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# The Child in German Literature: From Marionette Through Symbol To Reality

Eva Merrett Friedman

Mature man has always had a nostalgic desire to return to the serene days of his childhood. In German literature, Chamisso has given lyrical form to this longing in the line "Ich träum' als Kind mich zurück."<sup>1</sup> In music, Lortzing gives vent to this feeling in the heartfelt melody of his opera *Zar und Zimmermann*: "O selig ein Kind noch zu sein!"<sup>2</sup> Although man has always had this urge to relive the contented days of childhood, it is surprising and incongruous that the child as a figure per se did not assume an important role in any genre of literature until the nineteenth century. It evolved from a marionette-like character in medieval literature through an allegorical figure or symbol in the romantic epoch to the realistic being of the nineteenth century. The child does not emerge as a significant component of literary substance and expression until the development of the nineteenth century *Novelle*. It is the period of Poetic Realism that recognizes the problematical nature of the child. The poetic realist portrays it as a human being of flesh and blood, who is a prey to hereditary and environmental factors.

The child or youth in the medieval epic is transformed into a knight in miniature, claiming the three courtly virtues of chivalry, asceticism, and "minne." The attributes of "junc" and "tumb" are associated with the immature child, while "alt" and "wis" are related to the adult. Children like Parzival, who is charmingly childlike in his demeanor, are an exception. The depiction of childhood does not become more vivid in the Renaissance. Since the adult is now placed in the center of gravity, pedagogy aims to propagate the ideal of the "uomo universale." The boundary between childhood and adulthood is still irrevocably obliterated. The period following, the Baroque, is almost devoid of the depiction of child characters. However, the preoccupation with the child becomes apparent in the second half of the seventeenth century with the Pietistic Movement. Jakob Spener coined the motto: "Wer die Jugend hat, hat die Zukunft."<sup>3</sup>

In the literary field, we encounter a sparing use of the child in the seventeenth century, as well as in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The writers engage themselves with the child only in so far as they endeavor to prepare it for the stoic ideals of adulthood. The child is only a parasite, since it cannot exist by itself as the poet Haller proclaims in his philosophical poem *Gedanken*:

Ein Kind noch ein Kraut, das an der Stange klebt,  
Nicht von sich selbst besteht  
Nur durch andere lebt . . . .<sup>4</sup>

The concept of the child as an irrational being continues to flourish in the sensualistic

philosophy of the Enlightenment based on Locke's theory of the "tabula rasa." The child lacks any individual or distinctive features, since these are gained only through experiences. The child as an irrational creature is bound in obedience and subservience to the rational adult. The life of the youth should run according to rational, teleologically determined principles. The Age of Reason acknowledges the human being only in adulthood, in which the forces of the "ratio" are supreme. In order to assign any positive value to the child, it had to be portrayed as an adult "en miniature." The child is a phantasmagorical figure which utters eloquent phrases. It either conducts itself as a puppet or an adult. The young girl Arabella in Lessing's drama "Miss Sara Sampson" (1755) speaks and reasons like an adult. In attempting to persuade Mellefont to stay with her mother Millwood, she implores him precociously: "Verlässt man die, die man liebt?"<sup>5</sup> This rational observation is inconsistent with the reactions normally expected of a child. However, in Freiherr von Gemmingen's bourgeois drama "Der Deutsche Hausvater" (1782), we encounter an attempt to ridicule this attitude. The grandfather examines his six-year-old grandson Fritz with respect to his knowledge of the ancient gods and the history of Alexander the Great. The boy is able to answer these questions with facility. But, when he is asked: "Was bist du für ein Landsmann?", he retorts curtly: "Davon hab' ich nichts gehört."<sup>6</sup> He also believes that there are three gods instead of the one omnipotent God. The grandfather is horrified and rebukes the boy's parents for their fallacious method of training: "Seht ihr mit eurer Erziehung; ihr füllt den Kopf mit fremden Sachen und lasst die Kinder Worte ohne Sinne lernen. So ist's mit eurer Modeerziehung. Ihr denkt, wenn ihr aus Kindern Papageien macht, habt ihr genug getan."<sup>7</sup>

