

A CENTURY OF SEALSFIELD SCHOLARSHIP

By ADOLF E. SCHROEDER

In 1939, writing "Ein Gedenkblatt zu Charles Sealsfields 75. Todestag: Der literarische Kolumbus der 'Neuen Welt,'" ¹ the University of Vienna's distinguished Germanist, Professor Eduard Castle, predicted the imminent rediscovery of the writer characterized by Heinrich Laube in 1835 as "Der neue Unbekannte," ² and subsequently as "Der Grosse Unbekannte der deutschen Literatur," ³ by those critics and reviewers who considered his ethnographical novels of America comparable to Scott's historical novels: in conception and vision, at least, and in their grasp of the American character and experience, if not always in actual realization.

Castle's optimism was no doubt founded upon the plans then underway for the celebration, in 1943, of Sealsfield's one hundred and fiftieth birthday. The first World War had resulted in the suspension of arrangements to publish a definitive edition of Sealsfield's works in the *Bibliothek deutscher Schriftsteller aus Böhmen* under the general editorship of Otto Heller. Commissioned in 1907 to prepare a "historisch-kritische Ausgabe," Heller reported that two of a projected eighteen volumes were ready for the printer when the war broke out, and the subsidies pledged by the Bohemian parliament to support the undertaking were annulled. In 1939 he expressed the hope that the "frustrated design of 1907" ⁴ would still materialize under American auspices, but he died two years later without seeing his hope realized. Castle, with the dedicated assistance of a private Sealsfield scholar and collector, Albert Kresse of Stuttgart, acquired much of the material accumulated for the Heller edition, and with the aid of a former student, Dr. Eduard Frank, persuaded the "Sudetendeutsche Anstalt für Landes- und Volkskunde" in Reichenberg, with the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Prague, to sponsor a new critical edition of Sealsfield's writings. An undated flyer of the publisher, Franz Kraus, announced publication of a proposed twelve volumes of *Gesammelte Werke* in the *Bibliothek Deutscher Schriftsteller aus Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien.* ⁵ A thir-

¹ Eduard Castle, "Der literarische Kolumbus der 'Neuen Welt.' Ein Gedenkblatt zu Charles Sealsfields 75. Todestag." *Solothurner Zeitung*, No. 119 (23. Mai 1939). Born Karl Postl at Poppitz in Moravia on March 3, 1793, Sealsfield attended schools in Znaim and in Prague, where he was admitted to the monastic order of the Knights of the Cross, ordained a priest, and soon rose to the rank of Secretary of the Order. He left Prague in April, 1823, and disappeared. Efforts of police to locate him were futile, and he arrived in New Orleans in August, 1823, remaining in Louisiana about five months before journeying up the Mississippi and Ohio Valleys to Pittsburgh and on to Kittanning, Pennsylvania. In October and November, 1825, he explored parts of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, and Mississippi. From late 1825 until July, 1826, he lived in Louisiana and acquired a passport as "Charles Sealsfield, Clergyman." Returning to Europe late in the summer of 1826, he made arrangements with the publisher Cotta to have his first account of his journey from Pennsylvania to New Orleans printed under the pseudonym "C. Sidons." The same work was published in London in 1827 as *The United States of North America*, and in 1828 *Austria as it is* appeared. For the next three years Sealsfield lived in the United States, traveled through the American Southwest, and served as editor of the French language newspaper *Courrier des Etats Unis* in New York. His first novel, *Tokeah, or the White Rose*, was published in Philadelphia in 1829. In December, 1880, he returned to Europe, established residence in Switzerland, and published a number of books having their setting in America, establishing his reputation as the founder of the German exotic novel. He made two brief visits to the United States, in 1837 and 1853, to look after his business interests. After his death in Switzerland, on May 26, 1864, his will identified Charles Sealsfield, "Citizen of North America," as the Austrian priest, Karl Postl who had disappeared forty years before.

² Heinrich Laube, *Moderne Charakteristiken*, vol. II (Mannheim, 1886), 344-354.

³ Alfred Meissner, "Der grosse Unbekannte der deutschen Literatur," *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 127 (1865).

⁴ Otto Heller and Theodore H. Leon, *Charles Sealsfield, Bibliography of his Writings* together with a classified and annotated Catalogue of Literature relating to his works and his life. Washington University Studies, New Series, Language and Literature, No. 8 (St. Louis, 1939), p. 2.

⁵ "Die neue kritische Postl-Ausgabe." Anzeige mit Bestellzettel vom Sudetendeutschen Verlag Franz Kraus, Reichenberg [1942].

teenth volume comprising letters, documents, and sources, and a biography, a projected fourteenth volume, were announced at the same time.

In 1941 the Vienna Bibliophile Society announced as its annual gift to its members Professor Eduard Castle's *Das Geheimnis des Grossen Unbekannten: Die Quellenschriften . . .*, evidently the work listed as Volume 13 in the planned definitive edition. It was not until 1943 that the book finally appeared, published by the Bibliophile Society itself in a limited edition of 180 copies. At that time Castle was nearing seventy and had spent almost a quarter of a century in research into the life and works of his fellow Austrian. It was in a mood different from the optimism he had shown four years earlier that he wrote of the circumstances that seemed to him to have conspired to maintain the mystery surrounding Sealsfield:

Seltsamerweise entschlüpft . . . , wo man anfasst, alles den Händen. Die Spuren verwischen sich, schon Aufgefundenes verliert sich, Vorhandenes verschwindet: es hat den Anschein, als ob das Geheimnis des Grossen Unbekannten nie ganz enthüllt werden soll.⁶

Nevertheless, *Die Quellenschriften* is a substantial contribution to Sealsfield scholarship, an extremely valuable source book, bringing together letters, documents, articles, and, in some cases, complete books and pamphlets from libraries, archives, and private collections, making available many works known previously only from annotations in bibliographies, unreliable summaries, or brief, and sometimes misleading, quotations. Unfortunately, of the 180 printed, there appear to be only two copies of *Die Quellenschriften* in American libraries at present.

