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Eva Merrett Friedman  
*Adelphi University*

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## The Generation Gap a Century Ago: The Father-Son Conflict in Theodor Storm's Novellen

Eva Merrett Friedman

Since antiquity writers have been fascinated by the pathos, tragedy, and the comedy of the "generation gap." Sophocles tells the pathetic story of Oedipus, who murdered his father. In the *Clouds* Aristophanes focuses his humor on the permissive Athenian father beaten by his ungrateful son, who has been trained too well in Sophistry. In the *Hildebrandslied* father and son are pitted against each other in battle. In modern times Mark Twain has summarized the generation gap wittily and succinctly: "When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years."

Almost a century ago Theodor Storm was also absorbed by the generation gap, in particular the father-son conflict. But, unlike Twain he viewed it poignantly and sentimentally. It is congruent with Storm's *Weltanschauung*, which derived from the romantic movement, that he should be attracted to youth, since he was consumed by a "memento mori" spirit.<sup>1</sup> As an artistic realist Storm moved beyond the romantic writers to study familiar relationships such as his own. He puzzled over his failure to prevent his oldest son's moral collapse. As a tormented father he stresses the family and its associations in contrast to the romantic writers of the nineteenth century. Thomas Mann alleges that for Storm the family was the nucleus of the home.<sup>2</sup> In Storm's work intimacy (*das Geborgensein*) within the family circle is emphasized, and he has been called by Bertha Botzong "ein passionierter Vater."<sup>3</sup> When he left his family behind in his native Husum during the conflict over the Schleswig-Holstein Question to take a position in the Prussian judiciary system, Storm spent a lonely Christmas Eve in Potsdam in 1852, and was inspired by his yearning for his children to compose the verses for the poem "Weihnachtsabend":

Die fremde Stadt durchschritt ich sorgenvoll,  
Der Kinder denkend, die ich liess zu Haus. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Storm's biographer Alfred Biese confirms Storm's devotion to his children: "Storm war ein Virtuos der Vaterliebe und des Vaterstolzes."<sup>5</sup> Storm's daughter Gertrud also stresses her father's affection for his children in the preface of her edition of his letters: "Unser Vater trug das Herz seiner Kinder und hätte, wenn es möglich gewesen wäre, für jedes von ihnen sein Herzblut hingegeben. Nach dem Tode unserer Mutter

zugleich, wir konnten ihm immer sagen, was uns bedrückte und wessen wir bedürften; wir wussten, dass uns immer nach Kräften geholfen würde."<sup>6</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that Storm was a pedagogue to his own children and blamed himself for any failures in their upbringing. Various treatises, one by Oskar Katann, *Storm als Erzieher*,<sup>7</sup> have propagated his views with respect to pedagogy. It seems only natural that Storm should ponder over the associations of parents and children in view of his own family history. He had eight children,<sup>8</sup> to whom he was devoted, tutoring them in Latin, composition, mathematics, and piano. He was mother and father to them when his first wife Constanze died. It is, the father-son relationship, which absorbed Storm in his own life. He was incessantly troubled by the dissipation of Hans, his oldest son. Guilty and remorseful, Storm wondered what he might have done to prevent his son's moral failure and premature death. Hans became addicted to alcohol and succumbed at the early age of thirty-eight. The father was constantly afflicted with anxiety over this problem child and haunted by the gnawing fear that he was responsible for his son's death. He pondered over this guilt until his own death in 1888: Where did this evil drop of blood come from in the past of his ancestors? When Hans had left for the University in 1868, the father wrote to him: "Mir ist als sollte von Dir noch ein böser Stoss auf mein Herz kommen?"<sup>9</sup> This premonition came true and the father cried out in despair: "Es ist keine Sorge mehr, es ist ein Entsetzen, das mir das Blut vergiftet. . . Ich bin dem Unglücke gegenüber völlig machtlos."<sup>10</sup> Storm made poetic appeals to his son, "An Hans":

Bald schon liegt die Jugend weit,  
Komm zurück, o noch ist's Zeit!  
Friedlos bist du, mein armer Sohn.  
Und auch friedlos bin ich durch dich.<sup>11</sup>

Intermittently, the father believed to recognize a flicker of hope. For his birthday in 1875, Hans sent him flowers, which he had grown himself: "Ich erhielt Blumen sogar von meinem Sorgenkinde, das noch an mich gedacht hatte. Sein Strauss stand frisch und leuchtend auf dem Geburtstagstische."<sup>12</sup> While on board ship to Batavia, Hans sent a letter of longing to his father and a poem, which resounded with optimism. Storm comments: "Es ist nicht nur ein gutes Gedicht, . . . sondern zeigt auch, was mir in ihm verloren geht, wenn die Rettung nicht mehr möglich ist."<sup>13</sup>

