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**Im Namen Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs (1742-1799) ist die Lichtenberg Gesellschaft ein interdisziplinäres Forum für die Begegnung von Literatur, Naturwissenschaften und Philosophie. Sie begrüßt Mitglieder aus dem In- und Ausland. Ihre Tätigkeit umfasst die Veranstaltung einer jährlichen Tagung. Mitglieder erhalten dieses Jahrbuch, ein Mitteilungsblatt und gelegentliche Sonderdrucke. Weitere Informationen und Beitrittsformular unter [www.lichtenberg-gesellschaft.de](http://www.lichtenberg-gesellschaft.de)**

**In the name of Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799) the Lichtenberg Gesellschaft provides an interdisciplinary forum for encounters with and among literature, natural science, and philosophy. It welcomes international members. Its activities include an annual conference. Members receive this yearbook, a newsletter and occasionally collectible prints. For further information and a membership form see [www.lichtenberg-gesellschaft.de](http://www.lichtenberg-gesellschaft.de)**

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haft zu machen versteht in Anlehnung an seine Schrift „Von dem Nutzen, den die Mathematik einem Bel Esprit bringen kann“ und deren Verbindung mit der Bouhourschen Kontroverse, ob Deutsche überhaupt zu *esprit* fähig seien, was bereits von Christian Thomasius beantwortet worden war. Die Titelverbindung trug wesentlich zu Lichtenbergs Erfolg bei, diese Schrift auf mehrfacher Basis zu konstruieren und Vorschlägen für gründlich fundiertes Denken Ernst und Gewicht zu verleihen.

Wulf Koepke (Emeritus, Texas A&M University) brachte die Sitzung mit seinem Vortrag „The Discovery of (Human) Nature Through Wit and Common Sense“ durch eine Fülle von Beispielen und anregenden Überlegungen zum Abschluss. Lebhafte Diskussion folgte unter allgemeiner Beteiligung.

### Tenth International Congress on the Enlightenment University College, Dublin, 25. – 31. July 1999

Charlotte M. Craig  
Lichtenberg on R&R (Rest and Relaxation)

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799), a prominent thinker, scientist, aphorist, and professor of physics at the University of Göttingen – then under the aegis of the English crown – was aware of the need for relaxation and recreation to balance the rigorous mental discipline and tight schedule imposed by his employer.

In order to meet the requirements of his professional obligations, which included regularly overseeing aristocratic, English students, editorship of the „Göttinger Taschenkalender“, a life-long commitment to the international community of scientists, and a resulting voluminous correspondence, he sought to counteract the stress generated by the demands on his energy. Given his delicate physical condition and progressive distress stemming from various afflictions he took temporary comfort in recreational activities to maintain the stamina essential to fulfill his taxing professional demands.

The diversions which Lichtenberg pursued – beyond the gratification of primary drives – appear to be concentrated chiefly in a number of distinctive categories: pleasures of the palate, of wining, wenching and related pastimes. On a more sophisticated level, he had a special proclivity for good theater and its leading exponents, as well as for travel. In spite of the risks and prevailing road conditions, he welcomed opportunities for journeys – business, pleasure, or a combination of these – as an invitation to intellectual adventure. The allure of the sea and its shore elicited an extraordinary attraction on him. He perceived the sea as an element of invigorating power to which he attributed healing qualities. Indeed, he might be considered one of the earliest modern proponents of the benefits of sea bathing – deploring Germany’s reluctance of cultivating recreational beaches, as practiced in other countries, especially England. By editorializing and personal contacts, he gave the impetus for the eventual establishment of spas near Rostock, on Norderney, and in Cuxhaven. Baths in

other elements, notably exposure to clean, fresh air gained his favor and vigorous advocacy. Regular sojourns in his garden contributed to his well-being and invited horticultural experimentation.

One of Lichtenberg's pastimes was girl-watching. Known for his erotic penchant, sensual allusions pepper his conversations, his correspondence, his diaries, and notebook entries. As a further documentation of his anglophile leanings, he manifested his preference for English women for their looks, good taste in clothing, and personal grace.

On the second of his two trips to England he was privileged to enjoy close contact with the royal family at Kew, meeting outstanding dignitaries and representatives of the scientific community. Again, professional and social obligations left time to permit recreational activity alternately to relax or stimulate. Probably more than any other leisure time pursuit it was the theater which engaged and fascinated him – given the availability, variety and standard of the London performances, especially those by the actor Garrick.

