Ann Tizia Leitich: New Voice, New Woman: Packaging America for Vienna

Brooke Marie Wright

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Ann Tizia Leitich: New Voice, New Woman
Packaging America for Vienna

by

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Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of graduation requirements
for University Honors

German and Slavic Languages Department
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ABSTRACT

Ann Tizia Leitich: New Voice, New Woman
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This thesis examines the contribution which the 1920s works of Viennese journalist and novelist Ann Tizia Leitich made on the Austrian consideration of the new woman during the interwar period. Following World War I, European society was both infatuated and repulsed by American culture, and especially by American women. While many European women began to look to the United States as the model of the “new woman,” others harshly criticized the changes which American influence and the image of the American woman had brought to Europe. As an Austrian living in the United States and writing newspaper articles and other works for an audience back home, Leitich was able to provide a close-up analysis of American culture and the American new woman which was unavailable through other media.

As one of the few qualified to instruct Austrian women about their American counterparts, Leitich used the opportunity to explain and demonstrate the characteristics of the American new woman. Her writings focus on the simultaneous independence and femininity of American women. These writings reveal both the strengths and flaws of America, but ultimately reflect Leitich's belief that Europeans can benefit from a true understanding and emulation of American culture. Her overall intent is to convince her Austrian readers that the qualities of the American new woman could benefit European society.
I. Introduction


'Sie müssen doch zugeben, Ursula, dass wir [Amerikanerinnen] es viel schöner haben, als Ihr [Österreicherinnen] drüben. Wir wissen doch, was Leben heisst. Nicht wahr?'

Ursula antworte nicht. Sie fand keine Worte. Leben! Die glaubten zu wissen, was Leben war -- war es möglich, dass diese Frage ernst gemeint war? Vielleicht doch -- -- (Leitich, Ann Tizia. Ursula entdeckt Amerika 235)

In 1921, Ann Tizia Leitich, a young Austrian teacher frustrated by European society after WWI, left her home in Austria and traveled alone to the United States of America. First working as a private maid and later as a governess and secretary, in 1925 Leitich began a career in journalism. She served as the American correspondent for Vienna's popular newspaper Die Neue Freie Presse, wrote articles on American arts and culture for an Austrian public, and quickly became a household name. Leitich soon began to branch out into other literary genres and in 1926 published her first book, a collection of essays entitled Amerika, du hast es besser. Her 1928 novel, Ursula entdeckt Amerika, followed this work and offered a semi-autobiographical account of an Austrian baroness' introduction to and views on America. Later Leitich would publish some twenty-plus more books, most of them dealing either with Austrian history or with America (Brinker-Gabler 196).

Leitich wrote throughout the 1920s on the subject of America and American culture, directed her writings to an Austrian and German audience, and covered many topics ranging from current events to cultural differences and her personal experiences. However, one of the topics upon which Leitich focused particular attention concerns women and feminism. Coming from a Europe that was both infatuated and repulsed by
American culture, but living an American-style life in the United States, Leitich was particularly able to address misconceptions of the American woman. Through many of her writings, both newspaper articles and fiction, Leitich gives her European readers an inside peak at and analysis of the American new woman.

Leitich's writings on feminism directly reflect her belief that America is still in an early stage of cultural development, but that Europeans can benefit from a true understanding and emulation of American culture. As European preoccupation with things American intensified after WWI, many were eager to adopt American products and ideas, but others sharply criticized America's influence on European society. Of especial concern was the new woman, the liberated female who defied traditional norms, went to work, bobbed her hair, etc. As American life and culture infiltrated Europe, the American new woman was featured prominently in popular culture, and European women began to adopt her looks, ways, and lifestyle. While some eagerly accepted these developments and emulated the American woman featured in popular culture, others condemned this change and the influence of the American woman, blaming her for much of the evil in society. Writing from America, daily surrounded by American women, Leitich differs with both parties, and opposes both complete adoption and complete rejection of America. She attempts to convey the reality of America and the American woman to her European readers so that they might accurately judge for themselves.

While Leitich's works offer important additions to the 1920s debate of the American woman, these writings have largely been ignored in historical and literary research. In this thesis, I will begin to rectify this problem, attempting to demonstrate how and to what extent Leitich influenced the development of the 1920s Austrian new

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1 See, for example, see Giese, Ortquist, and Peterson
woman. In chapter 1, I will examine the icon of the new woman and her connection to America, demonstrating Austrian society's reaction to this image. In chapter 2, I will examine the life and experiences of Ann Tizia Leitich, focusing especially on her European reception. Chapter 3, will consider some of Leitich's newspaper articles published between 1925 and 1929, as well as the article "An die Damen" found in her collection of essays *Amerika, du hast es besser*. Finally, in chapter 4, I will analyze Leitich's 1928 novel *Ursula entdeckt Amerika*, through which Leitich was able to demonstrate, rather than simply explain, the American new woman. In these chapters and using these documents, my primary objective will be to demonstrate how Ann Tizia Leitich presented the American new woman to her readers, adding important perspective and influencing European women to adopt characteristics of the American new woman.

My work will have a threefold purpose. Although in recent years literary research has begun to focus on non-traditional genres of literature, studies made of journalism have not been fully integrated into this body of research (McFarland). I hope to emphasize the importance of journalism in studying literature and particularly the new woman, simultaneously emphasizing the importance of extending that research to discover other writings -- novels, stories, and biographies -- which such journalists wrote. My second objective is to reconsider the American influence upon the European new woman. Although traditional sources reveal a polarity among European society, with some outright rejecting while others swallowed American culture whole, Leitich's works document a different phenomenon. They suggest that a "positive reception of Americanism existed among even the bourgeois cultural elite" (McFarland). I postulate that reception of the American new woman was not simply divided between the masses
and the elites, but that Leitich's works made the American woman a subject of emulation among many different strata of women. Finally, I wish to reintroduce journalist and novelist Ann Tizia Leitich as a writer whose works are not only interesting and highly entertaining, but also are instructive in European, American, and international concerns and feelings of the 1920s. While researchers have generally ignored her works, Leitich offers great insight and unusual perspectives that highly influenced European society and reflect an interesting mix of Europeanism and Americanism.
II. The New Woman: Reality and Icon

The following illustration is an excellent example of the 1920s icon of the new woman. Taken from a 1926 edition of *Die Neue Freie Presse*, this advertisement for beauty products was featured in the same edition with some of Leitich’s works. As she exposes her slim figure to the world, the young woman portrays a sense of independence and a lack of inhibition that characterized the new woman. Although men stand in the

Figure 1. Advertisement. *Die Neue Freie Presse*. 1926.
background, they have no formal attachment to her – the new woman can and does stand on her own. She is dressed in modern and revealing clothing, sports the new pageboy haircut, and prides herself in her fashionable slenderness. Caught in the act of smoothing her hair, she portrays a self-aware sexuality as she purposefully uses her power to her advantage. As the new woman icon, she demonstrates a belief in her own power and independence, easily attracts the attention of men, and flatters herself that she is indifferent to criticism.

In order to understand Leitich and her works in their cultural context, it is necessary to examine the history and image of this new woman, especially as she appeared in Europe. With industrialization, urban boom, and the widespread need for women to work to support their families, the latter half of the 19th century saw an evolution in the female sphere and in women's ambitions. One result was the emergence of the term "new woman," made famous (or infamous) in 1894 with the publication of Sarah Grand's essay "The New Aspect of the Woman Question" (Ledger 9). Ledger states that, while the term "new woman" was applied to women from that point throughout the early 20th century, there was little consensus as to what the term actually meant. From its inception the term "new woman" evoked ideas as different as pure motherhood, free love, and lesbianism, and over the decades its definitions and uses would increase even more (10-11). Additionally, the term was used by several groups of people with very different motives. By the early 1900s, mostly male critics were using the term "new woman" to protest change while feminists used the same term to promote their own desires and agenda (10). As a result, attackers labeled her sexually abnormal and warned of the ill effects of her deviance from accepted norms (18), while feminists
put a positive spin on the term to embody their aims, which included female education, the vote, and a new style of marriage -- or no marriage at all (20-22).

This dichotomy also manifest itself on the other side of the Atlantic, where European fin-de-siécle society underwent a similar change and responded with similarly mixed antagonism and acceptance. While Viennese feminists formed various associations and societies and campaigned for education reform and the vote, among other aims, others responded negatively to these attempts. These critics often undermined both their characters and their attempts, believing that such women had "transgressed the bounds set by nature" (Anderson 5). One difference, however, in the European backlash, lies in the fact that Europe could and did find a scapegoat for the problem: while American discussions of the issue did not specifically blame any one group or influencer other than women, some Europeans saw the emergence of the new woman as directly tied to America. By 1904, when Dr. Hugo Muensterberg published his two-volume work Die Amerikaner, Europeans were already viewing American women as dangerous and subversive; in his work, Dr. Muensterberg writes extensively on the problem of the "self-assertive American woman," warning of "Frauenherrschaft," or "rule by women" as a spreading American phenomenon (Ortquist 277). While the idea of the European new woman echoed that of the American new woman, the fact that Europeans could link this creature with American influence and characteristics altered the discussion and would have future ramifications.