The recurrent theme in Theodor Storm's Novellen is the father-son opposition. He seems haunted by the type of discord which we first encounter in the Novelle *Ein stiller Musikant*, composed by Storm in tribute to his son Karl. Storm, like Herr Valentin in the Novelle, gave his son music lessons without possessing the necessary patience for the enterprise.<sup>14</sup> Christian, Valentin's son, is a solitary child deeply loved by his father. But, the elder Valentin does not understand his offspring and cannot relate to him. He wants Christian to become a prominent musician. More a disciplinarian than a sympathetic teacher, the father, a lawyer by profession, reprimands his sensitive son when he misses a note on the piano, not being aware of the latter's proneness to headaches. During a duet, the boy strikes a wrong note and the father in a fit of anger throws the piano bench on the floor. The elder Valentin's otherwise



keen perception mistakes the son's weakness for lethargy. The boy begs for clemency: "Schlage mich nicht Vater; . . . es fehlt mir etwas; es ist in meinem Kopf; ich kann nicht dafür!"<sup>15</sup> The dejected Christian stretches out his arms towards the picture of his deceased mother and cries out for assistance: "Ach, hilf mir, Mutter! O, meine liebe Mutter, hilf mir!"<sup>16</sup> Later, the intimidated son is sent on an errand to his father's study. The remorseful father clasps his son to him and pleads for forgiveness. Storm, having had a similar experience with his own son Karl, renders a very touching picture of this episode in the words of his hero Christian Valentin: "Dann lag ich an meines Vaters Brust; zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben. Ich fühlte, dass er zu mir sprechen wollte; aber er streichelte nur mein Haar und sah mich bittend an. 'Mein armer lieber Junge!' war alles, was er über seine Lippen brachte. Ich schloss die Augen; mir war, als sei ich nun vor aller Lebensnot geborgen."<sup>17</sup> On this fateful day, Christian's father enters the first amount in favor of his son's account in the bankbook. It is noteworthy that the last verses of the poem in this Novelle were taken by Storm from a poem written by Karl when he was only ten years old.

The father-son dissension reaches its most tragic expression in Storm's confessional Novelle *Carsten Curator*. One could reiterate the words of Charles Dickens concerning his novel *David Copperfield* and also apply them to Theodor Storm. "Of all my books I love this best. It will easily be believed, that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy and that no one can ever love this family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favorite child and his name is David Copperfield. . . ."<sup>18</sup> For Storm "this favorite child" is Heinrich Carstens, Carsten Curator's son. Theodor Storm pours his lifeblood into this child of his fancy, especially since in reality the figure of Heinrich is a poetic incarnation of his oldest son Hans. The devoted father could not free himself from the haunting obsession of his guilt in his son's degradation. Storm's letter to Hermione von Preuschen of May 26, 1878 gives us profound insight into the father's disconsolate soul: "Sie fragen: 'Wo ist das Glück?' Ich weiss es nicht, es ist nie lange bei mir zu Besuch gewesen; ich glaube, es guckt überall nur flüchtig in die Tür, so flüchtig, dass niemand es recht gesehen und recht beschreiben kann. Aber das Glück ist auch zum Menschenleben durchaus nicht nötig; nur die treuere Schwester desselben, die Hoffnung, können wir nicht entbehren, im Leben nicht und nicht in der Kunst. An ihrer gänzlichen Abwesenheit krankt mein *Carsten Curator*."<sup>19</sup> Carsten Curator recognizes that his only son Heinrich has inherited his mother's frivolous nature and her inclination for pleasure and drink. The desperate father, who loves this son more than anything else in the world, pays Heinrich's gambling debts until he goes bankrupt. The father is fully aware that all his endeavors are in vain. Despite his love and devotion, he is unable to prevent Heinrich's debauchery and perdition. Carsten perceives a flicker of hope in Heinrich's marriage to a healthy and vigorous girl, Anna, but it is soon extinguished. Even though he uses rigorous pedagogical measures in rearing his son, the father is unable to overcome the boy's inherent nature. When the child's beautiful eyes look up in supplication, Carsten Curator has to exert extreme force not to clasp the lad fondly in his arms:

Den von der Toten nachgelassenen Knaben, der sich bald als der körperliche und allmählich auch als der geistige Erbe seiner schönen Mutter herausstellte, erzog er mit einer seinem Herzen abgekämpften Strenge; dem gutmütigen, aber leicht verführbaren Liebling, wurde keine verdiente Züchtigung erspart; nur wenn die schönen Kinderaugen, wie es in solchen Fällen stets geschah, mit einer Art ratlosen Entsetzens zu ihm aufblickten, musste der Vater sich Gewalt tun, um nicht den Knaben gleich wieder mit leidenschaftlicher Zärtlichkeit in seine Arme zu schliessen.<sup>20</sup>

Storm stresses the intimacy and affection within the family circle in this Novelle. He intentionally introduces the portrait of Carsten's ancestors. The stately "silhouette" of Carsten's predecessors with their thriftiness and diligence, demonstrates the moral degradation of his son and intensifies the father's despondency. Storm gives us such a detailed account of this family portrait to magnify its contrast to the present decadent generation. Carsten cannot save his son. During restless nights, he goes to the bedside of his sleeping son and cries out into the stillness: "Juliane! . . . dein Sohn! Auch er wird mir das Herz zerreißen!"<sup>21</sup> He is reminded of the features of his deceased wife Juliane when he glances at the pale visage of his child with its soft silken curls, which crown the temples—the face could almost be mistaken for that of a woman—. A cry for divine assistance emanates from the depth of his soul: "Mein Herr und Gott, ich will ja leiden für mein Kind, nur lass ihn nicht verloren gehen!"<sup>22</sup> Suddenly, the boy opens his eyes, still dreaming and observing his father's raised hand, he shrieks in horror, as if he were going to receive the deathblow at his father's hand. He extends his arms beseechingly towards his father. Storm portrays this scene with empathy and compassion: "Und mit einem Laut, als müsse es ihm die Brust zersprengen: 'Mein Kind, mein einziges Kind!' brach der Vater an dem Bette des verbrecherischen Sohns zusammen."<sup>23</sup>