Lichtenberg's ultimate goal – a journey to Italy – combining professional enhancement, cultural enrichment, and physical restoration, the closest concept to a highly desirable sabbatical leave, then not customary, failed to materialize because of the nonavailability of a proper travel companion. In spite of keen anticipation, active support and careful preparation the thwarted project plunged Lichtenberg into profound disappointment and acute illness.

His chief, lifelong preoccupation regardless of ill-health and advancing age was his sustained pleasure and capacity for observing and drawing conclusions. A human face, a memorable shape, tangible and intangible matter were subjected to his scrutiny for pleasure and benefit. Experimentation and experience in the laboratory, the lecture hall and in life were indispensable to existence.

#### Volkmar Hansen

##### What Observatories can see: Cosmological Viewpoints of Lichtenberg and Goethe

Both Lichtenberg and Goethe were concerned with a central question of modern times, the question of the role which human beings play in the universe. Both authors embody the tensions between literature and the perception of nature; the works of both are imprinted by this tension. Astronomy is that natural science for both where the vastness and the smallness of mankind can be seen clearly; in the case of Lichtenberg in his best-known cosmological note (C 183), in the case of Goethe in his novel „Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre“ (book I, chap. 10) and in certain poems.

In the first part I give a comprehensive survey of the relationship. After the refutation of his „Timorus“, Lichtenberg attacks in notes and drafts the „Storm und Stress“, considering himself qualified on the basis of his insights into psychology, his familiarity with the world, and his knowledge of Shakespeare. Metacritically he reacts to the farce „Götter, Helden und Wieland“ (E 231), but begins to have an ambivalent image of Goethe after having read his „Götz von Berlichingen“ and „Die Leiden des jungen Werthers“. For Lichtenberg Goethe comes to represent two dangerous literary groups, even though he is greater than either. In the published polemics of Lichtenberg Goethe could see rejection, not ambivalence. The personal meeting in September 1783 did not bring a change. On the initiative of Goethe in the 1790s there is a

correspondence. We see Goethe in the role of a person who wants intellectual interchange on questions of optics and colour, but the exchange remains onesided.

The second part focusses on the cosmological viewpoints, the professional observations by Lichtenberg, and the more accidental ones by Goethe. In his description of life and discovery of Nikolaus Kopernikus, Lichtenberg emphasizes the error of the visual impression as the strongest argument for the Ptolomaic System and the importance of beginning with the grand concept and only then proceeding to the use of instruments. Goethe, whose life is accompanied by expressions about the worth of reading in the „book of nature“, is aware of the social relevance of the problem and points out, in an interview of 1831, the limitation of pure visibility and confronts this with freedom, even when such freedom of ideas might, as it often does, prove to be painful.

Linde Katritzky  
Lichtenberg's Paraclete Fragments

When Lichtenberg came to England for the second time in September 1774, his mind already simmered with satiric observations. That these ideas coalesced shortly after his arrival confirms the strong English influences on his thinking. Yet the disconnected notes he began to jot down for his new satire remain cryptic and fragmented. The three proposed forewords are digressive, and, in the manner of Swift, they confuse readers rather than guide them. Originally Lichtenberg's satire was aimed predominantly against the effervescent enthusiasm of the Storm and Stress movement, notably against its impatience with scholarship, and its claim that creativity and originality are flashes of inspiration. Gradually the focus shifted, and the work never materialized. As the few fragmented, surviving notes give only vague impressions of any intended strategy, the whole plan has frequently been dismissed as negligible and lacking in enduring merit.

An unwritten text cannot be reclaimed. Nor can now be established, whether Lichtenberg merely intended to clear his own mind by generating a unifying perspective for his disparate ideas, or whether he really expected to work out the details of his comprehensive design in writing. The complexities of the envisaged project emerge, however, when the scattered fragments are connected to related remarks in Lichtenberg's other writings and to the literature, which occupied him at the time. Analyzed and integrated in this way, his enigmatic hints, allusions and unfinished memoranda appear as integral part of a consistent attitude, and of the didactic efforts, which Lichtenberg invariably orientated towards practical application in everyday life.

Especially significant in this context is the proposed title: „Parakletor“, for paraclete – Greek for advocate, comforter, intercessor – is synonymous with the Holy Ghost (John 14 and 16), rendered by Martin Luther mainly as „Spirit of Truth“ (Geist der Wahrheit). Dryden retained the Greek expression, when he translated the powerful and well known ninth-century hymn: *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Lichtenberg, a master of compression and brevity, secularized this term to embody in a single word the intricate ideals of universal truth and enlightenment, against which he could set off his satiric ridicule of an inadequate reality, and of the various intellectual failings and abuses, which aroused his disapproval and apprehension. If he conducted this campaign primarily against literary shortcomings, it has to be remembered that these

were not only easily and generally understood, and comparatively safe subjects for attack, but, as in Alexander Pope's „Dunciad“, they also represented corruption of taste, perversion of public morals, general decadence and, eventually, the dread of cultural break-down.

