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Johann August Weppen's *Der Hessische Officer in Amerika* and David Christoph Seybold's *Reizenstein*:  
The American Revolution and the German  
Bürgertum's Reassessment of America

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JOHANN AUGUST WEPPEN'S *DER HESSISCHE OFFICIER IN AMERIKA*  
AND DAVID CHRISTOPH SEYBOLD'S *REIZENSTEIN*:  
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
AND THE GERMAN BÜRGERTUM'S REASSESSMENT OF AMERICA

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## ABSTRACT

### JOHANN AUGUST WEPPEL'S *DER HESSISCHE OFFICIER IN AMERIKA* AND DAVID CHRISTOPH SEYBOLD'S *REIZENSTEIN*: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE GERMAN BÜRGERTUM'S REASSESSMENT OF AMERICA

Virginia Sasser DeLacey  
Old Dominion University, 2004  
Director: Dr. Jeffrey H. Richards

While American, British, and French reactions to the American Revolution are well-known, those of the German people are not, despite the presence of almost 30,000 German soldiers in America fighting for the British army and hundreds of German volunteers fighting for the American patriots. The participation of German soldiers on both sides of the conflict inspired numerous works of German poetry, prose, and drama, all largely forgotten in the wake of the French Revolution and the rise of German Classicism and Romanticism. This thesis examines two works that have received brief mention in the past two centuries: *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*, a 1783 play by the Göttingen lawyer and poet Johann August Weppen, and *Reizenstein: Die Geschichte eines deutschen Officier*, an epistolary novel in two volumes written by the Swabian classics scholar and teacher David Christoph Seybold that was published anonymously in 1778 and 1779. Analysis of these texts suggests that German involvement in the American Revolution led German writers to reevaluate their perceptions of America in light of new information that was being sent home by the soldiers serving there and news reports about the conflict that were being published in German newspapers. These works reflect the popular discourse about America that was being carried on throughout the German territories, reveal the political climate in the areas in which they were written,

and show how America and the American Revolution were used to register German idealism and discontent. Weppen and Seybold contributed to a dynamic *Amerikabild*, or image of America, that developed in Germany during the American Revolution. This *Amerikabild* contrasted with the static views of America offered in pre- and post-Revolutionary literature about America, including the 1776 play *Die Werbung für England* by Johann Christoph Krauseneck and the 1798 novel *Der Unglückliche Walter* by I. Maillard, which this thesis will briefly consider for purposes of comparison.

For Bill, Patsy, Ginny, and John Patrick

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis has been a lot like having children. It's a good thing I had no idea of the hard work and dedication involved, or I might never have summoned up the courage to begin. My committee members at ODU have been a tremendous source of inspiration, guidance, and support. Jane Merritt's graduate classes in Colonial and Revolutionary American history brought me up-to-date on historiography. In addition, Dr. Merritt's research utilizing Moravian records from early America sparked my interest in learning German as a tool for researching early America. Heidi Schlipphacke's encouragement and willingness to meet me outside of class ensured that I would be able not only to read German but also to speak it passably—no small feat on her part! Dr. Schlipphacke's classes (and those of Dr. Frederick Lubich) also kindled my interest in German history and culture. While my original plan was to focus my thesis on some aspect of German-Americans during the Colonial or Revolutionary era, I found myself becoming interested in what was occurring in the German territories during the same period. In particular, I wondered what the reactions of the German people were to the departure of 30,000 soldiers to fight in America for Great Britain. When I found brief references to Johann August Weppen's play, *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*, and David Christoph Seybold's novel, *Reizenstein*, in surveys of German literature related to America I became even more intrigued and knew that Jeffrey Richards could help me find the historical angle to evaluate these works. Dr. Richards's two graduate classes in American literature were among my favorites at O.D.U. Dr. Richards's breadth and depth of knowledge regarding both American history and literature were a constant

source of amazement to me and my classmates, and his classes were always thought provoking and stimulating. Dr. Richards clearly takes teaching as seriously as his research and administrative duties, and it was always a pleasure to be in one of his classes. He gave us the tools we needed, pointed us in the right direction, and then let us make connections and discoveries on our own. Those hard-earned epiphanies are always more meaningful, and I thank Dr. Richards for the direction and support he gave me in pulling this thesis together.

I would also like to thank my family for their support and encouragement. My husband, Bill, has endured my many evenings hunched over the computer with grace and good humor. I was grateful that he encouraged (hounded?) me to save my work on a disk every night, particularly after our computer crashed and my data was temporarily lost in cyberspace. I have learned almost as much about technology in writing this thesis as about eighteenth century Germany and the German soldiers sent to fight in America. My daughters, Ginny and Patsy, often studied or read with me as I worked. They knew this project was important to me, and they quietly and patiently gave me the time and space to think and write. They will be as relieved as my husband when this process of researching, writing, revising, and defending is complete, and I have promised them that I will begin reading the fifth Harry Potter book as soon as I turn in my completed manuscript to the registrar's office. My son, John Patrick, remained blissfully unaware of my trials and tribulations as only an eighteen-year-old in his senior year of high school could. I knew this when he found me working on my revisions and commented that he thought I had already finished my thesis and graduated. For him, perhaps the chief benefit of me completing this project will be an improvement in the quality of meals.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

While American, British, and French reactions to the American Revolution are well-known, those of the German people are not, despite the presence of almost 30,000 Germans in America fighting for the British army and hundreds fighting for the American patriots. The German soldiers employed by the British, commonly referred to as Hessians, were often forced into service by their princes and comprised almost half of the total number of soldiers who fought for the British in America.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Germans fighting in service to the British, an unknown but much smaller number of Germans volunteered to fight for the American patriots. The participation of these German soldiers on both sides of the American conflict fueled an already keen interest in the American war in the German territories.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the American Revolution was the subject of numerous works of German poetry, prose, and drama, all largely forgotten in the wake of the French Revolution and the rise of German Classicism and

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This paper follows the format requirements of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations 6<sup>th</sup> edition* by Kate L. Turabian.

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst Kipping, *The Hessian View of America, 1776-1783* (Monmouth Beach, N.J.: Philip Freneau Press, 1971), 5, estimates that at any time after 1777, approximately 20,000 German soldiers fought for the British, which was only a little less than half the number of British regulars. Philip R. N. Katcher, *Encyclopedia of British, Provincial, and German Army Units 1775-1783* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole, 1973), 141, lists the strength of the Royal Army in North America, including all officers and other ranks in the Regular, Provincial, and German units as 6,991 in April 1775; 14,374 in March 1776; 23,694 in August 1777; 52,561 in Oct. 1778; 47,624 in July 1779; 44,554 in Sept. 1780; 47,301 in Sept. 1781; and 47,223 in March 1782. Katcher states these numbers were taken from Lord North's return books in the William Clements Library.

Romanticism.<sup>2</sup> This large body of material has received little attention either as part of German literary history or for considerations of the American Revolution. This thesis will examine two works that have been briefly mentioned in surveys of German literature related to the American Revolution, but, until recently, have not been examined in depth: *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*, a play written by the Göttingen lawyer and poet Johann August Weppen, published in 1783; and *Reizenstein: Die Geschichte eines deutschen Officiers*, an epistolary novel in two volumes written by the Swabian

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<sup>2</sup>Surveys of late eighteenth century German literature relating to the American Revolution are found in: James Taft Hatfield and Elfrieda Hochbaum, "The Influence of the American Revolution Upon German Literature," *Americana Germanica* 3 (1899-1900): 338-85, which examines the idealism surrounding the American Revolution as expressed in German articles, poetry, and plays; Harold Jantz, "German Men of Letters in the Early United States," in *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas* ed. Gerhard K. Friesen and Walter Schatzberg (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1977), 75-95, which focuses on Germans who came to America during the Revolution and wrote poetry, prose, and drama based on their experiences, including von Lindau, von Münchhausen, Seume, Riedesel, and Schoepf; Henry Safford King, "Echoes of the American Revolution in German Literature," *University of California Publications in Modern Philology* 14, no. 2 (1929): 23-193, which examines the writings of German poets, journalists, playwrights, novelists, and philosophers for subject matter relating to the American Revolution, including Klopstock, Voss, Schläzer, Lenz, Klinger, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Lessing, and Seume, among others, and concludes that while many looked to America for guidance in solving Germany's problems, others like Herder and Kant realized that the American republic was a product of successive rebellions of the English people against arbitrary rule and the "lessons" of the American Revolution could not be applied in Germany, which had a different political history; John A. Walz, "The American Revolution and German Literature," *Modern Language Notes* 16, no. 6 (June 1901): 168-76, which surveys German poets and authors sympathetic to the American Revolution and critical of the soldier trade, including Klopstock, Herder, Schiller, Klinger, Engel, Schubart, and Steffens; John A. Walz, "The American Revolution and German Literature," *Modern Language Notes* 16, no. 7 (Nov. 1901): 206-9, which surveys German and Swiss writers who opposed the American Revolution and defended the German princes who sold their troops to Great Britain, including Häberlein, Sulzer, Müller, Lenz, and Schläzer; John A. Walz, "The American Revolution and German Literature," *Modern Language Notes* 16, no. 8 (Dec. 1901): 225-31, which points out inconsistencies toward the American Revolution expressed by Wieland, Schubart, and Dohm, and discusses contemporary plays that treat the soldier traffic as legitimate and natural, portraying America as a refuge for Europe's failures and criminals; Robert E. Ward, "The Case for German-American Literature," in *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas* ed. Gerhard K. Friesen and Walter Schatzberg (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1977): 373-89, which focuses on creative literature written by German-Americans living in America from the late eighteenth century to the present day, briefly touching on poetry in German-American newspapers, calendars, and almanacs written during the American Revolution; Paul C. Weber, *America in Imaginative German Literature in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926): 1-42, which surveys German periodicals, essays, historical works, travel diaries, letters and diaries of Germans who fought in the American Revolution, and German translations of foreign literature about America.

classics scholar and teacher David Christoph Seybold, which was published anonymously in 1778 and 1779.<sup>3</sup>

Weppen's play and Seybold's novel are worth examining for the insights they provide into how Germans were not only redefining their perceptions of America during the Revolutionary period but also projecting upon America their desire for change within Germany, particularly with respect to the recognition and reward of middle-class talents and virtues. Each work capitalizes on the intense European interest in America during the American Revolution, incorporates new information received from German troops serving there, and reflects the political climate in the area in which it was written. Weppen's play, a seemingly light-hearted and superficial comedy, is set in America and centers around the exploits of a Hessian lieutenant serving in the British army who meets an American heiress while fulfilling his duty to his prince. Seybold's work, an 800-page sentimental novel, centers around the eponymous Reizenstein, a soldier in the Ansbach army who is drummed out of service for criticizing his prince's decision to sell troops to the British. Reizenstein travels to Paris to meet Benjamin Franklin and then to America to fight for the patriots where he, too, meets and marries a wealthy American woman. Both writers use the American Revolution to focus attention on social, political, and economic problems in the German states and to present America as a country ripe with possibilities for middle-class Germans of education and culture. Nevertheless, neither Weppen nor Seybold can imagine a society without patronage. Both Weppen's Hessian

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<sup>3</sup> Johann August Weppen, *Der hessische Officier in Amerika: Ein Lustspiel in drey Aufzügen* (Göttingen: Johann Christian Dieterich, 1783); David Christoph Seybold, *Reizenstein: Die Geschichte eines deutschen Officiers*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Weygendschen Buchhandlung, 1778-1779). Both works are in the Harold Jantz Collection of German Baroque Literature and German Americana at Duke University. The University of Wisconsin supplied a microfiche copy of *Reizenstein*, and Duke University supplied a photocopy of *Der hessische Officier*.

lieutenant and Seybold's Reizenstein, members of Germany's aspiring middle class, find new patrons in America to replace the German princes who sold their services to the British.

Despite contradictions and inconsistencies in their visions of America, Seybold and Weppen contribute to a dynamic *Amerikabild*, or image of America, that was being reevaluated and redefined in Germany during the American Revolution. In order to contrast Seybold's and Weppen's *Amerikabild* with pre- and post-Revolutionary views of America painted by other German writers, this thesis will also briefly consider the 1776 play *Die Werbung für England (Recruiting for England)* by Johann Christoph Krauseneck and the 1798 novel *Der Unglückliche Walter oder Leiden und Verfolgungen eines Deutschen in Amerika (Unfortunate Walter or Sorrow and Sufferings of a German in America)* by I. Maillard.<sup>4</sup> An examination of these two texts in relation to the works by Weppen and Seybold suggests that, during the American Revolution, Germany's *Amerikabild* was in a state of flux as America's strengths and weaknesses were reevaluated on the basis of the observations and impressions of German soldiers serving there. Despite the more complex view of America that emerged in the Revolutionary years, American faults were often ignored or overlooked in the post-war years as America was again idealized as an agrarian utopia.

Before examining these texts in depth, it is important to note the historical context in which they were written. Perhaps the most striking aspect about late eighteenth-century Germany was its heterogeneity. At the time of the American Revolution,

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<sup>4</sup> Johann Christoph Krauseneck, *Die Werbung für England: ein ländliches Lustspiel in einem Aufzug* (Bayreuth: Lübeck, 1776); I. Maillard, *Der Unglückliche Walter oder Leiden und Verfolgungen eines Deutschen in Amerika* (Wien und Prag: Franz Haas, 1798). Both works are in the Jantz Collection at Duke University.

Germany was politically in a state of what Palmer and Colton refer to as “feudal chaos.”<sup>5</sup> Unlike Great Britain and France, which had overcome the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and consolidated under one monarch, Germany was a weak and disunited collection of over 300 sovereign states, free cities, and ecclesiastical territories. Prussia, ruled by Frederick II in the northeast, was a strong, independent state, but the rest of Germany was a hodgepodge of small competing interests. Although technically still a part of the Holy Roman Empire, each state was ruled by a hereditary sovereign who had the power to conduct diplomacy, make treaties with foreign powers, pass laws, raise taxes, and recruit soldiers, in addition to deciding whether his subjects would adhere to the Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinistic faiths. The power of the princes within their territories was absolute, and the welfare of the inhabitants within each state depended on the whims of the ruler. Political writers in one territory often criticized or upheld the actions of a prince in another territory as a way of suggesting appropriate behavior to their own ruler. The elegant Rococo style of Louis XV’s France dominated German courts where princes and aristocrats spoke French and emulated French styles, culture, and manners. Frederick II of Prussia reportedly spoke French to gentlemen and German to horses. Many of the larger states had their own army, court, palaces, and opera company, often running up large debts as they tried to compete with each other and the monarchies in France, Prussia, and Austria.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Knopf, 1971), 150.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 150, 218-22, 234-44; King, 26-27; Herbert A. Frenzel, ed., *Daten Deutscher Dichtung: Chronologischer Abriß der deutschen Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1953), 100; Robert Darnton, *George Washington’s False Teeth: An Unconventional Guide to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 78.

While German politics remained mired in feudalism and German aristocrats venerated French culture, German intellectuals of the *Aufklärung*, apostles of the general European Enlightenment, advocated a new world order based on the independent development of the human spirit. Herbert A. Frenzel describes the characteristics of the German *Aufklärung* in his history of German literature, *Daten Deutscher Dichtung*. Instead of individuals depending on the church or aristocratic patrons to tell them what to think and to do, each person (and most *Aufklärer* probably meant each man) should be responsible for reading and educating himself so that he could make his own decisions, pursue his own happiness, and serve his own purpose. The German *Aufklärer* believed the purpose of humanity is to spread reason, enlighten minds, and promote virtue, and happiness lay in recognizing one's humanity and acting humanely. The German *Aufklärung* and the European Enlightenment, in general, were characterized by tolerance towards different religious denominations, optimism, rationalism, and cosmopolitanism, which meant that enlightened individuals were citizens of the world and not limited by narrow sectarian or national boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

German *Aufklärer* influenced and were in turn influenced by Enlightenment thinkers throughout Europe. Frenzel notes the German *Aufklärung*'s indebtedness to the English philosophers John Locke and David Hume, as well as the French writers René Descartes, Pierre Bayle, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, and he singles out Voltaire and Montesquieu as "the real agents of English Enlightenment ideas" in Germany.<sup>8</sup> In particular, Frenzel credits Voltaire with the idea of perfecting justice through the rule of

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<sup>7</sup>Frenzel, 100-1.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 100: "Voltaire (1694-1778) und Montesquieu (1689-1755) sind die eigentlichen Vermittler der englischen aufklärerischen Ideen."

law and Montesquieu with the idea of dividing government into legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Frenzel views Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz as the forerunner of the German *Aufklärung*, citing Leibniz's attempts to unite a theological view of the world with a physical-mechanistic one based on recent scientific discoveries. Frenzel credits Christian Wolff with using Aristotelian, Stoic, Scholastic, and Cartesian ideas to develop a practical philosophy centered around "healthy human understanding and virtue as the certain sources of life's happiness,"<sup>9</sup> and he notes that Johann Christoph Gottsched was among the first German writers to promote Wolff's view of the world and establish its connection to literature. Other major German writers associated with the *Aufklärung* include Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, and Christoph Martin Wieland.<sup>10</sup>

The Age of the Enlightenment is associated with the rise of the middle class in Europe, and in Germany the tension between a feudal aristocracy and an increasingly self-conscious middle class was particularly strong.<sup>11</sup> The German *Aufklärer* who perhaps articulated most strongly his antipathy towards a French-dominated German aristocracy and his sympathy towards the German middle class was Lessing, a literary critic, essayist, and dramatist, who is probably best known for his 1779 play *Nathan der Weise* and is regarded as the father of the literary Enlightenment in Germany. Heidi M. Schlipphacke, in an essay on Lessing in *Rhine Crossings*, notes Lessing's scorn for royalty and nobility as the subjects of tragedy and his veneration of the bourgeois citizen

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 101: "der gesunde Menschenverstand, sichere Quelle des Lebensglückes die Tugend."

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 100-1; 106-7.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 100; Victor Lange, *The Classical Age of German Literature, 1740-1815* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 3.

as the hero of his dramas. According to Schlipphacke, Lessing believed the French nation was “not human enough to embrace the bourgeois tragedy,”<sup>12</sup> and he criticized French writers for their adherence to form but lack of heart. Schlipphacke argues that during a time when the French so completely dominated German high culture, Lessing equated France with “decadence, ridicule, and the negative example of a good German”<sup>13</sup> in order to construct a German national theater and literature separate from French influence. Schlipphacke also points out the irony and inconsistency in Lessing’s demonization of the French given his Enlightenment views on cultural and religious tolerance.<sup>14</sup>

Charles Eliot states in *Continental Drama* that Lessing’s *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767) marks the beginning of German national drama with its sympathetic portrayal of the virtuous soldier Major von Tellheim and his fiancée Minna in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War. Both Weppen’s *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* and Seybold’s *Reizenstein* seem at least partially indebted to Lessing’s *Minna von Barnhelm*. Like Lessing’s von Tellheim, both Weppen’s Lieutenant Feldberg and Seybold’s Lieutenant Reizenstein are middle-class soldiers whose honor, integrity, and virtue ensure their success in marrying wealthy women of similar character. Weppen’s play, like Lessing’s, can be considered patriotic in that Feldberg voices loyalty to his patron in Hesse who has sent him to fight in America. Seybold’s *Reizenstein* also shows parallels with Lessing’s *Minna von Barnhelm* in its critique of the French and French culture. Schlipphacke

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<sup>12</sup>Heidi M. Schlipphacke, “‘Vous appellés cela betrügen?’: Slippery French Morals and German Bourgeois Virtues in Selected Writings by G. E. Lessing,” TMs, 13. In *Rhine Crossings: France and Germany in Love and War*, ed. Aminia Brueggemann and Peter Schulman (Albany: SUNY Press, forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-2, 9, 12, 37.



focuses on Lessing's portrayal of the Frenchman, Major Riccault, and contrasts his self-centered, foppish, and ridiculous behavior with that of the virtuous, self-denying, and sincere von Tellheim. In the second volume of *Reizenstein*, Seybold introduces the "German Frenchman,"<sup>15</sup> Baron von Breithenthal, whose slavish adherence to French culture and manners is negatively contrasted with Baron Roth's recognition of German writers and middle-class German virtues. Like Lessing, Seybold uses the French as a "negative 'other'"<sup>16</sup> to point out the moral superiority of middle-class Germans adhering to traditional German values.<sup>17</sup> This mocking of the French fop has its origins in seventeenth-century British drama.

While Lessing portrays France and French writers negatively, he upholds England and Shakespeare in positive terms. In his seventeenth "Literaturbrief," Lessing offers his most famous critique of French literature and accuses the German theater critic Gottsched, who embraced French theater, of overlooking English drama, which has more in common with the German mindset. Lessing writes: "He [Gottsched] could have noticed from our old dramatic pieces, which he drove out, that we follow more in the taste of the English than the French; that we want to see and think more in our tragedies than the timorous French tragedies give us to see and to think; that the great, the terrible, the melancholy has a better effect on us than the good, the tender, the amorous."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2, 1779, 63.

<sup>16</sup>Schlipphacke, 19.

<sup>17</sup>Charles W. Eliot, ed., Introduction to "Minna von Barnhelm, or The Soldier's Fortune," by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in *The Harvard Classics*, vol. 26, *Continental Drama: Calderon, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Lessing, Schiller* (New York: P. F. Collier, 1910), 298; Schlipphacke, 26-36.

<sup>18</sup>Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jun., 1972), 49-50: "Er hätte aus unsern alten dramatischen Stücken, welche er vertrieb, hinlänglich abmerken können, daß wir mehr in den Geschmack der Engländer, als der Franzosen einschlagen; daß wir in unsern Trauerspielen mehr sehen und denken wollen, als uns das furchtsame französische Trauerspiel zu

Lessing's concern that "our old dramatic pieces" are being forgotten and, indeed, driven out suggests a fear of cultural annihilation by the dominant French. Perhaps by equating Shakespeare with German *volk* dramas, Lessing sought to give legitimacy to German traditions that had been marginalized or overlooked by German Francophiles, and as Schlipphacke notes, German Enlightenment thinkers associated England with a serious morality. By portraying Germans as virtuous and serious vis-à-vis the decadent and ridiculous French, Lessing sought a resurgence of German national literature based on the English model.<sup>19</sup>

In his history of German literature, Frenzel notes the German literary *Aufklärung's* indebtedness to English writers. In particular, he cites the influence of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), which renounced the upper class hero of standing, and Samuel Richardson's novels, particularly *Pamela* (1740), which introduced the middle class as the focus of psychological family novels. Frenzel also notes the influence of English writers on *Empfindsamkeit*, or sentimentality, a movement within *Aufklärung* literature marked by an emphasis on feeling and emotion and also centered around the middle class. He cites Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760-1767) and *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768),<sup>20</sup> which depicted "the reaction of the traveler and his experiences on the smallest adventure, his inner suffering, and sense

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sehen und zu denken gibt; daß das Große, das Schreckliche, das Melancholische, besser auf uns wirkt als das Artige, das Zärtliche, das Verliebte."

<sup>19</sup> Schlipphacke, 8, 20.

<sup>20</sup>Frenzel, 125, notes that the word "empfindsam" can be traced to Lessing who recommended it to his friend Johann Joachim Bode in 1768 as the translation of the English word "sentimental" in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.

of humor.”<sup>21</sup> Frenzel also singles out Oliver Goldsmith’s *Vicar of Wakefield* for its “wishful picture of peaceful domesticity and charitable cheerfulness.”<sup>22</sup> Frenzel notes that the heroes of sentimental novels often functioned as social critics and that the main tone of these novels is “tearful, full of sighs.”<sup>23</sup> According to Frenzel, the politically and socially repressed middle class was particularly drawn to these novels of sentimental happiness and enthusiasm.<sup>24</sup>

A novel of the *Empfindsamkeit* movement that seems to have had a strong influence on Seybold’s *Reizenstein* is Sophie La Roche’s *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771). The first German novel written by a woman, it “was enthusiastically received and devoured”<sup>25</sup> by the German public, according to Martin Greiner, who classifies La Roche’s novel as a piece of *Unterhaltungsliteratur* or light fiction. Christoph Martin Wieland, who backed La Roche and her publication of the novel, assessed the novel as “particularly shocking because of its social criticism and casual and confessional tone of voice.”<sup>26</sup> The main character, Sophie von Sternheim, lives an idyllic childhood in the country with her mother, the daughter of English nobility, and her father, a commoner ennobled by his military service. Greiner describes the family’s life as “the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 126: “die Reaktion des Reisenden und Erlebenden auch auf die geringsten Abenteuer; inniges Mitleiden, durch das befreiender Humor bricht.”

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 126: “Wunschbild friedlicher Häuslichkeit und mildtätiger Frömmigkeit”

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 127: “larmoyant, voller seufzer”

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 103-4, 125-27.

<sup>25</sup>Martin Greiner, *Die Entstehung der modernen Unterhaltungsliteratur: Studien zum Trivialroman des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1964), 35: “wurde begeistert aufgenommen und verschlungen.”

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 37: “war sie besonders schockierend . . . durch ihre Gesellschaftskritik und . . . durch ihren ungezwungen und bekenntnishaften Tonfall.”

real cultural and educational ideal of the bürgerliche age”<sup>27</sup> because of its blend of material independence, intellectual culture, and feelings of social responsibility. La Roche shows how difficult it is to maintain that ideal when Sophie’s parents die and Sophie’s life becomes a series of “continual tests and probations.”<sup>28</sup> Greiner notes that La Roche’s novel reflects the complexities of the age in which it was written. In the novel, La Roche fluctuates between the feudal tradition of evaluating people based on objective rank or social standing and the modern claim of evaluating them on subjective qualities such as inner worth. Greiner also notes La Roche’s “alert sense that the free world voice of Rococo salons, the emotional and melancholy voice of middle-class friendship, and the severe voice of moral edification from the pulpit belong to the soul of her age.”<sup>29</sup> According to Greiner, La Roche believed that the great world and small happiness belonged together. After many trials and much suffering, the fictional Sophie ends up in England surrounded by friends and family who love her. As Greiner points out, the novel comes full circle from Sophie’s idyllic childhood on an estate in Germany to a peaceful and prosperous domesticity in the English countryside, where Sophie’s patience and virtue are rewarded with happiness.<sup>30</sup>

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed comparison and contrast between La Roche’s *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and Seybold’s *Reizenstein: Die Geschichte eines deutschen Officiers*, there are many parallels between

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 36: “das eigentliche Bildungsideal des bürgerlichen Zeitalters”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.: “unablässiger Prüfungen und Bewährungen”

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 38: “Sophe La Roche hat einen wachen Spürsinn dafür, daß der freie Weltton des Rokoko salons, der schwärmerische und melancholische Ton der bürgerlichen Freundschaft und der strenge Kanzelton der moralischen Erbauung zur seelischen Instrumentation ihres Zeitalters gehören.”

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 34, 36-40.

the two novels, not the least of which is the similarity in their titles. Both are sentimental novels written in epistolary form that contain strong social criticisms of the aristocracy in contemporary Germany. Seybold, who published the first volume of *Reizenstein* in 1778, seven years after La Roche's novel, shows how tenuous life in Germany is not only for middle-class women dependent upon their fathers and husbands for support but also for middle-class men with jobs as soldiers and scholars. The simple Arcadian life of material independence, social commitment, and intellectual pursuit that Reizenstein and his friends seeks to establish in Germany under the auspices of their aristocratic friend, Baron Roth, proves beyond their reach when Baron Roth dies in a hunting accident. Like Sophie von Sternheim, whose life becomes a series of tests after her parents die, Reizenstein and his friends must find their own way after the death of their wealthy patron. Unlike La Roche's heroine, whose virtue is rewarded with an idyllic life surrounded by family and friends in England, Seybold's hero, Reizenstein, finds his reward in America, where character and deeds are more important than wealth and social rank and abundant land is available for establishing the Arcadia he and his friends could only fantasize about in Germany.

While Seybold seems indebted to La Roche for the form, content, and tone of *Reizenstein*, both Seybold and Weppen are indebted to Lessing for his focus on the middle-class German soldier as an appropriate subject for German literature. Although neither Seybold's *Reizenstein* nor Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* breaks new literary ground and both could be considered pieces of *Unterhaltungsliteratur* or light fiction, these works are worth examining for their portrayal of America and the American Revolution. Prior to the outbreak of war, German writers had shown little interest in America and, in fact, had upheld England as a model for German culture and

the fulfillment of Enlightenment ideals. In order to understand how America became a subject of interest to middle-class Germans like Seybold and Weppen, it is important to look at how German views on America changed in the years preceding the outbreak of war.

Horst Dippel, in his monograph *Germany and the American Revolution: 1770-1800*, argues that the American Revolution brought about the “discovery of America” by the German middle class, or *Bürgertum*. Despite the emigration of over 80,000 Germans to America during the preceding century and despite the presence of an estimated 225,000 Germans and their descendents living in America when the Revolution began, Dippel contends that the vast majority of Germans knew little about America. According to Dippel, in 1770 most Germans believed Indians dominated both North and South America and that European settlements were primitive, small, and scattered. They knew little about the political and geographical structures of the continents, and what little information they had was usually outdated by decades. Although there were scholars in the universities who kept abreast of current developments in America and Moravian and Lutheran pietist religious leaders who kept in touch with their New world settlements and missionaries, Dippel contends that America was not a subject of much interest to the majority of Germans.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Horst Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking*, trans. Bernhard A. Uhlendorf (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 3-6. Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 4-8 describes three phases of German immigration to America. In the first phase, from 1683 to 1709, around 300 well-organized radical pietists immigrated to Pennsylvania to seek religious asylum. In the second phase, from 1709 to 1714, thousands of Germans and Swiss from the Palatinate arrived in New York and North Carolina following an agricultural disaster in 1709 and in response to an English settlement experiment. Fogleman’s study focuses on the third phase, from 1717 to 1775, when over 80,000 German speakers from southwest Germany immigrated due to overpopulation and land scarcity. Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, vol. 1 (New York: Steuben Society of America, 1927), 280-85 discusses the difficulty in estimating the number of Germans

Dippel traces the outburst of interest in America to the building conflict between Great Britain and its North American colonies. News about the American fight for liberty against the tyranny of the British government resonated with Germans who had taken to heart the republican ideals of the European Enlightenment. According to Gordon S. Wood, eighteenth-century republicanism “represented all those beliefs and values” that challenged the abuses of monarchy.<sup>32</sup> Republican values recognized individual talent, a liberal education, and virtue as opposed to hereditary privilege, superstition, and narrow self-interest. Throughout Europe, the Enlightenment was associated with the education of the middle class and the creation of a cosmopolitan culture that transcended national boundaries. According to Wood, a new kind of republican aristocracy developed based not on wealth and hereditary privilege but on “politeness, grace, taste, learning, and character,” qualities that could be cultivated by men of ambition.<sup>33</sup> In the German territories, where the majority of the people depended on the patronage system for economic survival, both the American fight for independence from the abuses of monarchy and the myth of the self-made man appealed to the hopes of a people frustrated by princely prerogative. Dippel argues that Germans sympathetic to the American cause made a “spiritual event” out of the American Revolution, idealizing it as the embodiment of Enlightenment ideals and proof that those ideals could be practi-

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living in America given the lack of accurate statistics concerning the population of the thirteen colonies. Faust looks at a variety of information on immigration to the thirteen colonies, taking natural increase into account, to reach a “conservative estimate” of 225,000 Germans and their descendants living in America in 1775, representing ten percent of the total white population.