In 1943 Professor Auguste Ravizé of Paris generously presented to Castle the correspondence and documents in his Sealsfield collection,⁷ gathered during many years of search in English and European libraries, and, according to the American scholar who was ultimately responsible for its publication, Castle was able to continue work on his monumental biography of Sealsfield during the difficult year that followed. *Der grosse Unbekannte: Das Leben*⁸ was completed in 1944.⁹ In the composing room when the printing house was destroyed, it was eventually released by the publisher who took over the house after the war and finally saw print in 1952, almost a decade after its completion, through the efforts of Dr. Karl J. Arndt and with the support of the United States and Austrian governments.

In *Der grosse Unbekannte*, Castle reported on the *Gesammelte Werke* announced by Kraus:

Der Satz der "Deutsch-amerikanischen Wahlverwandtschaften" war fertiggestellt und wurde bei der Einnahme Brünns zerstört. Wilhelm Frick-Verlag, Wien, beauftragte mit der Herausgabe der "Gesammelten Werke" Eduard Castle. "Das Kajütenbuch" zur Matrizierung nach Prag gesandt, ging dort verloren; "Süden und Norden" ist in zwei Teilen 1947 erschienen. Die Hoffnung auf die Reichenberger wie auf die Wiener Ausgabe muss derzeit aufgegeben werden.¹⁰

Although hope for an edition of the works was once more given up, the important companion volume to the biography, *Briefe und Aktenstücke*, was published in 1955, the year of Castle's eightieth birthday, bringing to full fruition in three volumes of some two thousand pages, the

⁶ Eduard Castle, *Das Geheimnis des Grossen Unbekannten. Die Quellenschriften* mit Einleitung, Bildnis, Handschriftenproben und ausführlichem Personen- und Sachregister (Wien, 1943), p. xxxvii. Subsequently cited as *Quellenschriften*.

⁷ E. Castle, *Quellenschriften*, p. xii.

⁸ Eduard Castle, *Der grosse Unbekannte. Das Leben von Charles Sealsfield* (Karl Postl) (Wien & München, 1952). 727 pp.

⁹ Karl J. Arndt, Review of: Eduard Castle, *Der grosse Unbekannte, Monatshefte*, XLV (1953), p. 163.

¹⁰ Castle, *Der grosse Unbekannte*, p. 692.

result of a life-time interest in unraveling the mystery of Sealsfield, of whom he had first heard during his gymnasium days.

Although there is considerable justification for Castle's 1943 observation regarding the frustrations that have faced Sealsfield scholars attempting to bring the life and writings of this most important of German-American writers into proper focus, in reviewing Castle's own work and the important studies toward a new biography by Karl Arndt which have appeared in the past two decades, what emerges as the incredible factor in Sealsfield scholarship is how much has been discovered and recovered to throw light on his problematic life and how many of his casual statements it has been possible to verify. When Sealsfield died, in May of 1864, the secret of his identity had been kept for more than forty years, often at serious cost to the reputation which his works had gained for him in America, as well as in Germany, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. As early as 1837, in the letter to Joel Poinsett, discovered in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania by Harold Jantz, Sealsfield spoke of this reputation: ". . . my literary works . . . however undeservedly, have gained me the surname of the Second Great Unknown."¹¹ That his American fame was not in his imagination but had in actuality provided him with, as he said, "baskets" of newspapers and periodicals with notices and reviews of his works and speculations about his identity, discounted by Friedrich Kapp in 1880 as "moonshine" calculated to impress his German readers,¹² has been proven in recent years by the fruitful search through American journals and newspapers undertaken by Arndt in preparation for his biography.¹³ There can be little doubt that Sealsfield's refusal to discuss the possibility of an American edition of his work with Appleton on the occasion of his last trip to the United States in 1853¹⁴ was at least partially inspired by a need to recover the anonymity in which the secret of his origin, becoming more oppressive to him as he grew older, would be safe, although as Arndt and Jantz have pointed out there were other important reasons for his silence: Outrage at American publishers who had pirated his works, a realization that the America he had tried to portray no longer really existed,¹⁵ or, in Jantz's view, the possibility that he was acting as an agent for the United States or France and did not want to draw attention to himself.¹⁶ Certainly the lack of available American editions of his work has resulted in his neglect by American literary historians or in a limited recognition of his significance and contribution, such as that of Edwin Gaston, who concluded that because no other writer attempted an ethnographical novel of the Southwest, this emphasis in Sealsfield's work is insignificant and the concept unimportant.¹⁷ Gaston includes *The Cabin Book* as one of the forty novels considered in *The Early Novel of the Southwest*,¹⁸ possibly because it is listed in J. Frank Dobie's bibliography of Southwestern literature,¹⁹ and contends that Sealsfield's attitude toward Texas and its inhabitants was prejudiced because he pointed out that in Texas "we are in a country, like all countries without a government," and

¹¹ Harold Jantz, "Charles Sealsfield's Letter to Joel R. Poinsett," *Germanic Review*, XXVII (1952), p. 164.

¹² Friedrich Kapp, "Deutsch-amerikanische Wechselbeziehungen," *Deutsche Rundschau*, XXV (1880), p. 104.

