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Wenn stolz auf neuen Glanz wir blicken,
Der auf das Sternenbanner fällt,
So baut das Herz oft gold'ne Brücken
Hinüber in die alte Welt.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Harry Loewen, *From Prussianism to Mennonitism: Reality
and Ideals in Theodor Fontane's Novel "Quitt"* 25
- Hildegard Emmel, *Vision und Reise bei Charles Sealsfield* 39
- Jeffrey L. Sammons, *The Lorenzo Da Ponte Episode in
Ferdinand Kürnberger's "Der Amerika-Müde"* 48
- Book Reviews 57
- German-American Poems 63

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**FROM PRUSSIANISM TO MENNONITISM:
REALITY AND IDEALS IN
THEODOR FONTANE'S NOVEL QUITT***

By
HARRY LOEWEN
University of Winnipeg

Critics of Theodor Fontane's novel *Quitt* (1890)¹ have repeatedly referred to "artistic weaknesses" in the work, especially in the second part of the novel where the action takes place in the United States of America.² According to critics, the contrast between the two parts of the book is most jarring: the realistic description of Silesian topography and life in chapters 1 to 16, gives way to an unrealistic, hence unconvincing, portrayal of an imaginary American landscape and conditions in chapters 17 to 37.³ Indeed, when one compares Fontane's vivid portrayal of the Silesian countryside in the first part of the novel with the nebulous description of the geography and life of the so-called "Indian Territory"⁴ of the second, there is no doubt that the first part is of greater literary value than the second. In describing the Silesian forests and social customs, Fontane was on familiar ground, having visited the area repeatedly. The first part of the novel thus rings true and includes memorable scenes of action and local color. But for his portrayal of the Indian Territory and its Mennonite missionary community, Fontane, who had never been in America, had to rely on travel accounts, various pamphlets, and other reading material.⁵ It has been pointed out that portraying imaginary situations and scenes was not Fontane's strength.⁶

*This paper was first presented at the North East Modern Language Association Conference, held on March 20-22, 1980, at Southeastern Mass. University, North Dartmouth, Mass. The section's topic was "Vision and Travel."

While readers of *Quitt* have generally been critical of the novel as a work of art, some Mennonite critics have objected to Fontane's portrayal of the American Mennonites.⁷ It is felt that Fontane not only misrepresents certain Mennonite beliefs and practices, but that he also portrays the practical and devout religionists too idealistically, hence falsely. It is argued especially that American Mennonites did not believe as strongly in fate as the Mennonite leader in the novel does, and that the theme of crime and atonement does not only fail to convince but that it is also contrary to Mennonite theology.⁸

The critics are of course correct in their judgement that the novel *Quitt* does not belong to Fontane's great works. It seems to me, however, that critics—notably Mennonite critics—fail, for some reason, to appreciate Fontane's intention in writing this novel and to understand his unique narrative art in *Quitt*. It must be understood that Fontane in this novel tells the story of a man who for good reasons rebels against a rigid Prussian system and then leaves that system for freedom and justice in America where the ideals he longed for cannot be fully realized. It is thus in the very nature of the novel's theme that the two parts not only take place in two different localities, but also deal with two related yet distinct realities, the one more real than the other. It is thus the purpose of this paper to analyze the real and the idealistic aspects of life with regard to the political and social systems in the novel, to comment on how Fontane's narrative technique combines and integrates the two levels of reality, and to point out that like the novel *Der Stechlin*,⁹ *Quitt* is truly a "political" novel in which Fontane criticizes the old order but fails to suggest a convincing alternative.

A brief summary of the plot of the novel will contribute to a better understanding of the subject of this paper. Lehnert Menz, the hero of the novel, who served with distinction in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71), was denied a medal of honour because of the direct intervention of Opitz, the district gamekeeper. Lehnert's subsequent poaching in the forests of Silesia is thus a revenge against his personal enemy and a war against the representative of Prus-

sian law and order, which Lehnert considers unjust. Despite the efforts of the local pastor to bring about peace and reconciliation between the two men, Lehnert in a duel-like encounter with Opitz kills the forester and then flees to America. In a Mennonite community located in the south-central United States, in what today is Oklahoma, Lehnert finds a haven of refuge as well as acceptance and love. The Mennonite society, like the Prussian system, adheres to strict standards of behaviour, but these standards are the result of human values and good-will rather than of rigidity and arbitrariness as under the Prussian system. The communal peace among the Mennonites, however, fails to quieten the guilty conscience of Lehnert the murderer. In an attempt to find his lost friend Toby in the nearby wilds, the hero accidentally falls down a precipice, and after a prolonged suffering dies similar to Opitz. He accepts his fate as an atonement for his past crime.

Lehnert Menz is not a rebel against 19th-century Prussian law and order as such, but against a system which allows the representatives of political and social justice to impose their will arbitrarily upon their society and individuals. Lehnert summarizes his basic attitude toward law and order in society to Pastor Siebenhaar as follows:

Ich war bei den Soldaten und weiß, was Gehorchen heißt, und ist gar kein vernünftiger Mensch, der gegen's Gehorchen ist. Denn das hält alles zusammen. Und so muß auch das Gesetz sein.... Aber auf die, die den Befehl haben, auf *die* kommt es an.... Und was mich angeht, Herr Prediger, ich bin nicht gegen das Gesetz, auch wenn ich's nicht immer halte, — ich bin bloß gegen den Opitz, diesen Schuft und Schelm, diesen Saufaus und Menschenschinder (12-13).

Gamekeeper Opitz symbolizes *that* in Prussian society which Lehnert hates and fights. Opitz reminds everyone around him that there are and must be superiors in a state, and that the will of the officials must not be questioned: "Alles andere gilt nicht, und wenn es gelten will, ist es Hochmut und Unsinn" (24). "Unterschiede müssen sein," he tells Christine, his maid, "Unterschiede sind Gottes Ordnungen" (28). And to his wife Opitz remarks emphati-

cally about the Prussian state: “Ich sage dir, *hier* ist es am besten, hier, weil wir Ordnung haben und einen König und eine Armee und Bismarcken” (29).

But the representative of the Prussian system is inconsistent and arbitrary with regard to the nature of law and order and its application. His wife tells Christine: “Er redet immer von Ordnung, aber jeden Tag hat er eine andere” (25). This inconsistency is reflected in Opitz’s annoyance concerning his wife’s objection to his irregularity when it comes to meal times:

Ich will Ordnung und Stunde halten, so soll’s sein, und wenn ich die Stunde *nicht* halte, weil ich sie mal nicht halten will, nun dann will ich sie nicht halten und will nicht dran erinnert sein, am wenigsten durch deinen Schmorbraten und dein Jammergesicht, in dem immer so was liegt, was mich ärgert... (24-25).

Lehnert’s mother, who according to her son is still from the old despicable “Kriechezeit” (8), is both hypocritical and a slave to the system. On the one hand she supports her son in his poaching because this provides her with food and some income; but on the other hand she believes that the political powers were instituted by God. “Der Förster ist doch eine Obrigkeit,” she flatters her pastor, “und die Obrigkeit ist von Gott. Ja, das haben Sie gepredigt, Herr Prediger, und das vergeß ich nicht wieder” (45). On one occasion Lehnert expresses anger when his mother submissively stands up and bows before officials like Förster Opitz: “Was bleibst du nicht sitzen, Mutter? ... Aber das ist immer die alte Geschichte mit dir. Du hast nur zwei Gedanken: Angst und Vorteil, und hast keinen Stolz und keine Ehre” (8).

Because Lehnert perceives Prussia to be a “land of slaves” (65), he reads and dreams concerning republican freedom and a “happy America” (11). Venting his frustration at the political and social conditions in Prussia, he says to his mother:

Übers Meer will ich. Es ist mir alles so klein und eng hier, ein Polizeistaat, ein Land mit ein paar Herren und Grafen ... und sonst mit lauter Knechten und Bedienten Eine jämmerliche

Welt hier ... ich möchte ... für mein Leben gern nach Amerika, wo's anders aussieht und wo, wenn ich mein Gewehr abschieße, niemand es hört als Wald und Berg und auf zehn Meilen in der Runde kein menschlich Ohr ist (49-50).

But it is not easy for Lehnert to leave his home, "seine Schlesierland, seine Berge, seine Koppe" (65) and seek freedom across the Atlantic Ocean. In his unsettled state of mind he turns to his church's pastor for help. In a conversation with Siebenhaar Lehnert agrees that he may be wrong in his feelings toward Opitz and promises to submit again to the gamekeeper for the sake of peace and reconcilliation. But Lehnert finds that however much he may try to acknowledge the superiority of Opitz, there will never be peace between the two men and their different concepts of law and justice. What is more, Lehnert begins to feel that Pastor Siebenhaar, as an official of the state, favours Opitz and his case.

The Prussian alliance between church and state¹⁰ is symbolically and ironically expressed in the description of the pastor's room in which Lehnert had learned the Catechism as a youth. The sinister nature of the collusion between the Christian religion and the Prussian state is aptly expressed in the slanted picture of Christ, which is flanked on either side by Prussian royalty: "Das Christusbild, mit Friedrich Wilhelm III. und dem Kronprinzen zur Linken und Rechten, hing noch gerade so schief wie vor vierzehn Jahren, als er hier, wöchentlich zweimal, auf einer wackligen Konfirmandenbank gesessen hatte" (10). Lehnert is thus a rebel against a long-standing tradition and he has but two choices: Either to fight this tradition in the person of the local tyrant, or to leave for a land of freedom abroad. He decides eventually to confront Opitz in a kind of duel and leave the outcome to God. In this encounter between the two enemies, Fontane is emphasizing that Lehnert is fighting Opitz as an equal and not as a criminal. This is what Fontane meant when he wrote to Martha Fontane in a letter of June 17, 1885:

Förster und Wilddieb leben in einem Kampf und stehen sich bewaffnet, Mann gegen Mann, gegenüber; der ganze Unterschied ist, daß der eine auf d. Boden des Gesetzes steht, der

andre nicht, aber dafür wird der eine bestraft, der andre belohnt, von "Mord" kann in einem ebenbürtigen Kampf keine Rede sein.¹¹

But there is no doubt that in this "equal struggle" between the two men, Fontane's sympathy lay wholly on the side of Lehnert, the victim of an unjust system.

The conflict between Lehnert and Opitz comes to a climax when the gamekeeper decides to make an "Exempel" of the poacher, "damit das Volk mal wieder sähe, daß noch Ordnung und Gesetz und ein Herr im Lande sei" (65). Lehnert appeals to the judgement of God and resigns himself to his fate. He confronts his enemy in the forest, waiting for Opitz to pull the trigger first. The forester tries to kill the "poacher" but the gun fails. Lehnert then shoots and mortally wounds Opitz. Satisfied that God has decided in favour of him, Lehnert leaves his enemy to die a slow and agonizing death. When the body of Opitz is found, all evidence points in the direction of Lehnert as the probable killer. But before he can be apprehended, Lehnert leaves his home and Prussia forever.

