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Politics and Cultures of Liberation

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Politics and Cultures of Liberation

Media, Memory, and Projections of Democracy

Edited by

Hans Bak, Frank Mehring and Mathilde Roza



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The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>
LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2018012768>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: “Brill.” See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2213-9729

ISBN 978-90-04-29200-0 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-29201-7 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

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Introduction: Politics and Cultures of Liberation

L'homme enfin n'est pas entièrement coupable, il n'a pas commencé l'histoire; ni tout à fait innocent puisqu'il la continue.¹

ALBERT CAMUS, *L'Homme Révolté*, 1951/1966 (355)

At the opening of the exhibition *Routes of Liberation: European Legacies of the Second World War*, in Brussels on 13 February 2013, Martin Schulz, then President of the European Parliament, identified the development of multiple-perspectives on war, liberation, and remembrance as a desirable or even necessary European aspiration. Referring to Albert Camus' conviction that human beings may not be "entirely guilty" when looking at past developments in history, he agreed with the French philosopher and author that they are not "wholly innocent" either, since it is they who shape future developments of history. Schulz went on to remind his audience that "man would be wholly guilty, if he started to forget."² The issue raised by Schulz, the importance of remembering, is an urgent and complicated one: how can we counterbalance one-dimensional processes and acts of repression, exclusion, erasure, forgetting, and misinformation that often characterize(d) remembrances of the processes of war and liberation in favor of understanding the multidirectional, competing, and often conflicting dimensions of remembering war and liberation?

Looking back on the course of the 20th century, including the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, the themes of war and liberation play a central role in the collective memory of many Europeans, shaping both national and supranational perspectives on how the ideal of democracy should be anchored, preserved, and projected. At the same time, the term liberation is loaded with connotations vastly different across the various nations involved, depending on political and cultural contexts.³ Since liberation embodies not

1 English translation: "In the end, man is not entirely guilty, he did not start history; nor is he wholly innocent, he continues it." See http://www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-schulz-2012-2014/en/press/press_release_speeches/speeches/sp-2014/sp-2014-february/speech-by-the-president [accessed 15 Jan. 2016].

2 Ibid. [accessed 15 Jan. 2016].

3 Closely tied to the experience of liberation from political oppression is the value of personal freedom from "restrictive or discriminatory social conventions and attitudes." *The Oxford*

a single idea but rather refers to a complex set of values, any effort at defining the term needs to take into account equally varied and often contested notions, whether approached from an intellectual, social, economic, political, or ethical perspective. For example, from a moral angle the term liberation has been used to claim legitimacy for a variety of grievances associated with victimizations, fears about current developments, as well as hopes and visions of the future.⁴ While traumatic memories of war, destruction, and particularly the Holocaust are at the center of many debates about a common framework of European memory (Sierp 2014, Sollors 2014, Watten 2015), this volume contributes to the ongoing discourse of mapping, analyzing, and evaluating memories, rituals, and artistic responses to the theme of “liberation” (Erll 2010, Hebel 2009, Rothberg 2009). While the liberation ending World War II was a multi-national event, the postwar memories of it are often defined by national characteristics and interests, and hence intrinsically selective. Also, views on other participating national entities are often one-dimensional: in the context of World War II and the Cold War, for instance, liberation is often closely associated with the United States as a liberating force, conceptualized as a beacon of freedom and stark proponent of democracy (Ellwood 2012, Fluck 2009, Kroes and Rydell 2005, Paul and Schock 2013, Mehring 2014, Pells 1997, Stephan 2006, Wagnleitner 1991).

Existing memory cultures, we argue, need to be confronted with international contextualizations, and be placed in transnational frameworks. The essays brought together here conjointly explore the memory of liberation by bringing into play both national and transnational trajectories that inform audio-visual and literary representations, commemorative practices, and sites of memory. The contributions explore how the national is framed within a dynamic system of intercultural contact zones highlighting often competing agendas of remembrance. Conjointly, the essays in this volume illuminate how the production, (re)mediation, and framing of narratives within different social, territorial, and political environments determine the cultural memory of liberation. Rather than dealing with one-dimensional and uncomplicated categories of liberation and oppression, this volume opens up new venues to better understand the

English Dictionary distinguishes between active and passive agents. On the one hand, “liberation” refers to the “action of liberating (esp. from confinement or servitude)”; on the other hand, “liberation” describes “the condition of being liberated.”

4 If no idea is more fundamental to the identity of Americans as individuals and as a nation than “freedom,” as Eric Foner argues (xiii), then “liberation” can be described as a key term for the experience many Europeans share. Both terms are linked in the sense that liberation paves the way for a new experience of freedom which, in some way or another, had been taken away before.

struggles, disagreements, and debates that necessarily come to the fore when they are approached from multiple (national) perspectives.

An important theoretical assumption that underlies this volume is that the politics and cultures of liberation inform educational, public, cultural and political institutions. The same holds for commemorative practices, which combine public affect (as defined by Erika Doss 2010), modern media, and performative acts (in the sense of what Jay Anderson describes as “living history” and Wolfgang Hochbruck as “Geschichtstheater”). For example, memorials celebrating the experience of liberation from oppression have the capacity to provide spaces and subjects that permit cultural and political creativity and prompt acts of responsible democratic citizenship. The study of culture in a political climate or context, from fine arts to photography, graphic design, and film, can reveal both national and transnational agendas that utilize the memory of liberation for overcoming chauvinism, ethnic prejudice, and foster mutual understanding. In addition to visual culture, as Jacques Attali and scholars in the field of sound studies (Sterne 2003, Schafer 1986, Paul and Schock 2013) have suggested, the politics and cultures of liberation can also be understood through music: new sources and archives can be activated to combine “transnational optics” (De Cesari and Rigney 2014) with transnational sonics so that memories of liberation can be experienced both visually and aurally across the traditional boundaries of the nation-state. Such recent approaches testify to the need for novel interdisciplinary theories and methodologies which can move beyond traditional approaches governed by a focus on national cultures. We argue that transnational studies can provide such a critical frame of reference.

The essays compiled in this volume seek to provide new interdisciplinary and intercultural perspectives on the politics and cultures of liberation by examining commemorative practices, artistic responses, and audio-visual media that lend themselves for transnational exploration. Rather than adhering to a single theoretical approach, the seventeen essays gathered here offer a wide range of diverse intercultural perspectives on media, memory, liberation, (self) Americanization, and conceptualizations of democracy from the war years, through the Cold War era to the 21st century. All contributions in one form or another seek to explore the possibilities of interdisciplinary and transnational approaches. Hence, the individual essays are informed by a wide array of theoretical and methodological concepts based on media studies, memory studies, history, literary studies and art history. The contributions evolved from symposia and workshops held between 2013 and 2015, which celebrated 25 years of American Studies at Radboud University under the theme “The Politics and Cultures of Liberation.” They also reflect the ongoing research agenda of the European Network of the same title, which the American Studies

program at Radboud University launched at the 20th EAAS conference in The Hague (2014).⁵

This anthology is divided into four sections, each of which has a separate focus: 1) The Politics and Cultures of Liberation: Marketing, Memory and Mediation, 2) The Soundtrack of Liberation, 3) Transnational Re-locations, and 4) Transnational Perspectives from the Archives. The fourth section is part of our efforts to ground transnational American Studies locally by highlighting the potential of specific archives and institutions to contribute new sources and perspectives related to the theme of our book.⁶

The opening section on *The Politics and Cultures of Liberation: Marketing, Memory and Mediation* presents Dutch, American, Japanese-American, and Canadian perspectives on the experience and framing of liberation in the context of World War II. **Marja Roholl's** essay focuses on "The Projection of America," a U.S. Office of War Information Overseas Branch program, explored here through its operations in a particular national setting: the Netherlands, 1944–45. The goal of the Overseas Branch was not only to smooth the transition from occupation and war to liberation, but also to help shape a new world order under the aegis of the United States. The campaign's most important tools were films and illustrated magazines. But the Overseas Branch saw these media as more than mere implements. It also helped the American film and publishing industries to protect and expand their markets, even if that was at odds with the official message of the propaganda campaign. Local circumstances mattered crucially to the deployment of "The Projection of America" program, as the Dutch case study shows. The liberation of the Netherlands took much longer than anticipated, with the Dutch government fully re-installed only in June 1945. This essay explores how the program's goals and products were tailored to meet local circumstances. The Dutch case underlines the importance of the local in understanding how propaganda was deployed and received. "The Projection of America" campaign was part of the invasion and

5 The European Network "Politics & Cultures of Liberation" wants to provide an innovative platform for European scholars of North American and Cultural Studies to present their research projects, coordinate future projects, workshops, organize conferences, and establish joint seminars and summer school initiatives. The network welcomes researchers who convene under the umbrella of the European Association of American Studies. The network aims to contribute to what we envision as a crucial goal of American Studies: to reunite our academic discipline with responsible citizenship thereby building new bridges towards a truly democratic society. More information under www.ru.nl/col

6 For more information on "grounding transnational American Studies" see our international spring academy mission statement under <http://www.ru.nl/nas/information/rudesa/>

the liberation; it also provided the prototype for America's postwar cultural diplomacy efforts.

Mathilde Roza focuses on the Dutch illustrator and pen artist Jo Spier. Spier made crucial contributions to two successful Marshall Plan booklets that were distributed in the Netherlands: *Het Marshall-Plan en U*, about the benefits of the Marshall Plan, and *Als We Niet Hélemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken*, a promotional booklet about the Technical Assistance Program in the Netherlands. Roza zooms in on the ways in which national identity and traditional conceptions of "Dutchness" were deployed as marketing strategies to "sell" the Marshall Plan to the newly liberated Dutch, not just in the official narratives in favor of the Marshall Plan that Spier contributed to, but also in other media, including two "Marshall films" by the famous Dutch filmmaker Herman van der Horst.

Joost Rosendaal puts the complicated memory and commemoration practices of the Nijmegen bombing at the center of his analysis on destruction, liberation and reconstruction. Taking his cue from a television documentary that explores the difficulties of comparing the destruction of Rotterdam by the National Socialists with the one in Nijmegen, caused allegedly by mistake by Allied American fighters on 22 February, 1944, Rosendaal examines how potentially traumatic events are repressed from memory and commemorated in different ways. As a case study, he turns to the bombardment and asks about the reasons for the delay of commemorations by several decades. His essay critically examines the specific narrative that American bombers allegedly had the intention to destroy a German city beyond the border. Would such an explanation make it easier for the population to cope with the tremendous loss of lives and the material damage caused by those who would later be remembered as liberators? Nijmegen in the Netherlands and the Belgian town of Mortsel are remarkable case studies to illuminate comparatively the more general problem regarding the function of self-censorship and political correctness in processing a traumatic historical event.

Laszló Munteán sheds new light on the mediated memory of Operation Market Garden, a combined air and ground offensive launched by the Allies in September 1944, aimed at securing bridges across rivers in the Netherlands in order to facilitate the northward advance of the army and, ultimately, to end the war by Christmas. The campaign was unsuccessful and the First British Airborne Division had to surrender after days of arduous battle. One year later the veterans of this division returned to Arnhem to reenact the battle in the form of the film *Theirs Is the Glory*, directed by Brian Desmond Hurst. Released in 1946, the film was shot on the former battlegrounds in and around Arnhem, exclusively featuring soldiers who participated in or witnessed the battle. Munteán argues

that the lack of professional acting and special effects are part and parcel of the way in which the film memorializes what was then the very recent past. Through the analysis of acting and *mise-en-scène*, the author demonstrates that the film derives its power less from its realistic depiction of the battle and more from the veterans as authentic witnesses and the ruins of Arnhem as the authentic location of the battle. In addition, the essay explores how the film employs this aura of authenticity as a rhetorical platform to reimagine the ill-fated campaign along the larger trajectory of the liberation of the Netherlands.

Wolfgang Hochbruck analyzes appropriations of history in reenactments of Operation Market Garden. He argues that the popularity and proliferation of reenactments over the last 50 years have resulted in the amalgamation of older forms of commemoration with living history presentations that both enliven, and potentially subvert, the traditional militaristic gravity of such events. In his article, he discusses the modes and methods of this transformation with reference to the change in participants, and the use of musical scores.

Hans Bak turns to the media of poetry and art as a source to trace the cultural imaginary associated with the liberation of the Netherlands. Against the background of the Canadian military presence in Nijmegen between November 1944 and May 1945, Bak examines the representation of war-torn Nijmegen in the war art of two Canadians who—each in his own way—marched “the road to Nijmegen:”; poet Earle Birney (1904–1995) and painter Alex Colville (1920–2013). In particular, Bak seeks to understand why the city of Nijmegen became a central symbolic motif in their artistic rendering of their war experience. What was it about the location, strategic importance, or “spectacle” of Nijmegen that made it a challenging and significant topic for artistic rendering by these two Canadian artists? How did their experience of Nijmegen as frontline city reverberate with larger philosophical or metaphysical concerns? What explains the special appeal of Nijmegen to their artistic imaginations?

The second section on the *Soundtrack of Liberation* turns to the medium of music as a central, often neglected source of remembering and commemorating the experience of liberation. This chapter follows Jacques Attali’s suggestion to understand socio-economic and cultural developments through music, arguing that music can “make people *forget* the general violence,” “make people *believe* in the harmony of the world” and “*silence* [...] by censoring all other human noises” (19). At the same time, this section goes beyond the analysis of the function of music in national environments in order to map the power of music to cross cultural, ethnic, racial, and national boundaries.

Frank Mehring excavates the unique visual, textual and musical archive of Dutch liberation songs to address questions regarding the transformative and healing power of music in light of the experience of destruction, despair and

suffering at the end of World War II. Mehring shows that the sheet music collection of liberation songs can shed new light on the function of the United State as a reference culture at a crucial moment in Dutch history: the summer of 1945. The months after the end of World War II are often remembered as a time marked by intense intercultural encounters, in which the *lingua franca* of American jazz conflated the Dutch Dream with the American Dream. Mehring reveals a dual function of music based on the liberation songs: first, music provided an emotional glue to interlink the cultural imaginary of a glorious past with a yet to be fulfilled prosperous future. Second, liberation songs created a kind of sounding memorial of gratitude to the Allied forces.

Walter van de Leur investigates the reception and development of jazz in the Netherlands from the period of liberation until the late 1970s. He argues that jazz music in the Netherlands offers a fascinating case study to investigate ever-changing cultural and social landscapes by placing particular emphasis on cultural mediators and mass media such as radio and film. Van de Leur observes that there is a remarkable consistency in the reception of jazz before, during and shortly after the German occupation. However, defenders of what sometimes is called “real” or “pure jazz” often differentiate between American entertainment music as “authentic” and “hot” music. Looking at the Dutch jazz magazine *Jazzwereld*, van de Leur shows that jazz remained a marginal phenomenon in the Netherlands in the postwar decades since only a small number of performers and composers could make a living of jazz music. Van de Leur ends on a critical evaluation of the government-funded jazz avant-garde, in particular the Willem Breuker Kollektief, and how it emancipated itself musically from American jazz models.

Wilfried Raussert's article addresses transnational flows of music within a political context. Using a distinction between sonic cosmopolitics from above and from below Raussert investigates the similarities and differences in agency, music, and politicization between U.S. government-sponsored programs such as *The Jazz Ambassadors* and *The Rhythm Road* and recent grassroots musical movements such as *Fandango Sin Fronteras* and *The Pleasant Revolution Tour*. Raussert points out that, for example, Louis Armstrong's Jazz Ambassador tour was part of the state-sponsored politics of liberation with a distinct political, economical and cultural motivation. Nevertheless, the iconic jazz performer was able to add critical voices from below to a top-down diplomacy program. Asking about new developments such as the *Rhythm Road* concept, Raussert critically analyzes how music can “align itself with grassroots egalitarian approaches to mobilize music form the people for the people” despite its involvement with State Department agendas.

The third section, on *Transnational Re-locations*, addresses the politics and cultures of liberation by exploring Dutch-American, German-American, Latin-American and Caribbean-American encounters. **Birgit Bauridl** investigates the arrival of the advance contingents of U.S. troops in Southern Germany in the spring of 1945 and the liberation of that part of Germany from the Nazi reign of terror. This process marked the beginning of a highly complex, mutually enriching, and at times intricately conflicted history of German-American encounters in the fields of politics, social interaction, and cultural exchange. Cultural encounters and contact zones, she argues, inevitably produce transnational processes of transfer, negotiation, and contestation. These processes ensuing from German-American encounters after the liberation are also reflected in the memory landscape of the German State of Bavaria, which, immediately after World War II, would become the larger part of the American military occupation zone in Germany. Tracing both archived and embodied manifestations of German-American transnational memories in Bavaria—and the blurry fields in between—the purpose of this article is twofold. First, it pursues a conceptual endeavor in regard to the dimension, location, and shape of cultural memory: Bauridl pinpoints the transnational dynamics and entanglements of cultural memory arguing that “American” or “transnational American” sites of memory may well be situated outside of the United States. Furthermore, it proposes that cultural memory may appear both in and especially beyond textual or material shapes. Drawing on Diana Taylor’s notion of the “archive” and the “repertoire,” the article suggests an approach to transnational memory that acknowledges embodied practice (i.e. performance) as enactments of cultural memory. Second, to illustrate its conceptual claim, the article introduces the complex network of trans/national memories in a contact zone located outside the United States asking how German-American memories in Bavaria emerged as a contact zone during and after the times of WWII liberation and post-WWII occupation.

Jorrit van den Berk investigates how the United States sought to influence Latin-American perceptions of its war effort through the information programs of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs during World War II. Several historians have suggested that these programs bolstered indigenous opposition to existing dictatorships in Central America, including the regime of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador. Based on the archives of the U.S. legation (embassy from 1943 onward) in El Salvador, this essay seeks to enhance our understanding of the role that the idealistic language of the U.S. war effort came to play in U.S.-Salvadoran relations. Van den Berk shows that Salvadoran oppositionists actively adopted and adapted the language of, for example, the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter,

to translate the objectives of their struggle against the local dictatorship to U.S. diplomats. While the United States would ultimately denounce the “dictatorships and disreputable governments” of Latin America, its failure to respond to the overtures of oppositionists prevented it from playing a positive role in El Salvador’s brief experiment with democracy.

Josef Raab turns to the experience of oppression and liberation by putting his academic searchlight on Caribbean-American history. Edwidge Danticat’s story cycle *The Dew Breaker* (2004) concentrates on the ways in which atrocities committed during the Duvalier dictatorships in Haiti (1957–1986) overshadow the lives of Haitian Americans twenty to forty years later. Unlike other immigrant writers like Mary Antin, who calls her new life in the United States a “make-over,” Danticat presents life stories that are ambivalent and complex, since the traumata of both victims and torturers will not vanish in the act of relocating but will instead continue to impact the circumstances of the migrants as well as those of the next generation. The book’s narrative technique, which asks readers to piece together fragments and clues, expresses the difficulty of finding words and coherent narratives for traumatizing experiences of violence and torture. Raab traces moments of resistance to remembering because to remember is to knit together experiences that deep pain has torn apart. Hope for healing emerges in the assistance of family and/or community, although the healing process is painful and never complete. Danticat uses the well-established topos of the United States as a space of liberation, while cautioning that the physical and emotional injuries suffered in the unfree past will continue to haunt the lives of Haitian Americans.

Eric Sandeen’s essay briefly rehearses the history of Japanese-American confinement in World War II, treating it as a racist act that deprived more than 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans living on the west coast of their full constitutional rights. Sandeen investigates how the former Heart Mountain Relocation Center in northwest Wyoming functions as a memory site, despite the fact that the landscape has been transformed and almost all of the signs of this settlement had been removed. Geographer Kenneth Foote introduced the term “shadowed ground” to describe what members of the Japanese-American community have sanctified through annual pilgrimages over the last 20 years. An interpretive center opened in 2011 on the site of the center, a restorative product of many years of hard work on the part of Japanese Americans and local community members. This facility offers an interpretive focus for the World War II experience. Many of the more than 400 barracks were relocated from the camp to serve as the building blocks for post-war settlement by Euro-American farmers. Using his own field research, Sandeen details the fates

of some of these barracks, which have, in effect, seen two forms of pioneering: one from the west, enforced by the War Relocation Administration, and the other from the east, promoted by the Bureau of Reclamation, both of these federal agencies. The barracks bear witness to a complicated history of hope, despair, and settlement, redolent of American myth and imbued with wartime injustices.

The fourth, final section offers *Transnational Perspectives from the Archives* from the United States and the Netherlands. Five international scholars and researchers, who have been working in archives of the Radboud University library, the Cornelius Ryan Collection at Ohio University, the National Archives in Washington DC, and the National Liberation Museum 1944–45 in the Netherlands, address the challenges of translating sources into multi-media environments and share new research perspectives regarding the politics and cultures of liberation.

Léon Stapper maps an American aid program to a European institution during the post-war years. The city of Nijmegen, its Catholic University, and more specifically its university library, had suffered badly during the war: the library lost several thousand volumes and part of its building. Stapper zooms in on the activities of a specific aid organization, officially called the “American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen” (ACA), which was meant to support the rebuilding and strengthening of the university as a whole, of which effort the aid to the library is the more visible, if not altogether very effective aspect. The activities of the ACA were coordinated by the Dutch priest P.J.M.H. Mommersteeg, the executive secretary of the ACA, Dr. Ch.M.J.H.J. Smits, the librarian of Nijmegen University, the jurist F.M.E. Haan, secretary to the Board of Governors, and Prof. Dr. Willibald M. Ploechl, an Austrian professor of Canon Law in Washington and assistant to Mommersteeg. Between 1946 and 1949 they were actively engaged in acquiring funds and books for the university library, which resulted in some 30,000 volumes being donated to the library. However prodigious that may seem, in the end only a small number were actually shelved, long after the decision was made in 1949 to end the ACA’s activities due to a lack of funding and proper results.

Doug McCabe emphasizes the potential use of the Cornelius Ryan Collection, which is one of the remarkable archival collections related to World War II in the United States. What kind of novel perspectives on world history events can be connected to the theme of liberation based on what McCabe describes as “memories of ordinary people caught up in unordinary times?” Many of the audio-visual sources and interviews Ryan conducted have not been used to investigate, for example, the destruction, liberation and reconstruction of war-torn cities such as Nijmegen.

Linda and Eric Christenson have been at the helm of the first feature length documentary on the Marshall Plan, for which they did intensive research in Europe interviewing people who worked in some capacity for the Marshall Plan. For the purpose of this volume, they selected three interviews from this unique archive of oral history particularly relevant to the theme of the politics and cultures of liberation: First, with economist Ernst van der Beugel, a representative of the Netherlands to the first meeting of the newly formed Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEECE) in Paris in July 1947. Second, the Honorable J.R.M. van den Brink, Minister of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands, 1948–1952. Third: Gerrit Staarman, who came to the U.S. in 1950 as a young farmer for a nine-month stay under the auspices of the ECA, and continued to be a spokesman for the Marshall Plan at his farm in one of the new polders. Taken together, these three interviews highlight Dutch-American connections, moments of cultural change, confrontation, and the function of the Marshall Plan.

Jory Brentjens and Wiel Lenders from the National Liberation Museum 1944–45 in Groesbeek, the Netherlands, shed light on the challenges of creating, mapping, exhibiting the theme of liberation from a multi-perspectival angle. In 2014, the Liberation Route Europe Foundation opened its travelling exhibition *Routes of Liberation: Legacies of the Second World War*. For the first time, the organizers and curators of the exhibition employed a multi-perspectival approach on a broader European scale with input from Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Poland. Bringing together the national narratives of five countries led to several heated discussions but also brought valuable new insights and a broader context in which to view one's own history.

This volume would not have been possible without the support of sponsors, colleagues, workshop and conference organizers, as well as the Radboud students and staff members who helped in countless ways. We are grateful for the inspiring work of Anja Adriaans who coordinated, organized and supported the events surrounding the theme of politics and cultures of liberation, from the 25th anniversary conference celebrating American Studies at Radboud University to the symposium “Crossroads & Bridges” commemorating the liberation of Nijmegen with the opening of the Oversteek Bridge. We are also indebted to Michel van der Hoeven for technical support, Francesca Bechis, Dorine Steenberg, the late Elly van der Borgh, Sophie Hochstenbach, and Tilly de Groot. A special thanks to the Société d'Etudes et de Recherche sur le Cinéma Anglophone (SERCIA) for hosting the 20th anniversary conference at Radboud during the festivities of 70 years Operation Market Garden. We are particularly grateful for the support by Melvyn Stokes and the members

of SERCIA. We also wish to thank our sponsors for their generous support, in particular the Embassy of the United States of America in The Hague, the International Office at Radboud University, the National Liberation Museum 1944–45 in Groesbeek, the *Gelderlander* newspaper, and the Department of English Language and Culture.

Finally, we would like to thank the editors of the Radboud Studies in Humanities series for accepting this volume.

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PART 1

*The Politics and Cultures of Liberation:
Marketing, Memory and Mediation*



An Invasion of a Different Kind: The U.S. Office of War Information and “The Projection of America” Propaganda in the Netherlands, 1944–1945

Marja Roholl

We are telling the rest of the world about the United States not because we want liking and admiration as ends in themselves, but because we realize that in order to work effectively and harmoniously with us in the creation of a lasting peace, other nations must understand us better than they have in the past.¹

(CIT., HART 2013, 104)

June 6, 1944: D-Day, the start of the invasion of Normandy. Soldiers, tanks and Jeeps rolling out of invasion vessels, parachutists making airborne landings, horrific battles and Allied victories at heavy costs. The images of the Allied invasion on the beaches of Normandy are part of our collective memory, shaped by an abundance of photos, documentaries and (Hollywood) films. Less well-known is the story of the accompanying propaganda invasion (Scott 2006a; Scott 2008; Miller 2014). The vessels and airplanes landing in Normandy brought not only soldiers, military supplies, food and medicines, but also more unlikely “weapons”: crates full of magazines, books, and movies, the majority of which were produced by the U.S. Office of War Information Overseas Branch (OWI OB) and the British Ministry of Information (MOI), organizations charged with overseas propaganda (Hench 2010, 1–2). These media were targeted at civilians rather than enemy soldiers. Their goal was not only to smooth the transition from occupation and war to liberation, but also to shape the post-war peace.

1 I would like to thank Antje Boehmert for generously sharing her research, and Kate Delaney for her assistance with the English text.

Only days after the liberation of the first French city, Cherbourg, on the 4th of July, 1944, the Office of War Information and the Ministry of Information showed their films in half-destroyed cinemas with the help of American equipment and personnel. In addition, the mobile film units of the Allied Information Service² (AIS) showed films in schoolhouses and comparable venues. A full mix of information and entertainment was at hand, with a program composed of OWI and MOI newsreels and documentaries, and a Hollywood comedy (Bishop 1966, 267–68; Miller 2014). Two days later, a one-ton truckload of magazines and books arrived in Cherbourg, the contents quickly finding their way into bookstores and Allies' reading rooms (Hench 153). These first shipments of films, magazines and books were soon to be supplemented by a large-scale multi-media program, not only in France, but also in other countries such as the Netherlands. Even though it was a joint British-American endeavor in the sense that both information agencies worked together on war-related materials, there was significant competition between the partners as well. Each side produced propaganda with an emphasis on its own society, its own contributions to the war, and the role it aspired to in the postwar world. Compared to the American program, the British one was modest, reflecting the differences in power positions and availability of means (Bennett 316).³ The focus of this essay is on the American program.

Thus, important as winning the war may have been, consolidating the peace on American terms was also imperative. The United States would not succumb to the political contractions that followed the First World War: this time the American government worked towards a new world order which the United States would dominate; and the Office of War Overseas Branch had a role to play in making this a reality.

The propaganda campaigns for overseas, labeled “the Projection of America” in 1943, involved multiple media, and ranged in specificity from one-size-fits-all to nationally and even regionally specific endeavors (Hart 2013, 71–107). The campaigns targeted various audiences with a carefully selected range of media, themes and arguments. The emphasis here will be on those parts of “the Projection of America” campaign developed for a general public, showing

2 The Allied Information Service (AIS) was the friendlier term used in non-enemy countries in Europe for the Psychological Warfare Division (PWD) of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEPF).

3 The Soviet Union had its own program ready for the countries it liberated, and for the ones defeated by Allied efforts, such as Germany and Italy. The United States would try to keep Russian materials out of Italy.

“how America lives” with less attention for programs directed at the elites. While books were often directed towards elites, magazines and films stand out as media of choice for a general public. This essay describes these propaganda operations housed in the OWI’s Bureau of Overseas Publications and the Overseas Bureau of Motion Pictures, with illustrations from one particular setting: the Netherlands, 1944–45.⁴

Before taking a look at the OWI Overseas Branch program in the Netherlands, a description of the organization and its goals is in order.

The U.S. Office of War Information

Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, led to America’s total involvement in the war, including on the propaganda front. In June 1942, President Roosevelt folded a number of existing organizations charged with propaganda and information activities at home and overseas into the newly created U.S. Office of War Information. The Office of War Information (OWI) consisted of two branches, the Domestic Branch and the Overseas Branch. The director’s office and most of the Domestic Branch were located in Washington, while the communication and news center, together with the offices of the Overseas Branch, were mainly located in New York; the Overseas Branch also had offices in Hollywood and outposts around the globe (Winkler 1978; Bishop 1966).

Elmer Davis was appointed director of the OWI. He was a highly respected journalist for *The New York Times*, and radio commentator and anchor for CBS. Democrats and Republicans alike considered him the right man for the job: a non-partisan, trusted and trustworthy voice. In contrast, many of the people employed by the OWI and its predecessors demonstrated a distinctly left-of-center, liberal orientation in their work and politics, and were often supporters of President Roosevelt and the New Deal. For instance, Robert Sherwood, one of President Roosevelt’s confidants and speechwriters, was appointed director of the Overseas Branch.⁵ Republicans and conservative Democrats alike feared OWI Domestic Branch’s potential propaganda power in the hands of the Roosevelt administration on a national platform, and criticized OWI’s concern

4 For a sense of how this played out in other nations, see for instance David W. Ellwood. 2010. *The Shock of America. Europe and the Challenge of the Century*, chapter 7. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5 By contrast, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), with William Donovan at the helm, in charge of “black propaganda” abroad, was seen as a stronghold of the Republicans.

about the position of African Americans (Hart 2013, 91–103). As a result, the Domestic Branch lost most of its funding in the summer of 1943. There was no concern, however, about propaganda directed at other countries' inhabitants, whether enemies or allies. Moreover, the Overseas Branch could quote high-ranking members of the military regarding the usefulness of its programs "over-there." Differences of opinion about strategy, about the relationship between foreign policy and propaganda, and personal rivalries, however, led to some shifts in personnel in the summer of 1943. Edward Barrett, deputy director, replaced Robert Sherwood as director of the US-based Overseas Branch; Sherwood in turn became the new head of the most important outpost, in London.

From the spring of 1944 onwards, the Overseas Branch's work was increasingly done by the outposts. Sherwood was charged with the planning of "the Projection of America" propaganda initiative around the invasion of Normandy and during the subsequent transition to peace. The London Outpost, close to the actual theater of war, and home to many governments in exile including the Dutch, was thus in a good position to adjust propaganda to local needs and to secure propaganda clearances. After the liberation of Paris and Brussels, new outposts there provided additional services for the Netherlands.

"The Projection of America" Guidelines

The OWI Overseas Branch worked with short- and long-term goals and guidelines. During the liberation and consolidation phase, the short-term goals included preventing friction between American/Allied troops and the population of liberated countries. The long-term agenda aimed beyond the war. The OWI realized that—notwithstanding enormous gratitude for the crucial role the US had played in the liberation—the more important America's position would become, the more concern it would provoke in allied and neutral nations that feared, on the one hand, an American retreat into isolationism (as occurred after the First World War) and, perhaps paradoxically, American hegemony and imperialism on the other (Hart 2013, 104–5; O.W.I. Overseas Branch Guidelines). Moreover, the OWI feared that America's new role as world power might be hindered by "misunderstandings" dating back to the pre-war era; a lack of accurate knowledge, Hollywood-generated stereotypes, and last but not least, years of enemy propaganda. The OWI's "repair work" was thus to be significant, from addressing prejudices that Americans were rich and culturally backward, to concerns regarding the discrimination

against African Americans which would undermine America's claim to moral leadership, to distrust about America's postwar agenda (Cousins 1944; Wilson 1944, 2).

The discussions within the OWI Overseas Branch about "the Projection of America" guidelines suggest an ingenious and careful response:

Nothing is to be gained by a frontal attack on unfriendly—(and in our view unfair)—sentiments of this kind. They don't deserve to be called opinions, for they have not been reached by rational thought or conscientious deliberation. Rather they are impressions, prejudices, rationalizations and unwarranted deductions. Direct argument may only crystallize or confirm them. (Cousins 14)

Providing alternative narratives was seen as a more fruitful approach, and publications and films were considered the most effective means. The next sections will situate the work of the Bureau of Overseas Publications and the Overseas Bureau of Motion Pictures (OBMP), the two organizations charged with implementing "the Projection of America" campaign, before delving more deeply into the Dutch situation.

Overseas Bureau of Motion Pictures (OBMP)

Even though the OWI considered movies a crucial medium in the propaganda war, their involvement at the central policy level was minimal. The Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) and its overseas division were even referred to as "the stepchildren" of the OWI (Bishop 92). Robert Riskin was in charge of the overseas activities. Before the war, he had been a very successful Hollywood screenwriter, most notably known for his collaborations with director Frank Capra on movies such as *It Happened One Night*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *Meet John Doe*. Politically a left-liberal and a Roosevelt supporter, Riskin had been concerned about developments in Germany since Hitler's rise to power and was an early proponent of American intervention, like many others in Hollywood. His Jewish background may have contributed to this awareness (Scott 2006b; Scott 2008).

The OBMP had several tools at its disposal: producing newsreels and documentaries, "guiding" Hollywood in its production, and selecting for export Hollywood movies and documentaries made by other government agencies.

Documentaries

Of the documentaries selected for screening overseas, the most important was the famous seven-part series *Why We Fight*, made under the guidance of Frank Capra for the Department of War as instruction films for the American military.⁶ Riskin gave this series priority for overseas exhibition over the OWI's own documentary series, *The American Scene* (Scott 2008). (Both series would appear on Dutch screens in liberated areas, starting in the fall/winter 1944).

The *Why We Fight* and *The American Scene* documentaries functioned in complementary ways. The *Why We Fight* series provided postwar overseas audiences with an overview of the events leading to the Second World War; of "the ugly face" of the enemy often based on the latter's own footage; and of the role played by Allied forces in some of the most important battles. The *Why We Fight* documentaries retrospectively arranged the past according to an American agenda and set a course for the future, and in so doing earned their value as an OWI overseas tool (Doherty 1993).

The American Scene series, produced between 1943 and 1945, can be considered Riskin's signature production. He was convinced that high-quality, subtle documentaries about America would provide an effective means of propaganda overseas. Where the *Why We Fight* films present emotional, newsreel-type history lessons (Barnouw 158) and the magazines and newsreels traded in more traditional "factual" propaganda, *The American Scene* documentaries are artistic, engaging and nuanced, armed with a sense of humor and showing the hand of their respective directors, cameramen, and composers. Even though as a Hollywood screenwriter Riskin did not have much experience with making documentaries himself, he was able to attract a stellar group of film and documentary directors to the OBMP, for instance Irving Lerner, Arthur Arent, Willard van Dyke, Alexander Hammid, and Joseph von Sternberg as well as leading composers like Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson (Scott 2006 a/ b and 2008; Miller 2014).

6 The seven parts were: *Prelude to War* (1942); *The Nazi Strike* (1943); *Divide and Conquer* (1943); *The Battle of Britain* (1943); *The Battle of Russia* (1943); *The Battle of China* (1944) and *War Comes to America* (1945). Much has been written over the years on Capra's *Why We Fight* series; Ian Scott's work and the documentary *Projections of America* brought Riskin's work out of Capra's shadow and into the light, a much-deserved outcome.... The official title at the time was *the American Scene. A Series*, also sometimes referred to as *the Projection of America Series*. Shown in the Netherlands at the time under the series title *Amerika in Beeld*. Scott and Miller refer to it as *Projections of America*.

The American Scene series set out to tell the world what it would be like to live in America, what ideals make America what it is—something not yet done in the interwar years - and yes, it presented that American scene through a liberal, yet due to OWI policies, restricted, prism (MacCann 147). Produced from the start with an overseas audience in mind, *The American Scene* documentaries were in conversation with their audiences overseas, “playing” with their fascinations and prejudices and addressing their lack of knowledge and understanding. They did not focus on America’s war industry and military might—people knew enough about that through other OWI products and often their own experience on the ground. They sought to counteract the impression of America as a country of “gangsters and cattle-rustling cowboys,” showing instead that it was composed of hardworking immigrants who found a good new home (NYT, March 7, 1943); they provided insights into the workings of American democratic, economic and educational systems, with an emphasis on small-town values, together leading to the successful and attractive “*American Way of Life*.” They also underlined America’s dedication, as the new world leader, to international forums to secure peace once the hostilities were over.

The *Why We Fight* and *The American Scene* series were both government productions. Yet, the government was also greatly interested in bringing the commercial Hollywood productions in line with the OWI’s overseas goals.

Hollywood and Public Opinion Overseas

In the context of its propaganda efforts the OWI underlined “the value of the screen as an international builder of public opinion” (Segrave 131–33; Koppes and Black 87–105). Therefore, Riskin’s team was very much involved with “guiding” Hollywood in its film production, and was responsible for selecting films for export. Hollywood knew how to make motion pictures, but did not always understand their overseas impact, according to OWI director Davis (Hart 2013, 85). The OWI considered many Hollywood films, which often emphasized city vices, the Wild West, luxury and romance, a major source of distortion for overseas audiences. Therefore, Riskin urged Hollywood to advance “American global interests by benevolently portraying the nation, its people, institutions, ideals and way of life” (Bennett 2001, 300) and to produce “win-the-peace-films.” The OWI had veto rights over export licenses, and since the overseas market was of great importance for the Hollywood studios, Riskin’s “suggestions” resonated with the industry.

The OWI and the military leaders considered Hollywood entertainment movies very important for creating “normalcy” in liberated areas and for generating good will. Hollywood allowed Riskin to handpick “from the shelves” forty movies which he considered to be in accordance with the OWI agenda and local sensitivities. These were to be shown in that crucial first phase after liberation, as soon as American/Allied troops had taken over a town or a city. (The MOI was permitted to select thirty movies produced by the British movie industry). The OWI/OBMP had at the same time a clear eye for Hollywood’s needs as well, and the very close personal ties between the Overseas Branch and Hollywood reflect that; Riskin himself is just one example. The OWI acknowledged the high commercial value of movies and pledged to help the movie industry reclaim its rights, and secure and expand its markets after the war was over (Bennett 2001). Production in the United States had continued during the war, and the backlogged output was waiting to be released abroad, with more in the making.

The Dutch case study will provide insights into the film activities of the Overseas Branch in a local context, but first we need to look at the organization responsible for publications.

Bureau of Overseas Publications

The Bureau of Overseas Publications was the Overseas Branch’s most elaborate endeavor. Part of it was specifically directed towards elites, demonstrating that “America does not only fight or work or eat or amuse itself, but America ‘thinks’” (Allen 1945). Books and “serious” magazines were considered the main carriers for that message. Illustrated periodicals and booklets catering to a general public, however, formed the core of the publication program (Roholl 2012). And here we see the hand of the directors of the Overseas Branch most clearly. Robert Sherwood had an interest in photo-essays—we see this reflected in OWI-publications such as *Look* and *Victory*. Edward Barrett had worked for *Newsweek*, had an interest in sociology, and favored a more impersonal social-sciences approach, as reflected in the illustrated booklet *American Women*.⁷ The magazines were repeatedly discussed and reviewed at the central level in Washington, at the Overseas Branch’s offices in New York, and at the outposts overseas. Products catering to audiences in several countries—one size fits

7 These would be distributed in the Netherlands in Dutch, under the titles *ΚΙΙΚ*, *Victory* and *De Amerikaansche Vrouw*

all—were produced in New York; by definition these were not able to address current or local developments. Products that targeted specific countries would increasingly be produced at the major outposts, as will be demonstrated in the following Dutch case study.

“The Projection of America” in a Dutch Context

Our projection of America must vary with the differing interests, intellects, economics, politics and cultures of our main target areas (Wilson 1944, 4).

The liberation of the Netherlands took longer than anticipated. On September 12, 1944, American troops liberated the small village of Mesch; the city of Maastricht followed a couple of days later. It would take until May 1945, however, before the whole country was liberated, due to strategic considerations and the failure of Operation Market Garden—memorialized in the Hollywood film *A Bridge Too Far* (1977). While American forces liberated the first towns and cities, the Canadian and British forces played a more crucial role in liberating the rest of the country; the Polish troops contributed significantly as well. Not until June 1945 was the Dutch government fully reinstated in The Hague (Klinkert 2009). In this long interregnum, in accordance with the Civil Affairs agreement signed by the Dutch government in May 1944, the commander of the Allied Forces exercised full authority, while working closely together with the Dutch Military Authority (Schoonoord 2010). This situation provided the OWI—and the MOI—unique opportunities to carry out their agendas. And even though American forces were not involved in the liberation of all parts of the Netherlands, the OWI’s propaganda products would become available in the country at large, thanks to the Allied Information Service.

The propaganda program for the Netherlands was based on the general outlines of the OWI Overseas Branch, combined with specifics for the local situation. The well-known American anthropologist Ruth Benedict and her colleagues working for the OWI during the war had assessed the Dutch, using secondary literature and interviews with Dutch immigrants because of the limitations imposed by the war. The Dutch, Benedict concluded, shared the general “misunderstandings” of, and fascination with, America. Yet, the OWI also identified additional specific circumstances and traits. All reports mentioned that the Dutch had “intellectual fibre:” they were very well educated and accustomed to high journalistic and cinematic standards, so that only

high-quality products would suffice. In Italy, by contrast, the OWI adapted its program to match the high illiteracy rates, relying heavily on visuals.

The OWI singled out the Netherlands—along with Spain, Italy, and Portugal—for its conservative attitude towards women. The Overseas Branch feared Dutch criticism of American family life and the role of ‘modern’ American women therein, and of society at large as a consequence. Indeed, for instance during the interwar years, the *Katholieke Illustratie* (*Catholic Illustrated*) had presented American women as selfish mothers and wives; too much enthralled with themselves, they spent the free time they gained with the labor-saving kitchen gadgets on themselves instead of on the family (Roholl 1994). The Dutch were also described as a proud people, who were trying to cope with their diminished role in the world and their dependency on the help of the Allies, in Europe and Asia alike—something that could easily turn into resentment. This attitude went hand in hand with reservations over America’s postwar role as world leader, and fears over American territorial ambitions and desire for economic concessions in the Dutch East Indies and elsewhere.

It was the Overseas Branch’s challenge to “translate” these points into “the Projection of America” programs for the Netherlands during the liberation and consolidation phase.

Liberation and “the Projection of America”

The military and the OWI anticipated that, in addition to deep-felt gratitude and admiration, frictions might arise between American soldiers and Dutch civilians. They realized that American soldiers served a double function as liberating warriors and as front-line ambassadors. They were the first *real* Americans people would meet, so the first impression was important. The soldier was seen by OWI as “our best chance to facilitate and promote a sympathetic and appreciative judgment of Americans in general” (Van Schreven 1). Thus, American soldiers were provided with information, and lists with “Do’s and Don’ts,” based in part on Benedict’s anthropological reports. Benedict described Dutch culture as very home-oriented and hospitable, and she explained different patterns and codes in dating. These good-looking “dough-boys,” from all regions of America and from all walks of life, bringing with them goodies such as cigarettes, chewing gum, chocolate, canned food, and products of America’s popular culture, were in a sense “walking bill boards” for the American way of life, “ambassadors for a society of abundance,” embodying the promises of an American-led future (Ellwood 2012B; Schrijvers 2012). Yet,

the many interactions of women with American (and Canadian) soldiers also created resentments among Dutch men about “unfair competition,” something which Benedict had predicted as well. Still, gratitude and curiosity won handily in the period under consideration.

The OWI Overseas Branch aimed to “contextualize” the American soldiers “invading” the Netherlands with publications such as *Schetsen uit het Amerikaansche Familieleven* (Sketches of American Family Life), based on the *Ladies’ Home Journal* series “How America Lives.” The OWI wanted to show that what these soldiers called home was different from the image most Dutch people had. Through eighteen personal stories it showed that American families were very much affected by the war, according to the OWI, a fact greatly underappreciated by the Dutch; the stories gave a face to these young American soldiers and the families they left behind. African American families were absent. America was presented as a country of immigrants, among them Dutch—a recurrent theme in OWI’s propaganda. Emphasis was placed on small-town America which provided a contrast with the city life and its vices, which the Dutch were more fascinated by and familiar with through pre-war illustrated magazines and Hollywood films. *Schetsen* also emphasized the central role women played in the American family and the community at large, a topic that would later take center stage in the booklet *De Amerikaansche Vrouw*.

Magazines

Magazines in the aggregate illustrated the transition from war and liberation, to peace and consolidation, under American aegis. They all relied heavily on very professionally produced photo-essays as their mode of communication, combining the “factuality” of the word with the expressivity and emotion of the visuals. The core magazine *KIJK*⁸ entered the country in the soldiers’ wake, close to the battle-line in South Limburg, underscoring the importance attached to propaganda for civilians. It was a thirty-two-page illustrated periodical, produced fortnightly at the London Outpost from September 1944 until December 1945, so beyond the liberation of the whole country and the installation of the Dutch government. It was very popular from the start. The print-run was substantial, around a hundred thousand, yet too low to satisfy the public’s demand, particularly after large parts of the country had been liberated. One should also note that it would take a while before the Dutch press

8 English title *Look*. The British equivalent was *Big Ben*, of which just nine issues were published.

and publishers began to function properly, providing an additional explanation for the popularity of American—and British—propaganda material.

KIJK served two separate but complementary goals: first, in the short run, to inform the Dutch about current developments specifically in the war in Europe and the Pacific (Dutch East Indies), functioning as a “news-reel” of sorts. The emphasis was on the military role the US played, but the magazine also gave huge credit to the other Allies, especially the new Ally, the Soviet Union. Dutch contributions were also more than generously acknowledged—part of a strategy of cementing good relationships with the Dutch population. Second, there was the familiar long-term agenda: “educating” the population about America: the importance of the Four Freedoms, the educational system, authentic American culture, and much more. The OWI Overseas Branch would have preferred to also address the discrimination against African Americans in a “constructive way,” but there was a ban on taking up such issues at the highest level (Hart 2013, 91–95). In the Netherlands, the position of African Americans was not much of an issue at the time, even though German propaganda had tried to capitalize on it. In other parts of the world the issue played out differently, undermining America’s moral position as prospective leader of the free world.

KIJK also connected the war with the postwar period. The economic system that produced the “Arsenal of Democracy”—the mass-produced tanks, ships, airplanes and more—that enabled America to defend democracy at home and abroad, would be converted into “the democracy of consumption” at home, but also abroad. And here, other OWI magazines such as *Victory* and to a lesser extent *De Amerikaansche Vrouw* best embody this transition to the postwar period. *Victory*, although produced and paid for by the OWI, was presented to the Dutch as a commercially produced magazine, with advertisements for American consumer goods, many targeting women. The OWI was thus helping American business to secure and expand its markets, even though it would take years before the Dutch could afford these products. The importance of *De Amerikaansche Vrouw* is that it showed that a desirable and commodity-rich American lifestyle would not undermine the “natural order.” Quite the contrary; it would enable women to spend more “quality time,” as wives and mothers, with their families (See also Rosenberg 1999).

Thus, illustrated magazines were cherished propaganda instruments: popular with the public and more easily adaptable to local circumstances than books or movies. But they also posed “challenges,” of which the transport of this bulk product proved significant. Moreover, magazines were consumed individually, at home or in a library room, allowing personal choices regarding what to read, and in which order. The situation with the movies differed in many ways.

Control over the Screen

For the OWI Overseas Branch, movies offered a huge advantage over books and magazines: “little transport was required. A jeep-load of film tins represented weeks of entertainment and information for many cities” (PWD/SHAEF 1951, 59–60). Moreover, they functioned differently: moving images, with accompanying music and watched collectively in a dark cinema, added extra layers of communication and persuasion. Movies, more than any other part of “the Projection of America” campaign, show how well positioned the OWI—and the MOI for that matter—was in providing its own materials to Dutch audiences.

Even though the Dutch government and film industry during the war had both, in different ways, envisioned strong roles for themselves in the postwar period, both parties were overrun, failing to protect the small Dutch film industry and prevent “Americanization” of the screen. Thanks to SHAEF, the OWI/AIS gained total control over the import, rental and distribution of movies, and thus over what was to be shown on the screens in the Netherlands. De Haan even describes this as “a militarized rental system,” with considerable profits later handed over to private companies. In addition, American military personnel helped American movie rental firms to retrieve their film properties and secure their film rights (De Haan 62–4).

Cinemas re-opened their doors to the public as soon as the owners and personnel had been screened for their role during the war and all films and stock had been confiscated. Many cinemas had been damaged during the hostilities, and the Allies, especially the Americans, provided crews and material, and even mobile units to accommodate the enormous appetite for movies. People lined up to get in, and tickets were even sold on the black market. In addition to a shortage of working cinemas, there was a shortfall of films, especially after the Northern and Western parts of the country had been liberated as well. As a result, some cinemas in the provinces of Brabant, Limburg and Zeeland had to close again, a situation that met with understandable criticism. Since only American and British films provided by the OWI and MOI were to be shown, American, British, French, Russian and Dutch feature films, lying on the shelves in the Netherlands and approved before the war by the Dutch censor, were not made available. Moreover, it would take until November 1945 before other Allies such as France and the Soviet Union were able to get their movies from outside the country into Dutch cinemas. Even though SHAEF would be dismantled in July 1945, the civilian organization OWI continued its involvement with the movie supply until September 15th, working with the American Embassy in The Hague (De Haan 65).

Hollywood Films

Of all films, the Hollywood feature films selected by Riskin and his team were most eagerly awaited by audiences. He had chosen some pure and “proper” entertainment films, such as the musical romantic comedy *You Were Never Lovelier*, Charlie Chaplin’s *Gold Rush*, and Disney’s cartoons, “as good will ambassadors and to help alleviate frayed nerves” (NYT, October 31, 1943). In addition, the Overseas Bureau of Motion Pictures hoped “to spread the true facts about America through the motion picture” (Cit. MacCann 140). Selected films included *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, detailing his life, politics and election to the presidency, and *Young Tom Edison*, whose story embodied the American Dream, the rise from rags to riches. It also underscored America as the land of technological inventions, a topic also addressed by *KIJK*, which published stories on DDT and penicillin, prefab carriers and homes. OWI’s affinity with the ideals of the small town and its honest and ordinary people, presented as the heart of America’s democracy, is reflected in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, one of Capra and Riskin’s 1930s productions, as well as in *The Human Comedy*. A substantial number of titles were war movies and complemented the *Why We Fight* series, which was also shown on the Dutch screen. In contrast to the latter, these movies were very personalized. *The Sullivans*, for instance, which depicts the death of all five Sullivan brothers, showed the Dutch the sacrifices American families made during the war, for the liberation of others. *Action in the North Atlantic* depicts the dangerous, and for some deadly, voyage of American seamen to Murmansk, with badly needed war goods for their Russian ally.

As noted, Riskin selected Capra’s *Why We Fight* series for priority distribution in the Netherlands (Allen 1945). This series was dubbed into Dutch in London by A. den Doolaard, a famous writer and well-known voice in Holland during the war, thanks to his radio programs from London for Radio Oranje. This suggests active involvement by the Dutch community and government in exile. Different episodes of the *Why We fight* series were frequently on the bill, both in the cinemas and in non-theatrical venues. Interestingly, the most popular was *The Battle for Russia*. It got excellent reviews across the religious and political spectrum, not least from the Dutch communist daily *De Waarheid*,⁹ for its cinematographic qualities, but also for the appealing tribute to the Russian army and population in their heroic fight against the Nazi armies in Stalingrad, present-day Volgograd. Together with the war feature films, these

9 De Waarheid translates as: the truth, or Pravda in Russian.

documentaries left the audience with the impression of a worldwide deployment of the American military, at high personal cost, working together with allies towards peace and a better world. This was an important message for the Dutch, since the American army did not play the major role in the liberation of the Netherlands itself. The huge American military cemetery in Margraten also reminded the Dutch of the many American soldiers who died outside the Dutch borders, on enemy soil, in Germany, in addition to the casualties in the Netherlands.

The American Scene Documentaries

The Overseas BMP packaged *the American Scene* documentaries together with Hollywood films. The series covered the full range of general goals and topics identified by the OWI Overseas Branch. In March 1945, ten of the sixteen films produced in 1943 and 1944 were dubbed into Dutch by A. den Doolaard, in London.¹⁰ This subset covered the OWI's main themes and messages, with the notable exception of planning for the postwar period through the United Nations (Allen, 1945, 7–8). The documentaries produced in 1945 emphasized this latter issue, but it is not clear whether the films covering this topic were made available in the Netherlands.

While parts of the *Why We Fight* series frequently appeared on movie bills and were extensively reviewed in the newspapers, the *American Scene* shorts were conspicuously absent.¹¹ There were, however, some notable exceptions. Very appropriately the first of this series shown in the Netherlands was *The Autobiography of a Jeep*. Allied forces had entered the country in Jeeps, and “the new kid around the bloc” made quite an impression. While there were no ads for this short documentary in the newspapers, there were many positive reviews. The reviewers thought highly of having the Jeep narrating its own (hi)story—a friendly and whimsical touch—and stressed the crucial role this mass-produced American invention played in the war. The newspapers also

10 *Cowboy; The Autobiography of a Jeep; Swedes in America; Pipeline; The Town; Oswego; A Journey; City Harvest; Toscanini—Hymn of the Nations, and Valley of the Tennessee.*

11 I have searched *Delpher*, a website providing full-text Dutch language digitized newspapers. The difference may be attributable to the running lengths of the respective projects, with *Why We Fight* films averaging between 40–80 minutes (just shy of feature length) and *the American Scene* documentaries averaging between 10–20 minutes (just over the standard length of the “shorts” that accompanied features, usually without being listed).

published their own stories on the Jeep in the Netherlands, about its ingenuity and ubiquity, and about a population initially not knowing how to either pronounce or spell the name of the exciting new friend.

Toscanini—Hymn of the Nations, another episode of *the American Scene* series, was in a class by itself and had a remarkable circulation history in the Netherlands. At nearly thirty minutes, it was longer than the other *American Scene* documentaries and was mentioned in advertisements, be it in small print. The film recorded a now pivotal performance of Verdi's *Hymn of the Nations* with the legendary Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra. Toscanini was a beloved conductor in the Netherlands and around the world, notable for having left Fascist Italy for America and for refusing to play the Fascist anthem even before Mussolini officially took over. The movie thus paid tribute to America as a safe haven as well as to the political power of music. The film received rave reviews, and Toscanini's work was frequently programmed on the radio. *KIJK* also carried a story on Toscanini. *Toscanini* was without doubt the most frequently shown *The American Scene* documentary, not only in cinemas but, interestingly, also on the cultural Sunday mornings regularly organized by the communist newspaper *De Waarheid*, which embraced Toscanini's and Italian partisans' message of anti-fascism. Arturo Toscanini had added to Verdi's *Hymn of the Nations*, which included among others the British national anthem, not only America's *Star Spangled Banner*, but also *The Internationale*, in this way honoring the Soviet Union, and Italian partisans, in accordance with OWI's guidelines and with Toscanini's political stand. *De Waarheid* often programmed the *Toscanini* film together with "*The Battle of Russia*" of the *Why We Fight* series and *Nine Hundred*, a film about Yugoslav partisans, together with live organ music and community singing. Before the war, Dutch censors had banned films that included *The Internationale*.

During the Cold War, *De Waarheid* frequently had *Toscanini* on its program, even though one of the essential messages of the film was that America provided a safe haven for opponents of oppressive regimes. *Toscanini* was also part of America's Cold War cultural diplomacy in the Netherlands, shown at the American Embassy, at hospital parties, and at union meetings. By that time, however, *The Internationale* had been cut out (Marvin 2014; Scott 2006a).

In Conclusion

This essay has sketched the general contours, goals and means of the OWI Overseas Branch's elaborate "the Projection of America" propaganda campaign, and underscored the importance and impact of local circumstances on

its deployment, in this instance in the Netherlands. The AIS/SHAEF exercised interregnum in each of the liberated countries until national governments were re-installed. In Belgium, for instance, although the struggle for liberation began on September 4, 1944 and was completed early in 1945, the Belgian government was already re-installed days after the battles began, on September 8, 1944; in France, in an explicit endeavor to avoid Allied military administration, the Republic was re-established even before D-Day. By contrast, the liberation of the Netherlands took longer than anticipated, from September 1944 until May 1945, and the Dutch government was finally installed in The Hague only in June 1945. The OWI has been active in the Netherlands until December 1945, working together with the American Embassy in The Hague. The situation in the Netherlands was thus unique among the liberated countries in Western Europe, with SHAEF in charge a much longer time than elsewhere. It provided the OWI—and the MOI—unique opportunities for its propaganda operations.

“The Projection of America” was an impressive, large-scale, fine-grained, multi-media propaganda campaign that crossed social segments (elites and general public), and “bombarded” its audiences with different propaganda “weapons” from factual information (newsreels, *KIJK*, booklets), to subtle and personalized life stories (*The American Scene* documentaries), to confrontationally direct documentaries (*Why We Fight* series), to entertaining family movies (Hollywood films). In the aggregate, the campaign portrayed America as a nation of hardworking immigrants, dedicated to their families and communities, enjoying an enviably high standard of living, willing to risk their lives to defend democracy at home and abroad. The country was run by a government dedicated to not only win the war, but to secure international cooperation and peace afterwards as well.

The campaign’s magazines, books and films all found a hearty welcome in the Netherlands. People lined up to get a copy of *KIJK* or to get into the cinemas. There was, however, discontent about the monopoly of American and British films, especially within the Dutch film industry, but also within the Dutch government. Yet, reality on the ground defined the terms of engagement between SHAEF/OWI and the Dutch in this respect.

What was the rationale behind this elaborate propaganda program? In the short run, the OWI hoped to prevent frictions between American soldiers and Dutch civilians by mutually informing them about one another. But the agenda was much more expansive than that, and included several other motives. The American government anticipated taking up its role as the new leader of the free world.