¹³ Karl J. Arndt and Henry Groen, "Sealsfield The 'Greatest American Author,'" *The American-German Review*, VII (June, 1941), 12-15. See also Arndt, "Charles Sealsfield, The Greatest American Author," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, October, 1964, p. 249-259.

¹⁴ Charles Sealsfield, Letter of 25 April 1854 from New York to Erhard, in: Castle, *Briefe und Aktenstücke* (Wien, 1955), p. 286.

¹⁵ Arndt & Groen, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁶ Jantz, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

¹⁷ Edwin W. Gaston, Jr., *The Early Novel of the Southwest* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1961), p. 68.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁹ J. Frank Dobie, *Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest*. Rev. ed. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1952).

had to "receive whatever came, even the dregs and outcasts of other countries."²⁰ That Sealsfield was making in this instance an objective observation is borne out by Philip Paxton, an admirer of *The Cabin Book*, who wrote in 1859 of the widespread use of "G. T. T." for "Gone to Texas" in the 1838's and '39's,²¹ and, more recently by Allen Walker Read,²² who documents the prevalence of "G. T. T." from Maine to Louisiana to indicate that the free state became a haven for those who for one reason or another found it expedient not to stay where they were.

Indeed, although Sealsfield was capable of seeing some of the inhabitants of the Southwest as what Gene Baro has called "resistant stereotypes" of the South,²³ among them, the Negro slave, and his general view of America coincided with that formulated by David Biron Davis in an excellent study of *Homicide in American Fiction, 1798-1860*, as "the generalized image of America in the eyes of foreign peoples from the 18th century to the present ... a phantasmagoria of violence ... a country of innocence and promise ... of easy going friendliness ... which has glorified personal whim and impulse ... and has ranked hardened killers with the greatest of folk heroes,"²⁴ he was, as Jantz points out, also a first rate practitioner of the "new journalism";²⁵ a realistic writer fully a generation before the development of realism. As a point in fact, Sealsfield had his Alcalde in *The Cabin Book* speak of the Texan as a special American, larger than life-size, with the capacity to become what the journalist of the 1960's, John Bainbridge, was to call "the Super American."^{25b} If today's journalist sometimes sees "the Texan" as more akin to Mike Fink than Davy Crockett, the Alcalde recognized this as a definite possibility, although he hoped for an ideal and heroic westerner. Whatever Sealsfield's faults of organization, his work did not, to use a term of Dobie's "betray rather than reveal life,"²⁶ as did that of many of his contemporaries, and it is unfortunate that he did not prepare the new American edition of his work that would have made him more generally known in the United States.

Sealsfield's identity did not come to light, in spite of periods of his early life in America when he was careless to conceal it, until his will was opened in June of 1864, and he was found to have left his estate to the Postl family of Poppitz. This led to his eventual connection with Karl Postl, Secretary of the Order of the Cross, whose disappearance while on leave from the monastery at Prague set off an intensive search for him throughout Austria and gave rise to the rumors regarding an alleged embezzlement of funds from the order, first heard by his brother, Joseph Postl, on a street in Prague on May 29, 1823,²⁷ revived after his death,²⁸ and finally disproved by the records of the order, although it was the Provost of the order, Josef Pannosch, who advanced the curious theory that Sealsfield had killed "the Great Unknown," and appropriated his works.²⁹ Amid general speculation in the English and European papers regarding his true name, variously claimed to be Seefeld, Siegfelfeld, Seatsfield, and Sealsfeald, hasty re-

²⁰ Charles Sealsfield, *The Cabin Book; or, Sketches of Life in Texas*. Translated from the German by Professor Ch. Fr. Mersch (New York: J. Winchester, 1844), p. 55.

²¹ Philip Paxton (pseud.), *A Stray Yankee in Texas* (New York: Redfield, 1859), p. ix.

²² Allen Walker Read, "G. T. T.—Gone To Texas," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XXVII (1968), 228-228.

²³ Gene Baro, *After Appomatox. The Image of the South in its Fiction, 1865-1900* (New York: Corinrh Books, Inc., 1963), p. 10.

²⁴ David B. Davis, *Homicide in American Fiction, 1798-1880* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957), vii-viii.

²⁵ Jantz, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

^{25b} John Bainbridge, *The Super-Americans* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961). Also: (New York: Signet Book, T2243, 1963).

²⁶ Dobie, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

²⁷ Josef Postl, "Was ich über meinen Bruder Karl Postl Charles Sealsfield weiss," Salzburg, 23. 3. 1875, in: Castle, *Quellenschriften*, p. 266.

²⁸ W., "Der grosse Unbekannte." *Die Glocke* (5. Juli 1864), in: Castle, *Quellenschriften*, p. 87.

²⁹ Johannes Scherr, "Sealsfield-Postl," *Blätter im Winde* (1875), in: Castle, *Quellenschriften*, p. 297.

