

## Karl/Charles Follen: Rediscovering the Multilingual Oeuvre

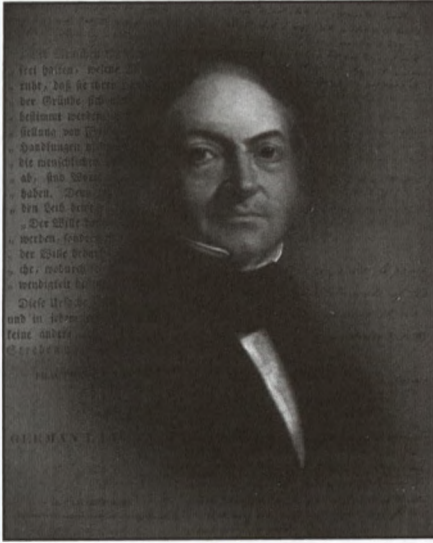


Illustration 1: Karl/Charles Follen (1796-1840)

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

During his presidency of PEN, Salman Rushdie made a passionate call for a closer look at foreign and dissenting voices to bring into focus the international challenges of translation.<sup>2</sup> In order to overcome alienation and foster a better understanding of the “other” both within and outside of the United States, Rushdie insisted that writers “have all the more reason to build bridges.” Many of these textual bridges already exist in the writings of immigrants from all over the world who came to the United States with their cultural lore and willingness to embrace the promises of a free, democratic society. However, more often than not, these literary products lie

buried in the archives of American universities. They are either forgotten or written in a language other than English thereby imposing often insurmountable obstacles to modern readers accustomed to writings in the international language of scholarship.

Marc Shell’s and Werner Sollors’s call for a “multilingual turn” in order to “prepare students better for world citizenship, and reduce cultural friction” (Sollors: 1998, 3) has spawned numerous discussions regarding immigrant literature and American identity among scholars. The field of German-American relationships has profited considerably from this new development. Among the most remarkable publications have been *The German-American Encounter* (2001) edited by Frank Trommler and Elliot Shore and *German? American? Literature?* (2002) edited by Werner Sollors and Winfried Fluck. Since the early 1990s, there has been a renewed interest in Karl/Charles Follen. In his biography *Charles Follen’s Search for Nationality and Freedom: Germany and America 1796-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), Edmund Spevack shed new light on the life of Follen. Scholars like Kurt Müller-Vollmer (*The Internationality of National Literatures in Either America*) and Heinrich Toltmann (*The German-American Experience*. Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000) locate Follen at the very center of German-American history of ideas in the 19th century. The new focus on transnational identities, transcultural confrontations, as well as the American dimension of German literature and language calls for a new look at Follen’s provocative personality.

The German-American tradition is, as Werner Sollors explains, particularly rich

(Sollors: 2002, 3). However, unearthing forgotten texts from the vaults of American libraries should not be a goal in itself, as it might create in the words of Winfried Fluck "just another ethnic corner" (Fluck: 2002, 176). The writings of the German-American freedom fighter Karl/Charles Follen are a case in point. Preceding the group of 48ers by a generation, his rich literary oeuvre offers revealing insights regarding the dilemma German immigrants faced during the first half of the 19th century when they argued for more political freedom and democratic reforms. A number of scholars have evaluated and reassessed Follen's contributions to the fields of literature, philosophy, religion, and abolitionism during the last one and a half centuries. Among them are renowned experts of German-American cultural exchange such as Albert Faust, George Washington Spindler, Henry Pochmann, Ursula Brumm, Kathleen Neils Conzen, Frank Trommler, Gerhard Weiss, and Edmund Spewack. The more Follen emerges as a controversial figure in transnational American studies, the more it becomes necessary to trace back his multilingual oeuvre and translations, his efforts to fashion himself into a representative American democrat, and to overcome the gap between democratic principles and practices.

Despite the remarkable scholarly interest in Follen's personality, his extensive writings have not been available since Eliza Lee Cabot's (incomplete) collection from 1841.<sup>3</sup> Many scholars struggle with the "bicultural problem" of Charles Follen, namely the transnational dimension of his thinking and multilingual writings. In order to understand his vision of equality within a democratic society means to familiarize oneself with the cultural particularities of two continents in the nineteenth century. Follen was fluent in German, French, and English. Considering his political activities as a polyglot intellectual on both sides of the Atlantic, it comes as no surprise that his literary output has been scattered around the globe.<sup>4</sup>

### **I. From Revolutionary Demagogue to Democratic Reformer**

Follen's life unfolded under the ominous banner of seeking refuge. He was born on 4 September 1796 in the house of his grandfather in the small village of Romrod, about 31 miles east of Gießen in the district of Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany. Gießen, the hometown of his parents Christoph (1759-1833) and Rosine Follenius (1766-1800), had become the military target of French soldiers. Thus, the family fled to the rural parts of the country to avoid possible confrontations with the French troops. Their second son was baptized Karl Theodor Christian. His parents were part of the social elite of Gießen with a distinguished pedigree of lawyers, state officials, and professors. The Latinized name Follenius, which the family adopted in the 17th century, roots them in a humanist tradition. Not surprisingly, Charles was trained in various old and modern languages at Gießen, among them Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but also French and Italian. He had three siblings who despite his emigration to another continent kept lifelong contact: August Adolf Ludwig (1794), Luise (1797), and Paul (1799). Their mother died one year after Paul's birthday.

From 1813 to 1818, Charles Follen attended the University of Gießen, then called Ludvociana, established more than two hundred years earlier. His attention was first directed to theology and then law. During this time, the young student was spurred by the rise of German nationalism, liberalism and the call for German national unity.

Informed by the writings of nationalist agitators like Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852) and Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860), Follen believed in the unifying ideals of a German ethnic identity which would form the basis for a new national entity. In early spring of 1814, Follen and his brother August Adolf Ludwig recruited themselves voluntarily to fight Napoleon's Grand Armée and drive them back deep into French territory. The nationalistic heroic poetry of Theodor Körner (1791-1813) mythologized the wartime experience of the naïve students. Despite their lack of actual combat experience, the uninterrupted march to Lyon gave Follen and his student companions a sense of national identity and allowed them later to reminisce about their "self-sacrificing fight for freedom."

The Wars of Liberation (1813-14) interrupted Follen's studies briefly. The violent struggle for German freedom left a lifelong mark on his thinking. Violence became a keyword to foster changes for a unified German fatherland. Follen's poetry cycle *Das Große Lied* provides ample evidence of the aggressive revolutionary spirit. "Freiheitsmesser gezückt!/ Hurrah, den Dolch in die Kehle gedrückt! Mit Kronen und Bändern, mit Purpurgewändern/ Zum Rach'-Altar das Opfer geschmückt" (quoted in Münch: 1902, 51).<sup>5</sup>

After his return to the University of Gießen, Follen became a central figure among the politically active students. The most radical wing of these young idealistic freedom fighters formed a fraternity called the "die Gießener Schwarzen" (the Gießen Blacks) due to the color of their dark clothes. With the newly established rules of the *Ehrenspiegel*, Follen outlined a code of honor for the fraternity members. It was designed to reform the notorious student life and to transform it into a model of a democratically organized society. Of particular importance was Follen's notion of "honor," which symbolized Christian uprightness, sexual abstinence, and self cultivation.<sup>6</sup>

Follen graduated in 1817 with a dissertation on ecclesiastical law and received the title *Dr. juris*. He continued to work as a lecturer at Gießen University. Although Follen was not present at the nationwide student gathering at the Wartburgfest on 18 October 1817, his ideas were represented by his close friend Christian Sartorius. The burning of books and other symbols of what was then labeled "un-German" caused strong repercussions in the press and public reception of student life as the hotbed of political radicalism. After Follen had successfully sided with Hessian farmers to argue a court case which forced the Dukes of Hessen-Darmstadt to revoke their recent increase of taxation, his future as a lawyer looked grim. He moved to Jena where he took on a lecturing position. Here, the young, enthusiastic student Karl Ludwig Sand (1775-1820) became one of his most devoted followers in a radical student group which Follen labeled "die Unbedingten" (the Unconditionals). This elite circle was bound by unconditional loyalty and destined to play a crucial part in a future revolution in Germany. Follen indoctrinated them about the need of sacrifice, if necessary even their lives, for the higher cause of freedom, equality, and national unity.