In the Novelle *Eekenhof* the father-son dissonance takes a different turn. Herr Hennicke despises his first-born from his first utterance, since he obstructs the father's designs with respect to the inheritance of his deceased wife. When the covetous Hennicke is advised of the probable death of his infant son, his scheming eyes flare up in gratification. He does not remain at the crib of his sick child, but rides out to survey his newly acquired territory: "Seine Blicke streiften über das Land mit einer Sicherheit, wie sie es nie getan. Der Erbe dieses Grundbesitzes lag sterbend in der Wiege; er aber war der Vater und der Erbe dieses Erben!"<sup>24</sup> On the third day, however, after the birth of this heir, the doctor joyously announces that the child will live. From this day henceforth, Herr Hennicke not only hates the doctor, but despises his son even more. Detlev is raised by a distant relative far away from Eekenhof. When he returns to his ancestral mansion, he meets his half-sister Heilwig for the first time. Heilwig, an illegitimate daughter of Herrn Hennicke, reveals to her brother her misgivings concerning her father, who deserted her mother and was thus responsible for her death. The boy pensively retorts: "Sag es zu keinem Menschen, Heilwig, auch nicht zum Informator; aber ich glaube, mein Vater ist auch kein guter Mann!"<sup>25</sup>



When the Vogt refuses to beat the Junker Detlev upon the request of Herrn Hennicke, the pernicious father takes the whip himself and strikes his son so fiercely, "dass das Blut hervorgeschossen ist."<sup>26</sup> His avarice eventually entices him to attempt to kill his son, but he is unsuccessful. He contrives to have this heir declared dead legally and finally wastes away, a broken man, deserted by his son and daughter.

The Etatsrat in the Novelle *Der Herr Etatsrat*, who resembles a monkey rather than a human, maltreats his talented son Archimedes. Devoting his energy solely to his punchbowl and to his musical instrument, he completely disregards his paternal duties. The father had christened his offspring with the classical name "Archimedes, . . . ohne jedoch später die Mittel zu gewähren, welche dem Sohn eine Nachfolge seines klassischen Taufpaten hätten ermöglichen können."<sup>27</sup> The egocentric Etatsrat is not concerned with his son's mathematical abilities; he refuses to send him to the University until it is too late. He uses Archimedes as an attendant to accompany him on his health cures. His own son is not as close to him as the secretary who attends to his whims and seduces the Etatsrat's daughter under the father's roof.

The disharmony and conflict between father and son is depicted with empathy and acuteness in Storm's realistic Novelle *Hans und Heinz Kirch*. Both father and son are obdurate in their demands. They love each other intensely, but they are unable to understand their respective weaknesses. The elder Kirch is overzealous in his ambitions not only for himself, but also for his offspring. When a son is born to Heinz Kirch, he "maps out" his life and career for him. In his assiduousness, the father wants his son to obtain that seat in the "Magistratskollegium," which had been denied to him. He loves his son with all his heart, but his over-ambition clouds his affection for his son. Thus, he does not permit the unfolding of the boy's true nature. When the boy is six years old, Hans Kirch takes him on his boat to familiarize him with his future surroundings. Already at this tender age, the lad has ideas of his own. When the father's back is turned, Heinz climbs up to the top of the bowsprit and cheerfully whistles a song. Theodor Storm purposely introduces this episode to prepare the reader for the eventual rift between father and son and the complete annihilation of both. He also brings out the differences of character between father and son as well as the great devotion of the father to his offspring. Hans Kirch glances at his child in trepidation, but hesitates to call him down from the bowsprit. He thinks to himself: "Kinder, wie Nachtwandler, muss man ja gewähren lassen. . . ."<sup>28</sup> Fortunately, he does not need to act since Heinz makes his own decision. Tired of whistling, he slides down and greets his father exuberantly. The elder Kirch, accustomed to perils of many kinds, tremulously embraces his son and implores him: "Heinz, Heinz, das tust du mir nicht wieder!"<sup>29</sup> He repeats this ultimatum with fervor in his voice and recovering from his initial shock, raises his hand towards the quivering and astonished boy. Henceforth, the child has to be forced on board ship and never attempts to repeat his daring stunt. Heinz at once fears and defies the paternal authority. The father's tenderness diminishes in proportion to the son's opposition: "Die Zärtlichkeit des [Vaters] kam gleicherweise immer seltener zu Tage, je mehr der eigne Wille in dem Knaben wuchs; glaubte er doch selber nur den Erben

seiner aufstrebenden Pläne in dem Sohn zu lieben."<sup>30</sup> When Heinz is twelve years old, a sister is born, "was der Vater als ein Ereignis aufnahm, das eben nicht zu ändern sei."<sup>31</sup> In church the enterprising father glances over to the pew where his son is sitting and conjures up visions of the boy's prosperity in the future. He pictures Heinz as the commander of many ships. Hans Kirch is filled with pride when the teacher reports that his son is precocious; he then decides to obtain private lessons for him with the local pastor, "denn Heinz sollte mehr lernen, als jetzt noch in der Rektorschule für ihn zu holen war."<sup>32</sup>

