

Karl J. R. Arndt

In Commemoration: The Bicentennial of the First Treaty between the United States and Prussia

September 10, 1985, marked the two hundredth anniversary of the day on which Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin concluded an epoch-making treaty with Frederick the Great of Prussia. Frederick the Great was a friend of the American Revolution who had not sold any of his citizens to King George to fight our young nation in its battle for independence. Baron von Steuben, who had been an officer in Frederick's service, helped to organize the colonists' army into a disciplined fighting force. George Washington was one of the many outstanding men of that time who celebrated this Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the two nations as one of the most important products of an enlightened age. The original copy of this great treaty formerly was framed and hung above the fireplace of the American Secretary of State. Of interest to us today because of Senator Hatch's bill to make English the official language of the United States is the fact that while Frederick was content to have his copy of the treaty written in French, the founding fathers Jefferson, Adams and Franklin insisted on having their copy of the treaty written in the *American* language! There was no German translation of this treaty until the author of these lines made it in 1977. The definitive trilingual edition of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce was published in Munich by the Heinz Moos Verlag in 1977.

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Original

Original

<p>Traité d'Amitié et de Commerce entre sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse et les Etats Unis de l'Amérique.</p>	<p>A Treaty of Amity & Commerce between his Majesty the King of Prussia & the United States of America</p>
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<p>Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse &c. &c. et les Etats Unis de l'Amérique desirant de fixer d'une manière permanente et equitable les regles qui</p>	<p>his Majesty the King of Prussia & the United States of America desiring to fix in a permanent & equitable manner the rules to be observed in their intercourse & commerce they</p>
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The opening and concluding lines of the original treaty

<p>le Pacte de leurs sceaux, aux lieux de leur domicile respectif ainsi qu'il sera expressément convenu. S. G. de Thulemeuf a la Haye le 10. Septembre 1785</p>	<p>their seals at the places of their respective residences and at the date, set forth under their several signatures.</p>
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Th. Jefferson
Paris July 22. 1785
 B. Franklin, John Adams.
 (20)
 The Hague, July 7. 1785. London August 6. 1785.

Cora Lee Nollendorfs

**Alexander R. Hohlfeld and the Wisconsin Project
on Anglo-German Literary Relations:
Defining the Role of a German Department in America**

As the field of German-American studies grows and develops, questions about its definition and boundaries arise both among its practitioners and those outside. Such questions are inevitable, especially because German-American studies is attempting to integrate materials and methodologies from a variety of disciplines. In a search for answers, it seems both natural and useful to investigate bases and forerunners of the field. Alexander R. Hohlfeld is such a forerunner. His Wisconsin Project on Anglo-German Literary Relations is an early attempt to expand the horizons of literary study; and his work suggests directions for research in our field which are still applicable today.

Not long ago, it would have been unnecessary to explain just who Hohlfeld was. A member of the German Department at the University of Wisconsin from 1901 to 1936, he was a leader not only of a major department but of the entire German-teaching profession. Even after his retirement, he remained active in scholarly and professional affairs until his death twenty years later. But in addition his associates and students, among whom B. Q. Morgan, Lawrence M. Price, Friedrich Bruns, Henry Nordmeyer, Heinz Bluhm, and Harold Jantz are familiar names, had spread out to all parts of the country and assumed leading positions in German departments and professional organizations and undertakings. Hohlfeld is in a real sense the father of German studies in America.

The Wisconsin Project on Anglo-German Literary Relations is even less widely known today than Hohlfeld. The project was, in fact, a group of doctoral dissertations done in the German Department at the University of Wisconsin between 1904 and 1939—a total of twenty-four, to which Hohlfeld adds one major M.A. thesis—all of which deal with the "interrelations between German literature and the literature of the English-speaking world" (Hohlfeld, "Wisconsin Project" 3). These dissertations were undertaken and completed under the supervision of

Hohlfeld. Representing roughly one-third of the total number of dissertations which Hohlfeld supervised, this group, the Wisconsin Project, is thus only part, but a major part, of the research work which was carried on by Wisconsin doctoral candidates in the field of German literature during Hohlfeld's time.

A native German with a degree from the University of Leipzig, Hohlfeld had been at Vanderbilt University before going to Madison, first teaching in Romance Languages, then as Professor of Germanic languages in a one-man German department, and finally in the capacity of Dean of the Academic Department. It was undoubtedly during his years at Vanderbilt that Hohlfeld first began to ask himself fundamental questions concerning his place and function within the American educational system and concerning the role of a German department in the United States.

His thinking was influenced—according to his own account—by two early experiences. The first was his acquaintance with the work of Max Koch in Anglo-German literary relations and comparative literature and the work of M. D. Learned in American-German literary and cultural relations.¹ The second was a passage from Goethe which states that a nation can really know itself only if it adds a survey of what foreign writers have to say to all the information available from within its own borders.² Goethe was referring specifically to the importance of the reception and criticism of German literature in foreign journals.