views of his works, and an uncritical serving up together of the few known facts and the many widespread rumors concerning his personal life, his identity gradually became known, leading to a renewed effort on the part of those who had associated with him, however casually, to get into print their remembrances of him and analyzations of his enigmatic life and character. Some, such as the novelist, Alfred Hartmann,³⁰ the pastor, Friedrich Hemmann,³¹ and Sealsfield's neighbor, retired teacher Müller-Gassmann, provided later biographers with generally reliable information concerning the last years in Switzerland, his financial affairs, and his statements regarding his earlier activities, which they had accepted with varying degrees of credulity. As early as 1865, a little book by Bernhard Wyss, *Aus Schule und Leben*,³² portrayed in one of its essays Sealsfield as he had been known to Müller-Gassmann and his family. The contributions of others who had known him, such as the Hungarian refugee, Karl Maria Kertbeny,³³ who claimed to have knowledge of Sealsfield's unpublished work, "a thick, yellowish manuscript of a diary," containing his reminiscences of Queen Hortense and Prince Louis Napoleon at Arenenberg, presumably written around 1832, and the sequel to *Süden und Norden*, to be titled *Osten und Westen*, were long considered to be wholly unreliable, probably because Kertbeny pretended a more intimate association with Sealsfield than other of his acquaintances, such as Elisabeth Meyer, believed to have been the fact. The assertions about the unpublished works were particularly suspect, although their existence was substantiated by Elisabeth Meyer,³⁴ for there was considerable contradiction in the statements of Hartmann, Hemmann, and others regarding the manuscripts. Hemmann bluntly denied³⁵ that Sealsfield would have burned them, as was reported by Hartmann and Kertbeny, and his evidence carried much weight with later scholars. As late as 1939, Heller stated that "Kertbeny's story about an agreement for the publication of "Ost und West" in three volumes, signed at Brügg in . . . 1844 . . . ," is doubtful,³⁶ but the actual existence of the contract with J. B. Metzlerssche Buchhandlung, in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv at Weimar, was brought to light by Arndt in 1942.³⁷

It was perhaps natural, in view of the confusion concerning his life, that Sealsfield research would for some time after his death have a biographical and bibliographical emphasis. In 1873 Albert Meissner published a biographical study, appending the short story "Die Grabesschuld" and aphorisms which he had found in a copy book obtained from Joseph Postl.³⁸ These are the only unpublished writings to have been located to this day. An enterprising young lawyer, Victor Hamburger, obtained from Sealsfield's publishers twenty-nine letters, including the important biographical letter of 1854 to Heinrich Brockhaus, a correspondence covering the period 1826 to 1854 and representing the first substantiation of the claims regarding his writing and publishing activities, which his Swiss acquaintances had

³⁰ Alfred Hartmann published a number of articles on Sealsfield, the most important of which appeared in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*, LVII (Stuttgart, 16. September 1864); see Castle, *Quellenschriften*, 106-118.

³¹ Friedrich Hemmann wrote from personal observations and after extensive inquiries in: *Gegenwart*, Nr. 36 (7. September 1878); *Nord und Süd*, X (September 1879); *Bohemia* (November 1887); *Nord und Süd*, L (Sept. 1889).

³² Bernhard Wyss, "Aus den letzten Tagen Charles Sealsfields," *Aus Schule und Leben* (Solothurn, 1865), in: Castle, *Quellenschriften*, 192-205.

³³ Karl Maria Kertbeny, *Erinnerungen an Charles Sealsfield* (Brüssel und Leipzig, 1864); also "Etwas über Uhland und Etwas über Sealsfield," *Die Gegenwart*, XIII (25. Mai 1878), in: Castle, *Quellenschriften*, 309-316.

³⁴ U[Elisabeth Meyer], "Der Dichter beider Hemisphären," *Daheim*, I (1864/65).

³⁵ F. Hemmann, "Etwas über Charles Sealsfield," *Die Gegenwart*, Nr. 36 (7. September 1878), in: Castle, *Quellenschriften*, p. 324.

³⁶ Heller & Leon, *Charles Sealsfield, Bibliography*, p. 44.

³⁷ Karl J. Arndt, "New Light on Sealsfield's *Cajütenbuch* and *Gesammelte Werke*," *JEGP*, XLI (April, 1942), p. 210.

³⁸ Alfred Meissner, *Die Grabesschuld*. Nachgelassene Erzählung von Charles Sealsfield (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 94-135.

viewed with some doubt. Hamburger also carefully checked the records of the monastery in Prague, to try to uncover the causes that motivated Postl to leave the order and showed the official attempts that were made to apprehend him.³⁹ Some attention was given to Sealsfield's literary significance, notably by Rudolf Gottschall,⁴⁰ who compared him to Stifter and lauded his nature descriptions and the originality and breadth of his cultural perspectives, and by Julian Schmidt who placed his work between that of the late Romantic and the "jungdeutsche" literature and perceived a resemblance to Balzac and Leopold Schefer.⁴¹ In general, however, evaluations of his work ranged from what Heller described as "inane adulation" to attacks for not doing, as Harold Jantz noted, what he had never intended to do.

It can be said that Sealsfield scholarship in America began with a brief dissertation submitted in 1892 to Johns Hopkins University by a twenty-two year old Ph.D. candidate, Albert B. Faust. *Charles Sealsfield: Materials for a Biography*⁴² was, to be sure, a sketchy preliminary study, but it pointed out the three general directions which subsequent Sealsfield scholarship was to take: Bibliographical and biographical, in the attempt to locate anonymously published works and to document statements Sealsfield made about his activities; linguistic, in the examination of the stylistic peculiarities resulting from Sealsfield's experiments with language, in which he believed that by avoiding Latin or French influences and "writing German according to English syntactical laws" he achieved a style that was more German "than the Latinized scholarly German,"⁴³ and his attempts to reveal by language ethnic, social, or regional characteristics; and historical and critical in the investigation of the influences affecting Sealsfield's writings as well as his impact on other writers.

Faust secured the important letters to Elisabeth Meyer, in abstracted form, the originals having been destroyed, as well as letters to Marie Meyer, both of which Hamburger had tried unsuccessfully to obtain.⁴⁴ First published in 1894, these and additional letters were appended to the first comprehensive biography of Sealsfield: *Charles Sealsfield . . . Der Dichter beider Hemisphären*,⁴⁵ published by Faust in Weimar in 1897. For over fifty-five years this work remained the standard biography, stimulating scholars in Germany, Austria, France, and the United States to further efforts to investigate in more depth and detail the territory mapped out.