When the youth is seventeen he is sent out on an extensive sea voyage. In parting the elder Kirch clasps his son's hand hastily and confides: "Ich sitze hier nicht still, Heinz; für dich, nur für dich! Und komm auch glücklich wieder!"<sup>33</sup> On this very same night, Heinz stays out too late with Wieb, the playmate of his childhood, and returns after the "Bürgerglocke" has struck. The grown son is sternly rebuked by his irate father: "Hast du die Bürgerglocke nicht gehört? Wo hast du dich umhergetrieben? . . . Hüte dich! . . . Klopfe nicht noch einmal so an deines Vaters Tür! Sie könnte dir verschlossen bleiben."<sup>34</sup> The two headstrong and obstinate men are separated by the intervention of Heinz' mother. The tenacious father sends his son indignant letters, which remain unanswered. A letter finally arrives from Heinz which lacks thirty "Schilling" in postage.<sup>35</sup> The father refuses to pay this negligible amount, since he is bitterly disappointed in the son, from whom he had expected so much. His glorious plans for Heinz are shattered—for thirty "Schilling" he disowns his flesh and blood, unable to utter a forgiving word and to pardon his son. All his hopes and dreams have been built around this child, whom he loved above all, and all his striving had been in vain. After seventeen years of loneliness Heinz returns home a stranger. His father cannot believe that this coarse and world-weary sailor is his son Heinz. As the sailor plays with Hans Kirch's grandchild, there is a faint smile on his sad face, especially when the child sits on his lap and pulls at his beard. Heinz longs for the love of his father, but the old man remains obdurate and will not acknowledge this son, who has returned home a despondent man. After a final farewell to his erstwhile playmate Wieb, Heinz leaves home forever. In the autumn of the next year, Hans Kirch has a dream in which his favorite child perishes by drowning. This dream coincides with the actual death of Heinz. Like Detlev's father, Hans Kirch becomes a senile old man. On his crutch, leaning for support on the shoulders of Wieb, Hans Kirch makes his way to the sea and confides his guilt for his son's perdition to the wind and the waves. In tragic self-accusation, he cries out: "Ich bin Hans Kirch, der seinen Sohn verstossen hat, zweimal! . . . Zweimal hab ich meinen Heinz verstossen, und darum hab ich mit der Ewigkeit zu schaffen!"<sup>36</sup> The Novelle ends on this tragic note. Hans Kirch has lost his beloved son and with him all his fervent hopes and ambitions since he disowned him twice.

The generation gap in the Novelle *Bötjer Basch* resolves itself with the maturity of the son acquired through his travels. Old Bötjer is more fortunate than Heinz Kirch, for his son returns home from his hazardous expedition to America and provides his father with comfort in his age. Fritz had decided to work as a cooper in an export



firm in America driven by his youthful restlessness. Here he had refused to play cards with the others during the gold rush days. When the players tried to force him into their card games, he would say: "Spielt! ich mach nicht mit; muss meinem Vater ein weich Kissen für seinen alten Kopf mit nach Haus bringen; hab kein Gold für eure Karten!"<sup>37</sup> From gossip prevalent in his town, Bötjer believed that his son was dead. He had never received the letter which Fritz had sent from California informing his family of his recovery from a wound inflicted on him because he refused to play cards for gold. The despondent father had tried suicide when the last symbol of his son's existence, the bullfinch, disappears. Fritz had brought home this bullfinch as a child and had taught it to whistle a ditty. Thus the lonely father cherished this bird as a keepsake of his lost son. Storm poignantly portrays the scene of recognition between the old cooper and his son, when the latter finally returns home: "Da schlossen eine junge und eine alte Hand sich in einander, und es bedurfte keiner Worte mehr; der Kopf des Jünglings ruhte mit geschlossenen Augen neben dem des Alten auf dem Kissen. . . ."<sup>38</sup> Bötjer's agile son carries on for his old father and does not succumb like Heinz Kirch. He draws strength from his companionship and understanding with his son.

The father-son solidarity existing between Hauke and Tede Haien in *Der Schimmelreiter* is also the reverse of the filial conflicts in *Carsten Curator* and *Hans und Heinz Kirch*. Old Tede Haien is a zealous and diligent man, who passes this assiduousness on to his son Hauke. The aspiration to become dikegrave takes shape early in the boy's mind.<sup>39</sup> This ambition increases when the youth hears himself called the "virtual official."<sup>40</sup> With the last words of his dying father, which are a sort of spiritual legacy, this latent ambition grows apace and soon shows signs of hybris. Hauke is the continuation of his father, a man of superior intelligence who collides with his superstitious fellow-men.<sup>41</sup> He has an acute mind which mocks at human stupidity and sloth. The son's intolerance of man's stolidity and incompetence is found already in the father. In a terse dialog, which is a masterpiece of laconism, old Tede Haien relates to his son his impressions of human behavior which are the result of silent observation.<sup>42</sup> Like his father, it is Hauke's fervent desire to elevate himself over the past generation. This last Novelle of Storm gives an optimistic tone to the father-son conflict. The son will carry on for the father. Here Storm seems to reiterate Goethe's belief in the evolutionary process.<sup>43</sup>