The idea of the new woman persisted through several decades, altering over time, and reemerging especially strong after World War I. Following the war, changes in European society surpassed even that which it had witnessed at the turn of the century.
The death of so many men during the war left some two and a quarter million more women than men over age twenty-five (Peterson 19), the divorce rate had more than doubled since before the war (26.6 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1913 to 59.1 in 1920) (21), and birth rates had dropped as well (16). By 1925, there were three times as many white-collar workers in Germany as in 1907, and this phenomenon echoed in other cities and countries (51). These changes hugely affected women, their roles and their opportunities. As in previous decades, the term "new woman" was used to refer to changes in society and women's roles; now, however, the term invoked a slightly more definite image.

**New Woman: Popular Culture and America**

The 1920s new woman was almost exclusively defined by her physical appearance. Writing to characterize the decade of the 1920s, Hans Janowitz suggested that a description of the time would have to begin with the words: "'It was the time of the pageboy, it was the time of the short skirt, of flesh-colored stockings'" (Hake 185). Seen in advertisements, on billboards, and on magazine covers throughout the 1920s, the new woman is tall and thin, dressed in stylish, often androgynous clothing, and sports the short pageboy haircut (Meskimmon 164). In his 1925 study of *Girlkultur*, Fritz Giese demonstrates that European idea of the new woman was almost entirely physical -- her essence is revealed in the bodies of dancers, in "Schönheitsmessung" and "Schönheitsrekorde" (54). The idea of the new woman as defined by her appearance was prevalent throughout European literature and culture of the time\(^2\).

Additionally, while changes in and emphasis upon physical appearance could have simply been the outward sign of women's internal change and development, many women seemed to consider the outward display of new womanhood to be the final goal.

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\(^2\) See, for example, Giese, Meskimmon, and Hake.
The woman's movement itself had "run out of steam" ("The Rise of the New Woman" 196) and been replaced by emphasis upon more superficial concerns. By focusing almost exclusively upon fashion and physical appearance while neglecting deeper and more lasting developments, the decade simultaneously emphasized and detracted from women's emancipation (Hake 199). Identifying a new woman primarily by her haircut, clothing, and figure, rather than by actions or attitudes, European society displayed a very shallow form of women's emancipation.

Various groups began to use the image of the new woman as a physical symbol or icon to promote or damage their individual causes and concerns. Mass media became the major voice in emphasizing this image in order to attract the female audience and boost sales. As a result of the media's control of this image, the term "new woman" lost its connection to real achievement and largely became a hollow term referring to supposed qualities and achievements which were very often nonexistent. As a result, new women were actually "disempowered [. . .] through an overdetermined emphasis upon physical appearance and commodity display" (Meskimmon 164). Writing in 1928, Hilde Walter states:

. . . all the consumer-goods industries geared to female customers were very quick to recognize the attractiveness of such catchwords and make full use of them in their advertisements. Even the most poorly paid saleswoman or typist is an effective billboard; in a provocative get-up she becomes the very emblem of endless weekend amusements and the eternal freshness of youth. Women's moderate professional successes, often
deficiently compensated, are glorified in annuals and wall calendars, if possible under the heading 'Women for Women. (Walter 210)

While images of the new woman became ubiquitous, these images demonstrated manipulation of the emerging female consciousness. As a media-controlled icon, the image of the 1920s European new woman did not symbolize female development, but instead demonstrated her exploitation and disempowerment.

Just as the image of the European new woman was directly linked to popular culture and the media, this image was also linked to America. The center of popular culture, film, and products of the decade, America was closely associated to the consumer culture that defined the new woman; this relationship suggested that the United States was largely responsible for the ubiquitous icon of the new woman. Calling America "das Mutterland der Körperkultur" (9), Giese's 1925 study of Girkultur states that America is responsible for Europe's new woman, a creature defined by her physical appearance. A 1925 passage by Rudolf Kayser similarly focuses on the American woman's physical appearance which is beginning to define the new European woman: "conforming to it is the new (Americanized) appearance of the . . . new type of woman . . . : boyish, linear, dominated by lively movement, by her gait, by her legs" (McCormick 163). Society often identified the new woman by her haircut, the Bubikopf (pageboy), which Coco Chanel and Isadora Duncan brought to Europe (Hake 187). The decade's fixation upon health and exercise, and the appearance of the dark, pale, and thin city woman, likewise stemmed from the influence of "Anglo-American body consciousness" as propagated by the media (196-197). One 1928 advertisement for diet pills emphasizes this association with the following verbiage: "So schlank wurden die

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3 See, for example, Frame, Giese, Hake, Meskimmon, Peterson
Cora Sisters durch das Tragen der Kleinert Reducer, amerikanische Entfettungs" ("M.E. Mayer Advertisement"). A sketch of two rail-thin women, clad in underclothing and sporting pageboy cuts -- typical examples of the new woman -- accompanies the ad and emphasizes the link between America and its products and a woman's desired figure and appearance. Such advertisements, combined with other media influences, demonstrate the relationship of American influence with the 1920s icon of the lean, streamlined new woman sporting a pageboy haircut.

This association of America with the new woman led to varied results with dramatic effects for European woman. One result, society's critical backlash at America and the new woman, requires extensive attention and will be dealt with in the following section. Another result, however, regards the idealization of the American woman. Because the new woman was directly linked to America, the American new woman became an ideal associated the successful woman (Meskimmon 165). As the supposed source of popular culture and fashion, the American woman became a fascinating creature whom European women often idealized and strove to emulate⁴. Seeing only the image of the American woman that the media used to promote its products, many Europeans strove to remake themselves in the image of this American new woman.

**New Woman: America and the Critical Backlash**

While some, particularly women, reacted to the new woman by attempting to emulate America, others, particularly men, saw this new woman as something dangerous and frightening. Some saw women as partially responsible for defeat in WWI; as one study states, some men included women in the "stab in the back" theory, believing that "the war was lost on the home front, rather than by the army, because of subversion by

Jews, Communists, Social Democrats -- and also women" (Bridenthal et al 7). Linking women with the loss of the war and possibly treacherous acts, these men thus saw modern women as morally reprehensible and dangerous. As post-war women began to change their physical appearances to conform to the image of the new woman, some began to fear female masculinization and overemphasize the change that these transformations would have upon their own lives. As Ute Frevert states, their fears and exaggerations led them to misunderstand and distort female modernity (Meskimmon 168). Thus distrusting women and fearing the effect of societal changes, many men feared the new woman and her influence.

Additionally, as post-war modernity resulted in large societal changes, some began to see women as representative of the negative aspects of society. In his 1928 article "Feminismus in Amerika," Rudolf Hildebrand demonstrates this tendency by blaming women for the negative development of society:

A confused wheelwork of hurrying, producing, changing of place.
Heartless factories. And the swarming of human larvae. Restless, restless.
The cry for the dollar. The longing cry of the unenlightened barbarian soul. All this to serve women's longings. (Ortquist 278)

According to Hildebrand, the fast pace, the mercilessness of modern society, and the social problems are all the fault of women and their unenlightened desires. Playwrite Carl Zuckmayer similarly criticizes the dangerous combination of modernity and feminism by describing the modern city as a female that "devoured talents and human energies with a ravenous appetite, grinding them small, digesting them, or rapidly spitting
them out again" (Petro 42). Viewing women as representations of negative modernity, such people often held women responsible for society's problems and deficiencies.

While linking women with the destruction of society, some critics additionally linked the dangerous new woman with America’s influence and believed that America was degrading European women. According to them, the American culture, touted as an example and ideal, was actually negative and destructive. Giese expresses this point clearly: “Was uns hier als Vorbild fesselt, wären nur die Dinge, die uns mangeln, nicht solche, die wir auch oder noch besser besitzen” (141). Similarly, Axwel Eggebrecht also wrote negatively of America's influence on women, writing of American actresses as "the Messalinas of the ending bourgeois era," (Ortquist 279). Referring to the wife of Claudius who not only ruled him, but was also known for debauchery and greed, and who was held responsible for the banishment of Narcissus and Seneca (278), Eggebrecht is condemning the influence of American women. Wolfgang von Lengerke's novel Die Amazone Gloria (1928) condemns the American women's movement, which is seen as "completely out of hand" (Peterson 20). In many such cases, men believe that America, the source of the new woman, is threatening to overcome Europe's women; she is the very image of malignant femininity (Ortquist 279).

G.W. Pabst's 1929 film adaptation of Wedekind's Die Buechse der Pandora (Pandora's Box) is perhaps the best expression of Europe's fears concerning the American woman's influence on Europe. Centered on the character Lulu, "an alluring young woman of uncertain origins, a dancer, a favorite of men -- and of some women," the film depicts Lulu's relationships with admirers ranging from old men to circus
performers to Jack the Ripper (Ortquist 273-74). Eventually Lulu accidentally kills a lover, is convicted of the crime, and dies herself.

Leslie Ortquist examines the film’s use of the image of the American new woman by considering the film's intentional connection of Lulu with America. Jazz music, an American import, plays throughout the film, and singing troupes, also associated with America, are featured in the background. Lulu herself is played by American actress Louise Brooks, who was specifically chosen for the part because she was American and fit the characterization of the new woman (Ortquist 276). These qualities and associations, rather than Lulu's actions, ultimately condemn her. As she appears in court for murder charges, the court focuses not on her actions, but on the image of Pandora releasing evils into the world: "My learned friend, Counsel for the Defence, you cannot present the accused as an innocent victim of persecution. I tell you she is Pandora, for she was the cause of all evil for Dr. Schoen!" (275) The film not only portrays woman in uncomplimentary ways, but it also fails to consider facts and simply indicts America and womankind for the evils of society. As Ortquist suggests, rather than looking within themselves to discover the root of the changes and problems of society, many European critics tried to attribute this emancipation to an "invasive force" from outside (278) -- American culture invading through their women. While many women strove to copy the image of the American new woman, others indicted this image as evil and invasive.

