

# Learning through Entertainment in the *Frauenzimmer* *Gesprächspiele*

Monet Colomb

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7304-2605>

## Abstract

*The Thirty Years' War left Germany without social and structural instability. To unify and strengthen Germany, the society had to rebuild itself once more. A distinguished German polymath and writer, Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, sought to reconstruct and sophisticate Germany's society in the 17th century. He was a member of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft, a German literary society, that promoted to standardize the German language through "useful learning" as reflected in his parlor games in the eight-volume collection, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*. By analyzing four parlor games and expanding on Karin Wurst's article, "The Utility of Play or the Enchantment of Instruction and Cultural Encounters," this article evaluates three learning methods: situated learning, experiential learning, and discursive learning. Through these three methodologies, the parlor games educate the players about various conversational topics and thus its relation to the integration of cultural practices of social etiquette in early modern German society. The combination of the learning methods creates a communicative and affective environment that additionally teaches the audience of the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* to learn and also experience appropriate social behavior through the parlor games.*

Georg Philipp Harsdörffer wrote eight volumes of the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* from 1641 to 1658 to educate his readers culturally and socially through conversation games that consist of three sets of couples whose names are introduced in the first volume, respectively: "Angelica von Keuschwitz, eine Adelige Jungfrau. Reymund Discretin, ein gereist-und belesener Student. Julia von Freudenstein, eine kluge Matron. Vespasian von Lustgau, ein alter Hofmann. Cassandra Schönleben, eine Adelige Jungfrau. Degenwert von Ruhmeck, ein verständiger und gelehrter Soldat." <sup>1</sup> Each character plays a specific role in the *Gesprächspiele* that is seen through their descriptions. The women are characterized by their social class through "von" as a part of the aristocratic social rank or the use of "adelige," as well as by their age through "Matron" or "Jungfrau." However, the men are characterized by their occupation, either as "Student," "Hofmann," or "Soldat." The difference between the descriptions shows how the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* values social etiquette and views gender roles in Germany during the 17th century. These roles are applied equally in the conversation games through the implementation of didactic methods as demonstrated by Karin Wurst in her article "The Utility of Play or the Enchantment of Instruction and Cultural Encounters." <sup>2</sup> She describes the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* as "the instructional model of the Horatian dictum *prodesse et delectare* at play [that] renders the useful pleasant in an encounter with [foreign] cultural practice [and] prepares the learners for material encounters with others. These encounters with foreign cultural

practices represent a form of ‘situated learning’ [that] examine[s] this sensory form of learning through interactive multidirectional games.”<sup>3</sup> Christian Meierhofer also states so that “für jeden Leser etwas Passendes und Unterhaltsames zu finden ist...verfolgt Harsdorffer in erster Linie die horazische Doppelfunktion des *prodesse et delectare*.”<sup>4</sup> Like Wurst, Meierhofer believes that there is an intended purpose of combining enjoyment and engagement in learning by utilizing the instructional model of the Horatian *prodesse et delectare* coined by the Roman poet Horace, meaning “to please and instruct,” that is seen critically in the *Gesprächspiele*. By expanding on Wurst’s article, I analyze situated learning, experiential learning, and discursive learning and its relation to the integration of cultural practices on the education of social etiquette in early modern German society. Four conversation plays, “Die Buchstaben,” “Das lebendige Schachspiel,” “Vom halben Umbkreiß,” and “Die Tugendsterne” serve as the key examples for this study.

Karin Wurst associates conversation games with examples of “situated learning,” a learning theory named by Jean Lave, who argues that learning is rooted within “activity, context and culture in a communal context.”<sup>5</sup> Wurst further explains this didactic method by defining it as “the utility of play and the enchantment of instruction [that is] achieved by the plethora of varied cultural practices assembled, described, and depicted in in the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*’s pages. The pleasurable aspects of the activities and the lively interaction of the players in the *Gesprächspiele* create a conducive, affective environment for seemingly effortless learning and the acculturation of conduct.”<sup>6</sup> The communal context is then exemplified “through the interaction of players that creates an affective environment.”<sup>7</sup> The combination of learning through an activity in a communal context creates an ideal situated learning experience through integrating multiple senses.

