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# Youth, Happiness, and Institutional Projects in the Early Eighteenth-Century German Lands

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▼ **ABSTRACT** The period of the project's flourishing has long been recognized as one in which young people were increasingly viewed as a social group with distinct needs—such as protection from neglectful caregivers—certain weaknesses, and key strengths. With some exceptions, age has not figured centrally in ongoing work on the history of projecting that this special issue prioritizes. Yet project-makers were very interested in age and devised projects that were specifically attuned to youth as a fresh, experiential, possibility-focused stage of life. In this article I argue that many German projectors were drawn to what was widely understood to be young people's unique orientation toward happiness, a topic of much philosophical discussion and debate by 1700. I explore several reasons why this was the case, tuning into how assumptions about happiness and age impacted institutional projects created for young people from very different social groups: Erlangen's *Ritterakademie* (a school for young noblemen), Waldheim's *Zucht-Waysen und Armenhaus* (a prison, orphanage, and poorhouse), and a tree-planting project for village youth. I argue that in these projects the goal was to use the relationship between labor and happiness to produce higher-quality forms of work through clever managerial techniques.

▼ **KEYWORDS** youth, happiness, institutional projects, labor, workhouse, Ritterakademie

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As future-focused interventions, projects frequently targeted young people—and by this I mean specifically people in an early "stage of life" or "age" (*Alter*)—because they brought the future into the present and represented an opportunity to shape it.[1] By their very nature, projects and their makers strive to make strategic interventions in the world in ways that are disruptive, and intentionally so. Projects are and were "world-building exercises" that enclose, uproot, transplant, mobilize, and re-categorize materials, knowledge, and relationships as endlessly mutable resources (see our introduction). The more malleable, flexible, and open to manipulation particular resources are, the easier it is to implement a project. Young people were understood to be more malleable or open to "cultivation," making them especially well-suited to being projected upon as human resources under construction. Thus, projectors envisaged a wide variety of strategies that relied on mediated knowledge practices, or pedagogies, and enlisted young people in efforts to realize institutional schemes.[2]

In the early eighteenth-century German lands, many believed that a project, like any young person, held potential. Some held more than others. Yet there was something about a young person's unique orientation toward happiness (*Fröhlichkeit* and/or *Glückseligkeit* in German), their inclination to be playful, active, and engaged when they were well cared for, that also seemed especially promising.[3] If a young person was happy and chose to engage in some activity, even if that activity was a form of labor or a bit risky, they would still make the effort to engage in it. Minimal coercion was necessary. This basic principle—a starting point for many educators at the time—held important implications for ongoing efforts in this context to devise a range of projects focused on enhancing effort, or the quality of labor as a human resource. It suggested, too, that in addition to being the targets of projects because of their dependency or need for better care, young people could also contribute meaningfully to projecting as an undertaking.

Popular ideas about young people's inclination to be happy and the effort they were willing to expend while experiencing it, had major implications for projecting.[4] As scholars have long recognized, concerns about the quality of labor, health, productivity, and idleness, including how to compel people to work more energetically, efficiently, and productively, grew exponentially in this period.[5] In addition to the expansion of Atlantic-world systems of chattel slavery, this is a moment that saw the development of penal bondage, including the expansion of institutions—such as workhouses—for confining

1 Williams, "Concepts of Youth," 21–39.
2 Dietz and Dupré, "Youthful Minds and Hands"; Whitmer, "Projects and Pedagogical Expectations."
3 Whitmer, "Putting Play to Use."
4 Walsham, "The Happiness of Suffering."
5 De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution*; Frambach, *Arbeit im Ökonomischen Denken*; Bräuer, "Die Armen, ihre Kinder"; Kirby, *Child Workers*; Almási and Lizzul, *Rethinking the Work Ethic*; Ehmer and Lis, *The Idea of Work*.

the impoverished, itinerant, disabled, and indolent.[6] Concerns about idleness as either a physical manifestation of a spiritual malady or the underlying cause of a depraved life were long-standing and had, since at least the sixteenth century, generated prescriptive texts that often focused on practices of moral discipline.[7] By 1700, concerns about idleness as an expression of man's inherently sinful condition had given way to an emerging preoccupation with the opposite idea, namely that happiness was the original condition and was always manifest in the everyday actions of children.

In this article, I focus on three different kinds of projects from the early eighteenth century in which one finds a preoccupation with youth, happiness, volition, and improving the effectiveness of labor. Although it might be tempting to treat these projects as fundamentally different from each other, they were connected by similar aspirations, in ways this article will elucidate. They have also received little to no attention from scholars. The first two were institutional projects designed to intervene in the lives of young people from two very different social groups: Erlangen's *Ritterakademie*, a school for elite noblemen founded in 1699, and Waldheim's *Waysen-* and *Zuchthaus*, a workhouse penitentiary, which housed youth from impoverished situations alongside adults. Relief-focused, rehabilitative projects such as workhouses often went hand in hand with other projects focused on higher educational reform efforts in this period, including new academies created for aristocratic young men or early polytechnical schools and academies (*Realschulen*). As institutions of "confinement," both participated in refining the disciplinary technologies that were central to Michel Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge relationships.[8] Yet considering them comparatively as projects draws attention to the roles that happiness and youth played too. Indeed, each project was part of a wider effort to inspire young people to work more energetically and strategically. I round out this study by considering a third project focused on the labor of young people from villages of Saxony and Brandenburg-Prussia. It was created by Peter Kretzschmer, an *Oeconomicus* who worked for many years as a caterer in the Halle orphanage complex before transitioning to Leipzig's orphanage and workhouse (*Georgenhaus*).[9] Although they were all very different, the potential of youthful happiness is a key part of the rationale for each. Even in a penitentiary situation such as Waldheim, youth remained central to efforts to maximize happiness and effort through clever managerial techniques.