**Flawed Analysis**

While uncritical acceptance and harsh denunciation of the American woman were both prevalent in the 1920s, it is apparent that these responses were based on exposure to unrepresentative specimens of American women. Fritz Giese’s analysis of American
women, for example, is based almost exclusively on dance troupes such as the Tiller Girls, on film, and on his own revised version of American history. Eggebrecht’s indictment of the American woman and her influence is drawn entirely from criticism of the entire country and reflects no knowledge of the actual American woman herself. Likewise, Pabst’s Lulu is an American woman on the edges of society, one who does not reflect mainstream culture or ideas. She is played by an American and is surrounded by symbols of America, but Lulu herself has no real defining American-ness. While these images and many others were supposed to represent the American woman, the authors and directors do not focus on the real American woman, but instead upon caricatures and extreme examples.

Because the American new woman that Europeans of the 1920s saw and dealt with was not representative of America, both emulations and criticisms of her were ultimately flawed. While such emulations and criticisms were accurately based on the American woman as represented in Europe, the lack of accurate information meant that women emulating the American woman and men criticizing her were only imitating and criticizing her skewed European version. Without reliable and detailed information on the true characteristics of the American women, they were mistaking the myth for the truth. 1920s German and Austrian society desperately needed a trustworthy source of information on the American woman to help move their analysis and discussion of the American woman back to reality.
III. Ann Tizia Leitich: Immigrant, Author, Mediator

While the works of Ann Tizia Leitich have been largely ignored until this point, they provide a necessary addition to the above discussion. Born in 1896 in Vienna, Ann Tizia Leitich was the daughter of writer and professor Dr. Albert Leitich and enjoyed a privileged childhood, eventually becoming a teacher (Brinker-Gabler 195). Following WWI and the accompanying changes and problems, a young Leitich suffered a sort of mental breakdown and decided to leave Vienna. Immigrating to America in 1921, she let no one know her whereabouts until 1923 when her first articles appeared in Die Neue Freie Presse (Ann Tizia Leitich, die Verfasserin). Although she knew English, Leitich first suffered from an inability to understand spoken American English and could only find low-ranking jobs (Figure 2), but she eventually learned to understand and to love America. Writing about Americans and American culture for Die Neue Freie Presse and other newspapers and also in several books, Leitich spent most of the 1920s in Chicago and New York, spent some time studying art history in Des Moines (“Leitich, Ann Tizia”) and in 1925 became an American citizen (Figure 3). Returning to Vienna in the late 1920s, Leitich married Dr. Erich von Korningen and continued writing. Eventually making her home in Vienna's 7th district at Lerchenfelderstrasse 25 (Figure 4), Leitich directed her efforts to fiction and nonfiction books dealing both with Austrian and American heroes and heroines. She died in 1976 at the age of 80 (Brinker-Gabler 195-196). Figures 5 and 6 provide a picture of the author as a young woman as well as a copy of her signature.
Dear Miss Leitich:

I have just read your letter addressed to the Policy Loan Department and others. I feel so concerned about you. I wish I were there to keep up your courage and give you some advice. I just feel that you haven't the confidence in yourself that you need. You must realize that it will take time to get on to the lines in any office.

However, I am sure that if we were to bring another clerk from another department in our own office into our Cashier Department they could not answer the many questions that come over our counter and over the telephone without weeks of actual experience in the department. With all my experience in this busy department I could not go into any office and handle like work without having a certain amount of training along their line of work.

You need not be alarmed because you cannot understand over the telephone. Neither could I if I were listening to strange voices and talking about a line of business that I do not understand.

Be sure to keep very cool. Let your employer understand that when get on to the details of the department you can do the work. I am sure that man had faith in you or he would not have offered you the position. While you are making good in that place do not use any of your strength giving thought to getting another position.

This is the close of the day and I haven't time to write more. We enjoyed both of your letters, very, very much. Write to us just as often as you can. Keep your courage up. You are bound to make good. I know you are one in many thousand.

Sincerely,
Dear Sirs,

As my qualifications may be of use to the embassy or one of the various commissions I herewith wish to present my application for the position of interpreter or secretary-translator-stenographer.

I was born in Vienna and became a naturalized American citizen in 1925. My passport expired in 1933 and could not at that time be renewed.

I had several years New York experience as secretary-translator with distinguished American firms. I am good at the typewriter and with stenography both English and German. For sixteen months I was a reader in the scenario-department of Metro-Goldwyn in New York. Partly at the same time and afterwards I wrote hundreds of articles and several books for Austrian and German publishers interpreting the American scene to the European reader. With reference to this work Mr. Messerschmidt, the USA minister to Austria, wrote me a letter, copy of which please find enclosed herewith. The second enclosure is a clipping of a Viennese paper in English language, also mentioning my work.

Very respectfully,

A. V. Körningen
Wien 7. Lerchenfelderstr. 25
Tel: B 37 1 96 Z

Figure 4. Home of Ann Tizia Leitich, Lerchenfelderstrasse 25, 7 Vienna. Personal property of Brooke Wright.
Figure 5. Photo of Leitich. „Ann Tizia Leitich, die Verfasserin unseres neuen Romans.“ Leitich Archive. Vienna: Wiener Stadt und Landesbibliothek Handschriftensammlung.

Figure 6. Leitich’s signature. Front cover of *Amerika, du hast es besser*. Personal property of Brooke Wright.
Herzlich müßte ich Ihnen für Ihre Auftrag und der

neuen Freiheit danken – Sie sagten zu Freunde

das, was ich selbst so sehr erwarte, – den Ameri-

caner stark seinen Weg in diese Welt, wo freud und

hier in Europa immer lebend ist, das liebe, meine

nicht verdanken können. So ist damit hier getan gewor-

den und wäre mit Freunden, als gute Freunde oder in-

gemeinsamkeit in der Welt, wo Freude zu spielen ist, die

bemerkende Zeit.

Sie sind wunderbar, sehr begrüßter! Sie seid sehr,

und auch wir, denen wir brauchen, Menschen, der Men-

schen, die nicht hier gehalten, was Sie von Freunden

brauchen – eigentlich sollten Sie es auch nicht forciere,

denn wir faken fast nur Partei des Amerikas oder

Abgeschmackten mit Alfred Herr. Offenbar konnte ich

Sie erstmal bestrafen – was für Freunden auf Herrn

gelassen und noch freier zu sein und noch freieren.

Mit vielen Grüßen

Stefan Zweig

Salzburg 31. März 1925
Verehrter Meister,


ich ein echt europäisches Geschick hinter mir gelassen habe. 

Das beste leistete sich überhaupt ein Mann, ein bekannter Übersetzer, den ich vor 15 Jahren kannte und der mir bei einem Wiedersehen sagte: wissen Sie, alles hätte ich Ihnen zugerat, aber dass Sie eine bekannte Schriftstellerin werden - nein, das war allerwenigsten - im Grunde schmeichelhaft; und er meinte es auch so.

Ich mache diesen Roman fertig, lerne fotografieren und gehe im September wieder hinüber. Bis danach hoffe ich Sie ganz gewiss noch zu sehen.

Indes schöne Grüße für Sie und Ihre Frau

[Signature]
During the interwar period, Leitich saw herself as a tempering voice between the extreme views of America that were being propagated in Europe. Taking her role as cultural correspondent very seriously, Leitich used her journalism and writings to attempt to demonstrate to the Austrian public what she was learning about America. Rejecting the extremes of wholeheartedly adopting American culture and of disdainfully and fearfully looking down upon it, Leitich provides a voice of reason and honesty that speaks from personal experiences and understanding. Disproving the myth that American women are nothing but useless luxury creatures and the men only money-making machines ("Dorothy predigt"), Leitich defends America while also often wincing in bourgeois horror at its lack of culture and taste. One of her most popular themes is the analysis of the American woman, as she attempts to remedy the skewed image and its results by describing and demonstrating the reality of the American new woman.

Although Leitich has been largely forgotten and ignored in recent years, it is clear that she was a popular and respected author whose works were widely read during the 1920s and well into the post-war period. The *Neue Freie Presse* was an excellent, well-respected newspaper read by many of the middle and upper classes. Files from the Ann Tizia Leitich archive located in the Stadtsbibliothek in Vienna, Austria, include letters from fans, discussions of the author in newspapers, and advertisements and order forms for her many books. Such documents record the praises of "Liebhaber", and the lectures that Leitich gave on the subject of America (Koelink). She is hailed as "one of the most brilliant of the younger school of Austrian Writers (Austrian Lauds Prohibition), and her books are listed in "must-read" lists next to those of Willa Cather (Bücher). The famed America-critic Stefan Zweig wrote to thank her for her articles, and acknowledged both
that he read all her works, very much wanted to meet her, and admitted that he agreed with her comments (Figure 7). Although her earlier works are largely neglected today, it is apparent that as early as the mid-1920s, soon after she began writing for *Die Neue Freie Presse*, Ann Tizia Leitich was a well-known, popular, and respected author and authority on America. Additionally, because the majority of her early works were published, not in expensive leather-bound editions, but in a daily newspaper, Leitich and her works are of even greater importance. Published in this easy-accessible mode and read daily over the breakfast table or on the train to work, Leitich's articles dispersed her message to a large readership of disparate background and ideological persuasion. Her message on the new woman could thus become widely known and understood.