Besides the prominence of the father in Storm's Novellen, there is also the role of the stepfather. There is only one, however, who plays an obvious part: the sinister clergyman in the Novelle *Aquis Submersus*. The solitary child Johannes, the son born to Katharina out of wedlock, finds comfort in his stepfather's love. Johannes' real father, who does not know of his child's existence, only awakens to his "Vaterbewusstsein" when the boy dies.<sup>44</sup> The stepfather, however, feels a strong sense of responsibility towards his stepson, even though he was conceived in sin. The immature boy has a beneficent effect on the pastor in his fanatical outbursts on idolaters and papists; the child by its mere presence soothes the impetuous clergyman in his condemnation of sensual lust, which he detects in the representations of the



Virgin: "Ein dunkles Feuer glühte in seinen Augen, aber seine Hand lag liebkosend auf dem Kopf des blassen Knaben, der sich an sein Knie schmiegte."<sup>45</sup> The austere man protects his stepson like a sacred object. Tenderness and devotion reign between these two. Johannes lovingly clasps his arms around his stepfather's neck and presses his soft cheek to the bearded face of the clergyman, "als finde er so den Schutz vor der ihn schreckenden Unendlichkeit."<sup>46</sup>

Storm's juvenile characters echo the author's sentiments on pedagogy and heredity. They are overcome by the daemonic force of heredity, just as Hans Storm was conquered by it. We have seen that the theme of heredity motivates the *Novelle Carsten Curator*. Poetically Storm incarnates Hans in the figure of Heinrich Carstens. Heredity also dominates the *Novelle John Riew*. The conflict between father and son became the motivating force in *Carsten Curator* and in *Hans und Heinz Kirch*. It also played a role in *Ein stiller Musikant*, *Der Herr Etatsrat*, *Eekenhof*, *Bötjer Basch*, and in *Der Schimmelreiter*. The father-son relationship runs the gamut from Herrn Hennicke, who wants to kill his own son so that he will be the sole benefactor of his wife's estate, to Carsten Curator, who sacrifices everything for his degraded son. In *Bötjer Basch*, the son returns to be a comfort to his aging father after he had overcome his restlessness. In his last great *Novelle Der Schimmelreiter*, Theodor Storm poignantly revealed the father-son solidarity existing between Hauke and old Tede Haien. In *Aquis Submersus*, it is the stepfather who can relate to the solitary child. Johannes finds comfort in his stepfather's love, while his real father only awakens to his "Vaterbewusstsein" when the boy drowns.

Since Storm's life (1817-1888) spans almost the entire nineteenth century, he was undoubtedly deeply influenced by the prevailing thoughts and theories of his era, which has been called the "Century of the Child" by Ellen Kay.<sup>47</sup> Storm drew much of his material for his characters from the scientific data at his disposal. Archimedes, the son of an alcoholic father in *Der Herr Etatsrat*, finally succumbs under the detrimental effects of excessive indulgence. Before he dies, he rebukes his father: "Pfui! pfui, man soll seine Eltern ehren; aber, . . . auf meines Vaters Gesundheit kann ich doch nicht wieder trinken. . . ."<sup>48</sup> Heredity and its deleterious effects is a dominating force in Storm's creative work, since he was obsessed by the fear that he was responsible for his own son's premature death. Darwin's work on the *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) propagated new ideas of evolution and heredity, which Storm adopted as an explanation for his son's dissipation. He absorbed himself with the enigma: What caused Hans to become an alcoholic? Since Darwin alleges that particles from all the organs of the body are transmitted from generation to generation and bring about the offspring's resemblance to the parent, the father blamed himself and his ancestors for Hans' failure in life. In the preservation of favored individuals and races, during the constantly recurrent struggle for existence, we see the most powerful means of selection. More individuals are born than can survive. A grain in the balance will determine which individual shall live and which shall die. In a letter to Heyse of October 22, 1879, Storm writes of a "culpa patris," thus assuming full responsibility for his son's tragedy.<sup>49</sup> Storm's pessimistic Weltanschauung revolves around Darwin's doctrine of Evolution, but it was also

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imbued with the deterministic ideas of the French naturalist Emile Zola.<sup>50</sup> The fate of the newborn child is sealed at birth by the psychological and physiological organism that it inherits. Zola demonstrates his theory in the *Rougon-Macquart* series.<sup>51</sup> In this series of twenty volumes, Zola shows the deleterious effects of heredity on the descendants of the alcoholic Macquart and the subnormal degenerate Adelaïde Fouqué, who live in France during the Second Empire.

