

Introduction

Agnes C. Mueller

“German pop culture: how ‘American’ is it?” is a question that can never be answered. Accordingly, the essays presented in this volume do not aim to offer any clear-cut answers. Instead, the question represents a set of problems requiring different modes of investigation that interact, support, and build upon one another. As this volume will show, issues associated with Americanization and popular culture in Germany have been relevant throughout the twentieth century and today suggest renewed urgency, especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the context of today’s post-cold war, postcolonial, and perhaps even postnational global world, representations of hegemonic power structures are gaining in complexity, a complexity brought home with terrifying immediacy after September 11 and a complexity that demands urgent investigation with constantly reexamined sets of parameters.¹ Thus, the seemingly simplistic and naive question posed in the title of this book intends to provoke a thorough interrogation of current scholarship on German-American relations, of youth and popular culture in Germany, of consumer culture in the West, of “America” as an imaginary cultural entity, and of the multivalently coded expressions of those cultures.

Little did I know as a teenager working for McDonald’s in Germany in the late 1980s that my experiences there would later become useful for the pursuit of such inquiries. As a high school student, my reasons for choosing to work at a much detested American fast-food chain² were mainly pragmatic and not culturally motivated, at least not consciously so. McDonald’s hired students under the age of eighteen, and I could work flexible hours, including weekends and evenings.

As I started my work at McDonald’s, the responses of people around me were rather uniform. There was some pity (*because every-*

one knew that *McDonald's* was the poster child of exploitive U.S. capitalism; after all, hadn't Günter Wallraff told us how bad it was?!), mixed with slight consternation at the idea of a dirty blue-collar job, and some questions on rumors they had heard (*did McDonald's really put appetite-stimulating chemicals into hamburger buns?*). But, as I continued to work, I actually liked it. What I liked was not so much the job itself but the somewhat mischievous notion of resistance against all the cultural and political objections raised by my peers concerning the supposed evilness of a company like McDonald's. My resistance to the resistance seemed validated by the sense of community I felt with the other employees, most of whom were Greek, Turkish, and Iranian but also included Hungarians, Arabs, and Pakistanis. In a curious twist, the partial ostracization I experienced from my peers provoked a sense of alterity I (a blue-eyed, almost blonde German) could share with my co-workers, from whom I learned about many distinct foreign cultures and their differences within and separately from the German context. As a result, I came to view McDonald's as an employer who, despite or perhaps because of its exploitive profit-driven company structure and low salaries, saved many foreign workers in Germany from unemployment since, unlike most German employers, it freely hired foreigners. Thus, against the as yet unspoken, highly problematic, but nevertheless lurking notion of a "Leitkultur," McDonald's became a polyvalently coded icon. Not unlike Levi Strauss and Coca-Cola in the 1960s, McDonald's, despite its role as a marker for American global economic imperialism, provided a mode of antiauthoritarian resistance, at least for me. But, beyond this, McDonald's—by opposing a dominant or traditional German culture—became a site, admittedly a highly exploitive one, that could function as a refuge for a host of Germany's displaced others. Consequently, the American company in Germany became a marker simultaneously for cultural diversity *and* for monocultural, homogenous, and homogenizing Americanness, for liberal employment politics *and* for an exploitive capitalist company structure. This complex power structure eliciting resistance and acceptance can also be subsumed under Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, defined as a form of domination through consent on the part of the dominated.³ The hegemonic economic success of McDonald's was all the more astounding given the timing of their big push into West Germany beginning in the early 1970s, shortly after the student protests against Vietnam and during the peak of anti-Americanism by German intellectuals.

But, it seems, even the intellectuals were not immune from suc-

cumbing to the beguiling ruse of marketing reason. Once I started my studies at the university, I decided to continue working at McDonald's even though I probably could have gotten a better employment situation elsewhere. The full extent of this decision and its cultural implications became obvious when the professor of my comparative and English literature seminar, an overtly career-minded woman in her mid-thirties, walked into the restaurant, spotted me behind the counter, and immediately scurried out, apparently hoping I hadn't seen her. The fact that going to McDonald's on her lunch break could trigger such embarrassment and guilt on her part started me to think about the cultural and political meaning of her reaction. Was she, as an academic working on Shakespeare's sonnets, intellectually opposed to "low" American culture, or was she more concerned with undermining a politically correct opposition to American capitalism and consumer culture? Either way, her reaction suggests a double standard associated with German intellectual responses to Americanism broadly conceived, a double standard that would merit further investigation.