Hohlfeld quickly made these ideas and approaches his own. In 1902, during his first year in Madison, he published a two-part article in the *Pädagogische Monatshefte*, with the typically German title of "Der Literaturbetrieb in der Schule, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die gegenseitigen Beziehungen der englischen und deutschen Litteratur." Here he urges that in German literature courses at the introductory level reference should be made wherever possible to relationships and similarities to the literature of the English-speaking world (74-75). He suggests a historical treatment of the interrelation of English and German literature as a suitable and intriguing project (73). He deplors the lack of bibliographical works which would facilitate the study of literary relations (82). And he mentions specific points of contact between English and German literature which need to be included in an intermediate text for the American student of German literature (79-81). Hohlfeld's students later recognized in this work a major document in the historical development of the field of Anglo-German literary influences.³

Hohlfeld quickly added one more item to his agenda for an American German department. In 1905, he published an article in the *PMLA*—again with an ungainly title: "The Teaching of the History of a Foreign Literature. With a Long Introduction Justifying the Choice of the Subject." In this article he stresses the importance of literature in translation for international literary relations:

. . . even in books expressly prepared for English and American students or readers . . . the subject [of literature in translation] is slighted or

entirely omitted, as if it were of no great practical importance or as if, at any rate, we professional guardians of the study of foreign literatures had nothing to do with it. . . . But I do believe that we should encourage, direct, criticize, collect or edit such work wherever it is of high grade and high aim. (xlvii)

With this, Hohlfeld had outlined a number of directions which scholarship in the field of Anglo-German literary relations could take. These include: the creation of bibliographical tools to assist in the study of these relations, the study of the reception of English and American literature in Germany and of German literature in the English-speaking world, and the study of literature in translation. These are the directions we find represented in the dissertations which constitute the Wisconsin Project on Anglo-German Literary Relations.

The cornerstone of the Wisconsin Project was a group of six dissertations, bibliographical works with historical commentary, two on "German Literature in American Magazines," covering the period from the beginning to 1880, and four on "German Literature in British Periodicals," covering the period from 1750 to 1860. The bibliographies based on American magazines were undertaken first and resulted in dissertations from the years 1905 and 1906 by Scott H. Goodnight and Martin H. Haertel, which were published in the years 1907 and 1908, respectively.⁴ The bibliographies of German literature in British periodicals, though also begun early—the first dissertation on this topic was completed in 1908—went along at a slower pace, because of the larger scope of this undertaking, the death of one of the doctoral candidates, the withdrawal of another from the publication project, and the interruption caused by the First World War. About the time of Hohlfeld's retirement, however, Martha Nicolai's dissertation completed the basic work, and finally in 1949 *German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860* was published, a compilation of the dissertations of Walter Roloff (1912), Morton E. Mix (1920), and Martha Nicolai (1937), edited by B. Q. Morgan.⁵ This work not only represents a monumental amount of effort on the part of all who contributed to it, but also stands as a fitting memorial to Hohlfeld. Hohlfeld's "Foreword" to the volume is itself a major document, in which he presents his philosophy of German studies in America and puts his own career into historical perspective. To this collection of bibliographical dissertations, an important part of the Wisconsin Project, must be added one more of similar nature, John P. von Gruening's "Goethe in American Periodicals 1860-1900" (1931).⁶

Another part of the Wisconsin Project, a companion group to the bibliographical studies, is a series on the attitude of the English-speaking world to German literature. One of these is Mariele R. Schirmer's unpublished dissertation, "American Criticism of German Naturalistic Drama" (1929). To this group belong also Lillie V. Hathaway's dissertation, "The Attitude of England and America toward German Literature of the Mid-Nineteenth Century" (1926), which was published nine years later, and Heinz S. Bluhm's study on "The Reception of Goethe's 'Faust' in England in the Second Half of the

Nineteenth Century" (1932), the findings of which were published in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* in 1935.⁷ Another from this group is Bertha Mueller's dissertation "American Criticism of Recent German Literature," which was completed in 1935 and is interesting in retrospect because of its date and its unique historical perspective.

