

**THE NEW WORLD AND THE YANKEE:
EMIGRATION AS A THEME IN THE WORKS OF
JOHANNES SCHLAF**

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Commencing with the appearance of *Papa Hamlet* in 1889, which was authored in conjunction with Arno Holz, the range of Johannes Schlaf's productive life spans a period of more than fifty years and concludes with the author's death in 1941 at nearly eighty years of age. During this time Schlaf composed an immense body of literature consisting of nearly thirty prose works, an equal number of critical essays and monographs, eighteen collections of poetry, a half dozen dramas, and twice that number of translated collections of works by Whitman, Verhaeren, Balzac and Zola.

Schlaf's composition of the monograph *Walt Whitman* (1904) and his translation of *Leaves of Grass*, which appeared three years thereafter, as well as other works focusing on the American poet manifest their author's concern with a subject which recurs throughout the corpus of his work. This theme is treated in Schlaf's attention to the phenomenon of America and the nature of her inhabitants, both native born Yankees and German immigrants.

Schlaf never emigrated nor is he known to have ever visited North America. Moreover his knowledge of English was surprisingly poor.¹ Therefore an analysis of Schlaf's work with regard to the author's expression of attitudes toward the New World does not reveal judgement based upon first-hand knowledge and experience, but rather beliefs, and in some cases prejudices, associated with stereotypes which were widely known by the public and readily called to the mind of Schlaf's audience by allusion. The nature of these may be noted as appreciation is gained for the technique

whereby aspects of a rich and diverse subject are incorporated within his writings.

In this study of Whitman, Schlaf deals with the nature of the American historical experience and argues that events of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of an era for the New World. The abolition of slavery and the preservation of the Union as a result of the Civil War constituted the attainment of a state of spiritual freedom for the republic which was no longer restrained by "Kulturprämissen." This time saw the emergence of a new being, "der von der Historie befreite junge Yankee."² A description is given of the typical American then engendered:

ein junger, ein neuer, ein harmonisierter Mensch; ein neuer Adam gleichsam, von dem Fluch alter Verbände und Schuld losgelöst und mit mächtigstem Steam des ganzen Wesens staunend, mit dithyramischem Jubel und in der Vollgesundheit herrlichster Barbarei in eine neue, junge, frische und werdende Welt tretend; hinein in das grosse Brausen und Jubeln neuer und unerhörter Anfänge. (WW, pp. 12-13)

That ecstatic exuberance expressed in Schlaf's conception of the American is not sustained in the author's estimation of men of commerce nor in his contemplation of the phenomenon of the metropolis. Conscienceless corruption and crime, ill health, materialism, and selfishness permeate the atmosphere of the industrial city and are predominating conditions there. From the German viewpoint Schlaf describes what is to be found.

Überall, im Geschäft, in der Kirche, im öffentlichen Leben herrschen Heuchelei, Gemeinheit, Gewissenlosigkeit und alle jene abscheulichen Untugenden, die wir Europäer mit dem Begriffe des Yankee zu verbinden gewohnt sind. (WW, p. 14)

This state of affairs extant in America is a consequence of the pursuit of economic gain; implicit is the assumption

of Naturalism to the effect that the human being is a product of his political, economic, and social milieu. In another context this finds expression. The central figure of the novel *Das dritte Reich* (1900) is Dr. Emanuel Liesegang, a lonely, sensitive, and cerebral visionary who is given to observing the pulse of human life with which the streets and sidewalks of Berlin teem. Liesegang notes that when passersby adhere to the dictates of fashion or concede to the desire for comfort in dress and no longer wear clothes indicative of their occupation these people become indistinguishable from one another in appearance. Individuals are reduced to obscurity in an anonymous mass by the operation of economic forces such as those which operate within the framework of the American political system.