This approach differed greatly from the isolationist turn it took in the international arena after the First World War. Success in this new position

would turn on making sure that the “new followers” had a more balanced and informed assessment of what America stood for as a society than before the war, and trust in America’s postwar foreign policy. “The Projection of America” was thus not an end in itself, but rather an instrument of foreign policy, even though the idealistic and liberal OWI Overseas staff sometimes tended to overlook that (Wilson 2000, 84–85).

Another part of the OWI Overseas Branch agenda was helping American business to protect and expand its markets, even though that was at odds with the official messages of the propaganda campaign. The long SHAEF interregnum in the Netherlands enabled the OWI Overseas Branch to fulfill its promise towards the movie industry: securing the industry’s holdings left behind after the German invasion, and providing Hollywood—and the British film industry—with unchallenged access to Dutch cinemas and the considerable revenues they represented. The OWI was also able to support American publishing houses’ efforts to expand their business in the Netherlands. By exhibiting the “American Way of Life” in all of its aspects through soldiers, publications, movies, and advertisements, the OWI primed Dutch consumers for American products and the economic system behind them. In the postwar years, ongoing cultural diplomacy efforts and the Marshall Plan would reinforce these messages. The greater part of the Dutch population embraced the American products that came their way, and did so enthusiastically, while others were more wary about the prospect of Americanization.

In retrospect, we can see one other result of, if not motive, for these propaganda efforts. In the Dutch collective memory, America’s role in the liberation narrative looms large. Yet, as important as it was, the role played by the British and Canadian military was of even more importance, and we see this reflected in the sad numbers of casualties.¹² As Culbert and Chambers argue: “To an increasing degree, memory of wars won and lost, like other public memories, is a social construct” (Cit., Scott 2008, 245). One can only speculate about the impact of “the Projection of America” program, with the *Why We Fight* series, and the period’s Hollywood war movies such as *The Sullivans* and *Action in the North Atlantic*, along with those that would follow, such as *Saving Private Ryan*. But at all times, American soldiers were shown in the thick of the action. The massive and impressive American military cemetery

12 Numbers provided by the NIOD in Amsterdam: 6,700 British, 4,100 Canadian, 1,135 American and 630 Polish soldiers died in the Netherlands during the Second World War. Many casualties were repatriated, thus not buried in the Netherlands.

of Margraten may have contributed to this narrative as well. While Canadian and British soldiers' bodies were buried in cemeteries spread across the Netherlands, American casualties were buried in one place, in Margraten, together with many American soldiers who died in Germany, on enemy soil (Kirkels and Purnot 2010).¹³ Americans have always keenly understood the cultural diplomacy aspects of cemeteries (and embassy buildings for that matter). Ron Robin cites those who identify American military cemeteries in Western Europe as a "forceful presence" and a political "foothold," as "symbols of America" (Robin 55). Over the years, the importance of Margraten as a site of commemoration of American sacrifices and of Dutch-American relations has only grown, acknowledged by high-level visitors such as Queen Beatrix and President G. W. Bush on Memorial Day in 2015. Perhaps even more telling is the fact that Dutch citizens have adopted all of the individual soldiers' graves. The recently collected personal stories of these soldiers give a face to America's sacrifice, something the OWI Overseas Branch already tried to do in a more general way with the publication *Schetsen van een Amerikaansch Familie Leven*.

The implementation and reception of "the Projection of America" propaganda in the Netherlands is a topic that seems to have fallen between the cracks in studies of postwar cultural diplomacy and research on the Second World War, with its more familiar emphasis on the Occupation, the Holocaust, resistance and military battles. It deserves more attention, crucial as it is to both research agendas. It was part of the invasion and the liberation, but it was also the prototype for America's postwar cultural diplomacy efforts. Additional research on the 'receiving end' of "the Projection of America" campaign, in other countries, may yield more insights in the importance and impact of local circumstances.

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13 See for more information on the history of this cemetery and the personal stories of the soldiers buried there the website <http://www.margratenmemorial.nl>

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Educating the Nation: Jo Spier, Dutch National Identity, and the Marshall Plan in the Netherlands

Mathilde Roza

Introduction

In the visual history of the Marshall Plan, the image of a Dutchman climbing the U.S. Dollar sign to a more prosperous future is well-known and holds a prominent place in the history of the Marshall Plan to the Netherlands. The iconic image (see figure 1) appeared on the cover of a small booklet, *Het Marshall-Plan en U (The Marshall Plan and You)* which had been designed and illustrated by Dutch artist Jo Spier, a well-known and highly popular illustrator in the Netherlands in the period before WWII, and regarded by many as one of the best, if not the best, illustrator of his time (Van der Heyden 13).

Published in November 1949, the booklet saw a second edition in March 1950, a third one in May of the same year, and reached an estimated 2,5 million Dutch people (one-fourth of the Dutch population at that time).¹ Also, after its successful appearance in the Netherlands, the booklet was translated into English² and was used in the United States to a very similar purpose: while the Dutch were being educated about the benefits of accepting American aid and the necessity for European cooperation, the American people, many of whom were opposed to the project, likewise needed to be educated on the goals and practices of the Marshall Plan and persuaded

1 The booklet's success is also illustrated by the fact that an exhibition on the Marshall Plan in the Netherlands, which opened in Amsterdam in early 1951, was entitled "Het Marshall-Plan en U" (See for instance *IJmuider Courant*, 5 maart 1951, 2. Krantenviewer Noord-Hollands Archief, <http://nha.courant.nu/issue/IJC/1951-03-05/edition/null/page/2>).

2 There are two different versions of *Het Marshall-Plan en U*, in both the Dutch and the English edition. Contrary to what Tity de Vries has written, however, this was not a matter of the English version differing from the Dutch (De Vries 44). In the second edition of both the English and the Dutch version, two errors from the first edition were corrected. First, the original edition had mentioned Switzerland as one of the beneficiaries of Marshall aid; the second error involved the representation of Turkey.



FIGURE 1
Front cover of *Het Marshall-Plan en U*.

that their tax money was being spent to a good cause: “Winning the hearts and minds of fellow Americans ... meant circulating more than a million pieces of pro-Marshall Plan publications—booklets, leaflets, reprints and fact sheets. The primary focus was on elite opinion, but the grassroots were cultivated too” (Machado 20). One of these publications, then, was *The Marshall Plan and You*. The Americans’ appreciation of the booklet as well as its popular success are evident from its continued usage by the Library of Congress and The Marshall Foundation (both, for instance, have the booklet on their website) and by the United States Missions abroad (the United States Mission in Italy, for example, used several images from the booklet in their 2007 brochure “The Marshall Plan at 60”).

This article will discuss Jo Spier’s contributions to Dutch-American cultural diplomacy, *Het Marshall-Plan en U*, as well as another Marshall Plan booklet *Als We Niet Hélemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken* (“Lest we Fall off the Map Entirely”), a promotional booklet about the Technical Assistance Program in the Netherlands. Specifically, this essay will consider Spier’s representation of Dutch national and cultural identity. The deployment of “Dutchness” is shown to have been a prominent strategy in the promotion of the Marshall Plan in the Netherlands, not just in the official governmental narratives that Spier helped produce but in other media as well, including the “Marshall films” by the famous Dutch filmmaker Herman van der Horst.

Jo Spier

Joseph Eduard Adolf Spier, born in the city of Zutphen on June 26, 1900, became known to the general public first through his journalistic illustrations for *De Telegraaf*, a leading newspaper in the Netherlands and Spier's employer for 16 years. Starting in 1924, at a time when photography was still cumbersome and time-consuming, the young art school graduate accompanied reporters on their assignments and produced illustrations of news reports on a wide variety of events ranging from political debates to court cases, accidents, natural disasters, personal interviews, theatrical performances as well as a variety of human interest assignments (Wolf 192–93; 205–6). In the view of Mariette Wolf, the importance of Spier's visual contributions can only be underestimated: the illustrated reportage became the *Telegraaf's* trademark to no small part because of Spier's work (Wolf 189). In the course of the 1930s, his drawings increasingly appeared as a *Telegraaf* category of its own: Spier developed a personal and recognizable style in which drawing and text, usually printed in the characteristic hand-written style that Spier became known for, worked together to provide mildly amused or ironic commentary on current events (Van Gelder 1994, 41–42). Indeed, Spier thought of himself more as a journalist than an artist (Van Gelder 1994, 25) and, as will be discussed below, Spier's Marshall Plan booklets reveal Spier's talent at creating "crossover[s] between a column and a cartoon" (Van Gelder 1992, 3).

Spier's work, whose style shows the influence of developments in that field in American magazines such as *Punch* and *The New Yorker* (Schöffers 1), is characterized by the use of fine yet sharply drawn lines, great precision, a radical economy, an impression of ease, and a distinct lightness of tone. Equipped with an eye for local color and the characteristic significant detail, as well as a loving attention for the trivialities of everyday life and the idiosyncrasies of individual people, Spier's genius lay in his ability to capture and convey essential qualities of the people, situations and places that he portrayed. As the director of the National Academy of Fine Arts in Amsterdam, the artist Richard Roland Holst, wrote in his foreword to the first collection of Spier drawings of 1933:

He fully grasps the very art which is the sign of mastery: the art of omission, the art to sacrifice everything that does not contribute to the picture. Spier achieves endlessly more with three, four lines than a mediocre draftsman does with a whole battery of technical manoeuvres. To arrive at so strict a limitation, one needs to think deeply and feel purely. (Qtd. in Van Gelder 1994, 37, translation mine)

The sharp clarity of his message, and the often humorous and original way in which he presented his observations to his audience were universally praised. Spier, as a 1946 review in the *IJmuider Courant* put it, was as “a wizard in black and white” whose drawings “tell of the whole of our multi-colored life as Spier’s brain has transformed it into grotesque or sparkling little portraits, with the sole purpose of pleasing the eye” (2). Although often animated by a sense of middle-class well-being—a characteristic also of the *Telegraaf* which began as a publication of the Amsterdam elite and became increasingly right-wing in the course of the 20th century (Wolf 2009)—his refined work was nevertheless marked by a sense of irony and humor, and not infrequently, a certain frivolousness. At its best, Spier’s work succeeds in temporarily defamiliarizing the known and rendering the ordinary extraordinary—a quality that Jo Spier himself aimed for: “[I wish I had more] insight,” he once reflected, “into why we consider the things that we normally do ... so normal, while they are really very strange. I hope that you look upon my drawings not as ordinary jokes— [but] that you can find some criticism in them at the folly that sometimes characterizes our society” (qtd. in Van Gelder 1994, 42, translation mine).

Spier’s work for *De Telegraaf* began to draw national attention as early as 1926 and a first exhibition of his newspaper illustrations was organized in 1932.³ A first anthology of his newspaper drawings, simply entitled *Jo Spier*, was published in 1933; many more exhibitions and publications were to follow. From the mid-1930s onwards, Spier additionally developed a career as an extraordinarily productive advertisement illustrator and rapidly obtained an important place and a high reputation in the world of Dutch advertising; Spier’s work was favorably discussed in practically every issue of *De Reclame*, a professional magazine for advertisers, throughout the 1930s (Van Gelder 1994, 47). The number of companies that Spier worked for was immense. What stands out from the list of employers is the number of large national firms; Spier illustrated promotional materials and publications for KLM, the Dutch Steam Company, the Dutch Postal Service, The Dutch-Indian Coal Trading Company, the Royal Dutch Salt Industry, the Dutch Shipbuilding Company, the Dutch Publishing Association (see figure 2), and many more.

3 For a detailed description of the praise and the positive responses that Jo Spier’s work received in magazines and newspapers in the Netherlands and the former Dutch Indies, as well as an outline of his fame and reputation in the decades before WWII, see Henk van Gelder, 1994, 34–59.

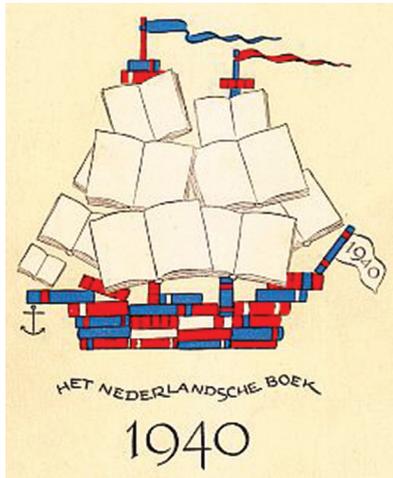


FIGURE 2

Het Nederlandsche Boek 1940 (The Dutch Book 1940, a publication of the Dutch Publishing Association). Amsterdam: Nederlandsche Uitgeversbond, 1940. COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JO SPIER.

Spier's public association with national cultural identity was strengthened further by the artist's strong preference for iconography associated with "Dutchness," a term that I use in the definition provided by historian Willem Frijhoff. Emphasizing the movability and changeability of definitions of national identity depending on time, place, context and point of view, Frijhoff defines Dutchness as "a general concept encompassing all those aspects of Dutch life and culture that were considered, at a particular moment and in a specific context, as characteristic and distinctive of the Dutch" (Frijhoff 328). In the case of Dutch national identity, he argues, most of these aspects are cultural in nature. Rather than identifying as a political nation as many European countries do, according to Frijhoff

[The Dutch] look for their unifying principles much more horizontally, in the cultural performances of the actual community itself: i.e. its emblems, like the House of Orange (which is not at all the same as the Crown), or the big Dutch multinational firms like Royal Dutch Shell or Philips, its symbols (like the national anthem, the city of Amsterdam ... or the major football teams), its shared social practices (like Saint Nicholas's Eve, the elaborate birthday festivals, coffee meetings with neighbours, and a host of everyday gestures that identify a Dutch citizen), its heroes (like founding father William of Orange ... the painters Rembrandt and Van Gogh, or football player John Cruyff), and above all its perceived or imagined values, such as the claim to be a really democratic, tolerant, consensual, open and utterly peaceful society. (336)

When seen in this light, Spier emerges as an artist who focused on exactly those aspects and features of the Netherlands that functioned as the “engine of national sentiment” (Frijhoff 335).⁴ Whether designed for national firms or other employers, many of Spier’s promotional materials reference Dutch culture: he often referred to the Dutch connection to water and water management; frequently alluded to fishing, sailing and skating; depicted fishermen, sailors and farmers (see Figure 3), Dutch customs or goods; and produced many picturesque drawings of landscapes and townscapes. Also,



FIGURE 3
1001 Manieren om u te Beveiligen (1001 Ways to Obtain Security), a promotional booklet of an insurance company). Amsterdam, H. van Veeeren N.V., 1941. COVER AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY JO SPIER.

4 Ironically, Spier, who was Jewish and lived in concentration camp Theresienstadt from April 1943 to May 1945, was suspected of having collaborated with the Nazis due to his forced involvement with the infamous Nazi propaganda movie *Theresienstadt*. Although Jo Spier was pronounced innocent of collaboration with the Nazis in September 1945 following intense investigations in both Czechoslovakia and the Netherlands, he continued to be viewed with suspicion in his home country—a state of affairs that may have contributed to his emigration to the United States in 1951, where he acquired US citizenship in 1957 (van Gelder 130).

Spier regularly accepted assignments from well-known manufacturers of typical Dutch food and drink, such as *jenever* (Bols), cacao (Droste), *ontbijtkoek* (Peynenburg), salad oil (Calvé), and Dutch beer (Amstel, as well as Heineken's beer brewery in the Dutch Indies, Mij Soerabaja). Surveying Spier's work in Dutch advertising, it is clear that Dutchness represented a very important selling strategy.

Het Marshall-Plan en U

Het Marshall-Plan en U, which appeared in November 1949, was one of several government initiatives to explain and promote the Marshall Plan to the Dutch population. As a unique foreign aid program, the Marshall Plan also represented an extensive exercise in cultural diplomacy that was accompanied by an elaborate publicity machine which produced brochures, images, stickers, booklets, newsreels, films; organized exhibitions, colouring contests, poster contests, parades and more to bring the American assistance to the people's attention. As Charles L. Mee, Jr., wrote: "In pursuit of higher productivity, the Americans would badger, wheedle, scold and humor the Europeans to a frazzle" (Mee 248). In the Netherlands, there was communication via brochures, leaflets and newsreels in cinemas, there were so-called "truck days" (when Marshall trucks, imported from the United States, drove through Dutch cities), there were parades, activities and fairs that were themed to the Marshall Plan, and the ERP logo was made visible in many places, starting with the distribution of 30,000 posters to Dutch bakers in November 1948 which announced that "over half of your bread is produced using Marshall grain" (De Vries 41).

In general, these activities enlisted but little enthusiasm from the Dutch, who, as the proverbial rule has it, tended to respond with suspicion at everything they considered conspicuous, flashy, or exaggerated (De Vries 43, Van der Hoeven 113). The archives of the Dutch Press Service at the National Archives in The Hague contain repeated calls to the Americans to take the Dutch soberness and dislike for pomp and circumstance into account in designing their propaganda; repeatedly, the correspondence regarding the required promotional activities contains warnings that the Dutch have "a different mentality" from the Americans, and displays worries that any form of "opzichtige" (flashy) American-style propaganda would simply be countereffective. With regard to the labels that were put on bread and other goods, the Press Service archive contains a typical response: "[We have accepted this] to increase our goodwill in America because it turns out that

the Americans are very proud of their help to Europe. And they wish to give expression to this by putting labels on goods.”⁵

In the face of this national resentment at intrusive promotional materials, a reassuring affirmation of Dutch identity may have struck the Press Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs—in charge of informing the population of the Marshall Plan—as the most persuasive strategy by which to attempt to sell the Marshall Plan. Approaching Jo Spier in this regard was an understandable and excellent choice: although the war had interfered, Spier’s drawing style continued to be nationally known and greatly appreciated. More importantly, perhaps, his reputation as a charming chronicler of Dutch common culture and national identity was strong. In addition, he was an excellent advertiser and salesman. *Het Marshall-Plan en U* became the Press Agency’s most successful Marshall publication (Van der Hoeven 101).

The first noticeable way in which *Het Marshall-Plan en U* catered to the Dutch commonsensical sensibilities is the booklet’s style: the reader is not confronted with a knowledgeable and didactic expert but is addressed by a direct and personal talking voice whose everyday common sense is underscored by Spier’s characteristic use of handwritten rather than typed words. A second feature is the booklet’s strong emphasis on Dutch national identity; in fact, I argue, it is this dimension that represented the most important marketing strategy and selling point in persuading the Dutch to accept the Marshall Plan and, by extension, to embrace the prospect of building a more cooperative Europe. Jo Spier’s visual representation of Dutchness contributed much to this strategy; indeed, the emphasis on Dutch national identity was carried not so much by the text as by the illustration of the cheerful little man on the ladder whom Spier chose as his central message man.

Volendam

Although the Marshall Plan sought to bring modernization, technological innovation and increased industrial productivity to Dutch business and society, the protagonist of *Het Marshall-Plan en U* is a fisherman from the idyllic village of Volendam, a well-known icon of traditional Dutch values, which

5 National Archives, The Hague, Ministry of Economic Affairs: Press Service and External Relations, 1941–1987, access number 2.06.085, box E20114, inventory number 110, 23 August 1948.

was long regarded as the very “anchor of Hollandishness” (Van Ginkel 3, translation mine).

In representing the Netherlands as a Volendam fisherman, identifiably dressed in the accompanying regional costume, Spier followed a tradition established in the 19th century when cultural nationalists embraced the inhabitants of farming and fishing communities as “national icons” who represented the true and “authentic” Dutch identity that was rapidly disappearing under the influence of modernization, urbanization and the rise of technologies (Van Ginkel, 4). In the second half of the 19th century, which also saw the rise of fisherfolk genre painting among the visual artists of the “The Hague School” (for instance Jacob Maris, Hendrik Willem Mesdag and Jozef Israëls), Dutch fishermen and fisherwomen were increasingly associated with the national character of the Dutch as a whole, and their values of industriousness, reliability, virtue, frugality and piousness were made exemplary to the nation at large (Van Ginkel 2009, 5; De Nijs and Beukers 2003, 627–28). Especially Volendam, whose picturesque aspects were discovered and described by the French cultural historian Henry Havard in the 1870s, became a magnet for painters from England, France, Italy, Germany and the United States. In the United States, the discovery of Dutch genre painting strongly contributed to the phenomenon of “Holland Mania,” the American celebration of all things Dutch in the period between 1880 and 1920 (De Nijs and Beukers 628; see also Stott 1998).

Although always already nostalgic, the fisherman’s symbolic representation of Dutch national identity became even more a manifestation of nostalgic desire after 1932, when the Zuiderzee, the sea that Volendam’s fishing identity was built upon and strongly associated with, was “lost” as part of the Zuiderzee Works. The target of one of the greatest 20th-century land reclamation projects in the Netherlands, the Zuiderzee was partially transformed into land and partially into a sweet-water lake, Lake IJssel, by means of a 20-mile dam, the so-called Afsluitdijk (“Closure Dike”). The Zuiderzee’s disappearance drastically reduced the number of fishermen and further threatened their culture. As the catalogue of a large exhibition on the disappearing Zuiderzee fishing culture wrote in 1930: “Much of what has given Holland its particular charm will irrevocably be lost ... When the Afsluitdijk is completed, all of that beautiful life which constitutes the fame of ‘typical Holland’ will have been surrendered to extinction” (cited in Wieringa 56, translation mine). But fears over the disappearance of the fishing-culture around the Zuiderzee stemmed from an earlier date: the region’s material culture was documented by writers, painters and photographers (see figure 4) and incorporated into museums as early as 1918 (Van Ginkel 13).



FIGURE 4 “Contemporary travelers in Volendam regional costume,” *Fotograaf Volendam* 120, ‘Reisblog Liefde voor Reizen,’ <https://www.liefdevoorreizen.nl/bestemming/europa/nederland/zaandam-en-volendam>. Used with permission.

Spier, who himself had lived in Volendam from 1921 to 1923 while studying at the Academy of Art in Amsterdam (Van Gelder 1994, 18), was no doubt fully aware of the village’s iconicity and the legacy of the “The Hague school.” In *Het Marshall-Plan en U* Spier recognizes and ostensibly returns to this tradition, but with a crucial difference: far from working in a social realist or sentimental romantic style, Spier designed a fisherman with decidedly cartoonesque, even caricatural characteristics, showing unmistakable joy but also an ironic awareness of both the stereotypical nature and the datedness of this definition of Dutchness. Less a stereotype than a caricature of the stereotype, Spier’s utterly inoffensive, charming, pipe-smoking fisherman possessed a strong “feel good” quality. Because of the fisherman’s iconicity, this quality easily transferred to Dutch national identity as a whole. At the same time, the fisherman’s cartoonesque character made the appeal to nationalism—taking place immediately after a vast historical tragedy in which nationalism had assumed a particularly destructive shape in the form of Hitler’s national-socialism—seem equally inoffensive.

Selling the Marshall Plan: Dutchness as Marketing Strategy

Het Marshall-Plan en U first introduces all participants to the Marshall Plan in the form of 17 healthy-looking and well-dressed men (16 in further editions);

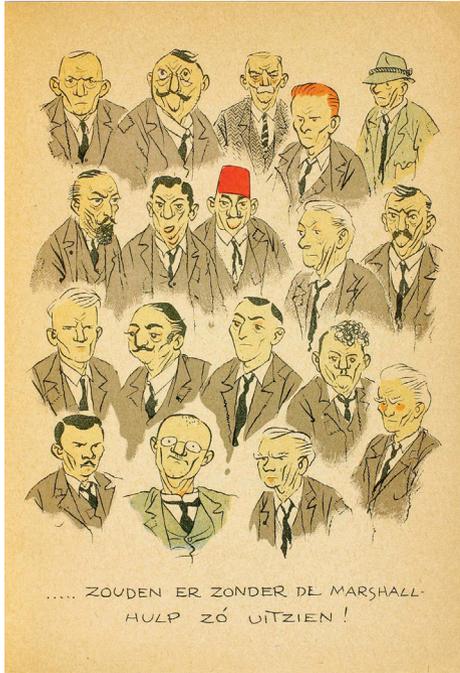


FIGURE 5

"[The men representing the participating countries] would look like this without Marshall aid," Het Marshall-Plan en U. In further editions, Turkey was represented without the fez.

on the next page text and image work together to inform the reader that all would look terrible without the Marshall Plan (see figure 5).

Reflecting the dire situation of Europe in 1947, when economic stagnation, a poorly functioning market, failing crops and a severe shortage of funds threatened what post-war recovery had been achieved, the brochure next warns of several dangers: without the Marshall Plan, the booklet argues, there will be a shortage of food, postwar reconstruction will come to a standstill, and factories will stop their production of goods. The essentially depressing messages were considerably lightened up by the narratives that were provided. Also, these macro-economic concerns were made relevant to ordinary citizens by a humorous translation into recognizable Dutch daily concerns. Strikingly, although couched in humor, the message seemed to be that Dutchness itself was at a danger: a low living standard, the booklet shows and argues, represents an assault on the Dutch desire for neatness (one would not be able to make one's children presentable, see figure 6). Likewise, low productivity would rob the Dutch, somewhat surprisingly, of the satisfactions of frugality (one would not be able to mend one's socks, the booklet warns the reader).

In addition, the booklet actively preaches and thus asserts a variety of what were seen as typical Dutch traits of character: the audience is told to hold



FIGURE 6

“Without the Marshall Plan your bread would not be ‘dressed.’ and nor would your children!”
Het Marshall-Plan en U.

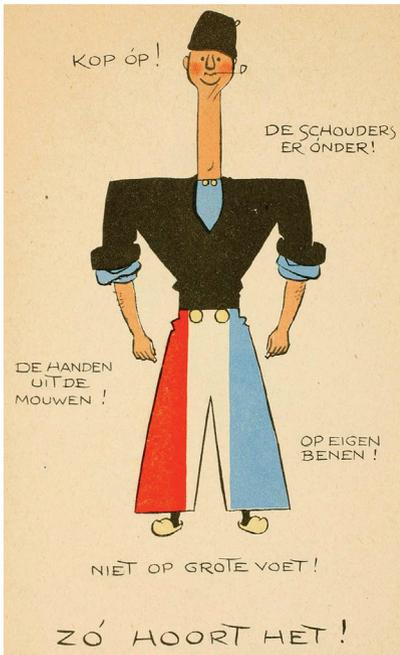


FIGURE 7

“Hold your head up, put your shoulder to the wheel, roll up your sleeves, stand on your own two feet, do not live beyond your means. That’s the way!” Het Marshall-Plan en U.

their heads up, put their shoulders to the wheel, roll up their sleeves, stand on their own two feet, and not live beyond their means. Accepting American money, the author thus reassures the readers, does not imply a loss of initiative, responsibility or national honor. To stress these national values, the fisherman no longer wears his regional colors, but dons trousers in the colors and stripes of the Dutch flag (see figure 7), a clear encouragement to identify national pride as a source of confidence and optimism as well as a great help in overcoming the crisis.

United States help, in short, poses no threat to Dutchness: Uncle Sam, who is portrayed as larger of body, is amiably helping the Dutchman cycle uphill, or rather, *updyke* (see figure 8). The reference to these two quintessentially Dutch elements—bicycles and dykes—creates a view of Uncle Sam as supportive of the Dutch culture and lifestyle: he simply helps the Dutch “be” and “do” whatever it is they want to be and do. This, in turn, helped deepen the Dutch people’s association with the United States not just as liberators but as benefactors to whom they should be grateful.

It is only on the last page that the booklet turns to the theme of European cooperation; the sixteen men representing the participating countries, the Volendam fisherman among them, are shown plodding up a mountain (and into a fairly mountainous terrain ahead), holding a life line which forms the



FIGURE 8 *Spier's Volendam fisherman and Uncle Sam cycling up a steep dyke, Het Marshall-Plan en U.*

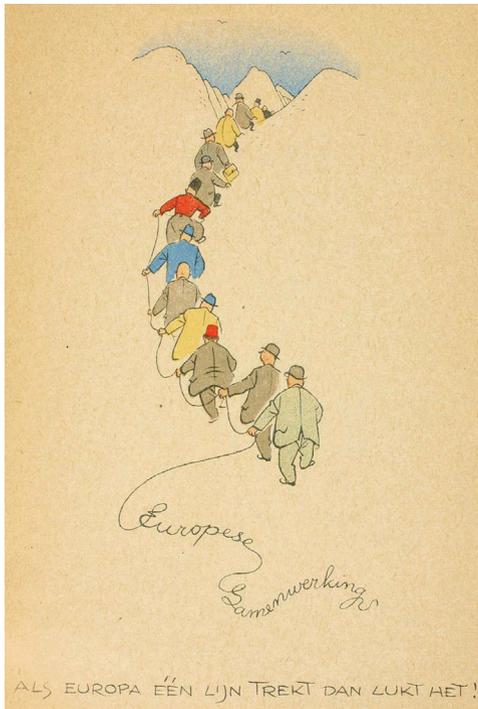


FIGURE 9

The sixteen participating countries trudging uphill, holding a line that spells “European cooperation,” Het Marshall-Plan en U.

words “European cooperation” (see figure 9). The accompanying caption (which was omitted in the English edition) reads: “If Europe pulls together on this one, we will succeed!”

This message notwithstanding, the booklet’s main argument in favor of accepting Marshall help is that US money will allow the Dutch to hold on to their core values, as embodied in the Volendam fisherman. Anyone who wishes the Netherlands to once again become “the good old land,” the booklet writes, had better accept Marshall aid. Visually, the prospective future of the Netherlands is pictured as follows (see figure 10):

The house of Holland, waving the Dutch flag, is quiet and comfortable, a cow is grazing in the meadow, flowers are in bloom, and the fisherman quietly continues his fishing. Strikingly, the Volendam inhabitant is fishing *on the wrong coast*: that of the North Sea, rather than the inner sea where Volendam is situated. This occurs despite the even more remarkable fact that the former Zuiderzee is still there: the Afsluitdijk—the 20-mile dam which, from the perspective of the older generation “robbed” Volendam of its sea—is omitted from the drawing altogether. Nevertheless, the fisherman, though still wearing his regional costume, has moved elsewhere. The



FIGURE 10
Spier's visualization of the Netherlands as "the good old land" ("het goede oude land,") Het Marshall-Plan en U.

temporal paradox in fact emphasizes the timelessness of the Volendam figure; his displacement to the North Sea coast likewise contributes to the revival of the Volendam fisherman as a *pars pro toto* for Dutch national identity.

Als we niet Hélemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken

A second product of cultural diplomacy that Jo Spier contributed to was *Als we niet hélemaal van de kaart willen raken* ("Lest we Fall off the Map Entirely"). It was published at the request of the Dutch "Contactgroep Opvoering Productiviteit" (Productivity Committee, COP), an agency which coordinated and encouraged Dutch interest in the Marshall Plan's "Technical Assistance." The Technical Assistance program aimed "to stimulate greater efficiency in industrial production through the introduction of American production techniques, styles of business organization, and labour-management partnerships" (Inklaar 1997, 33), and brought thousands of European professionals to the United States to learn about the latest techniques in management, technology and marketing. *Als we niet Hélemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken* contributed to the COP's goal of generating "the maximum amount of awareness of and publicity about the productivity concept" (Inklaar 2009, 758). The booklet did so by presenting a case study of a Dutch factory owner who ponders travelling

to the United States on a study-trip, or sending his staff, to meet American experts and learn how his firm could successfully increase productivity.

Spier's Volendam fisherman plays no role during the narrative proper. However, he is crucially evoked in the opening pages of the booklet to counter Dutch distrust of America's intentions which, as a 1949 poll conducted by the Bureau for Foreign Opinion and Market Research in New York and Zürich revealed, continued to be a reality in the Netherlands: 41% of those familiar with the Marshall Plan, for instance, were of the opinion that America was interfering in Dutch business and politics.⁶ Responding to the Bureau's recommendation that the Dutch needed to be convinced of America's honest intentions, the brochure emphasized that America was "in the same boat" as the Netherlands: as in the case of *Het Marshall-Plan en U*, the Volendam fisherman is joined by a large Uncle Sam to perform another typically Dutch activity: rowing a boat (see figure 11). Again, accepting



FIGURE 11

"[This booklet is intended] for those who know that the Americans are helping us because they are in the same boat as we are," Als we niet Hélemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken.

6 Roosevelt Study Center Middelburg, microfilmed at the National Archives Washington. Record Group 469 "Records of the Agency for International Development and Predecessor Agencies. Mission to the Netherlands, 1949–1953." Reel 7 Information Division, 1948–1954, Box 3 "Polls and Public Opinion," 295. Dutch newspapers gave detailed reports of the poll's results. See for instance, "Nederlands volk goed bekend met Marshall-Plan," *Haarlem's Dagblad*, 14 December 1949, 2. <http://nha.courant.nu/issue/HD/1949-12-14/edition/o/page/2>

American aid is construed as the one way for the Netherlands to “remain itself,” as the booklet literally writes, by dispelling the threat of totalitarianism: specifically, the booklet promises that the Dutch will continue to be allowed to insult their mayor by calling him a “suffert”⁷ (an “oaf”) without landing in jail.

Dutch distrust of American aid is most effectively depicted as uncalled-for with the help of two prelapsarian Volendammers. Cracking a joke at the expense of Volendam’s traditionally strong religiosity, Spier shows two hesitant Volendammers, half-naked, but donning their regional headgear and their clogs (and even the pipe, in the case of the male figure), pondering the dollar sign as the snake in the Garden of Eden (see figure 12):

The image of prelapsarian Volendammers once more reveals the caricatural dimension of Spier’s use of the Volendam fisherman. Stretching the limits of the supposed timelessness and essentialism of this “Dutchness” to the point



FIGURE 12

“This booklet is not intended for the man who believes that this is what American help is all about,” Als we niet Hélemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken.

7 Rather cleverly, Spier misspells the word “sufferd,” thereby implying that those who would insult their mayor are likely to be poorly educated.

of absurdity, Spier's representation displays the element of mild mockery that was so characteristic of his work. Designed to make the reader smile, it also functions to depict Dutch distrust of American aid as an equally quaint and charmingly innocent error of judgement. As in *Het Marshall-Plan en U*, Spier discredits the truthfulness of the charming Volendam fisherman as an icon of Dutchness. At the same time, the stereotype is upheld to get strategically useful messages across: whereas the appeal to national identity becomes harmless and inoffensive in *Het Marshall-Plan en U*, in *Als We Niet Helemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken* distrust of U.S. intentions is transformed into a naïvely anti-modern sentiment.

Accepting help, the booklet argues at its close, is not shameful or dangerous but smart: with American aid, progress will be inevitable. If *Het Marshall-Plan en U* depicted the future of the Netherlands through the modernization of the Volendam fisherman by having him fish on a different or new coast, the second Marshall Plan booklet more strongly emphasizes technological progress. At the booklet's close, the Volendam fisherman is no longer to be seen. Instead of a humble rowing boat, the last page shows a large seaship, a ladder dangling from its side to facilitate the entry of a "pilot," a specialist of the local waters who advises the captain of a ship how to navigate these waters. Once more tapping into Dutch culture and using a maritime metaphor, the booklet drives the point home to the proud sea-faring nation: "even the very best captain will accept a pilot to come aboard when he enters difficult waters! The Netherlands is in difficult waters!!!" Participating in the Marshall Plan, both booklets argue, is not just smart, but will pose no threat to the persistence of Dutch culture.

Linking Dutch National identity and the Marshall Plan: Other Media

The two booklets illustrated by Spier were not unique in making a strategic linkage between Dutch cultural identity and the acceptance of Marshall-Plan aid. Several artists, for instance, incorporated the Marshall help into an acceptable narrative of national identity by linking George Marshall to the mythical figure of "Sinterklaas" (Saint Nicholas), a kindly and insightful father-figure who brings joy to those children who have behaved well enough to deserve a gift. A complex figure of historical, legendary and folkloristic origins combined, Sinterklaas has become so central a part of Dutch cultural tradition over the last few centuries that the celebration of his saintly life, on the eve of December 6, was recently placed on UNESCO's

list of Dutch immaterial cultural heritage.⁸ In the political cartoon below (see figure 13), Franco's Spain, the only major Western European country that was excluded from the Aid Program, is depicted as the naughty child who would be excluded from the gift-giving ceremony, as determined by Sinterklaas's alleged great wisdom. The other nations (we see France, the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Italy, dressed in regional costumes) come running in much the same way that Dutch children would on December 5. Drawn by the Dutch political cartoonist Leendert Jurriaan Jordaan in April 1948, the cartoon is entitled "Late Sinterklaas: wie de koek krijgt, wie de gard" ("A Late Sinterklaas Celebration—who gets the goodies, who gets the stick?"):



FIGURE 13 L.J. Jordaan, "Late Sinterklaas—Wie de koek krijgt, wie de gard" 06-04-1948, Bron 738, Atlas van Stolk, Het Geheugen van Nederland, <http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl>

8 See Nationale Inventaris Immaterieel Cultureel Erfgoed Koninkrijk Nederland, "Sinterklaasfeest," <http://immaterieelerfgoed.nl/tradities/details/sinterklaasfeest/61>. Accessed July 1, 2016.

An even more striking example of an association between George Marshall and Sinterklaas is provided in a song by Lodewijk Dieben, a then popular Dutch singer and performer, who, following the practice of Dutch musicians to Americanize their names (a practice that Walter van de Leur discusses in his essay), was known as Lou Bandy. Together with the Dutch swingband The Ramblers, Bandy recorded his so-called “Marshall-liedje” (“Marshall-tune”) in 1948, a song whose seemingly unimaginative title in fact places it in the category of the so-called “Sinterklaasliedje.”⁹ In contrast to Jordaan’s political cartoon, Bandy imagines a much more liberal Sinterklaas. The decidedly frivolous song depicts Marshall as “the modern replacement of Saint Nicholas,” refers to him as Saint Marshall (even “Sint Marshall kapoentje” after the well-known name for Sinterklaas as “Sinterklaas kapoentje”), and implores him to please “throw something in our shoe,” as Dutch children traditionally request of Sinterklaas in their songs. Eliding the pedagogical matter of punishment and potential exclusion altogether, Bandy is provocatively “naughty:” the song strongly suggests that the traditionally money-loving Dutch would be foolish not to use this opportunity to get free money: as the song puts it, “wherever there’s money, life’s a ball!”—a line that is repeated twice before it climaxes in “wherever there are dollars, life’s a ball!” Taking the promise of a higher standard of living to its limits, the song hopes that “the Dutch lion will be given a golden dress” and looks forward to the Dutch reliving its “Golden Age.” In addition, the song (which takes the form of a medley and provides adaptations of several popular Dutch traditionals) even encourages the traditionally proud Dutch to flaunt their poverty if that is what it takes to get the money, in the same way that the original song encourages Dutch boys to show off their spiritedness because that will help them to attract girls: the original “en dat we toffe jongens zijn dat willen we weten!” (“we sure want to insist that we’re great guys!”) becomes “en dat we arme mensen zijn dat willen we weten!” (“we sure want to insist that we’re poor people!”) because that will help to attract (more) money. Despite the indecent comparison that Bandy draws between the desire for girls and the desire for money, he still hopes “Saint Marshall” will fill his shoe. All in all, the song promotes accepting Marshall help, but does so through a provocative celebration of Dutch shrewdness and recalcitrant “naughtiness.”

9 I wish to thank Lisa van Kessel, Master student of North American Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen, for alerting me to this parallel.

More praise of characteristics that are traditionally ascribed to the Dutch can be found in Herman van der Horst's high modernist documentaries *'t Schot is te Boord* (*Shoot the Nets*) of 1951 and *Houen Zo!* (*Steady!*) of 1952. Commissioned and funded by the Dutch mission of the Economic Cooperation Agency (ECA) and the Mutual Security Agency (MSA) of the Marshall program respectively, both films present Dutch culture in strongly positive terms. Like Jo Spier's Marshall booklets, *'t Schot is te Boord* is centred around the Dutch fishing communities, but this time on the coast of the North Sea (not Volendam). Donning regional costumes as well, the Dutch men and women depicted in this prize-winning documentary provide a powerful view of Dutch traditional values, culture and lifestyle (see figure 14). Intended to convey the importance of intra-European cooperation, the film shows the Dutch fishing boats to be travelling to Dogger Bank, then an important fishing area east of Northern England. "Eight different nations send their ships to these hunting grounds," the narrator tells the viewer. "Here there are no borders. While the rest of the world merely talks about peace and integration, these simple fishermen provide an example of peaceful cooperation on a daily basis." Throughout, however, the film presents the power, strength and validity of Dutch culture through the traditional lives of "authentic" Dutch fishing communities as they determinedly and courageously wrest a livelihood from the potentially life-threatening water.

Houen Zo! was one of several initiatives to draw public attention to the ways in which Marshall money was being employed for important public projects, in this case the rebuilding of the harbor and city of Rotterdam. Strikingly, the opening of this highly successful 20-minute film in which "the city becomes a rhythmic composition of machines and people" (Paalman 193), starts off with the following quotation by Clarence E. Hunter, the head of the ECA mission in the Netherlands:



FIGURE 14 Stills of Herman van der Horst's *'t Schot is te Boord*.

May the resurrection of bombed-out Rotterdam be a symbol of the recovered strength of the entire Netherlands. The recovery that has been achieved is due in the first place to the willpower of the Dutch themselves. The Marshall Plan has contributed only in the sense that the prosperity of previous times could be regained with less loss of time and money, and with a minimal lowering of the living standard. – Clarence E. Hunter

Another clear tribute to the Dutch nation, its culture and its willpower, *Houen Zo!* celebrates the Dutch solid work ethic, as well as the workers' principles of cooperation, solidarity and determination, as having been instrumental in rebuilding the city. American money, Hunter publicly insists, merely helped to speed up a process of recovery that the Dutch themselves achieved.¹⁰

Conclusion: Dutch National Identity and the Power of Hope, Optimism and Encouragement

Boosts to national morale such as can be found in the “official” works of Jo Spier and Herman van der Horst can be seen as a logical outcome of the Marshall Plan’s underlying premise, as expressed by George Marshall in his famous 1947 speech, that European economic recovery could only be achieved by the Europeans themselves. As Machado summarized Marshall’s point of view: “Recipients had to be centrally involved in planning for their own assistance. Only Europeans could reconstruct and save Europe. The US had to perform as a catalytic agent in the process” (Machado 2007, 7). At such, the cultural materials analyzed above powerfully illustrate the psychological dimension of the Marshall Plan—a dimension which some historians have argued should in fact be considered one of the Plan’s crucial characteristics (Inklaar 1997; Machado 2007; Judt 2001, 2005). As Tony Judt put it, the Marshall Plan was “not just economic and political; it was also and perhaps above all psychological” (Judt, 7). The promise of aid, the prospect of stability, and the restoration of public confidence that the Marshall Plan suggested to many were of utmost importance against the background of the many financial, social and political

10 Hunter’s statement ties in with the observation by Huetting (2008) who likewise found that European Marshall Plan films frequently emphasized and praised Europe’s own efforts and importance. Also, they pointed out that although the financial contribution made by the United States was probably indispensable, it was only one factor in Europe’s recovery (Huetting, 210–11).

uncertainties of the postwar situation, especially those of 1947 (Judt 1994, 7). What the present study of these well-known and celebrated Marshall materials reveals, however, is the extent to which post-WWII confidence, ambition and determination were fueled by means of an affirmation of core elements of Dutch national identity, nationalist sentiment and the promise (implicit and explicit) to the Dutch nation that they could “remain themselves” despite a projected future of European cooperation. Portrayed as something to treasure and defend, as something potentially changeable but nevertheless “real,” Dutchness was used as a strategy to help persuade and “educate” the nation that the Marshall Plan should be seen in positive terms and represented no threat. In the case of *Het Marshall-Plan en U, Als we niet Helemaal van de Kaart Willen Raken, 't Schot is te Boord* and *Houen Zo!*, the messages of hope, optimism and encouragement were brought to the Dutch in the form of an affirmation of Dutch national culture and identity.

The type of “Dutchness” that was advertised in these productions, moreover, implied a consolidation of a traditional monocultural national identity that was anchored in conservative traditional imagery (regional costumes, life-styles and customs), traditional traits of character (high work ethic, pride, resilience, resourcefulness, level-headedness), as well as a traditional separation of men and women into different spheres and an affirmation of the connection between descent and national identity: the employment of the traditional Dutch fishing communities contributes to this in the sense that they represent what Mac an Bhreithiún refers to as “place identity” which, because of its rootedness in a specific local history and its aura of authenticity, typically carries a vision of a monocultural Dutch identity (Mac an Bhreithiún 266). A larger corpus of Marshall Plan-related cultural productions would have to be considered to assess the full extent and intensity with which (traditional) Dutch identity was brought to the fore in response to the Marshall Plan. The promotional materials by Spier and van der Horst discussed in this essay, however, invested though they were in creating a more unified and cooperative Europe, are strongly reassuring of the validity and staying power of traditional Dutch identity and markedly lack a more open, transnational narrative that might have been expected in the light of the Marshall Plan’s ambition and agenda for intra-European integration.

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From Memory Repression to Memorialization: The Bombardments of Nijmegen 1944 and Mortsel 1943

Joost Rosendaal

On February 22, 1944, tragedy struck Nijmegen, a Dutch city in the south east of the Netherlands near the German border. American B-24 bombers, Liberators as they were called, dropped their fatal cargo on the city center. More than 760 people, including a few German soldiers, were killed in a matter of minutes. Hundreds of houses, five churches and most of the commercial center of the city were destroyed. On the same day, the Dutch cities of Enschede and Arnhem were hit as well, with less dramatic results. Alongside the flood of 1953 in the Dutch province of Zeeland and the bombing of Rotterdam by the Germans in May 1940, the Nijmegen bombing was the deadliest catastrophe in 20th-century Dutch history.

Despite the catastrophic scale of the bombardment the Nijmegen disaster did not become part of Dutch collective memory. The circumstances which led to the disaster remained unclear for many years. Many stories about the perpetrators and their motives circulated. Still, in the official history of the Netherlands in the Second World War by Loe de Jong only a few pages were devoted to the event (de Jong 1976, 1259–1262). It was not until 1984 that two studies appeared which examined the circumstances which had led to the event (Korthals Altes; Brinkhuis). These caused a flood of responses: there were feelings of recognition, of resignation and indignation, but also and especially they gave rise to many new questions. It now seemed clear what had caused the bombardment and who the perpetrators had been: American bombers had erred and mistaken Nijmegen for a German city.

Sixty years after the bombardment, the popular TV program *Andere Tijden* (*Different Times*) made a documentary about the disaster, which stated that for forty years there had been virtually no commemorations of the disaster: “Nothing was heard about it, unlike about the bombardment of Rotterdam. The big difference with Rotterdam, of course, is that this bombardment was a mistake, and one made by friends to boot. This makes the bereavement process much more complicated” (*Andere Tijden*). This set of assumptions will be the

central focus of the present essay.¹ In particular I will examine two aspects: the presumed lack of commemoration, and the explanation for the bombardment. First, why was the bombardment not commemorated for so long? Or, more precisely, is it true that no commemorations were held? Secondly, is the explanation given in 1984—that the bombers had the intention of bombing a German city—correct? Or is this a consoling vision, accepted to make it easier to cope with the loss of lives and the material damage caused by our Allied friends? The case of Nijmegen may illuminate a more general issue: to what extent did self-censorship and political correctness inhibit the processing of a traumatic Allied bombardment? In order to find an answer to these questions it may be useful to offer a comparison to the bombardment of the Belgian town of Mortsel.

On April 5, 1943, about ten months before the Nijmegen tragedy, American bombers—79 B-17 Flying Fortresses and 25 B-24 Liberators—began a mission to hit the ERLA-factory, a German aircraft industry building, near Mortsel, a town south of Antwerp. Due to German fighters, the Allied formation got in disarray, and was not able to bomb the target with the necessary precision. Only four or five of the 600 bombs hit the factory. The rest of the bombs destroyed the residential area Oude-God, killing 963 people, of whom 209 were younger than 15 years old. Although the factory had been hit, schools, houses and shops had been destroyed as well. As in the case of the Nijmegen disaster, this Mortsel tragedy did not obtain a place in the national war history or collective memory of Belgium (Serrien 2013). In many ways both events and their memorialization can be compared.

In order to discuss the first aspect, the commemorating of the Nijmegen bombardment, we should first ask how the national authorities reacted to the bombing of the three Dutch cities on February 22, 1944. Regarding the Dutch government-in-exile, the answer is simple yet rather shocking: it hardly reacted at all. No formal complaint was made to the Americans (Rosendaal 2009: 66–69).

What to make of this passive response? First of all, the Dutch authorities in London only found out about the bombardment on the 24th of February. According to an agreement with the forces, any operational plan, which could include the bombing of Dutch cities, was to be brought before the Dutch ministerial Committee on Air Raids in the Netherlands. This had not happened and the Dutch cabinet members were therefore very surprised to hear about the disaster. Still, Queen Wilhelmina did not want to make an official protest to the American government. She was more occupied with a German bombing raid near her home a few days before, which had killed two of her guards. It is also possible that she had not been informed of the full extent of the disaster

1 The ensuing examination is based on Rosendaal 2009.

and that her entourage wanted to protect her from any further strain. Later, it was said that the American ambassador had been severely questioned in the Queen's presence by the Dutch diplomat and cabinet member Michiels van Verduynen. But this story is incorrect: that particular interview actually took place after the earlier bombing of Enschede in October 1943. At the time of the February 1944 bombing, there no longer was an American ambassador to the Dutch government-in-exile in office. The Dutch government had hoped that a successor would be sent, which would have the added effect of confirming its (the government's) legitimacy. Thus, it is likely that for that reason as well, the ministers played down their reaction. In retrospect, their restraint can be seen as a form of self-censorship: the Dutch government-in-exile was afraid it would lose its recognition by the American government and kept quiet. Yet it is reasonable to ask, given the cabinet members' self-centered attitude, whether they would have made a firm protest had diplomatic relations not been at stake. At the same moment, for example, three of them were on the verge of resigning, for they felt ignored and were dismayed by the queen's authoritarian attitude (Rosendaal 2014: 61–62; Van Esch 239–248).

The reaction in the Netherlands was equally muted. Although posters appeared after the bombing protesting the 'Anglo-Americaansche Oorlogsvoering' ['the Anglo-American Warfare'], the German occupiers and the NSB [the Dutch National Socialist Party] made only limited use of it for propaganda purposes. The NSB burgomaster Van Lokhorst was in no working condition, officially because of his health, but in fact because he was afraid of an attempt on his life. His deputy, Deputy Mayor Harmanus Hondius, as convinced a National Socialist as the other aldermen of Nijmegen at the time, was doing his best to protect the unity of the Nijmegen population. He saw to it that post-bombardment aid was not monopolized by the national socialist *Nederlandse Volksdienst* [the Dutch Public Aid Service] and also ensured that the public funeral of the bombardment's victims and the concomitant memorial service were not organized by the NSB. Thus the memory of the bombing took on a politically neutral character almost from the outset (Rosendaal 2009: 87–105).

This is not to say that no attempts were made in the Netherlands to politicize the bombing. Celebrating Hitler's birthday in Nijmegen, a mere two months after the event, for instance, *Reichskommissar* Seyss-Inquart compared the bombardment of the city with terrorist attacks on Germany and described them as a mode of cultural barbarism perpetrated by ill-informed Americans. The resistance, for its part, did not discuss the bombardment at length, but in its illegal papers it was always spoken of as an unintentional mistake made by a friend.

The postwar reaction to the bombing can be divided into four phases. In the first period, from 1944–1959, the city government did nothing to

organize commemorations; individuals and organizations took the initiative instead. It was really the churches that first heeded the call to remember the dead: they began holding annual commemoration services in 1947. The churches offered reasons drawn from the Christian tradition for the suffering that had taken place: God, they said, had had a purpose in allowing the bombardment to take place. The first memorial plaque, erected five years after the bombing, was for the victims who died in the Molenstraat church. Efforts to erect a national monument for the victims, however, were unsuccessful. It took ten years before the city officials finally organized a memorial ceremony, and it did not become an annual tradition. It was not until 1959 that a monument was finally erected to the memory of *all* of the civilian casualties in Nijmegen: Mari Andriessen's *De gevallen engel* [The Fallen Angel] (Rosendaal 2009: 167–242).

From 1959 to 1984, even fewer public commemorations of the bombing took place. A few memorial services were held during the 20th and 25th anniversary years, 1964 and 1969, but for the most part the disaster increasingly slipped out of the collective memory of Nijmegen. Only in 1984, on the fortieth anniversary of the disaster, was there a sudden upsurge of interest. A number of major memorial ceremonies took place, and two books appeared, written by Korthals Altes and Brinkhuis. The renewed awareness of nuclear threat caused by the projected stationing of cruise missiles in the Netherlands, which led to nation-wide protests, gave new cause to remember the bombing as a terrible example of the horrors of war. For the next several years In Paradisum, an organisation which takes care of the memorial cemetery where many of the bombing casualties were buried, organized the memorial ceremonies (Rosendaal 2009: 245–285).

The final significant change occurred in 1999, when the city at long last took it upon itself to organize public commemorations and memorials of the 1944 bombardment. New monuments were erected at the City Hall and at the graveyard on the Graafseweg, the location of the mass grave far away from the actual area of the bombing. From this moment on, the war and the bombing in particular were considered key moments in the history of Nijmegen (Rosendaal 2009: 287–305). The 65th anniversary in 2009 was held in the presence of representatives of the embassies of the U.S., Germany and the United Kingdom. For the first time a cabinet member, representing the prime minister, attended the remembrance ceremony. From this year onward, the ambassador or a *chargé d'affaires* of the U.S. held a yearly speech in which he offered American sympathy with the loss of lives.²

2 The Dutch government was not again present until 2016, and this was more by coincidence than planning.

A comparison to the bombardment of the Belgian town of Mortsel and its memorial history shows remarkable similarities in commemoration. Of course, in this case it was not a target of opportunity the American bombers intended to bomb, but the aircraft factory near this place. Nevertheless, with nearly a thousand civilians killed, this action was as catastrophic as the Nijmegen bombing. In the first decades after the war, many surviving victims and next of kin of those who were killed did not speak about the tragedy. Only in religious services those who died were remembered. The local inhabitants were outraged as local officials who had organized the aid in the aftermath of the bombing, were severely persecuted for their German friendliness. In 1955, the citizens of Mortsel collected money to erect a memorial cross on the mass grave. An official, national recognition of the tragedy was withheld probably because of the friendly fire that caused it.

As was the case in Nijmegen, in the 1980s a local historian, Achille Rely, reopened the debate by publishing his research on the Mortsel bombing. Fifty years after the tragic event, Flemish television made a first documentary—and people began to talk. In the year 2000, a monument was inaugurated on the central town square and, stimulated by the local historical society, annual commemorations started to be held, organized by the local authorities. As late as 2004, national recognition was obtained when the city of Mortsel received an official certificate from the Belgian government proclaiming it a “war victim.” Sixty-five years after the bombardment a new study was published and from then on the American embassy in Belgium sent a representative to the annual commemorations. Plans are in the making for a new monument and information center on the bombing (Rely 1988; Rely 1993; Debruyne 1995; Serrien 2009; Serrien 2013).

To conclude this first part, we can say that commemorations *did* in fact take place in Nijmegen between the years 1944 and 1984. From 1954 onward, a memorial ceremony was organized every five years. During the last fifteen years of this period, when the bombing was not publicly remembered, the victims were commemorated individually by their relatives. The same was the case in Mortsel, where the remembrance was kept alive by the local community.

Should we understand the passive attitude of the Nijmegen municipal authorities towards commemorating the bombardment as a form of self-censorship, or possibly a manifestation of political correctness? Neither appears to offer a satisfactory explanation. After all, official commemorations of the war and celebrations of the city and the country’s liberations had been taking place at five-yearly intervals at fixed moments over a long period of time. Moreover, municipal policy dictated that all commemorations as well as the installation of war memorials had to originate in private initiative and

could not be government-imposed. During the 1960s, and even more so during the 1970s, there was a notable decrease in public interest in commemorating the war. From this we may conclude that attributing the lack of interest in commemorating the Nijmegen bombardment to political correctness may be inadequate. The same could be the case in Mortsel. New research reopened the debate and stimulated the public interest in Nijmegen and Mortsel in the 1980s. After twenty years, local and national authorities in both cities finally embraced the commemorations.

We can now turn to the second aspect: the explanations for the Nijmegen bombardment. From 1984 onward, the bombing was generally explained as an error: the American bombers had mistaken Nijmegen for a German city. But many questions remained. What had really happened? Did the navigators in fact miscalculate? Many survivors and relatives of victims still wonder: if the bombardment on Nijmegen was indeed a mistake, why then did the Americans also bomb Arnhem and Enschede on the same day? Had the planes really intended to bomb German cities?

As part of Operation Argument, the combined American and British Air Forces planned to bomb several targets in Nazi-Germany on February 22, 1944. Through a concentrated attack on aircraft factories and airfields, the allies hoped to gain air supremacy, which they believed would be decisive in winning the war. On that day, hundreds of fighter-bombers took off from bases in England. During the night and in the morning, bombers of the Royal Air Force and the tactical American 9th Air Force attacked Dutch airfields to prevent German combat planes from taking off, thus preparing a safe flying zone for the bombers of the 8th Air Force. Shortly after these bombers went aloft, snow and storm winds arrived off the English coast, causing enormous problems, and the flight formation became chaotic. Indeed, although most of the first division's bombers continued their mission targeting the northern part of Germany, the third division had to be recalled almost immediately. Both divisions were composed largely of B-17 Flying Fortresses.

The commander of the second division hesitated, but decided in the end to order a recall of his planes in action. These B-24 Liberators were on their way to the German city of Gotha. Yet since the idea of Operation Argument was to overwhelm German air defenses with a massive attack, a partial force was more vulnerable. Two of the three Combat Bombardment Wings involved received the recall message in time but the commanding operational officer of the 20th Bomber Wing, Captain William Schmidt, did not receive the message. It was only half an hour later that he received word and ordered the three Bombardment Groups of his Wing to return. By then, the Liberators had already passed the German border, so the officer ordered them to search

and bomb a so-called “target of opportunity.” The commander of the 448th Bomber Group chose a town district with a lot of factories as a proper target for his group’s incendiary bombs. Luckily, his colleagues in the 93rd Bomber Group realized in time that he was in the Netherlands and they refrained from bombing. Some of the planes dropped their bombs near Deventer, without aiming at a specified target.