In the fifth volume of the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, the conversation game “die Buchstaben” serves as an example of this learning theory in a multi-sensory process. It begins with Reymund discussing the importance of “vorerzählte Lehrarten ...welche man die Ausbildung nennen möchte...will ich mich zu Fortsetzung so beliebtes Gesprächs unterfangen die drei Gerätschaftskünste Spielweis auszubilden.”<sup>8</sup> Understanding education and how to educate oneself are important, in order to be able to play the conversation games, but the explanation behind them are also seen as important. “Die drei Gerätschaftskünste Spielweise” are introduced as “Sprachkunst,” “Vernunftkunst,” and “Redkunst” that are necessary for this society because they represent how people can converse effectively. Reymund says, “dem Menschen gegeben die Gnad zu reden, mit Vernunft zu reden, und zierlich zu reden.”<sup>9</sup> The traits as an educated speaker are to speak with grace, reason and politeness, which are seen as a science due to their importance and contribution to speech rhetoric. Equipped with these arts, one can utilize the appropriate rhetorical techniques in speech to articulate and lead a conversation, such that the audience or conversation partner will then respect the individual as an educated speaker. Reymund mentions, “Man betrachte Menschen der Stumm oder ohne Verstand und vorrisch ist, so wird man ersehen, wie diese Gnadengaben von unbegreiflicher Wichtigkeit zu achten.”<sup>10</sup> He describes a man without these traits as “miserable”<sup>11</sup> and uneducated; further emphasizing the importance of “Gnadengaben von unbegreiflicher Wichtigkeit” and the development of social etiquette in the speaker and how to hold a conversation appropriately. Christina Frei also states that “Harsdörffer reiterate[s] the art of ‘correct’ conversation and ‘proper’ conduct” which further demonstrates the importance of rhetoric in a social context.<sup>12</sup> Rhetoric is then part of how the conversational players can demonstrate their education and communicate appropriately.

“Die Buchstaben” then transitions to the actual conversation game, which is meant for children. Although intended for a younger audience, it teaches the older audience the importance of the alphabet as a beginning step towards speech rhetoric. Reymund affirms this by saying, “Das erste nun so ein Kind zu lernen beginnet sindt die Buchstaben nachmals die Sylben dann die ganzen Wörter.”<sup>13</sup> By teaching children the alphabet, they not only learn to make words, but are also exposed to new vocabulary. The more words the children learn, the greater vocabulary they have, which then advances the children to a larger acquisition of language. The more language that the children acquires, the more sophisticated the children’s language acquisition becomes. Language sophistication can lead to the development of rhetoric and the usage of the three “Gerättschaftskünste.”

The letters of the alphabet are illustrated in the fifth volume of the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, where the vowels are introduced first, since they are the most regularly used letters in words, as well as the easiest to pronounce phonetically, especially for children (see Figure 1, below). The letter “A” is naturally first and is not written as an actual letter; rather it is drawn as a picture of an eel. It reads, “Aal, ein gekrümmter Aal” (a curved eel), which is an exact description of the picture. By having this visual input, the child or the reader can contextualize the letter through its visual association. The child can also repeat out loud the description to help remember how the letter “A” sounds and that it looks like an eel curved into the shape of an “A.” The use of word “aal” also emphasizes the aural component of the letter because it emphasizes the sound of “A” by having it elongated and heavily stressed with a softer “l” sound at the end. This multi-sensory engagement uses the oral skills from the output of speech, the input of the visual, and the aural skills through the representation and retrieval of the letter.

“Die Buchstaben” additionally engages the reader when each individual player receives the task of forming a word. They choose a letter and try constructing a word. Although there are no actual examples of the words that they construct, it is clear that they have done so when Vespasian says, “Man kan wunderliche Sache herausbringen.”<sup>14</sup> Learning words in new ways can construct “wonderful things” through “playing” with the letters to form words with pictures. Children can engage their skills to begin their education with the letters and also begin learning vocabulary, grammar, and inevitably speech rhetoric.

Wurst comments on “die Buchstaben” when she says, “children are visually oriented and like nothing more than pictures, images facilitate learning, making it efficient, quick, and pleasurable.”<sup>15</sup> These three points establish effective learning that contributes to the success of situated learning. Learning begins with an activity in setting of the context, as seen by how children would learn their letters as an activity and the association of this activity to the environment. The pictures that are chosen are easily identifiable by children. Many of them are animals, body parts, and various items that they may have already encountered. For example, the letter “U” is illustrated through an open pocket watch. It is very likely that children have seen this item in their household or used by different members in the household. The association between the object and child is then clear, resulting in a quick correlation to the letter. It is then further emphasized by the illustration of the pocket watch, where children not only learn the letter but are also able then to use what they have learned essentially to draw the letter. The act of drawing the pocket watch results in an engaging and entertaining activity for children because they can now access their other talents and formulate their own version of the letter through artwork. The association between the picture and the letter is further strengthened by utilizing the

physical skill and introducing the child to view letters as pieces of a word that can create an artistic masterpiece of a word. Not only does this entertain the children but they now learn the letter through activity, context, and also culture in a constructive environment. Wurst also states that learning is now “sweetened” by rewarding the children with “toys and sweets.”<sup>16</sup> The concept of positive reinforcement is applied to children, similarly to teaching dogs new tricks and rewarding them with a treat, which she states “strengthens the link” in learning. By children creating their own artistic concept of the individual letters and being rewarded for their efforts, they associate learning the alphabet with as a positive and enjoyable activity.