All diese Menschheit so alt, klug, fertig und selbstbewusst, amerikanisch, demokratisch. Demokratisch! Ja! —
Die demokratische Gleichheit und Gleichberechtigung aller, mit dem Prinzip der freien Konkurrenz.³

Those qualities which Schlaf attributes to the Yankee are illustrated more concretely in aspects of character and style evidenced by several figures in Schlaf's work. These are ascribed traits and mannerisms which the author designates as typically American in nature. The novel *Peter Boies Freite* (1903), which chronicles the development of a young man toward the accomplishment of his intention to emigrate, contains in the figure of the minor character, Erich Massmann, just such a person. An acquaintance of Boie from his student days, Massmann is visited at his comfortable villa near Hamburg where he deals in art. He is described as clever and conceited, oblivious to his faults, in the same terms we have seen employed above.

...es gab wohl so leicht keinen bewussteren oder gar selbstbewussteren, fortgeschritteneren, konsequenteren und fertigeren 'Modernen' als ihn. Er spielte sich

gern etwas auf den Yankee hinaus, und sein Ideal war in jeder Hinsicht so etwas, das er Amerikanismus hiess.⁴

A cultivated dilettante, "ein Gourmand und Lebenskünstler aus dem FF" (PBF, p. 63), Massmann is intolerably affected and intersperses English words in his conversation. He has married despite the resolutions of his youth to the contrary—out of practicality, he concedes. In response to a question of Peter's he answers, "Kinder? — Never! — Kinder sind so unbequem, Kleiner" (PBF, p. 64).

Schlaf's conception of Americanism quite evidently involves excessive sensuality. This quality is evidenced by Massmann when with great pride he shows Peter his collection of erotic photographs and speaks of the details of love, demonstrating his "verfeinerten und kultivierten Geschlechtsgegnuss" (PBF, pp. 70-71) and relating intimacies from the marital bed in an effort to make a convert to his style of life. The deleterious consequence of such sexual behavior is substantiated by the condition of Massmann's wife. At a distance her face presents a "kultivierte Weltdamenexterieur" (PBF, p. 67), which however upon closer observation betrays the traces of "einer blasierten und allzu erfahrenen Sinnlichkeit" (PBF, p. 73). That this quality is also characteristically American may be discerned by consideration of the description which Schlaf provides of the sexes in America during the early nineteenth century: "Die Jünglinge sind verschmitzt, geschminkt, unlustig und unfähig zu ihrer Mutterpflicht; die Männer blasiert und korrumpiert in jeder Hinsicht" (WW, p. 14).

Other personal qualities which Schlaf interprets as characteristically American are evidenced in the temperament and behavior of Emanuel Liesegang's colleague, the chemist Conrad Horn. Upon Liesegang who is reflective and brooding by nature, Horn exerts an impulsive influence which is actively productive. Horn is ingenious and clever, strongwilled, and confident; "er ist praktisch wie ein Yankee" (DdR, p. 47).

However, upon becoming disillusioned or suffering a set-back, he becomes hardened in his single-minded self-assurance to the point of rudeness and brutality. When Liesegang falls hopelessly in love with Horn's fiancée, the beautiful Olga Wrede, Horn sarcastically torments his comrade with repeated allegations and reminders that this had been predicted from the time of Liesegang's first introduction to the young lady. Horn's unrelenting and uncompromising individuality lend him, we read, "eine geradezu yankeehafte Kälte und Rücksichtslosigkeit" (DdR, p. 274).

Among Schlaf's best known prose works are the tales of the *Dingsda-Geschichten*, which include the collection *Tantchen Mohnhaupt und Anderes* (1914). Here is to be found a short tale entitled "Frau Bornmüller" which constitutes a character sketch of a middle-aged widow by that name, who maintains a small "Gastwirtschaft" in the mythical village of Thalstedt bei Dingsda where the narrator stays during the period of his visit. Although tucked away in a fairly remote provincial area, Frau Bornmüller's establishment has not gone untouched by the commercial influence of the New World which has pervaded even this distant and little-known place and left its imprint on the life and character of its inhabitants. By means of a number of small and seemingly insignificant details the author conveys a feeling for the inconspicuous presence of the American giant; through the window of the front room where the customers sit and converse the sun falls upon an opened magazine, striking an advertisement for American petroleum;⁵ for various landowners in the area Frau Bornmüller orders every month fifty pounds of American pork lard (TM, p. 99); she has relatives abroad and in their company feels at home even in "Neuyork" [sic] (TM, p. 98). But it is in the woman's characteristically shrewd and opportunistic self-aggrandizement that she is revealed as peculiarly American.