The commanding officer of the 20th Bomber Wing was directing the 446th Bomber Group. The first section of this group chose a big railroad yard as their target of opportunity. The third aimed at a marshalling yard with some factories in another town. The second section, which flew in the middle, was not able to bomb. We will never know for sure whether the pilots knew the exact name and location of their targets at the moment that they dropped their bombs. The factory quarter of the 448th Bomber Group appears to have been Enschede. The first section targeted Nijmegen, the last section Arnhem.

The crew’s subsequent accounts of their mission allow us to reconstruct their intentions to some extent. It can be stated as a certainty that most of the crews knew the names of the places they bombed. Still, some of them confused Nijmegen and Arnhem, or were in doubt about which city they had bombed. All of the pilots bombed on the ‘lead’, the commander of their section. Later on, the commanding officers made statements in which they asserted that they believed their targets had been German cities. But by the time they did so, they knew that they had attacked places in occupied territory, which were only supposed to be hit on explicit instructions. This protocol had not been known to all the pilots when they took off on their mission. Still, commanding Wing officer William Schmidt’s statement that they mistook Nijmegen and Arnhem for the German towns of Goch and Kleve does not dovetail with earlier assertions by him and the other pilots. Wittingly or unwittingly, he gave a false account. Indeed, it seems most likely that the precise localization of the targets took place *after* the command “bombs away” had been given. The unexpected turning back and the necessity of choosing a target of opportunity caused such confusion that the crews could not really determine what places they were bombing (Rosendaal 2009: 47–61).

It is not correct, then, to use the term “*vergissing*” (“mistake”) for this line of action. Although the bombings of Nijmegen, Arnhem and Enschede were not the result of a premeditated plan, the order had been given to bomb targets of opportunity. The crews chose targets and intentionally bombed them. Only afterwards did they establish which towns they had hit and realized their action had not been allowed.

The death toll in Nijmegen far exceeded that of the other cities bombed that day, and was in fact one of the highest during the entire Second World War if

we take into account the fact that it was caused by only fourteen planes. There are several reasons for this. First, the bombardier in the first plane, wanting to bomb the marshalling yards, aimed at buildings in the city center, while supposing that the following planes would not take into consideration their groundspeed. Most of the bombs thus missed the railroad yard and hit the center of the town instead. Cluster bombs killed hundreds of people in front of the station. Moreover, the air-raid siren had just sounded the “all clear,” with no one realizing that the bombers had returned. As a result, many people were out on the streets when the bombs struck. Finally, fire broke out after the bombing which could not be extinguished because there was no water pressure. Numerous people burned to death (Rosendaal 2009: 23–44).

The term “vergissingsbombardement” or “the mistaken bombardment” was introduced as a way to trivialize the magnitude of the catastrophe. Describing the bombardment as an error, in which Nijmegen and Arnhem were mistaken for Goch and Kleve, lessened the ‘guilt’ of the American allies; the victims, as the term “mistake” implies, should have been Germans. The officers of the American Air Force, for their part, considered their mission as justified; they had tried to hit a target of opportunity, even though it was in occupied territory.

At the start of his study for his 1984 publication, before he had even embarked on his research, Brinkhuis publicly emphasized that he was convinced that it had been a mistake, and that he was going to prove it. His use of the term “vergissingsbombardement” seems to reflect a degree of political correctness. Writing in the middle of the Cold War, at the beginning of the 1980s, it was simply not deemed politically correct to accuse a protective friend of having perpetrated a massacre. But is this really an adequate explanation? Did Brinkhuis have the intention to be politically correct? When we compare his research to the case of Mortsel, a similar restraint in condemning friendly fire can be established.

It may, then, be necessary to bring in another dimension in the Nijmegen case. So far we have discussed the memory of only one event, one particular moment in time. If we consider the year 1944 in Nijmegen as a whole, are there any other episodes which failed to become, or should have become, part of the collective memory?

One of these, certainly, was the well-known Operation Market Garden, launched on September 17th, 1944. It failed to reach its objective—Arnhem was the proverbial bridge too far—yet after four days of heavy fighting, Nijmegen was liberated (Rosendaal 2009: 110–143). Ironically, the same planes which had bombed the city in February now dropped supply goods for the American liberators of the city. The liberation took its toll as well. In defending their bridgehead, the Germans set fire to the eastern part of the city

center. Many civilians were killed in the street fighting, and even after their retreat, the Germans continued to attack the Allied troops in the city for about five months. On October 2nd, the city was heavily bombed and shelled. About a hundred people were killed in the cellar of a factory that was used as a bomb shelter. Towards the end of the day, one inhabitant wrote in his diary that "Het schijnt dat onze stad ten onder moet" ("It appears our city must perish") (Uijen). All told, the number of deaths in this period exceeded the numbers of casualties of the February bombardment and the material damage was far greater than that caused by the American bombers.

The memory of this episode in the war seems to have disappeared totally, even more thoroughly than the memory of the February bombing. Although it entailed a greater loss of lives and more damage to the city, and was inflicted by the enemy, the Germans, it was never commemorated explicitly. Indeed, the destruction of the city center was, and still is, connected to the Americans. Thus, it could be stated that the politics of commemoration were not the result of political correctness. But is this true?

As we have seen, comparison to other allied bombings of targets outside Germany, like the bombing of Mortsel on April 5, 1943, can shed some light on the matter. In the Netherlands the southern quarters of the Rotterdam harbor were attacked, killing about 400 people. Two years later, some 550 civilians were killed in The Hague when the Royal Air Force dropped their bombs on the Bezuidenhout, instead of on a nearby V-2 installation. Indeed, around two percent of all the bomb tonnage dropped by the allies in 1944 came down on the Netherlands (Zwanenburg; Van der Pauw 2009). France received almost 30 percent of it. And although the main targets were airfields, railroads, military troops and industry, with this much bombing, residential areas and civilians were bound to be hit as well. Exact figures are not available, but it is estimated that more than 67,000 Frenchmen were killed (Florentin; Beaudufe). In Italy some 64,354 civilians lost their lives due to Anglo-American bombings (Patricelli: x). For a long time civilian casualties were considered mere collateral damage, even if these civilians had been killed by Germans. Of course there are exceptions: the bombing of Rotterdam by the Germans in May 1940 was considered a war crime and responsible individuals were blamed for this criminal act. But not much attention was ever paid to the victims. We do not know the exact number of victims, and nor is there even a reliable list of their names (Van der Pauw 2006: 848–852).

Only recently, philosophical debate, historical research and commemorative activities have led to a re-evaluation of the importance of civilians that were killed by the violence of war. Although in Germany the allied bombings were always publicly discussed, and more often condemned, the works of

W.G. Sebald and Jörg Friedrich intensified the debate (Von Benda-Beckmann; Sebald; Friedrich). The morality of bombing cities was also discussed in British historiography and analyzed in comparative, European perspective (Grayling; Overy).

If we look at the case of the Nijmegen bombardment, and the alleged lack of commemoration due to self-silencing of the authorities and the victims, we can conclude this was not the result of a politically correct desire to not offend our American friends. The German enemy was never blamed for the even greater destruction that it caused only a few months later. The public attention for the bombardment and the way it was remembered changed during the more than seventy years after the tragedy. A similar conjecture in commemorative practice can be found in Mortsel. In both cases, accepting civilian casualties has been difficult. They are considered to have been a kind of collateral damage, regarded as having served no useful purpose. This has made it especially hard to find a commemorative place for them. Soldiers killed in action died to defend liberty and the fatherland. The victims of the Holocaust proved the inhumanity and the cruelty of a racist and perfidious regime. So what can the deaths of civilians tell us? What they demonstrate, perhaps, is the insanity of war. During the Cold War the emphasis on collateral damage was not useful and was felt to risk endangering the public morale.

After 1990 and the European détente, discussing civilian casualties was no longer a taboo. The commemoration of the terrible destruction of war stresses the importance of peace. In 2016, the city authorities of Nijmegen and Mortsel tried to find ways to work together in their commemorative activities. They saw in the postwar rebirth of Nijmegen and Mortsel an opportunity for a new meaning and a sense of hope that might also be a paradigmatic example for other cities struck by war.

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Playing in the Ruins of Arnhem: Reenacting Operation Market Garden in *Theirs Is the Glory*

László Munteán

Films determine our popular image of World War II. When we remember the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the Bulge, and the D-Day landings, we do so through the spectacular battle scenes and memorable acting performances in Guy Hamilton's *Battle of Britain* (1969), Ken Annakin's *The Battle of the Bulge* (1965), and Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Operation Market Garden, the air and ground offensive carried out by the allied forces in the Netherlands in September 1944, is no exception: *A Bridge Too Far* (1977, Attenborough), a three-hour-long blockbuster, has played a key role in introducing the ill-fated operation into the collective memory of World War II. Although eclipsed by the immense success of *Star Wars* (1977, Lucas), its cast of international superstars, lavish scale, and superb marketing earned Attenborough's film the recognition it enjoys today. As a result, the very first cinematic representation of Operation Market Garden, Brian Desmond Hurst's *Theirs Is the Glory*, released in 1946, faded into oblivion for decades to come. Apropos of recent commemorations of the campaign the film has been brought back into the limelight (Smith 2010). However, apart from William B. Travis's (1986) comprehensive article on the making of the film and a few websites dedicated to Hurst's work and the history of parachute regiments, the film has not received serious scholarly attention.

What makes *Theirs Is the Glory* unique among war films is that it features veterans of the First British Airborne Division. Having fought at Arnhem in September 1944, many of the veterans returned a year later to reenact the battle. The result is a film that seamlessly combines original newsreel with reenactment, shot in the style of a feature film. Such an eclectic mix of genres, as well as shooting on location without professional actors, led one of the first reviewers of the film to point out its lack of "cinematic virtues" (K.F.B. 1946, 135). A recent blog likewise criticizes the unprofessional quality of acting as one of the film's major shortcomings (Lloyd 2014).¹ Indeed, the artificiality of dialogues, in addition to the

1 Lloyd maintains that in Hurst's film "[t]he soldiers are obviously not actors, and don't do very good jobs of portraying themselves. They tend to speak in stilted sentences in that very blasé British way, in which men in terrible peril seem not at all concerned about it. It gets so silly

poor quality of explosions, makes it difficult for the viewer to follow the plot. These cinematic flaws are, however, not only distracting. Paradoxically, they are key to the captivating power of Hurst's production.

Despite the absence of such cinematic virtues as realistic acting and special effects *Theirs Is the Glory* is a captivating film to watch even today. This essay argues that these very limitations are part and parcel of the way in which the film engages with and memorializes what was then the very recent past. The argument of this essay is twofold. First, through the analysis of acting and mise-en-scène it demonstrates that the film derives its power less from its realistic depiction of the Battle of Arnhem and more from the veterans as authentic witnesses and the ruins as authentic imprints of the battle. Second, it explores how the film employs this aura of authenticity as a rhetorical platform to re-imagine and embed the unsuccessful campaign within the larger trajectory of the liberation of the Netherlands.

Retrieving the Lost Object

This section undertakes a detailed analysis of the opening of *Theirs Is the Glory*, which sets the rhetorical tone for the rest of the film. Within this time frame of seven and a half minutes a veritable array of texts, voices, images, and music is employed to position the film vis-à-vis the historical event, as well as the viewer vis-à-vis the film and, by extension, the historical event. These rhetorical devices fall into five distinct modes: an authenticating mode, a commemorative one, a grateful, a strategic and a personal one. An analysis of these modes is helpful to uncover the affective dimension of rhetoric, the techniques Hurst applies to create an emotional disposition towards the failed operation.

Before the opening music starts, a text entitled "Foreword" appears against a dark background: "‘Theirs Is the Glory’ has been produced entirely without the use of studio sets or actors. Every incident was either experienced or witnessed by the people who appear in the film" (n.p.). This information is at once self-reflexive and performative. It is self-reflexive because, rather than foregrounding history as a narrative context within which the film is set, it calls attention to the production of the film itself. By way of sharing information about the lack of sets and actors, the foreword establishes a spatiotemporal bond between the people that appear in the film and the historical event they experienced. In terms of C.S. Peirce's system of signs, this bond is an indexical one insofar

it reminded me of that scene in Monty Python's 'Life of Brian' in which an English soldier is mildly perturbed by a tiger biting off his leg" (2014).

as the sign and its referent engage in an existential relationship, not unlike the one that exists between a foot and a footprint (1955, 106). Consequently, everything that we are about to see in the film is, in one way or another, an indexical sign of Operation Market Garden. The information disclosed in the foreword also constitutes a performative statement in J.L. Austin's (1962) sense. The indexical relationship established between the historical event and the people and locations that appear in the film operates as an authenticating force in that it renders the film an interface between the viewer and the people that "witnessed or experienced" the battle.

This performative gesture is carried over by the text that appears next. Once the foreword fades into a cloudy sky the insignia of the First British Airborne Division, the Pegasus and Bellerophon, appears and a longer text rolls down slowly, accompanied by the ceremonious tone of brass instruments in Guy Warrack's soundtrack:

It was in September 1944 that the men of the First British Airborne Division made their heroic stand at Arnhem. One year later survivors returned to the actual battlefield amid the ruins of Arnhem truthfully to re-enact and record for all time this most gallant action in which they had gained the admiration even of the enemy. This film is a tribute to every man who fought at Arnhem and an everlasting memorial to those who gave their lives. (n.p.)

While the foreword posits the witness as an imprint of the historical event, this text supplements that claim by ascribing the quality of truthfulness to the reenactment of the battle, which is to be recorded for posterity. The word "record," however, occludes directorial voice and grants agency to the veterans' reenactment as a guarantee of faithful representation. Played by a brass ensemble, the march-like melody of the soundtrack is more solemn than upbeat and more ceremonious than celebratory. As a musical background to the text, it accentuates the sentiment of commemoration, articulated in the last sentence.

The sentiment of the last sentence, which renders the film a tribute and memorial, signals a shift from the authenticating to the commemorative mode, which culminates in the film's title appearing in Blackletter, with the airborne insignia lingering in the background. By way of ascribing glory to the veterans and declaring the film a memorial the text demands that viewers watch the film with reverence and respect. Thus, the commemorative mode takes its performative power from the authenticating rhetoric of the previous sentences that posit the veteran as an indexical imprint of the past. It is through the commemorative mode, however, that this past is made meaningful in the present.

The film's title bears testament to the effort to overwrite the painful memory of a lost campaign with a narrative centered on "this most gallant action," thus foregrounding gallantry as a moral standard against which the operation is to be measured.

In his discussion of reenactment in documentary films Bill Nichols contrasts the "classic documentary image—where an indexical link between image and historical occurrence exists" with actual reenactment, where such an indexical connection is absent (2008, 74). The fact that the reenactment is temporally removed from the event that it represents burdens it with what Nichols regards as its "impossible task ... to retrieve a lost object in its original form even as the very act of retrieval generates a new object and a new pleasure" (2008, 74). Nichols's formulation of the desire to conjure the specter of a "lost object" is triply poignant in the case of *Theirs Is the Glory*. First, it marks the effort to reverse the passage of time and revisit the bygone event. Second, it entails the attempt to briefly reclaim the lives that have been lost during the operation. Third, it connotes the outcome of the battle as a military failure. It is in this third instance that the performative power of the commemorative mode most lucidly comes to the fore. "To make good that loss," to adopt Nichols' words, is to reclaim control over the campaign that got out of control a year before and, with hindsight, inscribe the battle into the trajectory leading to allied victory (2008, 74).

The scene that unfolds after the opening words creates a fantasmatic realm for investing the battle with meaning within a larger narrative framework. The film's title gradually fades into an image of Arnhem's pre-war riverfront, which turns out to be a painting as the camera zooms out. The solemn music that accompanied the text gives way to the quiet tunes of string and woodwind instruments, lending an idyllic feel to the town. These tunes also serve as a background for the voice of an invisible narrator, marked by his Dutch accent and speaking in first person plural, on behalf of the local population. His description of the peaceful town hit by the fury of war is echoed by the painting of the riverfront changing into panning shots of war-torn buildings and crosses erected in a haste to mark the graves of English soldiers. As the camera tracks over the bridge that the British troops were trying to hold, the narrator recalls "those brave men of the sky who came lightly equipped as airborne troops must, to fight for forty-eight hours, and then fought day after day against the tanks and heavy weapons of the Huns" (n.p.). The narrator next describes such landmark locations of the battle as St. Elizabeth Hospital, the village church at Oosterbeek, and the Hartenstein Hotel, where the last stand was made. The last shot in the sequence of locations shows a farmer plowing his field with a wooden cross in the foreground, covered with a soldier's helmet—a juxtaposition of symbolic images of war and peace, accompanied by the narrator's closing words: "And now, as

time does its best to cover the scars of war, the people of the soil make ready for a new harvest and the sons of British homes might rest and a free world may live" (n.p.). The Dutch accent that marks the voice of the liberated is a rhetorical device that underpins the causal relationship forged visually between the sacrifice of the airborne troops and the liberation of the Netherlands (Figure 1). Word and image together constitute what Nichols calls a "mise-en-scène of desire," where defeat is resignified as a token of freedom (2008, 76).

This "grateful" mode, in which the disembodied Dutch narrator gives thanks for the sacrifice of the British soldiers, sets the stage for the following scene in which the pastoral image of the countryside in the wake of the war changes into a miniature model of Arnhem observed by military officials. Brass instruments again take the lead in the soundtrack as the plan of Operation Market Garden, explained by an invisible narrator speaking with a British accent, is laid out on a map. Archival footage of the briefing of the troops and final preparations at an English airfield are interspersed with the map revealing the bridge at Arnhem as the key location of the campaign. This is the first time that original footage turns smoothly into reenactment, with Lieutenant Hugh Ashmore briefing his regiment in front of a map of Arnhem (Smith 2010). Ashmore, who was commanding officer of the 3rd Platoon of the 21st Independent Parachute Company, here plays Lieutenant Hanbury, a fictional platoon commander



FIGURE 1 *Framing the sacrifice of airborne troops as the precondition for peace. Screenshot from Theirs Is the Glory.*

(Travis 1986, 32). The viewer is taken back to England, prior to the offensive, this time looking at Arnhem on the map, through the eyes of the military strategist. The grateful words of the Dutch narrator invest this strategic mode with a teleological dimension that contextualizes the battle within the larger trajectory of the liberation of the Netherlands. The reenactment of the sermon delivered during the mass before the takeoff gives this trajectory a religious underpinning. The priest declares that “we are, in some mysterious measure, God’s instruments and we are called to right believers’ wrongs” (n.p.). The mission thus framed grants angelic power to the paratroopers, prefigured by the Dutch narrator’s reference to “those brave men of the sky” (n.p.).

A preceding scene, which takes place immediately after Ashmore’s briefing session, serves as a rhetorical counterpoint to the representation of the troops as crusaders. In it, ten men are shown in their barracks lying in bed, getting ready for their final rest before the operation. “Paratroopers aren’t supermen. These, for all the deeds they accomplished, are just ordinary people” (n.p.), says the narrator. Then he introduces the men by name and job, situating them within the peaceful lives they left behind. The slow pan over the soldiers rhymes with the camera movement employed at the church service but operates in a different affective register. The latter homogenizes the soldiers, wearing their uniform and listening to the sermon. The former places them in the context of the limited privacy they enjoyed as individuals of diverse geographical and occupational backgrounds. By doing so, this portrayal offers a screen for a fantasmatic identification not simply with the soldiers as “ordinary people,” but also with the imaginary of peacetime Britain delineated by the biographical details of these airborne soldiers. At film’s end the same sleeping quarters are shown with two surviving soldiers brooding over the empty beds of their deceased comrades (Travis 1986, 37).² The distant echo of biographical details from the film’s beginning is gently absorbed by words delivered in the commemorative mode, reminiscent of Simonides’s epigram dedicated to the fallen Spartans at Thermopylae:³

They have written in letters of fire an immortal page of history. Their manner of passing should be carried like a banner borne high by all that come after. Their story will be told wherever men cherished deeds of good report. The story of those filthy, grimy, wonderful gentlemen who drop from the clouds and fight where they stand. Just ordinary men. (n.p.)

2 Travis speculates that the eight empty beds signify the eight thousand soldiers who died, while the two sitting on their beds represent the two thousand that survived (1986, 37).

3 The epigram reads: “Go tell the Spartans passerby, that here obedient to their laws we lie.”

In her work entitled *Performing Remains* Rebecca Schneider argues that reenactment renders the past “a future direction in which one can travel” (2011, 22). By declaring the absence of actors and studio prop-ups in the production Hurst foregrounds the veterans as authentic agents of reenactment the truthfulness of which is predicated on their indexical connection to the battle. The rhetorical embedding of the battle into the narrative of liberation can be described as a “fantasmatic project” in Nichols’s sense where the pleasure of retrieving the lost object is guaranteed by the viewer’s (as well as the soldiers’) retrospective knowledge of allied victory (Nichols 2008, 76). The last words, “just ordinary men,” recall the narrator’s introduction of the soldiers as “just ordinary people.” Mentioned again at the end of the film, the word “ordinary” works as a euphemism. For it is by celebrating these men as extraordinary that *Theirs Is the Glory* shifts attention from military failure to heroic sacrifice and thus sets the stage, rhetorically, for what the viewer is about to see.

Of the five rhetorical modes outlined in the previous section the one that authenticates the reenactment is key to the affective register sustained throughout the film. Deploying the veteran as participant and witness is to convey the presence of the past corporeally, as it were. But does authenticity also warrant realism? The fact that reenacted parts in the film are often mistaken for original war footage and have inadvertently been used in documentaries (Hughes 2012, 209) indicates that certain reenacted scenes are so realistic that it is hard to tell them apart from contemporary newsreel. This applies particularly to establishing shots, capturing locations at a distance.⁴ Other shots create the opposite effect. A number of commentators have complained about the veterans’ bad acting as counterproductive to the film’s narrative power. Indeed, once the original footage of the preparations changes into the briefing of the soldiers by Hugh Ashmore, it becomes evident that his authentic presence as a veteran has little to do with the quality of his acting. His monotonous and quick pace of talking betrays that he recites a text he has learned. At one point he even looks into the camera by accident, leaving no doubt that, despite his presence as a veteran, he is out of his element as an actor. In addition, he does not reenact his own role in the campaign but plays a fictitious character.

When Hurst decided to have veterans reenact the Battle of Arnhem in his film, he was drawing on preexisting conventions of documentary filmmaking, while also breaking new ground. Using reenactment in documentaries was already well established in his time. The film that comes closest to the way in which *Theirs Is the Glory* features veterans is Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens’s

4 Although he does not reference Hurst’s film, Nichols sees such combinations of reenactment and documentary footage as ethically untenable (2008, 73–74).

1934 silent documentary *Borinage*. In it, Ivens addresses the plight of a miners' community in Wallonia and has local coal miners reenact a march they organized a year before. Eventually, the reenactment reinforced their sense of community and rekindled the miners' indignation at their exploiters, which granted a degree of realism to the film (Nichols 2001, 149–151). Ivens makes no secret about his stance against capitalism and his political identification with the miners, which he conveys through propagandistic intertitles, informing viewers of rising unemployment, deprivation, and solidarity among the poor against the rich. Yet the referent of reenactment in *Borinage* is not so much a past event as it is an expression of present fervor that made the miners' performance so convincing. In the absence of sound, however, this realism is played out on the visual level.⁵ *Theirs Is the Glory* features a similar reenactment of the recent past but it allows the reenactors to be heard, so to speak, through staged conversations. Although parts of Hurst's film can indeed be mistaken for combat footage, the audiovisual exposure of veterans, as Ashmore's briefing of the soldiers attests, generates the opposite effect.

By preparing the viewers for an authentic reenactment and simultaneously withholding the pleasure of realism Hurst indeed runs the risk of losing his audience. This is not to say, however, that *Borinage* succeeds in doing justice to the miners' cause while *Theirs is the Glory* fails to pay proper tribute to the veterans. On the contrary. The less successful the veterans' acting, the more they come to the fore as witnesses and survivors. The realistic reenactment in Ivens's film generates a sense of presence, a reclaiming of the lost object in Nichols's sense, while the fissure between authenticity and realism in *Theirs Is the Glory* is unsettling, to say the least, as it simultaneously underwrites and undercuts the truthfulness of the representation. To an extent, it unwittingly foreshadows the self-reflexive mode of "performative documentaries" that reveal their method of production (see: Bruzzi 2001, 153–180; Nichols 2001, 100–138). Yvette Vanson's *The Battle for Orgreave* (1985) and, more recently, Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing* (2014) fall into this category. Both of these films make use of reenactment by victims and perpetrators respectively but reenactments in these films are supplemented by interviews that prevent characters from slipping into the role of actors. In the mini-series *Band of Brothers* (2001), each episode starts with interviews of survivors whose stories serve as an inspiration for the story performed by professional actors. In

5 "Muting" characters that enact or reenact scenes for the camera is a strategy of a number of World War II propaganda films, such as the "newsdrama" *The Fighting Lady* (1944, Steichen), featuring scenes enacted by airmen and seamen in the midst of actual battle, with their voices "hijacked" by an omniscient narrator in free indirect speech.

the absence of such a scaffold of interviews, *Theirs Is the Glory* positions itself as a film that features veterans as survivors *and* actors. This breach between authenticity and realism lays bare the uncanny presence of the past in the form of an emphatic absence that simultaneously reinforces and undermines the rhetorical modes explored in this section. The following section will address this feature of Hurst's film through the pertinent theories of Roland Barthes, Siegfried Kracauer, and Jacques Rancière.

From Reality Effect to Sentence-Image

In his 1967 essay entitled "The Reality Effect" Barthes focuses on the lengthy descriptions of objects, places, and characters in nineteenth-century realist novels. He identifies these descriptions as typical of the genre and describes their function as an aesthetic expedience on the one hand, and an authenticating device operating as a "referential illusion" on the other. Barthes contends,

The truth of this illusion is this: eliminated from the realist speech-act as a signified of denotation, the 'real' returns to it as a signified of connotation; for just when these details are reputed to *denote* the real directly, all that they do—without saying so—is *signify* it; Flaubert's barometer, Michelet's little door finally say nothing but this: *we are the real*; it is the category of 'the real' (and not its contingent contents) which is then signified; in other words, the very absence of the signified, to the advantage of the referent alone, becomes the very signifier of realism: the *reality effect* is produced, the basis of that unavowed verisimilitude which forms the aesthetic of all standard works of modernity. (1986, 148)

The reality effect is thus the result of mistaking connotation for denotation or, in affective terms, perceiving the realistic as authentic. The more meticulous the description, the more it reads as referential to a reality out there. What happens, however, is that the textual coordinates of objects, places, and human characteristics not so much denote the contours of a reality as create an effect of reality at the level of connotation. Barthes's insights into this aspect of the realistic novel also holds true in the domain of film, as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998, Spielberg), *Band of Brothers* (2001, various directors), *The Pacific* (2010, various directors), and, most recently, *Fury* (2014, Ayer) attest. Whereas these World War II films of the past two decades approximate reality through period-accurate mise-en-scène and superb acting, the reality effect of *Theirs Is the Glory* lies elsewhere. By making the veterans act out a

script within the framework of reenactment Hurst creates a tension between what the veterans say as actors and their identity as witnesses. In Barthes's terms, the veterans' bad acting inverts the reality effect by way of allowing the real to return as a signified of denotation, rather than connotation. The veterans do indeed denote the real directly, perhaps too directly, so that their ineptitude as actors foregrounds their identity as survivors and witnesses. This inverse reality effect opens cracks in the fantasmatic world of the story by calling viewers' attention to a reality of the past which the veterans signify existentially, rather than representationally.

In his salient work on film theory Siegfried Kracauer discusses this power of objects, places, and characters to disrupt the narrative flow of film. Similarly to Barthes, he draws on modern realist literature as a forerunner of film's potential to expose minute details of physical reality that "open up a dimension much wider than that of the plots which they sustain" (Kracauer 1960, 303). Kracauer relativizes the secondary status of background to foreground and highlights the defamiliarizing potential of "scattered material events" (1960, 298). "A face on the screen may attract us as a singular manifestation of fear or happiness regardless of the events which motivate its expression. A street serving as the background to some quarrel or love affair may rush to the fore and produce an intoxicating effect," he contends (1960, 303). What is intended to immerse viewers into the story can, paradoxically, open up a dimension "beneath the superstructure of specific story contents" and disengage viewers from the unfolding plot (1960, 303). This intoxicating, and no less disorientating, effect is palpable when viewers recognize filming locations as different from what they represent in the film. In *Munich* (2005, Spielberg), for instance, locations in Budapest are made to stand in for streets in Paris, Berlin, and Munich, making inhabitants of the Hungarian capital literally lose their grip on the plot. By the same token, the bridge at Deventer functioning as Arnhem Bridge in *A Bridge Too Far* may have been no less confusing for locals. For what these locations say, to twist Barthes's phrase, is that we are *not* the real but its contingent contents.

The creative potential of this inverse reality effect can best be captured through Jacques Rancière's notion of the sentence-image. Rancière situates the sentence-image in between two regimes of the image: the representative and the aesthetic. In the former, what is visible is put to the service of what is sayable, that is, to an overarching plot or narrative. The latter paradigm subverts this hierarchy by subjecting the sayable to the visible. Similarly to Barthes and Kracauer, he relates this turn to the rise of the nineteenth-century realist novel where the abundance of descriptions of non-signifying details allows what is visible to disrupt what is sayable. Speech "exhibits its particular opacity, the

under-determined character of its power to ‘make visible’. ... At the same time, however, speech is invaded by a specific property of the visible: its passivity. The performance of speech is struck by this passivity, this inertia of the visible that comes to paralyze action and absorb meanings” (Rancière 2009, 121). Forming a transition between the representative and the aesthetic regimes, the sentence-image is

... the combination of two functions that are to be defined aesthetically—that is, by the way in which they undo the representative relationship between text and image. The text’s part in the representative schema was the conceptual linking of actions, while the image’s was the supplement of presence that imparted flesh and substance to it. The sentence-image overturns this logic. The sentence-function is still that of linking. But the sentence now links in as much as it is what gives flesh. And this flesh or substance is, paradoxically, that of the great passivity of things without any rationale. (Rancière 2009, 46)

Thus, the sentence-image simultaneously enforces and undermines continuity. It continues to forge causal linkages between narrative constituents but, by the same gesture, it denotatively highlights the materiality of these constituents in Barthes’s sense, which, in turn, disrupts meaning-making mechanisms. Unlike the representative system, which turns the visual into the service of the textual, the sentence-image allows for the visual to manifest itself in the “the great passivity of things” that stultifies meaning. The inverse reality effect comes to the fore here in the paradox of the activity of passivity, the overwhelming presence of non-signifying, material details that nevertheless come to bear heavily on the plot—a dynamics Rancière traces in the “vagaries of the indifferent intermixture of atoms” in the novels of Flaubert and Zola, and the “new sensory power of the shots” in the films of Jean Epstein (2009, 43–44). The way in which this dynamics manifests itself in *Theirs Is the Glory* is discussed in the following section.

“Just Ordinary Men”

When Lieutenant Ashmore, playing the fictitious Lieutenant Hanbury, appears in the first reenacted scene, he is doubly transformed. First, he is fashioned as an actor. Second, he is to play someone he has never been. His own identity and involvement in Operation Market Garden is concealed in the service of the plot. Other characters, one might say, have gone through less radical

transformations in the film. Private Peter Holt, along with many other characters, gets to play himself and serves as one of the narrative leads in the film. Upon landing, Holt's parachute is entangled in the crown of a tree, causing him difficulty getting back in touch with his platoon. His fighting alongside different platoons and eventual reunion with his comrades operates as a focalizing device that offers insight into the battle from the perspective of the average soldier. The characters that come closest, at least in particular scenes, to reenact their own roles are Lieutenant Colonel Richard Lonsdale and the Dutch civilian Kate ter Horst, who offered her house to be used as a hospital in the final days of the battle. In one of the most famous scenes of the film Lonsdale delivers a heartwarming speech to his soldiers in the old church at Oosterbeek, shortly before their withdrawal across the Rhine.⁶ Soon after this scene, Kate ter Horst descends to the basement of her house and reads out the 91st Psalm to console the wounded. Although these characters are among those who have the chance to recite what they said a year before, their acting is no more convincing than those impersonating fictitious or real characters.

The juxtaposition of acting and reenacting, and of actors and veterans in *Theirs Is the Glory* results in a tension that lies at the core of the sentence-image. The presence of the veterans, as we have seen in the previous section, is key to the authenticity of the reenactment but their clumsy acting undercuts the narrative flow of the film. Such a discrepancy between what they stand for as indexical signs of the film's referent and the realism of their acting suspends the chronological unfolding of events. The sentence-function, in Rancière's sense, is simultaneously present as a cohesive force at the level of the script but is unsettled at the level of acting. While they continue to "play" their roles in the film, this breach unmoors the reenactors from the narrative of the film and allows them to come to the fore as "corporeal remains" of the real campaign. Unhinged from the plot's signifying texture, they gain agency in their passivity, as it were, less as truthful reenactors and more as material imprints of the past. Therefore, the authenticity of the reenactment, emphasized by the opening texts of the film, lies not so much in the action as in what remains unseen by the viewer or, more precisely, what remains "unacted" by the veterans. Rancière's use of the word "flesh" is doubly poignant in this regard. On the one hand, flesh is synonymous with the imposing presence of material details, the non-signifying passivity, which fractures continuity. On the other hand, it

6 Remarkably, Lonsdale's speech was carved into a door to assist him in reciting it. Today the door is on exhibit in the Airborne Museum at Oosterbeek (See: "Oosterbeek—The Old Church").

denotes, literally, the body of the veteran as a “material witness” pushed to the fore as a sentence-image in *Theirs Is the Glory*.

It is unlikely that Hurst was aware of this uncanny potential of his film. The rhetorical modes set in motion at the beginning, as well as his smooth blending of reenactment with newsreel, attest to an effort to represent, rather than deconstruct. Nevertheless, it is hard not to notice how the camera tends to linger on the veterans’ eyes that seem to be looking inward, as though immersed in a world outside the plot (Figure 2). Undoubtedly, returning to Arnhem meant more to them than reenacting the events of the previous September. Many of them were looking for the graves of their comrades, bearing witness to the severe losses they had suffered (Travis 1986, 31). If their eyes seem to be looking inward, it is because they contemplate, rather than reenact the past. This is most conspicuous in close-ups showing veterans side-by-side, one engaged in a radio conversation that propels the story forward, while the other remains motionless, waiting it out passively. Rather than revealing the object of their gaze within the narrative, these gazes point back at the agent of looking. What comes to the fore, denotatively, is the character as witness to what Nichols calls the “lost object” that the film approximates through reenactment. The eyes, in their passivity, become direct interfaces between the viewer and the film’s referent. For it is through these “passive” gazes that



FIGURE 2 *The camera tends to linger on the veterans’ eyes that seem to be looking inward, as though immersed in their memories of the battle. Screenshot from *Theirs Is the Glory*.*

the referent of the reenactment materializes not so much in what is reenacted on the screen but what remains unrepresented yet hauntingly present in the corporeality of the witness. This present absence is precisely what Rancière conceptualizes as an “inertia of the visible that comes to paralyze action and absorb meanings” (Rancière 2009, 121). Bad acting can no longer be regarded as a shortcoming that disrupts the smooth sequence of action. Instead, it is a portal to a dimension that asserts itself through the disruption of action. The film’s *mise-en-scène* reveals further aspects of this dimension.

“Amid the Ruins of Arnhem”

The “Foreword” of *Theirs Is the Glory* emphasizes the absence of actors and studio equipment in the making of the film. We have already seen how the veterans’ inaptitude as actors recalls their role as witnesses, turning seemingly insignificant gazes and actions into the service of an inverse reality effect, invoking the battle negatively, in the form of absence. Likewise, setting the film in war-torn Arnhem creates a gateway to a past that escapes narrative representation in the film. The inverse reality effect working through the veterans’ acting here comes to the fore in a different disguise. The ruins are more than a simple backdrop to the story. They are referenced in the opening texts as the “actual battlefield,” imbued with the *genius loci* unleashed by the reenactment in their midst. No less than the veterans, the ruins are employed to authenticate the reenactment as indexical traces of the real battle. The ruins, however, are not exclusively the result of the battle fought during Operation Market Garden. Due to the failure of the operation the bridge that the First British Airborne was trying desperately to hold was eventually blown up by the German army, delaying the liberation of the city until April 1945 (Travis 1986, 31; Middlebrook 1999). Therefore, the bulk of the ruins visible in the film had been caused by bombardments and sieges over the fall and winter of 1944 (Figure 3).

There is an air of awkwardness about the rudimentary explosions in the midst of buildings wounded by real bombs and bullets and having witnessed real deaths. There is even something irreverent about “playing” war at the site of recent bloodshed. In her eloquent contemplation of artistic representations of ruins Rose Macaulay stipulates that ruins only cater to pleasure (*Ruinenlust*) once they are far removed from the present and unremembered as sites of pain and loss. In contrast to the aesthetic pleasure that classical ruins afford, new ruins, she contends, “are for a time stark and bare, vegetationless and creatureless; blackened and torn, they smell of fire and



FIGURE 3 *Reenacting the Battle of Arnhem among ruins that bear traces of subsequent fighting resulting from the failed operation. Screenshot from Theirs Is the Glory.*

mortality” (Macaulay 1953, 453). This kind of ruin is, in Dylan Trigg’s term, “traumatized architecture,” still exuding the pain of destruction (2009, 94). Playing among the fresh ruins of Arnhem, however, imparts what Nichols calls a “fantasmatic pleasure” played out in a “mise-en-scène of desire” (2008, 76). Reenactment is thus not simply the means to wrap the past into a heroic narrative but also an effort to confront it materially and express the desire to own it. In this sense, besides lending themselves as a rhetorical expedience to authenticate the reenactment, the ruins serve the veterans (and the viewers) as a site not only to reclaim the lost object but also to dramatize its loss. Therefore, if there is a *genius loci* that emanates from their midst, it is invoked through the effort to bear witness to and work through the past (see: Renov 2004, 120–29).

The scene in which the airborne troops launch their first assault on the bridgehead vividly illustrates this effort. From the perspective of a pathfinder observing the objective of his troops’ mission from the remains of a tall building, the bridge becomes visible in the form of a painting on a glass surface that shows it as still intact (Travis 1986, 31) (Figure 4). Subsequently, from the viewpoint of the house where Major “Freddie” Gough establishes his headquarters we again see a painting of the bridge from the West, through the binoculars of a soldier. In this second instance some smoke is visible in the foreground as



FIGURE 4 *Arnhem Bridge painted on a glass surface as though intact. Screenshot from Theirs Is the Glory.*

the soldier slowly moves his sight from the bridgehead onto the opposite bank. These painted representations of the bridge make no effort to lull the viewer into a false sense of reality. On the contrary, in the same way that they signify the bridge as intact, they also gesture back to the images of the blown up bridge revealed at the beginning of the film. In doing so, the positioning of the layer of painted glass in front of the camera constitutes a powerful sentence-image. In support of narrative plausibility, the paintings operate as a visual backdrop to the scene, similar to a film set. Concurrently, however, their representational role is suspended by their material palpability as painted glass. This would not necessarily disrupt relational linkages between narrative elements were it not so obvious that the real bridge is no longer there. By way of visually assisting the unfolding of narrative, the paintings uncannily foreshadow a future that, in narrative time, is yet come.

The dynamics of this sentence-image work to map the visible and the sayable onto material, temporal, and affective dimensions. As a substitute, the painted glass operates as a visual corrective. While the transparency of the glass acknowledges the ruined environment as part of the film's narrative, the painting of the bridge becomes indicative of the fetishistic desire to reverse time, of finding pleasure in reimagining the past as one that still holds the possibility of success.

Conclusion

This analysis has shown that what the viewer of *Theirs Is the Glory* may initially perceive as a lack of realism at the level of acting and props is in fact conducive to a kind of reality effect that derives its power from its juxtaposition of authenticity with realism; documentary with feature film; newsreel with reenactment; reenactment with acting; veteran with actor; the sayable with the visible. Indeed, the sentence-image is more than a theoretical term to expose the dynamic collision between these binaries in particular scenes. Janus-faced, it simultaneously connects and disrupts, obscures and illuminates and, as such, it reflects the affective register of the film as a whole. At the same time, rhetorical modes that the film adopts also attest to the attempt to absorb the failure of Operation Market Garden within the narrative of ultimate victory.

The imitation of the Arnhem Bridge on painted glass is an eloquent expression of this effort. A double for the main objective of the operation, the painting signifies its presence at the same instant as it marks its absence. No less awkward than the manner of reenacting the battle itself, the painting is not simply there to substitute but also to fantasize an alternative future in the face of an unchangeable past, to map a wish-image of presence onto the materiality of absence. It is, ultimately, what Nichols describes as the “mise-en-scène of desire.” Significantly, the film serves its role as a memorial by focusing on heroism and sacrifice, expressly marked by the soldiers’ graves at the beginning of the film and the empty beds in the barracks at the end. The task of pointing the finger of blame at the officers in charge of the campaign would not be taken up until thirty years later by the makers of *A Bridge Too Far*. To supplement the observation of the contemporary critic of Hurst’s film, if the film is known less for its “cinematic virtues” and more for “emotions recalled,” one may surmise that it is precisely in the lack of those virtues that emotions are most complexly palpable.

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“Can Anybody Fly This Thing?” Appropriations of History in Reenactments of Operation Market Garden

Wolfgang Hochbruck

A modern military transport plane flies over a field, parachutists jumping out of its rear hatch. It is followed by a World War II vintage twin-engine bomber. Above the noise of the engines, the guitar of Jonny Buckland is heard, and then the voice of *Coldplay* lead vocalist Chris Martin with the first line of “High Speed:” “Can anybody fly this thing?” (Hemmen 2009). The video by one Paul Hemmen is one of about forty YouTube amateur videos that were sampled for this study. All of them cover 21st century commemorative reenactments of the 1944 World War II airborne Operation Market Garden,¹ and all of them make use of para-filmic techniques, and a musical score. Fittingly enough, the album on which the Coldplay song appeared was named *Parachutes* (2000).

It is the tentative link between commemoration, reenactment, filmic, and musical culture that the present essay is interested in. “History’s affective turn,” as Vanessa Agnew has called it (Agnew 2007), has brought individual narrative, emotional experience, and affective responses to the forefront of scholarly historical discourses. As a side effect of this turn, scholars have become more aware of the realm of citizen scholars, aficionados, and mere hobbyists, who take history into their own hands, and re-stage historic events as reenactments, and then upload them to YouTube. However, as I will try to show, whereas there is a moment of reappropriation of both theatre and history in these activities (cf. Hochbruck 2012), few if any of the reappropriations—the shows as well as their representations in videos on the web—take place outside the well-demarcated hegemonial frame.

The last decade has seen a marked increase of interest in reenactments as a social and historical phenomenon, and some excellent scholarship in the field

1 I was invited to observe the 70th anniversary commemorative reenactment of the crossing of the Waal River by US forces which originally took place on Sept. 20th, 1944. My experiences as an American Civil War scholar, and reenactor, and a previous study on reenactments of the Civil War battle of Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863; Hochbruck 2016) seemed to indicate that the Waal / Market Garden events were indicative of a category not listed in my own typology of Living History presentations (Hochbruck 2013).

(Agnew 2004, McCalman/Pickering 2010, Schlehe et al. 2010). However, there are less than a handful of publications on World War II reenactments that might be called useful according to scholarly standards, and only one major study: Jenny Thompson's *War Games* (Thompson 2004) is an ethnographic treatise of the men and (few) women participating in these recreations of war scenarios on a variety of mostly private sites in the United States (Berens 2008).

The material analysed for this essay, as well as the method and the theory behind it, follow a different approach. For one, the videos and short films of the Market Garden reenactments for the most part cover commemorative events that take place on an annual basis in the vicinity of the original dates, and on or near the original sites. The September 1944 Operation Market Garden events involved British, American, Polish, and Canadian airborne and ground forces, Dutch civilians, and German *Wehrmacht* and *Waffen-ss* units, fighting and suffering along a corridor from Eindhoven to the greater Arnhem area. Commemorative events celebrating what was a failed attempt at liberating the Netherlands have proliferated and expanded over the last fifty years. They now include memorial services and parades as well as parachute jumps, and crossings of the river Waal. Operation Market Garden has also been turned into two major films, the star-studded Richard Attenborough-directed Joseph Levine production *A Bridge Too Far* (1976), and *Theirs is the Glory* (Hurst 1946; see the essay by Laszló Munteán in this volume) from the immediate post-war period, which used many original participants in prominent and supporting roles. The participation of reenactment groups in the current commemorative events, parades, and pageants on the historic sites near Arnhem and Nijmegen is the standard, and individuals and groups travel long distances in order to attend.

The bandwidth of events, and the ensuing multiplicity of overlapping perspectives and performative agendas, ranges typologically from the symbolic via pageantric representations to live-action role play, and they involve original participants and their descendants, other war veterans, contemporary members of units that were involved in the historical events, present-day reenactors, the local population, and of course numerous tourists from a variety of countries.

The interfacing of these typologically different formations means that the methodological basis needs to be reassessed. The term “reenactment” is used here for a variety of theatrical formats, all of which aim at a re-staging of events, based on various concepts (and consequently performances) of historical accuracy. It is, for instance, used for reconstructions of stage productions (cf. Fischer-Lichte 2012, 38–47), and in this context the term is used most appropriately in so far as *reenactment* assigns, semantically, to the original event the role of an *enactment*. In the historical field, however, *enactments* are most likely to take the form of rituals and ceremonies, diplomatic encounters

and state actions, in so far as they follow elaborate scripts. Many of them are reenacted as regular theatrical events to reaffirm local, regional, or national identities—and of course as tourist attractions.

Reenactments in the more limited sense as staged celebrations of past military occurrences are likewise re-constructions. The link to the *enactment* in this case is more tentative, though justifiable in so far as the staged structure of reenactments reinforces the public sense of the eventual outcome. As a theatrical practice, they are traceable to ancient Rome, and like with other forms of public theatre there is both a ritual and a political side to their performance. As part of the political theatre, they have been used in hegemonial processes as integral parts of the performativity of power (Hochbruck 2013). Within this system, reenactments need only to be scripted to a limited degree since they tend to follow certain sets of conventions accepted by the majority of participants. Reenactments reproduce an agreed-on set of historiographic accounts, rather than the past.

However, while this holds true for most of reenactment history, including the current practice, postmodern reenactment culture is at least theoretically, and strategically, also a form of theatrical reappropriation of history, and therefore at least potentially a theatrical format that can be used for cultural and social empowerment (Hochbruck 2012). Reenactments are also simply a legitimate form of theatrical entertainment, though they have not been seen, leave alone treated, as a part of the field of Theatre & Drama Studies for most of their existence. Instead, much of the discourse on reenactments has focused on issues of authenticity. However, the perception of authenticity changes as the historical events—and their original participants—gradually recede into history. The mode and method of authentication is transferred from original participant in military events and objects to accurately reproduced equipment and precise evolutions. The functions of reenactments can therefore be summarized as

- (socio-)political / historical
- mnemotechnical / ceremonial
- aesthetic / entertaining

For the set of Operation Market Garden reenactments, this means that there are interfacing and interacting formats. A mediaeval festival or an “Indian” camp are reenactments of “distant” pasts, places, and peoples. By comparison, the Operation Market Garden events are reenactments of proximity in so far as in terms of both time and space, nationality/-ies, and social structures, the events are located within reach. As part of a regional, and national, historical and cultural heritage, they are grounded in what Jan Assmann calls social memory (Assmann J. 1995): still embodied in memories of actual participants and their

descendants they are still part of “communicative memory” (Connerton 1989, Assmann A. 2006, Assmann J. 2008). Now in post-authoritarian societies, memory and commemoration are increasingly pried loose from hegemonially arranged structures, and appropriated by interested groups (Langenohl 2008). This opens their structures to more democratic, bottom-up approaches and appropriations (see Hochbruck 2012), but unfortunately this is not necessarily a progressive turn. Especially commemorations, and also reenactments, of the World Wars are constantly in danger of being appropriated by reactionary and neo-nationalist forces celebrating war and nationalist values.

The feature of historic authenticity, so central to Living History Interpretation programmes in museums (Hochbruck 2013, 42), is only one of a variety of aspects that might be considered in connection with reenactments. With the gradual transition from local historical events to contemporary reenactment scenarios, four steps can be identified by which the interpretatory power gradually shifts from the original participants and participants-as-historians to the next generation of their descendants, and subsequently to new generations of descendants and non-descendants whose performative practices attempt to create authentic (if usually downscaled) representations of the original events (Hochbruck 2015). The focus of the authentication method shifts in the process from veteran-centred, via descendant- and operational-movements-centred, to authentication by means of a replicated object-level and attempts at enacted proximity.

Reproduction to Replication: Four Steps

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Staging the event as reproduction | documentations
photographs
memorials
documentaries |
| 2. | Reenactment by Veterans themselves | Reunions |
| 3. | Reenactment by the Next Generation / Reenactment as Symbolic Action | Descendants of the original participants and / or the next generation of military personnel recreate operational movements and parades, often with veterans present as guests of honor |
| 4. | Reenactment as Scaled Replica | Reenactments as attempts at object- (and operation-)centred replication |
-

This system casts some doubt on Jean Baudrillard’s widely accepted notion that the “real” disappears in media simulations and that the “definition of the

real becomes that of which it is possible to provide an equivalent reproduction” (Baudrillard 1983, 146). The closest one might get to Baudrillard’s idea of a media-generated *hyperreality* should, technically, be where the proximity to the filmic mode is closest. Even though comments by reenactors about their own practice have been pointing in this direction, the importance of the filmic mode and method in reenacting still appears to have been underestimated so far: As Jenny Thompson found out, many reenactors “produce and simultaneously consume their own illusions—‘watching it while acting in it.’ No longer are they passive viewers in a movie theater ... they have assumed the powerful, dual roles of creator and participant in a war experience” (Thompson 2004, 170). This seems to be in line with Frederic Jameson’s contention that the postmodern period saw “the transformation of reality into images, the fragmentation into a series of perpetual presents” (Jameson 1988, 28). In the case of the material researched here, the images even come with a musical score.

Whereas the statement about production and consumption of their own illusions has a ring of truth to it, Thompson (as well as several other critics of reenactment events) possibly overestimates the identification level because of the kind of events that she attended, which took place on private sites in the U.S., with the reenactors playing for themselves, and each other. Commemorative events do not aim at recreating a past-as-present for all; usually only selected objects and individuals get transferred—the historic tank, the living veterans and eyewitnesses, or (increasingly) their descendants. Also, reenactors are always actors, and in the vast majority of cases consciously (often self-consciously) so: the immersive performance in a reenactment means taking over the (often generic) role of a rank-and-file participant, but it does neither involve real time-travel nor a lasting status change. The near (i.e. filmic) “identity” of original and replicated event leading to the sensory experience of a “period rush” or “history flash” (Hochbruck 2013, 93) is only possible where the re-created past is constructed as an attempted unified whole with ‘other’-worldly qualities, suggesting a touch-zone that is authenticity-based in terms of object level and qualities of reenacted space (i.e. without anachronistic structures).

For the postmodern reenactor at a commemorative event, however, this is but one of three “touch zones” in which to interact with history, true to the observation that historical learning is becoming more and more an affective, individualized, and story-based process. I would like to suggest a distinction between

1. an *authenticity-based touch zone*: with its filmic “identity” of original and replicated event,
2. a *spatial touch zone*: original event sites, original objects (cf. Hochbruck 2008), and

3. a *genealogical touch zone*: including contact with original participants (primary) or their descendants (secondary).

Applying the abovementioned hypothesis about the four steps to the form in which they present themselves in chronological succession for reenactments of, for instance, the much-reenacted American Civil War battle of Gettysburg (orig. 1863, see Hochbruck 2016), and of Operation Market Garden, it might become more apparent why the most recent generation of living history presentations shows a wider bandwidth of phenomena simultaneously, and is in less danger of creating hyperrealities in the Baudrillardian sense.

Four Steps Model: Gettysburg/Operation Market Garden

1.	1863	Battle of Gettysburg → National Cemetery	1.	1944	Operation Market Garden
			1. & 2.	1946	Film <i>Theirs is the Glory</i>
2.	1890	National Park, Veterans Reunions			
2. & 3.	1913	Sesquicentennial	2. & 3.	since 1970s	Reunions & Symbolic Restaging
3.	1938	75th Anniversary “Last Meeting of the Blue and Gray”			s. a.
4.	1963	Centenary Reenactment			
4.	1993	Film “Gettysburg”		1976	Film <i>A Bridge Too Far</i>
4.	1998 & 2013	Reenactments with nearly original participant figures	2. & 3. & 4.	2014	Symbolic reenactment & parades & veterans & descendants of veterans

A closer look at the bottom bar helps to explain the difference: At 135th Gettysburg in 1998, a total of almost 15,000 reenactors managed to recreate *Pickett’s Charge* against the Union positions on Cemetery Hill almost on a one-to-one scale. The requirements for participation that each participant had received ensured a considerable degree of homogeneity in terms of arms, equipment, and accoutrements. By comparison, the 70th anniversary reenactment of the Waal crossing (20 Sep. 1944) by units from the 82nd Airborne Division involved a company of present-day U.S. paratroopers. No attempts at historicizing uniforms or boats were made, but several veterans of the crossing as well as some

descendants of original participants were allowed in the boats with the soldiers of the 82nd (Nieuws uit Nijmegen 2014).² Covering fire, historically provided by General Brian Horrocks XXX. Corps Irish Guards tanks, was present courtesy of the Dutch army: an armored personnel carrier, some machine guns and a mortar unit. And then there was a five-piece British 25-pounder battery manned by reenactors. Their opening shot was fired by a British ww2 veteran artilleryman. Neither the guns nor the old gunner had been historically present.

The simultaneous presence of veterans, their descendants, and modern soldiers, and of modern-type reenactors using replicated as well as original uniforms, accoutrements, and ordinance, appears to be a fairly recent phenomenon and so far apparently limited to First and Second World War commemorative events.

What can be observed here is that there is a simultaneity of what in the case of the Civil War were successive stages, and that there is, probably because of this constellation, a far higher degree of homogeneous “authenticity” in the Civil War reenactments. The Civil War reenactment attempts to create a documentary mode and atmosphere; the added value lies in the suggested eye-witness position of the observer. From the point of view of didactics of history, the staged interpretation of an event is presented as representative of historical truth. The filmic mode of presentation, often with voice-over narration and appropriately selected music—i.e. Civil War era marches and tunes—does not diminish this impression at least for the audience, in so far as they are used to it from movies and history channel documentaries (cf. Schlote/Voigts-Virchow 2008, 113).

By comparison, World War II scenarios like the Waal crossing have a more strongly dissociative potential. The co-presence of diverse time-periods for instance at the 70th anniversary Waal crossing kept referring to its own historicity, and to the symbolically charged staging of the events witnessed. The audience at Nijmegen on 20 September 2014 was never allowed to forget the commemorative nature of the reduced drama before their eyes—reduced to symbolic action for commemorative purposes also in so far as there was no attempt at “reality” beyond exploding some blackpowder charges on the other side of the Waal. The *Volksgranadiere*—boys, and old men—defending the German positions were not reenacted. In fact they were hardly mentioned at all.³

2 One news channel video from the 65th anniversary reenactment jumps actually shows German paratroopers taking a nap right at the start (- 00:38), but fails to mention their presence in the voiceover narration, only mentioning Dutch, British, American, and Polish participants (EDTV.nl 2009).

3 Only by Doug McCabe, one of the speakers at the semi-attached conference at Radboud University (see McCabe, 2014).



FIGURES 1 AND 2 *WW2 Veterans and Royal Artillery reenactors at Nijmegen Bridge, Sept. 2014.*
PHOTOS F. MEHRING.

The diversity and multiplicity of perspectives typical of World War II commemorative events makes the re-appropriation of history in these events at least potentially a more conscious (and self-conscious) process. One of the indications of this (self-)consciousness is the fact that there seems to be a

dissociation between on-site or near-site commemoration, and the kind of military reenactment that thrives on a replicated object-level and attempts at enacted proximity.⁴ Another one is the use of music in Operation Market Garden events on YouTube videos. As I will try to show using a variety of formats from the body of the video samples, the use of music opens further vistas on reenactments. There is a bandwidth from attempts at “authentic” identification, via the use of “filmic” motifs trying to achieve an affective association with the role model (Bullerjahn 2001, 200), to assurances of distance.

To my knowledge, no scholarly paper has attempted to include music in its assessment of reenactments, even though in a situation where the perception and reproduction of histories are governed by an affective turn, the presence and role of the music accompanying this turn might be important. The role of music in movies is part of the supportive system (Bullerjahn 2001, Burt 1994). It can be traced to 18th and 19th century melodrama (Pisani 2014), therefore has been around long enough to establish “the need to coordinate music with the affective contents of the visuals, as opposed to simply providing some sort of ‘cine-muzak’” (Brown 1994, 13). The use of music to accompany their actions by U.S. soldiers in Vietnam has become popular folklore, based on accounts by Michael Herr and others (Herr 1977, Fish 2002). Already Stephen Crane had noticed how according to conventional standards heroic deeds in particular seemed to generate accompanying sound. In his novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, young Henry Fleming has barely left the battlefield, when he is already parading his memories in front of his inner eye: “Those performances which had been witnessed by his fellows marched now in wide purple and gold, having various deflections. They went gayly with music. It was pleasure to watch these things” (Crane 1962, 108).