The new affirmative approach towards childhood, which is espoused by Gemmingen, owes its impetus to the philosophic writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. With Rousseau a revolutionary conception of childhood and pedagogy asserts itself. The publication of Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) was epoch-making in its effects on the rearing of children. He opposes any infraction on the state of nature as swaddling clothes and all restrictions which tend to cramp and distort the primitive, unspoiled human nature with which the child is born. Rousseau expounds for the first time that the stage of childhood is of value per se, not only as a preparatory phase of adulthood. He paved the way for the emancipation of the child from superimposed conventionalities through his rebellion against the supremacy of the ratio and his affirmation of human emotions. With his *Emile*, Rousseau brought the child out of oblivion and at the same time set a new pattern for the portrayal of childhood in literature. His battle cry is: "Laissez mûrir l'enfance dans les enfants."<sup>8</sup> He praises the child for its innocence and pities the adult for his loss, inveighing against a decadent society:

Qui de vous n'a pas regretté quelquefois cet âge où le rire est toujours sur les lèvres,  
et où l'âme est toujours en paix?<sup>9</sup>

.....  
L'enfance a des manières de voir, de penser, de sentir, qui lui sont propres; rien n'est

moins sensé que d'y vouloir substituer les nôtres . . .<sup>10</sup>

Rousseau's *Emile* exerted a revolutionary and immediate influence upon the educational theories of the period. It inspired such educators as Pestalozzi,<sup>11</sup> Herbart and Fröbel to promulgate his proposals. His followers' insistence upon the importance of the study of child psychology and the unlimited development of natural activities of the young still motivates much of modern pedagogy and eventually led to the establishment of the Kindergarten.

The radical ideas propounded by Rousseau found systematic consideration also in the literature of the German Storm and Stress Movement. Johann Gottfried Herder, the guiding genius of this epoch, advocates a "philosophy of childhood." He views the world as subject to a gradual evolutionary process in which humanity as a whole grows up as does an individual being. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Herder draws an analogy between the child's development and the historical growth of mankind. Herder was a practical teacher and a writer on education, even though he produced no systematic work on pedagogy like Rousseau's *Emile* and Pestalozzi's *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt*. In all his writings, Herder stresses the development of the whole man. The aim of education should be the complete and symmetrical development of all the native powers of the individual, of the natural man. The corner stone of Herder's educational doctrine was a belief in the worth and beauty of free human nature.<sup>12</sup> Like Rousseau he endeavored to find a real humanity under the outer form and artificiality of society. Herder followed Rousseau in his belief in the worth of human nature; but this value to him did not lie in the inherent goodness of human nature. He contended that by nature the child was neither good nor bad but its disposition was so plastic that it might be both. Parents and teachers should unite in an effort to influence it, otherwise the child is lost.

The more vivid portrayal of childhood in the Storm and Stress Movement<sup>13</sup> finds its greatest exponent in Goethe and Schiller. Almost a decade before Gemmingen's drama, Goethe had derided the rational education of the Enlightenment in his play *Götz von Berlichingen*. Götz' son Karl is familiar with the ancestry of the fortress Jaxthausen and knows that it has belonged to the family of Berlichingen for two thousand years. However, Karl is not aware that his father owns Jaxthausen. His father asks him: "Kennst du Herrn von Berlichingen?" and Karl replies dumbfounded: "Nein." Götz exclaims in anguish: "Er kennt den Vater nicht vor lauter Gelehrsamkeit."<sup>14</sup> Goethe shows a profound understanding of the intricate nature of the growing child in his novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. He has captured the childlike innocence of a young girl in his portrayal of Malchen, one of Lotte's younger sisters. Werther meets her at the well and is so grateful that the child has permitted Lotte to drink first that he lifts Malchen up and kisses her. The girl in her naïveté begins to weep, since she firmly believes that she will now grow a beard where Werther kissed her.<sup>15</sup> In Goethe's works, the problems of childhood and youth are no longer dispatched in a few paragraphs. In his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Goethe gives an extensive psychological analysis of the spiritual development of his hero. Wilhelm's subjectivism, his talent nourished by the theatre, his