<sup>32</sup>Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1992; Vintage Books, 1993), 96.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 195.

cally applied.<sup>34</sup> The German historian Eberhard Zimmerman wrote in the 1790s: “A mere look at this land of freedom [was joyful and comforting, for it harbored] no compulsory service, no gabelles, no clerical tithes, no hereditary benefices, no monopolies, no preference by birth, no waste of the people’s industry by lazy courtiers or fat priests; the industrious, righteous, and clever man rises here from poverty to wealth, from a plough to the helm of state; here reason and human values rule.”<sup>35</sup> In the German territories, where the industrious, righteous, and clever man was beholden to an aristocratic patron and where reason and human values were often ignored in favor of traditional privileges and aristocratic self-interest, Germans aroused by Enlightenment ideals looked at America as a model, or perhaps inspiration, for improving conditions in Germany.

Dippel argues that the segment of German society most inclined to support the American Revolution was the middle class, or *Bürgertum*. The Enlightenment emphasis on education, rational thinking, and the progress of human society had raised the expectations of some mid-level government officials, civil servants, businessmen, university professors, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and other aspiring members of the *Bürgertum*, who wanted more economic opportunities, religious choice, social privileges, and civil rights, including security before the law. Dippel uses Régine Robin’s 1970 socioeconomic definition of the bourgeoisie in Europe in 1789 as those with the legal status of commoner who had economic and social power in capitalistic settings, opposed

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<sup>34</sup>Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 354-57.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 180. Uhlendorf translates from Eberhard August Wilhelm Zimmerman, *Frankreich und die Freistaaten von Nordamerika*, vol. 1 (Berlin: 1795-1799), 2. The original quotation reads as follows: “Das bloße Hinsehen auf dies Land der Freiheit . . . keine Frondienste, keine Gabeln, keine kirchliche Zehnten, keine erbliche Pfründen, keine Monopolien, kein Geburtsvorzug, kein Verschwenden des Volksfleißes durch faule Höflinge oder sich mästende Priester; der tätige, rechtschaffene, gescheite Mann steigt hier von der Dürftigkeit zum Wohlstande, von dem Pfluge zum Staatsruder; hier herrscht Vernunft und Menschenwert.”



privilege, and either consciously or unconsciously demanded a different structure of government.<sup>36</sup>

King points out that, although there had been “much grumbling over the abuses practiced by the princes” during this period, no alternative to the status quo had been suggested. King states: “Even political writers of distinction, like K. Fr. V. Moser and Justus Möser, while deploring the weak, disunited condition of the country, and cognizant of the need of a ‘third estate’ to offset the power of the princes and of the aristocracy, were not able to devise a practical means for the attainment of this end.”<sup>37</sup> Before the American Revolution, any talk of reform had usually been in terms of uniting the separate kingdoms under a constitutional or parliamentary monarchy modeled after that of Great Britain,<sup>38</sup> but no one had been able to come up with a plan for overcoming religious differences or getting any of the princes to give up their power. In many ways, the American Revolution was a source of hope for those who wanted a change in government structure along republican lines and a source of fear for those who believed monarchist and aristocratic structures were the best defense against anarchy.<sup>39</sup>

When six of these German princes—the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, the Count of Hesse-Hanau, the Duke of Brunswick, the Margrave of Ansbach-Bayreuth, the Prince of Waldeck, and the Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst—contracted with Great Britain to sell the services of almost 30,000 troops to help quell the rebellion in America, they provoked criticism from Enlightenment sympathizers across Europe. The French exile Mirabeau

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii, 348.

<sup>37</sup> King, 25.

<sup>38</sup> Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 95.

<sup>39</sup> King, 25; Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 334.

published a pamphlet, "To the Hessians and other nations of Germany, sold by their Princes to England," in which he bitterly condemned the princes as rapacious tyrants who had sold their subjects into slavery to suppress the freedoms of patriotic Americans. The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel attempted to buy up all the copies of Mirabeau's pamphlet and then published his own pamphlet defending his decision to sell soldiers as a business that had been going on for thousands of years. Although Britain's King George III was also the electorate of the German territory of Hanover, Dippel argues that these subsidiary treaties the princes made with Great Britain were not motivated by political or philosophical sympathies but by the need for cash to cover their debts. Lowell quotes Freiherr von Gemmingen, minister to the Margrave of Ansbach, who wrote to his agent in London: "It always seems very hard to me to deal in troops, but the Margrave is determined to set his affairs in order at any price, and to pay all his own debts and those of his predecessors. So the good that may come out of such a treaty of subsidy will far outweigh the hatefulness of the business."<sup>40</sup> The six German princes who sold the services of their troops, although aware of the criticisms directed against them, asserted their princely prerogatives and acted in their own self-interest, oblivious to or not caring about the hardships their decisions imposed on their subjects. Many conservatives looked at their actions with indifference or a business-as-usual attitude. Only a few enlightened despots like Frederick II of Prussia believed that rulers needed to keep the

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<sup>40</sup> Edward J. Lowell, *The Hessians and the other German Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War* (1884; reprint, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1965), 23. Lowell provides the translation of this quote, taken from Friedrich Kapp, *Der Soldatenhandel deutscher Fürsten nach Amerika. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2d ed. (Berlin: J. Springer, 1874), 108.

interests of their people in mind. Most rulers still believed that the people served the prince.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the almost 30,000 men sent by the six princes to fulfill their promise to Great Britain, hundreds of Germans volunteered to fight for the Americans. Dippel states that “numerous Germans, including officers and members of the nobility” wrote Franklin in Paris to offer their services to America. Dippel concludes that the majority of the officers who volunteered were Enlightenment sympathizers but that some officers and soldiers were looking for adventure at a time when Europe was at peace or were looking for a free trip to America. There are no statistics on how many Germans volunteered to fight for America. Rosengarten states that there were also a number of Germans fighting under Rochambeau once France entered the war in February 1778. Rosengarten cites the participation of troops from Zweibrücken, Trier, Alsace, Lothringen, and Anhalt.<sup>42</sup>

Once the war began and German troops started leaving for America, German interest in the conflict intensified. Dippel examined five political newspapers from Hamburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Vienna, and Zurich published between 1770 and 1783 and concludes that news of America dominated all five by the end of 1774. After the war broke out in 1775 and the first Hessian troops arrived on Staten Island in August of 1776, Dippel notes a spike in the number of books published about America. Examining data

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<sup>41</sup> Lowell, 22-23; Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 118; King, 25, citing statistics in K. Biedermann, *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1867), provides the following summary of troops sent to America over the course of the eight-year war: Hesse-Cassel, 16,992 men; Hesse-Hanau, 2,422; Brunswick, 5,723; Ansbach-Bayreuth, 2,353; Waldeck, 1,225; and Anhalt-Zerbst, 1,160 for a total of 29,875. Since over half the troops were provided by Hesse-Cassel and Hesse-Hanau, Germans fighting for the British were referred to as Hessians.

<sup>42</sup> J.G. Rosengarten, *American History from German Archives with Reference to the German Soldiers in the Revolution and Franklin's Visit to Germany* (Lancaster, Pa.: Pennsylvania-German Society, 1904), 32-33.

on German book production between 1770 and 1800, Dippel concludes that seldom more than twelve works per year concerning North America were published in Germany between 1770 and 1775. Between 1776 and 1783, an average of 29 books per year were published that contained “at least one continuous passage of at least half a book page in length . . . [that] dealt with the area that was declared the territory of the United States in 1783.”<sup>43</sup> During the peak years of 1776 and 1777, 42 and 47 books concerning America were published each year respectively, representing about two percent of all the books published in Germany. In *Americana Germanica, 1770-1800*, Dippel lists 780 books published about America during that time period that are still available in German and American archives. About one-third of the books are German translations of English and French works, such as Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* and Rousseau’s *Confessions of a Citizen of Geneva*. Dippel’s list includes political-historical works, geographies, statistical information, natural histories, and travel diaries, as well as poetry, plays, and novels.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to affecting the book publishing industry, the American war coincided with and contributed to the rapid development of German journalism in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Dippel argues that most political newspapers prior to the American war simply transmitted news gathered from the news exchanges of Western Europe, that is, London, Paris, and The Hague. These reports were often slanted, depending on the source, and provided merely superficial accounts of major events like the Boston Tea Party without analyzing the issues involved. Between 1770 and 1800, a new form of

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<sup>43</sup>Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 30.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 30-37; Horst Dippel, *Americana Germanica, 1770-1800: Bibliographie deutscher Amerikaliteratur* (Stuttgart: Metzlersche, 1976).

periodical journalism developed that offered news analysis and commentary in addition to transmitted data. Christoph Martin Wieland's *Teutscher Merkur*, introduced in Weimar in 1773, was the first of these political reviews. It was followed in 1774 by Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's *Deutsche Chronik* in Stuttgart, and in 1776 by August Ludwig Schlözer's *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts* in Göttingen. Weber states that Schubart's *Deutsche Chronik* and Schlözer's *Briefwechsel* were the two "most significant political-historical publications published during the American war." King, Lowell, Kipping, and Dippel view Schlözer as the most influential publisher in Germany during the war.<sup>45</sup>

Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, published in Hanover, and Schubart's *Chronik*, published in Swabia, are particularly interesting since Weppen was a native of Hanover and Seybold of Swabia. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to prove the direct influence of these publications on the opinions of either man, a look at the general attitude expressed toward America in each publication may be helpful in determining the kinds of ideas and information to which the two writers were exposed.

Schlözer was a professor of history and statistics at the University of Göttingen, "a center of pro-British influence" in the heart of Hanover. Sixty issues of the *Briefwechsel* were published at irregular intervals from February 1776 until May 1782. Schlözer collected articles containing statistical, historical, polemical, and descriptive information on practically any topic he considered of interest. In 1777, he devoted one entire issue to letters and historical articles on the Americas.<sup>46</sup> The same year he

<sup>45</sup>Weber, 5-6; Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 25-26; King, 26; Lowell, 21; Kipping, 20.

<sup>46</sup>August Ludwig Schlözer, *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, vol. 2, no. 10 (Göttingen: Verlage der Bandenhoekschen, 1777), 197-260. This issue included a letter dated 1757 from

published an article on Great Britain's land power,<sup>47</sup> and in 1778, he began publishing letters from German officers in America to relatives at home. According to Kipping, Schlözer first asked the Jäger captain Johann Hinrichs "to reappraise current views of North America and to correct them where necessary."<sup>48</sup> King, Weber, and Hatfield and Hochbaum argue that Schlözer was a monarchist who did not believe republics were viable and thought the colonists had no right to rebel.<sup>49</sup> In the February 1776 issue of his *Briefwechsel* he compared the participants in the Boston Tea Party to highway robbers, and asks "whether disguised highway robbers, or undisguised protectors of highway robbers are the proper organs through which a truly suffering subject calls upon his ruler for justice and help."<sup>50</sup> After being criticized for his pro-British leanings, Schlözer wrote in the October 1776 issue of the *Briefwechsel*: "I try to inform others about this great development as a cosmopolitan and contemporary, collecting data and handing them down to my readers. I leave judgment entirely to them, without anticipating it in any way."<sup>51</sup> Most historians agree that Schlözer provided reliable information about America

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the Marquis de Montcalm, a French general serving in North America during the Seven Years' War; letters about the discovery of America from Petrus Martyr, a friend and correspondent of Christopher Columbus; an article on the periods of American history; an article on Walter Raleigh; and an article on the South American colony of New Germany, established in 1669 by D. Becher, Count of Hanover.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, no. 12 (1777): 347-54.

<sup>48</sup> Kipping, 20.

<sup>49</sup> King, 46, 50; Weber, 7; Hatfield and Hochbaum, 353.

<sup>50</sup> Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1776), 53. The translation is mine. The original passage reads: "sind vermummter Straßenräuber, oder unvermummte Beschützer vermummter Straßenräuber, gebürliche Organe, durch die ein wirklich leidender Untertan bei seinem Oberherren um Recht und Hülfe ruft?"

<sup>51</sup> Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 94. The translation is Uhlendorf's from Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, vol.1, no. 5 (1776), 316. The original passage reads: "Ich suche mich von dieser großen Begebenheit als Weltbürger und Zeitgenosse zu unterrichten, sammle Facta, und teile das Gesammlete meinen Lesern mit. Das Urtheil überlasse ich ihnen, ohne ihnen darinn vorzugreifen."

despite his partisanship. Lowell speculates that Schlözer's anti-American tone may have been adopted to ward off the censors in Hanover. According to Dippel, Jakob Mauvillon, a friend of Mirabeau's and a professor in Cassel and later Brunswick, believed that Schlözer, in defending the British government, "intentionally and very subtly selected only reports whose argumentation was completely nonsensical and ridiculous, so that they would create just the opposite impression from what appeared on the surface."<sup>52</sup> Mauvillon's assessment is intriguing, particularly in light of the fact that Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*, which was also written in Hanover, has a subtext of criticism as well, perhaps indicating the cleverness required to get by the censors. Unfortunately, Dippel does not provide the details for Mauvillon's assessment, such as which of Schlözer's articles could be interpreted as critical of the British. Whatever Schlözer's point of view, most scholars agree that his *Briefwechsel* was the most widely read periodical in Germany and the chief source of information about America for a good many Germans.<sup>53</sup>

The tone of Schubart's *Deutsche Chronik*, published several times a week from 1774 to 1777, was very different from Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*. According to Dippel and King, Schubart, also a poet, was a larger-than-life personality with a passion for liberty and the American Revolution that he was able to convey to his readers throughout southwest Germany. Prior to the American Revolution, Schubart, like many advocates of reform in Germany, had admired Britain's liberal monarchy as the most enlightened form of government in Europe, but by 1776, he regarded America as the only country of

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Dippel summarizes the argument from *J. Mauvillon's . . . Sammlung von Aufsätzen über Gegenstände aus der Staatskunst, Staatswirthschaft und neuesten Staaten Geschichte*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: 1776), 143.

<sup>53</sup> Weber, 7; Lowell, 21; Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 94.

liberty. In the October 20, 1774, issue of the *Deutsche Chronik*, Schubart assures his readers that the fight against the British in the thirteen colonies is not a descent into chaos and anarchy but a positive and reasoned application of Enlightenment principles.

Schubart writes: “The spirit of liberty is constantly gaining in vitality in those regions but it is not the impetuous spirit that degenerates into licentiousness, but a spirit controlled by wisdom, moderation, and steadfastness.”<sup>54</sup> King describes Schubart as a mediator between America and Germany who was important in molding public opinion. King states: “We can see how his imagination takes fire in the heat of his enthusiasm, how some of the steel of the American temperament becomes welded into his own soul; and we are sure that the blows he dealt upon German political consciousness served to awaken the people from their lethargy, and resounded in later events.”<sup>55</sup> When Charles Alexander, the Margrave of Ansbach and Bayreuth,<sup>56</sup> sold 2,353 men to the British to fight in America, Schubart equated the bartering of troops with slavery and criticized the “apathy and servility” of the local press. For Schubart, selling troops to cover the debts of the ruling family was not a matter of business-as-usual, and he was able to arouse public opinion against the Margrave’s decision. Dippel provides examples of numerous publications written in Ansbach and Bayreuth, including sermons and prayers for special occasions, which defended the policies and prerogatives of the Margrave in selling

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<sup>54</sup> Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 148. Uhlendorf provides the translation from Schubart, ed., *Deutsche Chronik*, Oct. 20, 1774, 465. The original quotation is as follows: “Der Geist der Freiheit wird in diesen Gegenden immer lebendiger, aber nicht der ungestüme Geist, der in Zügellosigkeit ausartet, sondern ein Geist, der von Weisheit, Mäßigung und Standhaftigkeit gelenkt wird.”

<sup>55</sup> King, 177.

<sup>56</sup> Although Ansbach and Bayreuth were separate kingdoms, Charles Alexander was Margrave of both when he negotiated the treaty with the British in 1777. In 1791, he sold both kingdoms to Prussia for a pension and retired to England. See Lowell, 11-12.



soldiers. Dippel contends that such a defense would not have been necessary unless there had been public unrest and dissatisfaction over the issue, which he attributes at least partly to articles and editorials in Schubart's *Deutsche Chronik*. Dippel also sees Schubart's influence in the disproportionate number of letters expressing sympathy towards the American cause written to Benjamin Franklin by natives of Württemberg, Swabia, Ansbach, and Bayreuth between 1777 and 1784. Dippel footnotes eighteen such letters that he found among the Franklin Papers at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia.<sup>57</sup>

Although Schubart wrote freely about American liberty from 1774 to 1777 and criticized the Margrave of Ansbach and Bayreuth for bartering troops to Great Britain, in 1777 he was sent to prison for ten years without a trial for satirizing the Duke of Württemberg's morals and criticizing his sale of troops to Prussia.<sup>58</sup> Schlözer's purported self-censorship and Schubart's short-lived freedom of expression raise the issue of press freedoms and censorship in Germany, which seem to have depended on the whims and vigilance of local rulers at any given time. There do not seem to have been any hard and fast rules in most areas. In her monograph on the German book trade during the Enlightenment era, Pamela Selwyn describes the "incomplete nature of absolutist authority . . . in an age without effective surveillance techniques, swift communications, or centralized enforcement of either laws or standards."<sup>59</sup> Selwyn states

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<sup>57</sup> Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 122, 208, 220-21; King, 115, 177.

<sup>58</sup> King, 27, 117. While Schubart was in jail, J. M. Miller continued publishing the *Deutsche Chronik*.

<sup>59</sup> Pamela E. Selwyn, *Everyday Life in the German Book Trade: Friedrich Nicolai as Bookseller and Publisher in the Age of Enlightenment, 1750-1810* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 181.

the book trade was supposed to be controlled by laws governing the Holy Roman Empire, but in actuality local laws and policies usually predominated. Selwyn describes authors and booksellers in territories with rigidly enforced censorship policies travelling to neighboring territories with more lenient policies to publish their works. After a book was published, it could still be banned by local authorities, but Selwyn maintains there were so many books coming from the Leipzig book fair, for example, that it was difficult for local authorities to keep track of what books were coming into their territories. This may explain why Schubart, a local newspaper publisher, was thrown in jail while Seybold, whose *Reizenstein* was published anonymously in Leipzig, was able to keep his teaching position and avoid punishment.<sup>60</sup>

Weppen and Seybold, both solid members of the German *Bürgertum*, were living in two very different areas of Germany when the American Revolution captured their imaginations. Weppen was serving as a justice official in Oldershausen, a small town in Hanover, when he wrote *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*. Weppen's hero is not from Hanover but nearby Hesse-Cassel, which provided the majority of troops to the British for service in America.<sup>61</sup> Writing in an area strongly aligned with the British government where Schlözer's anti-revolutionary, pro-monarchist *Briefwechsel* dominated coverage of the American conflict, Weppen does not present the American Revolution as a manifestation of Enlightenment ideals but as an opportunity for his cosmopolitan hero to make similar friends in America who can help him out of his economic difficulties at home. Weppen's hero is apolitical and pragmatic as he fulfills his duty to his prince by

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-84.

<sup>61</sup> Troops from Hanover were not sent to America but to Gibraltar and Minorca to free British troops for service in America. Enough troops were kept in Hanover to defend it from an invasion by the French, which had occurred in the Seven Years' War. Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 118.

serving in America. While Weppen's hero serves the British cause in America, Seybold's hero volunteers to fight for the American patriots. Seybold, a native of Swabia, was the rector of a Gymnasium in Speyer, near Mannheim in Württemberg, when he wrote *Reizenstein*. His hero is in the service of the Margrave of Ansbach and Bayreuth, and much of the action in the first volume of the novel takes place in this area called Franconia. Living in Württemberg, Seybold was most likely exposed to Schubart's enthusiastic defense of American liberty in his *Deutsche Chronik*, as well as his criticism of the Margrave for bartering his troops. Seybold's hero, Reizenstein, also criticizes the sale of troops to the British and is caught up in the idealism of the American Revolution. While Seybold's criticisms of his prince and the social and economic problems in Franconia are direct and impassioned, Weppen's criticisms of the status quo are indirect, subtle, and open to interpretation. While Seybold idealizes America as an agrarian utopia, Weppen merely acknowledges that there may be opportunities in America for middle-class Germans. Nevertheless, both Seybold and Weppen address European stereotypes about America and attempt to offer their audiences a more multi-faceted view of America based on information received from news sources and from German soldiers serving there. Both authors contribute to a dynamic *Amerikabild* that evolved during the course of the American Revolution.

## CHAPTER II

WEPPEN'S *DER HESSISCHE OFFICIER IN AMERIKA*

Johann August Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* has been briefly mentioned in surveys of German literature related to the American Revolution. In a 1904 study, J. G. Rosengarten describes it as "a curious little play" that shows how interested Germans were in America at the time of its publication. Rosengarten states the play is set during the British occupation of Philadelphia and includes "Indians, Quakers, English, German and American soldiers, and negroes." Despite Rosengarten's assertion, Philadelphia is not mentioned in the play, and there are not any Native American, Quaker, or African-American characters. He concludes that it "must have been written by some one who had been here, for it shows great familiarity with the city and the conflicting parties residing or stationed here during the Revolution."<sup>1</sup> Rosengarten's assessment of the play is reiterated by Weber, who comments on the popularity of the American Revolution as a subject for the German stage, and Ward, who states the play is worth closer examination since its anonymous author appears to have been in America during the Revolutionary period.<sup>2</sup>

It is not clear why Weppen's authorship of the play was unknown to these scholars. On the title page of the seventy-one-page paperback edition of the play published by Dieterich in Göttingen in 1783, J. A.W. is cited as the author.<sup>3</sup> An entry on

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<sup>1</sup> Rosengarten, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Weber, 4-5; Ward, 378.

<sup>3</sup> This copy is in the Harold Jantz Collection of German Baroque Literature and German Americana at Duke University. The play is bound in a slim, paperback edition, but the pages are numbered

Weppen by Max Mendheim in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (1896) gives Weppen credit for writing *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* in addition to several poems and an operetta, information that should have been available for Rosengarten's 1904 study and Weber's 1926 study. In his 1976 bibliography, *Americana Germanica 1770-1800*, Horst Dippel lists three works by Weppen published in 1783: *Gedichte von Johann August Weppen*, published in Leipzig by Weidmann; *Gedichte von Johann August Weppen*, published in Karlsruhe by Schmieder; and *Der hessische Officier in Amerika: Ein Lustspiel in drey Aufzügen*, published in Göttingen by Dieterich. Dippel's bibliography may or may not have been available for Ward's 1977 study, depending on library acquisitions and other factors that could have delayed Ward's access to Dippel's research. Had Rosengarten, Weber, and Ward known about Weppen's authorship of the play, their assessments of the play would have surely been different.<sup>4</sup>

According to Mendheim, Weppen, the son of a minister, was born in Northeim in Hanover in 1741. He studied law at the University of Göttingen from 1760 to 1763, during which time his family was adversely affected by the "Kriegsunruhen," presumably the Seven Years' War, although Mendheim does not indicate what the adverse affects of the war were on Weppen's family. In 1763, Weppen returned home to live with his parents and work as an "Advocatur" after a position as a "Hauslehrer," or tutor, fell through. He was appointed to his first civil service position as "Auditor" in 1764, was named "Actuar" in 1766, and in the summer of 1766 was appointed to the "Gerichts-

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fom 181 to 253, perhaps indicating that it was once part of a larger work and rebound separately at a later time or published together with other works.

<sup>4</sup> Max Mendheim, "Weppen," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 41, ed. R. von Liliencron and F.X. von Wegele (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1896), 742-43; Dippel, *Americana Germanica*, 83-84.

halter,” or court of trade, in Oldershausen. In 1795, he retired as the “Justizamtmann,” or justice official, in Oldershausen due to poor health.

After Weppen became professionally established as a civil servant in Oldershausen, he began writing poetry for pleasure, experimenting with the fable, song, epigram, poetic epistle, romance, and comic narration. His poetry appeared in the periodical *Musen Almanach*, published in Göttingen. In addition to *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* and his collection of poems, he published *Heinrich Lange: Ein historisches Gedicht* (Henry the Long: An Historical Poem), in 1778; *Der Liebesbrief, ein komisches Gedicht in 4 Gesängen* (The Love Letter, a Comical Poem in Four Verses), in 1781; *Das städtische Patronant, ein komisches Gedicht in 6 Gesängen* (The City Patron, a Comical Poem in Six Verses), in 1787; and the operetta, *Das Freischießen oder das glückliche Bauermädchen* (The Freeshot or the Fortunate Farm Girl), in 1786. Although some of Weppen’s poems contain references to the American Revolution and Hessian soldiers serving there, the majority of his works do not, and there is no indication Weppen ever visited America.<sup>5</sup>

Mendheim describes all of Weppen’s published works as entirely mediocre. He sums up his assessment of Weppen with a quotation from Wolfgang M. Menzel in *History of German Poetry* (1824), who states: “He [Weppen] was a very weak imitator of Wieland. . . . Although his verse appears entirely similar to Wieland’s, everywhere it is missing the spirit. . . . Among his smaller poems several are tolerably funny.”<sup>6</sup>

Although *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* has not been judged significant for its

<sup>5</sup> Mendheim, 742-43.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 743. The translation is mine. The original quote is as follows: “Er war ein sehr schwacher Nachahmer Wieland’s . . . . Obgleich seine Verse den Wieland’schen ganz ähnlich sehen, fehlt doch überall der Geist . . . . Unter den kleineren Gedichten sind einige erträglich witzig.”

literary value, and it is certainly not historically valuable as an autobiographical account of the author's experiences in America, it is worth examining for the insight it provides on how educated, upwardly aspiring Germans were redefining their perceptions of America during the Revolutionary period, and on how a writer in King George III's Hanoverian dominion presented the American Revolution to his audience.

On the surface, *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* is a light, romantic comedy that praises the Landgrave of Hesse for his magnanimity, presents the Hessian Lieutenant as the most noble character in the play, and ends with the Hessian Lieutenant and an American heiress planning a trip back to the culturally superior Hesse. Beneath the surface, however, there is an undercurrent of criticism directed at social conditions in Germany and a suggestion that educated and cultured Germans would do well to look to America for a solution to their personal problems. Weppen addresses German and American stereotypes about each other and intimates that social class is more important than politics or nationality in determining alliances.

To summarize the main plot, a wealthy American woman, Miss Betty, falls in love for the first time when she sees the Hessian Lieutenant, Feldberg, standing in front of her house after a battle. Feldberg is in love with Louise, the daughter of a wealthy and distinguished Hessian clergyman, whom Feldberg thinks is back in Hesse waiting for him. Ginny, Miss Betty's chambermaid, finds out that Hut, Feldberg's conniving and disaffected corporal, has forged letters to both Louise and Feldberg, telling Louise that Feldberg is dead and Feldberg that Louise has married Corporal Hut's brother, a down-on-his-luck preacher in Hesse. When Ginny tells Miss Betty about the letters, Betty initially cannot decide what to do. On the one hand, if Feldberg received the forged letter

that Louise had married someone else, Betty would be in a position to console Feldberg. On the other, it would be immoral not to tell him the truth. In the end, virtue wins, and Betty makes Feldberg aware of Hut's duplicity. Feldberg laughs when the forged letter arrives stating Louise has married Hut's brother. He is not so amused when Louise arrives married to the American captain whom Feldberg saved in battle. Louise, now Madam Didier, tells Feldberg she had traveled to America to surprise him, received the letter telling her he was dead, and eventually married Didier, who had consoled her during her grief. Louise tells Feldberg there must be some girl who can make him forget her. Eduard, Miss Betty's brother, pushes Betty and Feldberg to acknowledge their mutual admiration for each other. The play ends with Betty and Feldberg planning a trip back to Cassel in Hesse, so Feldberg can see his father again. Betty declares that, after Cassel, they can do what they want because she is tired of the unrest in America.

Despite widespread criticism of the German princes for raising money to cover their debts by selling the services of their soldiers to Great Britain, Weppen never directly criticizes the Landgrave of Hesse through any of the characters in his play. Feldberg's servant, Andres, refers to "our most kind Herrn Landgrafen in Cassel,"<sup>7</sup> who has asked Feldberg to join the military as an officer in return for a favor. The Landgrave has agreed not to punish or pursue Feldberg's father, the "Rentmeister" in Cassel, who has been involved in a scandal that Feldberg attributes to a clerk his father trusted too much. Feldberg had just finished his university training and was about to apply for an office in the civil service when the scandal occurred. He muses that he would have never left his *Vaterland* and his beloved Louise had it not been for his "participation in the suffering of

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<sup>7</sup> Weppen, 183. All translations of the play are mine. The original reads: "unserm gnädigsten Herrn Landgrafen in Cassel."



my father, the gratitude toward our best prince, and also to some extent the disgrace which I felt about my father's dismissal."<sup>8</sup> Feldberg is not in America by choice, but he will fulfill his duty to the Landgrave, his patron, because he is an honorable man.

Although Feldberg is well-educated and acts nobly, his status in Hesse seems to be tenuous. His father's scandal has disgraced the family, and he worries about his mother having enough to eat. Clearly, his family is not wealthy but dependent on the patronage of the Landgrave. While Feldberg chooses to look at his military appointment as a sign of the Landgrave's favor, he could view it as an abuse of the Landgrave's power. Had the the scandal involving Feldberg's father been investigated and the clerk found guilty, Feldberg's military service might not have been required in exchange for his father's release. Even if Feldberg's father were found guilty, an impartial system of justice would not punish the son for the sins of the father. The Landgrave's power seems to be absolute. He needs soldiers to sell to the British, and he will get them any way he can.