The first part of *Quitt* is realistically conceived and full of action. The Silesian hills, valleys, streams, and forests come alive. The inter-personal relationships are well motivated; the individual characters, notably the hero, his mother, Opitz, and Pastor Siebenhaar, are flesh and blood individuals. And the author's criticism of Prussian law and order is both subtle and severe. In reading the first part of the novel, the reader is under the illusion that he is part of the dramatic action and that he witnesses a physical, psychological and political struggle which also concerns him. In following Lehnert's tragic story the reader is held in suspense, hopes that the protagonist might outwit the oppressive system, and feels a sense of relief when the hero is able to escape from the rigid Prussian environment. But the reader also feels pity for Opitz who dies a protracted and painful death. Fontane the realist thus shows deep psychological insight in presenting the oppressor and the oppressed as suffering human beings. This sense of reality in the first part of the novel is both vivid and highly entertaining.

In the second part of the novel Lehnert's story is taken up six years after his disappearance. The protagonist is now in his mid-thirties. After working in the gold mines of California and losing his fortune, he now finds himself south of Kansas, in the so-called "Indian Territory," where the Mennonites have established a farming and missionary community called Nogat-Ehre,¹² named after their ancestral home in West-Prussia. This Mennonite community which welcomes Lehnert Menz, is somewhat unreal and certainly idealistic compared to the "real" world of Prussia in the first part. The community is governed not by a rigid governmental system as in Prussia, but by the faith and love of the pacifistic Mennonites and the experiences and wisdom of its elder Obadja Hornbostel. The remarkable fact about these American Mennonites is that although they include individuals and groups of people with different and varying backgrounds, they are able to maintain not only law and order, but also peace and good will among their members. Lehnert is surprised at how the Mennonite community and the various non-Mennonites in Obadja's house are held together: "...nicht einmal durch das Band gemeinsamer kirchlicher Anschauungen" (126), Lehnert reflects. There is for example the atheistic Frenchman L'Hermite, who like Lehnert has a capital crime on his conscience; there are Mr. and Mrs. Kaulbars, the Prussians, who think that the Prussian discipline and ways are superior to American democracy and even to Mennonite brotherhood; there are Indians who live at peace with the Mennonites and are drawn to the Mennonite faith and way of life; and there are the Mennonite missionaries who preach, teach, and live the Christian gospel in such a way that all are attracted to the message and life of the Mennonites, although not without some reluctance and scepticism on the part of some.¹³ Upon reflection, Lehnert comes to the conclusion that Elder Obadja more than anyone or anything else, is the secret to the Mennonite success in Nogat-Ehre. Obadja not only preaches the gospel of peace, according to Lehnert, but "in reiner Erscheinung und in reinem Tun" he also personifies it (126). This Mennonite community is indeed a "happy family", as Lehnert calls it (126).

In this utopian world Lehnert submits readily to Obadja Hornbostel, the virtual Mennonite dictator. "Wo Verstand befiehlt," Lehnert says about the Mennonite elder, "ist der Gehorsam leicht. Bloß der Befehl rein als Befehl, bloß hart und grausam, da kann ich nicht mit, das kann ich nicht aushalten" (110). When Lehnert out of a long German tradition and usage responds with "zu Befehl" to Obadja's order, the Mennonite elder smiles, recalling this "Prussian-militaristic form of affirmation" (117) from the past. In the idealistic world of the pacifistic Mennonites this Prussian military language has no place.

Obadja, however, is not a blind admirer of American democracy and freedom. He speaks of an American "despotism of the masses," praises what he calls the "stable forces" in Prussia, and commends the spirit of "order and work" among the German people (118-119). But the ideal life is not found in either America or Prussia, according to Obadja, but in the imaginary world of Pestalozzi's novel *Lienhardt und Gertrud*.¹⁴ What Obadja calls "the republican spirit," is truly alive in this work:

...Über allen deutschen und namentlich über allen preußischen Büchern, auch wenn die sich von aller Politik fernhalten, weht ein königlich preußischer Geist, eine königlich preußische privilegierte Luft; etwas Mittelalterliches spukt auch in den besten und freiesten noch, und von der Gleichheit der Menschen oder auch nur von der Erziehung des Menschen zum Freiheitsideal statt zum Untertan und Soldaten ist wenig die Rede. Darin ist die schweizerische Literatur, weil sie die Republik hat, der deutschen überlegen, und alle Deutsche, die, wie wir, das Glück haben, Amerikaner zu sein, haben Grund, sich dieses republikanischen Zuges zu freuen (163).

All except L'Hermite, the atheist, nod in agreement with Obadja's moralizing. The Frenchman knows from experience the "Halbheitszustände" of that which is called "republic" (163). Obadja's long speech concerning Pestalozzi's *Lienhardt and Gertrud* and in praise of republicanism, and L'Hermite's response to this speech, are no doubt ironic. Through this irony Fontane the realist seems to imply that a world of freedom, equality, and goodness can exist in books only, and perhaps in a land like the American "Indian Terri-

tory" which lies outside the politically organized United States, or, for that matter, outside any political state and order.

Lehnert gradually realizes that even such ideal conditions as found in the Mennonite community cannot remove him from the tragic reality of the old world and absolve him from his guilt. He finds acceptance and religious peace among the Mennonites, to be sure, but he cannot forget or leave behind the world of his past. In an attempt to embrace the ideal world around him and become part of an idealistic community, Lehnert loves and hopes to marry Ruth Hornbostel, Obadja's daughter, but the Mennonite elder is both reluctant and slow to grant him his heart's desire. Lehnert struggles heroically against his fate and feelings of guilt, but as L'Hermite tells him, his past will ever be with him and "unatoned blood" will pursue him to the very end (123). L'Hermite's significant words to Lehnert may be in part an expression of Fontane's own pessimism with regard to the order of the world:

Gebt Ruth auf. Ihr kriegt sie nicht...ich sage Euch, Lehnert, Ihr kriegt sie doch nicht Glaub mir, es soll nicht sein. Es ist da so was Merkwürdiges in der Weltordnung, und Leute wie wir — pardon, ich sage mit Vorbedacht wie *wir* —, die nimmt das Schicksal, der große Jagernaut, unter die Räder seines Wagens und zermalmt sie, wenn sie glücklicher sein wollen, als sie noch dürfen (201).

L'Hermite's talk about the inevitability of fate may not be the language of pious Mennonites, but it expresses, at least in part, Fontane's own view, and it is a secular version of the Mennonite belief in divine providence, a belief that God directs the lives and ways of Christians and that however God leads, it is for the best (209). Lehnert, who in the utopian community has become a Mennonite, takes L'Hermite's words seriously; he merely hears from L'Hermite's lips "was ihm eine innere Stimme selber schon zugerufen hatte" (201). Not even thoughts of Christ can absolve Lehnert from his guilt (202). And because his past crime has not been atoned for, there can be no earthly happiness and no union with Ruth:

Es half nicht Reue, nicht Beichte; was geschehen war, war geschehen, und im selben Augenblicke, wo nur noch ein Schritt, ein einziger, ihm von seinem Glücke zu trennen schien, sah er, daß dieser Schritt ein Abgrund war (201).

Obadja's sermons and speeches state time and again that his house is a place of peace (160), that his church is to be a "Herberge" (188) for weary travelers, and that the Mennonite spirit is "ein Geist des Ausgleichs und der Versöhnung, ein Quell, der *jeden* labe, der da durstig sei" (160). But Lehnert feels increasingly that he is an intruder in this paradise. The Mennonites of Nogat-Ehre are pious people, he thinks, "fromm und fleißig und wahrheitsliebend und Feinde von Eid und Krieg. Und in solche Friedensstätte wollt er einbrechen?" (112). As a man with a violent past, he does not belong into this world of tranquility and peace: "... er gehörte nicht dahin, er war eine Störung..." (112).

But just as the reality of fate is operative in human lives, so is the ideal of forgiveness and grace capable of counteracting the effects of past actions and guilt. As Obadja observes: "Schon die Wege des Lebens seien wunderbar, aber am wunderbarsten seien die Gnadenwege. Wer die Gnade habe, der mühe sich umsonst, sie zu verscherzen" (187). Lehnert in the end experiences the two dimensions of reality: the real and the ideal:

Er [Lehnert] wisse wohl, daß er ein schlechter Mensch und des Glückes, das er begehre, durchaus unwürdig sei. Wen Gott erwählt habe, das seien Obadjas eigene Worte, der könne straucheln und fallen; aber er falle nur, um durch Gott selbst wieder aufgerichtet zu werden. Er hoffe, daß dies auch *sein* Los sein werde (192).

The opportunity to go and search for Toby Hornbostel, who is lost in the wilds of the Territory, comes as a sense of relief for Lehnert. When the practical Obadja suggests that in addition to prayer one must also act, the guilt-ridden Lehnert feels that this is his chance to atone for his crime: "Und über Lehnerts Züge flog es wie ein Glanz von Glück, und er fühlte deutlich, der Tag, der über ihn entscheiden müsse, sei nun gekommen" (205). In an attempt to find his friend, he accidentally falls and like Opitz before

him dies a slow and painful death. On his body is found a piece of paper on which the following words are written in blood:

Vater unser, der du bist im Himmel... Und vergib uns unsere Schuld ... Und du, Sohn und Heiland, der du für uns gestorben bist, tritt ein für mich und rette mich ... Und vergib uns unsere Schuld ... Ich hoffe: *Quitt* (213).

At the end of the novel there seems to be a symbolic attempt by the *ideal* world to reach out to the *real* world of Prussia. Obadja writes a letter to the church council of Lehnert's former home village, informing them of Lehnert's life in America, his conversion, and the manner of his death. The letter concludes with the words: "... sei es gestattet, hinzuzufügen, daß ich der Überzeugung lebe, seine Buße habe seine Schuld gesühnt: 'Hoffnung laßt nicht zuschanden werden'" (216). The rigid system of Prussia, however, will not yield to the ideals of the Mennonite community and its plea for understanding and humanity. Privy councillor Espe, after reading the letter, insists that Lehnert should have been returned to Germany for prosecution and trial: "Soviel ich weiß, haben wir, wie mit anderen zivilisierten Staaten, auch mit Amerika Kartellverträge. Daraufhin mußte die Spur dieses Lehnert Menz verfolgt und auf seine Auslieferung bestanden werden. Er gehörte vor die Geschworenen" (220).

Espe does not share the view that Lehnert's death has atoned for his past crime. Speaking to his family, he insists:

Was heißt *quitt*? Wer das Schwert nimmt, soll durch das Schwert umkommen; *das* ist 'quitt'. Der Staat, wenn ich mich so ausdrücken darf, ist in diesem Fall in seinem Recht leer ausgegangen, und die Justiz hat das Nachsehen. Und das *soll* nicht sein und *darf* nicht sein. Ordnung, Anstand, Manier. Ich bin ein Todfeind aller ungezügelter Leidenschaften (220).