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6 Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance*; Spierenburg, "Prison and Convict Labor"; Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience*; Hitchcock, "Paupers and Preachers."

7 Almási and Lizzul, *Rethinking the Work Ethic*.

8 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Harrington, "Escape from"; Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience*; Cavallo, "The Motivations of Benefactors."

9 Kretzschmer, *Oeconomische Vorschläge*; AFSt/W XX/III/8: 26, 28; Whitmer, *The Halle Orphanage*.

## Youth and Happiness in Projecting

Historians of German cameralist discourses and political economy have long recognized the links between discussions about happiness as a universal measure of humanity—discussions that had become quite popular by c. 1700—and projecting as an enterprise.[10] Vera Keller has emphasized that early figures such as Wilhelm von Schröder viewed their projects as "uncertain pursuits of happiness" unfolding within ideas about an "open future" that were regularly mapped onto particular situations.[11] These figures normalized risk-taking, claiming that risky, future-focused interventions were necessary if more happiness was to be the end result. Many of the later interventions that historians have highlighted had much earlier roots in major shifts in economic thinking linked to the normalization of risk-taking and the expansion of capitalism into mines, estates, and charitable organizations.[12]

Yet not everyone was inclined to embrace, without worry or concern, the risks involved in projecting. Some people seemed better positioned to succeed with implementing projects, to be more adept at bouncing back from the risks or dangers they involved than others. Indeed, youth—and specifically young men—Francis Bacon had argued in his essay "Of Youth and Age," were "fitter for New Projects, then for Settled Business [*sic*]."[13] They had a higher tolerance for risk and were more oriented toward the future, toward what was possible, making them optimally positioned to undertake the constant "future-oriented analyses of risk" (see the introduction) as a form of present action that formed a central part of the labor of the projector.[14] Projecting's popularity as an activity explicitly associated with "less risk-averse" and more adventurous young men created new possibilities for institutional interventions focused on these youths and their happiness. Yet in so doing, projects normalized the potential for harm, including the offloading of risk onto the vulnerable bodies of the young, as a necessary part of moving toward wider social benefits.

Contemporaries also frequently observed that happiness came more readily to youth than it did to the old. Young people specifically, they argued, were at a stage in their physical, intellectual, and moral development during which their instinct to seek out happiness—their *Kinderfreude*—was more pronounced than it would be later in life. These ideas about the happiness of the young were often taken as a truism in economic and pedagogical literature, including the prescriptive literature for "house fathers" that was popular in the German context. As one economist-practitioner, Franz Philipp Florin (1649–1699) explained, it was "due to the orientation of their temperament toward happiness"

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10 Nokkala and Miller, *Cameralism and the Enlightenment*.
11 Keller, "Happiness and Projects," 408; Sandl, "Development as Possibility."
12 Wakefield, *The Disordered Police State*; Lingg, "Creating Space."
13 Bacon, "Of Youth and Age"; Keller, *The Interlopers*, 142.
14 Boudia and Jas, "Introduction."

that young people did not like "to be too closely contained."[15] They were well suited for travel, exploration, and assimilating novelty.

At the same time, young people were increasingly viewed as a social group with particular kinds of needs, weaknesses, and strengths. Historians of childhood and youth have long argued that the main social, economic, and political changes associated with early modernity—state-building and nationalism, colonization, and the expansion of capitalism—had a major impact on the experiences of youth and transformed prescriptive ideas about what this stage of life should involve. One change was mounting pressure to confront the issue of vulnerability, including related problems of premature death from illness, abuse, and a lack of protection from neglectful caregivers. In light of growing demands for labor, combined with demographic expansion and the popularity of projecting, these became pressing areas of focus. Although young people were everywhere and widely circulated, it was clear they did not always have the resources they needed to survive, let alone thrive.[16]

When their needs were met, young people were natural contributors to projects. They would do anything (almost)—so went the idea—to achieve happiness; they were willing to work to realize projects from which they understood there would be a tangible benefit. Later in the century, in 1764, the political economist Johann von Justi would draw from this older idea when he said that, in fact, "all people are project makers," an assertion he recognized might "appear paradoxical to some" but was worth defending.[17] This was because, in his view, a project was "a thorough sketch of a particular undertaking, through which our own or another person's temporal happiness is promoted; and that is presented in a draft focused on how to realize [it] through any all available means and measures, along with how to address the possible difficulties and obstacles, including the art and means of moving these out of the way."[18] Emphasizing the naturalness of projecting as a universally human activity designed to facilitate happiness was a highly strategic move, part of a protracted effort by the end of the eighteenth century to rehabilitate the reputations of projectors, who were often portrayed as self-interested, immoral, and dishonest.[19] Yet this effort was also in keeping with long-standing philosophical conversations about the meaning of happiness more generally, including its relationship to concepts of growth—spiritual, intellectual, moral, economic—cleverness, wisdom, and coercion, all of which had much wider sociopolitical implications.[20]