In the "Grundzüge für eine künftige teutsche Reichsverfassung, 1819" (Draft of the Constitution for a Future German Empire), Follen combined French republican ideas with German nationalistic aspirations appropriated from Jahn, Arndt, and Heinrich Luden (1778-1847). He envisioned a utopian German nation based on a common cultural, religious and ethnic background. The comprehensive outline regarding the political, religious, and educational sphere has a dogmatic ring and is marked by a sense

of intolerance against dissenters.<sup>7</sup> Historians like Hartwig Brandt describe the draft as the most extreme of the constitutional drafts which appeared during the early phase of the *Vormärz* (Brandt: 1979, 121). In his well-known set of poems called *Das Große Lied* (The Great Song) Follen bluntly called for a violent uprising to overthrow an evil hierarchy based on aristocratic tyranny. In accord with philosopher Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773-1843), he believed that personal conviction (*Überzeugung*) and one's conscience had to be the guiding principles in the individual's decision making process. Under certain circumstances, a person that is willing to sacrifice his or her life for a higher cause of humanity is not bound by state laws any more.

Sand believed with almost religious devotion that he was one of the chosen heroes who had to sacrifice himself on what Follen called the "altar of freedom." His assassination of the popular German stage writer, August von Kotzebue, in Mannheim on 23 March 1819 caused a political and social uproar.<sup>8</sup> Sand composed a statement of moral justification entitled "Todesstoß dem August von Kotzebue!" (Death to August von Kotzebue!). Its drastic language and several references to Follen's *Das Große Lied* enabled the court to charge Follen with exercising a dangerous influence on the so-called "Unconditional." In the wake of the assassination Follen became stigmatized as the mastermind behind the murder. Institutions of higher education became the butt of tight control mechanisms. The assassination of August von Kotzebue paralyzed the liberal student movement in its efforts to break aristocratic tyranny and banned political activities of academics (Mehring: 2005, 164). Although the investigating law courts did not succeed in providing conclusive evidence, Follen appeared on the radar of political authorities in Prussia and Austria. When Fürst Metternich passed the Carlsbad Decrees in the fall of 1819, Follen's academic career was over, his days in Germany numbered.

At that time, Follen began to reflect on gathering forces to ignite a German revolution from outside. What Follen called the "homeland of freedom" represented one of the possible vantage points. Within the democratic environment of the United States, he considered establishing an educational haven for German émigrés. In his memorandum *Die Gründung einer deutsch-amerikanischen Universität* (On the Foundation of a German-American University), Follen envisioned the German intelligentsia and institutions of higher education as reliable powers to create a beacon of freedom across the Atlantic. Consequently, its guiding light would reflect on the revolutionary movement in the fatherland.<sup>9</sup>

Follen fled to France. During his stay in January and February 1820 he was introduced to the intellectual elite who would later help him to escape to the United States. In spring, he went to Switzerland: first to Zurich and then to Chur where he was offered a school teacher position. Being dissatisfied with his limited amount of influence and conflicting religious views of fellow teachers, he left Chur about a year later. In 1821, Follen was appointed public lecturer at the University of Basel and soon after professor of law studies. He edited the literary magazine *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Basel* along with Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette (1780-1849) and other colleagues. The magazine featured two comprehensive essays by Follen: "Die Bestimmung des Menschen" (The Future Destiny of Man) and "Über die Rechtslehre des Spinoza" (On the Legal Teachings of Spinoza).

Follen had not yet given up his intention to change the political fate of Germany. From his new home base he attempted to recruit young people who were to form a

Youth League. This group of committed "freedom fighters" should prepare for a national uprising to be complemented by a League of Elders. The purpose of the League was described as following: "Der Umsturz der bestehenden Verfassungen, um einen Zustand herbeizuführen, worin das Volk durch selbstgewählte Vertreter sich eine Verfassung geben könne." (Neigebauer: 1831, 42).<sup>10</sup> Follen's plan never materialized. Instead, he was forced to take flight again after the pressure from Prussia and Austria on the Swiss government had reached a critical point. In early November 1824, he escaped German officials with a false passport and a letter of recommendation from the Marquis de Lafayette to provide for a smooth acculturation in the United States. In Le Havre, he embarked on the *Cadmus* bound for New York. Subsequently, he called himself by the anglicized name of Charles.

Follen arrived in New York on 19 December 1824. Like Christopher Columbus standing on American soil for the first time, Follen remembered his excitement: "I wanted to kneel upon the ground, and kiss it, and cling to it with my hands, lest it should even then escape my grasp" (Follen: 1841, I, 139). His first destination was Philadelphia. Unlike many of his fellow immigrants from Germany, Follen focused on language studies to perfect his English. On 2 January 1825, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) provided him with references and recommendations to prominent Americans like Germanophile professor Edward Everett (1784-1865), George Ticknor (1791-1871), and John Thornton Kirkland (1770-1840), who then was president at Harvard University.

Soon after his arrival in the United States, Follen recognized the outlandishness of his original dream. While he had imagined a German university in the United States as a first stage to establish a model German state, which would ultimately transplant German cultural values to the New World, Follen changed his course dramatically. He found a new calling in fostering a better understanding of German cultural achievements in the United States. During the first five years, his vision of a country beyond the Atlantic, where freedom, equality, and the rights of the individual had been fulfilled, remained largely unshattered. Follen experienced an American success story *par excellence*, both socially and professionally. In 1826, he met Eliza Lee Cabot (1787-1860). She belonged to a large and influential Boston family.<sup>11</sup> In the same year, Follen initiated his career at Harvard as a language instructor in German and French offering courses on literature including books such as Edgeworth's *Mademoiselle Panache*, Goethe's *Faust*, Molière's *L'Avare ou l'École du mensonge*, or Schiller's *Räuber* (see illustration 2).<sup>12</sup>

Follen introduced translations and editions of classical and current German texts to a highly interested American audience. Among his friends he counted prominent American Germanophiles like the Unitarian priest William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) or the former president John Quincy Adams (1767-1848). Follen quickly became a highly regarded citizen of Boston with a social network among the most esteemed New Englanders. With his "Lectures on Moral Philosophy" ranging from classical to modern philosophical concepts, he complemented his introduction to German literature by 1831. Follen put special emphasis on the writings of Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) discussing their individual poetic merits, philosophical and aesthetic implications, as well as, providing translations and detailed biographical background information. In a letter to Thomas Carlyle, Emerson described Follen as a "respectable German" in New England whose lectures on Schiller

**DEPARTMENT OF Modern Languages**  
*German and French*

Academic Year 1826 — 7

3d Term.

Instructor, Charles Follen.

Term—beginning April 1826; ending July 1826.

No. of Exercises required of the Instructor, *German*, 10; *French*, 10; *Latin*, 10.

No. of Lectures given by the Instructor, *German*, 10; *French*, 10; *Latin*, 10.

Hours given daily, on an average, to instruction, *German*, 7; *French*, 7; *Latin*, 7.

| CLASS            | No. of Students or Pupils | No. of Students in each Class | No. of Students attending | No. of Exercises attended | No. of Exercises given | No. of Exercises given in each Class | Time of each Exercise | No. of Students present | No. of Students absent | Time of each Lecture | No. of Students present | No. of Students absent | Time of each Lecture | Books used, and the progress made in each. | Exercises assigned and Reg. given | Time spent in reading them | No. of Exercises completed | No. of Exercises not completed | Remarks |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Classical</i> | 1                         | 1                             | 1                         | 1                         | 1                      | 1                                    | 1 hour                | 1                       | 0                      | 1 hour               | 1                       | 0                      | 1 hour               | <i>Classical</i>                           | 1 hour                            | 1                          | 0                          |                                |         |
| <i>German</i>    | 4                         | 4                             | 2                         | 2                         | 2                      | 2                                    | 1 hour                | 2                       | 2                      | 1 hour               | 2                       | 2                      | 1 hour               | <i>German</i>                              | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 1                          | 2                              |         |
| <i>French</i>    | 10                        | 10                            | 2                         | 8                         | 8                      | 8                                    | 1 hour                | 8                       | 2                      | 1 hour               | 8                       | 2                      | 1 hour               | <i>French</i>                              | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 7                          | 18                             |         |
| <i>Latin</i>     | 14                        | 14                            | 2                         | 12                        | 12                     | 12                                   | 1 hour                | 12                      | 2                      | 1 hour               | 12                      | 2                      | 1 hour               | <i>Latin</i>                               | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 11                         | 25                             |         |
| <i>German</i>    | 9                         | 9                             | 7                         | 2                         | 2                      | 2                                    | 1 hour                | 2                       | 7                      | 1 hour               | 2                       | 7                      | 1 hour               | <i>German</i>                              | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 6                          | 19                             |         |
| <i>French</i>    | 8                         | 8                             | 2                         | 6                         | 6                      | 6                                    | 1 hour                | 6                       | 2                      | 1 hour               | 6                       | 2                      | 1 hour               | <i>French</i>                              | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 5                          | 28                             |         |
| <i>Latin</i>     | 12                        | 12                            | 8                         | 4                         | 4                      | 4                                    | 1 hour                | 4                       | 8                      | 1 hour               | 4                       | 8                      | 1 hour               | <i>Latin</i>                               | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 9                          | 28                             |         |
| <i>German</i>    | 10                        | 10                            | 10                        | 0                         | 0                      | 0                                    | 1 hour                | 0                       | 10                     | 1 hour               | 0                       | 10                     | 1 hour               | <i>German</i>                              | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 7                          | 22                             |         |
| <i>French</i>    | 10                        | 10                            | 9                         | 1                         | 1                      | 1                                    | 1 hour                | 1                       | 9                      | 1 hour               | 1                       | 9                      | 1 hour               | <i>French</i>                              | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 7                          | 22                             |         |
| <i>Latin</i>     | 11                        | 11                            | 9                         | 2                         | 2                      | 2                                    | 1 hour                | 2                       | 9                      | 1 hour               | 2                       | 9                      | 1 hour               | <i>Latin</i>                               | 1 hour                            | 3                          | 8                          | 22                             |         |