Of necessity, the immediate targets changed with literary fashions, but the main focus remained steady. As his brother and editor claimed, the ideas which crystallized around the Paraclete plan were of particular importance to Lichtenberg, and when these fragments are carefully assessed, they witness to a committed concern – purpose-orientated, didactic and directed towards practical applications – about the misuse of human potential, and they confirm, all satiric doubts notwithstanding, Lichtenberg's dedication to the spirit of enlightenment and universal truth.

### Dietrich Rolle Lichtenberg and the English language

It is safe to say that Lichtenberg was one of the foremost authorities on English life and institutions in Eighteenth-Century Germany. As my paper attempts to show, he also had an unrivalled interest in and command of the language of the country. The topic falls quite naturally into two main sections: What Lichtenberg noticed about the English language, and how he used it.

#### 1. Observations

##### 1.1 Phonetics

Lichtenberg deals at length with the pronunciation of the th-phoneme (E 446) and suggests a diagram for the vowels that anticipates the modern procedure (E 446). His transcriptions illustrate some aspects of late 18. C pronunciation: Open /a/ (SB 3, 307), preservation of (SB 3, 443).

##### 1.2 Vocabulary

1.2.1 He is careful to establish the exact meanings of words, partly defining them by varied translations (SB 3, 993). Lists of words and idioms serve partly for his own use (SB 2, 640), partly for the instruction of his readers (SB 3, 891 fn.).

1.2.2 His infrequent remarks on etymology are always to the point: F 451, E 71.

1.2.3 He occasionally manages to date a new term more precisely than the OED (SB 3, 835) or to identify an important semantic development (bore, L/E I 37).

#### 2. Practice

2.1 When employing translations of specifically English terms, Lichtenberg usually supplies the original English word in brackets (SB 3, 721 f.).

2.2 Characteristic English terms are taken over bodily: Whim (B 343), Pickpockets (J 903).

2.3 Others are incorporated into the German language by means of inflexion and word formation: Nonsense; Favorit-compounds; libellieren (D 31).

2.4 In a number of cases, the use of English words seems second nature for Lichtenberg (Bw 3, Nr. 1739). A sizable number of his letters to German correspondents are written in English.

2.5 A particular use of English terms may be described as a kind of shorthand for instructions to himself (L 290. 345. J 793).

2.6 Anglicisms are to be expected; they are small in number but conspicuous.

- 2.7 A foreign language may serve as a means of disguise. Lichtenberg has recourse to English with remarkable frequency in his diary in the nineties, obviously in order to avoid detection by a jealous wife (SK 661. 662). Generally speaking, using a foreign language may amount to distancing oneself from what is being said or written – an effect that can be undesirable at times (Bw 2, Nr. 857).

Jacques Message  
A-t-on lu Lichtenberg?

La connaissance française de Lichtenberg, contemporain de la Révolution Française, reste, en ce bicentenaire de sa mort, superficielle, peut-être parce que son oeuvre, réputée caustique, est restée attachée au moment historique de la publication des aphorismes, le Romantisme. L'irrationalisme paraissait justifié après le rationalisme, et Albert Béguin put lire comme un aveu d'échec l'affirmation du caractère inconnaissable du moi, alors que s'y ancrèrent à la fois possibilité de l'ironie et confiance profonde dans la réflexion. L'oeuvre de Lichtenberg devint matrice de citations illustratives, ayant déjà reçu, chez Kierkegaard et Nietzsche notamment, justification. On vit un trait dans la formule qui exprimait avec Kant la problématique de la majorité morale en politique: ‚La Révolution Française est l'oeuvre de la philosophie, mais quel saut, du Cogito ergo sum jusqu'[au] cri Á la Bastille!‘ [...]

Etre majeur, c'est connaître les fins de l'action. Or le mouvement des Lumières, humanisation nécessaire, peut être pratiquement conduit à se dévorer lui-même: sceptique moderne vis-à-vis de la masse, Lichtenberg soupçonnera les orientations historiques puériles décrétées sur le champ. Aux déterminations immédiates, mais abstraites, il oppose l'expérience, qui éclaire les affaires politiques. Chacun doit penser par lui-même et aussi être source de ses jugements. Or, quoique légitime, car non écrite ‚pour le genre humain [...], mais pour l'homme concret, membre d'un certain parti‘, l'opinion de la presse reste une opinion.