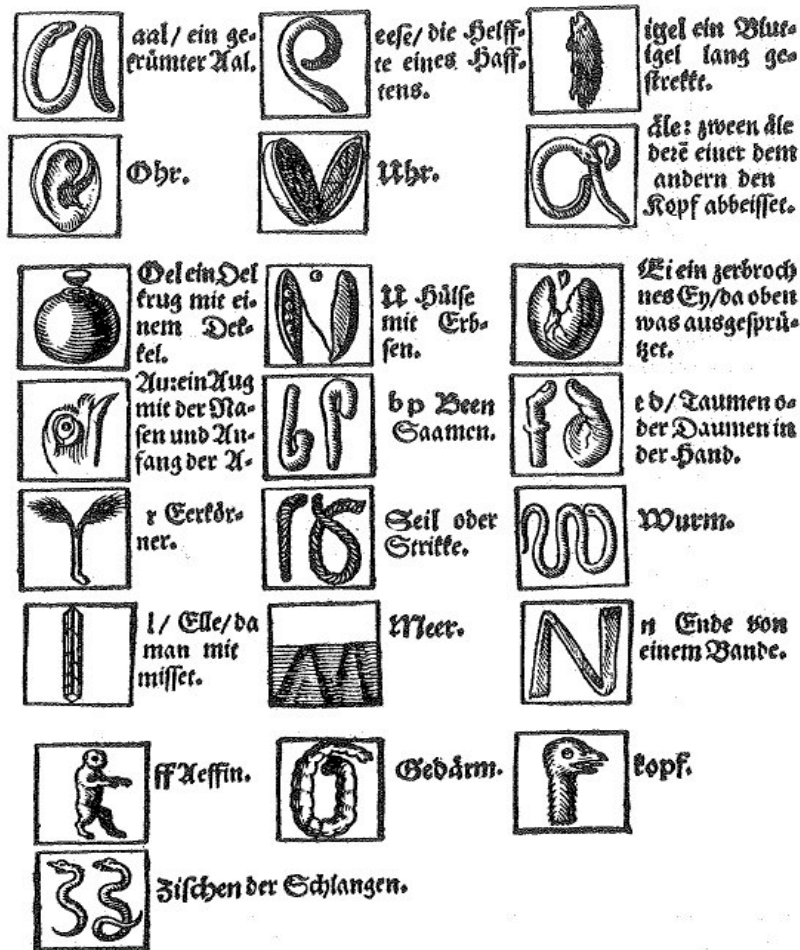


Figure 1: “The Alphabet,” Harsdörffer, 68-71.

The situated learning illustrated in “die Buchstaben” results in a multi-sensory education for children, and it also teaches the readers how to educate their own children. The previous explanation of the *Gerätschaftskünste Spielweise* explains the reasoning behind the conversation game and its importance in developing children’s reading skills early to be presentable in society. The readers are in fact a part of the situated learning by teaching children through this method and understanding the importance of education in society. The game also informs them of a different way of teaching that engages different skills that is not rote memorization of letters and

repetition of writing letters correctly. It gives the children a chance to explore the letters by developing their own interest in language, as well as introducing a different approach to learning letters.

Another didactic method seen in *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* is experiential learning, a learning theory coined by David Kolb, which he describes as “direct sense experience and in-context action as the primary source of learning.”<sup>17</sup> It differs from situated learning because it puts the learners into the realm of “learning by doing.”<sup>18</sup> An example of this learning theory is cooking because it is not taught through rules and books, since the learners acquire the skill through the experience of cooking. “Das lebendige Schachspiel” from volume two of the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* represents experiential learning that is already seen from the name of “the living chess game” and how the readers learn by playing as the chess pieces.

Degenwert explains the history of chess and the invention of which was created for Queen Catherine in France by an Italian.<sup>19</sup> He informs readers about the use of colors and clothing in the game, which will later perform a role when they play it. He further correlates the game to more philosophical ideas, “die fürsichtige Natur hat den Schlaf zu dess Menschen Ruhe erschaffen: Aber seine Gedanken, welche ohne Auffhör bemüssigt sein, können auch durch die Traum zur Arbeit gelangen.”<sup>20</sup> The philosophy behind this is that it is important to have ambition because it contributes to creating an effective work ethic. Chess represents then a working goal to fuel ambition in people because of the competitiveness to win. By telling the readers about the history of chess, it not only teaches them about chess but also acknowledges the foreign culture that is now being integrated into society.