This takes me back to the initial problem and my interrogation of the title. First, what is pop culture? I will not go into all that "culture" can mean; suffice it to underscore Raymond Williams's notion that it usually describes either, and more narrowly, a "cultivation of the mind" (in the arts or as intellectual work, including cultural criticism) or, more broadly, with John Clarke, the way "social relations of a group" are "structured, experienced, understood, and interpreted."⁴ As opposed to the example of McDonald's, which would fall into the latter, broader category, most contributions in this book are more concerned with the former. In other words, while my illustration of McDonald's as a workplace belongs in the category of culture as lived practices, the essays in this volume are mostly concerned with culture as texts. Either way, Birmingham School notions of culture turn out to be hegemonic in effect, which for Dick Hebdige can be used to explain the formation of subcultures. According to Hebdige, the styles of subcultures do not simply resist or oppose hegemonic domination; rather, they hybridize new styles out of images and materials available to them in an effort to construct their own autonomous identity.⁵ Given this reading, McDonald's as a workplace could indeed be considered a locus for the formation of a subculture—as a marker for an occupying power, it created a space for third-party resistance to the local dominant culture. Thus, new identities and communities were constructed out of the dominating hegemonic structures.

How, then, is "sub"culture related to popular culture or mass cul-

ture? Here, we might still wish to consider Adorno's notion of the "culture industry" and the resulting dichotomy between mass and high culture, or between low and high culture, which would implicitly suggest that popular culture belongs to low or mass culture. On the other hand, as the contributions to this volume also show, today's cultures are often hybrids of both high and low culture, rendering such a distinction impossible or even redundant. Instead of Adorno's, then, John Fiske's notion of pop or popular culture as an expression of power relations may prove more productive in that it allows for a dynamic model of constant struggle between domination and subordination, between power and various forms of resistance to it.⁶ Along those lines, Fiske contends that "popular culture is deeply contradictory in societies where power is unequally distributed along axes of class, gender, and race."⁷ Cultural commodities, he argues, have to meet contradictory needs, as the McDonald's example reveals. In this context, American popular culture does indeed seem to offer great opportunities for Germany's minorities to articulate ethnic and racial difference from German culture. In order for it to function, capitalism necessitates a hegemonic, massifying, centralizing, and commodifying economic structure. However, by their sheer existence, those same forces also pluralize meanings and pleasures of cultural commodities, compelling a struggle over the values of social or cultural experiences. In this sense, popular culture may at the same time be a response to the formation of subcultures, as it is an integral component of the hegemonic power's dominating culture. Pop culture, then, can also exemplify a further hybridization of subculture, by integrating the dominant culture into its struggle for a new identity. If we understand McDonald's as an icon of "German" pop culture, we find that it negotiates between hegemonic formations of American capitalism and culturally diverse representations of a multiethnic German subculture, while also acting as a contentious marker for public rejection and concealed acceptance.

How, then, does American culture become transformed or even deformed when introduced to Germany? From the perspective of a post-cold war, postunification Germany, the notion of "popular culture" can serve to investigate intersections of a newly evolving economic and ideological relationship between America and a now fully liberated Germany within a global setting. Just as pop culture—often via the formation of a subculture—negotiates between the dominant culture and its own autonomous identity, so are diverse modules of German pop culture today negotiating between domineering, hege-

monic representations of U.S. culture and their own subversive adaptations thereof. Most contributions in this volume will address diverse aspects of aesthetic, artistic, and cultural representations within those intersections of popular culture and American culture, especially since World War II.

This transformation and hybridization of American culture in the German context often entails a distinct and deliberate deviation from traditional forms of German or European high culture, especially when we look at cultures as texts rather than as lived practices. The German reception of Andy Warhol's pop art may serve as an example of such a deviation, given its engagement with an aesthetics of the surface, thus openly seceding from high modernist European notions of the artwork as unique. Gerd Gemünden's recent study shows how Rolf Dieter Brinkmann adopted Warhol's aesthetics of the surface and his artistic techniques in order to create a new voice in West Germany's post-1968 literary scene.⁸ By using Warhol's aesthetics for his poetics, Brinkmann also introduced the concept of postmodernism—albeit in an embryonic state—to a German audience. Fredric Jameson's concept of postmodernism similarly identifies a fascination with the surface as the artwork's main component.⁹ Whether Warhol is represented “truthfully” or to what extent Brinkmann's poetics and writings can be described as Americanized, however, become less relevant in view of the cultural and political transformations taking place in the new, hybrid space between the realm of U.S. culture and the German-speaking audiences. The example of Warhol and Brinkmann is only one of many. Most others do not involve poetry or the fine arts but rather employ mass media, music, and especially cinema—artforms that helped to shape the aesthetic experience of the twentieth century.

