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‘From Love to Hate’: A Story of Germania and Sam – Annotations to the History of American-German Relations

PRZEMYSŁAW ŁUKASIK AND MAIK ARNOLD

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances.
As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII, 139-141¹

Introduction

This essay is an intellectual language game inspired by literature or, as we could assert, a narrative history told in images by that most famous of English poets, William Shakespeare. Through the eyes of his literature, we will reconsider and present specific tendencies and relationships in international affairs between states, nations, and continents. This we undertake in terms of Antoni Sobanski’s (2007: 43) words: “It’s not important, what’s really happening, but what has caught the imagination of the people”. Most often these imaginations have become more or less part of Western ‘cultural historical memory’ (Assmann 2002). Friendly or strained relations between states are the outcomes of actions, deeds, words, common interests, and shared values, but are also shaped by imaginations and stereotypes that themselves are biased by one’s own cultural background as has been shown otherwise in postcolonial studies.

¹ Shakespeare 2011a.

Therefore, literature – in this case William Shakespeare’s works – is a messenger and herald of image-real *collages* and *aspirations*. Characters and events from his dramas, poems, and sonnets do still play an important role not only in literature circles, but also in real life. They present and criticize everyday life and social developments.² In this sense, these characters may tell us something about the complexity in transatlantic relations as well. Naturally, such thought-provoking attempts are accompanied by means of generalization, sometimes also by the necessity of simplification and of superficiality, especially in respect to the description and explanation of cultural exchange. For all of these, we offer an excuse to the reader in advance. Nevertheless, we do still hope that this approach will help to explain American-German relations thoroughly with the help of William Shakespeare. We have chosen this great English poet, and even the topic ‘literature’, as a link between the images and reality of transatlantic relations because of several reasons, although it is not intended as a genuine literature analysis.

Firstly, Shakespeare was one of the most prominent representatives and ambassador of rethinking one’s own personal affective emotions or collective sociocultural relations with the others. In his dramas and poems, he shows how stereotypes and beliefs about specific social groups, types of individuals, and even diplomatic activities work ‘behind the curtains’. Shakespeare is also best known for being one of the leading narrators, commentators, and exegetes of great archetypal characters, not only during his lifetime and in his country, although old and new ‘England’ emerged as an opinion leader for European-American relations. However, his literature is widely acknowledged and interpreted because of his exceptionally gifted talent of imagination. We think that his works show us a mirror to reality and dreaming of America and Europe on a meta-theoretical level. He incorporates and transforms his deliberations, reflections, and thoughts about the human nature in almost real and authentic characters of flesh and blood. Shakespeare’s characters are very specific types of heroes, full of ambivalent feelings and ambitions linked to the metaphors of love and hate. Hence, the inner

² For an overview of Shakespeare’s social criticism in his works, see i.e. Grady (1996).

contradictions of heroes could also be regarded as the visible personification of the ambivalence that relations between states and nations face. These ambiguities are appealingly good examples of American-German relations, as well as of transatlantic relations in today's world, but this should not be confused or equated with real situations in the literary sense. This comparative analysis makes us aware of archetypal (not identical) role models.

Secondly, William Shakespeare was once called 'the great author of America' (Cullen 2007: 36) by German immigrants who came to America in the 19th Century. His dramas, poems, and sonnets were widely

Figures 2-3: Germania at the Watch on the Rhine as personification of German nation (on the left) and Uncle Sam in a half-length portrait, pointing at the viewer as part of the United States government effort to recruit soldiers during World War I as the personification of U.S. government (on the right).³



³ Sources: (on the left) Hermann Wislicenus, 1873, *Germania or The Watch on the Rhine*, German Historical Museum, Berlin, Inv. no.: Gm 92/12; (on the right) James Montgomery Flagg, 1917, *I want you for the U.S. Army nearest recruiting station*, [in:] *Library of Congress Prints and Photographs* 1995: 43.

known in America. Scenes from his plays were onstage in almost all American theaters while verses of his poems were cited in saloons as well as by travelling actors who sang his songs and poems on the streets. The appreciation for him in America reminds us of the cultural dependence of 'New England' to the former motherland – as many immigrants often suggested: 'America has no culture' at all – they were bound to the old and centuries old stereotype of the 'barbarian land' (Rubin and Rubin 2004). The dominant model of immigrants' acculturation in America was an Anglo-conformism (cf. i.e., Kubiak 1975). Immigrants remained mostly accustomed to white Anglo-Saxon-Protestant culture and identity. Shakespeare's works and the King-James-Bible have become both the usual and commemorative tools of such acculturation in the 'New World'. It cannot be denied that this attitude has a cultural bias from Western culture.

Thirdly, Shakespeare can also be regarded as intermediator and interlocutor between love and hate that is the main content of his plays. Particularly outstanding and well known is his tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* that he wrote at an early stage of his career. It is the story about two young 'star-cross'd lovers' from two warring families in Verona, only through whose deaths could they ultimately unite themselves. In a sense, this demonstrates also a fight between people of the same kinship, blood relationship, and culture. For us, Romeo and Juliet are Sam and Germania, not in a literacy sense, but as archetypes (see Figures 2-3). The latter also belong to the same Western cultural 'family'. Struggles between them are continuously accompanied by love or hate as well as ups and downs: *Uncle Sam* is a national personification of the United States of America and, sometimes more specifically, of the American government, with the first usage of the term dating back to the beginning of the 19th Century. He is depicted as a stern elderly white man with silver-gray hair and a goatee beard, and dressed in clothing that recalls the design elements of the flag of the U.S.: a typically top hat with red and white stripes and white stars on a blue band, and red and white striped trousers. In contrast, *Germania* is the personification of the German Nation or the Germans as a culture nation, most commonly associated with the Romantic Era and the Revolution of 1848, though this character was later also

used by Imperial Germany. She is usually shown with the 'Reichsschwert' (imperial sword), showing that she wields worldly power. Additionally, she is also sometimes shown as carrying or wearing the Crown of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. She is often depicted as wearing armor, with long, flowing, reddish-blond hair, and possesses a medieval-style shield. Sometimes, the shield bears the image of a black eagle on a gold field.

As it is the objective of this paper to show the relationship between Germania and Sam as Germany and America respectively, we take from Shakespeare's most famous plays seven picturesque characters, each representing an image of love and hate – in short: international and transatlantic relations – that we afterwards interpret from the perspectives of history as well as from social and cultural sciences: the Birth of Macduff as the invention of America, the Passionate Pilgrim and immigrants to America, the Two Noble Kinsmen and good relations in cultural exchanges, Shylock and Aaron the Moor representing anti-Americanism and racism, Macbeth with the dream of power, The Phoenix and the Turtle as the fear of losing one's own values, and Hamlet's reflections and the self-assurance of Fortinbras. This interpretative, comparative analysis as a methodical and systematic way of thinking involves three different levels of interpretation for each image. Based on passages from Shakespeare's texts, a description and paraphrase will be elaborated on some important facts in the plot and on the main characters (at the level of reformulating the image). Thereafter, we will summarize in a hypothesis what we regard as the main point of the story (at the level of the meaning of the image). And finally, these meanings, of the manners of Shakespeare's reception, and the language games are interpreted to provide historical and socio-cultural substantiation (level of reflective interpretation of German-American relations).⁴

⁴ All these terms refer to the methodological principles of reconstructive, interpretative and qualitative empirical research. See i.e., Bohnsack (2007b).

