Childhood as Education, Youth as Exploration:
The Concepts of Childhood and Youth in Christian Felix Weiße's Works for Young Readers

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(German)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2013

Date of final oral examination: 10/11/2013

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To Rachel and Katie,

for teaching me how to be a true *Kinderfreund*

Acknowledgments

It goes without saying that the completion of this project would not have been possible without the help and support of many individuals—so many, in fact, that the very prospect of recognizing all of them in a few paragraphs is a rather daunting one indeed. Yet blessed is he who finds himself with a support network so extensive that the task of acknowledging all of them adequately should prove to be a challenging one—which is basically my way of saying both that I do indeed feel blessed to have enjoyed—and to continue to enjoy—the support of so many people and that the following remarks will not likely do justice to the extent of my gratitude in spite of my best efforts to make them do so.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor Hans Adler for his invaluable feedback, his unfailing patience, and his continual encouragement—particularly when the unpleasant task of reading several thousand pages of poorly scanned eighteenth-century texts on microfiche threatened to cause me to lose my eyesight, my sanity, and my desire to continue working on this project. Hans thus not only guided me professionally from the formulation of this project in its very earliest stages to its refinement into the final product found in this volume, but he also counseled me through the often emotionally difficult process of writing a dissertation. For all of these reasons, I am indebted to him both as a scholar and as a person.

I am similarly indebted to the hard work and insightful feedback of the rest of my committee members. Sabine Gross's notorious eagle eye will never cease to amaze me, and the revised version of this dissertation is immeasurably better as the direct result of her meticulous feedback. I am also grateful for the comments of Klaus Berghahn, whose zest for life and love of the eighteenth century continue to inspire me to this day many years after they first began to

inspire me during my very first semester in graduate school. Similarly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Hannah Eldridge for her insightful questions and comments and for her generosity in acquainting me with the similar research interests of her sister Sarah. And finally, I am grateful to Bill Reese not only for his invaluable comments on my project from a historian's perspective, but also for agreeing to serve on a dissertation committee for a student whom he had never actually met in the first place.

My research has benefitted greatly from the generosity of many other scholars, as well. These include European scholars such as Professor Dr. Michael Nagel of the *Universität Bremen*, who generously provided me with a wealth of information concerning the reception of Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, and Professor Dr. Pia Schmid of the *Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*, who spoke with me during the earliest stages of my dissertation research and who shared with me the particularly fascinating example of Weiße's reception among young readers from Johanna Schopenhauer's memoirs. Additionally, I am indebted to the librarians in UW-Madison's Special Collections, who never failed to make me feel welcome, even after nine full months of using their resources on a daily basis.

In addition to the members of my dissertation committee, I would also like to thank the other faculty members of the UW-Madison German Department. Their remarkable gifts as teachers inspire me to become the best teacher I can be, and I am grateful for the professional and personal support they have given me throughout my graduate career. Special thanks in particular are due to Monika Chavez, who more than any other individual has helped me to grow and mature as an educator. I am also deeply indebted to Joan Leffler and Mark Mears for their unfailing patience and willingness to guide me through the labyrinth of administrative red tape

and graduate-school policy. Were it not for their guidance, I would never have even made it to the beginning of the dissertation stage of my studies, let alone actually finished it.

I have also been blessed to share the many years of my graduate studies with an overwhelmingly supportive community of former and current fellow graduate-student colleagues, both within the German Department and beyond, who have challenged and inspired me to grow academically, professionally, spiritually, and personally. While the wisest and most prudent course of action would no doubt be to refrain from thanking anyone by name in order to avoid offending anyone whose name I might inadvertently overlook, I have seldom been accused of being either wise or prudent. To that end, then, I would like to apologize in advance to anyone whose name does not appear in the following list of individual acknowledgments (which by necessity is far from exhaustive). And so for providing technical support of all kinds; for providing feedback, be it solicited or unsolicited, on my research; for joining with me in much-needed diversions, be they at the gym, in concert halls, or at the gaming table; for humoring my numerous bizarre whims and near-insufferable idiosyncrasies with remarkable aplomb; for providing faithful counsel, be it professional or personal, in order to tilt at the windmill of trying to keep me grounded; for exhibiting such overtly geeky tendencies which make my own geeky tendencies seem far less embarrassing in comparison; or for some combination of these many reasons—or any of the countless others—to express my gratitude, I would like to thank the following individuals, listed here in alphabetical order: Chemist No. 1, Ph.D. (given name: Stephen Block); Chemist No. 2 (given name: Josh Carr); Justin Court; James Hogue; Jesse Holzer; Karolina May-Chu; Regina McConaghy; Andrea Menz; Helmar Menz; Matt Reed; Sarah Reed; Rose Rittenhouse; Ragnar Svare; Kris Thompson; Michael Thompson; Chemist No. 5

(given name: Ryan Van Hoveln); Chemist No. 4 (given name: Cale Weatherly); and Charlie Webster. It's been a pleasure, to say the least.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, without whose love and support I could never have finished this project. In particular, I am grateful to my parents Roger and Barbara for always believing in me; to my siblings Sarah and John for encouraging me and/or teasing me, as appropriate, about the duration of my graduate studies; and, last but certainly not least, to my beloved Big Peanut and Little Peanut, whose very existence was the cause of enough joy and encouragement for their Uncle Ben not only to complete this dissertation, but also to dedicate it to them—which, no doubt, makes for the very best Christmas gift a toddler could ever imagine.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines developments in the concepts of childhood and youth in late eighteenth-century Europe as reflected in the works for young readers by one of the earliest and most popular German children's authors of the time: Christian Felix Weiße (1726–1804). Building upon the debate surrounding the claim popularized by French historian Philippe Ariès that the concept of childhood itself was "discovered" in the late eighteenth century, this project aims to illustrate one highly influential individual's own concept of childhood and his related concept of youth, as well as to investigate both the relationship and the boundary between these two concepts. In order to accomplish this, the project presents a thorough comparative analysis of two periodicals written respectively for children and for young adults: *Der Kinderfreund* (1775–1782) and *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* (1784–1792).

In its twenty-four volumes, the immensely popular *Kinderfreund* includes a wide variety of texts—plays, fables, poems, and lessons in history and the natural sciences—which are all framed by the continuing story of a father and his four growing children. The twelve-volume *Briefwechsel*, targeted for Weiße's loyal readers who had since grown into young adults, continues the story of the same family: The children—themselves now young adults—enter the world on their own and begin to correspond with one another in a series of letters, which also feature a variety of textual genres. Both series consist of numerous vignettes, in each of which a particular case or situation is used to illustrate a more general moral or lesson.

Weiße's *Kinderfreund* depicts childhood as the most critical period of one's life, during which minor character flaws and moral shortcomings must be corrected, lest they develop into irremediable vices in one's adulthood. In addition to the exhortation for his young audience to

develop a strong sense of virtue in their early years, Weiße—an ardent proponent of the rationalist branch of the Enlightenment—also encourages even his youngest readers to develop their sense of reason during their childhood in order to guide all future behaviors. The text additionally argues that parents must play a direct role in the education of their children—a notion which was relatively novel at the time. Ultimately, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* presents childhood as the period in which every aspect of a child's life contributes to his or her education—be it formal education within a classroom or informal moral and social education elsewhere. In other words, Weiße does not simply argue that the boundaries of childhood are defined by the years of one's formal schooling, but rather presents childhood as a non-stop process of education itself.

In contrast, an analysis of Weiße's *Briefwechsel* reveals that the author views youth as a period of exploration during which the lessons of one's childhood are put to the test by the many trials and temptations of society. While childhood, according to Weiße, ought to be devoted largely to the development of abstract notions of moral virtue and upright behavior, youth is marked by the more practical concerns of selecting a career and finding a suitable spouse. It is during this period of life, moreover, when one's parents begin to transition from serving as teachers to acting as trusted friends. Above all, Weiße defines youth as a period of *self*-education, the phase of life during which young people, no longer in need of a mentor, begin to use their developed faculties of reason to monitor their own behavior and that of others. Thus, Weiße depicts not a biological boundary between childhood and youth, but rather a functional one—namely, the transition from guided instruction to independent self-instruction.

Although both of Weiße's periodicals for young readers appear on the surface to offer a new pedagogical model for the household, in actuality the situation is more complex. As the current study reveals, Weiße's family model, which demands the near-constant catering of numerous adults to the education of children, would be completely infeasible for nearly every family of the time to implement. Moreover, Weiße's works knowingly depict an overly idealized version of this pedagogical model, which appears to be so effective only because the author himself chooses to represent it in this way. The author's works thus do not constitute practical pedagogical treatises to be adopted directly by families of the time, but rather offer idealized case studies from which young and adult readers alike are expected to draw a more general principle or lesson.

Finally, this dissertation situates Weiße's concepts of childhood and youth within the pedagogical discourse of his time by offering a comparison of Weiße's works with Rousseau's highly influential *Émile* (1762). The works of both authors, who differed fundamentally in most aspects of their concepts of childhood, were as controversial as they were influential. This comparison demonstrates not only the broad spectrum of ideas concerning childhood in the eighteenth century, but also the intensity of the discourse on childhood at the time, thereby underscoring the significance of the concept of childhood in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 1

Christian Felix Weiße: An Introduction

1.1. Childhood vs. Youth: A Complex Issue

It goes without saying that across all times and places, children have been an integral part of human society, yet the concept of childhood—that is, the sociocultural understanding of what it means to be a child—has undergone dramatic changes over the course of centuries. Some scholars—most notably Philippe Ariès in *Centuries of Childhood* (1962)—have argued that the very idea of childhood did not exist naturally by default, but rather had to be discovered or developed. The birth of the modern Western conception of childhood is to be found, argues Ariès, in the late eighteenth century. To be sure, not all scholars agree with Ariès's claims that childhood had to be somehow created, yet many recognize the late eighteenth century as a pivotal moment in the history of childhood, which has proven to be an immensely difficult concept to define.

Evidence for the difficulty inherent in trying to firmly delineate the concept of childhood comes from lexical entries from eighteenth-century German dictionaries and encyclopedias. These definitions reveal that even scholars of the eighteenth century had great difficulty in defining the terms *Kindheit* and *Jugend* unambiguously; hence, these dictionaries also suggest that scholars of the time had just as much difficulty firmly establishing a clear concept of childhood, as well as the related concept of youth. Comprehensive research has already been conducted on the use of the terms *Kindheit* and *Jugend* in eighteenth-century dictionaries and

encyclopedias,[1] and for the purposes of illustration it will be useful now to review a few examples of eighteenth-century usage.

The definition in Johann Christoph Adelung's *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, originally published in 1774–86, might at first appear to be clear; for Adelung is so remarkably bold as to specify both a quantitative and a qualitative boundary of *Kindheit* in his definition: "das kindliche Alter, von der Geburt an, bis zum zehenten Jahre, wo man mehr nach Empfindungen, als nach Erkenntniß handelt" (II. col. 1578). Adelung fails to provide a reason for listing the tenth year of life as the end of childhood, although he apparently interprets this as the age at which children start to act based upon reason, rather than upon pure emotions. His definition of *Kind* likewise states that children are called *Kinder* through age ten (II. col.1574).

Zedler's *Universallexikon*, which appeared between 1732 and 1754 and which at sixty-eight volumes represented the most comprehensive work of its kind in the eighteenth century, similarly provides the then-valid legal age limit of a *Kind*, which differs from Adelung's boundary by three years: "Die Römischen Rechte setzen, um eine gewiße Regel zu haben, das Alter eines Kindes bis in das siebende Jahr, weil man gemeiniglich um diese Zeit einen stärckern Gebrauch Leibes und der Seelen an demselben bemercket" (XV. col. 641). While Zedler concedes that this boundary is somewhat arbitrary and was created solely for the sake of convenience, his attempt to justify its conclusion merely serves to support his previous definition of the word *Kind*: "Bald aber verstehet man darunter einen Menschen von solchem Alter, in welchem er den vollkommenen Gebrauch derer Kräffte Leibes so wohl als der Seelen nicht hat"

[1] See, for example, Lucia Amberg's extensive study *Wissenswerte Kindheit. Zur Konstruktion von Kindheit in deutschsprachigen Enzyklopädien des 18. Jahrhunderts* (2004).

(XV. col. 640). Thus, while Adelung defines children by setting up a dichotomy between emotions and reason, Zedler utilizes physical and moral immaturity as his central characteristics. Nevertheless, both age limits imposed on these two definitions remain necessarily arbitrary.

These arbitrary boundaries, however convenient and apparently straightforward they may be, are nevertheless complicated by definitions for the related term *Jugend*, which in Adelung's dictionary encompasses outwardly contradictory meanings: "Die Jugend ist überhaupt dem Alter entgegen gesetzet. In engerer Bedeutung stehet sie dem männlichen Alter entgegen, und begreift die Lebenszeit von dem ersten bis 25sten oder 30sten Jahre. In der engsten Bedeutung, wo sie auch noch von der Kindheit unterschieden wird, macht sie das so genannte Jünglingsalter aus" (II. col. 1445). Adelung recognizes here that this term is quite fluid and can be applied to a variety of ages which can actually encompass the denotation of *Kindheit*, depending upon the context.

Similarly, the historical attestations provided in *Grimms Wörterbuch* paint a similar intersection of the two terms. This dictionary states that while in the strictest senses of the words *Kindheit* and *Jugend*, there is a distinction between two phases of life, these words have also often been used synonymously—with reference to both earlier and later periods of life—ever since the Middle Ages (XI. col. 711, X. col. 2360). In Medieval German literature, knights are often referred to as *kint* even after marriage (XI. col. 711); and while *Kind* certainly did not remain a common term of reference for married men in subsequent ages, the conflation of *Kindheit* and *Jugend* certainly remained common throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and still happens on occasion today.

These examples, while certainly not exhaustive, should suffice to illustrate the complexity of defining the concepts of childhood and youth and to demonstrate the significant difficulty in clearly demarcating the two terms as they were used in the late eighteenth century. As I have noted, however, such conflation of the two terms still happens on occasion today; and it also appears to be the case that most scholars of historical children's literature simply take this fact for granted. For example, Reiner Wild, in his ambitious psychographic study of eighteenth-century culture as reflected in children's literature of the time, seems to implicitly accept the terms *Kindheit* and *Jugend* as interchangeable. In discussions in which he himself strives to present an overview of *Kindheit* in the eighteenth century, he cites primary texts which exclusively use the term *Jugend* and yet surprisingly refrains from commenting further on the matter (Wild, *Vernunft* 127–28).

Moreover, one sees from the dictionary examples above that much of the difficulty in defining childhood and youth as distinct concepts is determining a clear boundary between the two—in other words, determining when childhood ends and when youth begins. The two concepts are thus inextricably linked. As such, any examination of the concept of childhood in the eighteenth century must also explore the concept of youth in order to develop a more complete understanding of the relationship between and the limitations of both.

In order to gain a glimpse into the changing concepts of childhood and youth in the eighteenth century, this dissertation examines the works of German author Christian Felix Weiße. As one of the most popular and influential children's authors in the German-speaking regions at the time, Weiße offers a particularly noteworthy perspective on what it meant to be a child or youth in the eighteenth century. Moreover, Weiße's two most significant works for

young readers, the periodicals *Der Kinderfreund* (1775–1782) and its sequel *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* (1784–1792), provide a unique framework within which to explore the ideas of *Kindheit* and *Jugend* and their implications for literature written for children and young adults. As the two related works are targeted specifically at a readership of children and youth, respectively, these works provide an excellent point of comparison in order to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts of childhood and youth and the relationship between the two in the late eighteenth century. Before continuing in our discussion of the concept of childhood, let us first examine the life and career of the author himself.

1.2. The Life of Christian Felix Weiße

1.2.1. Early Life and Professional Career

Born in 1726 in Annaberg, Saxony, as the son of a school rector and teacher of European and Asian languages, Christian Felix Weiße developed a keen interest in languages and poetry at a very early age. During his studies at the *Gymnasium* in Altenburg, Weiße became fascinated with the theater and apparently began to experiment with his own dramatic and lyric compositions, since his classmates soon dubbed him the "Dichter." In 1745, Weiße went on to study classical languages and theology in Leipzig. At the time, Leipzig was a haven for literature and the arts, and its university faculty included such important writers and scholars as Johann Christoph Gottsched and Christian Fürchtegott Gellert. During his studies in Leipzig, Weiße became acquainted with fellow student, theater enthusiast, and budding playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who personally convinced Weiße to complete a play which he had

begun during his *Gymnasium* days. This play, *Die Matrone von Ephesus*, was performed to much acclaim shortly after its completion, although it was not published until several years later, and continued to enjoy popularity for years to come (Mai 15–16, 19–20; Minor, *Beziehung* 84–85). Thus began Weiße's career as a dramatist.

In 1750, Weiße completed his studies at the university and received a position as a private teacher for a young count studying in Leipzig, a position which he retained for nine years. Even though Weiße was later to become a well-known children's author and would be closely associated with leading pedagogues of his day, this period as a tutor marked his only experience as a professional educator. During this time, he continued to write works for the stage, many of which found great success with audiences (Mai 24–25). Upon the suggestion of his colleague Lessing, in 1759 Christoph Friedrich Nicolai asked Weiße to succeed him as editor of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*, one of the leading review journals of the time, and Weiße accepted (Brüggemann col. 1250). In 1762, after the conclusion of his teaching position with the count, Weiße accepted a position as a tax collector (*Kreissteuereinnehmer*) in Leipzig, a position for which he received the manor Stötteritz and which remained his primary source of income while he wrote in his spare time. Weiße retained this position until his death.

Weiße frequently commented on the difficulties of trying to compose his dramas while fulfilling the demands of his career and often suggested that his plays were not of the highest caliber for this very reason. In a letter to Christian Adolph Klotz dated March 30, 1765—at which point, it must be noted, Weiße's dramas were still greatly admired and widely

performed—Weiße himself jokingly attributed the mediocrity of his dramas to the amount of time he was required to devote to the "Gott der Steuerrechnungen":

> Mein Beruf, der mich zu einem Geldeinnehmer bestimmt, hat mich dem vertrauten Umgange der Musen gänzlich entrissen und ich darf Ihnen nicht erst sagen, wie wenig sich der Gott der Steuerrechnungen, wenn es anders einen solchen giebt, mit ihren süssen Gesängen verträgt. Die wenigen Augenblicke, die ich ihnen widme, muß ich abstehlen: wie kann es also anders kommen, als daß dasjenige, was ich oft unter dem Tumulte von einer Menge Bauern aufs Papier werfe, gar nicht diejenige Politur hat, die Horatz von den Dichtern verlangt. (qtd. in Pape, "billetdoux" 286)

These comments suggest an overall lack of confidence in the quality of his own literary creations, yet they also underscore the truly impressive feat of Weiße's literary productivity: Regardless of the caliber of his work, his position as one of the most prolific authors of his time is particularly remarkable in light of his career as a tax collector and the lengthy period during which he served as the editor of one of the most influential review journals of his day. Goethe himself was impressed by Weiße's accomplishments in this respect and even praised him accordingly in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: "Besonders wurden auch solche Personen verehrt, die, neben jenem angenehmen Talente, sich noch als emsige, treue Geschäftsmänner auszeichneten. Deshalb erfreuten sich Uz, Rabener, Weiße einer Achtung ganz eigner Art, weil man die heterogensten, selten mit einander verbundenen Eigenschaften hier vereint zu schätzen hatte" (Goethe 9: 397–98).

1.2.2. *Volksaufklärung* and Aesthetic Education: Weiße's Literary Works for Adults

Particularly in light of the significant demands on his time which his career as a tax collector and his position as editor required, Weiße's literary productivity is indeed impressive. A review of Weiße's literary profile reveals that, as Carola Cardi has rightly pointed out, Weiße's literary career can be divided into two distinct periods: his period as a dramatist for adults, which lasted

until about 1772, and his subsequent career as a children's author (Cardi 103). The first of these periods was characterized initially by remarkable success.

As a dramatist, Weiße produced comedies, tragedies, and even operettas (*Singspiele*); and his works enjoyed much popularity and acclaim. His *Singspiele*, for which he wrote the libretti to the compositions of his musical partner Johann Adam Hiller, adapted the French model to create some of the earliest German productions in this tradition. These works were by far the most prominent German representatives of the genre at the time (Colvin 203).[2] Many of the songs from these works became the first German "hits," such as "Ohne Lieb' und ohne Wein, was wär' unser Leben," which was the most popular song of the time and continued to be sung well into the nineteenth century (Anger 14*). Weiße's tragic works built largely upon the French and English traditions. He even adapted a small number of Shakespearean tales for the stage, including *Richard III* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and was one of the first to adapt blank verse for the German language (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 138–39). These works resulted in his greatest admirers comparing his abilities as a playwright to those of the Bard himself. In fact, Weiße was considered to be the greatest and most prolific tragedian of his generation (Lamport 164). Easily one of the most-performed playwrights of his time, he was also considered by some to be the center of the literary world of Leipzig (Pape, "billetdoux" 269).

Weiße's contributions went beyond the stage, however, and included the influence he exerted in his role as editor of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*. When Weiße assumed this position in 1759, he became, in the words of Walter Pape, the

[2] For a more thorough treatment of the significance of Weiße and Hiller's *Singspiele*, see the chapter "Das sächsische Singspiel als empfindsame Leitgattung" in Jörg Krämer's *Deutschsprachiges Musiktheater im späten 18. Jahrhundert* (1998; 130–201).

"Wahrer aufklärerischer Literatur und Ästhetik" ("billetdoux" 271). Weiße remained active in this position until at least 1782 and even then remained nominally the editor until his death in 1804. In his role as editor, Weiße was in a position to influence the definition of good taste among his readers; in other words, Weiße used his editorship to implement a program of aesthetic education. As the issues of aesthetics and good taste were two of the most widely discussed topics of the Enlightenment, Weiße served in this respect as a *Volksaufklärer*, working actively to promote the ideals of the Enlightenment among the public at large. In both his position as editor and in his role as a dramatist, Weiße openly stressed his connection to the reading public and explained his position as a *Volksaufklärer* by arguing that an author must maintain this connection to one's readers out of deference to them (Pape, "billetdoux" 268, 271). As we will see later, Weiße's endeavor to promote aesthetic education continued in his works for young readers, and his program to generate good taste among adults and children alike is considered to be one of his most enduring contributions (Cardi 106).

Weiße's influence as the arbiter of good taste and his popularity as a dramatist, however, were not to be long-lived. The development of new literary movements within Germany—most notably Sturm und Drang—effected marked changes in the reading tastes of the population, and Weiße himself began to recognize that the tide of public opinion had begun to turn (Mai 74). With the appearance of the young Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* in 1773, Weiße's popularity was eclipsed by that of a younger generation of writers, who began to mock his works as outdated and passé. Even Weiße's old schoolmate Lessing, whose theory of drama had since become more rigid and starkly delineated upon clear principles, started to criticize Weiße's works heavily (Minor, *Beziehungen* 254–55, 257). In the "73. Stück" of his *Hamburgische*

Dramaturgie, Lessing offers an unfavorable review of Weiße's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III* (Lessing 373–78). As a result of this criticism in such a high-profile work, Weiße's *Richard III.* is, perhaps ironically, the best remembered of all his plays in the present day (Lamport 164–65).

Weiße was notoriously sensitive to the remarks of his critics and openly attributed his decision to resign as a dramatist to their remarks. In his autobiography, for instance, he writes:

> [A]bgerechnet, daß die harten Urtheile, welche einige Mal über ihn ergiengen, ihm weh thaten; so trug der eine, wie die andern dazu bey, ihn furchtsam zu machen, und des Zutrauens zu sich selbst zu berauben. Er fieng an bey seinen Arbeiten ängstliche Rücksichten zu nehmen, welche ihm so lange fremd gewesen waren[…]. Die Neigung, fürs Theater zu dichten, erlosch; er legte eilig genug die Feder für diese Arbeiten nieder, ehe man ihm das: Desine, jam satis lusisti auf eine empfindlichere Weise zurufte. (*Selbstbiographie* 169)[3]

As a somewhat official recognition of the conclusion of his dramatic career, Weiße decided in 1775 to publish the complete set of his tragedies. When the fifth and final volume of these works was published in 1780, Weiße's introduction admitted that his career as a dramatist was for all intents and purposes finished, although he did not fail to blame the public's changing taste and, more importantly, to blame his critics' negative comments as the cause of his premature retirement from the theatrical arena. Even though his editor recommended omitting this introduction from the published volume, Weiße insisted upon retaining it in order to characterize the three types of critics he perceived: First, he attacked the champions of the Sturm und Drang movement for their overly one-sided taste in drama, as they rejected anything that did not mimic very closely the dramatic model that they had selected for themselves—namely, Shakespeare.

[3] Weiße's autobiography is, surprisingly, written in the third person. The book was edited by Weiße's son and son-in-law and published after Weiße's death. According to the editors' introduction, Weiße requested shortly before his death that the two edit and publish an account of his life. The two men used Weiße's extensive correspondence to reconstruct the facts of his life, and they assure the reader that Weiße himself recorded the notes of his life in the third person and insist that the work can and should be viewed as a true autobiography (*Selbstbiographie* III–VII).

Secondly, he condemned Lessing for evaluating dramas exclusively according to his rules of reason and intellect, rather than accounting for the overall emotional effect that the work might hold for the audience. Finally, Weiße bemoaned the pettiness of professional critics who took delight in exposing the shortcomings of an author's work without considering its positive attributes. Among these, he included the contributors to Nicolai's *Neue Bibliothek*, a publication for which Weiße himself had ironically once served as editor (Minor, *Beziehungen* 260–62). Thus ended Weiße's career as a playwright, as he somewhat less than tactfully publicly recognized the new epoch of drama.

1.2.3. Weiße's Literary Works for Children

Fortunately for Weiße, however, while his renown as a dramatist was fading into oblivion, he concurrently began to take interest in the publication of literary works for children; and it is indeed in this capacity as a children's author that he is best remembered today. So, too, with the end of his career as a dramatist, began the second period of his literary career. Weiße had actually begun publishing works for children as early as 1765 when the volume of songs *Lieder für Kinder* first appeared. At the time, the work represented the beginning of poetry for children in Germany (Haefs 2219). Weiße reports the occasion of the volume in his autobiography:

> Im Jahr 1765 war Weiße zum erstenmal Vater geworden. Seine innige Freude darüber und die Anhänglichkeit an das kleine Geschöpf ward Ursache, daß er oftmals in der Nähe desselben war und die abgeschmackten Lieder der Amme und Kinderwärterin singen hörte. Das brachte ihn auf den Entschluß, kleine moralische Lieder für Kinder zu dichten. (*Selbstbiographie* 129–30)

In actuality, however, it appears that Weiße had been hired by a *Kapellmeister* to write poems for a volume of songs for children; for this is how Weiße reported the event in a letter to his friend Ramler shortly after the release of the book (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 159). Weiße's account of the

story in his autobiography could easily be an intentional whitewashing of history, yet it nevertheless shows that even in regards to his works for children, Weiße retained his campaign to promote an understanding of good taste, as we will see further in later chapters.

Regardless of the circumstances of the volume's origins, *Lieder für Kinder* met with instant acclaim, as did his *Neues A, B, C, Buch* (1773), which was one of the earliest *Leselernbücher* to be published in Germany (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 159–60). In general, very few books written specifically for children existed in Germany when Weiße began directing his literary efforts to young readers. This was still true in 1775 when he began to produce the periodical *Der Kinderfreund* (1775–1782), but had already begun to change when he began publishing its sequel *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* (1784–1792) two years after the conclusion of *Der Kinderfreund*. The publication history and success of these two works will be discussed in much greater detail in later chapters.

Finally, the events related above concerning the origin of Weiße's *Lieder für Kinder* show that in spite of the historical reality, Weiße associated his literary works for children with his own family life. In 1763, Weiße had married Christiana Platner, and the couple had five children, one of whom died as an infant. Apart from the death of his son Christian August, Weiße's adult life was not marred by personal tragedy, and his life as a husband and father by all evidence remained a happy one until his death in 1804. Strangely, some critics—including both those in the nineteenth century[4] and those in the twentieth[5]—have suggested that Weiße's lack of

[4] In his surprisingly mean introduction to Weiße's plays in the collection *Lessings Jugendfreunde* (1883), Jakob Minor writes: "Christian Felix Weiße gehört unter die unbeliebten Erscheinungen, welche durch die Masse ihrer Produktionen eine größere Beachtung zu erzwingen scheinen, als ihnen der Beurteiler ihrem inneren Werte nach zuerkennen will. Weder als Dichter noch als Mensch war Weiße unbegabt; aber als Mensch wie als Dichter hat er sich über die Mittelmäßigkeit, welche sich in allem versucht und überall verwenden läßt, nicht erhoben. […] Weißes Leben bot in seinem einfachen Verlaufe keiner der Verwicklungen dar, welche einem dichterischen Talente Stoff

great suffering negatively affected his career as a writer. While one can only speculate how a more painful life would have influenced Weiße's career as a tragedian, Sophie Köberle has argued—and I would agree—that his rewarding family life enhanced his success as a children's author (Köberle 50). As we will see later, Weiße himself admitted in his autobiography that he regularly incorporated elements of his personal life into the fictional world of *Der Kinderfreund* (*Selbstbiographie* 186), the work which would ultimately prove to be his most enduring literary legacy.

1.3. Review of Scholarship on Weiße's Works for Children and Situation of the Current Project

1.3.1. Review of Scholarship on Weiße's Works for Children

In light of Weiße's influence as a writer for both adults and children of the time, surprisingly little modern scholarship has been conducted on this prolific author. As such, it is not difficult to gain an overview of the current status of existing scholarship on his works. A fairly comprehensive list of the most important research on his works for adult readers—most of which are admittedly of little relevance to the current project—can be found in Section 2.2. of the bibliography of this dissertation. In order to situate the contribution of the current research

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und Nahrung geben" (Minor, "Christian Felix Weiße" V–VI). Minor then goes on to claim that the only truly monumental event in Weiße's life was meeting Lessing ("Christian Felix Weiße" VI).

[5] In his chapter on Weiße in *Das literarische Kinderbuch* (1981), Walter Pape writes: "Seine Selbstbiographie ist eine der langweiligsten, und tatsächlich bietet weder seine äußere noch seine innere Biographie Außergewöhnliches" (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 151).

project, however, this literature review will focus exclusively on research concerning his role as a children's author.

It should first be noted that Weiße's works for children are a mainstay in contemporary collections of historical German children's literature. As literary anthologies play a critical role in establishing and passing on the literary canon, Weiße's presence in these anthologies is an acknowledgement of his influential position as one of the leading contributors to German literature for young readers. One such anthology is the Reclam volume *Kinder- und Jugendliteratur der Aufklärung* (1980), edited by Hans-Heino Ewers. The collection includes ten of Weiße's poems and songs for children, one fable written in verse, and one play that was originally published in *Der Kinderfreund*. Excerpts from Weiße's works are also included in anthologies of primary sources on the history of education, such as Katharina Rutschky's *Die schwarze Pädagogik* (1988), which contains several excerpts from *Der Kinderfreund*. Weiße's works, however, are not always cited in a positive light. For instance, in Horst Kunze's *Schatzbehalter* (1965), an anthology of children's literature from the Enlightenment through the early twentieth century, the editor explains that Weiße is included in the volume not because his works are of interest to readers today or even because they are of considerable literary value, but merely because he was so influential at the time:

> Wenn der brave Christian Felix Weiße […] in unserer Sammlung mit einem Gedicht vertreten ist, so ist das freilich mehr ein Akt der Pietät als der Anerkennung seiner dauerhaften Leistungen für die Kinderliteratur. […] Erfolg und Qualität sind manchmal zweierlei. […] Wie viele der Literatur verfallene Gebildete seiner Zeit vermochte Weiße zu reimen, nicht aber zu dichten. Seine Kindergedichte sind moralische Erbauungsliteratur für Eltern, zu erzieherischen Zwecken bestimmt. […] Es lohnt sich nicht, seine Kinderlieder der verdienten Vergessenheit zu entreißen. Eine Ausnahme möge das folgende Gedicht machen, weil seine ersten Verse als Nachklang seiner einstigen Beliebtheit bis in unsere Tage als geflügeltes Wort lebendig geblieben sind. Es ist aber in der Tat auch eins der besten von Weiße, dem moralisierenden Kinderfreund. (Kunze, *Schatzbehalter* 122–23)

The anthologized poem in question is "Der Aufschub," which was first published in *Lieder für Kinder* (1766) and which opens with the well-known "geflügeltes Wort" "Morgen, morgen, nur nicht heute! / Sprechen immer träge Leute." In spite of the editor's unmistakable disdain for Weiße's work, he also includes a six-page excerpt from *Der Kinderfreund* in his anthology (Kunze, *Schatzbehalter* 125–30). Thus, although Weiße's works have been all but forgotten today, his influence at the time evidently garners him enough recognition to be included in every anthology.

Weiße maintains a similar canonical status within literary criticism, as well. Indeed, nearly every book, chapter, or reference work which explores any aspect of children's literature of the Enlightenment includes a section on Christian Felix Weiße as one of the most influential figures in the field. Almost all of these brief overviews are identical in the information they provide (information, incidentally, which I will later discuss in much greater detail): They show that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was one of the earliest periodicals to be written specifically for children within Germany and attribute its immense popularity to the novelty of its presentation of discussions on moral topics in an entertaining format. These sources then provide an overview of this format and highlight select themes of the work which illustrate the author's position as a proponent of the Enlightenment. Finally, the influence of *Der Kinderfreund* is proven by the significant increase in production of literary works for children shortly after its publication.[6]

[6] As these works all provide the same basic information, it is not necessary to provide a complete list of titles. For the sake of convenience, however, here are some selected works with the relevant passages highlighted: For sections within general works on children's literature of the Enlightenment, see Ludwig Göhring's *Die Anfänge der deutschen Jugendliteratur im 18. Jahrhundert* (1904; 14–25), Sophie Köberle's *Jugendliteratur zur Zeit der Aufklärung* (1972; 50–54), Annette Uphaus-Wehmeier's *Zum Nutzen und Vergnügen* (1984; 88–92), Wolfgang Promies's "Kinderliteratur im späten 18. Jahrhundert" (1984; 798–803), or Johanna Monschein's *Kinder- und Jugendbücher der Aufklärung* (1994; 35–44). And within reference works, see Otto Brunken's entry on *Der Kinderfreund* in the *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur. Von 1750 bis 1800* (1982; cols. 137–55) or Ute

There is, however, one potential danger to be mentioned in regards to Weiße's near-ubiquitous inclusion in works on eighteenth-century children's literature—namely, that much existing scholarship discusses Weiße's *Kinderfreund* as if it were *the* representative work of Enlightenment children's literature. In other words, scholars make general claims about all of Enlightenment children's literature based primarily, if not exclusively, upon an analysis of Weiße's texts and his alone. Carola Cardi's monograph (1983) on the *Kinderschauspiele* of the Enlightenment, for example, offers a profile of Weiße as the primary representative of this genre and interprets the children's plays of other authors only with respect to his position as such (Cardi 245–80). Reiner Wild has commented on the vast similarities which many works of the burgeoning genre of Enlightenment children's literature shared, arguing that one can indeed glean information about common trends within the genre by examining only a small number of texts (Wild, *Vernunft* 36–39). It is certainly true that many works of the period are very similar, yet these similarities should not mislead one into overlooking the equally important differences between works by different authors. While Weiße was in all likelihood the most influential writer for children of his day, one must nevertheless be careful not to depict his works as necessarily indicative of universal trends of the time.

Reiner Wild's ambitious monograph *Die Vernunft der Väter* (1987) mostly avoids the pitfalls of this potential trap, even though his work provides a sweeping overview of eighteenth-century German children's literature by using Weiße's *Kinderfreund* as its primary lens. While the vast majority of Wild's examples stem from *Der Kinderfreund*, he does draw upon a very large number of other texts written by Weiße's contemporaries. In this respect, Wild admirably

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Dettmar's entry on Weiße in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (2006; "Weisse, Christian Felix" 4: 167).

situates Weiße's *Kinderfreund* within its historical context and by means of a comparison of many other works of children's literature, provides general claims about various topics as they are reflected in children's literature of the eighteenth century. These themes include the development of the middle class and its relationship to the upper and lower classes (54–96), as well as the changing family model and its role as an institution of the Enlightenment (97–121). Wild also discusses the dominant role of the father in works of children's literature as the arbiter of reason and notes the near-exclusion of mother figures from texts of the time (205–57).

Another common theme from Weiße's œuvre which has received attention is the depiction of the various social classes. Several scholars have discussed Weiße's complicated—and sometimes seemingly contradictory—attitude toward both the nobility and the lower classes as depicted within *Der Kinderfreund*.[7] Bettina Hurrelmann has convincingly shown in her monograph *Jugendliteratur und Bürgerlichkeit* (1974),[8] the first work to provide a thorough analysis of Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, that the work adheres strictly to the values of the educated bourgeoisie. Situated within this distinctly middle-class perspective, several passages within *Der Kinderfreund* unmistakably criticize the nobility for its arrogance, its wasteful lifestyle, or its rejection of a useful education. Conversely, comments regarding the lower classes are much more complex. The author finds himself trapped between a critique of the ignorance of the lower classes and the arrogance toward one's social inferiors for which he repeatedly criticizes the nobility:

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[7] See, for example, the following: Chapter 3 of Bettina Hurrelmann's monograph *Jugendliteratur und Bürgerlichkeit* (1974; 67–141); Chapters 5 and 6 of Gertrud Fankhauser's dissertation on Weiße's *Kinderfreund* (1975; 108–66); and Section I, Chapter 2 in Reiner Wild's *Vernunft der Väter* (1987; 54–96).

[8] Hurrelmann's article "Erziehung zur Bürgerlichkeit in der Jugendliteratur der Aufklärung" (1982) is essentially a highly abridged version of her monograph and makes most of the same arguments.

> Zwar gilt, daß das Vorurteil der höheren Geburt, das dem Adel als Laster vorgehalten wird, ebenso zu verurteilen ist, wenn es sich im Mittelstand den unteren Schichten gegenüber äußert, aber es wird durch ein intellektuell-bildungsbezogenes ersetzt, mit dem sich das Bürgertum bis in unser Jahrhundert von den unteren Gesellschaftsschichten abgrenzte. […] Der Tugend der "niederen" Stände fehlt der Anteil von Bildung und Gesittung, die für den Bürger unerläßlich sind. Im Grunde bleibt die Tugenderziehung des "Kinderfreunds" an ein schichtenspezifisches Wertsystem gebunden. (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 108–09)

Hurrelmann thus locates Weiße's potential readers solely within the educated bourgeoisie and argues that his analysis of the upper and lower classes is filtered through his own membership in that class.

The past decade has produced relatively little new scholarship on Weiße's works. One notable exception is the 2006 volume *Christian Felix Weiße und die Leipziger Aufklärung*, which offers papers presented at a 2004 colloquium in honor of the two hundredth anniversary of Weiße's death. Of the six essays contained in the volume, the only one to focus on Weiße's literary works for young readers is that of Ute Dettmar—incidentally the only scholar within the past decade to have written extensively on Weiße's works for children. In "Aufgeklärte Kindheit. Christian Felix Weiße als Autor für Kinder" (2006), Dettmar examines several of Weiße's plays for children, all of which appear in his periodical *Der Kinderfreund*.[9] She ultimately argues that Weiße's position as a proponent of the Enlightenment is confirmed by his depiction of child characters who exercise the power of reason to guide their behavior and who must face stark consequences if they fail to uphold their responsibilities, thereby concluding that the author takes children quite seriously indeed. Moreover, she shows that the incorporation of these plays into the greater context of *Der Kinderfreund* provides a unique contribution to the

[9] Dettmar's chapter on Weiße's plays for children in her monograph *Das Drama der Familienkindheit* (2002; 40–67) essentially presents the same arguments which she makes in this article.

aesthetic education of children, as the subsequent discussions of them within the framing story raise not just moral, but also aesthetic questions (Dettmar, "Aufgeklärte Kindheit" 88–93).

Walter Pape has also noted the significance of the role of aesthetic education within Weiße's works for young readers. In an extensive chapter which he entitles "Der ästhetische Erzieher," Pape argues in his monograph *Das literarische Kinderbuch* (1981) that Weiße was unique among other children's authors of his day because he was the only writer who understood that literature for children could be more than a "pädagogisches Hilfsmittel" (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 76). As evidence for this claim, Pape examines Weiße's emphasis on aesthetics and the development of good taste within his works for young readers. Pape argues that even though the debate concerning good taste was one of the central discussions of the Enlightenment, Weiße was one of the very few children's authors of his time to discuss such matters in his works for children. Pape ultimately concludes that Weiße's emphasis on the development of good taste—which the author himself explicitly associates with social behaviors and moral choices—is the primary goal of *Der Kinderfreund*, a work which thus seeks to teach its young readers to discern not only what is good, but also what is beautiful.[10] This aesthetic position, claims Pape, thus sets

[10] Pape suggests that Weiße's role as an aesthetic educator makes him superior to other children's authors of his day, yet there is evidence that his emphasis on teaching children to develop good taste was controversial at the time. A review in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* of Volumes 19 through 22 of *Der Kinderfreund* questions whether the topic of good taste will appeal to its target young readers: "Bey dem Liede S. 178, der Geschmack, möchten wohl die wenigsten Kinder etwas denken; so wie ich auch gefunden habe, daß sie bey dem Liede an die Unschuld in den Kinderliedern […] nichts denken. Solche personificirte Abstrakta machen manchem Erwachsenen und Studirten genug zu thun, wenn er sich bey jedem Zuge des Gemäldes etwas eigentliches und bestimmtes denken will, um wie viel mehr Kindern; und will mans ihnen erklären, so ermüden sie darob, ehe man mit der Erklärung nur den zehnten Theil zu Ende ist; ein sicherer Beweis, daß dergleichen nicht für Kinder gehört" (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 49.2: 527). This review was written by Ernst Christian Trapp, a teacher by trade and one of the leading members of the Philanthropinist pedagogical movement; as such, he was in a fair position to assess the potential interest or relevance of the text for children, particularly as his comment about the poem "An die Unschuld" reveals that he had previously incorporated other examples of Weiße's work into his curriculum. It must be noted that in Trapp's reviews of all twenty-four volumes of *Der Kinderfreund*, "Der Geschmack" is, moreover, the only poem or song

Weiße apart from other children's authors of his day, who viewed children primarily as "teachable objects" (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 133, 141, 145).[11]

Nearly all of the existing scholarship on Weiße's works for children focuses either on Weiße's *Kinderfreund* or his plays (which were all also published as part of *Der Kinderfreund* or the *Briefwechsel*); Ines-Bianca Vogdt's monograph on the history of children's poetry (1998) is a notable exception. In one of the few works to examine Weiße's *Lieder für Kinder* (1766), Vogdt takes up Pape's notion of Weiße as an aesthetic educator in order to illustrate how Weiße's concept of good taste pervades this volume of poetry (27–29). Her analysis also opposes the common criticism that Enlightenment children's poetry consists solely of tedious *Lehrgedichte* (such as the critical evaluation of Weiße's work by Horst Kunze in his literary anthology which we saw earlier) by arguing that Weiße's *Lieder für Kinder* contains a number of poems, "die sich jeden [sic] erhobenen Zeigefingers enthalten" (Vogdt 27).

Of particular note is the fact that in almost all of the existing scholarship on Weiße's works for children, there is no discussion of *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*, the less successful sequel journal to his immensely popular *Kinderfreund*. Of the works which offer an overview of Weiße's influence as a children's author of the Enlightenment, nearly all simply mention the existence of the *Briefwechsel*, state that it was far less successful than its predecessor

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which he explicitly mentions as potentially inappropriate for children. Incidentally, Pape's analysis of Weiße's entire œuvre relies heavily on this particular text. Of course, the fact that some of Weiße's contemporaries may have questioned whether his aesthetic position made him a superior author for children does not undermine Pape's argument; if anything, it underscores his claim that Weiße's attempts to develop good taste in children made him unique among children's authors of the time.

[11] Pape also provides a much more abbreviated form of this argument in his essay "'Ein *billetdoux* an die ganze Menschheit.' Christian Felix Weiße und die Aufklärung" (1990), in which he provides an overview of Weiße's entire literary corpus, rather than focusing exclusively on his works for children (Pape, "billetdoux" 285–86).

because it had greater competition within the market of literature for children, and at most explain the overall conceit of the work, if they mention the content of the periodical at all. As such, any scholarship which devotes more than one paragraph to the *Briefwechsel* is unusual.[12]

Some scholars, admittedly, examine the plays which were published as part of the *Briefwechsel*. For instance, Carola Cardi's *Das Kinderschauspiel der Aufklärungszeit* (1983) provides an analysis of Weiße's entire corpus of plays for children, including those published in the *Briefwechsel*. She examines these plays apart from the larger context of the *Briefwechsel*, however, and hence does not provide an interpretation of the periodical as a whole. The same is true of Eva Funke's monograph *Bücher statt Prügel* (1988), in which she provides examples from several plays published in the *Briefwechsel* without taking into account the greater context of the periodical itself. As nearly all of Weiße's *Schauspiele* were also published individually apart from their inclusion in *Der Kinderfreund* or the *Briefwechsel*, there is, of course, nothing faulty in Cardi's or Funke's approaches to the texts as individual plays in and of themselves. Nevertheless, this shows that no scholars have yet provided a thorough examination of the periodical as a whole. To date, there appears to be not a single work of literary scholarship which offers an in-depth analysis of Weiße's *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*.

1.3.2. Contribution of the Current Project

As we have seen, although Weiße's works for children were wildly popular in his time, there seems to be a surprising dearth of present-day scholarship about his role as a children's author,

[12] Such works include Sophie Köberle's *Jugendliteratur zur Zeit der Aufklärung* (1972), which provides a brief list of recurring themes in the *Briefwechsel* and an (albeit overly simplistic) list of potential reasons for its lack of success (Köberle 53–54), as does Wilhelm Braun's "Christian Felix Weisse's Place among Eighteenth Century Educators" (1916; 154–57). Neither of these works, however, provides any actual analysis of the text.

particularly in proportion to the sheer magnitude of this famously prolific writer's corpus of works for children. In contrast to those existing works of scholarship which analyze Weiße's works for young readers as more or less representative of all of Enlightenment children's literature, this project does not have the same intent. I have admittedly chosen to concentrate my analysis on his works because Weiße was extremely influential both in popularizing Enlightenment ideals and in developing the children's literary marketplace within eighteenth-century Germany, yet I do not believe that his works can necessarily be taken to be indicative of trends within the entirety of Enlightenment children's literature. On the contrary, I examine Weiße's works in the full recognition that his concept of childhood represents the views of one individual (albeit a highly influential one), rather than working under the false assumption that his works can speak for all other proponents of the Enlightenment who were writing for children at that time. Furthermore, this dissertation offers an analysis of Rousseau's *Émile* as a point of contrast in order to highlight the variation, rather than the uniformity, of ideas within eighteenth-century Europe.

Admittedly, discussing Weiße's works for children in relation to the changing conceptions of childhood in the late eighteenth century does not constitute a revolutionary approach. On the contrary, nearly every work of literary scholarship on children's literature of the Enlightenment situates the texts within this historical and sociological context because it is of such importance to the development of children's literature as a popular genre during this time. Relatively few Germanists, however, have offered a thorough profile of Weiße's own concept of childhood as reflected in his corpus of works for children, which is one of the main goals of this dissertation. The few scholars which have previously attempted to do so—most notably Bettina

Hurrelmann in *Jugendliteratur und Bürgerlichkeit* (1974), Walter Pape in *Das literarische Kinderbuch* (1981), and Reiner Wild in *Die Vernunft der Väter* (1987)—have, however, entirely ignored Weiße's *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* and have instead focused exclusively on *Der Kinderfreund* in order to make their claims. In contrast, my project will be a comparative discussion of both the *Kinderfreund* and the *Briefwechsel*, which will provide a greater understanding of Weiße's notions of childhood and youth. This focus will thus be unique among literary scholarship on Weiße's works and will consequently represent a new contribution to the field.

As Weiße wrote *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* as a sequel to *Der Kinderfreund* targeted at a slightly older readership than that of its predecessor, the work offers many fascinating points of comparison and contrast. In the *Briefwechsel*, Weiße illustrates his conception of youth in relation to the conception of childhood which he portrays in *Der Kinderfreund*. As such, the sequel addresses questions which its predecessor does not and, more importantly, provides a glimpse into the final product of Weiße's conception of childhood—that is, it depicts the fictional children from the previous series as they enter adulthood. Thus, a comparison of the two periodicals provides a much deeper and more complete understanding of the author's conception of childhood by illustrating his understanding of the ultimate result of childhood. Many scholars have taken up Reiner Wild's argument that Weiße depicts and addresses children solely in anticipatory relation to their future position as young adults (Wild, *Vernunft* 134–35)—a claim, incidentally, which is interpreted variously as a neutral, purely descriptive statement and as a legitimate critique. In light of this fact, it is particularly surprising that no scholars have undertaken an examination of Weiße's *Briefwechsel*, as it depicts his

understanding of childhood's terminus and the transition into young adulthood. This dissertation will, in fact, be the first work of scholarship ever to offer a thorough analysis of this periodical as a whole. Consequently, my dissertation will fill a conspicuous gap in the scholarship regarding this pioneer in the field of children's literature and pedagogy.

As I have already explained, this dissertation will examine Weiße's two periodicals as exemplifications of the concepts of childhood and youth, both of which were particularly fluid in the eighteenth century. In so doing, the project will illustrate one highly influential author's perception of these two ideas in order to place them within their historical context. As such, I hope to provide a greater and more accurate understanding of the changes in the phenomena of childhood and youth in the second half of the eighteenth century, as informed by the perspective of one eighteenth-century children's author and father who himself actively participated in the reformulation of what it meant to be a child at that time. Before presenting my analysis of Weiße's works for young readers, however, we must first consider the sociohistorical context within which the author was writing.

Chapter 2

Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: The Socioeconomic and Pedagogical Context

2.1 Socioeconomic Developments in Eighteenth-Century Germany

As with any interpretation of historical literature, an analysis of historical children's literature must also take its social and historical context into account in order to understand more fully the environment within which the author was writing and in which his young audience was reading. This chapter provides an overview of the developments in eighteenth-century Germany that are most relevant for the following analysis of Christian Felix Weiße's works for young readers. These developments include the emergence of a new middle class which raised the rallying cry for the education of everyone, changes in the dominant family model of the time, and a boom in the printing industry and in reading activity among the German population. The revolutionary pedagogical ideals of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the German educational movement of Philanthropinism will also both be discussed in order to establish the pedagogical milieu in which Weiße was writing. Finally, the chapter will revisit the debate among historians concerning the "discovery" of childhood in the eighteenth century and establish the point of investigation for the following analysis of Weiße's work.

2.1.1. The Emergence of a New Middle Class

When one speaks of the rise of the middle class in eighteenth-century Germany, one must distinguish between two different middle classes. According to the vertically defined class system (or *Ständegesellschaft*) which had existed since the Middle Ages, there had already been

an established middle class consisting primarily of merchants and tradesmen in city environments. Marked by their conservatism, the members of this middle class usually maintained loyalty to the local ruling nobility. In contrast to the conservative, established middle class, there developed in the eighteenth century a new middle class within the earliest beginnings of a laterally defined system of social class. This emerging middle class was much more liberal in its thinking and more ambivalent toward the traditional values of its conservative brethren. Above all, this new middle class—frequently referred to in German as *das gesittete Bürgertum*—was defined by education, culture, and upward mobility, values which were largely foreign to the old middle class. Although the two middle classes differed widely in their values, they were united in their esteem of virtue as the hallmark of progress (Wilson 268).

The new middle class upheld education as a virtue and as a means to improve one's position within one's social class, even though social mobility beyond one's given class was an impossibility during nearly all of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, this emphasis on the importance of education became a hallmark of *das gesittete Bürgertum*, which in turn became the true engine for the promulgation of the ideals of the Enlightenment (Grimminger 85, 88). The new educated middle class was both a product and a proponent of the notion of the *Volksaufklärung*, which promoted the education of individuals of all classes and strove toward the development of the faculty of reason within each person (Wehrmann 143). It is this emphasis on education and Enlightenment ideals which is particularly relevant to our understanding of Weiße's works. It was to this educated bourgeoisie, *das gesittetete Bürgertum*, that Weiße himself belonged; and it was primarily for the children of this same class that he wrote his works of periodical literature. It will become evident from our reading of Weiße's

works that as a member of the new middle class, in his works he very much promotes the emphasis of *das gesittete Bürgertum* on the importance of education. In this respect, Weiße's literary works for young readers cement his position as a true *Volksaufklärer*.