The presence of music at reenactments should therefore not come as a surprise, particularly when there is a larger audience and voiceover narration. Even less surprising is the presence of musical scores in reenactment videos, given their frequent aspiration to para-filmic quality. After all, among the purposes of music in (documentary) films are the evocation of a historical time, and the creation of a reception as communal and collective practice (Schneider 1989, 106, 110). About half of the videos sampled for this study

4 One of the few battle-reenactments of this kind on YouTube is “Battle for Arnhem—A Bridge Too Far Tribute” (Historical Aviation Film Unit, 2014), showing paratroopers jumping from a civilian DC 3, a replicated glider, and a firefight between British and German forces—in New Zealand in 2007, with voice-over commentary providing info on the actual battle, and commentary on the Levine film. The battle takes place on a treeless plain. There is no musical soundtrack.

were accompanied by some sort of musical score. Typologically, they can be categorised into four groups

1. memorial / commemorative events, accompanied by
 - a) music played on the occasion or
 - b) with added soundtrack
2. parades / pageantric events, accompanied by
 - a) music provided by organizers
 - b) voiceover (if included) & soundtrack by editor
3. (battle) reenactments (with or without soundtrack)
4. “movies” (with soundtrack & texts)

Given the proximity of reenactments to war movies, the videos and their music might be expected to conform to war movie conventions. Also, both movies covering Operation Market Garden provide memorable musical motifs, notably so the suite composed for *A Bridge Too Far* by John Addison, who was a veteran of the British xxx Corps (Addison 1976, cf. Thomas 1991, 132–145). However, the range of music used by the makers of the YouTube videos sometimes extends beyond the obvious choices, and sometimes chooses the overly obvious (cf. Burt 1994, 80). In order to grasp their range of possibilities—given that none of the musical scores were expressly composed for the videos they accompany—it is useful to return to a triadic distinction originally introduced by Hansjörg Pauli (Pauli 1976, 104), who claimed that film music served three basic functions: to paraphrase (supportive of the message, integrated), to polarise (when the music gives direction to an otherwise uncertain meaning), and thirdly *Kontrapunktierung*, which for the sake of simplification I will adapt and translate here as *subversion*. The model has shortcomings (Schneider qtd. in Bullerjahn 2001, 39; and Bullerjahn 2001, 38), and Pauli himself modified it, but it is useful here in the original form in so far as these three functions are usually visible as results of the rather openly displayed authorial intentionality so typical of YouTube videos.

Example 1: “Slow March massed pipes and drums John Frost Bridge Arnhem” (pieterwzn 2009)

Type: 1a. The pipes and drums of the Southern Highlanders perform John Cameron’s 1856 lament “The Mist Covered Mountains” on the occasion of the 65th remembrance.

While the units deployed at Arnhem were not particularly Scottish, bagpipe music had already been used to underscore the parachuting operation in *Theirs is the Glory* (Hurst 1946) and during the final pull-out, a

piper can not only be heard but also faintly seen (1:17). Also, a bagpipe lament somehow seems an ideal response to heroic failures.

Example 2: “Race to the bridge 2012 Renkum—Arnhem” (pkokkie3, 2012)

Type: 2a or b. The annual “Race to the Bridge” parade of military vehicles is supposed to be a reenactment of the British paratroopers’ advance from Renkum Heath, where many of them had landed, into the city of Arnhem to capture the bridges. Most of the vehicles seen are variants of the standard Willys “Jeep,” some of which were historically deployed by British glider planes, as well as motorcycles and bicycles. The presence of the bicycles and (at 4:00 and 5:26) several German *Kübelwagen* and what looks like a 1940s German *LLG* fire engine repainted to resemble a military truck, can be explained by their having been commandeered; the appearance of U.S. trucks and a *DUKW* goes beyond authenticity because of the character of the event as a mixture of reenactment and parade.

Ironically, the seven *welbikes* in the parade have every historical reason to be there, while they were left out of both movies—possibly because the minuscule one-seater, especially developed for airborne troops, looks simply ridiculous in practice. The music, performed by HM Royal Marines Band, has a similar tendency towards the involuntarily comical, in so far as the first march heard (probably from loudspeakers near the position of the camera-person, or else cut into the film in addition to the sounds of vehicles and visitors audible throughout), is American John Philip Sousa’s “The Liberty Bell” (1893). As a choice for a (failed) liberation, this might be considered appropriate, but this march was also the theme from the *Monty Python’s Flying Circus* in the 1960s. The (unintentional) comicality is underscored by the position of the camera, as the subtitle announces, “in front of Snackbar Lunchroom Airborne.”

Example 3: “Arnhem Bridge: Operation Market Garden. Reenactment 2010” (bazaoo78)

Type: 2a. Other than what the title indicates, this short video does not show Arnhem Bridge, nor does anything in the movie indicate a relation to Operation Market Garden. A group of British paratrooper reenactors with a jeep—possibly participants in the 2010 “Race to the Bridge”—appropriate the music played over a loudspeaker system for an impromptu dance.

That this is not a “hardcore” (or “campaigner”) group is easily visible from the fact that their majority seem to be at least in their fifties, including the one dancer, and that the other dancer is a young woman, whose modern hairdo

is visible under her red beret. They are dancing a boogie to the Andrews Sisters' version of "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (with Anyone Else but Me)" written by Sam H. Stept, with lyrics by Lew Brown and Charles Tobias.

The choice of music at this point appears to have been coincidental, the action spontaneous and, considering that the woman is supposed to portray a paratrooper, even "out of character" from the point of view of authenticity. At the same time, their spontaneous appropriation of the tune echoes numerous scenes from the days of liberation. It might even be an (unintentional) commentary on a diary entry for October 17th, 1944 by a young man from Nijmegen, Jan Hendriks, who had taken to playing for the liberators in bars: "'s Avonds ging ik weer piano spelen voor de Tommy's [sic]. Het was er gezellig. Ze waren verbaasd dat ik zoveel swingnummers kan spelen, zoals 'Lady be good', 'In the mood' en dergelijke" (Afdeling Educatie Nationaal Bevrijdingmuseum 1944–1945, n.y., 24).⁵ Hendriks' diary in turn stands in contrast to a post-war song claiming "Ik kan niet swingen" (Mehring 2014) about Dutch girls and Canadian and British liberators—obviously, some *Nijmegenaren* could.

Example 4: Battle Of Arnhem 17 September 2011 (Ederveen 2011)

Type: 2b / 3. The short film concentrates on airplanes flying over, and on a line of vehicles moving along a dirt road in the Ginkelse Heide area used annually for the reenactment of the drive up 'hell's highway' and the airborne drop. There was a musical score provided by the organisers, as loudspeaker masts are clearly visible. At ca. 4:10, a text panel informs the audience that the presentation will now go to tinted format to give the video a more authentic feeling: "We gaan de beelden even weer aanpassen om het geheel een authentiek tintje te geven."

The music also changes—to the British national anthem! This does tie in with the gratefulness resonating in the video commentary, but more importantly, it shows an interesting perception of the "authentiek" as decidedly filmic; or, more precisely, of reality as newsreel. The original events had of course been as colourful, or colourless, as the reenactment was—the same time of the year, the same colour uniforms, vehicles etc. The appropriation of history here is one that attempts to be toeing the line of hegemonial opinion, to the point where that attempt becomes comical in its well-intentioned choice of form and soundtrack (cf. Burt 1994, 80).

5 "In the evening I went again to play the piano for the Tommies. It was rather chummy. They were surprised that I could play so many swing pieces such as 'Lady Be Good', 'In the Mood', and the like."

Example 5: “Veterans Flight—Parachute Group Holland—Market Garden—Wolfheze, 21. Sept. 2012” (Redmanta84, 2012)

Type 3. Reenactment slide show with text panels and music. The *Parachute Group Holland* is a club specialising on jumps with the old military type of round canopy parachutes. They regularly participate in the commemorative Market Garden reenactment jumps. In 2012, two British “1st Airborne Arnhem veterans Harold Padfield, Tom Carpenter, and Dutch para veteran Theo Jacobs,” as the explanatory note on the webpage states (Redmanta84 2014) were with them on the plane (a restored Douglas C-47).⁶

The music is the main theme from the ego-shooter game *Medal of Honor*, (1999) composed by Michael Giacchino and chosen probably because of its proximity to Addison and other war movie soundtracks as well as for its title. This is what Norbert Jürgen Schneider refers to as “mood music” to inspire (Schneider 1989, 106). The (Congressional) *Medal of Honor* is the highest decoration awarded to U.S. soldiers—a fact that creates a certain irony in so far as none of the participant veterans in this reenactment were Americans. The music serves to enhance the reenactment character of the event in so far as the ego-shooter game contains all the fighting that is invisible from the slides, or visible only in so far as it is inscribed on the veterans in their red-bereted veterans’ suits with their rows of medal ribbons, and in the partly modern, partly historic (and mixed, American and British) paratrooper uniforms.

Example 6: “Market Garden—Driel, 18th September 2010” (MarsAssessor 2010)

Type 3. Reenactment of the jump of Major General Stanisław Sosabowski’s 1st (Polish) Independent Parachute Brigade, which suffered high losses during the operation. Only the mention of Driel indicates to audiences that this has anything to do with the Polish Brigade. The reenactors jumping from a historical C-47 Dakota were members of Pathfinder Europe, the oldest parachute group organisation

6 The text does not go into detail about the role or function on Mr. Jacobs, who does, however, appear on a website of a reunion of Dutch commando soldiers in 2015. World War II participation is not mentioned rather than “politioenele acties in Indië,” that is, the colonial conflict in what became Indonesia in 1949 (Korps Commandotroepen 2015)—a particular irony in so far as this would imply that two veterans who fought for the liberation of the Netherlands from Nazi rule shared the plane with a Dutchman who fought against liberation from colonial rule.

using round canopy parachutes. The Polish text and song, sounding like from a historical radio transmission or record, remain unidentified in the descriptive notes accompanying the video. The spoken text identifies the Arnhem operation, and mentions Sosabowski’s men. “Marsz Spadochronowy” is the Polish paratroopers’ march.⁷ Fittingly enough—but, ironically, it mentions Wilna (Vilnius) and Lwów (Lviv) as areas of liberating operations, neither of which are now Polish territory, and fails to mention Arnhem. No other indication is given in the film that the parachutists in the video are supposed to be Sosabowski’s men—the identification runs solely via the musical score and the explanatory text. This creates, in Pauli’s terms, polarisation—the music generates a meaning that the images alone cannot convey. Both Cornelius Ryan’s minutely researched book (Ryan 1974) and the Hollywood film *A Bridge Too Far* have described the Poles as marginalised, and ironically the use of Polish in the soundtrack of this video continues in this direction rather than bringing them closer. It is a small event, performed by what looks like no more than twenty men (three planes, or three times the same plane, with six parachutists on each run), with the Polish song “othering” the otherwise unrecognisable Poles.

Example 7: “Terug naar September 1944” (Sanders 2008)

Type 4 Movie (8:22). This example proves best that Jenny Thompson’s above-quoted statement about acting in a war-movie while watching it contains more than a kernel of truth. The aspiration to produce a “real” movie is visible throughout, starting with the assertion on the webpage that there is a production company.⁸ The production was filmed at the 2008 *Open Monumenten Dag* in Fort Vechten, where a group called *Vereniging Historische Militaria* and others named in the credits reenacted a Market Garden scenario. The story, told in four scenes, goes beyond “September 1944” to encompass the liberation in May 45 as well. The first scene, showing the German occupation, uses the same *Medal of Honor* soundtrack used by Ex. 5 until it is superseded by air-raid sirens and sound of airplanes. Advancing British paras are fired on by the Germans. The following battle scene switches to black and white at 4:45 with a German voiceover about

⁷ Thanks to my friends Monika Krol and Marek Gryglewicz for help with this text.

⁸ Sanders has produced a number Roman period reenactment videos, and at least one more ww2, about the “Battle for Dordrecht -1940-” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJOLD-hoOg6o>, acc. Sept. 5, 2015).

the defeat of the British airborne forces at Arnhem—this passage is obviously meant to look and sound like a German *Wochenschau*, and, like Ex. 4, to become more “real” that way. However, it is not directly modelled on, or using the text of, the real *Wochenschau No. 734* which reported the Arnhem fight (Worldly Life Distracts You, 2015). The third scene opens with a text panel announcing “5 May 1945” but the following scenario showing the liberation of the Netherlands by British and Canadian infantry is closest to the Eindhoven passage in *A Bridge Too Far*, with celebrating Dutch civilians singing “Oranje Boven,” an impression strongly reinforced by the use of music from Addison’s suite for the opening of the scene. Somewhat incongruously, the film then (6:45) switches back to a hospital scene, modelled on passages from *A Bridge Too Far* yet without music, before the credits start rolling.

Conclusion

The theatricality of reenactments has been established beyond doubt, their open-air character, lack of script, and their structural simplicity notwithstanding. Their predominantly assertive stance towards hegemonial historiography, their lack of accessible scripts, and their derivative and epigonal character have not rendered them particularly attractive for scholars. In fact, they might have shielded them so far from deeper and more systematic analysis. However, a number of aspects that link reenactments to other, more “artistic” forms of performance, can be established. Their proximity to film was already stated by Jenny Thompson. In conclusion to this paper, I would like to advance several claims that go beyond Thompson, Agnew, and my own research so far.

1. Modern and postmodern reenactments already presuppose and include a conceptually filmic performativity running throughout. Battle reenactments have always been war movies without cameras. With the ubiquitousness of simple hand-held, camera devices, however, that has changed towards even closer approximation. Reenactors can now participate in their own war movie, and not only watch themselves while doing it, but they can re-watch and upload it on YouTube afterwards.
2. Commemorations of 20th-century events integrate veterans, descendants of veterans, contemporary units that continue the tradition of the original ones, *and* reenactor groups / living history presentations, in a

- novel combination that leaves the seams of historiography more visible than in the more unified attempts at “authentic” reenactments.
3. Reenactment videos on YouTube are not just bad amateur war movies. Not being able to narrate a full story, and develop characters, they resemble more the original *actualities* film history started with—short clips up to the size of one-reelers which represent something the audience is already familiar with, so the clip / movie can work with inferences, show only excerpts and fragments, and rely on audiences to fill in the rest.
 4. Musical scores are one form by which authors / editors attempt to overcome the obvious limits of YouTube video clipping of reenactments and commemorative events, but very few YouTube video producers are able to compose their own soundtrack. In most cases where there is an accompanying soundtrack, at least in the samples investigated here the makers used prefabricated material, and tried to stay on the hegemonially beaten track.
 5. As at least two of the examples in this study show, however, music in reenactment videos can also be used to extend the range of the genre. The “paras” dancing to “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree” both reassert the genre—this was a war-time song, and couples danced to it—and they subvert it. Their age and gender indicate that their view of what might pass as authentic is considerably broader than what would be covered by any idea of *vraisemblance*. And finally, Coldplay’s “Can anybody fly this thing...?” just when the *B 25 Mitchell* heaves in view is subtle irony, and shows subversive potential, as do a number of other videos that focus primarily on the airplanes, or the jumps.
 6. The amalgamation of older forms of commemoration with present-day formations of living history presentation has changed the traditional militaristic gravity of commemorative events into a lighter, and in the Bakhtinian sense more carnivalesque and polyvocal format. This is underscored by the various ways in which music is used.
 7. The “commemorative reenactment” as an amalgam form constitutes another sub-category in the typology of Living History / ‘Geschichtstheater’ which to my knowledge has not previously been identified, or analysed. As an active, participatory format commemorating in this particular case the liberation of the Netherlands, and of Western Europe, its integral playfulness and potential subversiveness seem more appropriate for the 21st century than any continuation of older hegemonial forms of commemoration could possibly be any longer.

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On the Road to Nijmegen—Earle Birney and Alex Colville, 1944–1945

Hans Bak

Introduction¹

That the Canadian army played a significant role in liberating the Netherlands from German occupation between D-Day (June 6, 1944) and the unconditional surrender of Germany on May 5, 1945 has been well-documented by historians, diarists, and even—if to a lesser extent than the contributions made by the British and American forces—by novelists and poets (Bosscher; Davey; Zuehlke). The carefully maintained Canadian Military Cemeteries in the Netherlands— at Bergen op Zoom (968 graves), Groesbeek (2,400 graves) and Holten (close to 1,400 graves)—form a compelling memorial to the sacrifice of many Canadian lives. The Canadian war effort was decisive on at least three major fronts. In November 1944, in the Southwest, Canadians fought the Germans at the battle of Walcheren, to keep control over the Scheldt estuary and thus ensure open access to the Antwerp harbor for the Allied forces. In September 1944, in the Southeast, the Allied forces, predominantly American, marched through a narrow corridor from Belgium into the Eindhoven area and on to Nijmegen, as part of Operation Market Garden—its aim being to secure the two strategic bridges, one at Nijmegen across the river Waal, the other at Arnhem, across the Rhine. The city of Nijmegen was technically liberated by the Allied forces on September 20, but with Operation Market Garden grinding to a halt just north of Nijmegen—the bridge at Arnhem proving, in Cornelius Ryan’s famous words “a bridge too far”—the city remained under German fire and shelling through the winter and spring of 1944–1945. In November,

1 I thank the following people for helping me to locate poetic and visual representations of Nijmegen by Canadian poets and painters: Sherrill Grace, University Killam Professor, Department of English, University of British Columbia; Laura Brandon, Historian, Art and War, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa; Amber Lloydlangston, Historian, Art and War, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa; Jane Naisbitt, Head, Military History Research Centre and Collections Information, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

Canadian troops took over defending and protecting the city from the British; they effectively stayed until the spring of May 1945. After February 8, they pushed into the German Rhineland, as part of Operation Veritable. As a third front, from March 23 to the end of hostilities in May, the Canadian army moved back into the Netherlands and was crucial in liberating the regions north of the rivers Waal and Rhine (Rosendaal; Zuehlke).

During their long presence in the Nijmegen area Canadian soldiers largely enjoyed cordial and friendly relations with the local population. Welcomed as liberators and defenders, they could count on sympathy and cooperation, and were often warmly received into Nijmegen homes. That is not to say their behavior was at all times beyond reproach. If fraternization with the Nijmegen people was allowed, and even—within limits—encouraged by the military authorities, Canadian soldiers were as vulnerable to human weakness as others and not always willing or able to be cast in the role of exemplars of heroism, nobility and morality. As Michiel Horn has noted, “the Canadians were no saints; they were mostly young men who had fought, faced death, and lived” (Horn 158). They had trouble maintaining morale; under the pressure of ongoing counterattacks and shelling by a German army which proved a great deal more resilient and persistent than expected, they were ready for pleasure and relief; in interaction with a local population starved, pauperized and deprived, a black market economy of bartering cigarettes, food, liquor, and chocolate flourished; destruction and looting were regular occurrences (Horn, 156–73 *passim*). A vivid glimpse into the conditions of everyday life in frontline-city Nijmegen and the struggles of its inhabitants to survive—often in basement bomb cellars—amidst the shelling and burning buildings, is offered by the diary of Jan Hendriks, then a nineteen-year-old Nijmegen pianist. In exchange for cigarettes, chocolate, tea, hard liquor (which he then traded) or cans of corned beef, pork, and sardines, he regularly performed American jazz and dance music for the Allied forces, in local bars, societies, homes and concert halls like De Vereeniging which, under its temporary new name of “Wintergarden,” was a central place for relaxation and congregation of Canadian military personnel. The Canadians, Hendriks noted in his diary on November 16, were fierce drinkers, especially when they had to go into battle the next day (“Pleasure and death are close companions” [71]); being strong, healthy and (comparatively) wealthy, they were also serious competitors for Nijmegen boys for the graces—and sexual favors—of Nijmegen girls:

Nijmegen is a Catholic, conservative bulwark, but at present the clergy has no grip on this unexpected, new situation. We read in the papers that the Nijmegen girls must preserve their honor, but there is no way that going out with Canadian soldiers or visiting dance parties can be

forbidden. The population will not keep to the regulations. This is not a good time to be engaged to a Dutch girl. Many engagements are broken. The girls go out dancing with the Allied soldiers, and the Nijmegen boys have nothing to offer. The soldiers give the girls cigarettes, chocolate and nylon stockings, a product we did not know yet. Dresses are made out of parachute materials, and the soldiers stationed in the Nijmegen area bring goods from empty houses in the frontlines and present these to the girls. (Hendriks, entry November 21, 1944, 73)

Unwanted pregnancies, illegitimate births, venereal diseases, and a massive number of Dutch-Canadian war brides (as well as broken-off relations) were the long-term result—according to Horn (170), the Canadian government paid the passage to Canada of 1,886 Dutch war brides and 428 children, the second largest contingent, after the 4,868 British war brides.² The Canadian poet Raymond Souster captured some of these realities in his poem “Nijmegen, Holland, 1944” showing how reputed misbehavior on the part of Canadian liberators preceded their actual arrival on the scene, and could be misconstrued—and misused—by German propaganda:

“The Canadian Indians are coming,”
the German troops warned us solemnly,
that afternoon they left our city
for the last time.

“You’ll know them by their faces
painted red, blue and yellow,
from the way they loot your houses,
steal your food, rape your women.
So keep your blinds well down,
don’t show fire-smoke,
hide your daughters in the attic,
and perhaps do some extra praying.”

That’s what the Germans told us,
so we trembled all night in our beds,
not wanting to wake in the morning.

2 As both Horn and Bosscher have noted, reliable figures in these matters are particularly difficult to come by. See Horn 167–70 and Bosscher 172–76 for a balanced discussion of the relations between Canadian soldiers and Dutch women.

Then peeked out through our front windows
 very early to see slowly working their way
 first down one street then another,
 the white, nervous faces of young boys
 trying almost too hard to act
 like tough, devil-may-care fighting men,
 and just barely missing in the part.

I wept openly with joy
 looking at each uncomplicated face
 knowing Holland was free at last,
 knowing Holland was both safe and free. (Colombo and Richardson,
 161–62)

It is against the background of the Canadian military presence in Nijmegen, that in this essay I want to examine the representation of war-torn Nijmegen in the art of two Canadians who—each in his own way—marched “the road to Nijmegen”: poet Earle Birney (1904–1995) and painter Alex Colville (1920–2013). Specifically I want to try and understand why in particular Nijmegen became a central symbolic motif in their artistic rendering of their war experience. What was it about the location, strategic importance, or “spectacle” of Nijmegen that made it a challenging and significant topic for artistic rendering by these two Canadian artists? How did their experience of Nijmegen as frontline city reverberate with larger philosophical or metaphysical concerns? What explains the special appeal of Nijmegen to their artistic imaginations?

Early Birney, “The Road to Nijmegen”

During the 1930s poet and novelist Earle Birney (Fig. 1), ambitious to be a professional medievalist and university teacher, had foregone the writing of verse to give priority to what he then felt was the more pressing obligation of commitment to the world revolution as advocated by Leon Trotsky. But by 1939, the outbreak of the war, and Trotsky’s support of the Russian invasion in Finland, had not only disillusioned Birney with Trotskyism, it had also made him take up the concentrated art of writing poetry as a kind of “safety valve,” as he said in a 1946 radio interview: “the pressure of world events made me feel that there were things I wanted to say, and I didn’t have time to say them in any lengthier way” (Davey 239). In 1940, after the German invasion in Russia, he joined an army officers’ training camp, and by 1942 he

had become a personnel selection officer as well as a published poet: his first collection, *David*, won the Governor General's Award that year. In March 1943 he arrived in England in the rank of captain, and he spent much of 1943–1944 in England, enjoying his work as a personnel selection officer, as well as the sexual freedom that for him came with being away from his wife and son, and the making of new women-friends in London. As Davey notes, Birney's actual period of service on the continent was relatively brief: he was sent to the Dutch-Belgian border in November 1944, to offer moral and psychiatric support to the Canadian troops that had fought to protect the Scheldt estuary. He was stationed in Ghent and, in December, travelled “the road to Nijmegen” where he stayed during the turbulent and bitter winter of 1944–1945. In March he was hospitalized in Ghent, suffering from dysentery and diphtheria, and wrote his poem “The Road to Nijmegen,” before being sent back to Canada in mid-July (Davey 240).

Though Birney was not the only Canadian poet to incorporate Nijmegen into his work—besides Raymond Souster, Alden Nowlan references Nijmegen in his poem “Ex-Sergeant Whalen Tells This Story” (Colombo and Richardson, 162–63)—“The Road to Nijmegen” is without a doubt the Canadian poem that



FIGURE 1
Earle Birney in the 1930s. IMAGE
 APPEARS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY
 OF CALGARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
 MSC 13.9.1.21.

explores the meaning of “Nijmegen” with deepest resonance and complexity.³ Birney travelled his road to Nijmegen not as part of Operation Market Garden in September 1944, but later, most probably in December 1944, when the road functioned mostly as a wartime supply road, connecting the Canadian troops on the Nijmegen frontlines with support to the back. For Canadian soldiers the “road to Nijmegen”—or, in Canadian military parlance, the “Maple Leaf Up” or “Maple Leaf Highway” or “Maple Leaf Route” (Davey 243)—in effect signaled the route from Ghent to Turnhout and, by way of Eindhoven, Son and Grave to Nijmegen. Here is the poem in the more succinct revised version as included by Birney in his 1975 *Collected Poems*:⁴

The Road to Nijmegen

December my dear on the road to Nijmegen
between the stones and the bitten sky
was your face

Not yours at first
but only the countenance of lank canals
and gathered stares
(too rapt to note my passing)
of graves with frosted billy-tins for epitaphs
bones of tanks beside the stoven bridges

and old men in the mist
hacking the last chips
from a boulevard of stumps

These for miles and the fangs of homes
where women wheeled in the wind
on the tireless rims of their cycles
like tattered sailboats,
tossing over the cobbles

3 In the following analysis I am indebted to Frank Davey, who has offered a compelling in-depth reading of “The Road to Nijmegen” in “Earle Birney in Holland” (Davey 2005), contextualizing the poem in light of Birney’s references to Nijmegen in his fiction, in particular his novel *Turvey: A Military Picaresque* (1949), and letters.

4 Quoted from *The Essential Earle Birney* (2014), 22–23. Birney included an earlier more elaborate version in his 1945 book of poems *Now is Time*.

and the children
 groping in gravel for knobs of coal
 or clustered like wintered flies
 at the back of messhuts
 their legs standing like dead stems out of their clogs

Numbed on the long road to mangled Nijmegen
 I thought that only the living of others assures us
 the gentle and true we remember as trees walking
 Their arms reach down from the light of kindness
 into this Lazarus tomb

So peering through sleet as we neared Nijmegen
 I glimpsed the rainbow arch of your eyes
 Over the clank of the jeep
 your quick grave laughter
 outrising at last the rockets
 brought me what spells I repeat
 as I travel this road
 that arrives at no future
 and what creed I can bring
 to our daily crimes
 to this guilt
 in the griefs of the old
 and the graves of the young. (Colombo and Richardson, 160-61)

In an accompanying note Birney explained the locale and genesis of the poem: "Nijmegen was in 1944–5 the town at the tip of the Canadian salient in Holland, connected with rearward troops by a single much-bombed highway. The area had been the scene of tank battles, artillery duels, air raids, buzz-bombs and V-2 rocket attacks. It had also been denuded of trees, coal and foodstocks by the retreating Germans. The winter was in all Europe one of the coldest of the century." Though ostensibly set in the immediate environs of Nijmegen, in effect—as Davey convincingly demonstrates from Birney's fiction and letters (243–45)—the poem artistically conflates images that Birney may well have witnessed along the entire stretch of road.

The poem is cast in the mode of a letter or address to a beloved woman ("my dear")—presumably Gabrielle Baldwin, a young married woman with whom Birney had had a brief affair in the spring of 1943 while still back in

training camp in Canada (Davey 241)—the memory of whose face offers sustenance and comfort to the poet as he travels the devastated road in an army jeep, while flashes of war-ravaged scenes of bitter cold, starvation and death pass him by: graves with tin markers (wooden crosses presumably having been stolen or used for fuel), dismantled tanks and broken bridges, trees lining the road reduced to stumps being hacked at by old men for chips of fuel, women riding bikes without tyres “like tattered sailboats” against the blistering wind, children desperately in search of food and fuel, begging at the back of messhuts, “their legs standing like dead stems out of their clogs,” or “groping in gravel” for bits of coal to keep warm. The images of the war-torn and sleet-lacerated Nijmegen environment are harrowing and bleak, suggesting an almost apocalyptic landscape, populated by old men, women and children. The poet himself feels implicated and guilty (“our daily crimes”) for this war-inflicted, dehumanizing and de-individualizing (“like wintered flies”) misery of “grief of the old” and “graves of the young.” In his state of feeling “numbed” on “the long road to mangled Nijmegen” he cannot but desperately search—or at least long—for the possibility of hope and redemption: in the midst of a landscape of meaningless suffering it is the memory of “your face” and its associated remembrance of the “gentle and true” in human love and tenderness which holds out the frail possibility that the “light of kindness” may offer reprieve in this “Lazarus tomb.” For all the poet’s intense effort to see (“peering through sleet”), the possibility of transcendence or religious grace seems absent: instead of the magic “spells” of religion (or make-belief) and a “creed” to hold on to, the poet finds himself on a road “to no future”—on which whatever salvation, hope or redemption there is must be looked for—fleetingly, ephemerally like a rainbow—in human relationships, in “the rainbow arch of your eyes,” in “your quick grave laughter” (a laughter quick and alive, yet also knowing of death) “outrising at last the rockets.” The poem thus, as Davey pertinently suggests, offers “a meditation on the moral and metaphysical emptiness of war” (240)—and possibly of life itself. Using the specifics of his Nijmegen experience to articulate a deeper, more general vision of human life and nature, Birney’s poem thus bespeaks a stark existentialist humanism, deprived of the possibility of religious grace, in which only inter-human love offers at best a “glimpse” of hope. Fittingly, just as militarily the Nijmegen salient proved the dead end to Operation Market Garden, for Birney personally it proved the final point in his advance on the road he was travelling: in March 1945, having fallen ill of dysentery and diphtheria, he was sent back to recover in a Ghent hospital—and composed “The Road to Nijmegen.”

Alex Colville: Canadian War Artist

First and foremost among Canadian artists who have represented wartime Nijmegen is Alex Colville (1920–2013), one of Canada's premier and most popular realist painters who has attained both national and international stature. A 2015 catalogue to a posthumous retrospective of his art at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto spoke of him as “a towering figure in the history of Canadian painting” (Teitelbaum 14). His reputation was not always uncontroversial; in particular during the postwar years when abstract expressionism was in vogue, he was condescendingly dismissed by some in professional art circles as a realist relic of bygone times. And as late as 1983 his popularity raised some art critics' suspicion of commercial compromise, leading John Bentley Mays to proclaim Colville's importance exaggerated in a dismissive verdict in Canada's premier national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*: “[T]he art he has made is of virtually no creative consequence. ... Its widespread popularity and potential as a crowd-pleaser apart, Colville's art is worthy of inclusion in a small didactic group show of realists from Canada's Atlantic region, nothing more” (qtd in Cheetham 79). Today, Colville's reputation has outlasted such niggardly appreciation, and he is recognized as an artist who continued to explore the resiliency of imaginative realist painting, even when it meant going against the grain: “He renewed the relevance of figurative painting during the postwar period, when abstraction was gaining importance. He offered an alternative voice at a time when figuration was out of favour.” (Mayer 16)

The real nature of Colville's art and achievement have thus become more properly appreciated. His meticulous exploration of the daily scenes and dimensions of small-town Maritime Canada make his images seem both intimately familiar and hauntingly disturbing, and his art's ability to elicit audience identification has come to be seen as a strength rather than a liability, leading Matthew Teitelbaum to diagnose its “fascinating contradictions: his paintings are both difficult and accessible, both private and deeply resonant, both real in depiction and imaginary in association” (14). More pertinent to my present concern is the growing recognition that the seeds of Colville's mature artistic achievement are to be found in the work he produced during his formative years as a war artist (cf. Brandon, 1995): Colville's aesthetic, as Marc Mayer of the National Gallery of Canada observed in 2015, was “borne of the residual scars of his experience in war” (16).

Colville enlisted in the Canadian Army in May 1942, a month before he graduated from Mount Allison University, where he had met Rhoda Wright, a fellow art student from Wolfville, Nova Scotia; they were married in August

of 1942. Colville rose from corporal to infantry 2nd lieutenant, training other soldiers. Though his artistic talents had been recognized as early as high school and a poster he had done for the War Information Bureau had drawn the attention of Colonel A.F. Duguid, head of the army's Historical Section, Colville was wrapped up in the daily routines of soldiering and did no painting during his first two years of army service; as he noted in his diary, "[b]eing an artist while being a soldier is just impossible" (Colville, *Diary* 25 [hereafter: *Diary*]). Then, in the spring of 1944, he was jolted into action—and into being a war artist (Fig. 2). In a November 1980 interview he recalled the moment:

Suddenly I was sent overseas in a very dramatic way. My wife and I were living in a little place near a camp in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The assistant adjutant arrived at our home in a jeep, and said the Colonel wanted to see me. I got into the jeep, and as soon as I got there the Colonel said, "You're leaving at 3:45 on a Canso aircraft and you're being flown to Halifax and Montreal and England," then he said "Mr. Churchill wants you." I didn't know what it was all about. When I got to London, I was told to report to



FIGURE 2 Lieutenant D. Alex Colville, War Artist, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, Keppeln(?), Germany, 4 March 1945. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, MIKAN 3586369, PA 142087.

Canadian Military H.Q., to a Colonel C.P. Stacey, I reported to Stacey and he said, "You've been made a war artist." That was it, just like that. I was a war artist. ("Alex Colville on Alex Colville" 23)

By June 1944 he was spending two weeks with a reinforcement unit in Yorkshire, and making his first watercolor drawings: soldiers at work in a Mechanical Transport garage, at improvised stoves or building field kitchens (*Diary* 24–25). After two years, "it seemed wonderful to be painting again;" as his wife Rhoda recalled, "It was like postgraduate work for him. A great discipline to work in the field. It was like a reward for having given it all up" (*Diary* 25). Colville's years as a war artist—he was in Europe from June 1944 till his return to Canada in October 1945, and was formally discharged as a war artist in June 1946—took him to London, Yorkshire, and the Mediterranean (Gibraltar, Corsica, Naples), before he returned to London to be re-embarked to Belgium, the Netherlands (Nijmegen, Groesbeek, Berg en Dal), the German Rhineland (Kleve, Zylflich, Wyler, Bedburg, Sonsbeck, Uedem, Wesel, Xanten), and the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

The Canadian War Art Program had first been established during the First World War, when New Brunswick-born Lord Beaverbrook, riding a wave of emergent Canadian nationalism, in 1917 had created the Canadian War Memorials Fund to finance British and Canadian artists in the field. During the Second World War the program was resuscitated through the efforts of Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner in London and a trustee of the National Gallery of Canada, to become a new agency named Canadian War Records, in January 1943 (Milroy). Official war artists held commissions as officers, wearing the same uniforms and drawing the same pay. They were not combatants, yet shared many routine discomforts and war hazards with other servicemen—torpedos at sea, war raids, V-1 buzz bombs, V-2 rockets, artillery shelling (Halliday 12). Even so, serving as part of the Historical Section, war artists enjoyed considerable freedom and independence of movement, as they were given leeway to embark on the search for suitable subjects. The formal instructions they received specified subjects and approach, yet also allowed for ample liberty of artistic choice and orientation:

You are expected to record and interpret vividly and veraciously, according to your artistic sense, (1) the spirit and character, the appearance and attitude of the men, as individuals or groups, of the Service to which you are attached—(2) the instruments and machines which they employ, and (3) the environment in which they do their work. The intention is that your productions shall be worthy of Canada's highest cultural traditions,

doing justice to History, and as works of art, worthy of exhibition anywhere at any time. (qtd in Oliver and Brandon, 167)

Under the War Program artists were expected to produce two types of work: field sketches and finished paintings. The former required the ability to produce with speed and accuracy; the latter allowed for revisiting, revising, and imaginative interpretation, reconstruction and rearrangement. Laura Brandon believes that Colville had an uncanny ability to “identify and capture the complete content of a final composition in minutes” (Brandon 1995). Typically, as his diary testifies, he would make quick first-hand observer’s sketches on site, rework some of them into watercolors (often later the same day, once he had returned to camp), then revisit these at his leisure once he was back in his studio in London or in postwar Ottawa, where he would rework a selection into full-fledged oil paintings: “I would improve upon and dramatize the composition, possibly embracing details from other sketches, and aiming at a more powerful effect” (*Diary* 82). For his well-known painting of *The Nijmegen Bridge, Holland* (1946; CWM 19710261-2094)⁵ he made sketches and watercolors which show “a continuous development from the initial sketch to the finished work,” major changes in composition involving the size, type and placement of military vehicles, while fifteen different sketches preceded the finished *Infantry, Near Nijmegen* (1946; CWM 19710261-2079) (Brandon 1995). Given the time lapse (sometimes more than a year) between a first sketch and the finished painting, documentary recording took a back seat to imaginative interpreting and re-vision, as Colville moved from “literal rendering” to “imaginative rearrangement” and a deeper understanding of the implications of what he had witnessed, as in *Bodies in a Grave* (1946; CWM 19710261-2033), his rendition of a mass grave at Bergen Belsen (Brandon 1995).

Colville’s war diary testifies that even at the time he was aware that his work as a war artist, attached to the Historical Section, was of a different nature from that of the army’s documentary film and photography unit, whose members were “shooting footage all the time.” The difference, he noted, “is a conceptual one.” “The camera can record, can make extraordinarily good, affecting records, but a painter is more likely to select and reject, to edit, to interpret. You are not a camera, you are doing essentially different things. There is a certain subjectivity, an interpretive function” (*Diary* 123). His

5 CWM numbers refer to the paintings as catalogued by the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa which holds most of the drawings, watercolors and paintings referred to in this essay. Digital reproductions can be accessed at <http://collections.civilization.ca/public/pages/cmccpublic/emupublic/Query.php?lang=o>

ensuing statement—"I wasn't a mature artist. I was a young, bright person. I had been a good student, and I was technically competent. I considered my job essentially to record" (*Diary* 123)—is somewhat misleading; it must first of all be understood as reflecting the discrepancy between a young man's naïve and somewhat innocuous lack of full self-understanding and the insight of an older artist. Yet the very presence of a Canadian Film and Photo Unit sharpened his artistic self-awareness: "One had the sense that knowing that this was being covered photographically that one should be trying to get something else. I'm not quite sure but I think I was young enough not to worry about that. I simply thought I will do something each day. If it's good, fine; if it isn't good, that's too bad" (*Diary* 136). Laura Brandon has pertinently observed that the *de post facto* and often long-distance revisiting of what war artists had witnessed made their imaginative reconstructions more dramatic, and to a degree fictional:

In many ways, Canada's Second World War artists were essentially "embedded" with Canadian forces. Limited in much the same way as journalists have been during the recent war in Iraq, the artists' field sketches record only what they saw, and what they saw was a very limited slice of a much greater subject. This raises the question of whether their studio canvases and watercolours, completed many months - even years - later, and with the benefit of more knowledge, greater reflection, and understanding, convey more fully the meaning and implication of what they sketched. The evidence suggests that the long view, tempered by a wider contextual standpoint, is the more valuable testimony of events. That the canvases contain elements of imagination, rearrangement, and synthesis, which sometimes led to charges of their being "faked," should not detract from their overall value as expressions of the true experience of the Second World War. They may, in fact, represent an artistic truth and, in this sense, provide a more valuable record of the historical experience of the war than the field sketches. (Brandon "Doing Justice to History")

Though, in being transferred to the European theater of war, Colville had been wrenched away from a quiet domestic and marital life in Nova Scotia, his diary shows few signs of the proverbial artistic alienation. Rather, he thought of himself as the recording voice of a communal experience and felt accepted and appreciated by his fellow soldiers, who might have been less gifted in articulating or communicating how they felt; in Colville's *Diary of a War Artist*, the painting *Infantry, Near Nijmegen, Holland*, is accompanied by the following

observation: “In a certain sense I was writing letters home for these people, depicting their lives, the dugouts, tanks, where they lived” (*Diary* 90). Writing from Nijmegen on November 16, 1944, he noted: “This day was my first experience of working with a unit, and I enjoyed it tremendously. The subject matter was interesting and the people in the unit were interested, friendly and cooperative. The following day ... I visited the squadron commander who almost overwhelmed me with his hospitality” (*Diary* 66). In an entry for December 29, he observed how Lieutenant General Simonds had shown sincere and more than superficial or perfunctory interest in his work: “During this interview I was greatly impressed with the intensity bestowed upon each watercolor, the piercing logic of each question, and the alternative reception to each answer” (*Diary* 82). It was only rarely that he was met with suspicion and had to prove his credentials (*Diary* 88). More typically, he was met with sympathy:

There was no resentment. Most artists of this century are said to feel estranged from society; that is, they feel that they're a kind of outcast, that people don't understand them. It is said that there is a gap, that there is a barrier between the artist and society in general. Well, you see through this experience as a war artist, I never felt much of this gap business. I didn't feel that I was misunderstood or not sufficiently appreciated. (*Diary* 158)

In the face of danger and possible death, the very idea that lives were being recorded for posterity in artistic representation was welcomed as a form of consolation: “There is always this element in art. ‘Life is short, but art is long.’ A lot of these people were killed. They would be very interested in what I was doing, kind of astonished at it in a way” (*Diary* 90). “During the war the people who are involved have the feeling that they are likely to be killed and they like the idea of someone making a record of their activities, what they are doing, what life is like and so on” (*Diary* 100).

Colville was one of 32 artists appointed in the Canadian War Program (Fig. 3). “The artists themselves,” observed Hugh A. Halliday, “represented a cross section of the Canadian art community. Some had been well established before the war; others had shown promise and were chosen on that account; a few were virtually discovered by the armed forces” (Halliday 12–13). They served in all branches of the Canadian Army, across the European theater of war. Among those better known (besides Colville) were Aba Bayefsky (who also visited the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp), Charles Fraser Comfort, Lawren P. Harris (whose father had been one of the Group of Seven), and William Abernethy (“Will”) Ogilvie. Among those who served and painted in wartime Holland was Donald



FIGURE 3 *Official war artists, Canadian army, 1946. Standing, left to right: Orville Fisher, George Pepper, Will Ogilvie, E.J. Hughes, Molly Lamb Bobak, Charles Comfort, George Stanley (historian), Alex Colville, Campbell Tinning and Bruno Bobak; sitting, left to right: H.O. McCurry, National Gallery director and A.Y. Jackson. CWM 20040082-117. Canadian War Museum.*

Anderson (1920–2009), attached to the Royal Canadian Air Force, whose moving 1945 watercolor and ink painting “Dutch Refugees” (CWM 19710261-1323) showed RCAF airmen helping Dutch refugees over a broken bridge outside Roermond (also reprinted in Olivier and Brandon, 133). Several passed through, or stayed for longer periods in the Nijmegen area, recording scenes of military operation or wartime devastation in the wake of the September 1944 failure of Operation Market Garden. George Douglas Pepper painted scenes of “Bomb Damage in Nijmegen” (1944; CWM 19710261-5239) and “Bridges in Nijmegen, Holland” (1945; CWM 19710261-5242). On November 16, 1944 Gilbert Emil Bretzloff made a watercolor of the “Tower Bridge, Hatert, Near Nijmegen” (CWM 19770225-004), upheld by barges and cables as it spanned the canal connecting the rivers Maas and Waal. Paul Alexander Goranson’s oil painting of the Nijmegen Bridge towering above a cityscape of destruction (1946; CWM 19710261-3688) testified to the mesmerizing attraction the bridge held for

many Canadian war artists, among them Alex Colville, who was self-admittedly “fascinated by the possibilities of the bridge, river and wrecked town” (*Diary* 64). The only female Canadian war artist, a member of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, Molly Joan Lamb Bobak (1922–2014), was not posted to Holland until after V-E (Victory in Europe) Day. She was married to Canadian war artist Bruno Jacob Bobak and painted several scenes of social relaxation among Canadian soldiers in Nijmegen, among them the oil canvas “Canteen, Nijmegen, Holland” (1945; CWM 19710261-1561) (Fig. 4), worked up from an earlier sketch entitled “Canada Club Nijmegen” (September 22, 1945; CWM 19710261-1559). But, as the digital catalogue of the Canadian War Museum testifies, among those who painted Nijmegen scenes Alex Colville was by far the most prolific: of 26 images showing Nijmegen, 17 are by Colville.

Colville’s “road to Nijmegen” (and beyond) started in late October 1944 when—after having served in the Mediterranean—he was sent to the Continent from England to join the Third Canadian Infantry Division; he hooked up with them on Halloween in Ghent, Belgium, and would stay with



FIGURE 4 Molly Joan Lamb Bobak, “Canteen, Nijmegen, Holland” (1945; CWM 19710261-1561). Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

the Division until the end of his war service. In his diary for late October/ early November he registered how at Breskens the subject matter was “fascinating: complete devastation under a cold, blue-gray sky. We didn’t stay there long as one of our aircraft dropped a stick of bombs in the area.” At Westkapelle, he noted the dyke broken through by the Germans and witnessed “prisoners of war being carried in vessels through a flooded, flag-draped street,” before moving on to devastated Oostburg, which he found “most interesting” (*Diary* 64). As Colville, like other war artists, was not engaged in combat duty, he mostly drew, sketched and painted post-battle scenes of havoc or destruction, or scenes depicting military men stalled in moments of inaction or engaged in everyday routine-like jobs—such as “Painting the Ship” (August 29, 1944; *Diary* 54), showing soldiers engaged in everyday, “ordinary” maintenance activity. As he noted in his diary in 1981:

It’s very difficult to describe what war is like. Much of nothing happening. The Germans are over there, about three or four hundred yards away in houses and weapon slits, and we were here. At night there would occasionally be patrols and some shooting. I would sometimes go up in these static conditions to an infantry position and make drawings and watercolors.

The conditions of work were extraordinarily civilized and humane. We all had a completely free hand. I used to sometimes wonder what I should be doing and I soon settled into a kind of routine. Every day I would go out with this jeep and driver. Anything I saw that was kind of interesting I would make a drawing or watercolor of it. So it was a kind of genre painting of everyday life in the army. (*Diary* 59)

Indeed, it is almost with a faint tinge of guilt or inadequacy, that on December 30, writing from Nijmegen, he observes: “I realize that my front-line works may be criticized as lacking action, and appearing quiet and peaceful but it is my experience of static warfare that during daylight the front line is a deserted expanse of country with live figures very much out of sight” (*Diary* 82).

If the formal instructions for war artists had enjoined Colville to focus on “(1) the spirit and character, the appearance and attitude of the men, as individuals or groups, [...] (2) the instruments and machines which they employ, and (3) the environment in which they do their work,” it is interesting to observe that Colville’s artistic priorities seemed to have been different. In many of his images actual soldiers take a backseat to machinery: typically Colville will foreground tanks, airplanes, ships, guns, anti-aircraft, trucks, or display his

fascination—from childhood on (his father was a steel bridge worker and as a boy he was fond of building models of ships and airplanes)—for bridges and other multi-dimensional infrastructural designs. One of Colville's persistent themes in his war art (as in his later, mature, art) is the interaction between technology, human beings and nature. Often, he will draw soldiers in the process of interacting with machinery (cars, tanks, motorcycles, planes, ships, or gear), or even merging with machines to the point where man and machine become almost indistinguishable: in *Tanks in a Workshop* (February 5, 1945; *Diary* 124; CWM 19710261-2125) the men on the tank engaged in repair work appear to have become one with the vehicle (Fig. 5).

Numerous images show tanks or trucks as almost autonomous agents, manifestations of technological power independent of human agency. Images of vehicles or machines stranded, destroyed or mutilated become eloquent symbolic manifestations (disconnected from a human presence) of the havoc and tragedy worked by war. Landscapes, likewise, are often singularly devoid of human beings—post-apocalyptic images of emptiness and desolation (cf *Abandoned Munitions*, February 7, 1945; *Diary* 93; CWM 19710261-2023). Typically, in his sketches and drawings Colville will present individual soldiers from the back, looking into the distance at the spectacle of war, with faces averted or walking away. Or else humans will be vague, non-individualized, shadowy. They may appear in large numbers (as

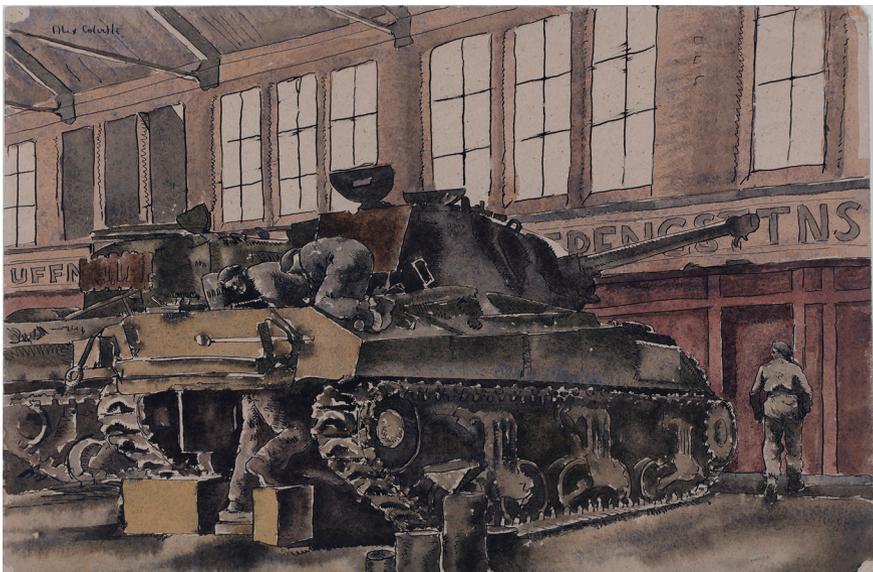


FIGURE 5 *Tanks in a Workshop*. (May 2, 1955. CWM 19710261-2125). Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

in *The Deploy*, August 4, 1944, depicting a landing near Naples; *Diary* 42–43; CWM 19710261-1675) but the overall impression is: do individual human beings count in a landscape in which they are overwhelmed by the larger more powerful forces of military vehicles or operations? Even the individual portraits of soldiers at rest are often drawn from the back (*Soldier Reading a Newspaper on Foc'sl*, July 30, 1944; *Diary* 36) or depicted in outfits underlining their interaction with machinery (*Motorcycle Instructor*, June 12, 1944; *Diary* 29; CWM 19710261-2092).

Despite Colville's retrospective observation that the conditions under which he was allowed to work were "extraordinarily civilized and humane," (*Diary* 59) the practical circumstances under which he had to make his on-site sketches often included powerful hindrances. The cramped spaces in which he had to work were one obstacle, if one that stimulated an improvisatory search for new technical solutions. Thus, thinking back to his drawing *Platoon Position in an Orchard*, in the Nijmegen area on December 10, 1944, he observed:

What you could do in the field was clearly limited. What we did were watercolors and drawings which were portable. I actually did some in my pup tent on a rainy day. I would make watercolors from rough drawings. I had brought a reducing glass which allowed me sitting in my pup tent to look at what I was doing as if I was twenty feet away. In my studio I always sit back at the other end of the room to look at what I am doing. The reducing glass served to overcome this technical problem. Limitations like this are actually intriguing and stimulating. (*Diary* 68)

Mostly, however, it was the weather conditions which proved a most forceful obstacle. The Dutch winter of 1944–1945 was excessively harsh and cold, leading to acute and widespread shortages of food and fuel, both in the regions north of the rivers Waal and Rhine that were still under German occupation and in the areas to the South that had technically been liberated. All through the winter months the Nijmegen area in actual fact continued in a state of war, as the city found itself on the frontline between the German forces to the east and the British, American and (from November 1944 on) predominantly Canadian Allied forces. As Birney's poem also testified, although conditions in the North during this notorious "hunger winter" were unspeakable, the Nijmegen region too suffered from severe cold, sleet, rain, fog—making the obstacles for artistic work at times seemingly insurmountable. Colville's diary offers vivid glimpses of the war artist facing the special physical and technical

challenges of working under circumstances of bitter frost and bone-chilling wetness, as in this entry from late December 1944:

Painting in cold weather presents several problems. On the average winter day I find it impossible to work outside for more than an hour at the time as after that my hands are numb. Watercolors will not dry outdoors, and sometimes even freezes on the paper or in the pans. One solution to these problems is to drive the jeep to a selected point of view and paint from inside the vehicle, warming the interior with an oil heater. Another, in places where the jeep cannot be taken, is to paint outdoors, but to go into a dugout or house at intervals to dry washes before a stove. A third solution is to make quick drawings on the spot and paint large works in billets from these sketches. At present I find this last method most satisfactory, for, although it is slow, my impressions cohere immediately after being registered. (*Diary* 76)

Recurrent entries show Colville being interrupted at work by heavy rains or violent hailstorms—and snow. On January 10, 1945, shortly after he had completed work on *Dugout Near Nijmegen* (*Diary* 84; CWM 19710261-2057), which he deemed “one of my most finished works,” and had begun to work up *The Barrier* (*Diary* 78; CWM 19710261-2028), a watercolor impression of a barricaded border crossing between Germany and the Nijmegen hinterland (possibly near Wyler or Groesbeek), he noted:

That afternoon I painted *An ME [Messerschmitt] 109 in Snow* [*Diary* 80; CWM 19710261-2090] from inside the jeep. The roof was covered with ice, which melted and leaked through after we lit the oil heater. It was snowing furiously outside and flakes infiltrated through the curtains, spotting the sky on my watercolor. In spite of these trials, the subject was so good (very bleak and colorless) that I felt fairly satisfied with the finished work. (*Diary* 84)

As the above suggests, however, more often than not the weather conditions were less a hindrance than a source of artistic challenge and inspiration. For Colville, one of the particular attractions in painting the Nijmegen bridge—and perhaps his ultimate justification for having it figure in the foreground or background of so many of his images—was not so much its acknowledged strategic importance in Operation Market Garden, as the interaction between the bridge’s powerful shape and structure with the natural environment, the river-scape, the weather and the light. For Colville,

as for many painters before him, the Dutch landscape and the light in and of themselves posed aesthetic challenges which, even in the midst of war, provided stimulus and pleasure. Thus, on December 31, as he set to work on his watercolor painting *Flak over the Nijmegen Bridge* [*Diary* 83; CWM 19710261-2065], positioning himself south of the river Waal so he could offer a view of the bridge with barges (no humans) in the foreground, he observed: “Numerous flying bombs passed over and I included one in my painting. It was unusually cold and clear and I was struck by the effect caused by the low sun. I have done numerous paintings of this bridge; it is an interesting subject and, I believe, an important one from a documentary point of view” (*Diary* 82) (Fig. 6).

Another painting, *Anti-Aircraft Gun Near Nijmegen Bridge* (December 20, 1944; *Diary* 83; CWM 19710261-2024) imagines the artist positioned behind a soldier, seen from the back, manning an anti-aircraft gun, but the spectator’s gaze is inevitably directed to two misty shapes in the background: to the left, the old fortification Belvédère (dating back to Charlemagne times) and to the right the Nijmegen bridge, both shrouded in mystifying fog. The dramatic move intrinsic to the painting thus directs the eye from the clear and lucid foreground of the anti-aircraft gun, the guarding soldier and the spidery tentacles of the shrubs sharply outlined, to the middle ground of army trucks slowly moving from the fortress



FIGURE 6 *Flak over the Nijmegen Bridge* [December 31, 1944; CWM 19710261-2065]. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.



FIGURE 7 *Anti-aircraft gun near Nijmegen Bridge* (December 20, 1944; CWM 19710261-2024). Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

onto the bridge, and into the fog-blocked possibility of seeing into the beyond. Such metaphysical implications intensify the power of Colville's war art (Fig. 7).

An entry in his diary testifies to the special aesthetic appeal the Nijmegen bridge held for Colville:

On 12 November [1944] I returned to Nijmegen (the shelling and mortaring there is not frequent enough to be a real danger) to look for subject matter. I was unable to work because of rain, but was fascinated by the possibilities of the bridge, river and wrecked town. This silver-gray atmosphere appeals to me; the natural haziness of the atmosphere is increased by the presence of smoke generators, and the effect is beautiful. (*Diary* 64)

As we follow the genesis of the final oil canvas from the preliminary sketch and watercolor versions, we note the progression of Colville's interpretative vision and the compositional rearrangements he made. Though the basic geometrical compositional design is firmly in place from the start, both sketch drawings—"Sketch for Nijmegen Bridge—Late Afternoon (Nov 15, 1944)" [*Diary* 58–59; CWM 19820303-205] (Fig. 8a) and "Sketch for the Nijmegen Bridge" [CWM 19820303-206] (Fig. 8b)—show the artist experimenting with changes in the number and positions of vehicles crossing the bridge. Both

drawings, also, retain the sign reading “Speed Up Over Bridge” and feature the row of electricity posts drawing the spectator’s gaze onto, almost into, and beyond the bridge, where the eye comes to rest on the spire of the church at Lent, on the northern side of the river Waal—in the former, presumably earliest sketch, there is a blank sky; in the latter the sky has been filled in with strokes suggesting lowering darkening clouds. In the watercolor version—“Nijmegen Bridge—late Afternoon” [*Diary* 60; CWM 19710261-2315] (Fig. 8c), which Colville worked on on November 25 and December 1, the threatening



FIGURE 8A *Sketch for Nijmegen Bridge—late afternoon (Nov 15, 1944), sketch drawing [CWM 19820303-205; Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum].*



FIGURE 8B *Sketch for the Nijmegen Bridge (sketch drawing) [CWM 19820303-206; Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum].*



FIGURE 8C *Nijmegen Bridge—late afternoon* (Nov 15, 1944; painted Nov 25, Dec 1), painting/watercolor [CWM 19710261-2315; Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum].



FIGURE 8D *The Nijmegen Bridge, Holland* (1946)—oil painting [CWM 19710261-2094; Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum].

shapes of the (now) whirling clouds have been enhanced, the sign removed, and the tank in the foreground of the second sketch has been removed, to return to the empty foreground of the original sketch. In the final oil painting—“The

Nijmegen Bridge, Holland" [*Diary* 60; CWM 19710261-2094] (Fig. 8d)—which Colville completed in his studio on his return to Ottawa in 1946, we note the introduction of a select few individual soldier figures, seen from afar and from the back, the reduction of the number of vehicles passing across the bridge to a single truck (moving away) and a single tank (approaching). The overall suggestion is one of quietude, almost peace—an impression reinforced by another new element: the addition of a few slants of hazy sunlight breaking through the clouds, suggesting at least the possibility of transcendence, hope or redemption as we cross to the other side of the bridge. Here, too, we see how revisiting his war art from the perspective of postwar Ottawa allowed Colville to introduce touches that revealed a deeper understanding of what he had witnessed and to spin out metaphysical dimensions that had remained implicit or unnoticed in the preliminary on-site versions. To underscore his enhanced perception, when he came to edit his war diary in 1981 Colville printed Earle Birney's poem "The Road to Nijmegen" side by side with his oil painting *Nijmegen Salient* (December 1944; *Diary* 74–75; CWM 19710261-2095), as if to underline the communality of vision underlying poem and painting.