“Das lebendige Schachspiel” can also be seen as an art form, a performance of the body, because the movements can be seen as a “Danzspiel.”<sup>21</sup> It introduces the art of dancing as a way to learn chess that allows young men and women to interact intimately, while learning the game of chess. Harsdörffer explains the significance of dance and chess in the terms of learning appropriate societal norms in these contexts.

Die Lauffer mit Welscher Kleidung unterschieden sein: die Jungfrauen mit gezwisten Haaren...Ferner sollen die Springer beiderseits in Französischer Kleidung von den anderen unterschieden sein...mit Federn auf dem Haupt geziert und zum Danzen und Springen staffirt.<sup>22</sup>

These descriptions illustrate the rules of the game and the separation of the two teams by gender and their clothing. Women are meant to have their hair up with feathers, while men wear distinctive French clothing. These types of dress show the appropriate clothing needed for a dance for the aristocrats, as they are dressed formally and very well. All the men have their swords on their left side and women have their fans in their hands. The picture (see Figure 2, below) further exemplifies the teachings of social etiquette by the man allowing the woman to go first and giving her a bow.



Figure 2: "The Dance," Harsdörffer, 98.

Politeness is important as one of the female players, Cassandra says: "so küsset an der an die Stell tretende, dem mit Höflichkeit von dannen weichende die Hand." <sup>23</sup> Presenting the hand shows respect for the player when they have to move into their spot and as a way to ask the other player politely to leave their spot, similarly to how one invites a person to dance. Wurst also mentions how "detailed verbal instructions of the allegorical attire distinguishing the living game pieces...teaches graceful movements and gestures." <sup>24</sup> Adhering to the rules results in learning about social etiquette on how to ask for a dance but also on asking appropriate questions. Wurst says, "the lost item can be reclaimed by answering questions on the topic of chess." <sup>25</sup> The lost item refers to the rules that mention: "welches unter dem Spielgenossen an seinem/ oder eines andern Anordnung irret (wie leichtlich bestehen kan) muss so bald ein Pfand von sich geben/ und nachmals widerumb an sich lösen." <sup>26</sup> The consequence of making an error results in losing an item, which is naturally an example of negative punishment due to the error causing an unwanted loss. As she states, the item can be "reclaimed" through questions about chess that reinforces that the main purpose of the game is to learn about chess. The inquiry about chess when a mistake is made supplies feedback on the mistake and engages the active learner to correct their mistake.

Experiential learning takes place in "das lebendige Schachspiel" through the uses of kinesthesia. Corporal movements are seen through the rules of the game that embody the reader to engage in chess as a chess piece. The body must move to the appropriate place and manner that is allocated by the chess piece's role. For example, pawns can only move one to two squares forward, bishops can only move diagonally for limitless squares, while queens are allowed to move in every direction. To abide by these rules and to play effectively to win, the body has to be able to function as a chess piece while mentally calculating their moves, in order to help their queen win the game. This encompasses not only kinesthetic knowledge, but also being actively

aware of the rules and using logic to win the game, showing how multitasking is crucial. Knowledge is then acquired through the multitasking that requires several senses to be active at once that then helps the player in the game learn the rules of chess by doing. The experience of learning creates a different atmosphere of chess because one learns the rules, must remember the rules, and be able to act them out. The effort that goes into playing this conversation game is much more than simply playing the chessboard; it creates physical memory through the kinesthetic action of being a chess piece.

Enacting the game of chess through dance, the physical movement of the pieces creates a social atmosphere. A chess game requires many pieces, which means this conversation game requires several people in formal attire to distinguish themselves as certain chess pieces. This atmosphere strongly resembles a social party where usually there is dancing and speaking to other people of the aristocratic class. The social element is also critical. This provides an opportunity for young people to be able to interact with the opposite sex and engage in conversation. The conversation game also observes these proprieties, since the teams are divided by gender where they must play against each other. They naturally have to abide by certain norms of social etiquette, such as an invitation to dance, which is also part of the *Schachspiel*. These elements work together, in order to teach the rules of chess and prepare the learners for social gatherings that require interaction with several people. Experiential learning integrates both of these categories in “das lebendige Schachspiel” through the interaction of logic and memorization of chess and through the physical movement of dance that is elaborated social codes of dress and decorum. By learning by doing, the players have now formed a deeper understanding of chess and enjoyed a fun experience of interacting with the opposite sex in a social gathering.