Ja, sogar den Umstand, dass sich die Leute hier
manchmal ein bisschen über sie lustig machten,

wusste sie, ohne jegliche Empfindlichkeit, mit grosser Schlaueit zu ihrem Vorteil auszunutzen. Es war kostbar zu sehen, mit was für einem sonderbar dummhörigen Gesicht sie bei solchen Gelegenheiten schweigen und lächeln konnte, wenn die Leute sie gelegentlich mal für dumm verkaufen wollten. Sie war wirklich eine Witwe, die sich ihrer Haut zu wehren wusste. Man hätte sie geradezu einen weiblichen Yankee nennen können. (TM, p. 93)

Schlaf's interest in America was shared by his contemporaries, who had a vague regard for geography and envisioned America as a land beset with danger from pestilence and fire.⁶ The association of fierce Indians and the rugged wilderness was influenced by the works of James Fenimore Cooper, to whom Schlaf acknowledges his debt.⁷ A glowingly idyllic report of farming in Missouri written by Gottfried Duden generated considerable public misinformation⁸, but an accurate fact of common knowledge was the absence in America of royalty or a repressive government as well the state church. Visions of wealth to be gained abroad were fostered by that money sent from the New World to relatives at home.

The enthusiasm for America is documented by several great emigrations. These took place mostly from 1840 to 1889 and reached particularly large proportions in the years 1854, 1873, and 1882, at which times Germans totaled one-third to one-half of all immigrants admitted to the United States and amounted to more than six hundred thousand people.⁹

The historical causes for emigration from Germany in the nineteenth century are to be found primarily in the following: religious differences, bad harvests and food shortages during the late 40's and 50's, unemployment and economic hardship, flight from a repressive political atmosphere and the abortive revolution of 1848, and the loss of land as a consequence of overpopulation, foreclosure, and subdivision (K, p. 47f).

Attracted in part by Duden's words, German immigrants

from all walks of life settled during the early nineteenth century primarily in Missouri and the Middle West where they devoted themselves largely to agriculture. About the middle of the century the nature of the German immigrant population and its interest evidenced a change as laborers and mechanics as well as small businessmen such as tailors, brewers, and tradesmen, motivated by economic considerations, landed on American shores together with individuals moved by political ideals (K, pp. 47-48).

A classic description of the three periods of German immigration to America suggests that the early settlers of the Middle West were succeeded at the middle of the century by newcomers who sought urban surroundings and occupations and that these were followed after 1866 by members of the working class with greater education than that of their predecessors (F, p. 588).

Whatever the German immigrant was, he was not a pioneer.¹⁰ Indeed it has been argued that Duden did German immigrants a disservice by encouraging settlement on the Middle West frontier where they encountered a life for which they were temperamentally unsuited. The harshness of hand-to-mouth existence, a characteristic desire for permanent land occupation rather than speculation, and absence of the comforts of civilized life caused great unhappiness. The German immigrant generally had a predilection for wooded areas to which he clung tenaciously and where he made a determined effort to remain unassimilated by the native born, seldom intermarrying and demonstrating little engagement in politics (H, pp. 21-53).

The interest which Schlaf expresses for the New World extends particularly to the German emigrant who leaves his people behind him in preference for that far shore. This figure occupies a central position in several of the author's works. The nature of this person as well as the circumstances which influence his decision to leave his homeland cast light upon Schlaf's conception of social and political conditions both in his own country and abroad.