2.1.2. The Transformation of the Prevailing Family Model

The latter part of the eighteenth century was also witness to the beginning of a dramatic shift in the dominant family model of the time. From the Middle Ages through well into the eighteenth century, the prevailing family model in Germany had been and remained that which social historian Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann has dubbed the *große Haushaltsfamilie*. Within this model, the family unit was not defined by genetic relationships, but rather was viewed as a productive unit which worked collectively toward a particular endeavor. The members of the family thus included everyone who contributed to the family trade; as such, the family was not limited to the nuclear family, but also encompassed everyone in the greater household who was part of this productive activity. Apprentices, journeymen, housemaids, and servants were thus included within the *große Haushaltsfamilie* as members of the family (Weber-Kellermann 14–16).[13]

In the last few decades of the eighteenth century, however, this model began to be supplanted by another. This shift coincided with increasing industrialization in Europe, as a result of which the means of production were no longer located within the realm of the household. This led to a stark division between work life and family life; in other words, it led to the separation of the public and private spheres. Within this new framework, the father of the

[13] For a more thorough profile of the *große Haushaltsfamilie*, see Chapter 2 in Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann's *Die deutsche Familie. Versuch einer Sozialgeschichte* (1996; 38–72).

house became the sole provider, while the wife and children were relegated to the private sphere of the home, no longer expected to contribute to the family business. The notion of family then came to be associated with this private sphere and hence was no longer defined by some sort of productive endeavor. Apprentices and household servants were no longer considered members of the family, which was now defined almost exclusively by biological relationships. This resulted in the dominant family model in Germany ultimately becoming, to use Weber-Kellermann's term once again, that of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie*.[14] This model is very similar to the familiar nuclear-family model of the twentieth century. Although this transformation began during the latter part of the eighteenth century, the process was not complete until the first few decades of the nineteenth century; and among the middle classes, the *große Haushaltsfamilie* remained the dominant family model throughout most of the eighteenth century (Weber-Kellermann 15–16). In other words, this transformation of the family unit, as with many other social changes which began in the eighteenth century, was not fully developed until later in the nineteenth century, suggesting that the eighteenth century was again a period of dynamic transition (Wild, *Vernunft* 103).

This transformation of the prevailing model had significant consequences for both children and the concept of childhood itself. As we have seen, the *große Haushaltsfamilie* was, at its core, an economic unit in which all members of the household were expected to contribute to the family trade. This meant that aside from very wealthy families, children were expected to begin work at a very young age and were assigned tasks of increasing complexity according to their age and abilities. As this collective contribution to the family trade was so closely

[14] For a more thorough profile of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie*, see Chapter 4 in Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann's *Die deutsche Familie. Versuch einer Sozialgeschichte* (1996; 97–175).

connected with the nature of the family at the time, the work itself which children performed also held a familial significance and fostered familial relationships. Historian James Sheehan points out that this was a commonplace practice at the time and no one questioned the appropriateness of child labor until much later: "Child labour was an essential part of traditional economic life, not an invention of the factory system. What made child labour so disagreeable to nineteenth century reformers were changes in the work children had to do and in what people believed was the proper nature of childhood" (Sheehan 83).

Of particular interest for the present study is Sheehan's claim that people's interpretation of the appropriateness of child labor is so closely connected to changes in the dominant conception of childhood at the time. The transition from the *große Haushaltsfamilie* to the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie* thus ultimately led to a revolution in the prevailing concept of childhood in Europe at the time. Namely, it marked a shift from the belief that child labor was both an appropriate and a necessary familial phenomenon to the assumption that childhood should be a time when children prepare for future work through the process of education, rather than participate actively in the work themselves.

After children were no longer expected to contribute to the family trade and instead were placed within the private sphere of the home under the new model of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie*, children were removed from the day-to-day duties of the family trade and instead were engaged separately in other "useful" activities, such as handiwork, gardening, and above all schooling. Thus, the period of childhood as a phase of life, argues Reiner Wild, was actually prolonged or lengthened as a result of socioeconomic changes in the eighteenth century and became a period in which children were trained and prepared for work later in life. In other

words, the end point of childhood was extended, and the beginning of youth or young adulthood was evidently postponed (Wild, "Aufklärung" 54). Again, we see that the shift in the family model had important consequences for the concept of childhood itself, as both the new lifestyle of children and the new expectations placed upon them altered people's perceptions of what it meant to be a child at the time.

Additionally, under the new model of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie*, education came to be the primary responsibility placed upon children, who no longer participated actively in the family trade. While formal schooling was indeed becoming more readily available for children outside of the highest classes, for many children education was reserved for the home. Printed literature consequently took on a far greater significance for children during this period, as it was the primary method of instruction for many. Likewise, many children no longer received direct, hands-on learning experiences by working for their fathers at a young age. As a result of the separation of the public and private spheres, children were restricted to the much smaller private sphere and hence had no immediate access to the wider public sphere. As a result, children's literature of the eighteenth century took on a new, very important mediating role in informing young readers about this world that was no longer immediately accessible to them (Wild, "Aufklärung" 54–55). As we will soon see, this greater significance of the role of children's literature also coincided with a marked increase in the production of texts for young readers.

2.1.3. The Bookmaking Industry and Reading Culture of the Eighteenth Century

The late eighteenth century marked a period of significant increase in book production, a trend which was tied to the commercialization of the printing industry. The rate of new titles at the

Leipzig and Frankfurt book fairs, for instance, increased tenfold within the period of 1763 to 1805 in comparison to the increase that had taken place over the previous forty years. The swell in titles under the category of "Schöne Literatur" or *belles lettres* was even more dramatic. This increase in belletristic literature reflected a simultaneous decrease in the production of religious texts. This was in part due to a gradual process of secularization, which was also reflected in a shift from publishing books in Latin to publishing books in German. By 1735, seventy-five percent of all books were published in German, as compared to a mere forty percent at the start of the century. Finally, periodical literature experienced a particularly significant increase in popularity during the second half of the century (Martino 3–5; Brandes, "Literary Marketplace" 79–80).

Not surprisingly, the increase in book production also coincided with an increased interest in reading. Thanks in part to the *Volksaufklärung*, which sought to popularize the ideals of the Enlightenment among all people, literacy rates also increased dramatically over the course of the century: Approximately only five percent of the German population are estimated to have been literate in 1700, but by the end of the century, this figure had increased by about twenty-five percent (Schenda 444; Brandes, "Literary Marketplace" 80). Thus, new portions of the population began reading for the first time, and literature became the primary means of written communication, as well as an increasingly important means of education (Wild, "Aufklärung" 43).

Although more authors began to publish books during the eighteenth century, the state of the printing industry within the German-speaking countries at the time did not easily lend itself to a career as a professional writer. The fractured state of the German-speaking regions in the

eighteenth century—which ever since the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War consisted of hundreds of relatively independent sovereign states—greatly affected the operations of the printing industry and the lives of writers at the time. Books published in one territory could be—and often were—essentially reprinted as pirated copies in other German-speaking territories. The author did not receive payment for these pirated copies, and the competition from these pirated copies frequently also prevented subsequent legal print runs for which the author would have received compensation. Consequently, most writers during the eighteenth century were unable to make a living through their writing alone and instead were obliged to maintain another career or position (Wilson 269). This was also true of Weiße: While he was a remarkably prolific writer, at no point during his life did he work as a full-time freelance author and playwright, but rather earned his primary income through his career as a tax collector.

The increase in book production during the eighteenth century has also been closely connected to Rolf Engelsing's notion of the so-called "reading revolution" which began to take place at the time. Whereas "intensive" reading—that is, repeatedly reading a very small number of texts such as the Bible and other religious writings—had previously been the norm, this practice came to be supplanted by "extensive" reading—that is, reading as many different new works as possible, but often reading them only once. While Engelsing argues that it was not until the very end of the eighteenth century that the revolution was complete—that is, that most readers of the time practiced extensive reading—he clearly recognizes that the turning point in this shift took place during the second half of the eighteenth century (Engelsing cols. 958–59). As increasingly more readers became interested in wanting to read a greater number of texts, the literary marketplace experienced a boom in production in order to meet the increased demand.

This boom in production extended to books for children, who had also become part of the expanded potential reading audience within the German-speaking regions. The last four decades of the eighteenth century marked a particular increase in the publication of literary works for children, from which one can glean that publishers had begun to recognize children as a potential reading market (Wild, *Vernunft* 5, 8). At the time, the increase in books for children was perceived as particularly significant—so much so, in fact, that Weiße himself in his autobiography referred to the significant increase in works of literature for children as a "Fluth von Kinderschriften in allerley Gewand" (*Selbstbiographie* 195). Notably, the author himself attributes this surge in production of children's books to the immense popularity of his own *Kinderfreund*.

Nevertheless, while it is clear that the degree of the increase in books aimed specifically at child readers was significant, this "flood" of books for young readers needs to be understood within the context of the time: During the entire eighteenth century, the number of books published for children, including school books, was approximately three thousand. Around the end of the eighteenth century, books for young readers constituted roughly one-and-a-half to two percent of all books published within Germany (as compared with approximately five percent at the end of the twentieth century; Wild, "Aufklärung" 43). There was a particular increase in periodical literature for children—such as the works of Christian Felix Weiße—during this time, a fact which Reiner Wild has attributed to the shift from intensive to extensive reading practices. The periodical format, he argues, was ideally suited for young readers because it repeatedly provided them with new reading material which could easily be digested in manageable chunks

(Wild, *Vernunft* 7–8). This, in a nutshell, was the culture of reading to which Weiße's young readers belonged.

2.2. Pedagogical Philosophy and Educational Reform: The Educational Legacies of Rousseau and Philanthropinism

2.2.1. Educational Philosophy at the Start of the "Pedagogical Century"

The eighteenth century has often been referred to as "das pädagogische Jahrhundert," as it was during this century that education came into being as its own discipline. Under the influence of the ideals of the Enlightenment, education also came to be appreciated more greatly, particularly with respect to the development of one's powers of reasons (Tenorth 78–79). Hence, pedagogical debates within the German-speaking regions in the first half of the eighteenth century focused largely on the development of a "rational" education, in which the power of reason and its use in the logical derivation of concepts was valued much more heavily than acquiring information through sensory experiences. Yet education in the first half of the century was also strongly characterized by its religious overtones. In light of the Christian doctrine of original sin—which claimed that all human beings are naturally evil—many leading educators believed that the goal of education was to combat the child's proclivity toward evil. As a result, many teachers both endorsed and practiced corporal punishment, although proponents of the Enlightenment vehemently opposed such practices of this so-called "Schwarze Pädagogik" (Wild, "Aufklärung" 49–50).

2.2.2. The Pedagogical Revolution of Rousseau's *Émile*

It was amidst this clash of pedagogical ideals that an even greater revolution within the discourse on education took place. This revolution concerned the concept of natural education. Towards the very end of the seventeenth century, John Locke had proposed a model of education which first and foremost aimed to recognize the individuality of each young student and ultimately to guide children to make their own conclusions about the natural world (Herrmann 102–03, 105). This idea of a natural education was taken up decades later in a work which would prove to be even more influential than Locke's ideas had been: Jean-Jacques Rousseau's novel *Émile, ou De l'éducation* ('Émile, or On Education'). Published in 1762, *Émile* not only had an immediate impact on the discourse concerning education at the time, but has had such a profoundly lasting effect on the history of education that some consider it to be the starting point of modern pedagogy (Blankertz 70). By Rousseau's own admission, the text is not to be read as a practical treatise on education suggesting a method of child-rearing which should be implemented literally; instead, Rousseau's ideas are to be read as speculations on pedagogical principles (Boutet de Monvel vii).

Of the many views on education and childhood which Rousseau espouses in the text, two were particularly revolutionary at the time and are also especially pertinent for the present study: The first is his notion of natural education, which suggests—in stark contrast to the doctrine of original sin—that children are by nature good. As a result, Rousseau claims that education which simply seeks to develop this innate sense of goodness in a child will necessarily lead the student to a life of virtuousness. Rousseau's concept of the natural man, furthermore, suggests that one's natural goodness is perverted by society, for the interests of the many are always at

odds with the interests and desires of the individual. Hence, Rousseau rejects the notion of educating children to be good citizens and instead depicts the education of a single pupil within an isolated natural setting, apart from the negative influence of society (Jonach 69–70). As we will see in the next chapter, this debate regarding the conflicting interests of the individual and society was a concern for later authors, as well.

Perhaps Rousseau's most well-known contribution to the history of the concept of childhood, however, is his recognition of childhood as a distinct phase of life and his belief in the value of a child as a child, rather than as a little adult or future citizen (Postman 58). In other words, Rousseau recognized the special nature of children and argues that they should be treated neither as little adults nor exploited as completely subservient beasts, but rather must be acknowledged as a unique entity different than either of the two:

> Il ne doit être ni bête ni homme, mais enfant ; il faut qu'il sente sa foiblesse et non qu'il en souffre ; il faut qu'il dépende et non qu'il obeisse ; il faut qu'il demande et non qu'il commande. Il n'est soumis aux autres qu'à cause de ses besoins, et parce qu'ils voyent mieux que lui ce qui lui est utile, ce qui peut contribuer ou nuire à sa conservation. Nul n'a droit, pas même le pére, de commander à l'enfant ce qui ne lui est bon à rien. (310)[15]

As a result of this belief, Rousseau has been christened by many as the true "Entdecker der Kindheit" (Rang 269; Blankertz 29; Ewers, *Daseinsform* 39), as he was among the first to appreciate the unique nature of children and hence acknowledge the importance of childhood as a significant period in one's life. The "discovery" of childhood is, as we will soon discuss, a

[15] English translations of the French quotes are provided in the footnotes. They are all taken from Barbara Foxley's translation of Rousseau's work. In future internal citations in which I do not quote Rousseau directly, I have provided page numbers for both editions of the work. The page number of the French edition is provided first; the page reference for the English translation is provided second, after the notation "trans.," as in this translation of the quote above: "He should be neither beast nor man, but a child. He must feel his weakness, but not suffer through it; he must be dependent, but he must not obey; he must ask, not command. He is only subject to others because of his needs, and because they see better than he what he really needs, what may help or hinder his existence. No one, not even his father, has the right to bid the child do what is of no use to him" (trans. 49–50).

notion which is still being debated by historians and sociologists today; yet there is no debate concerning the influence which Rousseau's *Émile* exerted on the pedagogical discourse of eighteenth-century Europe. His work was so influential, in fact, that its publication still serves as a turning point within European educational history of the eighteenth century: Prior to the work's publication, the debate among European pedagogues focused primarily on the ideas of rational pedagogy; yet after its publication, the debate among educators revolved around coming to terms with the ideas of Rousseau himself. This debate reached its climax in the 1770s and 1780s as a wave of pedagogical debate led to the establishment of an entirely new pedagogical movement (Wild, "Aufklärung" 50–51).

2.2.3. The Philanthropinists: Educational Innovators of Weiße's Time

As was previously stated, Rousseau did not intend the principles he discusses in *Émile* to be taken as practical suggestions, and he certainly did not intend for them to initiate a reform of the school system (Boutet de Monvel vii). Yet the decades of debate concerning his ideas which followed the publication of *Émile* led many educators to desire precisely that: a total reform of the school system that would implement the ideas of Rousseau within a formal educational setting. One such group that was formed in the German-speaking regions in the 1770s ultimately became the leading pedagogical movement of the Enlightenment. This movement was known as Philanthropinism, and its leading proponents—all of whom were professional educators—called themselves Philanthropinists.[16] Among the most influential members of this large group were

[16] Both in English and in German, there are at least two variants for the terms referring both to this school of thought (German *Philanthropismus* vs. *Philanthropinismus* and English *Philanthropism* vs. *Philanthropinism*) and to its proponents (German *Philanthropen* vs. *Philanthropinisten* and English *Philanthropes* vs. *Philanthropists* vs.

Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–1790), Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746–1818), Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744–1811), Ernst Christian Trapp (1745–1818), Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow (1734–1805), Christian Heinrich Wolke (1746–1806), and Peter Villaume (1746–1825).

Building upon Rousseau's idea of the natural man who is innately good, the Philanthropinists envisioned a new kind of education which in accordance with the principles of the rationalist branch of the Enlightenment would teach students to develop their sense of reason, to thereby also develop their innate goodness, and ultimately to achieve a sense of perfection or completeness (Jonach 81). In addition to this strong belief in the perfectibility of mankind, physical education played a very important role within the Philanthropinist curriculum, and it was at Salzmann's Philanthropin in Schnepfenthal that the very first gymnastics education was developed (Amberg 73). Curriculum that was practical and relevant for the students was esteemed at the expense of a classical curriculum; hence, students now learned modern languages instead of Latin and Greek. The Philanthropinists also rejected outright the influence of "Schwarze Pädagogik" by censuring any form of corporal punishment. Connected to this rejection of corporal punishment was the much more controversial Philanthropinist argument for the secularization of schools, as well as the endorsement of religious tolerance for students of all faiths (Jonach 88–90).

Philanthropinism was not, however, a unified pedagogical framework; on the contrary, its proponents often differed in their beliefs regarding the best way to implement Philanthropinist ideals (Finzel-Niederstadt 34–35). Similarly, the Philanthropinists did not accept all of the ideas

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Philanthropinists). Although the former terms in each pair generally appear to be more common in German, I have chosen to use the latter terms (*Philanthropinism* and *Philanthropinists*) for the current study because they are the only options which are unambiguous.

espoused by Rousseau in *Émile*, even though it was their enthusiasm for his work which first encouraged them to implement educational reform. Most notably, the Philanthropinists disagreed with Rousseau's presentation of a natural education apart from society. On the contrary, "Bildung zur Brauchbarkeit" was one of their most important ideals, and they sought to produce students who would become responsible citizens and productive members of society. Thus, unlike Rousseau, the Philanthropinists believed that it was possible to develop the innate goodness of the natural man in an educational system which simultaneously also sought to integrate its students into society (Jonach 86–87).

The Philanthropinists attempted to fulfill these goals through the foundation of experimental schools which implemented their ideals in a formal curriculum. These schools met with mixed success. Johann Bernhard Basedow, for example, opened the so-called Philanthropinum in the city of Dessau in 1774, which is still considered to be the founding moment of Philanthropinism. The school was notably free of oversight from the church and, in keeping with its promotion of tolerance, welcomed students of many European nationalities and of various religious faiths into its doors (H. Schmitt, "Philanthropine" 263–66). In this experimental school, students were to be recognized as the children they were, rather than as little adults. The school's emphasis on physical education and practical "hands-on" learning, as well as its clear religious nonsectarianism, proved to be too radical for most parents, and the short-lived Philanthropinum closed its doors in 1793 (Meyer 351–53).[17] The school's failure

[17] For a more thorough examination of the curriculum of Basedow's Philanthropin, see Annemarie Mieths "Das Dessauer Philanthropin und die Rolle des Philanthropismus in der Bildungsreform der Aufklärung" (2002/2003), Hanno Schmitt's "Die Philanthropine – Musterschulen der pädagogischen Aufklärung" (2005), and also Schmitt's "Versuchsschule vor zweihundert Jahren. Ein virtueller Besuch am Dessauer Philanthropin" (2007).

was also due in part to conflicts among the faculty, many of which were attributed to Basedow's infamously difficult personality (Amberg 73; H. Schmitt, "Philanthropine" 266).

A similar institute, on the other hand, founded by Christian Salzmann—who had once served as a schoolmaster at the Philanthropinum in Dessau—fared somewhat better. Founded in 1784 in Schnepfenthal, Salzmann's Philanthropin was specifically designed under the same pedagogical guidelines of Basedow's school. This nonsectarian school also stressed the importance of physical health and direct experience with the natural world; its founder argued that by focusing on each student as an individual and providing each student with a direct stake in his own education, the school would ultimately better equip students to enter the adult world as productive citizens. Unlike Basedow's short-lived institute, Salzmann's school was a model institution in the eighteenth century and remained open for over one-and-a-half centuries until 1945 (H. Schmitt, "Philanthropine" 270–72).

Although the various *Philanthropine* met with mixed success, Philanthropinism remained the most influential pedagogical discourse in Germany throughout the end of the eighteenth century and was also reflected in much of the literature written for children at the time. Christian Felix Weiße, who did not work as a professional teacher, was not directly involved in the Philanthropinist movement himself, although he shared many of their views and was in close contact with several of the leading members of the movement. As such, it is not surprising to discover that his works of literature for children promote pedagogical ideals similar to those of the leading Philanthropinists. In fact, Philanthropinism had such a profound impact on the children's literature of late eighteenth-century Germany that literary historians frequently divide works for children of the Enlightenment into two main periods: "pre-Philanthropinist" and

"Philanthropinist," with the year 1770 serving as an approximate boundary between the two (Brüggemann, Einleitung cols. 17–21; Wild, "Aufklärung" 51; Ewers, Einleitung 14). Pre-Philanthropinist children's literature is closely associated with rational education and is characterized by its treatment of the child solely as a "Vernunftwesen" (Brüggemann, Einleitung col. 24), rather than attempting to address the child reader in a manner befitting a child. In contrast, Philanthropinist literature is marked by its adoption of Rousseau's recognition of the child as a child and hence attempts to address its young readers in a tone and style more obviously tailored to appeal to the special nature of the child (Brüggemann, Einleitung col. 24, cols. 34–35). The extent to which this was actually true of Weiße's writing style will be explored in later chapters.

2.3. The Rise of Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Controversial Debate

2.3.1. The History of Childhood as Decline vs. The History of Childhood as Progress

In the midst of socioeconomic restructuring and educational reforms which were taking place within Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century, the phenomenon of childhood itself—that is, the actual experiences of children at the time—also underwent dramatic changes. As we saw briefly in the previous chapter, some scholars have claimed, in fact, that the late eighteenth century was also the birth of childhood as a concept within the minds of adults. This view holds that while children have naturally existed since the dawn of mankind, the concept of childhood itself has not—that is, that the very idea of childhood as a distinct stage of life had to be

somehow developed or discovered. The most famous—and likely also the most controversial—proponent of this view is French historian Philippe Ariès.

Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood*, first published in 1960 in French as *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, has been so often and so faithfully referenced that one scholar has quipped that it is often cited as "Holy Writ" (Manuel 203).[18] Ariès's argument relies largely on socioeconomic changes which we have already examined earlier in this chapter. He argues that before the development of the concept of childhood, children were essentially incorporated into the world of adults—most notably affiliating them with the trade of their fathers—as soon as they were weaned. Via this exposure to adult society, children enjoyed a high level of sociability, which also conflated the public spheres of work and society with the private sphere of the family. Ariès argues that the family, moreover, was up until the eighteenth century not so much a social unit as a political means of transferring money and property from one generation to the next. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, people began to recognize the special nature of children and religious leaders became concerned with their moral improvement. This gradually led to more institutionalized systems of education, which then became a matter of household concern. With the emergence of the middle class in the late eighteenth century, concludes Ariès, the family model was drastically revised so as to place the well-being of the child at its center, and the institutionalization of education separated the private and public spheres, essentially confining young children to the private sphere of the home. These changes in the day-to-day experiences of children at the time ultimately resulted in a change in people's

[18] Aside from these works which cite Ariès as "Holy Writ," many other now well-known works by historians or sociologists include a response to Ariès's claims or use his claims as a springboard to further research into the history of childhood or the family unit. Among the most influential of these works are Neil Postman's *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1982) and Steven Ozment's *Ancestors: The Loving Family in Old Europe* (2001).

concept of what childhood was or ought to be. The late eighteenth century is thus, according to Ariès, the point during which the modern concept of childhood, as defined by the process of education, was born.

To be sure, not all scholars have accepted Ariès's claims as definitive, and several historians—including, among others, Patrick Hutton and most notably Lloyd de Mause—have questioned the validity of his research methods,[19] which make extensive use of Medieval and Early Modern artistic depictions of the family to draw conclusions regarding the concept of the child and family during those time periods (de Mause 5). Among the most influential responses of Ariès's critics is Lloyd de Mause's essay "The Evolution of Childhood" (1974). Rejecting Ariès's thesis that the "new" childhood actually served as a restriction against children, de Mause focuses instead on the long history of child abuse—physical, emotional, and even sexual—to claim that philosophies of child-rearing have been vastly improved over the course of centuries and just recently are finally beginning to concentrate genuinely on the needs of the child. He opens his essay with a particularly shocking depiction of childhood in past centuries which contrasts greatly with the model of sociability and freedom which Ariès depicts: "The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused" (de Mause 1). Using the insights of psychoanalysis, de Mause argues that increasingly better (or at least less emotionally damaging) child-rearing practices—which de Mause appears to presuppose—will thus result in

[19] For a detailed overview of Ariès's critics and their specific criticisms of his work, see Chapter 6 ("Decades of Debate about *Centuries of Childhood*"; 92–112) in Patrick H. Hutton's *Philippe Ariès and the Politics of French Cultural History* (2004).

increasingly better child-parent interactions in which the child's needs can be adequately fulfilled (3). De Mause's arguments ultimately lead him to some admittedly questionable conclusions, such as that a noticeably nonspecific "very large percentage" of children who lived before the eighteenth century were "battered children" (40), whereby he apparently imposes a twentieth-century view upon the social practices of earlier times. Nevertheless, he pinpoints the eighteenth century as the period in which appeared "the great transition for parent-child relations" (52). Thus, de Mause depicts a history of childhood as a progression of increasingly positive parent-child relations and concludes that the eighteenth century was the moment of greatest improvement in this progression.

As Lucia Amberg has pointed out, the two opposing positions view the history of childhood as following a completely different trajectory: Ariès views the history of childhood as a process of *decline*, whereas de Mause sees it as a *progression* (Amberg 13). Yet it is certainly noteworthy that both Ariès and de Mause recognize the eighteenth century as the pivotal moment in the evolution of childhood, even if de Mause and other critics of Ariès's work refrain from explicitly labeling the Enlightenment as the birth of childhood. The fact that scholars of such opposing views on the history of childhood recognize the significance of the late eighteenth century for the concept of childhood is a compelling justification for the current investigation of Christian Felix Weiße's concept of childhood in his works for children.

I should clarify, however, that my primary goal in examining Weiße's works is neither to prove nor disprove the claims of Ariès or his critics. I cite this debate in order to illustrate the controversy surrounding the rise of childhood in the eighteenth century and to demonstrate the inherent complexities in attempting to clearly define the concept of childhood. My goal in

analyzing Weiße's texts is, rather, to provide a thorough examination of one author's conception of childhood as reflected in his works for children and youth; in so doing, I hope to capture a single moment during a particularly significant period in the development of the concept of childhood and the history of education.

2.3.2. Childhood vs. Youth in the Late Eighteenth Century

Related to the concept of childhood is, of course, the concept of youth, as the beginning of the latter marks the end of the former. The boundary between these two phases of life, however, is fluid and unclear; and as we saw in the introductory chapter, this was especially true in eighteenth-century Europe. Ariès himself, in fact, discusses the difficulty in pinpointing the end of childhood and the beginning of youth[20] in preindustrial Europe—that is, during the time before the concept of childhood was, as he claimed, discovered. Citing linguistic evidence from various European languages, he stresses that various words for 'child' could be used to describe a person well into his or her teenage years or even twenties because society used social relationships, rather than biological criteria, to mark the end of "childhood":

> The long duration of childhood as it appeared in the common idiom was due to the indifference with which strictly biological phenomena were regarded at the time: nobody would have thought of seeing the end of childhood in puberty. The idea of childhood was bound up with the idea of dependence: the words 'sons', 'varlets' and 'boys' were also words in the vocabulary of feudal subordination. One could leave childhood only by leaving the state of dependence, or at least the lower degrees of dependence. (Ariès 26)

[20] Although the development of childhood in the late eighteenth century has been, thanks in part to the controversy around Ariès's claims, widely debated among historians and sociologists, there has generally been less discussion of the concept of youth during this period. Of particular interest is, consequently, John R. Gillis's *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770–Present* (1981), especially with respect to Ariès's claims cited above.

This socio-relational definition of childhood thus suggests that the period of childhood became shorter over the course of the eighteenth century as people ceased to use the word to refer to subservients who had long reached sexual maturity and instead used other criteria to determine the end of childhood.

Yet as we have already seen in contrast to this alleged shortening of childhood, the changing model of the household within the eighteenth century provides evidence that the period of childhood actually lengthened in the course of the eighteenth century. As Ariès himself describes, the changing family model removed children, who previously had been expected to engage in the family business from a very young age onward, from the public sphere and confined them to the home. Scholars such as Reiner Wild conclude that as a result of this shift, childhood as a period of life actually increased in length, as children now spent many more years in the private sphere of the home before they were expected to enter the public sphere (Wild, "Aufklärung" 54).

Thus, central to the discussion of the concept of childhood are two factors: its duration and its definition. In the case of the former, much of the difficulty in determining a construct of childhood stems from the difficulty in determining the terminus of childhood. In other words, it is difficult to pinpoint when childhood ends and when youth begins. The definition of childhood as a phase of life is also connected to its duration, as the criteria which one uses to define childhood—socio-relational factors, say, versus biological factors—also play a role in determining the end of childhood.

In light of the interconnectedness of childhood and youth, therefore, any study of the concept of childhood in the eighteenth century would do well also to examine the concept of

youth in order to explore any discernible boundaries which might distinguish these two phases of life. To that end, this dissertation not only examines Christian Felix Weiße's concept of childhood, but also his concept of youth. A comparison of his two periodicals *Der Kinderfreund* and its sequel, *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*, provide an ideal corpus for such a comparison. The former text is written for a younger audience and depicts young children, while the latter is targeted for a slightly older readership and chronicles the lives of the same characters, who now find themselves in their youth. As both periodicals comprise a wide variety of textual genres while chronicling the physical, intellectual, and moral growth of the same four young characters, Weiße's works offer a singular blend of diversity and continuity which provides a uniquely comprehensive body of material on one man's understanding of the similarities and differences between childhood and youth during the Enlightenment.

Chapter 3

The History, Context, and Structure of Christian Felix Weiße's *Der Kinderfreund*

3.1. The History of the Moral Weekly Genre in Eighteenth-Century Europe

The latter part of the eighteenth century was indeed a pivotal moment in the development of both the concept of childhood itself and children's literature as a genre. When Christian Felix Weiße's periodical *Der Kinderfreund* first appeared in 1775, it reflected the changes in both. Not only did the work present Weiße's own understanding of what childhood was—and what it ought to be—but it also represented one of the very first weekly publications in Germany written specifically for children. When the periodical was first released, it was published in weekly installments, thereby maintaining the tradition of a literary form that was quite popular in Europe at the time: the *moralische Wochenschrift* ('moral weekly,' or more generally, the periodical essay).

The periodical essay was a genre unique to the eighteenth century which was far-reaching in its popularity and influence (Bond xiii); in fact, the moral weekly was the most important medium for the propagation of both bourgeois and Enlightenment ideals. As the name suggests, most moral weeklies were published in short weekly installments, although some were published biweekly, semi-weekly, or even daily. The periodical format provided a venue for discussions on new ideas of social concern which were punctuated over time in more easily digestible installments. The recurring characters of the frame story within the moral weekly provided continuity between issues. Most moral weeklies included discussions of moral topics and were generally intended to benefit the reader by causing him or her to reflect more seriously upon

issues of moral or social concern—hence the "moral" component of the moral weekly. Yet in the eighteenth century, the term *moral* encompassed a much broader spectrum of philosophical ideas; numerous moral weeklies were devoted to topics such as aesthetics, reason, language, and the like (Brandes, "Marketplace" 82–83).

As a literary genre, the various moral weeklies shared several important features in their literary format and style. The most common of these was the creation by the historical author of a fictional author who allegedly writes and compiles the periodical himself and often addresses the reader directly (Martens 28–29). Another hallmark of the genre was that this fictional author was usually accompanied by a society of friends or associates who served as supporting characters over the course of the periodical. Within this framework of fictional characters, however, the line between fact and fiction was often blurred by the integration of factual events or real-life reactions to the periodical, often in the form of letters to the fictional author or one of the other characters (Milberg 5).

In the early part of the eighteenth century, the periodical essay was particularly popular in England. Among the earliest and most famous were the three series compiled by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele: *The Tatler* (1709–11), *The Spectactor* (1711–12), and *The Guardian* (1713; Milberg 4). Of these three works, *The Spectator* is recognized by scholars of the genre as one of the most widely read and best-written of all time (Bond xiii). As we will soon see, *The Spectator* would also prove to be quite influential in the development of Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, more than sixty years after Addison and Steele had published it. The popularity and success of these earliest English moral weeklies resulted in the development of a vast number of similar periodicals in Germany, most of which retained the hallmarks of the English

originals: a fictional author, a society of friends, and a blurring of fiction and reality. Between the years of 1713 and 1761, the popularity of the genre was so great that there were no fewer than 180 unique moral weeklies published in the German-speaking regions, according to a list compiled by Johann Christoph Gottsched in 1761 (Milberg 4–14).

The greatest novelty of the moral weekly, however, was that thoughtful discussions on themes such as philosophy, ethics, and politics were being made available to a wider audience. In this respect, the periodical genre served as the most important and the most effective medium for propagating Enlightenment ideals.[21] This was true of the earliest English moral weeklies[22] as well as for the great many German weeklies that were published over the remainder of the eighteenth century. In his thesis on the significance of the moral weekly in eighteenth-century Germany, Ernst Wilhelm Milberg expresses this novelty as follows:

> Hier aber den richtigen Weg eingeschlagen zu haben und die neuen Ideen in *einfachster Weise, ohne gelehrte Vorreden, ohne gelehrten Titel* und *anonym*, also auch *ohne den ehrfurchtgebietenden Namen* eines *Gelehrten*, den Bürgern *in das Haus getragen* zu haben, wo man die Schriften bei ihrer *leicht verständlichen* und *unverfänglichen* Schreibart im Kreise der Familie vorlesen und besprechen konnte – das ist das erste und grösste Verdienst der moralischen Wochenschriften in Deutschland. (Milberg 3)

The true service of the periodical essay, then, was that it brought an open discussion of ideas into the homes of the people—in particular, the members of the newly formed middle class (Köberle 17). No longer did scholars hold a monopoly on the debate of ideas; rather, they shared them

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[21] For a more in-depth discussion of the periodical as the most important medium in the eighteenth century, see Helga Brandes's essay "The Literary Marketplace and the Journal" (2005), which presents both an overview of the history of the medium and a discussion of its influence.

[22] In Issue 10 (published on March 12, 1711) of *The Spectator*, for example, the fictional author Mr. Spectator clarifies his ambition for the periodical as follows: "It was said of *Socrates*, that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses" (*Spectator* 1, No. 10: 44).

with others in the unintimidating, easy-to-understand, and anonymous format of the moral weeklies. For our purposes here, it is also important to point out that Milberg rightly recognizes that these ideas were now being discussed "im Kreise der Familie," which naturally includes the children of the home. The first moral weeklies were written exclusively for adults; yet if they did result in the household discussion of ethics and society, these periodicals were certainly an important step in the household education of children. Still, it would be several years before the first periodical would actually be written *for* children.

Bettina Hurrelmann has convincingly shown that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was preceded by a progression of other moral weeklies that were written with an increasingly greater focus on children and education. Her analysis of periodicals published in German-speaking cities in the last half of the eighteenth century reveals a striking trend among the great many moral weeklies that were available overall. The earliest of these were written almost exclusively to and for a general adult audience on a variety of topics, although some of them naturally included the occasional discussion of a few topics regarding child-rearing and the importance of raising one's children properly. Gradually, however, the wider set of moral weeklies developed a sub-genre that was written exclusively on the topic of education and was intended primarily for parents and educators. These periodicals were not intended as scholarly clarifications of pedagogical approaches; rather, in the tradition of the moral weeklies, they were more general discussions of issues of wider concern, such as the moral upbringing of the children within the home. Hurrelmann has identified five such weeklies that were written exclusively on the topic of education:

Die vor sich und ihre Kinder sorgfältigen Mütter (1732–33)

Die vor sich und ihre Söhne sorgfältigen Väter (1734–35)

Wochenblatt zum Besten der Kinder (1760–69)

Wochenschrift zum Besten der Erziehung der Jugend (1771–72)

Wochenblat für rechtschaffene Eltern (1772–73)

While the earliest of these were written exclusively for an adult readership—namely, parents and educators—the latter ones began to include suggestions on appropriate reading selections for children and youth. The *Wochenschrift zum Besten der Erziehung der Jugend* even included brief reading selections designed for children within the periodical itself. Although these weeklies met with mixed reviews from critics and most were short-lived, they nevertheless fostered a greater awareness of the importance of education and served as an important step in the further development of children's literature as a genre (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 44–48).

The greatest step in this trend toward German periodical literature *about* children came with the appearance of the first weekly written specifically *for* children: Johann Christoph Adelung's *Leipziger Wochenblatt für Kinder*, which was published by the Crusius Verlag from 1772 to 1774 (Brunken 138). The text included a variety of topics that were considered suitable for children, everything from basic discussions of ethics and the arts to science and history. The text was not entirely original; Adelung also chose to incorporate excerpts from other texts, including some foreign ones (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 58–59). The proceeds from the *Leipziger Wochenblatt* were intended to finance the construction of an orphanage in the town of Werdau, Saxony.[23] In keeping with one of the characteristic features of the moral weekly,

[23] For more information concerning the details of "Carlchens Projekt," as the orphanage fundraising project was referred to within the *Leipziger Wochenblatt*, see pages 124–32 of Hubert Göbels's monograph (1980) on Adelung's periodical.

Adelung integrated reports on the progress of the orphanage into the fictional world of his periodical, which actually resulted in confusion on the part of the readers. One reviewer in the *Allgemeine Bibliothek für das Schul- und Erziehungswesen in Teutschland* remarked that while the idea of building an orphanage to educate children without families was certainly noble, its context within the *Leipziger Wochenblatt* would lead many readers, particularly those outside of Saxony, to question whether the numerous reports of the orphanage project were fact or fiction (*Allgemeine Bibliothek* 1: 407).

Thus, the development of the children's periodical in eighteenth-century Germany took place over a period of years, a point which Hurrelmann mentions specifically in her description of this development: "Eine literarische Gattung wird nicht plötzlich erfunden. Sie entwickelt sich den Bedürfnissen einer sozialen Gruppe entsprechend und bleibt so lange lebendig, wie sie in gewisser Spielbreite variabel und anpassungsfähig den sich wandelnden Ansprüchen ihrer Leserschaft entsprechen kann" (*Bürgerlichkeit* 38). While she is certainly correct that a literary genre must evolve over time in order to adapt to the changing demands of its readership, it is also important to note that this process does not happen automatically. On the contrary, it requires the insight of keen authors and publishers to develop new genres in order to appeal to changes in the reading public and its interests.

Such was the case of the development of the first periodicals written for children, including both those of Adelung and of Weiße. These men, along with their publisher Siegfried Leberecht Crusius, recognized the growing interest in periodical literature about education and childhood and realized that the less intimidating periodical format would be ideal for young readers. This belief is confirmed in an adulatory review of Adelung's *Leipziger Wochenblatt*

that appeared in the *Allgemeine Bibliothek für das Schul- und Erziehungswesen in Teutschland* in 1774:

> Ein glücklicher Einfall die Lektüre unter Kindern zu reitzen und zu unterhalten. Wenn man den Kindern ein ganzes Buch, es sey auch noch so geschmeidig, unter die Hände giebt, so werden sie desselben gar bald überdrüßig. Aber alle Wochen ein Blatt von einem halben Bogen werden sie mit vieler Begierde erwarten, und inzwischen das Stück, das sie schon haben, mehr als einmahl durchlesen, bis das neue ankommt. (*Allgemeine Bibliothek* 1: 402–03)

While the periodical format did indeed prove to be popular among children, Adelung discontinued the publication of his periodical in 1774, which the same reviewer from the *Allgemeine Bibliothek* fears at the end of his review:

> Wir würden es bedauren, wenn dieses so nützliche und angenehme Wochenblatt schon geschlossen seyn sollte, da wir es in dem neuesten Meßkatalogus nicht angezeigt gefunden haben. Es wird ihm doch nicht an Abgang gefehlt haben? Das wollen wir nicht hoffen. Was müßten wir sonst von den Eltern und Lehrern, und von der Erziehung der Jugend denken? (*Allgemeine Bibliothek* 1: 408)

Adelung had indeed stopped the publication of his periodical at this point, but sentiments such as those expressed by the reviewer of the usefulness and delightfulness of a children's periodical caused publisher Crusius to recognize the need[24] for another, similar periodical written for children and to set out to find a writer to produce it.

3.2. The Publication History and Success of *Der Kinderfreund*

This follow-up periodical to Adelung's *Leipziger Wochenblatt* was none other than Christian Felix Weiße's *Der Kinderfreund*, the twenty-four-volume run of which spanned the period from

[24] Weiße's autobiography refers quite literally to Crusius's recognition of a "need" for a children's periodical when Weiße praises the publisher for his insight and charitable nature: "Der Verleger, mit dem Bedürfniß der Zeit bekannt und ein Mann von gemeinnütziger Denkart, wünschte daher das Wochenblatt für Kinder fortgesetzt zu sehen" (*Selbstbiographie* 182–83). The veritable explosion of new works for children and young adults which appeared just after the publication of the first volumes of *Der Kinderfreund* provides further evidence of the correctness of Crusius's belief that there was a great need for children's literature at that time (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 152).

1775 to 1782. In the introduction to the first volume, the author explains how and why he was contacted by the publisher Crusius to produce the weekly:

> Meine lieben kleinen Freunde, ich höre von dem Verleger des Leipziger Wochenblattes für Kinder, daß Ihr den Beschluß desselbigen ungern gesehen, und oft bey ihm angefraget habet, ob sich Niemand gefunden, der sich wieder eurer annehmen, und auf eine eben so unterhaltende Art euch wöchentlich einen kleinen Unterricht ertheilen wollte. (KF 1: 3)[25]

Crusius actively recruited Weiße, whose success as a children's author had already been established by his *Neues A, B, C, Buch* and *Lieder für Kinder* (Köberle 50), to fill the gap in children's literature that had been left by the discontinuation of Adelung's *Leipziger Wochenblatt*. Weiße originally declined Crusius's offer because he was busy with other projects and instead suggested that Crusius hire theologian Johann Andreas Cramer to assume editorship of the publication. Shortly thereafter, however, Cramer accepted a professorship in Kiel and was forced to back out of writing the periodical. As a result, Weiße—who in the meantime had been put upon bed rest due to a foot injury—consented to produce his own children's weekly for Crusius. In its twenty-four-volume run, this periodical would ultimately prove to garner him the most recognition of all his works. Originally introduced as a weekly publication, *Der Kinderfreund* quickly became a quarterly one,[26] in order to allow enough time for the completion and incorporation of the engravings used to illustrate the periodical (Mai 69, 71). Examples of these engravings, which were created by multiple artists over the course of the series and were

[25] All citations to Weiße's *Kinderfreund* refer to the second edition published by the Crusius Verlag, which was first released in 1777 and continued through the conclusion of the series in 1782.

[26] Pape has used the fact that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* appeared quarterly (among other deviations from this genre which he mentions) as evidence that it should not be considered a true moral weekly (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 171–72). Although the distinctions which Pape notices between Weiße's periodical and the earlier English moral weeklies such as Addison's *Spectactor* are indeed valid, it is clear that Weiße's work was created within the tradition of the moral weekly, even if it did offer variations on the genre.

the only portion of the periodical which Weiße did not produce himself, can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2.1. Success on the Literary Market

While Adelung's *Leipziger Wochenblatt* had been generally well-received, its far more locally concentrated audience did not compare to Weiße's much wider audience throughout all parts of the German-speaking regions (Minor, *Beziehungen* 344). Indeed, by all accounts, *Der Kinderfreund* was a bestseller for the time. The first edition was originally released in 1776[27] and ran for twenty-four volumes until Weiße discontinued the *Kinderfreund* in 1782. In 1777, a second edition was released as a result of the periodical's popularity; the previously published volumes were reprinted and the release of both editions continued throughout the series's run. The changes in the second edition consisted merely of corrections and some minor stylistic changes. It is this second edition which I cite in the text. Finally, a third edition was released in 1780. This edition combined every two volumes into one; thus, the third edition numbered twelve volumes upon its conclusion. Aside from a few more error corrections, there were otherwise no deletions or changes in content in the third edition. The third edition, moreover, underwent two further reprints.[28] This quick succession of new editions and reprints was highly unusual at the time for a work of children's literature, and Hurrelmann ultimately calculates a rough estimate of 10,000 copies of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* having been sold within Germany.

[27] Although the earliest individual issues of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* were dated October 1775, the first bound volume was not published by Crusius until 1776.

[28] Weiße himself and much of the early scholarship on *Der Kinderfreund* report that the periodical appeared in five editions between 1776 and 1782 (Weiße, *Selbstbiographie* 189; Minor, *Beziehungen* 345), yet the very diligent comparative research of Bettina Hurrelmann has shown that the two reprints of the third edition do not constitute new editions in and of themselves (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 156, 159).

Further evidence of the periodical's popularity comes from the numerous illegal editions which were printed in Weiße's lifetime.[29] At least four illegal editions, published in locations spanning from Tübingen to Prague, were released during the original run of the series from 1776 to 1782 (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 162–69). Although it is difficult to track records of the success of these illegal editions, one piece of evidence to suggest their popularity comes from Weiße's autobiography, in which he mentions receiving an odd compliment when the man responsible for one of the illegal reprints boasts of having sold over 15,000 copies in Austria (*Selbstbiographie* 189).[30] Using Hurrelmann's figures, Walter Pape has approximated that 0.05% of the entire German population purchased a copy of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* and that, using an estimate of ten readers on average for each copy sold, 0.5% of the entire population read it. For the members of the educated German middle class, who represented the overwhelming majority of Weiße's

[29] Additionally, as we will see in the next chapter, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* inspired the creation of a vast array of works for children, several of which explicitly tried to build upon the success of Weiße's work by christening themselves his successors. In one of these works, Julius Bernhard Engelmann's *Neuer Kinderfreund*, the author, writing exactly thirty years after the first volume of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was published in 1776, praised the work as the single most widely read book—not just the most widely read children's book—in Germany at that time: "Manche meiner lieben Leser haben gewiß *Weissens Kinderfreund* gelesen; und wenn auch nicht sie selbst, doch vielleicht ihre Eltern; denn vor 20–30 Jahren war kein Buch in Deutschland beliebter, keins wurde häufiger gekauft und gelesen; selbst in andern Ländern Europas kannte und schätzte man es; auch *mir* gewährten, in meinen Kinderjahren, sein Kinderfreund und seine Kinderlieder manche lehrreiche und angenehme Stunde, wofür ich ihm herzlich danke" (Engelmann 6: 1, qtd. in Wild, *Vernunft* XIII). While Engelmann's claims are unmistakably influenced by both nostalgic hindsight and a personal self-interest in exaggerating the significance of the work he himself is mimicking, the very fact that he, along with several authors of other various *Kinderfreunde*, believed that the title *Kinderfreund* would carry enough clout to generate a profitable readership bespeaks the exceptional popularity of Weiße's work.

[30] Walter Pape has questioned the validity of this claim, reasoning that it is highly improbable that "im bevölkerungsärmsten und rückständigen Österreich," fifty percent more copies could have been sold than in all of Germany (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 168). While it does seem likely that Weiße's anecdote was either an intentional exaggeration or an unintentional mistaken recollection, the sheer number of different illegal reprints of his *Kinderfreund* serves as indirect evidence of its remarkable popularity at the time.

readership, Pape estimates that one percent of the *gesittetes Bürgertum* purchased a copy and ten percent read one (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 168–69).

Further evidence suggests that Weiße's works for children were among the collections of the relatively new *Leihbibliotheken* which became popular in the second half of the eighteenth century. According to the facts and figures included in Alberto Martino's impressive overview of lending libraries throughout all of the German-speaking regions, several libraries contained collections of educational literature for young readers, including Weiße's works (Martino 66). Of twenty-seven libraries within present-day Germany which Martino catalogs between the years of 1756 and 1814, Weiße is listed in three of them as a "Spitzenreiter"—in other words, as an author whose works were included among the library's holdings in great number (Martino 117, 122, 124). As a result, one can safely assume that several of the other libraries included in the list likely offered a small number of the author's works, as well. It appears Weiße's works were also well-known in Austria, as a library in Vienna evidently contained twenty-four volumes of his works (Martino 767). Given the sparse information available on these collections or the customers who may have used them, it is of course difficult to ascertain the extent to which the presence of Weiße's works in these libraries would have affected the popularity and recognition of *Der Kinderfreund* among the German-speaking population. Needless to say, though, their presence in any of these libraries could only have expanded Weiße's potential readership by making his works for young readers available to a wider audience.

While the considerable number of editions and reprints alone is proof enough of *Der Kinderfreund*'s success, the author himself realized the popularity of his periodical immediately

upon the announcement of the second edition. This is mentioned explicitly in Volume 6 (1777) of *Der Kinderfreund*:

> Daß Ihr, meine lieben kleinen Freunde, nach Unterricht begierig seyd, sollte ich beynahe glauben. Ich hörte, ehe noch ein Jahrgang von diesen meinen freundschaftlichen Blättern vollendet war, von meinem Verleger, daß er alle bisherigen Bände, vom ersten bis zum letzten, wieder müßte auflegen lassen, ein Glück, das Wochenblättern sehr selten in so kurzer Zeit wiederfährt. Diese Nachricht, ich kann es aufrichtig sagen, erfüllte mich mit einer entzückenden Freude. Sie ließ mich muthmaßen, daß diejenigen, die den Kinderfreund zuerst gelesen haben, einiges Wohlgefallen daran müßten gefunden haben, um ihn wieder andern ihrer Gespielen zu empfehlen, die ihn wieder andern empfohlen: ich schloß weiter, daß auch eure Aeltern damit nicht ganz unzufrieden müßten gewesen seyn, und glauben, daß Ihr Vergnügen und Lehre daraus schöpfen könntet [...]. (KF 6: 3–4)

Weiße thus assumed, based on the unusual republication of his periodical, that his young readership enjoyed reading his work, while his adult readership recognized the merit of such reading for their children.

3.2.2. Critical Reception

Reviews of *Der Kinderfreund* written by Weiße's contemporaries confirm that the author was indeed correct in believing that adult audiences appreciated the benefits of his work for young readers, as these reviews were overall quite positive in their assessment. Multiple reviews of various volumes of *Der Kinderfreund* appeared, for example, both in the review periodical the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* and in the *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, the newspaper which enjoyed the widest circulation within Germany at the time (Böning 22–23).

The anonymous reviews from the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* were uniformly positive from the start. Shortly after the commencement of *Der Kinderfreund*, a review praised the work and recommended it to German parents:

> Die Materien, welche in diesem Wochenblatte vorgetragen werden, sind gut gewählt, und den Fähigkeiten der Kinder angemessen, für deren Verstand und Herz auf gleiche Weise gesorgt worden. Eltern werden daher wohl thun, dieses Werkchen für ihre Kinder anzuschaffen. Wir

> wissen es, daß es von einigen mit Nutzen gebraucht worden. (*Hamburgischer Correspondent* 1776, No. 24)

The high praise continued over the course of Weiße's series, as the following review of Volume 6 reveals: "Noch immer bleibt sich dieses Wochenblatt, das in seiner Art vortrefflich ist, und welches wir Eltern und Lehrern zum Gebrauch für die Jugend nicht genug empfehlen können, an Güte gleich" (*Hamburgischer Correspondent* 1777, No. 152). The reviewer also praised Weiße's writing style for his young audience, commenting that the various textual elements in each volume were "grade so geschrieben [...], wie sie für solche junge Leser, denen diese Aufsätze bestimmt sind, geschrieben seyn müssen" (*Hamburgischer Correspondent* 1777, No. 152).

In contrast, the reviewer in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* initially expressed concern that Weiße's writing style was too complex for young readers[31] and suggested that it might be more appropriate for a teenage audience (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 31.2: 570–71). This reviewer was none other than Ernst Christian Trapp,[32] one of the leading proponents of Philanthropinism who served as an instructor at Basedow's Philanthropinum in Dessau. Weiße's style appears, however, to have become less of a concern for Trapp over the course of the series, as in later reviews he makes no further mention of it. Instead, his only criticisms of Weiße's

[31] This criticism of Weiße's writing style as inappropriate for his young audience is a point which merits further discussion, as it could suggest that the author is not, in fact, writing to children as they are, but rather to a particular construct of children which he has created. We will not examine this point in greater detail, however, until Chapter 5 for two reasons: First of all, this criticism of Weiße's style is renewed upon the release of *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*; and more importantly, the author himself responds to this criticism within that particular periodical.

[32] Several of the reviews of *Der Kinderfreund* in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* appeared anonymously, yet all of the others were by Trapp. In the review of the final volumes of Weiße's series, however, Trapp refers back to comments made in previous anonymous reviews as his own (ADB 53.1: 229), thereby suggesting that all of the reviews of *Der Kinderfreund* were indeed also written by him.

work consist of minor quibbles with particular passages which Trapp believes will prove to be too abstract or uninteresting for young readers (49.2: 527) or occasionally contain coarse language inappropriate for children (49.2: 527–28). In spite of these criticisms of particular passages, the reviewer himself admits that his overall assessment is otherwise glowing. This is particularly clear in his review from 1783 of the final three volumes of the series, which is quoted here in its entirety:

> Dies ist der Beschluß des so nützlichen und so allgemein beliebten Kinderfreundes, der sich bis ans Ende am Werth gleich geblieben ist. Zwar hab ich hin und wieder bisweilen etwas auszusetzen gefunden, hauptsächlich am Ausdruck, der mir nicht immer faßlich und bestimmt genug schien; auch in den Schauspielen schien mir manchmal nicht alles gut, wie ich auch zu seiner Zeit angezeigt habe. Doch muß ich demohngeachtet diesen Kinderfreund als eins unserer besten Kinderbücher empfehlen. Er liefert einem Lehrer, der seine Kunst versteht, entweder die Materien des Unterrichts, die er braucht, oder erinnert ihn wenigstens an das, was er aufsuchen und brauchen muß. Und als Lesebuch betrachtet, kann wohl nicht leicht eins unterhaltender für Kinder seyn. Auch hat es in der Kinderwelt Epoche gemacht. Der Hr. Verf. verspricht nur halb und halb, dereinst etwa wieder mit einem ähnlichen Werk hervorzutreten. Freylich haben sich seit den sechs Jahren, da der Kinderfreund begann, so viele in dies Handwerk für Kinder zu schreiben gemischt, daß weder auf Seiten der Kinder ein Mangel an solchen Büchern ist, noch auf Seiten eines Schriftstellers viel Lust seyn kann, dergleichen zu schreiben. Indessen wird man von dem V. des Kinderfreundes alles mit Dank annehmen, was er uns noch geben will.