An even larger group of dissertations deals with the reverse side of the same coin, namely the question of the reception of English literature in Germany. Apparently Hohlfeld was not bothered at all by the question of where to draw the line with his "Anglo-German Literary Relations." Indeed, as early as 1902 he had argued in favor of studying the influence of the literature of both England and Germany upon that of the other nation (Hohlfeld, "Litteraturbetrieb" 78), and he continued to see all facets of the literary relationship between the English-speaking world and the German-speaking world as appropriate subject matter for the Wisconsin Project. Included here are Lawrence M. Price's dissertation on "The Attitude of the 'Grenzboten' toward English Literature," from 1911, and John Whyte's "Young Germany in its Relations to Britain," from 1915, both of which were published in full.⁸ Another such dissertation was Charles P. Giessing's study entitled "The Attitude of German Periodicals of the Eighteenth Century toward English Literature (1732-1780)," completed in 1917, part of which was published in *Modern Philology* in 1918.⁹ Hohlfeld speaks of Price and Giessing in the same breath—and with the same respect—and bemoans the fact that Giessing's career was cut short by "a soldier's death" toward the end of the First World War.¹⁰ The other two dissertations which belong to this group remained unpublished: Albert P. Martin's work on "Herder's Attitude toward English Literature," of 1917, and a very respectable study by Joseph E. Hawkins, "The Attitude of Two of the Leading German Periodicals of the Eighteenth Century toward England and Things English," which deals with *Teutscher Merkur* and *Deutsches Museum*, 1773-1810, and was completed in the year 1922.

Another group of dissertations from the Wisconsin Project studies translations of major authors from the English language to German or vice versa. The first of these was also the first dissertation which Hohlfeld supervised, Frederick W. Meisnest's work on "Wieland und Eschenburg als Shakespeare-Übersetzer," from 1904, the Wieland part of which was published in the *Modern Language Review*.¹¹ There followed two dissertations on "Goethe's Lyric Poems in English Translation," one covering the period up to 1860, and the other the period after 1860, by Lucretia Simmons and Stella M. Hinz. Both of these were published.¹² Another dissertation on matters related to translation remained unpublished, although it is a solid piece of work and one based on an intriguing idea. This is Paula M. Kittel's investigation entitled "English Translations as Commentaries on Debated Passages in Goethe's 'Faust'," which was completed in 1931. The last dissertation from this series, also unpublished, is Helen Emerson's work "The English Metrical Translations of Gerhart Hauptmann's Verse Dramas" (1937).

Finally, a miscellaneous group includes three unpublished dissertations: Rudolf Rieder's study of a German-American literary figure and

his publication, "Ein Bild Robert Reitzels und des 'Armen Teufels' aus seinem Verhältnis zur Literatur" (1918); Mary M. Bausch's "America in German Fiction, 1880-1914" (1921), a topic of interest for that period because of its implications for German immigration to this country; and Margaret Wright's dissertation entitled "A Comparative Study of the Historical Prose Fiction of Sir Walter Scott and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer" (1939), a topic which may properly belong to the field of comparative literature. Lastly, there is the one M.A. thesis, J. C. Andressohn's study, "Die literarische Geschichte des Milwaukeer deutschen Bühnenwesens, 1850-1911," completed in 1912 and published the same year in the *German-American Annals*.¹³ This topic is one which was of special interest to Hohlfeld, who collected materials for many years and hoped someday to work on the topic of "German Theater in America."

This then was the Wisconsin Project. Of the twenty-five contributions to it, eleven were published and four more were published in part. All are interesting in concept and scope, and some are indispensable as bibliographical tools. This large group of dissertations established a Wisconsin German Department tradition of research and scholarly contribution in the field of cross-cultural literary relations. The Wisconsin Project and the effort which it represented did not go unnoticed. John A. Walz, himself one of the leading figures in German-American studies, spoke in 1936 of the influence of German literature in educational and scholarly fields, adding that in other fields "there has been more influence than is generally assumed. A number of studies have appeared in recent years, especially at the University of Wisconsin, that show . . . a wide interest in German literature" (56).

The Wisconsin Project was meant to be an ongoing effort. Topics dealing with recent literature were not shunned, and extensions of the time limits of earlier studies were planned and begun. However, after Hohlfeld's retirement, no systematic continuation of his work along these lines was undertaken. Indeed, surprising though it may seem, members of the Madison German Department are not even familiar with the Wisconsin Project. There are other studies related to the Wisconsin Project, mainly postdoctoral work of Hohlfeld's students and associates. Foremost among these are B. Q. Morgan's *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation, 1481-1935* and Lawrence M. Price's *The Reception of English Literature in Germany*, both of which appeared in two editions.¹⁴ It should also be pointed out that recent dissertations from New York University done under the supervision of Volkmar Sander, which deal with the reception of German literature in American periodicals, bear striking resemblance to the type of research completed as part of the Wisconsin Project.¹⁵ As a matter of fact, they fill a gap which Hohlfeld himself had pointed out years earlier (Hohlfeld, "Wisconsin Project" 31). The work of Sander's students, however, does not appear to be a direct descendant.