Notwithstanding the historical fact that few German immigrants were pioneers or indeed were temperamentally suited to become such, the central figure of the novel *Peter Boies Freite* aspires to become this very thing. Depicted as resolute, practical, and imaginative, the young man, after concluding his university studies, decides to emigrate to America and therefore learns English and reads the verse of Whitman. He reveals the basis for his decision in a fervent exclamation which conveys his anticipation of an adventure-some frontier existence and his rejection of stolid intellectualism.

O, lieber als Cowboy am Fangriemen sich schleifen lassen, ein wildes bocking [sic] horse zähmend, als im Centrum Berlins mit Kant und Fichte an der äussersten Grenze erkenntnistheoretischer Weisheit und letzten Wissens hockend und allwissend, wie Sokrates, den Bankerott seines Wissens wiederkauen! ... (PBF, p. 195)

However romantically Boie pictures life in the New World after the fashion of Karl May, he nevertheless suffers no illusions about certain aspects of settling which the author clearly emphasizes. These are the hazards posed by natural catastrophes and the necessity of back-breaking physical labor. Boie reads from a newspaper the account of a settlement being established in Arkansas where each homesteader is granted free land amounting to 160 "Morgen" and is moved to exclaim fervently

Arbeit, Arbeit und nochmals Arbeit! Von früh bis spät harte Arbeit. — Urwald musste gerodet werden ... Es war ein Ringen mit der Natur auf Tod und Leben. (PBF, p. 334)

Consistent with what has come to be termed the "Protestant Ethic" Schlaf conceives of the American experience as beneficial in its effect upon Boie. Regarding himself as a

good-for-nothing, the hard-headed youth resolves to make something meaningful of his life by devotion to industrious activity which will allow him precious little time for nonsense. The attempt will be made to realize those virtues which the author in another context ascribes to the Yankee farmer: "*Energie, Ausdauer, Gastfreundschaft und Biederkeit*" (emphasis mine, WW, pp. 19-20). Boie decides to make a proper woman and wife of the immature, temperamental and spoiled Geesche, a lovely child of the North Sea, who accompanies him. With a vision before them, the couple sails from Hamburg "dem neuen Leben und der Arbeit entgegen. Der Arbeit!"... (PBF, p. 336).

A defensive attitude regarding Boie's decision to emigrate is expressed by a minor character jealous of Geesche's love for Peter. Motivated by rivalry, Klaus Hansen attempts to besmirch Boie's character and reveals the attitude of the stay-at-home toward those who would desert their fatherland. A comforting rationalization is provided by the suggestion that only the worst moral elements seek to begin a new life abroad. "Für gewöhnlich gingen ja doch da allerlei Faulenzer und Tagediebe hin, die hier nicht gut thäten, oder hätten sich irgend etwas zu schulden kommen lassen, deswegen sie sich dünn spielen müssten" (PBF, pp. 179-180). The reader recalls a literary prototype in Karl from Hebbel's *Maria Magdalene* (1844), a suspected thief who wastes his means in alcohol and bowling before fleeing to sea to escape the reckoning.

Rather than social misfits who benefit Germany by their departure, emigrants in Schlaf's works constitute individualistic, adventuresome, active, and somewhat head-strong personalities who evidence what the author characterizes as the quality of "Yankee-Tollkühnheit" (WW, p. 18). One such person is the young Baroness Irmelin von Sternbühl in Schlaf's two volume novel *Der Prinz* (1908). Feeling confined by the world of adults and her home in a small village of Thuringia, she rejects the townspeople for moral hypocrisy and her parents for stuffy philistinism. Impulsive and fear-

less, she resolves to run away from home and is deterred from doing so only by the example of an acquaintance whose similar venture concluded in disaster when he was unable to reconcile himself to the frustration of his plans.