sensual awakening, and his pietistic experiences bring us face to face with a youth of flesh and blood. The juvenile characters in Goethe's writings are depicted with reality and empathy. Goethe sees the child as an individual personality and regards its nature from the morphological point of view. For him even the child could become a "Bildungsmacht," a formative influence, "denn was sogar die Frauen an uns ungebildet zurücklassen, das bilden die Kinder aus, wenn wir uns mit ihnen abgeben."<sup>16</sup> In the "Pädagogische Provinz" of his *Wilhelm Meister*, Goethe formulates the permeating principle of veneration for the universe and its creation, a principle deep-rooted in his humanitarian Weltanschauung. In the "Pädagogische Provinz," which was largely inspired by the farsighted theories of Pestalozzi and Herder, Goethe describes the aesthetic and ethical education of Wilhelm, who after the aimlessness of his Storm and Stress youth, becomes increasingly realistic, restrained and purposeful in adulthood. It is self-evident that childhood and youth also form an integral phase in Goethe's autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

Schiller like Goethe assigns a decisive role to the child in his work, especially in his philosophical essays. In his essay *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, he places ingenuity and childlikeness on the same level. His aesthetic idea of the "Spieltrieb" is not conceivable without a positive stand towards the primary stage of human growth. The child's typical outlet is play. Schiller suggests that this form of play be carried over into adulthood as a by-product of any endeavor. In his essay *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, Schiller praises the innocence, integrity, and energy of the child:

Wir sehen von der Beschränktheit unseres Zustandes hinauf nicht herab, von der Höhe unserer Vollkommenheit zu seiner Unschuld. Das Kind ist uns daher eine Vergegenwärtigung des Ideals, nicht zwar des erfüllten, aber des aufgegebenen, und es ist also keineswegs die Vorstellung seiner Bedürftigkeit und Schranken; es ist im Gegenteil die Vorstellung, seiner reinen und freien Kraft, seiner Integrität, seiner Unendlichkeit, was uns rührt . . .<sup>17</sup>

Schiller does not concern himself only with childhood in his philosophical writings, but he also gives us lucid drawings of the juvenile characters who appear in his plays. He poignantly reveals the boundless devotion and trust of Wilhelm Tell's son in the famous scene in which the father is compelled to shoot the apple from the boy's head. Schiller and Goethe portrayed their juvenile characters with sensitivity and poignancy, since they were keenly aware of their complexities. They esteemed the child for its purity, imaginativeness and candor.

The early nineteenth century, the romantic period, however, goes one step further, and not only admires these distinctive qualities, but also venerates them. The child is placed on a pedestal as an idealized being, from whom only goodness and kindness emanate. The adult in the romantic era desires fervently to return to this lost state, which he had derisively condemned in the Age of Reason.

As a pathfinder of this new era stands the novelist and pedagogue Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, who bridges the gap between the classicism of Goethe's and Schiller's later years

and romanticism. He perpetuates the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Heinrich Pestalozzi, which he expounds in his educational treatise *Levana oder Erziehungslehre*. On the whole, however, the romantic poets are not concerned with pedagogy, but rather assume a negative attitude towards education due to their metaphysically determined Weltanschauung. While the Enlightenment had centered its educational and humanitarian aims around the hearth of the family, the “Romantik” is more interested in the mysteries of love. In their romantic effusions, the poets satirize the stereotyped figure of the “Hausvater” who presided over the household in the Age of Reason. Training of the young should consist in pursuing the ideals formulated by Rousseau: to remove all foreign, destructive influences from the child’s environment, so that it could unfold organically from within. Friedrich Schlegel in his rhapsodic novel *Lucinde* has his hero Julius convey the irrational ideas of his creator:

Aber über die Erziehung habe ich schon unsäglich viel gedacht, nämlich wie wir unser Kind von aller Erziehung sorgfältig bewahren wollen; . . .<sup>18</sup>

Childhood is a phase of development which is to be emulated in its freedom from restraint. Hölderlin sends forth a hymn to the fantasy and serenity of childhood:

Ruhe der Kindheit! Himmlische Ruhe! Wie oft steh’  
ich stille vor dir in liebender Betrachtung,  
und möchte dich denken! . . .

Ja! Ein göttlich Wesen ist das Kind, solange es  
nicht in die Chameleonsfarbe der Menschheit  
getaucht ist.

Es ist ganz was es ist, und darum ist es so schön.  
Der Zwang des Gesetzes und des Schicksals betastet  
es nicht; im Kind ist Freiheit allein . . .<sup>19</sup>

In their “ideology of childhood”<sup>20</sup> the romantic poets envision the child as the incarnation of a divine spirit. It is the “logos,” since it exists in a realm of its own, an ethereal world. The revelations of the child are construed to be of a cosmic nature. Often the child is metamorphosed into an allegorical being. Novalis in his fragmentary novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* makes his Fabel the allegorical representative of fantasy and poetry. The boy Phantasmus in Tieck’s poem “Phantasmus” also serves in an allegorical capacity as the embodiment of imagination. In the pantheistic philosophy of the romantics, it is only the child who maintains a genuine relationship to nature and is still an integral part of it. Hölderlin’s Hyperion exclaims: “Wär’ ich so gerne doch zum Kinde geworden, um ihr [Natur] näher zu sein . . .”<sup>21</sup>

Childhood in the romantic period represents the Golden Age and Paradise of mankind. Novalis declares pensively in one of his *Fragmente*: “Wo Kinder sind, da ist ein goldenes Zeitalter.”<sup>22</sup> The sixty-year-old Brentano recaptures the paradise of his youth, his dreamland of “Vadutz,” in the fairy-tale world of the charming *Märchen von Gockel*,

*Hinkel, und Gakeleia.* The Golden Age for him, too, is a return to childhood as he depicts it in the ending of this wondrous tale. The romanticist considered childhood to be synonymous with Paradise. Man, in his striving for the Infinite and in his desire to emancipate himself from earthly bounds, had realized that all human knowledge is incomplete. In this spirit of resignation, the disillusioned adult yearned for the Paradise of childhood again, where originality, unpretentiousness and freedom from restraint reigned. The development of mankind should proceed in this manner according to the romantic metaphysician: from the first stage of uninhibited childhood through experience to a new phase of matured childhood.

A new Weltanschauung with respect to childhood and youth asserts itself in the period which follows the romantic era.<sup>23</sup> The novelists of the nineteenth century give us a detailed picture of the child's physical and spiritual make-up, not a portrayal of its innate sanctity only. The spiritual development of the child is especially poignantly described in the works of Jeremias Gotthelf, the Swiss pastor and pedagogue. Purity of the spirit as well as cleanliness of the body is uppermost in Uli's mind in *Uli der Pächter* in raising his children. Uli contemplates the future of his son on the day of his baptism. His thoughts are those of a father and a farmer in need of assistance. Will he use him as a "Karrer" or a "Melker?" There is also a very realistic description of Mädi, as she carries her "Herzkäferchen," little Vreneli, when the latter is only ten months old. But the most amiable and genuine child character to be found in Gotthelf's stories is the Erdbeeri-Mareili, a reticent and speculative little girl, who can find beautiful strawberries when no one else can. Mareili is the strawberry queen, who reigns supreme in her realm. She saves the household for her widowed mother because of her extraordinary skill in locating the most savory strawberries, which are then sold. The "Erdbeerihexli," as she is also known, even plants strawberry patches in her soul in the winter, and thus lives in her own dream world. She leads a vicarious existence. Both her brother and sister die, and she wonders whether they will still have strawberries where they are now. Gotthelf approaches the child and its hopes and dreams with empathy and realism. He concerns himself extensively with pedagogy and morality in regard to the rearing of the young.

