CHRISTOF DECKER
ASTRID BÖGER (Eds.)

Transnational Mediations

Negotiating Popular Culture between Europe and the United States

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Transnational Mediations: An Introduction

CHRISTOF DECKER and ASTRID BÖGER

The last twenty years have witnessed a proliferating debate about the history of transnational relations and the usefulness of transnationalism as a new concept for the analysis of culture. This book wishes to make a contribution to this debate by focusing on questions of 'transnational mediations' in the realms of visual media and popular culture and by tracing these mediations through encounters and exchanges between Europe and the United States of America. In academic disciplines dealing with visual culture, film and media, or American studies—all of which inform this book—transnationalism has become a forceful new research paradigm. Although these research traditions had pursued transnationalist questions since their beginnings in the 1930s and increasingly after the Second World War—sometimes in the form of internationalism, transatlantic studies, cosmopolitanism, or comparative studies—the 1990s witnessed a shift toward transnationalism as a new way of framing these issues. It was supported, on the one hand, by the new geopolitical constellation after the fall of the Berlin wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the reorientation of the U.S. as the remaining superpower. On the other, it was furthered by the emergence of the World Wide Web and its unique vision of globalization. The digital revolution not only created a global network of instant and increasingly mobile electronic communication, it also accelerated and multiplied the flow of goods, information, knowledge, and cultural artifacts.

This combined political, economic, technological, and cultural process—which still defines the contemporary moment—turned out to be so powerful that traditional notions of national identity as well as national sovereignty crumbled in the face of rapidly expanding multinational corporations and the emergence of global forms of communication in digital media networks. In the academic world, the term 'transnationalism' stuck because it indicated the persistent power of the

national imaginary while at the same time signaling its dissolution and demise. In this sense, the 'transnational turn' was welcomed in American Studies as a critique of ideologically suspect, essentialist notions of cultural identity—in particular the idea of American exceptionalism. Important contributions by Janice Radway, John Carlos Rowe, Günter Lenz, Heinz Ickstadt, Donald E. Pease, Winfried Fluck, and others moved away from the notion of distinct, coherently definable cultures and championed the focus on border discourses, contact zones, interaction, and exchange among individuals and groups, reconfigured by context as well as by the forever shifting position of the observer. In her seminal 2004 presidential address, Shelley Fisher Fishkin brought together many of these approaches to sketch out the new research agenda resulting from the transnational turn. To be sure, a global perspective was present from the institutional beginnings of American Studies. In one of the first issues of *American Quarterly* from 1950 the Committee on American Civilization of the American Council of Learned Societies wrote: "American culture should always be presented in proper relation to other cultures past or present, for purposes of critical comparison; and every student of American civilization should receive instruction about at least one other civilization, not necessarily Western" ("American Studies" 287). Yet with Fishkin's intervention more than fifty years later, this impulse moved to the forefront, defining the transnational as a 'cultural crossroads' and investigating "the historical roots of multidirectional flows of people, ideas, and goods and the social, political, linguistic, cultural, and economic crossroads generated in the process" (22).

Following this line of thought, the term 'transnational' may be understood as 'border-crossing' in this collection of essays. It relates to physical, virtual, imaginative, and even imaginary practices of crossing national boundaries and borders. Transnational encounters of people, places, objects, technologies, institutions, styles, stars, narratives, genres, images, art forms, and more therefore presuppose a notion of national origin, yet this notion is constantly renegotiated and reconfigured in the act of border-crossing. Investigating these acts as 'transnational mediations' allows us to understand their form and logic as instances of imitation, emulation, adaptation, reworking, translation, resistance, or negotiation thus going beyond traditional notions of cultural imperialism, dominance, or subordination. Rather than insisting on

the hegemony of American media in the analogue and digital eras, this volume shifts the focus to the question of how cultural artifacts perceived to have originated in the U.S. have served as common points of reference for European cultures, and how the cultural work of these artifacts was adapted to specific historical needs and constellations.

