

*Eighteenth-Century German
Authors and their
Aesthetic Theories:*

Literature and the Other Arts

Edited by Richard Critchfield and Wulf Koepke

CAMDEN HOUSE

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Literature and the Other Arts*

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CAMDEN HOUSE

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Preface

This collection of essays was first conceived several years ago by Professor Marlis Mehra of the University of Houston. Following Professor Mehra's departure from the profession, we assumed the task of editing the manuscript. In doing so, we asked several of our colleagues to make substantial revisions in their work. The list of contributors has also been changed. We would like to thank our colleagues for their willingness to make the necessary changes in their articles, and for waiting so patiently for the publication of their work. While their studies concentrate on German contributions to eighteenth-century aesthetics, and treat in particular the work of German creative writers, the larger European connections are clearly in evidence.

In an effort to make the volume more accessible to the non-specialist reader, all quotes have been translated into English. Quotations in the original language(s) are found in the Notes. We are especially indebted to Daniel Fallon, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University, for generously supporting the publication of the *Eighteenth-Century German Authors and their Aesthetic Theories*. We would also like to thank Rosângela Vieira-King for typing the manuscript. We are grateful to the following publishers for their kind permission to use quotations from published translations: University of California Press, Berkeley; University of Chicago Press, Carcanet Press, New York; Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York; Wayne State University Press.

It is the hope of the editors that this study will stimulate new interest in eighteenth-century aesthetics, and in the interrelationship of the arts.

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Introduction

I

THE ARTS, LITERATURE, THE VISUAL ARTS AND MUSIC alike were of a major concern in the eighteenth century, particularly in the second half of the period. They provided a medium to communicate a new lifestyle. This new sensitivity and style was translated into daily habits, discernible in furniture, in articles of daily use, in toys and gifts as well as in letters and diaries. And yet, the emphasis on specialized research characteristic of our time has often prevented scholars from recognizing the common thread linking the different expressions of artistic creativity and individuality in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It was a period that was subjective, emotional, if not sentimental. The period stressed pleasure and enjoyment and was thus oriented towards what is beautiful, graceful and enjoyable. It rejected and disparaged, for the most part, the brutal and horrible sides of life. A new view of natural sceneries, of beauty found in nature, and a new pleasure in outdoor activities and events emerged. And while it is true that women had an influence on the taste of the period, they were, due to social taboos, much less conspicuous among the creative spirits than they might have been.

Artistic pursuits were not divorced from the rest of life, but were, indeed, an integral part of it. Although many scholars have emphasized that the new art forms were of middle class origin and celebrated middle class values, the role of the courts should not be forgotten. The courts considered the artistic celebration of their life style as self-evident. Of course, middle class art wanted, not lastly, to be recognized and supported by the courts and the nobility. In the end, middle class poets attempted to attract the nobility to a new taste in art rather than to exclude them. As for middle class criticism of feudal and absolutistic conditions in German society, it has often unduly commanded the attention of scholars, particularly the

attention of Marxist scholars. And yet middle class artists not only criticized court society, but often wanted to emulate many of its values in their own lives. One needs only to think of the German classicists, Goethe and Schiller. Many of the artistic enterprises of the middle class extolled beauty, vitality, and a new hope in all that is human, not to mention a new religion that found God in nature and history, and believed in the perfectibility of mankind. The writers and artists of the time were, above all, social beings. They were keenly aware of the fact that they had to amuse their audiences even as they tried to educate them. Moreover, literature was not perceived as a concern of an isolated reader, but as a group activity. Poems were read aloud or set to music. Stories, novels and essays were also read aloud to friends and letters were shared. Society took a new interest in the viewing of paintings, and social gatherings enjoyed artistic gardens, especially the much celebrated English garden.

Of course, a rigid separation of private and public events did not exist. Thus, many activities involving the arts had a semi-public character, and were perfect outlets for amateur talents and groups, the latter of which often performed plays. It was particularly Goethe who became concerned with the growing amateurism of the period, an amateurism that tended to degenerate into provincialism and proved in the end to be a hindrance to the development of a national culture in Germany with high artistic standards. In addition, it delayed the rise of professionalism in the arts known to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Goethe's criticisms of dilettantism, however, occur at the very end of the eighteenth century. It is a reaction against a very broad movement in the country and may not have been entirely justified.