The Birth of Macduff or the Invention of America

MACBETH:
 Thou locest labour.
 As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
 With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.
 Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
 I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
 To one of woman born
 MACDUFF:
 Despair thy charm,
 And let the angel whom thou still hast served
 Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
 Untimely ripp'd.
Macbeth, Act V, Scene VIII⁵

This quote has been taken from a scene of the Shakespearian play *Macbeth*: Macbeth is a royal descendent and ambitious knight. He received a witches' prophecy that he will be Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland thereafter. At the urging of his wife, Lady Macbeth, who is the *spiritus movens* in this play, he kills the acting King Duncan of Scotland to become king himself. Yet his time as king is clouded by anxiety and fear, trusting no one and leading to a reign of terror. However, Macduff, the Thane of Fife and a loyal devotee to the murdered king, suspects Macbeth of regicide. Because Macbeth derives much of his motivation from a new witches' prophecy concerning his invincibility – that no man born of woman can hurt him (a motif of Achilles), he fears nothing and no one. Finally, in a duel Macduff, who was born not in a natural way, but 'untimely ripp'd from his mother's womb', killed Macbeth and restored the throne and honor to the rightful heir. Macbeth realizes too late that he had misunderstood the witches' prophecy.

Two pivotal points can be derived from this story: the *perception* of America as an invention, not a conquest, and the nation *building* process. Firstly, Macduff – born by caesarean section – can be understood as the personification of America, because in regards to its historical and cultural origins, America has experienced an unusual beginning: Following

⁵ Shakespeare 2011b.

the idea of the Latin American historian Edmundo O'Gorman (1999), there has never been a discovery of the new land called America, but instead an invention and emergence of an American dream. European immigrants who came to America anticipated a specific image of the 'New World': as a virgin paradise lost with unspoiled wild nature and God's good creatures. Bearing this worldview in mind, they were often confronted with reality. This selection process of role assignment is not arbitrary; similarities could also be expected in role reversal. Europe has also perceived herself as the center of the world, always struggling to wield power. In this regard, we could also speak of an invention of a European dream that is still valid.

Secondly, this comparison is also the result of positive or negative attitude to the new land during the process of immigration. For most of the (new) Americans, their own national culture was an instrument for observation and interpretation. A substantial difference between Macduff as America and Macbeth as Europe is also due to the origins of nation-state building process. Hence, the German-American relations rely on a fundamental distinction between 'Kulturnation' ('culture nation') like Germany and 'Staatsnation' ('state nation') like America (Namowicz 2001: 13-15). The term culture nation is commonly used for a nation as a community of people who are bound together through a common language and culture, a shared tradition and religion, but their group identity is not dependent on existing or lacking state borders. In contrast, a state nation is usually designated by a societal conception, in which people live as a nation together, irrespective of their ethnicity or mother language and as a result of an independent and free will. In the 19th Century, anti-democratic 'Anti-Americanism' in Europe was a typical reaction to U.S.-Americans' attempts to create, based on abstractive ideals of Enlightenment, the community of free and equal citizens (cf. Commager 1978).

From a *historical* perspective, we could argue at first with the Western narrative of the conquest of America: The 'New World' was discovered on 12th October, 1492, when Rodrigo de Triana – one of the crewmembers of the flagship 'Santa Maria' – saw the island of Watling in the Bahamas (Wójcik 2002). Three Spanish ships, under the command of the Italian cartographer and traveler Christopher Columbus,

were supposed to sail to India. It is said that, until his death in 1506, the Genoa born explorer Columbus thought he had discovered islands and lands which belonged to the Eastern parts of India. Instead, a contemporary Florentine explorer, Amerigo Vespucci, ascertained that it was a completely new land, a *terra incognita*. Discovered by Christopher Columbus, the ‘New World’ was not called Columbia, but instead America. Europe played a very important role in this process of birth (Europe as a *Geburtshelfer*). Martin Waldseemüller and Matthias Ringmann, both German cartographers, are credited with the first recorded usage of the word ‘America’ on their map *Universalis Cosmographia* from 1507 in honor of the Amerigo Vespucci: *ab Americo Inventore ...quasi Americi terram sine Americam* [from Amerigo the discoverer ...as if it were the land of Americans, thus America] (O’Gorman 1999).

In contrast to this well-known narrative, Edmundo O’Gorman instead asserted that America was not discovered, but invented (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007: 39). From the very beginning, the image of America was made of rumors, excuses, and stereotypical expectations. Sometimes a sharp contrast between European images of the New World and the realities of America led to overestimations or underestimations. For Americans, it has been certain that the so-called American experiment cannot fail and that it would be immune to the ‘sins’ of the old European continent. The ‘New Arcadia’ was supposed to be the land in which seeds of religious, social, and political freedom would grow without any obstacles (cf. Osiatyński 1983). As Americans predicted with optimism, the “Oasis of democracy in the midst of Sahara desert of absolutism” (Bailey 1969: 57) would flourish as a model and example. Conservative circles of European thinkers did not share this great hope for a new beginning of mankind in America. America as a land without common culture, history, and habits, had been regarded as a tree without long roots. Catastrophes were inevitable and eventually occurred. Conservative critics of the New World wanted to see America as an abstractive construction built upon rationalism and materialism, but without national exception and tradition. America was presented as a broken mirror through the images of the French Revolution, with abstract values of freedom, brotherhood, the Jacobin dictatorship, and the tyranny of Napoleon. This broken mirror image of America was

usually utilized to defend German and European cultural identity. But the unusual manner of Sam's birth (respectively Macduff) strongly affected relations between America and Europe. It stimulated European imagination, hopes, and fears, but also gave attention to the outcomes of the American experiment. America wanted to learn from the history of the old continent and avoid future mistakes, but was still perceived as the 'old lady', as an example to imitate or a role model (Ceaser 1997).

As many studies in social anthropology and philosophy have shown, the discovery of something different is always linked with a discovery of one's own self. As Tzvetan Todorov (1984: 3) asserted: "We can discover the other in ourselves, realize we are not a homogeneous substance, radically alien to whatever is not us." From his notion of 'othering' we can conclude: The other can only be thought as in relation to oneself, the so-called 'me'. Without going deeper into this matter, we here would only like to refer to the several theories of social and cultural identity (e.g., William James, George H. Mead, and Erik H. Erikson) in which the relationship between the 'I' or 'me' and the 'significant others' has been explored. In the case of America, Christopher Columbus' and all the other conqueror's striking beliefs were closely connected to the Christian notion of an earthly paradise that needs to be discovered (Todorov 1984: 16). The birth of the American nation is regularly related to European colonial expansion and violent Christian evangelism, as has been shown in postcolonial studies. But we have chosen this widely known narrative of the discovery, conquest, and invention of the others also because of the fact that it is still part of our present 'cultural memory' (Assmann 2002) and identity, nevertheless, it has influenced our ways of interpretation. With the discovery and conquest voyages of Europeans from the 16th Century, there also came the new knowledge of previously unknown peoples and tribes, cultures, and religions. Beside merchants, sailors, diplomats, colonists, researchers, and explorers also missionaries belong to the group of people of 'Weltensammler' ('collectors of worlds' – see: Ilija Troyanov's work) who have entered, on the one hand, new, and unknown territory, in order to persuade the others according to their beliefs. On the other hand, they were also ones who in an early period brought their cultural knowledge of foreign peoples and religions, traditions and customs to their home,

although her writings, chronicles, and reports include discriminating and stigmatizing judgments of the others as well as ‘exoticizing’ names and terms imposed by the others (Kohl 2000: 103). Moreover, written works full of experiences of cultural and social difference, alienation, and otherness had allowed the development of modern ethnology and ethnography, cultural psychology, and have also contributed to empirical social sciences. Through their intense and prolonged contact with others and strangers, they often had a better knowledge of foreign languages and life styles and are more familiar with local rites and customs than any other travelers at that time (Kohl 2000: 104). They also helped to break with traditional and overcome worldviews and human images. Through their endeavor of the ‘New World’, the cultural knowledge about other peoples and tribes could be delivered to posterity, documented for the descendants, and saved from oblivion.

