

How American Was It? Popular Culture from Weimar to Hitler

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The categories with which scholars have understood and analyzed Americanization have largely been inherited from the interwar period. Two broad lines of inquiry emerged. The first sought to identify and quantify the increase in European exposure to the American way of life as evidenced by the combination of travel to the United States and, more essentially, the marketing and appropriation of elements of American popular culture in Europe. The second endeavored to conceptualize the parallels and contrasts between European and American culture and to assess the impact of the latter on the former. Both approaches have been differentiated and reformulated over recent decades through analytical categories of modernization, Westernization, and globalization. Some commentators have discarded the notion of “Americanization” as too general, unilateral, and mechanical for analyzing the nature of cultural interchange.¹ Yet if, as interwar observers already recognized, the line between Americanization and modernization can blur, one can still question how American German popular culture was between the wars.

The burgeoning literature on the Americanization of Germany since World War II cannot escape the intense debates of the 1920s.² Those debates have long been taken as an indication that in the period before 1945 Germany was the European country most exposed to American influence. Among recent formulations of this phenomenon, Janet Lungstrum calls the Germany of the 1920s Europe’s most Americanized counterpart; Sabine Hake locates in this era “the rise of Americanism as the main paradigm of mass culture.”³ A host of familiar images fuels these perceptions—jazz in Berlin nightlife, the prevalence of American movies, preoccupation with American achievements, visits by Josephine Baker and Charlie Chaplin, the popularity of the

Bubikopf, and the emergence of the so-called new woman. Whether one refers to clothing and hairstyles, music and dance, or media and advertising, America figures as the primary foreign element in Germany's development. American fashions are credited with setting trends in work and leisure and with enhancing the popularity of sports and physical fitness.⁴

The broad consensus that identifies the 1920s as the high-water mark of Americanization before 1945 presents America's cultural presence as a smorgasbord of modernity and technological progress appropriated by Germans according to inclination and need.⁵ America specifically functioned as a point of departure for intellectuals and artists intrigued by the alternative it offered to domestic traditions they found worn out and stultifying. America therefore served as a promising or baleful signpost to Germany's future, a *Sonderweg* promising redemption for those disenchanted with Germany's own path or a threatening deviation from the German norm. Beeke Sell Tower's claim for Weimar artists applies very broadly: "In imagining America . . . artists took a spirited part in Weimar Germany's discourse on modernity and on America as either admirable model or specter of Spenglerian decline."⁶

The literature on Americanization in Weimar has generally focused on the ideas of those intellectuals who looked to America with curiosity or enthusiasm for answers to German problems. Without ignoring the undeniably strong currents of anti-American sentiment in Weimar, historians have paid these less attention.⁷ From Mary Nolan's examination of alternatives offered by the American model in the economy and society to David Bathrick's exploration of the infatuation among the avant-garde with boxing, America figures as the incarnation of values judged modern if not always admirable.⁸ Liberal and left-wing observers predominate. It is these same intellectuals who are tacitly referenced in Nancy Nenno's claim that "Berlin conducted a love affair with things American, attempting to model itself as Europe's most modern city."⁹

The rather more limited literature on Americanization in the Third Reich shifts perspective, emphasizing the resurgence of anti-Americanism and at best the ambivalence of Nazi observers toward America. Historians generally highlight the growing official hostility toward America and the marginalization of popular culture imported from the United States. As an exercise in national renewal and assault on what was labeled Jewish modernism and cosmopolitanism, national socialism foregrounded many of the negative stereotypes of America held by

conservative nationalists who were on the defensive in the 1920s. Denunciation of America as racially mixed and degenerate, restrictions on jazz music, and the gradual elimination of American motion pictures from German theaters all suggest a rejection of American popular culture.¹⁰

However, closer examination shows inconsistencies in perceptions and in the appropriation of America. Not only did elements of American popular culture continue to circulate widely in Germany—there was no sudden break in 1933—but respect for the American achievement in creating a broadly popular culture remained, even when coupled with derision toward the specific nature of that culture. This is consistent with the broader recognition that the Third Reich, despite its integral nationalism, cannot be neatly pigeonholed as reactionary. Rather, as Jeffrey Herf has suggested, it represented a form of “reactionary modernism” and in this regard at least may be classified with the broader phenomenon of interwar fascism.¹¹ For evaluating Americanization in the Third Reich one must certainly be attentive to the tension between the modern and antimodern in Nazism, but one must also not become preoccupied with it. Similarly, one should assume neither continuity nor break between Weimar and Nazi Germany in respect to American popular culture as a market force and reference point.