Harvard University, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1827.

Charles Follen, Instructor.

Illustration 2: Dept. of Modern Languages. Follen Reports and Papers: 1826-28. UA III 28.26.

and Goethe he expected to “stimulate the curiosity of scores of persons” (Emerson and Carlyle: 1965, 123). Follen became an important early mediator of German culture in the United States, long before the wave of the so-called 1848ers, the intellectual elite of Germany named after the failed Revolution in 1848, fled to the New World. In his “Inaugural Discourse,” Follen emphasized the benefits of studying German literature: “I believe that those who have received a genuine English education, are, more than other foreigners, prepared to enter fully and intimately into the idiomatic strength

and beauty of the German classics; and the further they advance, the more they perceive that in studying German, they are grounding themselves in their own language and literature" (Follen: 1841, V, 151).

Follen's inauguration to a professorship in Harvard coincided with his reading of David Walker's (1785-1830) radical abolitionist pamphlet *Appeal to the Citizens of the World* (1829). After discussions with William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79), Channing, and Lydia Maria Child (1802-80), he abandoned his conformist attitude to engage as a political activist.<sup>13</sup> The abolitionist cause, its rhetoric and political agenda triggered a passionate dedication to political reform and a reinterpretation of American founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Follen may have been reminded of the radical poetry he composed in *Das Große Lied* in Germany. Nevertheless, his tone shifted within the new democratic environment to bring about socio-political reforms. Follen insisted that the abolitionists had to work within the framework of existing legal and political institutions. While he hailed American democratic traditions, he argued for a more thorough understanding of their implications regarding the persisting evil of slavery.

Our Constitution has secured a government of law, freedom of conscience, the liberty of speaking and printing, to every citizen, nay, to every stranger sojourning amongst us. As citizens of the world, as members of the human family, as Christians, we look upon every one as a fellow-citizen, as a neighbour, who defends the rights, and respects the feelings, of all men; while he who does not see in every human being an equal and a brother, whether he be born here or elsewhere, he alone is regarded by us as a stranger and an enemy. (Follen: 1841, I, 630).

Follen eventually became vice president of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and a member of the Executive Committee of the American Antislavery Society. Following Garrison's call to further the abolitionists' cause, he founded the Cambridge Anti-Slavery Society. Due to his leading role in New England anti-slavery societies and personal issues with Harvard president Josiah Quincy (1772-1864), Follen's professorship at Harvard was not extended.<sup>14</sup> Follen linked the abolitionist cause with the pressing question of female emancipation. He held that men withheld essential rights from women. Follen demanded full legal equality for women and challenged nativists for bullying politics regarding freedom of speech for naturalized foreigners.

Follen's contacts to William Ellery Channing introduced him to Unitarianism and the Unitarian Church, whose members separated themselves from orthodox Calvinism in the early nineteenth century and opted for an independent denomination.<sup>15</sup> Within the hotbed of discussions regarding the substance of a modern denomination, Follen introduced German theological liberalism and enriched the controversy with his ideas on self-culture derived from German philosophical idealism.<sup>16</sup> Becoming increasingly disillusioned with people's conservative social attitudes and lack of stamina for reform, he teamed up with Frederic Henry Hedge in 1836. The regular Meetings at his house became the basis of the Transcendental Club consisting of young free thinkers like Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82), or Margaret Fuller (1810-50).<sup>17</sup>

In 1838, at the request of Henry Ware, Jr., Follen gave a lecture series on the

"History of Pantheism" at the Harvard Divinity School, which caused much turmoil in the audience. Among his key philosophers were Plotinus and Spinoza. The latter he had already introduced to the New England elite in his lectures on moral philosophy in 1830. His fascination with Spinoza can be traced back even further to his exile in Switzerland. Although Follen did not embrace pantheist ideas completely, he argued that they could help to liberalize the mind to overcome fixed opinions.<sup>18</sup>

Follen accepted invitations to preach and lecture on various topics in New York and Boston. After his plan to found a free church in New York had failed, new opportunities sprang up in Lexington, Massachusetts to realize his dream of an independent church modeled on his own Universalist beliefs. During his sojourn in New York City, where he lectured to audiences of the Merchants' Library Union, a letter from Lexington urged him to return in order to dedicate the new church building. On the steamboat "Lexington" bound to Boston a terrible accident occurred. The ship caught fire and sank in a storm off Long Island South at about 7 p.m. The entire crew and almost all of the passengers, including Follen, drowned.

It was not before Good Friday on the 17 April 1840 that Samuel Joseph May was able to commemorate the life of Karl/Charles Follen with his eulogy at Marlborough Chapel, more than three months after his death. A large assemblage of about 2000 people gathered in and outside the church to pay homage to a pioneer in transcultural contacts. Among those who praised Follen's courage and commitment to the antislavery cause was William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79). Despite their differences of opinion regarding the rhetoric and means to achieve political equality for all people in the United States, Garrison recalled the importance of Follen's support and loyalty. "(Charles Follen) found me at the outset of my labors, in the obscure chambers of Merchants' Hall. He aided, counseled, and strengthened, and cheered me. He labored to enlighten those who dwelt amongst, and made them sensible to the cause of enslaved humanity" (Garrison: 1840, viii). Only an analysis of Follen's writings can reveal whether Garrison's efforts to refer to Follen as one of his most intimate friends and to introduce him as a martyr for the cause of freedom in the United States bears resemblance to the convictions of the German-American "freedom fighter."

## **II. The Follen Controversy: Rediscovering the Multilingual Oeuvre**

Karl/Charles Follen represents one of the most controversial figures in the history of transatlantic cultural exchange and the search for freedom. In Germany he was both condemned as a racial revolutionary and hailed as a Teutonic visionary by the national socialists during the Third Reich. In the United States, interpretations range from emphatic descriptions as cultural ambassador to critical bashings as a nonconformist outsider. The ideological lore of two World Wars has overshadowed the evaluation of his oeuvre. However, with a new focus on the transnational dimension of American culture and the far reaching effects of the multilingual turn in literary scholarship, Follen returns from the margins to the center of American studies.

His keen sense of what it means to be an American citizen put him in the spotlight of the early socio-political reform movements which flourished with the advent of transcendentalist free thinkers such as Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker or Henry David Thoreau. Long before Frederick Douglass



posed the question, "What to the slave is the 4th of July?" one day after the celebration of Independence Day in 1852. Follen demasked the event by pointing out the gross shortcomings and the widespread hypocrisy regarding the issue of slavery and women's rights. "Every Fourth of July is to us a day of exultation for what we have done, and a day of humiliation for what we have left undone" (Follen: 1841, V, 190). Follen's ideas were inspired by the French Revolution, characterized by the rise of nationalism, rooted in philosophical idealism and theological liberalism which propelled his fight for the abolition of slavery and calling for democratic reforms in the United States. Follen's biographer Edmund Spevack argued that Follen's methods to transform his beliefs into action remained fundamentally the same in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States (Spevack: 1997, 3). Such an approach is problematic in many ways. Spevack charged Follen with obscuring his identity and hiding his papers and diaries from public view. In his efforts to trace back the sources and influence of Follen's thinking he relied largely on memories of fellow students, as well as court files. A new scholarly analysis must redirect the attention to Follen's writings in order to highlight the changes in his argumentation, methods, and concrete reform programs during the shift from a feudal to a democratic society.