If the metaphor of the "cultural crossroads" (Fishkin 32) created by transnational encounters has primarily been regarded as an enriching prospect—not just for a new research agenda but also as a political vision—it should also be pointed out that transnationalism can signify a feeling of loss and homelessness as the result of forced migration and displacement. The cultural mobility implied by 'border-crossing' may lose some of its appeal when viewed from the outside of Western lifestyles or from disfranchised internal vantage points, and it may indeed strengthen rather than dissolve the imaginary of national belonging. As Ezra and Rowden point out: "The continued force of nationalism, especially nationalism grounded in religious cultures, must be recognized as an emotionally charged component of the construction of the narratives of cultural identity that people at all levels of society use to maintain a stable sense of self" (4). This lingering attachment to the national may become evident in the reworking of hegemonic 'American' global codes in local or regional spaces. Even though American culture as mass and popular culture is a common point of reference for large audiences, its reception may vary dramatically according to local traditions and a notion of national identity grounded in the use of non-English languages.

Accordingly, this volume posits 'transnational mediations' as negotiating the meaning of American cultural artifacts in individual European cultures as well as forging a common notion of Europeanism vis-à-vis American culture. To claim a certain level of commonality for this notion may be justified by the focus on popular culture and its global reach throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Indeed, from the rise of consumer culture in the 1920s onward and particularly after the Second World War—the historical period most relevant to the essays in this book—globalization as 'Americanization in disguise' was often directly—and disparagingly—linked to the aesthetic and impact of Hollywood films, American music, advertising campaigns, television series, or, more recently, digital media and internet companies. This ambiguous European assessment of American mass culture as an economic and aesthetic threat—a hegemonic cultural influence—was frequently shared by crit-

ics in the U.S. To cite just one example, many important theoretical essays were included in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* from 1957. Edited by Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White, it represented an early example of transnational academic collaborations bringing together, among others, the New York intellectuals, European critical theory, and mass communication research. Many contributions noted with growing alarm the commercialization of culture and, as a result, the dominance of *kitsch* (Greenberg), homogenization (Macdonald), or middlebrow standards (Fiedler). Yet unmistakably, the rise of mass media had also changed the global reach of American culture thereby introducing the notion of culture as a form of popular education (cf. Lazarsfeld and Merton). Leslie Fiedler even argued that although he shared much of the criticism, American culture occupied a vanguard position indicative of a global transformation: "To declare oneself against 'the Americanization of culture' is meaningless unless one is set resolutely against industrialization and mass education" (541).

From a European perspective, the appeal of American popular culture was likewise its ability to reach audiences with different educational, cultural, and class backgrounds. Establishing a pattern for future decades, it had become a form of popular education that was often feared by cultural elites and intellectuals but eventually adapted and renegotiated according to the needs and traditions of the various 'indigenous' cultures. This quality of American popular culture was certainly based on its powerful industrial and technological apparatus, but it also resulted from a "refusal to be shabby or second-rate in appearance" (Fiedler 539), aesthetic practices of mixing and hybridity, the directness of addressing its audience, and a democratic blurring of boundaries between high and low. To be sure, all of these aspects had ambiguous implications for the critics in the 1950s—and for generations of cultural commentators to come—yet the early critics had understood that mass culture represented an attempt "to delegate taste to majority suffrage" (Fiedler 539) and that this transformation was an inevitable by-product of industrialization and globalization. Assessing the situation after the Second World War, but also looking into the future, Leslie Fiedler felt that the forms and practices emerging in the U.S. served as a "preview for the rest of the world of what must follow the inevitable dissolution of the older aristocratic cultures" (539). Fiedler was not making any claims for American exceptionalism but he did concede that the centers of cul-

tural production had shifted to the U.S. In the decades after the Second World War and up to the present moment, this joint vision of aggressive commercial expansionism and cultural democratization constituted the fertile yet also ambiguous framework for the negotiations of popular culture between Europe and the United States.