Three points from this review merit further comment: First of all, Trapp recognizes that the success of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* has led to a boom in the production of literature for young readers. Secondly, the fact that the reviewer is eager to accept further work from Weiße—which, as we will see in Chapter 5, Weiße did indeed produce—indicates that he holds Weiße's work in higher esteem than children's books by other writers. Finally, it is clear that the pedagogue Trapp believes that the texts of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* would make excellent reading material to be included in an academic curriculum. This is even more evident in a previous review of Volumes 4 through 8 in which Trapp predicts that as a result of the popularity of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* in private homes, schools will eventually be forced to reinvent their curricula

(*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 36.2: 576–78). Of particular relevance here is the Philanthropinist notion that the private sphere of the home both should serve as a venue of education and should complement the formal schooling which the children receive outside of the home; this, as we will soon see, is a common theme in Weiße's work.

In addition to praising the merits of Weiße's work, both reviewers acknowledge the widespread popularity of *Der Kinderfreund* to the point where they assume that every parent or teacher in Germany would already be well-acquainted with it. In a review of Volumes 11 and 12 of *Der Kinderfreund* published by the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* in 1779, for example, the reviewer writes: "Welche Eltern und Lehrer kennen diese vortreffliche Schrift nicht? Auch diese beyden Theile sind voll von Aufsätzen, durch deren Lesung der Verstand und das Herz der Kinder auf die nützlichste Art gebildet werden kann" (*Hamburgischer Correspondent* 1779, No. 70). Likewise, the reviewer in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* opens his 1782 review of Volumes 19 through 22 as follows: "Dieses Buch erhält sich immer bey seinem Werth. Da es in so vieler Händen ist, so würde ich nur Zeit und Papier verderben, wenn ich den Inhalt der hier genannten Theile hersetzen wollte" (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 49.2: 526). He then provides no further information about the overall make-up of the *Kinderfreund* and devotes the rest of his review solely to his opinion of the four plays contained within each of the relevant volumes.

We have already seen that the sales figures of Weiße's work, while uncharacteristically high compared with other children's works at the time, cannot give reliably clear evidence regarding the size of Weiße's readership; similarly, the comments in these reviews provide indirect evidence regarding the popularity of his work. They suggest that a few years into its

run, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* had become a household name. Moreover, the reviews claim that parents were not merely aware of the existence of Weiße's work, but more importantly that they were familiar with its actual content, suggesting that they had read previous volumes of it. Admittedly, the comments of these two reviewers reflect only their personal impressions of the work's popularity; yet the fact that these professional literary critics were likely well-attuned to the reading habits of the German population lends credence to the accuracy of their assessment.

Assessments of Weiße's works by his young target audience are, of course, much more difficult to ascertain. Memoirs written by Weiße's fans are in all likelihood the only source of such information, although they naturally only represent the views of select individuals. One particularly noteworthy memoir is that of Johanna Schopenhauer (1766–1838), the mother of the famous philosopher. In her collected memoirs, Schopenhauer fondly reminisces about her life as a precocious ten-year-old whose fascination with Greek and Roman antiquity led her to read exclusively books written for adults—with one notable exception:

> Römer, Griechen, Shakespeare, Homer, welchen Wirrwarr mußte das alles in einem so sehr jungen Mädchenkopfe anrichten! Gewiß war ich […] in eminenter Gefahr, ein überspanntes und verschrobenes Persönchen zu werden, so eine Art von gebildetem jungem Frauenzimmer. Doch eine neue Erscheinung bewahrte glücklicherweise mich davor; eine Erscheinung, der ich, meine damaligen Zeitgenossen, unsere Kinder und sogar noch teilweise unsere Enkel unendlich viel verdanken.
>
> Weißens Kinderfreund, der erst vor kurzem ans Licht der Welt getreten war, dieses vortreffliche, in seiner Art noch immer unübertroffene Werk war es, das, wenn meine poetische Exaltation gar zu überschwenglich zu werden drohte, mich immer wieder in das Element zurückführte, in welches ich eigentlich noch gehörte, in die stille, freundliche Kinderwelt, die eben damals von dem schweren Joche der trübsinnigsten Pedanterie und unverständiger Härte langsam befreit wurde, unter welchem sie bis dahin geseufzt hatte.
>
> Ich lebte ganz mit Karl und Lottchen, mit Fritz und Louischen; sie waren mir meine liebsten Spielgesellen; an allen kleinen Ereignissen, die ihnen begegneten und an deren Wahrheit ich steif und fest glaubte, nahm ich den wärmsten Anteil. (97–98)

Such effusive praise is no doubt that of a sincere fan of Weiße's work. The fondness with which Schopenhauer recalls her memories of the four child protagonists of the series is naturally

associated with her view of them not as fictional characters, but rather as living, breathing friends. Many of Weiße's other loyal young readers would likely have experienced a deeply personal connection to the characters similar to the one which Schopenhauer describes; this serves to illustrate the potential power and influence which Weiße's works were able to exert upon their young audience. Notably, Schopenhauer also suggests that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* remained popular and influential at least one, if not two, generations beyond her own generation, which composed the primary young audience of *Der Kinderfreund* at the time of its publication. This memoir, which was published over seventy years after the appearance of the first volume of *Der Kinderfreund*, also claims that Weiße's work has yet to be surpassed by any other work of its kind. Perhaps of greatest significance in this passage, though, is Schopenhauer's assessment that the "Kinderwelt" had at that time recently experienced a transformation and had become qualitatively different from the notion of childhood which had existed previously. Thus, it is not just historians, but also individuals who lived at the time, who recognize the significance of the late eighteenth century in the history of childhood.

3.2.3. Readership

As we have seen, various sources of evidence show that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was widely read and much admired by young and adult readers alike. Determining precisely to which social class these readers belonged, however, is a more difficult matter. Weiße himself reports that the periodical was read and beloved among all classes from the nobility to the lower classes, both in his autobiography (*Selbstbiographie* 190–91) and in the concluding issue of *Der Kinderfreund* (KF 24: 199). This does not mean, of course, that it was read evenly among all classes. The

third edition of *Der Kinderfreund* includes a list of approximately 2,000 subscribers to the periodical and includes occupations for most of them. Based on these data, Bettina Hurrelmann has calculated that 8.5% of Weiße's readers were from the nobility, an overwhelming 85.7% were from the new middle class, and 5.8% were members of the lower class (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 168–69, 171).

Walter Pape, though, has questioned the validity of Hurrelmann's calculations, arguing that subscriber lists are misleading and inaccurate sources of evidence of reading audiences. In his article on this very problem, for example, Reinhard Wittmann has pointed out that such lists were inaccurate because many known subscribers were often not included in the lists, either in accordance with their own wishes or because they began to subscribe after the early volumes had gone to print. On the other hand, it was not unprecedented for publishers to falsely include the names of highly influential, well-known individuals in the lists of subscribers, presumably in order to promote sales. More importantly, Wittmann argues that as the result of incomplete or imperfect existing data on the social and economic structure of eighteenth-century Germany, an examination of subscriber lists often produces skewed, unreliable results. He particularly stresses the unreliability of examinations such as Hurrelmann's which group the subscribers according to social class, pointing out that the titles and careers included in the lists provide contemporary scholars little reliable evidence with which to make claims about the income, social position, or level of education of these individuals (Wittmann 141–44, 150–51). This, incidentally, is also Pape's primary critique of Hurrelmann's analysis. He suggests that she has incorrectly assigned certain careers to the lower classes which should actually be considered middle-class positions and also points out that many members of the nobility at the time were

poorer and less educated than most representatives of the new middle class; hence, Pape ultimately concludes that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was read almost exclusively by members of the educated middle class (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 164–65).[33]

These results are not particularly surprising, as cost alone would have prevented most lower-class parents from purchasing a copy: The price of one volume of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was equivalent to that of six to ten pounds of beef (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 184–85). It is also not surprising that Weiße's work appears to have struck a chord with the middle class; for as we will see shortly, *Der Kinderfreund* depicts the daily life of a middle-class family and thus generally presents the viewpoints and ideals of the new middle class.[34]

[33] Pape fails to mention the anecdotes in Weiße's autobiography in which he learns that the English royal family and the Queen of Naples were both faithful readers of his works for children (*Selbstbiographie* 195–98). While it is of course possible that Weiße was embellishing these accounts in his autobiography, it should be noted that the first volume of *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* opens with a lengthy prefatory poem praising the English princesses for their fine German and their loyal support. More importantly, the first volume also contains the following dedication: "An / Ihre köngliche Hoheiten / Charlotten Augusten / und / Augusten Sophien / Prinzessinnen von Großbrittannien" (BW 1: n.pag.). Without doubt such examples of noble readers are the exception rather than the rule, yet they nevertheless show that Weiße's works for children did indeed attract occasional readers from beyond the middle classes.

[34] *Der Kinderfreund* does include several passages about both the nobility and the lower classes, but the information is always presented through the viewpoint of the upper middle-class narrator. While the complex—and occasionally contradictory—relationships between the social classes as presented in *Der Kinderfreund* certainly make for a worthwhile, thought-provoking topic of discussion, an in-depth analysis of them would deviate too greatly from the central question of this project. For more information on the representation of the social classes in Weiße's work, see Bettina Hurrelmann's monograph *Jugendliteratur und Bürgerlichkeit* (1974; in particular Chapter 3: 67–141); Section I, Chapter 2 in Reiner Wild's *Vernunft der Väter* (1987; 54–96); or Chapters 5 and 6 in Gertrud Fankhauser's dissertation (1975) on Weiße's *Kinderfreund* (108–66), all of which focus more directly on the question of social class.

3.3. The Narrative Structure and Format of *Der Kinderfreund*

As I have just shown, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was extremely popular at the time of its publication. Multiple scholars have attributed this immense popularity, as does Weiße himself in his autobiography, not so much to the content of his overall message, but rather to its presentation (Göhring 16; Ewers and Völpel 146–47): Rather than addressing the reader directly, Weiße chooses to frame his work from the perspective of a fictional narrator in order to make the work more exciting. In other words, Weiße exploits the convention of the moral weekly genre in which the historical author adopts a fictional persona to narrate the periodical. Naturally, this was a conscious decision on the part of Weiße; and in his autobiography, he clarifies that Addison and Steele's *The Spectator* served as his inspiration for this framework:

> Das Mittel, [den *Kinderfreund*] schon durch die Form anziehend zu machen, entlehnte Weiße von dem englischen Zuschauer. Er hatte bemerkt, daß dieser einen Theil des erhaltnen Beyfalls dem Umstande verdankte, daß er gleich anfangs mehrere Personen mit bestimmten Charakteren eingeführt hatte, aus deren Munde die verschiednen Urtheile über Menschen und Begebenheiten lieber angehöret wurden, als wenn der Verfasser sie in eigner Person vorgetragen hätte. Es war durch dieses Mittel Handlung und Leben in die Unterhaltung gebracht. Weiße schilderte daher zur Einleitung in seinen Kinderfreund eine bürgerliche Familie von Eltern, Kindern, und Hausfreunden, welche sich alle unter einander und von einander in ihrer Denk- und Sinnesart, in ihren Neigungen, Sitten und Lieblingsbeschäftigungen hinlänglich und genau unterschieden. Der ganze Stoff der Belehrung für die Jugend, welcher bearbeitet wird, erschien als Unterhaltung dieser Familie, an welcher jedes Glied nach seiner Weise Antheil nahm. (*Selbstbiographie* 184–85)

Weiße thus recognizes that much of the success which *The Spectator* enjoyed was due to its ability to present information and ideas in an entertaining way.[35] As such, he upholds Horace's maxim of *prodesse et delectare*, which proved to be so popular among writers of the Enlightenment. Weiße's adaptation of this approach for children, moreover, appears to be two-

[35] Weiße does not explicitly mention the influence of Addison's *The Spectator* anywhere in *Der Kinderfreund* itself, yet it is worth noting that Mentor mentions Addison, along with Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton, as one of the very learned men who made many contributions to "die schönen Schriften" and also led a life of piety so sincere that he was able to offer the following final words on his deathbed: "Sehen Sie, wie ruhig ein Christ sterben kann!" (KF 22: 34).

fold as he outlines it here: Not only does the fictional framework present educational information to children in an entertaining way, but it also presents education *as* an act of entertainment itself by depicting a family for whom the educational discussions serve as household entertainment. Thus, the fictional framework which Weiße establishes serves in part to fuse his two main goals for the periodical: to entertain and to educate his young readers.

3.3.1. Characters

The first-person narrator who establishes this fictional framework is known by the telling name C. Mentor. This upper middle-class[36] father of four is the ostensible compiler of the journal's elements, all of which have allegedly been somehow used for the instructional benefit of his children, whose education he personally oversees outside of their formal lessons. By publishing these texts, Mentor hopes to likewise educate a far greater number of children than four.

Ever the proud father, Mentor is nevertheless mindful of his children's flaws, a fact which he readily admits after introducing his four children to the reader with remarkable candor. Charlotte (usually called "Lottchen"), the eldest child who is eleven years old at the start of the series, struggles against carelessness and frivolity, while the industrious and inquisitive nine-year-old Karl is prideful and possesses a quick temper. The clever seven-and-a-half-year-old Fritz (or "Fritze") often plays tricks on his friends and siblings, while his shrewd sense as a

[36] While the occupation of the fictional narrator Mentor is never explicitly stated in the text, it is evident early on that the family portrayed in the periodical belongs neither to the nobility nor to the lower classes. Although multiple scholars have collected lists of the various clues throughout the series to the social status of the Mentor family (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 86–88; Wild, *Vernunft* XVII), the author himself admits in his autobiography that *Der Kinderfreund* portrayed "eine bürgerliche Familie" (Weiße, *Selbstbiographie* 184). Similarly, in the sequel periodical to *Der Kinderfreund*, the author, evidently temporarily slipping out of character and writing more as himself than as Mentor, refers back to *Der Kinderfreund* and its "*Darstellung einer bürgerlichen gesitteten Familie aus dem mittlern Stande*" (BW 12: 317).

dealmaker often reveals his selfishness. Lastly, the keen intelligence of Luise (or "Luischen"), who in spite of her young age of five can memorize songs and poems instantly and is quick to solve riddles, is undermined by her strong sense of vanity (KF 1: 9–16).

While Mentor depicts his children's personalities, virtues, and shortcomings in meticulous detail, he almost completely fails to mention his wife in the introduction at all. Were it not for his brief description of the children's "Liebe und Ehrfurcht […] die sie für mich und ihre vortreffliche Mutter haben" (KF 1: 17), one might otherwise believe he were a widower. While Mentor elsewhere praises his wife as being a well-educated and enlightened woman, a loving mother, and an extremely competent mistress of the home, she admittedly plays only a minor role in the course of the periodical; in fact, she does not say anything at all until Volume 7. In actuality, it was quite common in children's literature of the time that the father should serve as the children's primary educator and caretaker, while the mother played only a very marginal role in children's literature—if indeed she was mentioned at all (Wild, "Aufklärung" 65).[37] Certainly, this is the case in Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, as the father Mentor plays the largest role in securing his children's education and overseeing their upbringing; his telling name here makes this point all the less subtle.

Still, Mentor does not instruct his children singlehandedly; rather, four of his closest friends—again, all of them male—teach the children, play with them, and lavish gifts upon them. They thus function not only as additional instructors for the four children, but also more or less

[37] For a more thorough discussion of the exclusion of the mother and domination of the father within Enlightenment works of children's literature, see Section 2, Chapter 4 ("Die Dominanz des Vaters") in Reiner Wild's *Die Vernunft der Väter* (1987), which focuses on this very topic.

as additional family members.[38] Each of the four friends has a different field of expertise. The first, Herr Magister Philoteknos—"oder auf gut deutsch, Kinderlieb" (KF 1: 18)—shares all sorts of stories and fairy tales with the children, while Herr Spirit, the poet laureate of the group, composes his own poems, fables, and plays for the children.[39] The resident historian is the somewhat melancholy Herr Doktor Chronickel, while the final friend, Herr Papillion, serves as the children's guide to the natural world by exposing them to all the wonders of creation.

3.3.2. Character Typology

It is not difficult to see that these four friends represent the wide variety of textual genres which are prevalent in Weiße's *Kinderfreund*.[40] In a similar vein, the four children are largely limited

[38] The extent to which these four adult characters actually function as extended members of the Mentor family has been debated among literary scholars and will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter. For now, it will suffice to say that they spend a great deal of time within the Mentor household and are always welcome. Indeed, some combination of the four family friends is almost always present in every scene throughout the entirety of the series.

[39] While there is some overlap between the characters of Philoteknos and Spirit, they seem to represent different ages of literature. Philoteknos, the oldest of the group, usually presents the stories and legends of antiquity, while Spirit, who is much younger, more often discusses modern poetry or presents his own work. They also differ in the respect that Philoteknos is a literary scholar, while Spirit is actually a poet and playwright himself.

[40] Jakob Minor speculates that the four family friends are based in part on historical people: Philoteknos on Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, who was well-acquainted with Weiße and his family; Spirit in part on Weiße himself, in part on Daßdorf, the first tutor of Weiße's children; and Chronickel and Papillion combined on Böttcher, the tutor who succeeded Daßdorf in the Weiße household (Minor, *Beziehungen* 346). While these assumptions are based largely on comments made in Weiße's autobiography, I find them to be overly speculative and hence not particularly useful. After their initial introduction in the first volume of *Der Kinderfreund*, the personalities and mannerisms of the four family friends play only the smallest role in subsequent passages, aside from an occasional comment. The far more obvious manner in which they distinguish themselves from one another is based on their areas of specialization; as such, it is of little consequence for one's interpretation of the work to discern if their personal idiosyncrasies are based in part on historical figures or not.

to one or two particular strengths and weaknesses each.[41] Weiße thereby essentially creates a basic typology of characters who are each reduced to a certain number of defining characteristics; in other words, Weiße subsumes individuals under various generic categories. Although this is an unusual pedagogical approach by today's standards, it was not an uncommon characteristic of the eighteenth-century moral weekly genre, in which an author would typically create a society of diverse friends, all of whom remained largely unchanged and relatively one-dimensional throughout the course of the series. In the moral weekly, as in Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, the characters of the framing structure are not the protagonists of a grander work of fiction with a primary narrative thread; rather, they are essentially tools which serve to connect the various lessons and discussions that the author chooses to include for his readers.[42]

Although this somewhat awkward typology of the framework seems nevertheless to have contributed to the popularity of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* among young and old, one can scarcely claim that it is specifically a result of the *fictional* framework within which the work is presented. Quite the contrary: It appears that many readers, both young and old alike, were unaware that Weiße had created a fictionalized family; most readers simply assumed that he was describing the actions and conversations of his own family. He did, after all, intentionally choose to create a fictional narrator very similar in mindset and social status to himself, likely thereby further contributing to the blurring of fiction and reality. Even though the names of the

[41] In a similar vein, Alexander Beinlich (1973) has used the four portraits of the well-known Mentor children to present a typology of different reading personalities based on the comments included in *Der Kinderfreund* about the children's personalities and reading habits (Beinlich 215–16).

[42] As we will see in Chapter 5, this was not the case for the sequel to *Der Kinderfreund*. Weiße himself considered this sequel, which is much less episodic and far more serial in nature than *Der Kinderfreund*, to be a monumental epistolary novel (*Selbstbiographie* 193–95).

children and even the numbers of sons and daughters were different from those of Weiße's own children, many people, recounts Weiße in his autobiography, often mistook his real children for those in *Der Kinderfreund*:

> Es gelang [Weißen], die Leser für diese Familie einzunehmen und beinahe mehr als ihm lieb war, die Täuschung hervorzubringen, daß es seine Familie selbst sei, deren Leben und Handeln, Lehren und Lernen, deren Beschäftigungen und Vergnügungen geschildert würden. Die junge Welt und zum Teil ihre Lehrer und Eltern waren so gewiß überzeugt, daß das Personal des Kinderfreundes aus wirklich vorhandenen Personen und Persönchen bestehe, daß Weiße von Freunden sehr oft, wenn seine Kinder erschienen, gefragt wurde, welches Karl, Lottchen u. s. w., sei, daß Briefe an seine Kinder unter den aus dem Kinderfreunde vermeintlich bekannten Namen geschrieben, ja selbst einige Geschenke geschickt wurden. Man hat bisweilen in der Folge seine Kinder an entfernten Orten als bekannte Personen aufgenommen, und wenn diese nach dem Grunde der zuvorkommenden Aufnahme forschten, so fanden sie ihn in der geglaubten alten Bekanntschaft aus dem Kinderfreunde. Diese zum Teil beabsichtigte, zum Teil wider Erwarten erfolgte Täuschung trug das Ihrige dazu bei, daß der Kinderfreund sehr bald einen großen Kreis von Lesern in allen Ständen erhielt. Waren indessen gleich die eingeführten Personen nicht die Kinder und Hausfreunde Weißens, so war doch die Belehrung und Unterhaltung, welche er der jungen Welt erteilte, von der Art und auf die Weise eingekleidet, wie sie in seiner Familie und in jeder andern, wo das Bildungsgeschäfte vernünftig und zweckmäßig betrieben wird, wirklich Statt fand und Statt findet. (*Selbstbiographie* 185–86)

This anecdote thus suggests that many readers were blind to Weiße's intentional "deception" as they simply assumed that Weiße was depicting his own family, rather than portraying a fictional one.[43] The fact that *Der Kinderfreund* was nevertheless quite popular moreover shows that many readers viewed the familial fusion of education and entertainment as one which could believably exist in the real world—at least, according to Weiße, in families which promote education in a meaningful way. Precisely how this family pedagogical model reveals Weiße's concept of childhood will be the focus of the next chapter.

[43] Of course, some elements which Weiße chose to include in the periodical were indeed based on his own real-life experiences. We have already seen the example in which he announces the second edition of *Der Kinderfreund* (see Chapter 3.2.1), but he also on occasion includes both positive and negative feedback on the periodical from contemporary critics, as well as family events such as excursions and illnesses (including Weiße's own foot injury which placed him on bed rest at the start of the series's publication). This incorporation of real-life references into the fictional world was, as we have already seen, another common feature of the moral weekly which Weiße chose to adopt in his own periodical for children.

Chapter 4

Childhood as Education in Christian Felix Weiße's *Der Kinderfreund*

4.1. Weiße's Concept of Childhood in *Der Kinderfreund*: A Preamble on Methodology

4.1.1. Historical Author vs. Fictional Author: The Weiße-Mentor Problem

Before I offer a profile of Weiße's conception of childhood as presented in *Der Kinderfreund*, I would like to make some preliminary remarks concerning the methodology of the approach to this type of text. The previously mentioned blurring of fact and fiction in *Der Kinderfreund* raises an issue that is pertinent for a literary scholar examining Weiße's periodical: The ideas presented in the text are all presented through the mouthpiece of a set of fictional characters—most often through the fictional narrator and author Mentor. To what extent, then, can one comfortably claim that certain passages of the work reflect the views of the real-life author himself?

Fortunately for us, the evidence is indeed strong enough that one can safely claim that the views which are unequivocally endorsed in *Der Kinderfreund* are the views of Weiße himself. Not only does the fictional author Mentor relate events which are well-documented as having happened to Weiße's own family in the extratextual reality, but Weiße also asserts in his autobiography that although the characters in the text were fictional, their discussions and interactions were similar to the manner in which the author himself interacted with his own real-life children (*Selbstbiographie* 185–86). His autobiography also repeatedly mentions that the

ideas and beliefs in *Der Kinderfreund* are his own.[44] This is particularly clear in the previously quoted passage, in which Weiße explains that reading *The Spectator* led him to consciously choose to adopt a fictional persona within the text and create a circle of other fictional characters in order to make his own ideas more entertaining (*Selbstbiographie* 184–85). This, as we have already seen, was a widely recognized feature of the moral weeklies; and as such, it was no secret to the readers of Weiße's day that the fictional narrator Mentor was speaking on behalf of Weiße himself. The fact that so many fans of *Der Kinderfreund* assumed that Mentor's family in the text was one and the same as Weiße's real-life family is further support of this point.

As we will see, *Der Kinderfreund* is a clear example of literature which has been instrumentalized to serve as an educational tool,[45] a practice which was admittedly not uncommon among Enlightenment writers. As such, the claims made by the text's fictional

[44] It is widely recognized that Weiße did produce all of the poems, stories, and plays included in the periodical. Although Charles Paul Giessing ("Plagiarized Book Reviews"; 1918) and Richard F. Wilkie ("Borrowings"; 1955) have shown that Weiße did in fact "plagiarize"—or, rather, translated verbatim from English into German, a practice not uncommon at the time—reviews of English books during his tenure as editor of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* and F. W. Meisnet has argued that Weiße also borrowed extensively from other sources as he was writing his version of *Richard III.* ("Quellen"; 1910), there is no evidence that this is true of any of the texts included in his works for children. Indeed, the fact that the entirety of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was written exclusively by the author himself was unique for such periodicals at the time. The sheer volume of original text which Weiße produced on a regular basis is in itself remarkable (Göhring 24–25). Evidently, however, not all of Weiße's contemporaries realized that the author himself did not just compile, but actually produced, all of the textual material included in *Der Kinderfreund*, as the following comment from a review in the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* suggests: "Die Materien, welche in diesem Wochenblatte vorgetragen werden, sind gut gewählt" (*Hamburgischer Correspondent* 1764, No. 24).

[45] It would be useful to note that there are multiple layers of literariness present within *Der Kinderfreund.* The fictional frame story of the narrator Mentor and the discussions he has with his children does not represent true belletristic literature to the same extent as, say, the poems and plays which are embedded throughout the text. While the conversations which Mentor has with his children are the passages which the historical author Weiße most directly exploits for his educational purposes, it is crucial to observe that the literary texts are, as we will soon see, similarly instrumentalized—this time on the part of Mentor or one of his four friends—in order to illustrate a particular lesson. To this extent, then, there are not only multiple layers of literariness present in the text, but also multiple layers of the instrumentalization of texts for specific purposes.

narrator are much more closely connected to the ideological motivations of the historical author and are hence quite difficult (if not impossible) to separate. Nevertheless, in order to avoid making overly broad claims which may appear to conflate or outright equate the historical author and his fictional mouthpiece, I have tried to be as precise as possible in my references to both Mentor and Weiße. In the analysis which follows in this chapter, I distinguish between Weiße as the author and Mentor as the fictional father in *Der Kinderfreund*. When I refer to Mentor making a particular claim, this indicates that the character of Mentor makes the statement explicitly in the text. If I refer to Weiße making an argument, this implies that I have interpreted the text to suggest that the viewpoints either directly or indirectly expressed by the characters are the same as those of the historical author himself.

4.1.2. Selection Criteria of the Individual Texts for Discussion

It will also be of benefit to the reader to explain my choices regarding which texts to consider in detail, as I had a vast array of material at my disposal: Each of the twenty-four volumes comprises approximately 200 to 250 pages, resulting in approximately 5500 pages for the entire series. As has already been mentioned, *Der Kinderfreund* is a collection which encompasses a wide variety of textual genres. Most of the episodes in the periodical begin with a particular small event concerning one or more of the children, and this usually results in Mentor and his friends discussing a certain social, moral, or ethical topic with the children more generally. This particular-to-general structure was common in other works of children's literature at the time (Wild, "Aufklärung" 64).

This structure is, namely, that of the *Exempelbuch*, in which an individual case stands for a more general lesson to be gleaned. Weiße himself, it should be noted, uses the term *Exempelbuch* to describe his works for young readers at the end of the final volume of the *Briefwechsel*, the conclusion of the entire Mentor family saga. Discussing the relationship of fact and fiction within the series, Mentor ultimately concludes that the exemplary nature of the series is far more important than whether the situations depicted are true or not:

> Denn, im Grunde; was liegt daran, ob das Ganze Wahrheit oder Erdichtung ist, oder ob einige Umstände nur davon wahr und die Einkleidung von mir oder den eingeführten Personen herrühret? – Wenn diese unter den Situationen, in denen sie sich befanden, nur so handelten, wie sie der Vernunft und Weisheit gemäß handeln sollten, so liegt in Absicht des moralischen Vortheils für euch nichts dran, ob sie auch wirklich so handelten? Seht es in diesem Falle als ein Exempelbuch an, wovon die Absicht war, euch Muster darzustellen, wie eure Aeltern und Freunde wünschen könnten, daß Ihr, so bald euch die Fürsehung in ähnliche Lagen versetzte, betragen möchtet! (BW 12: 316)

Most volumes in the series comprise extended discussions of several—most frequently five—different topics or issues. The main concepts from these candid, abstract conversations are then usually illustrated in a more concrete way: Herr Doktor Chronickel might offer a historical example which illustrates the point in question, Philoteknos could recite a myth or fable, or Spirit could compose a poem or song. Thus, within the fictional world of Mentor and his friends, the adult figures utilize literary texts for pedagogical purposes, just as Weiße instrumentalizes the fictional world of Mentor for his own educational goals.

In addition to these thematic discussions, each of the twenty-four volumes in *Der Kinderfreund* features exactly one full play written by Herr Spirit, usually either preceded or followed by a discussion of its theme or Spirit's inspiration for writing it. Each volume also includes a lesson led by Herr Papillion on a topic in the natural world. Typically, these discussions concern one or more species of the animal kingdom, although some volumes have

featured discussions of trees, gardening, comets, and eclipses. Papillion's topic of discussion is usually then somehow connected to the fields of history or literature when, for example, a lesson about songbirds leads to a group discussion of the Greek myth of Procne and Philomela, two sisters who were transformed into a swallow and a nightingale, respectively (KF 4: 110–14). Papillion's lessons are likewise associated with a lesson for the children regarding their moral character or behavior. A discussion of animals that hibernate in the winter, for example, is associated with a discussion on the negative effects of too much sleep on humans (KF 2: 104–23). The following table provides an overview of the various textual genres contained within *Der Kinderfreund*, along with an approximation of their relative frequency within each volume:

Genre	**Approximate Number in Each Volume**
Abstract discussion of a particular theme	5–7
Song	1–2
Poem	2–3
Fable (usually written in verse)	1–2
Plays	1
Story ("Erzählung" or "Geschichte"; usually original material, but occasionally adapted from other traditions)	5–7
Realia (e.g., excerpts from newspapers)	0–1
Journal entry	0–1
Letter	0–2
Historical anecdote (including biographical sketches of famous individuals)	1–2
Lesson in the natural sciences	1

Table 1. Textual Genres in *Der Kinderfreund*

Weiße's *Kinderfreund* essentially functionalizes literature toward a specific educational goal. In other words, the various literary texts—the songs, poems, fables, and plays—which are included within *Der Kinderfreund* are, nearly without exception, intended to teach the children a particular lesson. This is true on two levels: Within the fictional framework of the story, Mentor and his four adult friends recount fables; recite poems; and in the case of Spirit, compose plays and songs in order to illustrate a particular moral concept or social topic which they are discussing with the children at that particular moment. In the extratextual world, the same can be said of Weiße himself: He has created and arranged all of the literary texts in *Der Kinderfreund* in order to teach a particular lesson to his young audience. It would not be entirely off the mark, therefore, to say that within Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, the literary arts are used as a means to an end. An appreciation of the artistic beauty of the *belles lettres* is of little concern as form gives way to function. Although Weiße was unique among children's authors of the time for having attempted a form of aesthetic education in his works for young readers by including discussions of good taste (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 141), the literary texts which the author includes in his own work are to be understood in the context of their function within the greater narrative of the story. For this reason, any analysis of the individual literary texts included in *Der Kinderfreund* must also evaluate them in light of the context in which they appear within the fictional world of Mentor's family.

With such a surfeit of material contained within Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, any analysis of the periodical must naturally be very selective in the particular passages to highlight. In my reading of the periodical with respect to the concept of childhood, I searched for two kinds of passages: individual sections which by themselves offer a clear insight into the author's concept

of childhood and separate passages which, when taken together with other passages in the work, reveal overarching themes present in Weiße's concept of childhood. The texts included in the following analysis are those which most directly and most powerfully reveal Weiße's conception of childhood and his beliefs concerning the appropriate education of children. This means that I have included discussions neither of any of Papillion's lessons in the natural world nor of Chronickel's history lessons, for neither field of study has an immediate bearing on Weiße's ideas concerning childhood. Beyond these exclusions, I have attempted to include a variety of textual types: poems, stories, and plays. However, Weiße's ideas concerning childhood and education are most evident in the discussions which Mentor conducts with his children about a given ethical, moral, or philosophical issue. Although these passages are informative, they are not necessarily "literary" in the same way as the plays or fables. With this in mind, I have tried where possible to include a thorough examination of at least one true literary text—that is, literary in the sense that it adheres to an established genre such as a poem or play—for each of my main points. This provides a comparison which reflects how Weiße represents his ideas more indirectly in a literary text versus a much more explicit discussion of his ideas from the perspective of Mentor conversing with his children.

As has already been mentioned, the literary texts within *Der Kinderfreund* thus serve as tools to illustrate a particular lesson or moral. In this respect, Weiße functionalizes literature in order to achieve his didactic goals for the young readers of his periodical. By situating each literary text within an explicit discussion of its significance, the author also aims to prevent any potential misunderstanding on the part of his young readers. The poems, fables, and plays contained within *Der Kinderfreund* of course do not address the reader directly; as a result, any

intended lesson would normally need to be deduced on the part of the reader him- or herself. When these works are then discussed by Mentor's family and friends within the narrative of *Der Kinderfreund*, however, the lesson is made explicit—and frequently on two levels. Not only do the adult characters explicate the moral to be learned for the child characters within the fictional world of Mentor, but the narrator also frequently addresses his real-life readers directly and restates the lesson to be learned from the previous textual illustrations. From the very first pages of the periodical, moreover, both the fictional and, by extension, the real-life authors are completely forthcoming in their overtly didactic intentions in publishing a moral weekly for children. That the author should choose to exploit literary texts in order to achieve these didactic goals in an entertaining way is certainly an understandable strategy from this perspective and, as has already been mentioned, was also a particularly common one for writers of the Enlightenment.

4.1.3. Rousseau vs. Weiße: A Comparison of *Émile* with *Der Kinderfreund*

The following analysis also compares Weiße's *Kinderfreund* to Rousseau's *Émile*—which appeared fifteen years before Weiße's periodical and which, as we have already seen, was extremely influential in changing European views concerning childhood and education. While scholarly works such as Sylvia Patterson's *Rousseau's* Émile *and Early Children's Literature* (1971) recognize the effects that Rousseau's work bore upon European works of children's literature which appeared later in the eighteenth century,[46] such an analysis is not the reason why

[46] Examples of Rousseau's commonly recognized contributions to children's literature of the time include the ever-present teacher who educates his pupil through every experience; an emphasis on learning through immediate experience; and the acknowledgement of children as children, rather than smaller versions of adults (Patterson 9).

I choose to cite Rousseau here. I am not investigating the influence Rousseau's *Émile* exerted on Weiße and how that influence might have been reflected in his works for children and youth; such an investigation would prove fruitless, as Weiße's conception of childhood and his thoughts on the proper education of children oppose those of Rousseau in many fundamental respects. The format of the texts themselves are likewise very different in nature: While *Émile* reads more clearly like a programmatic treatise for raising and educating a child, it was actually not intended to be thoroughly implemented by parents of the time.[47] On the other hand, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* is by no means a pedagogical treatise, yet it contains several indirect suggestions for parents and teachers which are more obviously intended to be implemented by parents who hope to provide their children with the best childhood and education possible. It is precisely this significant contrast, however, that makes a comparison of Weiße's and Rousseau's works worthwhile because it illustrates the great diversity of innovative, yet popular beliefs concerning childhood and education that were sweeping the landscape of eighteenth-century Europe.

4.2. Weiße's Concept of Childhood as Represented in *Der Kinderfreund*

4.2.1. It's Now or Never: Childhood as the Most Important Phase of Life

A reading of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* reveals that for the author, childhood is in many respects the most important stage in a person's life. It is only in this period, Weiße argues, that one is able to reform one's behavior, beliefs, or lifestyle. Minor character flaws or mistakes, if left uncorrected

[47] Take, for example, the anecdote about an admirer of Rousseau's work who proudly informed the author that he was raising his son according to the principles of *Émile*. Rousseau supposedly responded in shock, quipping: "Good heavens! so much the worse for you, sir, and so much worse still for your son" (Boutet de Monvel vii).

during one's childhood, will otherwise spiral out of control until they become irremediable major flaws in adulthood—often with severe consequences not just to the individual in question, but also to society as a whole. Hence, there is a sense of great urgency in much of *Der Kinderfreund*. Its lessons are to be heeded immediately before they are too late to be of any use to the reader. Weiße does not actually set a distinct limit for this critical period by specifying a discrete age at which it is too late to change oneself, but it is evident from his repeated entreaties to his young readers that it will certainly be too late to do so after the end of their childhood—and possibly even before then, as our first example will show.

The urgent tone of the work suggests that degeneration into moral turpitude can happen extremely quickly—even within one's own childhood. A particularly detailed example of this comes in a discussion based on a play written by Herr Spirit entitled *Der ungezogene Knabe* (KF 6: 47–128). As the title suggests, the play tells the story of an ill-mannered and self-centered ten-year-old boy named Ludwig, the son of a wealthy and well-respected man. Ludwig, the text suggests, has been spoiled rotten by his mother, who gives him everything he desires. When a very poor boy named Jonas visits the family home to perform music in order to raise money, Ludwig ultimately robs Jonas of all of his money and moreover breaks his violin, which is Jonas's only source of income to feed himself and his blind father. Although Ludwig lies to his father about his actions, the truth of his misdeeds comes to light by the end of the play; and Ludwig's appalled father threatens to send his son away to a home for troublesome children, implying that Ludwig is not even fit to be called a human: "Wer einem Armen seinen verdienten Lohn mit Gewalt rauben, sein einziges Rettungsmittel vernichten, und oben drein durch die

schändlichen Lügen verfolgen kann, ist so wenig werth ein Mensch zu seyn, als an einer menschlichen Gesellschaft Theil zu nehmen" (KF 6: 128).

The severity of this statement is evidence that, as Ute Dettmar has suggested in reference to this particular example, children are indeed taken quite seriously within Weiße's works. They, too, are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities and can rightly meet with harsh consequences when they fail to meet them (Dettmar, "Aufgeklärte Kindheit" 88–89). That Weiße should include such a statement in the text is nevertheless quite shocking, for it seems to run counter to the immense value which he so clearly places upon education. In other words, it implies that there exists a moral point of no return which one can cross, beyond which no amount of education or proper child-rearing could redeem one. Moreover, it is evidently possible for a ten-year-old child to have already reached this point. Presumably, Weiße would assume that such cases are exceedingly rare; after all, the character of Ludwig is portrayed as particularly loathsome and his actions toward the poor boy Jonas would likely be considered heinous by even the most ill-behaved children. I would argue that Weiße intentionally portrays the character of Ludwig in such a hyperbolic manner in order to heighten the sense of urgency in the point he is trying to make: One's upbringing during one's childhood plays an immediate role in determining who one will ultimately turn out to be.

Within the context of the play, one could possibly also interpret the father's statement as the vituperation of a furious parent who is intentionally exaggerating his sentence in order to further marginalize the son whom he is punishing so severely. While this may be a valid reading within the context of the play alone, it seems unlikely to be true when analyzed within the greater context of the entire periodical. As we will soon see, *Der ungezogene Knabe* does not represent

an isolated instance of such conclusions; on the contrary, similar statements are made elsewhere within Weiße's *Kinderfreund*.

After Spirit finishes reading his latest *Schauspiel* to the group, the children decide that they would like to perform it, yet nobody is willing to accept the role of Ludwig because he is such a loathsome character. Hereupon ensues a lively discussion of the dangers of being spoiled as a child. While the children are skeptical that such a naughty child could exist, Spirit is insistent that being spoiled could certainly lead to such greedy behavior. The child soon grows accustomed to receiving everything he desires and will thus become very greedy, expecting his wishes to be met. Likewise, the servants and tutors in this child's household will soon learn to appease the child in order to curry favor with his mother, thereby further strengthening the boy's greed. This greed will then lead to a willingness to garner money and goods by dishonest means, which in turn leads to a mistrust of others because he himself is not who he pretends to be. Thus, the seemingly innocent fact that the boy's mother lavishes him with gifts leads to the boy's total disregard for others while trying to satisfy his own desires at all costs. Herr Spirit concludes:

> Sein Fortgang im Bösen, das aus einer fehlerhaften Neigung entsprang, wäre vielleicht anfänglich durch eine aufmerksame Unterdrückung desselbigen leicht zu bändigen gewesen. Die Begierden wachsen, so wie der Mensch, und wachsen mit ihm zugleich groß. Ein Kind darf es nicht wagen, uns anzufallen und plündern zu wollen, wie schnell würden wir es ergreifen, und durch eine strenge Züchtigung zu bändigen wissen! aber wenn uns der gewaffnete starke Mann anfällt, dann müssen wir ihn an Stärke überlegen seyn, sonst liegen wir unter: eben so haben die Leidenschaften ihre Kindheit, und ihr männliches Alter. Ich wiederhole daher die euch schon so oft gegebene Erinnerung, euch ja frühzeitig Etwas versagen zu lernen. (KF 6: 139–40)

Spirit clearly states here that minor flaws are relatively easy to overcome in one's childhood, yet they are very difficult to suppress or even altogether impossible to control if they are permitted to grow into more serious issues in one's adulthood. The particular example of Ludwig, a ten-year-old boy, also illustrates the rapidity with which this process can take place. His father's

extremely harsh words at the end of the play suggest that there is little to no hope for Ludwig's redemption; for even though he is still a boy, his father seems to believe that his greed has already overpowered him so greatly that he is a menace to society and hence the only viable course of action is to separate him from society altogether.

This thorough explanation is but one of the many illustrations of this recurring theme in *Der Kinderfreund*. Nearly every time that Mentor or his friends discuss a moral flaw—and occasionally even seemingly benign habits—which many children possess, one of the adults mentions the severe consequences that this problem could lead to if it remains unchecked in one's childhood. At one point, Mentor discusses this with respect to his own children and speculates what greater dangers might await them in adulthood if they fail to correct the character flaws which he includes in his introduction of each child at the start of the series. Fritze's current concern for money, for example, could lead him to become a mistrustful miser (KF 2: 162–63). The fact that this theme is repeated so frequently throughout the course of the twenty-four volumes further underscores the strength of Weiße's conviction that childhood is indeed the most critical time in a person's life. In most cases, the outcome which Mentor foresees is an adult life of deception, cruelty, or crime. An eagerness to play games of chance, for example, will no doubt lead to a serious gambling addiction, an unhealthy obsession with money, and a desire to swindle and deceive others (KF 23: 5–8). A disciplined work ethic is also important to develop at a young age, claims Mentor, regardless of one's position in life. The poor who do not learn the value of industry will no doubt become crooked and embrace any opportunity to make money by dishonest means, while the rich who remain lazy and undisciplined in their childhood will likely become overly wasteful and will end up in great debt

(KF 10: 10–15). Cruelty to any living creature, no matter how small, is also condemned as particularly pernicious, as it will likely lead to cruelty toward all living creatures in adulthood. Mentor and his friends are adamant on this point, and Philoteknos comes to the following shocking conclusion:

> [W]enn ich eines unter Euch, meine Kinder wissen sollte, das sich an den ängstlichen Geschrey eines Thieres, oder auch nur an den konvulsivischen Krümmungen eines armen Wurmes weiden könnte, so würde ich über dasselbe die bittersten Thränen vergießen, ich würde vermögend seyn, ihm einen frühzeitigen Tod zu wünschen, weil ich in ihm ein gefährliches Glied für die menschliche Gesellschaft vorher zu sehen, glauben würde. (KF 4: 119–20)

Philoteknos would thus rather have a cruel child die young than grow up to be a menace to society.[48]

This statement is particularly shocking given its source. The previous problematic conclusion of *Der ungezogene Knabe* could potentially be accounted for by the fact that the father in the play is not depicted in a particularly positive light; he does, after all, neglect his son's upbringing to the extent that Ludwig develops into such a vile boy. Within the "real world" of Mentor and his friends, however, the figure of Philoteknos is beyond reproach. That he should make such a statement is far more significant. Yet once again, I would argue that the author intentionally exploits the use of hyperbole when causing his characters to make such drastic statements. By comparing the cruelty of a child torturing a harmless fly to that of a hardened menace to society, Weiße succeeds in stressing the consequences of one's childhood and preempting any further potential marginalization of a child's character flaws as mere youthful indiscretions with little bearing on one's future life. Essentially, Weiße takes up the

[48] This is not the only passage in *Der Kinderfreund* which makes such statements; in fact, when Mentor tries to explain why God allows some people to die young, he suggests that God's foresight prevents hardened criminals from developing by striking them down in their childhood or youth (KF 24: 92).

banner of childhood and fights for its recognition as an important, if not *the* most important, phase in one's life.

The stakes for Weiße's concept of childhood are thus immeasurably high. A child who gleefully pulls the wings off flies is, according to this system, on the brink of becoming a hardened criminal if he is not led to realize the error of his ways when he is still young enough to change his behavior. In other words, the difference between becoming a wanton murderer and a productive member of society starts in childhood. Mentor reasons that most dangerous criminals were as poor children likely encouraged to steal modest amounts of money from others. As they were never taught an honest means of earning money, this then became a greater habit of swindling others until as adults they were willing to stop at nothing to achieve their own ends (KF 5: 57–58). Certainly, it is in the child's best interest for him or her to be corrected at a young age and set on the right path from the start. It is also important to note here, though, that unchecked moral shortcomings in one's childhood are not only detrimental to the individual in question, but also to society at large. If the common results of such situations are dangerous criminals who are a threat to everyone, society as a whole has a vested interest in the upbringing of each child. Weiße is thus advocating for the education of children who are to become productive members of society.

4.2.1.1. Rousseau on the Importance of Childhood

In stark contrast to Weiße stands Rousseau, who quite explicitly states a view which is diametrically opposed to that of Weiße: "L'emploi de l'enfance est peu de chose. Le mal qui s'y

glisse n'est point sans remede, et le bien qui s'y fait peut venir plus tard" (518).[49] Rousseau here is almost flippant in his dismissal of moral flaws which emerge in one's childhood and assumes that they can easily be changed as soon as one is older. He argues, in fact, that children under the age of twelve are in actuality unable to overcome their moral vices because they do not yet have the mental capacity and moral knowledge to consciously discern right from wrong. In this respect, Rousseau then contradicts himself by claiming that childhood is consequently the most dangerous time in a person's life: "Le plus dangereux intervalle de la vie humaine est celui de la naissance à l'age de douze ans. C'est le tems où germent les erreurs et les vices, sans qu'on ait encore aucun instrument pour les détruire ; et quand l'instrument vient les racines sont si profondes qu'il n'est plus tems de les arracher" (323).[50] Rousseau thus describes a double-edged sword: He argues that children who do not yet possess the gift of reason are unable to overcome their own vices, yet he—like Weiße—admits that vices which emerge in one's childhood may become too deeply rooted to be eliminated later in life, thereby contradicting his other assertion that the evils which spring up during childhood are of no consequence. As a result, Rousseau concludes that the safest measure for the child is for his teacher and guardian to protect him from every kind of vice in his young age: "La prémiére éducation doit donc être purement négative.

[49] "The way childhood is spent is no great matter; the evil which may find its way is not irremediable, and the good which may spring up might come later" (trans. 193).

[50] "The most dangerous period in human life lies between birth and the age of twelve. It is the time when errors and vices spring up, while as yet there is no means to destroy them; when the means of destruction are ready, the roots have gone too deep to be pulled up" (trans. 57).

Elle consiste, non point à enseigner la vertu ni la vérité, mais à garantir le cœur du vice et l'esprit de l'erreur" (323).[51]

Although Rousseau's statements above do in part contradict each other, the positions of Weiße and Rousseau on the ability of children to mend their ways when they are young stand in unequivocal opposition to one another. While Weiße argues that children can—and indeed must—correct their flaws before it is too late, Rousseau insists that a child who cannot yet exercise his faculty of reason is in no position to change his behavior or disposition. Thus, he concludes, a child's teacher ought to refrain from attempting to alter the inclinations of his pupils, lest he make their childhood needlessly unpleasant:

> C'est, me répondez-vous, le tems de corriger les mauvaises inclinations de l'homme ; c'est dans l'age de l'enfance, où les peines sont le moins sensibles, qu'il faut les multiplier pour les épargner dans l'age de raison. Mais qui vous dit que tout cet arrangement est à vôtre disposition, et que toutes ces belles instructions dont vous accablez le foible esprit d'un enfant ne lui seront pas un jour plus pernicieuses qu'utiles ? Qui vous assure que vous épargnez quelque chose par les chagrins que vous lui prodiguez ? Pourquoi lui donnez vous plus de maux que son état n'en comporte, sans être sur que ces maux présens sont à la décharge de l'avenir, et comment me prouverez-vous que ces mauvais penchans dont vous prétendez le guérir ne lui viennent pas de vos soins malentendus bien plus que de la nature ? Malheureuse prévoyance, qui rend un être actuellement misérable sur l'espoir bien ou mal fondé de le rendre heureux un jour ! Que si ces raisoneurs vulgaires confondent la licence avec la liberté, et l'enfant qu'on rend heureux avec l'enfant qu'on gâte, aprenons leur à les distinguer. (302–03)[52]

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[51] "Therefore the education of the earliest years should be merely negative. It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error" (trans. 57).

[52] "Now is the time, you say, to correct his evil tendencies; we must increase suffering in childhood, when it is less keenly felt, to lessen it in manhood. But how do you know that you can carry out all these fine schemes; how do you know that all this fine teaching with which you overwhelm the feeble mind of the child will not do him more harm than good in the future? How do you know that you can spare him anything by the vexations you heap upon him now? Why inflict on him more ills than befit his present condition unless you are quite sure that these present ills will save him future ill? And what proof can you give me that those evil tendencies you profess to cure are not the result of your foolish precautions rather than of nature? What a poor sort of foresight, to make a child wretched in the present with the more or less doubtful hope of making him happy at some future day. If such blundering thinkers fail to distinguish between liberty and licence, between a merry child and a spoilt darling, let them learn to discriminate" (trans. 43).

After all, Rousseau points out, the life expectancy is such that one half of all children do not live to see adolescence; hence, there is little point in sacrificing the present for the sake of an uncertain future (301; trans. 42). Weiße himself would clearly take issue with this line of reasoning. His entire purpose in writing a periodical for children, after all, was precisely that they might enjoy a prosperous future.

4.2.2. Budding *Bürger*: Weiße's Hopes for the Future

The examples in the previous section all illustrate the troublesome path that someone's life can take if one does not receive an appropriate moral education in one's childhood, and most of the given cases result in the individual becoming a menace to society. These negative examples suggest that Weiße's plan for the moral education of children is to steer them down the right path—namely, that they should grow up to be productive members of society. As a result, Weiße felt that literature written specifically for children must therefore be written with the view of the children's future adulthood in mind (Promies 767).

In this sense, Weiße's concept of childhood is defined in part by the relationship of childhood to adulthood. This concept does not concern children as children per se, but rather as potential adults. Reiner Wild has discussed this very problem, which he finds not only in Weiße's works for young readers, but also those of other Enlightenment children's authors, as follows:

> Die Wahrnehmung der Kinder ist von der Erwartung des künftigen Erwachsenen bestimmt: Ihre Eigenschaften, die Tugenden wie die Fehler, sind Potentialitäten, auf die es entsprechend zu reagieren gilt. Die Zuwendung zum Kind hat ihre Basis *nicht* in einem Verständnis von Kindheit, das dieser ein Eigenrecht und einen Eigenwert zubilligt, sondern in der als zentral erfahrenen Notwendigkeit, das Kind zu einem Erwachsenen zu machen. Diese Zuwendung zum Kind und mithin auch die Erziehung, die aus ihr folgt, haben ihren Ausgangspunkt *nicht* in der Vorstellung eines möglichen eigenständigen Bedürfnisses von Kindheit oder Kindsein, *nicht* in einem Bild

> vom Kind, wie es *als Kind* ist oder sein darf, sondern in dem Bild, wie der Erwachsene sein soll, zu dem das Kind werden wird. Kindheit erscheint in der aufgeklärten Kinderliteratur als ein *Transitorium.* Zwar ist Kindheit vom Erwachsensein relativ abgesondert, insbesondere darin, daß sie als eine von existenzsichernder Arbeit befreite Phase des Lernens und insofern als eine besondere Lebensphase verstanden wird; die Merkmale aber dieser Lebensphase, voran das Lernen, das Kindheit zentral bestimmt, sind jedoch auf das Erwachsensein bezogen. (Wild, *Vernunft* 134–35)

Wild's claims that children's authors of the Enlightenment viewed children as potential adults, rather than as the children they actually were or might be, sound as if they offer a critique of this view. This is not necessarily the case, for even this position represents a notable change in the discourse on childhood of that time. Whereas according to pre-Enlightenment notions of childhood—or so the common critique would have one believe—children were essentially viewed as little adults, Weiße develops a notion of childhood which views them as not-yet-adults. In so doing, he recognizes the qualities which distinguish children from adults, even if he depicts them solely in relation to the adults they may become.