It is no accident that the most powerful visions of what Orm Øverland calls an "open, all-inclusive concept" (Øverland: 1998, 52) of American identity have been expressed by cultural outsiders like Jean de Crèvecoeur, Israel Zangwill, or Alexis de Tocqueville. Follen, however, was writing from within. In his socio-political criticism, problems of cultural clashes and conflicts in German-American encounters become visible. Educated in Germany with a doctorate in law, Follen took an unrelenting look at the promise and reality of the Declaration of Independence. Despite his call for reform, he never ceased to speak of his new homeland as the "asylum of freedom." From the vantage point of a naturalized German immigrant, he became one of the earliest activists who fought for female emancipation and the abolition of slavery. Follen fashioned himself into an influential mediator of German idealism, paved the way for a more favorable reception of representative German writers like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich von Schiller. He left his mark in the institutional history of German literature at American universities. As a Unitarian priest, Follen not only transformed his idealistic notion of a free, undogmatic, and universal church to the American cultural context but also founded a new church outside of Boston. Shortly after his death, Follen was elevated to an intellectual celebrity. He became a cult figure among his fellow New England reformers, as numerous articles and poems testify. The prominent intellectual William Ellery Channing published an extensive celebratory article on the "Life and Character of Dr. Follen," in the famous Transcendentalist magazine *The Dial* in 1843, which was preceded by two articles in the *Christian Examiner* ("Discourse" and "A Sketch of the Life of Dr. Follen," 1840). Samuel May's eulogy "A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Rev. Charles Follen" (1840), Follen's former student colleague Karl Buchner "Dr. Karl Follen" (1841), and Harriett Martineau's questionable summary of Follen's fate as a victim of both German and American despotism represent additional phases in Follen's sanctification.

Contemporaries like Channing admired Follen's "all-sacrificing devotion to the rights, dignity, and happiness of mankind" (Channing: 1848, III, 243), historians like Albert Faust recognized him as an outstanding cultural ambassador in American

academia (Faust: 1909, 216), Henry Pochmann emphasized his influence on the German mania among the New England Transcendentalists (Pochmann: 1957, 116), and literary critic Ursula Brumm praised him as a pioneer in transatlantic encounters (Brumm: 1995, 146). Some scholars, however, were less impressed by his ambitions. Conservative historians condemned him as an evil demagogue (Treitschke: 1927, 438), while others denounced him an anti-modern spirit (Hardtwig: 1985, 14). Marxist historians like Günter Steiger questioned his activities by labeling him a “revolutionary without a revolution,” whose promotion of violence contributed nothing to the rise of socialism and democracy in Germany (Steiger: 1991, 186). The limited availability of Follen’s writings also invited authors of fiction to fantasize about his personality in historical novels. Shortly after Karl Ludwig Sand’s assassination of August von Kotzebue on March 23, 1819, several publications tried to shed light on Follen’s involvement. Depending on the interpretation, Follen appeared either as a messianic mastermind or a devilish demagogue. Mathilde Gräfin von Reichenbach offered an apologetic perspective in her historical novel *Arndt und Follen – Ein Zeitgemälde aus den Befreiungskriegen* in 1862 (Mehring: 2005, 164).<sup>20</sup> Even today, Follen is a prominent character in historical re-enactments of the revolutionary developments in the time between the Wartburg festival and the repressive Carlsbad Decrees. Tilman Röhrig envisions Follen as a Christ-like figure among his devoted students in *Sand, oder Der Freiheit eine Gasse* (1993). In *Kotzebue. Eine deutsche Geschichte* (1998), Heinz-Joachim Simon returns to the characterizations of arch-conservative historian Treitschke to stage Follen as a devil in disguise. Considering these heterogeneous and contradictory accounts, the crucial question remains: what elements in Follen’s writings, speeches and lectures rendered his search for freedom and democracy so controversial?

Beyond the debate regarding Follen’s personality, a number of achievements are undisputed. He was among the founding members of the Gießen student society, sketched a code of honor to regulate student life and was among the first intellectuals to ponder on the benefits of an American university based on the German education system. Follen also claims an important position in American institutional history. He was the first professor of German literature in the United States at Harvard University. Promoting German literature and making new source material accessible to an openminded new generation of scholars, Follen became a central link between German and American intellectual exchange. Although his influence on the American Transcendentalists and their fascination with German idealism has never been addressed in a comprehensive manner, Perry Miller acknowledged Follen’s position in the intellectual life of New England. He included an abridged version of Theodore Ripley’s extensive review of Follen’s “Inaugural Discourse Delivered before the University” at the occasion of the first German professorship at Harvard in his groundbreaking anthology *The Transcendentalists* in 1956.

In the United States, Follen has been described as the “living representative of German philosophical idealism and theological liberalism” (Spevack: 1997, 169). He exerted a major influence on William Ellery Channing’s and Henry Ware, Jr.’s intellectual embrace of German theology. He was also an important mediator of German idealism for George Bancroft, Margaret Fuller, Frederic Henry Hedge, and Theodore Parker. The international network of friends and supporters that Follen coordinated on both sides of the Atlantic is particularly impressive. It reads like a “who is who” of early 19th century

intellectuals, reformers, academics, and political activists. Follen knew Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, whose concept of gymnastics Follen introduced first to the campus of Gießen University and later to Harvard.<sup>21</sup> Among Follen's friends were Johann Ferdinand Wit von Döring, Friedrich Wilhelm Schulz, and Friedrich Ludwig Weidig. He worked with philosopher Jacob Friedrich Fries and the historian Heinrich Luden at Jena, the theologian Wilhelm Leberecht de Wette at Basel, as well as reformist figures like August von Gneisenau and Heinrich von Bülow. He made the acquaintance of central figures of French political life like Marquis de Lafayette, his associate Marquis Marc-René d'Argenson, the liberal constitutional theoretician Benjamin Constant, as well as the Germanophile philosopher Victor Cousin. He kept in contact with former president John Quincy Adams who had developed a special interest in Follen's promotion of German literature in the United States. He worked closely with staunch abolitionists like Samuel May and Harriet Martineau, edited renown authors like Thomas Carlyle, and met with influential American writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Greenleaf Whittier. Naturally, he formed strong bonds with remarkable German Americans like Karl Beck, Francis Lieber, Friedrich Münch, and Christian Sartorius. In addition, the editor of the anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison, counted Follen among his most trustworthy friends and earliest supporters in his relentless fight against slavery.

Although Follen promoted revolution and even assassination during the German wars of liberation (1813-15), he turned into an Emersonian reformer advocating self-reliance, the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of women after his escape to America. While Follen desperately tried to become a representative American, his uncompromising advocacy for human rights based on the Declaration of Independence ultimately estranged him from many nativists who denounced him as a dangerous "foreign meddler" (Follen: 1841, I, 342). Considering the array of contradictory labels of praise and condescendence, the crucial question remains: who was Karl/Charles Follen? The most reliable sources for such an investigation are to be found in his writings.

Follen's literary oeuvre is as diverse as his career. A new selection of writings should include Follen's key essays, pamphlets, lectures, sermons, speeches, letters, poems, and translations. The primary aim of such a reader is to display the structure of Follen's intellectual work and life in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States of America. The selection, which I propose, represents the progression of Follen's thoughts in six different cultural areas: literature, language, abolitionism, religion, history, and philosophy. From Follen's oeuvre particularly those texts must be selected which best represent the crucial stages of his provocative and influential ideas on both sides of the Atlantic.

Despite his notoriety and remarkable achievements, the writings of Follen have not been available in book form since the publication of the *Collected Works* in 1841. This immense collection is both outdated and, given its age, difficult to locate. It is also highly biased as the editor Eliza Lee Cabot was not only a New England intellectual, an accomplished writer of children's literature, and anti-slavery poetry, but also Follen's wife. In her effort to commemorate her late husband, she eliminated passages from Follen's notorious poetic cycle *Das Große Lied* (The Great Song) and letters that appeared to be too radical. This early edition is highly selective as it neglects Follen's writings from Germany and Switzerland.