In the conclusion of the novel Fontane expresses both pessimism and a note of sadness. The real and the ideal worlds, portrayed in the two parts of the story, seemingly cannot be bridged. Like Grimmelshausen's Anabaptists in *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (1669),¹⁵ Fontane's Mennonites are an ideal community, a community which contrasts markedly with the real everyday world of Silesia and

Prussia. It is to this ideal world that the protagonist flees, hoping to find there justice and peace. In this idealistic world of the American Mennonites, Lehnert Menz does indeed find justice and love, but he cannot achieve complete peace because the real world of the past cannot be forgotten nor entirely left behind.

It is no doubt Fontane's artistic achievement to combine in the person of his hero the real Prussian world and the idealistic community of America. Moreover, in juxtaposing the two levels of reality in the two parts of the novel, Fontane succeeds in both contrasting the real and the ideal worlds and in severely criticizing the old Prussian order. But Fontane's sense of realism and pessimism not only prevented him from concluding the novel more optimistically, but also from portraying a believable idealistic community. His utopian Mennonite world betrays the author's view that in real life there is seldom, if ever, a truly "happy family." The Mennonite community in the novel remains a fantasy world of which it is possible to dream and whose ideals are worthy of admiration and even emulation, but it remains far removed from concrete social and political reality and orders. Significantly, the novel's Mennonite community exists outside of an organized political state, far removed from the real world in some nebulous territory. Lehnert's tragedy seems to be the tragedy of an idealist who naively believes in the existence of an idealistic order and that that ideal state, once realized, can obliterate the old and past experiences of the human condition. He dies, to be sure, in peace and harmony with himself and society around him, but he dies, nevertheless, as a victim of a system which will not change for the better, at least not soon, in the real world. The novel *Quitt*, like the novel *Der Stechlin*, is thus a political novel in which Fontane portrays proponents of the old and new orders. As in *Der Stechlin*, the idealized figures and the utopian world are not wholly convincing.¹⁶ The Mennonite characters who seem to have realized their ideals in a Christian community are somewhat pale and unreal in comparison with the figures in the Silesian world of the first part of the novel. The old world of Prussia Fontane knew well; he both loved and censured it.

The new order of the utopian Mennonites remained for Fontane a vision, a vision which in the real world must remain but a dream.

NOTES

1. All references to, and quotations from, this novel are from Theodor Fontane's *Sämtliche Werke*, Band VI (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1959). In the text of the paper the numbers in parentheses refer to the pages of this edition of *Quitt*.

2. Theodor Fontane, *Sämtliche Romane, Erzählungen, Gedichte, Nachgelassenes*. Herausgegeben von Walter Keitel und Helmuth Nürnberger. Band 14 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag — Ullstein Buch Nr. 4521-, 1970), p. 254. It has been observed that Fontane in contrast to Gottfried Keller is not precise and concrete in his description of characters, scenes, and situations. Heiko Streich points out: "Man kann mit gutem Recht Gottfried Keller als den poetischen Realisten bezeichnen, der am schärfsten *sieht* ... Nicht so Fontane. Er *hört* am besten. Er gibt nicht Äusserungen wieder ... er gibt psychologische Details ... gibt die Gesinnung einer Person; wenn überhaupt, skizziert er ihr Äusseres, malt es nie aus." *Theodor Fontane: Die Synthese von Alt und Neu* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1970), p. 46. Fontane's publisher was not as happy with the second part of the novel as with the first. On May 2, 1890, Fontane wrote to Georg Friedländer: "In der ersten Hälfte, bis zu dem Moment also, wo Lehnert plötzlich aus seinem Hause verschwunden ist, hat die Redaktion ... wahrscheinlich nichts oder nur sehr wenig geändert, desto mehr in der zweiten Hälfte. Hier ist kaum mehr als die Hälfte gegeben" Kurt Schreinert (ed.), *Theodor Fontane. Briefe an Georg Friedländer* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1954), p. 333.

3. The following comment is typical of some of the more negative criticisms of the novel: "... the 'Tendenzroman' *Quitt* (1891), cannot claim to be anything other than a minor work, despite its length The first sixteen chapters are set in Silesia, near Krummhübel in the Riesengebirge, an area which Fontane knew intimately from repeated holidays. The following twenty-one take place in the United States, a country not visited by the author. The result is that, while chapters 1 to 16 sparkle with life, all the zest goes out of the story thereafter and it drags its slow, colourless way through another 117 pages without retaining the reader's emotional participation." A. R. Robinson, *Theodor Fontane. An Introduction to the Man and his Work* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976), p. 126. A more serious and sympathetic interpretation of *Quitt* is that of Peter Demetz, *Formen des Realismus: Theodor Fontane—Kritische Untersuchungen* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag—Ullstein Buch Nr. 2983—, 1964), pp. 87-98.

4. "Indian Territory" refers to the former Indian country which, in 1907, was admitted to the United States as the 46th State, called Oklahoma. The Mennonites in this "Territory" came from the Vistula and Nogat delta in Prussia, where many Mennonites had found a haven of refuge as early as the sixteenth century.

5. For Fontane's sources for the "Indian Territory" in the United States and the Mennonite missionary community, see the following: Theodor Fontane, *Briefe I* (Briefe an den Vater, die Mutter und die Frau). Herausgegeben von Kurt Schreinert (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1968), p. 297-298; A. J. F. Zieglschmid, "Truth and

Fiction and Mennonites in the Second Part of Theodor Fontane's Novel 'Quitt': The Indian Territory," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XVI: 4 (October, 1942), pp. 240-246; Demetz, *Formen des Realismus*, p. 93.

6. Fontane, *Sämtliche Romane*, "Zur Entstehung," p. 254.

7. See especially Elizabeth Horsch Bender and the critics she cites in *The Mennonites in German Literature* (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1944), pp. 116-126. Erwin Enns writes: "Er [Fontane] hat sie freilich nie gesehen, diese Mennoniten... so ist ein großer Erzähler das Opfer seiner unzulänglichen Vorstellungen und einer ungereimten Phantasie geworden." "'Quitt' oder: Wie man auch Mennonit werden kann. Anmerkungen zu einem Fontane — Roman," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 1979*. Herausgegeben von der Konferenz der Süddeutschen Mennonitengemeinden e.V. (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1979), p. 68. Erwin Enns seems to have misunderstood Fontane's novel. A more positive response to the portrayal of the Mennonites in the novel comes from Ernst Correll: "Only occasionally does a line not ring true, as for example, when Obadiah on one occasion is made to confess to the doctrine of predestination; but the total picture of this group of Mennonites is quite accurate." "Theodor Fontane's 'Quitt'," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XVI:4 (October, 1942), p. 222.

8. Bender, *The Mennonites in German Literature*, pp. 124-126.

9. See Harry E. Cartland's penetrating study, "The 'Old' and the 'New' in Fontane's *Stechlin*," *The Germanic Review*, LIV:1 (Winter, 1979), pp. 21-28.

10. The state-church of Prussia in this novel is in sharp contrast to the "free" church of the Mennonites, who traditionally upheld a strict separation of church and state. On Fontane's attitude toward Prussian royalty and aristocracy, see D. Barlow, "Fontane and the Aristocracy," *German Life and Letters*, 8 (1954-55), pp. 182-191, and Willy Schumann, "Wo ist der Kaiser? Theodor Fontane über Kaiser Wilhelm II," *Monatshefte*, LXXI: 2 (Summer 1979), pp. 161-171.

11. Fontane, *Briefe II* (Briefe an die Tochter und an die Schwester), p. 76.

12. While "Nogat" was derived from the name of the river in Prussia, "Ehre," the other half of the name, was invented by Fontane.

13. Fontane was no doubt ironic in describing this "ideal" world of the Mennonites. However, he held this world up as a possible visionary alternative to the Prussian system which he viewed with misgivings. Other works, such as *Der Stechlin*, seem to bear this out. See Cartland, "The 'Old' and the 'New' in Fontane's *Stechlin*," p. 27.

14. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *Lienhardt und Gertrud* (first version: 1781-87; second version: 1790-92; third version: 1819-20). Lehnert's name was suggested to Fontane by the hero of this novel. On what Pestalozzi's contemporaries and later writers thought of *Lienhardt und Gertrud*, see H. J. Schueler, "Figurative Language and its Relation to Pestalozzi's Pedagogic Intentions in 'Lienhardt und Gertrud,'" *German Life and Letters*, New Series, XXIX:3 (April, 1976), pp. 273-282.

15. In Book V, chapter 19, Grimmelshausen portrays an exemplary Anabaptist community and holds it up as a model for all Christians to follow. The historical seventeenth-century Anabaptists were not as "perfect" as Grimmelshausen's group. See A. J. F. Zieglschmid, "Die ungarischen Wiedertäufer bei Grimmelshausen," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LIX,3/4, pp. 352-87.

16. Cartland observes: "Fontane's *Stechlin* is perhaps more a hope than a legacy. The figures which are to present the future are not wholly convincing. This apparent lack of verisimilitude may be seen positively as a correlative of the difficulty of seeing the future with any precision." "The 'Old' and the 'New,'" p. 27. This observation applies to a large extent to *Quitt* as well.

VISION UND REISE BEI CHARLES SEALSFIELD*

By
von HILDEGARD EMMEL
University of Connecticut
Willimantic, Conn.

Das Thema unseres Kongresses, *Vision und Reise*, ist für die Erschließung von Sealsfields Werk sehr geeignet, sowohl in methodischer wie inhaltlicher Hinsicht. Wie sich die Verbindung der beiden Elemente Vision und Reise auf die Thematik der Romanfiktion bei Sealsfield auswirkt, sei an dem letzten der von ihm veröffentlichten Romane *Süden und Norden*¹ aufgezeigt. Er erschien 1842-43 in Stuttgart bei Metzler und ist der zweite der beiden in Mexiko spielenden Romane Sealsfields. Geschrieben hat er ihn während eines Aufenthaltes in der Schweiz.

Wie Sie wissen, war Sealsfield Österreichischer Emigrant: im Frühjahr 1823 floh er aus Prag, entkam auf bis heute unbekannte Weise aus dem Machtbereich der Habsburgischen Polizei, schiffte sich in Le Havre nach den USA ein und landete im Herbst 1823 in New Orleans. Der unaufgeklärte Fluchtweg gehört insofern zu Sealsfields literarischem Werk, als der Romancier bis zu seinem Tod seine Herkunft und seinen echten Namen Carl Postl verschwieg und im Rahmen seiner Werke, in Einleitungen und Kommentaren, irreführende Angaben über seine Person machte. So gibt es auch keinen Beleg darüber, wann Sealsfield in Mexiko gewesen ist, ob in der ersten Zeit seines Amerikaufenthaltes, also 1824, oder vielleicht 1828. Es wird sogar erklärt, er sei überhaupt nicht dort gewesen. Namhafte Sealsfieldforscher indessen wie Castle, Arndt und Marianne de Bopp, die Herausgeberin der Mexikoromane in der neuen Ausgabe, vertreten den Standpunkt, daß er ganz gewiß in Mexiko war. Für mich selbst besteht kein Zweifel, daß er

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sogar den Süden des Landes gesehen hat, das besagt Oaxaca, wo *Süden und Norden* in seinen Hauptteilen spielt, und daß sowohl die Schönheit der Landschaft Oaxacas ihn inspirierte wie die Liebenswürdigkeit der dortigen indianischen Bevölkerung.