With some exceptions, these conversations involved reflection on whether or not happiness was best understood as a concept or a condition—was it

15 Florin, *Oeconomus Prudens et Legalis*; von Rohr, *Einleitung zu der Klugheit*, 335.
16 Sá, "Up and Out"; Gossard, *Young Subjects*; Harrington, *The Unwanted Child*.
17 Von Justi, "Gedanken von Projekten," 257.
18 Ibid., 257.
19 Keller and McCormick, "Towards a History."
20 Trepp, *Von der Glückseligkeit*.

a higher principle toward which one moved? Was it a state of being or a way of knowing now?—and the degree of control one actually had over making and experiencing happiness. As Johann Walch put it in the *Philosophical Lexicon*, any person was capable of performing activities that made life more enjoyable, regardless of the circumstances they found themselves living in; these included taking control of one's health or becoming adept in the art of discerning what was real and true.[21] But, generally speaking, these did not develop on their own. They were always in a state of development and only made effective through art (*Kunst*), cleverness (*Klugheit*), and dexterity (*Geschichtlichkeit*); in short, through vast amounts of meticulously directed effort toward this broader aspiration.[22] A different definition of happiness appears in the Zedler lexicon, which defines it as "a condition of experiencing in one's body the true attainment of or participation in the higher good," also the acquisition of it through the temporal means that are possible, "from which we cannot free ourselves in this life… [It is] a true form of happiness when it is present despite a preponderance of unhappy temporal realities. For humans' universal moral nature is such that even when given the smallest share of goods and luck, also amidst the saddest circumstances, they are undeniably capable of virtue."[23]

The realization of these capabilities hinged on a willingness to expend energy—which young people even now are understood to have much more of than the old—or to direct effort cleverly or strategically. Indeed, debates about how to generate more happiness were also, in some ways, debates about the links between knowledge production and effort, or how to tap into what many natural law theorists at the time understood to be a universally human inclination to be both industrious and ambitious. In Central European institutional settings, these ideas were associated with Samuel Pufendorf, who was interested in how a person's inclination or "internal impulse" to engage in some sort of action, combined with other factors such as age, nutrition, and health, affected the quality of that action.[24] Age was not the only factor; however, it was a key component. Other early German economic writers, such as Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (1626–1692), were indebted to these ideas and made them central to their own efforts to standardize projecting.

Many of the institutional projects that were implemented in the German lands in the early eighteenth century created opportunities to study the relationship between age, happiness, knowledge, and effort. We can see this convergence in the German economic writer and Kiel University professor Christoph Heinrich Amthor's *Project of Oeconomie in the Form of a Science*, which contained a critique of educational institutions specifically. In it, Amthor used reports from colonial administrators and Jesuit writers in the Spanish

21 Walch, *Philosophisches Lexicon*, 1335–36.

22 Ibid.

23 "Glückseligkeit" in Zedler, *Großes vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, 1703–4.

24 Pufendorf, *The Whole Duty*, 10–11; Saether, *Natural Law*, 62; Sasstamoinen, "Pufendorf on Natural Equality."

Americas to argue that "oeconomic" projects were valuable because they capitalized on a fundamentally human desire *not* to be idle, but to be engaged in constant activity. The choice to involve oneself in efforts that yielded benefits to others was a central part of what it meant here to be autonomous, or not dependent on others. As Amthor explained:

> Every person is made by nature—and it also serves one's body and character well—to undertake moderate activity in constant work: indeed, there are large numbers of people who, for many reasons, are extremely fruitful when they are engaged in constant motion, undeterred from engaging in useful undertakings and from particular vices like unnecessary curiosity, inner disturbances, idleness, drunkenness, violence, legal processes, poverty and crime and led through good fortune, peace and courage toward health and good work. One should above all else consider the Peruvians in America, a heathen people who practice this maxim very precisely. They have their own law against idleness, which they call the "house law," and it is so strict and strong that also children from the age of five, also people who are deaf and dumb, blind and very old cannot escape it, but rather everyone is given something to do in accordance with his strength and ability. Sloth and idleness are heavily punished and those guilty of it wholly dishonored…[25]

Amthor's project also described training programs for youths in colonial Mexico, where boys and girls were taken from their families, placed "in a tough camp," and given very little food to eat so that they "were not pampered" and focused only on their work.[26] From the camps they were sent to live with soldiers, "so that they could see for themselves" the challenges this life involved; they even wore "heavy weights around their necks" so that they would become accustomed to carrying things and would not be a burden for them later on.[27]

## The Erlangen Ritterakademie

Several of those involved in discussions about projecting and happiness supported schemes focused explicitly on the experimental application of new educational concepts and methods. An interesting yet understudied early eighteenth-century example is the Erlangen *Ritterakademie* project (f. 1699), which was implemented due to the support of the Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth (Christian Ernst) and the then President of Erlangen's "French

25 Amthor, *Project der Oeconomie*, 67; De Ayala, *The First New Chronicle*. Thanks to Vera Keller for this reference. Translations from German to English are my own.