This book is broadly divided into three sections. The first one, "Practices of Transnational Visual and Consumer Culture," focuses on global exchanges of visual artifacts. In the first chapter, addressing conceptual questions relevant to many essays in this volume, William Uricchio discusses notions of culture as a commodity versus culture as a creative tradition, and their influence on constructions of 'national' cultures in Europe and the U.S. Next, Frank Mehring examines globally circulating visual codes by looking at the historical development of silhouettes at the borderline of African American art and advertising. In a similar vein Astrid Böger revisits the aesthetics and ideology of the first 'global' photo exhibition *The Family of Man*, which took place in the 1950s. The final contribution in this section by Anneke Smelik and Maaike Feitsma combines the focus on visual and consumer culture by showing how the putatively 'American' garment jeans has been appropriated by designers and consumers in the Netherlands.

The second section, "Negotiating Film Stories and Styles," moves to the realm of the cinema as another fertile ground of transnational mediations. The essay by Juan A. Suárez discusses the work of Sidney Peterson as an instance of a surrealist film style transfigured through multiple transatlantic crossings and reworkings. Using a similar focus on the modernist period, Hilaria Loyo examines how Hollywood cinema and the star system supported the process of modernization in Spanish culture of the 1930s. Gilles Menegaldo's essay shifts the focus to horror films and describes how the genre's history and theoretical discourse developed in the U.S. and France. Concentrating on one horror trope, the zombie, Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet shows how it became one of the crucial motifs in recent European cinema. Also with an eye toward recent film history, the contribution by Ralph J. Poole discusses how the 'new' Turkish cinema has been shaped by renegotiating both American and European forms of cinematic narration and style.

The final section, "Reception Histories and Globalized Media Institutions," looks at the reception of American media and media institutions in different European cultures. Philip Schlesinger revisits the case

of the UK Film Council as an important, and ultimately failed, attempt at trying to emulate institutional structures of the American film industry. Looking at film criticism from the late 1940s, Melvyn Stokes compares how Charlie Chaplin's film *Monsieur Verdoux* was received very differently in the U.S., Great Britain, and France due to political and cultural reasons. Equally interested in the history of reception, Christof Decker examines how the American television series *Holocaust* managed to reconfigure the war-related historical discourse on guilt and victimization in 1970s German culture. The final contribution by Tomáš Pospíšil recounts how cultural exchanges during the period of the Cold War—and beyond—helped to create a notion of 'Americanness' that had both subversive and liberating as well as ideological functions—a pattern that, although undoubtedly unique in each cultural constellation and period, seems to be typical for the process of Americanization in the 20th and 21st centuries.

This book evolved from a conference held at the University of Munich (LMU) in 2013 bringing together an international group of scholars to discuss the theoretical and historical implications of "American Media—European Cultures." The conference and this publication have been generously funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Thanks are also due to the Bavarian American Academy for its financial support of the conference, as well as the Departments of English and American Studies at the University of Munich and the University of Hamburg for providing administrative and institutional support. The German Association for American Studies kindly endorsed the conference, and we would like to thank its then president Udo Hebel for giving the opening address. Special thanks for their support go to Klaus Benesch, Thea Diesner, Pia Eckert, Johanna Gustin, Helen Zwerger, and Meike Zwingenberger. Last but not least, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all contributors for the enthusiasm and the creative energy they have brought to this project.

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I Practices of Transnational Visual and Consumer Culture

1 The Residue of the National: Conditions of Production and the Transatlantic Divide

WILLIAM URICCHIO

For many, the battle lines of the transatlantic culture war seem clearly drawn: on one side, Team America starring Miley Cyrus, the latest Hollywood blockbuster, *Mad Men*, Google, and Facebook joining forces to conquer the European imaginary; on the other side, Europe, trying to leverage its considerable talents into something resembling a team, while divided among nations, languages and cultural hierarchies—split between supporting cultural legacies and creating an ongoing public culture—and torn over the substance of cultural identity in an era of mobile and multicultural identities.