In summary,<sup>52</sup> we find that Storm is a modern educator in his psychological probing into the conflict of parental authority and filial obedience, influenced by the scientific theories of his period. Like Pestalozzi and Rousseau, he stresses the inherent goodness of the child and aligns himself with them in his conviction that all destructive influences should be removed from the child's environment. It should unfold organically from within.<sup>53</sup> Ludwig Pietsch comments on Storm's pedagogical principles in his autobiography *Wie ich Schriftsteller geworden bin*: "Seine Kinder wuchsen in völliger Freiheit auf. Im Vertrauen auf ihre gute Natur kam das, was man Erziehungsmassregeln nennt, niemals zur Anwendung. Die drei Jungen, Hans, Ernst und Karl, wurden vom Vater als seine Freunde und Kameraden behandelt, mit denen er selbst Dinge besprach und erörterte, welche man gemeinhin vor Knabenohren nicht zu berühren pflegt. Diese Art der Erziehung und der Behandlung der Kinder ist immer ein etwas gewagtes Experiment. Wenn kein Unheil daraus erwächst, können Vater und Kinder von Glück sagen."<sup>54</sup> Theodor Fontane also voices his dissatisfaction at Storm's method of rearing his children in his autobiographical work *Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig*: "Auch hier nahm Storm einen etwas abweichenden Standpunkt ein und sah mit überlegenem Lächeln auf Pedantismus und preussischen Drill hernieder. Er war eben für Individualität und Freiheit, beides 'ungedeelt.' [sic]"<sup>55</sup> Storm like Jean Paul,<sup>56</sup> believes that the moral and intellectual characteristics of the child will develop to the fullest with the least possible interference. In his extreme devotion and assiduousness, Hans Kirch neglected to let his son's nature emerge gradually without pressure from the outside.

Storm considers both the physical as well as the spiritual development of the child. His approach towards youth and the generation gap is realistic and empathetic. Although he is in many respects a romanticist, he is not a romantic in his conception of childhood. He approaches childhood from the realistic-deterministic aspect of the nineteenth century, not from the idealistic-metaphysical viewpoint of the *Romantik*. Childhood and youth for the artistic realist like Storm is a state of past existence to which he reverts to find solutions for the puzzles of the present. Prior to the period of Artistic Realism, the young person had found a realistic portrayal only in Schiller and Goethe.<sup>57</sup> In Storm's century, the problems of youth became the cynosure of the psychologist as well as the novelist. Thus, Theodor Storm's empathetic treatment of the generation gap, which absorbed him so deeply in his own life, and his concern with heredity has relevance not only for the study of nineteenth century literature but also for its insight into a relationship that has concerned society from antiquity to the present.

Adelphi University



# NOTES

- 1 See Lloyd Warren Wedberg, *The Theme of Loneliness in Theodor Storms Novellen* (The Hague, 1964), I, 76. Wedberg states that for Storm death and immortality remained a permanent problem and a persistent component of his psychic and emotional make-up. He sought solace for loneliness in the family and home but he was not always successful.
- 2 Thomas Mann, *Leiden und Grösse der Meister* (Berlin, 1935), p. 193.
- 3 Bertha Botzong, *Wesen und Wert von Theodor Storms Märchendichtungen*, Diss. München 1923 (München, 1923), p. 27. Storm's letters to his parents from Potsdam as well as those to his wife Constanze are a testimonial to his pride in fatherhood. They retell some colorful episode in the lives of the children. See Gertrud Storm, *Theodor Storms Briefe in die Heimat aus den Jahren 1853-64* (Berlin, 1907). Without doubt, Storm's children influenced his literary work. Cf. E. O. Wooley, "The Literary Relations of Storm with his Children," *Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht*, 37 (December 1945).
- 4 Storm had taken an active part in the agitation for severance from Denmark and entrance of the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein into the German Confederation. He was denied the continuance of his law practice by the Danish authorities, since he refused to side with them. He obtained a position in the Prussian judiciary system and lived in Potsdam and Heiligenstadt. For the poem "Weihnachtsabend" see Theodor Storm, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Albert Köster (Leipzig, 1919-20), I, 121. Cf. the poem "Knecht Ruprecht" (*Wke.*, I, 198). Hereafter *Sämtliche Werke* will be cited as *Wke.*
- 5 Alfred Biese, *Theodor Storms Leben und Werke: Zur Einführung in Welt und Herz des Dichters* (Leipzig, 1917), p. 49. Cf. Robert Pitrou, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Theodor Storm* (Paris, 1920). Also see Theodor Storm, *Briefe an seine Frau*, ed. Gertrud Storm, publ. as vol. 10 in *Theodor Storms Sämtliche Werke, Aus dem Nachlass 2* (Braunschweig, 1916), p. 99. In his letter of Sept. 12, 1860 to Constanze, Storm writes: "Ich denke mit Schaudern daran zurück, dass wir 204 Abende von den 366 des Jahres, ein für allemal bestimmt, uns und unseren Kindern entzogen haben."
- 6 Theodor Storm, *Briefe an seine Kinder*, ed. Gertrud Storm, publ. as vol. 11 in *Theodor Storms Sämtliche Werke, Aus dem Nachlass 3* (Braunschweig, 1916), p. ii. Also see Gertrud Storm, *Theodor Storm: Ein Bild seines Lebens* (Berlin, 1912-13), II, 86: "Das Schulmeistern wurde dem Dichter recht sauer, denn seine Kräfte hatten sehr bestimmte Grenzen." The children required many hours of the day for homework, especially Karl for whom learning was not easy due to his weak health. Storm worried about the boy's homework, when he was not there to supervise it. He writes to his wife that the children should study their German and Latin daily. He instructs her to read aloud to them and to teach them Latin script. (Letter of August 19, 1856). Storm enjoyed his task as a tutor for his children, but he was a very impatient one. He gave his oldest boys their first lessons in Latin. Often these sessions would end in discord; the father would exclaim in irritation: "Flegel," and some more severe form of punishment would follow. See Theodor Storm, *Briefe an seine Frau*, pp. 136-40.
- 7 Oskar Katann, ed., *Theodor Storm als Erzieher: Seine Briefe an Ada Christen*, pseud. (Wien, 1948).
- 8 Hans (1848-1886); Ernst (1851-1913); Karl (1853-1899); Lisbeth (1855-1899); Lucie (1860-1935); Elsabe (1863-1945); Gertrud (1865-1936); Friederike (1868-1939). See Elmer O. Wooley, *Studies in Theodor Storm*, Indiana Univ. Publications, Humanities series, No. 10 (Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1943), pp. 100-105. The dates for Elsabe were provided by the late Professor Wooley to the writer in a letter of July 4, 1953.