The Passionate Pilgrim – Immigrants to America

When my love swears that she is made of truth
 I do believe her, though I know she lies,
 That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
 Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
 Although she knows my days are past the best,
 Simply I credit her false speaking tongue:
 On both side thus is simple truth suppress'd:
 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
 Oh! love's best habit is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not to have years told:
 Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

Passionate Pilgrim, Sonnet 138⁶

This image is from Shakespeare's anthology *The Passionate Pilgrim*, where the here referred Sonnet 138 is one of the most popular. All poems are dedicated to William Shakespeare's favorite lyric topic of ‘love’. As

⁶ Shakespeare 2011c.

Amanda Mabillard (2000) argues, in Sonnet 138 the poet discloses how he is emotionally attracted by the 'dark lady' (the main theme of a set of sonnets) and insecure about his own ageing process:

Unlike his intense yet healthy love affair with the young man, the poet's fling with his mistress is (for now) uncomplicated and practical, fulfilling his most basic needs of both sexual pleasure and continual reassurance that he is still worthy of love despite his age. So emotionally detached is the poet from his mistress that he prefers simply to *ignore* her lying and adultery. (Mabillard 2000)

Although Shakespeare's sonnets also refer as a whole to the topic of 'time', the poet's great rival, in this poem "the comfort that lies bring to an insecure mind" is the most visible feature (cf. Mabillard 2000).

For us, European immigrants to America could be described as passionate pilgrims who have left the European continent and come to America both to conquer the new land and to fulfill their longings for a pursuit of happiness. Therefore, the image of pilgrimage leads us to the *history* of European immigration to the U.S.: "Americans are the Western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry which began long since in the east", wrote John Hector St. John in his book *Letters from an American Farmer* (1904). America is the land of immigrants that has built its own nation. Almost all of them who came to America were motivated by economic success and the pursuit of happiness. As Hector St. John once wrote:

What attachment can a poor European emigrant have for a country where he had nothing? The knowledge of the language, the love of a few kindred as poor as himself, were the only cords that tied him: his country is now that which gives him land, bread, protection, and consequence: *Ubi panis ibi patria*, is the motto of all emigrants. (Hector St. John 1904: 54)

German immigrants were the biggest non-English speaking ethnical group who came to America between the 16th and 18th Century. Germans wished for a land without high taxes, compulsory military service, and feudal obligations. A symbolic and historical date of the German immigrant community in America is the year 1683, when Daniel Pastorius, together with 13 immigrants from Krefeld, built the town called Germantown. According to the census conducted in the 1790s, Germans were estimated at about 8,6% of the whole American population. In the

1880s and 1890s, German immigrants were the largest group (about 250,000) that came to America (United States Department of Homeland Security 2010: 5). At the beginning of the 20th Century, the influx of German immigrants rapidly reduced. In 1903, Lincoln Steffens wrote about Philadelphia, where 45% of inhabitants were immigrants from Germany, as the ‘most American city’ (Steffens 1903) at that time.

This image of American immigration cannot be different from reality, as August Müller wrote in a letter to his family in Germany: “Here, even twice a day I eat meat with roasted potatoes” (Reich 1997: 49). But in the next sentence he dispels the myth of America as the ‘Schlaraffenland’ (the land of milk and honey) and also wrote: “People in Germany think that in America money is lying on the street”, stressing the lack of real thinking about New Land among his countryman (Reich 1997: 49). Müller achieved success only through hard work. For many other pilgrims, especially older people and who were incapable to work, the American dream has not come true. As can be seen in the German ‘Volkskalender’ from 1871, America is described to European immigrants as the ‘Gold Land of Freedom and Profits’ (*Das Goldland der Freiheit und des Gewinns*) (Schelbert and Rappolt 1977a: 104), where many have to struggle. However, these positive affections to Uncle Sam have prevailed over a long period, although many immigrant workers were discriminated against by their employers who made no distinctions because of wealth. As free citizens they could enjoy the fruits of their hard labor, without feudal obligations, serfdom, and oppression (Schelbert and Rappolt 1977b: 63).

This history of immigration has also been subject to *socio-cultural* research. The prospect and expectation of acculturation in the early history of immigration to the U.S. had a tremendous impact on the development of American society. The term ‘acculturation’ usually refers to the process in which members of one cultural group or society adjust to the beliefs, cognitions, self-concepts, values, norms, behaviors, and (ethnic or cultural) identities of another group (Sam and Berry 2006). Acculturation is also closely connected to adjustment stress and the necessity of adaptation, which increases the dissimilarity of the host culture and the extent of interpersonal contact. In the time after the first British settlements, in the beginning of 17th Century up to the mid of 18th Century, there was a very deep cultural connection and dependence

on 'Old England' (Shaub 2007: 3). An insight into this early stage of U.S. immigrant history is given in Alexis de Tocqueville's book *Democracy in America* (2000). At that time, the so-called homogenous 'Anglo-Saxon-Americans' brought with them their Protestant religion, rural culture with specific patterns of family and religious life, eating conventions, jurisdiction, and clothing. By 1790, about 70% of the 3.9 million living in the territory of the United States were from either England or Germany (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research 1984). Although Tocqueville – like other authors of his generation – was very impressed by the general equality in American society, he certainly neglected several other groups that were not accepted as equal part of society (e.g., Negro-African slaves and American Indians). Generally speaking, it was typical for this period that acculturation did not really take place. These Americans shared much of the same culture with Europe, especially British and German culture, but ignored somehow their direct neighbors. Since the 1880s, when societal conditions in Europe also substantially changed, America experienced a greater influx of immigrants from and around England, but mainly from countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, e.g., Italians, Greeks, Poles, and Russians (United States Department of Homeland Security 2010: 5). These 'new' immigrants, often with Catholic, Jewish, or Muslim roots and with an urban-oriented lifestyle, brought a distinctive cultural heritage with them, which was different to the above-mentioned community life of the early settlers. New ethnic groups experienced, after hardships in their original homelands, substantial and continuous discrimination and attacks also in the U.S. As a reaction to this acculturation stress, some of the new immigrants attempted to adapt to and confirm with the 'American life ideals', while others persisted on maintaining their original ethnic (minority) identity (as can be seen in the many China Towns, Little Italy's and Polish sections). But nevertheless, there was also a small proportion of this new immigrant group who adapted to different lifestyles in form of a 'hybrid identity' (Bhabha 1990), like Chinese-Americans, Polish-Americans and German-Americans. This means that they kept parts of their ethnic identity, but did – according to the surrounding context – also not neglect to integrate values and beliefs of the American way of life to their self-concepts, like special

food, entertainment, and language. This situation was to last until 1965, when a new immigration law, the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments, was passed that liberalized immigrant policy by demolishing the system of national-origin quotas. Hence, new immigrants from non-European countries, Arabs from the Middle East, Hispanics and Asians came to the U.S. and changed the image of an ethnic make up and ‘melting pot’⁷ society once again:

From an acculturational development viewpoint this shift had other profound consequences. In my view, the most significant one was the idea that immigrants from this latest wave, particularly Hispanics and Asians, desired to keep their original personalities while growing a second, American personality – and to be able to move back and forth easily and seamlessly between the two as desired. This idea was quite different from earlier constructs and was developed by a generation of Hispanic and Asian social scientists who, largely through studying their own ethnographies, advanced the cause of empirical treatment of acculturation. Because that was the main idea of that time I refer to this period as *The Era of Bi-Culturalism*. (Shaub 2007: 7-8)

These and other experiences has been theorized and analyzed in several psychological and sociological acculturation studies in which Western (particularly North American) perspectives are still dominant (for an overview, see Sam and Berry 2006).