Im Dorf war mal ein Gutbesitzersohn gewesen, ein schöner, stattlicher, kräftiger junger Mann, so in seinem Alter jetzt, der eigentlich genau so ein Wesen wie Baroness Irmelin gehabt hatte. Und der war auch ausgerissen. Er hatte 3000 Mark seinem Vater aus dem Schreibtisch genommen und war ausgerissen. Nach Amerika hatte er gewollt. Sein Vater hatte ihn aber in Hamburg aufgreifen lassen, und da hatte er sich eine Kugel durch den Kopf geschossen.¹¹

Emigrants share certain aspects of character. That streak of daring possessed by the son of the landed gentry as well as the Baroness Irmelin, who as a young girl contemplates dissolving all ties of security to family and village, is evidenced in another minor figure of Schlaf. This is Papa Pohlmann in the same novel, the proprietor of a cigar store in the university area of Berlin and a beloved "Studentenonkel." He is described as "ein Original" (P, II, p. 73) and thereby imputed that individualistic bent he bears in common with other Germans drawn by distant lands. During adolescence Pohlmann mustered his courage and executed an attempt to flee parents and homeland. "Als Obertertianer... war er nach Amerika durchgebrannt, aber nur bis Hamburg gekommen. Wieder nach [sic] Hause angekommen wurde er für seinen Geniestreich geschasst, und sein Vater liess ihn Kaufmann werden" (P, II, p. 73). Undaunted by failure in this venture, Pohlmann reconciled himself quickly to this occupation because of the opportunity it provided to indulge his gregarious nature and good humor. The new undertaking also provided satisfaction and compensation for a feature which is mentioned again and again as constituting part of the particular appeal exerted by life in America, namely the actively industrious tempo and style of existence.

Throughout the fabric of the novel, which is set geographically in Thuringia and later Berlin, are woven references to the New World which suggest its proximity to Germany. It is the story of Jürg Deubel, dubbed "the prince" because of his descent from seventeenth century aristocracy, a boy whose existence is symbolized in the mill of his father to which it is expected he will succeed in later years. This building represents confinement to a rural, provincial environment beyond which lies an unknown world whose technological advances threaten to disturb the rustic idyl. The precarious state of Jürg's self-sufficiency is suggested in the opening sentence:

Die Mühle war eine von dem alten biedereren Geschlecht der Bockmühlen oder deutschen Windmühlen, wie sie heute immer mehr von den holländischen, den amerikanischen Halladay-Windmühlen, vor allem aber von den grossen Dampfmaschinen verdrängt werden. (P, I, p. 1)

Jürg, described by his tutor as "ein Genie" (P, I, p. 791), demonstrates intelligence and diligence in study but is denied permission by his father to enter the Gymnasium. In a scene which evidence elsewhere strongly indicates is based upon autobiographical events (WW, p. 7), Schlaf describes how during the study of geography Jürg becomes aware of America as a country representative of that outside world exerting such an attraction upon him. Venting his hostility before his father toward the object which embodies his subjection to traditional, provincial and paternal ways, he cries defiantly, "Ich pfeife auf die Müllerei!!" (P, I, p. 104). When taunted for his timidity upon hesitation at the door, the boy demonstrates his daring by resolutely collecting his belongings and slipping quietly into the night; "...hinaus ins Freie; in die Weite hinein; hinein in eine ungewisse, weite, grosse, lockende Ferne" (P, I, p. 130).

The author conveys the impression of familiarity with Americana by interjecting references which evoke a particular

home-spun or intimate quality. Reference is made, for example, to Jürg's elderly Onkel Miesbach as he sits with company after dinner relating tales and adventuresome "Hinterwäldlergeschichten" in his Saxon dialect: "Es war ein Mark Twain an ihm verdorben" (P, I, p. 324). A similar literary effect is achieved where an atmosphere of masculine comfort and studiousness is associated with Jürg's colleague Kurt Wittig. His preference in tobacco is emphasized by repeated reference to "amerikanischen Shag" (P, I, p. 349) which he enjoys at his desk "an seiner Old-Judge-Pfeife paffend" (P, II, p. 72). Hospitality is extended by offering a cigarette with coffee and accompanied by the interjection "Mokka, und Old Judge! Judge! Judge!" (P, I, p. 353)

Of central importance to Jürg is his association with the social-democratic and revolutionary "Klub der Moderne," where acquaintance is made with Lehrs, the son of a wealthy merchant and avid reader of Edgar Allen Poe. Endowed with a dynamic personality, he is intelligent, sensitive and religious in nature with a strange predilection for America, her culture and manners. Indeed his preoccupation with this subject to the point of indifference to contemporary European social conditions and the need for revolution elicits the reproach of colleagues.