This familiar portrayal masks a deeper and far more profound set of issues that have to do with the conditions for cultural production and the very understanding of the term 'culture.' The invocation of the language card is a familiar academic gambit; but the case of 'culture' is particularly vexed, as Raymond Williams notes, because the term enjoys so few cognates (cf. Williams). This renders 'culture' into an especially slippery referent. In the American context, academic disciplinary definitions aside, culture is many things to many people. But at an institutional level there is little doubt: culture is commodity, subject to the laws of supply and demand; a lifestyle choice, where individuals can select their own preferences and culture can be put on and taken off like a garment. In Europe, by contrast, culture remains 'an exception' (in the language of the 1993 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade or GATT), something that emanates from a creative force, an author; something that still enjoys public support in the form of (ever decreasing) subsidies; something that is engaged in by individuals whose actions and identities are protected by privacy; and something that emerges from a set of values that are deeply inscribed in the particularities of national history, language, and everyday life.

Europeans, of course, like people across the world, engage in diverse cultural practices. Those practices include viewing Hollywood blockbusters and listening to Miley Cyrus. But while the particular practices and artifacts that make up an individual's cultural diet in Europe may be diffused beyond easy description, the *conditions* for the creation of culture in Europe can be more clearly delimited and described. And it is equally clear that the logics and conditions of production represented by 'Americanization' are both antithetical to them, and increasingly gaining ground on them.

The re-positioning of European public culture can be seen in the polemics of neo-liberal politicians who threaten the future of subsidies to artists and broadcasting operations long understood as public. This development is aggravated by the stance of what in other times would be the political opposition, which now is divided in debate over *whose* culture should be supported with public funds. Enabled by a critical discourse that is particularly effective at deconstructing cultural norms and identities, policy makers seem unable to formulate policy objectives or even an operational notion of 'national' cultural practice in an era of multiculturalism. Contemporary European cultures have emerged as sites of contestation as the descendants of former colonies and 'guest' workers, multinational labor forces, increasingly bifurcated political factions, and a consumer-driven economy all struggle with 'essential' cultural identities. In this battle, the abstract nature of the 'American' solution, where the market is king, seems to have a natural advantage. Whether historically American or not is beside the point: it is branded with the residue of the national; just as European nations struggle with the residues of their own.

The dilemma is complicated, however, by other persistent sites of European culture such as the notion of the primacy of author's rights, and the commitment to a basic right to privacy (of self, of data, of DNA). Though of a very different cultural order than televisual or cinematic texts, these values are determining, and manifest themselves in lawsuits against Google or in intellectual property disputes—or in the GATT cultural exception.[1] Paradoxically, they are some of the clearest

[1] During the Uruguay Round of GATT talks, the European Union, led by France, argued that culture should be treated differently from other commercial products, and that cultural goods and services should be left out of international treaties and agreements. This argument opened the door for a cul-

articulations of a persistent European culture, and sites of greatest resistance to the project of economic rationalization masked by the term 'Americanization.' Unfortunately, the battle—the public battle—over culture takes the form of anxiety over vs. desire for Hollywood's products or Facebook or Twitter, and thus, over the material manifestations of 'national' culture, culture in the narrow sense. This stance is disempowering, keeping our focus on the misleading level of 'good' and 'bad' cultural artifacts (and putting defenders of European cultural artifacts into immediate danger of being seen as a cultural essentialists; and their counterparts, the defenders of Hollywood culture, as the barbarians at the gate) rather than on the conditions for culture, on cultural dynamics. Is the steady creep of 'American' cultural products a Trojan horse, bringing with it economic rationalization? Is the dispute over national cultural identity a hopeless and disempowering ruse, an unwinnable battle that, when lost, will largely cede the real war over values such as privacy and authors' rights?