26 Amthor, *Project der Oeconomie*, 70.

27 Ibid.

colony," Baron Christoph Adam Groß von Trockau (1649–1724).[28] Von Trockau further developed the curriculum of the new school with the help of a collaborator named Dietrich Hermann Kemmerich (1677–1745), who taught Moral Philosophy and Natural Law there for several years, leaving in 1710.[29] As had been the case in Halle (Saale) specifically, Erlangen's *Ritterakademie* served as the foundation for a new university that eventually opened its doors in 1742.[30] It accommodated up to fifty male students from noble families, who attended for free. Even after it ran into financial troubles, it was still a popular destination for young noblemen, who traveled there to "attend private lessons given by the academy's teachers."[31]

Christoph Adam Groß von Trockau and Dietrich Hermann Kemmerich published detailed descriptions of the new school's curriculum around the same time (between 1711 and 1713).[32] Taken together, these descriptions created a highly idealized plan for a useful, praxis- and vernacular-based curriculum in what von Trockau described as both an "academy of recreation" (*Spielhaus*) and a "practical academy." Young male "players"—i.e. the students—were expected to conform to a set of rules, yet they were also expected to embrace what von Trockau and Kemmerich described as their natural inclination to seek out happiness and to use it to their advantage. "The biggest problem with [existing] schools," von Trockau emphasized, was that educators still "focus mainly on developing the memory, largely by filling it with letters and precepts, rather than awakening one's capacities to make judgements and inventions."[33] The idea that Erlangen's *Ritterakademie* could serve as a place that would stimulate a young person's ability to innovate is central to understanding its status as an institution committed to training students to work harder and more strategically.

Von Trockau explained that in many other, more traditional schools, young men were forced to learn in ways that went against their desires, inclinations, and abilities so that, unsurprisingly, nothing of value came of the experience:

> [Young people] spend too much time in schools and universities with unimportant things that serve no purpose and are irrelevant to today's art of living; [they] are introduced to more vices than virtues; teachers are more concerned about their own interests and comfort than the cultivation of their charges … Teachers also complain that young people, especially

28 After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Christian Ernst of Brandenburg-Bayreuth invited Huguenots to settle in Erlangen; around 1,000 refugees formed a colony by 1700.

29 Beiergroesslein and von Dorn, "Natural Law for Nobility?," 17–18.

30 Clark, *Academic Charisma*. Clark focuses mainly on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century developments.

31 Beiergroesslein and von Dorn, "Natural Law for Nobility?," 18.

32 Kemmerich started drafting his curriculum around 1707 and also published a related text about the teaching and cultivation of wisdom in young noblemen. Beiergroesslein and Dorn, "Natural Law for Nobility?," 25; Kemmerich, *Präliminar-Discours*.

33 Von Trockau, *Recreationes Academicae Grosianae*, 30.

> noble youths, have a great aversion to studying. One no longer knows what, among all of the ongoing worldly transformations, to focus on and to teach or what methods one should use to teach them. People write about all kinds of new methods for teaching and provide instructions, but it is not so easy for many people to actually put these into practice.[34]

There were several advantages of the Erlangen project, he argued. First was community: a sense of shared responsibility and cohabitation in the same house. Second, "all of the lessons revolve around this principle," namely: "to ensure that every master has the materials, a method [*Modo*], memory and profit written in his mind."[35] Profit and productivity went hand in hand. The lessons offered a targeted approach to learning what a person of high social status needed to know, with no pedantry and a curriculum deliberately focused on the future, not the past.[36] Students were actively discouraged from becoming "learned parrots" (*gelehrten Papagey*) and, instead, were given the tools to grasp forms of knowledge that were useful and found in the "Real-Disciplines." Central to his description of these were practical mathematics, which von Trockau emphasized were also central to the generation of happiness.[37] Instruction focused on engagement with collections of models, tools, and materials, combined with movement and engagement.

Happiness was at the center of this institution because it held the key to the cultivation of a new generation of elite young men equipped to realize projects far away from home and with little guarantee of safety or success. Von Trockau emphasized that he and his collaborators had successfully created an atmosphere where they were freed from constraints—expectations, their dependency on (or obligations to) parents (etc.)—that compromised their desire to work well. In Erlangen, he explained, they had "the freedom to ask questions as often as they wanted to."[38] Instead of being forced to entirely let go of their games (*Kinder Spiel*), they were allowed to engage in "delightful things" (*Ergötzlichkeiten*), including exercises focused on instruction through conversation.[39] Most of these conversations happened while taking walks through the school gardens and around the courtyard, von Trockau noted, which is described as a "games and exercise place" in this image: [**Fig. 1**].

Von Trockau was quick to add that in these conversations, "No speculative philosophizing is allowed, no ethics, politics, logic or physics."[40] The focus was "only on 'useful things' found in the world and immediately at hand, more specifically what we can learn from them."[41] Discussing what was useful

34 Ibid., 3.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 7.
38 Ibid., 6–7.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 7.
41 Ibid.