My own work on American cinema in Weimar has hitherto tended to adopt the conventional pattern, highlighting the ideas of those who grappled seriously, though by no means uncritically, with the American model. It shares the premise of Weimar’s remarkable indebtedness to American culture, even as it leaves open the question about the relationship between Weimar’s experience and developments after 1933.¹² But having agreed with those asserting the breadth of American inroads in the 1920s (which tends to prejudge the case for discontinuity after 1933), I would like to revisit both that premise and the relevance of American popular culture for Nazi Germany. Without denying the extent to which America functioned as a reference point for Weimar intellectuals and, in a different way, for Nazi ideologues, I would like particularly to challenge the picture sometimes drawn of the ubiquity of American popular culture in Germany after World War I.

There is little doubt that the United States played a noteworthy role as a point of departure for German debates about social, economic, and cultural development. There is also ample evidence that America functioned as a model for a life-style understood to be more modern and democratic. It has not, however, been demonstrated that interwar

German popular culture became particularly American. There is a notable tension between assumptions about America's omnipresence in the 1920s and the contemporary, often academic debate about how extensively Germany borrowed from America. The literature on Weimar's encounter with America primarily engages absence, not presence. Such phenomena as the popularity of the German translation of Henry Ford's autobiography confirm this: not automobiles or marketing schemes crossed the Atlantic but a set of images and ideas. Indeed, one could argue that the debate over America raged precisely because of its (still) relative remoteness from everyday German life. Granting a major exception to this rule, the case of cinema, one can pose the following counterfactual question: Without American popular culture, how different would German popular culture have been before 1945?

To pose the question this way is to recognize, as did some contemporaries, that America represented a specific version of modernity already apparent in Germany. Yet conceding this point, and the transnational potential of modern popular culture, in interwar Germany neither radio, popular fiction, nor sporting events were American in a literal sense.¹³ The unprecedented awareness of American counterparts actually underscores the domestic provenance of popular culture. Germans were not obliged to digest American popular culture regularly. Many, however, felt an obligation to have an opinion about it. The great debates of this era, not least of which was the one over the "new woman," revolved primarily around images of America rather than American popular culture in Germany. Thus the question regarding how American German popular culture was before 1945 differs substantially from the question of what Germans thought or wrote about America in this period.¹⁴

For illustrative purposes, jazz in Weimar offers a useful case study. Historians, myself included, well aware that Berlin was not Germany, have nonetheless followed certain contemporaries mesmerized by currents in the capital in adopting jazz as a buzzword for American inroads into German music, dance, and fashion. Only recently has anyone probed the surface of this image. In the words of J. Bradford Robinson:

So domineering is our picture of bare-kneed flappers dancing the shimmy with tuxedoed lounge lizards in post-war Berlin, a city caught in a frenzy of sexual excess and political thuggery, that few have bothered to ask those mundane questions so obvious to social

historians: Who actually consumed this music, and in what amounts? Where did Germany's jazz originate? How was it imported, learnt, and disseminated?