The Two Noble Kinsmen – ‘Germania meine Mutter, Columbia meine Braut’

ARCITE:
Deere Palamon, deerer in love then Blood
And our prime Cosen
The Two Noble Kinsmen, Act I, Scene II⁸

The main characters in William Shakespeare’s play *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are the two patricians Palamon and Arcite. Both were cousins and

⁷ This period of immigration is called ‘The Melting Pot’ in respect to the so-called stage play by Zangwill (1925) *The Melting Pot: A Drama in Four Acts*.

⁸ Shakespeare 2008.

close friends who fell in love with the same woman, Princess Emilia. However, the love for that woman destroyed their friendship and in the end resulted in bitter rivalry. To settle their rivalry over Emilia, they decide to fight in a public tournament. As could not be expected, Arcite won the combat, but was thereafter thrown off his horse and died in the final duel. In the end, Palamon married Emilia instead.

In our point of view, this image of the two noble kinsmen represents Germany and America, whereby in history both kinsmen took the role of each of the two characters. Germany is supposed to be a kind of 'Geburtshelferin' (midwife), who was present and helped by the birth of Sam. Feeling of kinship heritage and interdependence is still present in the veins of Germania and Sam. It has always been a strong desire to live in freedom. In 19th Century, Americans – as distinct from Englishmen – sustained the thesis that war democracy in the forests of Germania was a beginning of their political system (Anglo-Saxons came to the British Isles from Germania). This kinship of freedom with deep historical roots was a platform of understanding in political sphere too. A great desire of freedom was also manifested in the idea of religious tolerance, which was experienced by all churches in America (cf. Com-mager 1978). German Americans should also be regarded as a valuable part of American society.

From a *historical perspective*, the feeling of kinship between Germania and Sam was manifested many times and in different branches of society in the 18th and 19th Century (cf. Adams 1993). Friedrich von Steuben (of German descent) organized the American Continental Army as general inspector during the American Revolution (1776-1783). Germania was also regarded and appreciated among American intellectuals as the mother of European science (such as the motherland of Bach and Schiller). Alexander von Humboldt, the patriarch of modern science and well known explorer, described unknown animals, species, and plants from the New World. At the turn of the 19th and 20th Century, there occurred a moment of intensive scientific exchange in which, one could assert, the Germans were donors and givers and America was the recipient (Stern 2001: 122). Many sons of Germania came in their 'pursuit of happiness' to America. The influx also brought important input to American culture and civilization (Kazal 2004). Until

WWI, the German ethnic group in America was able to preserve their mother language and home culture. A conception of the hybrid identity of the Germans in America can be best described in the words of Victor L. Greene: “Germania meine Mutter, Columbia meine Braut” (Greene 1987: 45). Preserving the ‘Deutschtum’ (Germaness) was necessary to American culture and made the acculturation process possible and predictable. Defenders of this hybrid German-American identity attempted to maintain their European origins through the public governance of institutions, civil rights, and the separation of church and state. For both kinsmen, the second part of the 19th Century occurred in chain of historical events that led America to become a future world power (cf. Barclay and Glaser-Schmidt 1997). For the U.S., such a milestone was the Civil War (1861-1865), which helped in the painful process of political and economic unification of the whole country. A pivotal moment for Germany was the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, which led to the warmly awaited political unity of Germany (Deutsches Reich). At this time, both nations had the same enemy – the Empire of France. French intervention in Mexico in 1860s was seen in Washington as a threat to a Western and American hemisphere. The 1880s and 1890s were a time of awakening of the American historical self-consciousness. Independence manifested itself in the economic growth of the young nation and expressed its claim to world power status. This exceptional claim was based on geopolitical grounds (domination in Western hemisphere) and political uniqueness (liberty was emerging in the American wilderness). Nevertheless, Germans also desired a ‘place in the sun’. After social reforms, the united Germany was on its way to supremacy on the European continent. The national identity of imperial Germany stressed more and more the image of America as a “nation without history and culture” (Helbich 1997: 123-125). Conflicts of interests between Germania and Sam became more and more visible and competing spheres of influence in Latin and South America led to tensions between America and Germany at the turn of the Century. A conflict was born which would come to destroy feelings of kinship. During WWI, both nations were fighting in opposite camps and this almost led to the liquidation of the German-American ethnic group. In the name the new motherland, they had to abandon their cultural autonomy. For America,

WWI was an opportunity to assimilate all so called 'hyphenated Americans'⁹, although America needed '100% Americanism'.

Consequently, the fight between the two main actors in Shakespeare's play also displays in *socio-cultural* terms the struggle for and the adventure of social recognition that affects all areas of our existence. As Tzvetan Todorov has asserted, every human coexistence is strongly related to the concept of recognition:

The recognition may be tangible or intangible, it can be property or honor, it may involve the wielding of power over other people or not. The quest for recognition may be conscious or unconscious, works with rational or irrational mechanisms. I can also attempt to attract the attention of the other through various facets of my human being, by my outer appearance or my intelligence, by my voice or my silence. (...) Recognition applies to all areas of our existence. Its various forums are not mutual exclusive, then, one can at least provide some comfort for that is missing. I demand for recognition in profession and in my personal relationships, in love and friendship. The loyalty of my friends does not really compensate for the loss of love, a fulfilled private life can make forgotten the failure in the political life. (Todorov 1998: 95-96; trans. P.L. and M.A.)

The need for recognition is also part of every social, economic, and political conflict. To be able to establish communication and interaction on an interpersonal or even macro-governmental level, in hierarchical or egalitarian relationships, a fundamental approval of the other and its interest and position is needed. Struggles for recognition are usually performed on two different levels of action: on the one hand, the efforts to obtain recognition of one's own existence, and on the other hand, the confirmation of the value of one's own actions. As Todorov depicted: "One can be indifferent to the opinion that others have of us, but we cannot remain insensitive to the lack of recognition of our own very existence" (Todorov 1998: 100 – trans. P.L. and M.A.). These insights in the mechanisms of mutual recognition are imperative for international and transatlantic relations too. German-American relations are characterized not only by ups and down and tensions, but also common interests and values.

⁹ The term 'hyphenated Americans' is an epithet commonly used to disparage Americans who were of foreign birth or origin and who displayed an allegiance to a foreign country.