In order to examine a wide scope of such transformations, it becomes necessary to look at different modes of cultural representation from a variety of disciplinary angles. While the project of cultural studies has gone a long way toward mediating between existing disciplinary boundaries, especially within the context of German studies, only a multiauthored volume can provide a truly interdisciplinary approach within an area that has so far been investigated mainly from the perspectives of “Germanistik” in the United States and “Amerikanistik” in Germany.¹⁰ Much of this previous research has been devoted to German-American relations in the immediate wake of World War II. While still highly useful to historians, studies published before the 1990s usually follow the typical cold war paradigm of East versus West—communist-occupied German Democratic Republic

(GDR) versus capitalist U.S.-dominated Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).¹¹ Such contributions based on binary relationships have become outdated in German cultural studies to the extent that they cannot take into account the changes occasioned by German unification, changes significantly precipitated by how we (re)view pre-1990 German culture.

Apart from previous publications by the contributors to this volume, I would like to point to a few more recent studies especially on the nexus of Americanization. In his 1994 publication *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, the Austrian historian Reinhold Wagnleitner argues that much of the so-called Americanization of Europe should be understood as a more developed form of Europeanization in that capitalism and consumerism are products of the European Enlightenment. After this sweeping statement, Wagnleitner reiterates yet another binary, the familiar victim-oppressor dichotomy, which seems especially overdrawn since the undifferentiated claim of the victimization of Austria (and, by implication, West Germany) clashes with the author's own enthusiastic affirmation of U.S. pop culture in his introduction. Taking issue with such undifferentiated accounts, scholars of American studies residing in Germany (e.g., Berndt Ostendorf and Winfried Fluck) attempt more balanced views, but their contributions on the topic thus far have consisted mainly of individual articles published in Germany (and often in German). As Ostendorf observes in a 1999 article, instead of asking why American pop culture is so popular, even some of the most recent publications on the topic of the Americanization of Germany remain guided by a reductive dichotomy of good versus evil, dream versus nightmare, and love versus hate.¹²

On the other hand, the co-edited volume in 2000 by historians Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May on the foreign politics of American popular culture addresses some of the more current concerns. While the book productively engages a wide array of themes (from academia, cinema, and music to politics), only three of the nineteen essays (by Thomas Fuchs, Christoph Ribbat, and Michael Ermarth) deal with German-American relations, while all the others focus on different regions of the world.¹³ In addition, valuable contributions by historians such as Kaspar Maase, Mary Nolan, and Volker Berghahn, as well as Uta Poiger and Heide Fehrenbach, represent efforts to arrive at a more differentiated understanding of German-American relations, setting the stage for the present volume.¹⁴ Publications from the German Historical Institute's conference on Americanization in 1999 help to shed light on such key terms as "globalization" and, especially, "Amer-

icanization.” Maase, Nolan, and Berghahn reject the notion of “Americanization” as a concept representing a one-way transfer in favor of a more dynamic model that allows for the description of more complex interactions between Germany and America. Most contributions to our present volume subscribe implicitly or explicitly to this more critical employment of the term, which also includes ongoing negotiations between Americanization and anti-Americanism. For the purposes of the essays collected here, Fehrenbach and Poiger’s introduction to their volume provides an excellent account of the entanglement of Americanization with modernization. Their contention of American culture as a marker for “mutable, multidirectional, and often highly contested social and cultural processes involved in identity construction” (xvi) must serve as the backdrop to any future investigation of German-American relations, regardless of disciplinary or geographic specificity. For analytical purposes, we therefore need to concede that “Americanization” cannot be clearly defined, since, not unlike “globalization,” it seeks to describe processes that involve constant negotiations and renegotiations among individuals, groups, and cultures.

Thus, a reexamination of the complex relationship between Americanization and pop culture in Germany from an interdisciplinary cultural studies perspective seems overdue, not only filling a lacuna but also taking the discussion out of some of its previous disciplinary boundaries while synthesizing ongoing discourses by presenting fresh assessments concerning the state of contemporary German film, literature, music, and national identity.