In the pages to come, I would like briefly to rehearse and complicate the growing tensions between these two sets of conditions, one 'European' and one 'American,' for cultural production. As the scare-quotes might seem to imply, I use these terms loosely to describe sites of identity that exist as stereotypes, often invoked (in the cultural context) negatively. This tension seems to me the latest twist in ongoing negotiations between U.S.-based (though usually multinational) cultural industries and their European counterparts. It is pushed by the global logics of late capitalism (where culture is an industry), enforced by global treaties, pursued by the politics of neo-liberalism, and enabled by a mistaken focus on the symbolic battle between Miley Cyrus and her spectral European counterparts. In order to better locate this particular state of things, I'd like first to rehearse earlier stages in the cultural *pas de deux* engaged in by the two cultures over the past century with a focus on *production logics.* From domination (an imposed cultural dynamic) to assimilation (selectively embraced cultural practices) to structurally integrated cultural behaviors, the terms of this shifting relationship seem familiar enough. However, within them lurk some un-

tural exemption of audiovisual trade from the Treaty's liberal trade terms. The United States strongly opposed this stance, but rather than see the seven-years-in-the-making agreement collapse, ultimately accepted the exemption.

derappreciated developments that bear upon this latest framing of the cultural debate. Although teased out into individual categories for heuristic purposes, I understand the relationship of these points to be overlapping and palimpsest-like, with shifting weights and definitional moments.

Domination

When the 1993 round of GATT talks neared completion, the cultural divide seemed clear: Europeans, with the French in the lead, saw the national cultural status quo as vulnerable and in need of protection, while the Americans argued for permeable borders and a dynamic culture powered by the (transnational) imperative of a 'free flow of information.' Lurking immediately behind the scenes were the twin imperatives of market protection and expansion, of course, with industry lobbyists on both sides applying pressure to their representatives. But there was something else. The debate tapped deeper concerns about cultural and societal hierarchization. Shakespeare, Bach and Picasso traveled across national cultural borders with impunity. Indeed, their names loomed large in most nations' bastions of cultural respectability—theaters, concert halls and museums; and their works were systematically impressed upon generations of students as emblems of cultural literacy. The Batman and his Hollywood ilk, however, posed a problem, and had visas been a prerequisite for entry, they might have been turned back at the border. Some cultural forms, it seems, travel across national divides freely, while others appear to pose a threat. And position in the cultural hierarchy seems to be a significant determining factor in the treatment a particular form is accorded.

Cultural and market protectionism speak to different dynamics and social cohorts, of course, but they are also occasionally opportunistic allies. Consider the start of the 20th century, when the shoe was on the other foot. America, like much of the world, was firmly in the grip of French motion picture producers such as Pathé and Gaumont; and even Denmark's Nordisk and Italy's Cines enjoyed more expansive international trade than the American studios. American film producers struck a temporary alliance with cultural arbiters (themselves no friends of the new medium), arguing that American film could help to uplift the lower

orders, that it could help to articulate and bind national culture, and that problems with the motion picture should be attributed to *imported* films, which brought foreign values, demoralization and degeneracy in their wake (cf. Uricchio and Pearson 41-64). The First World War brought an end to Europe's cinematic empire, and launched America's, by this point, located in Hollywood. Market domination, a distant cousin of the earlier century's European colonial practices, turned out to be a learned behavior, and Hollywood was quite good at it. A discursive inversion followed, which still echoes in our present: like an invasive alien species, Hollywood products and distribution systems disrupt local cultural ecosystems, dominating and laying ruin to native forms. America's pre-war cultural laments regarding European film paled in comparison to post-war Europe's complaints about Hollywood, complaints that would be garbed in the mantle of cultural imperialism.

The narrative of cultural domination is recurrent, surfacing in media industry discourse at the start of the 20th century and in theoretical configurations such as cultural imperialism in the 1970s and after (cf. Tomlinson; Schiller). Driven by economies of scale, facilitated by international trade treaties and hewing to the logics of the marketplace, it has given Hollywood's industries a central role as a global bully. And yet, the concept of cultural domination is not without its critics. The complexities of interpretation and appropriation, as explored by reception research and fan studies, challenge notions of 'effect' and impact. And, as just suggested, the weighted cultural agenda of the term 'dominance,' applied to the spread of popular culture texts but irrelevant with regard to the spread of high culture texts, suggests that the narrative of dominance has also been deployed in a highly selective and culturally loaded manner. The national framing and selective casting of the cultural domination scenario has obfuscated the potentially far more insidious operations of transnational taste and class hierarchies.

