social classes in Storm's works and his treatment of them have been studied by Gertrud Bohm.²³ She shows that because of his background, heredity, tradition, and environment in his home town, and for personal reasons (especially at Potsdam and Heiligenstadt) Storm could have no love for the nobility and no understanding of their privileged position in the Germany of his time. Gertrud Bohm and others²⁴ charge the author with prejudice and even with hatred of the nobility. The evidence in support of this charge seems overwhelming. But it is not sufficient to show that Storm hated the class that seemed to him, as to many of his contemporaries, unjustly to enjoy greater privileges than the middle classes. The often quoted Novelle *Im Schloß* (1861),²⁵ in which he voiced his convictions admittedly to influence his many readers,²⁶ seems to prove, rather, that Storm saw clearly both sides of the problem. The fact is overlooked by the critics mentioned above that Anna, a member of the nobility herself, suffers most under the limitations and the prejudices of her caste. She herself reports her suffering through her subjection to her father's will, which binds her to an inferior "equal." After her husband's death she finds full happiness because she herself has overcome the handicaps of her birth which would have prevented her from marrying the man of her choice.

Thus Storm, who acknowledges no superiority except that of the mind and of efficiency and who resents the arrogance of the nobility based on false premises, offers a very sensible answer: the caste itself must be brought to realize its error and change its attitude to the advantage of both itself and all concerned.

The same conviction is manifest in *Auf der Universität* (1862).²⁷ In this Novelle Storm shows the disastrous effects of the ruthless insolence of members of the nobility as well as of the upper middle class toward those of lower station. The pretty daughter of a flighty but poor French tailor seeks death after having been seduced and discarded by a rowdy student, who happens to be a nobleman. The daughters of the middle class elite also are rebuked, through the person of the mayor's wife, for their snobbishness toward the unfortunate girl.

In *Pole Poppenspüler* (1873-1874)²⁸ the wood carver and mechanic Paul Paulsen marries the daughter of an itinerant marionette player, despite the prejudices and the animosity of some of his neighbors toward the strangers. Paulsen shows great strength of character in his difficulties. Storm's deep conviction of the futility and injustice of such unfounded prejudices speaks out in the entire Novelle.

A variation of this theme, though the hero is a few degrees higher in the social scale, is found in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* (1878).²⁹ With slight irony the author tells of *doctor juris utriusque* Wulf Feders' conflict between his love and class pride, instilled in him by an aristocratic mother.³⁰ The mother wins; and Katti, the daughter of an ever-failing jack-of-all-trades, vanishes without a trace. Wulf Fedders becomes one of the Prussian officials whom the author disliked so heartily.

In *Zur Chronik von Grieshuus* (1883-1884),³¹ a historical Novelle invented by Storm, murder, fratricide, disaster, and the ultimate destruction of an entire noble lineage are brought about through stubborn insistence on tradition. Junker Detlev has caused the death of the common wife of his older twin brother Hinrich, who in turn slays his brother. Two generations later Hinrich's only grandson is killed in war. Hinrich meets with a fatal accident near the spot where he had once killed his brother.

Like Friedrich Hebbel in his drama *Maria Magdalena* forty-two years before him, Storm shows the social conflict within the same class in *Ein Doppelgänger* (1886).³² John Hansen, a day laborer, having become a criminal, spends some time in a penitentiary. After his release the question, "How can I regain my honor?" is constantly in his mind. Chiefly through the ruthless intolerance of his own class he is made to realize that his past will always be in his way.³³ He loses his wife through a chain of circumstances linked to his past. Unemployed and hungry, he is strongly tempted to steal vegetables in a field. In inner conflict he runs and falls into a deserted well, where he dies. Significant for our study are Storm's words: ". . . er war ein Mensch, er irrte, und er hat gelitten,"³⁴ which express his humanitarian sympathy for the unfortunate. Storm finds a defi-

nite solution for the problem of the innocent children of criminals. John Hansen's daughter, aged seven, is adopted by a family of a higher class far away from her home. Neither she nor they know of her father's criminal history.

Excessive social ambition is the theme of *Hans und Heinz Kirch* (1881-1882).³⁵ Hans Kirch, an industrious trader and a self-made man, has great plans for his bright and strong son Heinz, who has inherited his father's stubbornness. When the father objects to Heinz's union with a girl whom he believes beneath his station, the son disappears at the age of seventeen. Years later a letter without stamps arrives. The father refuses acceptance.³⁶ His wife dies of a broken heart. When Heinz finally does return, broken in spirit and changed to his disadvantage, his father is ashamed of him, gives him money, and sends him away. But Hans Kirch lives to repent. He makes friends with the woman whom he had wronged by preventing her marriage with his son.