Die Fiktion des Romans ist: vier Amerikaner und ein Deutscher reisen im November 1824 von Mexiko-Stadt mit kleinem Gefolge auf Maultieren nach dem Süden, geraten dort in vielerlei Abenteuer und lebensgefährliche Schwierigkeiten und verlassen, bedrängt und verfolgt, im Juni 1825 zu Schiff in Veracruz das Land.

Der November 1824 ist als fiktives Datum für den Beginn jener abenteuerlichen Romanreise in *Süden und Norden* von spezieller Bedeutung, weil kurz vorher, nämlich am 4. Oktober 1824, die republikanische Verfassung Mexikos proklamiert wurde, eine Verfassung nach nord-amerikanischem Vorbild. Die endgültige Befreiung Mexikos von Spanien war mit ihr vollzogen. Es ist eine politisch höchst wichtige Epoche für das Land, in die Sealsfield seine Reisenden hineinstellt. Um diese Epoche ging es ihm und zwar nicht, um sie als Hintergrund für einen abenteuerlichen Reiseroman zu verwerten, sondern weil sie zum Thema seines Romans gehört.

Dieses Thema ist umschrieben mit der Beantwortung der Fragen: Wer sind die Reisenden? Was ist das für ein Land, das sie bereisen? Wie reagieren sie darauf?

Die vier amerikanischen Reisenden sind charakterisiert durch Sealsfields Vision vom freien Bürger der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika. Sie betonen ihre Herkunft sowie die Verpflichtung, die sie daraus ableiten, an allen entscheidenden Wendepunkten der Handlung. Diese Selbstdefinition der Figuren enthält Sealsfields Botschaft an das deutsche Publikum, in dessen Sprache er seine Romane veröffentlichte.

Seine Vision des freien Bürgers von Nordamerika hat eine Reihe von Voraussetzungen, mit denen man sich in der neueren Forschung intensiver befaßte als früher. Zu diesen Voraussetzungen gehören einmal: Sealsfields eigene Prager Erfahrungen mit der von Wien ausgehenden geistigen Unter-

drückung, die ihn zur Flucht aus seiner Heimat veranlaßte, zum andern Vorstellungen, die ihm in den Kreisen des böhmischen Widerstandes vermittelt wurden, im besonderen Ideen des bedeutenden Prager Professors Bernard Bolzano, der als Sealsfield studierte, den neu eingerichteten Lehrstuhl für "philosophische Religionslehre" innehatte. Bolzano wurde 1820 als Professor abgesetzt; und man darf annehmen, daß dieses weite Kreise in Böhmen erregende Ereignis den jungen Theologen Carl Postl innerlich schwer belastete und seine drei Jahre später getroffene Entscheidung zur Flucht mitbestimmte.

Interessanterweise geht es in *Süden und Norden* bei der Auseinandersetzung der vier reisenden Amerikaner mit den politischen Mächten in Mexiko um die gleiche Spannung, die als die Ursache für Bolzanos Absetzung angesehen wird, um die Spannung zwischen Aufklärung und Restauration, zwischen liberalem Fortschritt und Wahrung überkommener Machtverhältnisse. Manche Formulierungen in *Süden und Norden*, z.B. bei der durchgehenden Verdammung der Vertreter der katholischen Kirche, scheinen nicht allein aus der Erfahrung der fiktiven amerikanischen Touristen von 1824 zu stammen, sondern ebenso aus der Empörung des Prager Theologen von 1820. Kein Zweifel besteht außerdem, daß Bolzanos philosophische Position und die seines gesamten Kreises in unmittelbarer, inhaltlicher Hinsicht zu den von Sealsfield in seinen Romanen künstlerisch gestalteten Vorstellungen gehört, ja daß die für ihn anzusetzende Einheit von Vision und Reise mit dieser philosophischen Position zusammenhängt und als ihre emotionale Verwirklichung anzusehen ist. Bolzanos Position ist gekennzeichnet durch eine in der Form gemäßigte, wohl überlegte Gegnerschaft zu Kant, die ihn mit dem Antikantianismus anderer katholischer Denker Österreichs verband. Eingewandt wird gegen Kant, daß durch ihn die konkrete Welt zweifelhaft wurde und daß er die Autonomie des menschlichen Geistes proklamierte. "Vom streng katholischen Standpunkt ist nämlich", wie Roger Bauer darlegte, "jede Philosophie als irreführend abzulehnen, die die Realität der von Gott geschaffenen Welt auf irgendeine Weise in Frage stellt. Dasselbe gilt für jede

Philosophie, die den menschlichen Geist als autonom darstellt, d.h. ihm die Fähigkeit zuspricht, sich Gesetze zu geben.”² Hieraus leiten sich zwei Grundthemen ab, die sowohl für Bolzanos Philosophie wie für das literarische Werk Sealsfields zentral sind: 1. Das besondere Naturverständnis, die Begeisterung für die Naturschönheit als Begeisterung für die Schöpfung Gottes. Bolzano widmete diesem Thema 1810 eine seiner sonntäglichen Erbauungsreden mit dem Titel “Der Sinn der Naturschönheit.” Sealsfield dürfte sie gehört haben (Philosophiestudium 1908-11). Die sozialetische Verpflichtung, die der Mensch zu erkennen und zu erfüllen hat. Sozialethik war ein Spezialgebiet Bolzanos.

Auch jenen Reisenden in *Süden und Norden* geht es, während sie ihr Amerikanertum hervorheben und seine Bedeutung unterstreichen, um die sozialetische Verpflichtung, die ihnen mit ihrer Herkunft auferlegt ist. Die Schwierigkeiten, in die sie bei ihrer Reise im Süden Mexikos geraten, haben innerhalb des Romans die Funktion einer Provokation ihres Amerikanertums. Es ist eine Provokation, der sie nur unter äußerster Anstrengung begegnen können. Sealsfield, der die verschiedensten Probleme Nordamerikas in seinen vorausgegangenen Romanen behandelte, spricht hier, in seinem letzten Roman, von einer persönlichen menschlichen Gefährdung des amerikanischen Bürgers.

Die Erzählung beginnt damit, daß die Reisenden sich im Gebirge verirrt haben; die Landschaft narrt sie; sie glauben sich viele Male dem Berggipfel nahe, meinen eine Hazienda zu erkennen; wenn sie aber darauf zugehen, haben sie sich getäuscht. Schließlich erreichen sie doch die Höhe, und es setzen die großen Landschaftsschilderungen ein, die gerade in diesem Roman besonders charakteristisch für Sealsfields Landschaftsdarstellung sind.

Während die Reisenden sich nach dem endlich gelungenen Aufstieg dem Eindruck der Bergwelt — der “unaussprechlichen Pracht” — überlassen, hat die Störung, deretwegen sie am Ende das Land fluchtartig verlassen müssen, schon eingesetzt. Sie selbst erkennen erst viel später, daß jenes Herumirren in den Bergen, bei dem sie sich mehrmals nach einiger Zeit wieder an der gleichen Stelle befanden, kein

Zufall, war, sondern Absicht der Wachmannschaft, die man ihnen von Seiten der Regierung in Mexiko-Stadt mitgab. Der Führer dieser Truppe hatte neben der Aufgabe, die amerikanische Reisegesellschaft zu begleiten, noch einen zweiten Auftrag, der auf einen konservativen, die neue Verfassung ablehnenden spanischen Aristokraten mit vielen Besitzungen gerichtet war. Als Lockvogel wird dessen junge Tochter Mariquita benutzt, die man mit dem jüngsten der Reisenden, dem noch nicht ganz 19jährigen Gourney, zusammenbringt und verkuppelt.

Sealsfield charakterisiert auch in diesem Roman wie in seinen früheren die persönliche Eigenart eines Amerikaners mit dem Staat, aus dem der betreffende stammt. Seine Figuren haben infolgedessen typische Züge. Einer der Reisenden, Cockly, kommt aus Kentucky, das bedeutet, er ist wild, tatkräftig, von schneller Reaktion; ein anderer, Whitely, stammt aus Pennsylvanien, das bedeutet, er ist besonnen, solide, zurückhaltend. Gourney stammt aus Vermont. Der Humor des Autors leistete sich hier einen Streich: man verführt im Süden Mexikos ausgerechnet einen jungen Mann, der aus Neuengland kommt, der Sohn eines Geistlichen ist und in der Liebe noch keine Erfahrung hat. Daß etwas mit ihm vorgegangen ist, daß er sich veränderte, erkennt Hardy, der Erzähler, während er feststellt, daß Gourney im Angesicht des gewaltigen Bergpanoramas in der Bibel liest und zwar das Hohe Lied Salomonis. Was die Wahl des Textes und das verwandelte Wesen Gourneys zu bedeuten haben, ergibt sich aus vielen, erst allmählich sich zusammenschließenden Details. Sowohl Gourneys Landsleute wie der Leser erfahren im Fortschreiten der Handlung, daß längst eine Verbindung zwischen Gourney und Mariquita besteht, daß die Reisegesellschaft schon vorher einmal das Dorf in der Nähe jenes Berggipfels besuchte, wo Mariquita auf dem Landsitz ihres Vaters, eben des gesuchten spanischen Grafen, der Sitte des Landes entsprechend gehütet wird. Die Tallandschaft, in gleichem Maße beeindruckend wie das Gebirge, erscheint als Paradies, als fruchtbare, überströmende südliche Welt, bewohnt von lebenswürdigen, gutartigen, in angenehmen Wohlstand lebenden Menschen, unter denen im

besonderen die Frauen auffallen ob spanischer oder indianischer Abkunft. Vorausweisend heißt es schon im 2. Kapitel des dreibändigen Romans:

Es ist das Paradies der Welt! Wie alle eure Paradiese hat es seine verführerischen Evas und Houris, ... Ihr habt alle eure republikanische Stoa, eure nordische Kälte vonnöten, um diesen verführerischen Syrenen gegenüber eure fünf Sinne im Gleichgewicht zu erhalten. Ihre Erscheinung, ihr ganzes Wesen hat so gar nichts dem eurer wohlerzogenen und wieder verzogenen Schönen ähnliches. Es ist etwas so erotisch Erotisches und doch wieder naiv, kindlich, harmlos Dringliches in ihrer Weise! (I, 40f.)