Indeed, one finds that all twenty-four volumes of *Der Kinderfreund* are strikingly forward-looking in their comments toward young readers. Both Mentor and his adult friends repeatedly mention the hopes they have for the children—for both Mentor's four children in particular and for all of Mentor's young readers in general—that they might grow up to be virtuous and respected citizens who are a credit to society. In the very first paragraph of the original volume, Mentor describes his eagerness to produce a periodical for children and his dreams for all of the good it might accomplish in the future:

> Ihr müßt wissen, das ich alle Kinder recht herzlich liebe, so bald sie gute, fromme, fleißige, und gehorsame Kinder sind; daß ich ihre Gesellschaft der glänzendsten Versammlung Erwachsener vorziehe, weil ich bey diesen oft mit Schmerzen sehe, wie sehr sich die Welt in der Hoffnung, die sie von ihnen in ihren Kinderjahren hatte, aufs traurigste hintergangen sieht, da ich hingegen in euch noch lauter große Erwartungen und Hoffnungen erblicke; euch als Pflanzen ansehe, die einst zu Bäumen erwachsen, und in dem Garten Gottes die nutzbarsten und schönsten Früchte tragen werden, oder deutlicher zu reden, in euch Menschen zu sehen hoffe, die Gott zu Ehren, ihren

> Aeltern zur Freude, ihrem Nebenmenschen zum Nutzen, und sich selbst zur Glückseligkeit leben werden. (KF 1: 3–4)

Mentor claims here that he tragically views a great many adults as failures who did not manage to live up to their full potential, while in children, he views the great promise which they still possess for the future.

The plant terminology at the end of the previous quote is a theme which pervades the entire *Kinderfreund*. Although metaphors for children as growing plants were admittedly common in eighteenth-century children's literature and to a certain extent are not unusual today, this imagery is especially obvious in Weiße's work. Mentor makes repeated mention of the fruit which he expects his children one day to bear, and he chooses to conclude the entire periodical with plant imagery, as well. In Mentor's farewell to the reader in the final volume of the series, he writes:

> Und könntest du in dieß mein Herz sehen, so würdest du es voll Preis und Lob zu Gott sehen, daß er mir in dir eine Pflanzschule voll von den seligsten Hoffnungen für die Zukunft, eine Pflanzschule künftiger guter Fürsten, edelmüthiger Patrioten, rechtschaffener Bürger, vortrefflicher Väter und Haußmütter, Gatten und Gattinnen, kurz des besten Menschengeschlechts, nach jedes seinem Verhältnisse ahnden läßt[...]. (KF 24: 200)

His view of his young readers as budding plants thus coincide with his hopes that they might grow up to become "rechtschaffene Bürger" who would bear fruit for the good of society.

A common belief in the eighteenth century, furthermore, suggested that the process of education should focus on the needs of the individual so that he or she, much as a budding plant develops from a self-contained seed, might develop the material already contained within him- or herself. In repeatedly exploiting the metaphor of children as plants, Weiße builds upon this belief. This key metaphor is, it should be noted, an organic one. As such, it is applicable to all humans and depicts education as a process which affects all individuals.

This hope that all children should grow up to become useful members of the world is not just prevalent in Mentor's direct comments to the reader; the theme shows up in other texts within *Der Kinderfreund*, as well. The first volume, for example, features Karl's ninth birthday, on which occasion he receives as a gift the following poem which Herr Spirit composes for him:

An Karln
bey seinem neunten Geburthstage.

Süßer, kleiner Freund, du, in dem die Deinen
Freud' und Wohlgefallen sehn;
Siehe, wie wir uns liebesvoll vereinen,
Dein Geburthsfest zu begehn.

Dieses ist der Lohn, edler, guter Thaten,
Und der treuerfüllten Pflicht!
Kinder – welch Geschenk, wann sie wohl gerathen
Sind sie frommen Aeltern nicht!

O! wie segnen die dann den schönen Morgen,
Als ihr Daseyn sie erfreut!
Mütterliche Angst, väterliche Sorgen
Werden selbst Zufriedenheit. –

O! wie Hoffnungsreich, Sohn, ist schon die Blüte
Die uns deine Kindheit weist!
Ein empfindsam Herz, ein gesetzt Gemüthe
Und ein wißbegier'ger Geist.

O! daß sie ja nicht einst zu Schanden werde,
Blüt' und Frucht sich ähnlich sey!
Sey ein nützlicher Bürger dieser Erde
Und Gott und der Tugend treu.

Es wird Fried' und Glück deine Lebens Pfade
Stets mit Bluhmen überstreun:
Du, der Menschheit Zier hier durch Gottes Gnade,
Und dort einst ein Engel seyn. (KF 1: 124–25)

While the poem praises Karl for his sensitive nature, calm disposition, and inquisitive mind, it focuses much more on the hopes that his family and friends have placed upon him for the future

and his obligation to live up to them. One can see Weiße's plant imagery return here in the terms *Blüte* and *Frucht*, yet the poem's message for its recipient Karl is stated quite explicitly as "Sey ein nützlicher Bürger dieser Erde / Und Gott und der Tugend treu" (KF 1: 125). There is thus no room for confusion on this point. The young Karl, as well as all of the young real-life readers for whom Weiße had written the poem, are admonished to grow up to become useful, virtuous, and pious citizens. Weiße is indeed writing for a young audience with an unmistakable look to the future.

4.2.2.1. Rousseau on Children as Future Citizens

Rousseau, in contrast, does not argue for the education of young citizens; in fact, in the first few pages of his text, he establishes a stark dichotomy between the roles of "natural man" and "citizen," arguing that the interests of both are inherently at odds with one another:[53]

> L'homme naturel est tout pour lui : il est l'unité numérique, l'entier absolu, qui n'a de rapport qu'à lui-même ou à son semblable. L'homme civil n'est qu'une unité fractionnaire qui tient au dénominateur, et dont la valeur est dans son rapport avec l'entier, qui est le corps social. Les bonnes institutions sociales sont celles qui savent le mieux dénaturer l'homme, lui ôter son existence absolue pour lui en donner une relative, et transporter le *moi* dans l'unité commune ; en sorte que chaque particulier ne se croye plus un, mais partie de l'unité, et ne soit plus sensible que dans le tout. […] Celui qui dans l'ordre civil veut conserver la primauté des sentimens de la nature, ne sait ce qu'il veut. Toujours en contradiction avec lui-même, toujours flotant entre ses penchans et ses devoirs il ne sera jamais ni homme ni citoyen ; il ne sera bon ni pour lui ni pour

[53] This dichotomy was the subject of much debate during Rousseau's time and has continued to be a topic of discussion among scholars ever since. Wilhelm Voßkamp, for instance, has discussed the reactions of the Philanthropinists, most notably Joachim Heinrich Campe, to Rousseau's claim that the interests of man and citizen are opposed to one another. While Campe recognizes that these interests are occasionally at odds, he insists that there must be a point at which they intersect, even if it be difficult to locate. So although the Philanthropinists did not concede that the notions of educating children to become productive citizens versus good people were irreconcilable across the board, in those specific instances where pedagogues were forced to choose one over the other, the Philanthropinists—like Weiße, but unlike Rousseau—opted to produce responsible citizens (Voßkamp 103–05).

> les autres. Ce sera un de ces hommes de nos jours ; un François, un Anglois, un Bourgeois ; ce ne sera rien. (249–50)[54]

In light of Rousseau's well-known depiction of the severely negative consequences of society on the natural man, it is not at all surprising that he ultimately rejects the notion of educating children to become citizens capable of making positive contributions to such society. Weiße's unmistakable strong sense of obligation toward society to educate responsible citizens presents a strong juxtaposition to Rousseau, who very early on in his text dismisses such endeavors as futile. In this respect, Weiße's views match those of the Philanthropinists, who unlike Rousseau believed that raising a child to be a useful citizen and a happy individual were not necessarily mutually exclusive options; yet much as Weiße's works suggest, in those instances in which the interests of the individual and those of society at large were found to be in opposition, the needs of the many must outweigh the desires of the one (Amberg 74).

4.2.3. The Guiding Power of Reason: Childhood and the Enlightenment

As an adamant proponent of the Enlightenment, Weiße strongly believed that the education of children should be informed by the principles of reason. Only by being subjected to the exercise of reason on the part of their parents and teachers, he argued, could children learn at a young age

[54] "The natural man lives for himself; he is the unit, the whole, dependent only on himself and on his like. The citizen is but the numerator of a fraction, whose value depends on its denominator; his value depends upon the whole, that is, on the community. Good social institutions are those best fitted to make a man unnatural, to exchange his independence for dependence, to merge the unit in the group, so that he no longer regards himself as one, but as a part of the whole, and is only conscious of the common life. […] He who would preserve the supremacy of natural feelings in social life knows not what he asks. Ever at war with himself, hesitating between his wishes and his duties, he will be neither a man nor a citizen. He will be of no use to himself nor to others. He will be a man of our day, a Frenchman, an Englishman, one of the great middle class" (trans. 7–8). Strangely, Foxley's translation omits the final phrase, which is also the most powerful statement in this entire quote: "He [who would preserve the supremacy of natural feelings in social life] will be nothing."

to develop their own powers of reason in order to discern right from wrong. Not surprisingly, *Der Kinderfreund* is replete with passages in which adults instruct children in accordance with the principles of the rationalist current of the Enlightenment. Mentor explicitly praises the Enlightenment, in fact, when he glowingly describes the age of reason: "Wir leben in einer glücklichen Zeit, wo sich die vortrefflichsten Männer beeifert haben, euren Verstand durch mannichfaltigen Unterricht in allen Theilen der Wissenschaften aufzuklären, und euren Herzen Lehren der Weisheit und Tugend in jeder Art der Einkleidung, einzuprägen" (KF 24: 206). As the rest of *Der Kinderfreund* will show, Weiße also believes that children, too, can—and should—use the gift of reason.

In the very first volume of the work, Mentor states explicitly that the power of reason is the greatest gift which God has bestowed on mankind. On his son Karl's birthday, Mentor explains that physical life is a gift from God, yet "das vernünftige Leben"—an awareness that one is alive and a knowledge of *why* one lives—is a far greater gift which separates man from the animals. Mentor then concludes:

> [A]lso ist der erste, der größte Dank, den wir Gott zu bringen haben, daß er uns die Vernunft gegeben, sie, durch die wir Gott in seinen Werken, Wohlthaten und Wundern, uns selbst nach unserm innern und äußern Zustande, und was außer uns ist, die Welt mit allen ihren Geschöpfen, mit aller ihrer Schönheit erkennen, das Gute und Böse, das Wahre und Falsche unterscheiden, um das Erste zu wählen, und das Letzte zu meiden, durch die wir endlich unsre letzte, große und wichtigste Bestimmung einsehen lernen. (KF 1: 110)

The gift of reason is for Mentor the tool which all people—including children—must use to distinguish good from evil and which will ultimately guide their behavior as they strive to do good and avoid evil. Here we see the power of reason helping to guide the desires of the heart, which was a core belief of the Enlightenment. The discourse on reason during the Enlightenment focused largely on the difficulty inherent in reconciling the needs of body, mind,

and heart, which has a rationality all its own and can lead one to do things which are ultimately not in one's best interest. Weiße thus upholds this Enlightenment ideal by promoting reason as the faculty which should be used to guide one's actions.

4.2.3.1. Reasoning with Children

This instruction in the powers of reason comes first through the example of adults who regularly exercise their powers of reason in guiding their children's behavior. Throughout the entire course of *Der Kinderfreund*, rational argumentation is the standard *modus operandi* of Mentor and his four friends when instructing the children, even when the latter are very young. The men repeatedly attempt to reason with the children, rather than resorting to scare tactics or corporal punishment, in order to guide their behavior and moral development. Their discussions encompass a wide variety of topics, such as the evils of cruelty to any creature, regardless how small (KF 4: 101–20); the dangerous consequences of stubbornness (KF 5: 25–48); the importance of being well-groomed and yet the detrimental effects of being overly groomed (KF 8: 73–108); and the dangers of placing too great of an importance on earthly possessions (KF 21: 49–58).

A further, fairly extreme, example comes from the passage in which Mentor provides a list of rational arguments why all four of his children—who at this point in the story range from ages twelve to six—should join him to witness the public execution of a convicted murderer. Not surprisingly, the children are reluctant to attend such a gruesome event, and so Mentor provides a list of rational arguments to justify the necessity of the death penalty for murderers and the important example that public executions set for the rest of society.

Mentor claims that the death penalty for the crime of murder is an absolute necessity in order to ensure public safety, lest bloodthirsty killers prowl the streets for innocent victims. While he admits that there are very few people who kill without reason, Mentor nevertheless concludes that such people need to be erased from society altogether; otherwise, no one would be free to walk the streets safely without fearing for his or her life. It is not only necessary to execute convicted murderers, however, but it is moreover a necessity that these executions be a public spectacle so that all—in particular the uneducated masses—might benefit from their example. Mentor emphasizes "das abschreckende Beyspiel [...], das oft einer rohen Menge muß gegeben werden, bey welcher der Anblick blutiger Züchtigungen mehr Eindruck macht, als Lehre, Warnung und Predigt" (KF 5: 52). For a man who otherwise employs only the rational argumentation of the Enlightenment in educating his children, it is certainly noteworthy that he concedes here that the shock value of visually witnessing a public execution is for many far more effective than any amount of argumentation or instruction. In this sense, the author depicts public executions not as a mere spectacle, but as theater: The spectators identify with the condemned "protagonist," and the cathartic release of the dramatic climax of the event is intertwined with an emotional response on the part of the onlookers.

In addition to Mentor's belief in the effectiveness of the theatrical nature of an execution for an uneducated "audience" in particular, it is perhaps equally noteworthy that Mentor so greatly desires his own children also to witness the terrible spectacle, as he undoubtedly believes that their behavior and moral growth can indeed be shaped by verbal instruction which need not rely on scare tactics in order to be fruitful. After all, if he were not convinced of the benefits of rational verbal argumentation, his efforts in writing *Der Kinderfreund* would surely be in vain.

It is not necessarily contradictory, however, that Mentor should argue that the uneducated require bloody examples to learn a powerful lesson and yet at the same time encourage his better-educated children to attend the same event. He seems to be suggesting here that visual examples can enhance the effects of verbal lessons. Likewise, by providing his children with the specific reasons to attend the execution, Mentor is transforming them into "enlightened spectators" who are not being instructed solely by the shock of the execution, but rather who are greatly attuned to the event's moral implications for their own lives and for the life of the condemned man. Mentor is thus actually infusing the event with the principles of the Enlightenment; hence, it is in actuality no surprise that he should encourage his children to witness the spectacle among the "rohe Menge," who will be enjoying a less enlightened experience, even though they will be witnessing the exact same event.

In order to ensure that his children get the most out of the experience, Mentor does indeed continue on to clearly explain the various benefits that his children will receive by attending the execution. First of all, he argues, witnessing an execution would develop courage and fortitude, an essential virtue for the boys in particular, who might very well later enter a profession which requires them often to witness bloodshed or even participate in executions. Mentor specifically mentions that he knows of several extremely squeamish judges and clergymen who have nightmares for weeks before each execution they have to attend and who must even shamefully resort to various "Stärkungsmittel" in order to endure the event (KF 5: 61–62).

While Mentor affirms his confidence that none of his children, nor any of his young readers, would ever commit murder, he likewise reminds them that countless people have been

led astray by their uncontrolled passions. Once again, he also points out that small transgressions committed in one's youth often lead to more heinous misdeeds in adulthood if one does not learn to keep one's passions in check at a young age (KF 5: 62–63). Thus, he concludes, it is actually children in particular who should be encouraged to attend public executions, for they have the most to benefit from witnessing such a public spectacle—and likewise the most to lose from not witnessing it.

Finally, Mentor concludes that the visual example of the execution will foster in his children a greater thankfulness to God for having blessed them with godly parents, teachers, and friends who have guided them in discerning right from wrong. Although Mentor admits that the culprit fully deserves his penalty for his crime, he concedes that the murderer is still to be pitied, as one can only assume that he suffered as a child under the hands of negligent or wicked parents who provided him no moral education and ignored or even praised him for smaller misdeeds (KF 5: 57–58, 65).

Now that Mentor has clearly outlined the benefits his children can expect from attending the event, they are ready to witness the execution as informed spectators. The text provides no description of the actual events which take place at the execution. In light of the great value which the fictional Mentor places upon witnessing executions, it is surprising that the historical author chooses not to include any description of it for his real-life readers. This might suggest that the author was concerned about making the text too graphic or gruesome for his young readers; but given that he endorses even very young children to witness such events in person, this seems unlikely. A more plausible explanation for the lack of description is that it is not the idea of an execution itself which can be so powerfully instructive for others, but rather the actual

experience of witnessing it directly. In providing a list of reasons why his young readers should not deprive themselves of this opportunity, the text performs as much as it can in order to lead its readers to this experience; without the experience itself, the reader's reaction will surely not be as significant.

The episode concludes by simply stating that the children were grateful that they attended because the event led to much instructive conversation among them (KF 5: 66). Mentor's plan is thus effective. By using clear, rational arguments to inform the children how the event could be of benefit to them, he has managed to transform the execution, which for the uneducated is merely a gruesome scare tactic used to maintain public safety, into a valuable experience which fosters courage and thankfulness for God's blessings.

4.2.3.2. Reasoning Children

Although this example of the public execution illustrates how adults can use the power of reason to guide their children's behavior or attitudes, Mentor has a far higher goal in educating his children according to the principles of the Enlightenment: By repeatedly providing his children with a rational justification for his desires for their lives, he is teaching them to exercise their own powers of reason in other situations, an ability now widely known as "transfer of learning." In other words, he is developing their powers of reason so that they might become more independent in guiding their own behavior at a younger age. Weiße thus uses rational argumentation with his young readers so that they, too, might develop their own sense of reason. It is not surprising that *Der Kinderfreund* contains other examples of this fulfilled goal—that is,

passages in which young children use reason to guide their choices in discerning what is right from what is wrong.

One such example comes from Weiße's play *Versprechen muß man halten. Oder: ein guter Mensch macht andre gute Menschen*, which is included in Volume 14 of *Der Kinderfreund* as the work of Herr Spirit. In this play, ten-year-old Karl consents to a deal with another ten-year-old—with the telling name of Herr Trickmann—and promises that they will evenly split all of the toys and sweets they receive for Christmas. Karl later confesses that he made the deal out of greed: Trickmann's mother is notorious for lavishing her son with lots of toys, while Karl's father thinks toys are frivolous and usually only gives his son practical items such as clothing, which are not part of the boys' deal because they cannot be divided. In reality, Trickmann has outwitted Karl because his mother has since passed away; and he well knows that his father will not give him many toys or sweets, as he too believes they are frivolous. As it turns out, however, Karl receives a great number of playthings from his aunt this year, and now he is reluctant to part with them in exchange for half of Trickmann's meager stash, particularly since he believes that he has been duped and even suspects that Trickmann is not being truthful about the very small number of gifts he received for Christmas.

At this point, Karl discusses the situation with another boy of his age—with the equally telling name of Wilhelm Herzig—who is poor, yet honest and kindhearted, and lives with his widowed mother in Karl's father's house. Karl wants to back out of his promise to Trickmann and is looking to his friend Wilhelm for support in this decision; but the extremely honest Wilhelm, who has spoken with Trickmann personally and knows all of the details of the situation, argues that the principles of logic and ethics prohibit this. Wilhelm points out that

even if he loses half of his Christmas presents, the remaining half is still more than enough for one child; this loss, moreover, would be the just punishment for Karl's greed. Karl continues on to explain his suspicions that Trickmann isn't being honest about the presents he received:

> KARL. Ja; und das, was er mit mir theilen sollte, wird er läugnen, um mich um das meinige zu bringen.
> WILHELM. Wenn er das thut, und dir die Wahrheit verbirgt, so ist er ein Betrüger.
> KARL. Und wer mich betrügt, dem brauche ich nicht Wort zu halten.
> WILHELM. Ey pfuy, Karl! Wer hat dir das gesagt? Das heißt so viel, wenn er einer wäre, so wolltest du es auch seyn?
> KARL. Er weiß ja viel, was ich bekommen habe, wenn ichs ihm nicht sage.
> WILHELM. Kannst du dir es selbst verbergen; und wenn es Niemand wüßte, als du, würdest du dich nicht vor dir selbst schämen müssen?
> KARL. Aber, ich habe von dem Papa auch nicht mehr an Nebendingen, als er von dem Seinigen erhalten: denn die andern Sachen – du weißts ja, sind von der Tante.
> WILHELM. Hast du die Ausnahme bey deinem Versprechen gemacht?
> KARL. Freylich wohl nicht.
> WILHELM. Also auf alles, was du bekommen würdest.
> KARL. Je ja, (stampft mit dem Fuße) ich möchte mich - - -
> WILHELM. So mußt du dein Versprechen halten: ich sags noch einmal.
> KARL. Je nu, wenn ich muß? Aber wer will mich zwingen?
> WILHELM. Dein Versprechen, Karl, und wenn du schlecht genug denkst, von diesem abzugehen, so wird Trickmann ein Recht haben, dich für einen Betrüger überall zu erklären: denn daß er es ist, kannst du ihm doch nicht beweisen. (KF 14: 55–57)

Wilhelm's arguments here clearly conform to Mentor's principles of reason as a God-given tool to discern right from wrong. Wilhelm points out, for example, that the fact that Trickmann might have deceived Karl in no way justifies Karl becoming deceptive himself; and from a very rational, pragmatic standpoint, breaking his promise would permit Trickmann to tell everyone that Karl is a deceiver who does not keep his word. When Karl tries to create a loophole by explaining that most of his toys were from his aunt, rather than his father, Wilhelm even points out that the terms of the deal do not permit this. Most importantly, however, Wilhelm explains that Karl will never be able to hide the truth from himself and would suffer the shame of doing something which he well knows is wrong.

Ultimately, Wilhelm's line of reasoning prevails and Karl is convinced to make good on his promise. When Karl later tells Trickmann that Wilhelm was the one who persuaded him to be so generous, Trickmann is moved by the poor boy's uprightness and feels convicted to reveal some money that he had received from his father for Christmas, but had not told Karl about because he greedily did not want to split it. Both boys finally decide to give half of their Christmas gifts not to each other, but to the noble Wilhelm, whom Karl's father likewise praises for his kindheartedness, concluding: "Ein guter Mensch macht immer wieder gute Menschen" (KF 14: 98).

The dialogue in this play, particularly in the scene above between Karl and Wilhelm, is strikingly similar to many other conversations that Mentor and his friends have with the children elsewhere in *Der Kinderfreund*. The important distinction here, though, is that the one making the arguments is another child. Weiße depicts here an overly idealized interaction between two ten-year-old boys, yet the character of Wilhelm reveals Weiße's desire that children be able to use their own God-given powers of reason to guide their behavior by teaching them right from wrong. This is just one example of Mentor's hopes for a generation of enlightened children who embrace the power of reason as their guiding principle in discerning right from wrong—and, within the greater context of *Der Kinderfreund*, his hopes for a generation of parents who guide their children to do so.

4.2.3.3. Rousseau on Reason

On this point, however, Rousseau's *Émile* offers a strongly opposing view. Although Rousseau greatly values the power of reason, he argues that children are not yet mentally mature enough to

develop this faculty. Thus, any attempt to reason with a child or to teach a child to reason on his own will ultimately fail:

> Raisoner avec les enfans étoit la grande maxime de Locke ; c'est la plus en vogue aujourdui ; son succés ne me paroit pourtant pas fort propre à la mettre en crédit, et pour moi je ne vois rien de plus sot que ces enfans avec qui l'on a tant raisoné. De toutes les facultés de l'homme la raison, qui n'est pour ainsi dire qu'un composé de toutes les autres, est celle qui se dévelope le plus difficilement et le plus tard, et c'est de celle-là qu'on veut se servir pour développer les prémiéres ! Le chef-d'œuvre d'une bonne éducation est de faire un homme raisonable, et l'on prétend elever un enfant par la raison ! C'est commencer par la fin, c'est vouloir faire l'instrument de l'ouvrage. Si les enfans entendoient raison ils n'auroient pas besoin d'être élevés ; mais en leur parlant dès leur bas âge une langue qu'ils n'entendent point on les accoutume à se payer de mots, à controller tout ce qu'on leur dit, à se croire aussi sages que leurs maitres, à devenir disputeurs et mutins, et tout ce qu'on pense obtenir d'eux par des motifs raisonables, on ne l'obtient jamais que par ceux de convoitise ou de crainte ou de vanité qu'on est toujours forcé d'y joindre. (317)[55]

The faculty of reason is for Rousseau the ultimate goal of the education process; as such, it would be absurd to expect a child to exercise a faculty which is far beyond his reach. Trying to do so would only frustrate both student and teacher. Rousseau concludes: "La nature veut que les enfans soient enfans avant que d'être hommes. Si nous voulons pervertir cet ordre nous produirons des fruits précoces qui n'auront ni maturité ni saveur et ne tarderont pas à se corrompre : nous aurons de jeunes docteurs et de vieux enfans" (319).[56]

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[55] "'Reason with children' was Locke's chief maxim; it is in the height of fashion at present, and I hardly think it is justified by its results; those children who have been constantly reasoned with strike me as exceedingly silly. Of all man's faculties, reason, which is, so to speak, compounded of all the rest, is the last and choicest growth, and it is this you would use for the child's early training. To make a man reasonable is the coping stone of a good education, and yet you profess to train a child through his reason! You begin at the wrong end, you make the end the means. If children understood reason they would not need education, but by talking to them from their earliest age in a language they do not understand you accustom them to be satisfied with words, to question all that is said to them, to think themselves as wise as their teachers; you train them to be argumentative and rebellious; and whatever you think you gain from motives of reason, you really gain from greediness, fear, or vanity with which you are obliged to reinforce your reasoning" (trans. 53–54).

[56] "Nature would have them children before they are men. If we try to invert this order we shall produce a forced fruit immature and flavourless, fruit that will be rotten before it is ripe; we shall have young doctors and old children" (trans. 54).

The primary difference between Rousseau's and Weiße's thoughts on the use of reason with children is thus the role which they ascribe to it in the process of education. Whereas Rousseau claims that the ability to reason is the highest goal in the education of an individual, Weiße views it as a means to an end, a tool that can and must be used in order to discern truth. And as the gift of reason is the greatest—and in his opinion, holiest—tool at an individual's disposal, one must necessarily be trained to use it from very early on.

4.2.4. Their Fathers' Sons: The Parents' Role in Their Child's Behavior

In light of the fact that Weiße so strongly emphasizes the hopes of his young readers' futures, one must also note that the onus to choose the right path does not lie upon the shoulders of the children themselves; rather, it is their parents who have the obligation to society to steer their children down the right path, lest they become social deviants in their adulthood. In this respect, Weiße holds the parents responsible for the actions—and misdeeds—of their children, almost without exception. Childhood is for Weiße a period in which the child is under the complete guardianship of his or her parents and in which the child does not yet have full responsibility over his or her own actions.

Examples of naughty, ill-behaved children permeate the entirety of *Der Kinderfreund*; and almost without exception, the author allocates the blame to the parents. When Mentor and his family visit an old friend in the countryside, for example, Mentor's entire family immediately notices that the friend's children are rude and ill-behaved. Mentor is quick to blame the parents, even though the father is an old friend, and points out that the man has better control over his dogs than his children:

> Unser Wirth hatte fünf bis sechs Kinder, und noch mehr Hunde. Die meinigen befreundeten sich bald mit jenen; aber ich muß es aufrichtig gestehen; meines Freundes Erziehung mochte wohl nicht die beste seyn: denn seine Hunde waren zehnmal besser gezogen, als seine Kinder. Diesen konnte er zu wiederholten Malen etwas gebieten oder verbieten, sie thaten es nicht, da jene ein Pfiff oder ein Zungenklatsch in der schönsten Ordnung erhielt. (KF 5: 78–79)

The fact that Mentor cannot even count the children comically hints at how wild these children must truly be. Presumably neither Mentor nor Weiße are actually endorsing that parents exercise authority over their children in the same manner that one would do so with a dog; rather, the contrast between the ill-behaved children and the well-trained dogs seems to highlight the extent of the children's disobedience. They refuse to fulfill even the simplest of requests from their parents.

The problem here, Mentor continues, is a lack of discipline. When one of the naughty boys ruins his clothes in a mud puddle, his parents at first send him to his room for the remainder of the day, but then quickly undermine their own authority and simply make him change clothes (KF 5: 79). The parents' inability or unwillingness to discipline their children effectively is thus the cause of the children's poor behavior. Mentor does not hold the children themselves responsible for their naughtiness.

This is certainly a straightforward example, yet even in the most extreme cases, Mentor still argues that the parents are usually to blame for their children's actions. Mentor offers one such example from a newspaper article in which a fourteen-year-old Norwegian girl bribed an eleven-year-old boy—with the odd price of forty-eight pins (*Stecknadeln*)—to kill her sleeping parents with a hatchet while the girl attacked them with an iron bar. After thirty blows, the mother died; yet the girl's father awoke before they could attack him and turned the children over to the police. Mentor's children are naturally shocked by the gruesome story and question how someone could possibly murder her own parents, to which Mentor responds:

> Ich gestehe noch einmal, sagte ich: ich würde diese Geschichte schlechterdings für eine Fabel erklären, so bald die Zeitung zugleich versicherte, daß dieser ihre Aeltern fromme, gute Leute gewesen wären: aber ich fürchte, ich fürchte, die Ursache dieser schrecklichen That oder dieser so verderbten Kinderherzen liegt in einer sehr schlimmen Erziehung, und in einem vorgängigem Betragen der Aeltern. Wenn sie ihren Kindern die heilige Erinnerung von der Wiege an tief eingeprägt hätten: „Dein Lebelang habe Gott vor Augen, und hüte dich, daß du in keine Sünde willigest, noch wider Gottes Gebot thust:“ so würden sie, meiner Vorstellung nach, ein solches Verbrechen zu begehen nie in Stande gewesen seyn. Inzwischen ist es ein Beweis, daß auch Kinder die äußerste Bosheit zu verüben im Stande sind, die Ursachen davon mögen in oder außer ihnen seyn. Wie viel habt Ihr also Ursache, Gott stets um Segen zu eurer Erziehung anzurufen, über euch selbst sorgfältig zu wachen, und die Fehler, die Ihr an andern so hassenswürdig findet, nicht selbst zu begehen. (KF 6: 145–46)

Even in this very extreme example, Mentor still believes that the girl's parents were somehow to blame for the fact that she murdered them and feels certain that such an atrocity could not have happened to parents who were "fromme, gute Leute." Mentor evidently takes it for granted that such parents would also be the kind to oversee the proper education of their own children. Otherwise, one could arrive at the conclusion that the process of education itself is irrelevant as long as one's parents are pious and good; yet Mentor—and, by extension, Weiße—subsume concern for the education of one's children under the umbrella categories of piety and goodness. In other words, any parents who were truly "fromme, gute Leute" would see to the education of their children, rather than neglecting them. At the end of this passage, however, Mentor admittedly hints that the cause of a child's wickedness could be within the child herself; as we will see shortly, this suggests that one's upbringing cannot be the sole cause of one's actions.

The author does, however, still attribute blame to the parents of adult offenders. In the case of convicted murderers, for example, Mentor believes that their life of crime can be traced back to the poor upbringing they received from their parents as children:

> Es findet sich noch ein anderer Grund, warum man auch dem ärgsten Bösewichte sein Mitleid nicht ganz versagen kann. Wenn wir oft einen solchen Menschen von dem ersten Augenblicke seines Lebens an, durch alle Auftritte bis zu demjenigen folgen sollten, wo die göttliche Gerechtigkeit endlich von seinen Bosheiten ermüdet, ihn der weltlichen in die Hände fallen läßt, und die Welt von seiner Last befreyet: so würden wir schaudern, so bald wir uns in seinen Stand versetzten. Verruchte Aeltern, wo er schon mit der Muttermilch Gift einsog; nicht nur keine,

> sondern gar eine schlechte Erziehung, wo er von Gott, von der Liebe des Nächsten, von den Pflichten, die uns Religion und Vernunft vorschreibt, nicht nur nichts hörte, sondern wo selbst der gute Saame, den die Natur in sein Herz pflanzte, mit Gewalt erstickt wurde: wo man ihm die gottlosesten Grundsätze beybrachte, ihn schon zu kleinen Bosheiten und Diebstählen abrichtete, ihn wegen glücklich verübter lobte, und zu grössern ermunterte, endlich keine Handthierung lernen ließ, wodurch er sein Brod ehrlicher Weise verdienen konnte. (KF 5: 57–58)

Even though a grown man has responsibility over his own actions, he is thus not entirely to blame; in fact, he was steered down the wrong path by his parents in his childhood. In the passage above, however, Mentor mentions "der gute Saame, den die Natur in sein Herz pflanzte" (KF 5: 57), which suggests that each individual is born with a certain innate sense of good which can be developed—but only under the right circumstances. As with any seed in the natural world, this "guter Saame" is only the *potential* for a future bud; there is no guarantee that goodness will sprout of its own accord. Indeed, within the wrong environment, suggests Mentor, this potential for goodness can be extinguished by the individuals around one.

This point is further complicated by numerous examples included in several of the stories or plays in *Der Kinderfreund* in which one sibling is a shining example of goodness, while the other sibling is anything but good. Just one of the many examples is Ludwig, the extremely naughty titular character in *Der ungezogene Knabe*, whose sister is unfailingly well-behaved, honest, generous, and kind. If the parents are exclusively to blame for their children's behavior and disposition, it logically follows that children with the same parents should be of a similar disposition; to find two siblings who are so different from one another seems to contradict Weiße's suggestion that one's family environment and upbringing play a critical role in the development of one's moral character.

One could argue that these are fictional examples—even within the fictional world of Mentor and his family—which serve merely to illustrate a particular lesson in which the parents'

role is often immaterial. Such a line of argumentation is complicated, however, by "real-life" examples which exist within the same world as Mentor's family. Mentor's eldest daughter Lottchen, for instance, corresponds with a friend named Emilie von Feldhausen, the daughter of one of Mentor's dearest friends, who spends the summer with her parents in the countryside. The girls' correspondence is featured several times over the run of the series. Emilie is kind-hearted, thoughtful, generous, and optimistic, while her sister Julie—who on occasion writes to Lottchen to complain about her dull life in the country—is vain, lazy, self-centered, and materialistic (see, for instance, KF 2: 15–35). It is evident from Emilie's and Julie's letters that their father is reasonable and virtuous, while their mother is shallow and materialistic. In one of her replies to Emilie, Lottchen herself attributes the difference in the daughters' dispositions to the differences in those of the parents and assumes that each parent more or less singlehandedly undertook the upbringing of one of the two daughters: "In der That würde mir es unbegreiflich seyn: wenn ich nicht aus Ihrer beider Briefen sähe, daß sich der einen Erziehung mehr der Papa, und der andern mehr die Mama angenommen hat, die so verschieden in ihrer Denkungsart zu seyn scheinen" (KF 2: 39).

Although Mentor elsewhere blames the girls' shallow mother for spoiling Julie and praises Emilie as being reasonable and virtuous like her father, it is difficult to believe that the girls would have been raised independently. Emilie, in fact, occasionally comments on the social events her mother frequently forces her to attend or the ridiculous, would-be fashionable outfits that her mother makes her wear against her will (KF 6: 181–87), implying that her mother does indeed play a direct role in Emilie's upbringing.

It is consequently difficult to reconcile this example, as well as many other similar ones, with Mentor's suggestion that parents are responsible for their children's disposition and behavior. One must ultimately conclude that neither Mentor nor Weiße can admit that a child's parents are exclusively responsible for every aspect of his or her disposition or behavior. It is only on rare occasions that Mentor makes such concessions as to admit that a child's God-given disposition could play a role in his or her behavior, yet the world of *Der Kinderfreund* is peopled by numerous child characters whose behavior or moral character does not mimic that of their parents.

While this particular aspect of Weiße's ideals for a moral education during childhood is easily his most contradictory on the surface level, these contradictions ultimately prove to be largely irrelevant for the author's purposes. Weiße's primary readership admittedly consists of children, yet he is also consciously writing his periodical for adults. In the market for children's literature, it is, after all, the parents who ultimately determine the success of a particular work by deciding whether or not to purchase it for their children. As a result, a work of children's literature must appeal to both child and adult alike. Much of Weiße's work is thus written for adults who will be raising or educating children—a phenomenon which Bettina Hurrelmann refers to as "Erziehung der Erzieher" (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 197).

The passages in *Der Kinderfreund* which emphasize the importance of a child's parents in his or her moral development are clearly directed more at an adult readership than a young one. Such passages could be of little benefit to children, who naturally have no control over who their parents are and how they choose to raise their children. Rather, these sections serve as an admonition to parents to heed their obligation to steer their children down the right moral path

before it is too late for a naughty child to mend his or her ways. If childhood as Weiße presents it is so strongly marked by moral and social education, then a child's parents must serve as his or her primary teachers, particularly by setting a positive example. According to other passages in *Der Kinderfreund*, however, it is critical that parents take a vested interest in their children's academic education, as well.

4.2.5. Entertainment as Education, Education as Entertainment: Forms of Play

Finally, there is one last component of Weiße's concept of childhood which should be discussed not because of its prevalence within *Der Kinderfreund*, but rather because of its conspicuous absence—namely, play. At almost no point in the series are the four Mentor children depicted as playing in a way that could not be construed as educational. Quite the contrary: The only passage in the entire series, in fact, which explicitly discusses appropriate games[57] and forms of play actually stresses the point that any form of play should be educational in some respect.

This passage appears in Volume 2 of the series when the Mentor children host a party for their friends. The children decide to play a *Pfänderspiel* which requires them to create challenges or riddles for the other players who have lost a small token previously in the game; in order to reclaim the token, the player must solve the riddle or successfully perform the challenge.

[57] Elsewhere in *Der Kinderfreund*, the term *Spiel* usually refers to gambling, an activity which—not surprisingly—meets with the disapproval of Mentor and the other adult characters, largely because they associate it with sins such as greed, deception, and swindling. Volume 23 of the series opens with an extended discussion of the dangers of gambling after an incident in which the three oldest children are depressed because they have each just lost all of their allowance money in a card game at a friend's house (KF 23: 1–26). This discussion is followed by a play written by Herr Spirit entitled *Die jungen Spieler, oder: Böse Gesellschaften verderben gute Sitten* (KF 23: 27–132). The play contrasts two fourteen-year-old boys: The behavior of one is beyond reproach because he has been raised by a nurturing father, while the other suffers from a gambling addiction, which is depicted as the result of his poor upbringing by his largely absent father.

The children are at a loss for clever ideas, begin to repeat the same challenges, and quickly get bored of playing the game (KF 2: 123–24). At this point, Mentor intervenes:

> Ich sagte bey dieser Veranlassung zu meinen Freunden, wie sehr ich wünschte, daß man theils auf neue Kinderspiele sinnen, theils die alten verbessern möchte. Z. E. bey den Pfänderspielen sollte man Aufgaben erfinden, und so gar, wenn es sich thun ließ, gewisse Regeln den Kindern an die Hand geben, wodurch sie selbst welche erfinden könnten, und wo, durch einen lebhaften Scherz zugleich ihr Witz geschärfet würde. Um einen kleinen Versuch zu machen, baten wir uns bey den Kindern aus, daß allezeit Einer von uns die Anfrage, was das Pfand thun solle? beantworten möchte. (KF 124–25)

Mentor thus seizes the opportunity to transform a simple game into an educational experience. Over the course of the following twelve pages, Mentor and the four family friends offer the kids in the story—and the readers—numerous opportunities to develop one's creativity, wit, and lateral-thinking skills. The children are asked to compose poems and stories, devise a melody for an existing poem, and solve seemingly impossible riddles. In the end, these activities meet with the highest praise on the part of the delighted children: "So endigte sich dieß Vergnügen, und alle sagten, daß ihnen niemals ein Pfänderspiel so viel Freude gemacht habe" (KF 2: 137).

The implications of this incident are clear: Educational play proves, in the end, not only to provide an instructive and beneficial experience for the children, but more importantly to be a significantly more enjoyable undertaking than the idle, misguided play of which they tire so quickly at the beginning of the passage. Weiße is clearly suggesting that every moment of a child's life should provide him or her with some sort of instructive experience. There is no place within his concept of childhood and pedagogical ideals for children to run around simply in order to release pent-up energy or enjoy the simple thrills of frolicking to and fro. Within the world of *Der Kinderfreund*, such aimless physical activity is associated with ill behavior and a poor upbringing and hence is repeatedly condemned. One such example is the passage which we

examined earlier in which Mentor and his children are appalled by the wild, unruly behavior of the children of a man whom they visit in the countryside. When the children run all over the place, Mentor concludes that the man's dogs are better behaved than his children (KF 5: 78–79). And while the Mentor family is depicted taking walks or picnicking in the countryside throughout the series, these outings always feature discussions of beneficial topics and recitations of virtue-instilling poetry.

For Weiße, education and entertainment go hand in hand. Idle play without any clear instructive purpose, he concludes, is fruitless. Conversely, the most enjoyable experiences are those in which one's mind and character are improved through some sort of educational purpose or goal. In the end, it is not surprising that Weiße should be of this opinion or should devote fifteen pages of text chronicling an educational *Pfänderspiel* in order to make this point explicit. After all, this is his ostensible goal in publishing *Der Kinderfreund* in the first place. The didactic intentions of his work are made evident from the start, yet the uniqueness of his endeavor lies in his attempt to show that these educational goals could be achieved in an entertaining way which would appeal to his young audience. Enjoyment and education are thus so inextricably intertwined for Weiße that he rejects any form of undirected play as a waste of the child's time.

4.3. Parent as Teacher: Weiße's Household Pedagogical Model

The various episodes in Weiße's *Kinderfreund* are usually initiated by a particular event within the Mentor household or a random occurrence which someone brings to the group's attention. When the boys tease Lottchen for sleeping in particularly late one morning, Mentor takes the

opportunity to teach the children about the importance of getting an early start to the morning. Likewise, when Herr Papillion announces that a local fair is exhibiting an elephant, he offers the children a detailed lesson about the creature before they go observe it in person. Two points are worth noting here: First of all, Weiße seems to be suggesting that a child's education can and should continue to take place within the home apart from a formal curriculum; and in this respect, the child's parents will need to serve as the instructors. This holds true not just for moral or social lessons, but also for academic education—by which I mean the acquisition of factual information and the establishment of a general knowledge base. All of Papillion's lessons on the natural world and Chronickel's history lessons, after all, take part outside of a formal instructional setting. Secondly, it appears that any event, no matter how seemingly trivial, can become a learning opportunity for a child if his or her parent chooses to make it one. Proof that Weiße himself endorsed such a position comes from his autobiography, in which he describes his pedagogical philosophy as follows:

> Die Belehrung, welche man Kindern außer den eigentlichen Lehrstunden geben will, wird am sichersten an die kleinen Vorfälle des Tages angeknüpft, in den Antworten auf ihre neugierigen und wißbegierigen Fragen fortgesponnen, und in Unterredungen, oder Erzählungen, oder auch in Dichtung eingekleidet. Behandelt man Kinder zwar als ungebildete aber als Bildungsfähige Wesen, läßt man sie sprechen, ist man geduldig bey ihren schiefen Urtheilen und Ansichten der Dinge, nimmt man Rücksicht auf die Verschiedenheit ihres Temperamentes, ihrer Neigungen und Fähigkeiten, so kann man sie bald an lehrreiche Gespräche über ernsthafte und wichtige Gegenstände gewöhnen; vorausgesetzt, daß sie von erster Kindheit an in der Gewöhnung zum Aufmerken, zum Denken und Sprechen nicht ganz zurückgeblieben sind. (*Selbstbiographie* 186–87)

By exploiting the happenstances of the day, the parent as teacher can and should instruct his children in all manner of topics. Even a serious or complex topic is worth discussing with children if they can relate it to their immediate lives by associating it with something that just happened to them personally.

Weiße himself recognized that the very idea of educating children within the family beyond the children's formal schooling was in and of itself a novel idea at that time, as he continues on to discuss in his autobiography:

> Sehr gewöhnlich war es nun eben bey der ersten Erscheinung des Kinderfreundes nicht, daß man Kindern außer ihren eigentlichen Lehrstunden etwas beyzubringen und ihnen Sinn für eine lehrreiche Unterhaltung einzuflößen oder die Fähigkeit dazu zu benutzen suchte. Gewöhnlich wurden die Kleinen auf ihre Schul- und Kinderstuben verbannt und zu einer Art des Spielens genöthigt, wobey sie entweder ihre Kräfte gar nicht gebrauchten oder mißbrauchen lernten [...]. Eine liberale Behandlung der Kinder, wie sie im Kinderfreunde dargestellt ward, hatte den Reiz der Neuheit für Eltern, Erzieher und Kinder. Glücklicher Weise war man aber auf dem Puncte der allgemeinen Bildung, um das Vernünftige und Zweckmäßige davon einzusehen. (*Selbstbiographie* 187–88)

Once again, we see evidence that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was also directed toward the parents of Weiße's readers, suggesting that parents should involve themselves directly in the instruction of their children. Thus, as he was writing on the cusp of a new age of educational ideals, the author not only offered a new pedagogical ideal of his own, but also a new image of the family with respect to the instruction of children. Bettina Hurrelmann has, furthermore, argued that this particular family model which Weiße depicts actually serves as a second source of education within the realm of *Der Kinderfreund*. The songs, fables, plays, and moral discussions independently serve as educational texts, but the framing narrative itself, in which a new family model is portrayed, functions as a separate form of social education which is directed primarily at adult readers (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 202–03).

Within *Der Kinderfreund* itself, Weiße promotes this new family model from the start by providing the very best role model for all would-be parent-teachers: none other than Mentor himself. In the first paragraph of the original volume, Mentor mentions that he is willing to make any sacrifice so that he may personally instruct and entertain his children:

> Diese meine Liebe zu euch gewinnt überdieß dadurch einen großen Zuwachs, da ich selbst Vater von vier Kindern bin, die ich mehr als alle Schätze der Erde, mehr als die ganze Welt, ja, ich

> möchte fast sagen, mehr als mein Leben liebe, und jene große Hoffnung auch von ihnen einst erfüllt zu sehen hoffe und wünsche. Einen so freudigen Endzweck zu erreichen, wende ich alle meine Bemühungen, Kräfte und Vermögen an. Ich entsage allen Vergnügungen damit ich ihnen Vergnügen und Unterricht verschaffen kann. (KF 1: 4)

Mentor then continues on to explain that he is selective among his friends and only truly befriends those who are eager to help teach his children:

> Endlich habe ich alle Freunde, die bey mir aus und eingehen, schon dahin gestimmt, daß sie an der Unterhaltung und dem Unterrichte meiner Kinder, mir mit müssen arbeiten helfen, wenn sie mir gefallen wollen; oder vielmehr, ich habe lauter solche Freunde gewählt, die selbst Kinderfreunde, folglich auch Freunde der Meinigen sind; die sich mithin durch das Gute, was sie bey meinen Kindern stiften, sich selbst und mir Freude, vielleicht bey der späten Nachwelt einen aufrichtigen Dank, und in dem Himmel selbst eine Belohnung verschaffen können. (KF 1: 5–6)

The new family model should thus include not only the parents to serve as instructors, but also any adult figure who is willing to take a personal interest in the children of the home.

4.3.1. Rousseau on the Parent as Teacher

In a similar vein, Rousseau also argues that a child's parents should take a direct role in his upbringing and education; yet in contrast to Weiße, Rousseau assigns each parent a particular role. Whereas Weiße's text endorses a general model in which the parents oversee their children's education, we have already seen that the mother is almost entirely absent from the series. The Mentor family children are essentially raised exclusively by adult male figures—namely, Weiße and his four friends. Rousseau, on the other hand, outlines the proper role which both the father and the mother should play in a child's upbringing.

Specifically, Rousseau argues that mothers should breastfeed their own children, rather than delivering them over to wet nurses. The very concept of a wet nurse, he argues, defies the natural order; and he wonders how a mother could entrust her baby to the care of a woman who neglects the well-being of her own child for the sake of another. He likewise concludes that the

use of a wet nurse will prohibit the child from developing true affection for his mother and will cause him to ultimately look down upon his former foster mother (254–57; trans. 11–13).[58]

Rousseau continues on, however, to argue that the natural order should also be maintained during a child's actual education—namely, that a child should be educated by none other than his own father:

> Voulez-vous donc qu'il garde sa forme originelle ? Conservez-la dès l'instant qu'il vient au monde. Sitôt qu'il nait, emparez-vous de lui, et ne le quittez plus qu'il ne soit homme : vous ne reussirez jamais sans cela. Comme la véritable nourrice est la mére, le véritable précepteur est le pére. Qu'ils s'accordent dans l'ordre de leurs fonctions ainsi que dans leur sistême ; que des mains de l'un l'enfant passe dans celles de l'autre. Il sera mieux élevé par un pére judicieux et borné, que par le plus habile maitre du monde ; car le zéle suppléera mieux au talent que le talent au zéle. (261–62)[59]

It is in the child's best interest to be educated by the man who has the most obvious personal interest in his well-being. By the same token, Rousseau reemphasizes here the importance of a mother's role in the nursing of her baby, thereby explicitly granting her a necessary role in child-rearing which Weiße all but ignores. Ultimately, Rousseau's primary reason for this line of argumentation is that the natural order demands it in order to serve the best interests of the child. He thus implores mothers and fathers to once again resume their natural roles as nurses and teachers, respectively, so that the natural order might be restored.

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[58] In fact, one of the plays in Weiße's *Kinderfreund* deals with this very subject. In the play *Die Milchschwestern* (KF 4: 3–31), two sisters are visited by their former wet nurse, along with her two daughters. One of the wealthy sisters is kindhearted and welcomes them as family, while the other behaves haughtily and rejects them as servants. Naturally, it is the former attitude which is endorsed within the play, but the text provides no comment on his thoughts regarding the practice itself of hiring a wet nurse.

[59] "Would you keep him as nature made him? Watch over him from his birth. Take possession of him as soon as he comes into the world and keep him till he is a man; you will never succeed otherwise. The real nurse is the mother and the real teacher is the father. Let them agree in the ordering of their duties as well as in their method, let the child pass from one to the other. He will be better educated by a sensible though ignorant father than by the cleverest master in the world. For zeal will atone for lack of knowledge, rather than knowledge for lack of zeal" (trans. 16).

4.3.2. Abusive Teachers and Negligent Parents

Although Weiße also argues that parents should play a direct role in the education of their own children, his reasons for doing so are quite different. By proposing a new view of education that far surpassed the limits of formal lessons and suggested that everyone could act as an instructor, Weiße was simultaneously rejecting a common method of education at the time in which the parents played little to no role in the instruction of their children. At least in the upper middle-class families such as the one depicted in the periodical, boys often received instruction from one private tutor, while the girls were under the supervision of a governess. The author finds several reasons for concern with parents who play no immediate role in the education of their children. Not only do the children miss out on many opportunities for learning outside of their formal lessons, but they might also suffer during their formal lessons, as well. Weiße warns that parents who neglect their children's education may be submitting their children to private tutors who are incompetent, corrupt, or even abusive. There are several instances in *Der Kinderfreund* in which Mentor harshly criticizes old-fashioned or cruel private tutors, as well as the negligent parents who employ them without any apparent concern for their children's well-being.

A particularly powerful example of this comes in the play *Die Schlittenfarth* (KF 10: 93–168), which features the corrupt Magister Bibulus, who works as a private tutor to Herr Worthmann's two sons. Bibulus's lessons consist solely of rote memorization of obscure facts and dead languages. The virtuous son, Franz, is genuinely inquisitive, yet he finds no favor with Bibulus, who repeatedly informs his father that he is a hopeless case. The younger son, Leopold, is dishonest, lazy, and mean-spirited; but as he takes every opportunity to curry favor with Bibulus, the tutor consistently praises his goodness to his father. Bibulus himself is anything but

virtuous. He often mistreats Franz for no apparent reason, and it is implied that he is not only stealing wine from his employer—hence the Latin pun in his name—but is also engaging in an illicit affair with one of the household servants. Herr Worthmann eventually learns of Franz's virtue when he kindly gives much money to two needy children—at great sacrifice to himself, no less—and Bibulus's corruption is exposed, which causes the father to dismiss him.