Schlaf employs the figure of Lehrs in order to investigate the nature of American culture and offer an insight into its peculiar character. Upon the basis of his broad knowledge Lehrs defends "die allernüchternsten und verwickeltesten Eigenschaften des 'Yankee' gegen das allgemeine Vorurteil" (P, I, p. 297). That this, in the author's opinion, constitutes a service to Americans is readily evident upon consideration of that passage from his monograph where allusion is made in an off-hand manner to the existence of "amerikanische Nüchternheit" (WW, p. 47).

Jürg is asked how he explains the fact that in America a cannon or locomotive may be exhibited as a monument, such as, for example, those to be found at the Civil War battlefield of Gettysburg. The young man's confident

response expresses an opinion shared by the author, however unflattering it is to Americans. Jürg answers, "Vielleicht, weil sie überhaupt keine Bildhauerkunst mehr brauchen? Ich meine, weil die Kunst dort vielleicht überhaupt aufhört" (P, I, p. 297). On another occasion the author alludes to "trübe amerikanische Kulturzustände" (WW, p. 16) and that "ästhetische und sonstige Borniertheit"¹² which characterizes the Yankee public.

In rebuttal Lehrs argues that Americans possess "eine vollendete Kunst" (P, I, p. 258) and a deep appreciation for the nature of beauty which surpasses understanding by the German mind. Yankees are uniquely able to sense the soul of inanimate objects by projecting their own psyche within them. The machine embodies a god or demon which is immanent and accessible to mankind and is regarded as an individual who has been allotted a specific role in history. The American vision perceives the unity between humanity and concrete objects of art and constitutes "eine intime, ganz monistisch gewordene Weltanschauung" (P, I, p. 298).

The power of attraction exerted by the New World as this emanates from a central character is indicated by Schlaf's drama *Gertrud* (1898), which portrays the tension imposed upon a marital relationship by the return of a German emigrant to his homeland from America. This work in three acts presents Gertrud and Fritz Baerwald during a summer holiday devoted to the recuperation of her nerves. Moody and bored, she smokes in a shocking and flagrant fashion, behaving emancipated and making utterances such as "O Goddam! — Mein Gatte!"¹³ Their relationship becomes strained and the atmosphere disturbed upon arrival of the figure from the outside much as in Hauptmann's *Einsame Menschen* (1891), which appeared seven years earlier and in which the bluestocking is not the wife but the young Anna Mahr who exerts the divisive marital influence. Here it is Albrecht Holm, a boyhood acquaintance of Fritz, who is presented as handsome, tanned by the sun, and muscular in appearance, possessing a quiet, modest, and likeable personality. Called "Buffalo

Bill" (G, p. 22) or "Cowboy" (G, p. 28) because of his demonstrated shooting prowess, he is introduced to the audience by means of the description given by Fritz to a comrade in lines which merely hint at his background and whet the curiosity of the audience:

— Wunderbar guter Kerl! — Kommt aus Amerika! —
Hat sich da wohl so an der Grenze rumgetrieb'n! —
Globetrotter! — Auch so'n bischen [sic] Anarchist!
(G, p. 19)

The attractive initial impression awakened by Holm's personal presence is heightened by the sense of romance associated with life in a foreign land and by his membership in the generation of the Forty-Eighters, who emigrated for idealistic political reasons. Schlaf here presents the figure of the hardy, independent individual who undertakes to fashion his own destiny shunning the support of others. Having cast aside ties to the Old World where he felt confined by the web of interdependent human relationships and having abandoned his former preoccupation with socialist politics, true to the historical personality of the German immigrant in America, Holm desires to permanently occupy land in that region glorified by Gottfried Duden. He expresses his intention to build a farm "Irgendwo am Missouri. In Dakota" (G, p. 34), that is, in the territory which in 1889, or nine years before this drama was written, had already been divided into the present day states of North and South Dakota.