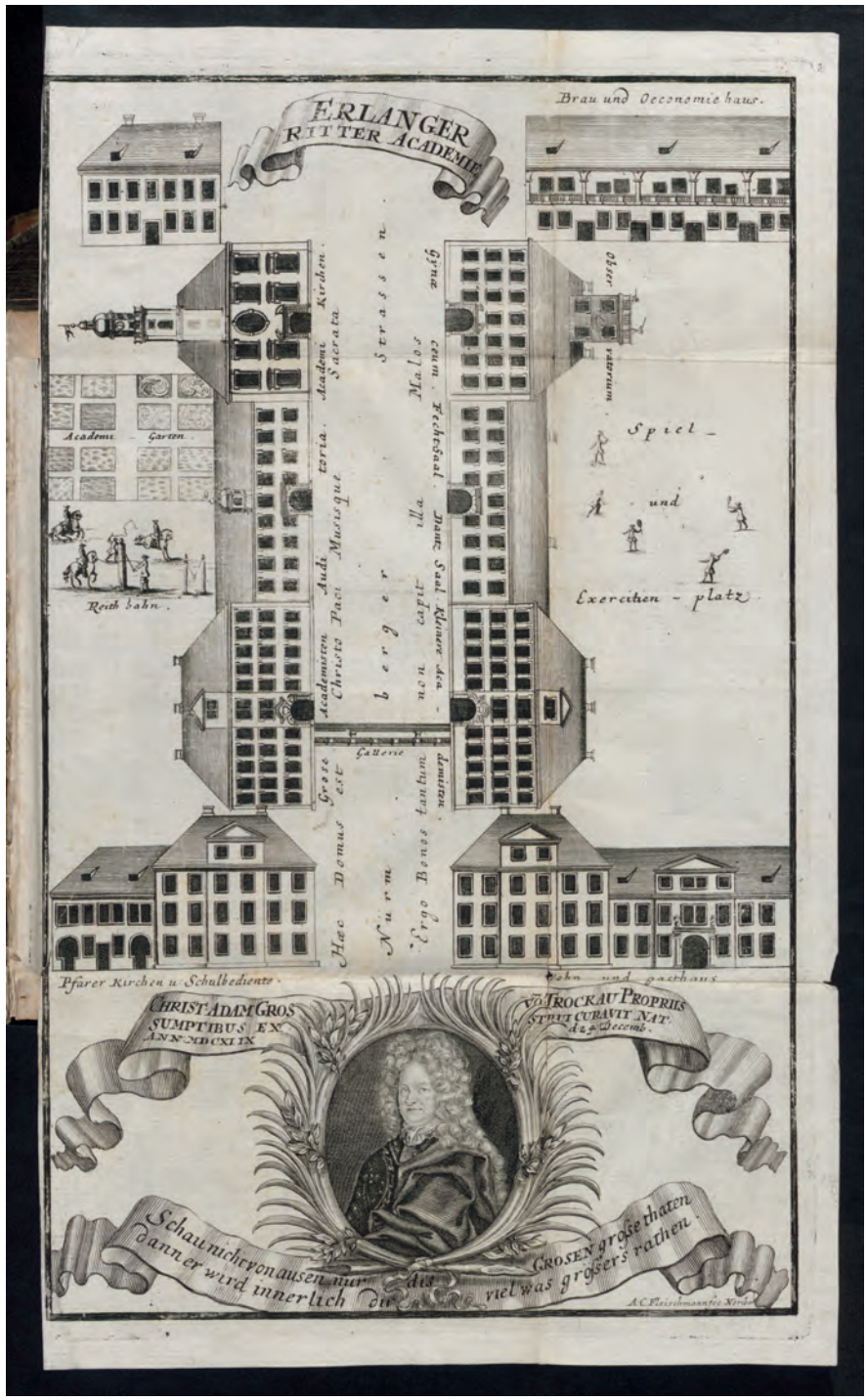


**Figure 1.** Architectural *Skizze* of the Erlangen *Ritterakademie*. Christoph Adam Groß von Trockau is featured in the image at the bottom along with a saying that reads "Don't look from the outside only, since He will advise you internally about implementing much bigger deeds." From von Trockau, *Recreationes Academicae Grosianae*. Used with permission of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen. Shelfmark DD2018 A 257:1.

and necessary while walking and exercising outside was important, as was the convening of "our own "French coffee houses," where mainly French and German newspapers were read out loud and the information discussed. He stressed that an added benefit of these conversations was that they would help young men learn to differentiate between categories of necessity, utility, and curiosity.[42]

In Kemmerlich's curriculum, we find an emphasis on the importance of learning to appreciate the differences between these three categories too, including the forms of inquiry they involved and their relationship to happiness.[43] In the third chapter of his *Akademie*, Kemmerich explained that "the primary goal of all our studies,"

> as with all of our other tasks is the advancement of our temporal and eternal welfare. The nearer that a particular course of study comes to helping us achieve this purpose, and the more it helps to further human happiness, the more useful it is and the higher it should be valued. From this [principle] four classes of the sciences emerge. The first course of study has such a precise and direct connection to human happiness that with it this goal cannot be achieved; and these are the necessary sciences …"[44]

As the highest form of knowledge, the necessary sciences furthered man's *future* and eternal happiness; since this was more important than fleeting forms of happiness found in the temporal realm, it followed that the study of theology was essential and the most useful.[45] The second most important area within the "necessary sciences" was ethics because it promoted forms of internal calm or emotional health (*Gemutsruhe*) essential for one's well-being. After this came the study of medicine, which directly promoted the health and happiness of the body. Training in the "necessary sciences" also needed to involve the study of law and *Oeconomie*, or the "science of the rights of the land," because these promoted peace, friendship, and basic human needs, specifically shelter and nourishment.[46]

The next, second most important course of study advanced the broader cause of human happiness in more indirect ways.[47] The "useful sciences," as Kemmerich described them, included the study of things that either made it easier to learn the necessary sciences or enhanced the "natural powers" of human understanding, such as anatomy, botany, and chemistry.[48] Kemmerich described the third most important area of inquiry as the study of curiosity

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42 Ibid., 19.