Shylock and Aaron the Moor – Anti-Semitism and Racism in Transatlantic Perspectives

SHYLOCK:

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs,
dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with
the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject
to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means,
warm'd and cool'd by the same winter and summer
as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?
If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us,
do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?
If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.
If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility?
Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his
sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge.
The villainy you teach me, I will execute,
and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

The Merchant of Venice, Act III, Scene 1¹⁰

AARON THE MOOR:

Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did
Would I perform, if I might have my will.
If one good deed in all my life I did,
I do repent it from my very soul.

Titus Andronicus, Act V, Scene III¹¹

Shylock and Aaron the Moor are the main characters from William Shakespeare's plays *The Merchant of Venice* and *Titus Andronicus*. Both are evil characters and typical representatives of racist, stigmatic and discriminative attitudes in the 16th and 17th Century. Shakespeare here uses common stereotypes from his time and presents 'Jewishness' and 'blackness' as emblematic images of early modern society. *Shylock* is a Jewish moneylender who gives money to his Christian rival, Antonio, and asks him to deposit a pound of Antonio's flesh as financial security in case of bankruptcy. When Antonio suddenly defaults on a loan and forfeits his bond, Shylock immediately demands the deposited pound of flesh as

¹⁰ Shakespeare 2011d.

¹¹ Shakespeare 2003.

revenge for Antonio's previous insult, but was defeated by a lawsuit in the court of Venice. Later the noun 'Shylock' has become a synonym for loan sharks, and as the verb 'to shylock' still has the meaning today 'to lend money at exorbitant rates'. In contrast, *Aaron the Moor*, as characterized in the play *Titus Andronicus*, represents evil incarnate. He has been the lover of Tamora, the Queen of the Goths. To avenge her dead sons, he punishes the family of Titus Andronicus with a massacre. According to one of the play's critics, Eugene M. Waith, 'his blackness is seen as emblematic' (Shakespeare 1984: 64). The rhetoric of the play also implies that there is some correlation between the color of Aaron's skin and his evilness. This image was used to show the negative side of Germania and Sam. In these two images it can be seen that '-isms' (e.g., racism, anti-Semitism) were (and are) predominant social issues in Europe and the U.S.

From a *historical* perspective, the problem of anti-Semitism was and still is inseparably bound to anti-Americanism. American participation in WWI on the side of the Allies confirmed some of the perceptions of German conservatives who just wanted to see America's gloomy materialism fail. Germany's announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare was the *casus belli* for the United States, because the U.S. wanted in this way to defend its economic interests that were dependent on free trade. For the Germans, this occasion was a motif to stereotype and to label America as a 'greedy Shylock'. This idiomatic expression has also become a synonym for loan shark and a symbol of the American financial elite, who were responsible for pulling the peace-loving society into the war. The label Shylock was a term widely used in the English language at that time. While using this term, the ruling circles in France and Britain wanted to condemn American claims for the repayment of debts after the war (Rhodes 1969). Anti-Semitic overtones were used to punish American policy-makers in a moralizing way of the new world power. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, wrote in his *Memories* that the American President Wilson 'speaks like Christ, but acts like Clemenceau' (George 1938), but the French Prime Minister always required tangible benefits.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Jewishness had become a synonym with the destructive influence of modernization in Germany. The Weimar Republic was, for representatives of the German conservative revolution, the

‘Judenrepublik’ (Jewish state) (Kunicki 1990: 134) and was regarded as a defeated nation in which international Jewish capital rules compete with lower value products. The Jewish merchant Shylock, synonymous with avarice, expressed a fear of economic dependency on America. Shylock as the personification of cosmopolitanism was seen as an enemy for both the left and the right wing in the Weimar Republic.

In Nazi times, dedication to the motherland played the first role in national-patriotic identification, understood as the sacrifice of the combatants in the trenches of the Great War. During WWII, in German propaganda, the U.S. was presented in black and white colors: a country of social contrast between the lazy sons of the rich and the misery of the poor. Plutocracy was perceived as the real ruler and unemployment as its omnipresent feature (Gerstorfer 1944: 135). German propaganda wanted to discredit the ‘Tierkapitalismus’ (animal capitalism) and to show the dream of American wealth as an illusion. Anti-Semitism was a central point of anti-American German propaganda. The U.S. was seen as a representative of the ‘Juden der Welt’ (Gassert 1997). The American Jews who advised President Franklin D. Roosevelt were full of hatred towards Germany and used their own press to cheer on the war fever. The U.S. President was called a hypocrite, because he accused the Germans of the very world domination which he wanted to accomplish himself. Shylock Jews became the scapegoat of all German problems and became an ahistorical force, devoid of culture and materialistic expression to the U.S. Europeans have criticized the situation of colored people in America like Indians and blacks.

It has been frequently pointed out that this would violate the principle of equality in a democratic and free society. Sometimes, however, immigrants also accepted the opinion of locals who emphasized that the situation of blacks was due to their lack of activity (Billigmeier 1974: 74). Some guides for immigrants told them that in the South one could meet wealthy Germans with Negro plantations (Gerstäcker 1997: 45). Two famous historical public figures were commonly used for strengthening Anti-American attitudes: Heinrich Heine, the German poet, pointed to the hypocrisy of the Americans seized from the British, which allows them as Christians attending an eagerly to the church and to tolerate the fact that millions of blacks in their country are sold like dogs (Schwann

1999: 41-45). Heine presented elitist-cultural aversion to the Anglo-Saxon model of democracy and noted that the American 'dream' of freedom turned out to be a prison nightmare. Alexander von Humboldt, as well as many others, was concerned with the problem of slavery as the main disadvantage of the young republic. Referring to the examples of Assyria, Babylonia, and India, he argued that most ancient cultures constituted as a multiethnic society. He was outraged by the fact that his book about slavery in Cuba was not banned in Madrid, but was not available for purchase in the United States. But he expressed his believe in the moral intelligence of the people who will win over the group of slave owners. Humboldt concluded: 'greatness without virtue cannot exist' (Schwarz 2004: 408). The unsolved status of the population of colored people in the U.S. had its consequences in the 20th Century. Segregation also marked the U.S. Army that was stationed in Europe after WWII. During the Cold War, America wanted to be seen as the home of democracy and freedom (Höhn 2000). American experiences in terms of racism confirmed that there is a large discrepancy between the theory and practice of democracy.

From a *socio-cultural* point of view, one could argue that the process of understanding and recognition, despite historical, cultural, economic, and political differences heavily relies on identity management and on the strategy of intercultural understanding. The constitution, stabilization, and transformation of (collective) identities are here assumed not to be static but relational. There neither exists *the* American or German nor *the* Sam or Germania on its own. If European or Americans wish to engage themselves in the process of defining their own collective identity, this will only be possible if they are also aware of the others and vice versa. This means that cultural difference can only be portrayed as a precarious construction and relation, integration and hybridization of one's own and the other (Straub and Shimada 1999: 454 – trans. P.L. and M.A.). Thus, the 'old' and the 'new' will lose their status as given entities, but without primarily interpreting the others from one's own point of view or jumping to an incorporation to one's self-concept (so as to reduce the other to a variant of someone's own) (Sundermeier 1991: 27 – trans. P.L. and M.A.). Having the others and the 'I' in mind, in a dialogical discourse and mutual understanding, new constructions of reality can be endeavored and reflected from all parties involved. But an intermediation between the 'I'

and the ‘other’ is not always accompanied by common sense on the part of all participants in a discourse. Perhaps, it is also possible that one could understand each other in situations and contexts where radical differences are maintained and dissent would be the result of the discourse. Humans may differ over political decisions, intellectual interests, and cross-cultural relations. To bridge these differences and conflicts of interests, a common shared value could eventually be the (unconditional) recognition and tolerance of other cultural life-worlds. However, this is associated with some not to be underestimated challenges. The image of the other does not always fit the image that one would like to have from him.