The novelist Wilhelm Raabe abounds in realistic portrayals of his child characters. Hans Unwirsch in *Der Hungerpastor* is considered to be a typical boy with his dirty hands. His visit to the "Weihnachtsmarkt" gives us the genuine joy and excitement of a real child. In *Chronik der Sperlingsgasse*, Raabe portrays two children Franz and Elise, who live in their own fairy-tale world, created by the young; their "Kinderherz" is able to comprehend everything in their make-believe world. Gustav in the same novel is a little devil, a genuine "mauvais sujet" with all his pranks.

The interest in the child aroused by Rousseau became firmly entrenched and popularized in psychological studies and in literature in Germany after 1830. Juvenile figures do not function solely in a symbolical capacity in this period, but they assume a more vital role in the total development of a major character. Psychology, philosophy, and pedagogy dominate in the speculative systems of the nineteenth century, which has been designated as "The Century of the Child" by Ellen Key.<sup>24</sup> The decisive impetus



towards the detachment from the idealized Weltanschauung of the romantic period was given by Spencer and Darwin. The theory of Evolution and the advancement in the field of the natural sciences brought about a new attitude towards childhood. Man attempted to seek a solution to the puzzles of his nature by going back to his youth and determining the factors that influenced him in his development. Environment and heredity became the two essential elements to consider in the study of psychology. Bogumil Goltz made childhood the object of his *Buch der Kindheit* in 1847. However, the first really significant treatise in this field was Berthold Sigismund's *Kind und Welt* (1856), followed by Pryor's psychological study *Die Seele des Kindes* in 1882. In literature, Heinrich Heine delves into his childhood to obtain a solution to the riddles of his problematical nature. In his *Memoiren*, he confesses: "Aus den frühesten Anfängen erklären sich die spätesten Erscheinungen."<sup>25</sup> In this industrial and scientific age, in which the sensitive spirit of the child was subjected to many adversities, which frequently transformed it into a neurasthenic, distraught human being, it was punctiliously observed by child pathologists and novelists. It was an undeniable fact that the young person had a human soul like the adult, which carried conflicts in its innermost nature that sought communication with the external world.

The poetic realist of the nineteenth century concerns himself as ardently with the child as the romantic writer, but rather from a realistic-psychological viewpoint than from an idealized-metaphysical one. He also bows to the "majesty" of the child, but does not overlook formative influences such as the family and the school in its development as the romantic poet had done. Obviously, it is the disillusionment with the idealism of the romantic period and with the pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer, which helped to elicit this new Weltanschauung. Heine exclaims sardonically in one of his poems:

Mein Kind, wir waren Kinder,  
Zwei Kinder, klein und froh;  
Wir krochen ins Hühnerhaus,  
Versteckten uns unter das Stroh.  
.....  
Vorbei sind die Kinderspiele,  
Und alles rollt vorbei, —  
Das Geld und die Welt und die Zeiten,  
Und Glauben und Lieb' und Treu!<sup>26</sup>

The juvenile figures in the Age of Poetic Realism are neither the marionettes of the Medieval period, nor the adults "en miniature" of the Age of Reason, nor the allegorical characters of the romantic period. They reflect the scientific thinking of their age. Environment and heredity became the two essential elements to consider in the study of child psychology. Theodor Storm, a representative of this period, was deeply influenced by the prevailing theories of his era with respect to heredity, since he was obsessed by a haunting fear that he was responsible for his eldest son's dissipation and ultimate death. The first trace of his interest in heredity can be found in his Novelle *Aquis Submersus*.