Robinson goes on to argue that the Jazz Age was a myth propagated by the Weimar media: "The music, dance forms, and cultural epiphenomena that bore this label captured the imagination of German journalists and intelligentsia to such an extent as to elevate jazz, a music entirely foreign to German traditions and ethos, to the level of what was called by one of its champions a *Zeitfrage*."¹⁵ The music itself touched only a small group of the urban middle-class. Moreover, what passed as jazz in Germany had little to do with its American variant. Most Germans "had little inkling of the nature of this music and still less desire to consume it." Robinson demonstrates that what passed for jazz in Weimar was "commercial syncopated dance music," mostly homegrown to an imagined notion of jazz.¹⁶ Jazz became code for any music from America or music perceived to be in the American style. In short, jazz was a heavily overdetermined site of debate about America's meaning for Weimar, more specter than actuality.¹⁷

The limitations Robinson notes with regard to the marketing of jazz in Germany—mass culture as a whole still in its infancy, a weak currency until the mid-1920s, and at best embryonic means for dissemination of music to a mass audience—have wider implications.¹⁸ If jazz was fundamentally the property of urban middle-class cognoscenti and the subject of artists and literary intellectuals ruminating about the nature of their age rather than part of the mainstream of popular culture, then we have confused cause and effect. Not only, as Cornelius Partsch has observed, did jazz in Germany, as in America, remain outside the cultural mainstream, but jazz also never became broadly popular.¹⁹ Its falsely implied ubiquity, on the basis of very limited exposure to the original American music or bands, can be taken as evidence of just how German, and impervious to America, popular culture remained. Here, as elsewhere, the longing among certain intellectuals for cultural renewal valorized an otherwise marginal cultural phenomenon.²⁰

A parallel, though inverse case can be developed for the Third Reich, where the official denigration of American music and dance politicized popular culture. Jazz enthusiasts and "deviant" youth whose musical preferences included jazz had those preferences "elevated" to the level of choices for or against the ethos of national socialism. American music offered not only the lure of the foreign and the

taint of the unclean but also an index of conformity and political loyalty. Even though Goebbels never totally excluded American dance music from radio, since he respected the extent to which it had found popularity in Germany, swing youth, who found in American music a symbol of independence, were persecuted as rebels.²¹

TO CONFRONT THE questions of the social historian posed by Robinson helps correct problematic generalizations but hardly exhausts the meaning of “American” for German popular culture. That jazz was a parallel rather than a borrowed form is no witness by itself against America’s importance for German culture after 1918. Popular culture is about images and icons as well as products and consumption. The fact that German jazz was a bastardization of the real item and thus un-American scarcely nullifies the German equation of jazz with modern (American) dance music. Rightly or wrongly, jazz stood in for the blend of primitive and modern elements in the American cultural matrix, with the saxophone as its unmistakable icon. This argument can be widened to other cultural phenomena, where the icon substituted for America. Even boxing could become a site of discourse on American modernity. “If sport, along with jazz, dancing revues, Josephine Baker, or the pragmatic Henry Ford came to symbolize American toughness and the up-to-date, then the figure of the boxer served as its corporeal representation par excellence.”²²

If the distinction between the imagined or iconographic America and American cultural imports is understood, a reference such as Tower’s to the “enormous success of America-style mass culture” belongs clearly to the former category.²³ Neither American music, American literature, nor American sports overwhelmed German counterparts. Nor did the “new woman,” however much she reflected gender anxieties in Germany, represent Germany’s conquest by the American girl. Rather, it was the image of America, simultaneously identified as modern, that she enshrined.

In only one area of popular culture was America as much literally as iconographically present (although the distinction becomes somewhat ironic in a medium devoted to images). Hollywood movies represented a direct rather than mediated contribution to German culture, while generating, like jazz, a set of icons and values (including that of the “new woman”) with resonance well beyond the screen. After an extended hiatus caused by the war, German theaters began to show American movies regularly again in 1921. By mid-decade they were releasing hundreds of Hollywood pictures annually, a pattern checked

only partially by the introduction of talkies. Well into the early years of the Third Reich American movies were familiar in German theater programs. While these imports were retitled and later dubbed, and often re-edited for German release, they were widely circulated and were not, as often is the case of jazz, weak facsimiles of the original.²⁴

American movies did not single-handedly pose the challenge of a medium commanding images; they did help frame it, however. Members of Parliament were not concerned about American film imports when in 1919–20 they debated and then reinstated censorship for movies alone after general abolition of censorship in the revolution of 1918. They were giving expression to widespread sentiments, especially among the educated bourgeoisie, that cinema adulterated culture. Movies were commonly dismissed as hopeless kitsch, but their broad popularity, perceived persuasiveness, and aggressive advertising, especially aimed at young people, made them appear threatening.