Leitich's popularity stems at least in part from her ability to view the world from both the perspective of the European and that of the American, from the old and the young; she is able to see from many angles because, as she writes in one letter to a fan, "ich bin sozusagen gerade auf der Messerscheide" (Leitich Archive). This ability allows her to view America clearly, but also to write such that her readers will best understand her message and view her as one of them. As one review of Leitich's book *Ursula entdeckt Amerika* states, her works have "auch den Vorzug, dass [sie] so ganz mit Wiener Augen gesehen ist, von einem wienerischen Menschen erlebt und dass alles, worüber Frau Leitich berichtet, auf Wiener Art gefühlt worden ist" (Figure 8). Although now an American citizen and a proponent of America, Leitich keeps her cultural identity and uses it to portray her message.

Leitich's popularity and appeal also stemmed from the fact that she provided a unique model for women. While her writings contain a distinct feminist component,
Leitich herself is the embodiment of the 1920s new woman. From the very moment she left Vienna for the unknown adventure of the United States, Leitich demonstrated the freeness of spirit and choice of the emerging new woman. Starting life in America at the low position of maid, Leitich gradually worked her way up to governess, secretary, and finally journalist. As a letter to one reader reveals, the novel *Ursula entdeckt Amerika* is partly based on such experiences (Figure 9), and her career path was a direct fulfillment of the desires of the many young women who joined the ranks of the "Angestelltinnen" of the time. Leitich's actions, as well as the spirit that led her to them were undoubtedly inspirational to many young women. By 1927, she was receiving many letters from young Austrians and Germans requesting her help in emulating her path by going to America or remaining in Europe (Leitich, Ann Tizia. "Sie wollen"). An embodiment of the new woman, Leitich's influence stretched across the sea to her native land, providing an instructive voice on America and the American woman.

The remainder of this essay will deal with a selection of Leitich's 1924-28 writings, first her articles and then the novel *Ursula entdeckt Amerika*. I will outline and demonstrate Leitich's comments on various topics regarding the new woman, demonstrating the new direction in which she led the discussion. Above all, I will focus on Leitich’s depiction of the American woman which greatly differed from the European myth, and which she used to undermine criticisms and inspire emulation of the American new woman.
IV. Journalism: Explicating the New Woman

In the October 12, 1924 edition of *Die Neue Freie Presse*, Ann Tizia Leitich published one of her first articles. Titling it "Präludien," from the outset Leitich addresses her Austrian readers and reminds them of how much they have copied from American women. She addresses her friend Gabriele, but also all Austrian women:

Und so lass mich Dich nur erinnern, wie Eure Frauen schon von hier gelernt haben, in Dingen, die dem schönen Geschlecht teuer und von denen manche äusserlich zwar, jedoch inder Symptomatik ihrer Bedeutung Stichworte sind. Habt Ihr Euch nicht die Haare geschnitten nach dem Beispiel der impulsiven, eigenmächtigen Amerikanerin? . . . macht Ihr ihnen nicht auch die bubenschlanke Linie nach?

By reminding her readers of their tendency to borrow fashion from America, Leitich focuses on the material elements of the American woman that have already penetrated European popular culture. At the same time, however, Leitich takes the discussion of the American woman beyond the material and into consideration of character and relationships. She next poses a question asking how these women have responded to the American character: "habt Ihr auch darin schon von der Amerikanerin gelernt?" As she immediately takes the discussion to a new level, Leitich signals the direction in which she will develop her journalism. Over the next four years, Leitich's articles would address both men and women to refute the material European version of the American new woman and replace it with a deeper analysis of the American woman.
To Men

While the majority of her commentary on the new woman addresses women themselves, Leitich often takes the opportunity to address men, to tell them that their fears are misguided, to reassure them and to warn them. Her first task is to dispel their mistaken beliefs concerning the American woman. In her April 1, 1926 article, "Dorothy predigt den Männern," Leitich creates an American friend, a young woman, who instructs the old-fashioned European men, dispelling some of the popular myths of the American woman:

Hier in Amerika haben die Männer keine Angst vor uns. Oh, ich weiss, dass man sich drüben Geschichten erzählt, als wären wir alle nichts als Panoptikumengel einer mechaniserten Welt, nichtsützige Luxusgeschöpfe (als ob Luxus unnötig wäre) und der Mann blosse Dollarmaschine, Teddybär und gelegentlicher Dienstbote. Das sind Uebertreibungen.

Directly confronting some of these myths, which are aptly displayed in the writings of Eggebrecht, Hildebrand, and others\(^5\), Dorothy begins a discussion which reveals male objections and fears concerning the development of the new woman and labels these fears as overreactions.

Aside from addressing the myth of the "useless" new woman around whom the mechanized world rotates, Leitich also uses this article to counteract the idea of female masculinization. At the time, one popular idea concerning the America woman centered on the concept that much of the evil of the new woman resulted as she engaged in

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\(^5\) See chapter 2
traditionally male activities and thus became more man-like and domineering. Speaking both for herself and through her friend Dorothy, Leitich repeatedly addresses this concern, denying it outright. As Dorothy says, "Lassen Sie mich Ihnen noch sagen, dass es ganz und gar nicht wahr ist, dass wir Männinnen sind oder die geringste Lust haben, es zu werden" ("Dorothy predigt"). In one 1925 article, "Ungeharnischte Bemerkungen über die Frauenfrage in Amerika," Leitich goes further, countering the widespread belief that engaging in traditionally male activities naturally leads to masculinization:

Aber es ist anderseits ganz falsch, zu glauben, dass sie sich entweiblicht, dass sie nicht verstünde, eine entzückende Hausfrau zu sein, eine gute Mutter, eine elegante Geliebte. Nur die Amerikanerin vermag es, jetzt in der Garage hinter dem Hof am reparaturbedürftigen Auto zu hantieren, um gleich darauf den Higen Overall und die Gummibandschuhe abzustreifen und drinnen dienen als perfekte Lady. Es ist staunenswert, was amerikanische Frauen zu gleicher Zeit sozusagen vollbringen können.

Leitich's words to men end in a definitive lesson, for which America provides the model. Here Leitich demonstrates that America understands a subtlety that Europe does not seem to grasp: that a woman can do the work of a man while still possessing her distinctly feminine characteristics.

Changing voices, Leitich abandons this comforting approach and adopts a half-comic method to scold men, but also to reassure them that this female empowerment does not mean the end of life as they know it; the end result of this experimentation will actually be positive. In her article "An die Damen," a chapter of *Amerika, du hast es besser* written for the female population, Leitich writes:

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6 See Bridenthal, Meskimmon, Ortquist
Ah, wird es Euch Angst und bang, Herren der Schöpfung, wenn Ihr dies lest. Geschieht Euch recht, denn Ihr sollt ja nicht mitleisen! Aber es braucht Euch nicht angst zu werden, die Frau will nur heraus! Und mal draussen, schaut sie sich um, und glaubt mir, sie mag manches probieren, aber . . . zum Schluss wird sie ja doch bei dem bleiben, was ihrer Eigenart liegt, und da diese ja doch der des Mannes nicht kongruent, sondern komplementär ist, wird sie dem Manne nicht schaden durch ihre Befreiung aus den Rosenbanden des Hauses, wohl aber der Menschheit nützen. (76)

Sarcastically addressing men as "Lords of Creation," Leitich ridicules them for their chauvinism, yet at the same time quells fears. Speaking to the middle class, to the conservatives, to those who fear this influence, she assures them that development after the American model is not some frightening, all-encompassing change. Instead it is a harmless and altogether positive development that will not result in some drastic refiguring of the social order.

Leitich continues in a sterner tone, rebuking men for their misunderstanding of the situation. Addressing the claim that a woman’s career is to be a wife and mother, Leitich writes:

Wir können und wollen es gar nicht ändern; wenn wir aber dazu berufen sind, wird es uns immer in Grenzen fesseln, denen wir nicht entrinnen können. Wenn es ein Beruf ist, so liegt es im Sinne des Wortes, dass neben dem Beruf noch Raum für etwas anderes ist; dass wir, ausser Gattungswesen zu sein, auch noch Menschen sind. Und darauf hattet Ihr oft vergessen. ("Dorothy predigt")
According to Leitich, the desires of men and women for women's development are actually remarkably similar. It is because men have forgotten that women are not just mothers and wives, but are human beings, with rights and privileges, that women have the need and the desire to defend themselves. Additionally, simple change on the man's part can result in renewed peace and harmony and can divert their feared upheaval. As Leitich reproaches men for ignoring basic human rights, she leaves the choice for the future to them.