Dans le Journal de physique de septembre 1789 Lichtenberg a pourtant approuvé que ‚nul sujet n'est le sujet d'un autre, mais que nous sommes tous soumis à la loi‘. Mais le respect lui paraît incompréhensible sans amour: incombe au désir (que la Physiognomonie de Lavater, figeant les expressions en silhouettes abstraites, ignore) le rôle de premier moteur politique. Antimonarchiste, critique du despotisme, Lichtenberg, note alors en 1793: ‚Le Ciel a bien peu foi en notre raison, et nous voulons néanmoins tout faire avec elle. La loi est un corps froid‘. Eduquer à la loi apparaît nécessaire, quoique difficile: la méthode socratique ne peut s'armer sans devenir torture [...] La guillotine, en tous cas, est affectation, excès impressionnant sans produire l'opinion vraie. Lichtenberg est le penseur d'une épaisseur psychologique et sociale irréductible à la maîtrise totale. ‚C'est toujours une bonne chose pour [les] droits politiques [...] lorsque somnolent un peu ses forces et ses inclinations, un peu comme les chevaux qui ne doivent pas faire usage de leur puissance à tout propos‘. Il dit de façon formellement réactionnaire qu'on ne peut pas regarder la liberté en face, ou qu'est risible de souhaiter immédiatement conjoints le concret et l'universel. Freud, lorsqu'il réfléchissait à l'humour, mobilisait les Aphorismes.

Lichtenberg soupçonnait que la Révolution, replacée dans une dimension plus vaste, appelait des jugements dialectiques. Identification avant l'heure à la Chouette de Minerve? Ce n'est pas sûr, à lire ce vade-mecum: ‚La Révolution Française: politique expérimentale‘.

Melissa Percival  
Lavater and Connoisseurship

The links between connoisseurship and physiognomy are often hinted at but seldom developed. Both are forms of knowledge which involve a direct encounter, an ‚acquaintanceship‘ with the object of investigation, and an appraisal of its intrinsic qualities. Visual skills are important, with both practices frequently being defined as a superior kind of seeing. The gaze is empowering, creating an ‚expert‘ with the authority to make a valuation, financial or moral. Like the physiognomist, the connoisseur finds the ‚character‘ of the artist in the ‚traits‘ of the canvas. He is not fooled by an apparent resemblance, and can spot a fake from a true work of art, as the physiognomist can spot the rogue or dissembler. Physiognomy and connoisseurship also share methodological problems: rules can be established, but at some level the techniques resist codification, and there is a point where the uninitiated must simply place their trust in the skills of the ‚expert‘, who alone can reveal what is hidden to ordinary eyes. Parallels can be drawn between Jonathan Richardson’s attempt to establish the principles of connoisseurship in his „Two Discourses“ (1719) and the rhetoric and methodology of the contemporary physiognomical treatise.

From early on in its conception, Lavater’s physiognomy was directed at the connoisseur, and the texts contain many flattering references. The early editions were themselves objets d’art, and Lavater’s ambitious plans for their production reached their apogee in the English edition of „Holloway and Hunter“ (1789-98), whose illustrations were provided by a team of artists under Fuseli. The work’s preface indicated that it was ‚destined peculiarly to the instruction and improvement of Connoisseurs and Artists‘.

In the *Essays on Physiognomy*, it is suggested that human beings are to be contemplated and appreciated like precious works of art. Lavater’s physiognomical comments often slide into aesthetic judgements, referring more to the quality of the image than to the person represented. He constantly berates artists for their inaccuracies because they hinder his physiognomical readings, but he also argues that through art, we can gain a greater idea of perfection and learn to be better people. Artists of genius are able to provide a glimpse of the divine realm, and for this reason they may be excused faults of detail.

Lavater was anxious to be taken for a man of taste and judgement. He was a patron of the arts and an advisor to noble collectors, but in some ways he lacked discrimination. His vast ‚cabinet physiognomonique‘ of some 25,000 art works, mostly prints and drawings with physiognomical inscriptions, are beautifully presented, but of widely varying quality, which only devalues the collection as a whole. His physiognomy vacillates between ‚connoissance‘, the appreciation of human beings in the manner of art objects, and judgement – making moral or aesthetic pronouncements on them. At times he adopts a popularising, all-inclusive approach which is grounded in his Christian sentiments, yet at other times he is highly judgmental, shrouding his expertise in an air of mystery and seemingly speaking only to the connoisseurs who share his method, his vision, and his intuition.