Appropriation

The dominated do not leave the dominator unsullied, the interdependence of the two positions breeding reciprocity. Indeed, something like a conversation ensues, with selective exchange, appropriation, and recirculation taking place without regard to hierarchies of power. At one

extreme, imitation with the always-attendant factor of localization offers an example of a form of appropriation. If imitation is a form of flattery, the history of European and American film and television is a love fest. From the cowboys of the Camargue to Neckar Westerns, the first two decades of the 20th century saw a surprising number of European films emulate one of America's then dominant genres. And on the Hollywood side on the other end of the century, we have witnessed countless remakes—*The Vanishing* (George Sluizer, 1993) & *Spoorloos* (George Sluizer,1988); *Breathless* (Jim McBride, 1983) & *À bout de souffle* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960); *Victor Victoria* (Blake Edwards, 1982) & *Viktor und Victoria* (Reinhold Schünzel, 1933); *The Scent of a Woman* (Martin Brest, 1992) & *Profumo di donna* (Dino Risi, 1974)—the list goes on. These examples suggest appropriation at its most literal, remaking a particular text or genre, and modifying it primarily for purposes of localization. While comparisons between the original text and the remake reveal much about cultural assumptions, the state of the remaking industry and the nature of the perceived market, they remain largely contained, bound within the one-directional logics of imitation.

At the other end of the spectrum, by contrast, a more dialogic form of appropriation creates a feedback loop between the original culture and the appropriating culture, sometimes triggering multiple rounds of appropriation and influence. Consider German Expressionism in film. From a pre-war art movement to a post-war fad, Expressionism offered German filmmakers a visual and thematic vocabulary that enabled them not only to make the most of the period's initially difficult studio conditions, but to stake out stylistic distinction from the new cinematic hegemon in Europe, Hollywood. Even though the process was enabled by an inflation period that produced an economic climate disadvantageous to foreign competition (one of its few advantages!), Expressionist film developed a life of its own, carving out a market niche in Europe and the United States in a climate otherwise hostile to things German.

'Appropriation' appeared in the form of Hollywood productions such as James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), a film that epitomized the dramaturgical repurposing of Expressionism's mise-en-scène (lighting, set design, camera placement), performance style and obsession with fate. The Hollywood twist was to literalize the Expressionist vocabulary, flattening it into a signifier for horror. This was not so much a case of imitation (as we saw with remakes) as inspiration, a form of creative

repurposing. And the conversation intensified particularly after the Second World War, when German and German-trained émigré directors, writers, cinematographers, lighting and set designers left an indelible mark on a body of often economically marginal but stylistically important works later called Film Noir. Explicitly evoking Expressionism, these productions gave prominent roles to the expressive force of environment and inanimate objects (the street, for example), embraced fatalism, and used light as a material force. As with Expressionism, these techniques made the most of constrained budgets, shooting schedules and studio access. These cross-cultural influences have been well-chronicled by contemporary film historians, and yet Noir was somehow initially received as a distinctively 'American' genre, not the least by the French film critics who left us with its French moniker.

Film Noir would be drawn upon by other movements for inspiration, such as the French *Nouvelle vague*, as emblematized by the costumes, motifs, and signifying practices of Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande à part* (1964). And the French *Nouvelle vague*, in turn, conversed with the American New Wave, evident in the early work of William Friedkin (*The French Connection*, 1971) and resonating through the work of Quentin Tarantino (*Reservoir Dogs*, 1992). The combination of relatively low budgets, high levels of stylization, and an explicit break from the dominant visual and narrative logics of the Hollywood studios provide a common thread through these cycles of inspiration and selective appropriation.