When his son drowns accidentally, Johannes paints his portrait and inscribes it with the initials: C.P.A.S., Culpa Patris Aquis Submersus. Heredity plays a minor role in *Der Herr Etatsrat*. But, it motivates the novelle *Carsten Curator* as well as *John Riew*. The parent in guiding his offspring gives him “mit jedem Bissen – zugleich ein Stück des eigenen Lebens.”<sup>27</sup> Storm’s oldest son Hans is depicted as a degenerate youth in *Carsten Curator* having inherited his mother’s evil traits. John Riew is an unmarried sea-captain, who befriends a young sailor Rick Geysers. As a result of excessive drinking, Rick meets his death by drowning when he stumbles on a loose plank. He leaves a baby girl Anna and his wife. The good-natured captain who boards with them grows very fond of Anna. He also teaches her to mix his drinks and invites her to join him in toasts. Thus, she overcomes her distaste for the pungent flavor of the alcohol. One night in a drunken stupor, she is seduced by a baron. She drowns herself after having given birth to a son. In Storm’s last Novelle *Der Schimmelreiter*, Wienke, the daughter of two highly intelligent parents is retarded. Two families, one declining, decadent (Elke’s family) and one rising, zealous (Hauke’s) terminate in this feeble-minded child. The question poses itself: where does this retardation stem from? Storm was tormented with guilt feelings as a father just as his characters.

All the children in nineteenth-century German literature are the products of their period. They are human beings who have an intellect which is alert and active. Not infrequently, they are deprived of food and sunlight or they lack guidance and love.<sup>28</sup> The child figures in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and Adalbert Stifter reflect the influence of an unfavorable environment upon their sensitive organisms. Meyer in his novelle *Die Leiden eines Knaben* perspicaciously recreates the suffering inflicted on the tender and artistic temperament of a maturing boy by his family and Jesuit teachers. Stifter can be said to align himself with the pedagogues of the eighteenth as well as his own century. He is a zealous educator. For him, the heath, the forest, and the animals are the primary companions of youth. His postulate with respect to child training is: to permit the child to blossom out according to the voice of his inner God, while preventing the demons within him from unfolding. The mystic Stifter makes his philosophy known to us in his novelle *Das Heidedorf*. The greatness of the world of man and of God should only be revealed to the child when the fertile heart is hungry for knowledge and love. It is a far cry from the rationalistic philosophy of the Enlightenment to the realistic Weltanschauung of Stifter.<sup>29</sup> The poetic realist Stifter has the father exhort his son: “Du bist mir nichts schuldig. – Die Kinder sind eine Gottesgabe, dass wir sie erziehen, wie es ihnen frommt – nicht wie es uns nützt . . .”<sup>30</sup> Stifter’s *Bergkristall* is one of the most artistically conceived stories about children. It is the story of Konrad and Susanna, brother and sister, who discover a miraculous world in the snow. While returning home on Christmas Eve over the mountain from their grandmother’s village on the other side, they are overtaken by a snow storm. They are forced to seek shelter under some stones. From their temporary abode they marvel at the crystalline beauty in the stark whiteness of the snow and observe the wondrous phenomena around them. They are not frightened and do not feel alone. There is an interrelationship of child and nature in Stifter’s novellen.

He delineates two types of children: beloved, obedient children of nature, and romantic wildcats, physical or mental misfits.<sup>31</sup>