This play is unusual within the context of *Der Kinderfreund* in the respect that it is neither preceded nor followed by any commentary or discussion by Mentor and his friends. The reader is thus forced to draw his or her own lesson from the play. Fortunately for the reader, this play is preceded in earlier volumes by a "real-life"—at least real within the world of Mentor and his family—situation that is even more heart-wrenching than the plight of Franz. One day, Mentor's oldest son Karl receives a letter through Mentor's publisher from an eleven-year-old boy named Philipp Junghart. He has read the previous volumes of *Der Kinderfreund* and believes that Karl will be sympathetic to his plight. Philipp's mother is dead, his father is seldom at home, and he is thus exclusively under the supervision of an abusive tutor, Herr Klump. This tutor is remarkably similar to Magister Bibulus from *Die Schlittenfarth*. He, too, enforces a curriculum of rote memorization and dead languages and likewise takes every opportunity to insult, intimidate, or even beat his pupil. He even belittles Philipp in front of other children so that they all believe he is stupid and poor Philipp remains alone. Philipp learns of *Der Kinderfreund* and purchases it secretly with his allowance, making sure to hide it under his bed, lest Klump discover it and burn it. At the conclusion of his letter, the poor boy implores Karl to ask his father and friends for advice and suggests that they write a reply in an upcoming issue of *Der Kinderfreund* so that he might find it. Mentor's children are understandably deeply moved

by Philipp's situation, and Philoteknos, who has many connections in the city, promises to look into the matter further (KF 5: 1–12).

In the next volume, Philoteknos announces to everyone's delight that the boy has been rescued from his abusive tutor. Through a mutual acquaintance, Philoteknos arranges a meeting with Philipp's father, who bemoans the fact that his son is a good-for-nothing—or so Herr Klump has told him. It turns out that the father has never bothered to examine Klump's character and instead has just assumed that any scholar is fit to teach his son. He is well aware that the tutor beats his son, but Klump has assured him that this is the only way to control the boy. Philoteknos responds with the most thorough summary of Weiße's pedagogical ideals to appear in any passage of *Der Kinderfreund*:

> Der Informator wird zwar sagen, es sey bloße Hartnäckigkeit von dem Knaben: aber auch für diese ist der Prügel ein schlechtes Mittel: denn er wird ihn noch hartnäckiger machen, sein Herz mit Bitterkeit anfüllen, und wenn er ihn ja Etwas zu thun zwinget, so wird er ihn vielleicht auf kurze Zeit zu einem Heuchler machen, der nur den Augenblick der Freyheit erwartet, seinen Leidenschaften völlig eine Genüge zu thun. Glauben Sie mir, der ich so viele Kinder gezogen habe: durch Liebe, Sanftmuth, Güte und Geduld trichtert man weit mehr den Kindern ein, als durch barbarische Strenge, und ich für meine Person, habe wenigstens noch keine so grundbösen Kinder gefunden, als sie oft von unwissenden Pedanten abgeschildert werden, die nicht mit Kindern umzugehen wissen, oder die menschliche Natur zu wenig kennen. [...]
>
> Und [...] das Auswendiglernen, Herr Junghart, macht auch weder gelehrte, noch weise, noch tugendhafte Menschen. Ich bin nicht dawider, daß das Gedächtniß geübt wird: aber es muß nicht überladen werden, am allerwenigsten mit einem Schwalle von Wörtern, die Kinder nicht verstehen, und wobey der Verstand gar nicht gebraucht wird. Wenn man sie Sachen lehret, so lernen sie Wörter mit, und Gott bewahre vollends! wenn sie mit Stecken, Ruthe und Ohrfeigen sollen gelehrt werden: der sicherste Weg, sie zu verstockten Bösewichtern zu machen, ist dieser. (KF 6: 29–30, 33–34)

Philoteknos then concludes by showing Herr Junghart the letter which Philipp wrote to Karl, at which point the father is deeply moved and agrees to hire a new tutor at once. Philoteknos oversees the hiring process and chooses the tutor himself, whom Philipp admires from the start (KF 6: 34–43).

In this passage, Herr Junghart is made to look rather negligent by Philoteknos's questions, since he has not bothered to examine the character of the man who has sole custody over his son, nor does he dare to question the teacher's methods, even when they might seem overly harsh. This seems to be Weiße's equally harsh critique of parents who give too much control to private tutors without first determining if the person is worthy of taking care of their children. Weiße admonishes parents to take a more direct hand in their children's education; for if they place their children in the care of an emotionally or physically abusive teacher, the consequences for the child can be very grave indeed.

4.3.3. Weiße and the Philanthropinists

The quote above from Philoteknos is unique, as I have already mentioned, because it is the most clearly detailed statement of how Weiße suggests that formal educational lessons should be conducted. The various episodes in *Der Kinderfreund* all take place outside of the children's lessons with their private instructor, as the focus of the periodical is on the educational opportunities within the family circle. In this passage, however, the reader gets a brief glimpse of Weiße's views on how a teacher should present a curriculum.

Rote memorization is criticized as an outdated, ineffective method of instruction, particularly that which takes place in languages which the pupil does not understand.[60]

[60] Another critique of the language issue comes in a brief anecdote which Mentor's eldest daughter Lottchen relates in a letter. While she goes to stay with a friend in the countryside, she meets a Magister who boasts of how learned his son is because he can recite the Lord's Prayer in six languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syrian, Chaldean—and German, the only language of the six which he apparently understands fluently. When Lottchen tells them she can recite the prayer in French (a language she actually speaks), both father and son look shocked and ask her to recite it for them slowly so that they, too, can learn it (KF 15: 9). The critique, of course, is of the belief that the ability to recite text in a foreign tongue is somehow proof of learnedness; far from viewing it as learned, Weiße seems to find

Otherwise, the exercise is senseless babble which does not require the student to exercise his powers of reason.[61] Once again, Weiße insists that students should be trained in developing their powers of reason so that they might be able to use them wisely in the future. This is best done, it seems, by exposing the student to "Sachen" so that they might learn the essence of things while at the same time acquiring words to speak about them. Weiße also believes it to be of great importance that the teacher attempt to foster an interest in learning among his pupils. Hence, corporal punishment is categorically condemned, as it will only embitter the student towards his teacher and thus toward education as a whole.

Clearly, this brief passage does not constitute a thorough explication of Weiße's pedagogy, nor is it intended to function as such within *Der Kinderfreund*. Yet this glimpse into Weiße's suggestions for a child's academic education contributes further to his "Erziehung der Erzieher." The principles he endorses here, moreover, associate him closely with the Philanthropinists, as discussed in the previous chapter. Even more obvious associations show up elsewhere in *Der Kinderfreund* when Mentor or one of his friends mentions their affiliation with the men associated with the Philanthropinum. In Volume 3, for example, Magister Philoteknos returns from a visit to Basedow at the Philanthropinum and praises the teaching style and positive environment of the entire institution (KF 3: 132–38). Elsewhere, Mentor announces

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the point of reciting poetry in a language which one does not understand to be of little pedagogical value—perhaps even absurd.

[61] Rousseau, too, disapproves of rote memorization within a curriculum because it often requires a student to learn passages which he does not actually understand. In this respect, Rousseau views the process as a waste of brainpower and indeed argues that acts of rote memorization hamper the mind's ability to make a clear and lasting impression of every sensory experience around him (351–52; trans. 76–77).

with excitement the publication of Campe's *Robinson der Jüngere* and happens to mention that Campe himself once visited the Mentor family a few years ago (KF 14: 177–78).

Such associations clearly indicate that Mentor—and thus indirectly Weiße—is advocating the pedagogical ideals of the Philanthropinists; yet as we have seen, the ideas of the Philanthropinists were not without controversy. The severity of this controversy is mentioned only briefly in Weiße's *Kinderfreund*, but the passage is particularly shocking. In the account of the young Philipp Junghart, who suffers under the hands of his abusive instructor Herr Klump, the boy at one point receives a book from his only friend: a picture book to accompany Basedow's *Elementarwerke*. Herr Klump's response when Philipp shows him the book is striking indeed: "Da sagte er, das wäre ein verruchtes Buch, und käme aus der Schule des Satans" (KF 5: 8). After this, the tutor takes the book away from Philipp, threatens to burn it, and forbids him from ever again seeing the friend who gave it to him. Herr Klump, as we have seen, is an extremely negative example of teachers at the time; hence, it is likely that this episode is intentionally exaggerated. Nevertheless, it must be indicative of the level of controversy surrounding Basedow's pedagogical reforms among the teachers of the old system who rejected them. It also suggests how innovative and potentially controversial Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was for publicly endorsing such pedagogical ideals.

4.3.4. The Implausibility of Weiße's Family Model

Finally, because Weiße's pedagogical ideals are depicted solely within the framework of a family model, his educational ideals are inextricably linked with this family model. The family model which Weiße depicts in *Der Kinderfreund* is, moreover, in many respects unique and has

proven difficult for scholars to classify along the *große Haushaltsfamilie-bürgerliche Kleinfamilie* spectrum. As previous Weiße scholarship has pointed out, the reader learns next to nothing from the text about Mentor's career and learns only slightly more, but still very little, about those of the four family friends (Wild, *Vernunft* 108). As far as Mentor is concerned, there seems to be a complete separation of work and family life. He is constantly in the presence of his children throughout the course of the *Kinderfreund*, and he says that he shares every joy and delight with them unless his "Pflicht und Beruf" prevent him from doing so (KF 1: 5). Such vague comments are nearly the only indication the reader receives that Mentor even has a career to begin with. This clear separation of private and public spheres would suggest that the family model which Weiße presents is that of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie*. While some previous scholars have come to this conclusion (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 211; Wild, *Vernunft* 111), others have pointed out that the four family friends Philoteknos, Spirit, Chronickel, and Papillion serve as extended members of the family and hence have rejected the family in *Der Kinderfeund* as a true example of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie* (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 172–73). While it is true that in his autobiography, Weiße himself referred to these four characters as members of the Mentor family,[62] this must not be read as incontrovertible evidence that the family model depicted in *Der Kinderfreund* is indeed that of the *große Haushaltsfamilie*. The situation is more complex than this.

At its core, the *große Haushaltsfamilie* is defined not just by the inclusion of non-blood-related servants, apprentices, and companions, but more importantly by its role as a *productive*

[62] In his description of *Der Kinderfreund*, Weiße writes: "Weiße schilderte daher zur Einleitung in seinen Kinderfreund eine bürgerliche Familie von Eltern, Kindern, und Hausfreunden" (*Selbstbiographie* 184–85), evidently including these four characters as true members of the family.

community working together to maintain the family trade (Weber-Kellermann 73). Hence, one could only consider the family model depicted in *Der Kinderfreund* to be a true *große Haushaltsfamilie* if the four family friends also contribute to the family business. Yet the text provides virtually no evidence as to what this family trade might be because the adult characters are constantly spending their time tending to the education of the four children—which, as far as the text is concerned, is the productive endeavor toward which each member of the little society is working.

The family trade of the Mentor clan is thus, as it were, education itself. This is not to imply, of course, that Mentor works outside of the home as a professional teacher; rather, the implication is that as far as the reader can glean from the text, the overwhelming majority of Mentor's time and energy is devoted to the upbringing of his four children. The four family friends, who seem to be constantly in the Mentor home actively participating in the education of the children, likewise participate fully in this same educational endeavor. Scholars such as Walter Pape have recognized that the four family friends play an indispensable role in the education of Mentor's children (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 173), yet none have acknowledged the possibility that the education of the children is the collective goal toward which the Mentor family as a collaborative, productive *große Haushaltsfamilie* is working. In this respect, if one views education as the Mentor family business, then the family model depicted in *Der Kinderfreund* does indeed constitute a true example of the *große Haushaltsfamilie*—albeit a strangely utopian one unlike any real-life family in late eighteenth-century Europe.

It becomes evident that within the world of *Der Kinderfreund*, every moment in the life of a child can and should be devoted to all aspects of his or her education. Yet there are

unmistakable implications for adults in this scenario, too, for the author depicts a unique family model in which adults seemingly devote every waking moment to the education of the children in their lives. Consequently, Weiße has established a domestic model which in practice is unsustainable, for it requires an entire team of adults who are evidently in a position to forego the demands and obligations of the work world in order to personally tend to the upbringing and education of the children. Few children in the real world would, of course, be as fortunate as Lottchen, Karl, Fritze, and Luischen to have a personal team of five educational consultants at their constant beck and call.

As we will discuss in greater detail in the following chapter, the pedagogical model which Weiße illustrates in his works for young children appears to work flawlessly, yet this is, of course, only because the author has portrayed it that way. He has created an ideological construction which serves as a thought experiment that is defined by a desired result. Not surprisingly, the highly idealized depiction of his thought experiment has little to no connection to reality. Although *Der Kinderfreund* is rife with passages which are clearly intended as suggestions for parents, the periodical must not be read as a serious proposal for a new family model to be implemented to the same implausible degree as it appears in the periodical.

Walter Pape is correct to conclude that Weiße's pedagogical model represents a utopian version of what a family might look like in an ideal world, rather than a legitimate suggestion for a new family model which could feasibly be implement in the real world (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 172–73).[63] While on the surface, it might seem as if Weiße is indeed proposing that parents

[63] Reiner Wild has pointed out that many families depicted in works of Enlightenment children's literature had a similar utopian quality about them. Although such literary family models are not true-to-life depictions of real families, he argues that they also do not lack all basis in reality; ultimately, Wild concludes that such literary

implement a new family model, it becomes clear upon closer inspection and reflection that this cannot possibly be the case. In this respect, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* is similar to Rousseau's *Émile*, which offers a pedagogical model which could neither practically be implemented in real life, nor was it intended to be. The question thus remains why Weiße should have chosen to portray an unsustainable family model, rather than a more realistic one. As the author addresses this very topic in the sequel to *Der Kinderfreund*, the answer will be discussed in the next chapter, which focuses on that periodical.

4.4. Summary: Childhood as Education in Weiße's *Kinderfreund*

In conclusion, the preceding analysis of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* reveals that childhood, as Weiße depicts it in the periodical, is not merely the phase of life during which formal schooling takes place; rather, Weiße conceives of education as the very essence of childhood itself. In other words, childhood is the time when everything a child does and experiences contributes to what he or she learns about the world and influences the person who he or she will ultimately become. Every aspect of a child's life is part of his or her education—be it moral, social, or academic education. To understand Weiße's educational ideals, then, is to understand his ideals for what childhood ought to be.

Weiße's educational ideals conformed to those of the Philanthropinists for a formal academic education, but the author also strongly insisted that the child's parents must also play a direct role in their children's education. For Weiße, a child's education was not something that

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families provide suggestions for *possibilities* of what a new family model might look like (Wild, *Vernunft* 120–21). This appears to be the case with Weiße's family model, too: It represents the possibility of what a family might look like if it were arranged according to his own pedagogical ideals.

existed within a set curriculum handed down from a professional teacher; rather, he believed that every moment of a child's life could be used for the purpose of education. Even moments of play were to be exploited for educational purposes.

Weiße believed, furthermore, that parents had an obligation to instruct their children at every opportunity, to guide them down the right path in life so that they might become productive members of society, and to teach them how to develop their powers of reason. These obligations, finally, were burdened with a great sense of urgency, as Weiße claimed that childhood was indeed the only time in a person's life during which it is possible to correct character flaws or inclinations toward immoral behaviors. If not kept in check, these flaws, he believed, would develop into much more serious issues in one's adulthood, at which point it would be too late to remedy them.

To be sure, Weiße's ideas concerning childhood are not without contradictions. His fictional narrator Mentor would suggest that parents are ultimately responsible for their children's behavior and dispositions, yet he provides numerous examples of ill-mannered and self-centered children whose parents are virtuous, reasonable people, as well as compassionate, thoughtful children whose parents are standoffish and unkind. In light of the fact that *Der Kinderfreund* comprises twenty-four volumes and over five thousand pages of material, a certain amount of contradiction could scarcely be avoided. It is remarkable, in fact, to appreciate the noticeable coherence of Weiße's ideas concerning childhood. This coherence is further enhanced by the persistence with which he hammers home his main points.

Weiße understood childhood as a non-stop educational process and indeed as the only phase in one's life during which moral education could actually be effective. But at what point

did Weiße believe that moral education ceased to be possible? And at what point did children become responsible for their own actions and for their own moral improvement? Did this happen in one's youth, or did it not occur until one's adulthood? In order to answer these questions and to examine the differences between Weiße's conception of childhood and his conception of youth, we must look to the periodical which Weiße wrote as a sequel to his first periodical for children: *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*. This is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Youth as Exploration in Weiße's *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*

5.1. The Origins and Development of *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*

5.1.1. The Origins of the *Briefwechsel*

At the end of the six-year publication of *Der Kinderfreund*, the four Mentor family children had progressed beyond childhood and were ready to enter the world as young adults. As Weiße himself comments retrospectively in his autobiography, many of his young readers had also blossomed into young adulthood and thus he decided to continue the Mentor family saga in order to provide further instruction for his loyal readers entering this new phase of life. The sequel is presented via a series of letters written by the same characters, who are now no longer living within the same household. In these letters, Weiße continues his same method of instruction, although his new audience is what he refers to as "die reifere Jugend" (*Selbstbiographie* 194), a term which today is used as a joking euphemism for senior citizens. Thus, *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*, as the work came to be collectively known, served as a successor to Weiße's *Kinderfreund* which was aimed at an older readership that was no longer in its *Kindheit*, but rather in its *Jugend*.

In the introduction to the *Briefwechsel*, the fictional narrator Mentor addresses his young readers and explains that his primary motivation to continue the series was the encouragement he received from countless parents and children who were saddened by the discontinuation of their beloved *Kinderfreund* (BW 1: 2). We have already seen that Weiße often blended fiction with

reality in his works—much in keeping with the tradition of the moral weeklies—and thus it seems highly plausible that Weiße himself was encouraged to begin a new series by many loyal fans, particularly because the *Kinderfreund* was exceptionally popular at the time of its publication.

To be sure, the popularity of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* no doubt also played a role in the author's decision to produce a sequel. While it is likely true that concern for his young loyal readers played a role in Weiße's decision to continue the series, it is equally likely that he was also partially motivated by other, less altruistic reasons. Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that financial concerns motivated Weiße, a father of four, to capitalize on his prior success in the children's literary market. Any encouragement he may have received from his fans surely helped to convince him that a sequel to *Der Kinderfreund* would be equally successful, although as we will soon see, this did not prove to be the case. The serial nature of the *Briefwechsel*, in contrast to the more episodic nature of the *Kinderfreund*, suggests that Weiße was consciously seeking ways to ensure that his readers would continue to purchase subsequent volumes of the series. Each volume remains open-ended with one or several of the characters in some sort of quandary, and these emotional cliffhangers serve as Weiße's method of maintaining a loyal readership.

The serial nature of the *Briefwechsel* is also the result of a conceit different from the context of the *Kinderfreund*. The author establishes this new conceit as his mouthpiece Mentor explains that his sons Karl and Fritze have left the family household in order to pursue their studies and career goals in the real world. As the four siblings are no longer in the same home, they have taken up writing letters to one another in order to stay in contact. Mentor, who

explains that the household-discussion format of *Der Kinderfreund* is no longer suitable for the new circumstances within his family, thus decides that the best way to instruct and entertain his young readers is by publishing this correspondence between them (BW 1: 31). From this point on, Mentor no longer serves as the narrator of the series; the children narrate in turn the events of their life from their own perspective. Thus, a strong connection is established between coming of age and narrating one's own life story; in fact, the two are essentially conflated. Although *Der Kinderfreund* includes a handful of brief instances in which one or more of the children narrate the events of their lives, it is not until these same characters enter young adulthood that they do so fully. As we will see, this is one of the most important themes of the entire *Briefwechsel*.

While Weiße—through the mouthpiece of Mentor—explains in the first pages of the *Briefwechsel* his reasons for publishing a sequel for a readership in its *Jugend*, it is not until the series's conclusion that he—in an epilogue written by Mentor directly to the reader—clarifies his goals for the project and his hopes for his young readers. Mentor recognizes that most boys in middle-class families leave the home for schooling or apprenticeships between the ages of ten and twelve and do not return until they are eighteen or even twenty. The girls, meanwhile, stay home and learn how to oversee a household and prepare for marriage. Thus, Mentor concludes that it has been useful for his young readers—most of whom are about to have similar experiences—to become aware of the potential dangers and temptations that may await them away from home in order that they might be able to protect themselves from falling prey to these dangers and temptations (BW 12: 312–14). Mentor continues to compare this situation to a great journey:

> Wenn man selbst eine Reise vor sich hat, so fragt man gern diejenigen, die sie schon gethan haben, um die Oerter, wo man hinkömmt, um die Sitten der Menschen, die daselbst leben, und die zu beobachtenden Klugheitsregeln kennen zu lernen, wenn man unter ihnen fortkommen oder den Zweck erreichen will, weswegen man sich unter ihnen aufhält? (BW 12: 314–15)

These statements suggest that Weiße's hopes for his young readers are that they might remain steadfast and virtuous as they leave home and enter a world which is fraught with moral pitfalls and temptations. This theme is revisited shortly thereafter, as Mentor outlines his desires for his readers in both the *Kinderfreund* and the *Briefwechsel*, in a passage which delineates his goals more explicitly than any other section of either periodical:

> Wenn meine Absicht also vormals bey dem *Kinderfreunde* war, *euch in der Darstellung einer bürgerlichen gesitteten Familie aus dem mittlern Stande in Kindern vom beyderseitigen Geschlechte und verschiedenen Charakteren ein anschauliches Bild einer nicht vernachläßigten, häußlich guten Erziehung, unter der Aufsicht zärtlicher Aeltern und guter Lehrer in den ersten Jahren der Kindheit*, zu geben: so war der, im gegenwärtigen Briefwechsel, wo sie so weit erzogen waren, daß die Knaben, nach Maasgebung ihrer Wahl zu einem gewissen Berufe unter fremde Leute kommen mußten, ein Gemälde aufzustellen, *wie sie unter den verschiedenen Situationen, die ihrer gemeiniglich unter einer solchen Veränderung warten, mit einer treufleißigen Aufmerksamkeit auf den Hauptzweck ihrer Bestimmung, sich weise und tugendhaft zu betragen haben, wenn sie glücklich werden wollen, und sie bis an den Standpunkt zu führen, wo sich ihnen, mit Eintritt in das wirkliche jugendliche Alter neue Scenen für ihr Leben öffnen*. Es sollte also kein Lehrbuch wissenschaftlichen Inhalts, sondern einer nützlichen Unterhaltung, durch lebendige Beyspiele handelnder Personen von verschiedenen, entgegengesetzten Charaktern seyn. Wie glücklich, wie erfreulich für mich, wenn ich diese Absicht nur halbweg erreicht habe! (BW 12: 317–18)

As we have seen in *Der Kinderfreund*, one of Weiße's main goals for its sequel is to guide his young readers so that they might comport themselves wisely and virtuously, even during a phase in their lives which is full of many significant changes. As a result, there are, not surprisingly, strong parallels between the *Kinderfreund* and the *Briefwechsel* in that they both place a strong emphasis on developing and maintaining a clear sense of virtue within their young readers. In the passage above, however, it is evident that Weiße intends to guide his older readers to the point at which they enter into "das wirkliche jugendliche Alter," a period which he explicitly

describes as being a period of major upheaval and transition. Thus, there may very well exist for Weiße significant differences between virtuousness in one's childhood and virtuousness in one's youth. In order to better understand Weiße's conception of youth as he presents it in *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*, however, it would first be useful to provide a more thorough overview of the history and structure of the periodical.

5.1.2. The Publication History of the *Briefwechsel*

Christian Felix Weiße's *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* was published as twelve volumes between the years of 1784 and 1792. Like *Der Kinderfreund*, it was also published by Crusius. For the first three years of its publication, two volumes were released each year; during the remainder of the series, one volume appeared per year (Brüggemann and Ewers cols. 1294–95). Most volumes are three hundred to three hundred fifty pages in length; the entire series thus comprises approximately four thousand pages in total. The publication quality of the *Briefwechsel* was generally higher than that of the *Kinderfreund*. There are on average four times as many engravings included in the volumes of the *Briefwechsel* than in its predecessor; most of them are of noticeably higher quality and signed by the artist, which was usually not the case in *Der Kinderfreund*. Multiple artists contributed to the engravings throughout the run of the *Briefwechsel* (Brüggemann and Ewers cols. 1294–95, 1398–99; Braun 155). Examples of engravings from the *Briefwechsel*, as well as images of the text itself, can be found in Appendix 2.

In contrast to its predecessor *Der Kinderfreund*—which as we have seen was a bestseller that underwent multiple editions and reprints and was translated into several languages—the

Briefwechsel proved to be significantly less successful on the market. Although it was translated into French (*Selbstbiographie* 198), only one German edition was ever released (Pape, *Kinderbuch* 168). Weiße himself insists, however, that his periodical did not lack for readers and fans. In support of his claim, the author describes at length how it came to pass that he learned that the English royal family were avid fans of his work and as a result dedicated Volume 3 of the *Briefwechsel* to the English princesses. He then goes on to recount discovering an admirer of his work in the person of the Queen of Naples, whereupon he presented to her the entirety of the *Briefwechsel* as a gift (*Selbstbiographie* 195–98).

In spite of the fact that the *Briefwechsel* enjoyed the admiration of a few noteworthy readers, even Weiße himself admitted in his autobiography that its sales figures did indeed pale in comparison to those of *Der Kinderfreund* (*Selbstbiographie* 195). Perhaps it is this lack of success on the market which explains why there is a conspicuous dearth of scholarship regarding Weiße's *Briefwechsel*. Although a handful of monographs have been written about *Der Kinderfreund* and many books and articles about children's literature in the eighteenth century discuss the impact of Weiße's first periodical in at least some detail, most of these works simply mention the existence of a sequel to *Der Kinderfreund* without providing much of an overview of it, not to mention offering an analysis of its contents or style. Similarly, Weiße's three biographers make little note of the *Briefwechsel*: H. C. Iphofen simply recapitulates all of the information about it which can be found in Weiße's autobiography (Iphofen 57–60), while Anne-Kristin Mai merely provides a brief description and one page of random quotes from the periodical in order to illustrate the topics which are discussed in the work (Mai 72). Perhaps most surprising, though, is the fact that Jakob Minor, whose biography of Weiße as an author is

the most thorough and provides the most comprehensive account of the author's writings, devotes just one paragraph to the *Briefwechsel* in his entire 400-page study (Minor, *Beziehungen* 348–49). While it is undeniable that the popularity and influence of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* greatly eclipsed those of its successor, the fact that a periodical to which Weiße devoted eight years of his life should be so neglected by both literary scholars and biographers alike nevertheless remains rather startling. Although the two works bear striking similarities in many respects, several key differences between the two—including their different target audiences—make the *Briefwechsel* a worthy object of study in its own right.

There are certainly several possible explanations for the *Briefwechsel*'s lack of success. Ludwig Göhring, for example, has speculated that the "Briefton" in Weiße's sequel produced a monotony whose tedium could not be offset by the poems and plays interspersed throughout the series (Göhring 24). The most plausible explanation for the work's poor sales figures, however, is that by the time of its release, there was a much wider variety of children's literature on the market than was the case when Weiße published *Der Kinderfreund*. The author, in fact, argues in his autobiography that it was the popularity of his own *Kinderfreund* that had unleashed the "Fluth von Kinderschriften in allerley Gewand" which were competing against the *Briefwechsel* for the attention of young readers (*Selbstbiographie* 195). While Reiner Wild points out that this "flood" of literary works for young readers consisted most likely of just three thousand works, including school books, over the course of the entire eighteenth century, he also notes that others of that time spoke quite literally of a "flood" of children's literature, which suggests that many perceived the surge in the production of children's books to be considerable (Wild, "Aufklärung" 43).

While it may be true that the popularity of Weiße's first periodical for children had led to an increase in literary works for children, this was of course not the only reason for the surge of new publications for children. As we have already seen, the publication of Weiße's works for young readers coincided with several socioeconomic trends which resulted in the production of many more written works for young readers. These trends include not only significant advancements in printing technology, but also increases in literacy rates due to the gradual introduction of obligatory schooling (Wild, "Aufklärung" 43–44). As a result of these factors, literature written for children soon became an important niche market within the publishing world (Brüggemann and Ewers col. 13).

Weiße himself, nevertheless, appears from the very inception of the *Briefwechsel* to have been aware of the stiff competition his new periodical would face. He even includes this concern in the very first few pages of Volume 1 when his fictional mouthpiece Mentor describes his initial reluctance to publish a sequel. Mentor freely admits that there were very few other works of children's literature in existence during the initial publication run of *Der Kinderfreund* (BW 1: 3), but then goes on to express his concern that his new work might not remain as popular amidst the new specimens of children's literature:

> Aber nun – da so vortreffliche Männer durch ganz Deutschland aufgestanden sind, euch zu unterhalten, zu unterrichten, zu vergnügen, wird der Mann, der einst den Kinderfreund in seiner gutgemeynten Einfalt gab, in seinem Unterrichte, in seinen Unterhaltungen noch für euch eben derselbige seyn? (BW 1: 4)

The quote above would suggest that Weiße may not have been altogether surprised by his new work's lack of success on the market. In reality, however, he evidently fixated on the poor sales figures of the *Briefwechsel* and was particularly disappointed because he appears to have considered the sequel to be a much more impressive work of literature than its predecessor. The

following quote from his autobiography, in which he bemoans the relative unpopularity of his work, particularly in light of the creative energy he had expended in order to produce it, is evidence of this:

> Weiße ließ daher die Familie, welche sich bisher im häuslichen Zirkel unterhalten hatte, getrennt werden und kleidete demnach die weitere Belehrung, welche er für die reifere Jugend (auch die ersten jugendlichen Leser des Kinderfreundes waren heran gereift) ertheilen wollte, in einen Briefwechsel jener Familie ein. Er ließ die Kinder in mancherley Situationen kommen, ihr Verhalten unter denselben nach ihren verschiednen Charakteren, welche sich immer mehr entwickelten, verbesserten und befestigten, selbst beschreiben, und ihre Belehrung und Erziehung durch Briefe ihrer Eltern und Hausfreunde fortgesetzt werden. Es entstand eine zusammenhängende Geschichte, eine Reihe von Begebenheiten, welche eben sowohl durch die handelnden Personen herbeygeführt wurden, als sie auf dieser Handlungen Einfluß hatten, oder ihnen Gelegenheiten zur Befestigung ihrer Grundsätze und Gesinnungen gaben. So wurde das Ganze ein Roman für die Jugend. Hätte man es aus diesem Gesichtspuncte betrachtet, und wäre das Auffassen desselben dadurch erleichtert worden, daß die zwölf Theile, woraus der Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes besteht, zusammen herausgekommen wären, so würde man, wo nicht die Nützlichkeit des Buches, doch das Verdienst des Schriftstellers höher als bey dem Kinderfreunde angeschlagen haben. Es war zu jenem mehr Fleiß und Imagination erforderlich als zu diesem. Darauf hat indessen kein Recensent das Publicum aufmerksam gemacht, sondern man hat das ganze Werk bloß als eine lehrreiche und unterhaltende Sammlung von Briefen angesehen. Kurz, es hat die günstige Aufnahme, welcher sich der Kinderfreund erfreute, nicht erhalten. (*Selbstbiographie* 193–95)

His claim that the *Briefwechsel* is essentially a giant novel is very much true—at least in the sense that it contains several storylines which develop over the course of the series and are ultimately resolved. The same can certainly not be said of *Der Kinderfreund*, which consists primarily of isolated vignettes which rarely serve as the continuation of or even make reference to incidents in other volumes. It is thus easy to believe that developing and writing the *Briefwechsel* required significantly more planning and forethought than might have been the case for *Der Kinderfreund*. The comments above indicate that Weiße himself appears to have considered the *Briefwechsel* an even greater literary achievement than the *Kinderfreund* for this very reason—hence his apparent particular disappointment that it did not meet with even greater popular or critical approbation.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the fact that Weiße places blame on his contemporary reviewers for having failed to recognize the novel-like structure of the *Briefwechsel* and then to draw their readers' attention to it. Weiße fails to recognize, however, that the serial nature of the periodical may have actually hurt its sales, rather than helped them. A reader who purchased Volume 2 without having read Volume 1 would not have been familiar with the large cast of supporting characters whom the children discuss in their letters and would likely have been confused—and hence less inclined to purchase subsequent volumes. In contrast, *Der Kinderfreund*—which in the tradition of the moral weekly is truly episodic, rather than serial—could have been much more easily consumed by readers who had purchased only select volumes.

5.1.3. The Critical Reception of the *Briefwechsel*

Weiße's belief that the *Briefwechsel* might have been more greatly appreciated (and hence have proven more successful on the market) if the critics had emphasized its novel-like structure rather than consistently comparing it to *Der Kinderfreund* remains, of course, fully speculative. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that his comment is correct: None of the reviews of the time commented on the narrative structure of the work, but rather praised it for its moral content and wholesome stories, much as they had lauded *Der Kinderfreund*.

Indeed, in spite of its less impressive reception in terms of sales, Weiße's *Briefwechsel*, much like his *Kinderfreund*, garnered nearly universal praise from critics of the time. Reviews often remark, for example, on the large number of readers who were overjoyed to learn that Weiße had decided to publish a sequel to *Der Kinderfreund*. One such review from the

Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek, in response to Weiße's own expressed reservations to publish a second periodical amidst the new flood of literature for young readers, reacts as follows:

> Indessen ist es mir und tausend andern Lesern lieb, daß er fortgefahren hat. Wenn man einmal die Kinder ans Lesen gewöhnt hat – und bey unsern Stadtkindern ist ja dies leider! fast die einzige Beschäfftigung außer den Lehrstunden, woran man sie gewöhnen kann – so werden sie bald mit den Büchern fertig, die bisher für sie geschrieben worden, und wollen immer etwas Neues. (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 62.1: 212)

Thus, at the start of the series's publication, this reviewer anticipated that Weiße's popularity and loyal readership would ensure the series's market success, in spite of increased competition from other works of children's literature. As we have already seen, this did not prove to be the case.

Nevertheless, the *Briefwechsel* maintained critical acclaim over the course of its publication. The following excerpt from a review of the first five volumes of the *Briefwechsel*, published in the *Allgemeine Bibliothek für das Schul- und Erziehungswesen in Teutschland*, indicates the enthusiasm with which the sequel to *Der Kinderfreund* continued to be received by its fans:

> Die Weisischen Schriften haben sich beym jüngern und ältern Publikum schon in einen so würdigen Kredit gesetzt, daß demselben ihre Anzeige nie zu früh und nie zu spat kommen kan, weil es im ersten Falle von ihrem vorzüglichen Werth schon zum voraus überzeugt ist, und im andern Falle die Ueberzeugung davon schon in Händen hat. Unsere Anzeige dieses mit Recht eben so beliebten Nachfolgers des Kinderfreunds hat sich gegen unsern Vorsatz und wider unser Verschulden bis itzt verspätet; dabey aber mehr gewonnen als verlohren; indem sie um desto zuverläsiger versichern kan, daß sich dieser Briefwechsel nicht nur zu Anfang, sondern auch in seinem bisherigen Fortgang seines Vorgängers mehr als würdig gezeiget hat. (*Allgemeine Bibliothek* 11.2: 183)

Weiße's *Kinderfreund* had thus proven so popular and successful that critics were convinced that any new work by Weiße would be equally worthy of one's reading time.

Above all, it was the content of Weiße's *Briefwechsel* which critics found so admirable and praiseworthy. One such critic, Samuel Baur, provided reviews of Weiße's entire corpus to date in a guide for educators and wrote toward the end of the *Briefwechsel*'s publication:

> Mit Vergnügen bemerkt man in den moralischen Stellen, wie fleißig Herr Weiße auf die Sitten unsers Zeitalters Rücksicht nimmt, um das Gute darinn zu empfehlen, vor dem Bösen aber zu warnen. Wir wünschen, daß diese vortrefliche Schrift noch lange zum Besten der jungen Lesewelt fortgesetzt werden möge. […] Kurz! Segen und Unsterblichkeit wird Weiße's Lohn sein, und noch bei der spätesten Nachwelt, werden die edelsten des Volks seinen Namen mit Achtung nennen. (Baur 557–58)

Baur thus also praises above all the moral content of Weiße's periodical and his obvious intent to improve the moral character of his young readers. Sadly, however, neither Baur's hope that the *Briefwechsel* would remain in publication for many years to come nor his prediction that Weiße's name would continue to be revered for generations would prove to be true. Weiße discontinued the series just two years after Baur published his review, and in the "Nachwelt" of today, Weiße's works have been all but forgotten.

While the content of Weiße's *Briefwechsel* and its relevance for young readers met with universal critical acclaim, critics were less convinced of the appropriateness of Weiße's writing style for his young target audience. As we have already seen, the style of the *Briefwechsel*'s predecessor had also met with similar criticism. Some critics, such as Baur, did indeed praise Weiße's ability to present complex subject matter in a manner both accessible and interesting for young readers:

> [Weiße] besitzt alle Eigenschaften, die einen guten Kinderschriftsteller charakterisiren. Er weiß alle Vorfälle des menschlichen Lebens für die Kindersphäre zu benutzen, und so darzustellen, daß sie Kindern nicht blos angenehm, sondern auch nüzlich werden. Wissenschaftliche Gegenstände behandelt er mit einer Faßlichkeit und Anmuth, die wenig mehr zu wünschen übrig läßt. So sehr er sich auch zu der Fassungskraft der Kleinen herabzulassen, und ihre Bedürfnisse zu befriedigen weiß, so geschieht es doch mit einer gewissen Würde, und einem anständigen Ernst, den viele unserer Kinderschriftsteller verfehlen. (Baur 554)

Most other reviews, however, were less effusively adulatory toward Weiße's ability to maintain a writing style appropriate for young readers. A review of the first volume of the *Briefwechsel,* for example, is optimistic that the author's florid style will be more readily comprehensible to his new slightly older readership, but implies that Weiße's style is still too complex for younger readers:

> Auch glaube ich, daß es dem Herrn Verf. noch fast besser glücken wird für das reifere Alter, als für die frühere Kindheit zu schreiben. Jenes verträgt und versteht schon besser den blühenden Stil, der Herrn W. eigen ist, und dem es sehr schwer hält zu verleugnen und zu der Fähigkeit junger Kinder herabzustimmen, wie doch geschehen muß, wenn man diesem Alter verständlich und nützlich seyn will. (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 62.1: 212)

While this review from the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* predicts that Weiße's style will be more accessible for a slightly older audience,[64] a review of Volume 2 of the *Briefwechsel* that appeared one year later in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* similarly expressed reservations about the appropriateness of its style for young readers. The two-sentence review reads in its entirety: "Erhält und verdient noch immer den Beyfall der Leser. Der Stil scheint mir hin und wieder zu witzig für Kinder" (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 62.2: 550).

Finally, in addition to Weiße's writing style itself, one early review which otherwise praised the series nevertheless expressed concerns over the wealth of material contained in the *Briefwechsel* and its suitability for young readers:

> Nur diß besorgen wir, die Länge der Briefe, und die gar zu vielfältig angehäufte Materien, die öfters in einem einzigen derselben vorkommen, möchten den jungen Lesern nicht ganz behagen,

[64] Another reviewer in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* had actually made the same comment about Weiße's *Kinderfreund*—namely, that its writing style was more suitable for a teenage audience than for younger children. The review of Volume 1 of *Der Kinderfreund* includes this statement: "Der Ton des Ganzen ist nicht der simple, der in dem Rochowschen Kinderfreunde ist, und in Büchern für kleinere Kinder auch für die meisten der größern billig seyn sollte; es ist der geschmückte, oft mit Gedanken und Ausdruck aus der Kindersphäre ausweichende Ton, der aber den geübtern Empfindungen sechzehnjähriger Jünglinge und Mädchen faßlich und angenehm seyn wird" (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 31.2: 571).

> sie ermüden und ihnen die Wiedererrinnerung [sic] an das, was sich aus den vorhergehenden Briefen auf die nachfolgenden bezieht, etwas erschweren. (*Allgemeine Bibliothek* 11.2: 185)

Both of these points of critique—that Weiße's writing style may be too complex for young readers and that the length and wealth of material contained in each letter may be too overwhelming—are valid. It is certainly true that many of the letters contained in the *Briefwechsel* are fairly lengthy and that many incorporate an array of poems, songs, fables, historical narratives, and personal anecdotes. Likewise, it is true that Weiße's style may be too complex for young readers—particularly as there are few discernible stylistic differences between his works for adults and those for children.

Nevertheless, neither of these criticisms—that the *Briefwechsel* is either too long or too stylistically sophisticated for its young target audience—could reasonably explain the lack of success of the *Briefwechsel* in comparison to its predecessor, *Der Kinderfreund*. After all, both of these criticisms were equally true for *Der Kinderfreund*, and as we have seen, critics of the time did indeed express such concerns in their reviews of that work. *Der Kinderfreund* contained a vast array of poems, fables, and other narratives interspersed with discussions on morals and ethics. Similarly, the writing style in *Der Kinderfreund* differs in no discernible aspect from that of the *Briefwechsel*. Seeing as Weiße's *Kinderfreund* was able to achieve unparalleled success on the market in spite of these two alleged shortcomings for its target audience, these factors cannot explain the *Briefwechsel*'s relative lack of success. One must conclude that it was primarily the increased competition from a wide variety of new works of children's literature which made the *Briefwechsel* less successful, rather than some inherent shortcoming within the *Briefwechsel* itself.

While *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* did indeed fail to achieve the remarkable success of its predecessor, the reviews above nevertheless indicate that Weiße himself continued to earn the esteem, affection, and appreciation of many readers and critics alike and that his works and characters continued to be beloved. A particularly fascinating piece of evidence for the latter claim comes from one final review, which appeared in the *Neue allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* shortly after the publication of the final volume of the *Briefwechsel*. This largely unceremonious review is presented here in its entirety:

> Mentor nimmt Abschied von seinen jungen Lesern, die sich gewiß ungern von ihm trennen. Lottchen, das schalkhafte Lottchen, verlobt sich mit Herrn Spirit, und begeht auch dabey eine von ihren kleinen Schelmereyen.[65] Der Himmel erhalte ihr die gute Laune in ihrem neuen Stande. (*Neue allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* Anhänge 1–28.2: 567)

Not only does this review indicate that the long-running series will be missed by many young readers, it more importantly describes the character of Lottchen as if she were a real person and longtime friend. Indeed, Weiße's loyal readers had read of Lottchen's endearing mischievous ways for nearly seventeen years; hence, it is not surprising that she and her siblings should seem like old friends not only to young readers, but also to adult readers such as this reviewer. Thus, while Weiße's *Briefwechsel* may not have been a bestseller, it most likely continued to have a strong emotional and intellectual impact on readers of all ages.

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[65] The "Schelmerey" in question involves Lottchen's engagement ring. Although Lottchen has for quite some time been reluctant to accept Herr Spirit's marriage proposal because she does not harbor romantic feelings toward him, her mother, confident that Lottchen will eventually accept the proposal, buys a ring for her to give to him. Lottchen discovers this, presents the ring to Spirit in the presence of her whole family and her friend Friederikchen, thereby accepting his proposal and simultaneously embarrassing him because he has no ring to give her. Friederikchen then gives Lottchen one of her rings, which Lottchen later refuses to part with, as she considers it her own engagement ring; thus, Spirit is forced to buy a new ring for Friederikchen, rather than for his own fiancée (BW 12: 334–37).

5.1.4. The Narrative Structure and Format of the *Briefwechsel*

As has already been shown, Weiße conceived of his *Briefwechsel* as a monumental novel with overarching themes and a continuing narrative, as opposed to the series of isolated vignettes in *Der Kinderfreund*. In this respect, the successor to *Der Kinderfreund* differs in narrative structure from its predecessor. In many other respects, however, there is a strong continuity in style, content, and textual variety between the two periodicals. Before presenting an analysis of Weiße's concept of youth as revealed in the *Briefwechsel*, it would be wise to examine the similarities and differences between the two works: The most important narratives of the main characters will first be examined, as well as differences in the characters' respective roles and ages which exist between the two periodicals. Finally, this section will discuss the clear continuities in overall writing style and format between the two periodicals and will present an overview of the structure of the letters which comprise Weiße's *Briefwechsel*.

5.1.4.1. Characters

The series resumes shortly after the conclusion of *Der Kinderfreund* as Karl and Fritze, both now old enough to leave the family household in preparation for their future careers, move away from Leipzig. Karl, who from the very beginning has expressed keen interest in becoming a true scholar, is sent to attend a *Gymnasium* under the tutelage of a professor who is a personal friend of his father's. Karl rooms in the professor's house, where he becomes better acquainted with two other young people his age: Friederikchen, the professor's daughter, is a bright and virtuous young woman who later begins a correspondence with Karl's sisters and who at the end of the series becomes betrothed to a young minister. Karl's other new friend is Herr von Z – –, a young

nobleman of reduced circumstances who also studies with the professor but ultimately goes on to become a soldier. It is evident that the professor lives in a small town, although the editor Mentor takes great pains *not* to mention the name of the town by deleting it from sentences such as "daß man unser heute in – – – erwarte" (BW 8: 114). At the conclusion of the series, Karl returns home to Leipzig and is shortly thereafter to begin his studies at the university.

The younger brother Fritze, meanwhile, has left to begin an apprenticeship in Berlin with a wealthy businessman, Herr Worthmann. Fritze eventually befriends Herr Worthmann's son Wilhelm, who is generally lazy, reckless, and wasteful. He also becomes acquainted with Herr Worthmann's daughter Mienchen, who does little to hide her romantic interest in Fritze and often makes brazen overtures toward him. Fritze also advises his mentor on how best to deal with his youngest son, Franz, who has been utterly spoiled by his mother and has become exceedingly selfish. Over the course of the series, both Wilhelm and Franz undergo dramatic transformations in their character thanks to the advice and friendship of Fritze. At the end of the *Briefwechsel*, Fritze leaves for an extended business trip across Europe with Herr Worthmann, but not before he confesses his love to Mienchen and she promises to wait for him.

Meanwhile, the two Mentor daughters remain in the family home in Leipzig. Of note, the Mentor household has received a new addition in the person of seven-year-old Julchen, the daughter of a close family friend. Julchen's mother has recently died; and her father, who is often away on business, desires the best upbringing for his daughter and believes that this can only take place within a family household. Julchen serves as a playmate for Luischen, while Lottchen learns from her mother how to run a household and prepares to find a suitable

husband—whom she ultimately finds in none other than Herr Spirit, one of the old family friends from *Der Kinderfreund*.

The roles of the adult characters are for the most part drastically reduced in the *Briefwechsel*. The most notable example is Mentor himself, who as the narrator of *Der Kinderfreund* was constantly present. In the *Briefwechsel*, however, Mentor is the author of just one letter[66] (in addition to his remarks to the reader at both the very beginning and the conclusion of the series) and hence primarily only figures as a character in the story when his daughters narrate recent events within the Mentor household. The family friends Philoteknos and Spirit are also featured much less prominently, although both still provide literary and mythological inspiration, as the girls often send their brothers a copy of Spirit's latest poem, song, or play, or recount a myth or fable they recently heard from Philoteknos. Both men, moreover, feature in a recurring storyline: Spirit in the account of his eventual betrothal to Lottchen, and Philoteknos in the account of his illness and ultimate passing. The remaining two family friends from *Der Kinderfreund*—namely, Herr Doktor Chronikel and Herr Papillion—are both present in exactly one scene in the first volume of the series and otherwise only mentioned in passing throughout the remainder of the series. Chronikel's absence is explained by his return from an extended

[66] Admittedly, it is no surprise to the reader that Mentor includes in the *Briefwechsel* just one letter written by himself, since he explicitly states in the introduction that few letters between the parents and children would be of interest to the reader, since the majority of them would primarily concern "bloß kleine ökonomische Einrichtungen" (BW 1: 32). While this explanation remains sufficient within the fictional world which Weiße has created, the author could have equally plausibly created a correspondence in which the sons solicit written advice from their father. The fact that Weiße chose not to establish such a framework, but rather focused solely on the correspondence between the children, suggests that he was striving to create a concept of youth that is qualitatively different than the concept of childhood he provides in *Der Kinderfreund*. This is what I will argue in the current chapter.

journey in the final volume of the series (12: 175); a reason for Papillion's absence, however, is never provided.

In contrast to the male adult figures in the narrative, all of whom are featured much less prominently in the *Briefwechsel* than in *Der Kinderfreund*, Frau Mentor actually takes on a much more prominent role. In *Der Kinderfreund*, it is the father who takes a much more direct role in his children's education and upbringing, while the mother remained conspicuously absent for the majority of the series. This, as we have already seen, was highly typical of most works for young readers at the time (Wild, "Aufklärung" 65). In the *Briefwechsel*, however, Frau Mentor appears much more frequently. This is presumably because the events of the Mentor household are now narrated almost exclusively from the point of view of the Mentor daughters, who are learning how to oversee a household and hence spend much more time with their mother. Thus, it is often the girls' mother, rather than their father, who now serves as the voice of reason to guide their actions, as the voice of discipline to admonish them when they have acted foolishly, and as the voice of wisdom to guide their futures. In this respect, Weiße's *Briefwechsel* is noteworthy for children's literature of the time because it features a mother figure in a fairly prominent role.

For the most part, the main characters of Weiße's periodicals are presented in the same way in both periodicals. There are, however, a few discernible differences—and occasionally even contradictions—in content between the two works. The most apparent example of discontinuity between the two series is the children's ages, both with respect to one another and with respect to the timeframe of *Der Kinderfreund*. In Mentor's introduction to the *Briefwechsel*, for instance, he mentions that Luischen is now nine years old (BW 1: 20), although

according to the chronology of the *Kinderfreund*, she should be eleven years old at this point. The other children's ages are not mentioned at the start of the *Briefwechsel*, yet it becomes clear from the beginning that Fritze—who in *Der Kinderfreund* is just two years older than Luischen—seems to act significantly older than his younger sister. In his letters to Luischen, Fritze speaks to her as if she were much younger than he is. It is not until later in the series that Fritze's age is finally revealed: In Volume 3, his older sister Lottchen refers to him as an "armes Jüngelchen von 16 Jahren" (BW 3: 169), which would make him at most fifteen years old at the start of the *Briefwechsel* and thus six years older than his younger sister Luischen.

It is certainly possible that Weiße himself may have lost track of the relative ages of his fictional creations over the course of the publication of the series, but it is also highly plausible that he intentionally manipulated the ages of the children in order to better suit the purposes of his new periodical. In his apprenticeship in Berlin, Fritze deals not only with professional struggles, but also encounters the many temptations present in such a metropolis, including wine, gambling, and flirtatious young women. In order to present a more realistic and thorough depiction of what his adolescent readers could expect to encounter during their studies away from home, Weiße might have felt it necessary to age Fritze prematurely. On the contrary, in order to keep the series interesting for younger readers and to illustrate more readily how older siblings can serve as guides for younger ones, Weiße may have intentionally kept Luischen young and given her another young playmate in the person of her new foster sister Julchen.

The introduction of Julchen into the Mentor family also bears further discussion, as there are several reasons why Weiße might have chosen to incorporate this new young character into the narrative: As in the case of Luischen's inexplicably reduced age, Weiße may have wished to

increase interest for very young readers, to illustrate the mentoring of younger siblings by older ones, and quite possibly also to attempt to keep his long-running format fresh. Finally, the character of Julchen serves to illustrate the transformative impact that a nurturing home and proper education can have as a young child. Before she moved into the Mentor household, Julchen was spoiled by an irresponsible governess; but shortly upon her arrival in her new home, she is converted into a virtuous, well-behaved girl, thanks to the tireless efforts of Herr and Frau Mentor. Julchen's transformation, which is related primarily in flashbacks recounted within the earliest volumes of the series, is thus just the first of many pieces of fictional evidence within the narrative which illustrate the efficacy of the family pedagogical model which Weiße so elaborately constructed in *Der Kinderfreund*.