While Theodor Storm recognizes class distinctions, he does not believe in arbitrary barriers between the classes, nor in special privileges granted to members of a certain class. He sees the merits as well as the shortcomings of the classes in their attitudes toward each other as well as toward their fellow members. He advocates adjustment through the better insight of those most concerned.

3) Greed.

Bulemanns Haus (1864)³⁷ has been called Storm's fairy tale of egoism. Daniel Bulemann, a miser, has for years jealously guarded his riches in solitude. But death would be too good for him. Having shrunk to the size of a baby, he can neither die nor escape from his house, where he is held prisoner by his two monstrous cats.

The widow of the well-to-do merchant Sievert Jansen, in *Im Nachbarhaus links* (1875)³⁸ is pictured as vain, proud, afraid of death, suspicious of every one, especially of doctors, greedy for gold, and shut off from the world. Her neighbor, the author's friend who tells this story,³⁹ succeeds in gaining her confidence and in persuading her to change her will in favor of her worthy, but poor, relatives. But, alas, she dies in the midst of her riches before she can execute her plan! Her money goes to an already heavily endowed charitable institution. But the happiness of her poor relatives is in no way impaired by their "loss."

Herr Hennicke in the historical Novelle *Eekenhof* (1879),⁴⁰ a disagreeable, cruel character, is twice prompted by greed to marry. Later he makes an attempt on the life of his own son by his first marriage, who has returned in order to claim his inheritance. Hennicke's

second wife is portrayed as extremely ugly, cruel to serfs, and avaricious. Their offspring, ugly twin brothers, remain bachelors and show all the disagreeable characteristics of their parents. Herr Hennicke becomes very old. Strangely attracted by the deserted Eekenhof with its ever-striking clock, he loiters daily near the scene of his attempted crime, to which the intended victim has never returned. Death seems to pass Herr Hennicke by.

These three cases of avarice leave little doubt as to Storm's attitude. Greed, according to him, reaps its own punishment.

4) Intolerance.

The question of intolerance has been touched upon above in connection with class distinctions, especially in *Pole Poppenspäler*.

The historical Novelle *Renate* (1877-1878),⁴¹ which takes place about 1700, deals with the superstitions of this period. Josias, a young minister who believes in the devil, is prevented from marrying the woman he loves simply because she and her father, both enlightened and educated much in advance of their time, are generally believed to be in league with the devil. Josias' father, likewise a minister, takes a deathbed promise from his son not to marry the "witch" Renate. Storm, characteristically, has Josias tell most of his story in an invented chronicle. Significantly for our study, Josias finally overcomes his superstition and regrets the suffering he has caused Renate through his superstition.⁴²

The disastrous effect of intolerance, coupled with superstition, is portrayed in *Im Brauerhaus* (1878-1879),⁴³ this time in the present. A customer's absurd claim that he had found a human finger in Brewer Ohrtmann's beer is made possible by the superstition that a finger cut from the hand of an executed criminal and buried under the threshold would bring many customers to any business enterprise. A finger had, indeed, been cut from the hand of a recently executed murderer. But even when it is proved that the "finger in the beer" is nothing but an innocent lump of yeast, Brewer Ohrtmann's customers do not return. "Dumm ist dumm, und es sollte niemand sagen, daß die Dummheit keinen Schaden tue,"⁴⁴ says the narrator from whose lips the reader learns the story of this frame Novelle. We do not know whether or not Storm's remedy for superstition was more and better education of the ignorant. However, the tone of impatience in which this Novelle is written reflects his attitude.

Storm holds that superstition and intolerance grow out of ignorance. His characters arrive at better insight, understanding, and the realization that through their errors they harm themselves as well as others.

5) The Church.