Apart from his dissertation, the new selection will feature all publications by Follen in Germany including "Der Giessener Ehrensiegel," "Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sammtschnulen seit dem Freiheitskriege 1813," "Grundzüge für eine künftige deutsche Reichsverfassung," "Die Gründung einer deutsch-amerikanischen Universität" and several poems. The grand poem *Das Große Lied* has a peculiar genealogy as some parts were meant to be hidden from public and recited only by the elite circles of the "Unconditionals."<sup>22</sup> The reception of the nationalistic poetry of the late 18th and early 19th century has been overshadowed by the national socialist nightmares of an Aryan master-race. Follen's style is heavily influenced by Schiller's historical idealism and Theodor Körner's sentimental propaganda for the Wars of Liberation. These verses need to be contextualized to regain their energy and furor. Schiller, for example, composed his poems and odes in a time of ecstasy full of ideals and a sense of revolution. The rattling lines of freedom, fatherland, and personal sacrifice for the common good touched the heart of a whole generation in a time of social and political experiments.

Follen was very much a child of his time when he composed verses and melodies on Schiller's themes regarding unconditional friendship, courage, honor and the fight against tyranny. It is striking that he more or less stopped writing poetry in the United States. I can think of two reasons. First, Follen became completely dedicated to learning and practicing the English language. Apart from letters to Germany or German exiles, there are hardly any traces of writings in his mother tongue. He may have felt that the specific nationalist, solemn ring of his poetic style could not be transferred into another language. Second, with his shifting notion of violence (from rebellion to peaceful reform) and patriotism (from national chauvinism to universalism), he may have found the poetic style of the past inappropriate. His new form of communication became, like the preferred mode of the Transcendentalists, speeches and essays. Although he held the poetry of Körner in high esteem, he attached a sentimental quality to it, rather than considering them a source of guidance, when he translated two of his favorite ones towards the end of his life. Critics have always connected Follen's political radicalism with quotations from his extensive and popular collection of poems *Das Große Lied*. It has never been published in its entirety, though. "The Great Song" is a poetic vision of a young and angry revolutionary. The various parts are designed to bring together the heterogeneous elements of dissatisfied intellectuals, farmers, and workers to ignite a revolution. Several sections were supposed to be read or sung as a dialogue between two speakers with a Greek-like choir as a commentator. Follen insisted that certain parts were not supposed to be publicized. Among his radical group of "Unconditionals" secret verses circulated. They served to bind the members to the political cause. Alexander Pagenstecher, one of the members of this inner circle, commented that Follen considered parts of *Das Große Lied* as a kind of religious gospel. The text needs to be reconstructed from all sources available to provide a version that is as complete as possible.<sup>23</sup>

Follen revisited some of his philosophical essays in the United States and adapted them to the new political climate. "Über die Bestimmung des Menschen" (On the Destiny of Man) is the first of two articles Follen published during his exile in Switzerland in 1824.<sup>24</sup> It was part of a larger project which Follen intended to rework under the title "Das Naturrecht" (Natural Law). In his article, he focuses on the moral nature of human beings, the role of conscience, conviction (*Überzeugung*), self-control,

and self-perfection. Man's moral agenda was intended to be applied to the realm of politics and religion. Many passages foreshadow Follen's rhetoric he would put to test during his fight against slavery. After he had settled in his new homeland across the Atlantic, Follen published a comprehensive article entitled "On the Future State of Man" which drew heavily on his writings published in the scholarly magazine he edited with de Wette and other colleagues at the University of Basel. Other writings focus on familiarizing American intellectuals with German literature and philosophical ideas. Of particular interest is Follen's shifting notion regarding the use of violence to destroy the vicious circle of oppression and exploitation of farmers in Germany and slaves in the United States. By comparing the documents from both sides of the Atlantic, changes and continuities in Follen's concepts of violence, his visions of a unified Christian

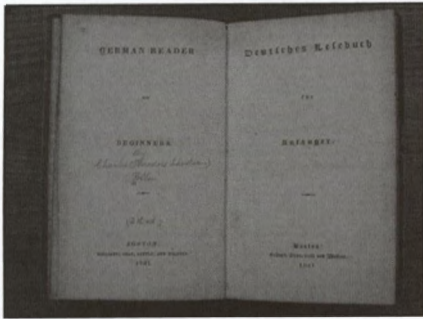


Illustration 3: *German Reader* (1826).

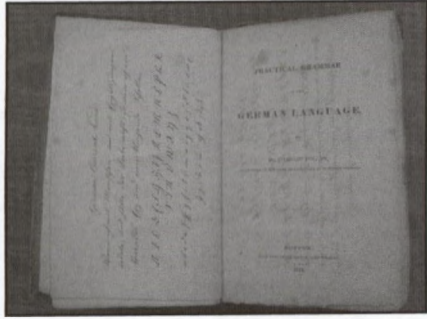


Illustration 4: *German Grammar* (1826).

church and the importance of America as a beacon of freedom for the world become apparent.<sup>25</sup>

A number of Follen's writings in Germany were devised to be used as guidelines within student fraternities or published in small international magazines like the short-lived *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* in Basel. Other articles, letters, and reviews wait to be discovered. For example, research on Follen has more or less neglected his impact on multilingual America as a language instructor. This is an inspiring example that puts the "false myth of a monolingual (American) past" (Sollors: 1998, 3) into perspective. Follen conceived the idea of German text books shortly after his arrival in Cambridge. In his letter to Karl Beck dated 22 December 1825, he explained: "I want a German Reader. Professor Ticknor is of the same opinion as I that we two should make a German Chrestomathy, which might, at the same time, serve as a sketch of the history of German literature. . . . The second point is a German Grammar in English" (Follen: 1841, I, 160). The selection for a new edition on Follen's writings should include the elaborate prefaces Follen composed for his *German Reader* (1826)<sup>26</sup> and his *Practical Grammar* (1828).<sup>27</sup> On 3 September 1831, Follen delivered his "Inaugural Discourse" to outline his program regarding the new position which was exclusively created with an endowment limited to five years. After a brief evaluation of the contributions of distinguished German writers, philosophers and scholars, he addressed the ambivalent reception of German literature in the United States. He argued against charges of American critics regarding "obscurity", "immorality", and "metaphysical loftiness" by raising issues of second-hand translations. Follen's speech represents an elaborate program to redirect the study of

German literature by putting a new focus on Goethe, Herder, Klopstock, Lessing, Richter, and Schiller.<sup>28</sup> Follen's interlinear translation and teaching concept, which he outlined in his book on Luther's *Gospel of St. John* (1835) has not even been mentioned by any of the Follen scholars. Each line of Martin Luther's original German text is followed by an English translation, which corresponds to the original word by word. Apart from the value of linguistic and grammatical instruction, the text selection shows Follen's lifelong fascination with the depiction of Christ as a martyr, a role model that his student Karl Sand tried to emulate when he first assassinated August von Kotzebue and then tried to kill himself for the sake of the German revolution.<sup>29</sup> Schiller was among those poets which Follen most highly praised. In a lecture series he introduced the German author par excellence to the American public. His impressionistic depiction of Schiller's life is of particular interest because Follen draws many parallels between the German and American ideal of freedom. As Schiller had a strong impact on the German student movement before the Napoleonic Wars of Liberation, it is striking to observe the differences and continuities in Follen's presentation of Schiller's oeuvre.<sup>30</sup> Follen assumed the role of a meticulous editor of Thomas Carlyle's groundbreaking biography *Life of Schiller*. In 1833, Follen explained the kind of editorial improvements he had made regarding translations of Schiller's works and letters which Carlyle quoted in his book. Follen argues that despite Carlyle's excellent and precise understanding of Schiller, he misinterpreted some sentences whose subtleties escaped the non-native speaker. Follen's comprehensive preface gives a detailed account of his alterations and

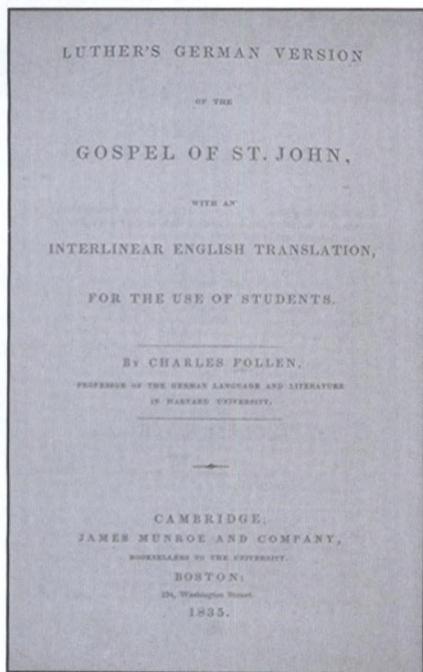


Illustration 5: Luther's German Version (Cover)