5.1.4.2. Time

Another marked difference between the two periodicals is the passage of time throughout the course of the series. In *Der Kinderfreund*, Mentor makes frequent mention of the passing of the seasons and the celebration of various holidays, thereby making it evident that the six-year publication run of the first edition parallels a six-year timeframe within the story itself. In the *Briefwechsel*, however, there are noticeably few references to holidays or the seasons; and although some of the letters are occasionally dated, the vast majority of them are not. The very first letter in the series is dated January 7, 1783 (BW 1: 33), which indicates that the events chronicled in the *Briefwechsel* begin very soon after those of the *Kinderfreund*, which ends in 1782. The timeline of the *Briefwechsel* is difficult for the reader to establish as a result of the dearth of explicit references to seasons or dates. The sense of time in the series is further jarred

by the juxtaposition of the publication of the series over the course of eight years with a sense that time is passing quite slowly within the story. Most letters refer back to prior events which are discussed in previous letters, and quite often the reader is left with the impression that each of the Mentor children responds immediately to every letter he or she receives. The correspondence between the children is thus quite lively, and it is evident that unlike *Der Kinderfreund*, the timeframe of the story does not coincide with the series's publication. The last letter in the series that is actually dated appears toward the end of Volume 9 (of 12) and is dated September 23, 1786 (BW 9: 227). Mentor's epilogue at the conclusion of the entire series reports that Karl and Fritze return home around Easter (BW 12: 319)—presumably, then, in the year 1787. The narrative of the *Briefwechsel* thus seems to cover a roughly four-year time period, from January 1783 to Easter 1787.[67]

5.1.4.3. Style

In spite of occasional discontinuities between the two periodicals, there is a marked similarity in overall writing style between the *Briefwechsel* and the *Kinderfreund*. Although the *Briefwechsel* is written from the point of view of several different characters, the writing style constantly remains unmistakably that of Christian Felix Weiße; one cannot fail to recognize "den blühenden Stil, der Herrn W. eigen ist," as one contemporary reviewer described it (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 62.1: 212). Regardless of whether a particular letter is written by Mentor himself, the teenage Karl, or nine-year-old Luischen, the style is remarkably similar from letter to letter. At

[67] Further evidence supporting a four-year timeframe for the narrative comes halfway through Volume 12, when Lottchen reports that Chronikel has just returned from a two-and-a-half-year trip (BW 12: 175), thereby explaining his absence throughout most of the series.

best, there are slight differences in tone or demeanor which help mark the author of a particular letter. Lottchen, for example, is notorious for a keen wit and is inclined to make sarcastic jokes, while her brother Karl is infamously serious in everything he says and does.

The fact that the writing style of Weiße's adult characters differs almost not at all from that of his child characters merits further discussion. On the surface, this would appear to suggest that the author is either indifferent to or ignorant of the particular linguistic and cognitive abilities of children, evidently writing instead from a children's perspective which has no basis in reality and also writing to a young readership which likewise has no basis in reality. In other words, it would appear that Weiße is writing not to children as they are, but rather to a particular *construct* of children which he himself has envisioned and developed.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Weiße's *Kinderfreund* establishes a very rigid construct of childhood within an idealized framework of the family model and pedagogical system which the author is proposing and which he depicts as particularly effective. This fictional system, however, is only effective precisely because it is fictional; in other words, it appears to be so flawless in its implementation solely because Weiße himself has intentionally portrayed it that way. The child characters in the *Briefwechsel* are the products of this perfect (and fictional) pedagogical system. Thus, it should come as little surprise that they themselves are depicted in an equally idealized manner—in a manner, no less, which reveals that Weiße's *Briefwechsel* likewise establishes a particular construct of youth. It might be tempting to conclude at this point, though, that Weiße's writing style—which fails to distinguish between child and adult narrators, as well as between child and adult readers—is indeed the result of ignorance on the part of the author. As we will see later in this chapter, however, the situation is

more complex than this and is in actuality the result of a conscious decision on the part of the author.

5.1.4.4. Genre Blend

Perhaps more important than these similarities in literary style are the similarities in the textual makeup of both periodicals. While it is true that the *Briefwechsel* features several story arcs over the course of the season such as one does not find in *Der Kinderfreund*, both works are composed of a mishmash of textual genres: Just as in *Der Kinderfreund*, the letters of the *Briefwechsel* often incorporate poems, fables, songs, or historical narratives which help illustrate the topic of discussion. Similarly, plays are also interspersed throughout the *Briefwechsel*, with nearly every volume featuring one full-length play (usually attached to a particular letter as a gift for the recipient). Thus, Weiße's two periodicals both provide a variety of textual genres which are often presented in juxtaposition in order to illustrate a particular moral or ethical topic. Weiße presumably decided to utilize this format once again, seeing as it had proven to be so successful in *Der Kinderfreund*, which had already adapted the format of the popular moral weekly genre. The varieties of textual genres that Weiße incorporates into both works differ only in how they are presented in their respective works: In *Der Kinderfreund*, the fictional author embeds them in individual installments which he writes directly to the reader; in the *Briefwechsel*, individual characters choose to incorporate them into a series of letters written to the other main characters.

5.1.4.5. Format

The letters which the *Briefwechsel* comprises average between thirty and fifty pages in length—regardless of the letter's author or recipient. Even most of the letters written by or to the young girls Luischen and Julchen are of considerable length. It is no small wonder that some of Weiße's contemporary critics, as we have already seen, expressed concern that the length and complexity of the material presented in the *Briefwechsel* would prove to be overwhelming for young readers. Clearly, letters of such length would be remarkable in the real world, even for an eighteenth-century adult author or recipient. The fact alone that Weiße has created a fictional world in which seven-year-old girls not only receive, but also write,[68] such epistolary tomes suggests that his fictional world is a highly idealized version of his pedagogical model, which, if it were to be implemented in real life, would in all likelihood appear very different than it is portrayed both within *Der Kinderfreund* and the *Briefwechsel*. I will later explore this problematic idea more thoroughly, but we must first return to an examination of the format and content of the periodical in question.

The majority of the letters included in the *Briefwechsel* follow a recognizable format with a brief introduction and two main halves.[69] The letter opens with a fond greeting and expression

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[68] The first letter in the series written by seven-year-old Julchen is, admittedly, considerably shorter than most of the others at five pages long (BW 1: 234–38). In the opening paragraph of this letter, moreover, the character explains that she received help in writing it from her older foster sister Lottchen (BW 1: 234). It would appear that Weiße is attempting here to achieve a certain level of plausibility within the fictional world which he is creating, yet it should be noted that this attempt at plausibility is quickly abandoned within the series: After her first letter, Julchen makes no further mention of receiving help in crafting her sentences, and early on in the series her letters cease to be noticeably shorter than those of the other characters.

[69] As letters were the most common form of mediated communication of the day, learning to write letters was a key component of the upbringing of children of the bourgeoisie. Many literary works for children of the time incorporated letters into the text; such letters, including those of Weiße's *Briefwechsel*, thus also served as *Musterbriefe* for young writers (Wild, "Aufklärung" 75).

of affection, which is usually mixed with some well-intentioned teasing, thereby making it evident to the reader that there is still room for banter among siblings even within the otherwise prim and proper world of the Mentor family. One particularly humorous example of this comes in the only letter in the entire series written by Luischen to her older sister Lottchen. When the Mentor family goes to visit Karl at the professor's house, Lottchen and her parents take a week-long excursion, during which Luischen takes the opportunity to express her feelings about finally having some time away from her big sister:

> Ungeachtet ich darauf rechne, liebes Lottchen, daß wir dich mit Papa und Mama in wenig Tagen wieder hier bey unserm gütigen Herrn Professor sehen werden: so kann ich es doch nicht übers Herz bringen, da es mir nicht an Zeit gebricht, dir einmal in deiner Abwesenheit zu schreiben, und wenn es auch nur in der Absicht wäre, dir zu sagen, daß ich mich über deine Abwesenheit nicht zu Tode gräme, wie dich deine stolze Einbildung bey unserm Abschiede wähnen ließ; denn ich sehe aus unserer Entfernung, wie man sich eben so leicht von einander entwöhnen, als an einander gewöhnen kann. Wenn du daher etwa dort im Bade einen hübschen Mann finden und eine Braut werden wolltest; so laß dich die Furcht, als ob ich deiner nicht entbehren könnte, ja nicht verleiten, ihm deine Hand zu versagen. Denn, ob ich dich gleich sehr liebe; so thut es mir doch itzt auch manchmal sehr wohl, daß ich nicht von dir, wie gewöhnlich, gehofmeistert und getadelt werde: denn du wirst dich nur zu gut erinnern, wie oft du dir diese Freyheit nimmst. (BW 9: 64–65)

Such instances of goodhearted ribbing come as a relief to the present-day reader and likely also to readers in Weiße's day; they reveal that occasional jokes and gentle teasing do indeed have a place within Weiße's ideal family model, which is otherwise populated with virtue and strict moral codes.

After this brief introduction, each letter usually comments on the contents of the previous letter which the author received from the recipient. If Karl discusses a particular topic in a letter to his sister Lottchen, for instance, Lottchen's next letter to Karl will assuredly comment on this same topic, as well. This is occasionally made explicit by means of a footnote within the text which provides the volume and page numbers of the previous letter in response of which the

current letter has been written (for example, "S. den 6ten Theil des Briefw. S. 47 bis 92" [BW 7: 38]). Usually, though, no such reference is provided. The first half of each letter thus serves to connect the series of letters to one another and establish a narrative thread. In the first half of most of the letters, the author usually praises or gently criticizes how the recipient handled a particular situation, comments on the behaviors of other characters mentioned in the previous letter, and provides advice (both solicited and unsolicited) on how the recipient should deal with a certain dilemma that he or she has described. This advice and feedback is often accompanied by a fable, poem, song, or historical example that the author finds to be thematically related to the topic at hand. Essentially, the same pattern which was established in *Der Kinderfreund* remains in the *Briefwechsel*: An abstract discussion on a moral issue, ethical dilemma, or practical concern is later illustrated or expanded by means of a literary work or historical example.

In the final half of each letter, the author relates new events in his or her own life and frequently asks the recipient explicitly for advice. Occasionally, this new information is simply the narration of a one-time event, such as a party or brief excursion, which has little connection to the greater narrative thread of the entire *Briefwechsel*. Usually, however, the second half of each letter furthers the narrative thrust of the series by providing updates to the various plotlines which recur throughout the entirety of the series and which center around the Mentor children and the various secondary characters present in the series.

As in *Der Kinderfreund*, the *Briefwechsel* both opens and closes with a direct address to the reader from Mentor, the father of the family and the editor of the series of letters. Otherwise, the periodical consists of a series of seventy-eight letters in total. Only nine of these letters are

written by or to adult characters: one letter from Mentor to Karl, and eight others between Philoteknos or Spirit and the Mentor children. Otherwise, all of the letters are written among the four Mentor children; their foster sister Julchen; and eventually Friederikchen, the daughter of Karl's professor, who befriends the Mentor daughters. While *Der Kinderfreund* was written nearly exclusively from the point of view of the adult Mentor, the *Briefwechsel* is thus narrated for the most part by children and teenagers. As we have already seen, however, the differences between Weiße's adult narrators and his child narrators are minimal: The author attempts to hide the marked similarities in style and content solely by occasional minor shifts in tone which are characteristic of a particular narrator—Lottchen's fondness for sarcastic quips, for instance, which are completely absent in any passage which Mentor narrates. Ultimately, these relatively insignificant shifts in tone do little to establish a clear distinction between adult and child narrators. Once again, Weiße presents staged versions of young characters who are not true to life, but rather conform to the idealized model which the author has created. It is thus through the point of view of these staged young adults themselves that the reader must decode Weiße's conception of youth. Before examining his conception of youth, however, it is worthwhile to discuss the parameters which define the analysis presented in this chapter.

5.2. The Present Interpretation of Weiße's *Briefwechsel*: Preliminary Remarks

5.2.1 Historical Author vs. Fictional Author: The Weiße-Mentor Problem Revisited

It is once again prudent to offer some preliminary remarks concerning guidelines which shaped the following analysis of the concept of youth in Weiße's *Briefwechsel* before the analysis itself

is presented. First of all, it is useful to revisit the issue of distinguishing between the historical author Weiße and the fictional author Mentor. The previous chapter argued that there is enough evidence to suggest Mentor for the most part can be considered to espouse the ideas of Weiße himself. This was a standard convention of moral weeklies, and many readers of Weiße's time simply assumed that Mentor served as a spokesman for Weiße anyway.

The character of Mentor, however, plays a much smaller role in the *Briefwechsel* than he does as the principal narrator of every installment of *Der Kinderfreund*. Since the *Briefwechsel* is composed of a variety of letters, each written from a different point of view, one cannot as readily attribute each argument to Mentor and hence also to Weiße. While there are admittedly several viewpoints presented in the *Briefwechsel*, there is nevertheless a striking uniformity among them. The Mentor children occasionally disagree with each other on less important matters; but regarding issues of morality or education, they almost always share the same opinion. They are, after all, each the product of the same upbringing—an upbringing overseen by Mentor himself. Thus, one can usually safely assume that the ideas which the various characters support are indeed those of both Mentor and Weiße.

Amidst this multiplicity of viewpoints, another degree of separation from Mentor (and hence from Weiße) is removed when in his introductory address to the reader, Mentor freely admits that he has occasionally taken liberties to edit or censor his children's letters:

> Daß ich mir die Freyheit nehmen werde, diese Briefe hin und wieder, so ich es nöthig finde, zu bessern, oder einen unschicklichen Einfall, wie es sich bisweilen unter Geschwistern, die sich weniger für übel halten, zu geschehen pflegt, wegzustreichen, kurz Direktor und Censor, das ist, Anführer und Richter über diese Briefe zu seyn, hoffe ich bey euch zu verantworten. So groß oder klein meine Leser seyn mögen, so habe ich für sie Hochachtung, und diese möchte ich auch von euch gern für mich und meine Familie verdienen. Sollte euch eines und das andere in diesen Briefen mißfallen, oder ihr dießfalls einige Wünsche thun, so dürft ihr mir es frey mittheilen. (BW 1: 31–32)

The contents of each letter have thus been edited and approved by Mentor, which suggests that he endorses the majority of the ideas which the authors support in the final, published version of each letter.

Similarly, in his farewell address to the reader, Mentor makes another confession. In response to hypothetical questions from his loyal readers as to whether the *Briefwechsel* represents truth or fiction and depicts real people and events, Mentor admits that his work blends elements of both truth and fiction:

> [D]aß die verschiedenen Charaktere[70] nach wirklichen Originalen in der Natur geschildert worden, könnte ich bejahen – daß so lange Briefe mit eingemischten Geschichten und Erzählungen von jungen Leuten unter solchen Umständen geschrieben worden, ist freylich nicht sehr wahrscheinlich, noch viel weniger, daß sie immer so klug zu handeln pflegen, oder so fruchtbar an guten Lehren und Warnungen für andre ihres Gleichen sind – besser also, ich lasse euch dießfalls in der Ungewißheit, damit ich der Wahrheit nichts vergebe. Denn, im Grunde; was liegt daran, ob das Ganze Wahrheit oder Erdichtung ist, oder ob einige Umstände nur davon wahr und die Einkleidung von mir oder den eingeführten Personen herrühret? – Wenn diese unter den Situationen, in denen sie sich befanden, nur so handelten, wie sie der Vernunft und Weisheit gemäß handeln sollten, so liegt in Absicht des moralischen Vortheils für euch nichts dran, ob sie auch wirklich so handelten? Seht es in diesem Falle als ein Exempelbuch an, wovon die Absicht war, euch Muster darzustellen, wie eure Aeltern und Freunde wünschen könnten, daß Ihr, so bald euch die Fürsehung in ähnliche Lagen versetzte, betragen möchtet! (BW 12: 316)

The fictional editor admits here that he has taken liberties with several of the events depicted in the *Briefwechsel* and has presumably authored some of them himself. In the end, he concludes that it is irrelevant whether the depictions of the children's actions in the *Briefwechsel* represent fact or fiction, as they are equally instructive for young readers in either case. The work's role as

[70] Note that this statement, written from the point of view of the fictional Mentor, refers to the individuals who people the *Briefwechsel*—who, of course, include his own children—as "Charaktere" and makes reference to the "Natur" of the extratextual reality. In this passage, then, the historical Weiße most directly addresses his real-life readers than in any other passage in either of his two periodicals. The comments contained in this passage can thus be interpreted quite clearly as a statement directly from the real-life author himself.

an *Exempelbuch* for its youngs readers, he concludes, ultimately outweighs any obligation to depict real-life or even realistic scenarios within the work.

Similarly, it appears to be more important for the author to illustrate that a *Briefwechsel* conducted by children could show that education can also be entertaining. Although the passage above has important implications for the ideas of education which are presented in the *Briefwechsel* and their relationship to entertainment—implications which will be discussed later in this chapter—it also brings the events and ideas of the *Briefwechsel* one degree closer to Mentor and Weiße.

In light of this evidence, the reader has valid reason to identify most of the positions which are promoted in the *Briefwechsel* as belonging to Weiße himself. Nevertheless, the following analysis will, as in the previous chapter, be careful to distinguish between the fictional author-editor Mentor and the historical author Weiße. References in the text to Mentor indicate that the character of Mentor himself is making a statement in the *Briefwechsel*, while references to Weiße are used for positions which can safely be traced back to the historical author himself.

Of greatest significance in the quote above, however, is Mentor's confession that it is highly implausible that such young people could write the lengthy letters included in the *Briefwechsel* or could offer each other such wise advice. In yet another instance of blurring fact and fiction, Mentor here offers the real-life Weiße's response to his extratextual critics who raise these specific concerns in their published reviews of his work. More importantly, Weiße essentially admits in this passage that the "truth" of his didactic intentions runs counter to a completely realistic depiction of his young characters: His primary goal in writing the *Briefwechsel*—and, one can safely assume by extension, also *Der Kinderfreund*—is not to depict

children and young adults as they are, but rather to establish ideal models such as he hopes his young readers might become. The author acknowledges that these models which he has presented are unrealistic, yet he believes that the usefulness of these fictional models for his young readers is more important than maintaining a sense of realism. In so doing, the author presents his readers with thought experiments which illustrate the desired outcomes of his pedagogical ideals. Weiße's depiction of young people who are unrealistically eloquent and sage beyond their years is thus not, as was discussed above, the result of ignorance or naïveté on his part, but rather reflects a conscious decision to offer a highly idealized result of his pedagogical model instead of a more true-to-life representation thereof. The implications of this will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

5.2.2. Selection Criteria of the Individual Texts for Discussion

It would once again be useful to the reader to discuss briefly the criteria which were used in selecting the individual texts and passages from the *Briefwechsel* for discussion in the following analysis. Recurring themes which are most closely related to Weiße's conception of youth were selected as the main points of discussion in the analysis. Conversely, while Weiße's *Briefwechsel* also contains depictions of much younger children, the main goal of this analysis of the *Briefwechsel* was to contrast his depiction of youth to his depiction of childhood as found in *Der Kinderfreund*. For this reason, passages in the *Briefwechsel* which focus more on the younger children and his conception of childhood were generally not included in the following analysis.

Likewise, with a corpus of such breadth at one's disposal, it proved necessary to exclude other important topics which, though they may be of general interest, are less closely related to Weiße's concept of youth. Some of these topics—such as the author's thoughts on the relationship between the various social classes—were generally excluded from the analysis altogether. Other complex themes—such as Weiße's position on the appropriate roles of both genders, which is so complex and prevalent throughout the series that an entire monograph could be written on this topic alone—were touched upon in the analysis, but admittedly only in passing.

Finally, the criteria for selection of individual passages to illustrate each topic were largely similar to those of the previous chapter. The *Briefwechsel*, much like *Der Kinderfreund*, includes a variety of textual genres—poems, songs, plays, fables, historical accounts—frequently integrated into a discussion of a particular topic or issue. In *Der Kinderfreund*, most of these shorter texts, such as the poems and fables, are used to illustrate a particular topic of discussion and hence provide another setting and context within which to provide perspectives on this topic. In the *Briefwechsel*, however, this connection between the more specifically literary texts in the periodical and the commentary on them offered in the letters is not always quite as strong. The literary texts are sometimes only tangentially related, and occasionally random poems and stories are included simply for the entertainment value of the recipient of the letter. This is particularly true in the letters written to the two youngest children, Luischen and Julchen. Similarly, Julchen—the youngest child of all—often copies poems or fables into the letters which she writes in order—as she states—to free herself of the burden of having to find something wise or witty to report.

As a result of this different relationship of the literary texts to the more explicit discussions of a particular issue, it did not always prove feasible to find a suitable poem or play which illustrates each topic in an interesting way. Hence, some issues which are discussed in the analysis rely solely on passages in which the main characters discuss a topic directly in their letters. Wherever possible, however, relevant literary texts were also analyzed, in order to establish the different ways in which Weiße promoted his ideals within the *Briefwechsel*: both directly through the mouthpiece of his main characters and indirectly through the wide variety of poems and plays he included in the periodical.

5.2.3. Rousseau (à la mode) vs. Weiße: A Comparison of *Émile* with the *Briefwechsel*

Rousseau's *Émile* depicts not only Émile's education as a child, but also his development into a young man and ultimately concludes with his marriage and the birth of his first child. As a result, Rousseau's notions of youth and young adulthood—and of how one can best guide young people through this phase of life—are prevalent throughout the latter portions of his text. Hence, the following analysis of Weiße's *Briefwechsel* will also feature comparisons to Rousseau's *Émile*. It should be restated that the reason for this comparison is not to analyze the effect that the two writers may have had on each other, but rather to illustrate the diversity—and occasionally the striking similarity—of influential opinions and ideas concerning childhood and youth that were prevalent in late eighteenth-century Europe.

As an index of Rousseau's influence during Weiße's time, it should also be noted that Rousseau is occasionally mentioned explicitly in Weiße's *Briefwechsel*. Specifically, the text

features background characters who misinterpret Rousseau's ideas[71] as they attempt to implement them as a new form of education—which, incidentally, was never actually Rousseau's intention in writing *Émile* (Boutet de Monvel vii). Two such examples of "Rousseau à la mode" are particularly noteworthy and should be discussed here.

5.2.3.1. Rousseau à la mode

In the first of these two examples, Fritze describes Franz, the spoiled youngest son of his master, Herr Worthmann, and expresses his dismay that Franz, who is nearly six years old, cannot read and has not received any sort of formal education of the world. Fritze describes his own upbringing as a child to Worthmann, explaining that he and his siblings had at that same age already begun reading and learning about history, nature, and literature. In response, Worthmann blames his wife for his children's poor education:

> „Das sehe ich, mit Vergnügen sehe ich es," sagte er, „aus den mannichfaltigen, artigen Kenntnissen, die Er für Seine Jahre mitgebracht hat, und zugleich auch, daß ich nicht ganz den rechten Weg, mit meinen Kindern gegangen bin. Meine Frau, die sonst viel von Erziehung, von Rousseauischen Grundsätzen schwatzte, die sie vielleicht selbst nicht einmal versteht und nur so von Hörensagen, was aufgelesen, hat mir selbst anfänglich das Ding mit in Kopf gesetzet, daß es den Kindern den Verstand und den Körper schwäche, wenn man sie vor dem zehnten Jahre viel lehren wollte. Aber schon mein Wilhelm überzeugt mich itzt, daß, so ein guter Junge er ist, er doch nach seinen Fähigkeiten und dem, was ich auf ihn gewandt habe, viel, viel weiter seyn könnte. (BW 3: 146–47)

Worthmann admits that his children's education should have been more rigorous and recognizes that his oldest son Wilhelm could likely be much more advanced and well-educated if his wife had not insisted on following principles which she ascribes to Rousseau. The most salient point

[71] There is admittedly one instance in Weiße's *Briefwechsel* where a character correctly understands Rousseau's arguments and cites them as support for her own position (BW 12: 71–74). This example will be discussed later in this chapter.

here, however, is of course that Frau Worthmann does not really understand these same principles, nor has she actually read much by the man whose ideas she claims to put into practice. That she has picked up enough from hearsay reflects the fact that people of late eighteenth-century Germany were discussing Rousseau's ideas frequently and that a wave of parents intended to educate their children in such a manner.

A similar situation occurs when Karl visits the local *Jahrmarkt* with his professor and they meet two men with diametrically opposed views on education: The local mayor is an avid proponent of the "alte Erziehung." He is extremely strict with his children; and as a result, they are completely terrified of him—and also of everyone else. The local pastor, on the other hand, raises his children in accordance to the principles of the "neue Erziehung." Because he lets his children fulfill their natural desires and does not discipline them, the children are wild creatures who constantly argue with one another, hit one another, and steal from one another (BW 4: 240–45). The two fathers discuss which form of child-rearing is more effective, and the pastor says to the mayor: "Vermuthlich aber haben Sie nicht die Schriften eines Locke, Rousseau, Basedow und anderer großen Lehrer der Erziehung gelesen, sonst würden Sie ein ander Liedchen singen" (BW 4: 245). The professor ultimately intervenes and says he believes that they are both wrong, offering his views on the ideal form of education, which seeks a middle ground between love and severity:

> Sie gehen beyde zu weit. Liebe und Ernst ist nöthig. Ernst heißt aber nicht, Ungestüm und Wuth und Liebe nicht blinde Verzärtelung und unvernünftige Nachsicht. Angewöhnung zum Gehorsam aufs Wort ist nöthig, damit sie schon lernen recht thun, und ihre Begierden unterdrücken, ehe man sie noch den Unterschied zwischen Recht und Unrecht, Gutem und Bösem, Schicklichem und Unschicklichem lehren kann. Liebe ist auch nöthig, damit die Kinder überzeugt werden, daß unsere Befehle nicht aus Eigensinn, Zorn und andern Leidenschaften, oder aus Vergnügen, unsre Gewalt an ihnen auszuüben, oder ihnen das Leben zu erschweren, herkommen: sondern daß unser Ernst und jede Art der Züchtigung allezeit ihre Glückseligkeit zur Absicht habe. (BW 4: 245–46)

The group then later meets two children who were raised according to the principles espoused by the professor and are impressed by how well-behaved they are. At the end of the visit, the professor learns that the pastor has never read anything by Rousseau or Basedow, although he repeatedly and publically touts what he believes to be their guidelines on child-rearing (BW 4: 253).

As with the first example, this instance indicates that some of the most ardent proponents of Rousseau's alleged "neue Erziehung" do not understand the principles they espouse and have frequently not even read Rousseau's work in the first place. Thus, both examples do not necessarily show that Rousseau's ideas do not work in practice—both Franz and the pastor's children, after all, are extremely ill-behaved and selfish—but rather these passages reveal that what does not work in practice is Rousseau à la mode—that is, a misconception of Rousseau's ideas which is based on hearsay and popular opinion. As such, these nods to Rousseau in the *Briefwechsel* do not necessarily represent a direct critique on Rousseau's principles. They do, however, illustrate the influence which his *Émile* had exerted on European parents in the late eighteenth century.

5.3. Weiße's Concept of Youth as Represented in *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*

5.3.1. Childhood Put to the Test: The Crucible of Youth

It has already been shown in this study that Weiße's *Kinderfreund* places great emphasis on the claim that childhood is a critical time in the life of an individual. Weiße writes his works with a

sense of great urgency, fully convinced that moral failings and character flaws which remain uncorrected in one's childhood will become nigh irremediable later in life. Thus, he concludes that it is of utmost importance that children receive the best possible education and upbringing so that they might be molded at a young age to become steadfast, virtuous Christians and responsible citizens in their adult life.

While Weiße's fictional characters have aged by several years when they reappear in the *Briefwechsel*, an unmistakably similar sense of urgency permeates the successor to *Der Kinderfreund*. First of all, the periodical once again presents many instances in which Mentor or one of his family members concludes that someone's behavior as an adult is the direct result of their poor upbringing as a child. The family, for example, once meets a woman who is deathly afraid of nearly everything—a predicament which Frau Mentor explicitly attributes to the manner in which she has been raised by her parents (BW 3: 217). Similarly, Karl's professor believes that brazenly flirtatious boys who constantly chase after girls are all the product of poor parenting. He surmises that their fathers took no direct hand in their upbringing; hence, the boys only had contact to women such as their mothers or governesses and quickly learned to make idle compliments in order to curry favor (BW 5: 308–09).

Additionally, the *Briefwechsel* offers a new perspective on this sentiment regarding the importance of childhood. It is not only suggested that flaws can become difficult or even impossible to correct later in life, but other passages argue that it is easier to develop good habits early in life, rather than being forced to acquire them with great difficulty as an adult. Fritze describes this when he writes to his younger sister Luischen:

> In der That hat die Gewohnheit einen so großen Einfluß auf uns, daß sie uns das, was anfänglich auch noch so lastig scheint, durch öftere Wiederholung endlich zur Fertigkeit, ja wohl gar zum

> Vergnügen macht, und ich denke mir itzt oft, wie glücklich die Kinder sind, die gleich in ihrer ersten Jugend zu dem gewöhnt werden, was sie sonst in ihrem künftigen Leben erst mit Mühe erlernen müssen und so auch umgekehrt. (BW 3: 113–14)

Just as it is easier to correct bad habits when one is young, the argument here is that it is also easier to develop good habits during childhood, as well. Indeed, Fritze claims these good habits even become a source of pleasure for young people, which will likely not be the case with older people who are forced to acquire new habits with great difficulty.

Both of these issues—the remediation of bad habits and the formation of good ones—are illustrated quite vividly in the *Briefwechsel* in the "conversions" of two very young characters. The first of these is Mentor's foster daughter Julchen, who by her own admission had been greatly spoiled by her French governess[72] before she came to live with the Mentor family—so spoiled, in fact, that she was selfish and extremely obstinate and would scream until she got her way. Upon her arrival in the Mentor household, however, Frau Mentor makes it clear that none of the staff will respond to her selfish demands and that she would not be permitted to eat whatever she pleases. Eventually, Julchen herself is converted into a virtuous, well-behaved girl and is delighted to report that some dishes which she previously refused to eat are now her favorites. She concludes that good habits are easy to form when one is young: "Da seh ich nun,

[72] French governesses are nearly an archetypal villain in Weiße's works for young readers. Without exception, such governesses are irresponsible and produce ill-mannered and ill-behaved children. In addition to the governesses themselves, Weiße's works also criticize the parents who place their children under the care of such women, as well as any German who insists on speaking French to the point of refusing to read anything written in German. Indeed, a common critique of French governesses in Weiße's works is that they usually forbid their charges to read anything that is not written in French. Regarding Julchen's former governess, for example, Mentor reports that she has committed the greatest of sins: "Den Kinderfreund verwarf sie, weil er nicht französisch geschrieben war" (BW 1: 22). Associated with Weiße's Francophobia was a resentment of Absolutism and the notion of demanding to receive everything one wishes. While this notion, which was most closely associated with Louis XIV, became popular among some residents of the German-speaking regions, others such as Weiße resented its wastefulness and luxus. The author's negative depiction of greedy children whose indulgent parents and French governesses cater to their every whim thus also represents a critique of the nobility, not just of all things French.

daß man alles seyn kann, was man will, wenn es nur recht angefangen wird, und wenn nur das verständige und gute Leute sind, welche die Aufsicht über uns haben und sich unser Bestes recht angelegen seyn lassen" (BW 3: 248).

Once again, we see that even the youngest of Weiße's characters exhibit wisdom and insight far beyond their years, as Julchen, who at this point early on in the series is only seven or eight years old, truly embodies the notion of the German term *Altklugheit*. Her ultimate conclusion is clearly a summary of Weiße's belief in the importance of one's upbringing for one's future, and her conversion itself is used as evidence to support the veracity of this claim. Weiße depicts Julchen's transformation within a family environment which upholds his pedagogical ideals as evidence of the efficacy of these ideal, in spite of the fact that both Julchen and her transformation are equally Weiße's creations.

The author is not providing legitimate evidence in order to establish the efficacy of an empirical pedagogical model; on the contrary, he is applying his personal ideal of pedagogy—which, as we have already seen, he has so clearly laid out over the course of the twenty-four volumes of *Der Kinderfreund*—and illustrating, through an admittedly fictional example, how it should be implemented.

Nevertheless, one should note that this statement is made in the indicative, rather than the subjunctive. The claim being made here is presented not merely as a hypothetical possibility, but a factual truth. In other words, Weiße himself hammers home his notion that a proper education in one's childhood will not simply predispose one toward an adulthood of propriety, but will actually guarantee it.

The other conversion story featured in the *Briefwechsel* is that of young Franz, the youngest child of Fritze's master. Much like Julchen, Franz has been spoiled greatly by his mother and has become extremely selfish and demanding. Fritze advises his master that his son might benefit from being educated with the children of Herr Just, one of his staff. Within a nurturing household run by a mother who does not give in to her children's demands, Franz learns from the positive example set by the other well-behaved children and begins to desire to be praised for his own virtues. Eventually, he becomes generous, kindhearted, and diligent (BW 10: 340–79). Here, too, Weiße provides a fictional case study as proof of the effectiveness of his pedagogical ideals.

5.3.1.1. Education in Groups

Both of the examples above illustrate another point regarding the education of children which Weiße appears to espouse—namely, that education is far more effective among groups of children, rather than in a one-on-one setting with a private tutor or governess. In his introduction to the reader, Mentor himself argues this position, claiming that educating several children together has several added benefits: The sense of camaraderie that develops between them enables them to learn positive behaviors from one another and prevents them from becoming selfish or greedy. At the same time, a sense of friendly competition will develop between the children, thereby causing them to work more diligently and become more disciplined in their studies. Mentor even goes so far as to suggest that wealthy parents who have just one child should find another child whom they could educate with theirs so that both children might benefit (BW 1: 24–25). In addition to Mentor's direct comments that education is more effective

in groups, there are other indirect examples of the efficacy of such an education prevalent in the *Briefwechsel*—of which the conversions of Julchen and Franz are just two. Weiße clearly felt quite strongly about the issue.

These examples once again illustrate more generally not only the value of a proper education and upbringing, but also the transformative power of Weiße's pedagogical ideals—or more accurately, the transformative power which Weiße believed his pedagogical ideals possessed. Within a matter of weeks, two naughty, selfish children are reshaped into generous, hard-working children—all thanks to the educational ideals which Weiße has promoted in *Der Kinderfreund* and once again revisits here. In the *Briefwechsel*, however, Weiße also explores the long-term effects of his educational system. While the children in the *Briefwechsel* have admittedly not yet reached full adulthood, the older ones are at least in a position in life to reflect upon their childhood. Repeatedly, Mentor's children express their gratitude for the upbringing that they have received as children. When one of the children encounters a bad parent or a spoiled child, for instance, he or she will often comment explicitly that he or she is thankful not to have been raised in such a manner.[73]

5.3.1.2. The Trials of Youth

The importance of such an upbringing becomes even more apparent in light of the depiction of youth within the *Briefwechsel*: According to Mentor, youth is a time fraught with peril and

[73] The children usually make such comments with respect to morally questionable actions, but occasionally they comment on a particular knowledge base or skill which they learned as children. A particularly unusual example comes from a passage in which Fritze saves Mienchen's life when her dress catches on fire after a rocket from a fireworks display goes off in her direction. While everyone else panics, Fritze calmly smothers the fire with his coat, attributing his presence of mind and knowledge of how best to extinguish the fire to an important lesson he learned as a child (BW 6: 176–77).

danger, a crucible in which the values and virtues which one has learned in one's childhood are put to the test. For Weiße, youth, like childhood, is a critical period in one's life. It is during this period that most children leave their family household for the first time and hence are exposed to a wide assortment of temptations and vices which may lead them down a dangerous path. We have already seen that in his farewell address to the reader, Mentor states explicitly that his primary motivations in publishing a sequel to *Der Kinderfreund* were to make his young readers aware of the dangers that would face them in the years to come and to provide living examples of how one can face those dangers while remaining virtuous and steadfast (BW 12: 312–315).

Karl and Fritze, it goes without saying, survive the trials of youth unscathed and remain faithful to the virtues instilled in them in childhood by their parents. Both of the boys move in with flawed families who are a far cry from the ideal Mentor family, and both boys ultimately serve to improve their respective host families. Each of them, moreover, befriends another boy of questionable moral character—Karl befriends Herr von Z – – and Fritze befriends Wilhelm—and is thus exposed to the vices of the real world: wine, gambling, smoking, and loose women. Both of the Mentor boys attend a wild party at one point: Karl attends a party with his fellow students, during which they drink, smoke, gamble, and tell off-color jokes and anecdotes (BW 5: 7–10). Fritze, meanwhile, is taken by Wilhelm to a late-night, clandestine party where provocatively dressed girls provide kisses to the young men, all of whom are frequently busy telling lewd tales (BW 5: 270–84). Both of the Mentor boys are extremely uncomfortable at their respective parties and vow never to return, admonishing their friends to do the same.

It is as a result of Karl and Fritze's proper upbringing that they are able to remain virtuous in their youth. Thus, the emphasis placed upon the trials of youth in the *Briefwechsel* is

a further emphasis on the importance of childhood: Without a strong moral education in one's childhood, one is far more likely to be led astray in one's youth. Consequently, while the author is attempting to encourage and protect his young readers who are about to have similar real-world experiences to those of Karl and Fritze, he is simultaneously making a plea to the parents of even younger readers to guide their moral development and instill in them a strong sense of virtue, lest they succumb to the temptations of the world in their youth. In the *Briefwechsel*, too, there remain certain elements which are addressed to dual audiences—his young readers, who are about to have experiences similar to those of his young protagonists, and their parents, whom the author is trying to educate so that they might better guide their children throughout life. Once again, one can note traces of the phenomenon which Bettina Hurrelmann has referred to as "Erziehung der Erzieher" (Hurrelmann, *Bürgerlichkeit* 197).

5.3.2. From Parent as Teacher to Parent as Friend: The Role of the Parent in One's Youth

Weiße's emphasis on the trials of youth is indeed an indirect appeal to parents of very young children to take a direct role in the moral education of their children while they still have an opportunity to do so. Additionally, the *Briefwechsel* contains several examples which much more directly convey the value of parents immediately overseeing the education of their children. The two most striking examples are, as we have already seen, the figures of Julchen and Franz, both of whose fathers largely play no role in their upbringing. As a result, both children are ill-behaved and obstinate until they come into a new household where a surrogate father and mother begin to oversee their moral education. Because we have already discussed Weiße's emphasis in *Der Kinderfreund* on the importance of parents acting as teachers to their young children, there is

little need to explore further examples in the *Briefwechsel* here. Rather, it is sufficient to point out that there are indeed numerous other examples of this in the *Briefwechsel,* which suggests that it is still a matter of importance for the author.

Weiße's *Briefwechsel,* however, reflects a noteworthy transformation in the role that parents ought to play in their children's lives. When the children are quite young, parents should act as their trusted teacher. While Weiße's ideal parent nurtures his or her children and fosters a deep sense of trust, the parent nevertheless necessarily maintains a position of authority of the child. This relationship remains a hierarchical one in which the parent can exert his or her authority over the child. As the children grow older and become more independent, however, Weiße's work suggests that the parent must transition to the role of a trusted friend and advisor. This new relationship of friendship thus establishes parent and child as equals who are no longer in a hierarchical relationship. Authority can no longer be exerted over the child; rather, reason and rational argumentation must be used in order to guide the child's path. The parent's new relationship to the child is, therefore, a relationship defined by two core ideals of the Enlightenment: equality and reason. The transformation from parent as teacher to parent as friend, however, is not an immediate one, but rather a gradual process which takes place as younger children come to the realization that they can trust their parents as their closest friends.

This is certainly the case for the Mentor children. Fritze, for example, admits as much explicitly to his master's son Wilhelm, who has been sneaking out at night and has also been bribing a servant and pleading with Fritze to keep his secret. Fritze encourages him never to keep secrets from his parents—a lesson which Fritze himself learned at a young age when he

came to realize that his parents had his best interests in mind and thus were confidants with whom he could share anything and everything:

> [I]ndem sie mir und meinem Geschwister [unsere Fehler] nach einem aufrichtigen Geständnisse liebreich vergaben, die Strafbarkeit und übeln Folgen derselben glimpflich vorstellten, und uns zurecht wiesen, wie wir in dem oder jenem Falle handeln sollten, wenn wir Zufriedenheit und Glückseligkeit zur Absicht hätten, gewannen sie uns unser Vertrauen so sehr ab, daß wir sie für unsere besten und verschwiegensten Freunde hielten: und was hält man wohl vor diesen geheim? (BW 8: 67–68)

Thus, Fritze recognized as a young child that his parents showed concern for his well-being by forgiving his mistakes and instructing him how he should have acted differently. The ultimate claim here is that by earning their children's trust and respect from a young age, parents will begin to show themselves as true friends and will earn the confidence of their children.

Mentor himself also explicitly states that he has always acted as his children's friend. In a letter to his son Karl—the only letter, no less, included in the entire series which is written from Mentor's perspective—the father reproaches his son for having mocked an elderly professor in his previous letter. Mentor explains that he must rebuke him for this, "denn wir reden als vertraute Freunde mit Offenherzigkeit und ohne Zurückhaltung mit einander" (BW 2: 42). At the end of the letter, Mentor once again asserts his role as friend when he writes:

> Du weißt, mein liebster Sohn, daß ich von jeher gewohnt gewesen bin, mehr wie Freund, als Vater mit dir zu handeln. Ich bin also überzeugt, daß du mir diese kleinen Warnungen verzeihen wirst. Sie sind Verweise meiner Liebe und der Sorge für dein Glück, welches auch das meinige ist und immerdar seyn wird.
>
> Dein
>
> treuer Freund und Vater
>
> Mentor. (BW 2: 56–57)

It is noteworthy that in the closing of the letter, Mentor actually refers to himself as Karl's friend *before* he refers to himself as his father, suggesting that he actually considers his role as friend to be the more significant role now.

Mentor's claim that he has acted more as friend than a father "von jeher," however, is somewhat questionable. It may be true that he has always had his children's best interests in mind and that they came to realize this from a young age, but there does seem to be a difference between his role in the *Briefwechsel* and that in *Der Kinderfreund*. In the latter work, Mentor acts more frequently as an authoritarian figure, albeit a benevolent one. Conversely, the relationship in the *Briefwechsel* seems less disciplinary and more genuinely friendly. Thus, there does indeed seem to be a true transformation from parent as authoritarian teacher to parent as trusted counselor and friend, and this transformation appears to take place during the children's youth.

This transformation, moreover, also marks the transition from prejudice to judgment: In other words, when children are young, prejudice is unavoidable because they must necessarily submit to authority and the judgments of authority figures. Although Weiße's *Kinderfreund* includes examples of reasoning children, such as the ten-year-old Wilhelm in the play *Versprechen muß man halten* (see Chapter 4.2.3.2), the examples are the exception rather than the rule and primarily serve to illustrate Weiße's ultimate goal for training children to develop their powers of reason. Otherwise, the text depicts children being exposed to the reasoning powers of adult authority figures, rather than exercising their own rational faculties. In this respect, the *Briefwechsel* does indeed depict a clear shift from passive reasoning to active reasoning: As children transition into their youth, they begin to reason for themselves and hence come to form their own judgments regarding the world and the people in it. The transition from parent as teacher to parent as friend thus marks not only a change in the parent's role, but more importantly in the role of the child as he or she comes to exert authority over him- or herself.

The most compelling illustration, however, of a parent acting as a friend—one which, incidentally, does not involve the Mentor family—comes in a play found in Volume 2 of the *Briefwechsel*. *Trau, schaue, wem? oder die Gefahren der Jugend* (BW 2: 173–320) tells the tale of sixteen-year-old Malchen, who is being wooed by von Qualm, a both morally and financially bankrupt young man who is notorious for having committed several youthful indiscretions. Malchen is unaware of von Qualm's past and seems genuinely attracted to him, but he is only interested in her for her money and has even bribed Malchen's governess to help his cause by convincing her to marry him. The governess repeatedly mocks Malchen, who wishes to consult her mother on the matter, and says that only babies need to take the counsel of their parents. Eventually, von Qualm and the governess attempt to kidnap Malchen; but Malchen's mother is able to thwart their attempt, rescue her daughter, and punish the guilty parties.

The drama in the plays stems from Malchen's uncertainty about whom to trust. She is torn between two women who are vying for her confidence: a wicked governess who is exploiting Malchen for her own selfish interests and Malchen's own mother, who genuinely has her daughter's best interest at heart. Although Malchen is inclined to trust her mother, the governess does her best to convince her otherwise. She first claims that it is not proper for a girl of sixteen to rely on the advice of her mother:

> Alles hat seine Zeit und Ordnung, mein liebes Malchen. Ein Kind, das noch einer Stütze braucht, sich selbst weder rathen noch helfen kann, wo der Verstand noch mit Finsterniß umnebelt ist, und das Herz für nichts als eine Zuckerdiete, ein Püppchen oder ein Bändchen fühlt, thut freylich wohl, wenn es die Mutter um alles fragt; aber wann jener sich aufhellt, für sich selbst sieht, für sich selbst urtheilen kann, was seinem Herzen wohl thun und sein Glück befördert, denn muß man dieß nicht in andrer Hände, geschweige in einer Mutter Hand geben, die immer andre Augen, und andre Absichten hat. (BW 2: 193)

The governess compares Malchen to a baby and argues that teenagers cannot trust their parents, particularly when it comes to matters of the heart. Later in the play, she clarifies the "andre Absichten" from the quote above when she claims that Malchen's mother is likely protecting her own interests by questioning von Qualm's motives in wanting to marry her daughter; instead, the governess assumes, the mother would prefer to marry her daughter off to an unpleasant older man who at least would keep her daughter nearby (BW 2: 250–51).

Malchen's mother, meanwhile, has learned of von Qualm's intentions and is skeptical of his motives, particularly as he has never spoken with her and has instead been wooing Malchen in secret. She speaks with Malchen and repeatedly assures her that she should talk to her as a friend, repeatedly making such statements as: "Du kannst doch keine bessere Freundin auf Erden als mich haben! Glaubst du das nicht?" (BW 2: 231). She gains her daughter's trust, who then begs her mother to forbid her ever to see the governess or von Qualm again. Her mother, however, refuses herself what she admits to be her right of authority as a mother and instead decides to act solely in her role as a friend and resolves to examine von Qualm's character, lest she should deprive her daughter of an honest man:

> Nein, liebes Kind! Ich könnte dir dieß als Mutter befehlen: ich will aber, als Freundin mit dir handeln. Meine Liebe für dich könnte mich doch in Ansehung seiner täuschen, und ihn mir von einer Seite vorstellen, wo er es nicht verdiente. Ich würde mir dann doch Vorwürfe machen, wenn ich dich um einen begünstigten Liebhaber gebracht hätte, und seine Verheimlichungen gewisse uns unbekannte Ursachen zum Grunde hätten. Ich will ihn also näher kennen lernen, um dich und mich vor allen Vorwürfen in Sicherheit zu setzen. (BW 2: 242)

Of particular significance in this passage is the fact that the mother relinquishes her rights as a parent—and hence her position of authority over her daughter—in order to prove herself a true friend—and hence equal—to her daughter. Although the mother has been acting in her daughter's best interests throughout the entire play and although she has every right to forbid her

daughter from marrying von Qualm, she proves her friendship to her daughter by giving von Qualm a fair chance to prove his character. She recognizes that her daughter is attracted to him and hence does not want to risk depriving her of the opportunity of real love. For a parent to act as a friend, therefore, means on occasion having to relinquish his or her authority in order to gain the trust and admiration of the child. This willingness to relinquish one's authority in favor of rational argument is once again based on a core ideal of the Enlightenment—namely, that reason will win out in the end. Thus, it is not only the children who must trust their parent as a friend; the parents, too, in order to be a true friend and equal to their children, must trust that their children will make the best decision and heed their counsel.

Malchen does indeed come to trust her mother as her dearest friend, but nevertheless falls prey once again to the governess's insidious kidnapping plan. After her mother is thankfully able to rescue her, Malchen concludes in the final line of the play:

> Ich sehe noch mehr! ich sehe, daß eine gute Mutter unsere höchste, beste Freundin ist; daß wir keine sicherere Vertraute auf der Welt wählen können, und keinen Schritt in einer unbekannten Welt ohne ihre Leitung thun sollten. O daß Ihnen nur alle Mütter ähnlich wären! welche Tochter würde da irren, oder jemals unglücklich seyn können? (BW 2: 320)

What the play lacks in subtlety, it makes up for in persistence—namely, in its continual restatement of the belief that children, particularly older ones, should trust their parents as their closest friends. In the world of trials and tribulations in one's youth which Weiße depicts, after all, young people would be more than ever in need of the trusted counsel of a dear friend.

5.3.2.1. Rousseau on Parents as Friends

Rousseau makes a similar comment when Émile's teacher recognizes that his pupil has become a man. This coincides with his sexual maturity:

> Quand par les signes dont j'ai parlé vous pressentirez le moment critique, à l'instant quittez avec lui pour jamais vôtre ancien ton. C'est vôtre disciple encore, mais ce n'est plus vôtre élêve. C'est vôtre ami, c'est un homme, traittez-le desormais comme tel.
>
> Quoi ! faut-il abdiquer mon autorité lorsqu'elle m'est le plus necessaire ? Faut-il abandonner l'adulte à lui-même au moment qu'il sait le moins se conduire et qu'il fait les plus grands ecarts ? Faut-il renoncer à mes droits quand il lui importe le plus que j'en use ? Vos droits ! Qui vous dit d'y renoncer ? Ce n'est qu'à présent qu'ils commencent pour lui. Jusqu'ici vous n'en obteniez rien que par force ou par ruse ; l'autorité, la loi du devoir lui étoient inconnües ; il faloit le contraindre ou le tromper pour vous faire obéïr. Mais voyez de combien de nouvelles chaines vous avez environné son cœur. La raison, l'amitié, la reconnoissance, mille affections lui parlent d'un ton qu'il ne peut méconoitre. (639)[74]

This passage illustrates Rousseau's belief also that the teacher and guide must ultimately become a friend to his former pupil. Whereas Weiße argues that this process can begin to take place in earlier childhood as children come to recognize that their parents always have their best interest in mind, Rousseau suggests that the transition to friend is an abrupt one that is clearly marked by the pupil's entry into manhood (as delineated, evidently, by puberty).

There is an even clearer difference in the respect that Rousseau suggests this new relationship will be drastically different from their previous one and that the teacher must now treat his pupil in a wholly new tone. Weiße, on the other hand, suggests that the parent-as-friend relationship is not a completely different kind of relationship, but rather the natural result of such concern that parents begin to show for their children when they are still young.

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[74] "When by the signs I have spoken of you perceive that the critical moment is at hand, at once abandon for ever your former tone. He is still your disciple, but not your scholar. He is a man and your friend; henceforth you must treat him as such.

"What! Must I abandon my authority when most I need it? Must I abandon the adult to himself just when he least knows how to control himself, when he may fall into the gravest errors? Must I renounce my rights when it matters most that I should use them on his behalf? Who bids you renounce them; he is only just becoming conscious of them. Hitherto all you have gained has been won by force or guile; authority, the law of duty, were unknown to him, you had to constrain or deceive him to gain his obedience. But see what fresh chains you have bound about his heart. Reason, friendship, affection, gratitude, a thousand bonds of affection, speak to him in a voice he cannot fail to hear" (trans. 281).

In spite of these differences, there is one critical similarity between the two authors' depictions of the changing roles of the parent: Rousseau and Weiße both associate parents or teachers acting as friends with the abdication of certain rights of authority. The two authors, however, assess this relinquishment of authority differently. Weiße suggests that the true parent as friend will be willing and eager to relinquish his or her rights in order to act as a true friend. On the other hand, Rousseau's teacher expresses his friendship precisely through his reluctance to relinquish his authority over his pupil, for the simple reason that his pupil is now entering a stage of life in which he will sorely need the counsel of his trusted advisor.[75] This belief that one's teenage years are a time fraught with peril and temptations is, finally, another connection between Rousseau and Weiße. Both recognize youth as a period in which young people are most greatly in need of a trusted friend; moreover, both acknowledge the fact that this trusted friend should be none other than the same person who oversaw the young person's upbringing as a child.

5.3.3. From Guided Instruction to Self-Education: The Image of Education in the *Briefwechsel*

The previous examples have illustrated the transformation from parent as teacher to parent as friend which takes place within Weiße's *Briefwechsel*. In light of this transformation, it should come as no surprise that the *Briefwechsel* also reveals a transformation in the children themselves—namely, that they begin to serve as their own teachers who correct their own

[75] Émile's teacher eventually does willingly relinquish his authority over his pupil—but not until the very end of the work. On Émile's wedding day, his teacher abdicates his authority and appoints Sophie to be his new guardian (867; trans. 444).

behaviors and those of others. In *Der Kinderfreund*, the children's misdeeds and moral weaknesses were consistently corrected by an adult figure—usually Mentor or one of the four family friends. Now that most of the children are older, however, they are able to monitor their own behavior and evaluate the behavior of others without needing to rely on the counsel of an adult. This suggests that the children have acquired enough wisdom or life experience in order to be in a position to evaluate the behavior of others. To be sure, it is primarily only the three older children—Lottchen, Karl, and Fritze—who are in such a position. The two younger children—Luischen and Julchen—are more frequently on the receiving end of the moral correction; in fact, nearly all of the letters written by one of the older siblings to either Luischen or Julchen exemplify some sort of correction or advice regarding their behavior or attitude.

In the very first letter in the series which is written to Luischen, for instance, Karl chastises her for not having smiled while her silhouette was being taken. He then proceeds to lecture her on the importance of having a pleasant expression on one's face before he apologizes for having started to lecture her:

> Doch, was schreibe ich? – Ich mache den Präceptor bey dir, da du mir keine Ursache darzu gegeben hast? – Beynahe möchte ich den ganzen Brief wieder vernichten. Daran ist der garstige Silhuettenmacher Schuld. Ich wollte dir blos von meinem brüderlichen, zärtlichen Andenken einen Beweis geben, und schütte da einen Sack voll Moral aus! – So geht es, wenn man um etliche Jahre älter ist, als seine Geschwister. Da denkt man immer ein Recht zu haben, Verweise zu geben, und Vorschriften zu ertheilen; vergieb mir, liebes Luischen, und denke, da dich vermuthlich meine Anmerkungen nicht treffen, daß es dich auch weiter nichts angeht. Laß uns lieber von etwas andern reden! (BW 1: 78)

Although Karl exerts his right as an older sibling to monitor the actions of his little sister, he does apologize for sounding so condescending. At another point in the series, Fritze admits to his brother that his constant *Hofmeistern* can be tedious, but he is confident that Karl always has his best interest in mind and is thus grateful for his input (BW 2: 1–5).