- <sup>9</sup> Gertrud Storm, *Theodor Storm, Ein Bild seines Lebens*, II, 152. See also E. Erichsen, *Theodor Storm und sein ältester Sohn Hans* (Hamburg, 1955).
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155 and *Wke.*, I, 253.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155. "Storm bot alles, was in seinen Kräften stand, auf, um den Sohn zu retten. Aber alle Opfer, die oft des Vaters Kräfte weit überstiegen, alle herzlichen Bitten vermochten nicht, ihn auf den rechten Weg zurückzuführen. Lange schon hindurch legte er sich jeden Abend mit schweren Sorgen um die Zukunft seines Sohnes schlafen, und die Qual, die er so im Stillen leiden musste, war bisweilen so gross, dass ihm der Tod degegen nur als eine Erlösung erschien. Oft bat er Hans in seinen Briefen, er sollte doch das Seine tun, um ihm sein Kissen etwas sanfter zu legen." (155).
- <sup>14</sup> Ferdinand Tönnies, *Theodor Storm: Gedenkbücher* (Berlin, 1917), p. 40.
- <sup>15</sup> *Wke.*, IV, 157.
- <sup>16</sup> *Wke.*, IV, 157.
- <sup>17</sup> *Wke.*, IV, 158.
- <sup>18</sup> Wilhelm Schiebold, *Kindergestalten bei Dickens*, Diss. Halle-Wittenberg 1908 (Halle-Wittenberg, 1908), p. 29. See also Franz Stuckert, *Theodor Storm: Der Dichter in seinem Werk*, in *Handbücherei der Deutschkunde*, No. 5 (Tübingen, 1952).
- <sup>19</sup> Hermione von Preuschen, "Erinnerungen an Theodor Storm," *Deutsche Revue*, 24 (1899), 200. See also Enno Krey, *Das Tragische bei Theodor Storm*, Diss. Marburg (Marburg, 1914), p. 35 and Walter Silz, *Realism and Reality: Studies in the German Novelle of Poetic Realism*, Univ. of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, No. 11 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 163: "Of Storm's Novellen, especially *Carsten Curator* and *John Riew*' represent the inexorable power of heredity as a form of fate. The case of his own ill-starred son led Storm to brood over a culpa patris." Silz mentions Storm's letter to Heyse dated October 22, 1879. In a later letter of June 15, 1881, Storm confides to Heyse that the Novelle *Carsten Curator* was an act of liberation "ein Befreiungsakt" for the "Alpdruck" on his soul. *Heyse-Storm Briefwechsel*, ed. Georg Plotke (München, 1917-1918), I, 213: "Dabei fällt mir ein, Du hast es natürlich herausgefunden, dass meine Novelle *Carsten Curator* (so gut wie *Der stille Musikant* und *Viola Tricolor*) auf einem inneren Befreiungsakt beruhen. Ich möchte es Dir aber ausdrücklich sagen, dass Hans in so unehrenhafte Dinge, wie der Sohn des Carsten Curator, nie hineingeraten ist." R. Hilbig, *Theodor Storms "Carsten Curator" und "Hans und Heinz Kirch"*, Diss. Greifswald 1950 (Greifswald, 1950), gives a very detailed study of these two Novellen and the problem under discussion.
- <sup>20</sup> *Wke.*, V, 5.
- <sup>21</sup> *Wke.*, V, 24-25.
- <sup>22</sup> *Wke.*, V, 25.
- <sup>23</sup> *Wke.*, V, 25.
- <sup>24</sup> *Wke.*, V, 236.
- <sup>25</sup> *Wke.*, V, 250.
- <sup>26</sup> *Wke.*, V, 254.
- <sup>27</sup> *Wke.*, VI, 5.
- <sup>28</sup> *Wke.*, VI, 55.



29 *Wke.*, VI, 56.

30 *Wke.*, VI, 54.

31 *Wke.*, VI, 56-57.

32 *Wke.*, VI, 57.

33 *Wke.*, VI, 62.

34 *Wke.*, VI, 65.