With almost 17,000 men promised to Great Britain over the course of the war, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel needed to recruit more men than were currently serving in the Hessian army. He was able to fill his rosters with a number of volunteers. Ernst Kipping, in his historical monograph *The Hessian View of America, 1776-1783*, states that these volunteers included young men seeking adventure and financial gain in America as well as those seeking a free trip to America who planned to desert once they arrived. Since the number of volunteers was far less than the number of recruits needed,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 186: "Wär' es nicht die Theilnehmung an den Leiden meines Vaters, die Dankbarkeit gegen unsern gnädigsten Fürsten, und auch gewissermaßen der Schimpf gewesen, den ich über meines Vaters Absetzung empfand?"

the Landgrave was forced to resort to other methods to muster the men promised.

Kipping states that the Hessian War Department “permitted almost any means to attract recruits [including] obscure machinations, bribery, ‘pressing’ by making men drunk, and other tricks.”<sup>9</sup> The poet Johann Gottfried Seume was a young university dropout on his way to Paris when he crossed a corner of Hessian territory and was pressed into military service.<sup>10</sup> In his collected works, Seume writes:

Noone was at that time secure from the henchmen of the seller of souls. Persuasion, tricks, fraud, and force, everything was legal. People did not ask about the means to this cursed end. . . . Here was layered together a real medley of human souls; good and bad, and others who were alternately both. My comrades were a son of the muses from Jena who had also lost his way, a bankrupt merchant from Vienna, a haberdasher from Hanover, a dismissed postal clerk from Gotha, a monk from Würzburg, a magistrate from Meiningen, a sergeant of the Prussian hussars, a discharged Hessian major from the fortress and others of similar ilk.<sup>11</sup>

Contrary to the American myth of the Hessian mercenary as a well-trained super soldier, a good number of Hessians serving in America were men with no prior military experience whose bad luck or personal problems had forced them into service. Captain Johann Ewald of the Hessian Jaeger Corps, in a diary entry dated November 27, 1777, complained: “Noncommissioned officers and jaegers are mostly deserters from all nations, partly frustrated officers and noblemen, students of all disciplines, bankrupted

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<sup>9</sup>Kipping, 6.

<sup>10</sup>Bernhard A. Uhlendorf, “Some Unpublished Poems of J. G. Seume,” *Germanic Review* 7 (1933), 322.

<sup>11</sup>Johann Gottfried Seume, “Mein Leben,” in vol. 2 of *Seumes Werke* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1965), 86: “Niemand war damals vor den Handlangern des Seelenverkäufers sicher; Überredung, List, Betrug, Gewalt, alles galt. Man fragte nicht nach den Mitteln zu dem verdammlichen Zwecke. . . . Hier war denn ein wahres Quodlibet von Menschenseelen zusammengeschichtet, gute und schlechte, und andere, die abwechselnd beides waren. Meine Kameraden waren noch ein verlaufener Musensohn aus Jena, ein bankrotter Kaufmann aus Wien, ein Posamentierer aus Hannover, ein abgesetzter Postschreiber aus Gotha, ein Mönch aus Würzburg, ein Oberamtman aus Meiningen, ein preußischer Husaren-Major von der Festung und andere von ähnlichem Stempel.”

men, tradesmen, and all sorts of adventurers.”<sup>12</sup> In a diary entry dated May 16, 1778, Ewald further complained that newly arrived recruits were the “dregs of society.”<sup>13</sup> Ewald’s and Seume’s comments indicate that the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel supplied the British with the agreed upon number of men, not battle-hardened professional soldiers.

Weppen seems fairly well informed with respect to the kinds of men serving as Hessian soldiers in America. His hero, Feldberg, is not the only Hessian in the play whose military service has been prompted by problems at home. While Feldberg is forced to join the army because of his father’s financial and political problems, his servant, Andres, has joined the army in order to get enough food to eat. Andre’s comment that he followed Feldberg to America because “the hangman tormented me”<sup>14</sup> may mean he felt forced to choose between stealing and joining the military to get enough food to eat, or it may mean he was caught stealing and given the choice of going to prison and possibly hanging or going to America to fight for the British. Andres probably represents the so-called dregs of society that Captain Ewald complained about in his diary, a group that was for the most part illiterate and therefore did not leave behind letters and journals recording their impressions and experiences.<sup>15</sup> While Andres and Feldberg have been forced into service by unfavorable conditions in Hesse, Corporal Hut may have volunteered to serve in America, although Weppen does not make the circumstances of Hut’s service entirely clear. Higher in the social order than Andres, Corporal

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Weppen, 181: “Hat mich der Henker geplagt, daß ich Ihnen gefolgt bin”

<sup>15</sup>Kipping, 5, notes that the “great majority of the troops, particularly the enlisted men, could not write.”

Hut tells Ginny he enjoys the army because he has more freedom in the military than he would have had under the thumb of a proud count in Cassel. Hut is a Latin scholar who had the chance to be the unnamed count's "Hofmeister," or resident scholar, but he could not tolerate the count calling him "er," as opposed to "du" or "Sie,"<sup>16</sup> and treating him like his "Kammerdiener," or room servant. Hut brags he could have had an easy life and probably snatched a fat priest's office if he had been able to grovel submissively.<sup>17</sup>

Although Hut is now Feldberg's "er," he tells Ginny his submission in the military is not total, as it would have been under the count, and he has the freedom to drink, play cards, and cause trouble. Hut is an interesting character, particularly in contrast to Feldberg. Both men are educated and need jobs, which places them in the *Bürgertum* or middle class, but Hut's rank as a corporal as well as his behavior and actions place him lower in the social hierarchy than Feldberg.

Weppen uses Feldberg, Andres, and Hut to portray not only the different types of Hessians serving in America but also the social and economic problems in Hesse that may have forced or led these men into service. Both Feldberg and Hut seem to be the victims of a patronage system that rewards loyalty and submission at the price of dignity and merit. Weppen implies that for a member of the *Bürgertum*, a good education is no guarantee of a good job and that a sympathetic patron or a wealthy wife is more important than individual merit in determining a man's professional and financial success. While members of the *Bürgertum* can depend on their patrons for economic

<sup>16</sup> The third person singular, "er," signified a lower status. Servants were addressed as "er" instead of the informal second person singular "du" or formal second person "Sie."

<sup>17</sup> Weppen, 196: "Ey sagt' ich Herr Graf; ich bin nicht Er—Such Er sich seinen Er, nenn Er seinen Kammerdiener Er—nicht mich, ich bin ein litteratus, und damit waren wir geschiedene Leute—Ich hätt' es da freylich recht gut gehabt, hätte recht locker leben, auch wohl demnächst eine fette Pfarre von ihm erschnappen können—wenn ich nur sein Er hätte vertragen, und untherthänig kriechen können."

support, members of the lower class or *Pöbel* like Andres must sometimes steal in order to eat. If work is not available and there are no charitable or government programs to feed the hungry, crime may have been the only option for the lower classes. Weppen also uses Hut's brother, an interesting character who never appears in the play, to limn the economic problems in Hesse. Hut has told Ginny that his brother is a minister in the diocese where Louise's father is the "Geistlicher" or pastor. Ginny, in a conversation with Miss Betty, states that Hut told her: "This brother of his had been a cheerful, good-as-gold fellow at the University. Now he ties up bears every now and again to help with the low yield of his minister's office" and also seeks a wealthy marriage with Louise.<sup>18</sup> A university-educated minister who baits bears on the side to earn extra money certainly seems indicative of a society with serious social problems. In contrast to Hut's brother, Louise's father is extremely wealthy, thus indicating a large disparity between the haves and the have-nots, even within the church.

Weppen uses the character Dr. Stambold to point out the contrast between the limited opportunity for economic advancement in Hesse and the unlimited possibilities in America. A barber who trimmed beards in Hesse, Dr. Stambold is now a doctor in America worth several thousand pounds. A comic figure, Dr. Stambold repeats himself, loses his train of thought when telling a story, and shows up whenever food is available. When the love affair between Feldberg and Betty hits an impasse, Dr. Stambold offers to concoct a love potion for Eduard to give the two. Dr. Stambold is a busybody, like Ginny, the chambermaid, with whom he clearly has more in common than with Eduard,

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 225: Ginny to Miss Betty: "Dieser sein Bruder sey eben so ein lustiger kreuzbraver Kerl auf Universitäten gewesen als er. Er habe hin und wieder Bären angebunden, und sey nicht vermögend, bey dem geringen Ertrag seiner Pfarrer sich zu helfen."

Betty, and Feldberg. Feldberg is surprised when Eduard tells him how much Dr.

Stambold is worth, since he is clearly not a gentleman of education, culture, and manners.

Eduard tells Feldberg:

In this part of the world, that is nothing new. We have ladies here in the province, who married advantageously and in Europe in a -- I don't want to say, where they were -- We have ministers, who committed the greatest dissipation in all kinds of pleasure in that part of the world, and here pass for venerable men -- We have staff and other officers who were shop servants, manual laborers, lackeys in Europe -- Overall many good-for-nothings have found their happiness here.<sup>19</sup>

In this statement, Weppen addresses European stereotypes about America as the last resort for Europe's misfits and criminals. He also seems to be commenting on how surprised Hessian military officers were when they discovered their counterparts in the Continental Army were not professional soldiers but farmers, merchants, lawyers, and doctors.<sup>20</sup> Clearly, in Weppen's view, American society is more fluid than Hessian society, and someone like Dr. Stambold, who takes the initiative to read a few books and offer his services as a doctor, can get ahead in America with a little luck and no formal training.

Although Weppen's Dr. Stambold is a fictional character, he had historical counterparts in colonial America. Alexander Hamilton, an Edinburgh-educated physician who emigrated to Annapolis, Maryland in 1739, expresses scorn for these self-made doctors in his 1744 "Itinerarium." On a four-month journey along the Atlantic seaboard,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 212: "das ist in diesen Theile der Welt nichts neues—Wir haben hier Damen in der Provinz, die sich aufs vertheilhafteste verheirathet und in Europa in einem—ich mag nicht sagen, wo gewesen.—Wir haben Geistliche, die in jenem Welttheile die grösten Ausschweisungen in allen Arten des Vergnügens begangen, und hier für recht ehrwürdige Männer gelten—Wir haben Staabs- und andre Officiere, die in Europa Ladendiener, Handwerksbursche, Lakaien gewesen—Ueberhaupt haben vielen Taugenichte hier ihr Glück gefunden."

<sup>20</sup> James L. Stokesbury, "Hessians in the American Revolution," *American History Illustrated* 11, no. 8 (Dec. 1976), 7, states that Hessian officers were "incredulous that American officers were lawyers, merchants, or even farmers (peasants to them)."

Hamilton encountered several “doctors” like the fictional Stambold. He describes one “greasy thumb’d fellow who, as I understood, professed physick and particularly surgery,” who extracted a housemaid’s tooth “with a great clumsy pair of black-smith’s forceps.”<sup>21</sup> In Schenectady he met a doctor remarkably similar to Weppen’s Stambold. Hamilton describes “Dr. Rosaboom” as “a man of considerable practice in administering physic and shaving,” who “had extracted all his learning in physick” from “a very voluminous Dutch Herbalist lying on the table before him.”<sup>22</sup> Although Hamilton occasionally encounters physicians of “good learning,”<sup>23</sup> like Dr. Douglass of Boston, he always finds their education and clinical skills inferior to his own. Hamilton’s “Itinerarium,” which was not published until 1907, offers a fascinating glimpse at the haphazard and entrepreneurial nature of medical practice in colonial America.

Weppen certainly seems aware of the state of medical practice in America. He may have also read firsthand accounts of Hessian attitudes toward German-Americans and American soldiers. First Lieutenant Andreas Wiederholdt, captured at Trenton and briefly imprisoned in Lancaster, writes in his diary about German-Americans he has encountered in Pennsylvania: “Most inhabitants of German descent are of the lowest class and are the dregs of that nation. They want to imitate the hospitality and candor of the others, but they remain raw and unrefined German peasants.”<sup>24</sup> Not all German officers described German-Americans so scathingly. A German soldier captured at

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<sup>21</sup>Alexander Hamilton, “The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton,” in *Colonial American Travel Narratives* ed. Wendy Martin (New York: Penguin Books, 1994): 181.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 225

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>24</sup>Kipping, 24; Ralph S. Walker, ed., “‘Trenton . . . I Shall Never Forget’: Excerpts from a Hessian Officers’ Diary,” *American History Illustrated* 11, no. 8 (Dec. 1976), 44.

Saratoga wrote a letter home describing the march from Saratoga to his prison quarters in Cambridge that Schlözer published in a 1779 edition of his *Briefwechsel*. In the letter, the soldier describes “Mr. Tielemann, our marching commissary, who is a native of Manheim, and a member of the committee in Albany, major of a militia regiment, proprietor of a tavern in that city, and by profession a shoemaker.”<sup>25</sup> The writer’s disdain for Mr. Tielemann’s multiple occupations is not glaringly obvious. Nevertheless, he refers to him as Mr., not Major, Tielemann, which is one indication of what he thinks of Tielemann’s military service. Another indication is the writer’s ironic, superior tone. He also denigrates a pastor he met on the march to Cambridge who had been a “stocking-weaver [before] he had developed into a servant of the church.”<sup>26</sup> The fluidity of American society and the multiple roles held by Americans seem to surprise this writer, who does not see this social flexibility in a positive light but as proof of American inferiority.

Like this captured German officer, Weppen disparages American society for allowing a culturally inferior man like his fictional Stambold to succeed, but at the same time, he portrays America as a land of opportunity where immigrants are given a second chance. When Feldberg asks how these “Champignons”—the prostitutes, profligate priests, amateur officers, and good-for-nothings—perform in America, Eduard tells him they do well. As Eduard states: “From the confluence of different people from almost all European lands—hypocrites, zealots, the melancholy, good-for-nothings, windbags—such a good mixture emerged after they arrived here, after they came in connection with

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<sup>25</sup>William L. Stone, *Letters of Brunswick and Hessian Officers During the American Revolution* (1891; reprint, Albany, N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 143-44; Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 4, no. 24 (1779), 378.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 143.



good people, and after poverty encouraged them to industry and frugality, that it was better than one would have expected.”<sup>27</sup> Implicit in Eduard’s statement is the assumption that America, with its abundant resources, immense size, and developing society, can provide opportunities that Europe cannot. America can also provide the incentive for people to work hard and enjoy the fruits of their labor since there is no patronage system in America. When Eduard assures Feldberg that there are also “worthy men”<sup>28</sup> who make their fortune in America and asks him how he likes their province and city, Weppen presents America as an alternative not just for Europe’s lower classes but for educated, cultured men like Feldberg. Instead of looking at America as inferior to Europe, perhaps aspiring members of the *Bürgertum* should look at the opportunities available there. If Europe’s poor and uneducated can intermingle and prosper in America, someone like Feldberg, in association with wealthy Americans like Eduard and Betty, should do very well indeed.

Socializing between German officers and well-to-do Americans was by no means confined to fiction. First Lieutenant Wiederholdt, who so scathingly denounced the German immigrants of Lancaster, was much more impressed with the Americans he encountered in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Arriving as a prisoner in December of 1777, Wiederholdt writes in his journal: “The residents are the friendliest and most courteous in America, no matter what their standing and their opinions. . . . The women are pretty, courteous, friendly, and modest, and at the same time frank and unaffected; we enjoyed a

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 213: “Aus den Zusammenfluß verschiedener Menschen fast aus allen Ländern Europens, aus Bigotten, Schwärmen, Schwermüthigen, Taugenichten, Windbeuteln, ist nachdem sie hieher übers Meer gekommen, nachdem sie in Verbindung mit guten Menschen getreten, nachdem die Noth sie zur Industrie und Frugalität ermuntert hat, eine so recht gute Mischung entstanden, besser als man vermuthet hätte.”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.: “würdige Männer”

great deal of civility from them and, notwithstanding the fact that we were enemies, they gave us a great preference over their own men at balls and other occasions.”<sup>29</sup> Wiederholdt describes being visited in his quarters by “sixteen ladies of the very highest class” and, on another occasion, of making “instrumental and vocal music” with two other German officers, which was praised by the ladies.<sup>30</sup> Prior to his parole to Philadelphia in February of 1778, Wiederholdt writes about being glad to rejoin the army but sad to say good-bye to one young Fredericksburg woman:

Nevertheless, a fair one who was favorably inclined toward me, and whom I shall always honor with high esteem, said to me: “Would to God you could stay here, and I would never be so unlucky as to part from you, which will happen tomorrow and perhaps forever. But go! where your duty and your honor call you—and may you always be happy!” This was true magnanimity, which doesn’t dwell in all rebels. She was a good American, well-disposed, beautiful, and rich.<sup>31</sup>

Wiederholdt believes he has much more in common with this rich, virtuous Anglo-American girl than with the raw German peasants he encountered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and his journal entry resonates with melodrama and romance. One wonders if such reports about beautiful, rich American women who value a man’s sense of duty and honor sparked the imaginations of Weppen and Seybold, whose works both involve such women.

Wiederholdt’s journal reveals that, despite being on different sides in the American war, men and women of culture and breeding could still socialize and enjoy one another’s company. Likewise, in Weppen’s play politics and nationality are less important than social class in determining allegiances. Feldberg has a natural affinity for

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<sup>29</sup>Walker, 47.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 48.

Eduard, Betty, and the American captain, Didier, because they are cultured, educated, honest, virtuous, and well-mannered. When Didier is wounded in battle, Feldberg rescues him from “an Engländer, or rather a devil in human form” who plundered Didier’s watch and purse and “dragged him into the bushes to massacre him or take more money.”<sup>32</sup> When Didier praises Feldberg to Eduard and Betty and describes him coming “like a God from the machine, this noble Hessian,” Feldberg modestly asks him to “be silent about the small favor . . . which you, Herr Kamerad, would have done for me in similar circumstances.”<sup>33</sup> Despite fighting on opposing sides in the battle, Feldberg rescues Didier, a fellow gentleman, and retrieves his watch and purse after a brief exchange with a British officer, the *Engländer*’s commander, who is presumably also a gentleman. In Weppen’s play, a gentlemanly code of behavior supersedes political ideology and nationality in determining wartime actions.

Weppen presents Feldberg as an apolitical man fulfilling an obligation to his prince. When Eduard tries to find out if Feldberg’s “Verbindungen,” or connections, with the Landgrave are such that he could stay in America if he wanted, Feldberg tells Eduard: “Loose or dissoluble they are not—at the same time, since I did not choose this profession from inclination—then my Vaterland would be there wherever I were doing well – But I still wish to see my father one day.”<sup>34</sup> This passage not only reveals

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 235: “Ein Engländer, oder vielmehr ein Teufel in menschlicher Gestalt hatte mich Verwundeten—Wehrlosen—Geplünderten in einen Busch geschleppt, wollte mich masacriren, oder noch mehr Geld haben.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.: Didier: “Da kam, wie ein Gott aus der Maschine, dieser edle Hesse . . .”  
Feldberg: “Schweigen Sie doch von der kleinen Gefälligkeit die einer dem andern schuldig ist, die Sie Herr Kamerad mir in gleichen Umständen auch geleistet haben würden.”

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 213-14: “Unauflöslich sind sie nicht—zumal da ich diesen Stand nicht aus Neigung gewählt—Dann würde mein Vaterland da seyn, wo es mir wohl gienge.—Aber meinen Vater wünschte ich noch einmal zu sehen.”

Feldberg's ambivalence about his military service and connection with the Landgrave but also his concept of the *Vaterland* as a place where a generous and beneficent patron ensures his professional and financial success. In this context, the *Vaterland* is not the place of his birth or cultural heritage but a remnant of the feudal system, with its obligations to and privileges granted by a patron. Feldberg misses his father and wants to return to Hesse to see him one day, but his bonds to the Landgrave are mutable. He has an obligation to fulfill to the Landgrave, but once that obligation is fulfilled, he could transfer his loyalty to another patron if that patron could do more for him than the Landgrave. Corporal Hut provides further insight into Feldberg's personal beliefs when he tells Ginny that Feldberg "with all his Pandekten Latin, does not want to kill any rebels" and then confides to Ginny that "the Lieutenant, for all his faults, has his heart in the right place."<sup>35</sup> Although Hut's comment indicates a certain sympathy that he and Feldberg feel for the American cause, Feldberg never expresses sympathy for either the Americans or British. As Hatfield and Hochbaum point out, the average German soldier did not question his service in America. He did his duty, served his prince, and did not concern himself with the justice or injustice of the cause.<sup>36</sup> Weppen portrays Feldberg as this quintessential German soldier who carries out his duty without considering the political or ideological issues involved in the conflict.

Indeed, Weppen seems to discredit political ideology as a unifying or motivating force. In the play, there is no reference to the opposing ideologies in the American Revolution. Weppen mentions neither the American fight for freedom from British

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 197: "mit allen seinen Pandekten-Latein wird er keinen Rebellen todt machen—Zwar, das muß ich auch gestehen, das Herz had er an der rechten Stelle."

<sup>36</sup>Hatfield and Hochbaum, 380.

tyranny nor the British defense of monarchy against the encroachments of upstart rebels. When Didier is brought wounded to Eduard and Betty's house and Eduard insists on seeing his friend's wound, "which was caused by his patriotism," Didier dismisses Eduard's invocation of patriotism, telling him: "Oh silence about patriotism—thoughtlessness, ambition, a tendency toward novelty, call it foolishness if you want."<sup>37</sup> Clearly, Weppen was not caught up in the idealism surrounding the American Revolution that was popular in some circles in Germany, and he may have been using Didier's character to criticize war and revolution in general.

Personal politics just do not seem to be important to Weppen. Indeed, he never makes the political sympathies of Eduard and Miss Betty clear. After the battle between the provincial and royal troops, Eduard tells his sister the outcome is good news, depending on one's point of view. When Betty chides him for making fun of the conflict, he assures her that he is "quite neutral, and were it not for his friend, Didier, he would side with the Motherland and not grudge the victors their victory."<sup>38</sup> When Feldberg arrives at their house after the battle, Eduard and Betty welcome him, although Betty wonders whether she should be so happy about Feldberg's good fortune in surviving the battle, since her countrymen might disapprove. She asks Feldberg to tell them quietly about what happened.<sup>39</sup> Weppen places Feldberg, Eduard, and Betty above political

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<sup>37</sup> Weppen, 237: Eduard: "Ich muß doch die Wunde meines Freundes sehen, die ihm sein Patriotismus zuwege gebracht." Didier: "O schweig vom Patriotismus—Leichtsinn, Ehrgeiz, Hang zur Neuheit, Narrheit nenne es wenn du willst."

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 229: "Ich meines Theils bin ziemlich neutral—Ja ich würde es ganz mit dem Mutterlande halten, und den Siegern ihren Sieg gönnen, wäre mein Freund Didier nicht—Dieser ist vermuthlich mit dabey gewesen."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 233: Miss Betty to Feldberg: "Ich nehme vielen Antheil an ihrem Glücke lieber Lieutenant—ob ich gleich wegen meiner Landsleute nicht sollte—Nun sollen Sie uns Ihre Affaire in Ruhe erzählen."

ideology. They represent a superior, civilized, transnational class united by education, culture, and behavior.

Eduard sees Feldberg as a worthy match for his sister whose previous suitors, Lord Mosthon and Sir Hargrave, she regards as too wild and too sensitive, respectively. Eduard, knowing that his sister has fallen for Feldberg and impressed with the young Hessian himself, tries to persuade Feldberg that Louise may not be waiting for him when he gets back to Hesse. Although Feldberg is impressed by Betty's generosity, honesty, and beauty, he remains loyal to Louise. He tells Eduard, "Admittedly, the temptation was never so strong as today; but I am an honest man, a German youth—that says everything."<sup>40</sup> When Betty tells Feldberg about the forged letter to Louise informing her of his death, Feldberg states "the loyalty of my Mädchen is unshakeable; gullible she is not, and I still less."<sup>41</sup> Feldberg's faith in Louise's loyalty and lack of gullibility proves unfounded when Louise appears in the last scene of the play as Didier's wife. Although Weppen never explicitly states it, perhaps Feldberg's loyalty to Louise, like his loyalty to the Landgrave, has been misplaced. When Feldberg acknowledges that Louise is no longer his, Eduard and Didier push him to recognize Betty's attributes. Feldberg states: "The praise that I have already heard of her during my short stay, her physiognomy, her noble behavior towards me, her magnanimity, this is enough guarantee for me of her good heart—and my happiness, if she loves me, is more than I could expect."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 219: "Freylich war die Versuchung noch nie so stark, als heute; aber ich bin ein ehrlicher Mann, ein deutscher Jüngling—das ist alles gesagt."

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 240: "die Treue meines Mädchens ist unerschütterlich, leichtgläubig ist sie nicht, und ich noch weniger."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 250: "Das Lob, das ich schon von ihr seit meinem kurzen Aufenthalt gehöret, Ihre Physiognomie, ihr edelmüthiges Betragen gegen mich, Ihre Großmuth, alles dieses ist mir genugsam Bürge ihres guten Herzens—Und das Glück, wenn sie mich liebt, ist mehr als ich erwarten könnte."

Feldberg's fortune in marrying Betty will be more than emotional. Eduard tells Feldberg that Betty is worth 24,000 pounds and also owns jointly with him the great house they are in, a small summer house, and different gardens.<sup>43</sup> Like America itself, Betty can offer Feldberg future happiness and security.

Eduard and Betty know nothing of Feldberg's problems back in Germany. When Eduard tells Feldberg it is his decision whether they live in America or elsewhere, Feldberg replies: "That shall depend on my dear Betty—Still I must confess, that I wish to see my old father again and comfort him because of a misfortune that has affected him."<sup>44</sup> Feldberg offers Eduard and Betty no details about the scandal involving his father and his own financial situation, but simply expresses a need to fulfill his filial duty. Feldberg exults over Betty's decision to go to Cassel with him, stating: "Oh how I will make my old father happy."<sup>45</sup> Presumably, Betty's money can help Feldberg make sure his parents live comfortably and at least have enough food to eat, if not restore his father's reputation.

Betty, ever the magnanimous spirit, assures Feldberg she will not only travel to Hesse with him but stay there if he wants. In a humorous passage, Betty praises Feldberg's fatherland in language that sounds as if she is reading verbatim from a travel book. As Betty states: "You know, I am not so inexperienced in geography that I should not have read about this charming home of your countrymen, which, as they say, still

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 251: "Ich habe Ihnen das Vermögen meiner Schwester noch nicht völlig bekannt gemacht, außer 24000 Pfund, wovon ich Ihnen sagte, gehört ihr dieses Haus, ein kleines Lusthaus, und verschiedene Gärten gemeinschaftlich."

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.: "Das soll von meiner lieben Betty abhängen—Doch muß ich gestehn, daß ich wünschte, meinen alten Vater wieder zu sehen, und wegen eines Unglücks, das ihn betroffen hat, zu trösten."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 252: "Also, Sie wollen mit nach Cassel liebste Braut! O wie werd' ich nun meinen alten Vater beglücken."

daily tastefully improves itself, and under whose wise government the arts and sciences bloom excellently.”<sup>46</sup> Through Betty, Weppen appears to praise the “wise government” of the Landgrave and the thriving culture in Hesse. Betty’s enthusiasm for Feldberg’s fatherland and her willingness to live there suggests a desire on the part of Americans to be included in the European community and to learn from European culture. Weppen also implies that Feldberg, as a man, will be able to mold Betty and, by association, America to his liking. A feminized America that is naïve and innocent like the virtuous but sheltered Miss Betty needs the firm guidance and protection of a masculinized Europe that, like Feldberg, is wiser and more worldly.

Despite Weppen’s apparent praise of the Landgrave and Hessian culture, the play ends with a discussion that could be interpreted as a negative reference to the Landgrave and his decision to sell soldiers to the British. When Eduard comments on what a “happy success evil unwittingly brought about this time,”<sup>47</sup> Feldberg agrees with him, quoting the following lines from an unnamed German operetta:

The devil is an evil man  
He causes nothing but disaster  
Still he often deceives himself.<sup>48</sup>

Although Eduard and Feldberg seem to be referring to Hut and the letters he forged, the corporal is never mentioned by name. Reading beneath the surface, one could view the Landgrave’s decision to sell soldiers to Great Britain as the evil that has brought about

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.: “Wissen Sie was, ich bin so unerfahren in der Geographie nicht, daß ich nicht von dieser reizenden Residenz ihres Landesvaters gelesen haben sollte, der, wie man sagt, selbige noch täglich so geschmackvoll verschönert, und unter dessen weisen Regierung Künste und Wissenschaften vorzüglich blühen.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.: “Was für einen glücklichen Erfolg hat diesmal die Bosheit wider ihren Willen hervorgebracht.”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.: “Der Teufel ist ein böser Mann/Er richtet lauter Unheil an--/Doch oft betrügt er sich.”



Feldberg's happiness. Had it not been for the American Revolution and his sovereign's need for money, Feldberg would have never traveled to America and met Betty. Betty's wealth and America's fluid social structure offer Feldberg opportunities that he would have never had in Hesse. Thus, his Landgrave's greed and oppression have inadvertently provided Feldberg with financial freedom and hope for a better future.

Weppen's play shows a keen awareness of current news about Hessian troops in America, as well as an awareness of the false perceptions that Americans and Germans had about each other. In the opening scene of the play, Andres and Feldberg stand hungry, soaked, and cold before the home of Betty and Eduard. Andres laments following Feldberg to such a "Hungerland,"<sup>49</sup> where he had believed "everything would be in abundance,"<sup>50</sup> and he complains about "not being able to find any gold nuggets"<sup>51</sup> to take home to his girl, Grethe. Andres tells Feldberg he had thought "they probably shoot with egg cake and bratwurst" in America, but "the cannon ball, which recently came flying past you . . . was no bladder sausage--it was a real lead ball."<sup>52</sup> According to Kipping, Hessian troops in America were often inadequately supplied and "suffered considerable privation" when the War Department in Cassel and the Ministry of War in London disagreed on who was responsible for supplying the Hessian auxiliary troops.<sup>53</sup> When Feldberg sends Andres out to the city to see if he can find food, he emphatically

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 181: "ein vermaledeites Hungerland"

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 181: "Ich glaubte, hier wär' alles voll auf."