Other images that came out of Colville's Nijmegen area period show that his artistic search for suitable or effective subject matter was slowly moving beyond the aesthetic appeal of light and color to more disturbed and disturbing observations. If the aesthetic gaze remained paramount—as when he relished the sight of abandoned munitions for having "rusted by exposure into beautiful orange and red color combinations" (*Diary* 93)—his aim was widening: on December 30, as he was working on *Parachutes in No Man's Land* (*Diary* 73; CWM 19710261-2100), he noted: "I felt that I wanted to do something expressive of war, rather than of local atmosphere" (*Diary* 82). Some such sentiment may have inspired what is perhaps Colville's most famous and effective painting from his Nijmegen period, *Infantry, near Nijmegen, Holland* (1946; *Diary* 90–91; CWM 19710261-2079) (Fig. 9), showing a line of soldiers, heads bowed and eyes cast down, marching single-file on a dyke through a desolate snow-covered and flooded river landscape, most probably the Ooij polder to the Northwest of Nijmegen. As Laura Brandon (1995) has noted, easily fifteen sketches can be associated with the final oil painting—ranging from details of uniform or anatomy, such as a separate sketch of the left hand prominently in the foreground of the painting (*Diary* 19), to an early water color composition, *Troops of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Near Nijmegen* (February 2, 1945), in which the file of marching soldiers, seen from the back, moves away from the viewer, across a bridge over a dyke towards a cluster of houses (*Diary* 103). The final oil painting, contrary to Colville's usual practice, reverses the direction of the (now seemingly endless) line of soldiers marching *towards* the



FIGURE 9 *Infantry, near Nijmegen, Holland* (1946; CWM 19710261-2079). Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

viewer, whose gaze is drawn to the sharply etched soldier first in line, his head bowed down, his eyes downcast, his lips in a somber straight line, his right arm listlessly hanging down, his left-hand thumb hooked behind a shoulder belt, so that the hand—prominently foregrounded—hangs limpidly. To the left and right of the soldiers marching in file stretches a watery, frozen, uninhabited landscape; to the right a naked bush with snake-like branches rises up; above them all, a bleak sun struggles to shine through yellowish clouds. Whereas the line of soldiers slowly blurs into a vanishing horizon, posture and facial expression of the first soldier, closest to the viewer, articulates the reality of the war experience: instead of drama, heroism or glory, we witness monotonous drudgery, overwhelming fatigue, exhaustion, tedium, emptiness and, perhaps, the ultimate senselessness of war, before which the possibility of light and redemption fades—or is the sun about to break through?

Such impressions of exhaustion nearing hopeless tragedy and ultimately death intensified as Colville, following the Canadian First Army in Operation Veritable (which lasted from February 8 to late March, 1945), moved into the German Rhineland, across the border to the east of Nijmegen, where the

Canadian troops fought to liberate the Reichswald area and push through to the Rhine. The German hinterland of Nijmegen offered even more startling images of destruction and defeat, as Colville saw himself confronted with large numbers of German soldiers taken war prisoners or left dead by the roadside. "With the prisoners one was conscious of immense fatigue," he noted retrospectively. "They were simply exhausted and relieved that they were still alive" (*Diary* 104). Other than his Nijmegen images, the impact of defeat—psychologically and bodily—inspired several sketches and paintings foregrounding the sufferings and deaths of individual German soldiers, such as the sketches *Prisoners Taken by the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division* (21–23 February 1945; *Diary* 104–5) and *Young Prisoner Near Udem, Germany* (March 5, 1945; *Diary* 109), or, most impressively, an oil painting he worked up from sketches after his return to Ottawa, *Exhausted Prisoners* (1946; *Diary* 142–43; CWM 19710261-2059). The sight of dead bodies wrapped in blankets which he saw on the road from Kleve to Hasselt on February 23 inspired a powerful watercolor, *Bodies on a Road* (*Diary* 106–7; CWM 19710261-2035) which he finished on March 1; his diary entry shows that Colville now more consciously strove to make his aesthetic effect serve the larger aim of giving expression to what war meant: "In this work I strived for a mood of tragedy through simplicity of design and color, and somberness of tone" (*Diary* 103). One day later, on March 2, he finished a watercolor of the German city Kleve, *Dead City* (*Diary* 98–99; CWM 19710261-2048), "again interested in simplicity and mood rather than detail" (*Diary* 103). On February 24 he had climbed to the top of the ruins of Kleve castle and from there sketched a somber panorama, in shades of dark brown, bluish-grey and purple, of "a scene of complete devastation" (*Diary* 97). As he made his way through the corpse-strewn German hinterland, death seemed all-pervasive, with countless civilian and military dead lying around—among them, inevitably, Canadian fellow soldiers, one of whom inspired *Grave of a Canadian Trooper* (March 22, 1945; *Diary* 116–17; CWM 19710261-2071), a watercolor which shows a disabled yet large-looming Sherman M4A4 tank shadowing, or perhaps protectively hovering over, the freshly dug grave of a member of New Brunswick's North Shore Regiment at Keppeln, near Udem, Germany. The images of exhaustion and death-in-defeat continued to haunt Colville even after he had left the Rhine as the Canadian army pushed liberation into the Northern Netherlands: the encounter with a dead German soldier near Deventer inspired *Dead Paratrooper, Near Deventer, Holland* (April 11, 1945; *Diary* 138–39; CWM 19710261-2051): "He was about twenty. They would fight right to the very end; they had put up a tremendous fight until they were all killed" (*Diary* 138).

The spectacle of death would leave indelible impressions on the mind and memory of Colville, as in late April 1945 he was commissioned to visit the newly liberated German concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen, and saw himself facing the aftermath of unspeakable horrors: "We arrived in late afternoon and we looked around. There were huge graves full of thousands of bodies, there must have been at least 35,000 bodies in the place" (*Diary* 147). The mass grave, seen against a backdrop of barracks, inspired the watercolor drawing *Belsen Concentration Camp* (April 30, 1945; *Diary* 147; CWM 19710261-2032), as well as a sketch of *Dead Women* (April 29, 1945; *Diary* 150; CWM 19710261-2052). The memory led Colville to reflect in 1981 on the numbing effect of being a witness, even in the full awareness that "it was a profoundly affecting experience": "This being in Belsen was strange, [...] the thing one felt was one felt badly that one didn't feel worse. That is to say, you see one dead person and it is too bad, but seeing five hundred is not five hundred times worse. There is a certain point at which you begin to feel nothing" (*Diary* 150). The long diary entry Colville made in late April describing his first reaction to Bergen-Belsen may be quoted in full:

On April 27 my instructions were to spend several days sketching Belsen, then if possible to visit 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion. I was given a letter of introduction to the Governor of the concentration camp. On April 29 I drove to this camp at Belsen, saw the authorities there, was dusted (as protection against typhus) and set up camp in a nearby barracks. That afternoon I visited No. 1 concentration camp. I will make no attempt to describe the conditions there as they have already been adequately described by others. The subjects were not of a sort which can be executed expressively at the time, on the spot. I felt that I would get most out of this visit by making sketches, then returning to these sketches at some later time. On the first day I made a drawing of some women, dead from starvation and typhus, lying outside one of the huts. While I drew, the group of bodies was added to as more people died and were feebly dragged out of the hut by the inhabitants, who were themselves more dead than alive. On April 30 it rained all morning. In the afternoon I began a watercolor of one of the huge open graves, with the camp in the background. I finished this the next morning. This afternoon I made a drawing of the bodies lying in a grave. These were soon obscured by other bodies which were being thrown from the back of a truck. (*Diary* 147)

Colville's visit engendered his perhaps most moving and disturbing oil painting, worked up from a preliminary sketch in his Ottawa studio in 1946, *Bodies in a Grave, Belsen* (*Diary* 148–49; CWM 19710261-2033) (Fig. 10).



FIGURE 10 *Bodies in a grave, Belsen* (1946; CWM 19710261-2033). Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

The painting shows four emaciated corpses stretched out in a pit, three of them naked, one partly clothed in the concentration camp's striped uniform. As the spectator's eye zooms in on the four bodies, the possibility of orienting oneself in space is precluded by the painting's compositional lack of depth—so that it almost appears as if the corpses, spirit-like, are floating horizontally upwards in space rather than lying down in a grave, a paradoxical motion reinforced by the gentle yellowish, brownish shades of color used in depicting a scene of inexpressible horror.

After Bergen-Belsen, Colville returned to the Netherlands, following the Canadian Infantry into the central and northern provinces, to record scenes of joy and liberation: "When a unit would move into a Dutch town that had just been liberated the people were out in hordes, fathers holding little children up in the air, people waving flags; it was all quite emotional and moving. Sometimes the local people would jump up on the armored cars and trucks. You'd see an armored car with ten or twelve kids on it" (*Diary* 155). He lingered on in the Netherlands for several more months, helping to stage an exhibition of War Art in Amsterdam, then returned to England in September. In October 1945 he was shipped back to Canada, to be reunited with his wife Rhoda, and his 15-months' old son Graham, who had been born during his absence; as the

final entry in his diary reads: “I came home on the *Isle de France* with 11,000 other people. We sailed into Halifax harbor on a Sunday morning, the 21st of October. It was a very beautiful morning, clear and sunny. I had never thought of myself as a patriot or even as a sentimental person, but I was very moved by the experience” (*Diary* 159).

As critics have testified (Brandon, Cheetham), and as his diary bears out in both word and image, his experiences as a war artist were crucially formative for Colville, as a human being and as an artist. In his own words: “The war had a profound influence on me. There was some technical influence. The parallel I would make would be for a novelist to be a police reporter doing factual reporting, physical, sordid, and concrete rather than philosophical or abstract. The immediacy had a philosophical effect on me” (*Diary* 158). Colville’s analogy of the police reporter may have its point, yet also seems to belie and belittle the actual complexity of his war art: certainly, as I have argued above, he was more than a factual recorder, and strove to convey the mood and atmosphere, the emotional coloring and metaphysical implications of what he witnessed. The drawings, watercolors and oil paintings that came out of his war experience speak more eloquently, subtly and complexly than his somewhat reductive verbal comments or self-analysis. Though there is, unmistakably, a degree of detachment and aloofness to Colville’s diary observations about war—as witness his understated comments upon entering Bergen-Belsen quoted above—critics like Richard A. Perry have perhaps overstated the case against Colville by criticizing his war art for its presumed “emotional sterility” (qtd in Cheetham, 38). Rather, as Cheetham pertinently qualifies, “Colville’s proclivity is for philosophical formulations rather than immediate emotional involvement. We see this trait in his diary writing and his art alike” (39). Colville’s focus on the unspectacular, ordinary, sometimes numbing everyday routines of army life; his rendering of dehumanized, de-individualized and machine-governed sites and sights of war and destruction; his tendency (apparent even in his Bergen-Belsen paintings) to let the aesthetic prevail and leave the moral impact of horror and the human capacity for evil largely implicit and, if anything, underemphasized—all this may be less an exemplification of Colville’s lack of empathy or feeling than a manifestation of a war aesthetics which Colville shared with others of his generation. As he observed in his diary: “I was born in 1920, this was the year [in] which most of the people who were killed in the Second World War were born. They were in their early twenties. A great many of people I went to school and university with were killed” (*Diary* 114). A surface semblance of unemotionality may well have served as a protective shield or shelter to keep the darker demons of war and war memory at bay. In an interview quoted on the website of the Canadian War Museum, Colville

comments on his experiences at Bergen-Belsen: “In such situations, [...] the body seems to have its own defense mechanism. My experience was voyeuristic. I was like someone who watches a sex film, but doesn’t have sex” (CWM 19710261-2033). We see a similar mechanism at work in an early diary entry for August 15, 1944, when Colville—still anchored in the Mediterranean—observes the capture of nine German prisoners of war: “They were burned and looked shocked. An unpleasant sight. Some had skin hanging down from their hands. I shaved after seeing them, to restore my morale” (*Diary* 52).

Colville’s responses are not unlike those of a death-haunted war artist of an earlier generation, Ernest Hemingway, who developed his own aesthetics of elimination, implication and understatement to give expression to emotions without explicitly articulating them, presenting a façade of cynical aloofness as a strategy of keeping emotionality at bay, a “spectatorial attitude” (to borrow Malcolm Cowley’s well-known phrase) evidenced by Frederick Henry, protagonist of *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) (Cowley 38). If for Hemingway the sports of bullfighting presented a metaphorical analogy for man’s capacity to test strength and courage in confrontation with the possibility of death, in his diary Colville, too, resorted to a sports metaphor to explain the curious “spectatorial” unemotionality of soldiers: “Soldiers don’t have very strong feelings, deep enmity or malice toward the enemy. It is a curious relationship which in some ways could be compared to that of sport, a very serious kind of sport, in which if you lose you get killed” (*Diary* 139). Like Hemingway, and others of his generation, Colville, too, writes about war in a deliberately deflated, anti-rhetorical style which resists glorification or heroization and downplays whatever deeper or higher effect war art may have: “I can’t see that war art serves any moral function in depicting the horrors of war” (*Diary* 158).

In light of the above, then, Perry’s 1985 verdict that in Colville we see “a painter who lacks spontaneity, improvisation, and subversiveness, and who extols discipline, structure, and ‘elaborate systems of convention’” (qtd in Cheetham, 87) requires qualification. As Cheetham poignantly observes, many of those who lived through or served in the Second World War, found their subsequent lives marked by “a special keenness about the value and evanescence of life” (59). Colville, too, has repeatedly spoken of his sense of the fragility, ephemerality and contingency of human life and civilization—and his hope that art could form a strategy of compensation, an antidote: “Life is characterized by its lack of permanence. Art, I think, tries to compensate for this. Art tries to be permanent, tries to extract from the transitory, that which is durably meaningful” (qtd in Cheetham 59). In this sense, Colville’s ongoing aesthetic emphasis on order, precision, exactness of geometrical design,

minutely detailed mimesis—virtues incipient in his war art that would grow into hallmarks of his mature art (see Hunter 2014)—is ultimately less symptomatic of the embrace of a traditional figurative realist aesthetics, than of an affinity of spirit with a modernist aesthetic creed exemplified in Robert Frost's adage that art might offer "a momentary stay against confusion" (Frost in Barry, 126) or Wallace Stevens' pursuit of art as a "blessed rage for order" ("Idea"). Such affinity of purpose is confirmed by Colville's observation that, when the artist's "attention to the continuous buzz and flicker of experience and his struggle to transmit these into forms results in an authentic work, other people will experience from it a kind of ordering, fulfilling, illuminating sensation" (qtd in Cheetham, 78). Perhaps even more than Birney's, Colville's aesthetics was rooted in the experience of the chaos of war, his exposure to the horror of evil, his initiation into the frailty of life, of mortality and death. It was on "the road to Nijmegen" that the seeds of Colville's future artistry were sown.

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PART 2

The Soundtrack of Liberation



Liberation Songs: Music and the Cultural Memory of the Dutch Summer of 1945

*Frank Mehring*¹

Photographs of victory and liberation of 1945 have entered the collective memory of contemporary viewers. In the United States, the iconic snapshot of the homecoming sailor kissing a nurse at Times Square in New York at V-J Day comes to mind, or: the liberation of Paris with crowds of French patriots lining the Champs Élysées to view Allied tanks and half-tracks passing through the Arc de Triomphe on 25 August 1944, the flag raising by Soviets over the Berlin Reichstag during the Battle of Berlin on 2 May, the liberation of concentrations camps in Auschwitz, Dachau or Buchenwald (by the US Third Army in April 1945), as well as photos of civilians greeting home-coming soldiers and the liberators of the Allied Forces. In the Netherlands, the picture of a Canadian Seaforth Highlander on a motorbike with two laughing girls on the backseat on the Amstellaan in Amsterdam (after the war the name of this street was changed to Vrijheidslaan/Freedom Lane) became one of the most popular images of the liberation. These scenes have entered the Dutch collective memory of the liberation and have been remediated in newspapers, magazines, documentaries, feature films, on social media platforms and innumerable Internet sites. I recently came across a remarkable image from the city of Nijmegen, which was liberated during Operation Market Garden in September 1944 (see fig. 1). We see people gather in front of a large brick building, singing and dancing. The photo was taken the following year on that memorable 5 May when the liberation of the Netherlands became official.

The feeling of being free again becomes visible in seemingly spontaneous, improvised performances. A piano has been pulled from a nearby house to the space in front of the Nutsschool at Hertogplein. The piano player sings and flirts with a woman standing next to him. Children sit in a church alcove slightly above the piano observing with many other bystanders the lively scene at the public

1 I would like to thank the following persons for their support in tracing the sheet music, photos, and for their inspiring suggestions: Rense Havinga from the National Liberation Museum Groesbeek 1944–45, American collector of Dutch WW II sheet music Hugo Keesing, and pianist Jens Barnieck for helping to make the music resound again.



FIGURE 1 *People dancing on Liberation Day on Hertogplein in front of the local school (Nutsschool) between Gerard Noodtstraat and Van der Brugghenstraat on 5 May 1945. FOTOCOLLECTIE REGIONAAL ARCHIEF NIJMEGEN.*

place at the intersection of Gerard Noodtstraat and Van der Brugghenstraat in downtown Nijmegen: young men and women dance with each other celebrating the end of the war. What is expressed here are gratitude for the new-won freedom from occupation, a vital approach to deal with loss and the destruction surrounding the scene.² However, the image remains silent. The question inherent in the photo is: what kind of soundtrack accompanies the scene? Could it be a Duke Ellington number? One of the latest swing, jive, foxtrot, or jitterbug dancing hits? Or perhaps something completely different, unexpected?

Historians have been surprisingly quiet about the sounds and soundtrack of history. In retrospect, the sounding signature for the Dutch liberation has become American jazz, in particular swing music and the close harmonies associated with the Andrews Sisters, as today's annual performances on 5 May (Liberation Day) in major cities such as Amsterdam, Arnhem, Den Haag, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, or Utrecht testify. Much of the original documentary

2 In the case of this image, ruins are carefully kept outside of the photographic frame. The building we see is intact while the area behind where the photographer stands has been destroyed in an allegedly mistaken bombing by US forces in February 1944.

film material, however, is silent. In most cases, we do not have authentic audio recordings to accompany those familiar moving images of people singing and dancing-images that have been endlessly recycled in documentaries and news clips about the liberation. Rather, a commentator and pre-recorded music are often added in postproduction in the sound studio. Most often, we get to hear music linked to jazz and swing with the sound of American big bands. The trailer of the DVD *Nederland Bevrijd: Einde 2de Wereldoorlog* offers a paradigmatic example: The scenes of cheering Dutch citizens and Allied liberators celebrating in public urban places are underscored with a recording of Glenn Miller's *In the Mood* (1939). This link between liberation and jazz has become so popular that it resembles a cliché. If we want to know more about the actual soundtrack of liberation heard on the streets of 1945, we have to take into consideration the history of media, its peculiarities, practices, and limitations.

Since a large number of recordings is available to fill the empty soundtrack of silent images, American jazz music represents a persuasive musical source to add to clips of the liberation. The academic discussion on the influential power of a reference culture such as that of the United States suggests that the “interplay of political and economic supremacy with the ‘soft power’ of cultural attraction and reputation plays a crucial role in how certain cultures establish guiding standards for other cultures.”³ One might ask: How American is the soundtrack of liberation? What hitherto untapped sources can we activate in order to find new answers regarding what kind of music accompanied the liberation on the streets and places of Dutch cities? Could it be that the history of the soundtrack of liberation has not yet been written?

The medium of music represents a “pioneering force” of crossing boundaries on cultural, ethnic, racial, and national levels (Raussert 13). Critics such as Wilfried Raussert and Reinhold Wagnleitner argue that music more than any other medium travels easily across borders, language barriers, and creates new cultural contact zones.⁴ During and after the liberation of Europe by the Allied forces, popular music and jazz played a crucial role as

3 This quote is taken from a 2014 conference at the University of Utrecht on *Reference Cultures and Imagined Empires in Western History: Global Perspectives, 1815–2000* (11–13 June 2014) where I presented an earlier version of this text. <http://translantiss.wp.hum.uu.nl/conferences/2014-conference/>

4 In addition to Raussert's *Travelling Sounds*, see also Wagnleitner *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, which traces forms of Americanization and self-Americanization putting music and radio in correspondence with advertising, comics, literature, education, theater, and fashion. Alfred Hornung and Rüdiger Kunow suggested that in the field of literature a shift of attention away from representations of the global towards what they call “culturally informed imaginings [...] of its effects” (197) might offer new insights into transnational networkings,

a sounding signifier of new beginnings, producing a shared *lingua franca* which shapes our cultural memory. Building on the conviction, which Jacques Attali put forth in his work *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, that music “is a way of perceiving the world” and a “tool of understanding” (4), I will ask: How did music transform the imagery of destruction, despair, and hope into a new emotional landscape? How can we critically analyze, map, and evaluate the nexus between sights, sites, and sounds of memory? How can we trace processes of cultural flows (William Uricchio) and (re)mediation (Jay David Bolter, Richard Grusin) in the musical culture of the liberators and the liberated nations? And to what extent does our cultural memory of music deviate from the experiential memory (in the sense of Aleida Assmann), namely the sound of the songs performed and heard in 1945? I would like to offer a triangular perspective on liberation songs combining the United States (as a reference culture) with the bordering countries of the Netherlands and Germany in order to analyze instances of cultural contact, transfer, and contested memories of liberation. The soundtrack of liberation encoded in the so-called liberation sheet music with elaborate cover designs, multilingual lyrics, and references to novel dances offers a new opportunity to approach the politics and cultures of liberation from a performative perspective.

Sound Senses

I borrow the term “soundtrack” from the medium of film. A film’s sound world consists of spoken language, musical compositions, and sound effects. The soundscape theoretician R. Murray Schafer describes the general notion of “sound” as the “sonic universe” (95)—the totality of sounds produced by anybody and anything. My focus, however, lies with an exclusive rather than an inclusive definition of music. While the influential avant-garde composer John Cage argued that our traditional conception of music is too narrow and that “music is sounds, sounds around us whether we’re in or out of concert halls,”⁵ I am interested in the kind of songs and their musical performances which emerged at the end of the war and during the “magical summer of liberation”

cultural mobility, and diaspora. This approach can also be made useful for understanding the soundtrack of liberation.

5 I have traced Cage’s inclusive concept of music as “organization of sounds” to Thoreau’s observations regarding unpremeditated sounds in his early diaries. See Mehring, *Sphere Melodies*, 123–26.

in 1945. But how can we find out what kind of music was actually played and heard at the time of liberation?

The unique collection of sheet music in the archive of the National Liberation Museum in Groesbeek offers a key to the soundtrack of the otherwise silent photos depicting dancing people in the summer of 1945. It reminds us that there was a genre called “Bevrijdingsliederen”—liberation songs.⁶ A photo of an advertisement in the front window of an Amsterdam music shop suggests that liberation songs were in high demand in 1945. Underneath the headline “Bevrijdingsliederen” in capital letters, the expression “alhier verkrijgbaar” with a large exclamation mark (most likely in the color orange, the photo, alas, is only in black and white) indicates a sense of urgency and desire: Yes, we do have liberation songs available here! The collection offers a fascinating opportunity to explore, describe, and hear the soundtrack of liberation. With these musical notes and lyrics captured on paper, we may get closer to answering the question of what kind of music was played, what kind of songs were sung, and what kind of dances were performed in the summer of 1945. Surprisingly, apart from exceptions such as *Trees heeft een Canadees*, *Als Op Het Leidscheplein de Lichtjes weer eens Branden Gaan*, or *Lili Marleen* few people remember songs such as *Vrij is Nederland*, *v-E Day*, *Herrijzend Nederland*, *Da-ag, Da-ag, Da-ag How I like this way to say “Hello,” Rotterdam Ahoy, Little Holland Girl, Eens zal de Wereld Zingen, Rood Wit Blauw, The Tommy Song, Tulips Bloom in Holland Once Again, Weet je Wat een Zoentje is? Een Zoentje is “A Little Kiss,”* or *De “Sten-Gun Walk.”* This remarkable gap in the history of liberation needs explaining.

6 Hugo Keesing, retired adjunct associate professor of Psychology and American Studies at the University of Maryland, donated his collection of Dutch sheet music, which dealt in some form or another with the experience of liberation. Keesing was born in Den Haag and emigrated in 1951 with his parents to the US. He had been interested in the political function of music during the Vietnam War as well as World War II. His dissertation *Youth in Transition: A Content Analysis of Two Decades of Popular Music* from 1972 is an early example of critical academic analysis of the kind of popular music which then was considered “an unpleasant manifestation of youthful rebellion, including a lack of good musical taste, which most teenagers would inevitably outgrow” (Keesing 2). His Dutch sheet music collection of almost 300 songs provides a unique perspective on the soundtrack of liberation combining elaborate cover designs, musical scores and in many cases multilingual lyrics. Astonishingly, hardly any of the songs are familiar to Dutch audiences apart from exceptions such as *Trees heeft een Canadees* or *Lili Marleen*. This is a curious surprise, which demands explanation.

Thus, another unexpected question arises: why have most of these songs, which formed the soundtrack of liberation, been more or less forgotten?⁷

Before we have a close look at the scores, it is crucial to clarify the premises of my project on the “soundtrack of liberation” and define the terms. Since nineteenth-century lantern shows and the origins of film in the 1890s, music has been played in order to both enhance the emotional impact and to overcome the gap between the technical projection of a fictitious world and the illusion of the real. However, the theme of liberation, music, and songs goes back further in time. Indeed, they feature prominently in the oldest parts of the Bible.⁸ For example, when God led the Israelites through the desert, parted the sea and a fire in the sky showed the way to the land of freedom—Israel—Moses sings the song of liberation and deliverance: “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation” (Exodus 2, chapter 15, King James Version).

If we want to understand the function of music in the socio-cultural and political context of oppression and liberation, we have to take into account the different functions which Attali ascribed to music: first, in a ritualistic context it can “make people forget,” in particular the experience of extreme violence; second, in a commercial context it can “make people believe in the harmony of the word;” third, in a constellation of capitalism and mass production it can serve to silence and censor (19). Regarding the concrete manifestation of film music, Siegfried Kracauer’s description is particularly helpful. He argued that music provided a “meaningful continuity in time” thus helping the audience to perceive “structural patterns where there were none before” (quoted in Cooke 12). This observation is crucial if we look at the effects music has on the perception of liberation. Concerning the function of music as a kind of glue between potentially confusing confrontations, between different visual shots, angles, narratives, and jump cuts in the editing, a soundtrack fulfills a compensatory function. In his work on *The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, the influential French film theorist Jean Mitry explains the connection between visual disruption and the function of our mind to create new continuities. Music plays an important in this process: “it is all too apparent that the editing of a series of fixed shots establishes a feeling of continuity but is unable, unlike moving shots, to create the sensation of the continuous, since this sensation

7 From 2 May to 30 September 2007, the Verzetsmuseum in Amsterdam offered an exhibition called “Bevrijdingsmuziek” featuring a selection of covers and scores from 1944 and 1945.

8 I am grateful for Jens Barnieck tracing these Biblical roots of liberation songs.

is reconstructed intellectually and not perceived as such—which means that reality appears as though it were an idea or memory; or, to put it another way, it appears restructured” (162). Memory, too, is restructured through music. Music allows us to create a reasonable narrative out of disjointed sensations such as war, destruction, friendly fire, and liberation. As far as liberation music is concerned, I would like to distinguish between four different types:

1. Liberation songs that have formed the basis of western culture in the Bible and poetry—first in aural culture and later in print. More recent examples from the transatlantic world include poetry from the U.S. Wars of Independence, the French Revolution, the German Wars of Liberation, the two World Wars, etc. Poems of earlier periods often reappear later in the form of songs, such as the patriotic poetry of Theodor Körner from the German Wars of Liberation which reappeared as songs in World War I, or poetry by Walt Whitman from the American Civil War which reappeared in World War II.
2. Musical soundtracks based on the work of film music composers for feature films or documentary films. Before the invention of sound film, parts of classical music were often used to frame sequences of “liberation,” as for instance Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries” in D.W. Griffith’s patriotic, albeit racist work on the history of the United States *Birth of a Nation* (1915). For the period from the end of World War II until today, musical soundtracks play a decisive role to underscore the experience of war and liberation in films ranging from compositions by Gail Kubik for *The Memphis Belle* (1944), Hugo Friedhofer for *The Best Years of our Lives* (1946), Victor Young for *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) to Jerry Goldsmith for *Patton* (1970), John Williams for *Saving Private Ryan* (1996), and Alexandre Desplat for *The Monuments Men* (2014).
3. Concert music composed for socio-culturally and politically decisive moments in history ranging from the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the German Wars of Liberation, and the two World Wars, to the Vietnam War, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the ensuing newly won freedom of Eastern European countries, and current global conflicts. For the final period of World War II and the early postwar years, examples include compositions such as Arturo Toscanini’s *Hymn to the United Nations*, Dimitri Shostakovich’s *United Nations March* (featured in the MGM war-time musical *Thousands Cheer* from 1943, a march for which the American composer and conductor Leopold Stokowski also created a symphonic transcription), Kurt Weill’s *United Nations Song* as part of the song cycle *Songs of*

the Free, or *They are There* by the so-called father of American music, Charles Ives, which expresses the notion of liberation and freedom in terms of classical and avant-garde music.

4. *Gebrauchsmusik*, a “music of use” created for a specific purpose as defined by Paul Hindemith, Ernst Krenek, and Kurt Weill. The German-American composer Weill, for example, wanted to liberate opera from its paralyzing prison of tradition. He saw in the use of new popular idioms such as jazz and contemporary themes such as *The Lindbergh Flight* (1929) across the Atlantic or the biting critique regarding life in big cities *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930) an opportunity to invigorate the musical theater of the Weimar Republic. During World War II, he contributed arrangements of patriotic songs such as *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Beat! Beat! Drums!*, or *The Star-Spangled Banner* to the American war effort. In popular music from World War I and II, “music of use” refers to songs published as sheet music and performed by soldiers or civilians to celebrate the liberation and newly-won sense of freedom. They are composed, written, published, and performed for a specific time frame in a particular socio-cultural and political environment. Thus, they had a built-in expiration date, a kind of “best used before the end of liberation.”

In the following sections, I would like to put my searchlight on the final category of *Gebrauchsmusik*. As a manifestation of the soundtrack of liberation, Dutch sheet music—which functioned to express the feeling of liberation, freedom, and hope for a better future—serves as a revealing case in point to complicate the all too easy explanation that the triumph of American (popular) culture in the Netherlands should be seen as a consequence of cultural imperialism.

Sounding Intercultural Encounters

The popular sheet music, which I refer to as the “soundtrack of liberation,” has a strong expressive potential. The cover art, the lyrics, the music, and public performances collectively function as a means for self-expression and self-affirmation of Dutch citizens after the liberation. These audio-visual and textual products respond to the cultural encounters with one or several reference cultures of the liberators. The production and performance of sheet music allows for the articulation and representation of an imaginary of the past and future. I am using the term “imaginary” following Winfried Fluck’s

definition of the word as a concept to “describe the unstructured and decontextualized stream of images, associations, sensations, and feelings that constantly feed our cognition and interpretation of the world without having a tangible form of their own” (244). The key term “liberation” plays a central role in the European imagination from 1945 to the present. For example, the Liberation Route Europe, a multi-media project that was launched in 2013, offers a new multinational perspective on World War II by focusing on the shared experience of liberation and a newly won sense of freedom asking: How can we forge a common European denominator that builds on our common (media) memory of World War II and emphasizes positive elements such as freedom and liberation?⁹ What does this mean regarding the memory of the soundtrack of liberation? Is there a shared recollection of songs?¹⁰ If we put our searchlight on the short phase in which the sense of liberation was expressed in lyrics, songs, and music, we are able to trace the culture of liberation at a crucial moment shortly before, during, and immediately after the liberation of the Netherlands.

The performance culture of Dutch liberation songs is not based on exhibiting special skills, musical talents, bodily attractions, technological or

9 Aline Sierp argues that since the 1990s the “common experience of repression, dictatorship and genocide [...] turned into a point of reference for the definition of the [European] Union’s values and political goals” (115). In the new millennium, new initiatives such as the Liberation Route Europe have tried to shift the focus away from the experience of trauma and destruction.

10 In the case of the Dutch liberation, we need to keep in mind that the American forces did not play a crucial role in the liberation of the northern parts of the country. Nonetheless, the United States State Department made sure that the American intervention became particularly relevant in the Dutch national imagination and memory. The cultural diplomacy and soft powers of the Marshall Plan played an important role to enhance the U.S. contributions to the Dutch economic recovery and to a certain degree their role in the Dutch liberation. For example, the exhibition *De Amerikaanse Droom in Nederland 1944–1969* in the Nederlands Openluchtmuseum (and the informative catalogue by Jan Donkers) shies away from questioning conflicting memories and taboos in favor of liberation in the immediate aftermath of the war called “Bevrijd en besmet” (“liberated and infected”) with an emphasis on Marshall Plan help, images of liberation, Donald Duck, and the Wild West. Not surprisingly, as far as music is concerned, jazz figures most prominently. The exhibition even introduces the expression “second liberation” to describe the culture of the fifties with Hollywood, cars, jeans, and Rock ‘n’ Roll music. The images in the exhibition reveal a sense of complicity with the message of the Marshall Plan as the seal for the European Reconstruction Program with the American flag and shield or the Strength for the Free World emblem show. Far from creating a narrative of hegemonic Americanization, the exhibition on the American Dream and liberation is a paradigmatic example of self-Americanization.

other sensational feats. Rather, it is a form of *Gebrauchsmusik* (“music of use”) created for a specific national audience during the narrow time frame between the liberation beginning with the September 1944 offensive “Operation Market Garden” and the period surrounding the official liberation of the Netherlands and the capitulation of Nazi Germany in May 1945. During that time period, popular sheet music had not yet entered into competition with what would soon become the most important mediator of culture: the American movies and record industry. Before Dutch audiences could engage in the immediate experience of American sights, sounds, and fantasies and absorb their illusions of reality, popular sheet music offered a welcome means to celebrate and express feelings of joy, pride, and gratitude. The exuberant feeling of being free again was, in most cases, dominant despite the dire reality of destroyed cities, war casualties, torn families, and uncertainty regarding lost friends or family members. This short-lived period of exception, of first expecting to be liberated followed by the actual experience of being free again, created the magical feeling of the summer of 1945. When it was over, the usefulness of most of the songs had expired. Thus, hardly any of them were recorded and entered the collective memory.

How can we describe the music, which filled the streets, bars, and public spaces? The blue print for the Dutch liberation songs are the American sheet music publications from the period after the 1910s when the cultural craze of jazz and later swing swept over Europe. These publications themselves built on the nineteenth-century popular sheet music, in particular those songs based on minstrel songs. The Dutch soundtrack of liberation was to a certain degree informed by the rich archive of World War I sheet music and the interwar years.

The World War I sheet music from the U.S. combined musical notes with lyrics and colorful designs, which formed a visual gateway into the song. The manifold themes can be categorized into songs which

1. celebrate the belief in American liberty with the colors of the flag and icons such as the Statue of Liberty
2. mediate the value of democracy
3. emphasize the need to fight for American core values
4. commemorate crucial battles at Verdun, in Flanders, or Berlin
5. identify and satirize the enemy
6. idealize the life of soldiers
7. express feelings of longing for loved ones.

In World War II, the media situation became more complex. Soldiers listened to the radio, watched films, played records, and enjoyed live

performances. Nevertheless, sheet music continued to play a decisive role. The sheer number of songs published in the United States indicates that this nineteenth-century medium served its purpose of drumming up support, fostering a spirit of community among soldiers, stirring up patriotism, and ridiculing or stigmatizing the enemy. The themes, which I identified for the period between 1914 and 1918, continued to inform the productions of the 1940s as is indicated by the selection of sheet music covers below with titles such as *Remember Pearl Harbor*, *Old Glory: Star Spangled Rhythm*, *Marching and Singing*, *Der Fuehrer's Face*, *Ten Little Soldiers*, *We Did It Before*, or *Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!!*

The Dutch liberation songs embraced U.S. marketing strategies through elaborate cover art as a first means for potential buyers and performers to get an idea of what the song was about. What kind of music can we identify in the collection of Dutch liberation songs? There are five categories particularly relevant to express a new sense of freedom: hymns, love songs, marches, boogie-woogie and swing, and foxtrot songs. In the following section, I will concentrate on the analysis on the last three categories.¹¹

Marching Music Between Occupation and Freedom

It might come as a surprise that the very musical genre that the National Socialists and the NSB (National-Socialist Movement in the Netherlands) identified as the genre suited best to transport authoritarian ideas and fascist aesthetics continued to be popular: marches. In song collections such as *S.A. Liederbuch*, *Singendes Volk* and *Kameradschaft im Lied*, as well as nonfiction books such as Joseph Müller-Blattau's *Germanisches Erbe in Deutscher Tonkunst* (with a preface by Heinrich Himmler) or Richard Eichenauer's *Musik und Rasse*, National Socialists recognized that marching music could help to de-individualize people, form them into a controllable mass, and manipulate them to embrace a specific political ideology.¹² Youth groups often participated in ritualistic singing traditions and marches as a kind of paramilitary exercise.

11 A more comprehensive analysis of all the categories, including illustrations and musical examples, can be found in my book *Soundtrack van de Bevrijding. Swingen, Zingen en Dansen op Weg naar Vrijheid* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2015) with contributions by Anja Adriaans, Jens Barnieck, Rense Havinga and Hugo Keesing.

12 In addition to marching music, National Socialists emphasized the importance of folk songs for ideological purposes. See for example Thomas Phleps "Musik und Ideologie" (2002).

In the Netherlands, the popular collection of marches and war songs, *Zoo Singt de NSB (twintig Marsch- en Strijdliederen)*, paved the way for using music as a means to “educate” the young, and transform them into a uniform mass of soldiers. The motto “Du bist nichts, dein Volk ist alles” (you are nothing, your people is everything) translated well into the idea of marching uniformly in rows eliminating a sense of individuality. Since May 1940, formations of the Jeugdstorm, Nederlandsche Arbeidsdienst, and the Dutch SS marched through the streets while singing songs such as the *Swarthemdendlied*, *Vrijheid en Recht*, *WA Marcheert*, *Voorwaarts*, *Stormsoldaat*, or the *Oostlandlied*.¹³ The latter was sung by thousands of Dutch soldiers fighting at the Eastern front.

Music and striking cover art created an aesthetic unity, which found its powerful expression in the marching and singing in public spaces and during ritualistic festivals. Examples include the silhouetted rows of soldiers on the covers of *Singend door alle Dietsche gouwen* or *Lied der Legionssoldaten (Opgedraagen aan wijlen sijne Luitenant Generaal H.A. Seyffardt)*. The combination of marching music and political topics strengthened a sense of unity among a certain group of people or soldiers. This kind of music should persuade, agitate, and overwhelm.¹⁴ When combined with certain uniforms, symbols, and color codes, the effect could be particularly striking. Certain key words and musical signature sounds set easily recognizable frames of reference. Key words included freedom, nation, flag, and fatherland. Important musical signatures were a marching beat and the typical fanfare-like rising fourth interval at the beginning. Why, however, would composers of liberation songs revert to the very musical genre that had become a blueprint for the occupation and for a traumatic experience of censorship, loss of cultural identity, and national humiliation?

Judging from the cover art and lyrics, marching music became an effective means of reasserting freedom and recovering what was lost. Songs such as *We zijn weer Holland en we zijn weer vrij!*, *De Vrijheidsmars*, *Vredesmarsch*, or *Vry Nederland (Vryheidsmarsch)* show how music can become a means of celebrating the end of oppression. Now the signs of the occupiers were replaced by the iconic Dutch lion unchained. On 5 May 1945, the front page of *De Gelderlander* newspaper featured a poem next to the image of Queen Wilhelmina, in which the metaphor of the Dutch lion had a similar function in poetry and musical cover art:

13 As Gerard Groenveld explains in *Zo zong de NSB*, these songs have been forgotten over the decades (200).

14 See in this context Hanns-Werner Heister's entry on political music in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1997).

De Hollandsche leeuw hoeft, Van woede verbeter, Niet langer onmachtig Gekerkerd te zijn.	The Dutch lion, Pent up with anger, Need no longer be impotent And encaged.
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The color orange pervaded public spaces as a national metaphor of freedom regained. This color code in combination with marching music strengthened the national identity of people. The importance of the color orange can even be traced in newspaper articles printed in orange after the liberation.¹⁵ At the same time, the references to Dutch history, language, and the country's proud and strong people helped to erase the five-year gap of humiliation and cultural colonization. Dutch marching music with themes of freedom, nationhood, and patriotism thus allowed the people to come to terms with the traumatic experience of occupation and war.

The return of Dutch marching music is closely tied to emotions triggered by sounds heard between 1940 and 1945. One only has to think of the sound field of occupation in the streets of major Dutch cities. Apart from the howling of sirens during air attacks, the droning sounds of airplanes above the cities, the ear-shattering sounds of bombs crashing into houses in city centers, Dutch war diaries often refer to an uncanny kind of silence after the beginning of the occupation. In May 1940, there was hardly any traffic, buses did not run, taxis were unavailable. Due to the shortage of gas, doctors could not make visits to patients (except on bicycles). After October 1942, when all forms of musical performances were banned from the streets, Dutch citizens longed for the familiar tunes played by the popular street organs. In addition, church bells fell silent after they were molten into cannon and other military equipment. Anne Frank described in her famous diary that she lost her sense of time after the Westerkerk bell stopped telling the citizens of Amsterdam the time of the day. With the loss of bells came the silencing of carillon music. The sound of German troops singing their marching songs filled the silence. In Amsterdam alone, 14,000 German soldiers contributed to the sound field of the city with their language and music. Some described the singing of German soldiers and the NSB as terribly off-key. Studies of Dutch war diaries reveal that one of the psychological strategies of occupied citizens to cope with unwelcome foreign cultural politics was to either ignore sounds associated with occupation or to

15 Interview with Rense Havinga conducted for the MA paper "Liberation Songs" at Radboud University by Esther Adema, Litanía de Graaf, and Rita Hynes in June 2014.

categorize them as unpleasant.¹⁶ After 1944, one liberation song by Ar Colijn with a quick rhythm and catchy lyrics explicitly addressed the new sonic experience of hearing *The Bells Now Ring Again*, as the title of the song indicates. The chorus says:

The Bells now ring again.
 We did not wait in vain,
 The sun drove out the rain
 The Nazis slain,
 Let's elevate our voice,
 Sing to the Tommy boys
 Our songs of gratitude.
 In cheery mood.
 All nightmares are ended,
 Suddenly just as the war intended:
 Liberty!!!
 Now shake hands,
 With Americans,
 In steady brotherhood,
 And cheery mood.

We have to imagine a special sound field in 1945: the sounds of bells returning to destroyed city centers in combination with marches such as *Wij zijn weer vrij!* (*Lied van Vrijheid en Vrede*) with words by A.J. Driest and music by Hendrik van Beek presented in “gematigd Marschtempo met spontane voordracht” – with a moderate marching tempo and spontaneous singing:

Wij zijn weer vrij!
 Heft aan onz' jubel zangen.
 Nu wij, verlost van slavernij,
 Den vrede weer ontvangen.
 Zoo moge dan die vrede
 Ons hoeden voor hernieuwd geweld.
 De vredes zonne stralen beschijnen
 't eeuwig vredesveld.

We are free again!
 Let us sing our jubilant songs.
 Now that we, free from slavery,
 Receive peace again.
 So may that peace
 Protect us from renewed violence.
 The sunlight of peace shines
 On the eternal field of peace.

16 Annelies Jacobs and Karin Bijsterveld speak in this context of “politics of sound” based on their analysis of Amsterdam diaries. See “Der Klang der Besatzungszeit: Amsterdam 1940 bis 1945” (2013). See also Annelies Jacobs's *Het Geluid van Gisteren: Waarom Amsterdam Vroeger Ook Niet Stil Was* (2013).

The composer Hendrik van Beek notes that the final line of the chorus should be sung with great emphasis on melody and rhythm:

Zoo rijz' ons aller bede,	Thus rise all of our prayers,
Dat voortaan t'allen tij	That from now on for all time
Op aarde heersche vrede	On earth shall reign peace
En Neerland blijve vrij!	And the Netherlands be free!

With a final fanfare on the rising basic chord of C major the march ends on a fortissimo celebrating music, freedom, and peace. The keywords “rise,” “prayers,” “peace,” and “free” mentioned in this march are also present in most of the other compositions, which might be subsumed under the category freedom marches.

Liberation Boogie-Woogie and Swing

Contrary to the aesthetics of marching practiced by the National Socialists and the NSB, the African-American genre of boogie-woogie and in particular the emerging swing movement focused on individual expression of vitality through dance rather than paramilitary exercises accompanied by a steady beat. The mostly piano-based boogie-woogie, with its recognizable melodic bass lines and syncopated rhythms, became most popular in the 1930s and was picked up by swing bands such as Tommy Dorsey's and Glenn Miller's. In the Netherlands, the song *Gee, I like this Boogey Woogey Swing* from 1945 by Han Ninaber testifies to the function of music to overcome sadness and sorrow.

Heeft U weleens zorgen?	There is a brand new rhythm, ¹⁷
Last van reumatiek ...?	Listen for a while.
Dan weet ik een middel	To the very popular
't middel heet muziek:	Boogey woogey style.
Speel voor mij een beetje dansmuziek.	Gee! I like that boogey woogey
	swing
Daar ben ik dol op,	With boogey woogey
Ja dat vind ik knal.	Life is never blue.

17 These English words are by Bart Ekkers.

There is a slight difference of emphasis between the Dutch and English lyrics. The Dutch version contrasts more dramatically the experience of grief with the healing power of the boogie-woogie: “met wat Boogey Woogey ‘Swing’ muziek vind ik het leven lang nog niet zoo mal” (with this Boogey Boogey Woogey “Swing” music I find life is not all too bad).¹⁸

The National Socialists had responded to performances of African-American musicians and music with roots in black culture with defamation. The Düsseldorf exhibition “Degenerate Art” (*Entartete Kunst*) from 1938 identified blues, boogie-woogie, and swing as poisonous infiltrations of so-called Aryan art. The Dutch version of the National-Socialist caricature of “Liberators” encouraged the viewer to read the Dutch Nazi paper *Storm-ss*. The cover identifies the United States as a racist robot out of control, covered in the hood of the Ku Klux Klan, with a torso of a cage in which an African-American couple dances a jitterbug, and legs made of bombs threatening to destroy iconic German cities. Musically, the references discredit the U.S. as a country holding a gun in one hand and a drumstick in the other, ready to produce the rhythm of destruction. Destruction also comes from the alleged weapons the American war machine holds in its hands: a sack of American dollars and a record, indicating the threat from the powerful connection between entertainment and capital. In awe of such an onslaught of “acoustic terror,” the little figure in the foreground can hardly believe his ears, which have grown beyond reasonable proportions. The sign he is holding mocks the promise of the liberator: “De U.S.A. zullen de Europeesche Kultuur van den ondergang redden” (the U.S.A. will save European Culture from Destruction).¹⁹

18 Translation by F. Mehring.

19 The response to new American musical styles of African-American origin continued to be controversial in many European countries. For example, despite initial efforts to discard African-American music as primitive, immoral, and alien, the BBC program shifted towards a more positive image of jazz in 1943 due to its function to lift spirits in times of war. It is particularly striking that with the establishment of the American Forces Network in July 1943, such music “served as a catalyst for those worried about Americanization, which they regarded as a threat to the survival of a distinctly British culture” (*Victory Through Harmony*, 177). Even the German radio propaganda utilized jazz music to attract British and other soldiers, inserting propaganda messages in-between. Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz have offered an overview of National-Socialist subversive radio programming and Goebbels’ propaganda orchestra around the crooner Karl (“Charlie”) Schwedler in *Hitler’s Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (1997).

The spreading of African-American music could hardly be contained—neither in Germany, nor in the Netherlands.²⁰ Before and during the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, the musical borders were already porous. The refined arrangements of orchestral dance music by the likes of Duke Ellington or Benny Goodman impressed German musicians, who immersed themselves in the African-American styles of swing, foxtrot, and boogie-woogie. The German bandleaders and musical followers of Ellington and Goodman were Teddy Stauffer and Kurt Widman. Thus, swing sounds emerged from German record stores, in movie houses showing American musicals, and dance parties featured swing from both sides of the Atlantic. Due to defamation of jazz and swing by the National Socialists, lyrics of “hot music” were often Germanized. For example, one of the earliest African-American success numbers, “Tiger Rag,” became “Schwarzer Panther.”²¹ Even National Socialists did not follow a clear line on how to approach African-American music between discrediting swing as “degenerate” or silently condoning it. The party response to swing can best be described as hypocritical.²² The individualistic emphasis on solo instruments, improvisation, and the African-American roots did not fit into the concept of music as a tool of propaganda for melting the individual into a uniform mass. Thus, the German swing movement with its creative, individualistic, and even anarchic attitude and with its own fashion code represents the first German youth subculture that defined its resistance to the status quo through music.

What Hans Dieter Schaefer described as a “split conscience” towards swing and similar strategies to undermine National-Socialist regulations can also be found in the Netherlands. Swing and boogie-woogie could be enjoyed only when hidden behind Dutch sounding titles. One of the best-known Dutch orchestras, The Ramblers, was formed in 1926 (see Swaart 233). It emerged in the wake of the European tours by the famous African-American clarinet player Sidney Bechet and Paul Whiteman—the self-acclaimed “King of Jazz”—and his swing

20 Walter van de Leur traced the history and reception of jazz music in the Netherlands by looking at the Dutch magazine *Jazzwereld*, which was published between 1931 and 1940. He explained that “[t]he purpose of both *De Jazzwereld* and the Nederlandse Hot Club (NHC) was to promote and defend jazz, to educate players, listeners and adversaries alike, to organize concerts, competitions, and lectures, to push radio stations to play more jazz, and to establish a network of like-minded jazz lovers” (unpaginated).

21 One of the earliest historians who described the function of jazz in German culture was Horst H. Lange in his overview *Jazz in Deutschland. Die Deutsche Jazz-Chronik 1900–1966* (1966).

22 Here, I follow Bernd Polster's conclusion regarding the fine line between discrediting and condoning swing music in the 1930s and 40s. See *Swing Heil! Jazz im Nationalsozialismus* (1989).

orchestra. After 1933, The Ramblers with their jazz and swing program became influential via radio performances for VARA, the *Vereeniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs*. However, when the *Departement van Volksvoorlichting en Kunsten* passed the law “Verbod van negroïde en negritische elementen in dans- en amusementsmuziek” (Law against black and “blackish” influences in dance and popular music), English-sounding band names were forbidden. The Ramblers changed their name emphasizing the role of their bandleader into Theo Uden Masman en zijn dansorkest (Theo Uden Masman and his Dance Orchestra).

In the collective consciousness of the Netherlands, the sound and music of the Ramblers is closely connected to the soundtrack of liberation. However, in the summer of 1945, The Ramblers did not perform a single song of their jazz and swing repertoire in the country. Since they had also played for the German Wehrmacht and the National-Socialist *Nederlandsch Arbeidersfront*, The Ramblers were banned from performing after the liberation. Under the leadership of drummer Kees Kranenburg the band went on tour in other countries. After the magical summer of 1945 was over, things calmed down. In January 1946, the ban was lifted and The Ramblers continued their success story.

The German term “Verniggerung” became part of a large-scale prohibition of African-American music in record stores or on radio channels during the war. African-American performers were banned from Germany and the occupied countries. This created a musical vacuum in the Netherlands as elsewhere, and explains the particular interest of music publishers and performers alike to gain access to sheet music. However, printed scores can only provide a limited understanding of what makes the musical genre of boogie-woogie and the use of improvisation so unique in live performances. Not surprisingly, early efforts of Dutch composers to utilize these novel genres produced an often awkward appropriation, not unlike, by the way, to the early efforts of experimenting with jazz by Ernst Krenek, Erwin Schulhoff, Paul Hindemith or Kurt Weill immediately after World War I. For example, the Dutch liberation song *Ik kan niet swingen* (I cannot swing) points to the gap between the desire to participate in the new musical dance sensation from the U.S. and the inability to do so shortly after the liberation. As a matter of fact, the song *Ik kan niet swingen* is composed as a foxtrot. As Duke Ellington would have said as early as 1932: “it don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that swing”:

‘k kom uit heel gegoede kringen,
 ‘k kweek exotische seringjen.
 Ik zit vol betoveringen,
 maar helaas, ik kan niet swingen.

I come from very wealthy circles,
 I grow exotic flowers.
 I am full of enchantments,
 However, unfortunately, I cannot
 swing.

The cultural opposition towards the music of the occupiers turned jazz into the soundtrack of the liberators for many. Syncopation, swing, blue notes, and improvisation became loaded with political associations.²³ As Kees Wouters suggested, by objecting to jazz, Dutch people risked the stigma of siding with the former enemy: “[p]laying a Nat Gonellaw or a Benny Goodman record on a birthday party, one demonstrated that one was on the ‘right’ side” (507). The attitude towards jazz in the Netherlands would soon become more polarized.²⁴ In 1945, Jack Bulterman recognized an opportunity to fashion himself into a musical mediator par excellence.

Among the most successful numbers of The Ramblers after 1945 was Bulterman’s composition *Bouncin’ in Bavaria*, which became a standard in big band repertoires.²⁵ The song gained recognition in many European countries. *Bouncin’ in Bavaria* was considered the best song of a concert in Groningen in February 1950. In Great Britain, *Bouncin’ in Bavaria* was one of the most requested songs (Morley 131). The American Forces Network in Munich used it as their signature tune for a radio show of the same name: “Bouncin’ in Bavaria.” An article in *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* identified the song as a well-known AFN tune (“*Bouncin’ in Bavaria*, de van de AFN welbekende ‘tune’, was een van de beste nummers van de avond” (6 Feb. 1950, p. 7)). The association with the American Forces Network radio shows how a Dutch swing number celebrating the liberation could also shape the cultural memory of the AFN radio audience in Germany without necessarily recognizing the original national background.

23 Walter van de Leur explains how critical responses continued to be present, particularly among older generations, while young people often embraced American jazz. See in this context the contribution by van de Leur in this volume.

24 A revealing case in point is the article in the *Gelderlander* newspaper from 12 October 1946, on the new film *Follies Girls* in the Scala theater. The kind of jazz music and dancing is described as an attack on “our good taste” (“aanslagen op onzen goeden smaak” (2)). Another derogative term used is “Amerikaansche humbug.” Though the article acknowledged the positive things that the Americans had brought with the liberation, jazz ranked among the few exceptions which the Dutch allegedly could do without: “De nieuwe wereld bracht ons onvergetelijk veel goeds, maar wij menen hierom toch niet te moeten nalaten afwijzend te staan tegenover aanslagen op onze goeden smaak en beschaving” (2).

25 The information on the hit tune of The Ramblers is quite sparse and mentioned only in passing in Bulterman’s *The Ramblers Story* (1973) and Co de Klete and Gabri de Wagt’s *Mooi Holland? De Woelige Jaren van de Ramblers* (1981).

Fox-Trotting and Flirting in the Summer of 1945

One of the most popular labels in the liberation songs referred to the foxtrot dance. This is understandable considering that foxtrot had emerged from the United States in the 1910s from the collaboration between the innovative British dancers Vernon and Irene Castle and the leading figure in African-American music, James Reese Europe. Allegedly, Jim Europe and Ford Dabney from the Clef Club in Harlem wrote so many songs and marches that their names were spelled backwards on some sheet music publications in order to “lend an appearance of variety” (quoted in Southern 347). After the dance craze swept over the United States in the second decade of the century, the foxtrot quickly became a transatlantic phenomenon in the 1930s. Artists from the United States were traveling across Europe; foxtrot music was the singing and dancing sensation of the inter-war years, sold via records, sheet music, and broadcast on radios. European composers embraced the format and created songs for their respective national audiences. In the 1940s, Dutch composers drew on a rich history and experience of foxtrot music in the preceding decade in order to express humor and joy about the feeling of being free again.

Many of the songs breathe the exciting atmosphere of intercultural encounters between Dutch people and the Allied forces from Canada, the UK, and the United States. In a lighthearted manner they make fun of cultural misunderstandings or language problems. Examples include Jack Millar's *White Stripes in a Sky of Blue*, dedicated to the Allied Air Forces “who in cause of freedom, flew over Holland,” or Jack Bulterman's foxtrot *Snoezepoes*, in which an Allied soldier addresses every stereotype conceivable about romantic encounters with a Dutch girl on a bench: sitting “by the old Dutch mill,” holding hands, whispering words of love under a linden tree, wearing wooden shoes. Alas, neither of them understood a single sentence the other spoke. The only word the soldier learned and remembers lovingly is the Dutch expression for sweetheart—“snoezepoes.” Jack Bulterman, a composer as well as multitalented musician on piano, trumpet, and accordion, represents a key figure in the liberation songs genre. He built on his work for The Ramblers and translated cabaret elements to the experience of liberation between 1944 and 1945. His light and joyful songs must have struck a chord with both the Dutch citizens and the liberators.²⁶

26 For further reference on the role of Bulterman in The Ramblers see *Jack Bulterman: The Ramblers Story* (1973) and Co de Kloet's and Gabri de Wagt's *Mooi Holland? De Woelige Jaren van de Ramblers* (1981).

Many liberation songs express gratitude towards the liberators in songs such as *Thanks Tommies!* or *Sing your Song of Thanks (to the Tommies and their Tanks)*. Some of the most memorable songs address the romantic encounters using a humorous mix of Dutch and English lyrics in songs such as *Geef mij maar 'n echt Hollandsch Meisje* (I prefer a real Dutch Girl), *Little Holland Girl*, *Mamma, zijn naam is Johnny*, or *Mijn Tommy uit Canada*. One of the few songs that actually entered Dutch cultural memory is the song *Trees heeft een Canadees*.

Trees heeft een Canadees	Trees has got a Canadian
O, wat is dat kindje in haar sas	Oh, how content the child is
Trees heeft een Canadees	Trees has got a Canadian
Samen in de "jeep" en dan: vol gas!	Together in the jeep and then: full throttle!
Al vindt zij dat Engelsch lang niet mis is,	Although she thinks that English is not bad,
Wil zij dolgraag weten wat een kiss is	She really wants so to know what a kiss is
Trees heeft een Canadees	Trees has got a Canadian
O, wat is dat kindje in haar sas.	Oh, how content the child is.