Wie sich zeigen wird, kann keiner der reisenden Amerikaner der Verführung jener Syrenen gegenüber seine "fünf Sinne im Gleichgewicht ... erhalten". Und nicht allein die eigenartig lebenswürdigen Mädchen verwirren sie, die gesamte Umwelt bedroht ihr Wesen, sowohl die klimatischen Verhältnisse wie die politische Situation, deren untergründiger, unüberschaubarer Wirkung sie während ihres gesamten Aufenthaltes in Mexiko ausgeliefert sind und die sie fortwährend diskutieren. In gleicher Weise diskutieren sie die Beziehung zwischen Gourney und Mariquita, in der der Konflikt der gegensätzlichen Positionen von "Süden" und "Norden" seine schärfste Ausprägung erfährt. Von der äußeren Handlung her kompliziert sich die Lage der Reisenden durch die Geschichte des Paares auf doppelte Weise. Zunächst scheint es darum zu gehen, daß Gourney an einem Abend zu ungehöriger Stunde im Landhaus des Grafen vor Mariquita aufgetaucht war, das besagt, "es gewagt" hatte, fremdes Hausrecht zu verletzen, indem er sich einschlich und daß Mariquita bald danach gegen den Willen ihres Vaters sowohl ihren Wohnsitz verließ wie später auch das Kloster, zu dem der Vater sie verurteilte, den Amerikanern nachreiste und, da man sie von ihnen trennte, unter amerikanischen Soldaten angetroffen wird. Diese Soldaten selbst verurteilen den Vorgang. Sie waren den fliehenden Reisenden gegen die sie bedrängenden Regierungstruppen zu Hilfe gekommen und sagen jetzt:

Ei ausgepeitscht sollten die Leute werden, die arme Mädchen aus dem Hause ihrer Eltern entführen, ... Hätten wir euch gekannt, wie wir euch jetzt kennen, dürftet ihr lange gewartet haben, bis wir eurentwegen unsere Bälge zu Markte gebracht hätten. ... Will euch sagen, was uns dazu brachte. Brachte uns das dazu, was ihr, vermute ich, nie gekannt, und wenn ihr es je gekannt, längst verlernt habt, — amerikanisches Ehrgefühl. ... Wollten nicht Amerikaner, Landsleute, ... da preisgeben — sie und uns vor den Augen von ganz Mexiko zu Schanden werden lassen. (III, 442f.)

Was hier als Stimme des Volks, als Standpunkt ganz einfacher Leute formuliert wird, sagten die Reisegefährten Gourney von Anfang an. Whitely, der Pennsylvanier, legte ihm dar:

Ihr habt Euch da in ein Abenteuer eingelassen, bei dem nicht bloß Euer und unser Leben, sondern was mehr ist, Eure und unsere Ehre, ja die amerikanische Ehre auf dem Spiele steht. Täuscht Euch nicht. Das Land, oder vielmehr seine Bewohner mögen im Punkte der Liebe harmlos, leichtherzig, ja leichtsinnig denken, aber wir dürfen nicht harmlos, leichtherzig oder leichtsinnig denken oder handeln, und tun wir es, so haben wir alle künftig in dieses Land kommenden Amerikaner im voraus als leichtsinnige Abenteurer charakterisiert. (I, 191.)

Die Angelegenheit des Paares liegt jedoch anders, als es zu Anfang erscheint. Es geht nicht um "Liebschaft" und nicht um "Entführung." Gourney begreift sehr gut, daß er verzichten muß. Er wurde aber, während er noch in die Verführung eingesponnen war, wie seine Gefährten Opfer des umfassenden politischen "Komplots." Bei seinem zweiten Besuch in der Hazienda, zu dem die gesamte Reisegruppe eingelanden war, gaben Mariqita und er sich im Rausch der Wiederbegegnung in Anwesenheit eines Priesters ein Eheversprechen. Nach in Mexiko geltendem Kirchenrecht, so erfährt man, gilt ein solches Eheversprechen vor einem Priester als unlösbar. Zugleich aber ist es in Mexiko, wie man auch erfährt, verboten, einen Ausländer zu heiraten, selbst wenn er Katholik ist. Ein Verlöbniß mit einem Nichtkatholiken dagegen ist undenkbar und erregt Aufruhr. Die Gefahr für die Reisenden wird immer größer, und Mariquitas Lage ist auswegslos.

Um so wichtiger wird die Frage nach der Reaktion der amerikanischen Bürger. Während sie lange meinten, sie könnten auf die Gesetze des Landes und auf ihr Recht bauen und besäßen auch Rückhalt in ihrer eigenen Regierung und deren Vertreter in Mexiko, begreifen sie später, daß solche Erwartungen in anbetracht der noch gänzlich verwirrten politischen Verhältnisse Mexikos unangebracht sind, und daß sie mit nüchterner Analyse ihre Situation lediglich vor sich selbst klären können, den mexikanischen Behörden gegenüber aber nichts ausrichten würden, denn von dort aus wurden sie ja absichtlich getäuscht. Es bleibt ihnen daher nur die Flucht. Außerdem stehen sie fest zu Gourney und beurteilen seinen Fall auch jetzt im Rahmen ihrer Gesamtvorstellungen. Wie zu Anfang ist von Pruderie oder puritanischer Selbstgerechtigkeit ihm gegenüber nicht die Rede. Er mag verlobt oder verheiratet sein, das ist sein Recht. Mariquita kann Katholikin sein oder Gräfin, es ist nicht wichtig. Man respektiert die Beziehung der beiden.

Wie bald erkennbar wird, ist Mariquita der Situation nicht gewachsen. Reue, ihren Vater verlassen zu haben, statt dessen dem Geliebten, dem Ketzer, gefolgt zu sein, und das sichere Gefühl, daß Gourney ihr wieder entgleiten wird, geben ihr das Bewußtsein der Verlorenheit. Ihre letzten Szenen zeigen sie im Wahnsinn — Ophelia oder Margarethe. Daß sie außerhalb ihrer bisherigen Welt an Gourneys Seite ein neues Leben beginnen könnte, ist nach der Anlage des Romans nicht vorstellbar. Der Autor läßt sie — mit Gourney und Whitely — auf der “Hornet” ausreisen, einem Schiff, das untergeht. Hardy und Cockly, die auf einem andern Schiff fahren, überleben.

Der Untergang der “Hornet” gehört zu den Ereignissen, die Sealsfield nachweislich umdatierte. In Wahrheit ging das Schiff dieses Namens im Oktober 1829 unter. In das Jahr 1829 gehört auch die Geschichte eines Engländers, der sich durch Eheversprechen vor einem Priester mit einer reichen Mexikanerin verheiratete, von ihrem Vater verklagt und im Gefängnis von Aufständischen ermordet wurde.

Die beiden konkreten historischen Ereignisse sind so völlig in die Geschichte der Reisenden integriert, daß man

annehmen könnte, der Autor habe sie zum Zweck der Erzeugung von Spannung und Sensation erfunden. Ihre fiktive Verbindung ermöglicht den gemeinsamen Tod des Paares. Er wirkt wie ein literarisches Motiv; der gesamte Roman könnte nach dem Schema Heliodors gebaut sein. Das Paar findet sich auf den ersten Blick, wird sogleich getrennt, findet sich wieder, wird noch mehrmals getrennt, geht durch viele Gefahren und ist am Ende vereint. Aber es ist kein gutes Ende, wie es der Frömmigkeitshaltung des Barockautors entsprach. Vision und Reise ergaben bei Sealsfield keinen Horizont für die Zukunft. Trotz vieler Sympathien für die Bevölkerung von Oaxaca sah er die Situation Mexikos negativ und meinte, dreihundert Jahre spanischer Unterdrückung hätten die Menschen für Generationen verdorben. Auch für seine amerikanischen Bürger mit all ihrer Untadeligkeit hatte er keinen Ausblick. Hardy gesteht in einem kurzen Nachwort, daß die Erinnerungen an die Erfahrungen seiner gefährlichen Reise in ihm nachwirken wie das süße Gift einer genossenen Zauberfrucht, ohne daß er sagen kann, ob "diese wilden zerrissenen Bilder Wahrheit ... Dichtung" oder "Träume einer krankhaften Phantasie" sind. Damit wirft Sealsfield selbst das Problem auf, das die wissenschaftliche Erarbeitung seines Mexikoromans zu verfolgen hat und auf das ich hinweisen wollte, indem ich es unter das Thema *Vision und Reise* stellte.

ANMERKUNGEN

1. Zitiert wird nach der kritischen Ausgabe Charles Sealsfield, *Sämtliche Werke*, hrsg. von Karl J. R. Arndt et al.; darin *Süden und Norden*, 3 Bde. (Hildesheim—New York: Olms, 1978); im Text angegeben nach Band und Seitenzahl.

2. Roger Bauer, *Der Idealismus und seine Gegner in Österreich* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1966), S. 13.

GERMAN-AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL NOTE

The Kreisarchiv Graudenz

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**THE LORENZO DA PONTE EPISODE IN
FERDINAND KÜRNBERGER'S
DER AMERIKA-MÜDE***

By
JEFFREY L. SAMMONS
Yale University

It has long been known that Ferdinand Kürnberger's novel *Der Amerika-Müde* of 1855 was pieced together from a wide variety of sources. Primary among them, of course, are the letters of Nikolaus Lenau about his American experience. But, as George A. Mulfinger showed in his 1903 Chicago dissertation, there were a number of others, including several of the novels of Charles Sealsfield.¹ It is clear from examining the relationship of the sources to the novel that Kürnberger proceeded by a method that, when I was a undergraduate, was sometimes applied to the writing of term papers and was called "plagiaristic synthesis." Often Kürnberger's seams are rather ineptly sewn; one example is a scene taken over virtually verbatim from Sealsfield's *Morton oder die große Tour*, which fits awkwardly into the sense of the novel, since the villain of Sealsfield's next is a German farmer, while Kürnberger is constantly concerned to present the Germans as the only decent element in American society.² Given this method for writing a novel about America without ever having been there, it is likely that further sources remain to be indentified. I make no great claims for myself for having found one of them; it was easy enough. But I want to use the example for some considerations on the scholarly treatment of this book and of the nineteenth-century German novels about America generally.

Early in the novel the protagonist Moorfeld encounters on the streets of New York a melancholy, broken-down old man with whom he exchanges a few words in

*This paper was first presented at the North East Modern Language Association Conference, held on March 20-22, 1980, at Southeastern Mass. University, North Dartmouth, Mass. The section's topic was "Vision and Travel."

Italian.³ When they meet again towards the end of the book, they engage in a conversation on two subjects: the beauties of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and the miserable fate of a man of culture and sensibility in the barbaric United States.⁴ The old man, it soon appears, is Mozart's librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte, now a wreck washed up on the inhospitable American shore. "Ich werde meine Memorabilien schreiben," says he,⁵ thus pointing the experienced reader of Kürnberger to one more stone in the plagiaristic mosaic.