35 *Wke.*, VI, 74. For the letter motif, see the Keller-Storm correspondence. In his letter of Feb. 26, 1879, Keller begs Storm to place the correct postage on the letters addressed to him, since his sister Regula has had to pay a penalty several times, over which she let out "ein Zetergeschrei." *Storm-Keller Briefwechsel*, ed. Albert Köster, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1909), p. 59.

36 *Wke.*, VI, 123.

37 *Wke.*, VII, 129.

38 *Wke.*, VII, 129.

39 *Wke.*, VII, 260.

40 *Wke.*, VII, 284.

41 See Walter Silz, *Op. cit.*, p. 118: "Der Schimmelreiter celebrates the creative individual, the man with a dream and a mission, the genius—opposed, with almost Hebbelian antithesis, to the dull, levelling 'Masse.' . . . Storm himself expressly rejected the older view of tragedy resulting from 'eine spezielle Schuld des Helden' as too narrow and juristic, and advocated a deterministic view that recognizes 'die Schuld des Allgemeinen,' the guilt of the age, the social class, the heredity and environment in which we participate and which we are powerless to oppose."

42 *Wke.*, VII, 270 ff.

43 Cf. Goethe's "Grenzen der Menschheit":

Was unterscheidet  
Götter von Menschen?  
Dass viele Wellen  
Vor jenen wandeln  
Ein ewiger Strom:  
Uns hebt die Welle  
Verschlingt die Welle,  
Und wir versinken.

Ein kleiner Ring  
Begrenzt unser Leben,  
Und viel Geschlechter  
Reihen sich dauernd  
An ihres Daseins  
Unendliche Kette.

44 Storm points out that Johannes' real father loves the "woman" in Katharina, not the mother, when he confronts her after several years of absence. After she had borne this illegitimate child, she married the clergyman, who was the boy's stepfather. Katharina expresses astonishment that Johannes' real father did not recognize the little boy as his son when he sat on his lap. See E. Allen McCormick, *Theodor Storm's Novellen: Essays on Literary Technique*, Univ. of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, No. 47 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 108. McCormick states that Johannes is stirred by the boy's eyes and the sorrow in his expression; he often feels the urge to hold the child in his arms, but of course cannot explain why. See also Clifford A. Bernd, *Theodor Storm's Craft of Fiction: The Torment of a Narrator*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, No. 43, Part 1 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 17. Bernd speaks of a feeling of paternal guilt developing in Johannes with the passing of time.

45 *Wke.*, IV, 318.

- 46 *Wke.*, IV, 317.
- 47 Ellen Kay, *The Century of the Child* (New York and London, 1909). See also Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York, 1962).
- 48 *Wke.*, IV, 281.
- 49 *Briefwechsel Heyse-Storm*, I, 177.
- 50 Margarete Stein, *Die Lebensanschauung Theodor Storms und die innere Motivierung in seinen Novellen* (Zürich, 1923), p. 48.
- 51 It is noteworthy that the wave of laboratory investigations with humans as depicted in the *Rougon-Macquart* series had found favorable reception in Germany since 1871.
- 52 We cannot discuss the father-daughter relationship here. In general, there is no generation chasm between the two. The filial association between father and daughter is mostly founded on tenderness and devotion. The daughter is the sole comfort in the father's adversity and loneliness (Christine in *Ein Doppelgänger*, Dagmar in *Ein Fest auf Haderslevhuus*, Anna Geyers in *John Riew*, Wienke in *Der Schimmelreiter*, Lisei in *Pole Poppenspärer*, Heilwig in *Eekenhof*). Exceptions are Anna in *Im Schloss* and Phia in *Der Herr Etatsrat*.
- 53 Storm has received adverse criticism with respect to his methods of education. In his views on rearing his own children, he can be called a disciple of Pestalozzi. He believes like the Swiss educator that the individual character in the child should be fostered and permitted to unfold freely. He writes to his parents on March 15, 1855: "Meine Zärtlichkeit geht eben darauf aus, jeden von ihnen in seinem Wesen zu erkennen und zu lieben." The parent in guiding his offspring gives him "mit jedem Bissen—zugleich ein Stück des eigenen Lebens." Only zealous individuals can deal with difficult problems. Storm wanted his children to develop into conscientious and happy adults. He writes to his wife: "Hätte jedes doch ein Liebes und auch seinen Platz in der Welt!" (*Theodor Storms Briefe an seine Frau*, p. 101). Storm himself expresses confidence in his own method of bringing up his children as verified in his letter of Sept. 2, 1858 to his parents: "Seit Freitag vor acht Tagen habe ich denn nun alle meine Lieben wieder um mich und lebe wieder auf. . . .—Nicht wahr, meine Erziehung ist doch nicht so übel?"
- 54 Ludwig Pietsch, *Wie ich Schriftsteller geworden bin* (Berlin, 1898), p. 95.
- 55 Theodor Fontane, *Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig: Autobiographisches* (Berlin, 1920), II, 243.
- 56 Johann Paul Richter, pseud. Jean Paul (1763-1825), author of *Levana oder Erziehungslehre* (1807). He expounds the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Heinrich Pestalozzi. He stresses the unfolding of the natural inherent potentials.
- 57 Cf. especially Walther in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* and Karl in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*.