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 183: "Habe noch keine Goldklumpen finden können"

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 181-82: "Dachte so, da schiessen sie wohl mit Eyer Kuchen und Bratwürsten—Aber, Andres, Andres, du hast dich mächtig geirret. Die Kanonkugel, die neulich bey Ihnen vorbeey . . . war keine Blasenwurst—es war eine natürliche Bleykugel."

<sup>53</sup> Kipping, 6.

instructs him to “go, only do nothing with violence.”<sup>54</sup> When Andres returns with a large loaf of bread under one arm, a flask in one hand, and a plate with some disgusting-looking meat in the other, Feldberg states, “I hope that you did not need violence.”<sup>55</sup> Andres smugly replies: “Heaven forbid! I only said if they didn’t want to kindly give it to us, we wanted to help them open the boxes and crates. And then they gave this away kindly and voluntarily—and didn’t want us to pay for it either.”<sup>56</sup> Feldberg sends Andres back to pay for the food he extorted, aware that his men must eat but not willing to let them take food without paying for it. In this passage, Weppen seems to be defending Hessian soldiers who had been vilified in the American press for plundering American farms and towns. Although common soldiers like Andres might be tempted by hunger to threaten Americans and steal from them, according to Weppen, Hessian officers like Feldberg were honorable men who would rectify the transgressions of their men, if they knew about them.

The letters and journals of Hessian officers serving in America reveal an official policy toward foraging for supplies and compensating local farmers that sought to appease and accommodate the local population. In a letter dated June 24, 1777, which appears in a 1778 edition of Schlözer’s *Briefwechsel*, a Hessian officer stationed in Rhode Island writes his brother:

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<sup>54</sup> Weppen, 185: “Geh nur! aber ja nichts mit Gewalt.”

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 200: “Ich hoffe doch nicht, daß du Gewalt gebrauchet hast?”

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*: “Behüte der Himmel! Ich sagte nur wenn sie’s nicht in Güte geben wollten, so wollten wir uns selbst schon Hülfe schaffen, und Kisten und Kasten öffnen—Und da gaben Sie dieses freywillig und in Güte her—wollten auch kein Geld.”

There is likewise nothing more vexatious than the fact that by an express order of the king the soldiers are obliged to treat this people, who are in reality all rebels, with the greatest courtesy – so much so, that not a grain of salt may be taken from them without compensation. The poor soldiers, accordingly, would die of starvation if the ship provisions were not furnished to them for 3 pence per *diem* (28 kellers), viz., one pound of zwieback [toasted bread or biscuit], salted but almost uneatable pork, a few musty peas, some oatmeal, and a little rum. With this diet they are forced to support life, although a good many are made sick by it.<sup>57</sup>

While this officer chafes at a policy he feels unfairly benefits the “rebels” at the expense of hungry soldiers, Adjutant General Major Carl Leopold Baurmeister worries that plundering on the part of royal troops is increasing and hardening American resistance. In a journal entry dated December 16, 1777, Baurmeister writes about preparations for winter quarters in Philadelphia:

On the 11<sup>th</sup> he [General Cornwallis] stopped foraging after having collected about two thousand head of cattle and sheep. . . . His Excellency General Howe was exceedingly satisfied with General Cornwallis’s conduct, but not with those who did the foraging and drove in the cattle. They all thought first of themselves and not of the commonweal. In fact, many deserve being openly accused and punished without consideration. In this, as well as in several other things, we have been going too far and have done infinitely more to maintain the rebellion than to smother it.<sup>58</sup>

Baurmeister does not elaborate on what these men did to go “too far” and alienate the local population. Unlike the officer stationed in Rhode Island who does not see the benefit in compensating “rebels” and treating them humanely, Baurmeister seems to understand that not all Americans are rebels and that in order to keep individuals neutral or loyal to the crown, the British army must treat them fairly.

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<sup>57</sup>Stone, 208; Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, no. 13 (1778), 32.

<sup>58</sup>Carl Leopold Baurmeister, *Revolution in America: Confidential Letters and Journals 1776-1784 of Adjutant General Major Baurmeister of the Hessian Forces*, trans. Bernhard A. Uhlendorf (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 139.

Earlier entries in Baurmeister's journal indicate that the British army had a strict policy against pillaging and looting and that men caught were severely punished. On August 26, 1777, Baurmeister writes that a combined battalion of German and British soldiers made their headquarters at Elk Ferry, Maryland: "In spite of the strictest orders, marauding could not at first be entirely prevented. Several men in the most advanced English troops were caught by General Howe himself. One of these marauders was hanged, and six others were flogged within an inch of their lives."<sup>59</sup> Apparently these severe punishments were not enough of a deterrent, and before a September 22, 1777, march to Mill Dam, Delaware, troops again had to be reminded of official policy. Baurmeister writes: "Everyone is warned against setting fire to houses, barns, or other buildings along the line of march."<sup>60</sup> Conscientious officers like Baurmeister tried to keep pillaging and other abuses of the local population to a minimum. In a letter to Baron von Jungkenn, a major general influential in military affairs at the Landgrave's court in Hesse-Cassel, Baurmeister describes a march to Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey on June 26, 1778, during which "there was much plundering," but he assures von Jungkenn "there was no pillaging and plundering on the part of the Hessians."<sup>61</sup>

Despite Baurmeister's efforts to ensure that the Hessian soldiers under his command behaved honorably, the Hessians had a reputation for barbarism and brutality even before they arrived in America. Carl Berger, in his historical monograph *Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of the American Revolution*, states that King George III's decision in 1775 to hire foreign troops contributed to the conviction on

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 102.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 185.

the part of colonial patriots that it would be impossible to reconcile with Great Britain, and patriot propaganda against these “foreign mercenaries” began almost as soon as the news about their procurement reached America.<sup>62</sup> One of the most virulent and widely circulated pieces of propaganda against the German soldiers serving Great Britain appears in the *Declaration of Independence*. Towards the end of the list of grievances against King George III is the entry: “He [King George III] is, at this time, transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun, with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.”<sup>63</sup> This link between foreign mercenaries and barbaric cruelty was a stereotype that clung to the Hessians throughout the war despite the best efforts of decent men like Adjutant General Major Baurmeister. Lieutenant Wiederholdt, imprisoned in Dumfries, Virginia, affirms this stereotype in a journal entry dated April 15, 1777: “Now the dumb Americans had funny ideas about us Hessians, believing that we were not made like other men, that we had a strange language and generally were a raw, wild, and barbaric people.”<sup>64</sup> While individual Hessians were no doubt occasionally guilty of atrocities, individual British and American soldiers were equally guilty of such crimes, and the stereotype of the Hessian barbarian was probably an unfair one.

In addition to being aware of American stereotypes about Hessian barbarians and of the efforts of Hessian officers to control the behavior of their troops, Weppen

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<sup>62</sup>Carl Berger, *Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), 102; Kipping, 29.

<sup>63</sup>*Declaration of Independence*, 1776.

<sup>64</sup>Walker, 44.

acknowledges that common soldiers were less bound by a sense of duty than their officers. When Feldberg sends Andres out to find food, Andres leaves singing:

You people we come from Hesse  
 in America is there  
 nothing for us to eat  
 and nothing to drink?  
 We come not as enemies  
 Still give us roast and wine  
 so shall we your heart's friends  
 and allies be.<sup>65</sup>

Like his commanding officer, Andres is apolitical. He has nothing against the Americans, and, indeed, his loyalty may be determined by who feeds him. Although Weppen does not expand on this theme in his play, his inclusion of Andres's song indicates an awareness of how vulnerable low-ranking German soldiers like Andres were to the propaganda of the American patriots, particularly when their supplies ran low and they were cold and hungry. Adjutant General Major Baurmeister wrote to Baron von Jungkenn of 200 Hessian deserters in 1778. He attributed their desertion "to our long stay in Philadelphia and the many kinds of temptations, which need not be very alluring to blind the common soldier and make him break his oath."<sup>66</sup> While gentlemen like the historical Baurmeister and the fictional Feldberg will fulfill their obligations to the Landgrave, lower-class men do not feel the same sense of loyalty.

In addition to being aware of American stereotypes about Hessian barbarians and the susceptibility of common soldiers to American propaganda, Weppen was also aware of the journals kept by German officers in America. After the battle in which Feldberg

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<sup>65</sup> Weppen, 185: "Ihr Leute wir kommen aus Hessen/Ist in Amerika/Für uns denn nichts zu Essen/und nichts zu Trinken da?/Wir kommen nicht als Feinde/Doch gebt uns Braten und Wein/So sollt ihr Herzensfreunde/und Bundsgenossen seyn."

<sup>66</sup>Baurmeister, 185.

rescues Didier, Betty comments that “this day has earned an excellent place in your journal.”<sup>67</sup> When she asks him if he keeps a journal, Feldberg replies: “Yes, miss, since my departure from Hesse. Good as well as bad incidents give pleasant recollections in the future. The former stay always sweet with us, and give through cheerful memories half the pleasure again, and the latter fill our hearts not less with a thankful joy that we survived.”<sup>68</sup> Since 1778, Schlözer had been publishing letters from German soldiers serving in America in his *Briefwechsel*. In addition, the regimental quartermasters in twenty Hessian units serving in America had been ordered by the War Department in Cassel to keep an official journal of their experiences in the American war.<sup>69</sup> A number of soldiers and officers kept private diaries as well. These letters and journals provided first-hand accounts not only of the war but also of America and its people. Undoubtedly such personal accounts contributed to Weppen’s knowledge about America and interest in writing a play set in America.

Despite Weppen’s awareness of German and American stereotypes about each other and his familiarity with the journals kept by Hessian officers, his play reflects little knowledge of actual battles and cities in America. Despite Rosengarten’s assertion that the play is set in Philadelphia,<sup>70</sup> Weppen never specifies either the setting or time of the play. The first act begins with the parenthetical statement: “The scene is in a city in

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<sup>67</sup> Weppen, 237: “Dieser Tag verdient einen vorzüglichen Platz in Ihrem Tagebuche—Sie führen doch ein Tagebuch?”

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.: “Ja Mis, seit meiner Abreise aus Hessen.—Sowohl gute als böse Vorfälle geben in der Zukunft eine angenehme Erinnerung. Jene bleiben uns immer süß, und gewähren durch frohes Andenken den halben Genus nochmals, und diese erfüllen nicht weniger mit einer dankbaren Freude, daß sie überstanden sind, unsere Herzen.”

<sup>69</sup> Kipping, 5.

<sup>70</sup> Rosengarten, 25.

North America, on the lane before a great house.”<sup>71</sup> Since Andres and Feldberg complain about the cold and Betty comments on the “unfriendly weather,”<sup>72</sup> the play probably takes place during the winter, but the winter of what year is not stated. The American captain, Didier, writes Eduard that he will visit in a few days and hopes to play the *Prävenire* “if the royals . . . have still not occupied your place.”<sup>73</sup> When Betty states, “he probably will not come, since the royals have played the *Prävenire*,”<sup>74</sup> she implies that royal troops have not only occupied the city but visited her home. When Hut asks Ginny if she speaks Latin, she tells him “we understand German or English here.”<sup>75</sup> These clues may have led Rosengarten to assume that Philadelphia was the setting for the play, but New York, Charleston, and Savannah were also occupied by the British and could have contained German-speaking households. Weppen’s description of the battle that takes place during the play does not help pinpoint the setting either. In Act III, scene 3 Eduard tells Betty: “Enough the Provincials are beaten, and a great part have . . . been captured. They were too careless—had riskily come too near the city and not noticed the ambush behind the country houses and gardens. Their retreat was cut off. I believe much blood was shed.”<sup>76</sup> Weppen’s generic battle could have taken place in any city. This could

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<sup>71</sup> Weppen, 181: “(Die Scene ist in einer Stadt in Nord-Amerika, auf der Gasse vor einem großen Hause.)”

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 189: “so unfreundlicher Witterung”

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 192: “Wenn die Königlichen, wie ich hoffe, deinen Ort noch nicht besetzt haben, so spielen wir das *Prävenire*.”

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 194: “Also wird er nun wohl nicht kommen, da die Königlichen das *Prävenire* gespielt haben.”

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 195: “Ich verstehe nicht, sprech er deutsch, Monsieur, oder englisch—das verstehen wir hier.”

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 229: “Genug die Provincialen sind geschlagen, und ein großer Theil ist . . . gefangen. Sie waren zu unvorsichtig—hatten sich zu nahe an die Stadt gewagt, und nicht den Hinterhalt vermuthet, der



indicate Weppen's lack of knowledge about specific battles and American geography, but it could also reflect a poet's lack of concern for specific details. Weppen's goal is to entertain and not to provide his audience with an accurate history of the war.

Despite his nondescript setting and battle, Weppen does refer to historical figures other than the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. The American officer, Didier, writes Eduard: "For three weeks I have been a soldier and captain of a company of volunteers, which I recruited myself. My purse has felt it. – I march to the Corps troops, that shall push to Washington, always at the right hand, through woods and rough areas."<sup>77</sup> Weppen's Didier may be fictional, but Weppen knows who Washington is, and he is aware that Americans with no military experience recruited volunteers and paid to outfit them. Likewise, he knows about the Brunswick General von Riedesel's wife and her trip to America. Weppen's fictional Louise, living in Brunswick after the death of her father, persuades her aunt to let her travel to America with the Baroness.<sup>78</sup> According to Lowell, the historical figure, Baroness Frederika von Riedesel, left Brunswick on May 14, 1776, arrived in Quebec in June 1777, and traveled to Massachusetts after her husband's Brunswick regiment, part of Burgoyne's army, was defeated at the Battle of Saratoga. The Brunswick troops arrived in Cambridge in November 1777 and were put in barracks there. None of the German prisoners were allowed to visit Boston, but Lowell states that the Baroness went there occasionally to visit a daughter of the American general, Philip

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hinter den Landhäusern und Gärten postiret stand. Durch diese wurde ihnen der Rückzug abgeschnitten. Ich glaube es ist viel Blut vergossen."

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 192: "Ich bin seit drey Wochen Soldat und Capitain einer Compagnie Freywilliger, die ich selbst erworben. Meine Börse hat es gefühlt. Ich marschire dem Corps Truppen, das zu Washington stoßen soll, immer zur rechten Hand, durch Wälder und unwegsame Gegenden."

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 246: "Es both sich mir die schöne Gelegenheit dar, mit der Frau Generalin von Riedesel nach Amerika zu überkommen."

Schuyler, who had been instrumental in Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga.<sup>79</sup> In Weppen's play, Louise is in Boston when she receives the forged letter telling her of Feldberg's death. She and Didier have been married for three months when they arrive at the home of Eduard and Betty, but Weppen does not specify the time elapsed between Louise's arrival in Boston and their marriage. While the historical details are tantalizing and one is tempted to try to pinpoint the setting and time period of the play from these clues, the value of the play is not in its historical accuracy. Nevertheless, the play's historical details or lack thereof give insight into the kinds of information about America and the American Revolution that were being reported in the German press.

Undoubtedly, Weppen's main purpose in writing *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* was to entertain. Writing at a time when newspapers were filled with news of the conflict in America and almost 17,000 men from neighboring Hesse-Cassel were fighting there, Weppen capitalized on public interest in the conflict and incorporated tidbits of news to make his play more topical. Weppen addresses the stereotype of the barbaric Hessian, comments on supply problems in feeding the troops, and refers to Baroness von Riedesel's trip to America. He also dispels misconceptions about America as a land of plenty where egg cake and bratwurst are used for ammunition and gold nuggets can be found lying around on the ground. On one level the play can be interpreted as a provincial piece that touts the superiority of Hesse. The young Hessian lieutenant is the bravest, most honorable character in the play; the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel is constantly praised for his magnanimity; and Hesse-Cassel is upheld for its cultural superiority. On another level, the play can be interpreted as a subtle criticism of

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<sup>79</sup> Lowell, 126, 135, 188.

social and economic conditions in Hesse and of the Landgrave's policy in sending troops to America. Feldberg, Andres, and Hut are all serving in America because economic problems at home have driven them there. Although Hut is portrayed as the bad guy whose evil has unwittingly brought about happiness, the Landgrave's policies could also be interpreted in that light. Had it not been for the Landgrave's need to pay off his debts, Feldberg would have never traveled to America and met Betty, whose wealth offers a solution to his father's financial troubles back home.

Although Weppen never upholds the American Revolution as a manifestation of Enlightenment ideals or a noble fight for freedom, he does offer his audience a fresh look at America and the economic independence it offers German immigrants. Weppen never directly or indirectly suggests that reforms in Hesse or a change in the Landgrave's behavior are needed. Instead, he presents conditions in Hesse as they are and offers America as an alternative for educated and cultured Germans who have been harmed by the Landgrave's policies. While Weppen acknowledges that America can appear backward and crude by European standards, he centers his play around wealthy and refined Americans who value the virtues of a man like Feldberg and encourage him to stay in America where worthy men, not just crude peasants, can make their fortune. Weppen presents America as a growing country with such a need for immigrants to develop its resources and to provide services that a crude Hessian barber like Stambold can become a successful doctor. While Feldberg's future in economically-straitened Hesse appears uncertain, his marriage to the wealthy Miss Betty provides Feldberg with choices. Once his obligation to the Landgrave is fulfilled, Feldberg will no longer be dependent upon the Landgrave's patronage for economic survival. He can choose

whether to live in Hesse or America because Miss Betty's fortune gives him the economic independence to make his own decisions. Thus, Weppen's America is a country of abundance and opportunity where men can make or marry their fortunes and then return to the culturally superior Hesse. Although Weppen's attitude toward American culture is ambivalent, the *Amerikabild* he offers his audience is essentially positive and contributes to a more complex view of America that was emerging during the American Revolution.

CHAPTER III  
SEYBOLD'S *REIZENSTEIN*

Unlike Weppen's play, which has received little attention in the past two hundred years, David Christoph Seybold's *Reizenstein* appears poised for a critical and historical reevaluation since its 2003 reprint in Vienna. Wynfrid Kriegleder, a German studies professor at the University of Vienna, states that although *Reizenstein* has hardly been noticed by researchers, it is the first German novel that deals extensively with the American Revolution and it anticipates to an astonishing degree the German perception of America for the next sixty years.<sup>1</sup> According to Kriegleder, Seybold's *Reizenstein* offers an ideal picture of America where "the restoration of a premodern, arcadian world, still not sickened by luxury" is possible.<sup>2</sup> Kriegleder concludes that Seybold is the first of many German novelists to present America as the land of the future where the European past will again be erected. Kriegleder's assessment of *Reizenstein* was first published in a 1996 article in *Monatshefte*, a magazine for German language literature and culture published by the University of Wisconsin. Kriegleder's article is reprinted as the epilogue to the 2003 Edition Praesens edition of *Reizenstein*. In the reprint, Kriegleder

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<sup>1</sup>Wynfrid Kriegleder, "David Christoph Seybolds *Reizenstein*: Der erste deutschsprachige Roman über die amerikanische Revolution," *Monatshefte für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur* 88, no. 3 (1996): 310, 326.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 318: "die Restauration einer vormodernen, noch nicht vom 'Luxus' angekränkelten, arkadischen Welt"

also supplies comments on the original text, including explanations of historical and literary references and translations of passages in Greek and Latin.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to Kriegleder's 1996 article, there was scant mention of *Reizenstein* in surveys of German literature related to the American Revolution. In a chapter in the 1977 monograph, *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas*, Harold Jantz laments the dearth of research in German-Americana concerning the period of the Revolution and early Republic and states that "hardly one-fifth of the material is known" in the imaginative fields of poetry, drama, novel, and essay. Jantz views such imaginative works as valuable in "assessing the German psychological, sociological, and political climate of the time," and he asks:

Why, for instance, in the literature of the last fifty years has there been only one brief reference to David Christoph Seybold's two-volume novel, *Reizenstein* . . . even though in it the situation of the German soldier arbitrarily shipped off to America is presented more dramatically, more sharply, and in closer detail than in most of the expository works of the day? Indeed, one can only marvel that such a courageously radical revolutionary work not only escaped censorship but even experienced a reprint and a sequel. Such freedom of the press is highly indicative and may be quite startling to those more familiar with the standard clichés on the Germany of those times than with the actual phenomena.<sup>4</sup>

Although Jantz states *Reizenstein* was superficially noticed fifty-one years ago, he does not cite the work, which would have been published in 1926, and there were no references to Seybold's work in the surveys of German-American literature cited on page 2 of this thesis. There is no listing for *Reizenstein* in Dippel's *Americana Germanica: 1770-1800*, and Theodor Schön's entry on Seybold in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (1896) does not list *Reizenstein* among Seybold's writings. Perhaps one reason for the

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<sup>3</sup>David Christoph Seybold, *Reizenstein: Die Geschichte eines deutschen Officiers*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Weygendschen Buchhandlung, 1778, 1779; reprint, Vienna: Edition Praesens, 2003). All subsequent references are to the original volumes published in 1778 and 1779.

<sup>4</sup>Jantz, 76.

omission, at least in Schön's entry, is that *Reizenstein* was published anonymously, and it is not clear when Seybold took credit or was given credit for writing the work.<sup>5</sup>

While Jantz cursorily acknowledged *Reizenstein*'s historical value for its portrayal of the German soldier arbitrarily sent to America and Kriegleder has given a detailed exposition of the novel's themes vis-à-vis the establishment of a German image of America that lasted sixty years, no one has looked at the contemporary accounts about America that informed Seybold's view. Perhaps one clue to understanding the novel is information Seybold provides about himself in *Kleinere Schriften vermischten Inhalts* published in Lemgo in 1792. According to Seybold, there is nothing he would rather read than newspapers and that, even as a boy, he could hardly wait for the newspapers to arrive.<sup>6</sup> In *Reizenstein*, there are numerous references to newspapers. Since the characters in the novel get their information about America and follow the conflict there via the newspapers, it seems logical that newspapers were probably a significant source of information and inspiration for Seybold in writing his novel. A close reading of the novel suggests that Seybold grappled with conflicting reports about America and the promise it held for Europeans. While Seybold's novel ends with the realization of an agrarian utopia in America, the establishment of this idyll is by no means a foregone conclusion. Seybold's German hero must convince virtuous but naïve Americans that a sinister Congress allied with the French does not have their best interests at heart and, in fact, threatens to ruin America through its alliance with the corrupt and corrupting

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<sup>5</sup> Theodor Schön, "Seybold," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 39, ed. R. von Liliencron and F.X. von Wegele (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1896), 79-80.

<sup>6</sup> David Christoph Seybold, *Kleinere Schriften vermischten Inhalts: Pädagogische gemeinnützige Reden bey Volksversammlungen nebst einer biographischen Nachricht von dem Verfasser* (Lemgo: Meyerschen Buchhandlung, 1792): "ich las nichts lieber, als Zeitungen," 3; "Die Zeitungen konnte ich jedesmal fast kaum erwarten," 4.

French. There is certainly no indication from the available biographical information about Seybold that he ever visited America.

Three sources of biographical information on Seybold are Schön's entry in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, information Seybold provided about himself in *Kleinere Schriften vermischten Inhalts*, and Kriegleder's article in *Monatshefte*. All three sources state that Seybold was born in Brackenheim, a town in Swabia southwest of Heilbronn and northwest of Stuttgart, in 1747. His father was the city clerk, or "Stadt-schreiber." Schön states:

Seybold . . . attended the state theological teaching institute, earned a doctorate in Physik in 1769, became a professor of philosophy in Jena in 1770, rector of the gymnasium in Speyer in 1775, rector of the gymnasium in Grünstadt in 1779, and from 1779 to 1792 was the Hessian-Darmstadt professor at the gymnasium in Alsace. After much danger endured during the time of terror, he returned to Württemberg in 1795 and became professor of classical literature at the University of Tübingen. As such he died on February 19, 1804.<sup>7</sup>

He was living in Speyer, southwest of Mannheim and Heidelberg, when he wrote *Reizenstein*. According to Kriegleder, Seybold was known primarily for his extensive academic work and secondarily for his school and pedagogical folk writings. His fiction represented a small portion of his work. Nevertheless, Kriegleder notes that both *Reizenstein* and *Hartmann, eine Württembergische Kloster Geschichte* (1778) were reprinted and that *Barbara Pfisterin*, Seybold's novel about middle-class life, "made a sensation"<sup>8</sup> when it was published in 1782. Kriegleder observes that all of

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 80: "besuchte die theologischen Lehranstalten des Landes, doctorirte 1767 in der Physik, wurde 1770 außer-ordentlicher Professor der Philosophie in Jena, 1775 Rector des Gymnasiums in Speyer, 1779 (nicht 1775) in gleicher Eigenschaft in Grünstadt, 1779-1792 hessen-darmstädtischer Professor am Gymnasium zu Buchweiler im Elsaß. Nach vielen zur Schreckenszeit ausgestandenen Gefahren kehrte er 1795 nach Württemberg zurück, wurde 1796 Professor der classischen Litteratur an der Universität Tübingen. Als solche starb er am 19. Februar 1804."

<sup>8</sup> Kriegleder, 312: "Sensation [. . . ] machte"



Seybold's novels are vehicles for Enlightenment ideas.<sup>9</sup> In addition to his academic duties, Seybold was also the editor of two successive women's magazines between 1782 and 1788: *Magazin für Frauenzimmer* (1782-1786) and *Neues Magazin für Frauenzimmer* (1787-1788).<sup>10</sup>

Seybold was a prolific writer. A WorldCat on-line search provided twenty-two listings of works by Seybold in U.S. libraries.<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly more of his writings can be found in Germany, including his contributions to the women's magazines that he edited. Perhaps the largest number of Seybold's published works fall under the category of academic writings. Seybold, like many Germans of the eighteenth century, was a "great admirer" of the Greek author Lucian, who wrote during the age of Imperial Rome.<sup>12</sup> Seybold published three books about Lucian, including *Luciani Opuscula selecta* (1774), *Neue Gespräche im Reich der Todten. Nach Lucianischem Geschmack* (1780), and *Lucians neueste Reisen oder wahrhafte Geschichten* (1791). His other academic writings include *Super Odyssea homerica* (1769), *De eloquentia Homeri* (1771), *Schreiben über den Homer an die Freunde der griechischen Literatur* (1772), *Die Werke der philostrate* (1776), *Correctiones et supplementa Bibliothecae latinae Fabricio-Ernestianae* (1790), *Lusus ingenii [et] verborum* (1792), and *Virgils Aeneide in 12 Büchern aufs neue übersetzt nebst den nöthigsten erläuternden anmerkungen* (1793). In addition to these

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: "Jedenfalls sind die Romane nach dem Verständnis Seybolds Zweckschriften zum Transport aufklärerischer Ideen und Vorstellungen."

<sup>10</sup> "Sammlung Deutscher Drucke 1701-1800 Neuerwerbungsliste 4. Quartal" at [www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/archiv/nel/neu\\_115/a.pdf](http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/archiv/nel/neu_115/a.pdf) (Accessed on 7/24/2004).

<sup>11</sup> WorldCat query on David Christoph Seybold on 7/29/2004.

<sup>12</sup> Heinz-Guenther Nesselrath, Review of *Lukian in Deutschland. Eine forschungs- und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Analyse vom Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart*, by Manuel Baumbach, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (January 24, 2003) at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2003/2003-01-24.html> (Accessed on 7/24/2004).

academic works on classical writers, Seybold published the following works, which would fall under Kriegleder's classification of school and pedagogical folk writings: *Predigten des Herrn Sebaldus Nothanker* (1774), *Neues Wörterbuch auf eine andere Manier von dem Nothankerischen Schulmeister* (1776), *Die Hirten der Alpen. Ein Nachspiel: Nach der Erzählung des Herrn von Marmontel* (1777), *David Christoph Seybolds Professor und Rektor des Gymnasium zu Grünstadt Einleitung in die Griechische und Römische Mythologie der alten Schriftsteller für Jünglinge: mit antiken Kupfern* (1779), *Joseph der Zweite, eine Skizze* (1786), *Kleinere Schriften vermischten Inhalts* (1792), *Selbstbiographien berühmter Männer* (1796), *Glimpf- und Schimpfreden des Momus* (1797), and *Selbstbiographie Johann Valentin Andreäs aus dem Manuscripte übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen und Beilagen begleitet von Professor Seybold* (1799). The only novels by Seybold listed on WorldCat are *Reizenstein* and *Hartmann, eine Württembergische Kloster Geschichte. Barbara Pfisterin*, mentioned by Kriegleder in *Monatshefte*, is not listed, perhaps because there are no copies available in U.S. libraries.

In the biographical information he provides in *Kleinere Schriften*, Seybold indicates that he may have published a number of works anonymously. Seybold writes: "Because it is just so strange, but a true fact, that my writings, before which my name stands, have never received much praise in these journals, which perhaps comes from my former connection with Klotz, however the anonymous [writings] have been for the most part praised."<sup>13</sup> Seybold does not mention *Reizenstein* or any of his other anonymous writings in this biographical sketch, but he does describe his early professional

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<sup>13</sup>Seybold, *Kleinere Schriften*, 32: "Denn es ist doch eben so sonderbar, als ein wahres Faktum, daß meine Schriften, vor denen mein Name steht, in diesem Journale nie sehr gepriesen, welches vielleicht zum Theil von meiner ehemaligen Verbindung mit Klotz herkommen mag, die anonymen hingegen, größtentheils gelobt worden."

association with Christian Adolf Klotz, a classical scholar affiliated with the University of Halle whom Seybold admired and who wrote Seybold a letter praising his thesis at Tübingen.<sup>14</sup> According to Seybold, his thesis argued that “what does not redound to the honor of God is to be rejected; but is not a disputation about the heroic Homer to the honor of God also.”<sup>15</sup> Seybold states that he “was until 1769 a disciple of Klotz”<sup>16</sup> and writes about how excited he was to correspond with Klotz “who at that time had still not been belittled by Lessing and [Friedrich] Nicolai.”<sup>17</sup> In *Kleinere Schriften*, Seybold nevertheless seeks to distance himself from Klotz, whom he describes as “not so thoroughly grounded in the old literature as it seemed, and not industrious enough to become grounded.”<sup>18</sup>

Frenzel, in his history of German literature, makes brief mention of Lessing’s “feud with Professor Christian Adolf Klotz”<sup>19</sup> but does not provide any details. Frenzel also notes Lessing’s feuds with the “Horazübersetzer” (Horace translator) Samuel Gotthold Lange and the “Hauptpastor” (high priest) Goeze. Interestingly, in *Reizenstein* Seybold makes only two brief references to Lessing, the lion of Germany’s literary Enlightenment, and both references are in relation to his feuds. In a letter to Müller, Reizenstein imagines a conversation between Gottsched and Klotz, modeled after

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.: “was nicht zur Ehre Gottes gereicht, ist zu verwerfen; nun aber gereicht eine Disp. [Disputation] über den heldnischen Dichter Homer nicht zur Ehre Gottes—also—“

<sup>16</sup>Seybold, *Kleinere Schriften*, 16: “Ich war also bis ins Jahr 1769 ein Klotzianer”

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 21: “der damals durch Lessing und Nicolai noch nicht herabgesetzt war”

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 14: “Klotz war nicht so gründlich in der alten Literatur, als er schien, und hatte nicht Fleiß genug, um es zu werden.”