Macbeth – A Dream of Power

BANQUO:
That trusted home
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Beside the Thane of Cawdor.
But ‘tis strange: And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray’s
In deepest consequence.
Macbeth, Act I, Scene III

I am in blood
Stepp’d in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o’er.
Macbeth, Act III, Scene IV¹²

Macbeth and Banquo are the main characters in Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth*. Macbeth, of kingly origin, is known for his bravery and fighting prowess. During his reign he wades through blood until his inevitable fall. As we can see, it is not so easy to resolve the question of Macbeth’s motivation. In the first act, his motivation appears vague, insufficient, and concealed. But later, Macbeth’s motifs match with the witches’ prophecies. The evil actions seem to trap him into a cycle of criminal behavior, as Macbeth finally recognizes himself.

¹² Source to both quotations: Shakespeare 2011b.

In this regard, it can be argued that the 'dream of power' is a transatlantic phenomenon. It is a vision of both Europe and America taking an important place in history. It is a connection of reality and fantasy, which leads to the overstatement of one's own national characters. As a consequence, it sometimes leads to arrogance and the misuse of power and, in the end, to catastrophes and downfall.

From a *historical* perspective, the European continent is a 'cradle' of historical thinking that is structured by reflections on the past. The opinions of historians become a kind of 'court over the world' (Angehern 2007). In history, people have attempted to find justifications for sources of power or weakness, success, or failure of states and nations. This has led to a kind of fetishization of history, looking for hidden meanings and symbols. The high position of the people 'at the table of history' attributed to national character traits, decency, hard work, and courage. They looked for the cause, but also a certain logic within history called the philosophy of history. At the turn of the 19th and 20th Century, wishful thinking and the rationalization of history among nations resulted in national megalomania. The British proclaimed their 'white man's burden', the French raised their 'civilizing mission' justifying its commitment to the proper 'place in the sun' (Carr and Davies 1999). Two world wars were an attempt of strengthening powers needed to achieve supremacy. As a consequence, bloodshed and atrocities on an unprecedented scale, even for Europe, emerged. An economically, culturally, and morally devastated Europe lost its position as the center of the world to America. Germany's dream of power was defeated and humiliated by the new superpower from across the Atlantic (Münkler 2009). Through the propaganda image of Germany as a gorilla in the 'Pickelhaube' (spiked helmet) wielded a club with the word 'Kultur', German national pride was offended (Moore 2001: 311). American society considered Germany to be a country of writers, poets, and philosophers but was hailed as a militaristic and 'enemy of mankind'. In this way, anti-Americanism became a kind of protective reaction, which served as a defense of German identity. The propaganda of anti-Americanism drew handfuls of well-established stereotypes of materialistic America 'without a history and culture' even in the 19th Century (Schwark 2008). During the interwar period, both leftist and rightist groups rejected

America and its socio-economic system. The need to build a fair social system, which served to restore the dignity of man, was also taken up by the Nazis. Finally, German anti-Americanism resulted in a cynicism of disappointed idealism and ambition. The United States was regarded as the 'decisive force' in both world wars, which took the historical place 'owed' to the Germans (Junker 1997). America's attacks on Germany seems to support the allegation that, under the hypocritical slogan of 'peace without victors,' they cultivated a policy of imperialism.

From a *social* and *cultural* research perspective, some scholars analyzed this drama as a parable of the human eagerness for power and as an attempt to put chaotic situations in order (Williams 2008: 55). Not only did Macbeth and Lady Macbeth aspire to become more powerful, influential, and dominant, but also Duncan was addicted to the pursuit of predominance, while he perpetrated a massacre with his troops both against the Norwegian army and the betrayer Macdonald, the former Thane of Cawdor. Shakespeare's drama became the subject of many adaptations on stage and in cinema and the several Thanes have been portrayed, in Roman Polański's film especially, as bloodthirsty and power-conscious opportunists. In a similar way, Old Europe and the New World also had and have required supremacy in cultural, social, economic, and political perspectives. Nevertheless, the drama itself and the series of vendettas mentioned can eventually be understood as an allegory or metaphor not only for the rise to supreme power and the pursuit of predominance of nation states and culture nations. Macduff as America could also be portrayed from the standpoint of its ideological re-/transformation and development after its separation from the 'Old Europe' (Macbeth). America pursued the creation of a new society not based on homogeneity but particularly on 'American Values'. Americans are committed to values like individual freedom, equal opportunity, the fair distribution of contributions, constitutional democracy, property rights, and entrepreneurship. These more individualistic values also correspond with social values like the feeling as subjects of rights and duties, the attitude to patriotism, neighborly help, and fair-mindedness. In terms of Geerd Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, the U.S. and (Western) Germany are ranked very high on the scale of individuality and collectivism: the higher the scale index of individualism is, the

higher a subject of a culture values self-dependence, calls for autonomy and resistance to peer pressure. Especially in Western industrialized countries like Australia, Canada, Great Britain, and the U.S. there are usually high rates in this individuality index. Although Hofstede's (2001) results have been criticized by many scholars from different disciplines (for an overview, see i.e., Ailon 2008) especially because of its Western cultural bias and the essentialism of 'culture', other (cross-) cultural psychological studies can provide evidence for the hypothesis that Western cultural identity and self has been often described as more 'independent', 'individualistically,' and 'idiocentric' than in any other culture (e.g., Markus and Kitayama 1991; Straub and Chakkarath 2010; Triandis 2001). Hofstede (2001: 89) also measured on the scale of power distance the extent to which the lesser powerful members of institutions and organizations in a society and culture anticipate and accept the unequal distribution of power. In other words, with the index of power distance one could describe how tolerance or acceptance for differences of power and authority distribution is perceived in one culture. The high scale values for power distance legitimate hierarchies. While the U.S. has a lower scale value than most Latin American countries, Arab states, South Asian countries, Belgium, France, and Greece, it is still higher than Austria, Western Germany, and the Scandinavian countries where lower power distance values are shared.

The Phoenix and the Turtle

Phoenix of beautie, beauteous, Bird of any
To thee I do entitle all my labour,
More precious in mine eye by far then many
That feedst all earthly sences with thy savour:
Accept my home-writ praises of thy loue,
And kind acceptance of thy Turtle-doue

*The Phoenix and the Turtle*¹³

The Phoenix and the Turtle is an allegorical poem about the death of ideal love. In addition to the story of an ideal friendship, this poem

¹³ Matchett (1965, p. 213).

can be considered an elucidation of the relationship between truth and beauty. In this poem, two fabulous creatures are depicted: There is the Phoenix that is, in ancient mythology, one of the most beautiful (fire-) birds and symbol of immortal love. The Turtle, instead, characterizes one of the longest living animals on earth and its mythological sense is devoted to time and longevity. It is also known as an animal that appreciates livelong commitment and faithfulness in terms of monogamist love. Because of the turtle shell that it carries on his back, it also stands for carrying the weight of the whole world. The poem is a kind of expression of ideal and enduring love commitment between the Phoenix and the Turtle. The whole poem is a kind of love ode that values feelings of faithfulness and honesty and lover attributes.