43 Kemmerich, *Neu-geöffnete Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Kemmerich derived at least part of his discussion of utility here from Claude Fleury, a French scholar and court tutor whose pedagogical writings were of great interest to many German intellectuals by 1700.

44 Ibid., 23.

45 Ibid., 24.

46 Ibid., 25.

47 Ibid., 24.

48 Ibid.

and stressed that it was somewhat useful because it triggered amusement and pleasure and led to new discoveries. He included in this category travel accounts that detailed the manners and "ways of using things" in "Asian, African, and American" lands, also all of the playful parts of physics, especially experiments.[49]

In Kemmerich's view, Erlangen's Academy was a youth-centered institutional project devoted to the idea that happiness is the primary mover—and goal—of all human effort, and that the young possessed more of it. He explained that even though it might be tempting to dismiss *Ritterakademien* as mainly "riding, fencing, and dancing schools," schools where elite men "played" and engaged in arguably frivolous pastimes, they were actually best understood as "schools of wisdom" entirely focused on the study of what was useful and the making of more productive human beings.[50] In a passage that would be copied later by other political economists and German projectors, Kemmerlich noted that while one could make a distinction between the pursuit of happiness and "the ways of the household," his goal was to bring the two together. The idea was to accustom youths, even while "in the middle of playing their games," to "pay attention to the things to which they should seriously apply themselves."[51]

The forms of happiness associated with the study and advancement of the necessary sciences were elevated above other lessons. Von Trockau and Kemmerich stressed the importance of effort and invention, of exchanging information. They also emphasized that a culminating aspect of the lessons would be a journey, funded entirely by the benefactors, where young men would be challenged to apply the following principles that they had learned in Erlangen:

i Transform your negative senses and gestures [into happy ones].
ii Cleanse your Understanding of errors.
iii Hold in your memory only necessary and important things and sharpen your ability to make sound judgements through your own invention.
iv Recognize yourself and wonder at the wisdom of the creator in his Creatures.
v Always read only the best books.
vi Above all things, diligently research in the Bible.[52]

Kemmerich specifically recommended reading Assanius Christoph von Mahrenholz's *Amusing Discourse and Curious Conversations of Three Traveling Companions on their Way to Holland*, which presented three "types" of young

49 Ibid., 28. Kemmerich mentioned the study of optics, astronomy, geography, antiquities, "the science of medals and coin cabinets," the science of "war things," fireworks, shipbuilding, hunting, mining, music, and painting.
50 Ibid., Vorrede.
51 Ibid., 8; Rohr, *Compendieuse Haushaltungs-Bibliothek*, 34.
52 Kemmerich, *Neu-eroeffnete Academie der Wissenschaften*, 8.

men on journeys abroad, and challenged readers to determine which one was the happiest.[53] Indeed, learning to "sharpen [one's] ability to make sound judgments through [one's] own invention" while traveling abroad, assessing the relative utility of specific projects—including the peculiar qualities of the situations in which these projects intervened—and making sound decisions about how best to direct one's energy mattered the most because it would inspire them to work more strategically and, as a result, to be happier.

## The Zucht-, Armen- und Waisenhaus in Waldheim, Saxony

Waldheim's *Zuchthaus* was founded in an abandoned castle in the town of Waldheim, roughly 80 kilometers away from Leipzig (on the Zschopau river), in 1716. It was a direct response to a recommendation by a Poor House Commission created a few years earlier to address the problem of begging in Saxony.[54] It was also a project that aimed to profit from the labor of those it housed and worked to rehabilitate—an aspiration consistent with many other institutions founded in this period.[55] Indeed, as Andre Wakefield has emphasized in his own scholarship on workhouses, the prospect of *profitability* held enormous appeal to those whose livelihoods hinged on ensuring these spaces ran well.[56] Embedded in this charge of rehabilitation was also a recognition of the fundamental need for cultivation and care that the youngest residents of the house possessed. And, as in Erlangen, happiness remained a guiding principle and leitmotif, particularly for the institution's efforts to train up young people willing to work well.

The institution housed orphans (*Waisen*), who were called this if they were under 12 years old, and many *jugendliche Züchtlinge*, literally translated as "young breedlings." These youthful residents were housed alongside older adults with afflictions such as insanity, criminality, or "an unwillingness to work." No matter what label they received from the institution's managers, all residents were portrayed as poor in terms of access to material wealth, status, and professional opportunities; however, they were not all understood to be unhappy. While the entire organization portrayed itself as an antidote to unhappiness, some residents—yes, the younger ones—were described as happier than the others, and the opportunity of their physical presence was used as a means of rehabilitating the "less happy" ones. In some ways, by virtue of their status as the ones in possession of *more* happiness and an inclination to work, Waldheim's youngest residents were understood to be notably "richer" —and thus were treated differently—than older, often disabled or chronically ill, residents.