These instances of moral correction do not only take place between the Mentor children directly. Frequently, one sibling will comment on the moral failings of another character and point out to the recipient of the letter a lesson to be learned. For example, when Fritze first describes how badly his master's wife has spoiled little Franz, her youngest child, he comments on the dangers of an overly lenient education and praises the corrective power of genuine rebuke:

> Nicht wahr, liebes Luischen, du siehst ein, wie weit besser ein ernstlicher Verweis bey solchen Gelegenheiten gewesen seyn würde, als eine so strafbare Nachsicht? Du glaubst nicht, wie sehr ich es unsern lieben Aeltern schon itzt verdanke, daß sie in meiner ersten Kindheit nicht meinen Starrsinn begünstiget, und für meine Ungezogenheiten zu viel Nachsicht gehabt haben: und du wirst es auch mit der Zeit erfahren, wie gut sie es meynen, wenn sie es itzt nicht mit den deinigen haben. Die Leidenschaften und Begierden wachsen wie das Unkraut, das oft den guten Saamen überwächst und ihn nicht selten erstickt; und darnach sind wir zu schwach zu widerstehen und unterliegen gar zu leicht der Versuchung. (BW 1: 129)

Fritze thus recognizes that it would be better for little Franz if his mother occasionally rebuked his misdeeds and then informs his little sister that she should be grateful to have parents who are not afraid to rebuke her when she is misbehaving. Not only does this passage serve as yet another example of the Mentor children's gratitude toward their parents and the ideal education they received from them, but it also shows that Fritze believes that he is now in a position to judge even the parenting and education of adults.

That the older children in the *Briefwechsel* should rebuke one another's faults or those of their younger siblings is indeed a new element in Weiße's fictional world, but the fact that these same children should feel comfortable giving parenting tips to adults is much more surprising. Fritze, for example, becomes a parenting advisor to his own master, Herr Worthmann, when he offers pointed advice on how Worthmann should be raising his children. It is Fritze who first suggests to Worthmann that the spoiled Franz should be educated with other children in the house of one of his staff members, quite candidly pointing out that Frau Worthmann is

responsible for the boy's bad behavior. Likewise, upon learning that Worthmann's older son Wilhelm has been secretly attending wild parties at night, Fritze reports this to Worthmann and ultimately ends up counseling Worthmann on how he should intervene in the situation. Worthmann very much appreciates Fritze's advice and continues to seek it out throughout the remainder of the series. At the very end of the final volume, Worthmann and Fritze make a brief stop in Leipzig for a few days while they are traveling, which presents Worthmann with the opportunity to meet the Mentor family. He praises Fritze profusely, states that he would be happy if he were to marry his daughter, and expresses his confidence that he would make for a better father than Worthmann himself had ever been: "Denn leider! sehe ich wohl, wo es versehen worden, und daß ein Hauß, wie das Meinige, kein gutes Erziehungsinstitut ist. – Auch das hat mich Ihr guter Sohn gelehrt" (BW 12: 341).

That Fritze should be in a position to teach his own master anything is indeed remarkable. It serves as yet another indication of the confidence which Weiße places on the effectiveness of his pedagogical model—a model which has hypothetically produced a sixteen-year-old boy who is better suited to oversee a father's household than the father himself. Once again, we see the triumph of the Enlightenment ideal of reason over authority: Fritze's rational arguments, even though he himself is young, prevail over the authority of his significantly older and hierarchically superior master. The power of reason, which Weiße has praised from the earliest volumes of *Der Kinderfreund*, thus once again topples the hierarchy of authority and asserts itself as the right and true guide for one's behavior.

While Fritze's insightful parenting advice to his own master might illustrate Enlightenment ideals and the theoretical power of Weiße's pedagogical system, surely even

Weiße himself would consider such a situation to be exceptional and unlikely, if not altogether impossible, to take place in the real world. This becomes even more apparent at the very end of the entire series, when Mentor addresses the concerns of his readers that the events and characters depicted in the periodical might not actually be true. In a passage which we have already examined, Mentor admits that the *Briefwechsel* is a blend of fact and fiction and, more shockingly, reveals that young people such as the Mentor children likely would not be able to express themselves so eloquently or even to act so prudently: "[D]aß so lange Briefe mit eingemischten Geschichten und Erzählungen von jungen Leuten unter solchen Umständen geschrieben worden, ist freylich nicht sehr wahrscheinlich, noch viel weniger, daß sie immer so klug zu handeln pflegen, oder so fruchtbar an guten Lehren und Warnungen für andre ihres Gleichen sind" (BW 12: 316).

It would seem that both the fictional author Mentor and the historical author Weiße admit that the consistently wise actions and the always sound advice of the young adults in the *Briefwechsel* are not the words and deeds of normal teenagers. The young protagonists of the periodical are the manifestation of Weiße's ideals, the ultimate—perhaps unachievable—goal of his educational principles. Should it prove possible to implement his beliefs to the letter, the end may, in a perfect world, indeed be a sixteen-year-old Fritze—embodying the power of reason—who is in a better position to educate a child than his own fully grown employer—embodying hierarchical authority. This dramatic example of the triumph of reason over authority not only illustrates once again Weiße's insistent emphasis on the power of reason, but also suggests that this same insistence has created a notion of reason so rigid and inflexible that it has, ironically, become a new kind of authority in and of itself. In other words, Weiße's belief that reason

trumps all concerns of age, position, or social standing admits no exceptions and ultimately leads to such otherwise implausible situations as a sixteen-year-old apprentice offering parenting tips to his master.

The admission that the actions and words of the young characters are exaggerations does not, however, diminish the alacrity with which Weiße promotes his own educational agenda. Having so strongly established and delineated his educational ideals in *Der Kinderfreund*, he reiterates them in the *Briefwechsel* and more importantly illustrates what the product of those ideals might look like. Similarly, as Mentor himself points out in the conclusion, it is of equal benefit to the young reader to see how one *should* act or what one *should* say in a particular situation, even if a typical teenager would like have said or done something different (BW 12: 316). To this end, these idealized depictions of young adults in the *Briefwechsel* serve to further the author's educational program. By learning from the high standards set by Karl and Fritze, Weiße's young readers may be able to comport themselves more wisely and avoid all manner of worldly vice when they, too, leave their family household and set foot into the great wide world, eager and ready to oversee their own moral development and monitor their own behavior. Weiße's ultimate goal in writing the *Briefwechsel* for a young audience is thus not to depict an empirical pedagogical program which can be implemented directly in real life, but rather to model an admittedly idealized construct of youth which can provide inspiration for his young readers. The young protagonists of the *Briefwechsel* are therefore intended to serve as goals which his young readers might strive to emulate, rather than reflections of what his readers should reasonably be able to achieve at present.

Finally, it is necessary to note one last implication of the fact that the youth in the *Briefwechsel* begin to correct the behavior of others. It has already been shown in the previous chapter that Weiße's conception of the child as depicted in *Der Kinderfreund* is a non-stop process of education. In other words, he believes that childhood is the stage of life in which every single moment should contribute to the individual's moral, social, or academic education. In this sense, children are constantly being educated by others or by the world around them. When as youth, however, they are mentally and emotionally competent enough to begin monitoring the behavior of others, there is a critical shift in the direction of education. No longer is the individual a passive recipient who is infused with knowledge and a sense of virtue; rather, he or she has become an active participant in the moral and social education of others, be they children or adults. Furthermore, it is no mere coincidence that this transition from educated to educator should take place at the same time when one's parents transition from teacher to friend. Having taken on the role of teachers themselves, young people are no longer in need of a parental teacher. Weiße's idealized pedagogical model is, in conclusion, a self-propagating one: Children who receive a strong moral education in their early years will grow up to assume the moral education of others around them, thereby producing yet another future generation of little educators.

5.3.4. Strange New Feelings: The Representation of Sexuality in the *Briefwechsel*

Considering that most of the main characters of Weiße's *Briefwechsel* are teenagers—as were many members of Weiße's target readership—one might expect that the characters' budding sexuality would be a recurring theme within the *Briefwechsel*. In actuality, there are relatively

few references to sexual desire or puberty, and the few that do appear are rarely discussed in serious detail—with one notable exception. It does not appear to be the case that Weiße himself was uncomfortable discussing such issues; that he mentions them at all indicates at the very least that he recognized that they were of relevance to his readers. Within the world of Mentor, it similarly does not appear to be the case that these issues are rarely discussed because the siblings are uncomfortable talking about them with their siblings. On the contrary, the Mentor children appear to have been raised in such a virtuous household that they are able to exert remarkable self-control against any sort of sexual urges. This is particularly true of both sons, who in comparison to the less wholesome Wilhelm and Herr von Z – – show nearly superhuman restraint.

By the same token, the Mentor children occasionally seem to be overly naïve regarding the strange new feelings which they begin to develop in their teenage years. In one particularly humorous example, the younger son Fritze—at the time sixteen years old—writes to his older sister Lottchen of a recent awkward one-on-one encounter with Mienchen, his employer's daughter:

> Sage mir was in aller Welt wohl die Ursache seyn konnte, daß ich itzt so gar dämisch vor dem Kopfe war, und nichts Erträgliches zu sagen wußte, da es mir doch sonst gewiß nicht an Mundwerke fehlt, und Mamsel Mienchen mir heute theils ihrer außerordentlichen Höflichkeit wegen, die sie gegen mich äußerte, theils auch wegen ihres angenehmen leichten Anzugs, der nicht so überladen, wie gewöhnlich war, recht wohl gefiel? […] Wir saßen ein Weilchen stille, und, da ich doch glaubte, ich müsse auch einmal die Unterredung anfangen, so sagte ich sehr albern: Wo muß nur in aller Welt Ihr Herr Bruder so lange bleiben! – Ah, fiel sie mir gleich ins Wort und sagte: wird Ihnen bey mir allein die Zeit lang, so thut es mir leid, daß ich nicht bey der Gesellschaft geblieben bin: vielleicht hätten Sie lieber mit ihm geangelt? – Ich fühlte den verdienten Verweis, ward wie ein Blut so roth und stammelte: bewahre der Himmel! ich fürchtete solches vielmehr meiner Seits, weil ich mir nicht genug Verstand zu traute, ein so artiges Frauenzimmer gemeinsam zu unterhalten. – Dieß Kompliment schien sie wieder zu besänftigen, und sie machte mir einen Lobspruch über meine Bescheidenheit und über meine Belesenheit. Hätte ich gewußt, sagte sie, daß wir allein zusammen seyn würden, so hätte ich sie [sic] gebeten ein angenehmes Buch mitzunehmen, und mir daraus etwas vorzulesen. – Ich dachte in meinem

> Herzen: Ja, das hätte ich auch gewünscht; ich hätte dann nicht reden, und nicht so oft die Augen niederschlagen dürfen, wann sie mich ansah, oder sie nicht anzusehen brauchen. - - - Nicht wahr, du wirst dabey lachen? Mir war es aber damals gar nicht lächerlich. (BW 3: 29–31)

No doubt many of Weiße's young readers could have identified quite well with Fritze's nervousness at being alone with a girl for the first time, yet surely many, if not most, of the teenage readers would have suspected the reasons for their nervousness. Thus, it is noteworthy that Weiße chooses to depict the sixteen-year-old Fritze as completely clueless on this matter: He literally cannot think of a single cause for his awkwardness in Mienchen's company. The author's motivations for portraying such a naïve teenage boy becomes more readily apparent in the reply which Fritze receives from his sister Lottchen.

The boy's prediction that his sarcastic sister would laugh at him because of this does indeed prove to be true—for which, as she points out in her reply, their father chastises her:

> Und meynst du, daß der Papa mit lachte? Nichts weniger; er sah vielmehr ernsthaft aus und schüttelte dann und wann den Kopf. Ich dachte, er wäre unzufrieden, daß dein Aufenthalt in einem so großen Hause und in einer so großen Welt dich nicht klüger, oder galanter gemacht hätte; statt dessen sagte er: „dein Lachen und Spott sind sehr übel angebracht. Worüber lachst du! – Daß Fritze noch der verschämte, bescheidene Jüngling ist, der in Verlegenheit geräth, weil er einem jungen gesitteten Frauenzimmer, die ihn mit ihrer Gesellschaft beehret, nicht Albernheiten oder Unwahrheiten, ungegründete Schmeicheleyen, oder süße Lügen vorzusagen weiß? Oder, weil er bey einem kleinen Nachdenken über seine gegenwärtigen Verhältnisse, was er ihr dießfalls Verbindliches hätte sagen können, für zu gefährlich in seinen Folgen hielt? Oder, weil sein Herz vielleicht sich in einer Lage fühlte, die ihm ganz neu und fremd war, und Eindrücke fühlte, für deren Aeußerungen ihm seine Zunge die Worte versagte? Das letzte will ich nicht fürchten, noch wünschen. – „Aber, lieber Papa, Sie hören ja, aus dem, was er selbst in seinem Briefe sagt, daß sein wunderliches Betragen, und seine Verlegenheit nicht aus solchen Bewegungsgründen kam, da er selbst darüber spottet und sich tadelt, sondern weil er nicht wußte, warum er immer in den Hut guckte und nichts Kluges und Artiges vorbringen konnte?“ – Also war es Unwissenheit, versetzte er, und Unwissenheit oder Unschicklichkeit, solche nichtsbedeutende Geschwätze anzuspinnen, gereicht bey seinen Jahren, die noch ans Knabenalter gränzen, mehr zur Ehre, als wenn er schon die Sprache eines leeren plauderhaften Stutzers, oder süßen empfindsamen Schäfers hätte spielen wollen? (BW 3: 171–72)

Mentor admits the possibility that these feelings were likely entirely new for his son and takes pity on him. What is most significant in this passage, however, is that the father actually praises

Fritze's "Unwissenheit" about how to make small talk with girls as an honorable quality, particularly because he is still so young. Weiße's motivation to include this incident in the *Briefwechsel*, therefore, does not appear to be solely to reassure his young readers that any recent awkward one-on-one encounters they may have recently experienced are entirely natural. On the contrary, the author's primary goal—as spoken through his mouthpiece Mentor—is to dissuade his young readers from open flirtation. While Fritze's shyness meets with the approbation of his father, the brazen overtures which Mienchen makes toward Fritze early on in the series are repeatedly depicted as negative and meet with the disapproval of Fritze's family members. It would seem that Weiße would greatly prefer a generation of naïve, ignorant young men and women to a generation of insincere smooth talkers.

This negative depiction of young men who flirt with young women appears elsewhere in the *Briefwechsel*—specifically, in the one passage in the entire series which makes multiple references to sexual activity. The passage describes an incident involving Fritze and his employer's son Wilhelm, in which Wilhelm and his friends repeatedly boast about their recent conquests with girls. One boy begins by describing a neighborhood girl whose imposing father recently passed away:

> [E]he vierzehn Tage ins Land kommen, muß ich sie in meiner Gewalt haben. Sie wohnt in meiner Gasse und ich bin ihr schon längst nachgegangen. So lange aber ihr Vater lebte: (er hatte eine Bedienung auf der Post) so fürchtete ich mich, vor ihm, wie vor dem Satan: denn es war ein Mann wie ein Riese, war Soldat gewesen, und hatte seiner Wunden wegen abgehen müssen. Nun aber habe ich eine Frau, die sie frisirt, auf meiner Seite, die will mir ein Rendezvous verschaffen, und die Briefchen tragen; und wenn die Mutter gleich wie ein Drache ihre Keuschheit bewacht – so müßte doch der Henker holen, wenn ich nicht mit ihr fertig werden wollte. Geht nur doch mit solchen Umschweifen hub ein vierter an: Liebes Briefchen, Bestechungen, Rendezvous, das wäre mir zu weitläuftig. Wenn ich ein Mädchen haben will, so gehe ich gerade hin, wo ich für Geld das Auslesen habe. Da ist die * * in der Königsstraße und die, in der Lindenstraße und – hier nannte er eine ganze Reihe lüderlicher Häußer – oder, fuhr er fort, ich kriege eine Kupplerin her – – O fieng mein Monsieur Wilhelm an, da bin ich viel zu delikat, lieber unterhalte ich eine Theaterprinzessin, die wenigstens, so lang ich bezahle, mein allein ist – (BW 5: 254–55)

This passage is without question the most graphic depiction of sexual activity in the entire *Briefwechsel*. There is indeed much in this passage which could rightly alarm the reader: the lengths to which the boys are willing to go in order to spend time with the girls, the fact that the first boy explicitly refers to taking a girl's virginity, and the implications of prostitution. The shock value is particularly heightened by comparison to the otherwise chaste content of the periodical. It is consequently not surprising that Weiße depicts the protagonist Fritze as being completely shocked by the boy's statements and disappointed in his friend Wilhelm in particular. Fritze admits he is outnumbered and thus waits to speak with Wilhelm in private, but he does mention that the boys continue on to relate even more lascivious tales—at least half of which Fritze suspects are untrue (BW 5: 255).

When Fritze has the opportunity later to speak with Wilhelm privately, he expresses both his disappointment and shock, "daß [Wilhelm] in seinen Jahren schon von Maitressen schwatzte" (BW 5: 259). Fritze claims further that boasting about such things is silly; being proud of something so shameful is misguided and most of the stories are not even believable anyway (BW 5: 260–62). More importantly, Fritze continues to argue that such rendezvous with girls could distract him from more important concerns:

> [O]hne an die Grundsätze, die mir von Jugend an eingepräget worden, zu denken, würde ich bloß, wenn ich meine gesunde Vernunft und meine zeitlichen Vortheile zu Rathe zöge, fürchten, daß ich bey einem vertraulichen Umgange mit einem Mädchen, sie und mich unglücklich machen könnte, mich zu sehr zerstreute, meine Geschäfte vernachläßigte, meine gegenwärtige und künftige Bestimmung und Absichten ganz aus dem Gesichte verlör, und zu keinem von beyden hätte ich Herz. (BW 5: 266)

That the teenage character of Fritze is able to consider girls to be a distraction from his apprenticeship is yet another example of the remarkable self-control which his author has chosen to grant him. Fritze goes on to explain, moreover, why he believes that any sort of "vertraulicher

Umgang" with girls could be detrimental to both parties involved: Even if the girl is virtuous and he falls in love with her, he is in no position yet to get married; hence, the relationship would likely give the girl false hope and ultimately break the hearts of both. In the case of women of loose morals—such as those about whom the other boys were boasting—Fritze finds a very different reason to avoid their company:

> Wäre es endlich gar eine so lüderliche Person, wie die, von denen die jungen Herrn sprachen, wo bloß ein zügelloser und gedankenloser Mensch seine sinnlichen Lüste zu befriedigen denkt: so habe ich zu viel Ehrfurcht und Liebe zu Gott, und für mich selbst zu viel Hochachtung, als daß ich mich so wegwerfen wollte. (BW 5: 268)

In this instance, there is a moral objection to the situation, which is not surprising, as well as a belief that engaging in illicit sexual activity would bring dishonor upon his person.[76] The issue is thus not merely a religious issue, but rather a matter of self-respect.

Aside from this one main passage, there are very few references to sexuality in the *Briefwechsel*. The few exceptions consist primarily of occasional comments made in passing about "sinnliche Lüste" or something of the kind. Thus, this passage is the only discussion in the entire periodical which even touches upon the matter of premarital sex and the fulfillment of teenage sexual desire. Even here, the matter is still somewhat indirect, as the truth of the boys' stories is called into question; it is also possible that the occasionally vague language does not distinguish between kissing and sexual intercourse. Both, after all, would constitute the "vertraulicher Umgang" with girls which Fritze is condemning.

It is clear that Weiße is opposed to such familiarities between boys and girls. To be sure, it is to be expected that Weiße's work—and, quite frankly, any other work of children's literature

[76] Rousseau, interestingly enough, in *Émile* ascribes a belief to the Germans that a young man who loses his virginity before the age of twenty would bring dishonor upon himself (640; trans. 282).

of the time period—would condemn any form of premarital sexual activity, so Weiße's portrayal of a shocked and appalled Fritze should come as no surprise. Moreover, Fritze's subsequent discussion with Wilhelm is yet another example of Weiße's affinity for rational argumentation as the best means to come to a decision. The character's long list of reasons to avoid romantic or sexual entanglements ultimately serve to convince Wilhelm—and, so hopes Weiße, also the reader—that Fritze's chaste position is the best course of action. Once again, reason emerges triumphant—even in matters of the loins. As we will soon see, the same is true for matters of the heart.

Given that Weiße's *Briefwechsel* was also intended to be enjoyed by readers as young as Julchen and Luischen, perhaps it is not surprising that there are relatively few discussions of sexuality within the *Briefwechsel*. This was nevertheless clearly an issue which Weiße believed should be addressed, since many of his readers would likely be struggling with it; yet this is one issue where the author does not provide any concrete tips on how to exert such self-control. Assuming that none of his readers had likely enjoyed an ideal moral education and upbringing such as that of Fritze and Karl, a lengthier discussion may ultimately have proven more useful to Weiße's readers. None is ever provided in the *Briefwechsel*.

One cannot conclude, however, that Weiße's conception of youth—even a highly idealized one—imagines young people as completely asexual beings. The topic's inclusion in the periodical shows, in the first place, that the author recognized its significance for his young readers. As we have seen, Weiße admittedly takes great pains to portray his young protagonists, particularly the boys Karl and Fritze, as completely chaste and distinterested in the distractions which young women provide; yet once again one must bear in mind that the author seeks to

create models which his young readers should strive to emulate, rather than models which are expected to be fully realistic.

Although the boys exhibit impressive self-control, moreover, they are not portrayed as completely asexual. Both boys express interest in marriage someday, and they each consider their instructors' daughters—Friederikchen and Mienchen—as suitable matches. Another, somewhat humorous example also suggests that Fritze is not entirely immune to the sensual pleasures of the flesh: At one point, he agrees against his better judgment to attend a clandestine party with Wilhelm. There are many girls at this party, most of whom kiss all of the boys indiscriminately. Although Fritze is uncomfortable during the entire evening, he eventually admits to himself—and to his brother Karl, the recipient of the letter in which Fritze relates this anecdote—that he can understand why Wilhelm finds these parties so intoxicating: "Ich fühlte mancherley Empfindungen in mir erwachen, eine gewisse Lust auch bey den wenigen Küssen, die mir diese Personen wider Willen aufdrangen, die ich nicht nennen kann, und noch nie empfunden habe" (BW 5: 280). Thus, even within Weiße's ideal of youth, there is still a small place for sexual temptation, even if it is to be quickly quenched by the powers of reason which argue that one must fight against it.

5.3.4.1. Rousseau on Sexuality

In contrast to Weiße, Rousseau addresses the issue of budding sexuality quite directly in his text, although his method of addressing it with his pupil Émile is somewhat less direct. While Rousseau recognizes that puberty marks a period of sexual maturity, he argues that a pupil at this stage of life needs the counsel and guidance of his teacher more than ever. It is of the utmost

importance, Rousseau argues, that one not speak directly against sexual desire, which he considers to be a fundamental part of the natural man:

> J'avoüe bien que si heurtant de front ses desirs naissans vous alliez sotement traiter de crimes les nouveaux besoins qui se font sentir à lui, vous ne seriez pas longtems écouté ; mais sitôt que vous quiterez ma methode, je ne vous reponds plus de rien. Songez toujours que vous étes le ministre de la nature, vous n'en serez jamais l'ennemi. (639)[77]

Nature, he concludes, cannot and will not be opposed by man. As a part of nature, the same can be said of human sexuality.

Nevertheless, Rousseau admits that this stage of life is fraught with great peril for the young person, and hence he must be guided during this period. His teacher must thus not ignore him during this period, lest he should be schooled in the matters of the flesh by a less reliable companion or servant (641–42; trans. 283). On the contrary, the teacher must deal with the matter of sexual maturity directly with the pupil:

> Je n'ai donc plus qu'un parti raisonable à prendre ; c'est de le rendre comptable de ses actions à lui-même ; de le garantir au moins des surprises de l'erreur et de lui montrer à découvert les périls dont il est environé. Jusqu'ici je l'arrêtois par son ignorance ; c'est maintenant par ses lumiéres qu'il faut l'arrêter. (641)[78]

By freely admitting the dangers to which the pupil is exposed, Rousseau argues, the teacher will maintain his trust and confidence. The process of leading a pupil to come to terms with his sexuality while remaining virtuous, however, entails more than a simple one-time discussion.

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[77] "I grant you, indeed, that if you directly oppose his growing desires and foolishly treat as crimes the fresh needs which are beginning to make themselves felt in him, he will not listen to you for long; but as soon as you abandon my method I cannot be answerable for the consequences. Remember that you are nature's minister; you will never be her foe" (trans. 281).

[78] "There is therefore only one reasonable course open to me; I must make him accountable for his own actions, I must at least preserve him from being taken unawares, and I must show him plainly the dangers which beset his path. I have restrained him so far through his ignorance; henceforward his restraint must be his own knowledge" (trans. 282).

Indeed, the pupil will require much preparation until he is ready to hear what the teacher has to say on this matter. In the meantime, the teacher does his best to distract the pupil from thoughts such as may lead him astray:

> La lecture, la solitude, l'oisiveté, la vie molle et sedentaire, le commerce des femmes et des jeunes gens, voila les sentiers dangereux à frayer à son age, et qui le tiennent sans cesse à côté du péril. C'est par d'autres objets sensibles que je donne le change à ses sens, c'est en traçant un autre cours aux esprits, que je les détourne de celui qu'ils commençoient à prendre. C'est en exerceant son corps à des travaux pénibles que j'arrête l'activité de l'imagination qui l'entraîne ; quand les bras travaillent beaucoup, l'imagination se repose ; quand le corps est bien las, le cœur ne s'échauffe point. (643–44)[79]

Émile's teacher decides to distract him via more worthwhile pursuits until he is truly ready to learn of sexuality. He eventually removes him from town altogether in order to further isolate him from temptation (644; trans. 284–85).

While Rousseau addresses the topic of sexuality in his text, his approach remains nevertheless somewhat indirect. At no point does he explicitly mention how the teacher should actually discuss the matter with his pupil as soon as he is ready to hear it; instead, he only provides suggestions on how the teacher can best retain his pupil's confidence during this preparatory phase. At the same time, he actively seeks ways in which to sublimate his pupil's sexual energy, rather than talking about it openly. In contrast to Weiße, who represents a traditionally Christian view that premarital sex dishonors God and oneself, Rousseau claims that sexuality is a natural part of life and is thus not morally wrong. Nevertheless, both authors skirt around the issue to a certain extent: Rousseau never explains how the topic of sexuality should

[79] "Reading, solitude, idleness, a soft and sedentary life, intercourse with women and young people, these are perilous paths for a young man, and these lead him constantly into danger. I divert his senses by other objects of sense; I trace another course for his spirits by which I distract them from the course they would have taken; it is by bodily exercise and hard work that I check the activity of the imagination, which was leading him astray. When the arms are hard at work, the imagination is quiet; when the body is very weary, the passions are not easily inflamed" (trans. 284).

be discussed with young people, and Weiße merely condemns sexual activity without offering suggestions which may help his young readers remain pure. Given that issues of sexuality in young-adult literature are still often controversial today, the fact alone that the authors address these issues to the extent that they do makes them worthy of discussion.

5.3.5. Love without Passion: The Representation of Marriage in the *Briefwechsel*

While there are relatively few references to sexual activity in the *Briefwechsel*, the work provides particularly lengthy and candid suggestions regarding preparations for marriage. It should come as no surprise to both eighteenth-century and present-days readers that Weiße devotes a very substantial portion of the *Briefwechsel* to providing advice to his young-adult readers about what is most likely the most important life decision they would ever make: the selection of a spouse. There are a few relatively general discussions of this topic earlier in the series; but as the young characters age over the course of the series, this matter is discussed with ever-increasing frequency. This is the case for at least two reasons: First, the characters obviously grow older—and hence closer to marriageable age—as the series progresses. Secondly, as the topic of marriage becomes of more immediate relevance to Weiße's maturing characters, it likely also has gained particular relevance for many members of his youthful target audience and hence would also serve as a particularly useful topic of discussion within Weiße's *Briefwechsel*.

As a result, the author chooses to devote an overwhelming portion of the final two volumes of the series to this very topic by chronicling one very familiar young woman's betrothal: Lottchen herself receives a marriage proposal. In the second-to-last volume of the

series, upon earning the title of *Magister*, Herr Spirit offers his hand in marriage to a shocked Lottchen, who has never thought of her old family friend in a romantic way.[80] She learns from her mother that her parents have been aware of—and fully supportive of—Spirit's intentions for some time, although he needed to wait until he was in a financial position to support a wife (BW 11: 248–69). Much of the remaining one-and-a-half volumes of the series are devoted to a distraught Lottchen receiving both solicited and unsolicited advice on whether or not to accept Spirit's proposal, which she ultimately does at the very end of the series.

5.3.5.1. Parent as Marriage Counselor

While the *Briefwechsel* largely turns a blind eye toward the children's budding sexuality, Weiße lets his characters speak with remarkable frankness and candor on the matter of marriage. This candor, however, always comes from an adult source: While the Mentor children give one another advice on any number of issues throughout the course of the *Briefwechsel*, marriage is one arena in which none of them has any experience and is hence also a matter about which they must seek the advice of their parents or other adults. Thus, while Lottchen and Friederikchen exchange several letters on this topic, it is made clear that the advice provided therein originally stems from either their parents or a close adult friend such as Herr Philoteknos. The young characters occasionally make their own observations regarding marriage based on various

[80] The proposal comes as a shock to Lottchen alone. Her mother freely admits that she and her husband have been aware of Spirit's intentions for years (BW 11: 259). Before he officially proposes, even Lottchen's younger sister Luischen reveals in a letter to Friederikchen that Spirit seems overly fond of Lottchen and often composes poems for her, which leads Luischen to the correct conclusion that he is romantically interested in her sister (BW 10: 41–43). Indeed, the proposal comes as no surprise to the reader, for the author has been hinting at Spirit's affection for Lottchen over the course of most of the series—as early as in Volume 2, in fact, when Spirit becomes jealous when Lottchen flirts with a man at a ball (BW 2: 142–72).

married couples they have known, yet Weiße's opinion is evident from the *Briefwechsel*: The selection of a life partner is one matter on which all children, regardless of their age, should consult their parents.

Indeed, the first rule of choosing a spouse in the *Briefwechsel* is to seek the counsel of one's parents. This point permeates nearly all of the passages on this topic in the entire series, and it is repeatedly claimed that no union can be truly happy which does not enjoy the blessing of both the bride's and the groom's parents. One such passage is found in Volume 11. In response to Lottchen's announcement that Spirit has proposed to her, Friederikchen copies a letter she recently read in which a father gives advice to his daughter on selecting a husband. Not surprisingly, this letter also argues that the approval of one's parents is critical:

> Heurathe nie ohne deiner Aeltern Einwilligung. Wenn sie dich lieben wie sie sollen, und deine Glückseligkeit wünschen, so werden sie dich nie wider deine Neigung zwingen: doch mußt du eben so wenig bloß nach deiner Leidenschaft wählen, und wenn sie Gründe wider deine Neigung anführen, sie wohl prüfen: denn in meisten Fällen sehen sie doch weiter als du. (BW 12: 57)

One of the reasons why the blessing of one's parents is so critical is that they have the ability to discern reasons for concern to which the young woman's affection might otherwise turn a blind eye. Moreover, the point is made that loving parents would never force their daughter to marry a man against her will. Friederikchen goes on ultimately to conclude that no marriage which fails to receive the blessing of the parents can be truly happy, as the rift within the family will likely lead to further unpleasantness and resentment between the husband and wife. Conversely, she decides that marriages approved by one's parents will be happy ones—even when feelings of romantic love are absent at first (BW 12: 70).

Presumably, this is the position of Weiße himself; hence, it comes as no surprise that the ideal parents Herr and Frau Mentor also share this position: After Lottchen is dismayed when

Spirit proposes to her, her mother informs her that Mentor and she are both in favor of the union, although they would never force her to marry someone against her will (BW 11: 263). While the counsel of one's parents is considered indispensible in the selection of a marriage, once again the readers see that the parent is viewed here more as a trusted friend than as an authoritarian who exerts full control over his or her children.

5.3.5.2. Marriage Advice for Boys

Advice regarding the selection of a spouse is largely divided by gender. The advice for girls concerns the discernment of a groom's true character and the development of love, while the advice for boys focuses largely on courting and the financial concerns of taking a wife. Courting, it is made clear, is only suitable when a young man has intentions of marrying a girl. This becomes apparent when Herr von Z – –, a fellow student who lives and studies with Karl, expresses interest in becoming better acquainted with Friederikchen, the professor's daughter. He admits to Karl, however, that he has no intentions of marrying her, as he is too poor to support a wife. When Karl asks him what he hopes, to receive from Friederikchen, Herr von Z – – explains that he is simply interested in "unschuldige Liebkosungen, zärtliche Versicherungen, und einen unterhaltenden Zeitvertreib" (BW 4: 44). Karl is shocked by his friend's response and replies as follows:

> O! unschuldige Liebkosungen. Das ist nichts gesagt, – der Zweck kann nichts als Verführung, oder wenn die Absicht rechtschaffen ist, eine Heurath seyn. – Die letztere verwirfst du selbst: mithin bleibt nichts übrig, als das erstere. Gesetzt aber, du hättest auch keine so unedle Absicht im Sinne: so wird doch das Mädchen, wenn sie nicht ein leichtsinniges und lüderliches Geschöpf ist, sich mit jenen Hoffnungen und Erwartungen schmeicheln, die du nicht erfüllen willst noch kannst. Und wenn sie sich denn nun von dir hintergangen sieht: was kann dann wohl ihr Loos seyn, als Gram über fehlgeschlagene Hoffnung, Angst, Verzweiflung, Tod? (BW 4: 45)

Karl claims that any "Liebkosungen" without the possibility of marriage can never truly be "unschuldig," as they will likely either lead the girl astray and send her down a treacherous path or will establish false hopes of marriage within her and will then destroy her when her hope has been killed. Either way, wooing a girl without the intention of marrying her is likely to ruin her reputation and possibly also her life. Karl continues on to explain that it would likely also destroy her relationship with her family and would cause insurmountable grief to her parents (BW 4: 45–46). Thus, the author of the *Briefwechsel* argues that pursuing a young woman without intentions of marrying her must be avoided at all costs, as it will have nothing but dire consequences for the girl.

For young men, the *Briefwechsel* also stresses the fact that they must not propose to a young woman until they are in a financial position in which they are able to support a wife. Indeed, this point is made with nearly all of the male characters in the story. This was the problem with Herr von Z – – in the example above, and Spirit was not able to propose to Lottchen until he had completed his degree and received a well-paying position. Mentor's younger son Fritze, meanwhile, has been relentlessly pursued throughout the entire series by his master's daughter Mienchen. At the end of the series, he finally admits his love for her, but also admits that he is not yet in a position to support her. Her father, however, is thrilled by the possible union and arranges for the two to correspond with one another while Fritze is away on his extended business trip (BW 12: 347–51).

His brother Karl, meanwhile, is following a much longer career path and is about to enter the university. Although he admits that the sweet and virtuous Friederikchen would make for an ideal wife, he admits that he is no position to support her, nor can he expect her to wait so long

for him. Quite pragmatically, he also argues that he will likely meet many other young women who are equally virtuous; Friederikchen, in other words, is not his only opportunity for a happy marriage (BW 12: 45–46). Karl finally resigns himself to the fact that he will have to wait for his chance at love and composes a poem "An den Amor" to express his resignation in verse:

An den Amor.
Weg mit deinem Pfeil und Bogen,
Kleiner Schütze, weg von mir!
Sey doch, wer da will, verwogen,
Greife zu und traue dir!
Seh ich nicht der Pfeile Spitzen?
Diesen Bogen scharf gespannt? –
O wie leicht könnt' ich mich ritzen
Und verwunden Herz und Hand!
„Mit Gewehr ist nicht zu scherzen,"
Warnte man mich schon als Kind:
Leicht macht man durch Wunden Schmerzen,
Aber heilt nicht so geschwind. –
Wie? du läßt mir keinen Friede? –
Pallas! o so fleh ich dich!
Deine mächtige Aegide
Steh mir bey und schütze mich!
Laß dein Käuzlein mich bewachen,
Wann ein Schlummer zu mir dringt,
Und er mir, mich blind zu machen,
Seine Bind' ums Auge schlingt.
Rüste mich mit deinem Speere,
Deinem Panzerrock und Helm!
Und so trotz' ich, dir zur Ehre,
Jenem kleinen tückischen Schelm.
Hab' ich einstens Manneskräfte,
Daß ich richtig zielen kann:
O dann nehm ich das Geschäfte,
Amor, deines Bogens an!
Wann dann schwarze Augen blitzen,
Welche meinem Herzen dräun,
Soll ein Pfeil von dir mir nützen
Und mir Ruhm und Sieg verleihn. (BW 12: 49–50)

Thus, while young men may long for the day when they meet their beloved, the text emphasizes that they will need to exercise patience and self-control until such time as they are able to support a wife.

5.3.5.3. Marriage Advice for Girls

While the advice for boys regarding marriage deals largely with financial concerns, the advice for young women deals more with matters of the heart and with the discernment of a potential husband's character. It should also be noted that the great majority of advice on marriage within the *Briefwechsel* appears to be targeted at young women, rather than young men. Admittedly, the only two main characters who become engaged in the series, Lottchen and Friederikchen, are female; but this is likely only part of the reason that the information regarding marriage is targeted at young women.

A more significant reason is that the selection of a spouse is even more critical for a woman than for a man; for within Weiße's ideal world, a woman is defined almost exclusively by her role as a wife and mother. This theme is repeated throughout the series. One example is a passage in which Friederikchen's father is discussing marriage with her, and he concludes: "Denn, das größte was du in jedem Stande erwarten kannst, ist, nach der Bestimmung deines Geschlechts, doch kein anders, als das Glück eines rechtschaffenen Mannes zu befördern, in dem Seinigen das Deinige zu finden, in der häuslichen Sphäre zu glänzen, und als Gattin und Mutter allen deinen Pflichten eine Genüge zu leisten." (BW 5: 299). As a young woman's entire happiness depends upon that of her husband, so argues the world of the *Briefwechsel,* it is all the more important that she make a prudent choice from the start.

Once again, as an ardent proponent of the rationalist branch of the Enlightenment, Weiße places the highest value upon reason as the guiding principle which must influence a young woman's decision whom to marry. This theme is prevalent throughout much of the *Briefwechsel*. In a passage in the earlier part of the series, for example, Lottchen recounts learning from her mother that girls in particular are prone to ignore their sense of reason when it comes to matters of the heart:

> Nämlich ein Mädchen sollte sich nie erlauben, für einen jungen Mann günstige Gesinnungen zu hegen, bevor sie ihn nicht unter mancherley Lagen und verschiedenen Verhältnissen im menschlichen Leben gesehen hätte, indem diese ihr auf einmal den Aufschluß über ihr künftiges Schicksal würden geben können. Die Laster, die an einer Mannsperson seiner künftigen Frau am meisten nachtheilig werden, sind Jachzorn, zumal wenn er in Unmenschlichkeit ausartet, Geiz, Verschwendung und Untreue und ich dächte doch, ein Mädchen müßte gewaltig einfältig seyn, wenn sie nicht ihre vorgebenen Liebhaber ein wenig sollte aufs Eis führen können, um zu sehen, wo einer oder der andere glitscht, das ist, ihnen so eine Gelegenheit in Weg werfen, wo die Leidenschaft Gefahr läuft der Vernunft zu unterliegen. Die Mama macht mir zwar die Einwendung, daß viele von unserm Geschlechte selten so lange ihre Besonnenheit behalten, um solche Gelegenheiten abzuwarten, oder zu veranlassen: ihr Verstand folge immer blindlings der Partheylichkeit des Herzens, und dieß sey denn nur zu geneigt, in dergleichen Fällen dem Auge bey den Fehlern des geliebten Gegenstandes nach Beschaffenheit der Umstände optische Spiegel vorzuhalten, welche die Tugenden und Laster vergrößerten oder verkleinerten, oder von einer Seite darstellten, wo die abscheulichsten Flecken, sich zu einer lieblich kleinen Nachläßigkeit zusammenzögen. (BW 4: 73–74)

The argument here is that one's affection for one's beloved can often fail to heed one's sense of reason, thereby preventing it from discerning significant character flaws in the object of one's affection. It is particularly critical for a young woman to discern the true nature of a man before consenting to a union with him, as the moral failings mentioned in the passage above could ultimately cause her to suffer a miserable, unhappy life. Girls must consequently prevent themselves from following their hearts blindly, but must consistently heed the voice of reason. Friederikchen's father, incidentally, gives her the same advice in another passage (BW 5: 297–98).

Thankfully for young women, Weiße's characters allege that it is easier for young women to discern the true character of young men than vice versa. According to Friederikchen, girls have the advantage that the character and virtue of young men is more widely known as a result of their business careers and dealings in society. In order to predict what sort of a husband a young man would make, it is merely necessary for a woman to inquire as to his public reputation. Women who marry men of questionable moral character and subsequently suffer in unhappy marriages, Friederikchen concludes, have only themselves and their gullibility to blame. In contrast, it is far more difficult for men to discern the true character of potential brides, as most young women are confined to the home for most of the day and enjoy a much more limited sphere of influence within which their character may be observed (BW 11: 35–36). While the argument that women in unhappy marriages have only themselves to blame may be troubling for most present-day readers,[81] the most salient lesson here for potential brides is that they must exert diligent use of their faculty of reason in order to prevent themselves from falling prey to a similar fate.

That one should first and foremost select a spouse whose character is beyond reproach is another prevalent theme throughout the *Briefwechsel*. Frau Mentor repeatedly praises Spirit's virtue when she encourages Lottchen to accept his proposal and concludes that the marriage

[81] The greater context in which this passage appears would likely be even more troubling to readers of today: Friederikchen includes this argument as part of her response (BW 11: 1–57) to a letter (BW 10: 1–34) in which Lottchen describes her belief that in nearly all unhappy marriages, the wife is the reason why the marriage is suffering. Friederikchen agrees and insists that most marriages would be more harmonious if more wives would recognize their spheres of influence as the home and family (BW 11: 31). That Weiße felt compelled to include such passages at all would suggest that he perceived overreaching women to be a significant issue of his day which he was trying to remedy. One can surmise that the author permitted these ideas to be expressed by female characters in order to lend greater credence to them, which might further suggest that he anticipated that even in his day, these claims would be unpopular among at least some female readers.

would thus be a happy one (BW 11: 262–63). Moreover, some time before he reveals his true intentions, Spirit himself gives Lottchen similar advice—which in hindsight might seem entirely self-serving. Spirit bemoans the fact that many people use superficial characteristics such as physical appearance when it comes to matters of the heart and insists that the most important criterion for such affection must be inner virtue. He does admit that physical appearance will likely still play a role for both sexes in the development of affection, but he also points out that a beautiful soul makes for outer beauty and that the eyes of the lover will seek that which is beautiful in his or her beloved (BW 9: 293–95, 298–300).

5.3.5.4. Romantic Love and Marriage

Passionate love and simple infatuation are repeatedly criticized throughout the *Briefwechsel*, as it can too often blind one's sense of reason and lead to an unsuitable and unhappy marriage. It is clear that Weiße is arguing against what he perceives to be false notions of love as they were presented in romance novels of the time. Such novels are time and again derided throughout the course of Weiße's series, which in keeping with the prevalent notions of *Lesesucht* and *Lesewut* of the time, argues that they pollute young women's minds with fanciful notions of romance that do not exist in the real world.[82] When Lottchen is taken aback by Spirit's proposal, she tells her mother that she harbors no romantic passion for him as one might find in such novels. Her mother insists that such passion is short-lived and differs greatly from true love, which she describes as follows: "Eine Liebe, die sich auf Vernunft und Tugend, und auf gegenseitige

[82] For more information on the eighteenth-century debate on *Lesucht* and *Lesewut*, particularly with reference to young readers, see Dominik von König's "Lesesucht und Lesewut" (1977). The article also includes a large discussion of Campe's definition of this "ailment" and the appropriate "treatment" for it.

Hochachtung gründet, findet immer neue Nahrung, und brennt durch die Zeit heller und reiner" (BW 11: 266). In Weiße's world, true love is not dependent upon passion, but rather upon virtue and mutual respect.

It is also suggested that romantic love can be detrimental if one permits one's heart to stand in the way of reason. Weiße explores this idea in the final play which is included in the series, *Die Ueberschwemmung, oder: Die edelmüthige Eifersucht* (BW 11: 113–96). The heroine of the story, the shepherdess Amaryllis is deeply in love with Daphnis, but is concerned that he is too jealous. She vows not to let her love for him lead her astray into prematurely consenting to marry a man whose character is still in question. Thus, she resolves to test her beloved by seeing if he is willing to put his jealousy aside in order to come to the aid of a poor shepherd whose hut was destroyed in a flood, even though Daphnis believes Amaryllis is in love with this shepherd. Daphnis ultimately puts his jealousy aside and helps the other shepherd, although he believes it means he will never be with his beloved Amaryllis. Convinced of his virtue, however, Amaryllis professes her love for him, and the two are blessed with a happy union. *Die Ueberschwemmung* thus once again clearly shows Weiße's belief that one must continuously listen to reason in matters of the heart and that one must consider the inner character of a potential spouse to be more important than one's personal feelings.

Within the "real world" of Mentor, another example of this comes in the person of Friederikchen, who toward the end of the series makes the acquaintance of a young minister and quickly develops an affection for him. In spite of this, she prudently resolves not to let her affection for him prevent her from getting to know him more fully in order to be more keenly

aware of both his virtues and his faults (BW 12: 82–85). In the following months, Friederikchen gets to know the minister much better and eventually accepts his proposal of marriage.

In light of this emphasis on the inner beauty of virtue, it is no surprise that the concept of love as Weiße presents it is a more complex issue than inexplicable passion or infatuation. For Weiße, the notion of love at first sight is impossible,[83] as love must be developed over time as the result of deep mutual respect, admiration, and above all friendship. Indeed, love is defined explicitly as a heightened form of friendship when Friederikchen writes to Lottchen after speaking to her father about marriage:

> Denn, finden wir nur den Mann erst unserer Freundschaft werth und kann er uns das Vertrauen abgewinnen, daß es ihm um unsere wahre Glückseligkeit ein rechter Ernst ist, so wird er auch nicht weit entfernt seyn, sich unsere Liebe zu erwerben, und uns mit dem Wunsche erfüllen, ihm gefallen zu wollen, und seine Wünsche zu befriedigen: denn Liebe ist ja nichts, als ein erhöhter Grad der Freundschaft, und selbst die heftigste Liebe der bloßen Leidenschaft, wenn sie sich nicht auf Hochachtung gründet und in Freundschaft reift, wird, wenn der Genuß und die Jahre das Feuer der Jugend dämpfen, nicht ausreichen und dauerhaft seyn. (BW 12: 71)

Superficial love that is based simply on infatuation or passion, she claims, cannot and will not endure; but a marriage between mutual friends will be long-lasting and happy.

True love, according to Weiße, can only develop over time as two friends begin to develop a deep respect and admiration for each other's virtues. One must bear in mind, however, that several of the passages discussed above suggest that this development of love can take place *after* a young woman has accepted a marriage proposal and will continue throughout the

[83] Weiße actually criticizes the notion of love at first sight in one of his plays which is included in the *Briefwechsel*. The play *Der Krug geht so lange zu Wasser, bis er zerbricht; oder der Amtmann* (BW 6: 185–318) primarily deals with political corruption and the setting right of social injustice, but it also features the story of a young clerk, Biedermann, who becomes deeply infatuated with the inner and outer beauty of a virtuous young woman named Julie. He repeatedly professes his love for her, but throughout the story, several characters insist that he can't possibly love a woman whom he has just met. Biedermann's infatuation does not lead to a union at the end of the play, but rather to the resolution that the two virtuous young people should become better acquainted over time, which may perhaps lead to true love and a blessed marriage.

marriage. In this respect, Weiße appears to assume that true love will naturally develop over time during such a union that is built upon mutual respect and admiration between two friends of strong moral fiber. Frau Mentor, in fact, says as much to Lottchen:

> Du sagst, du hast keine Abneigung für ihn, sondern vielmehr die größte Hochachtung; du erkennest seinen ganzen Werth? Gut, bey einem noch nähern Umgange wird jene Hochachtung gewiß die zärtlichste, die dauerhafteste Liebe erzeugen: sie wird nach und nach in die reinste Freundschaft reifen, die sich durch einen beständigen Wetteifer eure gegenseitige Glückseligkeit zu befördern, jedes dem andern in seinen Wünschen zuvorzukommen, und euch den mühsamen Pfad des Lebens auf alle ersinnliche Art zu erleichtern, äußert. (BW 11: 266)

These assurances, however, do not at first seem particularly comforting to poor Lottchen, who cannot begin to think of Herr Spirit in a romantic way. Her desperate pleas for advice from her friend Friederikchen and her cries to her brothers not to mock her plight suggest how truly desperate she feels at first. As her mother points out, however, marriage proposals from kind and generous men do not come along every day, nor can Lottchen expect to be permitted to live with her parents for the rest of her life (BW 11: 265). Lottchen ultimately seems ever more resigned to the thought of marrying Spirit—although it is worth noting that not once does she suggest that she has developed true feelings of love. Indeed, the only sign that Lottchen has not been entirely drained of her now-familiar playful mischievousness comes from the joking manner in which she finally accepts Spirit's proposal: She surprises him with a ring in the presence of her family, at which the embarrassed Spirit must admit that he does not have a ring to give to her (BW 12: 334–37). In light of the previous four hundred pages of Lottchen's dismay, however, this incident does little to compensate for the fact that her decision to marry a man she does not love remains a difficult one.

While her sense of reason ultimately wins out—as is always the case in Weiße's idealized framework—it is clear that the many compelling arguments which her parents and friends have

made do not make her decision any easier emotionally. This incident, more than any other in either of Weiße's two periodicals for young readers, most powerfully illustrates a crucial point: The power of reason is not a substitute for one's emotions, and the two might often be in direct conflict. In other words, obeying one's sense of reason is not always an easy task. Yet the ever-adamant proponent of the Enlightenment Weiße illustrates here that even when one's emotions might tempt one down a different path, one must always follow the pathway established by one's guiding sense of reason. To put it bluntly: Reason trumps emotion.

As difficult as Lottchen's decision to marry Spirit may be for her, the character admittedly finds herself in a much better position than that of countless other real-life young women of the time. Whereas Lottchen freely admits to her admiration and respect for Herr Spirit, even if she does not harbor any sense of romantic love toward him, it is certainly true that this would not have been the case for every young woman of the time who was compelled—either by her own sense of reason or by the authority of her parents—to accept a proposal of marriage. These points serve as a strong reminder that love was not necessarily a luxury that all young women of the time could afford.[84] Weiße does not completely turn a blind eye to the

[84] The changing role of romantic love in the history of the institution of marriage is also associated with the shift in the family model which took place during the eighteenth century. Within the framework of the *große Haushaltsfamilie*, both husband and wife were members of the same productive unit; as such, marriage functioned much more like a business contract in which a potential spouse's skill set was more significant than his or her inner qualities. After this model gradually came to be supplanted by that of the *bürgerliche Kleinfamilie*, gender roles were established: The husband served as the sole provider, while the wife oversaw the private sphere of the home. As spouses were no longer team members of a productive unit, the inner qualities of an individual came to be much more important in a marriage, and romantic love gradually came to play a prominent role as a prerequisite for marriage (Schwab 280–85). As we saw in the last chapter, the unique family model which Weiße presents in his works for young readers incorporates elements of both models and hence defies clear categorization within these two models. The author's depiction of love and marriage in the *Briefwechsel* thus provides further evidence of the uniqueness and complexity of Weiße's family model. All of the advice he offers on selecting a spouse focuses on a person's inner virtue, rather than a particular skill set which could enhance the family trade, yet the case of Lottchen

plight of his female readers, yet one must wonder how his assurance that love would develop after the wedding may have been received by young women of the time who were faced with the prospect of marrying a man whom they did not love. Indeed, it is surprising how far he pushes this issue—and also the paradigm of the rationalist branch of the Enlightenment. Clearly, selecting a suitable spouse was then, as now, an issue of the greatest importance, yet the fact that he approaches the matter with near-clinical rationalism illustrates quite powerfully his belief that the power of reason remains supreme above all other virtues—and, as was mentioned earlier, a new kind of authority in and of itself. In short, reason remains a continuous thread throughout both series combined—from the earliest volumes of the *Kinderfreund* to the final pages of the *Briefwechsel*.