Hence, this image of the ideal love between the Phoenix and the Turtle can be attributed to (West-) German-American relations during the Cold War. The fear of communism and the commitment to the same political, cultural, and economical values were a platform for strong transatlantic alliance. Especially the magic of ideal love between the Turtle and the Phoenix could be translated into the love of freedom, which created such a long-lasting commitment between Germany and America after WWII. The notion and the desire for freedom are connected to Germania and Sam: there are ups and downs in an undulating process – like in any normal human love.

From a *historical* analysis we can conclude: After WWII, both parts of Germany divided into pro-Soviet German Democratic Republic and pro-Western Federal German Republic presented quite a different attitude towards America. The German Democratic Republic, as a product of the Cold War and as a tool of Soviet Unions' perception of America, the Leninist theory of capitalism separated between the 'capitalistic-fascist' and 'communistic-anti-fascist' world (Grosse 1999). Soviet and Eastern German propaganda accused the USA of destroying anti-Nazi alliance to increase its pursuit of imperialism as a means of protection against capitalist overproduction. The Western world is considered as a threat that could use its nuclear weapons and is based on the strength of the dollar (Diner 2002). Propaganda images of America in the GDR coincided with that of the Soviets (Ehrenburg 1948: 164). Ilya Ehrenburg (1948) in his book *In Amerika* released

an image of state, its politics, culture, and social relations, which was reproduced in Soviet propaganda. As he asserts, the real capital of America is 'loud, colorful, and inhumane New York'. Ehrenburg (1948) also wrote about racial divisions, discrimination, and lynching as evidences of the American double moral standards. He also criticized the young American generation for drunkenness and fancy clothes and cars.

In contrast, the nature of the pro-Western Federal relationship with America would be described as a noble brotherly friendship. Americanization and Coca-Cola-Colonization, however, understandably aroused concerns, but the process was inexorable. Konrad Adenauer in interview for the London Times once said that he chose Bonn and not Frankfurt as the capital because "Frankfurt is completely Americanized (...). While I enjoy working with the Americans, we do not want to be Americanized" (Ermarth 1993: 102-103). Meanwhile, Germany succumbed to a very tight and easy to measure process. *Der Spiegel* reported in 1965 that Coca-Cola as "the symbol of the civilization of the New World and the promise of American life" was consumed by 80 million people and 5.8 billion liters per year around the world (Spiegel 1965: 40). According to *Der Spiegel* (1965), the average American consumed twice as much Coca-Cola per year as the average West German, while the FRG among the 120 surveyed countries in terms of consumption stood at second place in the world ahead of Mexico and Japan). The protagonist in Ulrich Plenzdorf's book *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.*, Edgar Wibeau, states: "You can imagine life without jeans? (...) I think that jeans are a belief, not pants" (Plenzdorf 1974: 19). In the 1970s, Western Germans were even called 'European Americans' (Adam 2005). Brotherly love was based on community values, freedom, democracy, political interests, and the fight against the Soviet threat in order to gain the unification of Germany as a cultural nation. Germany was treated completely different than after WWI, mainly because of the attitude of the United States. Germania (FRG) sometimes accepted the advice and decisions of his older brother Sam (USA) with a grimace or a cry, e.g., the war in Vietnam, the deployment of missiles in Europe (Emons 2004). The end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany again supported the notion of unconditional love.

The fabulous images of ‘The Phoenix and the Turtle’ are also emblematic pictures used to describe specific characteristics of people, nations, and cultures. In the *social and cultural theoretical* discussion about ‘transnational’ and ‘transcultural’ transfers between Germany and the United States, it is unavoidable to also speak about the stereotypes that have continuously shaped the historical developments of transatlantic relations. Insofar as the economic, political, and cultural relations across the Atlantic are not free of irritations and misunderstandings, stereotypes as specific forms of the identification of others developed in the process of perception to counter the complexity of the world and are cognitive essential for individual and social orientation and cannot be omitted (Lüsebrink 2005: 88-90). (Auto- and Hetero-) Stereotyping images contain empty phrases and simplifications: they are “at the same time uncritical generalizations that are isolated against falsification and are relatively resistant against changes” and perceptions of reality (Lüsebrink 2005: 88). Stereotypes are characteristics, which are attributed to members of a social group merely on the basis of their affiliation to that group (Petersen and Six-Materna 2006). Regarding national personifications, these “pictures in our head” (Lippmann 1922: 3) can be either positive or negative: While images of progressive economic development and growth in the process of industrialization in the U.S. is regarded positive in respect to the idea of liberal freedom, the so-called ‘American Way of Life’ has also been critiqued and stigmatized by Europeans as a philistine concept of ‘mass society’ that is blind to the social and economic differences in its own country (Rausch 2006). On the one hand, Germans often see Americans as arrogant, patriotic, domineering, materialistic, and over moralizing. On the other hand, Americans expect Germans to be solid and trustworthy partners, affable, and hostile that are (although dutiful) addicted to pedantic accuracy and always pessimistic. Despite the contradictory characters of these stereotypes, they have some things in common: generalization, orientation, identification, differentiation, self-expression, and legitimation (Lüsebrink 2005: 89-90).

Between Hamlet's Reflection and the Self-assurance of Fortinbras

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
(...) Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment

Hamlet, Act III, Scene I¹⁴

While fighting with his own sanity, Hamlet struggles with whether to avenge the regicide of his father. If so, he wonders, on whom should he wreak his vengeance? Wrestling with his thoughts, he is unable to force actions that could lead to the death of many people and which makes him a tragic character. Fortinbras – the alter ego of the main character in Shakespeare's tragedy – is a Norwegian crown prince. At the end of the play, after Hamlet's death, he becomes ruler of Denmark. Fortinbras also serves in many ways as a parallel to Hamlet: Like the latter, he is motivated largely by the death of his father, whose name he also bears (as Hamlet does his fathers). In other respects, Fortinbras serves as a foil for Hamlet: While the Danish prince is deliberate and given to long-winded soliloquies, the Norwegian is impulsive and hot-headed, determined to avenge his slain father at any cost.

For us, this image raises questions about tensions and friendship in transatlantic realities: Can we make a distinction between Europe as Hamlet, in whom lurks doubt and who is unable to act, and America as Fortinbras, self-assured and active? Are the ups and downs in transatlantic relations simply consequences of the true nature of this partnership (which suddenly shows up during tensions) or are they affected by temporally circumstances?

In a *historical perspective*, we could draw a line to Thucydides, who describes in his *The History of Peloponnesian War* that the peoples of

¹⁴ Shakespeare 2011e.

Athens and Sparta are struggling for hegemony in Greece and stresses the importance of political differences as a factor for stimulating mutual hostility of state relations. He wrote that:

neither between individuals can arise a lasting friendship nor between states can arise a lasting relationship if both parties do not consider themselves to be fair and do not have a similar character; the difference in views also influences different proceedings. (Tukidydes 1988: 157 – trans. P.L. and M.A.)