To this end, I found it useful to facilitate an exchange with the purpose of discussing those methodological and disciplinary questions both in theory and by focusing on specific examples. I therefore organized a German studies symposium at the University of South Carolina, to which experts from different fields (German studies, history, American studies, film/media studies, and women’s studies, along with two German writers) residing in different countries (the United States, Canada, and Germany) were invited. The conversations at the symposium were centered around eight panels, each with two twenty-five-minute presentations with an additional forty minutes reserved for discussion. This format proved extremely productive in that it stimulated responses to individual presentations but also allowed for discussions reaching beyond the immediate subject of any one panel. One of the issues debated most intensely was the question of Americanization and its complex relationship with globalization, especially since participants attempted to take into account the previously mentioned recent

discourses employing a more differentiated understanding of those terms. A majority of participants agreed that the term “Americanization” in its previous, traditional usage seemed too limited in that it neglected the inclusion of highly complex hybrid cultural representations, such as the emerging subculture of Turkish writers, singers, and filmmakers, and the complexities of late capitalist structures that are often precipitated by new modes of communication. While “globalization” seemed to be more closely associated with capitalism and its detriments in twentieth-century consumer culture, the term for some appeared too focused on issues of the global market economy, not taking into account the multitude of cultural utterances subverting that very concept (as Fiske suggests in his definition of pop culture). Several other symposium contributions, however, pointed directly to the fact that, as a result of the confrontation with globalizing impulses, a strengthening of local identity has taken place. Thus, “globalization” and “Americanization” are closely related concepts that merit careful consideration in each individual setting.

Some other more conceptual discrepancies can also be linked to questions of methodology. As Scott Denham, Irene Kacandes, and Jonathan Petropoulos illuminate in their *User’s Guide to German Cultural Studies*,¹⁵ such (productive) disagreements often surface where a truly interdisciplinary (as opposed to multidisciplinary) approach is sought. Along the same lines, despite the aim to be comprehensive, not all aspects of our question are examined to the same degree. Some readers may find the issue of the Americanization of GDR culture less evenly treated than other aspects. Although contributions by Uta Poiger and, to a lesser extent, Marc Silberman, Barbara Kosta, and Thomas Meinecke address the Americanization of GDR culture and juxtapose it with concurrent movements in the FRG, there is no contribution solely devoted to GDR culture. But this omission may illustrate a change in perception: More than ten years after unification, we no longer have to view the GDR as a separate entity requiring separate treatment but can instead choose to focus on the complex relationship among GDR culture, West German culture, the new Berlin Republic, and American culture. Furthermore, I think that the question of how American the GDR might have been during the cold war almost immediately raises the question of Sovietization, which would distract significantly from the focus of this collection.¹⁶

As the following brief overview of the essays in this book suggests, a cultural studies approach examining German issues from a variety of angles can prove most useful in sorting through some of the termino-

logical and politically charged issues. The temporal focus of the collection is marked by two important transitions in the latter half of the twentieth century: the transition from Nazism to the cold war and, even more significantly, the transition from the cold war to the postsocialist, global-market, multicultural, unified Germany.

The noted German-based Americanist Winfried Fluck opens the discussion by combining a review of current (terminological and methodological) issues pertaining to the Americanization of Germany with a reassessment of Frankfurt School notions of the culture industry. As recent publications from both Germany and the United States indicate, the thesis of a culture industry and related charges of American cultural imperialism are outdated and, Fluck argues, should instead be replaced with models of self-empowerment through different modes of appropriation of popular culture—an argument developed further by, among others, Sabine von Dirke’s investigation of the German hip-hop scene. While he does link Americanization with modernization, Fluck sees possibilities for (German) self-empowerment through a process of reappropriating American pop culture, given the broad variety of ethnicities found in the United States, which actually opens up a space for pluralities at a time of growing globalization.

Frank Trommler further pursues issues of Americanization and modernization by examining the communication revolution of the 1960s, specifically its relationship to high versus mass culture. Since the communication revolution has rendered “high” and “mass” culture indistinguishable, communication per se becomes culture, placing its transformative power in a category beyond Americanization. Trommler contends, however, that it is too early to determine whether and to what extent such transformations can indeed be termed “global.”