During the next half-century a few German universities, notably Prag, München, Münster, and Wien⁴⁶ contributed dissertations offering detailed studies of Sealsfield's language, his nature descriptions, or the concept of

³⁹ Victor Hamburger, *Sealsfield-Postl. Bisher unveröffentlichte Briefe und Mittheilungen zu seiner Biographie* (Wien, 1879), pp. 3-15.

⁴⁰ Rudolf Gottschall, "Charles Sealsfield, ein literarisches Porträt," *Unsere Zeit*, I (April, 1865), 241-261.

⁴¹ Julian Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1896), V, 271-275.

⁴² Albert B. Faust, *Charles Sealsfield (Carl Postl). Materials for a Biography; a study of his Style; his Influence upon American Literature* (Baltimore, 1892), 53 pp.

⁴³ Kertbeny, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁴ A. B. Faust, "Unpublished Letters of Charles Sealsfield," *PMLA*, IX (1894), 343-402.

⁴⁵ A. B. Faust, *Charles Sealsfield, (Carl Postl). Der Dichter beider Hemisphären. Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Weimar, 1897), 295 pp.

⁴⁶ Dissertations accepted at European universities in chronological order:

Paul Schultz, *Die Schilderung exotischer Natur im deutschen Roman mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Charles Sealsfield* (Münster i. W., 1913).

Fritz Paul Knöller, "Charles Sealsfields Werke," *Typewritten* (München, 1923), 267 pp.

Milosch Djordjewitsch, *Charles Sealsfields Auffassung des Amerikanertums und seine literarhistorische Stellung* (Disa., Universität München), *Forschungen zur neueren Literaturgeschichte*, LXIV (Weimar: Verlag von Alexander Dunker, 1931), 135 pp.

Max L. Schmidt, *Amerikanismen bei Sealsfield* (Würzburg, 1937), 82 pp.

Elfriede Aufderheide, *Das Amerika-Erlebnis von den Romanen von Charles Sealsfield* (Göttingen, 1946).

Liselotte Bauernfeind, *Karl Postl—Charles Sealsfield, Die Demokratie im Lichte seines literarischen Schaffens und seiner Persönlichkeit* (Wien, 1948).

Gertrude Hübner, *Charles Sealsfield and Sir Walter Scott* (Wien, 1949).

Alfons Kozeluk, *Charles Sealsfield und J. F. Cooper* (Wien, 1951).

E. Arns (geb. Lüty), *Charles Sealsfield. Besonderheit und Grenzen eines Schriftstellers* (Bonn, 1955).

America in his work; valuable and thoroughly documented as these studies were, they were to some extent limited by an imperfect understanding of the American people of whom Sealsfield wrote and the time in American history he tried to reveal.

Most of the significant research, before the Castle publications, was produced at American universities. A center for Sealsfield study developed at Washington University, where Heller published between 1907 and 1912 eight articles, seven dealing with bibliographical problems: Publication dates of Sealsfield's first book, *Die Vereinigten Staaten van Nordamerika*, in Germany, England, and the United States were established, as well as those of *Tokeah*, *Morton*, and *The Cabin Book*.⁴⁷ Contributions made to Cotta's *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* and *Das Ausland* were identified.⁴⁸ Heller began to a limited extent the search through early American newspapers that was later to prove so rewarding to Arndt and his students and discovered source material used by Sealsfield in the *Illinois Intelligencer* of 1827, Timothy Flint's *Western Monthly Review*, several other Western papers⁴⁹ and the *New York Mirror*.⁵⁰ He searched through the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*⁵¹ to establish the validity of Sealsfield's statement, questioned by Kertbeny⁵² but accepted by Faust, that he had served as editor of that journal, or perhaps, more accurately, to disprove the statement. Believing to begin with that Sealsfield's claim was not true, he concluded that indeed it was not, publishing the results of his investigation in 1907. He had not modified his view thirty years later, in his 1937 lecture before the Missouri Historical Society,⁵³ and Norman L. Willey of Michigan strongly supported his contention that Sealsfield's claim, made in his autobiographical letter to Brockhaus, was false.⁵⁴ It was not until almost half a century later, in 1953, that Karl Arndt established, most persuasively, by a detailed examination of a complete run of the paper and its prospectus, the likelihood that Sealsfield had, as he stated, served as editor of the French language political weekly in 1828.⁵⁵ This was further verified by Castle,⁵⁶ working independently to refute Willey's "Charles Sealsfield in Amerika," published in the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* in 1941, in which he referred to the statement about the *Courrier* as "eine leicht erwiesene Unwahrheit" and used this to support his view that all Sealsfield's statements regarding his travel and experience in the American South and Southwest were inventions.⁵⁷ The important discovery in 1952 of the lost Sealsfield letter to Poinsett by Jantz further supports the evidence found by Arndt in the weekly itself.⁵⁸

Some years after the period of Heller's initial activity in Sealsfield research, a second series of studies, inspired by Heller and supported by a Rockefeller foundation grant, was produced at Washington University. The most important contribution of this period was the Heller-Leon Sealsfield bibliography and catalog, still the most complete compilation of Sealsfield works and criticism.⁵⁹ Until the publication of Castle's source book,

⁴⁷ Otto Heller, "Bibliographical Notes on Charles Sealsfield," *Modern Language Review*, III (July, 1908), 360-365.

⁴⁸ ———, "Sealsfield-Funde," *German-American Annals*, N. S., VIII (1910), 82-86 and N. S., IX (1911), 3-30.

⁴⁹ ———, "Some Sources of Sealsfield," *Modern Philology*, VII (April, 1910), 587-592.