<sup>19</sup>Frenzel, 107: “Fehde mit dem Professor Christian Adolf Klotz”

Lucian's *Speeches in the Kingdom of the Dead*. In a dialogue with Gottsched, Klotz states: "Unfortunate one! the arriving writers call out, my name is hardly still known. Let me see Lessing! let me see Herder, and you especially Nikolai! come down only once. I will belt you."<sup>20</sup> The anger Seybold conveys in this remark contrasts with the neutral, almost sympathetic tone he assumes in his second reference to Lessing, which occurs towards the end of the second volume of *Reizenstein*. In a letter from Erlangen, the tutor Janson writes to Reizenstein in America: "Lessing has published from the Wolfenbüttel library fragments of an anonymous work, which contains a sharp attack on religion. The actual book, which is entitled: On the Purposes of Jesus' Teaching . . . has been confiscated. . . . Semler and Goeze . . . write against it; Lessing appears to be quiet about the quarrel, and works in the meantime on his Nathan, a drama that he would give out on subscription."<sup>21</sup> Charles Eliot explains that the fragments Lessing published were from a work on natural religion by the German deist, Reimarus, and that the work "incited the wrath of orthodox German Protestants led by J. M. Goeze."<sup>22</sup> Perhaps Seybold included this reference to Lessing because he approved of Lessing's efforts to liberalize religious thought, or it may indicate Seybold's *Schadenfreude* that Klotz's attacker was himself being attacked.

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<sup>20</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), 301: "Leider! die nen ankommenden Schriftsteller sagen aus, mein Name werde kaum noch genennet. Wart', Lessing! und wart', Herder, und du vollends, Nikolai! kommt nur einmal herab. Ich will euch versohlen."

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., vol. 2 (1779), 342: "Lessing hat aus der Wolfenbüttelschen Bibliothek Fragmente eines Ungenannten herausgegeben, die einen scharfen Angriff auf die Religion enthalten. Das eigentliche Buch, das zum Titel hat: Von dem Zwecke der Lehre Jesu . . . konfisziert ist. . . . Semler und Götze . . . schreiben dagegen; Lessing aber scheint ruhig bey dem Streite zu seyn, und arbeitet indessen an seinem Nathan, einem Drama, das er auf Subskription heraus giebt."

<sup>22</sup>Charles W. Eliot, ed., introduction to "The Education of the Human Race," by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in *The Harvard Classics*, vol. 32, *Literary and Philosophical Essays: French, German and Italian* (New York: P. F. Collier, 1910), 184.

Seybold definitely seems to have believed that his former association with Klotz was the reason his professional writings received such a cool reception, as he noted when addressing the subject of his anonymous writings in *Kleinere Schriften*. Giving credence to Seybold's view, Kriegleder points out that the first volume of *Reizenstein* was praised for its mood and sensitivity in a review in the *Allgemeinen deutschen Bibliothek*, but the second volume was panned in a later review in the same periodical. Kriegleder speculates that Seybold's authorship may have become known and that the negative judgment was related to Seybold's affiliation with Klotz.<sup>23</sup>

Although Seybold may have published *Reizenstein* anonymously because of his former association with Klotz, Pamela Selwyn, in her monograph on the German book trade, explains that authors chose to remain anonymous for many different reasons. While some feared repercussions if their names were associated with works that were politically or theologically sensitive, others felt their work would be judged on its own merit if readers did not know who they were. Selwyn cites one writer, Knigge, who believed "once the public knew the author of a novel, they attributed to him evil motives and began searching among his acquaintances for the characters' real-life models."<sup>24</sup> Seybold addresses this issue in the preface to the first volume of *Reizenstein* when he informs his readers that he has borrowed the names of certain persons or families but that people seeking the real Reizenstein, Schröder, and Müller will be confused because he did not have real people in mind.<sup>25</sup> Since *Reizenstein* is so critical of government and

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<sup>23</sup> Kriegleder, 311.

<sup>24</sup> Selwyn, 335.

<sup>25</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), i: "entlehnt er Namen von gewissen Personen oder Familien . . . niemand die Mühe giebt, in jenen Gegenden, in welcher die Personen dieser Geschichte auftreten, die

church practices in Franconia, particularly the actions of the Margrave of Ansbach and Bayreuth, Seybold may have published it anonymously to avoid punishment or professional complications.

It is not clear how widely the novel was circulated, how many copies were published, who read it, how it avoided the censors, and when Seybold's authorship was acknowledged. Given its numerous plot twists, sentimental tone, and didactic undercurrents, it may have been intended primarily for a female audience. Since Seybold was the editor of two women's magazines between 1782 and 1786, he obviously had an interest in writing for women. The illustration by Daniel Chodowiecki following the title page of the 1778 edition of the first volume of *Reizenstein* provides another indicator that the novel was written for women. A woman in her nightgown and cap, who has been asleep or resting, excitedly pushes back the covers of a generously stuffed, canopied bed. Her husband sits sprawled in a straight-backed chair next to the bed with an unfolded sheet of paper, presumably a letter, in his hand. The jacket of his soldier's uniform is unbuttoned, as if he has just come home and, in his haste to read the letter to his wife, has not taken the time to remove his jacket. The setting is cozily domestic and comfortably middle class, as the husband reads his wife news from friends or family. While the hero of *Reizenstein* is male, women also figure prominently in the novel, although always in relation to their fathers, brothers, husbands, or sweethearts.<sup>26</sup>

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Originale leibhaftig zu suchen, noch durch die Namen Reizenstein, Schröder, Müller 2c. sich irre machen läßt, als ob man wirkliche Personen in den Gedanken gehabt hätte."

<sup>26</sup>In 1783 Sophie La Roche contrasted her women's magazine, *Pomona. Für Teutschlands Töchter* with Seybold's publication: "The *Magazine for Women* [editor was the grammar school teacher D.C. Seybold] shows my readers what German men respect about us as useful and pleasing. *Pomona* will tell them what I think of that." ("Das Magazin für Frauenzimmer [Herausgeber war der Gynmasiallehrer David Christoph Seybold] . . . zeigt meinen Leserinnen, was deutsche Männer uns nützlich und gefällig achten. *Pomona* wird ihnen sagen, was ich als Frau dafür halte.") From Gisela Brinker-Gabler, "Deutsche

*Reizenstein* is a sprawling, sentimental novel that intertwines multiple love stories with tragedy and adventure and uses the Margrave's decision to sell troops to the British to focus on the tyranny of the princes and the unforeseen opportunities available in America. Seybold extols middle-class values, trumpets the idea that people should live for themselves and not for their princes, and promotes the creation of a German national identity to combat the domination of French culture and language. The time frame for the two-volume novel is from July 12, 1775, when the first letter is written, to April 26, 1780, when the last is sent. Since the prologue to the second volume was written on March 24, 1779, Seybold's novel does not completely coincide with historical events, although he does refer to historical characters and some historical events. As Seybold states, "it [the novel] interweaves real history with much fantasy [and] even takes a powerful step forward, and tells what should, could, and one would like to happen in future years or centuries."<sup>27</sup>

The first volume takes place in "Franken," or Franconia, the area in present-day northwest Bavaria, where Reizenstein and his friends form a tight-knit community that keeps in touch through letters. Although the American war is in the background, the first volume centers on problems in Franconia that are pressing in on the characters and interfering with their plans for happiness. Much of the action in the second volume takes place in America, where Reizenstein fights for the Americans and his friend, Müller, is the field doctor for the Ansbach troops fighting under the British. In the second volume,

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Dichterinnen vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart," Sophie: Literature. A Digital Library of early German Women's Writing. <http://sophie.byu.edu/literature/brinker/dichterinnen/brinker2.htm> (Accessed 7/24/2004)

<sup>27</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), ii: "er durchwebt sonsten das wirklich Historische mit vielen Erdichtungen; ja er thut sogar einen mächtigen Schritt vorwärts, und erzählt, was im künftigen Jahre oder Jahrhunderte geschehen sollte, könnte und möchte."

Seybold projects his hopes and fantasies for Germany onto what he perceives to be the blank slate of America. In the prologue to the second volume, Seybold writes: “If the man, the youth puts this book down with the wish: ‘In the country with this form of government, I want to live’—and the maiden says: ‘Here shall my beloved build a house for us’ and a small sigh accompanies this wish: so I am marvelously rewarded for my trouble. Still more! if in several centuries the scales fall from the eyes of our politicians—if—<sup>28</sup> In this statement, Seybold indicates his hope that his novel will help fuel the desire among his German readers for a better form of government and way of life in Germany. While Seybold’s stated goal in the first volume of this novel is “to either give pleasure to his reader or to better him, or rather to do both at the same time,”<sup>29</sup> his ultimate goal is to promote the creation of a society in Germany in which individual merit is rewarded and people have the freedom to live their lives for themselves free from the arbitrary rule of princes. Nevertheless, he offers America as an alternative fatherland for Germans suffering under the rule of autocratic princes.

Reizenstein is in his early twenties and an ensign in the Ansbach army when the novel begins. He writes his friend, Schröder, a captain in the army, about his new quarters in Erlangen and confesses that after completing his University training, “I was too honorable to apply for an office for which I did not feel ready, so I became a

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., *iii-iv*: “Wenn übrigens der Mann, der Jüngling dieß Buch mit dem Wunsche aus der Hand legt: “In dem Lande, bey dieser Verfassung möchte ich wohnen”—das Mädchen: “Hier soll mein Geliebter eine Hütte für uns bauen” und ein kleiner Seufzer diesen Wunsch begleitet: so bin ich herrlich für meine Mühe belohnt. Noch mehr! Wenn es in einigen Jahrhunderten von den Augen unserer Politiker fällt, wie Schuppen—wenn—“

<sup>29</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), *i*: “seine Leser entweder zu vergnügen, oder zu bessern, oder vielmehr um beydes zugleich zu thun”



soldier.”<sup>30</sup> Reizenstein enjoys the “merry brotherhood” in the army and the “good Mädchen” in Erlangen,<sup>31</sup> and Schröder tells him, “you seem born for adventure.”<sup>32</sup> A man of action, Reizenstein also has an intellectual side, which he reveals in his second letter to Schröder. Reizenstein relates a recent discussion among the officers regarding whether democracy, aristocracy, or monarchy is the best form of government. He writes that “the prize was awarded to monarchy,”<sup>33</sup> and he cites the best example of monarchy as that described in the sixth book of Polybius,<sup>34</sup> in which “the Konsul . . . had the power and appearance of a king, who had to be accountable to the people.”<sup>35</sup> Reizenstein studies Greek. He asks Müller to send him Mauvillon’s translation of Abbe Raynal’s *Histoire philosophique et politique* and discusses with him Gellert’s fables, Kleist’s “thoughts on morality,” and Mauvillon’s “free and bright thinking.”<sup>36</sup> Seybold presents Reizenstein as an intellectually curious young man who is aware of the latest currents in Enlightenment thought and is concerned about Germany’s future.

Seybold’s point of view, which he expresses through Reizenstein, is essentially an optimistic one. In a letter Reizenstein writes to Müller in January 1776, he looks back on

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 2: “Weil ich zu ehrlich war, mich um Aemter zu bewerben, denen ich mich nicht gewachsen fühlte, so wurde ich Soldat.”

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.: “eine fidele Brüderschaft” and “artige Mädchen”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 73: “Daß du zu Ebentheuren gebohren zu seyn scheinst.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 5: “der Preis der Monarchie zuerkannt wurde”

<sup>34</sup> Polybius was a Greek historian best known for his *Histories*, which concern the growth of the Roman Republic from 266 to 146 B.C.

<sup>35</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), 6: “Der Konsul . . . hatte die Macht und das Ansehen eines Königs, der—vor dem Volke Rechenschaft ablegen mußte!”

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 66: “Wollen Sie mir igt des Abbe Raynals *Histoire philos. et politique* schicken? Aber die deutsche Uebersetzung Mauvillons.”; p. 65: “Kleists moralischen Gedanken”; p. 66: “ist Mauvillon ein Mann . . . frey und hell denkend”

their New Year's Eve conversation and their shared belief that "in several centuries people . . . completely and in all countries [will have] a better posterity."<sup>37</sup> Reizenstein and Müller share the Enlightenment belief in the progress of civilization. They believe that when rational thought replaces superstition and when government institutions founded on rational Enlightenment principles replace hereditary privilege and corruption, human society will be permanently improved. Reizenstein discusses with Müller the better future he foresees in which there is a new emphasis on individual happiness and a return to simple Christian principles. Reizenstein writes Müller: "Philosophy, which would begin to worry about the happiness of people after it has rooted around long enough in the infertile drifting sand of metaphysical hypothesis; a better theology, in which one clears away the collected debris, in order to implement an orderly, old Christian structure, a brighter knowledge and fruitful application of history, etc. they will still play their game and little by little enlighten humanity."<sup>38</sup> Behind the fog of the present age, Reizenstein writes Müller that he sees a bright future. Seybold, through Reizenstein, foresees a future in which the common man is not just a pawn for his prince, his subservience to church and state maintained by government force as well as religious fear and superstition. Seybold foresees a future in which the self-educated man of virtue guides church and state instead of a corrupt elite at the head of church and state guiding and misleading the common man.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 65: "So denke ich mir die Menschheit in einigen Jahrhunderten! Ganz und in allen Ländern kann doch der Glaube an eine bessere Nachwelt nicht eine Chimäre seyn."

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: "Die Philosophie, die anfängt, sich um die Glückseligkeit der Menschen zu bekümmern, nachdem sie lange genug im unfruchtbarem Flugsande metaphysischer Hypothesen gewühlt hat; eine bessere Theologie, in der man nun den Kompendenschutt wegräumt, um ein ordentliches, altchristliches Gebäude aufzuführen, eine hellere Kenntniß und fruchtbare Anwendung der Geschichte 2c. die werden doch ihr Spiel spielen, und nach und nach die Menschheit aufklären."

Seybold recognizes that, in order for the common man to shake off centuries of government oppression and misguided theology, he must be educated. The books that Reizenstein and Müller discuss are one path to self-education. Another important path is newspapers. Frenzel, in his history of German literature, notes how “important the numerous, moral weekly writings were for the spread of the Enlightenment.”<sup>39</sup> According to Frenzel, these writings worked in advance of general educational reforms, advocated the education and recognition of women, and stimulated an interest in art and poetry to the further circle of the *Bürgertum*, again establishing a connection between literature and life.<sup>40</sup> These weekly writings, modeled on the English newspapers, *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*, included brief stories and moral portrayals dealing with daily spiritual and practical life.<sup>41</sup>

Seybold describes these German instruments of the Enlightenment through his main character, Reizenstein, who writes Louise and Schröder that he believes “the weekly journals have always been the path through which all good minds in England and Germany seek to shed light upon their nation.”<sup>42</sup> Observing how important newspapers are in disseminating information to a wide audience, Reizenstein writes the Schröders:

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<sup>39</sup>Frenzel, 105: “Wichtig für die Verbreitung der Aufklärung waren die zahlreichen moralischen Wochenschriften.”

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.: “Sie arbeiteten der Reform des allgemeinen Erziehungswesens vor, traten für Bildung und Anerkennung des weiblichen Geschlechtes ein. Sie regten das Interesse weiter Kreise des Bürgertums für Kunst und Dichtung wieder an und stellten wieder eine Verbindung zwischen Literatur und Leben.”

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), 104: “Man bemerkt doch, daß Wochenschriften immer der Weg waren, durch den alle gute Köpfe in England und Deutschland . . . ihre Nation aufzuhellen suchten.”

Many a person reads such a flying broadside, who does not read an alphabet. A broadside circulates rather farther around an area, and goes easier from hand to hand than a book, which is why it is also more hard working. The book that lies on the table, many leave lying. But to so much [work] an individual sheet of paper, which here on a toilet, there on a desk lays, takes hold of the sweet gentleman and the businessman, who keep it initially, the one perhaps for a French epigram or light comedy, the other for *das Erlanger Blättchen* or *die deutsche Chronik*, read a little, it pleases them some, they read it completely, let the other issues come also, tell their colleagues about it—and so such a paper receives what it wishes—readers.<sup>43</sup>

Instead of relying on government advisers and church officials for information, the common person can get information and a different point of view from the newspapers. Given Seybold's point of view in *Reizenstein*, it is significant that he mentions Schubart's liberal, pro-American *Deutsche Chronik* in this passage.

In tune with Enlightenment intellectual currents, well read, and well informed, Reizenstein is concerned about Germany's future, but he is equally concerned about his own. Although Reizenstein has been happy in the army, when he hears from Schröder that he has married Louise, Reizenstein's thoughts turn to settling down, and he contrives to meet the pretty girl he has seen in the window of her father's apothecary shop in Neustadt. Sophia Wolff, or Fikchen, is a shy and studious young woman whom Reizenstein woos by discussing literature and sending her copies of Wieland's writings. Reizenstein brags to Schröder that Fikchen is so well read she could converse with six professors from the university at Erlangen.<sup>44</sup> Under the influence of Fikchen, Schröder,

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 105: "Mancher liest so ein fliegendes Blättchen, der ein Alphabet nicht liest. Ein Blättchen verbreitet sich eher weit herum in einer Gegend, und geht leichter von Hand in Hand, als ein Buch, daher auch fleissiger. Das Buch, das auf dem Tische liegt, lassen viele liegen. Aber nach so einem einzelnen Bogen, der hier auf einer Toilette, dort auf einem Schreibtische liegt, greift der süsse Herr und der geschäftsvolle Mann, haltens anfangs der eine vielleicht für ein französisches Epigramm oder Vaudeville, der andere für das Erlanger Blättchen, oder die deutsche Chronik, lesen ein wenig, es gefällt ihnen einiges, sie lesen es ganz, lassen sich auch die andern Stücke kommen, sagen ihren Kollegen davon—und so erhält ein solches Blatt das, was es sich wünscht—Leser."

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 15-16: "wenn sechs Professoren von Erlangen kämen, sie könnte sich mit ihnen unterhalten"

and Louise, Reizenstein loses his interest in the army and decides he is ready to earn his “Magister,” or Master of Arts degree, at the University of Erlangen. When he gets out of the army, he plans to study “land economy, history, languages, particularly the ancient ones, geography, and human philosophy,”<sup>45</sup> marry Fikchen, and buy a small property near the Schröders in Mainbernheim where he will garden in the summer and study and write in the winter. When Louise teases Reizenstein about Fikchen’s father, whose position on the social scale seems to be lower than theirs, Reizenstein defends Fikchen, writing, “I have often observed that the best children come from such homes where one sought them the least, where Father and Mother Dumbhead were stubborn, morose people; that is, these are the ones who have educated themselves, and that is why my Fikchen is worth so much to me.”<sup>46</sup> Reizenstein values Fikchen for her sweetness, intelligence, and goodness of heart, not her position in the social hierarchy. This idea of intrinsic worth that supersedes social standing and the circumstances of one’s birth is extremely important to Seybold, and a theme that he returns to repeatedly in his novel.

Although Louise and Karl Schröder have encouraged Reizenstein to meet Baron Roth, a member of the nobility whose friendship has been valuable to them, Reizenstein has been hesitant to meet him. Eventually, he has a change in heart and writes Schröder: “In the meantime, if the nobleman earns it, when I want to come to you again I will make his acquaintance. Consider it pride or not, I don’t throw myself away, and if the Premier-minister would be a fox hunter, a mere harbor hero, a nobleman of vulgar rye and corn, I

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 51: “Landökonomie, Geschichte, Sprachen, besonders die alten, Geographie, Menschenphilosophie”

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 22-23: “Ich habe überhaupt bemerkt, daß die besten Kinder aus solchen Häusern kommen, wo man sie am wenigsten suchte, wo Vater und Mutter Dummköpfe, störrische, murrische Leute waren, d.i. daß diejenigen es sind, die sich selbst gebildet haben, und daher ist mir mein Fikchen wirklich sehr werth.”

do not want to get to know him, even if he wanted to honor me with his friendship.”<sup>47</sup>

Reizenstein is not impressed by titles and social position, and his statement indicates he has met too many people of noble birth who are not well informed or interested in issues affecting Germany but who spend their days hunting, drinking, or resting on their laurels. Reizenstein’s reservations regarding the Baron are unfounded, and Baron Roth proves himself to be a worthy friend and patron who shares Reizenstein’s concern for the future of Germany. Seybold gives a modern twist to the feudal need for a wealthy patron by making Baron Roth an Enlightenment sympathizer.

Baron Roth, who lives on his estate in Speckfeld with his twenty-year-old daughter, Wilhelmine, and younger children, Amalia and Fritz, assumes the role of patriarch not only for his own children but also for his *Hofmeister*, Ferdinand Müller, as well as the Schröders, Reizenstein, and Fikchen. After Müller’s father, a minister in Würzburg dies, the Baron also takes in Müller’s mother and sister, Charlotte. In addition to providing this close-knit circle of friends with guidance and support, the Baron is an enlightened ruler who is concerned about the welfare of his servants. He writes his brother, Baron Kaltenthal: “I see leaders who distance themselves from their servants and see everyone, from Hofmeister to dog trainer as creations who are made from different glue. I think the Hausherr should be the father of his staff . . . he should promote their physical and moral happiness, now and then enlighten their understanding,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 25-26: “Indessen wenn der Edelmann es verdient, so will ich, komme ich wieder zu Euch, Bekanntschaft mit ihm machen. Haltets für Stolz oder nicht, ich werfe mich nicht weg, und wenn der Premierminister ein Fuchsjäger, ein blosser Hafenheld, ein Edelmann von gemeinem Schrot und Korne wäre, ich verlange nicht ihn kennen zu lernen, wenn er mich gleich mit seiner Freundschaft beehren wollte.”

and seek to better their hearts.”<sup>48</sup> Seybold’s Baron Roth is the quintessential enlightened patriarch. He is a benevolent leader who keeps the best interests of his subjects at heart and, as much as possible, protects them from harm.

Although a member of the nobility, Baron Roth has reared his children with middle-class values, much as the von Sternheims reared Sophie in La Roche’s popular novel. When Wilhelmine attends the baptism of the Schröder’s baby, she is outraged by the behavior of Herrn von Rosentritt, a neighboring nobleman who was as “thoughtless and inattentive as possible” and whose “half smile seemed almost to mock the ceremony.”<sup>49</sup> When Wilhelmine confesses to her father “my amazement at this thoughtless performance,”<sup>50</sup> the Baron tells her: “We have little contact with others of nobility, otherwise this would not have been so strange. . . . To pray, to thank the creator for receiving favor, to call on him for new needs, one leaves to the Bürger and farmer, and it almost seems, our good God must treasure as an honor, if a nobleman still bends a knee for him. I . . . see no difference between the praying king and the praying beggar, except the former has to apologize to God more.”<sup>51</sup> In this statement, the Baron portrays himself as having more in common with the common man and farmer than with fellow

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 145: “so entfernen sich andere zu weit von ihren Hausgenossen, und sehen alle, vom Hofmeister an bis zum Hundsführer, als Geschöpfe an, die von anderm Leimen gemacht sind. Ich denke, der Hausherr soll der Vater seines Gesindes seyn . . . er soll ihre physische und möralische Glückseligkeit befördern, ihren Verstand bey Gelegenheit aufheitern, und ihr Herz zu bessern suchen.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 1779, 117: “so leichtsinnig und unachtsam, als möglich”; “Sein halbes Lächeln schien der Ceremonie fast zu spotten”

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 118: “meine Verwunderung über diese leichtsinnige Aufführung”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 118-19: “wir haben freylich wenig Umgang mit andern von Adel, sonst würde dir dieses nicht so fremde gewesen seyn . . . . Beten, d.i. dem Schöpfer für erhaltene Wohlthaten danken, und ihn um neue anrufen, überläßt man dem Bürger und Bauer, und es scheint fast, unser guter Gott müsse sichs zur Ehre schätzen, wenn ein Adelicher noch ein Knie vor ihm beugt. Ich . . . sehe keinen Unterschied zwischen dem betenden König und dem betenden Bettler, als etwa den, daß jener Gott mehr abzubitten hat.”

members of the nobility. Far from upholding the superiority of the nobility, the Baron criticizes the behavior of its members and the existing social order when he states a king needs more of God's forgiveness than a beggar does.

This contrast between the lax morals of the nobility and the Baron's recognition of middle-class, German virtues is made even more apparent when Baron von Breithenthal and the Baronessin Bologneser visit the Roths. Charlotte writes her brother in America: "[The Baron von Breithenthal] still cannot forgive you, that you so often answered in German to his French questions, reminded him that he was not in France, and asked him whether one conversed in German in Paris society?"<sup>52</sup> Thus, Müller is like Lessing's heroine, Minna von Barnhelm, who refuses to speak French in Germany.<sup>53</sup> Charlotte writes her brother that Baron von Breithenthal regards him as "a respectable person," but a "German Michel [who lived] as the old German Schildbürger, and knew nothing of French *Airs* and *Manieres* [but was] fundamentally honest, sincere, open-hearted," qualities that were no longer "*la mode*."<sup>54</sup> Baron von Breithenthal, like many members of the German nobility, speaks French, embraces French culture and manners, and looks down on German customs. When the conversation turns to French and German writers, Charlotte writes that Baron von Breithenthal, the "German Frenchman," knows nothing about the German writers Gesner, Gerstenberg, and Wieland and "had still dared to speak

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 61: "Noch kann er dirs nicht verzeihen, daß Du ihm so oft auf seine Französische Fragen Deutsch antwortest, ihn daran erinnerst, daß er nicht in Frankreich sey, und ihn fragtest: ob man denn in den Pariser Gesellschaften Deutsch rede?"

<sup>53</sup> Schlipphacke, 32.

<sup>54</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 61: "ein ordentlicher Mensch"; p. 62: "Ein Deutscher Michel . . . lebt, wie die alten Deutschen Schildbürger, und nichts von den Französischen *Airs* und *Manieres* weiß—' Der also im Grunde ehrlich, aufrichtig, offenherzig—'O nur zu sehr, plus qu'il est la mode."



of his fellow countrymen with scorn.”<sup>55</sup> Unlike Baron Roth, von Breithenthal definitely believes nobles are “made from different glue.”<sup>56</sup> Charlotte writes her brother about overhearing von Breithenthal confess to Baron Roth his shame at having almost eaten with loud commoners in the Baron’s home.<sup>57</sup> Charlotte takes great pleasure in telling her brother how Baron Roth responded to von Breithenthal’s elitism, even if his words had no effect. Charlotte writes: “Alone all the beautiful principles of human equality, of the true human nobility of the heart, of the false sparkle of inherited title, of the pride of beggars at the service of their ancestors slipped off Herrn von Breithenthal, like water off the rock wall.”<sup>58</sup> Unlike Baron von Breithenthal, Baron Roth recognizes the goodness and “true human nobility” in Müller, Charlotte, the Schröders, Reizenstein, and Fikchen. Thus, Seybold, like Lessing, Gellert, La Roche, and other German writers of the *Spätaufklärung* and *Empfindsamkeit*, believes the German nobility’s obsession with French values and luxury is ruining Germany.

Baron Roth and Reizenstein are concerned that the extravagance of Germany’s many princes is driving their territories into the ground. Baron Roth writes his brother, Baron Kaltenthal: “Extravagance more and more undermines the bliss of the people. It is profitable for the princes [because it] brings money from the pockets of the subjects into the purses of the princes . . . [but] it kills domestic prosperity, health and every

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 63: “Deutschfranzosen”; “hatte doch gewagt, seine Landsleuten Hohn zu sprechen”

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 145: “von anderm Leimen gemacht sind”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 64: “Er habe sich wirklich heute ein wenig geschämt, fast mit lauter Bürgerlichen zu speisen.”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 65: “Allein alle die schönen Grundsätze von Menschengleichheit, von dem wahren Menschenadel durch das Herz, von dem falschen Glanze angeborner Würde, von dem Bettelstolze auf Verdienste der Voreltern 2c. glitschten an dem Herrn von Breithenthal ab, wie Wasser an der Felsenwand.”

virtue. Through it despotism grows stronger, which little by little robs from the noble and common classes the feeling of their own value and personal freedom.”<sup>59</sup> In order to finance the opulence of their courts, the princes extract more and more from their subjects in taxes, placing greater burdens on the common people while increasing their desire for material goods. In a letter to Müller, Reizenstein notes Germany’s weakness in comparison to other countries: “But poor Germany, that in comparison with the sea powers, has so little trade and gold, and still thinks, it must have everything that the French, English, Indians, and Chinese make.”<sup>60</sup> Reizenstein rhetorically asks, “Where is an only mediocresly wealthy man who would not have his silver spoon?”<sup>61</sup> To prove his point, Reizenstein tells Müller to “skim through our own weekly reports and intelligence papers” for listings of debtors to see “how little by little more and more families go to bottom.”<sup>62</sup> The princes can finance their lavish lifestyles, but the common man who imitates the princes must go into debt to maintain appearances in a materialistic culture.

Reizenstein concludes his letter to Müller with a pessimistic view of Germany’s future: “If I think about it and glance in the future, I would have a great desire to expatriate in order not to be able to see the misery, which in a short or long time will raise its head upwards in our fatherlands. Because we will want to continue our luxury, we

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 1778, 234-35: “Der Luxus untergräbt immer mehr die Glückseligkeit der Menschen. Er ist dem Fürsten einträglich, d.i. er bringt das Geld aus der Tasche der Unterthanen in den Beutel des Fürsten . . . er den häuslichen Wohlstand, die Gesundheit und jede Tugend tötet. Durch ihn wachsen dem Despotismus, der dem Adel- und Bürgerstand das Gefühl von eigenem Werthe und die persönliche Freyheit nach und nach raubt, immer neue Kräfte.”