Extending the focus back into the early twentieth century, historian Tom Saunders continues probing Americanization with an investigation of popular culture as conceived in Weimar and national socialist Germany. His provocative thesis, that Nazism contributed significantly more toward the Americanization of German popular culture than did the Weimar period, becomes especially productive when he turns his attention to cold war discourses of jazz and the concurrent fascination with the image of the “new woman,” here meant to describe women’s political and cultural emancipation represented by the “Bubikopf” of the 1920s.

Taking up the subject of the “new woman” during the cold war, Sara Lennox pursues the degree to which West German constructions of femininity during that era can appropriately be considered Ameri-

can. Her essay refutes earlier claims of a deliberate antifeminism embedded by the return of women to the domestic sphere. For Lennox, post-World War II German femininity can be regarded as Americanized, provided that one accepts the notion that women as consumers were important contributors to the U.S.-driven economy. As opposed to Saunders's piece, where political and cultural emancipation are at stake for the concept of a "new woman," the term is here employed to depict women in their newfound, self-conscious role as consumers.

Uta Poiger opens the second part of the volume, providing several specific examples of productive appropriations of American cultures by marginal identities. Her essay pursues the issue of jazz during the cold war period, with a special emphasis on the role of the GDR in the nexus of Americanization. Her point is that, during the 1950s, both East and West German jazz critics used "authenticity" as a qualitative marker to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable forms of jazz. The eventual and comprehensive East German rejection of jazz actually served to reinforce West German acceptance of Americanism and U.S. gender roles. Her suggestion that the West German acceptance of African-American jazz was used in part to overcome Nazi racism still seems to hold true for today's German hip-hop movements, as the following essay by Sabine von Dirke confirms. Despite some differences in methodology, the thematic intersections of the essays by Saunders, Lennox, and Poiger underscore the significant American impact on German culture from 1933 until the 1960s, especially in terms of film, gender, and music, connecting at least in this respect Nazi Germany with West Germany of the cold war period.

Continuing the broader topic of music and marginal identities, Sabine von Dirke delivers a fresh account of "old school" and "new school" hip-hop adaptations in Germany. She convincingly demonstrates why cultural imperialism and Americanization no longer work as analytical tools for investigating the German hip-hop scene. Instead, she sees processes of creolization/hybridization characterizing transatlantic transfers of pop music and at the same time challenging negative preconceptions of Americanization that, especially among German minorities, are more positively viewed, as my earlier example of McDonald's suggests.

Eckhard Schumacher turns his eye to another specific instance of American culture and its mediation to German audiences. German writer Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's deliberate "distortions," actually a desemantication and decontextualization, served as a model for the German reception of U.S. pop culture in the late 1960s and, as Schu-

macher argues, continue to do so. Brinkmann's strategies, including his aesthetics of the surface, are still evident in current German "fanzines" and pop magazines as well as in Germany's most recent pop music scene. Schumacher's essay thus illustrates the degree to which Germany's pop literature boom of the late 1990s is entangled with both earlier and concurrent affirmations and rejections of U.S. pop culture.

The third part of the book, a productive break from the academic discourse, is devoted to the voices of two contemporary German writers, Matthias Politycki and Thomas Meinecke, whose views on popular culture in general, and particularly on the Americanization of German culture, could not be more contradictory. Especially in light of the current debate on German "Popliteratur," it seems essential to include the voices of those "on the ground." Politycki's polemic against the Americanization of German culture and especially of the German language, caused by America's dominance as a global player, calls for reinventing a European aesthetics, in the case of language even by insisting on German traditions. Despite Politycki's aim that his arguments not be subsumed under any politically motivated anti-Americanism, his thesis may be read as a problematic turn toward an all too familiar, Nazi-tainted conservatism. His views seem especially controversial considering that American popular culture also serves as a site of empowerment and resistance for those marginalized in German society, as some of the contributions to the present volume contend. On the other hand, Politycki's advocacy of a renewed attention to German language and culture could also be interpreted as an affirmative and vital element in the conceptualization of the new Berlin Republic within a newly conceived Europe, an element represented in several of this volume's essays (e.g., Koepnick, von Dirke, Gemünden, and Kosta). Even though Politycki seems to regard Americanization as disabling rather than empowering in its potential to create new "hybrids" (in that he rejects foreign influence not dissimilar to the *Sprachgesellschaften* of the seventeenth century), his polemic clearly signals the desire for a renewal of German (national?) identity.