Discursive learning is also displayed in one of the conversation games in Harsdorffer’s *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, “von halben Umbkreis” and “die Musik.” Richard Young explains this type of didactic methodology:

The practice is the construction and reflection of social realities through actions that invoke identity, ideology, belief and power involv[ing] repetition, but what participants do in a practice is not necessarily to repeat their own performance; instead a person may perform a practice for the first time in their life but through direct or indirect observation.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, a discursive learning emphasizes the importance of practice and the learning of various discourses, in order to enhance the learning of one concentrated field of discourse.

In the “von halben Umbkreis” and “die Musik,” discursive learning is first observed when the conversational players have to sing a ‘praise’ for each season. These songs describe the seasons through metaphors of nature. For example, “Lob des Frühlings” describes spring as “Nun blicket und blinket die lieblichte Zeit der glänzede Frühling kommt fröhlich zu singen” and also as “die Erde/die Bäume/ die Luft und die Wäld bestimmen ein Liedlein den Frühling zu gefallen.”<sup>28</sup> The elements of nature provide vivid imagery of spring and the new life that is blossoming. The feeling of happiness is also seen and the excitement for this new birth of nature from the combination with the earth, the trees, the air, and the forest that contribute to the awakening of the season, spring. According to Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, the usage of the “Oberstimme” for the “Lob des Frühlings” is the highest vocal pitch that can illustrate the first cry of a newborn coming

into this world and declaring its birth. The metaphors of nature and birth with music create a figurative component to the discourse of music that is then practiced through singing.

In “die Musik,” the conversation players describe the purpose of music again with the discursive approach. Vespasian states:

dass ich ein Spiel von den Musikspielen sehen bei welchem man das ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la ausgetheilt und weil alle alldar Anwesende der Singkunst kundig waren/ hat der/ so das Spiel geführt...und anfangen zu singe ut, mi, re und ein jedes so lang als ein halber oder ganzer oder viertel Schlag gewäret...so lang selbe Noten gelautet/stehen bleiben...haben die Pfand mit Beantwortung etlicher Fragen von der Music wieder lösen müssen.<sup>29</sup>

He refers back to the game “von halben Umbkreis” with the praise songs as an initial step to learn about *Singkunst* through learning the different notes and how musical scores should be sung as part of the answers of *Pfand*. They continue their game by asking one another questions about what they should learn about music. Vespasian suggests a question about music and how it compares to bird songs or the sounds of water that are both related to nature.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, he asks questions that require opinions in the sense of whether the other players like the natural voice or the artistic instrumental sound.<sup>31</sup> These questions thus incorporate issues of artistic taste and being able to justify one’s preferences. It also further integrates other topics of interests to create a vibrant discussion about the discourse of music. Additionally, Vespasian brings in another discourse through the four elements of the body. He explains:

Die waare Ursach solcher wundersamen Wirkungen zu achten. Unser Leben ist nicht anders als seine künstliche Music, welches in einer rechtgleichen Ungleichheit verfasst ist. Ein Teil desselben ist subtil als die Lebensgeister die Oberstimm und das Feuer: oder andere Mittelteil etwas grosser als das Geblüt/ die hohe Stimme/ und die Luft: Ferner gleich das Fleisch der gemeinen Stimm und dem Wasser: Dann letztlich die Gebeine der Grundstimme und der Erden. Diese Ähnlichkeit beursacht meines Erachtens die allgemeine Zuneigung zu der Music/ welche gleichsam ein Vorgeschmack.<sup>32</sup>

Through his metaphors of the corporeal elements and music, he suggests that music, like the body, is harmonious. It works together to build the embodiment of music, similarly how body parts create a body. They all have a specific role that constructs an essential part of the whole. For example, he takes the corporal elements of the spirit, the blood, the flesh, and the bones and compares them to the vocal range of music. Without one of the corporal elements, the body would be incomplete and lack a certain role. The spirit is essential because it personifies the body to express the mind and emotions that cannot be presented by the other three elements, similarly the Oberstimme or soprano is seen as the soul of the music. The highest vocal range is also known as the head voice because it resonates in the mind rather than in the chest, which can also be understood as the purest form of the vocalization of one’s spirit. The other metaphors highlight the different voices that the body has and where different vocal registers are focused in the body. Harsdörffer’s thorough understanding of music is explicitly seen through these two conversation games. He effectively uses discursive learning by implementing discourses of nature and corporal elements as metaphors with music. He engages readers to create a pedagogical schema of how they can learn the importance of music with connections made from these metaphors. He furthermore engages experiential learning because he provides the readers the opportunity to read the musical notation of the songs that they are meant to sing. By being able to produce what are they learning, they are engaging in “learning by doing” through the experience of singing with



output of their knowledge. This also creates another level of experiential learning because it works with their earlier discussion and reinforces what they learned through the vocal chords that creates physical memory. The physical memory of the vocal cord strengthens the integration of learning with the input and output of knowledge.