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 155: “Aber das arme Deutschland, das, in Vergleichung mit den Seemächten, so wenig Handel und Gold hat, und doch meynt, es müsse alles haben, was der Franzose, Engländer, Indier und Chineser machen”

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 156: “Wo ist ein nur mittelmäßig begüterter Mann, der nicht seine silberne Löffel hätte?”

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 160: “Lesen Sie nur ganz flüchtig unsere izigen wöchentlichen Anzeigen oder Intelligenzblätter durch”; “wie nach und nach immer mehrere Familien zu Grunde gehen”

will not be able to, and then brother will arm himself against brother in secret cabals or obvious attacks.”<sup>63</sup> Reizenstein worries that, in a weak country with a large population experiencing severe economic pressures, people will conspire against one another to get ahead and maintain a lifestyle of luxury. As the novel unfolds, his predictions prove to be true when Lieutenant Jahn and his brother, a minister, conspire to ruin the reputations of Reizenstein and the Schröders in order to obtain Reizenstein’s position in the army and the Schröder’s small property in Mainbernheim.

Ironically, Seybold’s critique of luxury was also common in America beginning in the 1770s. Kriegleder states Seybold uses the key word “Luxus” to symbolize the sickness of the old continent,<sup>64</sup> but T. H. Breen, in his 2004 monograph *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*, shows how a culture of materialism evolved in the American colonies beginning in the mid-eighteenth century as imported articles “flooded into the homes of yeomen and gentry alike.”<sup>65</sup> Breen describes how American colonists adopted the republican virtues of “frugality, industry, and simplicity of manners” as an antidote to British-inspired materialism and in response to British taxes on consumer items.<sup>66</sup> Even after the American Revolution, republican virtues were contrasted with a love of luxury, as evidenced by Royall Tyler’s 1787 play, *The Contrast*, which Jeffrey Richards calls “the most important play by an

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 162: “wenn ichs überlege, und in die Zukunft blicke, ich hätte grosse Lust zu expatriiren, um den Jammer nicht ansehen zu müssen, der über kurz oder lang in unserm Vaterlande sein Haupt empor heben wird. Denn wir werden unsern Luxus fortsetzen wollen, wir werdens nicht können und dann wird Bruder gegen Bruder zu heimlichen Ränken oder offenbaren Angriffen sich waffnen.”

<sup>64</sup> Kriegleder, 316.

<sup>65</sup> T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 329.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 330.

American in the eighteenth century.”<sup>67</sup> Set in contemporary New York, Tyler contrasts the pleasure-seeking of “wealthy, young, fashion-conscious New Yorkers”<sup>68</sup> with the commitment of a former officer in Washington’s army to the republican cause. A speech by Colonel Manly echoes to a remarkable degree the critique of luxury in *Reizenstein*. Referring to the history of ancient Greece, which he views as a cautionary tale for the young American nation, Manly states that “when foreign gold, and still more pernicious foreign luxury, had crept among them, they sapped the vitals of their virtue. . . . The common good was lost in the pursuit of private interest.”<sup>69</sup> Like Baron Roth and Reizenstein, Colonel Manly is worried that a love of luxury will destroy his country. There is no indication in *Reizenstein* that Seybold was aware of America’s pre-Revolutionary consumer culture or the adoption of republican virtues as a remedy for materialism.

Although the characters in Seybold’s novel do not discuss republican virtues per se, they fantasize about becoming shepherds in a rural or Arcadian paradise that is diametrically opposed to the culture of materialism and greed dominating contemporary Germany. Reizenstein writes Müller: “The shepherd’s life exists mainly in innocence and purity of morals, in sincere goodwill toward all creatures and in loving help, which one shows to those who permit it. If we only endeavor to prove our heart pure and innocent, think of all creatures as warmly as ourselves, help the neighbor when we can;

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<sup>67</sup>Jeffrey H. Richards, introduction to “The Contrast,” in *Early American Drama* ed. Jeffrey H. Richards (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 4.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>69</sup>Royall Tyler, “The Contrast,” in *Early American Drama* ed. Jeffrey H. Richards (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 39.

are we not then true Arcadian shepherds?”<sup>70</sup> This idea of *Wohltätigkeit*, or charity towards others, in a rural paradise is a common element in sentimental fantasies from Sophie La Roche’s novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* to Klopstock’s poem *Zürchersee* (1771).

In Seybold’s novel, Reizenstein and the Schröders invite Baron Roth, Wilhelmine, Müller, and Fikchen to the Schröders home in Mainbernheim where they spend the day in the garden acting out their vision of an Arcadian paradise. Baron Roth writes his brother about the day and describes how each person had to tell a story about “beautiful and noble action from domestic or public life.”<sup>71</sup> The stories spark a discussion about middle-class virtues and values, and the Baron notes: “In our country we have only laws of punishment and no public encouragement to act honestly. . . . One places the slanderer in the stocks, but the man who speaks good of everyone, who excuses the small and great mistakes of his neighbor . . . is often regarded as weak. The woman who murders her child is led through the court, but the upright mother who raises a half-dozen brave children for the state, betters her standard of living, and overall runs a good economy, stays between her four walls entirely unknown.”<sup>72</sup> As Schröder comments, “the state little notices the quiet domestic or middle-class virtues, which make

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<sup>70</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), 197-98: “Das Schäferleben besteht hauptsächlich in Unschuld und Reinigkeit der Sitten, in herzlichem Wohlwollen gegen alle Geschöpfe und in liebevoller Hülfe, die man dem erzeigt, ders bedarf. Wenn wir nun uns bemühen, unser Herz rein und unschuldig zu bewahren, mit allen Geschöpfen so herzlich es meynen, wie mit uns selbst, dem Nächsten helfen, wo wir können; sind wir denn nicht wahre arkadische Schäfer?”

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 209: “schöne und edle Handlungen aus dem häuslichen oder öffentlichen Leben”

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 216: “daß wir in unsern Staaten nur Strafgesetze haben, und keine öffentliche Ermunterungen, rechtschaffen zu handeln . . . Den Pasquillanten stellt man an den Pranger, aber den Mann, der von jedermann Gutes spricht, die kleinen und grössern Fehler seines Nachbarn entschuldigt . . . den hält man oft wohl für schwach. Die Kindermörderin wird zur Gerichtsstätte geführt, die rechtschaffene Mutter aber, die dem Staate ein halbes Duzend braver Kinder erzieht, ihren Nahrungszustand verbessert, und überhaupt eine gute Wirthschaft führt, bleibt zwischen ihren vier Wänden ganz unbekannt.”

no screeching in the world.”<sup>73</sup> Seybold views these middle-class virtues as a solution to the problems besetting Germany. Baron Roth writes his brother that “those who sit at the rudder of the state have no time . . . to direct an eye to the moral state of the country”<sup>74</sup> and that “small private societies”<sup>75</sup> like the Arcadian gathering at Mainbernheim, must “introduce better morals and erect an institute for the perfection of humanity.”<sup>76</sup> Baron Roth laments that the latest style of bonnet and hairdo spread quickly, “but the spread of better thinking, brighter insights, useful institutions goes at a snail’s pace,”<sup>77</sup> and he blames “the church and government advisers”<sup>78</sup> for keeping the country in darkness. Seybold believes that members of the established church who strive for material wealth and political power while promoting narrow theological doctrines undermine Christian morals and virtues instead of supporting them. He also believes that government advisers are more concerned with increasing the material wealth of the princes than with instituting reforms in line with Enlightenment principles.

Seybold, like Lessing, Gellert, La Roche, and other German writers believes that the spread of middle-class values will solve Germany’s economic and social problems. In her monograph on the German book trade, Pamela Selwyn translates a letter written in

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 217: “daß der Staat die stillen häuslichen oder bürgerlichen Tugenden, die kein Gekreische in die Welt hinein machen, so wenig bemerkt?”

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 202: “Weil diejenigen, die an den Rudern des Staats sitzen . . . nicht Zeit haben, auf die moralische Verfassung des Landes ein Auge zu richten”

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 201: “in kleinen Privatgesellschaften”

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 202: “bessere Sitten einzuführen, und Institue zur Vervollkommung der Menschheit zu errichten”

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 202-3: “Aber die Verbreitung einer bessern Denkungsart, hellerer Einsichten, zweckmäßigerer Einrichtungen geht einen fast unbegreiflich langsamen Schneckengang.”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 203: “die Kirchen- und Konsistorialräthe”

1784 by the Prussian bookseller and publisher Friedrich Nicolai, in which he upholds the German *Bürgertum* as “the center and backbone of the state” and expresses his belief that “culture and enlightenment will soon spread from the middle class [mittlere Klasse] in to the lower classes [untern Klassen] of the people . . .and also in the higher ranks [höhere Stände].”<sup>79</sup> According to Selwyn, Nicolai believed the *Bürgertum* provided moral and cultural leadership and should be listened to by the princes, but he never “called for direct political participation by these middle classes.”<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately, without political power, the *Bürgertum* could advise the princes and provide role models for virtuous behavior, but there was no guarantee their voices would be heard or their behavior imitated.

Seybold never explicitly criticizes the absolutism of the German princes. Although he criticizes the princes who finance their lavish lifestyles by overtaxing their subjects, he never calls for implementing a rule of law to protect public interests, as Rousseau does in *A Discourse on Political Economy* (1755). Instead, Seybold seems to believe that leaders like Baron Roth, who are models of benevolent paternalism, will lead less enlightened rulers to embrace middle-class German values and treat their subjects more humanely. Rousseau, of course, argues against this view, pointing out that when rulers have all the power and authority, it is unrealistic to expect them to voluntarily put the interests of their subjects on a par with their own interests. To paraphrase Rousseau, while a father’s duties are dictated by natural feelings, a ruler does not have any natural interest in the happiness of his subjects and, in fact, may seek his

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<sup>79</sup> Selwyn, 5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

own happiness in their misery. Unlike Baron Roth, who is the patriarch of a small estate and knows all of his servants personally, the ruler of a large kingdom does not know or care about the majority of his subjects.<sup>81</sup>

Although Seybold advocates the recognition of middle-class values in Germany, his novel makes it clear that political and social conditions in Franconia preclude any immediate change, and shortly after the Arcadian gathering in Mainbernheim, the lives of the participants begin to unravel. Schröder is dismissed from the army by the Margrave of Ansbach-Bayreuth after a rival accuses him of not properly caring for his troops over the winter and being unprepared for spring exercises.<sup>82</sup> Unlike his rival, who has the Margrave's ear, Schröder is not able to defend himself against these false accusations.

When Reizenstein finds out that "General Faucit [*sic*],"<sup>83</sup> the British Commissioner who negotiated the subsidiary treaties with the German princes, is coming to Franconia, he worries about "being flung to America like the Hessians and Brunswickers."<sup>84</sup> In a May 1776 letter to Schröder, which is intercepted by the jealous and ambitious Lieutenant Jahn, Reizenstein complains bitterly about "what a good, willing-to-serve nation we are!"<sup>85</sup> Reizenstein writes:

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<sup>81</sup>Rosemary Agonito, *History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 115-20.

<sup>82</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 1 (1778), 272.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 275. Although Seybold refers to him as General Faucit[*sic*], Lowell (14) states that William Faucitt was a colonel.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*: "wie die Hessen und Braunschweiger, nach Amerika geschleudert werden"

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 276: "Was wir doch für eine gute, dienstwillige Nation sind!"



We send to America hands we need for agriculture in order to acquire for a powerful people [i.e., the British] what they could do without and still be happy. . . . For it is a given that we need the trade with America and the import of American products, and it would not be necessary to send wares to America via England and then receive them from America via the English, so why do we let the English have the profit. . . . England uses the money it gets from its trade with us to buy our young men. . . . The proud Brit carries out the slave trade not in Barbados alone but also in Germany, and princes estimate the life of a subject at a few pounds sterling? They don't feel the irretrievable loss . . . but the descendants will still feel it after centuries.<sup>86</sup>

Reizenstein is concerned about how his impassioned condemnation of the princes would be received if it fell into the wrong hands, but he writes Schröder he is only expressing “what thousands of patriots all through Germany think and lament.”<sup>87</sup> He notes the irony of sending Germans, “who in previous centuries fought against the spiritual and political fetters of Rome,”<sup>88</sup> to fight against their brothers in America. Reizenstein writes: “We let ourselves be dragged to another part of the world in order for them to put us up against our brothers on the other side of the ocean. Because are they not flesh from our flesh, leg from our legs? Have not their elders, who now live in Germantown, formerly lived on the Rhine, Neckar, the Danube, and in other areas of our Vaterland?”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 276-78: “Daß wir die Hände die man zu unserm Feldebau braucht, nach Amerika schicken, um da einem mächtigen Volke die Herrschaft wieder zu erwerben, die es—gar wohl entbehren, und doch glücklich seyn könnte? . . . Denn vorausgesetzt, daß der Handel mit Amerika, und die Einfuhr der amerikanischen Produkte ein wahres Bedürfnis für uns ist . . . hätten wir nicht nöthig, die Waaren durch die Engländer nach Amerika zu schicken, und aus Amerika durch sie zu erhalten . . . Und mit unserm Gelde, das England in dem Handel mit uns gewinnt, kauft es uns aldann wieder unsere junge Mannschaft ab . . . Der stolze Britte . . . treibt nun den Menschenhandel nicht mehr in Barbados allein—nein! Auch in Deutschland!—und Fürsten schätzen das Leben eines Unterthanen nach ein paar Pfund Sterling? . . . und fühlt nicht den unwiderbringlichen Verlust . . . Aber die Nachkommen werden ihn noch nach Jahrhunderten fühlen.”

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 278: “was tausend Patrioten durch ganz Deutschland denken und beklagen”

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 278-79: “die wir in den vorigen Jahrhunderten gegen die geistliche und politische Fesseln Roms so muthig gekämpft haben”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 279: “wir lassen uns nun in andere Welttheile überschleppen, um sie unsern Brüdern jenseit des Weltmeers anzulegen. Denn sind sie nicht Fleisch von unserm Fleische, Bein von unserm Beine? Haben nicht die Vorältern derer, die igt in Germanstown wohnen, ehemals am Rheine, Nekar, an der Donau, und in andern Gegenden unsers Vaterlandes gewohnt?”

Reizenstein tells Schröder that he believes the reason no one listens to the German patriots arguing against the sale of Germans to the British is that “the American war opens up new sources of revenue”<sup>90</sup> for princes who are living beyond their means.

Instead of accepting the mercenary trade as a business that has been going on for hundreds of years, Reizenstein rails against the practice, which supports a lavish lifestyle for the princes but hurts everyone else. Specifically, Reizenstein tells Schröder that the thought that will accompany him over the sea is that “you [i.e. Reizenstein] have destroyed the best girl in the pain of a hopeless love,”<sup>91</sup> and in keeping with the parameters of a sentimental novel and *Trivialliteratur*, Fikchen indeed dies of a broken heart after finding out that Reizenstein is being sent to America.

Reizenstein and Fikchen are not the only lovers affected by the Margrave’s sale of troops to the British. Müller, who has fallen in love with Wilhelmine, the Baron’s daughter, volunteers to serve as a field doctor for the Ansbach troops going to America. He is promised “captain’s pay and many rations” and “either good land or a position as a city physician” when he returns to Ansbach.<sup>92</sup> He leaves the Baron’s estate in the middle of the night without telling anyone why, and then writes the Baron before his departure from Ochsenfurt that he would rather “escape and sacrifice myself” than take advantage of his position in the Baron’s home and be a “malicious seducer.”<sup>93</sup> Müller believes that since Wilhelmine is a member of the nobility and he is not, they would

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 279: “der amerikanische Krief eröffnet neue Geldquellen”

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 333: “und dieser Gedanke soll mich über das Meer hin . . . begleiten: du hast das beste Mädchen in die Qual einer hoffnungslosen Liebe gestürzt.”

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 340: “denn Sie erhalten Hauptmannssold, und bekommen eben so viele Rationen”; “bey ihrer Zurückkunft in einigen Jahren die besten Land oder Stadtphysikate versprechen”

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 386: “lieber zu fliehen, und mich aufzuopfern;” “ein niederträchtiger Verführer”

never be able to marry. Wilhelmine, who has also fallen in love with Müller, is heart-broken by his departure. Baron Roth eventually forgives Müller for his abrupt departure and, revealing the depth of his egalitarian nature, writes to give him permission to marry Wilhelmine when he returns after the war.

Ironically, given the outcome of the novel, neither Reizenstein nor his friends has ever had any desire to go to America. In a letter to Schröder, Reizenstein complains that “General Faucit tears me away from the protection of my friends and throws me in a world, which I had no desire to get to know.”<sup>94</sup> Although the American war has been in the background since the beginning of the novel, America has not been a subject of much interest to any of the characters. Reizenstein did send Müller a copy of Lafiteau’s *Allgemeine Geschichte von Amerika* in January 1776,<sup>95</sup> but the two men have been more concerned with discussing problems in Europe than far-off America.

Early in the first volume, in a letter dated October 28, 1775, Louise Schröder mocks America and the American Congress:

You will have read in the newspapers, that the American Congress, in order to make the old bravery of knights and the feeling of knightly honor fashionable in the world again, mainly on the recommendations of President Hancock, has decided to introduce the tournament again. Already the first will be held on the thirteenth of May of next year. So set up, courageous knight! Sharpen your sword, polish your Pikelhaube, and provide your lance with a good shaft, and ride to Philadelphia, in order to assert yourself against all knights of the thirteen provinces. Your princesses are—if not the most beautiful—still at least the most fragrant princesses in the world! You could appear at the gate under the title of Knight of the Musquash.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 330: “der General Faucit; da reißt er mich weg aus dem Schooße [Schutz] meiner Freunde und Freundinnen, und wirst mich hinaus in eine Welt, die ich nicht so kennen zu lernen Lust hatte.”

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 18-19: “Sie werden’s so gut, als ich, in dem Zeitungen gelesen haben, daß der amerikanische Kongreß, um die alte Rittertapferkeit und das Gefühl von Ritterehre wieder in der Welt Mode zu machen, hauptsächlich auf Anrathen des PräsidentHankok, beschlossen hat, die Turniere wieder

Louise seems to be referring to a news report about a meeting of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in May of 1776, but it is not clear why Louise equates the meeting in Philadelphia with a medieval tournament of knights. Seybold may have conflated news of the Congressional meeting with reports of the medieval-style Meschianza held outside Philadelphia by British officers in May 1778. Randall Fuller describes the Meschianza as a “lavishly theatrical”<sup>97</sup> entertainment consisting of a series of jousts, dances, and fireworks that was organized by Major John Andre to honor the departure of General William Howe. Major Andre, who was later captured by the American army and executed as a spy for his involvement with Benedict Arnold, wrote an article on the Meschianza that was published in a 1778 edition of *Gentleman’s Magazine*, a British periodical that Seybold may have read. Louise’s ridicule of Congress and wild, smelly Americans would seem to indicate a pro-British news source. There is certainly nothing in Louise’s comment that indicates any interest in America or perception of it as a land of freedom.

Until Reizenstein arrives in America, his own feelings about the country are ambivalent. Although he has “had no desire to get to know” America and has argued against fighting “our brothers on the other side of the ocean,” after Fikchen dies, he writes Schröder: “Now America opens for me a showplace for shining deeds. How I want to approach the enemy, force my way in, where he stands the thickest—and then I

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einzuführen. Bereits wird das erste den 13ten May des nächstkünftigen Jahres gehalten werden. Auf also, tapferer Ritter! laß dein Schwert schärfen, deine Pikelhaube poliren, und deine Lanze mit einem guten Schaft versehen, und reit’ hin nach Philadelphia, um da gegen alle Ritter der dreyzehn Provinzen zu behaupten, deine Prinzessin sey—wo nicht die schönste—doch wenigstens die wohlriechendste Prinzessin der Welt! Unmaßgeblich könnten Sie an den Schranken unter dem Titel des Bisamritters erscheinen.”

<sup>97</sup>Randall Fuller, “Theaters of the American Revolution: The Valley Forge Cato and the Meschianza in Their Transcultural Contexts,” *Early American Literature* 34, no. 2 (1999), 127.

find ‘Honor’ or death in the furious turmoil!”<sup>98</sup> Reizenstein, reckless and hopeless in the aftermath of Fikchen’s death, is perfectly willing to fight the American patriots as a mercenary and die. However, when he is stripped of his command and banished from Franconia after his letter critical of the princes is made public, Reizenstein writes Baron Roth that he is relieved not to be fighting against freedom: “Now I can reveal to you that, apart from the separation from my friends, the most unpleasant thing about the migration [to America] was that I should fight against freedom, and I thank fortune that it freed me from that in such a good manner.”<sup>99</sup> With Fikchen dead and his reputation in Ansbach destroyed, Reizenstein tells the Baron he plans to go to America, “but via Paris.”<sup>100</sup> In Paris, Reizenstein visits Beaumarchais, Abbe Raynal, and Benjamin Franklin, who accepts Reizenstein’s “request to serve under the colonists” and sends him to America with “letters to Congress.”<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, in a letter to Baron Roth, Reizenstein worries about whether the American cause is just:

For several days, or many more since my stay in Paris, doubts torment me, whether I go there to fight for a just cause? Yesterday I was really at the point of leaving the ship, and hiking away on land; but to where? This held me back, because there is no country in Europe where I wish to stay. . . . I go to America and seek a little place there which pleases me. Whether I fight for Congress or not depends always on me.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 350: “Izt öffnet mir Amerika einen Schauplatz zu glänzenden Thaten. Wie will ich gegen den Feind anfliegen, in ihn eindringen, wo er am dicksten steht—und dann find’ ich ‘Ehr’ oder Tod im rasenden Getümmel!”

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 1779, 7: “Izt kan ichs Ihnen entdecken—ausser der Trennung von meinen Freunden—war mir das unangenehmste bey dem Zuge dahin das, daß ich gegen die Freyheit fechten sollte, und ich danke also dem Geschicke, daß es mich mit so guter Manier davon befreyet hat.”

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.: “gehe ich nach Amerika—aber über Paris”

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 45: “meinen Antrag, unter den Kolonisten zu dienen”; “Briefe an den Kongreß”

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 51: “Seit einigen Tagen, oder vielmehr seit meinem Aufenthalte in Paris, quälen mich Bedenklichkeiten, ob ich denn hingeh, für eine gerechte Sache zu streiten? Gestern war ich wirklich im Begriff, mich von dem Schiffe zu entfernen, und zu Lande fort zu wandern; aber wohin? Dies hielt mich

Although impressed by Franklin, Reizenstein seems torn by indecision. In an earlier letter to Müller, Reizenstein equates Washington and Hancock with the German princes who fight for ambition and territory when he wonders “if an American . . . dies more for Washington and Hancock, than for his own freedom.”<sup>103</sup>

Although Reizenstein’s suspicion of Congress and its motives is a theme that pervades the novel, once Reizenstein arrives in America in July 1778 and meets Washington, he becomes more committed to the American cause. Reizenstein arrives at Washington’s camp in Germantown, the community near Philadelphia that was founded by German immigrants, and writes: “Here I am now, with Washington! . . . Indeed, many fine people have collected around the American Fabius; one believes himself almost to be in Rome . . . so eagerly everyone converses about freedom, and each seems to have decided to spill his blood for it. Now, I want to fight for it also. The purpose is still good, and whether the assumed reason is good, we cannot decide.”<sup>104</sup> Despite his earlier skepticism, Reizenstein becomes caught up in the patriotic fervor, although he is still not certain how the patriot’s ideals will be realized on a practical level once the war is over.

Reizenstein’s alternating skepticism and enthusiasm regarding the American Revolution may reflect diverging news sources and opinions in Germany. Congress

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noch zurücke, weil kein Land in Europa ist, das ich mir zum Aufenthalte wünschte? [illegible] ich vollends mitzugehen nach Amerika, und da ein Plätzchen zu suchen, wo mir gefällt. Ob ich für den Kongreß fechten will, oder nicht, hängt ja immer von mir ab.”

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., vol. 1 (1778), 153: “wenn ein Amerikaner . . . nicht mehr für Washington und Hankok, als für seine Freyheit stirbt?”

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., vol. 2 (1779), 53: “Hier bin ich nun, bey Washington! . . . In der That, viele Edle haben sich um den Amerikanischen Fabius versammelt; man glaubt fast in Rom zu seyn . . . so eifrig redt alles für die Freyheit, und so sehr scheint jeder entschlossen, sein Blut für sie zu vergiessen. Nun, so will ich dann auch für sie fechten. Der Zweck ist doch gut—und ob die genommene Veranlassung dazu gut ist, können wir nicht entscheiden.

seems to have been held in particularly low regard by German officers serving the British army in America. In a letter to Baron von Jungkenn dated May 10, 1778, Adjutant General Major Baurmeister writes from Philadelphia criticizing Congress for its imprisonment of Quakers after the Battle of Brandywine, noting that “according to good information . . . many unworthy and previously worthless men make up this august body.”<sup>105</sup> Colonel von Wurmb, in a January 1779 letter to Baron von Jungkenn from Flushing, Long Island writes: “There is an infamous sort of people in Congress. If a man does not follow their dictates, he is summoned before a court and hanged. In Philadelphia they hanged a son, Robert, of a good friend of mine because he had said that Congress was not being fair to England, for this country owed everything to England.”<sup>106</sup> In general, news accounts from London printed in conservative periodicals tended to disparage Congress and equate the patriots with thugs, as Schlözer did in his *Briefwechsel*, while news accounts from Paris, printed in more liberal periodicals like *Die Deutsche Chronik*, tended to romanticize the American war and equate America with Republican Rome.<sup>107</sup> Dippel points out that at a time when Greek and Roman antiquity was a subject of intense interest and study in the Western world, those in Europe who romanticized the American fight viewed Washington as the “Fabius of America”<sup>108</sup> and Franklin as “the American Orpheus.”<sup>109</sup> Seybold is certainly aware of the high regard for both men in Europe’s Enlightenment circles and of Franklin’s renown as a scientist.

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<sup>105</sup>Baurmeister, 168.

<sup>106</sup>Kipping, 34.

<sup>107</sup> Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 184.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 248.

Although Seybold leans toward romanticizing the American war, he never completely succumbs to the temptation, and Reizenstein's enthusiasm for the patriots is tempered by pragmatism. Reizenstein's belief in the American cause may have waffled between skepticism and enthusiasm, but his awareness of the possibilities inherent in these "immense lands"<sup>110</sup> and the danger of them becoming too closely allied with the French never wavers. After meeting Franklin in Paris, Reizenstein writes Baron Roth that "with particularly deep respect I looked at the silver hair of Franklin, at the hero, who with one hand conducts lightning, and with the other weighs out the destiny of immense lands."<sup>111</sup> Reizenstein tells the Baron he took the freedom to tell Franklin that "perhaps it would be better, if the colonies did not so completely affiliate themselves with France,"<sup>112</sup> and it is a steady refrain through the rest of the novel. Reizenstein perceives France, the source of so much misery in Germany, as a threat to the future happiness and security of America.

Almost immediately after arriving in America, Reizenstein acquires a new patron after rescuing Lord Barbington, a planter from South Carolina, during a military engagement around Germantown.<sup>113</sup> Lord Barbington's description of the skirmish and his rescue is surprisingly similar to Captain Didier's description of his rescue by the Hessian lieutenant, Feldberg, in Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*. Lord

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<sup>110</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 44: "ungeheurer Länder"

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.: "Mit besonderer Ehrfurcht betrachtete ich die Silberhaare eines Fränklers, des Helden, der mit der einen Hand den Blitz leitet, und mit der andern das Schicksal ungeheurer Länder abwägt."

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.: "Vielleicht wäre es besser, wenn sich die Kolonien nicht so ganz an Frankreich angeschlossen hätten."

<sup>113</sup> Reizenstein rescues Lord Barbington in August 1777. Seybold does not mention the British takeover of Philadelphia on September 26, 1777 or the Battle of Germantown, which took place on October 4, 1777.



Barbington writes his sister, Auguste, that in a fight among the “houses of the enemy,” he was about to be captured when “like lightning the leader of a small wedge of about twenty men broke in to me, scattered everything around like chaff and tore me away.

. . . The man who did this deed is called Reizenstein, a noble thinking young man, rich in knowledge, as if he could not carry the sword, and brave, as if he had always laid among tents.”<sup>114</sup> Clearly impressed with this intelligent man of action, Lord Barbington wants his sister, whose “spartan heart honors the courageous,”<sup>115</sup> to meet Reizenstein, and Lord Barbington and Reizenstein become fast friends.

Müller, who is stationed in Philadelphia with the Ansbach regiment serving under the British, writes his sister, Charlotte, about meeting Lord Barbington after receiving a pass to visit Reizenstein. Despite the fact that they are serving on different sides in the war, Reizenstein and Müller meet each other several times in the novel. Müller writes Charlotte that he visited the American camp with an officer sent by General Howe for “exchange business”<sup>116</sup> with Washington. While the officer negotiated the terms of a prisoner exchange, Müller visited Reizenstein and Lord Barbington. Müller writes Charlotte that Reizenstein “must have told him at least a part of our story, and named all our friends”<sup>117</sup> because Barbington seemed to follow their conversation easily and know who they were talking about. According to Müller, Barbington said: “If only all your

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<sup>114</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 100: “Hausen der Feinde”; “Wie der Blitz brach izzt der Anführer eines kleinen Keils von einigen zwanzig Mann zu mir ein, zerstiebt alles um sich her, wie Spreu, und riß mich heraus. . . . Der Mann, der dieses that, heißt Reizenstein, ein edel denkender Junge, reich an Kenntnissen, wie wenn er das Schwert nicht führen könnte, und tapfer, wie wenn er immer unter Zelten gelegen hätte.”