Although, along with Politycki, he fiercely rejects the notion of traditional forms of linear narration and plot construction, Thomas Meinecke presents a totally opposite viewpoint. Meinecke uses his postwall experience as a writer by embracing both Americanisms in language as well as America's daily cultural intrusion into German music and literature. He acknowledges that his very existence as a writer is deeply indebted to a culture that is neither purely German nor completely American but rather a hybrid he calls "pop," emergent from Warhol's

techniques of reference and abstraction or pop/techno music's subjectivity. Meinecke's pop manifesto (which is decidedly not a manifesto) deconstructs both the traditional author figure as well as the subject, a deconstruction he sees as a political necessity given today's discourses. Pop, for Meinecke, is neither a concept nor a program but rather a self-referential moment in the deconstructive process. In regarding the deconstruction and hybridity as opportunities for the development and empowerment of the self, Meinecke's take on Americanization and popular culture is in line with the findings represented in the scholarly essays of this volume.

It is especially interesting that two writers of the same generation (both were born in 1955) come to such widely divergent conclusions on Americanization and popular culture. Despite their differences, however, both writers emphasize an urgent desire to revisit or come to terms with a postwar Germany that seems desperate to break free from the U.S. dominance of the 1960s and earlier, while at the same time negotiating the predominance of U.S. icons in everyday language and culture.

Accordingly, the last part of the book is concerned with the formation and establishment of the more recent discourse of the 1990s. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the medium of cinematic representation—with its combination of visual, acoustic, and linguistic forms and its essential contemporaneity in its response to current innovation in media technologies—seems to yield the most productive insights. Along those lines, the film historian Marc Silberman examines both the infrastructural shifts in the film industry and the discursive conceptualizations and significations of national cinema(s) per se accompanying those shifts. He also sets out some of the parameters that have given rise to the complaints and hype surrounding developments of popular film and television genres in Germany during the last decade of the twentieth century.

Barbara Kosta's essay on the popular success *Run Lola Run* investigates more recent German filmmaking and its shift from the entrenched forms of New German Cinema toward renewed appropriations of Hollywood themes and aesthetics. Actually, recent German films present a hybrid of elements from both New German Cinema and Hollywood filmmaking traditions while simultaneously and playfully undermining these same modes. Perhaps more importantly, Kosta shows how cinematic projections of the image of yet another concept of "new woman" and representations of romance and (German) history have helped to shape the identity of the new Germany.

Gerd Gemünden's essay "Hollywood in Altona" looks at other examples of current German filmmaking, this time within the minorities discourse. Again, if we keep in mind my comments on the effect of McDonald's on minorities in Germany, it comes as no surprise that the new German minority film auteurs such as Fatih Akin and Fatima El-Tayeb and Angelina Maccarone incorporate Hollywood images and language instead of availing themselves of the politically more subversive aesthetics of New German Cinema. It is not without a certain sense of irony that Americanization and its path to popular culture seem to offer greater opportunity for Germany's minorities to articulate ethnic and racial difference (from their German hosts) than do the ideologically more subversive and nominally liberal modalities of New German Cinema with its Brechtian claim of transformative potential. While Gemünden's essay emphasizes the negative aspects of such (Americanized) globalization, it also points to a transcendence of the traditional nation-state for the cultural expression of minorities in today's Germany, similarly demonstrated in von Dirke's essay on hip-hop culture.

Lutz Koepnick's essay brings to a close both the book's part on current film as a discursive path to the 1990s and the volume as a whole. Koepnick argues the existence of a new genre of the German heritage film in which characteristics of its British highbrow model are replaced by a turn toward popular and mass culture. As such, these films become integral to the recent Berlin Republic's aim to reinscribe and renew twentieth-century German history and German national identity. The emergence of the new genre illustrates that globalization produces new desires for localization, thereby challenging traditional models of American filmmaking. This thesis provokes Koepnick to ask whether categories of Americanization/Hollywoodization or even the concept of a national cinema are still useful when describing the more recent reinvention and redefinition of German film. Koepnick's essay rounds out the last part of the book by taking issue with the arguments put forth previously by Kosta, Gemünden, and von Dirke, urging us all to revise and reconsider current interpretative tools. At the same time, Koepnick's findings for the German heritage film point the way to other postnational German cultural representations of the postwall era.