5.3.5.5. Rousseau on Marriage

On the matter of marriage, Rousseau largely agrees with the arguments Weiße presents in the *Briefwechsel*. In the final portion of *Émile*, the author depicts Émile's future spouse Sophie and describes the process of their courting and subsequent marriage. Sophie's father espouses a similar view to that of Weiße regarding the development of love from friendship, but has a different view on the notion of marriage itself:

> C'est aux époux à s'assortir. Le penchant mutuel doit être leur prémier lien : leurs yeux, leurs cœurs doivent être leurs prémiers guides ; car comme leur prémier devoir, étant unis, est de s'aimer, et qu'aimer ou n'aimer pas ne dépend point de nous-mêmes, ce devoir en emporte necessairement un autre qui est de commencer par s'aimer avant de s'unir. C'est là le droit de la

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shows that within Weiße's model, romantic love is certainly not yet a prerequisite for marriage. Once again, we see that Weiße's family model seems to represent a transitional model which incorporates elements of both models.

> nature que rien ne peut abroger : ceux qui l'ont gênée par tant de loix civiles ont eu plus d'égard à l'ordre apparent qu'au bonheur du mariage et aux mœurs des citoyens. (756)[85]

Here again one sees the strong belief that true love must develop from mutual friendship. In contrast to Weiße, however, Rousseau insists that this love develop before the couple enters into the bonds of marriage, lest the natural order be perverted and the concept of marriage be exploited for legal or pragmatic reasons. Although Weiße does not preclude the possibility that love could or should develop before marriage, he appears to recognize that many young women have little choice as to when or if they should marry and thus reassures them that love will develop afterward. In so doing, Weiße seems to be tacitly endorsing the fact that marriage remains a financial or social necessity that might be independent of romantic love. Rousseau, on the other hand, perceives marriage as part of the natural order for two people who love each other, but bemoans the fact that it has been perverted in society.

The two authors do, however, agree that passionate love can be a problem. In the *Briefwechsel*, in fact, Friederikchen at one point actually cites Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, in which it is argued that love is not necessary for a happy marriage and indeed can even be detrimental to it. This is because deep romantic love can prove to be incapacitating and thereby prevent married people from accomplishing the many tasks which must be done in order to maintain and support a household (BW 12: 71–74).

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[85] "Husband and wife should choose each other. A mutual liking should be the first bond between them. They should follow the guidance of their own eyes and hearts; when they are married their first duty will be to love one another, and as love and hatred do not depend on ourselves, this duty brings another with it, and they must begin to love each other before marriage. That is the law of nature, and no power can abrogate it; those who have fettered it by so many legal restrictions have given heed rather to the outward show of order than to the happiness of marriage or the morals of the citizen" (trans. 363).

In *Émile*, Rousseau paints a similar portrait which shows that passion can be detrimental not only to married people. After the title character has fallen hopelessly in love with Sophie, he can think of nothing else, much to the dismay of his teacher: "La passion dont il est préoccupé ne lui permet plus de se livrer comme auparavant à des entretiens purement raisonés ; il faut l'intéresser par cette passion même à se rendre attentif à mes leçons" (814).[86] Émile's teacher goes on to insist that one must be able to overcome one's passions and affections in order to remain virtuous:

> Qu'est-ce donc que l'homme vertueux ? C'est celui qui sait vaincre ses affections. Car alors il suit sa raison, sa conscience, il fait son devoir, il se tient dans l'ordre et rien ne l'en peut écarter. Jusqu'ici tu n'étois libre qu'en apparence ; tu n'avois que la liberté précaire d'un esclave à qui l'on n'a rien commandé. Maintenant sois libre en effet ; apprends à devenir ton propre maitre ; commande à ton cœur, ô Emile, et tu seras vertueux. (818)[87]

In order to protect his pupil's virtue and teach him what a mature love looks like, Émile's teacher takes him away from his beloved Sophie for two years. Both mature during this time, and Rousseau's work concludes with their marriage and the birth of their first child. As with Weiße, Rousseau proposes a notion of mature love that is dependent on deep respect, rather than infatuation, and he also admits that passion can be detrimental to one's virtue and reason.

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[86] "The passion which engrosses him will no longer permit him to devote himself as in former days to discussions of pure reason; this very passion must be called to our aid if his attention is to be given to my teaching" (trans. 405–06).

[87] "What is meant by a virtuous man? He who can conquer his affections; for then he follows his reason, his conscience; he does his duty; he is his own master and nothing can turn him from the right way. So far you have had only the semblance of liberty, the precarious liberty of the slave who has not received his orders. Now is the time for real freedom; learn to be your own master; control your heart, my Emile, and you will be virtuous" (trans. 408).

5.4. Summary: Youth as Exploration in Weiße's *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*

Childhood, as we have already seen, is for Weiße the period in a person's life in which every single moment can and should be devoted to education—be it moral, social, or academic. In other words, he identifies childhood with the process of education itself. In Weiße's *Briefwechsel*, this notion of childhood remains the same. Luischen and Julchen, the two youngest children, still receive constant instruction—both from their parents and their older siblings—and there are multiple instances in which the author confirms the same educational ideals which were the primary focus of *Der Kinderfreund*.

The novelty of *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* is, however, the greater emphasis which is placed on older children. It is through the actions and words of these young-adult protagonists that Weiße's conception of youth becomes apparent. Much as with his view of childhood, Weiße believes that youth is a critical time in a young person's life. It is the phase of life in which one first leaves the home and is submitted to the temptations and vices of the adult world—including sexual temptations, even though they are discussed only briefly in the periodical. As a result, youth is the period in which the virtues and morals established in one's childhood are put to the ultimate test. No longer within the safety of one's family circle, the young adult must rely on his upbringing to withstand the perils of youth, lest he ultimately be led down the path that leads to destruction. Youth is thus both a time of exploration in which young people experience the wonders of the real world and a time of trial in which their virtue must prove itself in the midst of temptation.

At the same time, youth appears to mark a shift in the nature of one's preparations. While childhood was for Weiße primarily devoted to the development of good habits and abstract notions of virtue, youth is devoted more greatly to practical concerns. It is during this period that young people make concrete plans for the future. For young men, this means preparing for their future careers; for young women, it means learning how to run a household. Most importantly, for both it may include the search for a spouse. On this last point in particular, Weiße's *Briefwechsel* provides especially candid advice and illustrates very well the transition from a focus on abstract topics to more practical concerns.

Finally, youth marks a dramatic transformation in the roles which parents and young adults play in each other's education. The parent gradually transitions from a caring, yet authoritarian teacher into a trusted friend who constantly has his or her child's best interests in mind. The children, meanwhile, are no longer passive recipients in the educational process, but rather have reached an age when they are ready to become active participants in the education of themselves and others. Once again, we see a functional definition of this period of life. For Weiße, the boundary between childhood and youth seems to be delineated by this transition from educated to educator, the time when young adults begin taking part in the education of future generations. In the concluding chapter, we will examine the relationship between these two life stages, seek to establish more specifically Weiße's boundary that separates them, and situate Weiße's ideas within the context of his own time.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Weiße's Conception of Childhood and Youth within His Own Time

6.1. Distinctions and Overlaps between Weiße's Concepts of Childhood and Youth

6.1.1. Weiße's Concepts of Childhood and Youth: A Caveat

Before I offer a summary and discussion of my conclusions, it would be wise to consider what these findings tell us about the discourse concerning the concept of childhood in the eighteenth century versus the actual experiences of children living at that time. In other words, one must ask oneself to what extent Weiße's works accurately depict the lives of middle-class children in the late eighteenth century and hence how much these works actually inform one about what it meant to be a child at that time. As proponents of a relatively new genre at the time, eighteenth-century children's authors such as Weiße made significant contributions to the existing discourse on childhood and, more importantly, were among the first to depict scenes of childhood in a literary format and to engage children themselves in this discourse by producing texts directly addressed to them. In light of this situation, Reiner Wild has suggested that children's literature of the Enlightenment does not so much provide information about children themselves, but rather about the discourse conducted by adults *about* children:

> Die Texte der aufgeklärten Kinderliteratur sind keine Zeugnisse realer Kindheit im 18. Jahrhundert; sie dokumentieren vielmehr die Verhaltenserwartungen der Erwachsenen, die diese an die Kinder richten und die an der Vorstellung vom künftigen Erwachsenen, zu dem das Kind werden soll, ausgerichtet sind. Die aufgeklärte Kinderliteratur ist nicht – jedenfalls nicht unmittelbar – ein Dokument realer Kindheit im 18. Jahrhundert oder gar deren Abbild, sondern vielmehr ein Dokument der Rede der Erwachsenen über Kindheit (damit selbstverständlich auch auf die realen Gegebenheiten von Kindheit bezogen). Die Auskünfte, welche die Texte in der historischen Untersuchung gewähren, sind mithin vornehmlich Auskünfte über die Erwachsenen,

> über deren Vorstellungen von Kindheit, deren Erwartungen und Anforderungen, und nicht Auskünfte über die Kinder. (Wild, *Vernunft* 29)

Wild comes to this conclusion in part based on the fact that the vast majority of works of eighteenth-century children's literature are written with an overtly forward-looking focus on the adults which their authors' young fictional characters—as well as their historical readers—will become. Similarly, Wild points out that the child characters in these works are constantly surrounded by a cast of adult characters who guide their behavior, oversee their education, and engage them in rational discourse on any number of instructive topics. As I have shown, both of these characteristics hold true for Weiße's two periodicals for young readers.

This is not to say, of course, that a study of Weiße's works for children does not provide a meaningful investigation of the concept of child in the eighteenth century, nor is it to say that an analysis of any historical literature would be equally fruitless. On the contrary, Wild admits that the discourse among adults on the concept of childhood was naturally related to the actual realities of children's lives at the time. More importantly, it is this concept of childhood itself—that is, the perceptions and projections of childhood, rather than the historical realities of the lives of children—which my research has aimed to investigate from the start.

The original impetus for my investigation, after all, was Philippe Ariès's claim that the concept of childhood was "discovered" in the eighteenth century. This claim, it must be noted, has less to do with the real-life experiences of children at that time than it has to do with adult perceptions of childhood at the time. Ariès himself is writing about a particular conception or construct of childhood which is defined by a discourse based on people's perceptions. Consequently, my examination of Weiße's works for children does indeed provide a useful lens through which to study the history of the concept of childhood, as these works reflect the

perceptions of one man—and a particularly influential one, at that—who actively participated in the discourse on the concept of childhood during a period when questions about this concept were being discussed for the very first time. My analysis of his works must thus come with the caveat that both Weiße's depiction of the life of children in his works and my interpretation of his depiction do not so much inform one about the real-life situations of children's lives in late eighteenth-century Leipzig, for instead they represent one particular example within the lively discourse of adults on the concept of childhood.

6.1.2. Weiße's Concepts of Childhood and Youth: A Summary

My analysis of Weiße's *Kinderfreund* has revealed a concept of childhood which is equated with the very act of education itself. During one's childhood, Weiße argues, every moment of a person's life could and should contribute to his or her moral, social, or academic education. It is only during this period, he believes, that minor character flaws can easily be mended before they spiral out of control and become irremediable vices later in one's life. Parents are expected to play a direct role in the upbringing of their children and serve as mentors in their moral education. Above all, children must be taught from childhood onward to develop their sense of reason in order to discern right from wrong and guide their behavior and that of others later in life.

Likewise, my analysis of Weiße's *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes* has shown that the power of reason still plays a critical role in Weiße's concept of youth. During this phase of life, young people must assume responsibility over their own actions and must use their sense of reason to guide their behavior. This marks a significant shift in one's life as one's

parents no longer serve as teachers, but rather as trusted friends. While childhood was a time focused primarily on moral education and the acquisition of abstract notions of virtue, youth is a period of highly practical concerns such as the preparation for one's career or the selection of a spouse. In this respect, it is also a time of personal exploration, the period when young people explore the world and submit the convictions of their childhood to the world's many temptations.

A comparison of Weiße's concepts of childhood and youth thus reveals that the author makes a clear distinction between these two periods of life. This distinction, moreover, is a *functional* one: Weiße does not specify a particular age as the boundary between childhood and youth, nor does he recognize the onset of puberty as a decisive factor. Instead, he marks the onset of youth—and thus the end of childhood—as the point at which children begin to take a hand in their own education and start to explore specific plans for their future adulthood. Weiße's understanding of youth as a preparatory phase for "true" adulthood thus introduces young adults more fully to the workings of adult society and forces them out of the protective education within the family home during childhood.

6.1.3. Weiße's Concepts of Childhood and Youth: A Boundary

As I have mentioned previously, much of the debate around the concept of childhood in the eighteenth century centers around the difficulty in establishing the boundary which demarcates the end of childhood and the onset of youth. This, too, proves to be a difficult task with respect to Weiße's works for children. Although the author makes a clear and fast distinction between childhood and youth as two very different phases of one's life, it is difficult to discern an unambiguous boundary separating the two periods. Generally, his works reveal a gradual

transition between the two, as later volumes of *Der Kinderfreund* eventually begin to discuss more mature topics that are of greater relevance for an audience in its youth. Such topics include selecting suitable friends (KF 16: 1–77), taking care of one's health (KF 16: 78–112), choosing a fitting career (KF 23: 177–241), and coping with the loss of a loved one (KF 24: 73–112). The themes of the various plays within *Der Kinderfreund* also seem to gradually become tailored to an older audience, as several of the ones in later volumes feature teenaged characters who are engaged or fall in love, while those in earlier volumes focus on the lives of young children only.

The hazy boundary separating childhood and youth in Weiße's works is further blurred by the author's frequent conflation of the terms *Kindheit* and *Jugend*. At the very beginning of this dissertation, I demonstrated through examples from eighteenth-century dictionaries that there was a noticeable overlap between the usage of the terms *Kind*/*Kindheit* and *Jugend* during that period. Perhaps it should come as little surprise that Weiße, too, in both his *Kinderfreund* and his *Briefwechsel* appears to use the two terms interchangeably with remarkable frequency. An overview of a few examples will help illustrate the point.

In *Der Kinderfreund*, Mentor often refers to or addresses his four children with a term such as "meine kleine Jugend." He does this, moreover, both toward the beginning of the series (KF 4: 78; KF 5: 64) when the characters range in ages from roughly six to twelve years old and at the end of the series (KF 24: 6) when they are eleven to seventeen. He thus appears to use the term *Jugend* indiscriminately with little regard for the age of the young person in question. Yet at the end of the series, when Mentor explains to the reader why he has decided to discontinue the periodical, he explains that his children are truly entering their youth: "Nun aber, da ich am Ende des vier und zwanzigsten Bändchens bin, meine Kinder [...] ins jugendliche Alter

eintreten" (KF 24: 199), although it should be noted that earlier in this same volume, Philoteknos explicitly states that Luischen, the youngest of the four children, is still in her childhood and not yet in her youth (KF 24: 105). In the quoted passage, he seems to be distinguishing youth and child as separate stages of life and implies that only now is his children's childhood coming to a close. The distinction between the two becomes even more apparent when a few pages later Mentor addresses his young readers directly:

> Es wäre möglich – (denn wie sollte ich Etwas verreden, das mir so viel Freude macht,) daß ich, wenn mir die Fürsehung Leben und Gesundheit verleiht, ich, wo nicht euch – (denn ein großer Theil von denen, die mich bisher gelesen, werden ins jugendliche Alter hinüber gerückt, stärkere Speise zu ihrer Nahrung fodern,) daß ich, sage ich, eure jüngern Brüder und Schwestern wieder aufsuche, und sie noch einmal ein Stückchen Weges wieder begleite. Indessen werdet Ihr nicht verlieren, wenn Ihr auch bey eurem Fortschritt im Leben auf die guten Grundsätze, die Ihr in den Jahren eurer Kindheit gelegt habt, fortbauet. Was wahr und gut ist, bleibt es durchs ganze Leben: denn es giebt nur Eine Tugend, und Ein Laster, und sie äußern sich nur nach dem verschiedenen Verhältnissen unsers Alters und Standes auf verschiedene Art. (KF 24: 202–03)

Here, too, the implication is that the loyal readers of *Der Kinderfreund* have now, much like Mentor's children, entered their youth and left their childhood behind. Yet even this seemingly clear distinction is once again blurred when multiple statements in the *Briefwechsel* refer to one's childhood as "die ersten Jahre der Jugend" or simply "die erste Jugend" (BW 1: 12; BW 3: 113; BW 11: 60). In the following quote from a letter written by Fritze, for example, the characters describe childhood as follows: "[I]ch denke mir itzt oft, wie glücklich die Kinder sind, die gleich in ihrer ersten Jugend zu dem gewöhnt werden, was sie sonst in ihrem künftigen Leben erst mit Mühe erlernen müssen und so auch umgekehrt" (BW 3: 113–14).

Although Weiße continues to conflate the two terms throughout both periodicals, the *Briefwechsel* admittedly also contains a few hints regarding the boundary which Weiße seems to recognize between the two stages of life. When, for instance, Mentor says that sixteen-year-old

Fritze is "bey seinen Jahren, die noch ans Knabenalter gränzen" (BW 3: 172), the father implies that his son is close to his boyhood, but technically no longer belongs in it. Virtually the exact same statement is made of another sixteen-year-old character in the play *Der kindliche Gehorsam auf der Probe* (BW 4: 89). Although this would seem to place the boundary between childhood and youth at approximately fifteen years, the following statement from Weiße's play *Die Ueberschwemmung, oder: Die edelmüthige Eifersucht* appears to set it significantly earlier: "[E]in Kind ist man im zwölften Jahr auch nicht mehr" (BW 11: 116). Reconciling these two claims is understandably difficult.

Perhaps the clearest demarcation of this boundary, however, comes at the very end of the *Briefwechsel* as Mentor—occasionally slipping into the perspective of the historical author Weiße—concludes the series. At one point in this section, he recounts for the reader his original impetus to write the *Briefwechsel*, a periodical depicting the period in one's life which he describes as follows:

> Gemeiniglich kommen die Söhne von Personen des Mittelstandes, wie die meinigen, in den Jahren die zwischen der Kindheit und dem jugendlichen Alter liegen, d.i. zwischen einem Alter von 10 und 12 Jahren bis an das 18te oder das 20te, in fremde Zucht und Aufsichten, wo sie sich zu ihrer künftigen Bestimmung vorbereiten sollen, und bleiben darinne bis das jugendliche Alter sie wieder in eine andere Lage versetzt[...]. (BW 12: 312)

Weiße makes a distinction here between *Kindheit* and *das jugendliche Alter*, a term which seems to refer to young adulthood or the point at which young people begin their own career. This latter point is particularly noteworthy in light of the examples from *Der Kinderfreund* above, in which he uses the exact same term to describe his children's age at the end of that series. Of particular note in the passage here, though, is the six-year gap between the two which appears to belong to neither category. This limbo period is, of course, the same period which is chronicled

in the lives of the Mentor children in the *Briefwechsel*—namely, the point at which the boys prepare for their futures through study at a *Gymnasium* or an apprenticeship, while the girls learn to oversee a household and prepare for marriage (BW 12: 312–13).

Weiße seems here to distinguish this period from *das jugendliche Alter*; and based on the previous examples of his slippery usage of the term *Jugend* throughout *Der Kinderfreund* and the *Briefwechsel*, it appears that the term *Jugend* has very little semantic consistency for him. It may well be possible that Weiße might distinguish between *Jugend* (which would refer to the gap period) and *das jugendliche Alter* (which would refer to young adulthood after this gap period), but the fact that he refrains from using the term to refer to this limbo period in the passage above—coupled with his usage of the term *das jugendliche Alter* in previous passages to refer to the period immediately following young childhood—would seem to refute this possibility. I would argue, therefore, that for Weiße, the actual term *Jugend* refers to young people in general, from very small children to young adults, and does not at all refer to a particular stage of life.

Weiße's slippery usage of the term *Jugend*, however, does not necessarily indicate that he does not have a clear *concept* of youth. While the examples listed above suggest that the author's author notions of youth may be temporally vague, I have already demonstrated that his concept of youth is functionally quite clear. The fact, too, that Weiße does not provide a term for the gap period between childhood and young adulthood must not lead one to assume that he does not view it as an important period in one's life. He did, after all, devote eight years of his life to the creation of a periodical which chronicles this phase of life and is targeted at its members. Indeed, even as he describes this gap period in the passage above, it is clear that he values its importance as a distinct phase of life during which one prepares for young adulthood.

Finally, one should note that in Weiße's demarcation of the boundaries between childhood, youth, and young adulthood, he once again offers a functional distinction between them, just as he defines the distinction between the two concepts. Although he provides approximate age ranges for the transition from childhood to youth, it is evident that he is not using biological criteria to determine the onset of youth, but rather marks it as the point in one's life when one begins to prepare more seriously for one's future adulthood. For Weiße, the periods of childhood and youth are delineated not by one's physical or cognitive development, but rather by the expectations placed upon one at the time and the function which these periods fulfill in one's life. His concepts of childhood and youth, while temporally fluid and unclear, are thus functionally quite strongly delineated.

6.2. Weiße's Position within the Pedagogical Discourse of the Eighteenth Century

6.2.1. Weiße and the Philanthropinists: A Comparison

Weiße was not writing, of course, within a vacuum, but rather was an active participant in the lively discourse concerning the concept of childhood that was taking place at the time. We have previously seen that within the German-speaking regions of Saxony and Prussia in particular, Philanthropinism was the most influential pedagogical movement during the period within which Weiße wrote his periodicals for children. As previous literary historians have convincingly argued, German children's literature of the eighteenth century written after 1770 was primarily characterized by its accordance to Philanthropinist principles and represented the "true" children's literature of the Enlightenment (Brüggemann, Einleitung cols. 17–21; Wild,

"Aufklärung" 51; Ewers, Einleitung 14). Weiße's works, as we have seen, were no exception. Most salient, of course, are his beliefs in the perfectibility of mankind and in the supreme value of the faculty of reason as a guiding force to steer one's path; both of these were key values of Philanthropinism. Although Weiße was not actually a leading participant in this educational movement, he was nevertheless closely associated with its members. His explicit endorsement of Philanthropinism within *Der Kinderfreund*—such as Philoteknos's positive assessment of the curriculum at Basedow's Philanthropinum (KF 3: 132–38) or Mentor's excitement over the publication of Campe's *Robinson der Jüngere* (KF 14: 177–78)—further underscores Weiße's strong ties to the pedagogical movement. Weiße's works can thus be read as part of a greater discourse which was sweeping the German-speaking regions in the eighteenth century.

One must not, however, simply assume that all of his ideas are representative of all children's authors of the time. Even though the entire corpus of children's literature from this period is marked by a clear uniformity, rather than variety (Wild, *Vernunft* 36–37), Weiße's works still reveal minor differences from other works of Enlightenment children's literature. The most notable of these is, as Walter Pape has argued in *Das literarische Kinderbuch* (1981), his program of aesthetic education. In comparison to other children's authors of his day, Weiße was one of the few writers who attempted to discuss matters of good taste and aesthetics with his young readers. As we have seen in our discussion of his life and literary career, this had been a deeply personal conviction for him throughout his career as a dramatist and and during his editorship of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*. Evidence that Weiße's emphasis on aesthetics and good taste was unusual among children's authors at that time comes from a contemporary review of his work which questioned the appropriateness of

such an issue for young readers (*Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 49.2: 527). The fact that this review was written by Ernst Christian Trapp, one of the leading proponents of Philanthropinism, further underscores the uniqueness of Weiße's position relative to other works of Philanthropinist children's literature and makes his aesthetic program for children all the more noteworthy. While I would ultimately argue that Weiße's works for young readers are indeed more similar to other works of Enlightenment children's literature than they are different, this example alone should prevent the reader from making sweeping generalizations about eighteenth-century children's literature based on an analysis of Weiße's works alone.

6.2.2. Weiße and Rousseau: A Comparison

Although much of German children's literature of the Enlightenment may have been markedly similar in content, style, and tone, the spectrum of concepts of childhood and youth in the broader European marketplace of ideas was, of course, significantly more diverse. In order to illustrate the diversity of opinions which permeated the eighteenth-century discourse on the concept of childhood, I have offered, as a contrast to Weiße's concepts of childhood and youth, a partial analysis of Rousseau's views as reflected in *Émile*. Although I have made a direct comparison of specific points of agreement and disagreement throughout the course of this dissertation, it would be worthwhile now to revisit some of the most salient of these differences and similarities.

Of note is that the authors disagreed fundamentally on the significance of childhood as a phase of life. For Weiße, as we have seen, childhood is the time when a person's character is cemented; hence, he views it as the most critical period in an individual's life. In stark contrast,

Rousseau is nearly indifferent to the importance of childhood, remarking that flaws in one's childhood can easily be corrected and instead views adolescence as the most important phase in one's life.

On other points, however, the authors agree more closely; for example, both fundamentally believed in the perfectibility of mankind. Rousseau, arguing that the natural man is innately good, suggested that a proper education which simply strives to develop this inner goodness would necessarily lead the child into a life of virtue. Society, not self or sin, Rousseau argues, is responsible for the corruption of man. The Philanthropinists, as we have seen, embraced the notion of perfectibility in their pedagogical ideals, and the same could be said of Weiße. The frequent organic metaphors in his work suggest that "der gute Saame" within a child must simply be developed. Weiße, however, is less quick to blame the corruption of mankind on society. On the contrary, Weiße actively seeks to develop the good seed within his young readers precisely so that they can become productive members of society later in life. While Rousseau's Émile is raised in seclusion from the world, Weiße's young characters are seamlessly integrated into society and have regular contact with adults.

In light of the influence of the Enlightenment during which both men were writing, perhaps the most significant point of contrast between the two is the role of reason in their pedagogical programs. Weiße repeatedly states explicitly that children should be taught to use their powers of reason from a very young age. Both *Der Kinderfreund* and the *Briefwechsel* are replete with passages in which adult figures use rational argumentation to guide the behavior of children, as well as with passages in which older children then use their own faculties of reason to monitor the behavior of others or themselves. Rousseau, in contrast, argues that reason is

beyond the limited cognitive abilities of a child; instead, reason serves as the ultimate goal toward which one educates a child. In other words, for Weiße, reason is the means of education, whereas for Rousseau, it is its end.

One must bear in mind, however, that neither Weiße nor Rousseau provides a feasible model of education. By Rousseau's own admission, his *Émile* was never intended as a practical treatise. The ideas discussed in the text were speculations, rather than actual suggestions for child-rearing, even though many of the readers of his day interpreted them this way. On the surface, Weiße's model, in contrast, appears to provide a much more practical model on the appropriate education of children. As I have shown, however, the family model depicted by Weiße possesses a noticeably utopian character and would actually be completely infeasible to implement in real life. Weiße thus depicts a highly idealized version of his family model; what the adult or parent readers might choose to take away from it could have varied wildly from reader to reader.

Ultimately, one can draw three primary conclusions from this comparison of the works of Rousseau and Weiße: First, one can safely say that within the world of eighteenth-century Europe, there was clearly much variation within the discourse concerning the concept of childhood. While a review of German children's literature of the Enlightenment could perhaps give one a different impression, a variety of influential concepts of childhood were prevalent within the discourse of the late eighteenth century.

Secondly, one can more deeply appreciate the disconnect which existed between the discourse on childhood and its real-world implications. Both authors promoted novel pedagogical ideals, yet neither presented them in a manner which could be feasibly implemented

by either parents or teachers—at least not to the degree in which they were presented in the texts. The discourse on childhood in the eighteenth century thus also serves as yet another example of the complex relationship between theory and praxis.

Finally, the fact that both Rousseau's and Weiße's ideas were so wildly popular during their day shows the intensity of the discourse on childhood during the eighteenth century. It is no overstatement to say that Rousseau's ideas sparked a pedagogical revolution at the time of their publication; and while Weiße's ideas cannot be called revolutionary, the immense popularity of *Der Kinderfreund* and the many new works of children's literature which it inspired are both a testament to its remarkable influence within Germany and beyond. Similarly, the ideas of both authors met with a fair amount of controversy, which further suggests that there were people of opposing views who were strongly invested in the discourse on childhood. All of this combined provides a clear indication that the topic of the concept of childhood was, to say the least, an issue of great significance within late eighteenth-century Europe.

6.3. Conclusion: The Complexity of Weiße's Concept of Childhood

In this dissertation, I have offered a profile of Christian Felix Weiße's concepts of childhood and youth as depicted in *Der Kinderfreund* and *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*, respectively. While on the one hand the profile reveals that this influential author's literary works do indeed offer a very clear picture of his concepts of childhood and youth, my research has also demonstrated that these concepts are not unproblematic. As we have seen, in both periodicals, he depicts not a true-to-life family model, but rather the utopia of a flawless pedagogical model which works so well only because he has portrayed it in this way. Similarly,

his inconsistent and occasionally even contradictory usage of the terms *Kindheit* and *Jugend* suggests that the distinction between these two phases of life is not as clearly defined as a profile of his works suggests.

The complexity of Weiße's concepts of childhood and youth, however, should not simply be read as a critique of his system. On the contrary, this complexity confirms the legitimacy of the historical debate on childhood which is still continuing today. After all, if it were easy to define what it does mean or ought to mean to be a child, this debate would have ended long ago. Rather, the fact that the debate is still ongoing suggests not only the difficulty of the task, but also speaks to the fact that the concept of childhood has evolved and will continue to evolve over time.

To return, in conclusion, to my initial impetus for this project, I would argue that Weiße's concept of childhood as a non-stop act of education suggests that the late eighteenth century was indeed a pivotal moment in the history of childhood—if not, as Ariès has claimed, the point at which childhood itself was discovered. The model of childhood which he depicts in his works for young readers upholds the belief that the eighteenth century was the time when education withdrew children from active participation in adult society and when children became the primary focus of the family as a social unit. Indeed, Weiße's conception of childhood as the very act of education itself accords an even greater significance to the role of education in the development of the concept of childhood. As such, Weiße's works for children and youth provide a powerful lens through which to investigate the argument that during the Enlightenment, the concept of childhood was, so to speak, in its true infancy.

Appendix 1

Images from *Der Kinderfreund*

Fig. 1. Title page of the final volume of *Der Kinderfreund* (KF 24: title page)

Der
Kinderfreund.
Ein Wochenblatt.

CLXXI. Stück.
den 10. Oktober, 1778.

Fortsetzung des vorigen Stücks.

Die Sonne und der Wind.

Der Nordwind und die Sonne stritten,
Wer an Gewalt der stärkste wär?
Indessen kam von Ungefähr
Ein Wanderer daher geschritten —
Es war im Herbst, wo bald das Wetter schön,
Bald stürmisch ist: drum hat er sich auf alle Fälle
Mit Mütz' und Mantel wohl versehn. —
Ha! rief die Sonne: auf der Stelle
Ist der Versuch gemacht! Laß sehn,

Fig. 2. First page of the fable "Die Sonne und der Wind" (KF 13: 17)

Abſchied des Kinderfreundes an Seine jungen Leſer.

Meine lieben jungen Freunde und Freundinnen,

Es ſind nunmehro ſechs Jahre, als ich dieſes kleine Wochenblatt zu ſchreiben anfieng. Meine Abſicht war, indem ich euch meine Unterhaltungen mit meinen eignen Kindern vorlegte, euch einige Monat hindurch auf eine leichte Art zu vergnügen, zu unterrichten, und ſo euch ein kleines Leſebuch von etlichen Bändchen nach und nach in die Hände zu ſpielen. Nie ließ ich mir damals träumen, daß ich, ohne euch und mich zu ermüden, euch ſo lange auf eurem Wege durch

Fig. 3. First page of Mentor's farewell to his readers (KF 24: 197)

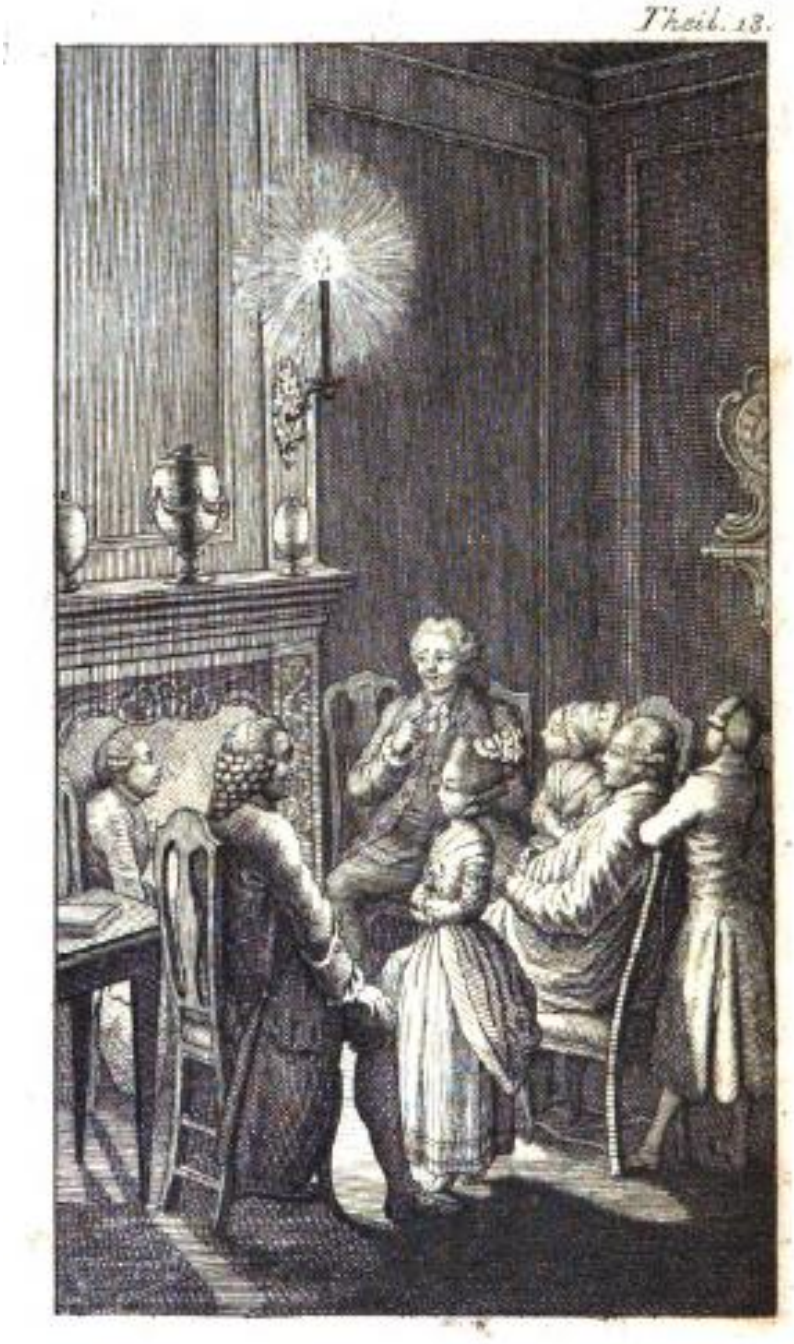


Fig. 4. Mentor, his children, and the family friends (KF 18: frontispiece)

Fig. 5. Illustration of an ill-mannered, unkempt young gentleman (KF 17: bet. pp. 18–19)

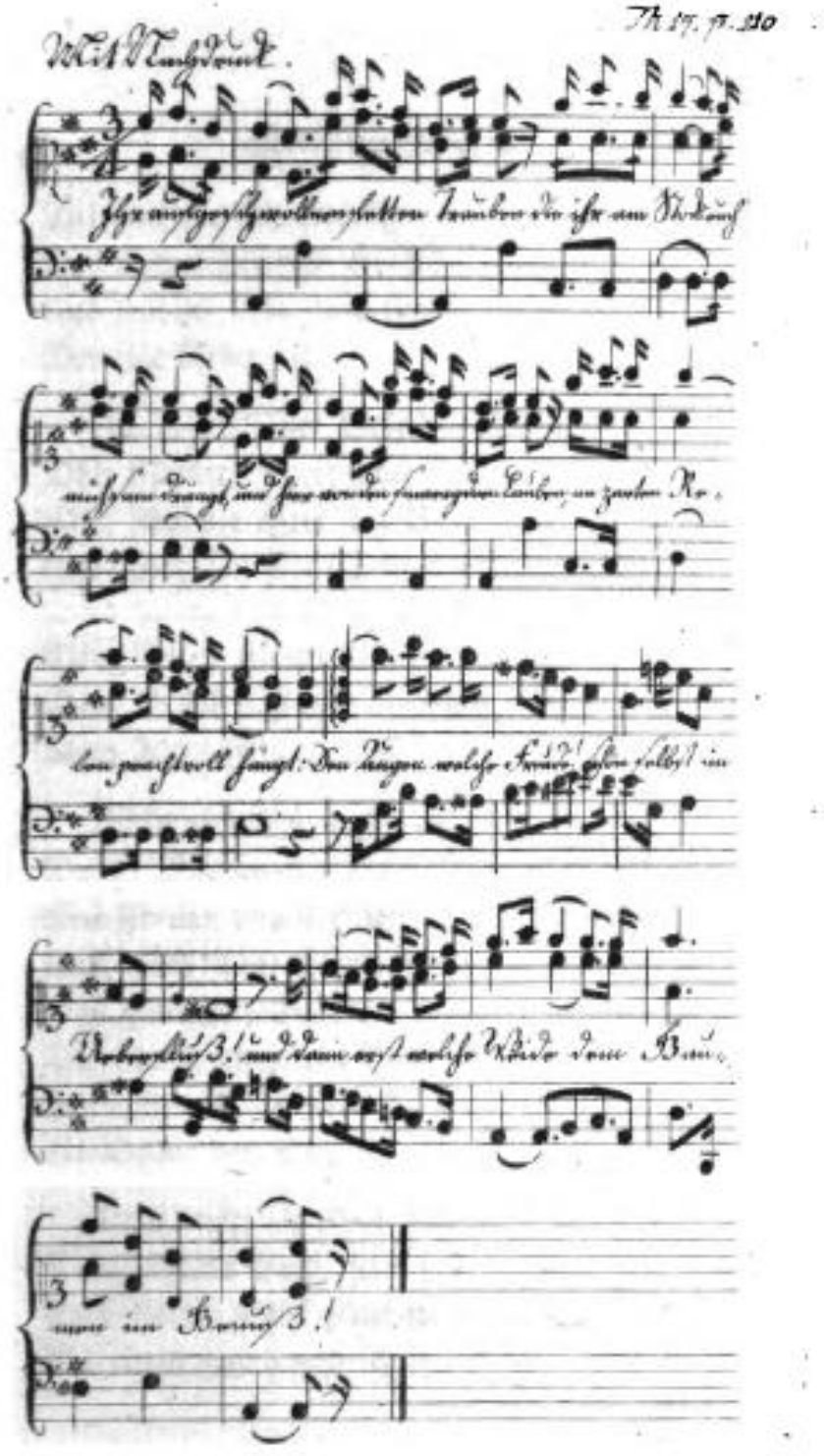


Fig. 6. Musical score of "Auf die Weintrauben. Ein Kinderlied." (KF 17: bet. pp. 110–11)

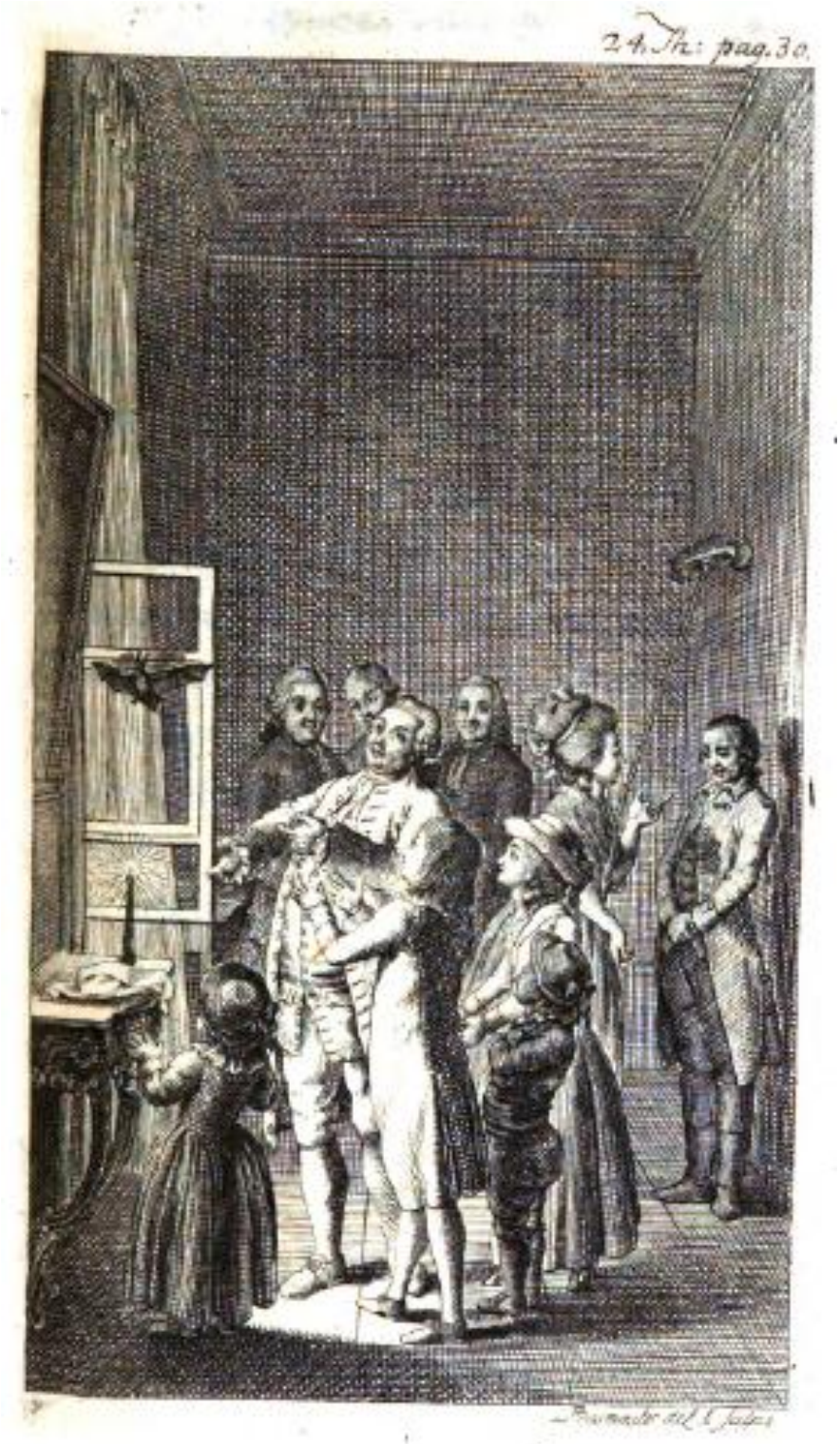


Fig. 7. Herr Papillion showing a bat to the children (KF 24: bet. pp. 30–31)

Fig. 8. Scene from *Das Denkmal in Arkadien. Ein ländliches Schauspiel für die Jugend mit untermischten Gesängen in Einem Aufzuge* (KF 24: bet. pp. 178–79)

Appendix 2

Images from *Briefwechsel der Familie des Kinderfreundes*

Briefwechsel

der

Familie des Kinderfreundes.

Mit allergnädigsten Kaiserlichen und Churfürstl. Sächsischen Privilegien.

Leipzig,

bey Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius. 1784.

Fig. 9. Title page of the first volume of the *Briefwechsel* (BW 1: title page)

Amaryllis.

Weg hinfort mit allem Mißtrauen und Eifersucht! Sie iſt das Grab der Liebe und verengt das Herz: ein Glück, daß das deinige groß und mild genug war, ſie nicht über Wohlthätigkeit und Menſchenliebe ſiegen zu laſſen! Nie hätte ich dir ſonſt dieſes Band gewährt, ob du gleich mein Herz beſaßeſt; und ſo hätteſt du, indem du mich verkannt, mich und dich auf immerdar unglücklich gemacht.

Daphnis.

O wenn ich es wieder gegen dich ſeyn könnte, ſo verdiente ich den Zorn der Götter, deiner und aller Welt Haß — Alſo iſt Amaryllis mein, mein auf ewig? — Komm Amynt, nimm die kleine Wirthſchaft, die ich dir auf immerdar einräume, geſchwind in Beſitz, damit du deſto ſchleuniger deiner Sylvia theilhaft wirſt.

Daphne.

Und deſto eher Du deiner Amaryllis: wie leicht könnte wieder ein zweyter Amynt . . .

Daphnis.

Boshafte Kleine! Auch du haſt mich gequält!

Amyntas.

Amyntas.

Ohne dich, wohlthätige Amaryllis, ohne dich, edler Daphnis, was wären wir?

Daphnis.

Ohne Amaryllis milden Fürſpruch würde meine Freygebigkeit zurückgeblieben, ohne eure Liebe mein Glück noch unentſchieden und ich in einer traurigen Verlegenheit noch umhergeſchlichen ſeyn! O was wird ſie mich in Zukunft durch ihr Beyſpiel noch für Tugenden lehren!

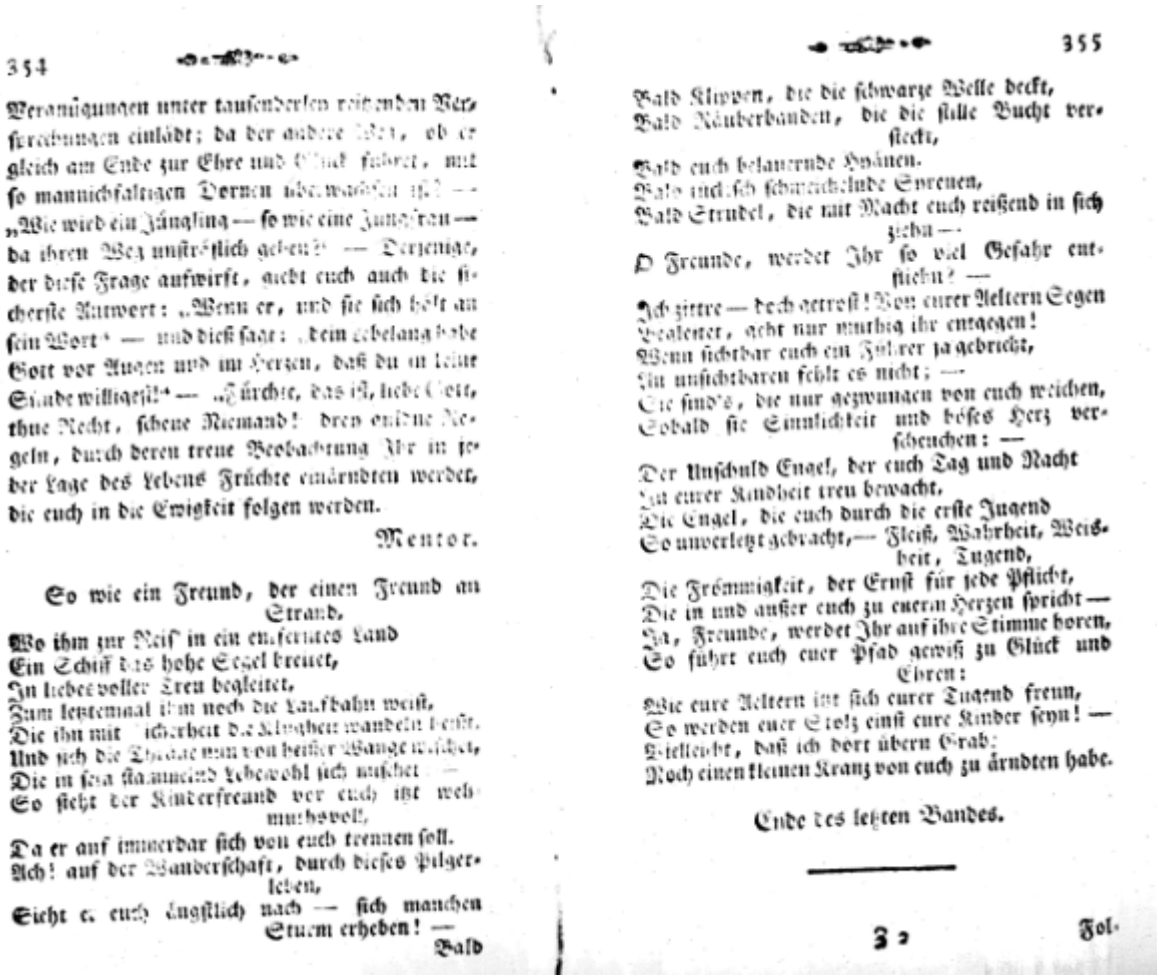
Amaryllis.

Wenn man ſo gelehrige Schüler hat, daß ſie den Meiſter übertreffen; ſo werden ſie bald ſelbſt Beyſpiele werden! Vor allen Dingen laß uns den Göttern danken, die das Ungewitter, das unſern Freunden ihr nahes Glück zu rauben ſchien, zu einer Quelle von Vergnügen machten.

Amyntas.

Auf den Ruinen meiner Hütte will ich ein Altärchen erbauen.

Fig. 10. Sample text from *Die Ueberschwemmung, oder: Die edelmüthige Eifersucht. Ein Schauspiel in Einem Aufzuge* (BW 11: 194–95)



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Vereinigungen unter tauſenderley reitzenden Verſprechungen einlädt; da der andere lehrt, ob er gleich am Ende zur Ehre und Ruhe führet, mit ſo mannichfaltigen Dornen überwachſen iſt? — „Wie wird ein Jüngling — ſo wie eine Jungfrau — da ihren Weg unſträflich gehen?“ — Derjenige, der dieſe Frage aufwirft, ſucht euch auch die ſicherſte Antwort: „Wenn er, und ſie ſich hält an ſein Wort“ — und dieß ſagt: „dein gelebang habe Gott vor Augen und im Herzen, daß du an ſeine Gnade willigeſt!“ — „Fürchte, das iſt, liebe Gott, thue Recht, ſcheue Niemand!“ — dieß einzige Regeln, durch deren treue Beobachtung Ihr in jeder Lage des Lebens Früchte einärndten werdet, die euch in die Ewigkeit folgen werden.

Mentor.

So wie ein Freund, der einen Freund am Strand,
Wo ihm zur Reiſ' in ein entferntes Land
Ein Schiff das hohe Segel breitet,
In liebevoller Treu begleitet,
Zum letztenmal ihm noch die Laufbahn weiſt,
Die ihn mit Sicherheit die Klippen wandeln heißt,
Und ſich die Thräne nun von beider Wange wiſcht,
Die in ſein ſtammelnd Lebewohl ſich miſchet —
So ſteht der Kinderfreund vor euch itzt wehmuthsvoll,
Da er auf immerdar ſich von euch trennen ſoll.
Ach! auf der Wanderſchaft, durch dieſes Pilgerleben,
Sieht e. euch ängſtlich nach — ſich manchen Seufzer erheben! —

Bald

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Bald Klippen, die die ſchwarze Welle deckt,
Bald Räuberbanden, die die ſtille Bucht verſteckt,
Bald euch belauernde Hyänen,
Bald euch ſich ſchmeichelnde Syrenen,
Bald Strudel, die mit Macht euch reißend in ſich ziehn —
O Freunde, werdet Ihr ſo viel Gefahr entfliehn? —
Ich zittre — doch getroſt! Von eurer Aeltern Segen
Begleitet, acht nur muthig ihr entgegen!
Wenn ſichtbar euch ein Führer ja gebricht,
Ihr unſichtbaren fehlt es nicht; —
Sie ſind's, die nur gezwungen von euch weichen,
Sobald ſie Sinnlichkeit und böſes Herz verſcheuchen: —
Der Unſchuld Engel, der euch Tag und Nacht
Zu eurer Kindheit treu bewacht,
Die Engel, die euch durch die erſte Jugend
So unverletzt gebracht, — Fleiß, Wahrheit, Weisheit, Tugend,
Die Frömmigkeit, der Ernſt für jede Pflicht,
Die in und außer euch zu euerm Herzen ſpricht —
Ja, Freunde, werdet Ihr auf ihre Stimme hören,
So führt euch euer Pfad gewiß zu Glück und Ehren:
Wie eure Aeltern itzt ſich eurer Tugend freun,
So werden euer Stolz einſt eure Kinder ſeyn! —
Vielleicht, daß ich dort übern Grab
Noch einen kleinen Kranz von euch zu ärndten habe.

Ende des letzten Bandes.

Z 2 Fol-

Fig. 11. Final two pages of the series (BW 12: 354–55)

Fig. 12. Scene from *Die Ueberschwemmung, oder: Die edelmüthige Eifersucht. Ein Schauspiel in Einem Aufzuge* (BW 11: bet. pp. 154–55)

Fig. 13. Scene from *Der kindliche Gehorsam auf der Probe. Ein Schauspiel in Einem Aufzuge* (BW 4: bet. pp. 178–79)

Fig. 14. Spirit discusses his proposal of marriage with Lottchen (KF 11: bet. pp. 252–53)

Bibliography

This bibliography is arranged in order to highlight the works by or about Christian Felix Weiße. Section 1 provides a list of all of Weiße's published works for young readers, followed by a list of his autobiography and published personal correspondence. The first half of Section 2 contains those works of secondary literature which either provide an overview of Weiße's entire life or literary work or which focus exclusively on his writings for children; the second half of Section 2 lists research literature which concentrates on Weiße's literary works for adults. Section 3 consists of primary sources written by authors other than Weiße that are cited in this text. Finally, Section 4 contains all remaining secondary sources which were consulted during the course of my research for this dissertation.

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