We must now pause for a moment to explain how Kürnberger's hero could have run across Da Ponte in New York in what must be the early 1820s.⁶ Da Ponte, approximately six months older than Goethe, was born of Jewish parents in 1749 and from an early age set out upon an adventurous life as what one might designate as a practical poet. Among his gifts were not only the capacity to produce in useful genres, but also a retentiveness, extraordinary in so patchily educated a man, for the great classics of Latin and Italian literature. In the Vienna of Emperor Joseph II, whom he boundlessly admired, he made his indelible mark in the cultural history of mankind as the librettist of Salieri and, of course, Mozart. After the death of Joseph II in 1790 and of Mozart in 1791, he wandered to Holland and then to London, where he labored as a theater director and bookseller. In London, as so often in his life, he got into insoluble financial difficulties, and emigrated to the United States in 1805. Thus began his American saga, which includes an effort to set himself up as a grocer in New York and as a storekeeper and distiller in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, with disastrous consequences, after which he returned to New York in 1818, dying there twenty years later. In New York he had been taken up by the wealthy and highly literate Clement Moore, the author of "The Night Before Christmas," who met Da Ponte in a bookstore in 1807 and encouraged him in his persistent purpose of making Italian literature better known in the United States; Moore's father, who was a bishop and a man of a considerable influence, also helped him. With varying success, Da Ponte gave private lessons in Italian language and literature. In 1825 he was appointed the

first professor of Italian at Columbia College, of which Bishop Moore had been president. He received no salary for this post and was allowed only the tuition of his relatively few students, but this was not unusual, for the modern foreign languages were not at that time a part of the regular curriculum, and all foreign language professors were in the same situation. Da Ponte himself regarded the professorship from a wholly practical point of view, endeavoring to use it as an anchor for his bookselling.

Da Ponte wrote his memoirs in several installments. The first version appeared in 1823; the purpose was not only to give a justification of his checkered career and to pillory his many enemies, but also to produce a modern Italian language textbook, which he sold to his students. An expanded version appeared in 1829. I do not know whether Kürnberger knew Italian. In the novel a few Italian phrases are worked into the conversation between Moorfeld and Da Ponte. But I think it unlikely that Kürnberger knew the memoirs in the original; they were published in New York and were banned in Italy and Austria, for, apart from his devotion to Joseph II, Da Ponte had rather disrespectful things to say about the House of Habsburg. The first German translation of the memoirs, an anonymous one, appeared in Stuttgart in 1847, and I am pretty sure that it was Kürnberger's source.⁷

The Da Ponte episode, which is only a matter of a few pages, can for our purposes be divided into three segments. One is a flowery speech of Moorfeld about *Don Giovanni*, to which Da Ponte replies with an observation on the importance of a good finale to an opera. The second is an anecdote Da Ponte tells of an American girl singing a Mozart aria poorly; when he tries to inspire her to a better performance and identifies himself as the author of the text, a leathery American gentleman interposes with: "Mein Herr, es kümmert uns blutwenig, womit Sie und Ihr Mozart sich in Europa Ihr Brod verdient. Daraus fließt kein Gesetz für uns in Amerika, die Kunst andres [*sic*] zu treiben, als es uns beliebt."⁸ The third is Da Ponte's complaint about the heart-

less commercial spirit of America that has duped and bankrupted the helpless cultured European.

The passage about the opera finale is taken nearly verbatim from Da Ponte's memoirs.⁹ Although there have been a few minor deletions and syntactical changes, the diction is so close as to make it most probable that the 1847 translation was Kürnberger's source. Like some of his other borrowings, it fits awkwardly into the text, having no connection with Moorfeld's effusions on *Don Giovanni*. In fact, in Da Ponte's text the passage has nothing to do with *Don Giovanni* but is a comment on the libretto for *Ricco d'un giorno*, written for Salieri. Kürnberger, doubtless sensing the incongruity, tries to pass it off with a remark about the quaintness of Da Ponte's eighteenth-century manner.

The anecdote about the incompetent American singer and the philistine gentleman is not to be found in Da Ponte. It may, however, derive from another story to the effect that when Da Ponte hoped during his first stay in New York to give instruction in Latin, he was told "*daß die Herren Amerikaner genug zu wissen glauben, um keinen Unterricht von einem lateinischen Italiener zu bedürfen.*"¹⁰ It is altogether probable that Kürnberger picked up the tone of this passage and fit it to an invention of his own that coheres with the main theme of the novel, the pervasive, crassly commercial Yankee boorishness that is inimical to all genuine culture. It might be remarked parenthetically that there are several similar, if much funnier, scenes of Yankee know-it-alls in Charles Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which appeared in German translation immediately upon its publication in 1843-1844. It would not be surprising if it were to be discovered that Kürnberger was influenced by Dickens' America novel.

The third element of the episode, the lugubrious description of the hero of European culture ruined by America, requires a somewhat closer look at Da Ponte himself and the text of his memoirs. It is true that Da Ponte in America, especially in Sunbury, had a string of epic commercial and financial disasters, and by his own account he was grievously

cheated and maltreated, though not always by Yankees; some of his most persistent adversaries were his fellow Italians. The same was true of his life in London, and he had found himself frequently abused in Germany, Austria, and Italy as well. Now it is clear from the historical record, and ought to be suspected by any intelligent reader, that Da Ponte's memoirs are systematically self-seeking and selective; no man can have been so relentless abused in total innocence for eighty-nine years. He himself was clearly not without guile, though he lacked talent for genuine rascality. His American editor Arthur Livingston remarked that he was "at the worst, a usurer and a speculator, handicapped by a large dose of native honesty and a tender heart."¹¹ Kürnberger's picture of him as a miserable derelict is laughable. Although he seems to have been virtually chronically bankrupt, he lived in a fairly grand style in a fine house on Broadway and always kept servants and a horse. One of his sons became an accomplished Classicist and Professor of Italian at the University of Maryland and New York University, and married a niece of President Monroe's wife.¹² Da Ponte was, at times, at least, something of a social lion, and he was rather successful in his purpose of propagating Italian culture in America; he is regarded as the father of Italian studies in this country.

Now there is no reason that Kürnberger should have known all this, for Da Ponte does not always stress the bright side in his memoirs. Furthermore, the 1847 translation lacks the fifth part, published in 1829, in which a number of his successes are reported, among them the appointment to the Columbia professorship. One passage that might have given Kürnberger something to think about in regard to the utter absence of culture in America is Da Ponte's enthusiastic account of highly successful New York performances of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* in 1825 and of *Don Giovanni* itself in 1826. One can be sure, of course, that Kürnberger would have found no use for these items in his novel. But it should have been clear to him from what he could read that Da Ponte did not regard America and especially New York as a locus of desolate misery. When describing his departure from

England he speaks of America as “ein glücklicher Welttheil, durch welchen ich meinen geneigten Leser führen werde, gleichwie die gütige Vorsehung es mir gethan hat.”¹³ He immediately comments on how much less rigorous American laws concerning debtors are than the English, a circumstance of no little interest to him. Despite his grueling experiences in Pennsylvania, he seems to have regarded New York, perhaps excepting Joseph II’s Vienna, as the happiest environment of his life: “Durch die vielen in Sunbury ausgesetzten Plagen und Qualen wurde ich endlich auf ganz wunderbare Weise wieder in die für mich so theure und gesegnete Stadt Newyork zurückgeführt, und welche höchst angenehme Folgen meine Rückkehr dahin sowohl für mich als für Andere gehabt hat, werde ich in der Folge beschreiben.”¹⁴ From this passage alone one can see that Kürnberger’s picture of Da Ponte in America is an outright falsification. Nor can his use of Da Ponte as an example of the absence of culture in America be regarded as anything but mendacious. Da Ponte makes it altogether clear, and the historical record supports him, that he was recognized, patronized, and encouraged by highly cultured people, especially Clement Moore, to whom Da Ponte is generously grateful in his memoirs.

Near the end of his dissertation, Mulfinger wrote: “Dass sich ein Mensch, der nie in Amerika war, untersteht, aus willkürlich zusammengelesenen und oft entstellten Berichten solche Urtheile über Amerika zu fällen, wie es Kürnberger die Helden seines Romans thun lässt, gehört zu den grossen Impertinenzen der Litteratur.”¹⁵ We may smile at this patriotic feeling of 1903, which today we find harder to sustain. But Mulfinger’s instinct was right. In the first place, Kürnberger’s treatment of Da Ponte speaks against him as a novelist. Da Ponte was an extremely interesting character. He was a modern picaro, careening dizzyingly from the highest success to the grittiest misfortune and back again. He reminds one strongly of Casanova, whom he knew personally and on whose memoirs his are modelled, though Da Ponte’s are a great deal less salacious and also in some ways concerned with more substantial matters. Despite his failings of

character, he is not only exceptionally appealing owing to the fundamental goodness of his heart, but was quite clearly unusually talented and a serious cultural figure. What a gift he ought to be to the realistic novelist! Kürnberger's reduction of him to a snivelling wretch cowering in a doorway in New York is an aesthetic and intellectual offense.

But, beyond this, it should be remembered that novels of this kind were for the nineteenth-century German public a context for meditation about America, doubtless helping to solve the question of emigration that must have preoccupied literally millions of minds. *Der Amerika-Müde* was by no means an obscure book. It was published in a series called "Deutsche Bibliothek: Sammlung auserlesener Original-Romane," which included such authors as Hermann Kurz, whose *Der Sonnenwirth* appeared simultaneously in this series, and the former Young Germans Ferdinand Gustav Kühne and Ernst Willkomm, whose bizarre novel, *Die Europamüden* of 1838, obviously inspired Kürnberger's title. Thus it is clear that the literary environment was liberal, but it is equally clear that Kürnberger's liberalism was of the nationalistic, not the democratic, denomination, for *Der Amerika-Müde*, as I have argued elsewhere,¹⁶ is primarily a tract of German national chauvinism. It was republished in 1857 in a series called "Allgemeine Hausbibliothek." In 1890 it was taken into the Reclam series, wrongly designated as "Zweite Auflage." The editor, though willing to grant that Kürnberger's view of America had been made obsolete by time, expressed the hope that the wide distribution of the Reclam volumes would bring him new readers.¹⁷ The novel appeared again in 1910 as a volume in Kürnberger's collected works, published in Munich. It was republished in 1927 in Vienna. That it was passed up by the Nazis must have been an oversight, caused, perhaps, by Kürnberger's reputation in literary history as a liberal. In 1973 it was published in East Germany, accompanied by a solemn recommendation of the book as a warning against "die Abgründe des Phänomens Amerika."¹⁸ It is not superfluous to add that this same commentary refers to the "Gestalt da Pontes, des begnadeten Librettisten und Mozart-Freundes," in which is exhibited

“die tragische Entfremdungssituation des Künstlers, ja des Individuums in der kapitalistischen Welt.”¹⁹

This balderdash is unfortunately not altogether uncharacteristic of the treatment of the German American novels in literary history.²⁰ It is in the first instance a failure of elementary philology, a lack of evaluative inquiry into the source and ideological motivations of these works, along with a failure to pay some informed attention to American history. It was not until 1975 that the provincial absurdities of Lenau's account of his American experience, which forms the main foundation of Kürnberger's novel, were exposed by Manfred Durzak.²¹ The irredeemably foolish *Amerika-Müde* is perhaps too easy a target for such an inquiry, but it might usefully be applied to other authors, for example, Sealsfield. One can read over and over again of Sealsfield's democratic and republican allegiances and certainly they are an important feature of his role as a dissident author in the German and Austrian context. But I have yet to encounter a historically informed analysis of his Jacksonian partisanship and his own location within it, which would raise troubling questions about racism and imperialism, among other things. For example, I have long wondered whether it would be possible to learn more about Sealsfield's alleged connections to the Freemasons, a question that I suspect may have been muddled by the ideological fantasies of his biographer Eduard Castle, and to inquire in particular whether they might have something to do with his unreasonably violent opposition to John Quincy Adams, to whom a so-called Anti-Masonic Party became allied. There is much useful scholarly work of this kind to be done in this area, and American Germanists are uniquely well placed to pursue it.