Her admonition quickly develops into a strong warning, however, as she prints a dire picture of what will occur if men do not recognize the basic rights of women. In a March 25, 1928 article, “Kommt das Matriarchat? Die Krise der amerikanischen Familie,” Leitich specifically addresses men to warn them of what will happen if they block the progression and development of their wives. Stating directly that the women will not take it, she once again assuages fears by stating that women want to be wives and mothers, but she combines this with the ultimate warning: if men will not permit this development, the woman will take on all responsibility and do it alone – the career, the children, the family. According to Leitich, the woman does not need the man in order to succeed and contribute to in the world, and if it is necessary, she will forego the man and work alone. Shedding her generally conservative approach, Leitich becomes more extreme:

Es wird natürlich ganz und gar von den Männern abhängen, nämlich davon, ob sie es vermögen, mit der Frau in der Entwicklung zu ganz neuen Verhältnissen Schritt zu halten. Vermögen sie es nicht, dann dürfte das Matriarchat am Ende Tatsache werden.
Men have it in their power to allow women the freedom and development they need, or they can block it and suffer the consequences – the radical change in society that they fear. In effect they have no choice: if males want to retain any of the traditional order and their way of life, they must support the new woman in her development.

To Women

Leitich targets women in a very different way, using analysis and persuasion rather than pacification or extreme views of the future. In 1926, in her book of essays, *Amerika, du hast es besser*, Leitich published an article entitled “An die Damen,” in which she specifically addressed women on the subject of American womanhood. Dealing with European preconceptions of the American woman, Leitich first addresses the myth of the new woman and replaces it with some semblance of reality. From the outset, Leitich focuses upon the non-material aspects of the American new woman. Her qualities cannot be bought or sold, but rather rest in her interior:

Madame, das Geheimnis der Amerikanerin können Sie weder in Seidenpapier gewickelt am Ladentisch bekommen, noch vermag es Ihnen der Hafenbeamte von Newyork zwischen die Blätter Ihres Passeports zu schieben, wenn er ihnen diesen revidiert zurückgibt. Man muss damit aufgewachsen sein. . . . Denn sehen Sie, dieses Geheimnis ist, was die englische Sprache einen "State of mind" nennt, eine Seelenkonstruktion, eine Temperamentssache. (70-71)

In narrowing the uniqueness of the American woman to this "State of mind," Leitich is rejecting European popular culture, which suggests that the qualities of the new woman are readily available for a set price; she is rejecting material emphasis to instead talk
about the soul. Her repudiation of material elements extends even to physical appearance, as Leitich states that even the American’s famed beauty cannot be bought or primped, because it results from internal forces: "Die Amerikanerin ist schön, weil sie natürlich, frei, selbständig ist, und vor allem, weil sie glücklich ist; glücklicher als alle anderen Frauen der zivilisierten Welt" (71). Stating that the famed American woman, the model of new women, results as American women develop their own characters and souls, rather than acquire new dress and physical characteristics, Leitich makes herself the ultimate authority in relaying this character to her European readers. Because she is not easily imitated, the new woman must be carefully analyzed and it is Leitich who can provide this close understanding.

If pills, powders, clothes and haircuts have not made her what she is, how then has the American woman differentiated herself? In her articles, Leitich continues to clarify the position and attitude of American women. Rather than focusing on material aspects or extremes, she again speaks of inner development and inner qualities.

Eine Frau ist in Amerika das, was sie ist und nicht das, was ihr Mann ist.


("Ungeharnischte Bemerkungen")

Here Leitich emphasizes that American society supports the idea that woman is her own self and can stand on her own. A woman's focus, she implies, is not upon the appearance of a person, or the importance of titles, but upon personal development. Because of this, she is real and down-to-earth rather than imitation or façade. In a September 1926 article,
"Newyork [sic] empfängt" Leitich discusses the German-American girl, Gertrude Ederle, who was the first woman to swim the English channel and who was greeted as a heroine throughout New York City. In an interview, Gertrude is forthright and honest, even revealing weakness: "Ich bin so nervös, so zappelig; und ich war es doch gar nicht beim Schwimmen." Gertrude's mother describes her as "just a home-girl," and Leitich seizes on this description to praise the development of this ordinary girl: "Ein Homegirl mit ihrer Gutschlossenheit, ihrer Gesundheit, ihrem Mut und ihrer Ausduer, ist es nicht das Beste, auf das ein Land stolz sein kann?" Throughout such works, Leitich displays a theme common to her writing, the idea that the American new woman is not special and new because she meets set expectations of appearance or because she accepts extreme philosophies and activities, but rather because she develops herself, changes herself to accomplish all she can. It is personal development that matters.

Having thus made the ideal intangible and thereby distanced her readers from the ideal, Leitich then directly counters this distance by describing the ubiquity of the American new woman. It is not just the privileged few, the wealthy or well-educated who possess these traits -- it is all. The American woman, while extraordinary, is also ordinary:

Die Frauen, deren Buben und Mädchen die zahlreichen College bevölkern, die von 6 bis 1/2 7 Uhr auf ihren Mann zum Dinner warten, die wissen, was Strümpfe stopfen heisst, und schliesslich, -- wenn nicht vor der Heirat so doch nachher -- lernen, Apple-pie und Steak zu bereiten, die nachmittags shopping gehen, wenn sie nicht im Business sind, und abends im Theater den Pelzmantel von den Schultern schieben, um sich im Glanz
In stressing that the American new woman is ordinary, yet amazing, Leitich is stressing to the masses that all can join the ranks of the enlightened and liberated new woman; social status, lack of wealth or education, do not preclude this development. While the European women's movement was supported almost entirely by teachers and academically educated women (Salomon 112), Leitich is emphasizing that America has shown that this does not have to be so. Emphasizing that any woman can enjoy the benefits of being a new woman, Leitich goes to great extents, even altering the truth, to tell ordinary women that this empowerment is within their reach: “Sie haben es nicht mit Logarithmen gemacht, mit Hungerstreiks und mit Doktordissertationen, aber zum grössten Teil -- mit dem Pantoffel. Exactly, meine Damen. In Amerika hat es keine Suffragetten gegeben“ ("An die Damen" 77). While overstating her point and outright neglecting the actions of many more militant American women, Leitich is stating that the secret of the American woman lies at least partly in the traditional female world. She is thus making the emulation of the American woman a possibility for all, including those who do not meet the supposed requirements of the new woman.

Leitich goes further, instructing her European counterparts that it is possible to learn from the American woman and develop her traits, and suggesting how they do so. The first rule, Leitich instructs, is to remain loyal to her feminine nature and use supposed feminine traits, as well as masculine ones, to her advantage. In "Dorothy predigt den Männern," the American girl Dorothy explains how she would speak to the lawmakers of Europe:
Here Leitich uses the words “männlich” and “weiblich” to suggest that women are capable of both types of actions and must not hesitate to use the female attributes as well as the male in seeking their desires. While moving in a male world, feminine attributes are essential to female empowerment. The American woman knows this and uses it: "Und es beweist wieder den ganz ausserordentlichen Common sense der Amerikanerin, dass sie weiss, dass sie, trozt und mit aller Befreiung, dann am stärksten ist, wenn sie ganz das ist, wozu sie die Natur gemacht hat: Frau" ("An die Damen" 77). Traditionally male qualities are good, but they should not be developed at the expense of femininity.

Leitich emphatically states that her Austrian and German readers can develop qualities of the American new woman and begins to instruct them in how this is possible. The first step toward such development is loyalty among women:

babei tödliche Lächeln, wenn von der Arbeit einer Frau die Rede ist. ("An die Damen" 76)

Again, the emphasis is on inner development and loyal cooperation rather than material competition. By combining their efforts, by using their own feminine characteristics and remaining loyal to each other, they are on their way to developing the positive traits of the American woman.

In the above articles, Leitich offers an alternative reading of the term "neue Frau." Rejecting the ubiquitous images of the new woman offered by popular-culture and bourgeois critics, Leitich uses the American woman as a model delineating the future possibilities of European women. Focusing upon the development of the inner self, the acceptance of both traditionally female and male roles, and a loyalty to both female identity and other women, Leitich recreates and idealizes the new American woman for her readers. She uses her perceptions of the American woman to speak optimistically of a new world in which "die Frau die schönen Eigenschaften ihres Geschlechtes beibehält und im Leben dem Manne wissend und helfend gegenübersteht, eine Kameradin. Wenn auch, manchmal, eine Konkurrentin ("An die Damen" 77). In this new world, the world which the American woman is now exploring, men and women will each contribute what they can, whether it be traditionally male or female in nature, and each will be valued for his or her own unique characteristics. Neither, however, is considered inherently better than the other. Viewing this as an ideal, Leitich optimistically offers a glimpse of the possibilities of the future:

Damit dämmert ein Zeitalter heran, wie es die Geschichte, die nur entweder Mannes oder Weibeherrschafı t kannte, noch nicht gesehen hat.
Das Zusammenarbeiten, das Zusammenstreben beider. Freilich, wir sind noch weit davon entfernt; da sind noch viele Rauhkeiten, die geschliffen, noch viele Hürden. Die übersprungen werden müssen. Aber hier in Amerika dämmert das Morgenrot. (77)

The vision, the future of feminism, of the development of the new woman, lies in America, the land where the ideal is on the horizon. If Europe is to achieve the same, it should follow the example set by the American woman.
V. Ursula entdeckt Amerika: Fictionalizing the New Woman

Through the novel Ursula entdeckt Amerika, Leitich continues to build upon the idea of emulating the American woman, but also addresses how and to what extent her readers should do so. Ursula, the protagonist in Leitich's first novel, is a young Austrian baroness who is impoverished and orphaned during WWI and is then abandoned by her equally-impoverished fiancé. Deciding that she cannot stand to live in her home anymore, Ursula seizes the opportunity to go to America, and travels to Chicago, where she first works as a maid, but later at a number of other jobs, including governess and secretary. Struggling to make it financially and weakened by illness and hunger, Ursula befriends a small and sick American boy, who in turn introduces Ursula to his uncle, the architect Kenneth McDonald. While Ursula's emotions for her former fiancé complicate their relationship, Kenneth and Ursula eventually find love and happiness. While the book opens with a grim and at times emotional portrayal of immigration and the fears of Ellis Island, and is often autobiographical in nature, it ends in an idealized fantasy world, the pleasing ending to a romance novel.