The physical and commercial ubiquity of Hollywood leaves open, of course, complex questions about the appropriation and meaning of American films for German audiences. Several general observations are in order. First, despite its newly won international dominance, Hollywood was not yet synonymous with motion picture entertainment. German production expanded dramatically during and immediately following the war and sustained itself, amid turbulent economic circumstances, right through the interwar period. American and domestic movies appeared side by side in roughly equal proportions through the second half of the 1920s. Second, although not all American genres found broad popularity in Germany, most of them became familiar. Depending upon the sources one consults, the American imports can be judged either as alien and generally unpopular or as welcome variety and essential stimulants to a national production that otherwise would have become insular and pedestrian.²⁵ Westerns, slapstick, and select blockbusters certainly found German audiences. Third, American movies were a strong enough presence on the German market and in the visual imaginations of German producers and directors—prominently Erich Pommer and Fritz Lang—that it is scarcely possible to understand German cinema in this period apart from its steady dialogue, both friendly and hostile, with Hollywood. Finally, American movies not only disseminated images of the American way of life (moral and material) but also brought with them advertising techniques and marketing values. Hollywood therefore played a crucial role in the contest to dominate the realm of images and icons and, with these, distraction and consumerism. It was precisely this con-

test that riveted Nazi attention on the motion picture and has sustained the view that the Third Reich aimed to reduce Hollywood's presence.

THAT AMERICAN MOVIES were domesticated in Germany in the 1920s means that, whether appreciated or condemned, they participated, more than any other American cultural import, in the formation of Germany's modern media culture. The motion picture was the leading medium of an age inundated with images en route to becoming icons. This is not to suggest that the rise of film marginalized aural or literate culture. On the contrary, cinema became *the* medium of the twentieth century precisely because it synthesized the literate, the visual, and the aural. Its mechanisms operated in everything from the consumption of sporting events to fashion shows. Already in the 1920s it was observed that the essence of American movies was advertising—not primarily or necessarily for products but for poses, values, and visual pleasure. Here the spectator and consumer merged, a development critical for understanding modern popular culture in general. It is also critical for grasping Nazi culture in particular.

While popular culture traverses national borders, the icons of the twentieth century, whether corporate, political, or from the realm of entertainment, were often identified with nations. America was the twentieth century's most fertile producer of images and icons. Nazi Germany was a somewhat distant second. To assess the meaning of American popular culture for interwar Germany therefore requires consideration of the extent to which American images and icons became household items in Germany. Reference has already been made to Chaplin, the *Bubikopf* and the "new woman." Regardless of their popularity, each gained considerable resonance as symbols of America's cultural weight. Like Hollywood, national socialism sought to capture the popular realm with its images and icons. Both Hitler and Goebbels recognized a fundamental principle of advertising and applied it to politics in the time of struggle: better to be resented than ignored. Not to figure in the thicket of images and slogans that dominated the public realm meant to surrender without a fight. And the Nazis, of course, saw themselves engaged in a struggle for culture, one whose leitmotif was purification—that is, the removal or stripping away of the debasements of modernism and adulterations from abroad that denationalized and thus falsified authentic German culture.²⁶ Nazism had multiple cultural enemies, from expressionism and primitivism to cosmopolitanism. However, it also posited the creation of a truly popular culture, suited to the modern age.

What then of America and popular culture in the Third Reich? Thematically, Hitler's Germany was about the restoration of a national, racially pure culture against an international or cosmopolitan culture, which scarcely endeared it to the American model. Structurally, it was about mechanisms of oversight and control. The Reichskulturkammer, with its seven departments, provided a framework for oversight of all areas of cultural life. Motion pictures and radio, the two media apart from the press that enjoyed the broadest resonance, were particularly important for setting the tone of popular culture in the Third Reich. In terms of content, each laid claim to national orientation and was to serve the regime. Yet the operative principle of each, especially cinema, was entertainment. Goebbels famously objected to pedantry even in propaganda—to be obvious and boring was the cardinal sin.²⁷ Although American movies were increasingly marginalized as a source of film entertainment and then disappeared during the war, I would argue that Hollywood was internalized. The politics of image, whether in the political arena or in motion pictures, came to characterize public life.