⁵⁰ ———, "The Source of Chapter I of Sealsfield's 'Lebensbilder aus der westlichen Hemisphäre,'" *Modern Language Notes*, XXII (1908), 172-173.

⁵¹ ———, "Charles Sealsfield und der Courrier des Etats-Unis," *Euphorion*, XIV (1907), 718-724.

⁵² Kertbeny, *Erinnerungen*, p. 87.

⁵³ Otto Heller, "Charles Sealsfield, A Forgotten Discoverer of the Valley of the Mississippi," *Missouri Historical Review*, XXXI (1937), 382-401.

⁵⁴ Norman L. Willey, "Charles Sealsfield in Amerika," *Z. f. d. Phil.*, LXVI (August, 1941), p. 58.

⁵⁵ Karl J. Arndt, "Charles Sealsfield in Amerika," *Z. f. d. Phil.*, LXXII (1953), 169-175.

⁵⁶ Eduard Castle, "Charles Sealsfield in Amerika zur Berichtigung," *Z. f. d. Phil.*, LXVII (November, 1942), 57-66.

⁵⁷ Willey, *op. cit.*, 58-63.

⁵⁸ Jantz, *op. cit.*, 155-164.

⁵⁹ Heller and Leon, *op. cit.*

Sealsfield scholars in the United States were largely dependent upon Heller's annotations for information about many of the early notices of Sealsfield's work and biographical and critical evaluations that had appeared in European journals. The valuable catalog of the Albert Kresse collection,⁶⁰ which supplements and amends the Heller-Leon work is, through Mr. Kresse's generosity, in the hands of a number of Sealsfield scholars in America, but has not, unfortunately, been published.

Although he had been successful in locating many of Sealsfield's sources, Heller, in referring to Richard Meyer's discovery of Sealsfield's use of Balzac's *Gobseck* in *Morton* expressed the view that Sealsfield's debts to others would eventually be proven to be far less than the indebtedness of others to him.⁶¹ This has not yet been the case. Heller established that Frederick Hardman had borrowed "The Smuggler's Leap," which he published in *Blackwood's* in 1846, from *Ralph Doughby*.⁶² Curiously, Hardman published translations from Sealsfield in the same journal from 1843-1846, and in 1846 had an appreciation of Sealsfield's work in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*.⁶³ Mayne Reid's use of Sealsfield in his *Wild Life* was detected by Edward Leyh, who published his discovery in the *Washington Sentinel* in 1887,⁶⁴ and Faust found that over a hundred pages of Reid's work was taken from an English translation of *Das Cajütenbuch* which had appeared in *Blackwood's*.⁶⁵ Murray G. Hill showed how the influence of the *Cabin Book* and *Life in the New World*, read by Longfellow during the winter of 1847, when he was at work on "Evangeline," reflected in his descriptions of the Acadian country in Louisiana.⁶⁶ L. A. Shears in 1933⁶⁷ and Norman L. Willey in 1939 discussed Sealsfield's influence on Theodor Storm's "Von Jenseit des Meeres," which Storm acknowledged: "Es war Sealsfields Pflanzeleben; der Teil, welcher die lebensvolle Erzählung von den Farbigen enthält..."⁶⁸ The disputed Sealsfield-Simms plagiarism, however, seems to have been finally settled in favor of neither. Simms wrote Rufus Griswold that "whole pages of *Guy Rivers* have been stolen by Sealsfield and have been quoted abroad as superior to what could have been done by an American, even describing his own country." Faust believed that plagiarism from Simms was unlikely and suggested the possibility that Simms either borrowed from Sealsfield or that both had used a third source.⁶⁹ A careful review of the evidence by Arndt in 1954 supports the probability that the disputed pedlar, Jared Bundle in Sealsfield and Jared Bunce in Simms, were inspired by a common source, perhaps a newspaper story, although by correcting Faust's error about the date of publication of the Sealsfield sketch in which the pedlar appears, he admits of the possibility that Sealsfield did use *Guy Rivers* for local color.⁷⁰ That whole pages were stolen is an exaggeration.

The problem of plagiarism is a troubling one in any examination of Sealsfield's work. Edmund Wilson has said that Poe had an "annoying mania of accusing his contemporaries of plagiarism—a harsh name he is in the habit of brandishing to indicate borrowings and echoes of a kind which

⁶⁰ Albert Kresse, "Sealsfield Sammlung Albert Kresse Stuttgart," Typewritten copy in my possession.

⁶¹ Otto Heller, "A Plagiarism on Charles Sealsfield," *JEGP*, VII (1908), 130-131.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁶³ Frederick Hardman, "The Writings of Charles Sealsfield," *Foreign Quarterly Review*, XXXVII (London, 1846), 416-448.

⁶⁴ Edward Leyh, "A Bold Piece of Plagiarism" *Washington Sentinel* (September 10, 1887), p. 2.

⁶⁵ A. B. Faust, *Charles Sealsfield* (Carl Postl), *Materials for a Biography*, p. 44.

⁶⁶ Murray Gardner Hill, "Some of Longfellow's Sources for the Second Part of Evangeline," *PMLA*, XXXI (1916), 164-177.

⁶⁷ L. A. Shears, "Storm and Sealsfield," *Germanic Review*, VIII (1933), 178-182.

⁶⁸ Norman L. Willey, "Exotic Elements in Storm and Sealsfield," *Germanic Review*, XIV (1939), p. 29.

⁶⁹ A. B. Faust, *Charles Sealsfield. Der Dichter beider Hemisphären*, p. 6.

⁷⁰ Karl J. Arndt, "Plagiarism: Sealsfield or Simms?" *Modern Language Notes*, LXIX (1954), 577-581.