In one of the opening scenes of the novel, Leitich writes of the first American woman whom Europeans aboard Ursula's immigration ship meet: "Eine Amerikanerin! Die geduckten und versklavten Frauen des Ostens blickten scheu zu ihr auf, machten ihr ehrerbietig eine Gasse" (14). In so writing, she unashamedly reflects the great curiosity and desire with which many European women view their American counterparts. Leitich's articles on the American woman, discussed in the previous chapter, are meant to give an introduction to American women and culture, and Leitich uses them to analyze the attributes of American woman. These articles rarely, however, focus on actual
women and introduce these women to the reader -- they thus leave the reader's curiosity and desire unfulfilled. In *Ursula entdeckt Amerika*, however, Leitich remedies this weakness by introducing and examining a multitude of examples of real American women. Going beyond preaching or explanation, Leitich now instructs her countrywoman on how and to what extent European women should emulate America. She conditions those writings that seem to idealize American women and discusses the complex issues that European women must deal with as they consider America as a role model. By demonstrating, rather than explicating the ideal form of Americanization, Leitich offers a tangible model of the positive combination of European and American characteristics and demonstrates how this combination can be achieved. This chapter will first examine the positive and the negative examples of American womanhood found in the novel, analyzing the purpose of this more balanced portrayal. It will then examine the author's use of Ursula herself in demonstrating European adaptation to and adoption of characteristics of the American new woman.

**Positive examples**

In a small town in Illinois, Missouri Falls, Ursula finds work as a secretary and is befriended by the large group of young women who also work there. Invited to the bridal shower of one of the women, Ursula examines this group of women who so definitively embody the aspects of the new woman.

Sie sah diese Mädchen an, die sich von Luft, Sonne, Regen, Sturm, Leben beizen liessen und dabei eine zarte Haut hatten und Rosenwangen, die sie pflegten und salbten, wie Satrapenliebchen. . . . Das sind keine demütigen Dienerinnen, keine Frauen, die ihren Männern die Schuhe putzen. (235)
These are young, independent women who work and care for themselves, are excited for the future, and are in many ways the essence of the new woman. While such a description does not greatly differentiate itself from the shallow European image concerning the new woman, Leitich also dwells on two aspects of American new womanhood ignored by the European press: their happiness and their embracement of their femininity.

Keine Sklavinnen der Liebe und der Mutterschaft, und doch jung blühende -- und wenn's darauf ankam, bebende Weiber. Waren sie nicht hier festlich versammelt um einer willen, die in die Ehe ging? Und waren hier nicht Bräute und Hochzeiten und Kinderbekommen hochwichtige, fast geheiligte Angelegenheiten? (235)

At first glance, the secretaries illustrate the type of American woman that was well-known in Europe, yet Leitich also considers their deep-rooted womanhood and the celebration of this femininity. These women have embraced every aspect of their lives and characters, their femininity and friendship as well as their independence and health, and it is because of this full combination of qualities that they are to be envied.

At yet another job, this time as governess, Ursula meets women of the upper class who do not go to work, but who nevertheless demonstrate a similar principle. With the family that she works for, Ursula travels to the forests of Eastern Canada, where she meets many women who spend their vacation days in the wild as the men do. When evening comes, however, they display their classic femininity:

Männliche Farben und Knickerbockers trugen sie am Tag und die Haare verbargen sie unter einem Lederhut. Sie standen den Gefährten nicht nach
Among these women, Ursula comes to realization: a woman can have the same interests, the same occupation, a similar clothing style and sense of humor as a man, and yet still remain distinctly feminine. New American women seem to appreciate this, treasuring and developing all sides of themselves and emerging as well-rounded and happy new women.

The above examples both depict positive elements of American womanhood that Leitich weaves into her story, using them to comment on the accomplishments of American new women. Despite their many differences, these women have core attributes in common. They embrace their femininity while also realizing that their gender is a deeply-rooted identity rather than a restriction on their activities. They allow themselves to try new things, to take bold steps and seize opportunity, and are able to do use their own gifts and talents to enjoy the world and make achievements in it. Emphasizing these
characteristics and this attitude, Leitich makes it clear that such American characteristics are worthy of emulation.

**Negative examples**

While many of the women Ursula meets are displayed as figures to be learned from and emulated, other examples are not so positive. These women display negative characteristics which are often in some way connected to the European idea of the American new woman, but which are generally more realistic and more deeply analyzed. Ursula’s acquaintance with these women, combined with Leitich’s commentary, helps define these negative attributes. While these women have all grown up with the freedoms and opportunity that come with being a woman in America, they have damaged their own ability for happiness. They form another side of American new womanhood, the side most often portrayed in Europe, which Leitich affirms to be negative and damaging. Like the European girls who unthinkingly try to be the American woman, these women are more concerned with appearances than reality, and focus on others' opinions of them rather than their own development. As Leitich moralistically displays, these women suffer as they focus on the material aspects of life.

One such woman is Mrs. Olginsky, an American from Chicago who is married to a Polish immigrant. Obsessed with the “right” thing, Mrs. Olginsky sacrifices her relationships with friends and family for the sake of convention and form. When her husband calls her "Dearest" in Ursula's presence, Mrs. Olginsky berates him: "Wie oft habe ich dir schon gesagt, du sollst mich nicht 'Dearest' nennen vor den Leuten. Es ist nicht fein, es ist nicht amerikanisch" (115). Although a wealthy American woman, Mrs. Olginsky is easily embarrassed and allows style and the supposed opinions of others to
severely damage her relationship with her husband. Overly concerned with convention
and form, she lets these elements control her lifestyle, sacrificing herself and others to
these shallow concerns.

Another who falls into the same trap is the habitually-discontent Mrs. Higginson,
whose children Ursula cares for as a nanny. Although wealthy and beloved by a husband
and three daughters, Mrs. Higginson is continually discontent. Describing Mrs.
Higginson, Leitich writes:

Sie lachte zu wenig; einmal, weil sie in einem Newyorker Magazine
gelesen hatte, dass vieles Lachen nicht fein sei, und dann, weil sie nicht
viel Grund zum Lachen fand. Sie dachte neuerdings zu viel darüber nach,
dass sie zwei Jahre älter war also ihr Mann, und ausserdem langweilte sie
sich zu Tode, ohne dass sie es gewagt hätte, dem Wort 'Langeweile' offen
und ehrlich ins Gesicht zu sehen. Auch war es ihr ehrlicher Glaube, dass
Langeweile und absolutes Nichtstun mit zur Ausstattung der
Wohlhabenden gehörte. (157)

Yet again, a woman is caught in a trap of unhappiness that stems from doing the popular
or the expected rather than following her own inclination. Conforming her behavior to
what magazines and society suggested was the correct thing, she is miserable.

Another unhappy woman is Pamela Perkins, a society woman whose husband is
cheating on her. Leitich emphasizes the discrepancy between Pamela's outer and inner
characteristics, and shows the negative results of mere outer beauty and development.
Describing her, Leitich writes:

(168-69)

Carefully caring for her legs and thin figure, the middle-aged Pamela has neglected to develop her own character and, despite her ideal beauty, she is disappointed by life. The problems that result from this, from her adulterous relationship with a Native American student to the scandalous divorce process that reveals everything and rocks New York society, pervade the novel. Ursula’s husband, Kenneth McDonald, comments on Pamela's possibilities and the characteristics that she ignored to her ruination: "Und sie war gut, sie war reizend, sie war alles. Aber dann ruinierte sie das Geld, dass sie doch haben wollte. Es betrog sie um das Kostbarste, um die Fähigkeit, hingerissen sein zu können" (281). Yet again, Leitich demonstrates the misery that results from developing the appearance and the convention at the expense of the inner person.

Leitich does not deeply develop these characters, but instead uses them to demonstrate negative examples of American womanhood. She thereby emphasizes a central message of her works that contradicts many European ideas and practices: the
happiness and freedom of new women does not result from simply adopting the social conventions that surround the image, but requires something more. As these women focus on outer elements and on the "correct thing to do," they neglect inner development and are unhappy. While none of these women is necessarily the extreme example of the American new woman that the European press focused on, each of them does focus on those same external elements that characterized the negative image of the new woman: outer image and the fashion of the times rather than true development. The result is unhappiness and stagnation.

Positive and Negative?

