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## Artikel

HORST BREUER

Haupttext und Subtext in Shakespeares *The Merchant of Venice* ..... 1

**Abstract:** Chief literary works are rarely evenly structured, but often show a pattern of interior tension and inconsistency. Frequently, there is a surface stratum which confirms the values and stereotypes of the time, but is concomitantly disclaimed by a less visible layer of unpredictability and subversion. These conflicting dimensions may be called the “overt text” and the “subtext” of the work. A number of studies are quoted which have employed the concept of “subtext,” e.g. by Constantin Stanislavski, who coined the term, and by Meinhard Winkgens who clarified the approach theoretically and applied it to a reading of Charles Dickens’s *David Copperfield*. The present article then proceeds to analyse Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, and discusses the play’s conflicting elements and the range of discrepant interpretations. The overt text of the play presents the comedy of a genial group of Christian friends who are temporarily threatened by an outsider’s malevolence but are finally united in mirth, harmony and mutual love. The subtext suggests a less consciously shaped ‘recalcitrant’ strain of Jewish victimisation as well as Christian selfishness and superficiality. This double structure explains why the play has been read and staged in widely diverging ways, at one extreme as a brazenly anti-Jewish comedy, at the other as a problem play full of dark undertones and social critique.

FRANK MEHRING

Dissens in der Emigration: Der deutsch-amerikanische Abolitionist Karl Follen ... 21

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the role of Karl Follen in the New England abolitionist movement. Despite his efforts to overcome his reputation as a German radical political activist in exile, his protest against slavery has been continually linked to the assassination of August von Kotzebue by Karl Sand, one of Follen’s student followers. While biographers have focused on the continuity in Follen’s transatlantic search for freedom, this paper emphasizes the differences between the cultural environment in Germany and the United States, which ultimately determined the nature of Follen’s dissent. Working as a professor at Harvard University, Follen became an American citizen and adapted his ideas of destiny, promise and rhetorical prophecy to his new socio-political surroundings. Although he promoted revolution and even assassination during the German wars of liberation (1813-15), Follen turned into an Emersonian reformer advocating self-reliance, the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of women after his escape to America. In order to understand the dynamics of Follen’s dissent and non-violent approach regarding social reforms, the rhetoric of William Lloyd Garrison serves as a foil. While Follen desperately tried to become a representative American, his uncompromising advocacy for human rights based on the *Declaration of Independence* ultimately estranged him from many nativists who denounced him as a dangerous “foreign meddler.” It appeared as if German notions of freedom were incompatible with the American concept of democracy. This is why Follen’s controversial activities, his cultural contributions and their far-reaching repercussions need to be evaluated in the broader context of democratic vistas in German-American discourses.

WOLFGANG HOCHBRUCK

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**Abstract:** The texts that Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain wrote about his Civil War experience put him in various shifting and unstable positions, ranging from boy soldier to Confederate Veteran. Rather than try to find an elusive historical truth, the article treats all of these adopted roles as poses, reacting to a variety of personal and societal demands, and telling more about the textuality of the war than about Twain's biographical history, or his personal convictions. Among the texts under investigation are the well-known "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed" together with its lesser-known variations, as well as several public speeches from the 1870s to the "Lincoln Birthday Dinner Address" of 1901.

JOERG O. FICHTE

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**Abstract:** In the wake of Ellis Peters' first Brother Cadfael Chronicle, *A Morbid Taste for Bones* (1977), there has been a veritable boom in medieval mystery stories. Since all authors proclaim to write historical crime fiction, they combine the two genres of the historical novel and the detective story. In doing this, they create specific images of the Middle Ages. The notion of what is medieval and how the Middle Ages can be used as a site for crime fiction is the subject of the first part of this investigation. Parts two and three analyze the conventions adopted from the modern detective story, especially the Golden Age clue-puzzle story and the hard-boiled school, and their use in medieval mysteries.

KURT MÜLLER

Im Schatten der Geschichte: Neuere amerikanische Essayistik zu Deutschland und den Deutschen ..... 71

**Abstract:** The present paper is a contribution to imagological studies on the image of Germany and the Germans in current American discourses. It starts with a view on how this image is negotiated in contemporary American fiction, taking Walter Abish's *How German Is It* (1980) as a major example. In a further step, this analysis will be contextualized with the findings of recent research which has borne out that the image of contemporary Germany in current American discourses, apart from being influenced by a set of long-lived clichés and stereotypes, is still heavily shaped by Germany's Nazi past. The study will then focus on the image of Germany projected in various feature articles of the *New Yorker*, a magazine famous for its critical approach and its high intellectual standing. The analysis covers material from roughly a decade before and after reunification (1981-2003). A chapter will be devoted to the contributions of Jane Kramer, the magazine's long-standing German and European correspondent, who can be regarded as one of the most knowledgeable foreign observers of Germany today. The analysis will show that, in spite of their comparatively high level of sophistication, the discourse on Germany and the Germans in these articles is informed by a hermeneutics of suspicion that produces and perpetuates a somewhat static and less complex picture of contemporary Germany than one would wish for.

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