Expressionism's example of bi-directional influence, exchange and appropriation illustrates a fundamental dynamic for both Hollywood and European cultural producers as much because of the regular exchange of creative talent and discursive communities (critics, academics, festivals), as because of the role of international finance and markets, as because of audience familiarity with dominant conventions. With remakes, appropriation at this level is manifest textually. But influence also takes a less visible—and arguably more insidious—form at the level of the institutional and normative behaviors that give texts their specificities, evident in the logics of integration.

Integration

The accelerated global flows of capital, corporations, and peoples together with the (transnational) affordances of the Internet have brought long-simmering forms of integrated cultural production to a boil. Transnational co-productions, global outsourcing and production pipelines, internationally syndicated formats and the widespread embrace of professional norms constitute cultural behaviors distinct from domination or appropriation. While ultimately manifest in textual instantiations, these elements generally operate at the level of the *conditions* of textual production. As such, they are not new. Companies such as Méliès and Pathé had production headquarters in multiple nations during the first decades of the 20th century; Hollywood invested significantly in the interbellum German film industry as attested to by Fox-Europa and Parufamet; and German, Soviet, British and American television systems all licensed Radio Corporation of America (RCA) technology in the mid-1930s. But by the end of the 20th century, things began to speed up considerably.

Television formats provide one of the clearest contemporary sites of this process. *The Wheel of Fortune*, America's longest-running syndicated television game show, has over sixty national instantiations. In each of its settings, not only is the format integrated into the larger programming mix, but it is seen as local by the majority of its viewers. As of this writing, the world's largest independent producer of television is the Dutch company Endemol, with a business that turns on the creation, sale and localization of television formats (reality shows, game shows) as well as other forms of programming. *Deal or No Deal*, *Big Brother* and *Fear Factor* are among its hits that are embraced as native by American viewers, as is *The Voice*, syndicated from John de Mol's *The Voice of Holland*. Albert Moran has discussed the ensuing complexities of a space of legally stipulated sameness subject to cultural variation, interpretation, and identity (cf. Moran). But for our purposes, the point is simple: format syndication offers opportunities for the deep integration of transnational systems—with everything from casting methodologies, set and lighting design, production workflows, and budgeting categories determined from a central authority—into a set of indigenous texts that are discerned as local by the general viewing public.

Just as invisible are the transnational production pipelines involved in programs ranging from HBO's *Game of Thrones* to the simplest tele-

vision station logo. An 'American' production, *Game of Thrones* was filmed in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Croatia, Malta, Iceland, Morocco, Spain and the United States, hewing to the spatialities of 'runaway' productions less for economic than for diegetic reasons. But more interesting is the program's visual effects work, developed by companies such as Pixomodo with studios in Frankfurt, Beijing, Toronto, Los Angeles and London (among many other cities). Digital effects even more than location shooting enjoy remarkable fluidity, with various visual and sound assets being 'sent' from workshop to workshop, from Los Angeles to Shanghai to Singapore, with little more than the click of a mouse. And unlike location shooting, which usually brings with it the specificities of the local, the transnational digital effects pipeline is designed to leave no trace of place as an asset moves from color correction in one location, to texture rendering in another, to effect layering in a third. The integration of many different cultures and sites in the service of global production is largely, in Iwabuchi's terms, 'odorless' (cf. Iwabuchi 23-50). One could make a parallel argument about the financing of big-budget media productions, whether 'European' or 'American,' with multinational funding schemes and corporate underwriting and distribution deals invisibly supporting a particular national façade. Integration is both structural and structurally unobtrusive.

A very different kind of integration can be seen with companies such as Google, Facebook, and Netflix. In these cases, the 'American' status of the endeavor (despite the complexities of global finance and staffing) seems unmistakable if only for the sheer absence of robust European alternatives. But while this pattern may look the same as cultural domination, there is a crucial difference: these companies operate on a principle of pull, not push. They have generally not imposed themselves in the way that Hollywood sought to control European film distribution and exhibition outlets, or used government assistance (as with the Marshall Plan and GATT talks) to assure an open door policy towards their products. Rather, they reveal the extent to which the terms of the old 'America vs. Europe' debate are inadequate if we want to understand the cultural practices associated with certain technologies (networked digital culture) and the behaviors of certain demographic segments, especially those that might be considered digital natives. The nation is perhaps not an adequate or even appropriate unit of measure, masking as it does certain transnational dynamics—or rewriting them,

and in so doing, constructing a self-fulfilling national narrative by relying on national data. The new digital media environment enables a different kind of trace; and with it, new kinds of economic transactions that at their heart challenge long established European values by threatening to reconfigure conditions of production.