Nevertheless, it speaks of a broad concern for the arts which was widespread. Members of the middle class and of the aristocracy considered an active interest in art an important part of their lives.

Unlike the eighteenth century, the twentieth century tends to see literature as separate from the other arts, and it makes a sharp distinction between "serious" and "popular" literature. The progressive movement of the eighteenth century was deeply concerned with the question: what is the proper function of the various forms of art and the different types of literature. In their search for an answer to that question, they looked beyond the previous function of art in their time to decorate, glorify and embellish. They were keenly interested in how forms of art found at the court, namely, the opera and its derivatives, could be transformed into art forms for the entire society. Literary scholarship has been concerned almost exclusively with the literature of the period alone, and with the sequence of the canonized literary periods, i.e., Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*),

Storm and Stress (*Sturm und Drang*), classicism (*Klassik*) and romanticism (*Romantik*). The German term *Klassik* particularly merits comment here. Since the German term *Klassik* has become such a complex concept with multiple meanings, it is important to discuss one of its meanings, that of classicism, from a new vantage point. If one observes the practice and theory of the visual arts in the eighteenth century, and the growing separation conceptually and in practice between painting and sculpture, particularly between the picturesque and the statuesque, it is readily apparent that classicism provides the norm. On the one hand, the century attempts to harmonize beauty and nature and assign to the artist the task of depicting “beautiful Nature” — *la belle nature* — defined in terms of antique ideals of beauty. On the other hand, opposition against the tyranny of the classicistic canon begins to assert itself as “modern” and justifies the wide range of the picturesque, including the integral functions of ugliness, of the ridiculous, and of individuality.

These battles for freedom and individuality in the arts occur in music, in the visual arts, and in literature. The notion of social conventions, of the status of the artist, of the artist’s obligation to society as opposed to his individual creativity becomes increasingly part of public debate. Quite frequently, conventional forms, defined as “classical,” i.e., authoritative, are attacked as sterile remnants of a dead past. The polemics centering around the concepts of classicism quite often cloak social, even political arguments with aesthetic terms. The anti-prescriptive movement, which dominated most of the second half of the eighteenth century in Germany, was considered part of a general process of liberation. Thus, the apparent attempt by Goethe and Schiller at the very end of the century to impose some new norms in literature, and which was continued by Goethe’s policy in the area of painting and drawing, through the prize competitions organized by the friends of the muses in Weimar (*Weimarer Musenfreunde*), seemed to be retrograde and reactionary to a good number of observers. German cultural history has yet to come to terms with its canonization of Goethe’s and Schiller’s policies.

The present volume attempts to open up alternative perspectives on the age, and on its remarkable diversity. Diversity also in the sense that some of the writers did not seem to be aware of what was going on elsewhere. The fragmentation of Germany and of its periodic media had the result that multiple “culture lags” occurred. Many writers seemed to be a generation behind in their premises. And yet, sometimes from these seemingly outdated positions they came to surprisingly progressive conclusions. This mixture of outdated and anticipatory ideas can be observed in Heinse’s views, to a lesser degree in Jean Paul, even in Herder, and also in

Schiller. It is, indeed, fascinating to see how ideas on the different art forms could influence each other in paradoxical ways. Correspondingly, the present volume also demonstrates the close relationship between the different forms of art, and the degree to which the writers of the period were interested in aesthetic questions arising from other art forms, particularly from the visual arts. In addition, the volume will add some new and often neglected dimensions to the images of such figures as Herder, Lessing, Goethe and Schiller. At the same time, the study analyzes and reevaluates aspects of aesthetic thought in the eighteenth century which have either suffered the fate of benign neglect or have been overlooked in earlier scholarly enterprises. In the course of the essays a number of ideas emerge which are commonly associated with early romanticism. Certainly, this should not be construed to mean that early romanticism was not revolutionary in its own right, but the new ideas of the Schlegels and their associates were indebted to many more predecessors than they ever acknowledged.