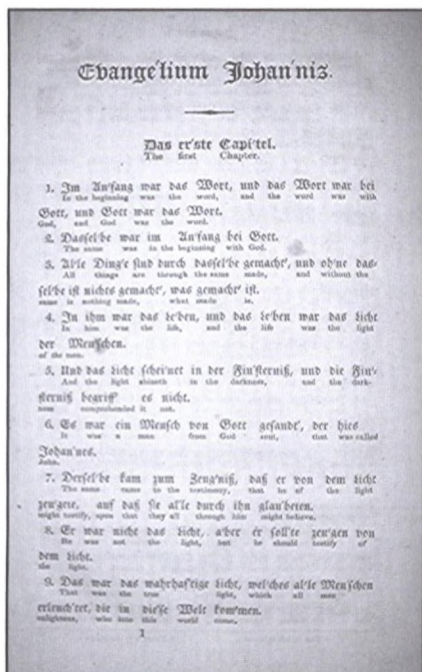


Illustration 6: Luther's German Version (p.1)

interpretations. The American edition and Follen's editorial work paved the way for a

re-evaluation of Schiller's writings.<sup>31</sup>

Follen's commitment to the democratic promise of the Declaration of Independence caused him to speak out publicly against the cruelty and injustice of Slavery. These documents reveal how the fight for freedom in a democratic environment differs from efforts in an aristocratic feudal society. Among his courageous publications are "Lectures on Moral Philosophy,"<sup>32</sup> "Address to the People of the United States on the Subject of Slavery,"<sup>33</sup> "The Cause of Freedom in Our Country,"<sup>34</sup> and "Anti-Slavery Principles and proceedings."<sup>35</sup> The "Speech before the Anti-Slavery Society,"<sup>36</sup> which Follen held at the annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society on 20 January 1836, represents one of the most remarkable documents of German-American encounters. It deals with problems of first generation immigrants and their claim to being fully Americanized.<sup>37</sup> Follen reveals his great, but nevertheless utopian visions of a democratic society when he contextualizes the problem of acculturation with the socio-political role of women and slaves in the United States.<sup>38</sup>

A new edition of Follen's writings needs to emphasize the multilingual dimension of Follen's oeuvre. Language has been the site of cultural as well as political battles in the United States from the first cultural contacts with Native Americans to the massive immigrant movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century. As Eva Hoffmann explains in *Lost in Translation*, emigration and language shifts often produce a sense of distance between words and their actual representations. Thus, in acquired languages, words may lose their aura and "natural" meanings they held in the native language (Hoffmann: 1989, 106). Instead of implying unity and continuity of thought, the disruption in Follen's biography caused by his emigration is mirrored in the language of his writings. The need to express himself in another language after his arrival in the United States created unforeseen difficulties for the teacher, reformer, and poet from Germany. The transfer of ideas and process of adapting to a new socio-political environment can only be grasped by comparing the texts in the corresponding language they were composed in. Therefore, Follen's essays, prefaces, lectures, poems and letters should be offered in the original language version.<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

The international person Karl/Charles Follen has not only been described as a dangerous revolutionary, but has also been praised as the living representative of German philosophical idealism and theological liberalism. The new edition will introduce for the first time a broad selection of Follen's controversial writings emphasizing the multilingual dimension of his oeuvre in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. His essays, lectures, sermons, speeches, and poems concern the challenges of democracy in the socio-political climate of the political *Vormärz* in Germany and the Jacksonian era in the United States. Follen located problems in the segregation of ethnic minorities, xenophobia, the lack of female emancipation, and language barriers. His activities to overcome the discrepancy between the promise of the Declaration of Independence and the reality of political hierarchies provide a master model for transatlantic encounters and confrontations. Thus, Follen's writings emerge as a unique storehouse of ideas on topics ranging from resistance against aristocratic government, intellectual self-culture, German-American cultural transfer, challenges of American democracy, to the

reception of German literature and philosophy during the crucial years of the American Renaissance.

When the Unitarian minister and renowned educational reformer Samuel Joseph May delivered his eulogy on Charles Follen in Marlborough Chapel on 17 April 1840 before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, he did not describe Follen as a "mere patriot," but elevated him to the transcultural ranks of a philanthropist. As such, he insisted that Follen's example will live on and transcend the struggles of the time he lived in. "He is taken from us. But he is not lost to us. His words remain. He still speaks to the understandings and hearts of the people" (May: 1840, 26). A new edition of Follen's writings must put May's oracle to the test.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Parts of the essay will appear in Frank Mehring's *Between Natives and Foreigners: Selected Writings of Karl/Charles Follen (1796-1840)* (Bern, etc.: Lang, 2007). With kind permission by Peter Lang and the series editor.

<sup>2</sup> See Rushdie, Salman, "The PEN and the Sword," *New York Times Book Review* (April 17, 2005): 31.

<sup>3</sup> Shortly after Follen's death Channing published a comprehensive biographical essay: Channing, William Ellery, *A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Rev. Charles Follen, L. L. D. who perished, Jan. 13, 1840* Boston: Henry L. Devereux, 1840. Other friends from both sides of the Atlantic provided their own narratives of Follen's life. Among them are the New England abolitionists Samuel Joseph May (*A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Rev. Dr. Follen*. [Boston: H.L. Devereux, 1840]) and the German revolutionary Karl Buchner ("Dr. Karl Follen: Mit Benutzung von noch ungedruckten Briefen desselben aus Amerika in die Heimath," *Der Freihafen* 4 (Altona, 1841): 71-76). In 1841, Eliza Lee Cabot Follen published the five volume collected writings of her husband including a 500page memoir in volume I. (*The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen (ed.) [Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841]). Other biographical publications include: Parker, Theodore, "Life and Character of Dr. Follen," *The Dial* (January 1843): 343-62; Münch, Friedrich, "Das Leben von Dr. Karl Follen," *Gesammelte Schriften* (St. Louis, Missouri: Witter, 1902) 39-91; Spindler, George Washington, *Karl Follen. A Biographical Study* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1917); Haupt, Hermann, "Zum Gedächtnis Karl Follens," *Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois*, Julius Goebel, ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 7-55; Wüst, Julia, "Karl Follen. Seine Ideenwelt und ihre Wirklichkeit," *Mitteilungen des Oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins* 33 (1936): 5-139; Spevack, Edmund, *Charles Follen's Search for Nationality and Freedom. Germany and America 1796-1840* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Mehring, Frank, *Karl/Charles Follen: Deutsch-Amerikanischer Freiheitskämpfer* (Giessen: Ferber'sche Universitätsbuchhandlung, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> The following archives hold letters, poems, lectures, essays, and unpublished manuscripts of Karl/Charles Follen: Archiv der Deutschen Burschenschaft in Frankfurt am Main, Archives of the Justus Liebig University of Giessen; Boston Public Library; Harvard University Archives; Department of Modern Languages; Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden; Records of the Mainz Central Investigation Commission on student radicalism at the University of Giessen; Hessische Landesbibliothek Kassel; Huntington Library, San Marino, CA; Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; New York Public Library (Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations), Rare Books and Manuscript Division; Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin: Darmstädter Sammlung.

<sup>5</sup> "Take out the knife of freedom! Hurray, pierce the dagger through the throat! With crowns and bands, with purple gowns/ Decorate the sacrificial offering on the altar of revenge." Translation by F. Mehring.

<sup>6</sup> "Der Ehrenspegel soll die Grundfeste eines Zustandes von Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit sein, der die Burschenschaft in den Stand setzt, sich als seine christliche und teutsche, als ein freies Gemeinwesen auszubilden und in dieser Ausbildung dem Geist der Ehre Leben und Herrschaft zu begründen unter den



Burschen." (Follen: 1927, 56). "The code of honor shall be the foundation for conditions of equality and justice, which will enable the fraternity to establish itself as its Christian and German, as a free community. And in this process, it shall provide the basis for giving life and power to the spirit of honor among the students." Translation by F. Mehring.

<sup>7</sup> "Ihre Quelle, aus der jeder Bürger unmittelbar schöpft, ist das Neue Testament, die einzelnen Glaubenssekten lösen sich in eine christlich-deutsche Kirche auf; andere Glaubenslehren, welche den Zwecken der Menschheit zuwider sind, wie die jüdische, welche nur eine Glaubensart sind, werden in dem Reiche nicht geduldet." (Follen: 1979, 123). "Its source to which every single citizen is dedicated is the New Testament; other sectarian groups are dissolved into a Christian German church; other religions, which run counter to the purposes of humankind like the Jewish religion, are not tolerated within the empire." Translation by F. Mehring.