The values determine personal and collective identity and are closely connected to our aims, needs and will. In Hans Joas' words: "Values express no desires, but tell us what is worth to desire" (1997: 32 – trans. P.L. and M.A.). Values also determine our actions. These experiences confirm the truth of historical relations between Europe and America. European conservative intellectuals saw in the American Revolution a product of Enlightenment rationalism that falsely claimed the right to build a political community based on abstract and universal principles. It was widely believed that the American Revolution was the first step towards liberating people from the yoke of backwardness and national prejudices. According to Americans, the ruling class of the 'Old World' was dissatisfied with the fact that a dangerous experiment with the American constitutional republic succeeded and did not die a natural death. Being 'an oasis of democracy' in the middle of 'the Sahara absolutism', the new republic offended the monarchy with its very existence (Bailey 1969: 57). According to the American historians Thomas Bailey (1969), who analyzed U.S. diplomatic relations with Europe in the 19th Century, the hostility of European countries was emphasized earlier as their simultaneous expansionist ambitions towards the American continent. This has directly influenced the nature of transatlantic relations (Bailey 1969: 57). The persistence of this state of affairs throughout the entire century induced the necessity of isolation from Europe up to the moment in which the political differences – as Americans believed the main reason for disharmony in mutual relationship – would allow the creation of friendly relations. In the 20th Century, the United States entered the arena of history as a political-military power, which was reflected in the victory in two world wars and the East-West confrontation. America, having overcome isolationism, destroyed the Eurocentric

order and created firstly a Euro-Atlantic and, later, a global world. The disintegration of the Soviet bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall were understood in Germany, as in whole Europe, as the announcement of the 'end of history' in the form of Pax Americana (Fukuyama 1996). A unified Germany faced the difficult task of blurring the differences that developed during the Cold War between East and West Germany: the relaxation of the German-American community's interests, the increase of the U.S. unilateralism as the sole hegemon in the world, manifested in the attitude to the Kyoto Treaty and the International Criminal Court, as well as the use of force in the two wars in the Persian Gulf. As Robert Kagan (2003) correctly observed, a disproportion between the military force of America and Europe results in different set of ideals and principles concerning their use. Thus, Europe – using the phrase Wolf Lepenies (2005) – is 'Denmark's prince Hamlet', who is embroiled in her mind as doubting dreamer. The 'knight in soft slippers' is how Zbigniew Herbert (2000: 19-21), the famous Polish author, once called Macbeth in his poem the *Elegy of Fortinbras*. In the opposite, according to the same German historian, America is the Norwegian prince Fortinbras who acts quickly and decisively. Prolonged meditation, unlike Hamlet, does not affect the strength of Fortinbras' actions. Thomas Mann (2002: 145) described the US-German relations as "freundliche Fremde" that shows simultaneously: sympathy and difference between Germania and Sam. The persistence and smoothness of these differences will write Shakespeare's epilogue for those characters.

Cultural exchange, in the form of transatlantic relations, is largely influenced and fundamentally shaped by culturally differing value systems. Scholars in *social and cultural studies*, especially in the field of so-called intercultural or cross-cultural communication, have discussed at length this fundamental rationale under the thesis that culture as a system of knowledge, orientation, and meanings has a predominant impact on peoples' expressive perceptions, cognitions, emotions, and actions.¹⁵ In our context we may refer to the well-known empirical tangible concept of 'culture standards' as developed from the German scholar Alexander Thomas that he defines as follows:

¹⁵ For the concept of 'culture' cp. Eagleton (2001) and Boesch (1991).

Culture standards are processes of perception, thought, evaluation and action that for the majority of the members of a particular culture are regarded, for themselves and for others, as normal, typical and obligatory. Personal behavior and the behavior of others is judged and regulated according to these central culture standards. Central culture standards regulate wide areas of thought, evaluation and action whereas peripheral culture standards are the rule only for specific situations or groups of people. The individual and group-specific manner of handling central cultural standards for behavior regulation can vary within a certain range of tolerance. Manners of conduct that are outside the given limits are rejected and discredited. (Thomas 1996: 112)

Cultural standards allow a confrontation of one's own thinking, judging, evaluating, and acting with such of other cultures and can bear on (culture specific) values. In addition, Germania and Sam differ marginally in their sense of the perception of one's own cultural values and, vice-versa, that of others. To make it more concrete, we summarized few culture standards that resulted from cross-cultural research (see Table 2).

Table 2: Central U.S. American and German Culture Standards¹⁶

Central U.S. American Culture Standards	Central German Culture Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism and individual freedom • Equal opportunity and fair sharing of contributions • Orientation to achievement, performance and action • Interpersonal approachability • Social recognition • Evenness of temperament • Patriotism • Orientation to future • Functional understanding property rights • Mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalism • Orientation to hierarchy and authority • High performance of one's duty • Orientation toward family • Differentiation of interpersonal distance • Avoiding physical body contact • Direct interpersonal communication • Private property rights • Differentiation by traditional sex roles

As we are aware of its critics (cf. i.e., Krewer 1996), the concept of culture standards, nevertheless, helps to underline differences and similarities between these two cultures. U.S. Americans are committed

¹⁶ Source: Thomas 1997: 132-133 – trans. P.L. and M.A.

to individual expressions of life and appreciate values like individual freedom, equal opportunity, and the fair sharing of contributions. They tend to orientate present and future actions to achievement and performance, are usually responsive to social recognition, and tend to support patriotic principles. In contrast, Germans are inclined towards formalism, hierarchical and authoritative orientations, and appreciate higher family values. They usually value interpersonal distance higher and avoid physical or body contact. For Germans, direct communication and the demarcation of one's own property are respected and desired. All these culture standards can only be understood as relationships and mutual references. Despite all differences, there are many more commonalities. As we mentioned in regard to Hofstede's (2001) cross-cultural studies, U.S. Americans and Germans belong to the same Western cultural 'family' that is characterized by a tendency to higher levels of 'individuality' (so far the U.S. on the top of the index) and 'independent' self-concepts. As we can see in modern history and politics concerning transatlantic relations, the orientation to values is also interlinked with differences in communicative styles:

Especially, verbal communication plays an important role in individualistic cultures. Silence is regarded as abnormal and suspect. There is an obligation to verbal communication; even it is superficial and banal. (Schugk 2004: 121 – trans. P.L. and M.A.)

We could understand and interpret these common cultural values of intermediation and cooperation, mutual support and assistance as well as peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts as essential impact factors in international as well as in American-German relations, in the past, present, and future.

Conclusion

Relations between countries, as well as human relations, should be based on understanding and trust, which stems from a common worldview, and these, in turn, with common values and interests. Transatlantic relations and US-German understanding was always, and still is sometimes,

a scarce commodity. Understanding cannot, in fact, be based on ideas previously prepared (The Birth of Macduff as the invention of America), cannot ignore the substance of the relationship (The Passionate Pilgrim and the immigrants to America). Understanding is based on a shared basis, and those were and still are the values personified by Western civilization, which, like a bridge over the Atlantic Ocean, connects two cousins with some precious blood ties (The Two Noble Kinsmen and good relations in cultural exchange). Understanding cannot ignore evil, and speak of it in both historical and social terms; its silence can distort these values (Shylock and Aaron the Moor – anti-Americanism and racism and Macbeth with its dream of power). Understanding is also something more than uncritical imitation and the acquisition of patterns on the other hand (The Phoenix and the Turtle – the fear of losing one's own values). Understanding, ultimately, should rely on common sense, which avoids extremes and the squabbling between opposites (Hamlets Reflections and Self-assurance of Fortinbras). Some tensions in transnational relations do, and will, remain:

The nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. (English and Halperin 1987: 137)

As described in this paper, both America and Europe, as characterized by Uncle Sam and Germania, are keen to retain the ambitious tension between marriage or romance on the one hand, and separation or divorce on the other.

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