. . . are usually perfectly harmless." ⁷¹ The act as well as the accusation seems to have been common at the time. Sealsfield, in whose works the borrowings were sometimes more than echoes, had, himself, a realistic view toward the effective use of source material. In an undated letter to Cotta, presumably written late in 1827, he said: "Sie sind theils von mir, theils in der Übersetzung so verändert, dass sie füglich mein Eigenthum genannt werden mögen." ⁷² Later, to H. Brockhaus, he wrote: "This work I have finished chiefly from my own experience, and that of men of common sense." ⁷³ He believed that if a historical novelist cited his sources to enable the reader to determine for himself how truly a time and people had been portrayed the value of his work would be increased. Often he acknowledged the sources he consulted to provide the authenticity to which he felt his readers were due, but sometimes he did not, and much of the Sealsfield research in recent years has been concerned with the location of these sources. Both Faust and Heller made important discoveries. Ravizé, in verifying Sealsfield's statement that his work had appeared in *The Englishman* in London, discovered that there was no such magazine but he identified five short stories contributed by Sealsfield to the first five issues of the *Englishman's Magazine*, in existence from April through October, 1831. The third of these stories, "My little Grey Landlord," concerns the Lomond who plays such an important role in Morton II. He is Balzac's Gobseck, and the entire episode is often a literal translation, although descriptions are elaborated and extended. ⁷⁴ Castle later expressed his belief that Sealsfield may not have seen Balzac's book but used the version of Chapter I of *Gobseck* which appeared separately in *La Monde* on March 6, 1830. ⁷⁵ Studies by Garrett W. Thompson in 1910, ⁷⁶ Uhlendorf in 1921, ⁷⁷ Djordjewitsch in 1931, and Dallman in 1940 ⁷⁸ treated this problem, but all of them except Thompson seemed to rely on Richard Meyer's brief article of 1907, ⁷⁹ apparently not aware of Ravizé's discoveries.

Preston A. Barba's discovery of Sealsfield's use of the anonymous *Visit to Texas* as a source for his *Cabinbook* was published in 1911 ⁸⁰ and further investigated by Willey in 1948 in his attempt to prove that Sealsfield's knowledge of the South was extremely faulty, his statements unreliable, and his experience in the United States confined to Pennsylvania and Ohio. ⁸¹ Uhlendorf revealed the extent of Sealsfield's reliance on Thomas L. McKenny's *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes of 1827* and showed evidence that Berquin-Duvallon's *Vue de la Colonie espagnole du Mississippi, ou des provinces de Louisiana* of 1803 was a further source. ⁸²

When the Louisiana State University became a second center for Sealsfield research in the 1930's and early '40's Karl J. Arndt and John T. Krumpelmann undertook to establish the facts of Sealsfield's American reputation, locate sources of his works, and determine the reliability of his descriptions of Louisiana and Texas, which Willey and others considered to have been either plagiarized from more knowledgeable writers or simply invented by Sealsfield. Krumpelmann showed that "The Smuggler's Leap,"

⁷¹ Edmund Wilson, *The Shock of Recognition. The Development of Literature in the United States Recorded by the Men Who Made It* (New York: The Modern Library, 1955), p. 83.

⁷² E. Castle, *Briefe und Aktenstücke*, p. 140.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁷⁴ Auguste Ravizé, "Neu aufgefundene Novellen Sealsfields" *Euphorion*, XVI (1909), 102-116.

⁷⁵ Castle, *Der grosse Unbekannte*, p. 300.

⁷⁶ Garrett W. Thompson, "An Inquiry into the Sources of Charles Sealsfield's Novel *Morton oder die grosse Tour*," unpublished diss. (University of Pa., 1910), 56 pp.

⁷⁷ Bernhard A. Uhlendorf, *Charles Sealsfield, Ethnic Elements and National Problems in his Works*, Ph. D. diss. University of Illinois (Chicago, 1922).

⁷⁸ William P. Dallmann, "Sealsfield and Balzac Again," *JEGP*, XXXLX (1940), 346-354.

⁷⁹ Richard M. Meyer, "Ein Plagiat Sealsfields," *Deutsche Arbeit*, VI (1907), 510-512.

⁸⁰ Preston A. Barba, "Sealsfield's Sources," *German-American Annals*, N. S. (1911), 31-39.

⁸¹ Norman L. Willey, "Sealsfield's Working Methods," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, XXXIV (1948), 299-315.

⁸² B. A. Uhlendorf, "Two Additional Sources of Sealsfield," *JEGP*, XX (1921), 417-418.

which Frederick Hardman had borrowed from Sealsfield, who used it both in his travel log, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*, and in the fictional "Ralph Doughby's Brautfahrt," had been borrowed by Sealsfield from *The Navigator: . . . directions for navigating the Monongahelia, Allegheny, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers* . . .⁸³ His familiarity with Joseph Holt Ingraham's *The Southwest by a Yankee?*⁸⁴ and C. C. Robin's *Voyages dans l'intérieur de la Louisiana*⁸⁵ was established, and the extent of his debts to Jedidiah Morse, Audubon, Timothy Flint, and McKenny, whom he had cited himself, was investigated. Many of Sealsfield's disputed statements on the plant and wild life of Louisiana were verified, including the much ridiculed story of the drunken robins, who in Louisiana intoxicate themselves on the fruit of the chinaberry.⁸⁶