While *Trees heeft een Canadees* is comparatively well known, recorded and performed regularly, the story it tells is by no means an exception in the liberation song genre. Songs such as *Snoezepoes*, *Da-ag, Da-ag, Da-ag How I like this way to say "Hello,"* (followed by the self-ironic line "Da-ag, Da-ag, Da-ag is the only word of Dutch I know" in the catchy chorus) or *Weet je Wat een Zoentje is? Een Zoentje is "A Little Kiss,"* deal with similar issues using mixed language lyrics as a means to humorously address intercultural encounters between Allied soldiers and Dutch girls:

Weet je wat een zoentje is?
Een zoentje is "a little kiss,"
Een meisje is "a little miss."
That's all, my darling!
Hoe gaat het heet
"How do you do?"
Ik hou van jou is
"I love you."
Dat is de waarheid,
"that is true."
That's all, my darling!

Music, flirting with Allied soldiers, and American entertainment culture formed an integral part of social life in 1945. Crucial for the success of the foxtrot were novel dances such as the Lindy Hop or the Jitterbug.²⁷ Several Dutch sheet music songs from 1945 include more or less detailed information on dance moves, which were supposed to accompany the music. Examples include *De Hi Ha Holland Dans* or the so-called dance sensation from Great Britain *The Chestnut Tree*. One of the most memorable and impressive dances is *De Sten-Gun Walk*—a musical homage to the resistance fighter Pierre Zom, Jr. In his dance school, the pianist discovered a large number of British Sten guns underneath the school's dance floor after the war. Recognizing the courageous role Zom played during the occupation, Leo Friedriks (aka Fred Riks) composed a song about Sten guns and worked out an elaborate choreography for dancers to joyfully re-enact the liberation of Dutch people from their occupiers. Here, music and performance create a unifying experience of self-empowerment reflecting the special feeling of being free again in 1945.

Holland vrij! Ieder blij.
 En een het Nederlandsche Volk
 Dans nu de "Sten-Gun Walk."
 Hold your Sten!
 Pas op je tellen!
 Hold your Sten!
 Tred niet versnellen!

Holland free! Everybody happy.
 And all of the Dutch people
 Now dance the "Sten Gun Walk."
 Hold your Sten!
 Watch your step!
 Hold your Sten!
 Don't walk too fast!

It would not take long until the light-hearted approach to intercultural encounters turned bitter sweet when more than 2000 so-called war brides embarked on ships across the Ocean in search of a better life beyond the war-torn ruins and sites of destruction in the Netherlands.²⁸ More would follow suit to emigrate and join their sweethearts from Great Britain or the United States. Before

27 For an overview of the impact of international dances on Dutch culture, see Lutgard Mutsaers' *Beat Crazy* (1998). Mutsaers, however, starts with the function of dance in Dutch youth culture in the 1960s.

28 Enne Koops provided a helpful overview of Dutch emigration to North America, and traced the cultural elements of attraction between the liberation and Marshall aid. See *De Dynamiek van een Emigratiecultuur* (2010), in particular 104–139. Rense Havinga explained that the tone of the songs change from humorously describing the romantic encounters between liberators and Dutch women towards warning and accusing the men from overseas (105).

many of these songs could be recorded and enter into the collective cultural memory, the magic of 1945 was gone.

Coda

The popular sheet music on the theme of Dutch liberation and the newly won sense of freedom shows a double function of music: First, liberation songs provide the glue for Dutch citizens to create a positive emotional link to a glorious past and to imagine a proud national community. Second, the liberation songs represent a sounding memorial of gratitude to the Allied forces. Listening to liberation songs reveals a surprising dimension regarding the cultural memory of jazz and swing as the sound signature of 1945. Before the cultural productions of records, films, and the concert tours of U.S. jazz ambassadors established American jazz as the soundtrack of liberation in retrospective view, the sheet music collection of liberation songs in Groesbeek tells a complex story of international, multilingual contact and erasure. In the Dutch cultural memory, the soundtrack of liberation is closely tied to American jazz, in particular the sounds of swing, big bands, and the close harmony singing of the Andrews Sisters. However, it was not long before African-American jazz artists such as Lionel Hampton, Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, Max Roach, and the Modern Jazz Quartet caused a storm of enthusiasm in Amsterdam and elsewhere. In hindsight, these revolutionary performances—which in the case of Hampton's performance of songs such as *Hey! Ba Ba Re Bop* in the Amsterdam Concert Hall in September 1954 caused a riot and destruction—overlap with the memory of a “second American liberation,” the wave of *A-Wop-Bop-A-Loo-Bop A-Lop Bam Boom* of Little Richard and Elvis Presley.²⁹

The analysis of liberation sheet music shows that media play a crucial role in the way we remember historical events. Foxtrot songs such as *Ik kan niet swingen*, *Mijn Tommy uit Canada*, marching songs, hymns, and love songs express the desire to embrace the new international forms of expression that swept

29 A recent exhibition in the Nederlands Openluchtmuseum entitled *De Amerikaanse Droom in Nederland 1944–1969* is a good case in point. The American Dream, as the organizers explain, offered exactly what the Dutch were longing for: a culture of abundance, comfort, and fun. If there were warning signs on the horizon, they were not identified as geostrategic strategies of control and smart power (in the sense of Joseph Nye combining military power with cultural diplomacy), but rather by references to stereotypes regarding an all too material surface culture.

into the country with the Allied forces. They also helped to create a new bridge to the time before the occupation. Learning how to swing American style and marching at the same time to the rhythms of the past define the magical spirit of the summer of 1945.

Liberation songs consist of more elements than sounds, melodies, harmonies, and lyrics. They are also part of rituals expressing emotions such as joy, pride, and hope for a better future. The cultural matrix of the European Recovery Program (better known as the Marshall Plan), the presence of African-American musicians, and the availability of the latest jazz records during the years of reconstruction linked the soundtrack of liberation firmly to the memory of American music. Since jazz grew out of a culture of suffering and oppression, and overcame different forms of stigmatization as primitive or even degenerate towards its global victory in popular culture, it had the greatest potential to become in the words of Reinhold Wagnleitner “a model of liberation.”³⁰

Let me return to my original question: why are only a few songs such as *Trees heeft een Canadees, Als Op Het Leidscheplein de Lichtjes weer eens Branden Gaan*, or *Lili Marleen* remembered, while the majority of liberation songs – such as *Vrij is Nederland*, *v-E Day*, *Herrijzend Nederland*, *Da-ag, Da-ag, Da-ag* *How I like this way to say “Hello,” Rotterdam Ahoy, Little Holland Girl, Eens zal de Wereld Zingen, Rood Wit Blauw, The Tommy Song, Tulips Bloom in Holland Once Again, Weet je Wat een Zoentje is? Een Zoentje is “A Little Kiss,”* or *De “Sten-Gun Walk”* – have disappeared from cultural memory? One of the reasons for the continuing popularity of some songs is the fact that they were recorded by artists such as Albert de Booij, Willy Walden, Lale Anderson, or Marlene Dietrich. In addition, having access to new recordings during and immediately after the war remained problematic due to a lack of financial means and wartime shortages of shellac. This made recording, at least of phonograph records that could be sold, close to impossible. Unless a song was featured on a radio program or in a show that was transcribed, no concurrent recorded version would exist. While analog audio recorders date back to the war years, it is highly unlikely that many were in private hands.³¹ As far as the rediscovery of more than 300 sheet songs is concerned, a pattern in the connection of media and memory becomes apparent: songs that are not recorded hardly ever enter into cultural memory and are easily forgotten.

30 See in this context Wagnleitner, “Jazz—The Classical Music of Globalization” (29).

31 In personal conversations and email exchange, Hugo Keesing offered inspiring suggestions and comments regarding the media situation in 1945.

In the magical summer of 1945, music offered an important means to make sense of the liberation. Imaginations of the past and future form the basis for the dream of a new beginning. In the shift from socio-cultural and political destabilization towards a new national order, music provided an important emotional sense of harmony, orientation, and ordinariness. During the economic recovery and with the persuasive cultural program of the Marshall Plan with its promise “you, too, can be like us,”³² American music quickly took over the role of providing the soundtrack for a new post-war generation.

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32 See in this context Frank Mehring, “You too can be like us! Friendly Persuasion, Self-Americanization, and the Utopia of a New Europe.” *Selling Democracy / Friendly Persuasion*. Rainer Rother (ed.). Berlin: DHM, 2006. (35–46).

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The Reception and Development of Jazz in the Netherlands (1945–1970s)

Walter van de Leur¹

In the decades after the Second World War, the Netherlands underwent significant economical, political and cultural changes, which invited the Dutch to rethink their national identity. Jazz, which triggered cultural debates since it first arrived in Europe, provides an ideal lens to look at these changes. This essay seeks to position jazz in the ever-changing cultural and social landscapes of the Netherlands in the postwar years, beginning with the liberation in May 1945 and ending in the 1970s.

As Mehring (2015) argues in *Soundtrack van de bevrijding* (“The soundtrack of the liberation”) it is hard to know the actual music performed during the euphoria that came with the end of the German occupation in the Netherlands. Film footage shot during those days is silent. Documentary makers have typically added the music that was both antithetical to the Nazi-regime and that symbolized the youth culture of the Allied forces: American big band swing. In the months after the liberation, some 300 songs were written by Dutch songwriters to commemorate the end of the war. These were published as sheet music but few of them were recorded at the time. Mehring distinguishes different categories: marches, patriotic hymns, romantic love songs, boogie-woogie and swing, and foxtrots, which was “one of the most popular genres among the liberation songs.” Technically, the foxtrot is not so much a genre as a dance, typically danced to big band music. In the 1930s and 1940s, many quite divergent works were identified as “foxtrots” on their record labels—a marketing ploy rather than a genre classification. Dancing had been instrumental to the success of swing music in the 1930s and early-1940s, and it continued to be the main attraction after the Second World War.

1 This essay draws on papers delivered in Nijmegen (*The Politics and Culture of Liberation Conference*, Department of English and American Studies, Radboud University, June 8, 2013), Paris (*Colloque International: Les Circulations Globales du Jazz*, Musée du Quai Branly, June 27, 2013) and Darmstadt (*Darmstädter Jazz Forum/Tagung des Instituts für Jazzforschung Graz*, Sept. 28, 2013).

Swing music warrants a somewhat technical digression. Characteristic of swing music was the ongoing pulse in the rhythm section, which played a steady, yet light, four-to-the-bar beat, with an uneven rhythmical subdivision, often expressed by the drummer on his cymbal: *ching chick-a ching chick-a*. That subdivision—called swing eighths or uneven eighths—is to be found in the melodies and accompanying lines in the music, together with so-called syncopations, or shifting accents. Swing is an interpretative practice, and its subtleties are hard to notate. Creating swing is a procedure that can be, and has been, applied to all kinds of music. Published sheet music does not capture that interpretative practice well, and publishers typically do not bother to notate swing because the performers knew how to interpret the written rhythms in swing style. A case in point is the published sheet music of Glenn Miller's *In the Mood*, the archetypical soundtrack to World War II documentaries. From the original published music one cannot know that this is to be played with a swing interpretation, apart from the somewhat vague indication "medium bounce tempo." Another iconic song from that period, *Lili Marlene*, was sung by Marlene Dietrich with a laid-back swing feel over a lightly strumming guitar, but the notation (with dotted eighth-sixteenth figures) suggests a much squarer rhythm. Similarly, the published liberation sheet music from the Netherlands gives many important historic perspectives on repertoire, lyrics, and iconography (covers), but leaves much unanswered as to the actual interpretation(s) of the material at the time. Accomplished performers could easily turn any piece into a swinging, danceable rendition.

One of the most intriguing and informative documents in Mehring's book is the repertoire list of amateur pianist Jan Hendriks, who played for the Allies with a professional band consisting of Amsterdammers "who followed the troops." The typed list, titled "Foxtrots," and marked 1944 in pen, shows that Dutch musicians had knowledge of relatively recent swing numbers such as *Take the "A" Train*, recorded in February 1941 by Ellington and his Orchestra, and *As Time Goes By*, written in 1931 but popularized through the movie *Casablanca*, which premiered November 1942 in the United States. Also on the repertoire were rhythm and blues numbers such as Louis Jordan's *Is You Is, or Is You Ain't My Baby*, which peaked on the U.S. charts in the summer of 1944. The inclusion of "Hé Baberebob" (in all likelihood Lionel Hampton's jump blues hit *Hey Ba-ba-re-bop*, recorded and popularized after March 1945) suggests a slightly later date for this list. But even if played sometime in mid-1945, much of this repertoire was quite up to date, given the difficulty to obtain records. It shows that jazz as a sonic culture traveled fast. Musicians in the Netherlands may have had no access to the actual recording or the sheet music of Hampton's *Hey Ba-ba-re-bop*, but they picked up tunes from the airwaves: the BBC was a major source, as was the American Forces Network (AFN) (Kleinhou 2007: 60, 65).

Even during the war, Dutch jazz musicians had stayed in touch with the latest music, by listening to these then illegal broadcasts.

Swing had been quite popular before and during the war. Much of the popular repertoire from the Ramblers—the most popular Dutch dance orchestra, led by Theo Uden Masman—was in swing style, and Dutch radio orchestras, such as the AVRO Dansorkest, and the orchestras of Ernst van't Hoff and Dick Willebrandts, were modeled after American and British swing orchestras. Just before the war, the most successful teenage idols had been Johnny and Jones, and their record *Mijnheer Dinges Weet Niet Wat Swing Is*, had been a hit (Openneer 2001). The song deals with a Mr. Dinges (Whatshisname), an old-fashioned composer and piano teacher with a mock German accent, who has no clue about swing, radio, saxophones, hot solos and the like. The record's success implies that Dutch teenagers full well knew about these things. To Mr. Dinges, jazz is scandalous and banal, which was pretty much the position of Dutch authorities—a stance ridiculed by Johnny and Jones. In another piece, titled *Swing Your Song, Violetta*, they took a stab at opera. Johnny and Jones, whose real names were Nol van Wesel and Max Kannewasser would die from exhaustion in the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen, just before the end of the war.

The popularity of swing music only rose with the arrival of the Allied forces, who craved music just as much as the partying Netherlanders. The newly founded Orchestra of the Dutch Swing College was an instant hit with the Canadian troops stationed in Apeldoorn, and it performed on a daily basis for months. Other swing bands such as the Red, White and Blue Stars, the Kees van Dorsser Orchestra and the Plus Fours similarly found ample employment in the months after the liberation. The Ramblers, too, returned, even though their leader was reprimanded for presumed collaboration with the Nazis and was not allowed to work for six months. There were smaller swing-oriented ensembles (typically referred to as combos) such as the Millers, led by guitarist Ab de Molenaar, the Atlantic Quintet and the sextet of singer Rita Reys and drummer Wessel Ilcken. Next to these more swing-oriented outfits, so-called Dixieland bands were active, such as the Dixieland Pipers, later followed by the Down Town Jazz Band and the New Orleans Seven.

If live music was not available, the radio provided entertainment. For swing and jazz the AFN was the first choice, with broadcasts that had started in 1943. The other station that provided jazz programming was the BBC. After the liberation there was quite some jazz programming on the national network Herrijzend Nederland ("Resurging Netherlands," 1944–46), albeit irregularly and mainly drawing from pre-war recordings (Kleinhout 2007, 195). In June 1947, Jaap "Pete" Felleman (1921–2000) started his legendary show *Swing & Sweet, from*

Hollywood & 52nd Street for VARA radio, which effectively made him the first disc jockey in the country. Felleman could boast an impressive private (pre-war) record collection, which provided the basis for the program. Foreign import of luxury goods was restricted by the government until 1950, which made it impossible to obtain the latest records from abroad. In response, Felleman set up his private import by asking KLM-pilots who flew on American cities to buy specific records for him (Gras 1994, 23). Hence, *Swing and Sweet* introduced many listeners to music that no one else had access to. When Felleman, who also worked for record companies (Gras 1994, 24), left VARA-radio because of a conflict of interests Michiel de Ruyter succeeded him and became one of the best-known and most recognizable jazz disc jockeys in the Netherlands.

Yet neither the German occupation nor the liberation changed the various pre-war positions on jazz and swing much: authorities generally opposed the music, while many teenagers tended to be fans. The titles of two studies about the reception of jazz in the Netherlands before and after the Second World War are telling; *Ongewenschte Muziek* (“unwanted” or “unwelcome music,” Wouters 1999) and *Jazz als Probleem* (“jazz as a problem,” Kleinhout 2007). After World War II, the debate over the merits of jazz followed familiar tropes that had accompanied jazz from its earliest arrival in the Netherlands. Dutch authorities, from mayors to church leaders, and from police chiefs to heads of schools, continued to be worried about the impact of this “addictive and sensual” music, “alien to white culture.” The concerns about public morale were aimed at a number of issues. To start with, jazz came from a black and “primitive people” and only distracted listeners from their own European culture, which was of a higher order. Furthermore, with jazz came dancing which was rejected in similar moralistic and racist terms. In fact, the dances that belonged to the sphere of jazz were seen as more dangerous to public values than the music that accompanied those dances. Jazz’s rhythms, it was believed, numbed the senses of easy-to-influence teenagers who would lose control over their sexual urges. In the early-1930s, Dutch politics, too, were deeply concerned about the widely-felt “dance problem” or “dance danger,” which subverted teenagers:

The modern dances—such as the Step, the Fox Trot, the Shimmy, the Charleston—often have a highly sexual character. ... Consequently, every adolescent girl who chooses to visit a dance hall runs the risk to be led in an inappropriate manner. How many of them are unable to maintain the necessary moral resistance, and end with a *rendez-vous*[?] (Bie, Van der Heyden, *et al* 1931)²

2 All quotations from Dutch sources were translated by the author.

Against this backdrop of public rejection, defenders of jazz before and after the war followed a curious route. They agreed with their opponents that much of the American entertainment music was of little value, but argued that “real” or “pure jazz” was incorrectly seen as mere entertainment or dance music, too. Authorities, they argued, failed to distinguish between real jazz and its lookalike, which was commercial dance music. One had to understand what pure jazz was: authentic hot music, often identified as Negro folk music, of the likes of Armstrong and Ellington. Jazz’s defenders hastened to add that one shouldn’t confuse jazz’s cultural value with that of European high art, which was far ahead of the simple, naïve expressions of jazz, which they nevertheless liked. In their opinion, jazz posed no threat to the much more advanced European culture. The radio guide that accompanied the “V.A.R.A. Jazz Propaganda Week” (March 17–23, 1935) explained that “defending a type of music which has come to us from the primitive black race” would in no way undermine our “sensitivity for the many and rich treasures of our European music” (Poustochkine 1935, 9). After the war, Poustochkine would follow this line of reasoning in his articles in the jazz press.

But even to jazz *aficionados* it was difficult to separate the fake jazz from the real jazz. Before the war, this issue had already led to heated debates in the Dutch jazz magazine *De Jazzwereld* (1931–1940) where in lengthy intellectual articles authors tried to define jazz, only to find that Duke Ellington’s next record did not meet the criteria. Jazz proved to be a moving target that turned out to be indefinable (Van de Leur 2012, *passim*). The music developed so quickly that Dutch jazzophiles (as *De Jazzwereld* referred to its readership) could disagree deeply about what belonged to the realm of jazz and what did not.

Debates as to what jazz essentially was were revived after the war. *Tuney Tunes*, a magazine that had started underground in 1942 with the publication of “the lyrics of the latest dance songs” in English (which could be hard to decipher for the average Dutch listener), took on the task of educating its readership. Again, swing music was seen by jazz connoisseurs as suspect, a watered-down white version of pure jazz that lacked the authentic black feeling. The magazine had no problem denouncing African-American musicians such as altoist Johnny Hodges and tenorist Coleman Hawkins, for straying too far from their roots, which were typically understood to be those of simple and honest folk music of the “American Negro.”

But bigger issues lay ahead. During the late-1940s, Dutch jazz musicians and fans became gradually aware of a new and much more radical development that had taken place in American jazz: bebop. As in the United States, this novel, high-energy, and to some rather abstract genre would split the ranks

of jazz-lovers in modernists and traditionalists (known in the U.S. as “moldy figs”), whose arguments (again) built on questions of authenticity. Because of the limited access to bebop recordings (and the total absence of live bebop performances), it would take a while before listeners understood what the new genre entailed. As Kleinhout’s discussion of the polemical exchange between the various authors shows, there was much confusion over what bebop was. Still, that did not stop listeners from deciding whether they were for or against the latest turn jazz had taken. It split the *Dutch Swing College Club*, whose more conservative members defected and founded their own organization. The magazine *Rhythme*, the newly founded “monthly for modern music,” opened the discussion with an article by the famous French jazz critic Charles Delauney (1950a), who defended bebop against its detractors. The reply came from Poustochkine (1950), who in no uncertain Eurocentric terms saw New Orleans jazz (and its recent revival) as the only valuable contribution to the musical landscape. Delauney was not convinced (1950b). The exchange, often in loaded language, expressed that the different positions were hard to reconcile. As a result, jazz fans in the Netherlands pretty much belonged either to the camp of the traditionalists or that of the modernists, and occupied their own spaces.

Among those who embraced modern jazz and bebop were the so-called Vijftigers, a young generation of poets—such as Lucebert (Lubertus Swaanswijk), Hugo Claus, Remco Campert, Jan Hanlo and Gerrit Kouwenaar—and the painters Karel Appel, Corneille (Guillaume van Beverloo) and Constant (Nieuwenhuijs), who were the co-founders of the Cobra movement. These artists saw jazz as a source of inspiration and in part followed its improvisational methodology, which materialized in their “jazzgedichten” (jazz poems). The connection was not hard to miss. In 1950, for instance, Campert published a collection of poems under the title *Ten lessons with Timothy*, which was the title of a 1946 record by one of bebop’s founding fathers, the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. Appel painted portraits of Gillespie, Miles Davis and John Coltrane. The bond between the painter and these musicians (many of whom he knew personally) was so close that in 2008 the Cobra Museum curated an exposition titled “Karel Appel: Jazz 1958–1962.”

From the late 1940s on, more and more so-called jazz and rhythm clubs were founded, after the example of the *Dutch Swing College Club*. These clubs were organizations of fans who typically came together on a regular basis to play records, discuss music, view films and visit concerts. They often published newsletters, and sometimes organized jam sessions and concerts. Many clubs were organized along genre-lines, as some of the names indicate: The New Orleans Rhythme Club clearly catered to other fans than the Modern

Jazz Club Persepolis. Many fans found a home in these hobby organizations. In 1950, the C.P. Jazz Club Apeldoorn noted that its membership had quickly grown to almost 100 (“Rondom de Nederlandse Jazz- en Rhythmeclubs,” 9), an impressive number that indicates that listening to jazz was an increasingly popular pastime. *Rhythme* had a separate section that brought news from the clubs. The magazine itself found its way to thousands of subscribers; the reader’s poll from 1954 was answered by over 3100 respondents, and that of 1957 by 5578. The editor noted that “more than half of our readers participated” (“Nederlandse *Rhythme* poll all stars”) which, if true, implies that *Rhythme* must have had about 10,000 subscribers.

Live performances by Americans were scarce between 1945 and the early-1950s. As a result, they were greeted with eager anticipation in the jazz press and were critically reviewed afterwards. In November 1949, saxophonist Sidney Bechet visited the Netherlands “under auspices of *Rhythme*.” “It will be the first time since 10 years, that a soloist of stature from the American jazz world will visit our country,” the magazine stated (“Sidney Bechet komt naar Nederland”), although trumpeter Louis Armstrong played in Rotterdam a month earlier, certainly a soloist of stature too. They were followed, among others, by Duke Ellington in 1950, Dizzy Gillespie, and the all-star line-up of Norman Granz’s *Jazz at the Philharmonic* in 1952, and Stan Kenton in 1953.

In the general press, these concerts usually received little attention, much to the chagrin of the jazz press. But an incident such as Lionel Hampton’s October 8, 1954 concert in the Apollo Hal in Amsterdam, where riotous fans tore down the interior and the floor partly collapsed under their weight, got national coverage and only fueled the prejudices of the general public. *Rhythme* sadly noted in its editorial that the audience’s behavior had damaged the reputation of jazz in the Netherlands: “Impresario Lou van Rees has cancelled the concerts of George Shearing, Gerry Mulligan and Louis Armstrong. The gentlemen of the press found something right up their alley and the already shaky reputation of jazz has been struck by a significant earthquake” (“Wansmaak”). The damage, however, was temporary, and the two foremost concert producers in the Netherlands, the aforementioned Lou van Rees, and Paul Acket, founder of the North Sea Jazz Festival in 1976, would separately stage a steady stream of concerts in the ensuing years. Among these were the famous double-concerts in the Kurhaus in Scheveningen (Den Haag) and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.³ Concerts from these “American greats” received rather mixed

3 A number of these are issued by the Nederlands Jazz Archief, including concerts by Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Lee Konitz, Zoot Sims, Sarah Vaughan, J.J. Johnson, Gerry Mulligan, Count Basie and Chet Baker.

responses—especially jazz connoisseurs could be quite critical. According to one journalist, the concert was “skilful but useless, and destined to be forgotten quickly.” “So long, Duke Ellington,” he concluded, “until the time when the ‘bebop’-nightmare is finally over” (quoted in “Duke Ellington in de Nederlandse pers”).

Despite their differences, jazz fans and musicians in the Netherlands all agreed that jazz was an inherently American music. Whether they played in traditionalist New Orleans-style outfits, in swing-bands, or in more modern bebop and cool jazz formations, Dutch musicians tried to emulate the examples from overseas. Their bands had English names (Skymasters, Sunny Boys, Atlantic Quintet, Diamond Five) and they often anglicized their own names to make them sound more international. Hence, Gerard and Arie van Rooijen changed their names to Jerry and Ack van Rooyen, Henny Frohwein became Hank Frowan, and Jos van Heuverszwin was known as Joe Hervey.

Musically, the highest achievement was to sound “international” or “on-Nederlands” (“un-Dutch”). For most Dutch critics the best players in the Netherlands, who reached that aim, could be found on four LPs recorded between 1955 and 1957: the album *Jazz from Holland*, which appeared on Bovema Records, and three volumes of *Jazz Behind the Dikes* which were recorded by Phonogram (Philips). In a review for *Rhythme*, Tony Vos, who played on *Jazz Behind the Dikes*, praised *Jazz from Holland* as follows: “It has been known a long time that our boys can compete with their American fellow-artists. Now they’ve had a chance to prove it, and they have used the opportunity... From now on, men like Chet Baker and Shorty Rogers will have to politely take off their hats for Ack [van Rooyen]” (Vos 1955, 10). There was similar praise for the first *Jazz Behind the Dikes* recordings, and *Rhythme* boasted that thanks to their “top performances,” the featured combos received international acclaim from “jazz connoisseurs on four continents” (Peter 1955, 14).

Rita Reynolds, prominently featured on the first two volumes of *Jazz Behind the Dikes*, achieved the highest acclaim possible: she recorded in New York with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Her New York “successes for radio, TV-appearances with the world’s greatest jazz musicians—‘one-niters’ in famous jazz clubs, recordings!” clearly filled the editors of *Rhythme* with great pride (“Rumoer rond Rita”). The tracks with the Jazz Messengers, issued on one side two of *The Cool Voice of Rita Reynolds*, were hailed by the magazine as “highpoints in the international record repertoire” (Kop and Voogd 1956, 31). Apart from making records that held promises of international recognition, Dutch jazz musicians at times were hired to play with touring American soloists, who often worked with local rhythm sections, since that was cheaper than flying

in American accompanists. Trios, such as those of drummer Wessel Ilcken or pianist Rob Madna, backed up visiting musicians.

But despite the enthusiastic reception of Dutch jazz records on the home front, the international impact was quite modest. Rather luke-warm reviews by the well-known American jazz critic Nat Hentoff of Reys' recording with the Jazz Messengers and later of *Jazz Behind the Dikes* in the leading American jazz magazine *Down Beat* (Hentoff 1956 and 1957), made *Rhythme* wonder in an editorial: "are our prominent musicians really so prominent?" (Kop 1957).

Notwithstanding the dedication of musicians, publicists and fans, jazz remained a marginal phenomenon. Only a small number of musicians could make a living in jazz. Some found employment with the radio orchestras in Hilversum, such as the Skymasters or the Metropole Orchestra, while others ventured out abroad, such as the brothers Van Rooyen and Rob Pronk. They would have successful careers in Germany.

Still, Dutch record companies were hardly interested in jazz, and the jazz press, with *Rhythme* as largest publication, remained small, while the regular press largely ignored jazz. Furthermore, new musical genres were competing with jazz for popularity. In January 1958 *Rhythme* celebrated its 100th issue, with Rita Reys on the cover. But the sign that the times were changing was in the final pages. We get "daily phone calls" and "uncountable stacks of letters ... from *Rhythme*-gals [asking] for an exclusive pic of Pat in their favorite magazine" read the byline under a publicity shot of pop star Pat Boone, not a jazz singer by any standards ("Pat Boone!"). Ten months later, Perry Como graced the cover, followed by Frank Sinatra (March 1960), Caterina Valente (May 1960), Harry Belafonte (June 1960), and Doris Day (August 1960). In September 1961 the magazine folded. In an article titled "Farewell blues" the editors explained that *Rhythme* was doing well for a jazz magazine, but that its figures nevertheless paled in comparison to those of other publications. "In the past months circulation has dropped to such a degree that it is commercially no longer viable to see *Rhythme* to its 13th year" (Kop and Voogd 1961, 3). Dozens of the once so popular jazz and rhythm clubs followed suit, and folded in the early 1960s.

Against all odds, a new jazz magazine called *Jazzwereld* was launched in 1965. In an editorial Anton Kop warned that Europeans should not overestimate their role in the making of jazz, and understand that "jazz is an American music, which *completely* evolved in America. ALL new genres developed in America, and Americans are the leading figures. Such was the case in 1920, and in this respect nothing has changed in 1965" (*Jazzwereld* 1–2: 3; emphasis in original). His position was representative for the generation of jazz fans and musicians who had been in their early to mid-teens by the end of the

Second World War, and who had wholeheartedly embraced American jazz. By contrast, the baby-boomers, who had been born between 1945 and 1955, and hit adolescence in the early 1960s, had a different perspective. They felt that American jazz had become stagnant, as had its largely imitative Dutch variety. In addition, they grew increasingly troubled by American politics and ideologies, both at home (civil rights) and abroad (Vietnam). Young jazz musicians, including pianist-composer Misha Mengelberg, drummer Han Bennink, and reed player-composer Willem Breuker, started to move away from the American models. To mark their independence, they dropped the word jazz, to replace it with the term *improvisatiemuziek* (improvisation music).

The jazz establishment was confronted head-on with this new high-energy music at the competition at the Loosdrecht Jazz Festival, a pretty mainstream affair in the boathouse of yacht harbor Van Dijk (Oud-Loosdrecht). Willem Breuker premiered a radical piece titled *Litanie voor de 14e juni* (*Litany for the 14th of June*). The work was a response to the death of construction worker Jan Weggelaar, who had died during riots in Amsterdam, known as the *Bouwwakkersrellen* (1966). It consisted of a recitation from newspaper articles over noisy, free improvised music. The work deeply divided jury and audience. Breuker received the second prize, but more importantly, *Litanie* made it clear that the times of politely swinging jazz music were over.

In the Netherlands, like elsewhere, there were confrontations between the authorities and different groups in society who sought to alter established structures. The liner notes to Breuker's record *Contemporary Jazz from Holland* explicitly stated the relation between these movements and the new jazz: "Jazz had to throw off the shackles of conventional swing. This liberation is closely connected to parallel developments in other forms of art and social life" (Bunders 1966). In keeping with the social movements of the 1960s, these Dutch jazz musicians questioned capitalist and centralized models of cultural production, as exemplified by record companies, booking agencies and concert halls, and tried to come up with alternative strategies. They established independent, non-commercial, self-supportive forms of production such as the ICP record label (1966), or Willem Breuker's BVHaast (1974). Through these companies, they recorded, designed, produced and distributed their own records. In addition, musicians formed new professional organizations, such as the "Beroepsvereniging van Improviserende Musici" (BIM), the "Union of Improvising Musicians." To have a home for their music, the BIM members launched their own podium for improvised music, the Bimhuis, which continues to be one of the leading jazz venues in Europe, with year-round jazz programming.

The avant-garde subscribed to new mythologies that gradually and partly replaced old ones. Like the broader Sixties movement, they questioned authoritarian power structures in society, which were rooted in the church (both Protestant and Roman-Catholic), challenged middle-class ideologies, and sought to replace conventional thought with ideas rooted in the counter-culture. But below the surface, the new jazzers quietly subscribed to older values: they were well-organized and invested in long-standing relationships with local and national politics. While they positioned themselves as free and independent artists, Dutch impro-musicians became heavily dependent on government funding. Paradoxically, they viewed themselves as non-commercial, that is, not answering to market demands, but now, the very government that supported them functioned as their new market. At any rate, they were quite successful: the Willem Breuker Kollektief, for instance, was supported by public funds for thirty-five years.

In their music, improvising musicians increasingly emphasized their Dutchness. One obvious way to do this was to use Dutch titles for their works, as exemplified by recordings on ICP, the label founded by Misha Mengelberg and Han Bennink. This constituted a break with the earlier practice to be “international.” LP titles such as *Een Mirakelse Tocht* (A Miraculous Trip, ICP 013), or the onomatopoeic *Tetterettet* (ICP 020), and compositions such as *Met Welbeleefde Groet van de Kameel* (With Sincerest Regards from the Camel) and *Enkele Regels in de Dierentuin* (Some Rules in the Zoo), displayed a playfulness that was one of the hallmarks of the new genre. The record covers of ICP 005 and 007/008 show typical Dutch post-war middle-class row houses and a community garden. Often, compositions conjured up places in the Netherlands, such as Breuker's *Jordaan Waltz*, or referred to local political events, such as his *Litanie* or his *Maagdenhuis 1969*, which commemorated the student protests (BVHaast CD0301). Breuker also used sonic markers of Dutchness by writing for street organs and church carillons. His experimental *Lunchconcert voor Drie Draaiorgels* premiered on three barrel organs on the Dam square in 1967, to an audience of bewildered bystanders.

Over the course of the late 1960s, jazz and improvised music in the Netherlands found new confidence. A comparison of *Jazzwereld's* earlier modest stance (“jazz is an American music”) with drummer Han Bennink's remarks in the same magazine, five years later, bears that out. Under the heading “[Archie] Shepp, [Pharoah] Sanders, [Albert] Ayler, [Sunny] Murray, it's enough to make one cry,” he stated that,

[the American avant-garde] has stopped progressing since 1964. No, even worse: it has gone downhill. You know what is crazy? I've read that there

are jazz-excursions from the Netherlands to America. There's no need for that, as far as I'm concerned. Those trips go the wrong way. They should have trips for Americans, to come our way!... There is no American avant-garde. There is no European scene either. Believe me, currently the best music can be heard in the Netherlands. (*Jazzwereld* 30: 18-19)

Gradually, an understanding grew that there was—or rather had to be—something specifically Dutch in improvised music from the Netherlands. In 1978, Journalist Bert Vuijsje somewhat infelicitously applied the term *Hollandse School* (Dutch School) to the new Dutch jazz scene that had developed in the 1960s; a label hitherto reserved for the Dutch painting masters from the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Jan Steen, Johannes Vermeer, Frans Hals and Rembrandt van Rijn. One of the key elements of the jazz-version of the *Hollandse School* was an anti-establishment attitude. It translated into absurdity and irony, the rejection of any sentimentality, and an ever-present tongue-in-cheek attitude, which often played with audience expectations. Among the musical techniques employed were a deliberate merging of composition and guided or free improvisation, hard-cut edits and collage, and an eclectic mixing of musical genres, as exemplified in most of Mengelberg's compositions. Furthermore, many Dutch impro musicians tended to use theatrical elements in their performances, as typified by Mengelberg's *Met Welbeleefde Groet van de Kameel*, which calls for some on-stage woodworking. The piece involves noisily sawing up a wooden chair and re-assembling it in the shape of a camel while the music continues—such Fluxus-type performances are among Mengelberg's trademarks (see Adlington 2013, *passim*; and Schuiling 2014, *passim*).

Those in favor of the new improvisation music, and others who hung on to the American examples of swing, bebop, cool, and hard bop, disagreed bitterly about the nature of the music. Rita Reys recalled how her husband, the piano player Pim Jacobs, and his brother, the bassist Ruud Jacobs hated the local avant-garde: “The rise of Willem Breuker was something that Pim couldn't handle. He thought it was horrible ... you like [that music] or you don't—we didn't. We didn't understand it at all” (Reys and Vuijsje 2004, 187). Part of the frustration centered around money: “The difference between us and people like Willem Breuker en Misha Mengelberg is that we never received a single penny of government support. We have done it all by ourselves, and I'm quite proud of that. With all the subsidies they [Breuker *et al*] received, they didn't get that far” (*ibid.*) The deep divide that separated jazz practitioners and aficionados in the Netherlands (commonly referred to as *richtingenstrijd*, or polarization), would gradually close, as younger generations were less invested in it.

The anti-bourgeois, non-conformist, and egalitarian ideas subscribed to by the avant-garde were central to new myths of Dutchness, as expressed in the 1980s by the so-called *Hollanditis*, when hundreds of thousands marched peacefully against nuclear arms and for peace in Amsterdam and The Hague. Another example may be found in the 1995 Postbank TV-commercial which introduced the hit song *15 Miljoen Mensen* (fifteen million people, the country's population in the 1990s). It shows Netherlanders as a carefree, fun-loving and at times unruly people, who picnic next to a "don't walk on the grass" sign. Later in the clip, two young girls grab the cap of a police officer and laugh at him, while the song informs the viewers that one can't impose rules on the Dutch. Remarkably, the commercial was for the largest bank of the Netherlands, which until 1986 had been government-owned: apparently even such respectable institutions now identified with this new Dutch identity.

In the decades that followed the Second World War in the Netherlands, the perspectives on jazz changed dramatically, from the music of the American liberators to a music that only could retain its validity if it were separated from its American models. In the process it lost much of its fan-base. Although the music mattered tremendously to the Dutch jazz community at large—fans, musicians, journalists, critics, agents and the like—jazz remained a marginal sub-culture, either despised or largely ignored by the cultural establishment. Before long, genres such as beat music and rock and roll were much more popular and commercially viable. Nevertheless, because of the often heated debates that surrounded the music, jazz provides valuable insights in how the Netherlands changed, how its people dealt with those changes, and how the Dutch viewed themselves.

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Sounds of Freedom, Cosmopolitan Democracy, and Shifting Cultural Politics: From “The Jazz Ambassador Tours” to “The Rhythm Road”

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Music is a powerful global player, as it traverses national and continental boundaries faster than any other art form. It moves within transnational economic, cultural, and political circuits and forms an important asset of translocal and global community-building. Music has also remained linked to visions of change, liberation, and even revolution. We may think of the reputation of jazz as a liberating force in the Cold War period, of the Cuban Nueva Trova as a reflection of the ideals of the Cuban Revolution, or of soul and funk as an expression of change for African American and Afro-Latino cultures in the 1960s and 1970s (Moore 2014, 93–94). Certainly music’s utopian potential should not be overestimated but its political significance has been recognized by governmental institutions and grassroots movements alike. In U.S. government-sponsored programs such as The Jazz Ambassador tours and The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad, music as a political messenger is mobilized from above; political power structures with national interests in global politics guide the funding and distribution of “American” musical expression cross-culturally. Both projects emerged in moments of national crisis: The Jazz Ambassador program was launched as a response to anti-Americanism(s) during the Cold War Period whereas The Rhythm Road project represents a follow-up response to the global image loss of the U.S. during the Bush Administration after September 11. Both programs build on black music’s multifaceted heritage as the sound of freedom.

I take a look at these programs through the dialectics of what I call “sonic cosmopolitics” from above and from below. By using sonic cosmopolitics as an umbrella term to describe the transnational music flows I am conceptually less concerned with what Daphne Brooks in reference to the legendary African American entertainers Nina Simone and Eartha Kitt calls “sonic cosmopolitanism” which she defines as the expression of their voices which create “the very sound of ‘the worldly’ and the limitless traveler” (Brooks 2011, 113). Rather, I explore the politicization of music as a translocal and global community-building force. As I argue, the above music projects partake in larger processes

of democratizing the world within and beyond Western liberalist meaning. Recent discourse on cosmopolitanism proposes a more open-minded view of cosmopolitan thought which steps into dialogue with other visions surrounding the term. With a nod to critics like Appiah I use “sonic cosmopolitics” to challenge both elitist and purely universalistic notions of the term cosmopolitanism and argue for ‘cosmopolitanism from *below*’ as an alternative to ‘cosmopolitanism from *above*.’ According to Amanda Anderson:

Cosmopolitanism ... typically manifests a complex tension between elitism and egalitarianism. It frequently advances itself as a specifically intellectual ideal, or depends on a mobility that is the luxury of social, economic, or cultural privilege.... At the same time, the cosmopolitan identification with the larger sphere of the world, or with humanity, or with standards assumed to transcend any locale, is ostensibly inspired by the deep-seated belief in the humanity of all, wherever positioned. (Anderson 1998, 268)

I would like to add that conceiving cosmopolitanism from a ‘*below*’ perspective makes room for contradictions, dynamics, conflicts as well as changes and encourages dialogue not only among different conceptions of cosmopolitanism as a philosophical world view and a political project but also about different ideas about the cosmopolitan individual and his or her cosmopolitan disposition(s) or political engagement beyond a local and national level. “Cosmopolitan democracy,” according to Danielle Archibugi, “helps to capture the idea that the international order is becoming increasingly democratic in the sense that there are many chains of negotiation, multilevel and multi-sited interconnections among population segments, and the expansion of many kinds of exchanges” (Blau 2001, 64). Such conviction clearly opposes ideas of imperialist forms of globalization present in various political, economic, military as well as cultural discourses. Perhaps torn between utopian belief and dystopian disenchantment it is illuminating to investigate what role “sonic cosmopolitics” occupy in this context.

Both The Jazz Ambassador tours and The Rhythm Road project builds on jazz as a core expression of U.S. American culture. They differ not only in historical context, though. Whereas the Jazz Ambassador program elected jazz musicians of international fame as its messengers to diffuse U.S. American music globally, The Rhythm Road project selects and promotes new and largely unknown artists. While the Jazz Ambassador program appears a clear top-down endeavor, the Rhythm Road project, despite its government affiliation, intensively borrows elements from contemporary grassroots politics of community-building through music. Hence, I want to address the Jazz Ambassador tours and the

Rhythm Road project within a larger framework of transnational music flows. Through the critical lens of sonic cosmopolitics from above and from below this also involves a reflection about how musicians, performers and artists as global actors position themselves in respect to the institutional body of a government sponsored program. The latter promotes but also selects and controls. Presented as national artists and the nation's cultural ambassadors, the musicians are at times conflicted in simultaneously having to deal with the diffusion of national cultural heritage on the one hand, and with imaginaries of belonging beyond nationscapes on the other.

At first glance, The Jazz Ambassador tours and The Rhythm Road project may look like unilateral and one-directional music flows. The U.S.-American musicians involved, however, have also entered into aesthetic, personal and political dialogues with local musicians, local communities and local representatives in their host countries. Musicians have been sent out but they have also returned with new cultural impressions and with an insight into new musical traditions. We may think of Dizzy Gillespie's insertion of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Latin elements in bebop as a striking example expressing an inter-American dialogue within the Jazz Ambassador tours' mission. By studying the transversal dimension of flows we encounter more complex patterns of circuits, circulations, and exchanges than broader conceptualizations such as globalization-as-Americanization and the Latinization of U.S. America have suggested. Both pursue a more unilateral and unidirectional approach to the mobility of goods, ideas, and people. For instance, Ruth Oldenziel explains:

There is now a broad consensus that Americanization refers to a cultural transformation that has only in part to do with the American nation-state and U.S. based multinationals, but often marks a semiotic sign floating outside its geographical bounds. America in this sense represents a kind of offshore America, constructed outside the U.S., called America. (Oldenziel 2007, 86)

She later sums up that "in short, both in the popular imagination as in conventional scholarship, American power is considered beyond geography: spaceless yet everywhere at the same time" (Oldenziel 2007, 90). The omnipresence of the signifier, however, suggests a center from which all flows emerge and does not take aspects of relations, reciprocity or exchange into consideration. With regard to the Latinization of U.S. American culture, studies like John Storm Roberts' *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States* (1999) provide intriguing insights

into the cultural flows from the South into the North and their impact on popular music forms in the United States. According to Roberts, “virtually all of the major popular forms—Tin Pan Alley, stage and film music, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, country music, rock have been affected throughout their development by idioms of Brazil, Cuba, or Mexico” (Roberts 1999, ix). Tracing back the musical flows to the late nineteenth century, Roberts maintains: “Aside from the successive specifically Latin styles that have swept the country ever since the late-19th-century habanera, both Latin-Caribbean and Mexican idioms have become indigenous to the United States through Puerto Rico and the Chicano Southwest” (Roberts 1999, ix). While drawing upon conceptualizations of agency and flows in their respective argumentations neither Oldenziel nor Roberts include the transversal nature of flows frequently present in global circuits and so essential for the emergence and development of jazz.

Jazz, which is the cultural and musical backbone of both The Jazz Ambassador tours and The Rhythm Road project, is a seemingly ever-transforming musical form that has emerged out of multiple flows and contact zones of musical traditions. Jazz’s complex translation of collective expression and individual voices provided a master trope to propagate U.S. American culture as democratic, egalitarian and individual. Especially during the Cold War period music in the form of jazz gained recognition as the sound of freedom. And jazz remains strongly connected to other black musical expressions that have continued to play a pivotal role at the intersection of democratic aesthetics and politics of liberation. Against the historical background of the tumultuous 1960s and early 1970s, when the Civil Rights and the Black Power movements not only shook the foundations of white supremacy in the United States but advanced anticolonial black struggles throughout the Americas and other parts of the globe, musical expression reached another height of spreading political messages. Referring to the diffusion of black cultures and politics during that epoch, Thomas Fawcett writes about new identitarian links between African American and Afro groups throughout Latin America and the Caribbean that travel via music—funk and soul—in particular:

[...] the globality of soul and funk music [...] shows that music can create linkages between distinct groups of the African diaspora. [...] Soul and funk music linked distinct communities of the diaspora despite the potential barriers of linguistic and cultural differences. Fans and musicians alike adopted elements of the soul aesthetic – such as the afro hair-style – in a show of solidarity and as an implicit protest against the status quo. (Fawcett 2007, 24)

Funk and soul started as sonic cosmopolitics from below, and were later adopted and diffused through global music markets. Commenting upon black musical expression in the Americas, Roger D. Abrahams reminds us that

Not that these black expressive forms are not associated with specific places: the Cuban Habanera, the Samba of Rio, Reggae and Kingston, the Mississippi blues. But these are also recognizably vernacular inventions that achieved a place in the transnational entertainment industry rather than providing the kind of cultural reflexivity that leads to the formation of a patria. (Abrahams 2001, 99)

What Abrahams suggests here is the diffusion of a larger black imaginary in market circles beyond the boundaries of nation-states. As he concludes, “These musics, and the peoples identifying themselves through them, knit together the entire region, even as they advertise local cultural invention to worldwide popular audiences (Abrahams 2001, 100). What emerges is a vision of black Americas far beyond the US South: “It is a region which not only includes the Caribbean and the U.S. South, but many coastal outposts in South America on both the north, east, and west coasts, and many areas of the latifundium of Central America, including Mexico, Belize, and Costa Rica” (Abrahams 2001, 100).

Describing the impact of funk and soul on black liberation throughout the Americas, William L. Van Deburg in *New Day in Babylon*, states that

Transcending the medium of entertainment, soul music provided a ritual in song with which blacks could identify and through which they could convey important in-group symbols. Music was power and considered to be supremely relevant to the protracted struggle of black people for liberation. To some it was the poetry of the black revolution. (Van Deburg 1992, 205)

Soul songs such as “To Be Young, Gifted, and Black” by Nina Simone, “We Got More Soul” by Dyke and the Blazers and in particular “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud)” by James Brown turned into hymns for the struggle of black liberation throughout the Americas and other sections of the globe concerned with anti-colonial struggles.

With such a strong presence of black music in the realm of political struggle it comes as no surprise that jazz keeps on nourishing cultural politics, albeit now more from above than below, after having become America’s classical music. The U.S.-sponsored Jazz Ambassador tours to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia launched in the 1950s during the Cold War period, and the contemporary The

Rhythm Road project launched in 2005 by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs represent programs of musical mobility and cultural diplomacy organized and sponsored by governmental institutions. While the Rhythm Road project, the second State Department program in music diplomacy now run by Jazz at Lincoln Center was in full swing, the Meridian International Center in Washington, DC inaugurated the photographic exhibition *Jam Session: America's Jazz Ambassadors Embrace the World* in April 2008 to look back and honor jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington among others for their cultural work as jazz ambassadors during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. As Curtis Sandberg reminds us,

Developed in collaboration with University of Michigan professor Penny M. von Eschen and drawn from collections around the United States, the presentation brought together for the first time in history more than 100 images capturing memorable scenes from jazz tours to 35 countries and four continents. (Sandberg 2008)

The traveling exhibition has functioned as a mobile archive to commemorate the jazz tours that started with Dizzy Gillespie's and his orchestra's engagement as jazz ambassadors playing in Latin America and being sent to Southern Europe and the Middle East in 1956 by the State Department and the Eisenhower Administration. The tour involved meetings with governmental representatives, local communities as well as artists and was designed to spread the gospel of American freedom and democracy as a counterforce to Soviet communism during the Cold War period. Other musicians were to follow such as Benny Goodman and his band who traveled to East Asia in 1958; the Dave Brubeck Quartet which toured Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia; Louis Armstrong and the All Stars who hit the front pages of newspapers around the world and played numerous concerts in Africa in 1960 and 1961, with Armstrong being celebrated as a black cultural and political voice by African communities and politicians alike; and the Duke Ellington Orchestra which crisscrossed the Middle East and South Asia in 1963—a tour that marked the beginning of a decade of journeys for one of the most influential jazz composers and bandleaders of the twentieth century. These mobile and musical forms of cultural diplomacy initiatives continued under the direction of the State Department until 1978, and numerous jazz musicians, including Miles Davis, Clark Terry, and Sarah Vaughan performed on a global scale as cultural ambassadors and musicians alike.

At their very base of the Jazz Ambassador and the Rhythm Road projects is an actor network based on a vertical top-down strategy. Put simply, government officials set the political agenda and government-sponsored cultural workers

become the mediators between government officials and the musicians sponsored for touring. The overall aim is to produce political influence through cultural contact. Both projects launched on State Department initiatives have aimed at celebrating U.S. American cultural production as a means of establishing a positive influence or better connections in regions and countries in the world that have had skeptical, critical or even antagonistic attitudes towards U.S. American foreign policies; the latter are often considered part of “empire building” to borrow a term from Amy Kaplan. But while race and colonialist politics marked the framework of the Jazz Ambassador programs especially in the 1950s and 60s, it seems that cultural conflicts fueled by Samuel Huntington’s notion of the clash of civilizations (Huntington 1996, 192 and 273) and the Bush Administration’s global war against terror provides the political context for the contemporary *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* project to improve U.S. America’s public image abroad in the aftermath of the Iraq War. In the case of *The Rhythm Road* a stronger notion of participatory culture appears at the core of the endeavor. Intentionally or not it seems to foster a more egalitarian approach to cultural difference and diplomacy.

Both projects embody a variety of tensions and contradictions at work in the entanglement of music with politics. We may ask ourselves, for instance, how President Eisenhower in the 1950s could hold on to segregationist politics at home and put jazz and African American jazz musicians on a pedestal as cultural ambassadors at the same time. How did jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie cope with the paradoxes of being part of a discriminated racial group on the one hand, and internationally acclaimed and celebrated musicians on the other? For Armstrong and Gillespie spreading the American gospel of democracy and freedom on a global scale was certainly closely linked to the struggle against black oppression within U.S. society. It seems that the global recognition of their musical talent provided them with the additional strength needed to face the paradoxes and controversies involved in being a black musical ambassador in the realm of international politics run by white U.S. hegemony. Even more significant it appears that they could resort to the rhetoric of black liberationist movements steadily gaining strength and visibility within and beyond the United States.

In the late 1950s and the turbulent 1960s the black freedom struggle had moved to the center of American domestic and international politics, and the global appeal of jazz music as an art form manifested in the successes of Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong and others, had put African American musicians in the spotlight of attention. The global appeal of jazz was due on the one hand to the individual talent and presence of Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie, but jazz had also already established itself as syncretic art form emerging out of

multicultural cross-overs and continued to do so (for instance, Dizzy Gillespie's fusion of Latin American rhythms with earlier jazz forms or Miles Davis' fusions of jazz and rock). Hence, jazz as musical expression sonically embodied the continuous process of crossing, bridging, and negotiating cultures.

While government officials, cultural workers, and the press may not have been aware of jazz's multicultural complexity, the success of jazz tours by Armstrong, Ellington, and Gillespie in Europe had provided sufficient evidence that the music had the ingredients to 'cross national boundaries.' As Daniel Stein reminds us:

In the mid-1950s, Armstrong became known as Ambassador Satchmo, a public figure that afforded him a new political platform. The primary function of jazz ambassadors was to present themselves and their music on international tours sponsored by the State Department with the objective of exporting a democratic image of America into regions of the world in which the Soviet Union sought political influence. (Stein 2012, 231)

Looking at Louis Armstrong's involvement in the Jazz Ambassador tour as a case study helps us shed more light on the complexity behind the politics of liberation. Historically, the struggle for civil rights in the U.S. coincides with African colonial independence movements in the 1950 and 1960s. Armstrong's involvement is equally multifaceted; he continuously repositioned himself as New-Orleans based black musician, African American spokesperson, critical commentator, and as a political entertainer—a shifting of roles that led to divergent views on Armstrong ranging from musical genius to African celebrity to Uncle Tom entertainer. It is important to remember that Armstrong's performances took place within the larger framework of the state-sponsored politics of liberation which were politically, economically, and culturally motivated. Democracy, free trade, and individual freedom and expression fused into a package of 'feel good' foreign diplomacy. However, the politics of liberation were complicated by a number of factors. The most important of these was that the racist internal politics within the U.S. contrasted sharply with the official support of black independence movements on the African continent. Jazz ambassadors like Armstrong and Brubeck themselves lyrically and musically mocked that "No commodity is quite so strange as this thing called cultural exchange" (Von Eschen 2004, 81), and repeatedly revealed the ambiguities, contradictions, and bigotry within the State Department's mission of spreading the U.S. American gospel of democracy through jazz, thus exposing the tensions within the actor network. The State Department adopted views

of jazz as the sound of individual freedom and social equality, an attitude that could easily be supported through references to the earlier rejection of jazz by totalitarian regimes in Germany, Russia, and Spain as a threat to state order and discipline. But for musicians such as Armstrong, the politics of liberation involved more complex issues having to do with racial exclusion at home, demeaning roles in film, dependency on the pressures of sponsoring (Pepsi Cola) and attacks by black radical intellectuals. Hence for Armstrong his music became politicized through contextualization and he wavered between the outspoken enraged African American citizen and the success-oriented popular music genius and entertainer. In projects like the Real Ambassadors he successfully synthesizes the political agent with the musical genius. As Penny Von Eschen reminds us:

The collaboration in the Real Ambassadors (a jazz musical revue and collaboration between the Brubecks and Armstrong performed to critical acclaim at the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1962) offered Armstrong material that was closer to his own sensibility and outlook. And while Armstrong had often managed to rise above racist material by the sheer force of his artistry, the production allowed him a chance to make a statement about a life-long struggle for control over his own representation.... For Armstrong, freedom remained an aspiration, not an achievement. (Von Eschen 2004, 89)

The Real Ambassador revue at the Monterey jazz festival took place during the most turbulent period of the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s and managed to express the often very complex and contradictory politics of the State Department tours “at the intersection of the Cold War, African and Asian nation-building, and the U.S. civil rights struggle” (Von Eschen 2004, 79). The tours were further complicated by shifting alliances and tensions between the cultural workers of the foreign-service personnel and the musicians on tour such as Dizzy Gillespie, the Brubecks, and Louis Armstrong; while some cultural workers shared the musicians’ mission of music as a form of bridging cultures, nations, and races, others shared the racial views of President Eisenhower and his segregationist allies (cf. Von Eschen 2004, 80). For Armstrong, the situation demanded a constant repositioning of himself as a political agent from public to private. As Daniel Stein rightly points out:

Armstrong’s at times superficial disengagement from political action—‘his professed unwillingness to dive into politics’—is counteracted further by the stories he repeatedly told about his experience with racial

segregation, which usually ended with the affirmation of his music's power to reach across the racial divide. (Stein 2012, 245)

Hence, Armstrong's cosmopolitics emerge at the intersection of storyteller, public political figure (whose role was sometimes celebrated and then again denied) and musical genius. It is the autobiographical mode that became his primary political tool while the music remained the central cathartic and liberating expression for the private and the public self of Armstrong. His role as a musical ambassador also demonstrated that popular music, throughout its history, has negated clear dividing lines and, in addition, has repeatedly proven capable of transforming itself despite its entanglement in mass and commodity culture. Clearly, Armstrong, Ellington, and Gillespie had star cult status at the time they embarked on their tours as jazz ambassadors and this allowed them to raise their individual and at times dissident voices to foster their idiosyncratic understanding of community building.

Since Armstrong already added critical voices from below to a top-down cultural diplomacy program, we may ask ourselves in which ways sonic cosmopolitics from below are different from government sponsored programs. As the following section of this chapter intends to demonstrate, the Rhythm Road project embraces strategies of participatory culture fully. In its use of the music as a community-building force the Rhythm Road projects also resembles contemporary grassroots music movements. In recent years the conception of music as the sound of freedom has moved far beyond African American cultural contexts. The use of music in the context of contemporary translocal, transethnic, and transnational grassroots movements has adopted the notion of music as a liberating and a bonding force. Frequently this goes hand in hand with an explicit inclusion of the audience in the act of performance. Musical grassroots movements like the *Fandango Sin Fronteras* and *The Pleasant Revolution Tour* by the Ginger Ninjas are participatory networks and are part of what critics like David F. García and Arjun Appadurai classify as *flows* or *scapes* in times of heightened globalization (cf. García 2006, 95–107; Appadurai 1996, 25 ff.). They embody crossovers of music, musical heritage awareness as well as local *and* translocal community politics. These movements call in remembrance earlier African American models, arise out of the midst of grassroots contexts, and aim at creating and spreading new alternative forms of community building: from the people for the people.