From this perspective the marginalization of the "authentic" images of America, such as Hollywood movies, mattered less than it might appear. In the early Hitler years, American movies continued to feature in German theaters. Thanks in part to the introduction of talking pictures in the late 1920s the American share of the domestic market had shrunk significantly even before the Nazis took office. Growing chauvinism in trade circles during the Depression did not translate into demands for a ban on the import of American films. Film experts and audiences welcomed American specialties, such as Disney's animation or star vehicles for performers such as Greta Garbo or Joan Crawford. Had Hitler not been bent on a war in which America was certain to become an antagonist, and thus the object of attack for German propaganda, American movies would not have been banned altogether as they were from 1940. Whatever economic and diplomatic considerations came into play, American movies otherwise complemented more than threatened Nazi culture.

It is no accident that Hitler and Goebbels admired Hollywood's achievements. For them culture and politics merged in the ambition to enthrall and rally followers and to provide the pleasure of distraction—which Hitler himself indulged through hours of movie watching. Both men were, of course, obsessive stage managers, Hitler to the point of dissolving the distinction between stage and reality. Compared to the political leaders of Weimar they could well have been Hollywood

directors à la Cecil B. de Mille. Preoccupation with mise-en-scène, lighting, and creating moods became the very stuff of politics. Whereas Weimar governments thought primarily in terms of controlling and taxing cinema, and had at best vague hopes that it might serve republican purposes, Nazism harnessed it not only for direct propaganda effect but also for distraction, creating communal daydreams to mask the mundane and increasingly regimented experience of everyday life.²⁸

The achievements of Nazi cinema in creating pleasurable distraction, and the remarkable increase in cinema going, belonged to a broader trend. For decades social historians have debated national socialism's role in forging a modern mass society through dissolution of historically entrenched distinctions of region, class, and political loyalty.²⁹ Parallel with this debate has been the study of Hitler's ideas and priorities and elements of Nazi socioeconomic policy that credit Nazism with a modern social vision.³⁰ On balance historians have related the emergence of a modern consumer society after 1945 more to the destructive impact of war and its aftermath than to Nazi *Gleichschaltung*—the *Volksgemeinschaft* has not received a very congratulatory press. Similarly, while accepting that there were elements of a modern social vision in Nazism, historians have not been prepared to consider these as the driving force behind developments in the Third Reich, which followed racial obsession to war and destruction.³¹

There is no need to reinvent or “relativize” Nazism to see its popular culture as a badly distorted yet recognizable variant of the American model. Indeed, it was a caricature of the caricature of American popular culture that circulated in Germany in the 1920s: at once homogeneous, conformist, youthful, and energetic, easily swayed and easily distracted rather than reflective or critical.³² It would at once reward conformity and performance and offer amusement and distraction. In affirming, however self-servingly, the elements of modern consumer societies, the Third Reich inadvertently aligned itself with American popular culture.³³

Structural parallels between mass culture in Germany and the United States still yield no simple formulas. We can certainly not draw a line of influence from new world to old and assert the Americanization of the Third Reich. Unlike the period after 1945, there was clearly no vacuum into which American popular culture or consumer products could readily flow after 1933. The same applies before 1933, when exposure to American culture was intense enough to cause the skeptical to reference and denounce the proverbial German openness to things foreign—and by extension disregard for its own heritage. With

partial exception for the case of cinema, popular culture in Germany was not literally American, even leaving aside important questions of how foreign culture was appropriated. The inroads after 1933 of a product such as Coca-Cola, wonderfully symbolized by the image of Hermann Goering taking a swig from a bottle of Coke at Düsseldorf's counterpart to the World's Fair in Paris in 1937, point both forward (beyond 1945) and beyond Nazism.³⁴ The power of this image is surely the incongruity it suggests as much as the assimilation it implies, even as it testifies to the transferability of popular culture, at once transnational and beyond ideological sanction.