The peculiarities of Sealsfield's language, resulting from his attempt to render into German the color and vigor of the speech of Jackson's backwood's supporters in political diatribe against Adams or the stock dialect of the Negro slave have been the subject of a number of investigations. M. C. Dilkey of Cornell,⁸⁷ under the direction of Faust, contributed a dissertation which examined in exhaustive detail the divergencies in language and categorized them, concluding, as had others that Sealsfield's "proficiency in the literary use of German had been [more] impaired by his contact with other languages than he was willing to admit." "A Study in Atypical Usage," was completed by Heller and Leon in 1941, but the results were somewhat inconclusive, although it was conceded that Sealsfield's use of Creole English established "beyond doubt an idiomatic knowledge of French,"⁸⁸ a fact much disputed by Willey and others. Max Schmidt, at the University of Würzburg, in "Amerikanismen bei Sealsfield,"⁸⁹ attempted to prove that he deviated from normal German only with a fixed purpose and used his exoticisms to heighten the realism of his work. An important contribution to American historical lexicography was made by Krumpelmann, who examined Sealsfield's German works for early usages of American idioms, localisms, slang and political terms, publishing his findings in *American Speech*.⁹⁰ Both Krumpelmann and J. B. McMillan,⁹¹ working along the same lines, furnished evidence used by H. L. Mencken in *The American Language*. Recently an extended study of Sealsfield's use of Louisiana French was undertaken under the direction of Krumpelmann, and on the basis of a dictionary of the language now in progress at Louisiana State University, it was concluded that his knowledge of "this obscure idiom is so comprehensive that it indicates beyond reasonable doubt . . . an extended and intimate association with the state of Louisiana."⁹²

American historian Merle Curti, writing on "The Reputation of America Overseas, 1776-1860," has pointed out the wide-spread misconceptions about the United States which persisted in England and on the Continent well into the mid-nineteenth century and a prejudice so well established that the regime of Louis XVIII forbade the circulation of the *North American*

⁸³ John T. Krumpelmann, "Sealsfield and Sources," *Manatshefte*, XLIII (1951), 324-326.

⁸⁴ ———, "A source for Local Color in Sealsfield's Cajütenbuch," *JEGP*, XLIII (1944), 429-433

⁸⁵ Adolf E. Schroeder, "New Sources of Charles Sealsfield," *JEGP*, XLVI (1947), 70-74.

⁸⁶ J. T. Krumpelmann, "Sealsfield's Inebriated Robins," *Monatshefte*, XLVI (1954), 225-226.

⁸⁷ Marvin C. Dilkey, "A Critical Investigation of Charles Sealsfield's Style," *Cornell University Abstracts of Theses* (1937), 46-48.

⁸⁸ Otto Heller and Theodore H. Leon, "The Language of Charles Sealsfield," *Washington University Studies*, New Series. Language and Literature, No. 11 (St. Louis, 1941), p. 133.

⁸⁹ Max L. Schmidt, "Amerikanismen bei Sealsfield," unpublished diss. (University of Würzburg, 1937), 82 pp.

⁹⁰ J. T. Krumpelmann, "Charles Sealsfield's Americanisms," *American Speech*, XVI (1941) 26-31; 104-111. XIX (1944), 198-199.

⁹¹ J. B. McMillan, "Lexical Evidence from Charles Sealsfield," *American Speech*, XVIII (1943), 117-127.

⁹² Thomas C. Starnes, Jr., "Charles Sealsfield and Louisiana French," unpublished M. A. thesis, Louisiana State University (August, 1957), xii + 87 pp.

*Review*⁹³ in France. He has urged the importance of further study of the travel books and foreign works which attempted to dispel British and European ignorance and prejudice about the American people and the political and social scene. If it may be said of Sealsfield, as it has been said of Brockton Brown, that "his ability to plan exceeded his power to execute,"⁹⁴ nevertheless his understanding of the America of his time and his enthusiasm for what James Truslow Adams, in one of the happiest phrases of our time, has called "The American Dream"⁹⁵ give a historical significance to his work, and it is to be hoped that the English biography now in progress will result in a renewed interest in his writings by American historians, folklorists, and linguists.

The importance of Castle's Sealsfield research, culminating as it did in the three important volumes of sources, biography and letters can hardly be overestimated. The availability to Castle of the great life-time collections of letters, documents, works, and other materials brought together by Albert Kresse of Stuttgart and Auguste Ravizé of Paris⁹⁶ further contributed to the accuracy and value of his treatment of problematical associations in England, France, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, particularly the period leading to Postl's flight to America in 1823 and in his later dealings with European publishers and political figures. Although Castle had the unfailing cooperation and support of American scholars, with whom, according to one, he was able to keep in touch by way of Siberia even after the war began⁹⁷ and he was able to make amendations and additions that took into account wartime and post-war research in America before final publication of his work, nevertheless the greatest strength in his biography lies in its treatment of the European years. It is about Sealsfield's American experience that much remains to be discovered. Comparison of Sealsfield's work with such recently published travel books as Bollaert's *Texas*⁹⁸ and a re-examination of his American novels may not only further confirm the authenticity of his descriptions of the Southern frontier but establish the validity of the view of the American national character by the Austrian monk who until his death called himself "Bürger von Nord Amerika."

⁹³ Merle Curti, *Probing Our Past* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), p. 195.

⁹⁴ Arthur Hobson Quinn, *The Literature of the American People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 193.

⁹⁵ J. T. Adams, *The Epic of America* (Boston, 1931), p. viii.

⁹⁶ Auguste Ravizé, Report dated Paris, 1943 included in "Vorbericht" to E. Castle, *Briefe und Aktenstücke*, 4-6.

⁹⁷ K. J. Arndt, Review of Eduard Castle, *Der grosse Unbekannte* in: *Monatshefte*, XLV (1953), p. 153.

⁹⁸ *William Bollaert's Texas*, edited by W. Eugene Hollon and Ruth Lapham Butler (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956).