The *Fandango Sin Fronteras* movement draws upon a restoration policy developed by *El Nuevo Movimiento Jaranero* in the mid-1970s to decolonize the state identity politics of the Mexican government by re-emphasizing the multicultural ingredients of the musical tradition and by reviving the participatory

and improvisational elements in the fandango praxis of rural communities (Gonzalez 2011, 63). Its decolonial outlook attempts to free fandango music from such stifling labels as state, regional, and national cultural heritage and to revive a participatory and horizontal spirit that takes away the boundaries between performer and audience, and between professional musicians and amateurs, making participatory culture a central strategy of musical performance and social network building. To link this newly regained praxis to Chicano/a communities in the United States music groups such as Quetzal from Los Angeles, Mono Blanco from the port of Veracruz, and Son de Madera from Xalapa initiated transnational collaborations at the beginning of the New Millennium. In the meantime fandango has travelled to various urban centers and Latina/o communities in the United States and Canada and has created new networks of *convivencia* (the Latina/o notion of community and coexistence) by means of a participatory music culture. The musicians and community activists involved in *Fandango Sin Fronteras* frequently travel back and forth between various locations, have roots and contacts at different sites and build networks on translocal as well as transnational scales. Communal and cultural centers in Xalapa, Santa Ana, and Seattle are representative sites of network-building and nodal points of transit for musicians and activists alike.

A similar inter-American outreach characterizes the ecopolitical projects of the rock fusion band Ginger Ninjas. As depicted in Sergio Morin's documentary film, *The Ginger Ninjas Rodando México*, in 2007 the band travelled from California to Palenque, Mexico in one of their tours as part of a larger ecopolitical project called The Pleasant Revolution Tour. The fact that they transported all instruments and amplifiers by bike set their form of traveling succinctly apart from exclusively elite or aesthetic notions of touring the world, often characterized by class privilege and the ability to travel and 'consume' the cultures of the world. Their major conceptual frame is the synthesis of alternative forms of mobility with music and audience interaction to promote new translocal communities and networks. They reclaim public spaces for community politics and use places like *plazas* and beaches for public performances. The Ginger Ninjas' *The Pleasant Revolution Tour* aims at bridging the gap between musicians and audience, between art and life, by getting the audience "on bike" as well and actually integrating them in the process of energy production for the amplification of the band's instruments. Their musical live performance style affirms that "for many critics, fans, and musicians," according to Roy Shuker, "there is a perceived hierarchy of live performances, with a marked tendency to equate the audiences' physical proximity to the actual 'performance' and intimacy with the performer(s) with a more authentic and satisfying musical experience" (Shuker 2012, 201). During their gigs in Chapala,

Guadalajara, Morelia, and other locations, the Ginger Ninjas set out to connect California-style ecological awareness with the rapidly growing Mexican movement of *ciclismo* in order to create a transnational ecological or if you want “ecocosmopolitan” awareness of finding new ways of encountering the other within and outside your community.

The Rhythm Road concept, then, while directed by the State Department, clearly aligns itself more consciously with these grassroots egalitarian approaches to mobilize music from the people for the people. Quite different from the elitist approach of The Jazz Ambassador tours to send world famous musicians abroad, The Rhythm Road does not select musicians and performers of a star-cult status but allows younger musicians to apply and go through a selection process. The program annually sends 10 bands (mainly jazz, some hip-hop, all of which audition for the gig) to more than 50 countries. Also, the politics of cultural exchange seem to have changed and become more dialogical. Whether this is a sign of revised diplomacy or a corrected politics of empire remains to be answered. The emphasis is now on dialogue; frequently musicians do not only export music made in America but attempt to adapt to the musical cultures of the regions and nations visited. As an official report declares:

Before the bass player Ari Roland went to Turkmenistan last year, he learned some Turkmen folk songs. His band played jazz improvisations of these songs with local musicians—the first time such mixing had been allowed—and a 15-minute news report about the concert ran on state television several times the next day. (Kaplan 2008)

While building on strategies of the Jazz Ambassador tours, the new program embraces a more horizontal approach to cultural dialogue. Rather than presenting huge concerts, musicians are expected to learn local traditions, to appear on local television and radio shows, to host workshops with local musicians and students, and to conduct concerts at schools and communities (“U.S. Embassy Presents” 2009). As the webpage of the Dictionary of Cultural Diplomacy has it, “Rhythm Road represents the new generation of musical ambassadors; reaching beyond concert halls to interact with other musicians and citizens around the globe” (“The Rhythm Road” 2014). It is designed to foster intercultural dialogue, overcome negative images and counteract stereotypes. Moreover, the promotion of the actual aesthetic experience of creating music together has helped the program to push the collaboration of artists from the United States with peoples and audiences from Africa, Asia and South America. As the Dictionary of Cultural Diplomacy has it: “Although an overt

act of Cultural Diplomacy sponsored at the state level, Rhythm Road promotes real grassroots interaction between US musicians and peoples of the world, promoting a spirit of cooperation, friendship, creativity and peace" ("The Rhythm Road" 2014).

In conclusion, I share with Josh Kun that:

Popular music is one of our most valuable tools for understanding the impact of nationalism and citizenship on the formation of our individual identities.... [I]t is also one of our most valuable sites for witnessing the performance of racial and ethnic difference against the grain of national citizenships that work to silence and erase those differences. (Kun 2005, 11)

What jazz—the phenomenon at the core of The Jazz Ambassador tours and The Rhythm Road—stands for is a complicated process of cultural recognition and resistance that accompanies the history of black music throughout the Americas. When the Jazz Ambassador tours started, jazz had just emancipated itself from connotations of 'jungle' music. Embodied today by the status of Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Performance Center, jazz has become America's classical music and has achieved elitist status.

The Jazz Ambassador tours could already build on jazz music's popularity on a global scale to turn it into a strategic tool for spreading the U.S. American gospel of freedom and democracy. Likewise, the musicians invited and sometimes also pushed by their music agents to participate in the Jazz Ambassador tours, had reached stardom long before they toured. While many of the jazz tunes presented had already hit the charts, the musicians' involvement in the tours certainly enhanced their record companies' sales. Music as cultural capital lent itself successfully to a promotion track of U.S. American cultural achievement. A fruitful synthesis of political impact and market success characterized the top-down program. Beneath the official success story, however, the internal conflicts between the at times outspoken and dissident jazz musicians, the government officials, and the civil right mediators reflected severe ruptures within the program; Louis Armstrong's critique of domestic racial policy, so sharply in contrast with the global gospel of freedom, is just one example. The official political mission then was to achieve geocultural primacy by spreading "American" music, conceived as a national or nationalistic expression. The jazz ambassadors had to walk the tightrope between transcultural musical expression and the role of national ambassador. Indeed, as Penny Von Eschen points out, "the goodwill ambassadors' understanding of jazz as an international music complicates

the characterization of jazz as ‘America’s music’—a label used by Willis Conover and others who have subscribed to the view that jazz won the Cold War” (Von Eschen 2004, 250). It would be reductive to talk about jazz as the ‘soundtrack of American Empire’ or the ‘music of freedom’ in a unilateral one-directional way. Rather, as Penny von Eschen emphasizes:

For these musicians, jazz was an international and hybrid music combining not just American and European forms, but forms that had developed out of an earlier mode of cultural exchange, through the circuitous routes of the Atlantic slave trade and the “overlapping diasporas” created by migrations throughout the Americas. And if the U.S. State Department had facilitated the music’s transnational routes of innovation and improvisation, for many musicians there was a certain poetic justice in that. (Von Eschen 2004, 250)

What psychological, cultural, and political forms of liberation The Jazz Ambassador tours may have culturally and sonically succeeded in achieving is hard to tell, but they certainly have helped free blackness from low culture and jazz from the label ‘American’ as monolithic and national confinement by constantly reshuffling its African, Latin American, North American, European multicultural backbones and giving voice and sound to a process of transcultural transformation within the Americas and beyond. Clearly, Fandango Sin Fronteras as well as The Pleasant Revolution Tour today aim at creating transnational diaspora communities and transnational ecological communities respectively and do so primarily from grassroots agendas, whereas musicians involved in The Jazz Ambassador tours and The Rhythm Road never have lost touch with U.S. cultural diplomacy interests completely (even if the individual artists and musicians may hold dissident views themselves). But as the new directions taken within the framework of The Rhythm Road show, grassroots politics and participatory cultures have gained more profound access to the realm of cultural diplomacy as well. Let us hope that this may lead to a more cosmopolitan understanding of democracy as well.

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PART 3

Transnational Re-Locations



Marching Towards Kullman's Diner: Performing Transnational American Sites (of Memory) in Bavaria

Birgit M. Bauridl

Introduction

The arrival of the advance contingents of U.S. troops in Southern Germany in the spring of 1945 and the liberation of that part of Germany from the Nazi reign of terror marked the beginning of a highly complex, mutually enriching, and at times intricately conflicted history of German-American encounters in the fields of politics, social interaction, and cultural exchange. In the decades to follow, the German State of Bavaria—immediately after World War II the larger part of the American military occupation zone in Germany—saw the emergence, institutionalization, and transformation of a wide array of sites of contact. Originally (at least supposedly) ‘American,’ these cultural, political, or physical spaces grew into increasingly transnational sites of cultural contact, memory, negotiation, and transfer. They testify to the continued usability of theoretical notions of contact zones, famously identified by Mary Louise Pratt in 1991 as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34). While Pratt pinpoints texts as platforms of negotiations emerging from contact zones, the German-American sites of encounter since World War II are not just metaphorical but actual, physical spaces of cultural contact and ensuing processes of cultural negotiation. Complex dynamics of exchange, transfer, and appropriation in these contact zones oftentimes blur, if not erase categorical lines between ‘German’ and ‘American’ or even local ‘Bavarian’ cultural phenomena into a transnational and transcultural haze. Is, for example, a German-American *Volksfest* on the grounds of a U.S. military base in the German State of Bavaria featuring beer, pretzels, barbecue, line dance, and *Blasmusik* German or American or Bavarian? Whose cultural and social practices and narratives are enacted and continued by an exhibit located in a rural Bavarian museum that functions as a site of memory for Elvis Presley’s legacy? In what shapes do memories emerge in a space that is characterized by a history of American presence and institutions such as *Amerika Häuser*

or U.S. military training facilities and during times of the supposedly global, contemporary phenomenon of Americanization?

In their introduction to their edited collection on *Transnational Memory* (2014), Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney postulate:

[T]he time is ripe to move memory studies itself beyond methodological nationalism. Globalized communication and time-space compression, post-coloniality, transnational capitalism, large-scale migration, and regional integration: all of these mean that national frames are no longer the self-evident ones they used to be in daily life and identity formations. As a result, the national has also ceased to be the inevitable or preeminent scale for the study of collective remembrance. By now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, it has become a matter of urgency for scholars in the field of memory studies to develop *new theoretical frameworks*, invent *new methodological tools*, and identify *new sites* and *archival resources* for studying collective remembrance beyond the nation-state. (2; my emphasis)

This article engages in the approach to memory suggested by De Cesari and Rigney in multiple ways. First, it illuminates *new sites*—sites located outside the United States in Bavaria, Germany. Second, it participates in discourses of cultural memory as *transnational* memory by highlighting the transcultural and transnational nature of these sites. It draws attention to the multiple cultural appropriations between and beyond German and American. Above all, it is interested in new theoretical frameworks beyond traditional notions of the archive. Signifying on Diana Taylor's 2003 monograph, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, this article scrutinizes the diverse shapes transnational memory takes in Bavaria. These may range from 'permanent' archives of memory in the material form of museums or memorials to the 'performatic' forms of cultural memory, i.e. events such as celebrations and holidays or everyday cultural and social habits and practices.

In her groundbreaking monograph, Taylor initiates the closing of a gap in memory research when she highlights and insists on the impact of embodied forms of memory in her discussion of what she terms the *repertoire*. The performative dimensions of memory in the Schechnerian sense of effective and transformative character—i.e. memory comes into being by *doing* it—holds true for all shapes of memory. Yet Taylor's *repertoire* shifts the focus to behavioral, physical, corporeal, and, at least in their single appearance, ephemeral manifestations of cultural memory. Performatic phenomena constitute acts of memory; memory becomes performative. While Taylor emphasizes the mobility of memory to oscillate between archive and repertoire, two working

concepts that are by no means defined by clear-cut boundaries, she nevertheless observes: "The rift, I submit, does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)" (19; emphasis in original). Taylor makes a strong point for the study of performance as a key source for the study of memory: "Recognizing performance as a valid focus of analysis contributes to our understanding of embodied practice as an episteme and a praxis, a way of knowing as well as a way of storing and transmitting cultural knowledge and identity" (278). She concludes that the "repertoire too, then, allows scholars to trace traditions and influences" (20).

Within the wider framework of Taylor's discussion of memory, this article traces both the *archive* and the *repertoire* of German-American transnational memories in Bavaria—and the blurry fields in between. Hence, the purpose of this article is twofold. First, it pursues a conceptual endeavor regarding the dimension, location, and shape of cultural memory. It proposes to view cultural memory as a *transnational* contact zone that may be situated *outside of the United States*. It argues that cultural memory may appear both *in* and especially *beyond textual or material* shapes and therefore suggests an approach to transnational memory as cultural *performance*. Second, to illustrate its conceptual claim, the article surveys and scrutinizes select examples located in the complex landscape of contemporary German-American memories in Bavaria.

Transnationalizing Memory: German-American Sites in Bavaria

Collective and cultural memory have frequently been defined as concepts that pertain to present-oriented processes of self-definition and identity-formation drawing on real, imagined, or constructed narratives of a common past of a particular cultural or national community. The German-American contact zones emerging in Bavaria after World War II are, however, characterized by the co-presence of multiple cultural and national groups that construct collective memory/ies of the past and perpetuate communal cultural memory/ies into the future. These contact zones illustrate the need for changing conceptualizations of nationally located sites of memory as 'sites of transnational memories' or 'transnational sites of memory.'

Calls for a more transnational approach to memory are not fully new to American Studies, yet nevertheless relatively recent. Preceding De Cesari and Rigney's insistence on transnational conceptualizations of memory, already in 2008 Udo Hebel notes in his "Sites of Memory in U.S.-American Histories and

Cultures”: “The multiethnic and transnational histories of North America and the hemispheric, Atlantic, and Pacific contexts of North American cultures have always given national U.S.-American sites and ceremonies of commemoration a multidirectional, pluralistic dimension—notwithstanding all historical processes and official acts of repression, exclusion, erasure, and forgetting” (57). Implicitly, Hebel points to the transnational and transcultural scopes and meanings which cultures of memory can assume within the United States.¹ More explicitly, Hebel states in his epilogue “Whereto American(ist) Memory Studies?” to Hans-Jürgen Grabbe and Sabine Schindler’s edited collection on *The Merits of Memory: Concepts, Context, Debates*:

As far as American(ist) memory studies are concerned, it seems that a creative synthesis of two recent turns, i.e. the transnational turn and the spatial turn, offers particularly promising perspectives for grounding American memory studies in the increasingly complex and challenging landscapes, structure, and processes of transnational exchange, competition, and conflict. Especially in transnational—or transnationally relevant or transnationally charged—spaces, memory will continue to be considered and interpreted as a shaping factor in acts of political legitimization and cultural opposition. (395)

In 2009, Hebel continues to urge: “transnational trajectories, implications, and politics of U.S.-American cultures of memories and sites of commemoration deserve more attention” (Hebel, “Introduction” 2).²

The German-American contact zones in Bavaria after World War II and the sites and processes of memory located in them make it necessary to engage in the debate on transnational memories. They also require a shift in focus from transnational sites of American memories situated within the United States to sites outside the United States. A “transnational approach directs attention to all kinds of ‘sustained, cross-borders relationships spanning nation states’ and to those phenomena *not neatly captured within the borders of the latter*” (De Cesari and Rigney 5; my emphasis). American memories and transnational processes of memory that relate to the United States can and must also be studied in non-U.S. locations that take the shape of contact zones involving American cultural and social participation. Since the end of World War II, the German State of Bavaria has been an increasingly transnational contact zone

1 For a discussion of transculturality, see Welsch; Lenz.

2 Also see Rothberg, who makes a similar point and “rethink[s] the conceptualization of collective memory in multicultural and transnational contexts” (21).

full of crossroads of and for German American encounters of different political, social, and cultural manifestations and implications. From the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in the spring of 1945³ to the ongoing presence of U.S. troops and their families especially in and around the Upper Palatinate community of Grafenwöhr, the U.S. military has been a momentous political, economic, and cultural force in a region paradigmatically stretched out between traditionalism and (post)modernization. Once-powerful American platforms of reeducation such as the *Amerika Häuser* have long since been closed down and turned into sites of memory of their own historical and cultural mission intricately embedded in cityscape ensembles of conflicted histories of a larger scale.

In different ways and to different extents over the course of the past decades, icons of 'American' (popular) culture such as cowboys, baseball, and diners have become part of 'German' leisure time activities. Annual German-American *Volksfeste* (fig. 1) strategically hosted within the otherwise sealed-off confines of military training areas have brought together, at times in astounding constellations and performances, internationally deployed U.S. troops and their dependents as well as the local population of the Upper Palatinate and their tourist guests. Local museums have staged Elvis Presley exhibitions documenting the King's military tour of duty in the area in the late 1950s as well as his popular culture outreach and personal legacy (fig. 2). And the small Upper Palatinate town of Oberviechtach has recently erected the only 9/11 memorial in Germany with an original WTC steel beam at its commemorative center (fig. 3).

A list of Bavarian transnational sites of memory including American and German participation can hardly be complete. Among its vast array of various shapes of memory, it includes material, physical sites established as quasi-archives for the purpose of commemorating contacts from confrontations to liberation in times of war and victory, for instance the Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Museum Flossenbürg (*KZ-Gedenkstätte Flossenbürg*; (fig. 4)), the Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Museum Dachau (*KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau*), or the Nuremberg War Criminals Court (*Reichsparteitagsgelände*). These sites are reminders of public diplomacy and cultural exchange from reeducation and the Cold War to post-9/11, for example the *Amerika Haus* in Munich, the (former) German American Institute (DAI) in Regensburg, or the DAI in Nuremberg. They function as archives of the narrative of the U.S. military as well as its political and cultural presence in Bavaria, for instance the Grafenwöhr Cultural and Military Museum (*Kultur- und Militärmuseum Grafenwöhr*) or the 2012 Elvis Presley exhibit in the local museum of

3 Also see Gessner, "Dachau."

Burglengenfeld, which was dedicated to Elvis's time as a soldier in training in Grafenwöhr. The 9/11 Memorial in the rural town of Oberviechtach is a similarly material site of memory. Yet its dedication ceremony in 2011 points to dynamics and dimensions of memory that go beyond permanent, material features and are characterized by their performative, if not theatrical appearance. Similarly, the joint German and American Grafenwöhr Training Area Centennial celebration or the Veterans' Day celebrations by the U.S. Army in Grafenwöhr are further examples of the eventful and non-material, yet corporeal and ephemeral character of commemorative cultural phenomena of the German-American contact zone of Bavaria. Pullman City, as the adventure park's website describes it, is a "living Western town" where "children and adults have been experiencing the Lower Bavarian 'Wild West' since 1997—during archery, gold panning, pony and Western horse riding, with live country music, line dance and the romance of the campfire" (*Pullman City*). Last but not least, everyday German-American life/lives and their practices and habits, in the particular context of the former American occupation zone and the continued American presence, serve as constant transmitters and perpetuators—as agents of memory—of American culture(s): diners such as Regensburg's Kullman's Diner or Max & Muh Diner, Regensburg's Baseball Club "Buchbinder Legionäre," or the city's Cowboy Club.

Deep Space—The Grafenwöhr Training Area

Transcultural and transnational approaches to memory "take on board the principle that memory 'travels'" (De Cesari and Rigney 4). The list of examples above demonstrates that, with the continued presence of U.S. Armed Forces and civilians in Bavaria during the occupation and afterwards, Americans and American memories traveled to the German space. The Grafenwöhr Training Area may serve as a suitable example here. Located in the Upper Palatinate region of Bavaria, it has always been shaped by diverse presences. The military center of the German-American encounters in Graf, the American nickname for the Grafenwöhr Training Area, is the largest and most advanced military facility owned by the U.S. 7th Army in Europe. Yet the first shot was not, as one might expect, fired by the U.S. Army after World War II or during the times of the occupation. Rather, it was fired by the Bavarian Army's 21-year-old canonier Michael Kugler in 1910 from Gruenhund Hill, now the area of the 7th U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Training Command's Shooting Range 114. The GTA is shaped by multiple palimpsestic layers created by diverse groups present in the past—diverse cultures, imaginaries, and memories ranging

from the Bavarian Army and Upper Palatinate villages to the Nazi era to post-WWII US occupation to the contemporary multinational structure led by the United States. Layer over layer, new histories and with them new memories are inscribed into the Bavarian landscape. These layers are, on the one hand, characterized by the respective synchronic transnational mobilities, especially American mobilities that continue to reach the Bavarian space since WWII. On the other hand, the present is shaped by the multiple layers of the past.

The German-American contact zone of Bavaria becomes a *"deep space"*—a phrase and concept I use elsewhere (Bauridl, "From Grafenwoehr to 'Graf'") in reference to Shelley Fisher Fishkin's idea of the deep map. In her response to Fishkin's idea, Karen Bishop explains the nature of scholarly deep maps as "open-access digital archives that collect all manner of multilinguistic primary and secondary text, paratext, ephemera, oral and written history, critical studies, and interdisciplinary and mixed media—to name just a few possibilities—in a series of overlaying and overlapping palimpsests built on a specific geolocation manifest on the surface of a digital map that serves as gateway to the archive" (2). Deep maps are interactive, digital maps that connect people, material artefacts, texts, experiences, memories, and narratives—which may constitute "conflicting interpretations"—to "the location that produced" them (Fishkin, "Deep Maps" 3). They emphasize ideas, stories, and people that "cross borders" (Fishkin, "Deep Maps" 3) and thus depict networks of past and present traces of individual and collective mobility within and outside the nation. Similarly, De Cesari and Rigney point to the idea of different memories intersecting and interacting in one particular space: "The transnational optics adopted in this volume allows memory to be visualized differently: not as a horizontal spread or as points or regions on a map but as a dynamic operating at multiple, interlocking scales and involving conduits, intersections, circuits, and articulations" (6). Approaching Bavaria as a German-American contact zone established by the end of WWII via the concept of the deep map/space means viewing the region not as a digital representation but as a physical and cultural network of memories, as a landscape shaped by transnational trajectories of—themselves heterogeneous—German and American memories. These diverse layers produce diverse memories in the present which are nevertheless located in the simultaneity of one space; they intersect, interact, negotiate their presence, are appropriated, and oftentimes become transnationally entangled.

The 2010 Centennial Celebration in Grafenwöhr clearly commemorates the initiation of the training area by the Bavarian Army; yet the celebration is staged by both the U.S. Army, now training on the former Bavarian grounds, and the German Bundeswehr. One of the highlights of the Centennial nevertheless serves as a perpetuation of U.S. national memories and narratives

when a U.S. Veterans' Day celebration, broadcast by the U.S. station ESPN to the United States live from Germany, stages U.S.-American soldiers in a Warrior Challenge as strong, brave, and excelling national heroes. The visual dimension of the broadcast inevitably also includes the material and cultural space of the setting: Grafenwöhr and its historic water tower. Built in 1911 in Frankonian timber-frame design, the tower prefigures the post-WWII American presence; at the same time it has become a visual symbol of the American (military) presence at the GTA ever since the occupation. Recognized by both German and American 'locals' as a symbol for the GTA, it constitutes a site of memory that fuses a Bavarian and an American past and present. The example highlights two intersecting characteristics of transnational memory/ies: firstly, 'national' memories continue to play a role but become transnationally blurred and entangled; secondly, the site as a deep space, i.e. the setting of memory—not to be confused with Pierre Nora's concept of the site of memory—interacts with and shapes memory.

Transnational Appropriations: Elvis in Burglengelfeld

The example of the Grafenwöhr Training Area implies that especially transnational sites of memory are inherently contested sites, i.e. they constitute 'usable' sites of appropriation which become utilized for diverse enactments of memory. They make visible the co-existence and the tensions between multiple national, sub-national, and super-national discourses. Together with scholars such as Bryce Traister or Shelley Fisher Fishkin (see esp. "Crossroads" 24), Heinz Ickstadt cautions American Studies to not all too enthusiastically engage in all-transnational discourses, over-looking the continued impact of national dynamics:

Between the local and the global there is still the 'national' as a category requiring continuous analysis. [...] [The] United States must be studied as a distinctive collective entity (however heterogeneous or divided it may perceive itself to be) within a network of global or transnational interrelatedness. (551)

Discussions of transnational memory are fully in sync with transnational American Studies at this point. De Cesari and Rigney likewise note that "the transnational dynamics of memory production operate in conjunction with the continuous presence and agency of the national"; national and transnational memories "remain deeply entangled" (6). In 2012, a local Bavarian

museum in Burglengenfeld on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of Elvis's death hosted an exhibit commemorating not Elvis Presley per se, but, more particularly, the most prominent GI's presence in the Upper Palatinate (fig. 2). As a site of negotiation between sub-national, national, and ultimately transnational discourses of memory, this exhibit visualized how this particular German region has appropriated Elvis in its collective memory as a symbol for the American presence and for a definition of the region's (rather than Germany's) cultural space and collective identity, a definition which reflects the region's own role and format as a cultural contact zone. The exhibit allowed locals and visitors to tour a temporally and spatially condensed version of this area and era of encounter and of its cultural and political negotiations. Elvis was in Germany for 17 months, starting with his arrival on October 1, 1958. Strikingly, Elvis was not stationed in the Upper Palatinate, but in the Hessian Friedberg. Nevertheless, he spent several weeks in the Grafenwöhr area for military training. In large parts of the exhibit, Elvis is less a GI in the Cold War than a visitor to the Upper Palatinate whose identity stands in reciprocal transfer with that of the region. When the visuals in the exhibit portray Elvis as immersed in American master narratives and as the prototypical Franklinian self-made man, as the son who takes care of his family, as the ideal son-in-law, and as an American, hard-working, masculine, strong hero, who preferred to fully engage in his military duties rather than accept any more convenient options offered to him as a 'star,' they define Elvis as an ideal character. Despite all American connotations, this ideal character type is also a local Upper Palatinate one, and his portrayal is not only a characterization of the GI but also of the allegedly archetypal Upper Palatinate self. Thus, an exemplary and prominent photograph of Elvis shows him dapper and well-groomed, clad in a woolen cardigan, flouncy shirt, and a slim tie fit for a local Sunday coffee gathering with the future mother-in-law: "schwieg-ermuttertauglich" reads the German caption to the photograph. The exhibit thus entangles and confuses national and regional processes of remembering and consequential self-construction into a transnational haze. In the contact zone, national (in this case U.S.) memories are appropriated and adapted and become part of national (German / Bavarian) memories and thus transnationally entangled. Likewise De Cesari and Rigney portray "cultural remembrance" as "involve[ing] the continual production, remediation, and sharing of stories about a past that changes in relation to the new possibilities for interpreting it within shifting social frames operating at different scales and across different territories (see Erl and Rigney 2009)" (8).

The example of the exhibit, like the example of the GTA's Veterans' Day, elucidates the significance of the site in which memorial processes take place.

Like Halbwachs's *cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, 'site' here includes more than the physical geography of the particular space. It is the social, cultural, and political space that influences and impacts processes of memory. In the German-American contact zone the memory of an American citizen, Elvis Presley, is staged in the social, cultural, and political space of another nation—more precisely, of a particular region of another nation. It is the present needs of that region—a desire to stage its regional identity as individual and visible within the national framework, a longing to enact its own cosmopolitanism as opposed to a past existence as the margin of the nation—that become entangled with the imagined past of the U.S. celebrity. The commemoration of Elvis becomes transnational; or, seen from the flipside of the coin, German memory becomes transnational by appropriating the American Elvis.

The exhibit merges multiple angles and spatial levels of communal identity with larger historical patterns when it constructs an emancipated relationship between 'Americans,' 'Germans,' and the Upper Palatinate during the Cold War. It emphasizes Elvis's close-knit relationship with the local community as well as with the international military activities he was involved in. It construes his presence at a time of containment of the East and integration of Germany as a time in which the local space participated in (American) Cold War activities as an equal and empowered global player rather than as an occupied post-war region. Elvis participated in Winter-Shield, a NATO maneuver and an activity in the Cold War context conducted by the US *and* the German military. While the photographs, taken in this context, of Elvis with Upper Palatinate women or soldiers visualize the close-knit relationship between Elvis and the region and are thus more an expression of a regional taking-possession of the GI than of military activities, the presence of the German soldiers stationed in the Upper Palatinate nevertheless demonstrates the military and physical power of the region as an important contributor to the transnational Cold War endeavor. In the exhibit, Winter-Shield, a NATO maneuver, is a performance and self-enactment of the military, political, and international impact of the Upper Palatinate. It helps to display the region as a space of inter/transnational influence, power, and protection. If this Elvis can be appropriated and integrated into an Upper Palatinate context, with the region and its inhabitants as active agents in this very process, Elvis is turned into an icon of one's own empowerment.

The example of Elvis in Burglengenfeld shows that memory in transnational spaces is not either/or, but rather an ever-evolving fusion and negotiation. It is what Rothberg terms 'multidirectional memory': "Against the framework that understands collective memory as *competitive* memory—as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources—I suggest that we consider memory as

multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing [...]” (3; emphasis in original). Rothberg adds:

I have proposed the concept of multidirectional memory which is meant to draw attention to the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance. [...] The model of multidirectional memory posits collective memory as partially disengaged from exclusive versions of cultural identity and acknowledges how remembrance both cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites. (11)

Likewise, “dynamic transfers” happen between the American Elvis of the late 1950s, the German region of the 1950s, and the German region of the early 21st century; Elvis’s commemoration links and entangles the United States and Germany and thereby becomes a memory not just of Elvis and the U.S. but also a memory and construction of the Bavarian German self. The German self-construction—like cultural memories according to De Cesari and Rigney—is “[...] made up of heterogeneous elements, borrowings, and appropriations from other languages and memorial traditions that are assembled together into narratives” (15).

Towards Transangular Perspectives: Commemorating 9/11 in Bavaria

Seen from the perspective of ‘American’ memory/ies, the Elvis exhibit, as one of the example(s) of the contact zone, demonstrates that ‘American’ memory/ies become transnational in their outlook and appropriation. In “Towards a Prismatic American Studies,” a programmatic article in the conceptual context of transnational American Studies, Jane Desmond insists on an understanding of the United States as an “interlocking set of imaginaries.” These imaginaries may be situated and brought about by agents in- or outside the United States; they are always related to both, the United States *and* the spatial contexts in which they are produced. Memories produced in the German-American contact zone in Bavaria constitute a part of the imaginaries that shape our understanding of the United States. In Desmond’s call for “prismatic American Studies,” the notion of the “prismatic” stresses the multiple and “interlocking” understandings of the U.S., “the multiple coexisting illuminations coming from different angles”—and I would add spaces—“of vision” (6).

Yet do the multiple national, sub-national, and super-national discourses remain *clearly* distinguishable? In other words: Can transnational memory be pieced together like a puzzle consisting of *clearly* identifiable components of diverse national, sub-national, or super-national discourses? Desmond's "prismatic" perspective metaphorically stresses triangular approaches to the transnational. The triangular highlights that 'transnational' in its real-life material, discursive, and ideological dimensions means more than bilateral or bidirectional relationships between clearly defined agents, groups, and entities. Transnational American Studies, then, needs to denote more than comparative approaches or discussions of two-polar interactions. As the multidirectional memory/ies in the German-American contact zone show, more than two agents and perspectives are involved in transnational processes. These agents and perspectives are different in reference to diverse national, cultural, social groups, to diverse time frames, to diverse spaces that shape them. Moreover, once they enter transnational processes and interaction, they do not stay the same or clearly distinguishable from each other; they become entangled into a complex transnational network of (ex)changes and intersections. Consequently, the negotiations and memories located in this contact zone require neither a comparative nor an additive, but a connective or, rather, integrative perspective. This perspective needs to be based on the concept of the transnational; it needs to emphasize the involvement of multiple parties, which do not simply add up into a compound, but which become increasingly entangled and blurred. "Transangular" as a conceptual and methodological metaphor stresses the recognition of "more complicated trajectories than simply triple comparisons"; it highlights the "possibly infinite interconnectedness of all angles into palimpsestic structures"; and ultimately it calls for a likewise "transangular mode of investigation" (Bauridl and Hebel 457).

The example of the Oberviechtach 9/11 Memorial (fig. 3) reflects the nexus between memory/ies and spaces and the need for a transangular perspective most immediately. Dedicated in October 2011, the memorial situated in the middle of the small Upper Palatinate town of Oberviechtach includes the only original steel fragment from the ruins of the WTC on display in Germany, if not in Europe. Oberviechtach is located 30 to 40 minutes away from the military bases and training areas of Grafenwöhr from which a considerable part of the U.S. American 'war on terror' was waged after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. For decades, the local population had been in close contact with the American military and their families, with a large part of the local and regional economy profiting from the presence of the U.S. and the extensive investments of the military from the times of the Cold War through the beginning of the 21st century. Consequently,

long-standing personal relations—in this case between the fire departments of Oberviechtach and New York City—led to the idea of a 9/11 memorial and eventually to the transatlantic mobility of a fragment of a WTC steel beam.⁴ The whole story is much more complicated and entails, among other things, the visit of a local theater group to New York City and alike ventures on both sides of the Atlantic. The memorial itself is a relatively modest structure which gains additional interpretative and ideological significance because of its on-site proximity to the local monuments remembering the German dead of WWI and WWII. Although the performative pomp and circumstance of the dedication ceremony in October 2011 seems to have remained a singular event in the still brief history of the memorial, the site itself presents a particularly multivocal crossroads of transnational histories and narratives in a place surrounded by the local amenities and needs of a gas station, a newsstand, and a parking lot.

At the Oberviechtach 9/11 memorial, at first sight several incongruent 'parts' are juxtaposed and fused. Is the memorial an American site of memory in a German space? Is it a German (self-)construction, similar to the Elvis exhibit in Burglengenfeld, that appropriates the memorial, and thus a terrorist attack far away, as an occasion to demonstrate one's own outstanding position as the only place in Germany to host a steel fragment from the terror-struck site? Is the memorial an American site in Germany that elevates American memory into an all-encompassing, city-upon-the-hill realm? Is it a removed site of American grief, of American power, or of local German everyday life? Does the site commemorate 2001 and the American tragedy of 9/11, and the local WWI and WWII memorials happen to be nearby; or is the 9/11 memorial located in a site that primarily commemorates the local experience of WWI and WWII?⁵ As a phenomenon of the contact zone and seen in the particular historical and present context of German-American encounters in Bavaria, the site is all of that at once and none of its specific components alone. At first sight dedicated to the commemoration of the tragedy of one event, the site becomes a transangular constellation of multiple and multidirectional memories.

4 See Gessner, "Remembering 9/11."

5 The question "Does the memorial's slogan 'dedicated to all who serve with honor' pertain to the local Oberviechtach or New York City firefighters or does it extend to the WWI and WWII memorials nearby?" contributes to the complexity of the site and would require a separate and more far-reaching critical discussion of implied comparisons, evaluations, or even simplistic appropriations.

Encounters of a Different Kind: Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Museum

The most obvious site of memory of American encounters in the German-American contact zone of Bavaria is also possibly the most complicated one: the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Museum (fig. 4). When U.S. troops liberated the Nazi concentration camp of Flossenbürg in the Upper Palatinate close to today's German-Czech border, they encountered the horrible scenes that the Allied Forces in the West and the Red Army in the East had already been confronted with across Germany and Europe and which they would be confronted with again in the much-better known Dachau concentration camp some 200 kilometers further south and close to Munich. Flossenbürg had been a Nazi concentration camp throughout the war supplying the Regensburg Messerschmidt airplane factory with workers and—significant for current perceptions of the site—serving as a prison site for Hitler's so-called 'special personal prisoners,' among them theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Although it took a while until Flossenbürg was given due attention as a site of national remembrance and mourning—to some extent because of the world-wide recognition of Dachau and because of its own remote location only a few miles away from the former Iron Curtain running through the seemingly impenetrable Bavarian and Bohemian Forests—it has now become a very visible part of the Bavarian State Foundation for Commemoration. What is particularly interesting about Flossenbürg is its ever-increasing commemorative recognition outside of Germany as the place where Dietrich Bonhoeffer spent his last days, wrote some of his famous prayers, and was executed only a few days before the U.S. troops liberated the camp.

Flossenbürg constitutes a site of American encounters in three dimensions: liberation; U.S. visits from the nearby Grafenwöhr Training Area; and commemorative events including both liberators and liberated. Yet the spatial site of Flossenbürg is more complex, more multidirectional, and more transangular than that. Flossenbürg not only offers extended educational programs, guided tours, and special exhibitions, but it is also, and increasingly so, becoming a crossroads of memory for German, American, and European visitors. Official booklets describe Flossenbürg as a "European site of memory"—a description that bears adequate witness to the sufferings of the prisoners from all across Europe at the hands of the German and partly (East) European guards and executioners. Like all former concentration camps, Flossenbürg is also visited regularly by survivors who at times still join with their liberators from the U.S. forces—a commemorative

practice that will soon cease to exist. After its liberation, Flossenbürg was used as a camp for prisoners of war and from April 1946 onwards as a camp for Displaced Persons. Displaced Persons from Poland launched the very first initiative to turn Flossenbürg into a site of memory. Besides the cemeteries in the town of Flossenbürg that continue to serve as a reminder of the cruelties committed at Flossenbürg, a particular memorial (which also reflects the cultural and religious impact of its predominantly Catholic Polish initiators) was added to the Flossenbürg concentration camp site: a church built of the material of the former concentration camp towers. Stadtbaumeister Linhardt drafted the commemorative, park-like-structured *Tal des Todes*, which stretches between the crematorium and the slightly—and symbolically—elevated church. In the 1950s, the (former barrack) area adjacent to the concentration camp's *Appellplatz* became a designated housing and homeowners' area for Displaced Persons. The rural homeowner's neighborhood continues to exist until today. The museum website consciously highlights the multidimensional use of the space: "Als anlässlich des 50. Jahrestages der Befreiung des KZ Flossenbürg mehrere hundert ehemalige Häftlinge an ihren früheren Leidensort zurückkehrten, fanden sie auf dem ehemaligen KZ-Areal eine Wohnsiedlung, einen Industriebetrieb und einen als Parkanlage gepflegten Friedhof vor" (Skriebeleit, "Konzentrationslager Flossenbürg").⁶ The industrial buildings were torn down in 2000; currently, the previous structures are turned into a more obvious and carefully crafted site of memory. Yet still today, the descendants of the former Displaced Persons literally cross the concentration camp site on their everyday route into the small downtown of Flossenbürg or on their way to work, possibly also in any of the infrastructural facilities of the Grafenwöhr U.S. military training installation. It is their presence and their story that best shows the multiple cultural and national, the transangular, dimensions of the site of Flossenbürg, liberated by the U.S. Army but crossed by many paths.⁷

6 When several hundred former prisoners returned to their former place of suffering for the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp, they encountered a residential area, an industrial plant, and a park-like cemetery on the former Concentration Camp grounds.

7 For a detailed study of the history of the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp as well as the memory work of the Memorial Site and Museum, see Skriebeleit's *Erinnerungsort Flossenbürg*.

Beyond the Archive

The Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial and Museum, in the sense of Taylor's archive, is made of "supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones)" (19). Yet its commemorative practices—'events' with survivors, witnesses, liberators—point to a less stable and more performatic dimension of memory. This dimension may range from clearly keyed and framed events—i.e. events that are designated and recognizable as particular acts of commemoration and perpetuation and clearly marked in terms of time frame, site of performance, and purpose—to practices, behaviors, and habits that are either less keyed and framed—or not at all. These dimensions of memory are less studied than the archival dimensions.

Astrid Erll notes in her introduction to *Cultural Memory Studies*: "The field thus remains open for the exploration of unintentional and implicit ways of cultural remembering [...] or of inherently non-narrative, for example visual or bodily, forms of memory" (2). In "Sites of Memory in U.S.-American Histories and Cultures," Hebel emphasizes the importance of "commemorative performances" (53) already in the early republic "for the affirmation of the newly created collective identity" (53). He observes that a "large variety of local, regional, and national festivities that took the scripts and repertoires of traditional religious and folk rituals" was appropriated and adapted to commemorate, for example, "specific occurrences of the American Revolution" or "birthdays or inaugurations of revolutionary leaders turned presidents" (53). While Hebel points to keyed and framed commemorative practices with the clear purpose of commemoration, Welzer in his concept of 'social memory' extends the notion of memory as performance, or, rather, of performance as memory to the realm of unintentional acts of memory. While not speaking explicitly about performance yet nevertheless implying performatic practices, Welzer notes that

"[s]ocial memory" refers to everything which transports and communicates the past and interpretations of the past in a non-intentional manner. Four media of the social practice of forming the past can be distinguished: record, (moving) images, spaces, and direct interactions. Each refers to things which were not produced for the purpose of forming tradition, but which nonetheless transport history and shape the past in social contexts. (286)

In other words, everyday actions, habits, and behaviors as performative acts may constitute and perpetuate cultural memory/ies.

Seen from the perspective of performance studies then, cultural performances are performative in that they transmit cultural knowledge, be it

implicit or explicit. Memory is performative in that it springs from cultural performances. Joseph Roach understands (cultural) performance—which is always corporeal and defined by the participation of bodies—as “coterminous with memory and history. As such, it participates in the transfer and continuity of knowledge: ‘Performance genealogies draw on the idea of expressive movements as mnemonic reserves, including patterned movements made and remembered by bodies [...]’” (Taylor 5; and Roach qtd. in Talyor 5). Introduced by Milton Singer in his collection of essays on *Traditional India: Structure and Change* in 1949, the concept of cultural performance remains central for performance studies’ investigation of the perpetuating as well as interruptive potential of performance until today. Starting from a limited definition—cultural performance as clearly keyed and framed and mainly referring to non-artistic performances—cultural performance nowadays has reached a broader definition as situated anywhere on a continuum from particularly marked events to embedded everyday actions, from artistic and theatrical forms to rituals and events to behaviors and habits. In “Images and Reflections: Ritual, Drama, Carnival, Film, and the Spectacle in Cultural Performance,” Victor Turner elaborates on Singer’s initial idea of cultural performance:

Among the most salient ‘concrete experiences’ were what Singer found to be discriminable “units of observation” which he called “cultural performances.” [...] The performances became for Singer ‘the elementary constituents of the culture and the ultimate units of observation. Each one had a definitely limited time span, or at least a beginning and an end, an occasion of performance [...]’ (23)

John McKenzie’s more contemporary list of forms of cultural expression which may be labeled cultural performance illustrates the widening of the concept:

The field of cultural performance that has emerged over the last half century includes a wide variety of activities situated around the world. These include traditional and experimental theater; rituals and ceremonies; popular entertainments, such as parades and festivals; popular, classical, and experimental dance; avant-garde performance art; oral interpretations and storytelling; aesthetic practices found in everyday life, such as play and social interactions; political demonstrations and social movements. This list is open to additions, subtractions, and debate, but from it one can see that cultural performance is cultural in the widest sense of the term, stretching from “high” to “low” culture, though its most ardent proponents stress its countercultural aspects. (29)

What has been an integral part of the concept of cultural performance since its inception is its ability to carry, transport, and perpetuate, “to express and communicate the content of [...] culture” (Turner, “Images and Reflections” 23). Cultural performance can be read as a medium of memory. Yet this medium does not simply transport stable cultural knowledge, but cultural performance serves as a gauge and evaluating force of cultural content. Turner uses the distinction between “reflective” and “reflexive” to explain this phenomenon:

I would agree with this, but only if it is realized that cultural performances are not simple reflector or expressions of culture or even of changing culture but may themselves be active agencies of change, representing the eye by which culture sees itself and the drawing board on which creative actors sketch out what they believe to be more apt or interesting “designs for living.” As Barbara Babcock has written: “many cultural forms are not so much reflective as reflexive.” Here the analogy is not with a mirror but rather with a reflexive verb “whose subject and direct object refer to the same person and thing.” Performative reflexivity is a condition in which a sociocultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components which make up their public “selves.” (Turner, “Images and Reflections” 24)

In a similar vein, memory, as “the self-reflexive cultivation of the past” (De Cesari and Rigney 1) is always linked to a particularly present perspective on and appropriation of the past. The selection and manipulation of memory according to present needs and according to visions of the future may serve as a motor of change. While drawing on the past, memory is always also directed towards the future. The most prominent and obvious example is that of counter memorials and counter memory—a memory that deliberately tries to shape the future as a time different from the past. In a similar way, the reflexive nature of cultural performance leaves room for an enactment of either affirmation and perpetuation of cultural content or for the deliberate or accidental bringing about of gradual or radical, natural or critical development and change. In 2000, Jon McKenzie stresses the double potential of cultural performance. On the one hand, it may be effective in terms of “uphold[ing] social arrangements,” “reaffirm[ing] existing structures,” and offering a “possibility of conservation” (31). On the other hand, cultural performance is endowed with “transgressive or resistant potential” to “change” and “transform” “people and societies” (30, 31). John MacAloon summarizes the memory work cultural performance completes as well as the potential

to enact change: Cultural performances “are occasions in which as a culture or society we *reflect* upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective *myths and history*, present ourselves with *alternatives*, and eventually *change* in some ways while remaining the same in others” (introduction 1; my emphasis). Yet what happens when this “we” becomes more hybrid and/or complex in contact zones? What happens when the site of the memory performance is a transnational site? What happens when the location is characterized by cultural ideas that may or may not differ from the agent of memory?

Just like scholars of memory such as Nora or Halbwachs have stressed the importance of the spaces and platforms of memory—be it in the sense of its geographical and material or in the sense of its cultural, social, and political sites—scholars of performance such as Erika Fischer-Lichte insist on the importance of the very site of performance. The materiality of performance binds it in time and space. As soon as these factors change, the meaning of the performance (in poststructuralist fashion of an ever-evolving plurality of meanings) changes as well (Wirth 43, based on Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*). Cultural performance and site, memory performance and space, become inseparable (see also Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik* 187, 200). Sounds, smells, objects, audiences become part of the performance. Yet the space of performance does not remain limited to the physical setting (Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik* 216). Cultural, social, political particularities—of the site and also those of the larger cultural, social, and historical space—likewise interact with the performance; more generally speaking, cultural performance “operate[s] within the highly coded system of a culture” (Carlson 44). Ultimately, memory performance and its site enter into a reciprocal and almost paradoxical connection of mutual influence. The performance of memory intersects with and thus impacts the meaning and identity of the site.

Performing Trans/National Memory: From 9/11 to Independence Day

Let us revisit the sites of the 9/11 memorial in Oberviechtach and the Grafenwöhr Training Area and extend our perspective beyond the archival dimension to the performatic dynamics. At the 9/11 memorial site in Oberviechtach, the dedication ceremony for a few moments in time overpowered the everyday meaning of the space as the park-like walkway from the gas station to the small downtown—a walkway which may happen to feature WWI, WWII, and 9/11 memorials. For a brief moment in time, the 9/11 memorial certainly dominated. Without the dedication performance, the space would have simply retained its everyday function and definition. Through the performance, it became the venue and the setting of

9/11 commemoration (also see Fischer-Lichte, "Theater als Modell" 100). If performance has the power for cultural change, the cultural site of the performance may contribute to the change of the cultural content in performance. The dedication ceremony in Oberviechtach initiated the fusing of a Bavarian cultural space of WWI/WWII commemoration and local everyday routine with the commemoration of the victims of a terrorist attack set in a faraway U.S. surrounding. The Bavarian space transnationalized the commemoration of 9/11 in Oberviechtach. Vice versa, the commemoration of the U.S. 'event' impacted and transnationalized the German/Bavarian space. What was initiated by the dedication ceremony continues to be performed by the presence of the memorial. If, as formulated above and for example argued by Turner or Fischer-Lichte, the larger cultural and historical space contributes to the constitution of meaning, the 9/11 dedication ceremony did not only take place in a Oberviechtach setting, but in the larger context of German-American encounters in the former occupation zone. In that context, the dedication ceremony becomes a joint effort, "a site of negotiation" (Carlson 16) of German-American, or rather Bavarian-American, relations into the 21st century. In Oberviechtach, the memorial in its seemingly stable materiality continues the memory work of the dedication ceremony, although in ever-changing perceptions and although itself increasingly merging with its everyday surroundings. In Oberviechtach, the difference between dedication ceremony as memory performance and the memorial as site of memory may not be much. Yet the memory work of the dedication ceremony as cultural performance points to the centrality, power, and impetus of similar ephemeral memory performances that disappear and do not result in lasting memorials.

The 9/11 memorial in Oberviechtach may reveal itself quite openly as a transnational phenomenon. Yet even when performances of memory in the German-American contact zone of Bavaria take the shape of decidedly U.S. national cultural performances—strategically essentialist as these may be—the performance cannot cease to interact with the German site. When the U.S. military base of Grafenwöhr celebrates Veteran's Day, the Fourth of July, or any other U.S. national holiday, it does so against the backdrop of, firstly, the German space, and, secondly, against the backdrop of the history of the Grafenwöhr Training Area as Bavarian, German Wehrmacht, and ultimately U.S./international military space. The displays and perpetuation of U.S. national narratives in holiday celebrations such as the 4th of July inevitably become negotiations of power in the former occupational zone. When the *Bavarian Times*, a U.S. Army-related newspaper, notes that "USAG Bavaria hosts the Fourth of July Hometown Celebration across its three communities to celebrate the birth of American independence with typical festivities ranging from casual gathering to barbecues and ending with fireworks" ("Fourth of July"), it announces a commemorative performance that affirms and perpetuates a particular version

of and emphasis on American history. Yet the site of the performance unavoidably adds the dimension of international if not global power and presence and the particular history of WWII, liberation, and occupation. The event becomes even more complex—and ultimately transnationalized—when Germans are invited to participate in the U.S. national holiday. The blog section of the German-American *Volksfest* website notes: “Grafenwöhr. Die US-Armee Garnison Grafenwöhr lädt auch in diesem Jahr wieder ein, gemeinsam den Unabhängigkeitstag der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika zu feiern. Die Veranstaltung findet am 4. Juli 2012 auf dem Paradeplatz in Grafenwöhr auf dem Truppenübungsplatz statt. Highlight ist um 22.30 Uhr ein Feuerwerk, das den Himmel in den Farben rot, weiß und blau erstrahlen lässt” (Matthias).⁸

Phrased from a performance studies perspective, Germans participating in 4th of July celebrations ‘repeat’—simplistically put—American traditions and behavior. The notion of repetition both in the Schechnerian sense of restored / twice-behaved behavior or in the Derridean sense of iteration can be seen as key to the effective power of performance (see also Derrida, “Signature, Event, Context”). Taylor locates the nexus of memory and performance in Schechner’s idea: “Performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called ‘twice-behaved behavior’ ” (2; see also 21). To Schechner, performances are “twice-behaved behaviors” (*Performance Studies* 28): “Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own. The original ‘truth’ or ‘source’ of the behavior may be lost, ignored, or contradicted—even while this truth or source is apparently being honored and observed” (Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* 35). In other words, strips of behavior can be “stored” (36) and “rearranged” (35) in settings that range from artistic stages to rituals and festivities to everyday actions and in contexts and by agents that are independent from the source (36). German participation in the 4th of July celebrations in Grafenwöhr constitutes a varying repetition of a known or unknown original by agents with a different national/cultural background in a context that is somewhat original (American) and somewhat not (German). The potential of restored behavior lies in its combination of repetition and change. It is

8 Grafenwöhr. The US Army Garrison Grafenwöhr is happy to once again invite you to its annual celebration of the U.S. Day of Independence. The event takes place on July 4, 2012, at the Grafenwöhr Training Area’s parade ground. A highlight of the event will be a fireworks display at 10.30 pm, which will color the sky in red, white, and blue.

always copy and creation at the same time. The joint German-American celebration of the 4th of July becomes a commemoration of an event that is neither fully American nor fully German; an event that may or may not be celebrated as a perpetuation of American narratives; an event that is transnational.

Whose Memory Is It Anyway? Embodied Memory at the Volksfest

Schechners term “restored behavior” points to a broad definition of performance and its inclusion of everyday actions, habits, and routines. The examples of memory performances discussed so far are clearly keyed and framed—events and festivities rather than behavior or everyday routines. Memory in the contact zone may, however, also take the shape of habits, behaviors, and practices that implicitly perpetuate cultural knowledge—embodied, behavioral, tacit knowledge. This idea takes us back to Taylor’s distinction between the archive and the repertoire. “The repertoire,” Taylor explains, “enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge” (20). “[C]ultural memory is an embodied practice” (Taylor 50). Taylor’s term “repertoire” captures the paradoxical nature of an ephemeral form of expression, i.e. performance, that at the same time is supposed to enact something that lasts, i.e. memory. Taylor explicates that while “[...] *individual* instances of performances disappear from the repertoire” (20; my emphasis), as “reiterative behavior,” performances do nevertheless not “disappear” (20) but are continued in subsequent repetitions. In Taylor’s words: “Multiple forms of embodied acts are always present, though in a constant state of againness. They reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge” (21).

From these perspectives, the German-American *Volksfest* in Grafenwöhr constitutes a curious mixture of keyed and framed event (fig. 1). It happens at a particular time and space—usually in early August on the grounds of the Grafenwöhr Training Area—and it serves the clearly identifiable purpose of celebrating German-American friendship in the region and of commemorating past German-American encounters and a joint history. The *Volksfest* celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2008 and in 2012 had a record of 80,000 visitors. In its set-up and dynamics, it is a concrete materialization and visualization of the cultural contact and exchange triggered by the military presence of the U.S. in the Upper Palatinate region. On these particular days, Germans cannot only enter the training area freely, but the location of the *Volksfest* turns into a space where Americans can tour cultural representations of their German environment and

where Germans can tour cultural manifestations of the American military and cultural presence. Members of both nations and cultures can tour a space that represents their proximity in and around the military communities. It comes as no surprise then that the *Volksfest* displays both German and American military power—exhibits by the U.S. Army as well as by the German Army—to present the contact zone as a joint effort while at the same time emphasizing individual national strength. It exhibits both (stereotypical) German and (stereotypical) American food cultures and offers not only *Bier* and *Bratwurst* but also barbecues and burgers. The visual design engages in both Bavarian narratives and cultural clichés as well as in American narratives and cultural clichés (e.g. the Wild West, Oktoberfest scenes and *Lederhosen*, etc.) and thus uses the liminal space of the contact zone to perpetuate cultural narratives, however stereotypical they may be. Simultaneously, cultural power is enacted by claiming knowledge and a mastering of the respective 'other' culture: for instance, Germans selling Native American products produced in Germany or Americans in Bavarian clothing. Mirroring cultural encounters, the German-American *Volksfest* at the same time produces them. More than a mere representation, it is a participant and agent in cultural exchange as it, within the realms of the already existing contact zone, creates the space for specifically keyed and framed cultural encounters and for a spatial self-definition as open, multi-cultural, hybrid, and dynamic.

The Bavarian regional group The Flying Boots from the local town of Eschenbach presents a linedance show in the contact zone of the *Volksfest*. A German group with mostly German members thus engages in a cultural performance that originates in the U.S. and stages this performance in a German-American contact zone. Seen from Taylor's perspective of the repertoire, these German dancers repeat an American cultural form of expression and thereby perpetuate cultural memory in an embodied way. Yet whose cultural memory is this? Line dance as "an embodied praxis and episteme" (Taylor 17), as a cultural performance that enacts cultural memory, on the one hand, continues American cultural practice. Yet, on the other hand, in the case of the Flying Boots at the German-American *Volksfest*, the performers have changed in nationality and in space. It is different agents with different cultural contexts that produce the (variation of) the repetition and thus a new transnational (re)creation of the American embodied episteme which can no longer be attributed to one nation or culture. "Histories and trajectories become visible through performance, although recognizing the challenges and limits of decipherability remains a problem," Taylor claims (271). The Eschenbach line dancers make obvious the German-American historical and contemporary trajectories; their dance and the memory work it does, however, refuses clear categorization. They also direct our focus to the repertoire and the power of the

repertoire for a study of memory—in transnational as well as in not so transnational contact zones. “It is imperative now,” Taylor urges, and “overdue” to “pay attention to the repertoire” (27). She continues: “Part of what performance and performance studies allow us to do, then, is take seriously the repertoire of embodied practices as an important system of knowing and transmitting knowledge. The repertoire, on a very practical level, expands the traditional archive used by academic departments in the humanities (Taylor 26).”⁹

Coda—What Is Memory Anyway?

In 1945, American troops approached the region and triggered an intense period of German-American encounters. Today, Germans in the Bavarian city of Regensburg, for example, march towards Kullman’s Diner to enjoy a burger, fries, coleslaw, and a coke. They engage in an activity that Walter Scott from Providence, Rhode Island, envisioned in 1872, when he created the first diner, or that Sam Kullman envisioned in 1927, when he founded the Kullman Dining Car Company. Thomas Feucht in collaboration with Kullman brought Kullman’s Diner to Germany in 1999—literally from New Jersey to Bremerhaven. Kullman’s decidedly perpetuates an American diner design; a glimpse into the menu confirms the American original. Kullman’s opened in Regensburg in 2003. It has been a local favorite and a story of success ever since. Visitors to Kullman’s accept and participate in the well-known American practice of ‘wait to be seated’ before they engage in the—be it stereotypical or not—American embodied practice of eating a burger and thus contribute to the repertoire. Do they consciously perpetuate American cultural content and thus enact some sort of American memory? Some may do so, many may not. Even if they do not, they reiterate restored behavior, which may, to repeat Schechner, be “independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. [...] The original ‘truth’ or ‘source’ of the behavior may be lost” (*Between Theater and Anthropology* 35). Just as “normalization has rendered [Butler’s performativity of gender] invisible” (Taylor 5), the normalization of eating a Burger

9 Also see Bauridl and Wiegink, “Toward an Integrative Model of Performance in Transnational American Studies,” for a call for the interdisciplinary integration of cultural performance into the agenda of transnational American Studies. This endeavor is pursued by the DFG Research Network “Cultural Performance in Transnational American Studies” (Wiegink and Bauridl). For calls for an awareness for performance studies (in American Studies), see especially Román; or Desmond; also see Wiegink.

in Regensburg may have rendered invisible the American character of eating a burger, i.e. the performance of (stereotypical) Americanness. If “cultural memory is an embodied practice” (Taylor 50), the customers at Kullman’s consciously or unconsciously perform American memory work in the sense of perpetuating American cultural practice—a cultural practice that has lost, or not, its Americanness and gained transnationality. Regensburg is not Kullman’s only German location, and there are further locations outside Bavaria. To discuss whether Kullman’s is a result of the occupation and the continued American presence in at least some parts of Germany or whether it is just another instance of the often-cited globalization of American culture would be speculation. Eating a burger in the German-American contact zone of Bavaria, however, is a cultural performance that is always situated in a cultural, social, and political space that inevitably carries the history of liberation, occupation, and ongoing German-American encounters. Eating a burger in the German-American contact zone of Bavaria, then, is a cultural performance that enacts transnational (and supposedly) American memory in a landscape that is characterized by a myriad of post-wwii transnational / (heterogeneous) American / (heterogeneous) German memories and by ongoing German-American encounters that continue to be generated by the past history of liberation and occupation. Liberation was the starting point for the American presence in the region. Eating a burger continues not only American cultural memory, it continues the post-wwii German-American encounters of its setting and thus implicitly or explicitly commemorates German-American encounters in Bavaria in a transnational way.