True-to-life children are most abundant in Gottfried Keller's novellen. Keller's poetic vision and keen insight into human nature enable him to equip the child with those potential characteristics which will accompany it in maturity. His autobiographical novel *Der grüne Heinrich* gives us both the physical and spiritual development of the hero. The novel dwells on his youth, his cruel expulsion from school, his hopes of becoming an artist, his trip to Germany, his failures, doubts and groping, his return to his native Switzerland, and the death of his mother. It is Keller's favorite technique to commence his novellen with scenes from childhood and then to integrate them into the plot. Keller proves his dexterity as an interpreter of the juvenile's soul in his Novellen: *Dietegen*, *Hadlaub*, *Frau Regula Amrain*, *Pankraz der Schmoller*, and *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*. In *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*, Sali and Vrenchen meet as small children when both are sent to bring food to their respective fathers, who are plowing the fields. They play on the disputed piece of land, over which their fathers are feuding. The boy Sali teases Vrenchen by throwing her doll up in the air and slowly dismantling it. Neither one of them can anticipate the tragedy which engulfs them as they play and frolic together. We follow Sali and Vrenchen from this innocent play to their doom, the victims of their fathers' sins; from the first touch of their hands, wet from fishing together to their tragic death in the water. Keller demonstrates his comprehension of the problems of youth in these scenes and in his delineation of the individual traits of his juvenile characters. He lucidly portrays the harmonious growth of body and soul.

In looking back at the manifold attitudes towards childhood and youth in our survey, we can readily appreciate the contributions of the poetic realists of the nineteenth century. The child has emerged from a marionette and episodic figure in the medieval epic to the realistic being of flesh and blood of this century, so aptly designated "The Century of the Child" by Ellen Key. Prior to the period of Poetic Realism, the child had found its most empathetic and realistic portrayal in the works of Goethe and Schiller. In the romantic era, which in its thinking and feeling was entirely metaphysically directed, the child was the symbol of the Absolute. It no longer remains in the background in the literature of the nineteenth century. The child is revealed either as a healthy, affable, intelligent, or as a malnourished, melancholy and retarded being, who is a prey to hereditary and environmental factors. The child per se has won recognition and is not "persona non grata" on the stage. Childhood does not serve merely to augment autobiographical details as in *Parzival*, but it is an organic experience in the total process of maturation. It is not a metaphysical and idyllic phase to which the romantic poet yearns to return, but a state of past existence to which the poetic realist reverts to find solutions for the puzzles of the present. The problems of childhood and youth have become the cynosure of the novelist as well as the psychologist. Not only the scientist, but also the poet has given cognizance to the fact that it is inconceivable to overlook biological heritage. The child is now approached with empathy and understanding for its complexities instead of apathy and ignorance. Children are not stereotyped in the

nineteenth century, but divided into the heterogeneous groups which make up their ranks. This, then is the final step in the evolution of a subjective to an objective Weltanschauung with regard to childhood.

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- <sup>1</sup> Adalbert von Chamisso, *Werke*, "Das Schloss Boncourt" (Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig, 1874 ff.), I, p. 49.
- <sup>2</sup> Albert Lortzing, *Zar und Zimmermann*, Libretto Königliche Schauspiele (Berlin, n.d.), p. 62.
- <sup>3</sup> Stephen Duggan, *A Student's Textbook in the History of Education* (New York, 1948), p. 178.
- <sup>4</sup> Albrecht von Haller, "Gedanken," *Deutsche National-Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1882/99) ed. Kürschner et al., XXXI, Part II, 36.
- <sup>5</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hugo Göring (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1840), III, 126 (Act II, scene iv).
- <sup>6</sup> Otto Heinrich Reichsfreiherr von Gemmingen, "Der Deutsche Hausvater" in *Deutsche National-Literatur: Das Drama der Klassischen Periode*, CXXXIC, Part II, 35.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- <sup>8</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1821-24), VIII, 125.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 93
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118. See also *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, VII, 240.
- <sup>11</sup> The reform movement started by Rousseau was continued by the Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827). He was also a pathfinder in the field of social and educational improvements with his experiments at Neuhof, Stanz, Burgdorf, and Yverdon as well as with his literary activity, namely his publications of "Lienhard und Gertrud" (1781) and "Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt" (1801; 14 letters). Johann Basedow (1723-1790) also helped to carry the theories into practice in Germany by establishing an institution known as the "Philanthropinum" in Dessau. The keynote of the school was: everything according to nature.
- <sup>12</sup> James Mace Andress, *Johann Gottfried Herder as an Educator* (New York: Stechert & Co., 1916), p. 122.
- <sup>13</sup> The dramas of the Storm and Stress period attest to a more intensive absorption with childhood. Klinger in his *Otto* contrasts the healthy child with the degenerate society. His children are so realistic that they even speak in the dialect of their native Frankfurt. In Gerstenberg's *Ugolino*, there are numerous scenes devoted to the three sons of *Ugolino*. Lenz in his drama *Der Hofmeister*, demonstrates the evils which arise from reading sentimental books. In general, we encounter two types of children: the bold titan or "Kraftmensch" and the sentimental "Weltschmerz" or Werther type. Cf. Clara Stockmeyer, "Aufklärung und Sturm und Drang im Spiegel der kinderrolle," *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde*, XXXVII (1923), 160.