II

Jutta van Selm traces the development of a "Roman" aesthetics of painting from Raphael Mengs to Karl Philipp Moritz and Goethe. Goethe's own theoretical efforts in aesthetics were more involved with the pictorial arts than with literature. Of course, Goethe, as Edith Potter aptly shows, was indebted to contemporary authorities, such as Winckelmann, whose views on the different forms of art had provoked Lessing's criticism in *Laokoon* (1766). This was not merely a question of classicism versus modernism, but of understanding the nature of the different forms of art. It was Goethe's early mentor, Herder, who pointed out in his *Kritische Wällder* (1769) that Lessing was right in his criticisms of Winckelmann with regard to literature, but not with regard to the visual arts. According to Herder painting had to be justified in its own way, separate from any evaluation of sculpture. The discovery of the rich heritage of painting and its many legitimate forms is part of the aesthetic development of the age. It was an age of book illustrations, of engravings of many kinds, including "picture stories." The concept of the *tableau* on stage and in novels reflected the close relationship between drama and other forms of writing. It was an age of illumination, of optical illusions, a time in which the *laterna magica* had gained great importance and use.

Rita Terras demonstrates in her essay how Wilhelm Heinse incorporated discussions and ruminations on painting and on music into his fictional work. Heinse has traditionally been seen as an outsider to literary groups

of the period. He was, of course, close to Wieland. And yet ever since Goethe associated Heinse's *Ardinghello* (1787) with Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1781), he has been linked to writers belonging to the period of Storm and Stress. While Heinse's later works and unpublished writings on the arts have been regarded as representing a development similar to that of Storm and Stress to German Classicism, caution should be exercised. In brief, Heinse neither fits into the conventional periods of literature nor do his ideas on the arts. He is unique in several different ways: he can be regarded as progressive in some respects, but as very conservative in others. Heinse did not understand the revolution in music commonly associated with the names Mozart and Beethoven, and his ideas on music hardly do justice to the operas of Gluck, whose oeuvre Heinse, nevertheless, applauded. Many theoreticians were hampered by their aesthetic principles from understanding what was actually occurring among the better composers of the time. Heinse is more representative in this respect than he first might appear. Still, no matter what the aesthetic merits of his novels, particularly his last novels, may be, they not only attempt to portray artists as so many of the romantic works tried to do some years later, but to integrate aesthetic and social issues into the action and plots of his novels. While *Ardinghello* is concerned with the visual arts, it also proclaims the liberation of the individual, particularly his sexual liberation, and the foundation of a republican society. Moreover, both *Ardinghello* and the novel *Hildegard von Hohenthal* deal with the emancipation of women.

Yet another figure usually assigned a marginal role in the history of aesthetics is Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. Lenz is usually considered to belong to Storm and Stress. He is known mostly for his plays and his attempts, however unsuccessful, to become Goethe's "satellite," and not lastly for his many misfortunes in life. Lenz's innovative approach to *Mimesis* attests to an original mind. Among other things, his approach touches on a key issue regarding the emerging theory of the novel, namely the literary expression of inner-human reality. What is "reality" and how should it be expressed? It is characteristic of an age of classicism that Lenz returns to the Greek sources of European aesthetics, namely, to Plato and Aristotle, to arrive at his thoroughly modern answer. Lenz's return to Greek authorities demonstrates that the use of classical sources is not per se an indication of an author's position. Some of the solutions Lenz postulates fit neither into his own plays nor are they indicative of the Storm and Stress period. Helga Madland cogently argues in her essay on Lenz that the theoretician and playwright lays the foundation of what might be termed modern realism, a theory which is not free of contradictions.

Not the least interesting aspect of aesthetics in the later eighteenth century is its dialogue character. The authors use their sources, be they classical or modern, authoritative or negligible, as dialogue partners. Many of the works under consideration here are a critique of others, are an attempt at a “productive reception.” This term has been particularly associated with Lessing. Richard Critchfield offers not only a new example of such a reception of Diderot, but also an illustration of how such a reception operates on different levels; in Lessing’s aesthetic theories, in his translations and in the writing of his plays. Indeed, questions and issues turning on the reception of art run through all the essays in this volume. It is the particular focus of the essay by Cora Lee Nollendorfs. Nollendorfs takes the discussion to the end of the century and into the nineteenth century with Schiller and Wilhelm von Humboldt. While Nollendorfs points out, on the one hand, that Humboldt analyzes quite accurately different aspects of the reception and the effect of a work of art, especially literature, she demonstrates, on the other, how Schiller is confronted with the limits of individualism and of realism. Schiller’s “classical solution” of purifying the literary work from everything which is accidental (*zufällig*), and thus rendering it permanent (*dauerhaft*) also in the reception process, is one possible solution to the vexing dilemma of modern art which searches for the proper integration of the general and the particular. The relationship between Schiller and Humboldt reflects one of the transitions from the eighteenth-century problems to nineteenth-century concerns. It is true that Schiller may have been more influential in his formulation of problems than in his solutions. The critical and productive reception of Schiller’s ideas on aesthetics certainly is fascinating. But this is not only true for Schiller, it is equally valid or even more so for the reception of Herder’s ideas on aesthetics.