Life in America is one of hardship that cannot be survived by the effete. Fritz attempts to arouse Gertrud's feelings of maternal sympathy for his boyhood acquaintance: "Er steht doch so recht mutterseelenallein in der Welt und hat sich durch so manches durchfressen müssen, was mich z.B. längst kaputt gemacht haben würde" (G, p. 28). And Holm in fact represents America as a refuge for those who seek to release pent-up, undirected creative and productive energies which must otherwise lie dormant in contemporary German

society. He asks rhetorically, "Es giebt ja heute so viel kulturmüde Menschheit. So viel Kraft mit einem unbestimmten Willen?" (G, p. 35). Such words, however, evoke only sarcasm from Baerwald, who remarks with reference to the visitor: "Kommt aus dem gelobten Lande der Yankee's [sic] und philosophiert wie der deutscheste der Litteraturzigeuner!" (G, p. 36)

The attitude of Fritz vis-à-vis the friend from the New World reveals defensive jealousy and predisposition. He derides the "Amerikanimbus" (G, p. 29), suggests that Holm has turned his back to culture, and taunts, "Aber hast Dich nun doch wieder nach Europas übertünchter Höflichkeit zurückgesehnt?" (G, p. 32). The basis for Holm's intention to return to Germany, however temporarily, lies in the strong resistance which German immigrants in America exerted against assimilation by the native born and which manifested itself in intramarriage and the attempted preservation of language and customs. Among his female compatriots Holm seeks a bride, and even this revelation is greeted by the mockery of his host, "Aber sag mal: weshalb heirathest Du Dir eigentlich nicht so eine smarte Yankeeese an?" (G, p. 33). Holm's response to this gibe includes an indication of those qualities which he deems most essential to successful survival and adaption in America and which he expects to find only among women of his own nationality: resolve, independence, bravery, freedom from prejudice, and sexuality.

Having steeled herself against Holm's attraction, Gertrud remains aloof until finally in a passionate outburst she reproaches him for wasting his words on uncomprehending philistines. Thereafter in confidence she begs him to leave, and he seeks to persuade her to accompany him. America is represented in his inducements as a world in which she may find self-fulfillment in an atmosphere free of restraint; he however concedes that life is primitive and physical conditions harsh, due in part to the fact that all types of people are thrown together to experience a common fate. In a fashion characteristically Biedermeier Gertrud overcomes her

romantic inclinations and resigns herself to contentment with her present state since she realizes that she is not suited for an exotic and adventuresome existence—one which Holm however did not suggest was to be found in America. Gertrud wishes him well with the parting exhortation, "Und bauen ihre Farm, und bebauen Ihr Land, und haben — Arbeit, und — eine Heimath..." (G, p. 51).

America in the works of Johannes Schlaf presents a complex phenomenon. It is pictured realistically and without romantic glamour, indeed life in the New World is described as a primitive existence bearing few traces of culture as it is known in Europe. The ethnic heterogeneity of the population contributes to the harshness of life, but the country offers both a place to experience freedom from restraint and a site for the release of productive energies in constructive effort. Native born Yankees are sensual in nature, philistine, and materialistic. They are conceited in that they regard themselves as individuals without shortcomings and as embodiments of the most progressive aspects of contemporary existence. Americans are pragmatic, practical, clever, and marked by a shrewd sense of self-interest which sometimes manifests itself in cold, ruthless inconsideration for others. The subject of emigration may evoke feelings of jealousy and defensiveness among those who remain at home. In Schlaf's works the German who feels confined or restricted by circumstances and his environment is a prime candidate for emigration. Such a person exercises self-reliance, resolve, and daring. He is ingenious, practical, and eager to embrace a somewhat adventurous, and exceedingly active, industrious life.