The above report on Alexander R. Hohlfeld's Wisconsin Project on Anglo-German Literary Relations is intended to provoke discussion on the questions of "What is German-American studies?" and "What is

the proper role of a German department in America?" The Wisconsin Project owes its genesis and conception to Hohlfeld's persistent efforts to answer these questions. Hohlfeld viewed a German department at an American university as a transmitter of culture—above all literary culture—and set out to investigate all aspects of these cross-cultural literary relationships.

It is appropriate to close this survey with a statement by Hohlfeld which he identified as a "sort of professional credo." He states:

A department of German at an American university, or for that matter in any non-German institution of learning, should not pattern itself too closely, whether in its teaching or its research, on German procedures in either substance or method. Language and literature, like history and philosophy, and indeed all humanistic disciplines, are bound to assume different aspects when transferred from the national sphere of which they form a part, to become integrated in the culture of a foreign people. ("Wisconsin Project" 11)

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Notes

¹ Hohlfeld mentions specifically Max Koch's monograph, *Über die Beziehungen der englischen Literatur zur deutschen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883) and his work with the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*; also M. D. Learned's publication *Americana Germanica* and a seminar and a group of Ph.D. theses done under his supervision at the University of Pennsylvania (Hohlfeld, "Wisconsin Project" 10).

² From Goethe's essay "Fernerer über Weltliteratur." *Goethes Werke*, Weimarer Ausgabe, IV, vol. 46 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1908), p. 145. (Hohlfeld, "Wisconsin Project" 10).

³ Lawrence M. Price, *English-German Literary Influences: Bibliography and Survey*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 9 (Berkeley, 1919-1920). Price lists this article under "General Surveys," as serial number 8, p. 10.

⁴ Scott H. Goodnight, *German Literature in American Magazines Prior to 1846*, rpt. from *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin*, Philology and Literature Series 4 (Madison, 1907): 1-264; Martin H. Haertel, *German Literature in American Magazines 1846 to 1880*, rpt. from *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin*, Philology and Literature Series 4 (Madison, 1908): 265-452.

⁵ Walter Roloff, Morton E. Mix, and Martha Nicolai, *German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860*, ed. B. Q. Morgan and A. R. Hohlfeld (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1949). Not only Roloff, Mix, and Nicolai, but also J. L. Ruff and Frederick W. Oswald had a hand in this work. Ruff died before completing his dissertation, and Oswald withdrew from the project without "completing the necessary revision of his section" (Morgan 35). Morgan admits that the editorial task he faced in putting it all together was enormous (33).

⁶ Printed, in part, under the same title, in *PMLA* 50 (1935): 1155-64.

⁷ Lillie V. Hathaway, *German Literature of the Mid-Nineteenth Century in England and America, as Reflected in the Journals, 1840-1914* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1935); Heinz S. Bluhm, "The Reception of Goethe's Faust in England after the Middle of the Nineteenth Century," *JEGP* 34 (1935): 201-12.

⁸ Lawrence M. Price's dissertation was published as *The Attitude of Gustav Freytag and Julian Schmidt toward English Literature (1848-1862)* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1915). John Whyte's was published with unchanged title in the Ottendorfer Memorial Series of Germanic Monographs, 8 (Menasha, WI: George Banta, 1917).

⁹ Under the title "The Plagiarized Book Reviews of C. F. Weisse in the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften*," *Modern Philology* 16 (1918): 77-88.

¹⁰ Hohlfeld, "Wisconsin Project" 31. According to records in the German Department at the University of Wisconsin, Giessing died at Camp Dix in October of 1918.

¹¹ "Wieland's Translation of Shakespeare," *Modern Language Review* 9 (1914): 12-40.

¹² Lucretia v. T. Simmons, *Goethe's Lyric Poems in English Translation Prior to 1860*, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 6 (Madison, 1919); Stella M. Hinz, *Goethe's Lyric Poems in English Translation after 1860*, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 26 (Madison, 1928). The dissertations were completed in 1913 and 1925, respectively.

¹³ *German-American Annals* 10 (1912): 65-88 and 150-70.

¹⁴ B. Q. Morgan, *A Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation*, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 16 (Madison, 1922). Rev. and expanded 2nd ed. published as *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation, 1481-1935* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1938). For the 1st ed. of Lawrence M. Price's work, see note 3. The rev. 2nd ed. published as *The Reception of English Literature in Germany* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1932).

¹⁵ Wolfgang Heinsohn, "The Reception of German Literature in America as Exemplified by the *New York Times*. Part I: 1870-1918," Diss. New York U 1973; Alice Carse, "The Reception of German Literature in America as Exemplified by the *New York Times*. Part II: 1919-1944," Diss. New York U 1973; Eva Schlesinger, "The Reception of German Literature in America as Exemplified by the *Atlantic Monthly* 1919-1944," Diss. New York U 1976.

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