To describe the culture of Hitler's Germany with the label of "reactionary modernism" therefore exposes some but not all of its peculiarities. The backward-looking connotations of "reactionary," whether applied to politics or culture, pose particular problems. For national socialism the past, apart from indeterminate racial antecedents, held little appeal, for even the racial community they trumpeted had never existed. The reactionary element in Nazism should therefore be seen primarily as a generalization of its ambition to isolate insiders from outsiders, thus its integral nationalism and xenophobia. The tension is not that between backward- and forward-looking elements but that between participation in modern Western culture and preservation of national distinctiveness. Nowhere was this tension more evident than in confrontation with American popular culture, above all the motion picture. Although German culture was not defined by America, it could not be identified without reference to or reaction against America.³⁵

Baldly put, Nazism set itself the task of creating for the twentieth century, in which American popular culture was internationally dominant, a national popular culture that was both historically rooted and modern. Nazism was therefore less reactionary than atavistic, appealing through hopelessly muddled racial metaphors to sentiments of tribal identity and exclusiveness in the attempt to birth a distinctive culture. It did this despite some recognition that tribal exclusiveness was an impossibility, that popular culture was hybrid and showed limited interest in national borders. The proof of this is found both in the export of German movies across Europe in the Hitler era and in the resonance of Nazi icons and symbols after 1945.³⁶

If one reads Nazi popular culture as fundamentally modern in aspiration, while entertaining atavistic impulses, it is surprising neither that American cultural products were marginalized nor that they found popular appeal. Understanding popular culture in the age of the mass media as the marriage of image or icon, entertainment, and advertis-

ing, Hitler's movement firmly grasped the need to reorient German culture. Early in his political career Hitler borrowed from critics of Germany's propaganda efforts in World War I the notion that Germany had lost the international war of images to Britain and the United States. The attempt of his regime to reverse that alleged defeat, long before war was declared on the United States in 1941, necessarily paid tribute to the enemy. American popular culture may have played a declining role in the later years of the Third Reich, but Nazism ultimately made it *gesellschaftsfähig*.

NOTES

1. Cf. the papers presented to the German Historical Institute's conference in March 1999: *GHI Conference Papers on the Web: The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective*, ed. Raimund Lammersdorf, <<http://www.ghi-dc.org/conpotweb/westernpapers/index.html>>. See especially the papers by Volker Berghahn, Kaspar Maase, and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel.

2. There is a brief recent summary in Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, "Dimensionen von Amerikanisierung in der deutschen Gesellschaft," in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 35 (1995), 1–34. On images inherited from before 1914, see Alexander Schmidt, *Reisen in die Moderne: Der Amerika-Diskurs des deutschen Bürgertums vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg im europäischen Vergleich* (Berlin: Akademie, 1997). For samples of the contemporary debate in English, see Anton Kaes, *Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 393–411. Further references to Weimar's encounter with America are in Thomas J. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

3. Janet Lungstrum, "The Display Window: Designs and Desires of Weimar Consumerism," *New German Critique* 76 (winter 1999): 123; Sabine Hake, "In the Mirror of Fashion," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 193.

4. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In 1926* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 17, cites the characteristic generalization of *Berliner Tageblatt* (July 25, 1926): "Being cosmopolitan means being Americanized. It also means being influenced by sports and health concerns."

5. Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, trans. R. Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 178–90.

6. Beeke Sell Tower, "'Ultramodern and Ultraprimitive': Shifting Meanings in the Imagery of Americanism in the Art of Weimar Germany," in *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*, ed. Thomas Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994), 85. On Josephine

Baker, cf. Nancy Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space: Josephine Baker in Berlin," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 146: "As an icon of jazz, her Charleston echoed the sounds of the city. As an American, she represented ultra-up-to-dateness."

7. For a recent summary of anti-American sentiments, see Adelheid von Saldern, "Überfremdungsängste: Gegen die Amerikanisierung der deutschen Kultur in den zwanziger Jahren," in *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum in Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Alf Lüdtkke, Inge MaBolek, and Adelheid von Saldern (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), 213–44.

8. Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); David Bathrick, "Max Schmeling on the Canvas: Boxing as an Icon of Weimar Culture," *New German Critique* 51 (fall 1990): 113–36.

9. Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space," 146.

10. The most comprehensive recent assessment of this issue, with further references, is Phillip Gassert, *Amerika im dritten Reich: Ideologie, Propaganda, und Volksmeinung, 1933–1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997).

11. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

12. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin*, 3: "In the postwar decade Europe experienced a massive invasion of American culture. . . . Jazz bands, sports heroes, troupes of dancing girls, movie stars and tycoons were its personal representatives. American literature, fashions, mores, and aspirations were its commercial counterparts."

13. Cf. Karl Christian Führer, "A Medium of Modernity? Broadcasting in Weimar Germany, 1923–33," *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 722–53; Frank Becker, *Amerikanismus in Weimar: Sportsymbole und politische Kultur, 1918–1933* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 1993).

14. Cf. Eve Rosenhaft, "Lesewut, Kinosucht, Radiotismus: Zur (geschlechter-)politischen Relevanz neuer Massenmedien in den 1920er Jahren," in *Amerikanisierung*, ed. Lüdtkke, MaBolek, and von Saldern, 119–43.

15. J. Bradford Robinson, "Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure," in *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 107.

16. *Ibid.*, 113. Cf. the introduction to Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3–10, where the picture of a jazz-inspired culture is seriously qualified by the analysis of its dissemination in Germany.

17. This is apparent in Tower, "Ultramodern and Ultraprimitive," 93.

18. Robinson, "Jazz Reception," 116.

19. Cornelius Partsch, "Hannibal ante Portas: Jazz in Weimar," in *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*, ed. Thomas Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994), 105. Partsch implies that Berlin's jazz scene largely catered to foreign visitors.

20. Cf. Kater, *Different Drummers*, 17, where the passionate interest of left-wing intellectuals implies popular sympathies.

21. Cf. Kater, *Different Drummers*; Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, trans. R. Deveson (London: Penguin, 1987), 154–69.
22. David Bathrick, “Max Schmeling on the Canvas,” 118.
23. Tower, “Ultramodern and Ultraprimitive,” 94.
24. Details on the trends described here and in the following paragraph are in Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin*. Cf. Markus Spieker, *Hollywood unteim Hakenkrenz: Der amerikanische Spielfilm im Dritten Reich* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1999).
25. Cf. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin*, 149–61; Joseph Garnarcz, “Hollywood in Germany: The Role of American Films in Germany,” in *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 94–135.
26. The essays in Glenn Cuomo, ed., *National Socialist Cultural Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1995), offer a useful survey of the issues.
27. For Goebbels’s role in cinema, see Felix Moeller, *Der Filmminister: Goebbels und der Film im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Henschel, 1998).
28. See Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).
29. The pioneering work is David Schoenbaum, *Hitler’s Social Revolution* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).
30. Cf. Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler: Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Stuttgart: Klett/Cotta, 1987); Ronald Smelser, *Robert Ley: Hitler’s Labour Front Leader* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1988).
31. For a brief discussion, see the latest (fourth) edition of Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship* (London: Arnold, 2000), 243ff.
32. These stereotypes are nicely represented in Fritz Giese’s *Girlkultur: Vergleiche zwischen amerikanischem und europäischen Rhythmus und Lebensgefühl* (Munich: Delphin-Verlag, 1925).
33. On this theme cf. Thomas J. Saunders, “A ‘New Man’: Fascism, Cinema, and Image Creation,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 12 (1998): 227–46.
34. I am grateful to Jeff Schutts for allowing me to consult portions of his dissertation on Coca-Cola in Germany.
35. The distinction drawn by Goebbels between form and content in an American film reflects this reality more than it confirms the ambivalence of “reactionary modernism.” See Gassert, *Amerika im dritten Reich*, 65. This distinction was recycled endlessly by film critics in the 1920s as a way of distinguishing between the sensibilities of American and German movie audiences.
36. Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).