NOTES

1. He is accused of having "no knowledge of Whitman's language" (91) and showing "astounding ignorance" in this regard (94). O. E. Lessing, "Whitman and German Critics," JEGP, IX (1910), 85-98. Analysis by the same critic of Schlaf's translation leads to the conclusion, "seine Kenntnisse der englischen Sprache sind gleich null" (118).

See Henry Bryan Binn, **Walt Whitman, Englische Studien**, XXXVIII (1907), 117-118.

2. Johannes Schlaf, **Walt Whitman**, "Die Dichtung," Bd. XVIII, ed. Paul Remer (Berlin & Leipzig: Schuster & Loeffler, 1904), p. 12. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as WW and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

3. Johannes Schlaf, **Das dritte Reich. Ein Berliner Roman** (Berlin: F. Fontane & Co., 1900), p. 256. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as DdR and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

4. Johannes Schlaf, **Peter Boies Freite** (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann Nachfolger, 1903), p. 62. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as PBF and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

5. Johannes Schlaf, **Tantchen Mohnhaupt und Anderes. Dingsda-Geschichten** (Leipzig: Reclam, n.d.), p. 95. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as TM and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

6. Michael Kraus, **Immigration, the American Mosaic: From Pilgrims to Modern Refugees** (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1966), p. 38. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as K and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

7. Nathanael Bumbo [sic] is described as "eine der schönsten und fruchtbarsten Lieben meiner ersten Jugend." Johannes Schlaf, ed. and trans. Walt Whitman, **Grashalme** (Leipzig: Reclam, 1907), p. 3.

8. Duden's **Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas und einen mehrjährigen Aufenthalt am Missouri** appeared first in 1827. Albert Bernhardt Faust, **The German Element in the United States**, vol. 1 (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), p. 441f. Subsequent references to this volume will be indicated as F and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

9. John A. Hawgood, **The Tragedy of German-America. The Germans in the United States of America during the Nineteenth Century—and After** (New York/London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), pp. 57-58. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as H and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

10. "...to regard the typical nineteenth century German settler as a hardy frontiersman, taming the wilderness and winning the west, is very far from the truth. Rather did he consolidate and improve what others had won" H, pp. 22-23.

11. Johannes Schlaf, **Der Prinz**, 2 vols. (München & Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1908). Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as P and designated by volume in roman numerals when cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

12. Johannes Schlaf, "Walt Whitman," **Die freie Bühne**, Jg. 3, ii (1892), 981.

13. Johannes Schlaf, **Gertrud** (Berlin/Paris: Verlag Joh. Sassenbach [Neuland-Verlag], 1898). Subsequent references to this work will be indicated as G and cited parenthetically with the page number in the text.

MATER DOLOROSA

Einsame Frau auf steinerner Bank
Sitzend in Juliglut
Den Blick gerichtet aufs Hospital
Darinnen ihr Kind, der einzige Sohn
Der einzige Mensch der noch zu ihr gehoert
Von schwerer Krankheit Genesung sucht.

Mit gefalteten Haenden sitzt sie da
Auf steinerner Bank, einsam, allein
Betend, heisser als all die Juliglut
Bette mein Kind, o Herr,
"Rette mein Gott mir den Sohn
Und Du rettetest mein eigenes Leben."

So Vieles gab ich in Leid und Schmerzen
Den Gatten, den innigst geliebten,
Eltern und Schwestern, Verwandte
Und Freunde, die treu einst gewesen.

Herzblut vergoss ich um sie
So wie auch das Herz mir noch blutet
Um die verlorene Heimat,

Standhaft und still hab ich getragen
All das Herzweh und Leid
Wenn heimlich der Strom der Traenen
Im Herzen auch niemals versiegte.

Drum fleh ich o Herr:
Eine Madonna der Schmerzen,
"Rette, o rette den Sohn mir
Und Du rettetest mein eigenes Leben."

Hertha E. Nathorff
New York