NOTES

1. Georg A. Mulfinger, *Ferdinand Kürnberger's Roman "Der Amerika-müde," dessen Quellen und Verhältnis zu Lenaus Amerikareise* (Philadelphia: "German American Annals" Press, 1903).

2. Ferdinand Kürnberger, *Der Amerika-Müde: Amerikanisches Kulturbild* (Frankfurt am Main: Meidinger, 1855), pp. 288-292; cf. Charles Sealsfield, *Gesamt-*

ausgabe der Amerikanischen Romane (Meersburg am Bodensee and Leipzig: Hendel, [1937], II: 358-362. See also Mulfinger, pp. 32-33.

3. Kürnberger, *Der Amerika-Müde*, pp. 75-76.

4. Ibid., pp. 469-477.

5. Ibid., p. 476.

6. The action of the novel cannot be precisely dated. Usually it is thought to be in the early 1830s, the time of Lenau's American experience. One scene introduces the aged ex-President Monroe, who died in 1831. However, Da Ponte says he is in his seventy-second year (p. 477), which would place the scene in 1820 or 1821. That would be consistent with his intention to publish his memoirs.

7. *Memoiren von Lorenz da Ponte von Ceneda. Von ihm selbst in New-York herausgegeben* (Stuttgart: Verlag der Franck'schen Buchhandlung, 1847). The only copy of this I was able to discover in the United States is in the Newberry Library in Chicago. I am grateful to the Newberry Library for providing me with a microfilm. A more complete and better known translation appeared as *Denkwürdigkeiten des Lorenzo da Ponte von Ceneda*, tr. Eduard Burckhardt (Gotha: Opetz, 1861). This, of course, is too late to be Kürnberger's source.

8. Kürnberger, *Der Amerika-Müde*, p. 476.

9. *Memoiren von Lorenz da Ponte*, [I]: 115-116.

10. Ibid., [II]: 159.

11. *Memoirs of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, tr. Elisabeth Abbott, ed. Arthur Livingston, with a Preface by Thomas G. Bergin (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p. xv.

12. Ibid., p. 270, n. 216.

13. *Memoiren von Lorenz da Ponte*, [II]: 139.

14. Ibid., [II]: 196-197.

15. Mulfinger, p. 51.

16. "Land of Limited Possibilities: America in the Nineteenth-Century German Novel," *Yale Review* 68 (1978/79): 49.

17. V. K. Schembera, ed., Ferdinand Kürnberger, *Der Amerikamüde: Amerikanisches Kulturbild* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1890), p. 3.

18. Ferdinand Kürnberger, *Der Amerikamüde*, ed. Friedemann Berger (Weimar: Kiepenheuer, [1973]), p. 565.

19. Ibid., p. 572.

20. See, for example, Rüdiger Steinlein, "Ferdinand Kürnbergers 'Der Amerikamüde'. Ein 'amerikanisches Kulturbild' als Entwurf einer negativen Utopie," in *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur: Neue Welt—Nordamerika—USA*, ed. Sigrid Bauschinger, Horst Denkler, and Wilfried Malsch (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), pp. 154-177. Steinlein seems to draw most of his knowledge of America from the writings of Marx and Engels.

21. Manfred Durzak, "Nach Amerika. Gerstäckers Widerlegung der Lenau-Legende," in *ibid.*, pp. 135-153.

RECENT PUBLICATION

Sharifa A. Bogina, *Immigrantskoe naselenie, SShA, 1865-1900*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1976. 273 p.

Studies the history of American immigration from 1865-1900 with special attention to the Germans, the Italians, and the Scandinavians.

BOOK REVIEWS

Kahn, Lisa, Ed., *Reisegepäck Sprache: Deutschschreibende Schriftstellerinnen in den U.S.A. 1938-1978*. Munich: Fink Verlag, 1979. 145 pp.

The twenty writers represented in this anthology seem, at first glance, to have little in common. About half belong to the older generation and came to America before the war, as exiles; the others are younger and came after 1945, as immigrants. Some of the poems and prose pieces are traditional, others modernistic; the thematic range is likewise great. The element that does unite these writers is expressed in the title: *Reisegepäck Sprache*. As the reader sees, in the works themselves and in comments under the rubric “zur Sprache” which each author has supplied, they share the desire—in some cases the compulsion—to retain at least this one connection with the land in which they grew up.

A few of the contributors will be familiar to readers of *Journal of German-American Studies* (Franzi Ascher-Nash, Mimi Grossberg, Margarete Kollisch, Margot Scharpenberg), most are known only to a limited audience, and a few are virtually making their literary debut. Erika Metzger, Lilo Pretzer, Christiane Seiler, and Rita Terras are represented by previously unpublished poems. These authors, each of whom has her own unique style, offer new and interesting perspectives. They share a contemporary attitude and an acute awareness of their situation, living “in zwei Sprachen” (Pretzer). Indeed, several of the poems contain English phrases which are carefully integrated with the German.

The works of these authors is different from most literature now being written. This is not surprising, since they, as German-Americans, inevitably will have different points of view from persons who live and write within a single cultural framework. As the editor observes in her introduction, “die vorliegende Anthologie [soll] als literarische und nicht als politische Arbeit gewertet werden.” These works are first and foremost literary documents (and many are outstanding). Secondarily they are products of German-Americans. And finally, they are by women—although a radically feminist position is consistently absent. Whatever a given reader’s reason may be for approaching these texts, it is not likely that he—or she—will be disappointed.

JERRY GLENN
University of Cincinnati

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Ernest G. Fischer. *Marxists and Utopias in Texas*. Burnet, Texas: Eakin, 1980. x—246 pp., illus., biblio., index. Cloth \$14.95.

Despite its flamboyant title, the flaming red hammer and sickle on its cover, and the subscript on the dust jacket describing this book as an account of “the Lone Star State’s pioneer flirtation with Socialism-Com-

munism, Fischer's work delivers neither thorough scholarship nor delightfully shocking yellow journalism. Scandal has, I'm afraid, grown more demanding of late than what Fischer offers.

The author, a guest of the German High Command and an AP correspondent with the German army on the Russian front during World War II and more recently a part-time journalism teacher at Tulane and the University of Texas, claims this book was ten years in the making. It does have ten chapters. At the apparent rate of a chapter a year, one might expect these chapters to be organized; they are not.

Fischer presents an assortment of anecdotes and a great deal of trivia—much of it published elsewhere but some of it uncovered as a result of his own sleuthing—on early German communists and Forty-Eighters, French Fourierists and Cabetists, Mormons, Quakers, and other utopianists. The illustrations are good. The conclusions are missing. Some day this subject, which promises so much, will attract the deserved attention of kindred and competent scholars.

GLEN E. LICH
Schreiner College
Kerrville, Texas

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Otto W. Tetzlaff, tr. and ed. *The Emigrant to Texas: A Handbook and Guide*. Bremen: Schuenemann, 1846. Rpt. Burnet, Texas: Eakin, 1979. vi plus 120 pp., illus. Cloth \$7.95.

This little volume, written in a fairly elementary style, was first published in 1846 as an emigrant guide to Texas. The translation by Otto Tetzlaff, head of the Modern Languages Department at Angelo State University, includes a brief history of Texas, a description of its geography and economy, and an outline of its government, followed by a more thorough discussion of the Mainz and Antwerp emigration organizations.

Tetzlaff labored carefully to give an accurate and readable translation of a text written to be understood by people of limited education. Tetzlaff's own introduction, while not the work of an English stylist, is probably the best part of the volume. The rest of the book is sketchy, especially the parts about Texas which are occasionally misleading in the glib re-presentation of clichéd materials on Texas widely published and read in Germany. The passages on flora and fauna afford some of the best unintentional humor in the book. Texas is described, of course, as a potential garden, richly resourced, blessed by a generous climate, and populated by ruffians—Anglo-Americans among whom "drunkenness [sic.], fraud, and gambling" were widespread. The Mexican population was less consequential than the Anglos but more compatible with German standards of culture. Apparently there were few Indians in Texas in 1846, a matter which may surprise American historians; those Indians mentioned briefly in the last paragraphs on population and commerce are described as having "nothing to look forward to but complete extinction, to which their craving for brandy only adds."

By ignoring Anglos, avoiding Indians and Mexicans, abstaining from crude Texan liquor, not trafficking in slaves, and staying clean, Germans were assured of leading wholesome and morally upright lives. It is questionable, however, whether the Germans did not endure the same fate which befell their imported potatoes; the anonymous author of the guide lamented that "European [sic.] potatoes do well, but degenerate within a few years, providing fewer and smaller tubers. Therefore, from time to time these potatoes must be replaced from abroad."

The shortcomings of the guide are the shortcomings of the popular nineteenth-century travel guides in general. One must bear in mind that such writings were designed to sell travel packages; if they were not as accurate as modern Michelins, then too people then were not as conversant with travel as now.

Eakin Press does scholars a great service by printing such resources and making them available for study and research. One would hope that the press will soon acquire a more reliable editorial staff and submit manuscripts to reputable scholars for reading before publication. Frequent typographical errors, garbled cutlines, and distracting design do not enhance the publications of a press which has shown its willingness to revive and sustain local lore and literature.

GLEN E. LICH
Schreiner College
Kerrville, Texas

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George Fenwick Jones and Renate Wilson, Trs. and Eds., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America...* Edited by Samuel Urlsperger. Volume 5, 1738. Wormsloe Foundation Publications, No. 14. Athens: University of Georgia Pr., 1980.