Although there is a brief introduction to the topic of music in the conversation game, the music was first sung, then discussed, which is very effective because the readers are learning by singing. Thus, they can reflect on the experience of singing and then be able to discuss it. The combination of the 'doing' and 'discussing' adheres to the adage that practice makes perfect. They learn through singing and listening about music and its resonance. These several elements illustrate the harmony of the seasons, nature, and corporal elements with music and create an enjoyable and entertaining environment for effective learning. The harmonious attributes demonstrate the balance of music and the importance of music in society. To be able to speak about music and perform it illustrates the desirable accomplishments, and how players are able to present the music in a different light and discuss it with these discourses.

The *Tugendsterne*, a conversation game in the fifth volume of the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, captures all of the three didactic methodologies: situated, experiential, and discursive learning. It is divided into two parts, where the first part presents the actual conversation game that talks about the virtues in detail, while the second part focuses on the performance with the musical notation. It begins with Reymund discussing the background to the *Tugendsterne* that illustrates foreign culture being introduced into German society through the metaphorical aspect between virtues and astrology. He explains:

Welches Tugend und Redlichkeit nicht zur Grundfeste hat/ in die Länge nicht ruhig und in Frieden verbleiben könne. Diesem nach habe ich entschlossen einen Aufzug von den VII. Tugenden aufzusetzen/ welche gleichsam die VII. Planeten oder Wandelsterne sind...Weil aber Glareanus die VII. Stimmen oder Töne der Music mit den VII. Planeten und ihren Eigenschaften vereinbaret.<sup>33</sup>

The combination of the virtues with the planets and the music portray different discourses that are usually not related to one another to enrich one's learning and education. The conversational game begins with the first virtue, Faith whose astrological sign is the sun and the musical tone is D for Dorian or (also known as *re*.) These three interact in the following way: Verfinsterter Herzen/schlaffende Sinne nun wachet! Erwachet! Strecket euch fort beschauet den purpor/ glänzenden Ort/ dass jetzo in eurer Seele beginne/ die Himmlische Sonne durch glaubige Wonne...<sup>34</sup> Faith or *Glaub* is an essential virtue as seen through its analogy to the sun, which governs the Earth and is critical to life, since it is the time when people are productive and allows for increased awareness through light. It is symbolized as a religious awakening in the lines: "dass jetzo in eurer Seele beginne/ die Himmlische Sonne durch glaubige Wonne" that further reiterates the focus on faith as an important virtue for the soul.<sup>35</sup> It creates lightness in the soul that can now access a higher source of being and access to the ultimate paradise of Heaven. When sun is the "Seel so nehrt," it reaches a higher enlightenment, and Faith then nourishes the soul.<sup>36</sup> The soul needs faith because humans "ohn Glauben sich quälen."<sup>37</sup> The torment of the soul is the ultimate punishment, where one cannot escape and needs to endure a Hell; however, the soul can be 'saved' and 'freed' from such torment through faith. The comparison to the sun shows how without the sun, the Earth would be a very dark and cold place. There would be less productivity and advancement without light and development because it

nourishes people, plants, and other forms of life. It also creates happiness due to the light exposure that is positive compared to darkness that can be a melancholic and depressing mode. Additionally, Degenwert explains the musical tone as “prachtig und majestatisch” and “die Landschaft kan sein von Kirchen und Weinbergen.”<sup>38</sup> His words emphasize how this tone is higher and has a more magical component. Faith is a virtue that needs to be actively sought after, because the benefits of faith for leading a moral life are viewed as wonderful elements. Faith is also associated with a color. Vespasian comments that the color of Faith should be *Feuerfarb* due to its association with the sun.<sup>39</sup> This flaming amber color infuses the color with golden hues and the primary color of red, highlighting how faith is essential to living.

Harsdörffer moreover inserts an engraving that depicts Faith on her chariot flying through the clouds (see Figure 3, below). As illustrated, the two lions pull her chariot, which Vespasian comments, “die Tiere welche vorbesagten Sonnenwagen ziehen, mögen Löwen sein: weil die Sonne im Löwen am brünstigsten und dieses Tier auch sonst das stärke und treffechste ist.”<sup>40</sup> The lions are the strongest and most splendid of animals, who, in turn, serve the virtue of Faith. This can imply that even the strongest animals in the kingdom submit to this higher being and set aside their pride to service Faith. It implies that anybody can become faithful to a divine power and be able to exhibit and embody this virtue. The Löwe additionally is a zodiac sign for the month of August that associates itself with the Sun, hence furthering the importance of the virtue, Faith.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 3: “Faith,” Harsdörffer, 286.