Storm was an agnostic, and, true to the spirit of his age, the second half of the Nineteenth Century, he pointed to the possibility of finding God through the natural sciences.⁴⁵ His first wife was not given a Christian funeral. His philosophy rejected the Church as interpreter of a force incomprehensible to man. In *Veronika* (1861)⁴⁶ he solves the problem of religion in a manner with which we have become familiar in the course of this study. Veronika, a Catholic, is the wife of a much older jurist, an agnostic. She falls in love with a young relative of her husband. At Easter she plans to confess to her priest, but cannot bring herself to do so. A walk through nature gives her new strength and new trust in her husband. She goes to him, confesses, and finds him understanding and forgiving.⁴⁷

Storm rejects the Church, but realizes that for others the religious problem can be solved only by the individual concerned. His Novelle shows excellently the difference between a practice that tends to diminish the feeling of personal responsibility for one's deeds, and the attitude of the individual who feels that he is a free moral agent answerable only to himself and to those concerned in his actions. The latter alternative requires greater strength of character, but brings about greater integrity toward both oneself and one's fellowmen.

6) Mercy killing.

In a statement made to Erich Schmidt on September 29, 1887,⁴⁸ Storm says that his motive in *Ein Bekenntnis* (1887),⁴⁹ was: "How is one brought to kill a beloved person, and what becomes of us after we have done so?" As might be expected, Storm's mercy killer of *Ein Bekenntnis* tells his story in the first person. Franz Jebe, a capable and serious-minded physician, has killed his own sensitive and rather ethereal wife. He had determined that she suffered from an incurable and extremely painful cancer. She herself, who had always had a mortal fear of pain, had begged him to take her life. A few weeks after her death he discovers from an article in a journal which he had neglected to read that a famous specialist has succeeded in curing several similar cases. Now Jebe devotes himself to the cure of cancer. Three years later he heals a lady thus afflicted by an operation. The patient's daughter, Hilda, has fallen in love with him. Although not indifferent toward her, he flees to the resort Reichenhall in order to think. Here he meets his old friend, the author of the story. Dr. Jebe, who had always been very reserved, unburdens his heart. We see the author's opinion in Jebe's words when he speaks of the sacredness of life, which no man of science should destroy lest he become a murderer.⁵⁰ He would commit a new crime, so Jebe considers, if he should marry Hilda and degrade her as a "means to a cure."⁵¹ He leaves at once and, as the au-

thor learns much later, spends thirty years in East Africa, where he hopes to find a "cure" for himself through work in places where ignorance rather than disease and epidemics cause death.

Storm is strongly opposed to mercy killing and considers those who practice it murderers. Significant is the fact that he, the jurist, does not speak of the application of man-made laws but lets the "culprit's" own conscience be his guide.

7) Dipsomania and heredity.

In the course of his life, Theodor Storm met with many adversities, e.g., his self-imposed exile from Husum; his great dislike of, and vexations in connection with, his official duties while in Prussia; the death of his first wife; and his disappointment at the lack of ability of his son Karl, the musician. He was able to cope with all of them sooner or later. There is a certain finality about most things; and time is a great healer, even for the most grievous sorrow. But nothing caused Storm more worry than that his oldest son was given to excessive drinking. By 1875 it became clear to the father that Hans was a hopeless dipsomaniac. This helpless apprehension did a great deal to embitter the poet's old age, and continued until Hans's death in 1886, less than two years before Storm's own passing. Little wonder that during all these years the author's thoughts occupied themselves with dipsomania, and, above all, with the problem of heredity. His sense of justice groped for reasons, causes, possible cures, and means of prevention. It was to be expected that he would attempt to ease his troubled soul in his writings. Dipsomania and heredity play more or less dominant rôles in not fewer than four of the Novellen written between 1875 and 1885: *Aquis Submersus*, *Carsten Curator*, *Der Herr Etatsrat*, and *John Riew*.

In the historical Novelle *Aquis Submersus* (1875-1876),⁵² a gentle and refined young noblewoman has a brutal and coarse brother who is given to excessive drinking. Rather brief, vague hints connect the dipsomania with heredity. While the girl shows all the good characteristics of her parents, the brother's traits must stem from an older generation. A picture of a woman with small, gray, piercing eyes in the ancestral gallery seems to give a clue. Legend reports that she cursed her only daughter, who was then driven to suicide.⁵³ While there are several other motives in *Aquis Submersus*, the fact is conspicuous that two fine people are deprived of their happiness and subjected to lifelong suffering through the brutal acts of Junker Wulf, who becomes a maniac in the state of intoxication.⁵⁴

In the equally tragic Novelle *Carsten Curator* (1877)⁵⁵ we encounter a resigned belief in predestination through the blood of ancestors.⁵⁶ Heinrich Carstens, the son of a