Before moving on to consider that threat in the conclusion of this essay, one final manifestation of the logics of integration demands attention: professionalization. Jérome Bourdon, in his study of the 'self-inflicted' Americanization of European television, makes the case for integration as the assimilation of values on an institutional-behavioral level. At the program level, while Europeans sometimes copied or were inspired by American programs and vice versa—a process we have just described as appropriation—something far more profound was often at hand. An emergent notion of professionalism and with it, ideas regarding the 'proper' organization of work routines, of performance norms, of equipment, and of standards, came to dominate the field. Bourdon argues that, particularly post-Second World War and in the domain of television broadcasting, these dynamics were stimulated by U.S. State Department and USIA-sponsored study trips, bringing European broadcasters to America to see how the 'pros' worked (cf. Bourdon). Television-specific professional standards quickly emerged in areas such as lighting, sound design, shot composition and editing, directing, and even news program formats. They took the form of stylistic conventions; of preferred brands of cameras, lenses, video and sound equipment; and of professional societies, journals and competitions. But 'professionalization' also bled beyond the contours of craft to include a re-imagination of European television, providing a model for its commercialization (rather than hewing to a public service model), and for imagining the audience as an abstract entity to be measured and exchanged within the framework of a market (rather than seeing the audience as citizens who constituted a public). These latter sensibilities, reinforced by the efforts of transnational companies such as Nielsen (a key audience metrics company in over 100 countries) and auditors such as Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers, took up an increasingly international trade in advertising and revenues.

Bourdon's use of the term 'self-inflicted' as a way to describe the embrace of a particular notion of professional behavior seems particularly apt to the larger logics of integration. Conditioned by the global

flows of capital, people, and cultural artifacts, cultural integration marks a space of alliance, or more critically, of complicity, with practices that have been abstracted beyond the aromas of the local—even of the American. Whereas 'Fordism' with its reformulation of work routines was synonymous with 'Americanism' by the 1930s, professionalism has come through untainted by the brand 'America' (cf. Gramsci). So, too, has the integration of many syndicated television formats, which tend to be received as local and have offered their intellectual property holders in places like the Netherlands and Sweden an opportunity to play on a global stage. However, the integration of network culture and its corporate manifestations in Google and Facebook skew somewhat differently. In settings like China, with robust national alternatives such as Baidu and Renren, they are cast as American; in Europe, too, they are acknowledged as 'American,' but lacking significant local alternatives, they are embraced by digital natives, and serve as portals to whatever national or commercial configuration of network culture their users seek. But their identity as 'American' seems a far cry from the meanings evoked in earlier cultural imperialism scenarios.

Towards a New Order

Culture is complicated, hopelessly intertwined thanks to its historical antecedents, the churn of populations and trade, its many different scales and registers, and the transformative power of context and meaning making. A rich scholarly tradition including the work of Hannertz, Chung, Jenkins, Shohat and Stam has taken up the challenge and embraced that complexity, in the process effectively precluding the kinds of binary oppositions so central to the America/Europe dynamic. It is a tradition to which I am deeply indebted. And yet, the simple heuristic of the transatlantic divide helps to create a sense of tangible coherence in this otherwise slippery field, offering a basis for a politics of identity that is ultimately discernable and actionable. Much ink has been spilled on the three modes of cultural interaction that I've touched upon—domination, appropriation and integration—not to mention the many other ways of configuring the issue. However, I've tried to note the less obvious dimensions of these dynamics: the contradictions in narratives of *domination*, with very different perceptions and treatments attending