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53 Ibid., Vorrede; von Mahrenholz, *Allerhand lustige Discours*; Stannek, *Telemachs Brüder*, 51.
54 *Beschreibung*, 9–10.
55 Bretschneider, "Menschen im Zuchthaus."
56 Wakefield, "The Insolvent Zuchthaus."

After its founding, this new institution published newsletters with key details about the project's components and the rationale for its founding. While paying lip service to key ideas about the State's obligation to respond to problems of indigence and the rich and the poor's common humanity, early descriptions of the organization stressed the ways in which it was also indebted to the idea that inequality needed to exist in the world. Happiness, of course, figured centrally in this framing. "Rich and poor are so different from one another in terms of their actual existence and the literal understanding, in some ways it seems that simply invoking the name of one instantly reveals the essence of the other," we read in the first edition:

> Yet, [richness and poorness] are not so interconnected that one cannot exist without the other; instead they must offer each other helping hands. As unhappy as a republic would be in which nothing but poor people could be found, it would be no less happy if it were only inhabited by rich people, because there would be a complete lack of the necessary and helpful means of carrying out the daily business of human society.[57]

Here ideas about access to wealth and social position are central to understanding what it means to be rich; however, the implication is that the happiness of a "rich" person is tied in various ways to the "happiness" of those who have fewer resources at their disposal. Being rich is also portrayed as a condition in which one is, in fact, dependent on the effort of others—the "necessary and helpful means"—needed to carry out the "daily business of human society." Exploring these aspects of the Waldheim project opens up new ways of appreciating what the particular roles of youth within the organization were. It creates opportunities to see how "happiness politics" were woven into the fabric of this institutional project, including the symbolic performances embedded in daily life and ongoing efforts to measure the effort of all inhabitants.

This was an institution that claimed its main focus was meeting basic health and nutritional needs and housing children with no care. As one might expect, all residents were expected to follow a highly regimented schedule that involved frequent church attendance and participation in processions, such as the one shown here: [**Fig. 2**].

The parade is pictured alongside a moment of collectively witnessing the public shaming and ritual punishment of residents who engaged in sinful acts. It also included what the caption (below) describes as "dead body parades," which involved collectively burying residents who had perished in the institution [**Fig. 3**].

Collaborative symbolic performances in the space of the *Zuchthaus* were important parts of the approach to teaching via constant physical activity, embraced by workhouse managers as overseers.

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57 *Beschreibung*, 9.


**Figure 2.** Representations of activities undertaken at the Waldheim *Zuchthaus*, including church going, participating in a church-going parade, and observing ritual punishments inflicted on a pillory as part of the ritual welcoming of new inmates. In *Beschreibung*. Used with permission of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen. Shelfmark 8 H SAX REG II, 7600.


**Figure 3.** Portrayal of a "dead body parade" at the Waldheim *Zuchthaus*. *Beschreibung*. Used with permission of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen. Shelfmark 8 H SAX REG II, 7600.

For much of the day, most days, everyone worked outside, both gathering and grating Brazilwood (*Färbeholz*) for the dying industry.[58] The newsletter explained how:

> the work of the *Zuchtlinge* consists mostly of grating (*raspeln*), but partly also of hoeing, shoveling and moving rocks, which are then sorted and put in well-kept, sturdy containers made of brown-yellow japon wood and pernambuco, which anyone can readily buy unadulterated anywhere at cheap prices; those who show themselves to be negligent in their work or otherwise do not want to give up their wickedness are, depending on the crime, initially admonished with good and bad words to correct themselves,

58 Amsterdam's Rasphuis was founded in 1596. Sellig, *Pioneering in Penology*; Dodge, "Forgotten Century of Brazilwood."


**Figure 4.** Waldheim's *Holtz-Flöße* with inmates shown "grating," carrying, shoveling, and moving rocks. In *Beschreibung*. Used ;with permission of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitäts- bibliothek Göttingen. Shelfmark 8 H SAX REG II, 7600.

> or if these do not help, with the deprivation of a meal or food, and finally even with beatings while tied to a column.[59]

Waldheim's location on the river Zschopau helped to ensure access to the copious quantities of wood made available for the prisoners to process vis-à-vis periodic log flows (*Holtz-Flöße*) that transported fallen wood from forests in the area to more populated towns and cities in the region [**Fig. 4**].

Tellingly, the daily schedules of the youngest residents of the workhouse differed, often dramatically, from the older ones. A note in the first edition of the project's newsletter explained how "the youth" (*der Jugend*) dedicated at least four hours a day to "instruction in Christianity," along with reading and writing.[60] The *Waisen* and female "breedlings" received special permission to work inside the institution in two rooms, spinning wool or flax, knitting,

59 *Beschreibung*, 24–25.
60 Ibid., 24.

or engaged in other household activities. Other reports stressed that directors paid special attention to activities they observed their youngest residents gravitating toward of their own volition. "As much as one cares about thoroughly instructing young people," a note found in the third edition of the Waldheim *Zuchthaus*'s newsletter reads, "one also *puts a lot of effort into attending to their desire and love for work*, so that they can be useful to themselves and others in the future and find a way to earn their living in the world in an honest way…".[61] They were called on to demonstrate which tools they most enjoyed using before being placed in a particular workshop setting.[62] Although this was a penitentiary situation, where—unlike Erlangen's *Ritterakademie*—violence was routinely embraced as a rehabilitative practice, youth and appeals to happiness, to effort, and to applied knowledge remained central to this institution's efforts to improve the quality of the work each resident engaged in. The Waldheim workhouse, too, was a space that made the links between happiness, age, and volition visible and available to be engineered.