While Herder’s early writings such as *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (1767) and the *Kritische Wälder* in particular, were always considered important, Herder’s essays on Shakespeare and on Ossian in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773) were acknowledged to have broken new ground in literary aesthetics. By way of contrast, Herder’s pronouncements on art in the *Zerstreute Blätter* (1784–96) received less attention, and the late Herder was even considered regressive and insignificant. Still, key parts of the *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1794–97) and *Adrastea* (1802–03) deal with literature, and *Kalligone* (1800) is a book devoted entirely to the theory of aesthetics. Herder’s violent polemics against Kant and his hostility towards Goethe and Schiller’s theory of classicism (*Klassik*) largely influenced scholars’ views with regard to his late work. An unbiased reading of Herder’s later texts may, indeed, reveal

some sterile polemics, but also many passages of high interest. Certainly, one problem with Herder, particularly with the later Herder, is the complexity and density of his arguments. A good deal of their complexity is due to the fact that he was often fighting on several different fronts at the same time, and that on many occasions he implied more than he openly stated. This is no reason to neglect his late work, however. Karl Menges addresses in his essay the issue of the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*, which long after it had been forgotten in France, received a surprising new relevance in Germany at the time of German Classicism. While Schiller's and Schlegel's answers to the problem are well known, Herder's own solution has largely been ignored. And yet, Herder may very well have reached the most forward-looking position of his contemporaries.

Moreover, modern theory makes it possible to decipher some of Herder's ideas and their implications. Scholarship in the late twentieth century could lead, in part, to the discovery of Herder as the predecessor or precursor of twentieth century aesthetics. The dangers and pitfalls stemming from the contemporary application of earlier aesthetic theories is quite obvious. Nonetheless, the discussion of aesthetic factors in Herder's philosophy of history as seen through the theories of Jan Mukařovský by Luanne Frank yields a good number of surprising insights which demonstrate the possible virtues of such an approach. No one wrestled more forcibly with the problems caused by the relationships of culture, society and history than Herder. Herder maintained that the arts were central to the national identity of any society. Their reduction to mere decoration, and their use for the amusement and glorification of princes and kings, was a perversion of their history, not to mention their anthropology. At the same time, Herder believed that aesthetics could not be divorced from language, religion, history and anthropology. As for language, it was, in Herder's view, constitutive of human existence. Language was, in its origins, both poetic and historical, as well as a source of divine instruction.

Certainly, no one was more influenced by the late Herder and his ideas than Jean Paul Richter. Wulf Koepke's contribution deals with Jean Paul Richter's use of the sublime in Richter's *The School of Aesthetics* (*Vorschule der Ästhetik*) (1804), specifically in the context of his theory of humor. His definitions and examples of the sublime show him not only as a defender of Herder against Schiller, but also underscore how problematical the entire concept of the sublime had become by that time. Of course, Jean Paul's world is one of crisis. His characters, notably his humorists, are fighting the nightmare of nihilism. In this extremely modern context Jean Paul's reaffirmation of God's reality is a defiant gesture; it is also an indication of man's alienation from society. The desire of Jean Paul's characters to

change their existence is both social and metaphysical. The reevaluation of an aesthetic category constitutes here a fresh look at the function of art, and a new historical awareness acquired by Richter through his close study of Herder. In essence, Jean Paul sees aesthetics as both an expression of specific historical conditions and of fundamental human conditions.