<sup>8</sup> Follen's role in the assassination of August von Kotzebue has been debated ever since. See Anton, Karl, *Entwicklung der Irrtümer welche Kotzebues Ermordung veranlassten. Zur Warnung für Jünglinge, nebst drei Beilagen, enthaltend einen Abriss von Kotzebues und Sands Leben, so wie die Geschichte des Bahrdt mit der eisernen Stirne* (Görlitz: Gotthold Heinze, 1819); Hohnhorst, Staatsrath von, ed., *Vollständige Übersicht der gegen Carl Ludwig Sand wegen Meuchelmordes verübt an dem Russischen Staatsrath von Kotzebue, geführten Untersuchung. Aus den Originalakte ausgezogen, geordnet und herausgegeben* (Stuttgart und Tübingen: J. Cottasche Buchhandlung, 1820); Goerres, Joseph, "Kotzebue und was ihn gemordet," *Gesammelte Schriften*. Wilhelm Schleeberg, ed. (Köln: Gilde-Verlag, 1929), 13:489-95; Cramer, Friedrich, ed., *Acten-Auszüge aus dem Untersuchungsprozess über Carl Ludwig Sand, nebst andern Materialien zu Beurteilung desselben und Augusts von Kotzebue* (Altenburg und Leipzig, 1821); Wesselhoeft, Robert, *Carl Ludwig Sand. Dargestellt durch seine Tagebücher und Briefe von einigen seiner Freunde* (Altenburg: Hahn, 1821); Heer, Georg, *Geschichte der Deutschen Burschenschaft. Zweiter Band: Die Demagogenzzeit* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1965); Heydemann, Günther, *Carl Ludwig Sand. Die Tat als Attentat* (Hof: Oberfränkische Verlagsanstalt, 1985); Hünenörder, Christian, ed., *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Einheitsbewegung im neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1986); Williamson, George S., "What Killed August von Kotzebue? The Temptations of Virtue and the Political Theology of German Nationalism, 1789-1819." *The Journal of Modern History* 72, 4. (December 2000): 890-943; Mehring, Frank, "August von Kotzebue, Mannheim, 23. März 1819," *Politische Morde. Vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart*, Michael Sommer, ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 157-64.

<sup>9</sup> "Von Deutschland aber, als dem Mittelpunkt der ganzen neueren Bildung, muß auch für Amerika der tiefe geistige Gehalt ausgehen, der allein die Grundlage seines Weltstrebens ausmachen kann. Dies ist der letzte Zweck der in Nordamerika zu gründenden teutschen Bildungsanstalt, wodurch zugleich die Bestimmung der in Teutschland wurzelnden tiefen und allseitigen Bildung erfüllt werden möchte" (Follen: 1979, 129). "Germany must remain the central focus of all modern education in America. On Germany's deep spiritual substance America must build her global aspirations. This is the final purpose of the German university in North America. Thus, at the same time, the profound and comprehensive knowledge with its roots in Germany will find its destination." Translation by F. Mehring.

<sup>10</sup> "The destruction of the contemporary constitutions, in order to produce a situation in which the people may give itself a constitution through elected representatives." Translation by F.M.

<sup>11</sup> They married two years later on 15 September 1828.

<sup>12</sup> Follen was appointed superintendent of the Harvard gymnasium in 1827. This position gave him the opportunity to introduce his concept of *Turnen* and to organize a gymnastic society modeled along the lines of the German *Turnvereine*. In 1830, Follen became a naturalized foreigner. In the same year, his son Charles Christopher was born.

<sup>13</sup> It is unlikely that Follen was not aware of Walker's activities and the political differences between the South and the North for African Americans. By the end of the 1820s, about 1000 black people lived in Boston. The clash of racial difference must have been striking as many resided in poorer quarters north of the State House where they were not represented and only allowed to enter as servants to whites. Shop windows and taverns often displayed cartoons ridiculing African American physiognomy and culture stressing deformity and vulgarity. See the account of David Walker's contemporary Hosea Easton in "A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and the Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the United States; and the Prejudice Exercised towards Them," *To Heal the Scourge of Prejudice: The Life and Writings of Hosea Easton*, George R. Rice and James Brewer Stewart, eds. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 196-107. For the socio-cultural background of African Americans in Boston see Jacobs, Donald, ed., *Courage and Conscience: Black and White Abolitionists in Boston* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> The reasons for the discontinuation of his position in Harvard have been contested in the past with reference to the fact that the professorship was originally established for only five years. However, there

were several conflicts at Harvard which might have been crucial for the denial to extend the professorship. Of particular interest are the opposing concepts of teaching methods between Harvard president Josiah Quincy and Follen. See McCaughey, Robert A., *Josiah Quincy, 1772-1864. The Last Federalist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 148; see also Spevack, *Follen* (1996), 161 and Mehring, *Follen* (2004), 172-73. The English writer and philosopher Harriet Martineau (1802-76) commented later on this incident by characterizing Follen as "the only European exile of that vintage who declined to prosper as an American by flattering the nation's sin" (Martineau: 1877, II, 279).

<sup>15</sup> Unitarianists rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and considered the person of Jesus distinctly different from God. Breaking with Calvinist notions of God as a God of wrath, Unitarianists believed that God represented one element in the complex process of human self-perfection.

<sup>16</sup> Channing supported Follen's endeavors to become a Unitarian minister. In 1828, he was appointed lecturer at the Harvard Divinity Church teaching topics ranging from ethics to ecclesiastical history. Two years later, he gave up the position to focus his energy on the new professorship of German literature at Harvard. Before he was ordained as a Unitarian minister at William Ellery Channing's Federal Street Church in 1836, Follen preached in several churches in and around Boston like Lexington and Newburyport, but also in New York City and Washington, D.C. Thus, during the first five years of his American career Follen blended in perfectly with the intellectual elite in Boston and Harvard who with scholars like George Bancroft, Channing, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82), Josiah Quincy, Andrews Norton (1786-1853), or James Russell Lowell (1819-91) considered themselves liberal, tolerant Unitarianists.

<sup>17</sup> This "new school" of literature, philosophy, and religion wished, in the words of Hedge, to assemble "certain likeminded persons of our acquaintance for the free discussion of theological and moral subjects" (Mott: 1996, 223). They represented the liberal wing of the Unitarianists. Ultimately, Transcendentalists like Emerson and Theodore Parker (1810-60) denounced Unitarianism as outmoded and regressive. In Follen's writings and lectures on religious issues he did not limit his audience to a particular creed. Instead, he intended to equally address all denominations, be it Christian, Jew, Hindu, or Muslim. Summing up his beliefs in his book *Religion and the Church*, Follen identified "religion" as a "common tendency" which could be found in all cultures and was thus an integral part of human nature. His definition of religion as a constant progress of refinement, of self-perfection and a teleological "tendency of the human mind to the infinite" sounded those chords of self-reliance, which Emerson would pick up around the same time in *Nature* (1836) and soon afterwards in the ground-breaking essays "Self-Reliance" (1841) and "The Poet" (1844). Follen found himself in the middle of an increasingly delicate debate around religion and infidelity where German theologians became the butt of conservative critique, as for instance in Andrew Norton's *Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity* (1839). Norton attacked those American intellectuals who, like Follen and Emerson, advanced pantheist views based on Spinoza.

<sup>18</sup> "The subject of investigation is, the relation between God and the world; whether there be a God of nature, or nature itself be God. These are questions which call indeed for the utmost exertion of the spirit that is endowed with the singular power, and impelled by the unquenchable desire, to search all things, even the deep things of God" (Follen: 1841, I, 503). With his teachings on Christianity and Pantheism which he rooted in Hindoo writings such as the *Vedas* and the *Laws of Manu*, Follen became an important link for American Transcendentalists to define their intellectual declaration of independence. It is striking that Follen's discussion of Plotinus concept of intuition as the immediate contemplation of God within the human being finds an echo in Emerson's quotation of Plotinus at the beginning of his first groundbreaking publication *Nature*. "Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul; nature being a thing which doth only do, but not know" (Emerson: 1979, 1).