## Kreztschmer's Child Labor Tree-Planting Project

In the 1740s, Peter Kretzschmer, a seasoned estate manager of Leipzig's orphanage and workhouse who had recently accepted a position in Berlin's State Chamber Council (*Landkammerat*), published a collection of "Economic Suggestions." It was recommended by a professor of political economy at the University of Leipzig, Georg Heinrich Zincke (1692–1769), who opened with an essay about projects and project-making.[63] Prior to taking on this post, Kretzschmer had spent several years working as a supplier of food and supplies in Halle's orphanage, where he collaborated with other professors active in the university. His job as the orphanage's *Oeconomicus* involved responding to issues that threatened to disrupt the workings of the institution. For example, he was in charge of buying the large quantities of wood needed for heating and cooking. He observed that the costs of this resource were constantly increasing as local forests in his area were becoming steadily depleted.[64] One of the projects he published in response to this issue presented a plan for resolving this regional wood shortage. Another addressed a series of problems related to old fruit trees across the region dying off en masse due to cold winters.[65]

Rather than planting young varieties of the same trees without regard for where or how, Kretzschmer advocated for fertilizing "fruit seeds of the best sorts" and having the children of villagers plant them in holes of dead "mother"

61 Ibid., 82.
62 Ibid.
63 Zincke, "Vorrede."
64 On deforestation in this region, see Grewe and Hoelzl, "Forestry in Germany."
65 Kretzschmer, *Oeconomische Vorschläge*, 51–54.

trees in a series of "recreational exercises" overseen by schoolmasters.[66] The lessons would include the use of a special box (*Kästgen*) with twenty different compartments, like a spice drawer, that were numbered and described in a catalog. In every village school, the children would be tasked with going around to local residents and collecting "all the good sorts" of fruit tree seeds, and then they would go into various orchards and other areas where the mass die-offs had occurred and plant, en masse, new varieties of cherry, plum, and medlar trees.[67] At the conclusion of this process, the entire village community would then build a fruit tree plantation that would be tended by the local children. To keep them interested and to "enhance their desire" to work on these plantations, Kretzschmer suggested offering rewards to those who first noticed new growth or collected tree wax.[68] Yet he also insisted that most children would not need to be convinced to perform this labor because, in short, it would make them happy; their happiness would come from recognizing, as they would instinctively, the need for the undertaking more generally. They would act on this instinct, of their own volition.

As he worked to explain the social and economic value of his tree-planting teaching project using child labor, Kretzschmer relied on the ideas I have discussed here about young people's inclination to work when it made them happy. Yet he also wrestled with issues of trustworthiness, which arguably always swirled around projectors, and their tendency to create new problems while often claiming to be addressing others. Kretzschmer drew attention to one criticism of his project that he had learned about (which he characterized as mean-spirited) in which someone said, simply, "out of nothing comes nothing, and that consequently the specified work, namely planting the villages with fruit trees, cannot be done without costs and forcing many thousands of subjects, who are not lacking in taxes and work, to do more."[69] Revealingly, in response to the critique, Kretzschmer drew attention to the role of effort in this particular project and in projecting more generally. He stressed that it could be easily implemented, with literally no costs and "almost no work," because "the children will be expected to do the bulk of it and, in the process, will be led to the study and practice of *Oeconomie*."[70] The seemingly effortless labor of the young people implicated here, he argued, held the key to what Kretzschmer considered would be this project's inevitable success.

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 54
68 Ibid., 55.
69 Ibid., 79.
70 Ibid.

## Conclusion

Young people's dependency, malleability, and frequent need for better care was a big part of why they often held such appeal as targets of institutional projects. Yet, as I have shown, related ideas about volition, effort, and how the happiness of young people made them more inclined to labor had a greater influence on the creation of—and had major implications for—a wide variety of institutional projects, many of which might seem at first glance to have very little to do with each other. Although the Erlangen *Ritterakademie* was decidedly not a workhouse, it *was* an enclosed space designed to disrupt the lives of those who attended it. It was designed to cultivate the young nobleman's desire to move, to converse, and to consume novelties, and to direct this desire toward inventing, intervening, and risk-taking—toward being more productive, toward expending effort that yielded actual profits. Although the inhabitants of the Waldheim *Zuchthaus* had decidedly less choice when it came to the forms of labor they engaged in, administrators were expected to appeal to the inclinations of the youngest residents, to allow them to do work that made them happy so that they would be more productive. Despite their confinement, they were given this choice as long as a love of labor was the end result. Kretzschmer, too, envisioned a project that capitalized on young people's willingness to work when it involved things that made them happy, such that they would hardly even realize they were expending effort at all. The secret was to disguise the labor as a fun activity that children would thereby choose to participate in. It was their calculated emphasis on happiness, volition, and improving the quality of work that made these three different projects resemble each other; each one of them turned on the strategic management of the young as human resources, on making their natural happiness a starting point for the success of the project. They traded in subtle forms of social disruption that aimed to study, manipulate, and ultimately take advantage of the things that make young people better workers—and even projectors-in-development.

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