The engraving also contains writing on the chariot’s wheels. Angelica explains, “die Sonne oder der Glaub auf einem herrlichen Siegwagen sitzen dessen zwei Räder der Unglaub und Aberglaub benamet sein mögen.”<sup>42</sup> Their two extremes shown here result from faith. One is the lack of faith, also known as disbelief. The other shows too much belief, which then results in

superstition. Harsdörffer illustrates that he fully considered the potential backlash that readers might have from his emphasis on the virtue of faith. He illustrates that this virtue, and all of the following ones, must be balanced, similar to how the chariot is balanced by two wheels. There needs to be a middle ground for faith, in order for it to not be an extreme because there can be consequences of each. Lack of faith is naturally discouraged because it can lead to an unhappy and tormented life, as well as a life without any of the morals valued in this society. Too much faith overindulges it. Faith needs to be regulated, in order to achieve a good and balanced virtue.

Through various combinations of discourses, Harsdörffer relates *Tugendsterne* to situated and discursive learning. The situated learning establishes the conversation in a communal context, where each conversation player looks at the poem and the engraving of the virtue and analyzes it. They identify the virtue through previous information about the definition of what it represents and through different discourses. This exchange of knowledge and ideas creates an effective discussion that requires a higher order of thinking and appropriate commentary that is being taught to the readers. The visuals provided through the artwork also create another level of situated learning, since they engage the reader to look and reflect on the components of the text. This further supports the discursive learning, because the *Tugendsterne* integrate moral values, music, art, colors, poetry, and astronomy as well as astrology. This expansive and rich discourses permit readers to learn through various means. They do not learn one subject through rote memorization or in a standardized way; instead they are learning through development of correlations of topics with other topics. For example, learning a musical tone D with the astronomy of the sun teaches a different view of music and the sun. They are no longer two very different topics because they are correlated through the metaphor of how the brightness of the sun can reflect the 'brightness' of the tone of D. It then personifies the balanced virtue of Faith on how it brings the light and positivity of the sun, and also the light and majestic tone of the D. Additionally, the tone of D brings in an aural element of learning the 'sound' of virtue, which accommodates aural learners. The color and artwork provide visual learners an opportunity to correlate colors and a personification of Faith. Furthermore, Faith is represented as a woman with her hair tied up in a bun, who is facing the cloudy skies. Visual learners can perhaps be able to interpret how the chariot is moving away from white and full to darker and stormy clouds as a symbolism of how Faith is a matronly figure, who can help someone navigate these dark clouds.

The experiential learning takes place in the *Tugendsterne* through the performance. The singing of the poems is combined with a symphonic piece where Harsdörffer explains what instruments are needed and in which tone they need to be played. Singing is a completely different discourse, since it engages reading, vocalization, and adapting the voice to the appropriate tone and being able to enunciate the word carefully, in order to be understood. Moreover, the addition of the symphony requires the skill set to adapt to the music's harmony and sing conjoined and in synchronization with the instrumental music. The symphonists also need to be able to adjust their tempo and the rhythm to accommodate the singer. This addition of the symphonists combines another element, whereby people who cannot sing well, can play an instrument. Harsdörffer adds in "das Reimmass des folgenden..." that shows how the song should be sung with a certain rhythm.<sup>43</sup> These thorough instructions for the singing allow the vocalist to learn and experience virtue in a new manner. The combination of all three didactic methodologies creates a learning environment in which every type of learner is welcome. It engages all the senses that allow learners to choose or incorporate all the senses to learn about the virtues. However, the virtues are not the only thing that is being taught. Readers are also

learning about various discourses to reflect their education, and being able to ask appropriate questions and sociable through the conversation game. The integration of the three didactic methodologies allows the reader to learn in five sensual ways and have a rooted understanding of how conversation on these discourses can ensue.

These discourses create a lively and entertaining manner for learning. Georg Phillip Harsdörffer's *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, according to Karin Wurst, "enchant" his readers through the conversation game.<sup>44</sup> The "enchantment" is confirmed through the three didactic methodologies of situated, experiential, and discursive learning. In the introduction to the first volume of *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Harsdörffer writes, "Darvon beginnt den Spielenden zu nennen: deswegen bringt er ihm die Erstlinge der Frucht die vor der Klügelhitz so wehren Schatten sucht."<sup>45</sup> The next page shows a picture of a blooming palm tree with the motto "Nutzet und behagt Lust auf manche Art."<sup>46</sup> He clearly indicates that his purpose for the *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* is to entertain his readers and teach them that learning is pleasurable. It sheds light on how learning is not a rigid field, where one must learn facts and be able to recite them; instead learning is an enjoyable activity that can take place in a communal context with other people. They can learn through games, a fun activity, that establishes how learning can be engaging and entertaining by utilizing the five senses. Harsdörffer's progressive view in pedagogy creates an environment, where learning in a communal context can also teach appropriate social behavior and allow readers to experience it through these games.