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 101: “so ehrt dein Spartanisches Herz den Muthvollen”

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 103: “Auswechselungsgeschäften”

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 106: “Reizenstein muß ihm schon wenigstens einen Theil unserer Geschichte erzählt, und unsere Freunde alle zusammen genennt haben”

friends were here! we would live pleurably together; I have great estates in Carolina, which could feed us all, and which I would like to distribute among the whole company.”<sup>118</sup> Thus, Reizenstein’s rescue of Lord Barbington has secured Reizenstein and his friends a wealthy patron in America. Seybold portrays Lord Barbington as Weppen portrays Eduard and Miss Betty in *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*, that is, as wealthy, culturally isolated, and eager to befriend virtuous, educated Germans. Somewhat lonely living with his sister on their vast estate in South Carolina, Lord Barbington is entranced by Reizenstein’s descriptions of his close circle of friends and their shared sense of community, and he views sharing his wealth and lands with such an agreeable group of Germans as mutually beneficial.

Müller, who plans to return to Germany after the war and marry Wilhelmine, does not comment on Lord Barbington’s offer, and Reizenstein does not seriously consider the idea until he spends the winter at Barbingtonhouse on the banks of the Savannah River. In South Carolina with Lord Barbington and Auguste, Reizenstein is finally able to think hopefully about his future. Reizenstein writes Müller: “Through him [Barbington] a completely new view of my life has opened up to me. Yes, friend! I hope to find for you and me on the property of the noble man peace and quiet that the rest of the world does not grudge us.”<sup>119</sup> Reizenstein sees that America offers the best hope for establishing the Arcadian paradise that he and his friends envisioned on the Schröders’ estate in Mainbernheim. He writes Schröder:

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-7: “Wären nur alle ihre Freunde hier! wir wollten vergnügt zusammen leben; ich habe grosse Ländereyen in Karolina, die uns alle nähren könnten, und die ich herzlich gerne unter die ganze Gesellschaft austheilen wollte.”

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 237: “Durch ihn hat sich mir eine ganz neue Aussicht meines Lebens eröffnet. Ja, Freund! ich hoffe, auf den Gütern des edlen Mannes für Sie und mich die Ruhe zu finden, die uns die übrige Welt nicht gönnt.”

I have found a place where I think of ending my days, and if people should make you still more frustrated, so only pack everything together and travel to America. . . . What keeps you in old, melancholy Europe and especially in small Franconia. You and your descendants have nothing in the old world, except to always expect new plagues of luxury and despotism. Here is the land of freedom; here one lives a patriarchal—or, if you would rather, an Arcadian life; here one sits in the protection of quiet and abundance personified.<sup>120</sup>

Reizenstein describes the beauty of the land and the sparseness of inhabitants. Seybold indicates in a footnote that the source for his description is *Neue Erdbeschreibung von ganz Amerika*, a geography written by Daniel Fenning and translated into German by August Schlözer in 1777. After describing the beauty of the South Carolina landscape, Reizenstein writes Schröder: “Here envy, jealousy, conflict of interest and the other evils which ruin human society are almost completely banished, or can at least more likely be than in your walled-in prisons, in which your people are incarcerated . . . with heads against one another.”<sup>121</sup> Reizenstein equates European cities with prisons in which people live on top of one another and strive to get ahead by conspiring against one another. By contrast, in America, there is enough room for everyone to spread out and live peaceably “in God’s free air.”<sup>122</sup> Seybold’s portrayal of America as an Arcadia alludes to an imagined rural paradise in Greek and Roman literature. Although Reizenstein and his friends tried to establish an Arcadia in Germany, the evils inherent in

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 193-94: “ich haben einen Ort gefunden, wo ich meine Tage zu schliessen gedenke, und wenn die Leute Euch noch mehr Verdruß machen sollten, so packt nur alles zusammen, und laßt euch nach Amerika überfahren . . . was macht Ihr auch in dem alten, schwermüthigen Europa, und vollends in dem kleinen Franken. Ihr und euer Nachkommen habt in dem alten Welttheile nichts, als immer neue Landplagen des Luxus und Despotismus zu erwarten. Hier ist das Land der Freyheit, hier lebt man ein patriarchalisches—oder, wenn Ihr lieber wollt, ein Arkadisches Leben; hier sitzt man der Ruhe und dem Ueberflusse leibhaftig im Schoosse [Schutz].”

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 195-96: “Hier sind also Neid, Eifersucht, Kollision des Interesses, und die andern Uebel, die die menschliche Gesellschaft verderben, fast ganz verbannt, oder könnens wenigstens eher seyn, als in euern ummauerten Gefängnissen, in welche die Menschen bey euch eingekerkert werden . . . mit den Köpfen wider einander.”

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 196: “in Gottes freyer Luft”

a competitive society with limited resources doomed their attempt. Seybold, through Reizenstein, recognizes the seemingly unlimited potential in a tremendous country with abundant natural resources and imagines that a cooperative society, free of the ills of European civilization, can be established there. Thus, while Sophie La Roche's sentimental fantasy is fulfilled in England, Seybold's is realized in America.

Seybold's description of America as an Arcadian paradise coincides with Durand Echeverria's description of the "American mirage" that developed in France in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>123</sup> According to Gilbert Chinard, the French viewed America as a place where "the Golden Age" and "the Lost Paradise" could be realized again, and America became the "imaginary locus" where philosophers and critics of society, like Rousseau, constructed their utopias. According to Chinard, America was perceived as a place where men could live "free and happy" in the midst of bounteous prosperity, and it offered "an unlimited territory where men could escape the restraints of a civilization growing every day more complicated."<sup>124</sup> Seybold's view of America, which so closely coincides with this description, suggests that the German idea of Arcadia and the French fantasy of a "Lost Paradise" share the same cultural roots and are indicative of the intellectual sharing that took place among European Enlightenment thinkers, despite nationalistic efforts to form separate cultural traditions.

Seybold's description of Lord Barbington's sister, Auguste, also suggests the author's indebtedness to Rousseau for his depiction of the ideal woman, Sophie, in *Emile or On Education*. On Lord Barbington's estate from November 20, 1777, until February

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<sup>123</sup> Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (1957; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1966).

<sup>124</sup> Gilbert Chinard, foreword to *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815*, by Durand Echeverria (1957; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1966), vii- viii.

15, 1778,<sup>125</sup> Reizenstein develops a close relationship with Auguste, who helps him get over Fikchen's death. Before he leaves, the two plant a garden in Fikchen's memory, and Reizenstein writes Müller, asking him, "is it unloyal if I love my Sophie in Auguste?"<sup>126</sup> Unlike Fikchen, who was overwhelmed by anxiety and melancholy at the thought of Reizenstein fighting in a war that would do nothing to better their lives and only line the pockets of their prince, Auguste believes the war in which her brother and Reizenstein are fighting will secure freedom and liberty for all Americans and that her country's needs are greater than her own. Like Fikchen, Auguste is gentle, modest, attentive, reserved, and virtuous, all qualities that Rousseau deemed important for women to possess.<sup>127</sup> However, Auguste has a strength and faith that Fikchen lacked. Reizenstein admires "the Roman spirit [that] glows on her cheeks" when she is feeling patriotic.<sup>128</sup> In a letter to Müller, Reizenstein describes Auguste sending him and her brother back to the front: "Here she stood before us and held our hands; her posture was the noble posture of a Spartan, who sends her sons to a military encounter, and her eyes spoke Roman patriotism: 'Take care of your lives, if your death will not help the Vaterland; but then, if it is of use to it, so give up a thousand lives in order to save the

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<sup>125</sup> Although Reizenstein has been fighting with Washington's army, Seybold does not mention, perhaps because he did not know, that Washington retired with his army to Valley Forge on December 19, 1777 where another German, the Prussian Baron von Steuben, spent the winter drilling and imposing discipline on the Continental Army.

<sup>126</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 239: "ists Untreue, wenn ich in Augusten meine Sophie liebe?"

<sup>127</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, translated by Allan Bloom. (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 361, 370.

<sup>128</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 229: "Ja wenn Sie Patriotin sind; dann glüht Römergeist auf Ihren Wangen"

Vaterland.”<sup>129</sup> Seybold portrays Auguste as the perfect helpmeet for Reizenstein because she understands and values his commitment to the cause of liberty.

In a subsequent letter to Reizenstein, Auguste writes about political matters and her fears regarding the American alliance with France. Defending the content of her letter, Auguste writes: “I am a woman; should I because of this be able to say and think nothing clever about the position of my Vaterland. . . . Does history not recognize the influence of many women in the most important events? Since I can do no deeds, should I be blamed for talking, disclosing my thoughts to men, and cheering them to action?”<sup>130</sup> Auguste cannot fight for America, but she sees a role for herself as an adviser and cheerleader for the men in her family circle.

Both the role Auguste envisions for herself and Reizenstein’s invocation of her Roman patriotism and Spartan posture find echoes in a passage in Rousseau’s *Emile*:

Woe to the age in which women lose their ascendancy and in which their judgments no longer have an effect on men! This is the last degree of depravity. All peoples who have had morals have respected women. Look at Sparta; look at the ancient Germans; look at Rome—Rome home of glory and of virtue if ever they had one on earth. It is there that women honored the exploits of great generals, that they wept publicly for the fathers of the fatherland, that their vows or their mourning were consecrated as the most solemn judgment of the republic. All the great revolutions there came from women. Due to a woman Rome acquired liberty; due to a woman the plebians obtained the consulate; due to a woman the tyranny of the Decemvirs was ended; due to women Rome, when besieged, was saved from the hands of an outlaw.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*, 240: “Hier stund sie vor uns hin, und faßte unsere Hand; ihr Stand war der edle Stand einer Spartanerin, die ihre Söhne ins Treffen schickt, und ihr Auge sprach Römischen Patriotismus: ‘Schont eures Lebens, wenn euer Tod dem Vaterlande nichts nützt; aber dann, wenn er ihm nützt, so gebt tausend Leben hin, um das Vaterland zu retten.’”

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, 274: “ich bin ein Weib; sollte ich deswegen nichts kluges über den Zustand meines Vaterlandes denken und sagen können? . . . Erkennt nicht die Geschichte denn Einfluß vieler Frauenzimmer in die wichtigsten Begebenheiten? Sollte es mir verdacht werden, daß ich, da ich keine Thaten thun kann, wenigstens rede, Männern meine Gedanken eröffne, und sie zu Thaten aufmuntere?”

<sup>131</sup>Rousseau, *Emile*, 390.

According to Rousseau, a moral society listens to women and respects them. Honored for their virtue, women are not equal partners with men but goads to action that will benefit the state. Rousseau presents the patriotic fervor of women in a positive light and gives women credit for starting revolutions.

Seybold presents America as a moral society where women are not only valued and respected but also important in sustaining the American Revolution. The German women have difficulty understanding Auguste's patriotism. After arriving in America, Wilhelmine writes Charlotte: "This patriotism, dear sister! will admittedly always be somewhat strange to your German women; because . . . it is indifferent to them, in which corner of the earth they eat bread, if they only have something to eat. Here it is entirely different! The name, Fatherland, is to each colonist a silver tone in the ear . . . . In feminine society the present matter will be spoken of . . . as warmly and eagerly as in the male."<sup>132</sup> Wilhelmine then relates a story told by Auguste about ladies in Amelia County, Virginia, who made an agreement among themselves "to give no man their hand, who had not earned it through brave deeds against the oppressors of freedom."<sup>133</sup> Like the Athenian women in Aristophanes' play, *Lysistrata*, who withheld sex from their husbands until they ended a longstanding war, Virginia women withheld their favors from local men until they earned their attention by fighting heroically against the British.

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<sup>132</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 325: "Dieser Patriotismus, liebe Schwester! wird euch Deutschen Frauen immern freylich etwas fremde seyn; denn . . . es ist ihnen gleichgültig, in welchem Winkel der Erde sie Brod essen, wenn sie nur zu essen haben. Hier ists ganz anders! Der Name, Vaterland, ist jedem Kolonisten Silberton ins Ohr . . . . In weiblichen Gesellschaften wird von den gegenwärtigen Angelegenheiten so gut, und so warm und eifrig gesprochen, als in den männlichen."

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 325-26: "keinem Manne ihre Hand zu geben, der sie nicht durch tapfere Thaten gegen die Unterdrücker der Freyheit—so nennen sie die Engländer"

While Reizenstein is in America establishing a strong relationship with Lord Barbington and Auguste, his friends in Franconia face one calamity after another. When a priest finds out that Louise had a child before she and Schröder were married and that the child does not live with them, Louise and Schröder are accused of murdering the child, a recurring theme in *Spätaufklärung* and *Empfindsamkeit* literature. Several men appear at their door to take the two to prison “in the name and on the order of his honor, the margrave.”<sup>134</sup> Since several months earlier Reizenstein had witnessed the public execution of a young, unmarried woman who had killed her baby, the charges are serious, and Louise and Schröder are afraid that, even though the charges are not true, their enemies have enough power to further harm them. Baron Roth intervenes on their behalf, convinces a senior civil servant that the child is alive but living elsewhere, and Louise and Schröder are placed under house arrest until the child is brought to the official and their story explained. Thus, the Baron is able to protect Louise and Schröder from the maliciousness of their enemies in a society where justice is arbitrary and there is no rule of law to protect the powerless.

Unfortunately, the Baron’s power is limited. Although he is a member of the nobility, his lands are not extensive, and other nobles are more powerful than he. When a neighboring prince from Würzburg begins hunting on the Baron’s land, the Baron is frustrated by his inability to get the man off his land and is concerned about shots being fired so close to his castle gardens. The Baron appeals for help from the Margrave’s Privy Councillor von Dieskau and gets a letter back telling him that the government in Ansbach has no power to make a prince in Würzburg do anything. In relating this story

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 17: “Im Namen und auf Befehl seiner Margräflichen Durchlaucht”



to Müller, Charlotte writes: “It becomes very fashionable, as the Baron says, that the great gentlemen and states of Germany push the smaller and seek to restrict them.”<sup>135</sup> In a fractionated country where the arbitrary rule of princes prevails, not even being a member of the nobility ensures one the freedom to live a quiet life safe from the machinations of ambitious, aggrandizing men. In relating his frustration over the situation to Reizenstein, the Baron writes: “If the thing does not come to an end soon, I will sell my property, convince the Schröders also, and move in my old days to America with you. There we will still find a corner which gives us quiet, and then we will lead a patriarchal life, like the people of the golden age.”<sup>136</sup> Although the Baron has tried to lead a quiet, patriarchal life on his estate at Speckfeld, the outside world is pressing in on him and making it impossible for him to live peacefully in Germany. The Baron does not necessarily see America as a land of political freedom but as a place that is large enough and undeveloped enough to give him the freedom to live his life as he chooses with his family and friends. Before the Baron is able to resolve the hunting issue or make a decision about coming to America, he is shot in a hunting accident by a boy who lives on his estate and dies several days later.

Although the Baron’s power has been limited, conditions for his friends and family go from bad to worse after his death. As the Baron lies dying, Charlotte writes Madame Müller: “What will become of us, dearest mother, when our great benefactor is gone? I hope heaven makes me so fortunate that I can feed you with my needlework in

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 70: “Es fängt gar zu sehr an Mode zu werden, wie der Baron sagt, daß die grösseren Herren und Staaten Deutschlands die kleinern drücken, und einzuschränken suchen.”

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 124: “Hört das Ding nicht bald auf, so verkaufe ich mein Gut, berede die Schröderscher auch dazu, und ziehen in meinen alten Tagen nach Amerika zu Ihnen. Da werden wir doch eine Ecke finden, die uns Ruhe verleiht, und dann wollen wir ein patriarchalisches Leben führen, wie die Leute des goldenen Zeitalters.”

Kulmbach, or anywhere else you want to settle down.”<sup>137</sup> Through Charlotte and her mother, Seybold portrays the precarious lives of women without husbands or fathers to protect them and provide for them. The Baron has kindly taken the women in after the death of Müller’s father but with the Baron’s estate in limbo after his death, the women feel forced to leave and support themselves on what little money they can earn through their needlework. Although Baron Kaltenthal is appointed guardian for Wilhelmine, Fritz, and Amalia, Seybold makes the point that guardians do not have the same concern for and involvement with children that a parent does. After all, Louise got pregnant when her guardian took Schröder in as a boarder. With the Baron dead, there is no one to stop the ministers from persecuting Louise and Schröder. They receive word that the church council has fined them a penance of 1000 Thaler because, as Louise writes Wilhelmine, “I took Schröder to bed before the priest spoke the blessing.”<sup>138</sup> Eventually, Louise and Schröder find out that Lieutenant Jahn’s brother, a local minister known for being miserly, is behind the accusations against them because he wants their property, which they are forced to sell in order to pay the fine levied against them.

Angry and frustrated, the Schröders decide that life in Europe is no longer possible, and they are going to America. Schröder writes Reizenstein:

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 150-51: “Was wirs mit uns werden, liebste Mutter, wenn unser grosse Wohlthäter dahin ist? Ich hoffe, der Himmel macht mich so glücklich, daß ich sie mit meiner Handarbeit in Kulmbach, oder wo Sie sich hinsetzen wollen, ernähren kann.”

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 206: “weil ich meinen Schröder zu Bette nahm, ehe der Herr Pfarrer den Segen darüber gesprochen hatte”

Yes, I come! and had decided even before your letter so charmingly painted Carolina's beauty; because it is no more to be endured in Europe, that one is the game for the intrigue of any scoundrel. So it goes, that personal freedom is more and more weakened, that the subject is lowered to a mere piece of furniture, and that, in the end, one must almost pay taxes on sunshine, air and rain, so you will certainly still receive more German colonists than America already has.<sup>139</sup>

The Schröders feel persecuted by greedy priests and corrupt government officials who exploit their youthful indiscretion and make a peaceful, comfortable life impossible for them. Schröder writes Reizenstein that Louise looks forward to leaving Babel, as she now calls Franconia, and migrating to Kanaan.<sup>140</sup> Louise, who once mocked the wild, smelly Americans meeting in Philadelphia, now looks at America as the Promised Land, where she and Schröder will finally be able to live in peace.

Wilhelmine is initially torn by indecision. She cannot decide whether to wait for Müller to return to Germany after the war or to travel to America with the Schröders and build a new life with him there. Although her father had promised her she could marry Müller when he returned, Wilhelmine worries that the nobility in Franconia will look down on her for marrying a commoner. If her father were alive and gave his public approval to the marriage, it would be one thing. Since he is dead, Wilhelmine fears gossips will accuse Müller of taking advantage of her vulnerability to better himself and accuse her of tarnishing her father's reputation by marrying someone beneath her. When she receives a despondent letter from Müller intended for Charlotte, Wilhelmine decides

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 242: "Ja, ich komme! und war entschlossen, noch ehe Dein Brief Carolinas Schönheit so reizend mir vormalte; denn es ist in Europa nicht mehr auszustehen, daß man das Spiel von der Intrigue eines jeden Schurken ist. Gehts so fort, daß persönliche Freyheit immer mehr geschwächt, daß der Unterthan zu einer blossen Meuble herabgewürdigt wird, und daß man zuletzt fast Sonnenschein, Luft und Regen versteuern muß, so werdet ihr gewiß noch mehrere Deutsche Kolonisten erhalten, als Amerika schon hat."

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 243: "wie selbst Louise sich freuet, aus Babel—so nennt sie izt unser Franken—auszugehen, und nach Kanaan zu wandern!"

she will renounce her status as a member of the nobility and go to America to marry Müller. Although she asks herself, “is your step not too daring for a woman?” she decides that “in the arms of the beloved you forget the world,”<sup>141</sup> and she departs with Louise and Schröder and their young son, leaving Fritz and Amalia with Baron Kaltenthal in Pommersfeld and Charlotte and Madame Müller in Kulmbach. Janson, Müller’s replacement as the Baron’s *Hofmeister*, applies for a church office since Fritz will be going to the university soon.

After a long, arduous journey, Wilhelmine and the Schröders arrive in Charleston, where they are met by Müller, who is now living at Barbingtonhouse. In a skirmish with Ansbach troops withdrawing from Philadelphia, Reizenstein has “captured” Müller and sent him to Lord Barbington’s estate in South Carolina for the duration of the war. On Lord Barbington’s estate in South Carolina, Müller marries Wilhelmine and Reizenstein, on leave from the army, marries Auguste. The friends then establish the Arcadian society they had only dreamed of in Germany.

Wilhelmine describes their Arcadian life in detail in a letter to Charlotte. She and Müller live in a two-story house with twelve rooms that was built one hundred steps to the left of Barbingtonhouse, and Schröder and Louise live in an identical house built one hundred steps to the right of the main house. In an alley that leads to Barbingtonhouse, they all breakfast together under an arbor of sumach, tulip, and Indian fig trees. After breakfast, Schröder, whom Müller has appointed overseer, visits the “Negers” on the plantation; Müller studies, plants in his Herbarium, or seeks insects for his collection; and the women make pillow lace, knit, do other work in the house, or go walking if it is not

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<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*, 266: “ist dein Schritt nicht zu gewagt für ein Frauenzimmer?”; “in den Armen des Geliebten vergißt du die Welt”

too hot. At noon, a servant calls them to eat in the large dining room at Barbingtonhouse where they stay until the air cools. In an earlier letter to Reizenstein, Auguste had described playing “either billiards or badminton or wippen,”<sup>142</sup> or visiting neighbors after their noon meal. If the weather is bad, they stay inside and dance. When the weather is beautiful, and Wilhelmine writes Charlotte that it usually is, they all walk to a pasture and play games, act out small novels, and sing while Schröder plays the flute.<sup>143</sup> Wilhelmine writes Charlotte that “here is everything that belongs to life, in abundance.”<sup>144</sup> She also writes of her relief at being in a land where “the difference in class status” is not important and “only personal honor counts.”<sup>145</sup> Thus, Seybold idealizes America as a place where economic pressures and social constraints do not exist, at least for middle-class Germans with wealthy American slaveholders as friends.

Kriegleder points out that Seybold does not elaborate on the economic basis of this agrarian idyll: “who built all the beautiful houses and laid the alleys while the women played badminton and the men studied, the reader must guess.”<sup>146</sup> Seybold makes brief mention of Schröder becoming the “overseer of the building and of the work of the Negroes,”<sup>147</sup> but he does not express any concern that his Arcadian paradise is founded on slave labor. Nevertheless, Seybold displays a certain squeamishness towards slavery,

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<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 308: “spielen wir entweder Billard oder den Federball, oder wippens uns”

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 356-58.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 361: “hier ist alles, was zum Leben gehört, im Ueberflusse”

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 359: “der Unterschied der bürgerlichen Stände”; “nur persönlicher Adel gilt”

<sup>146</sup> Kriegleder, 323: “wer all die schönen Häuser gebaut und die Alleen angelegt hat, während die Frauen Federball spielten und die Männer studierten, muß der Leser erraten.”

<sup>147</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 307: “Den Hauptmann er [Müller] zum Oberaufseher über das Bauwesen und die Arbeit der Negers gemacht”

although he presents the slaves at Barbingtonhouse as part of one big happy plantation family. At Reizenstein's wedding, the slaves make music and dance with the German servants until the sun goes down. Wilhelmine describes this scene in a letter to Charlotte and then writes that "these unlucky creatures . . . are treated humanely" by Lord Barbington and neighboring planters.<sup>148</sup> She contrasts Lord Barbington, who "honors them as people and does not overburden them with too much work," with planters whose "hardness and inhumanity" make slaves "appear malicious and evil."<sup>149</sup> Ignoring or not acknowledging the importance of slavery in maintaining the Arcadian paradise he has established for his characters in South Carolina, Seybold has the American colonists, led by Reizenstein and Lord Barbington, abolish slavery in post-Revolutionary America.

Contrary to the historical event, Seybold ends the American Revolution in October 1779 with the Americans victorious over the British. In Philadelphia, Lord Barbington and Reizenstein force members of Congress who want to replace British dominance with French control to step down and let a national assembly decide how the country will be organized. In the last thirty pages of the novel, Seybold tediously expounds on his utopian vision for America. Seybold's utopia shares elements with the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian society composed of independent, self-reliant, industrious, public-minded yeomen farmers,<sup>150</sup> but Seybold takes the Jeffersonian aversion to crowded cities and European influences one step further. In Seybold's America, cities are razed and trade with Europe is cut off. In addition, personal property

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 328: "diese unglücklichen Geschöpfe . . . menschlicher behandelt werden"

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.: "er [Lord Barbington] sie als Menschen ehrt, daß er ihnen nicht zu viele Arbeit aufladen läßt," 328; "die Härte und Unmenschlichkeit," 329; "scheinen sie das Tückische und Boshafte", 329.

<sup>150</sup>Gary B. Nash and others, eds., *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society*, Brief 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Longman, 2003), 244.

and slavery are abolished, and small, agrarian, patriarchal societies are established that are “as close to nature as possible.”<sup>151</sup> In these small, patriarchal societies, people live in family groups and work to supply their own needs. Reizenstein writes Janson: “If he builds his little goodness in quiet, and can consume the fruit of his sweat with pleasure, if he is glad to be alive, and enjoys the beauty of creation—is he not then happy? So happy, with God! shall all the colonists in America become!”<sup>152</sup> In Germany, where personal choice was limited and men were being forced to fight in America to finance the lavish lifestyles of their princes, this idea of being free to pursue one’s own happiness must have appealed to a large segment of the population. Reizenstein writes Auguste that America “shall become the seat of earthly and middle-class bliss.”<sup>153</sup>

The war over, Reizenstein returns to Lord Barbington’s estate and his bride, Auguste. In a somewhat contradictory passage, given the fact that personal property has been abolished, Reizenstein writes Janson: “I am the Herr of two square miles of land which her noble brother has given her! I live in the most lovely area of the world, surrounded by friends who love me. We all live like a family in the golden ages!”<sup>154</sup> The Arcadian paradise that the friends could only dream about in Franconia has been realized in America, and the novel ends with the last of Reizenstein’s friends in Germany writing to say they have decided to immigrate to America.

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 405: “der Natur so sehr nähern, als möglich!”

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 406: “wenn er sein Gütchen in Ruhe bauen, und die Früchte seines Schweisses vergnügt verzehren kann, wenn er seines Daseyns sich freuen darf, und die Schönheiten der Schöpfung genießt—ist er denn nicht glücklich? So glücklich sollen, mit Gott! alle Kolonisten in Amerika werden!”

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 384: “soll noch der Siß [Sitz] der irdischen und bürgerlichen Glückseligkeit werden”

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 402: “ich bin Herr von zwey Quadratmeilen Landes, die ihr edler Bruder ihr geschenkt hat!—ich lebe in der herrlichsten Gegend der Welt, umringt von Freunden, die mich lieben—wir alle leben, wie eine Familie in dem goldenen Zeitalter!”

Seybold does not address the contradiction between the Arcadia established at Barbingtonhouse and his post-Revolutionary utopia. Without slaves to do the hard, physical work of the plantation, Wilhelmine and her friends will be forced to do more than make pillow lace and collect insect specimens. Seybold's radical utopia is obviously at odds with the comfortable, leisurely middle-class existence at Barbingtonhouse that Wilhelmine described in earlier letters to Charlotte. As Kriegleder points out, the novel ends with the acceptance of the new constitution, and readers are spared "letters in which the noble Wilhelmine or the scholarly Müller report from farming, sawing, and harvesting in the sweat of their brow."<sup>155</sup> Lord Barbington's wealth and patronage have made their Arcadian idyll in America possible, and their lifestyle will change considerably living in small cabins and supplying their own needs, as the new constitution requires of all Americans.

Seybold had let his readers know in the prologue to the second volume that his novel "interweaves real history with much fantasy."<sup>156</sup> Although those interested in eighteenth-century utopias may find his jumbled mix of European-style patronage and radical egalitarianism worth further research, the remainder of this chapter will concentrate on the historical accounts about America that inform Seybold's novel.

Although Seybold uses historical figures and facts from the American Revolution to support his novel, his primary focus is on promoting middle-class virtues and an ideal of community, not on providing an accurate historical account of the American war. Like Weppen in *Der hessische Officier in Amerika*, Seybold knows enough about what is

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<sup>155</sup>Kriegleder, 325: "Briefe, in denen die edle Wilhelmine oder der gelehrte Müller vom Ackern, Säen und Ernten im Schweiß ihres Angesichts berichten."

<sup>156</sup>Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), ii: "durchwebt sonst das wirklich Historische mit vielen Erdichtungen"



going on in America to make topical references to George Washington and unnamed battles around Philadelphia, but the novel does not provide historians with any insight on events or circumstances in America. Seybold's novel does, however, give an indication of the type of information about the American war that was available to an educated man who was fond of reading newspapers. Seybold wrote *Reizenstein* during the first few years of the war, when information received in Germany about the war was often spotty and biased. A brief look at the historical references in the novel gives some insight into the news about America that was being disseminated in Germany.

Seybold shows an awareness of the hardships German mercenaries faced in a letter Müller writes to Reizenstein in March of 1778. Reizenstein has been encouraging Müller to apply for an early release from his military commitment, and Müller writes Reizenstein that he has finally convinced his general to request another field doctor from Germany. Müller writes that he told the general: "Now that summer comes the wounded will be added to the different sicknesses. In general there has been so much [sickness] this winter because of the terrible food and the shortage of the usual supplies, that I could probably have used a helper."<sup>157</sup> Like Weppen, Seybold is aware that the German troops serving the British were not being adequately supplied despite British promises in the treaties negotiated with the German princes.

Seybold mentions in his novel only two military movements that have an historical basis. Reizenstein writes Auguste in June 1778 that "we are again in possession of the capital city,"<sup>158</sup> indicating that Seybold had accurate information about

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 255: "da igt den Sommer über zu den andern Kranken auch Verwundete kommen werden. Ueberhaupt seyn es diesen Winter schon durch die schlechte Kost und den Mangel an den gewohnten Nahrungsmitteln so viele gewesen, daß ich wohl einen Gehülffen hätte brauchen können."

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 276: "wir sind wieder in dem Besitze der Hauptstadt"

the British withdrawal from Philadelphia. He also makes reference to a naval encounter off Newport, Rhode Island involving the French admiral, d'Estaing. Reizenstein indicates the joint effort by the French and Americans went badly when he writes Auguste that "Estaing puts the blame for the unsuccessful attack on us, and we on him."<sup>159</sup> Edward Lowell, in his 1884 historical monograph, *The Hessians and the other German Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War*, describes two regiments of Ansbach soldiers arriving to reinforce British troops occupying Newport in anticipation of an attack by the French fleet. In an expedition that was, as Lowell states, "grossly mismanaged," the French fleet pursued the British fleet off Rhode Island but did not return to provide support to the American militia that planned to invade Newport. The attack was aborted, and the British and Germans remained in control of Newport.<sup>160</sup> Since Ansbach troops were involved in this engagement, Seybold may have been privy to reports that were sent back to Germany by these troops. He may have also read a letter written from Newport by a German officer on September 8, 1778, that was published in Schlözer's *Briefwechsel* in 1779.<sup>161</sup> In this letter, the writer describes an engagement at Quaker and Turkey Hill in which a British attack on an American redoubt left 105 Hessians, 100 British, and 30 Americans dead.