In addition to documenting new understandings of Americanization, the contributions in this volume tackle the delicate nexus of U.S. popular culture as a tool for the subversion of a dominant German culture or the subversion of U.S. culture in Germany. With the end of the

cold war, revisiting the complex ways in which American culture may be used and understood abroad poses a new set of challenges. As the essays here demonstrate, America and its cultures—both its culture of global capitalism and its popular culture—frequently serve as tools for other nations and communities to come to terms with their own political and cultural problems. In the case of Germany, those issues range from creating Nazi Germany in the 1930s, to coping with the Nazi past during the 1960s, to (re)establishing a “new” German identity in the postwar era, to locating minority cultures within the dominant German discourse. Therefore, in the present context, terms such as “Americanization” or even “globalization” need to be employed with caution. Instead, we might wish to consider that, in today’s world, cultures are more clearly defined along the lines of dominant versus subversive spaces. In this respect, to borrow a line from one of the contributors to this volume, the answer to the impossible question of how “American” is Germany would be “very” as well as “not at all.”

NOTES

1. An example of the more recent turn in German-American relations after September 11 is the debate on America’s “justified” war, documented in *Der Spiegel*, which also invites German intellectuals to respond. Peter Schneider, “Die falsche Gewissheit,” *Der Spiegel* 35 (2002): 168–70.

2. The numerous reasons for many Germans’ rejection of McDonald’s are, to some extent, similar to those outlined in George Ritzer’s *The McDonaldization of Society*, rev. ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1996). Although Ritzer uses the example of McDonald’s to analyze today’s society at large, many Germans find those same problems (overrationalization and dehumanization, health concerns, environmental concerns) embodied by McDonald’s. Here is not the place to critique Ritzer’s highly simplified approach; suffice it to say that the success of his book as a teaching tool proves that he delivers a useful account of many Americans’ perception regarding the downside of the fast-food industry. From the German perspective, however, the issue becomes more complex, given their perception of the company as a symbol for American economic imperialism.

3. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International, 1971). While Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is more concerned with the working class’s failure as a revolutionary subject in Western industrial societies and its subsequent integration into existing orders, the concept can also serve to illustrate the acceptance of U.S. domination in West Germany, in this case by “displaced others.”

4. Raymond Williams, *Sociology of Culture* (New York: Schocken, 1981), 11, and John Clarke et al., “Subcultures, Cultures, and Class: A Theoretical Overview,” in *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*,

ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 9–74 (quotes from 10–11).

5. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979).
6. John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (Boston: Hyman, 1989), 19.
7. Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, 4.
8. Gerd Gemünden, *Framed Visions: Popular Culture, Americanization, and the Contemporary German and Austrian Imagination* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 43–65.
9. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 9.
10. For an example of “Germanistik” in the United States, see Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History: Vol. I, Immigration, Language, Ethnicity; Vol. II, The Relationship in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), and for a recent example of Amerikanistik, see Berndt Ostendorf, “The Final Banal Idiocy of the Reversed Baseball Cap: Transatlantische Widersprüche in der Amerikanisierungsdebatte,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44, no. 1 (1999): 25–48, or Winfried Fluck (this time published in a German studies venue), “The ‘Americanization’ of History in New Historicism,” *Monatshefte* 84, no. 2 (1994): 220–28.
11. Trommler and McVeigh, *America and the Germans*, vol. 2.
12. See Ostendorf, “The Final Banal Idiocy”; Alf Lüdke, Inge Maßolek, and Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996); and Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
13. Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds., “Here, There, and Everywhere”: *The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2000). In this present context, Christoph Ribbat’s contribution on hip-hop in Germany is especially elucidating; see “‘Ja, ja, deine Mudder!’ American Studies und deutsche Populärkultur,” in *Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven in der Nordamerika-Forschung*, ed. Friedrich Jaege (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2001), 145–60.
14. See those works in the bibliography, and in particular: Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger, eds., *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2000), and Raimund Lammersdorf, ed., *GHI Conference Papers on the Web: The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective*, <<http://www.ghi-dc.org/conpotweb/westernpapers/index.html>>.
15. Scott Denham, Irene Kacandes, and Jonathan Petropoulos, eds., *A User’s Guide to German Cultural Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1997).
16. For the earlier postwar period, this question has been researched thoroughly in Konrad Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1945–70* (New York: Campus, 1997), and looking at the time beyond 1970—indeed a most deserving project—would require separate treatment.