## Friedman: The Child in German Literature: From Marionette through Symbol to

- 14 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, ed. Karl Heinemann (Bibl. Institut, 1901/1908), VII, 31.
- 15 Goethe, "Leiden des jungen Werther," *Werke*, VIII, 46-47. (Letter of July 6, 1771). Cf. Goethe's poem to Kestner in his letter of January 1773, in which he recreates an idyllic childhood scene. Philipp Stein, (ed.) *Goethes Briefe* (Berlin, 1913), I, 241.
- 16 Goethe, "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre," *Werke*, ed. Heinemann, X, 52 (Book VII, ch. vii).
- 17 Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, Säkular-Ausgabe (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1904/05), XII, 164-165.
- 18 Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde* (Leipzig: Insel, 1892), p. 164.
- 19 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Werke*, ed. W. Böhm (Jena, 1921), I, 9.
- 20 Hans Georg Kind in his dissertation *Das Kind in der Ideologie der deutschen Romantik* discusses the ideology of childhood as opposed to a psychology of childhood (Diss., Universität Leipzig, 1936).
- 21 Hölderlin, *Werke*, I, 208.
- 22 Novalis, *Briefe und Werke* (Berlin, 1943), III, 80 (Fragment #103). Cf. Victor Hugo who similarly glorifies childhood in "En voyant un petit enfant," *Le Pape: L'âge d'or, l'heureux temps de Saturne et de Rhée*, Existe, c'est l'enfance . . . Victor Hugo, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1927), IX, 57. The child is a kind of "Savior" placed on earth to redeem mankind. It must preserve its virginity in spite of all temptations. Esmeralda in *Notre Dame de Paris* and Cosette in *Les Misérables* both grow up in a depraved environment. They are, however, untouched by their milieu due to their inherent purity.
- 23 The period of Young Germany (Jungdeutschland) is excluded here, since the writers concentrated on political reform rather than on the problems of childhood.
- 24 This sobriquet is derived from the title of Ellen Key's book: *The Century of the Child* (New York, 1909).
- 25 Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Tempel Verlag, 1909), V, 353.
- 26 Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Werke*, I, 127-128. (no. 38 in "Die Heimkehr")
- 27 Theodor Storm, *Werke*, ed. Köster (Leipzig, 1920), V, 168.
- 28 Cf. Emile Zola's juvenile figures. Zola's child characters are malevolent, degenerate and sexually debauched as products of their detrimental environment. In his *Rougon-Macquart* series, he traces the pernicious effects of heredity upon the descendants of the alcoholic Macquart and the subnormal degenerate Adélaïde Fouqué.
- 29 Cf. Voltaire. The rationalist Voltaire had admonished in *Stances ou quatrain: Enfant, crains d'être ingrat; sois soumis, doux, sincère! . . . Vois ton Dieu dans ton père . . . Oeuvres complètes* (Paris 1877), VIII, 544.
- 30 Adalbert Stifter, *Studien I*, (Leipzig: Reclam, 1899), 210.
- 31 For the effect of the environment upon the child, cf. Stifter's Novellen: *Waldgänger*, *Waldbrunnen*, *Abdias*, *Turmalin*, and *Katzensilber*.