Although Seybold's inclusion in the novel of actual military maneuvers is limited to the withdrawal of the British from Philadelphia and the naval engagement off Rhode Island, he makes references to the Conway Cabal, Benedict Arnold, and Lutterloh, a Brunswick officer who fought for the Americans, which perhaps reveals more about his

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 314: "Estaing schiebt die Schuld des mißlungenen Angriffs auf uns, und wir auf ihn."

<sup>160</sup> Lowell, 218-20.

<sup>161</sup> Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 4, no. 21 (1779), 174; Stone, 228-29.

eclectic news sources than anything else. In a December 1778 letter to Reizenstein, Lord Barbington writes: “How much Washington is valued by Congress, particularly by the current president Jay, you can take from the fact that Conway has received his discharge because he judged the general in a letter to a friend in an unflattering manner.”<sup>162</sup>

Seybold’s inclusion of this incident indicates that he had accurate if not detailed information about the letter written by Major General Thomas Conway to Horatio Gates that questioned Washington’s effectiveness as commander-in-chief. Seybold does not give any clues to indicate the source of his information.

In a dramatic scene toward the end of the novel, Lord Barbington and Reizenstein confront members of Congress who are meeting to put the final seal on an agreement that essentially places America under French control. Members of Congress have sent “Major Lutterloh”<sup>163</sup> to arrest Reizenstein and Lord Barbington for speaking against Congress. Instead, Lutterloh is convinced by the two men that Congress is not acting in the best interests of the country. Lutterloh, Benedict Arnold, and Thomas Conway, join Reizenstein and Lord Barbington in confronting Congress. Reizenstein describes the scene to Auguste:

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<sup>162</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 331: “Wie viel Washington beim Kongresse gilt, besonders bey dem itzigen Präsidenten Jay, können Sie daraus abnehmen, daß Conway bloß deswegen seinen Abschied erhalten hat, weil er in einem Briefe an einem Freund nicht zum Besten von dem General soll geurtheilet haben”

<sup>163</sup> Faust, 332 indicates that Lutterloh was made a colonel on Washington’s staff in 1777.

When your brother arrived with Lutterloh from one side before the meeting house of Congress, Arnold advanced from the other with his troops, Conway from the third, and I from the fourth side; we occupied all entrances, and as soon as the leaders went outside and the people had gathered across the street, over this extraordinary scene the slogan was shouted: "No Congress! No French tyranny!" The people joined in, and now we were victorious!<sup>164</sup>

With "the people" on their side, Reizenstein and his allies convince the members of Congress to step down and allow a national assembly that truly represents the people's interests to decide the future course of the country.

It is not clear why Seybold chose the historical figures Arnold, Lutterloh, and Conway to be the fictional Reizenstein's allies. Seybold published his novel before Arnold's plan to surrender West Point to the British was discovered in 1780. Reizenstein writes Auguste that "your brother's and General Arnold's regiments consisted for the most part of Germans."<sup>165</sup> Seybold does not indicate the source of this information. He may have also been aware of Arnold's key role in the Battle of Saratoga that resulted in the surrender of Burgoyne's army, including German troops under Baron von Riedesel. It is interesting that the group Seybold imagines confronting Congress consists of the German officers Reizenstein and Lutterloh and German-American troops serving under Lord Barbington and Arnold. Thus, freedom-loving Germans who have escaped French domination in Europe force a corrupt Congress to resign and save the American people from French control.

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<sup>164</sup> Seybold, *Reizenstein*, vol. 2 (1779), 397: "Als Ihr Bruder mit Lutterloh von der einen Seite vor dem Versammlungshause des Kongresses ankam, rückte Arnold von der andern mit den Seinigen, Conway von der dritten, und ich von der vierten Seite an; wir besetzen alle Zugänge, und sobald die Anführer hinaufgegangen waren, und das Volk indessen auf den Strassen über diesen ausserordentlichen Auftritt sich versammelt hatte, wurde die Losung gerufen: "Kein Kongreß! Keine französische Tyranny!" das Volk stimmte ein, und nun hatten wir gesiegt!"

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 383: "Ihres Bruders und des General Arnolds Regimens bestünden größtentheils aus Deutschen."

Although Seybold knows that Lutterloh is “ein Braunschweiger”<sup>166</sup> fighting for the Americans, he does not seem to know much else about him. According to Faust, Heinrich Emanuel Lutterloh was a “major of the guard of the Duke of Brunswick,”<sup>167</sup> which may explain why Seybold referred to him as Major instead of Colonel Lutterloh. The *Calendar of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by Isaac Minis Hays, contain summaries of several letters Lutterloh wrote to Franklin or the American Commissioners in Paris in January 1777.<sup>168</sup> Lutterloh offers to raise troops in Germany for service in America and outlines the “plans and conditions under which he will enter the American army.”<sup>169</sup> A letter dated March 6, 1777 from Jonathan Williams, Jr. to Franklin in Paris indicates that Major Lutterloh had arrived in Nantes and expected free passage to America. Williams asks Franklin’s “advice on this point.”<sup>170</sup> In a letter to Franklin dated March 25, 1777, Williams informs Franklin that an order from the English ambassador arrived “which would have obliged Major Lutterloh’s return to his regiment had he not already embarked.”<sup>171</sup> There is no reason to think Seybold was aware of Franklin’s correspondence with and about Lutterloh, but Seybold certainly knew that Lutterloh, like his fictional Reizenstein, had volunteered to fight for the Americans. Seybold may have read about Lutterloh in a letter published in Schlözer’s *Briefwechsel*. In a letter dated January 5, 1778, a German officer imprisoned in Cambridge writes: “By

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>167</sup> Faust, 332.

<sup>168</sup> Isaac Minis Hays, ed., *Calendar of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1908), 198-99; 204.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

way of comfort . . . we have received greeting from Major Lutterloh [*sic*], formerly in the Brunswick service, but now Quartermaster-General in Washington's army."<sup>172</sup>

According to Faust, Washington made Lutterloh the first assistant quartermaster on his staff when he arrived in America in 1777 and appointed him quartermaster general in 1780, a post Lutterloh kept until the end of the war.<sup>173</sup> Seybold does not indicate that he knew the position Lutterloh held in the American army.

It is not clear why Seybold selected Thomas Conway as a member of this group. Conway was discharged by Congress when his letter critical of Washington was discovered. Kriegleder suggests that Seybold's mention of the Conway Cabal has an important function "since it refers to the future revolt of the conspiring generals."<sup>174</sup> Perhaps because Washington is backed by Congress and has the French soldier Lafayette as a trusted adviser, Washington could not lead the revolt against Congress and French rule, although Seybold does not specifically address the issue.

Although Seybold shows some awareness of historical events and people pertaining to the American Revolution, he plays fast and loose with the facts, throwing out names and events here and there but relying, for the most part, on his imagination. Of course, the majority of his readers in Germany probably did not know what was fact and what was fiction, given the fact that they had the same news sources Seybold did, and in a sentimental novel, they probably did not care. Nevertheless, Seybold mixes love stories, tragedy, and melodrama with an impassioned critique of the status quo in Germany, revealing the frustrations and concerns of a *Bürgertum* with far more to

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<sup>172</sup>Schlözer, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 4, no. 24 (1779), 341; Stone, 160.

<sup>173</sup>Faust, 332.

<sup>174</sup>Kriegleder, 321: "da sie auf den künftigen Putsch der verschworenen Generäle verweist."

complain about than most of the colonists in America. For Seybold, America provides a blank slate on which he can imagine a society that not only recognizes the value of the middle class but also gives it the opportunity to thrive. Although Seybold probably never visited America, he seems to have gleaned from everything that he read about the country, from Schlözer's translation of Fenning's geography to articles in *Die Deutsche Chronik* and Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, that America was an immense land that could not be easily controlled by government and church officials in league with a ruling aristocracy. Seybold seems to have believed that there was enough space in America to form a society of family and friends free from the machinations of striving, ambitious people. Nevertheless, he could not imagine a society without patronage. In Seybold's novel, as in Weppen's play, the German soldier's virtue and heroism are rewarded by marriage to a wealthy American woman. Thus, Seybold contributes to the myth of an American utopia where German virtues are recognized and rewarded by well-to-do Americans.

## CHAPTER 4

## CONCLUSION

Johann August Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* and David Christoph Seybold's *Reizenstein* are just two examples of German popular literature that used America and the American Revolution as a mirror for German idealism and discontent. These works reflect the popular discourse about America that was being carried on throughout Germany, and a comparison of the two works reveals how that discourse varied by territory or region of Germany. Weppen, writing in the pro-British electorate of Hanover, is skeptical of American idealism and patriotism, and his critique of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel is indirect and subtle. Seybold, writing in Württemberg where pro-American sentiments were widespread, passionately condemns German princes for selling their subjects to Great Britain but initially questions American idealism before embracing the American cause. Both works indicate that their writers kept abreast of current developments in America and that the information they received was spotty and often biased. Nevertheless, both writers perceived America as a country of enormous possibility for Germans having problems at home. While Weppen's goal is more to entertain than enlighten, he still presents America as a place where German virtue is rewarded with material wealth and favorable connections. Although Seybold imagines an enlightened society in America that he hopes could eventually be implemented in Germany, he portrays America as a place where Germans can enjoy a peaceful, prosperous agrarian life and favorable connections. In both works, the hero is a member of the German *Bürgertum* whose virtue and nobility of character do not ensure his material success in Germany. Thus, Weppen and Seybold, both solid members of the



German *Bürgertum*, contribute to the myth of an American utopia that recognizes and rewards middle-class virtues.

Two works in the Jantz Collection at Duke University that offer still different perspectives on America and the American Revolution are Johann Christoph Krauseneck's *Die Werbung für England (Recruiting for England)* and I. Maillard's *Der Unglückliche Walter oder Leiden und Verfolgungen eines Deutschen in Amerika (Unfortunate Walter or the Suffering and Persecution of a German in America)*.

Krauseneck's play, published in 1776, and Maillard's novel, published in 1798, offer two more examples of the popular discourse about America that was being carried out in Germany and point to the significance of publication date in terms of a writer's attitude toward and knowledge about America. Unfortunately, background information on neither author could be found. Neither is listed in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, a source of information on both Weppen and Seybold.

While Weppen and Seybold use America and the American Revolution to promote a recognition of middle-class values, Krauseneck used the conflict to demand that the princes recognize the humanity of their poorest and most oppressed citizens. *Die Werbung für England*, a sixty-four-page country comedy in one act, was published in Bayreuth in 1776 about six months before the Margrave of Ansbach and Bayreuth concluded his treaty with England, and according to Dippel was "very popular."<sup>1</sup> The play centers around the Brawe family, whose forty-something-year-old father is being forced to enlist in the army for service in America. Father Brawe, a poor farmer, served in the Margrave's army fifteen years earlier and is now the sole support for his wife and two daughters, Lise, 16, and Röschen, 10. His only son died two months earlier, and he

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<sup>1</sup>Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 119, 129.

worries about leaving his family in poverty. Although Krauseneck declares in stage directions at the beginning of the play that “the scene is not in Franconia,”<sup>2</sup> the name of the village is revealed later in the play as Wiesenttal, which is southwest of Bayreuth and northeast of Ansbach. In the play, Mother Brawe criticizes the prince for the hardships he imposes on his poor subjects who cannot pay the taxes he demands after a recent agricultural disaster. When she finds out that Father Brawe is being forced into military service, she asks: “And the prince is not ashamed of himself, of selling you also? Does he not feel, not consider making women and children miserable while he hurls so many fathers, mothers, brides in despair? Ha! the hard, inhuman hearts of the powerful.”<sup>3</sup> Mother Brawe asks how the princess would feel if her husband were ripped from her arms, driven away, and felled in battle, leaving her poor in a corner without hope and help. Frustrated that her prince does not recognize poor subjects as human beings, Mother Brawe asks, “Have we no gift of feeling, no right to humanity, no parent’s heart?”<sup>4</sup> In the same vein, Mother Brawe later asks, “And is the life or death of his subjects nothing to him? Their misfortune or prosperity nothing?”<sup>5</sup> Through Mother Brawe, Krauseneck voices the modern, Enlightenment view that princes should serve their people and concern themselves with the welfare of their subjects. Father Brawe, however, voices the tradition of princely prerogative when he replies, “We are here but to

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<sup>2</sup> Krauseneck, *Die Werbung für England*, 2: “Die Scene ist nicht in Franken”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 17-18: “Und der Fürst schämt sich nicht, auch dich zu verkaufen? Fühlts nicht, bedenkt nicht, trostlose Weiber und Kinder zu machen, indem er so viele Väter, Mütter, Bräute in Verzweiflung stürzt? Ha! die harten, unmenschlicher Herzen der Großen!”

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 19: “Also haben wir keine Gabe des Gefühls, kein Recht auf Menschlichkeit, kein Aeltern herz?”

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 25: “Und ist ihm seiner Unterthanen Leben oder Tod nichts? Ihr Unglück oder Wohlstand nichts?”

obey the prince, to serve, even if it does not please us.”<sup>6</sup> Mother Brawe tells her husband she could accept that point of view of their country were being attacked and the prince needed him to defend it but that the American war does not concern them.

Krauseneck contrasts the callousness of the prince with Captain Stromberg, the officer Father Brawe served under fifteen years earlier. Father Brawe had hoped that Stromberg would be able to keep him off the enlistment rolls this time, but when he finds out that the captain is recruiting in a village ten miles away, he realizes that he will have to serve again. In the end, Captain Stromberg appears just before the new recruits are to march out of the village, and he is able to exchange two of his own recruits for Father Brawe and the teenage neighbor, Fritz, whom Lise loves. When Father Brawe sees Captain Stromberg, he exclaims, “Ach! This gentleman doesn’t misunderstand. He loves all people!”<sup>7</sup> Unlike the prince, who does not see his subjects as human beings, Captain Stromberg got to know and respect Father Brawe during the eight years they served together in the army. During one campaign, Father Brawe saved Stromberg’s life when he carried him wounded from the battlefield, held his wound shut for half an hour, and then spent a month nursing him back to health. Captain Stromberg, unlike the prince, recognizes Father Brawe’s intrinsic value and knows that had it not been for the courage and loyalty of Father Brawe, he would have died from his wounds. When Mother Brawe tells him how much Father Brawe still talks about him and admires him, Captain Stromberg exclaims: “Good, splendid human heart, completely worthy of my love, my friendship.”<sup>8</sup> Like Seybold, who portrayed Baron Roth as the quintessential

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 19: “Wir sind aber da, dem Fürsten zu gehorchen, zu dienen, wenn es auch nicht behagt.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 61: “Ach! dieser Herr nimmt euch nicht übel, der liebt all Menschen!”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 53: “Gutes, vortrefliches Menschenherz, ganz meiner Liebe, meiner Freundschaft würdig!”

enlightened patriarch, Krauseneck upholds Captain Stromberg as the model for enlightened leadership. The play ends with Father Brawe exclaiming, “Great God! how happy the territories would be if their princes thought like Captain Stromberg!”<sup>9</sup> and Mother Brawe responding, “And her subjects were as honorable as Brawe!”<sup>10</sup> Krauseneck envisions a country in which ruler and ruled live in a mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship.

In *Die Werbung für England*, Krauseneck directly and forcefully addresses the sale of German troops to the British, pointing out the hardships it imposes on honest, hard-working Germans already suffering under the burden of heavy taxes and crop failures. Krauseneck demands that his audience look at the people being rounded up for service in America as human beings with families who need them more than their prince does. Krauseneck rejects princely prerogative and the status quo view that the people serve the prince and promotes an enlightened paternalism in which leaders consider not only their own needs but also the needs of their subjects.

Although the American Revolution and the recruiting of troops to serve there is the catalyst for Krauseneck’s condemnation of princely abuses, America is not presented as a desirable destination for oppressed Germans. The only character who is happy about the campaign in America is Fritz’s father, Knaus, who thinks “his Fritz will come back a rich man.”<sup>11</sup> Ten-year-old Röschen overhears Knaus tell their father about the natural abundance in America and, quoting Knaus, tells Lise: “Neighbor Brawe, he spoke further, what there is to fish, what to grab! Gold and precious stones and sugar and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 64: “Großer Gott! wie glücklich wären die Länder, wenn ihre Fürsten, wie Hauptmann Stromberg dächten!”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 64: “Und ihre Unterthanen lauter Brawe wären!”

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 7: “sein Friße wird als ein reicher Mann zurtück kommen.”

coffee enough! And for those who want to stay there, land and fields as long and wide as our official district.”<sup>12</sup> Not everyone believes these reports about America, as Lise reveals when she replies, “The newspapers have made Knaus crazy.”<sup>13</sup>

Krauseneck, like Seybold, deplores the current social and economic conditions in Germany, but unlike Seybold, he does not use America as a screen for projecting his fantasies of a future Germany. Instead, Krauseneck rejects the myths about America that are being printed in the newspapers and modestly demands that princes start considering the needs of their poorest subjects. Since the first German troops did not arrive in America until August 1776 and *Die Werbung für England* was published in July 1776, Krauseneck was not privy to the letters and reports of German officers serving in America. Had he been aware of those firsthand accounts describing the prosperity of the inhabitants and the vastness of available land, he may not have written so disparagingly about America.

While Krauseneck shows little interest in America, Maillard, writing in 1798, presents America as the reward for the patient suffering of a German man persecuted by his guardian in Germany and enslaved for six years in the diamond mines of Brazil. *Der Unglückliche Walter, oder Leiden und Verfolgungen eines Deutschen in Amerika* is a 184-page adventure novel that, at first glance, seems to be critical of America’s treatment of German immigrants. The title is misleading, however, since Walter’s suffering and persecution take place in Germany and South America, not the United States.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 5: “Nachbar Brawe, sprach er weiter, da ist was zu fischen, was zu kapern! Gold und Edelgesteine und Zucker und Caffee genug! Und für den, der da bleiben will, Land und Felder lang und breit, wie unser Amtsbesirk so groß.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 6: “Knausen haben die Zeitungen das Hirn verrückt.”

Walter's troubles begin when his parents die in an epidemic. He worries about who will care for him, support him, guide him, and have mercy on him when he makes mistakes, and his fears are well founded. His guardian plots to block Walter from inheriting his grandfather's ministerial position and from marrying the wealthy young woman, Karoline, whom Walter loves. His guardian, who wants his own son to marry Karoline, accuses Walter of murder and has him arrested. Walter is given the choice of going to prison and being executed or becoming a soldier and going to America. The officer who arrests Walter tells him: "Become a soldier! The American war is before the door. The prince from Y\* pays his people well, and in America you can make your fortune. There is money there like hay; there you can collect so much that you have enough all your life."<sup>14</sup> Thus Maillard, like Krauseneck and Weppen, addresses the myth about America as a land of easy riches. Walter, who has no desire to go to America, decides to become a soldier because he fears he will not get a fair trial in Germany. On the ship to America, however, he causes so much trouble and complains so loudly about leaving his fatherland and Karoline that he is whipped and transferred to a Portuguese ship bound for South America.

Taken to Rio de Janeiro as a criminal in chains, Walter is sentenced to death after a slave overseer plants a knife on him when he appears before the governor. After six years in the mines, Walter is about to be executed when his honest face arouses the sympathy of a young Inca girl and her mother. Zora and her mother, Zamire, introduce Walter to Kamillo Fernandez, an attorney who will plead Walter's case before the court in St. Salvador. Walter's death sentence is dropped, but the judges demand that Walter

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<sup>14</sup> Maillard, *Der Unglückliche Walter*, 21: "Werde Soldat! Der amerikanische Krieg ist vor der Thüre. Der Fürst von Y\* bezahlt seine Leute gut, und in Amerika kannst du dein Glück machen. Da gibts Geld, wie Heu, da kannst du dir so viel sammeln, daß du dein Lebetag genug hast.

leave Brazil and renounce his fatherland. When one of the judges asks him where he will go, Walter replies, "I will go to Pennsylvania . . . my fatherland is lost for me."<sup>15</sup> Walter, who has never mentioned Pennsylvania prior to this passage, departs for America with Fernandez, who tells him Zamire's story during their journey.

The next sixty-two pages are a novel within a novel as Maillard tells Zamire's story through Fernandez. Originally from Peru and the daughter of a noble Inca chief, Zamire migrated to the other side of the mountains with her husband, Zumena, when their tribe became too large for the land to support it. A new homeland was established with Zumena as the wise ruler and judge, and the tribesmen who migrated with Zumena and Zamire lived peacefully until Europeans arrived in search of precious metals. When Zumena rejected an alliance with the Europeans, telling their representative that the Incas did not need their wares because the Incas would be unhappy and poor if they had European needs, the European invaders attacked and destroyed the tribe, killing Zumena. Zamire and her children were captured, but instead of being enslaved like most of the other women and children, her captors recognized her nobility of soul and took Zamire and her children with them to Rio de Janeiro where she could be a model of virtue for the European women there. After her son fell overboard on the journey to Rio, Zamire became even more despondent and talked of wanting to die. Fernandez tells Walter that Zamire eventually realized that there were still a thousand useful things she could do, including saving Walter from being executed. Maillard's novel-within-a-novel presents Zamire as a Pocahontas-type savior whose aboriginal purity and simplicity of morals are respected by Europeans in tune with Rousseau's teachings on the state of nature.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 64: "Ich stimme für Pensylvanien, antwortete ich, mein Vaterland ist für mich verloren."

Fernandez counsels Walter not to be angry about his past misfortunes but to learn from them and find the path that Providence wants him to take. Fernandez tells Walter, “Misfortune is the best school of wisdom for people.”<sup>16</sup> Soon after, Fernandez gets sick, but before he dies he tells Walter that when he arrives in Pennsylvania he wants him to see his friends Franklin, Washington, and Adams, the founders of their country and “the admiration of Europe and the objects of America’s worship and love.”<sup>17</sup> When Walter arrives in Pennsylvania, he immediately goes to Washington, who asks to hear the story of Walter’s sorrows. Walter states that Washington was amazed and astonished by his story and that his pale face and the scars on his hands from being chained convinced Washington that his story was true.

Washington replaces Fernandez as Walter’s patron and benefactor when he exclaims: “I welcome you, dear, suffering stranger! My house is a place of refuge for the unfortunate! Be my son! I want to be your father. Stay with me, and I want to help you get established. You shall again find your lost friend in me.”<sup>18</sup> Washington, as America’s most famous representative, welcomes Walter and offers his house, or America, as a place of refuge. Washington introduces Walter to his friends, Americans whom Walter describes as “simple, happy people.”<sup>19</sup> Washington provides wooded land for him to buy at a low price, which Walter clears and cultivates with the help of his friends, and in a short time his fields are bearing a hundredfold. Thus, Maillard presents

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 133: “Das Unglück ist die beste Schule der Weisheit für den Menschen.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 136: “die Bewunderung von Europa und die Gegenstände der Verehrung und Liebe von Amerika”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 139: “Sey mir willkommen, lieber, leidender Fremdling! Mein Haus ist ein Zufluchtsort für Unglückliche! Sey mein Sohn! Ich will dein Vater seyn. Bleibe bey mir, ich will für deine Einrichtung sorgen, du sollst deinen verlorren Freund in mir wieder finden.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 141: “einfachen, glücklichen Volkes”



America as a welcoming refuge for Germany's oppressed where cheap land is available and kind, helpful Americans will help immigrants get established.

After three years in America, Walter enjoys peace and prosperity and the return of good health, but he cannot stop thinking about Karoline and wondering how she is. Franklin, who is also Walter's friend, advises Walter to find a wife, telling him that for men who marry, "everything becomes dearer to them, their work, their joy, their spiritual education" and that "domestic happiness is the source of bliss."<sup>20</sup> When Walter confesses to Franklin his love for Karoline, Franklin finds out that she is living with an older American couple six miles away, and he unites the long-lost lovers.

Walter and Karoline live together in domestic bliss for fourteen years and have three children before an epidemic kills Karoline. Feeling the need to distract himself, Walter takes his children back to Germany for a visit, leaving his property for a Quaker neighbor to manage while he is gone. Back in Germany, Walter states, "The sight of my fatherland was to me a glance into a different world."<sup>21</sup> Although Walter has wanted to show his children where their parents were born, he realizes that Germany no longer offers anything for him or his children. Walter feels a "longing for America" and his children want to return "to their fatherland," which is America.<sup>22</sup> Walter returns home to America where he finds out that Franklin has died, and he mourns for both Karoline and Franklin.

A year after his return from Germany, Walter becomes a member of Congress, despite his own reservations about being unprepared for the position. The novel ends

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 143: "alles wird ihnen theurer werden, ihre Arbeiten, ihre Freuden, ihre Geistesbildung"; "Das hausliche Glück is die Quelle der Glückseligkeit."

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 180: "Der Anblick meines Vaterlandes war mir ein Blick in eine andere Welt."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 182: "Sehnsucht nach Amerika"; "nach ihrem Vaterland"

with Walter's summary of the rest of his life in America. Walter states:

I worked with untiring enthusiasm, more concerned with the prosperity of the states than my own prosperity, and I can say without arousing suspicion that I am seeking glory, that I have contributed no small share in the precautions and measures that have raised this country to one of the most blessed on earth. My daughters grow like flowers that promise to blossom gloriously, and they are already engaged to noble, virtuous young men from well-to-do and rich houses and I—I look with a calm and serene glance at my grave.<sup>23</sup>

Walter has thrived and prospered in an America that not only welcomed him but also recognized him as a selfless leader whose wisdom and past suffering could help guide the young nation. Walter, the victim of persecution in Germany and South America, can help create laws to protect the innocent and ensure that a decent standard of living is available for those willing to work. His own children look forward to a prosperous, happy future in America that was denied Walter in Germany.

Unlike Weppen and Seybold, whose *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* and *Reizenstein* are set during the American Revolution, Maillard skips over the war and presents the United States as a *fait accompli*. Although Walter is enlisted as a soldier and put on a ship to America, he ends up spending six years in Brazil's diamond mines. When he finally arrives in America, the war is over. Maillard does not wrestle with the same doubt and skepticism toward American idealism and patriotism that Weppen presents in his play and Seybold initially suggests in his novel. Unlike Weppen and Seybold, who intersperse historical details with their fictional narrative and seem to be grappling with the American war and what it means to Germans, Maillard presents America as an idyllic paradise where good, honest people work hard and prosper. There is no conflict and

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 183-84: "Ich arbeitete mit unermüdeten Eifer, ließ mir die Wohlthat des Staates mehr am Herzen liegen, als meine eigene, und ich kann, ohne mich der Ruhmsucht verdächtig zu machen, sagen, daß ich an den Vorkehrungen und Anstalten, wodurch dieses Land zu einem der gesegnetsten der Erde erhoben ward, keinen geringen Antheil habe. Meine Töchter wachsen wie Blumen heran, welche die herrlichste Blüthe versprechen, sie sind bereits an edle, tugendhafte Jünglinge aus ansehnlichen und reichen Häusern . . . verlobt und ich—ich sehe mit ruhigem und heitern Blicke auf mein Grab."

there are no competing ideologies in Maillard's America. Once Walter arrives in America, all his suffering ends.

Maillard's glowing depiction of the United States as an Eden for the common man coincides with Horst Dippel's assessment that, in the 1790s, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, Germany's enlightened, educated *Bürgertum* tended to idealize America as a middle-class utopia. The violence of the French Revolution and its degeneration into mob rule frightened reform-minded Germans who contrasted the excesses of the French Revolution with the perceived orderliness and moderation of the American Revolution. While America had been portrayed before the American Revolution as a land of easy riches where gold lay on the ground waiting to be gathered, during the war the myth emerged that Americans were a happy, prosperous people enjoying the fruits of their labor with a minimum of government interference.<sup>24</sup>

Both Weppen and Seybold contributed to the development of this popular image of America. Writing during the American Revolution, they confronted the old myths about America. Weppen discounted the myth of America as a land of easy riches, and Seybold confronted the stereotype of wild, barbaric Americans. Both men used new information available about America from geographies, newspaper reports, and firsthand accounts of German officers serving there to reassess America and create an updated image of the country for their German audiences. Both men portrayed an America where wealthy, educated people appreciated the talents and virtues of German citizens and enjoyed a prosperity only dreamed about by the majority of Germany's *Bürgertum*. Unlike Maillard's post-Revolutionary novel, which presents a glowing account of a conflict-free, middle-class utopia, Weppen and Seybold do not completely idealize

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<sup>24</sup> Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution*, 288-311.

America. Weppen questions American patriotism and idealism with a pragmatist's view of America's material abundance. Seybold demonizes the American Congress and its French allies before putting forth his vision of an American utopia that is quite different from the property-based American society that was idealized in Germany.

Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* and Seybold's *Reizenstein* were two small pieces in Germany's popular discourse about America. Both works show how myths about America changed under the influence of news reports and letters sent home during the American Revolution. Weppen's play and Seybold's novel extended the range of selected news reports and letters, offering new perspectives about America to a wider popular audience and stimulating further interest in the new country. Both works contributed to the reassessment of America that began with the American Revolution, intensified with the arrival of German troops to serve in the conflict, and evolved during America's early national period. Confronted with the negative outcome of the French Revolution, German reformers looked at America as a model for reform and tended to idealize the country, ignoring or overlooking the struggles that were taking place in the new republic. As conditions deteriorated in Germany during the Napoleonic era, many Germans began looking at America not as a model for German reform but as a refuge from Europe's ills. Over the course of more than fifty years, a popular image had evolved of America as a welcoming asylum that offered abundant lands and prosperity, and beginning in 1830, with the Napoleonic wars over and the continental blockade lifted, German immigrants began pouring into the country. Over the course of the nineteenth century, approximately five million Germans immigrated to America.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2000), 447.

Undoubtedly, Weppen's *Der hessische Officier in Amerika* and Seybold's *Reizenstein* contributed to the popular image of America that eventually resulted in these mass migrations.

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