<sup>19</sup> "Dr. Follen, the patriot hero of Germany, the student, the poet, the philosopher, the victim of the Holy Alliance, the Christian teacher, the American abolitionist, and the victim of American despotism. (...) He was one of those rare great spirits that find no alternative at the call of a great cause but obedience. He was the only European exile of that vintage who declined to prosper as an American by flattering the nation's sin, - so rare is the virtue that can pour out of its life-blood twice. While suffering proscription from the land of his birth, he identified himself with Garrison among the earliest, and suffered, with the rest, a fresh proscription from the land of his love and his adoption" (Martineau: 1877, II, 279). See also Channing, William Ellery, "Discourse" and "A Sketch of the Life of Dr. Follen," *Christian Examiner* (March, 1840): 68-87; 87-88; Parker, Theodore, "Life and Character of Dr. Follen," *The Dial* (January 1843): 343-62; Buchner, Karl, "Dr. Karl Follen," *Der Freibäfen* 4 (1841): 71-76.

<sup>20</sup> Due to the vivid narration of Follen's dramatic biography, her literary account of Follen's role in the political *Formärz* was reissued at the beginning of the 20th century.

<sup>21</sup> In a letter of Follen's brother Adolf Ludwig Follen to their friend Karl Jung in Berlin, he emphasizes the importance of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn for the student movement in Gießen. "Grüße den alten verehrten

Vater Jahn, dessen Verdienst wir alle das große Teil an unserer geistigen Auferstehung zuschrieben. Ohne Jahn würde uns nichts gelungen sein." Published in Goebel, Julius, ed., *Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois, Jahrgang 1922-23* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 53. For a detailed analysis of the gymnastics movement at Gießen University see Gissel, Norbert, *Vom Burschenturnen zur Wissenschaft der Körperkultur. Struktur und Funktion der Leibesübungen an der Universität Gießen 1816-1945*, Studia Giessensia 5 (Gießen: Verlag der Ferber'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1995). It is important to note that the hidden revolutionary agenda behind the gymnastic movement during the *Vormärz* in Germany was absent in the American cultural environment. The process of depoliticization can also be encountered in the gymnastics societies established by other German immigrants in the Midwest (Totten: 1964, 55).

<sup>22</sup> Regarding the function of Follen's *Das Große Lied* in German student life see Mehring, Frank, "Sterben! was heißt das? Der jugendliche Freitod im politischen Vormärz," *Jugend im Vormärz*, Detlev Kopp und Michael Vogt, eds. (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007), 65-88.

<sup>23</sup> See Döring, Johannes Wit, genannt von, *Fragmente aus meinem Leben und meiner Zeit*, Erster Band (Leipzig: Bräse, 1830), Appendix II, 430-48; Münch, Friedrich, "Das Leben von Dr. Karl Follen," *Gesammelte Schriften* (St. Louis, Missouri: Witter, 1902), 39-91; Follen, Charles, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841), 1: (Appendix) 585-93. Handwritten versions of *Das Große Lied* by Follen's contemporaries are located at the Hessische Landesbibliothek Kassel and at the Archiv der Deutschen Burschenschaft in Frankfurt am Main. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen also quoted some of the poems in her biography. She was highly selective, though, and seems to have omitted those lines and verses, which would have put her husband in a radical and hence unfavorable light.

<sup>24</sup> The second article Follen published in the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* translates into "On the Legal Teachings of Spinoza." Baruch Spinoza represents one of the first modern philosophers who questioned the authority and literacy of the Bible. Follen introduces him as a model thinker on the search for truth. Using Spinoza's argument that God was the substance and eternal law behind every manifestation of life, Follen expanded on the idea of the individual quest for complete freedom. Follen went on to explain that human beings could live together on the basis of an ideal social contract of popular sovereignty. Spinoza's pantheistic ideas played a crucial role in the Transcendentalists' turn from Unitarianism to a form of moral self-reliance. See Follen, Karl, "Über die Rechtslehre des Spinoza," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* (Basel, 1824). The first part was published in vol. 2.3 (1-27), the second part appeared in the following edition vol. 2.4. (28-62).

<sup>25</sup> See "Über die Bestimmung des Menschen," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, Herausgegeben von Lehrern der Baseler Hochschule (Basel, 1823). The first part was published in vol. 1.1 (72-94), the second part appeared in the following edition vol. 1.2. (37-11).

<sup>26</sup> Follen, Charles, "Preface" to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *German Reader for Beginners* (1826, 1828, 1831). The first edition was published in Cambridge by Hilliard and Metcalf in 1826. The second and third edition appeared in Boston and were published by Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins in 1828 and 1831 respectively.

<sup>27</sup> See Follen, Charles, *Preface* to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *A Practical Grammar of the German Language*, By Charles Follen, Professor of the German Language and Literature in Harvard University (1828, 1831, 1834).

<sup>28</sup> See Follen, Charles, *Inaugural Discourse: Delivered before the University in Cambridge, Massachusetts September 3, 1831, on occasion of the author's induction into the Professorship of the German Language and Literature*, First published in Cambridge (Mass.) by Hilliard and Brown in 1831, Edited in Charles Follen, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841) 5:125-52.

<sup>29</sup> See Follen, Charles, *Luther's German version of the Gospel of St. John with an interlinear English translation for the use of students* (Cambridge: J. Munroe, 1835).

<sup>30</sup> The lectures on Schiller are collected in Follen, Charles, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841), vol. 4.

<sup>31</sup> See Follen, Charles, "Preface," Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of Friedrich Schiller. Comprehending an Examination of his Works*, From the London Edition (Boston: Carter, Hendee, and Company, 1833), iii-xvi.

<sup>32</sup> Follen, Charles, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841), 3: see particularly lecture no. 13.

<sup>33</sup> See Follen, Charles, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols. Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841), 5:189-227.

<sup>34</sup> See Follen, Charles, "The Cause of Freedom in Our Country," *Quarterly Antislavery Magazine* (October, 1836): 61-73.

<sup>35</sup> See "Anti-Slavery Principles and Proceedings," *Christian Examiner* (1838). The headline reads: "Art: VI. Correspondence between the Hon. F. H. Elmore, one of the South Carolina Delegation in Congress, and James G. Birney, one of the Secretaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society. New York: Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society. 1838. 8vo. pp. 68."

<sup>36</sup> See Follen, Charles, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841), 1:627-33.

<sup>37</sup> The abolitionist Samuel May considered the speech as one of the bravest remarks on the issue of slavery. "There was not a word, not a tone, not a look of compromise in it. He met our opponents at the very points were some of our friends thought us deserving of blame, and he manfully maintained every inch of our ground" (May: 1869, 255-56). Due to Follen's commitment to the abolitionist cause, many of his contemporaries began to stigmatize him as a "foreign meddler."

<sup>38</sup> See Follen, Charles, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, 5 vols., Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, ed. (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1841), 1:627-33.

<sup>39</sup> The bilingual edition will feature the following writings: I. Writings in Germany: *Ehrenspiegel der Burschenschaft zu Gießen, Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Samstagschulen, Grundzüge für eine künftige deutsche Reichsverfassung, Das Große Lied, Die Gründung einer deutsch-amerikanischen Universität, Gedichte*. II. Writings in Switzerland: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift: Grundsatz, Über die Bestimmung des Menschen, Über die Rechtslehre des Spinoza, Kodex des Jünglingsbundes, Gedichte, Briefe*. III. Writings in the United States of America: *Deutsches Lesebuch für Anfänger/German Reader for Beginners, A Practical Grammar of the German Language, Inaugural Discourse, Luther's German Version of the Gospel of St. John, Plan of the Boston Seminary, Thomas Carlyle's The Life of Schiller, Lecture I: The Life of Schiller, Lecture X: Dramatic Sketches, Poetry, Lectures on Moral Philosophy: No. XIII, Address to the People of the United States on the Subject of Slavery, Speech before the Anti-Slavery Society, The Cause of Freedom in Our Country, Anti-Slavery Principles and Proceedings, Consistent Democracy, History, On the Future State of Man, Benjamin Constant's Work on Religion, Sermon XI: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect," Religion and the Church, Peace and War. Letters: An Christian Sartorius, An die Familie, To President John Quincy Adams, To Ralph Waldo Emerson, To Harriet Martineau, To William Ellery Channing.*

## Illustrations

1. Charles Follen. Montage of Spiridione Gambardella's Portrait of Follen and Writings. Photo and graphic montage by Frank Mehring. Original in Follen Church, Lexington, MA.
2. Dept. of Modern Languages. Follen Reports and Papers: 1826-28. UA III 28.26. Reproduction Courtesy of the Harvard University Archives.
3. Charles Follen, *German Reader* (1826, 3rd edition 1831). Photography by the author
4. Charles Follen, *German Grammar* (1828). Photography by the author
5. Charles Follen, *Luther's German Version* (Cover, 1835). Photography by the author.
6. Charles Follen, *Luther's German Version* (First Page, 1835). Photography by the author.

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