In addition to further advocating Leitich's perspective on womanhood, the mix of positive and negative examples serves another purpose as it suggests that even the reality of American womanhood should not be absolutely and completely adopted. While Leitich had previously denied the reality of the American woman as portrayed in Europe and set American womanhood up as the ideal, here she conditions this idea. She demonstrates that not all American women meet up to expectation, that many are deeply flawed, and that some even resemble the flawed and shallow European version of American women. Because flaws exist even in the ideal American womanhood, the European woman must be careful in her emulation of the American woman and should not simply adopt her characteristics because they are American. Because of these flaws, it is necessary for those who wish to learn from the American woman to use reason and great care in deciding which aspects of American womanhood are actually of worth.

Ursula herself
While the positive and negative examples of American womanhood that pervade the novel demonstrate that the American woman is worthy but must be approached with care, Leitich's protagonist Ursula demonstrates how an Austrian carefully gleans the best from American society while also remaining fundamentally European. A bridge between Austria and America, Ursula begins the story as an almost stereotypical European following WWI -- she has been the recipient of a rich cultural background and education, but is impoverished both monetarily and in spirit. Her attitudes toward America are mixed -- she believes Americans to be uncultured and unaware of what life really is, while she also highly admires them and considers America to be her salvation. Plunged into the confusion of a foreign culture that she both detests and admires, Ursula must choose how to respond to that culture -- to completely shun it, completely embrace, or somehow balance these two extreme options. Ursula learns how to deal with and learn from this new world, revise her attitudes, and glean the good from America.

Writing of women protagonists in modern novels, Susan A. Lichtman states that they are often found in novels of development, which demonstrate the individual growth of a hero on a quest. Generally, the knowledge and wisdom they gain is used for a specific purpose -- “to re-educate and redirect society” (10). Lichtman's description applies particularly well to Ursula on her quest to learn from America and survive in this new and different world. While American culture affects her compatriots at home, Ursula is far closer to the source and thus has a more accurate view of the country and culture. Like her countrywomen, however, Ursula must decide how to deal with American culture and the American woman and what to learn from them. As Ursula demonstrates how a young Austrian woman deals with America and learns from that
country to her great benefit, she becomes a model of bridging European and American
culture, and thus becomes worthy of emulation herself. She fulfills another of Lichtman's
qualities of a hero, that she "becomes a legacy herself and may mentor another" (11-12).
Ursula's response to and interaction with America serves as a model to German and
Austrian women. The rest of this paper will examine the way in which Ursula chooses to
learn from America and American women, and thereby teaches other European women to
pluck the good from the bad and do the same.

**Definite Lessons**

Like many Germans and Austrians following WWI, Ursula has mixed and
complex feeling for America and must rid herself of emotional baggage before being able
to progress. Admiring America's strength and abilities, she also harbors great bitterness
against the country which was at least partially responsible for the pains of the past -- the
death of her father, the loss of the family seat, and her own doomed love affair (7).
Arriving in America, she continues to relive these pains, thus finding it almost impossible
to enjoy the present, but instead interrupting her own pleasant moments with feelings of
despair and bitter memories from home. Experiencing the wonders of Chicago for the
first time, she dwells on her former fiancé and is kept from happiness by the memory:
“Und plötzlich wusste Ursula, woran sie die ganze Zeit gedacht hatte, diese letzten, mit
Einsamkeit und Schmerz gefüllten Stunden: An Bertie Krüger!” (72). Greeting a change
in season, she feels bitterness and loss rather than hope: "Frühling! Erinnerungen an
Lenze vergangener Jahre stiegen vor ihr auf, -- Pfirsichblüten in Weingärten, die
Kirschen an der Efeumauer in ihrem verlorenen Schlossgarten . . . Eine Stimme, die ein
Wort flüsterte: Liebe – Bertie -- -- das Einst -- -- ihr Hoffen!” (96). Memories of the war
and the pains of its aftermath make it difficult for her to move forward, enjoy life, and learn. Like many of her compatriots, Ursula is shackled by this bitterness which keeps her from learning, enjoying, and progressing.

Among the first lessons that Ursula allows herself to learn is to let go of the past and her bitterness and to allow herself to learn from a former enemy whose victory brought her so many personal problems. Doing so apparently requires that she understand that America has not usurped power, but earned it, and that a new age has begun. Kenneth expresses the message most clearly: „Nicht wir haben euch arm gemacht, eure eigene Ohnmacht tat es. . . . Eure Kultur hat keine auftreibende Kraft mehr, weil ihr die Neugierde fehlt und die Brünstigkeit des Wollens. Aber wo ihr stehen bleibt, dort springen wir ein und führen weiter -- euch mit uns, in uns” (271). Although it is difficult to stop living in the glories and pains of the past, Ursula moves on, stops blaming and resenting America and opens her eyes to a new way of life. Allowing the American forward-looking attitude to supplant her backward-looking pains, Ursula accepts this new order and finds supreme happiness in the final pages (304). In allowing herself to find new and greater happiness in and through America, she demonstrates the necessity of accepting the new era and not allowing bitterness toward the past keep her from using the American influence and attitude to again find happiness.

Additionally, Ursula learns that some aspects of American life must be adopted in order to survive in the new world. As the American way of life astounds and pushes Ursula, Leitich writes: “Die Musik Chicagos ist ein schmetterndes Allegro mit vielen Dissonanzen; diese musik schmeichelt nicht, sie fächelt nicht, sie lockt nicht; sie treibt nur an, treibt mit, treibt hinauf” (56). The continual pushing rhythm of America forces
Ursula to do things that she would never have thought herself capable of doing. Speaking of her first job, Leitich writes: “Nie hätte Ursula drüben für möglich gehalten, dass sie ein sechzehnraumiges Haus . . . bedienen könnte” (75). At another job, Ursula is again astounded by the American pace and life: “Sie wusste es: Sie war zu langsam. Die Gehirne all dieser munteren kleinen Mädchen, der Clerks im Büro, arbeiteten eingeleisig, waren auf das Detail gedrillt und reagierten darauf mit einer Flinkheit und Präzision, vor der Ursula entmutigt und fast bewundernd dastand” (200). In these situations, and many more, Ursula is forced to do things she would have thought herself incapable of -- and learns that she is capable of far more than she thought. This new American world demands that she change -- there is no choice if she is to survive.

Ursula quickly discovers that pride is incongruent with and humility absolutely essential to this new world. As she first arrives in the U.S., Ursula, like many Europeans of education, feels superior and sees herself as a lone cultivated figure in the midst of a throng of uneducated humanity. Because she is so evidently superior, Ursula believes that she will be immediately rewarded for her qualities and abilities: “Denn daran war doch kein Zweifel, dass ein gebildetes Mädchen wie sie in diesem Land, wo es an allgemeiner Bildung mangelte, etwas anderes und tausendmal Einträglichere zu tun bekommen sollte, als Schüsseln waschen und Badezimmer aufräumen. Daran war doch kein Zweifel” (95-6). She discovers, however, that her excellent piano playing and three languages will not get her what she needs. Instead, she must work hard like any other person, humbling herself to search for work in order to keep from starvation. In one memorable and melodramatic scene, Ursula, perilously near to starvation, is called to the sickbed of a small boy that she has befriended. Although ill and faint herself, she thinks
only of him: “Und jetzt war Cecil krank und lag im Bett! Der arme kleine Kerl. Schnell, schnell zu ihm!” (205). After entertaining him and helping him fight a high fever, Ursula allows herself to let go of her pride and ask a favor: “‘Dürfte ich Sie bitten, dass ich mir’ . . . ‘das ich mir eine Tasse Kaffe machen darf, eine heisse Tasse Kaffee, mir – ist – schlecht’” (207). The scene not only stands out as the beginning of a new and more humble Ursula who considers others before herself, but also demonstrates the rewards of this humility. Ursula's connection with Cecil will eventually lead to her acquaintance with Ken, her marriage, security, and happily-ever-after. Life in the new American world, Leitich emphasizes, depends not only upon skills and abilities, but also upon humility and humanity.

By preventing her from finding happiness, a twisted sense of pride further thwarts Ursula's ability to exist in the American world. Invited to sit and relax with her employers, she cannot allow herself: "Nein, Ursula wollte nicht, sie konnte nicht. Sie sah ja ein, wie gut es Mrs. Bulwer meinte, aber -- war sie denn dort Dienstmädchen oder Gast?” (48). Ursula then goes to bed and denies herself desperately needed company and relaxation. In another instance, pride stops her from enjoying a pleasant evening in a restaurant: "Sie hatte plötzlich bemerkt, wie armselig sie angezogen war. Sah man nicht scheel auf sie her?” (66). In her mind, money and differences in wealth and status are of extreme importance and her poverty is a great chasm between her and others, such that she finds it impossible to be happy. In America, however, she learns of a different way of looking at the world -- of not ranking people or creating explicit or implicit social hierarchy. While shopping in Marshall Field's, Ursula notices: "Jede Wäscherin, jede Grünzeughändlerin war hier Frau, Amerikanerin, Dame und trug sich danach" (63). All
were fundamentally the same and did not separate themselves. Furthermore, while visiting a very wealthy New York society woman, Ursula begins to consider the relationship between happiness and wealth and pride: "Ursula war nachdenklich. 'Nein,' sagte sie sich, 'diese Frau ist nicht glücklich. Reich, schön, und nicht glücklich. Wie kommt das?' (173) Although it takes her the majority of the book to come to learn how this is possible, Ursula eventually learns an essential lesson -- this distancing and stratified pride do not belong in America. No longer letting pride interfere with her happiness, Ursula's circle of friends increases and she finds greater happiness.