There are several common threads which link all the essays in this volume. The writers treated in the volume were often involved in intense discussions with regard to the meaning and the social function of the arts. They reevaluated authorities from Aristotle to Sulzer and Kant in order to ascertain if the latter's aesthetic categories and solutions would be helpful in providing answers to their own problems. All these aesthetic theories were applied theories. Their function was to contribute to the emergence of a new art. The answers they provided were neither normative nor prescriptive. But they were also not simply descriptive either. They did not dictate to artists how they were to write and paint. In short, they proposed what good art was, what the best examples were one should follow, and what the desired effects of works of art should be. Aesthetic theories acknowledged the pivotal role of artistic freedom. And yet they were still supposed to give guidance to both the creator and the receiver, for the creator as a critique and an orientation, and for the receiver as a guide to a better appreciation of art. Underlying these aesthetic arguments are the social issues of the day. Thus, we find a redefinition of the proper function of the arts in society, and of the proper position of the artist.

As one doubted the validity of the rules in art in the second half of the century, one also began to doubt the notion that creativity could be taught. True, artists learn from great models, but not by slavish imitation; rather they learn by the prudent and skillful application of such models to different times and cultures. These discussions are part of a debate on the nature of creativity. Creativity, they believed, cannot be learned, but existing creativity can be guided and further developed. (This is especially important when the arts are supposed to play a crucial role in fostering and maintaining a national spirit in society as was the case in Germany). Although many writers of the period argued that it was not their duty to propagate and uphold existing systems of morality, and that art was free of external considerations, the works of the time, and by implication the aesthetic theories, were full of arguments on moral, religious and social issues. The freedom of artistic creativity was not synonymous with *l'art pour l'art*, rather the opposite was the case. The significance of the arts for society was intensely debated. Thus, the question of the literary reception and the "effect" (*Wirkung*) of literature was in the forefront of many artists'

thoughts. (One thinks here of Lessing, Schiller, Herder, Heinse, to name but a few.) If works of art did affect people, how should this be done? And could this process be modified or controlled in any way?

Certain aesthetic concepts and ideals of earlier periods continued to influence aestheticians of the eighteenth century. *Mimesis* (*Nachahmung*) was one; the portrayal of the Beautiful and the Sublime; the authority of the Greek and Roman Classics; *prodesse* and *delectare* would be others. At the same time, a new type of reception oriented more toward the inner experience of the individual began to emerge which gave new meaning to such concepts. The debate of these concepts is related both to the new ideal of creative genius with the new needs of the audience. Not all of the views of the writers discussed in this volume were original, but they were certainly symptomatic of literary issues and problems of that time. The contributions to the volume cannot begin to treat these issues and problems in their entirety. They should rather be seen as an attempt to reevaluate the importance of the aesthetic issues and theories, and their significance for the development of future aesthetics.

Aesthetics then in the eighteenth century is an expression of a general redefinition of social and individual life; and the general trend of the later eighteenth century in Germany is that of experimentation and emancipation. This calls into question traditional concepts and styles, especially the idea of normative art, and of art as an official representative adornment of court society. In this sense, aesthetics redefines the place of the creative individual in society. This occurs in all artistic forms of expression, particularly those affecting artists with multiple talents or interests. Theatre with its need for a *Gesamtkunstwerk* of poetry, music, and the visual arts was a fertile battle ground. There is another angle to the aesthetic debate. The new theories and artistic creations intended, in part, to redefine the social functions of the work of art. Instead of being an adornment of court society, it was to be both a genuine expression of an individual creator and an expression of a communal spirit, the spirit of a cultural entity which Herder called *Nation*. Thus it was to be a representation of an entire community, not just of a small ruling class or of rich patrons of the arts. The arts and artists would become a national concern, the innermost expression and cultural justification of a "people" (*Volk*), and the genuine voice of the people at the particular historical moment. Germany was still a conglomerate of smaller or larger states at the time these ideas were being debated. One could say that the artists were in search of a nation, as the nation was in search of representative artists. The various ideas and approaches presented here can be regarded as single instances of this general trend, sometimes advanced by very isolated individuals such as Lenz

and Heinse. While the cultural tradition of the nineteenth century, and particularly nineteenth-century scholarship, has simplified the historical picture and found its orientation in *Klassik* and romanticism, this should, however, not prevent the twentieth century from rediscovering the true diversity and creativity of the eighteenth century.