---

<sup>1</sup> Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Teil 1, Nürnberg: Endter, 1644, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Karin Wurst, "The Utility of Play or the Enchantment of Instruction and Cultural Encounters." *Daphnis* 33, 1-2 (2004): 285-302.

<sup>3</sup> Wurst, 285.

<sup>4</sup> Harsdörffer, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Lave, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge, 1991, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Wurst, 287.

<sup>7</sup> Lave, 23.

<sup>8</sup> Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Teil 5, 65.

<sup>9</sup> Harsdörffer, 66.

<sup>10</sup> Harsdörffer, 67.

<sup>11</sup> Harsdörffer, 67.

<sup>12</sup> Christina Frei, *Gender, Pedagogy and Literary Societies in the Education of Women*, 77.

<sup>13</sup> Harsdörffer, 67.

<sup>14</sup> Harsdörffer, 71.

<sup>15</sup> Wurst, 297.

<sup>16</sup> Wurst, 298.

<sup>17</sup> David Kolb, *Experiential Learning*, 1984, 33.

<sup>18</sup> Wurst, 286.

<sup>19</sup> Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Teil 2, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Harsdörffer, 77.

<sup>21</sup> Harsdörffer, 78.

<sup>22</sup> Harsdörffer, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Harsdörffer, 83.

<sup>24</sup> Wurst, 292.

<sup>25</sup> Wurst, 292.

<sup>26</sup> Harsdörffer, 83.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Young, *Discursive Practice in Language Learning and Teaching*, Willey-Blackwell, 2009, 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Teil 2, 277-288.

<sup>29</sup> Harsdörffer, 291.

<sup>30</sup> Harsdörffer, 292.

<sup>31</sup> Harsdörffer, 292.

<sup>32</sup> Harsdörffer, 293.

<sup>33</sup> Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimme Gesprächspiele*, Teil 5, 281.

<sup>34</sup> Harsdörffer, 286.

<sup>35</sup> Harsdörffer, 286.

<sup>36</sup> Harsdörffer, 286.

<sup>37</sup> Harsdörffer, 287.

<sup>38</sup> Harsdörffer, 288.

<sup>39</sup> Harsdörffer, 287.

<sup>40</sup> Harsdörffer, 288.

<sup>41</sup> Christian Leitz. "Die Sternbilder auf dem Rechteckigen und Runden Tierkreis von Dendara." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 34, (2006): 285-318.

<sup>42</sup> Harsdörffer, 288.

<sup>43</sup> Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Teil 8, 641.

<sup>44</sup> Wurst, 285.

<sup>45</sup> Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*, Teil 1, 8-9.

<sup>46</sup> Harsdörffer, 10.

## Works Cited

- Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*. New York: Urizen, 1978.
- Frei, Christina. "Gender, Pedagogy, and Literary Societies: The Education of Women in Georg Philipp Harsdörffer's *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*." Diss. Davis/CA, 2002.
- Haar, James. *The Tugendsterne of Harsdörffer and Staden: An Exercise in Musical Humanism*. Dallas: American Institute of Musicology, 1965.
- Harsdörffer, Georg Philipp. *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele*. 8 Vols Rpt. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1968.
- Kolb, David A. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.
- Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge England: Cambridge, 1991.
- Leitz, Christian. "Die Sternbilder auf dem Rechteckigen und Runden Tierkreis von Dendara." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 34. (2006): 285-318.
- Rudd, Niall, ed. *Horace: Epistles, Book II and Epistle to the Pisones (Ars Poetica)*: London: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Meierhofer, Christian. *Georg Philipp Harsdörffer*. Hannover: Wehrhahn 2014.
- Wurst, Karin. "The Utility of Play or the Enchantment of Instruction and Cultural Encounters." *Foreign Encounters: Case Studies in German Literature before 1700*. Ed. Mara Wade and Glenn Ehrstine. *Daphnis*: 33. 1-2 (2004): 285-302.
- Young, Richard. *Discursive Practice in Language Learning and Teaching*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Zeller, Rosmarie. *Spiel und Konversation im Barock: Untersuchungen zu Harsdörffers Gesprächsspielen*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974.