**Combining Europe and America**

These examples of Ursula's development are indicative of what European women must do in order to thrive in a rapidly Americanizing world, and to learn from and emulate America. However, while Ursula's experiences in America demonstrate the need for her own change and development, they also delineate a common issue of the time -- the question of how to view and balance both European and American ideas and culture. In the second half of the novel, as Ursula begins to Americanize and accept the positive characteristics of America and American women, Leitich addresses this question. Abandoning her semi-autobiographical mode, Leitich now idealizes Ursula's future and thereby future Austrian-American relations. Her conclusions suggest an idealistic combination of America and Europe to create a perfect whole.

Although she is at first highly critical of America, viewing the country and its inhabitants as crude and uncultured, Ursula soon begins to appreciate the positive qualities found in America. She allows herself to admire the nation and its people, and the practical genius of America begins to fascinate her:
Sie stand den Wundern der Technik von vornherein eher misstrauisch gegenüber, denn dem künstlerischen und besinnlichen Geist des Österreichertums ist das alte Schöne wichtiger als das praktische Neue. Jetzt aber ahnte sie die Grösse der mathematischen Klarheit, die hier am Werk gewesen. Verblüfft stand sie davor. (98)

She begins to be convinced that, despite a general lack of culture, the Americans actually have life better than the Europeans. When one young woman at the party asks her to admit that life is far better in America than in Europe, Ursula is first astounded, asking herself, "war es möglich, dass diese Frage Ernst gemeint war?" (235) However, after a moment's pause she must reconsider -- "Vielleicht doch -- -- ." As she accepts the positive attributes America has to offer, Ursula begins to pick up on some Americanisms -- directness of speech, industry, and attitude -- and in some ways becomes Americanized. However, at the same time, her love for and loyalty to home remain undiminished:

“Ursula hatte die Zeitungen und ein Buch von drüben bekommen. Es war wohl mehr als ein Jahr her, dass sie kein deutsches Buch in der Hand gehabt hatte. Nie hätte sie gedacht, dass ein blosses Buch solche Ehrfurcht und solche Liebe auslösen könne” (217). While American influences have altered Ursula's accent, habits, expectations, and attitude, she remains fundamentally European.

As Ursula accommodates American influences with her Austrian core, becoming in some ways Americanized strengthens and helps her, allowing her to survive and develop in this new world. Significantly, however, it is her European-ness that gives Ursula much of her strength and charm and eventually creates the happily-ever-after that ends the novel. When Ken asks her to marry him, she warns him that she can never
become “innerlich” American (253) -- that she will always remain European. His reply validates the unique characteristics of the European that should not be lost in the emulation of American qualities:


By adopting some American characteristics, Ursula has strengthened and improved herself, but her soul remains Austrian, and this is a strength to her as well. The message to European women is clear -- they can and should look to America and the American woman for models, strength, and inspiration, but a complete and total acceptance of America and its modernity neglects the strengths of their own culture.

In Ursula's relationships and eventual marriage, Leitich addresses this idea, further illustrating the principle that the combination of European and American working in tandem is the ideal. Here, Ursula, Bertie, and Kenneth are all representatives of their own cultures, Ursula and Bertie portraying European sensitivities and Kenneth portraying American strength and abilities. In her love affairs, Ursula is haunted by two images, the first of a romantic and somewhat weak European, the other of a strong and manly American: “Bertrands Augen standen vor ihr. Aber neben ihm tauchte ein anderes paar Augen auf, ein anderes Gesicht. Sonnverbrannte Wangen, ebenso schmal wie die Bertrands, aber robuster, lebenbejahender; und ein Mund mit einem kleinen Lächeln” (163). Ursula and Bertrand, her Austrian suitor, stem from the same background and
culture, and have experienced similar situations during the war, yet when Bertie shows up at her New York apartment, Ursula feels nothing for him (279). When she tells Bertie that she loves Kenneth and not him, Bertie is incensed and considers the match to be ridiculous: “’Er sieht aus wie sein eigener Kammerdiener. Nie wird er ein Grandseigneur sein, mag er noch soviel Geld haben,’” Bertie asserts (282). Ursula, however, sees the positive qualities that Bertie completely overlooks and replies only, “Ich will gar nicht, dass er es je wird. So wie er ist, will ich ihn’” (282). In the end, as she settles into a happily-ever-after with Kenneth McDonald, the American architect, her femininity and European-ness is the complement to this masculine American -- their respective strengths complement each other and their weaknesses are compensated by the other’s strength.

In the closing chapters of the novel, Leitich additionally adds a model on how to achieve this symbiotic relationship with America. Kenneth proposes marriage to Ursula who, lonely and discouraged, but not yet in love with him, does not know how to reply. Here, Ursula is representative of the hesitant European who does not know if she is willing to trust America and try to learn from its ways. However, somehow unwilling to reject him, Ursula allows Kenneth to convince her to marry him, agreeing to a relationship that will be platonic until she is ready and loves him (255). Although still unsure of her emotions and still tied to Bertie, who is still in Austria, Ursula takes the plunge into a relationship with this American. As she gets to know him, she discovers his faults, but also clearly sees his merits, and truly falls in love. This marriage allows for greater togetherness and it is through greater exposure to Kenneth that Ursula eventually falls in love and finds greater happiness. Although unsure of her feelings toward Ken and
toward America, Ursula takes the plunge and gives the relationship a chance. As a result, Ursula ultimately receives everything she wants and even more. As Leitich idealizes the end of the novel in this improbable conclusion, her core message becomes clear: although it may be initially hard, Europeans can greatly benefit from close understanding of and association with America.

This chapter has attempted to consider how, through her character Ursula, Leitich is able to demonstrate an ideal of responding to America and its influences -- recognizing and adopting the good while also nourishing and promoting one's own unique characteristics. While her articles regarding women in *Die Neue Freie Presse* demonstrate only positive analysis of the American new woman and what she has to offer, here Leitich is more balanced. Offering both positive and negative examples of American womanhood, she helps the reader learn to judge the worth of specific elements of American culture, thus deciding what is worthy of emulation and what is not. Additionally, she addresses the question of how European women can best balance their own culture and a foreign culture, gleaning the positive elements of America while rejecting the negative. While Ursula's initial horror of American culture is replaced by love and appreciation, she does not swallow this culture whole, but remains careful and slightly particular, adopting some elements while rejecting others. As Ursula's development eventually leads to a fairy-tale ending of love and wealth, Leitich is proclaiming the message that some elements of American culture are of worth to Austrian women, but that traditional Austrian values and identity are just as necessary: together they constitute an excellent whole. Ultimately positive in outlook, Leitich looks
to a future in which the two countries and cultures work in tandem to create the ideal -- in each individual as well as in society.
VI. Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate that the works of Ann Tizia Leitich are an important addition to discussions of the 1920s European new woman. I have demonstrated that the new woman image was distinctly associated with America and that women of the time often emulated American women, and have discussed conventional literature and culture surrounding this phenomenon. This literature and culture tend either to unhesitatingly accept a skewed version of America or, alternatively, to vilify it.

In addition to this discussion, however, I have considered the works of Ann Tizia Leitich, especially focusing on her description of American women and how a European woman can learn from these women and adopt some of their qualities. Leitich's newspaper works, as well as the two books she published in the 1920s, *Amerika, du hast es besser* and *Ursula entdeckt Amerika* provide detailed information on Leitich's views on American women and their possible consequences for Europeans. Rejecting the extreme views so often propagated, Leitich instead critically accepted the new American woman, realistically viewing both positive and negative attributes and crafting her discussion of America to positively influence the development of American characteristics in her German and Austrian readers. Her objectivity added a new and necessary voice to the 1920s discussion of America and the European new woman.

It is impossible to know exactly how influential Leitich's works were, but comments from readers and newspapers and the importance of the newspaper at the time let us know that her readership was likely quite large\(^7\). Additionally, it is important to note the weight which readers of the time often associated with novels and journalism.

\(^7\) See chapter 2
As psychologist Alice Rühle-Gerstel reported in *Die literische Welt* in 1931, women often considered novels as a source of self-help, rather than a source of aesthetic pleasure.

The women want to find in a novel that which is at the moment only available in the popular scientific or so-called self-help books; answers to questions like: to marry or not to marry, bringing children into the world or preventing pregnancy; faithfulness in love, demanding faithfulness, whether one can hope for faithfulness; being fair to husband and children and still increasing one's income through work. (Frame 22)

As a female Austrian correspondent in the United States, Leitich was an important and respected journalist whose words held great weight, especially for a female audience wanting to learn about the new American woman. Although Leitich's works were undoubtedly pleasurable to read, they also very likely influenced the thoughts and attitudes of a public eager to learn practical lessons from such writings.

In writing on Leitich and her works of the 1920s, I have attempted neither to include all elements and important factors of these works, nor to suggest that Leitich was the only voice of the time that attempted to portray America and American women with greater accuracy. However, Leitich had great in-depth experience with America, understood European mores and culture. Additionally, she was able to popularize her writings and opinions. Rather than appealing to a narrow segment of the population, Leitich developed a large readership that regularly consumed her ideas and discussion of America and the American woman. While much work has yet to be done on both Leitich and other voices that contributed to European emulation of America, this thesis has laid
groundwork for a greater consideration of America's influence on the development of the 1920s European new woman.
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