1

Lessing, Diderot, and the Theatre

Richard Critchfield

The story of writers allegedly influencing Lessing's dramatic theory and practice fills no small chapter in the annals of Lessing research. Scholars have spoken, on the one hand, of Greek and Roman, and on the other, of English and French poets and thinkers whose views and aesthetic programs have presumably found expression in Lessing's theoretical observations, and in the writing of some of his most memorable plays.¹ It is, indeed, true that much of Lessing's dramatic enterprise can be characterized, to use a current term, as a "productive reception," a reception of not only earlier, but also of contemporary theoreticians and practitioners of the theatre, one, however, wherein Lessing went far beyond a slavish imitation of earlier models and precepts.

Still, a cursory reading of Lessing's praise and acknowledgements of indebtedness to such figures as Aristotle and Denis Diderot leaves the impression that he was deeply and lastingly influenced by their teachings. Such accolades as below only helped to reinforce this view among Lessing's readers. In 1768 Lessing wrote enthusiastically of Aristotle's *Poetics*: "I do not, however, hesitate to acknowledge (even if I should therefore be laughed to scorn in these enlightened times) that I consider the work as infallible as the Elements of Euclid . . . Especially in respect to tragedy, as that concerning which time would pretty well permit everything to us, I would venture to prove incontrovertibly, that it cannot depart a step from the plumbline of Aristotle, without departing so far from its own perfection."² And yet, Lessing's moralizing interpretation of Aristotle's theory of tragedy departed in several salient points from the original design of his Greek mentor.³ While Lessing would use the authority of Aristotle in his campaign against the influence of the French classical theatre and its advocates in Germany, he also altered and modified aspects of Aristotle's "most infallible work" to suit the moralizing intentions of his own theatre.

In brief, Lessing may have held Aristotle in the highest of esteem, but he found it necessary to depart in his own theory and practice from the latter's teachings. Surely, the contradiction between Lessing's paeans to Aristotle's theory of tragedy and his own modification of the points of view expressed therein is not atypical for the German enlightener. It is a pattern which can also be observed in Lessing's reception of his great contemporary, Diderot, who, similar to Lessing, was committed to a reform of his own country's theatre. But more of Diderot's ideas on the theatre later. Of course, Lessing's aesthetics reflect far more than the contradictions between theory and practice, between seemingly unlimited praise of other artists and the failure to emulate their programs fully. Students of Lessing's oeuvre are well aware that his aesthetic was extremely protean, an aesthetic which was not only continually evolving, but one that had to be adapted to changing political conditions, and above all, to the problems of censorship. One needs here only to recall such works as the tragedy *Philotas* (1759) and *Nathan der Weise* (1779). Both writings seem to belie some key aspect of Lessing's then current pronouncements on tragedy, and particularly his program for a middle-class tragedy. Indeed, *Philotas*, this "game of literary camouflage," seemed to refute Lessing's arguments against the portrayal of heroic figures on the stage.⁴ On the other hand, *Nathan der Weise* had little resemblance to such a play as *Emilia Galotti* (1772), in which Lessing had sought, in part, to give expression to his ideal of a middle-class tragedy.

Of course, the form of both *Philotas* and *Nathan der Weise* was preconditioned by considerations with regard to censorship, and not lastly by didactic intentions. As for Lessing's relationship to Diderot, it was complex and often contradictory. Certainly, no one can deny that Lessing was the most influential figure in introducing Diderot's views on the theatre and his plays *Le fils naturel* (1757) and *Le père de famille* (1758) to German audiences and readers.⁵ For this deed alone Diderot's own debt to Lessing was great. As for the question of Diderot's influence on Lessing, it has often evoked controversy. Many scholars have either seen in Diderot a theorist whose ideas decisively influenced Lessing's drama or they have minimized Diderot's importance for Lessing, if not completely rejected their colleagues' point of view. This controversy merits brief comment. To the more zealous and careless writers emphasizing Lessing's indebtedness to Diderot even *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755) was unthinkable without Diderot's *Le fils naturel*, although the latter was written after Lessing's play.⁶ Moreover, according to one critic, such a masterpiece as *Minna von Barnhelm oder Das Soldatenglück* (1767) would probably never have been written had not Lessing translated *Le fils naturel* and *Le père de famille*.⁷