Anyone now or in the future interested in the colonial Germans in general or the Germans in Georgia in particular will find a wealth of source materials as a result of the work of George Fenwick Jones. Among the works which come to mind is his article on the German language in Georgia "Colonial Georgia's Second Language *Georgia Review* 21:1 (1967): 87-100. The volume reviewed here is an annotated English translation of the reports written in 1738 in Ebenezer, Georgia and sent to the Francke Foundation in Halle.

Most of these reports were written by Johann Martin Boltzius and Israel Christian Gronau, the former of which was the Lutheran pastor assigned to the Salzburger Protestant exiles in Georgia, the latter of which was Boltzius' assistant. The reports were first sent to Augsburg where they were edited by Samuel Urlsperger, the senior Lutheran minister of Augsburg. After editing the reports he sent them on to Halle to the Francke Foundation. These edited reports were then published by the Waysenhaus Press at Halle while the fuller reports were transcribed into copy books at the Foundation. Prior to the present edition scholars and researchers have had to rely on the "greatly bowdlerized edition."

The present edition restores all of the text deleted by Urlsperger and indicates this textual material by placing it in brackets. Text which was added by Urlsperger is set off with slashes. An example of deleted material are those texts which discredit the English authorities and the behavior or conditions of the Salzburger.

These reports are "almost the only intimate information we have of that important segment of the population, which was so little understood by the British authorities and inhabitants of the town." The notes are fascinating and the select bibliography and index useful. In short, an outstanding contribution to the field of German-American studies and a sterling piece of scholarship.

DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN
University of Cincinnati

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Darrel E. Bigham with Research Assistance from Charles F. Petranek,
Reflections on a Heritage: The German-Americans in Southwestern Indiana. Evansville, Indiana, 1980. 32 pp.

This booklet, made possible through matching grants from the Indiana Committee for the Humanities in cooperation with the NEH, represents an excellent utilization of oral history in the field of German-American studies. Based on interviews with approximately sixty third- and fourth-generation German-Americans within a ca. twenty mile radius of Evansville, Indiana it aims not to write a community or institutional history, but rather to record the reflections and impressions of persons "about what it meant (and means) to be a German American."

Most mentioned the following factors as causes for their ancestors' immigration: wars, famines, industrialization, conscription, and religious and political persecution. New Orleans was the prime port of entry for Germans who settled in southwestern Indiana, and they were attracted to the area mainly by word of mouth. Descendents of the immigrants knew the general place of origin of their ancestors, such as Hesse-Darmstadt, Württemberg, Baden, Bavaria and Alsace-Lorraine, and some have studied their family history closely. Most Germans immigrated to the area between the 1830s and 1880s.

Initially German culture was centered on religion, language and rural folkways. "The Germans were unable to separate religious expression from the German language." One person recalled "If you weren't confirmed in German, you weren't confirmed. God didn't listen to you in the English language." Prior to the 1920s little English was taught in the church schools. A school day at Trinity Lutheran School before World War One consisted of "beginning with a German greeting, and a German hymn, followed by an hour of Bible instruction. The remainder of the day—devoted to such basics as literature and arithmetic—was also taught in German." By the fourth of fifth grade English instruction began in such

schools. Most German-Americans who began their education before the First World War recall that English was learned only after they started school.

Supporting church and language were the various agrarian folkways, at the center of which stood the patriarchal family within the broader framework of a close-knit network of family relatives. Among the farming communities the land was prized as if it was sacred. They practiced scientific farming and crop rotation and the "worst sin" was to waste the land. Language, religion and family were, therefore, central to the German heritage in southwestern Indiana.

In the urban areas residential enclaves were established by the immigrants: most German-Americans in Evansville lived on the west side. However, such enclaves not only provided security but also job opportunities. Young German-American women, for example, found the best job opportunities on the west side. The community, however, was not homogenous since there were regional differences amongst the Germans as well as religious and ideological conflicts, especially with the Forty-Eighters. The church was especially important since together with its schools, organizations and various activities it "attested to a way of life which stressed, through pageantry and ceremony, separateness and superiority."

Celebrations, such as German Day, were important, but the most important was the family celebration of Christmas. One recalled "That was the only time you could get fruits that they did not grow—like bananas, cranberries, oranges, and tangerines." Less obvious, however, were the values held by German-Americans.

German-Americans were conservative and stressed the values of "perseverance, patience, thrift and respect for authority, with enough idealism to save and build homes in the New World." On the west side of Evansville little credit was needed since German-Americans worked hard, saved money and lived within their means. Fundamental to German-American conservatism was the belief "that government should spend as little as possible." Also, party affiliation was related to family tradition, but regardless of party affiliation or faith "most Germans shared, on the whole, a set of values brought from the Old World." And they translated into "honesty, thrift, hard work, and discipline. Central to those ideals were loyalty to family, church and community."

Within this framework this booklet examines what remains of the German heritage today. Most fourth-generation German-Americans spoke little English as they entered grade school in the 1940s. By the fourth-generation general attitudes about marriage had changed: Alsations married Bavarians, Lutherans married Catholics, and Germans married non-Germans. Technological change brought new occupational opportunities that drew people from their various communities. The Health Department closed an old world open-air market, an important aspect of agrarian folkways. Residential neighborhoods have been displaced by industrialization and churches have, therefore, lost membership, some closed, as a

result. Modern methods of transportation also contributed to the weakening of residential enclaves and suburbs emerged with the result of further population dispersal. However, German-Americans assigned the greatest significance to two major factors which affected their life and heritage: World War One and prohibition. Nevertheless, generalization about the German-Americans of the area is difficult since the degree of cultural retention and modification varies greatly. Regarding German traditions one person responded "I think these are built into these people, and they might even suggest them without realizing that they came out of the old tradition."

Since the 1940s the German language and its various dialects are confined mainly to family use with public use limited to church sermons or to choral presentations. The religious beliefs of Protestants, Catholics and Jews are still patterned on the immigrant past. Most still belong to the religious institution of their immigrant ancestors. One person observed "this was the church of their fathers, their church came out of Germany, and this is the place where they would belong." Selfcontained neighborhoods still persist, but not to the extent as earlier. Political loyalties still evidence German traditions: certain families belong to this or that political party as a part of family tradition. Clubs, such as the Lessing Lodge, the Central Turners and the Germania Maennerchor, are popular. Food and drink evidence the German tradition, although much fainter than earlier.

The old ways have been obviously modified by the American experience, and much has blended together so that at certain points it is difficult to distinguish what is American and what is German. However, this booklet documents the presence of German traditions and values in and around Evansville, Indiana. There is little overt identification there with German roots since they are simply part of every day life, but to the outside observer "much of the German tradition persists, although altered by the American experience."

Reflections on a Heritage: The German-Americans in Southwestern Indiana is not only a fine contribution to the field of German-American studies, it is an example of the use of oral history, and one which should and could be replicated elsewhere.

DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN
University of Cincinnati

**NORTH DAKOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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TEA LEROW

**ZUR NOTWENDIGKEIT VON LEIBESÜBUNGEN
MORGENS MITTAGS ABENDS NACHTS
ODER
FÜR MÄNNER DIE DAS HERABZIEHENDE
DES EWIG WEIBLICHEN BEKLAGEN**

*Halb zog sie ihn,
halb sank er hin,
the damn fool. Mehr Muskel
und ein halber Fisch
briete in der Pfanne,
zierte ihm den Tisch.*

Austauschbares Ende:

*doch hätte er
mehr stamina
dann hielt sich ihm
die femina
zum Schmusen hin.*

**EIN HÜBSCH LIED VON DEN ZWEYEN BRUSTEN
(im linden brustton)**

*ach wie bin jch froh
das mein brustel so
weych und rund*

*denn wer mein junck stoltz
viereckig auss holtz
zu dysr stund:*

*wie kunt ich auff mein lieblich sitze
ich wurd ym schier den pelz aufritze
dar zu sie klappern wild
sein durst wer ungestillt*

*das helsen thet ym bass;
o dankbar bin jch wie ein kind
das sie rund wie zweyn belle sind
und hupfen all zeyt froh
fur treuhertz augen so
weych vnd rund.*

* * *

N O T

*Schon lange hungern wir.
Auch der Wald gibt nicht viel her.
Oben kreisen Aasgeier.*

*Noch einige Wurzeln
für uns unterm Eis. Manchmal
ohne ich, wo sie wachsen.*

*Mit grosser Freude schützt
dein dürrer Leib mich immer
noch vor dem schrecklichen Wind.*

*Dann und wann flüsterst du
mir ein Ratsel ins Ohr. O,
wie mich deine Stimme rührt.*

*Nachts machen wir Feuer,
und unsre Leiber rollen
sich zitternd umeinander.*

*Solange du atmest,
will ich noch.*

ILSE PRACHT-FITZELL

LIEBESPAAR

<i>am morgen sassen</i>	<i>da standen sie auf</i>
<i>sie am hügel und</i>	<i>nach osten bliesen</i>
<i>warteten auf die</i>	<i>sie in die hände</i>
<i>sonne sie kam nicht</i>	<i>die sonne gingauf</i>

WENN WIR BEISAMMEN SIND

(in der Form des Meistersang)

*O wie wunderschön
dich so anzusehn
leise Worte hin und her
und die Blicke nun
ineinander ruhn
sich erkennen mehr und mehr.
Seelenlaube licht
friedlich dein Gesicht
Honigtropfen Zeit
Gold voll Süßigkeit
still das Herz.
Wie geschmückte Boote ziehn
selig leise Worte hin.*

GERMAN-AMERICAN EPITAPH

*Andrew Yundt is my name
America was my station;
Hinkletown was my dwelling place
And Christ is my salvation.
When I am dead and in my grave,
And all my bones are rotten;
When this you see remember me,
Lest I should be forgotten.
Remember me as you pass by.
As you are now,
so once was I
As I am now
so must you be.
Prepare for death
and follow me.*



AT YOUR SIDE THERE WERE GERMANS TOO

by

K O N R A D K R E Z

Not as burdens to these shores we throng,
From our cherished German Fatherland.
Indeed, we have brought so much along,
Unknown to you, yet by our hand.
And when from the dense forestal shields,
and the open wilderness you
wreath'd your vast and verdant fields,
At your side there were Germans too.

So much of that which in earlier days
you brought here from across the sea,
We taught you how to prepare, and ways
to produce more goods, yes, 'twas we.
Dare not forget this, deny it n'er —
Say not that we did not so do,
For a thousand forges witness bear:
At your side there were Germans too.

And though your art and your sciences now
bring their strength and power to this land,
Their fame rests still on the German brow,
'Twas mostly done by German hand,
And when from your songs melodies ring
memories of hearts once so true,
'Tis known to me, in the songs you sing
is much put there by Germans too!

Thus, with great pride on this soil we stand,
Which from the wilds our strength brought claim,
Ever wonder then, what kind of land,
'twould be if n'er a German came!
And so we declared in Lincoln's day,
And that day freedom's horn first blew —
Yes, we dare undeniably say:
At your side there were Germans too!

Translated from the German original by Dr. Robert E. Ward, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.