FIGURE 1 *Elvis Exhibit. Burglengenfeld. 2012. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.*



FIGURE 2 German-American Volksfest. Grafenwöhr, 2012. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.



FIGURE 3 *9/11 Memorial Oberviechtach, 2013.* PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.



FIGURE 4 *Flossenbürg, 2014.* PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR.

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The Promise of Democracy for the Americas: U.S. Diplomacy and the Meaning(s) of World War II in El Salvador, 1941–1945

*Jorrit van den Berk**

Warning: The High Principles Expressed Herein Are Purely
Propaganda, to Be Taken Seriously Only at Your Own Risk.

WILLIAM KREHM, 1944 (20)

In early 1944, radio listeners in El Salvador were assured several times a day that “[Y]ou don’t ask for liberty, you conquer it. United, the United Nations will triumph.” Somewhat anticlimactically, the radio announcer continued with the advice to “take Mejoral” for “your headaches” (Krehm 21). Sterling Products, the U.S. manufacturer of Mejoral aspirins, had its slogan from the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), the U.S. government’s agency for the coordination of wartime relations with the Latin American republics, which blanketed the continent with pro-Allies propaganda during World War II. William Krehm, a U.S. journalist critical of his country’s policies in Latin America, claimed at the time that the OCIAA was “blissfully unaware of the dynamite it was sending into Latin America’s tyrant-ridden lands.” El Salvador was indeed “tyrant-ridden:” the dictatorial regime of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez had been in power for thirteen years by the end of the war. Things were about to change, however. During the spring of 1944 a failed military uprising followed by a successful civilian strike toppled Martínez and inaugurated an all-too brief experiment with civilian, democratic government in El Salvador. Appropriately, the same radio announcer who told Salvadorans to take liberty (and aspirins) also announced the fall of the dictator (Krehm 21).

This brief anecdote raises a number of important questions about U.S. war-time diplomacy in El Salvador. Firstly, what role did authoritarian regimes

* This article references to a large degree hitherto unpublished sources from the National Archive of the United States. In order to facilitate the reading experience, the references to archival material have been relegated to the footnotes.

such as that of Martínez play in the U.S.-led wartime alliance against European dictatorship and Japanese militarism? Secondly, how did the U.S. government, through the activities of the OCIAA, frame its informational programs for El Salvador? Following up on that question, how were these programs received by various audiences in the country? Did they lead to the anti-dictatorial revolution against Martínez, as William Krehm seems to imply? Lastly, how did U.S. diplomats respond to that revolutionary activity? In answering these questions, this contribution seeks to explain what meaning U.S. public diplomacy programs acquired in the context of Salvadoran politics during World War II.[†]

Considering the extent of wartime propaganda activities in Latin America, several scholars suggest that a connection must exist between U.S. public diplomacy and the (temporary) demise of dictatorship throughout the Western Hemisphere. Exactly how such propaganda was received by local audiences remains unclear, however. It is unlikely, as Krehm believed, that U.S. propaganda *caused* resistance to local dictatorships, especially since such opposition *predates* the foundation of the OCIAA. A key assumption behind the argument set forth in this text is that the anti-authoritarian movement that surfaced in El Salvador by the end of the war was largely indigenous in its origins and ideologies.¹ As this paper will show, however, Salvadorans regularly adopted the language of the war and referred to wartime programs when they confronted U.S. diplomats with the contradictions in their nation's foreign policy. The latter were slow to recognize that the ideology of World War II could have any

† A note on terminology: throughout this text I will use terms such as “public diplomacy,” “informational programs” or “propaganda” interchangeably to refer to U.S. efforts to influence audiences in El Salvador. My use of these terms is not intended to convey my judgment on the activities of the OCIAA, nor does it reflect adherence to any particular theoretical framework. Following conventions in the field of Latin American studies, I will use the term “America” to refer to nations of the Western Hemisphere and “U.S.” to refer to the United States of America.

1 Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America since 1920* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1987), 101; Patricia Parkman, *Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador. The Fall of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez* (University of Arizona Press: Tucson, 1988), 32–33; Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, “Introduction: The Postwar Conjuncture in Latin America: Democracy, Labor, and the Left,” in idem eds., *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944–1948* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1992), 1–32, there 6–7; David Rock, “War and Postwar Intersections: Latin America and the United States,” in idem ed., *Latin America in the 1940s: War and Postwar Transitions* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1994), 15–40, there 19–21; Thomas M. Leonard, “The OCIAA in Central America: The Coordinating Committees at Work,” in Gisela Cramer and Ursula Prutsch eds., *¡Américas Unidas! Nelson A. Rockefeller's Office of Inter-American Affairs (1940–1946)* (Vervuert: Frankfurt, 2012), 283–312, there 288.

meaning in El Salvador and, in the end, U.S. diplomacy proved too inflexible to adapt to the new directions that Salvadorans set out for themselves. In that sense, the current text adds a critical note to this volume by tracing the potential and ultimate insignificance of “liberation” in a region that the United States had long considered its own “backyard.”

Both U.S. public diplomacy and its relation with Latin American dictators during World War II should be understood against the background of the rise and decline of the Good Neighbor policy during the 1930s and 1940s. Observing Latin American hostility toward U.S. military, diplomatic, and economic intervention throughout the 1920s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration had adopted the so-called Good Neighbor policy toward the nations of the Western Hemisphere when it came into office in 1933. The backbone of that policy was U.S. recognition of the sovereignty and equality of all the nations of the Americas and, by extension, the adoption by the United States of the nonintervention principle. The Roosevelt administration withdrew U.S. troops from Haiti and Nicaragua; negotiated an end to the Platt Amendment to the Cuban constitution, which gave the U.S. the right to intervene in the island's politics; and ended the non-recognition policy by which Washington had tried to push Salvadoran President Martínez out of office.

Historical assessments of the Good Neighbor policy and especially the practice of nonintervention have developed over time. According to Bryce Wood, it was because of the Good Neighbor that, by 1939, “the United States had established, with the assistance of certain Latin American states, an unprecedented set of relationships productive of a nearly solidary American attitude toward threats from without.” Especially when compared to the lack of Latin American enthusiasm for cooperation during World War I and the later Korean War, the support that the United States received from its Latin American allies during World War II was, according to Wood, the greatest triumph for the Good Neighbor. Only toward the end of the war did U.S. interventionism reemerge when Ambassador Spruille Braden attempted to preempt the election of Juan Perón in Argentina. From that time onward, the Good Neighbor was steadily “dismantled” (Wood 1961 and 1985).

Wood's argument represents a generation of historians who regard U.S.-Latin American cooperation during World War II as a high point for the Good Neighbor policy, before the relationship soured again during the Cold War. More critical voices emphasize the continuity between the early 20th century and the Cold War (see Gilderhus 91–96). According to Lars Schoultz, for example, the Good Neighbor represents only a tactical break with the interventionist past. While military incursions ended, Washington started to rely on local dictators to protect its interests during the 1930s. The war only strengthened these ties.

The U.S. supported the dictators in the interest of local stability and the dictators supported the U.S. in order to be eligible for lend-lease aid, flexible trade and financial agreements, and prestigious United Nations status. After the war, the strong bonds with local military regimes “would facilitate the transmission of anticommunist values to Latin America” (Schoultz 310).

The wartime alliance of American republics, which eventually included every nation but Argentina, was undoubtedly a great diplomatic victory for the Roosevelt administration. However, Schoultz raises an important issue by drawing our attention to the fact that before, during, and after the war, the United States worked closely with authoritarian regimes, especially in Central America and the Caribbean. Yet, wartime diplomacy was not only an extension of earlier policies. It was mainly during the war itself that the celebrated non-intervention principle was silently abandoned. Washington introduced new treaties for the use of Central American airfields and harbors; arrangements to share intelligence; assistance in the blacklisting of German economic interests; collaboration with local security forces, including the supply of lend-lease equipment; extensive propaganda campaigns to sell the purpose of the war to American allies; programs for the deportation of Axis nationals; and many more initiatives. During the war years, U.S. legations (embassies from 1943 onward) in Central America were expanded to be able to deal with the vast amounts of work relating to the war. Cultural attachés and FBI agents (“legal attachés”) were sent to all American republics to conduct propaganda programs and to gather intelligence on “non-American” activities. These men were joined by military instructors who were to ease the introduction of U.S. armaments to the sister republics and economic advisors to wage economic war on Axis nationals. These new activities were also accompanied by more benign programs for the improvement of roads, hospitals, sewers, agricultural techniques, and educational programs.²

Recent historical interpretations acknowledge that Washington abided by the nonintervention principle more or less faithfully through the 1930s, but

2 An overview of State Department wartime programs can be found in: John E. Findling, *Close Neighbors, Distant Friends: United States-Central American Relations* (Greenwood Press: New York, 1987), chapter 5. For military programs, see: John Child, *Unequal Alliance: The Inter-American Military System, 1938–1978* (Westview Press: Boulder, 1980), 27–62. For an overview of cultural programs, see: Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1981), 35–61. For local economic developments and the role of U.S. economic warfare, see: Bulmer-Thomas, *Political Economy*, 87–100. Also consult references below for information on specific programs and activities.

abandoned it during, rather than after the war. Max Paul Friedman argues that “overblown fears of an external threat to the hemisphere brought about the end of the Good Neighbor policy during the Second World War, not the Cold War.” As Friedman demonstrates, U.S.-German economic rivalry and exaggerated concerns for the existence of a Nazi “fifth column” in Latin America escalated into a U.S.-led deportation program during the war. Part of a broader program of economic warfare against German interests in the Western Hemisphere, thousands of Germans and Japanese and hundreds of Italians were deported from Latin American nations and interned in the United States on the mere assumption that they posed a threat to U.S. security. Much like Schoultz, Friedman observes that it was the dictatorships of Latin America who were especially keen to cooperate with the United States. Many local strongmen used the program to their advantage as the properties of German deportees were expropriated, offering new opportunities for enrichment and graft. The democratic nations more carefully guarded their sovereignty against U.S. interference and tried to protect the interests of deportees who were often long-time residents or citizens of the nations in question (Friedman 230).

U.S. public diplomacy in Latin America should be understood within this context of wartime interventionism. In order to strengthen “economic and cultural ties with Latin America and ensure hemispheric solidarity in the face of a growing Axis presence,” the Roosevelt administration founded the Office for the Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics (later Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, or OCIAA). Headed by Nelson Rockefeller, the OCIAA initiated a range of projects, but it is best known for its cultural activities. Combining private initiative with government coordination, the OCIAA promoted the dissemination of Hollywood movies, radio shows, news items, and printed materials throughout the continent. According to Uwe Lübken, policymakers regarded the cultural programs as a benign alternative to forceful intervention, which was still taboo under the Good Neighbor.³ When viewed in the context of other wartime programs, however, it is clear that OCIAA propaganda represents one side to a more interventionist policy.

3 Uwe Lübken, “Playing the Cultural Game: The United States and Nazi Threat to Latin America,” in Cramer and Prutsch, *¡Américas Unidas!*, 53–76. For more information on the OCIAA, consult other articles in the aforementioned volume as well as: Darlene J. Sadlier, *Americans All. Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy during World War II* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 2012).

The OCIAA headquarters in Washington relied on coordinating committees in each Latin American nation to adapt its programs to local contexts and to disseminate information through such sources as were available. Coordinating committees were established in Central America in 1942 and their staffs of volunteers were recruited from U.S. businessmen with connections in local communities. Each committee worked with certain constraints, the most important of which were the interests that their voluntary staffs took in their task; the attitudes of the local government and the local U.S. embassy; and the communications infrastructure of the host nation. In El Salvador, the most important obstacle to the committee's effectiveness turned out to be the limited infrastructure of the country, especially outside of the capital city of San Salvador. The committee distributed news materials to newspaper, spread posters and pamphlets, offered scripts for radio programs, and showed movies, among a variety of smaller activities. However, due to poor transportation facilities and restricted radio ownership, the committee's main audiences were the upper and middle classes of the capital.

According to Thomas Leonard, the OCIAA informational programs for Central America concentrated on "the military strength of the United States, its wealth, resources, and productive capacity; its traditional concept of freedom and tolerance, and its lack of imperialistic motives; its sincere effort toward improved social conditions for all; and the importance of culture in American life." By mid-1943, the coordinating committee in El Salvador had come to focus on the themes of inter-American solidarity and postwar economic and social ties. The U.S. ambassador in El Salvador also noted widespread attention for the Four Freedoms and Atlantic Charter, which were, "blazoned by us throughout El Salvador in the form of posters." As the coordinating committees kept careful track of their audience's main interests, we know that the middle and upper classes in Central America expected a postwar world with strong ties to the United States and the possibility of greater participation in more democratic governments. Whether those expectations were directly linked to U.S. programs, is, in the words of Leonard, one of "the most perplexing aspects" of the coordinating committees' work.⁴

4 The discussion of the OCIAA in El Salvador is based on: Thomas M. Leonard, "The OIAA in Central America," in Cramer and Prutsch, *Américas Unidas!*, 283–312. The quotation of the U.S. ambassador is from: Ambassador Walter Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1123, December 30, 1943, National Archives of the United States at College Park, MD, Record Group 84: Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Legation in San Salvador [henceforth: PRES], box 82, class 800: Salvador.

As the OCIAA set up its activities, Central America's small middle sector was expanding and asserting itself. Through natural increase and rural-urban migration, the middle sector had become an identifiable element in the populations of Central American capitals by the 1940s. However, this growing class was not represented in the political system. In El Salvador, upwardly mobile groups such as university students and junior military officers saw their social advancement cut short by the Martínez regime, which was dominated by a stagnant and aging group of senior officers and government officials. During the war, moreover, economic growth in Central America's urban centers fell behind due to the decline in commerce, causing further frustration for middle sector groups. These social and economic factors combined with the "espousal of the Atlantic Charter and Roosevelt's Four Freedom" would add up to "a powerful case for political change," according to Victor Bulmer-Thomas. The developing middle class opposition movement was "heartened" by the idealism of the war, Patricia Parkman finds, because it conferred respectability and legitimacy to its ambitions.⁵

As the United States fought the dictators of Europe and the OCIAA spread its propaganda about political freedoms and socio-economic improvements, Washington worked closely with several dictators in Latin America. U.S. policy-makers did not perceive this paradox until it was pointed out to them by local oppositionists (on which more below). Through the early years of the war the cooperative attitude of Central American dictators was actually instrumental in allowing U.S. diplomats to uphold the fiction that the nonintervention policy was still valid. Authoritarian regimes had been established throughout the hemisphere following the economic and social turmoil of the Great Depression. In Central America, Jorge Ubico (1931–1944) came to power in Guatemala, Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1931–1944) in El Salvador, Tiburcio Carías Andino (1932–1948) in Honduras, and Anastasio Somoza García (1936–1956) in Nicaragua. The strongmen of the Caribbean were Rafael Trujillo (1930–1961) of the Dominican Republic and Fulgencio Batista of Cuba (1933–1959). Having adopted the nonintervention policy, Washington did not contest the rise of dictatorship in its sphere of influence, although Friedman argues that

5 Bulmer-Thomas, *Political Economy*, 100–104, quote on 101; Parkman, *Nonviolent Insurrection*, 30–45, quote on 32–33. Victor Hugo Acuña Ortega adds an important caveat to these findings, showing that some middle class groups had a vested interest in the continuation of the authoritarian state: Victor Hugo Acuña Ortega, "The Formation of the Urban Middle Sectors in El Salvador, 1910–1944," in Aldo Lauria-Santiago and Leigh Binford, *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society, and Community in El Salvador* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 39–49.

the dictators' pro-American attitude and status-quo policies made it easier for the United States to assume the role of a good neighbor (Frieman 230). In any event, all were staunch allies of the U.S. during World War II.

Many programs that were deemed essential to the war effort in the Americas could only be accomplished with the consent or active collaboration of local governments, whether they were democratic or authoritarian. Economic warfare against German companies, for example, could only be executed through cooperation with the local governments—to the point where the U.S. legation in Guatemala prepared the laws that the local government needed to implement to make economic warfare possible.⁶ While the rhetorical commitment to the Good Neighbor remained, new definitions and justifications were necessary to harmonize wartime activities with a supposed attitude of nonintervention. In 1941, for example, U.S. Minister to El Salvador Robert Frazer argued that encouraging Salvadoran newspapers to print “solidarity-of-the-Americans propaganda” did not constitute intervention: “[T]o regard the exercise of such an influence [over the Salvadoran press] as circumscribing their independence is, we think, perhaps an extreme view. As a matter of fact, the entire press of Salvador is pro-Pan-American anyhow, so that no paper would be violating its principles or sacrificing its ideals by printing [U.S. propaganda].”⁷ Frazer’s argument is ingenious, since the Salvadoran press was strictly censored by the Martínez regime.

Interestingly, the Department of State became concerned about the “impression” prevalent in some Latin American countries that the United States had “abandoned its popular nonintervention policy during the War.” The Axis nations were using this sentiment to their advantage, the Department believed, with propaganda about “Yankee Imperialism”: “The pretext for this propaganda is the increasing activity of this government in various enterprises on the soil of the other American republics: the construction and operation of military and naval bases, the Proclaimed List, deportations, a wide variety of economic operations (ranging from the war-connected rubber programs to projects with a pronounced ‘welfare’ aspect, such as the health and sanitation program).”

6 John Moors Cabot, memorandum, October 17, 1941, National Archives of the United States, College Park, MD, Record Group 59: Department of State Lot Files [henceforth: Lot Files], entry 211: Individual Countries [henceforth: entry 211], box 46, folder marked Guatemala, 1936–1942.

7 Minister Robert Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1437, July 2, 1941, PRES, Strictly Confidential Files [henceforth: SCF], box 5, class 891: Public Press.

The Department patently rejected the notion that such activities were acts of intervention: “After all, intervention on behalf of special groups in the United States [a reference to business interests] has not been revived.” Furthermore, all U.S. activities were executed on the basis of “collaboration” and “what can honestly be described as [the] interests of the whole hemisphere.” This turned out to be the magic formula. As long as local collaborators could be found and as long as the objectives of the United States could be described as serving a common cause, the Department was not, in fact, intervening: “We must get off the defensive. The expression ‘nonintervention’ should give way to ‘collaboration,’ as a sign of changed conditions.”⁸ Although it was not acknowledged at the time, the problem remained that local collaborators might use their connections to U.S. programs to increase their own power and prestige. Also, there was no democratic method by which the definition of the “common good” could be established—the State Department would take it upon itself to determine that.

In their search for local “collaborators,” U.S. legations in Central America relied more and more on their association with the local dictatorships. In the wartime context, the military dictators of Central America turned out to be peculiarly useful allies. Not only were they particularly keen to follow U.S. policies, they also had standing armies, intelligence networks, permissive laws against subversion, and propaganda machines that could—with a little help and direction from the United States—be employed to fight the perceived fifth column threat. The only liberal country in Central America, Costa Rica, was at a disadvantage in this regard: “German and Italian activities in Costa Rica date from the very beginning of the Nazi and fascist regimes in Germany and Italy. This is accounted for by the fact that [...] the Government of Costa Rica is democratic in every sense of the word and activities could therefore be carried on without any hindrance.”⁹ Ironically then, the most democratic republic of the isthmus was most vulnerable to totalitarian subversion.

The argument that the United States supports right-wing dictatorships to maintain stability and security in its sphere of influence is well-known (see Schmitz 1999). The experience of the war strengthened that tendency in specific ways. U.S. diplomats developed new justifications for collaborating with

8 “Propaganda about Relations between this Government and the other American Republics,” September 17, 1942, Lot Files, American Republic Affairs, entry 214: Miscellaneous Memorandums, January 4, 1938 to September 12, 1947 [henceforth: entry 214], box 66, folder marked Chapin and Toop, 1941 to December 1942.

9 Cabot, Strictly Confidential Memorandum for Mr. Overton G. Ellis, n.d. (September, 1941), PRES, SCF, box 42, volume VI, class 500: Congresses and Conferences.

dictatorships in the context of a global crisis and a local fifth column threat. Such justifications would reemerge during the Cold War. The authoritarian regimes in Central America benefitted from military missions and FBI instructors who were sent to Central America to train the local security forces in the use of modern weapons, intelligence gathering, and surveillance—increasing the regimes' capability to control their own populations.¹⁰ The OCIAA financed the dictators' official press and supplied upbeat "information" about the war and the United Nations—thus strengthening the impression that the dictators were important allies of the United States. Economic advisors helped the local authorities to nationalize German interest—giving the regimes new sources for graft and illegal enrichment. U.S. engineers built roads, sewers, hospitals, and schools with U.S. funds—but the local leaders claimed that the new services were the result of their modernizing policies.

This complex interplay of developments on international and national levels—U.S. wartime interventionism, including the propaganda activities of the OCIAA, and the existence of a friendly dictatorship, together with an expanding, restless middle class—would shape the meaning of World War II in El Salvador. Throughout the war years, the Martínez regime and local oppositionists competed with each other to lay claim to the war on fascism in order to translate their goals to U.S. diplomats. That process began even before the United States entered the war. In September, 1941, a group of former government employees, urban professionals, and young intellectuals formed two new organizations: The *Acción Democrática Salvadoreña* (Salvadoran Democratic Action, ADS) and the *Juventud Democrática Salvadoreña* (Democratic Salvadoran Youth, JDS). Formally, these were not political parties, but civic organizations that wished to support the Allied cause by promoting democratic ideals and counteracting the spread of totalitarianism. The regime was not duped, however. Shortly after the founding of said organizations, the Salvadoran minister of foreign affairs visited U.S. Minister Frazer to warn him that ADS and JDS were in fact anti-government parties and therefore, naturally, communist and pro-Nazi. The Martínez government was somewhat embarrassed by the situation because it was on record as promoting democracy and opposing totalitarianism itself, but, argued the president and the foreign minister,

10 John H. Coatsworth, *Central America and the United States: The Clients and the Colossus* (Maxwell Macmillan: New York, 1994), 45–48 argues that U.S. military aid significantly increased the power and the prestige of local military establishments. Leonard argues that the influence of U.S. military aid was slight: Thomas M. Leonard, "Central America: On the Periphery," in Leonard and John F. Bratzel eds., *Latin America during World War II* (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, 2007), 50–53.

the present world crisis required unity and patriotism in the face of threats. If the members of ADS and JDS were genuinely interested in the defense of democracy, they could join El Salvador's sole legal party: the *Partido Nacional Pro-Patria*. The fact that they did not proved that they were only interested in creating division. Some weeks later, ADS and JDS were outlawed.¹¹

The U.S. legation had witnessed opposition to the Martínez regime before, most notably in 1932 when indigenous communities in western El Salvador rebelled, subsequently to be massacred by government troops (see Anderson 2001). These episodes had generally been disregarded by U.S. diplomats as being purely local affairs. This time it was different, because the members of ADS and JDS were not peasants, professional politicians, or disgruntled army officers, but former government officials, physicians, lawyers, and professors—in a word, close friends and acquaintances of the legation.¹² Moreover, in the parlance of democracy, the new organizations found a theme that related to traditional Salvadoran civic culture, the interests of its middle class supporters, and the war against fascism. Frazer reported to the Department that it was ridiculous to characterize ADS as communist or pro-Nazi, as the local government did, because its members were “all prominent, conservative and patriotic. Most of them are known to have resigned office because, although formerly in full accord with the President [Martínez], they disagree with the extension of his presidential term and his continuation of a de facto dictatorship.” When, in October, the government formally restricted the right of assembly and presented this as a measure to deal with enemy activities, Frazer reported that the

11 Francisci Lime to Frazer, September 19, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica; Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1715, September 22, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica; Frazer, Memorandum on Visits by Drs Araujo and Avila re New Democratic Parties, September 23, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica; Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1720, September 24, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica; Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1727, September 24, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica.

12 Later in the war, Ambassador Walter Thurston and members of his embassy would describe known members of the opposition as “competent,” “outstanding,” and “highly reputed” attorneys, journalists, and engineers. They were also described as “pro-American” and “friends of the embassy,” several of whom had visited the United States on official exchanges or had studied there. Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1156, January 8, 1944, PRES, box 98, volume XIII, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1351, March 2, 1944, PRES, box 98, volume XIII, class 800: Salvador. General; Ellis, Confidential Memorandum for the Ambassador, March 14, 1944, PRES, box 98, volume XIII, class 800: Salvador. General.

decree was obviously directed at “legitimate” opposition such as that of ADS and that it was enacted “in spite of President Martínez’ reiterated statements of his belief in and support for democracy.”¹³

Notwithstanding Frazer’s reports, only the middle level of the Department demonstrated a passing interest in the matter. The suppression of ADS and JDS almost coincided with the United States’ formal entry into the war. When former members of the, now illegal, ADS visited Frazer at the legation on December 18, only 11 days after Pearl Harbor, the minister could not help but sympathize with those “sincere men of high ideals, actuated by unselfish, patriotic motives.” They left a manifesto with the minister that expounded their ideals, perhaps in a last effort to involve U.S. diplomats in their conflict with the regime. Writing his report on the meeting that evening, Frazer regretfully noted that there was nothing more he could do to help, since the Department had already been notified about the situation but, under the circumstances, could not act “without indulging in improper criticism of President Martínez’ administration.” “This memorandum, therefore, is being filed merely to complete the records.”¹⁴

Minister Frazer’s experience with ADS and JDS is indicative of attempts by Central American actors, both representatives of the regime and its opposition, to appropriate the language of the World War and to use it, successfully at times, to translate their own politics to U.S. diplomats in a way that would elicit attention and sympathy. It was already noted how the experience of war led U.S. diplomats to construct new justifications for their cooperation with Latin American dictators in their fight against European dictators. It should be stressed, however, that local leaders like Martínez actively contributed to the construction of that perception.

In early 1943, for example, Martínez told the newly arrived U.S. ambassador, Walter Thurston, that “liberty” in El Salvador was not the kind of liberty that a North American might be used to—playing up to U.S. prejudices regarding Latin Americans’ “political maturity” and implicitly rejecting the applicability

13 Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1720, September 24, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica; Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1740, October 3, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica.

14 Secretary of State to Frazer, instruction 464, October 8, 1941, PRES, box 4, class 800: Government; Frazer to the Secretary of State, despatch 1777, October 16, 1941, PRES, box 4, class 801: Government; Frazer, Memorandum on Call at Legation of Dr. Francisco A. Lima and Six Other Members of the Central American Committee of the Acción Democrática Salvadoreña, December 18, 1941, PRES, SCF, box 4, class 800: Accion Democratica.

of the Four Freedoms to El Salvador. At the same time, the regime tried to convince the population that the United States supported it. In his weekly speeches, which were themselves modelled on Roosevelt's fireside chats, Martínez regularly referred to wartime cooperation and the many U.S. projects to improve roads, sanitation, and agriculture in El Salvador—suggesting that his regime provided an irreplaceable link between Salvadorans and Washington's largesse. Complementing the government's public propaganda was a "whispering campaign": planted rumors that suggested that the United States would never accept a change of regime during the war. Naturally, Martínez needed some more substantial signs of U.S. support to back up his claims. So, on July 7, Thurston was officially invited to attend a banquet in Santa Anna in honor of Martínez, which turned out to be the official kick-off of Martínez' latest reelection campaign. The embassy found out about the real purpose of the banquet when it was too late to decline the formal invitation outright without causing something of a diplomatic scandal. Even more deviously, the Salvadoran regime attempted to get a U.S. fiat for constitutional changes that were necessary to keep Martínez in power beyond 1944 by claiming that a review of the country's first law was necessary to allow for the expropriation and sale of "Axis" possessions in El Salvador.¹⁵

15 Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1, January 14, 1943, PRES, box 76, class 123; Thurston; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 214, March 23, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 802.1: Executive Departments; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 259, April 6, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 802.1: Executive Departments; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 269, April 8, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 802.1: Executive Departments; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 115, February 19, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 803: Legislative Branch; Ellis to Thurston, September 9, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; Gerhard Gade, untitled memorandum, July 19, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 624, July 19, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to Mauricio Callardo, July 24, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 618, July 28, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 498, June 26, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 711.3: Proclaimed List; Acting Secretary of State to Thurston, instruction 259, July 27, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 711.3: Proclaimed List; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 966, November 16, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 711.3: Proclaimed List; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1080, December 16, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 711.3: Proclaimed List; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1119, December 29, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 711.3: Proclaimed List.

The underground, middle class opposition movement also aligned its goals with those of the war and also sought the support of the U.S. embassy. Trying to avoid censorship, the opposition press published editorials and open letters to President Roosevelt on the ideals of the United Nations while, in the opinion of Ambassador Thurston, “transparently alluding to local conditions.” Oppositionists visited the ambassador and sent him letters and memoranda on the establishment of civic societies in support of the fight against fascism. While many of those communications were careful to avoid direct criticism of the regime, others were more explicit in their assertion that the Martínez government was a despotism “equal in pride and vanity to those we fight abroad.”¹⁶

Toward the end of 1943, a local student organization, the *Frente Democrático Universitario* (University Democratic Front, FDU), attempted to involve the embassy more directly in its protests against the regime. On December 4, the students presented a plan to Thurston to hold a parade on the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, supposedly to demonstrate their support for the Four Freedoms and Atlantic Charter and their solidarity with the people of the United States. The students asked the embassy for U.S. flags, pictures of President Roosevelt, and posters about the Four Freedoms to brighten their parade. The march would end at the embassy and its climax would be a speech in support of the United States, which (in its eventual form) called on “Latin American citizens” to “vigorously fight” the transplantation of fascism “on our continent.”¹⁷

Thurston’s natural inclination as an experienced “Good Neighbor” was to avert all attempts to draw him into local politics—which he did with considerable skill. On the one hand, the ambassador discouraged the “scoundrels” of the regime to seek his help. Being unable to ignore the invitation to the government’s banquet in Santa Anna outright, Thurston convinced the organizers that pressing matters prevented his attendance and sent two lower ranking officers in his place. Seeing through the regime’s ploy to involve the embassy in a reform

16 J. Cipriano Castro to Thurston, June 20, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Political Affairs, Salvador (translation from Spanish by the author). The 1943 files contain many opposition letters and embassy reports on opposition activity. For a non-exhaustive sample covering the month of September, see: “El Pueblo Salvadoreño” to Thurston, September 4, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Asociación Nacional Democrática to Thurston, September 21, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Frente Magisterial Democrático to Thurston, September 28, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador.

17 Rafael Eguizábal h. et al. to Thurston, December 4, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; “Discurso pronunciado ante la estatua de la Libertad por el Sr. Rafael Eguizábal h., a nombre del Frente Democrático Universitario, con ocasión del homenaje a los Estados Unidos de América, el 11 de diciembre de 1943,” PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador (translations from Spanish by the author).

of the constitution, the embassy informed authorities that the United States had requested no changes to the constitution; that Salvadoran laws enabling the prosecution of the war were deemed adequate; and that the government should make no attempt to convey the impression that the United States was in any way involved with the contemplated revisions. Perhaps Thurston's most significant action was to cancel the shipment of 1,000 U.S. sub-machineguns to the Salvadoran government. Navy intelligence had informed the legation that these weapons would probably be distributed to members of *Pro Patria*, to be used against the opposition in imitation of the 1932 massacre.¹⁸

Having deflected the regime's attempts to draw his embassy into local politics, Thurston felt that he had to take the same position in his dealings with the opposition. Thus, the ambassador often received oppositionists personally and politely listened to their criticism of the government, only to inform them that he was completely neutral in the matter. The case of the student demonstration offered something of a challenge since its purported intention was to support the allied cause. Initially, the ambassador informed the students that he appreciated their initiative, but that he could not support their parade of December 8, as President Roosevelt had recently vetoed a bill proposing to commemorate the yearly anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Having no intention to give up that easily, the students informed Thurston that they would happily postpone their parade to December 11, the day that war was declared on fascism. This time, Thurston could only offer the rather thin excuse that he wished all manner of celebration to be called off until final victory in the war was secure. Without the embassy's patronage, the student parade, intended to be a grand affair with much waving of the Salvadoran and U.S. flags, turned out to be a modest gathering of some 400 nervous students (one sixth of whom, in the estimate of the U.S. military attaché, were actually undercover policemen). While the government did not break up the supposedly pro-allied demonstration, some of the student

18 Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 430, June 4, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston to Callardo, July 24, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 618, July 28, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston, untitled memorandum, June 21, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; D.V.R., Memorandum on Projected Reform of the Salvadoran Constitution, June 29, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 1, class 800: El Salvador; Maleady to the Secretary of State, telegram 150, July 20, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 11, class 824: Equipment and Supplies; Major C.P. Baldwin to Thurston, July 23, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 11, class 824: Equipment and Supplies; Lieutenant R.W. Rastetter to Thurston, August 26, 1943, PRES, SCF, box 8, volume 11, class 824: Equipment and Supplies.

leaders were spirited away by what oppositionists had come to describe, tellingly, as the *Gestapo Martínista*. The disappointed students would later impress upon Thurston the analogies between Martínez' action and those of the European dictators and asked the ambassador's help to firmly implant the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter ("los Cuatro Libertades del Atlántico") in El Salvador.¹⁹

The failure of Salvadoran students to obtain the embassy's patronage did not mark the end of oppositionists' attempts to draw the United States into their local war with dictatorship. However, the tone of their communications became increasingly bitter. Through a local U.S. businessman named Winall Dalton, Thurston was in touch with several Salvadoran oppositionists who observed that while the State Department would not intervene against the dictators, it had in fact intervened on many occasions during the war and therefore had a "moral responsibility" toward the Salvadoran opposition. The United States, Dalton's friends said, had intervened to keep Nazi-sympathizers from being appointed to government offices; to deport Axis nationals and liquidate their property; to protect U.S. economic interests; to plant pro-Allied information in the papers and to supply lend-lease weapons to the regime. Furthermore, Minister Frazer had publically defended the Martínez regime and its cooperative stance during the war and had allowed the dictator to adopt the pro-democratic language of the war while he was in effect a "nazi-fascist." Aside from the political and economic angle:

You intervened, with sincere sentiments we desire to believe, to give us sewers and modern slaughterhouses, swimming pools and bridges, highways and schoolchildren feeding-programs. WHY? [...] We have had no voice in accepting these gifts you have brought. You have dealt with the illegal government your legation helped to perpetuate and your country

19 Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1070, December 13, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston, untitled memorandum, September 8, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 955, November 12, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston to Eguizábal h., December 4, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Eguizábal h. to Thurston, December 6, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston, untitled memorandum, December 11, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Eguizábal h. to Thurston, December 13, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1070, December 13, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; G.B. Massey to Thurston, December 14, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Oswaldo Escobar Velado and Eguizábal h. to Thurston, December 13, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador.

has sustained by recognition. We resent this Good Neighbor program of yours—we do not want charity and you offend us by extending it. You are a great and powerful people—why do you give us sewers but aid in the denial of Human Rights?

Dalton's letters on behalf of the opposition represent the gap that had come to exist between the United States' experience of fighting a war for democracy and the Central American experience of living under a U.S. supported dictatorship. "Will it not be shameful for you Americans to see our people mowed down by your General Grant tanks? Could you not find a better and honorable use for them—or scrap them if you have too many?" this letter pleaded, "To whom do you pretend to be a Good Neighbor? To the dictator or to the people of El Salvador?"²⁰

Salvadoran oppositionists did not ask the ambassador to put a halt to U.S. intervention. Rather, they pointed out that the United States should take responsibility for the ways in which it was influencing Salvadoran politics and acknowledge the promises it had made in the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. For example, an unnamed Salvadoran attorney, "whose friendship for the United States is not open to doubt," told a member of the embassy in a private conversation that "he considered the avowed policy of the United States not to interfere in the internal policies of the Latin American countries as prejudicial to the cause of democracy and liberty [...] asserting that thereby, the United States encouraged dictatorships in power." Rather, this Salvadoran believed that Washington should institute a policy of non-recognition of dictators. A manager of an independent (though censored) newspaper volunteered to a member of the embassy the "feelings of resentment and frustration" that his colleagues felt about the way in which U.S. activities in El Salvador were "allowed to be converted to the prestige of the Martínez administration." According to this newspaperman, the publishers of the independent newspapers had considered a "declaration of war" on the U.S. by refusing to publish the materials of the OCIAA. On another occasion however, the pressmen had considered to remind Nelson Rockefeller of the cooperation that they had furnished to him and to insist that he help them in return by getting Washington to withdraw its diplomatic recognition of the regime.²¹

20 Winnall A. Dalton to Thurston, December 28, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador.

21 Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1123, December 30, 1943, PRES, box 82, class 800: Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1156, January 8, 1944, PRES, box 98, volume XIII, class 800: Salvador. General; R.T.S., confidential memorandum, March 10, 1944, PRES, box 98, volume XIII, class 800: Salvador. General.

In January 1944, the coordinating committee in El Salvador also concluded that Washington's collaboration with Martínez impaired U.S. prestige, though it is not clear whether the activities of local oppositionists had any role to play in the formation of that view. At any rate, Ambassador Thurston could no longer ignore the issue. In a report to the Department, Thurston wrote with apparent surprise that "[o]ur pronouncements such as the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the Four Freedoms (the latter blazoned by us throughout El Salvador in the form of posters) are accepted literally by the Salvadorans as official endorsement of basic democratic principles which we desire to have prevail currently and universally." Salvadorans could not reconcile these pronouncements, the ambassador continued, with U.S. collaboration with the dictators of the American continent. As Thurston now understood the problem, "[t]he principle defect of a policy of non-intervention accompanied by propaganda on behalf of democratic doctrines simultaneously stimulates dictatorships and popular opposition to them." He counseled the Department to consider this dilemma, cautioning that "a problem of this complex nature is not susceptible of ready solution and the most that should be attempted at this time is an empirical search for improvements and careful study of plans for a revision of policy after the war."²²

Unfortunately for Thurston, Salvadorans would not await the outcomes of careful study. In May 1944, following a failed military uprising, a revolution started with a student strike that spread throughout the capital, gradually paralyzing the city. Remembered as the *huelga de los caídos brazos* (sit-down strike) the protests were a successfully executed campaign of non-violent resistance against state terror (see Parkman 1988). Initially, Martínez belittled the significance of the insurrection and blamed it on "agitators employing well-known Nazi war-of-nerves tactics." Ultimately, he tried to strike back by bringing armed peasants to the city. Martínez' cabinet ministers and advisors managed to convince the president not to let the situation escalate, however, and the latter decided to step down. The president's retirement was announced over the national radio on May 9, and power was transferred to a provisional government under the leadership of Minister of Defense Andrés Ignacio Menéndez. The opposition, which was not entirely satisfied by Menéndez' appointment, kept up the pressure for some days, until Martínez fled to Guatemala and the interim government announced its intention, in the language of the war, to govern "according to the norms of the most ample democracy, guaranteeing

22 Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1154, January 8, 1944, PRES, box 98, volume XIII, class 800: El Salvador.

the Four Freedoms proclaimed by Mr. Roosevelt.” While the U.S. had taken no active part in the change of government, Salvadorans closely identified Martínez’ resignation with the war effort: “Four Freedoms posters and improvised variations thereon were carried throughout the city by the multitude celebrating the occasion. Several demonstrations—some small and some numbering several thousand—paraded to [the U.S.] Embassy cheering the United States.”²³

The Salvadoran experiment with democracy lasted for only four months, but was characterized by feverish activity. Some ten political parties were formed—or came out into the open—in the two months after Martínez’ downfall. Some were radical, some reactionary, but all referred in some way or another to the democratic ideology of the war.²⁴ New newspapers were

23 Thurston to the Secretary of State, telegram 136, May 5, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, telegram 141, May 7, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, telegram 152, May 9, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; A.F.M., memorandum on political situation, May 10, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to Boaz Long, May 11, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, telegram 159, May 11, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1555, May 12, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: El Salvador; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1557, May 12, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Parkman, *Nonviolent Insurrection*, especially 62

24 This trend is noticeable in the names of the new parties: *Unión Democrática Nacional*, *Partido Emancipación Nacional*, *Frente Popular Salvadoreño*, *Partido Unión Demócrata*, *Partido del Pueblo Salvadoreño*, *Frente Social Republicano*, *Partido Fraternal Progresista*, and *Partido Unificación Social Democrática*. Not all parties were as progressive as their names suggested: *Partido Fraternal Progresista*, for example, was led by an old caudillo while *Partido Unificación Social Democrática* represented conservative coffee interests. It is indicative of the prestige of democratic principles that even the old coffee barons felt obliged to acknowledge it in the name of their party. Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1628, May 26, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1644, May 29, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1648, May 29, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1658, May 31, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1662, June 2, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1687, June 5, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Gerhard Gade to the Secretary of State, despatch 1753, June 22, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Gade to the Secretary of State, despatch 1756, June 24, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General.

published while existing newspapers began to express editorial comments freely, one such paper announcing that “The triumph of the United States of North America is our triumph. It signifies our independence.”²⁵ The revolution in El Salvador was part of a broader development throughout Latin America. Several long-lived dictatorships were toppled by opposition movements that were at least partly inspired by U.S. wartime propaganda. Jumping on the bandwagon, the Department of State initially expressed careful satisfaction with the trend and, in 1945, it instituted its own policy of denouncing “dictatorships and disreputable governments” in Latin America. Unfortunately, right-wing forces would reassert their power quickly, so that, by the beginning of the Cold War, many Latin American countries were under the sway of conservative and military governments.²⁶

The democratic revolution in El Salvador was ended in October 1944, by an army coup led by Colonel Osmín Aguirre y Salinas, a veteran of the 1932 slaughter and, in the view of the U.S. embassy, a fascist-sympathizer. Under pressure from local opponents and the United States, which initially refused to extend recognition to the new regime, Aguirre stepped aside for another president, but the liberal factions of El Salvador would not regain their strength after the October coup. Aguirre’s brief sway did lead to an important and perhaps definite break between the U.S. embassy and the democratic opposition. In March 1945, just days before Aguirre would step down, the Department of State decided to recognize the regime in order to be able to invite the Salvadoran government for a meeting of the American ministers of Foreign Affairs in Mexico.²⁷ From Washington’s perspective, the conference in Mexico was an important step in its evolving postwar policy toward Latin America, but many Salvadorans were shocked that the United States chose to work with a man of Aguirre’s background. In the days and weeks after recognition, the embassy in San Salvador received hate mail in such quantities that a separate file marked “protests against recognition” was created in its archives. Many letters accused the United States of fascist policies; some contained more traditional denunciations

25 Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1557, May 12, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General; Thurston to the Secretary of State, despatch 1576, May 17, 1944, PRES, box 99, volume XIV, class 800: Salvador. General.

26 Bethell and Roxborough, “The Postwar Conjunction,” 2, 5, and 18–19.

27 Cabot to Messersmith, December 21, 1944, Lot Files, entry 211, box 46, folder marked El Salvador, 1940–1947; Messersmith, Memorandum on Telephone Conversation with Toriello, February 14, 1945, Lot Files, entry 211, box 46, folder marked El Salvador, 1940–1947.

of “Yankee imperialism”; at least one letter was accompanied by a picture of Franklin Roosevelt adorned with swastikas.²⁸ While the fact that the Salvadoran opposition, as an organized body, never regained its old strength must have played a role in the development, it is noteworthy to observe that throughout the following years there was very little contact between the U.S. embassy and oppositionists.

At that time, the new U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, John Farr Simmons, still considered the group of “forward-looking liberals, small in number but strongly influenced by Jeffersonian concepts of democracy,” to be the best hope for El Salvador’s future. It was fortunate that these “liberals” were “more articulate” than in any other Central American countries and that they patterned their “ideals upon the democratic processes of our country.” However, their “liking and respect for the United States [suffered] a severe setback at the time of our recognition of the Aguirre regime.” If the United States was serious about its policy against “disreputable governments,” Simmons argued, the liberal element in El Salvador “should be given every encouragement [because] in the long run, [it] is our greatest hope for the future in the gradual establishment in this country of what we understand as the democratic process.” This advice came too late. Over the course of the next years, the Salvadoran military strengthened its grip on the country while Washington’s tolerance for political experimentation in Latin America declined as the Cold War set in.

U.S. diplomats never fully grasped what meaning the ideals of World War II, sold locally by the OCIAA, had for Salvadorans. Ambassador Walter Thurston understood how both the Martínez regime and local oppositionists claimed the war. The former stressed the need for solidarity and stability and used the expropriation of “Axis” properties as an excuse to tamper with the constitution. The latter pushed the analogy between the fight against European dictatorship and its own fight against dictatorship. Thurston believed that by adhering to the traditional nonintervention policy, he could avoid being entangled in local politics. However, the nonintervention policy was, to all intents and purposes, a fiction by 1943. The State Department itself emphasized “collaboration” for the “common good,” fully aware of the fact that this would mean cooperation with dictatorship in many Latin American countries. Liberally-minded Salvadorans came to resent U.S. wartime programs, including the democratically flavored propaganda of the OCIAA, because they could not harmonize what was to them obviously an

28 PRES, box 119, Volume XVII, class 800: Salvador. Protest against Recognition.

interventionist policy with the ambassador's refusal, based on the nonintervention principle, to distance his country from the Martínez regime.

By 1944, Thurston came to believe that a nonintervention policy combined with propaganda in favor of democracy stimulated both dictatorship and opposition against it. By framing the issue in these terms, however, Thurston revealed how far apart he and Salvadoran oppositionists really were. Firstly, the many letters that the embassy received from local oppositionists reveal that they did not regard nonintervention, by itself, as the central problem. The real problem was that U.S. wartime programs benefited the dictatorship of Martínez. Secondly, it is unlikely, as Thurston believed, that pro-democratic propaganda *caused* opposition to Martínez. Neither did Salvadoran oppositionists ever recognize the United States as the *source* of their ideals. Rather, they adopted the language of the war in their communications with U.S. diplomats in order to extend a moral claim on U.S. support in favor of the ideals that it was spreading through the work of the OCIAA. Lastly, by counseling the Department to subject the problem of dictatorship and democracy to careful empirical study after the end of the war, Thurston demonstrated a complete lack of understanding for the urgency of Salvadorans' desire for democracy. A little over four months after Thurston wrote his report, Martínez had been toppled.

Regarding the question of the meaning of U.S. wartime propaganda in El Salvador, this text has provided a partial answer. While scholars tend to portray the OCIAA's public diplomacy as comparatively benign cultural program, Salvadorans came to interpret it in the context of U.S. intervention and collaboration with a dictatorship that was quickly losing support. While the war and U.S. wartime informational programs undoubtedly contributed to the opposition against dictatorship in Central America, as several historians have already suggested, it is important to note that Salvadorans were not passive recipients of such propaganda. Whether Salvadoran oppositionists actively subscribed to the message of the OCIAA or believed that it reflected a serious commitment of the United States to the spread of democracy is a question that requires further research. What is clear from the many opposition letters and the placards and flags that Salvadorans carried in their marches on the embassy, is that they adopted the language of public diplomacy to recruit the United States in their local struggle for their liberation. If U.S. diplomats had been able to imagine a democratic future for Central America, it might well have offered Washington an opportunity to play a more positive role in the region than it did once the Cold War had begun.

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Liberation and Lingering Trauma: U.S. Present and Haitian Past in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*

Josef Raab

On the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, Emma Lazarus's sonnet "The New Colossus" identifies Lady Liberty as the "Mother of Exiles," proclaiming

... "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" (Lazarus 2007, 520)

Although Lady Liberty continues to lift her welcoming torch, its light nowadays increasingly ferrets out the "tired" and the "poor" in order to return them to their dangerous countries of origin, instead welcoming mainly the middle-class and wealthy.

American attitudes toward immigration have never been simple: in 1951, Oscar Handlin declared in his Pulitzer Prize-winning study, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*: "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants *were* American history" (Handlin 1951, 3, my emphasis). That history combines a need for cheap labor—from enslaved Africans between the 17th and the 19th century to Chinese railroad workers in the 19th century, and Mexican field workers under the Bracero Program in the 20th century—with xenophobia. Hence, it also includes restrictions on who is allowed into the country. These restrictions range from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the Immigration Act of 1924, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, and the curbing of immigration after September 11, 2001. The fence along much of the U.S. border with Mexico and the many deaths of illegal migrants risking the dangerous Arizona desert crossing are drastic illustrations of the continuing perception of the U.S.A. as the land of opportunity. However, this land provides liberation only selectively.

What each immigrant from a violent, impoverished world experiences, the longing for freedom from torture, poverty, and hunger, can never be achieved

exclusively by what the United States has to offer. From Mary Antin in the early 20th century to Edwidge Danticat in the early 21st century, American narratives of immigration and assimilation have presented the process as neither automatic nor easy. Political and religious freedoms cannot provide release from fear and traumata until the ability to tell and to accept the truth about the traumatic past is developed. Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* (1912), a classic account portraying the immersion into U.S. society as an almost religious conversion, is a case in point. The book and its author celebrate George Washington, for he "gave his land its liberty" (Antin 2001, 195) and they ask:

What more could America give a child? Ah, much more! As I read how the patriots planned the Revolution, and the women gave their sons to die in battle, and the heroes led to victory, and the rejoicing people set up the Republic, it dawned on me gradually what was meant by *my country*. The people all desiring noble things, and striving for them together, defying their oppressors, giving their lives for each other—all this it was that made *my country*. (Antin 2001, 190-91, emphasis in the original)

The freedom from oppression to which Antin refers relates to the anti-Semitism suffered in her own Eastern European Jewish past as well as to the U.S.A. as a destination for those trying to escape despotic rule around the world. The rosy picture painted by Antin as well as her sweeping rejection of her Russian Jewish self, the self that remembers being spat on as a Jew, the self that grew up hearing tales of pogroms in which babies were torn apart in front of their mothers, houses burned to the ground, the self that lived daily with fear of the worst, belied her reality though. We know that after a brilliant start as a model student in love with her adopted country and after her total conversion to what she deemed the American way, Antin collapsed into mental illness from which she never recovered, unable to repress any longer her memories of the violent anti-Semitism she had experienced in her Eastern European past. The freedom of the U.S. present could not wipe out the traumata of the Russian past. Her earlier proclamation that through her arrival in the United States she had been "made over" had been premature; a new identity required coming to terms with her past in the first place (Antin 2001, 3).

The sad story of Mary Antin throws into relief the immigrant problem of how to reconcile the unfree and often traumatic past in the migrant's country of origin with her or his new American life. Contemporary immigration narratives like those by Edwidge Danticat tend to recognize the importance of acknowledging the past and of integrating the past with the present by constantly traveling, mentally or geographically, between the old country and the

new America. Often trauma suffered in the past and on the journey enters into accounts of making it to or in the United States. Some recent examples of traumatic narratives of migration to the U.S. include Helena María Viramontes's short story "The Cariboo Café" (1984), Hector Tobar's novel *The Tattooed Soldier* (1998) and Cary Joji Fukunaga's film *Sin Nombre* (2009). In all of these narratives, which span the past 30 years, the migrants' point of departure lies in the Americas: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico. Their geographic focus reflects that over the past half-century migration from other parts of the New World to the United States has outnumbered migration from Europe or Asia. Migration from the Caribbean to the U.S.A. also fits into this picture. Because of the histories of violence and dictatorial rule that many parts of the Americas have experienced in the 20th and 21st century, trauma is often part of the cultural baggage that inter-American migrants carry with them.

The desire for a liberation from the history of violence and dictatorial rule that has shaped her native Haiti appears constantly in Edwidge Danticat's writings. Her texts reveal that trauma can never be totally left behind, that no liberation can be accomplished in the promised land without the individual's ability to tell the truth about the past and to find a way of accepting that truth. In Danticat's works, which contain explicit depictions of violence and terror, of the discovery of dark family secrets, of mothers and fathers whose past wrecks havoc on their children, of fears of being found out, of doubt rather than trust, we encounter characters struggling to patch together fragments of an unhappy, violent past from which no liberation can emerge until that past is acknowledged, the secrets are shared, guilt and victimhood are articulated, and the pieces are put together. A daughter discovers that she was conceived in a rape. A father reveals to his daughter that he tortured victims himself rather than having fled from a torture prison. Danticat makes it clear that such bitter truths need to be acknowledged rather than repressed in order for the individual to be able to move on into a more liberated state of being.

Her fiction is replete with examples of suffering and trauma. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), a child is separated without warning or preparation from a beloved aunt, discovers she bears the face of her mother's rapist, finds she must take care of her mother rather than relying on her for protection, and submits to brutal vaginal "testing" in order to prove her virginity. From the desperate voyage of the Haitian boat people in *Krik? Krak!* (1996) to the ethnic strife and torture in *The Farming of Bones* (1998), from the history of an uncle dying in United States detention by the Department of Homeland Security in *Brother, I'm Dying* (2007) to the portrayal of a Haitian town community marked by loss in *Claire of the Sea* (2013), Danticat depicts the will to come to terms with horrors and traumatic experiences.

In her narratives the migration from the Caribbean to the United States is triggered by the terror regime of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier in Haiti between 1957 and 1986.¹ As she said in an interview, the Haiti in which she spent her childhood and that nation’s violent history play a major role in her work: “while I have left Haiti, it’s never left me” (Adisa 2009, 345). Haiti is linked to community, but also to terror. Writing about the pain connected to her country of origin also has a therapeutic function for Danticat, who states: “My work allows me to exorcise my ghosts. I purge the pain from it. The words are my tears on the page” (Adisa 2009, 353).

Edwidge Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker* (2004) depicts the United States as a place of new beginnings—not necessarily welcoming, but still a refuge in the sense that the individual is free from state persecution and torture and can hope for a gradual healing of the wounds of the violent past. When the unnamed wife in the episode “Seven” arrives at New York’s JFK Airport from Port-au-Prince to be picked up by her husband, whom she had not seen in seven years, she symbolically relinquishes the accessories of her former life at customs: “the mangoes, sugarcane, avocados, the grapefruit-peel preserves, the peanut, cashew, and coconut confections, the coffee beans, which he [the customs official] threw into a green bin decorated with fruits and vegetables with red lines across them” as well as the “small packet of trimmed chicken feathers” she had brought for sexual stimulation (Danticat 2004, 40).² After this metaphoric shedding of her old life tied to Haiti, her new life grounded in the United States can begin. Symbolically, there is a threshold to cross:

suddenly she found herself before a door that slid open by itself, parting like a glass sea, and as she was standing there, blinking through the nearly blinding light shining down on the large number of people who had come to meet loved ones with flowers and placards and stuffed animals, the door closed again and when she moved a few steps forward it opened, and then she saw him. He charged at her and wrapped both his arms around her. And as he held her, she felt her feet leave the ground. It was when he put her back down that she finally believed she was really somewhere else, on another soil, in another country. (40-41)

1 It is estimated that 30,000 Haitians were murdered during the reign of these two dictators (Ibarrola Armendariz 2010, 32).

2 All subsequent quotations from Edwidge Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker* will be indicated only by page number.

The arrival is full of wonder and hope; the reunion with the husband promises the chance of a new start, something like the ‘make-over’ that Mary Antin mentions. While the new territory is at first disorienting and while she is initially afraid of leaving their room for fear of getting lost in the city, the wife gradually comes to feel more comfortable and liberated in the United States.

Danticat contrasts the lack of freedom in dictatorial Haiti to the liberation that seems possible in the U.S.A.: recalling the dictator François Duvalier threatening in a long speech that “blood would flow in Haiti as never before” if anyone tried to topple him (193), she presents the United States as a place offering shelter from past terror and present trauma. Her story cycle focuses less on past events than it does on living and coping with the Haitian past in the U.S. present. It is less about justice than it is about reconciliation. As Danticat once said, she does not set out to write Haitian history, but she “like[s] to write characters that are touched by it” (Adisa 2009, 352). In *The Dew Breaker* the liberation that is possible in the U.S. present (for both survivors and former torturers) is coupled with lingering trauma caused by the Haitian past. The liberation process requires communication with family or community; it is a long or even a life-long endeavor, involving struggle, continuous effort, and great emotional cost.

The Dew Breaker distinguishes itself from earlier, idealizing depictions of the U.S.A. (like Antin’s *Promised Land*) first through its form: the book has been called an episodic novel or a collection of nine interrelated stories.³ Each story or episode appears distinct, and the reader understands only by the very end of the book that the nine narratives are interlaced and that the fragments of the past patchwork have been quilted into a cycle. Second, the book blurs the distinction between perpetrator and victim of a terror regime. It offers insights into the traumata of both the former torturers and those who were at their mercy (as for example in “Night Talkers”). And third, the book might be placed in the tradition of Helen Epstein’s groundbreaking study, *Children of the Holocaust* (1979), which first drew attention to the ways in which the

3 Rebecca Fuchs opts for the characterization of *The Dew Breaker* as a story cycle that highlights fragmentation and interdependence. She points out “the tension between coherence and fragmentation as both the challenge and the decolonial potential of Caribbean thinking. This tension formally prevents a dominant narrative voice and order from controlling the reading process, which *The Dew Breaker* exemplifies both within its story chapters and with the form of the story cycle. By letting different narrators and focalizers speak in each story chapter, Danticat forces readers to constantly change their perspectives and to give up a comfortable overview in favor of a multiperspectival or prismatic view” (Fuchs 2014, 161).

trauma of a people is handed down from parent to child. In focusing on the next generation, Danticat illustrates the struggle of a daughter to reconcile the father whom she believed to be a victim with his confession that he was in fact a torturer.

The book starts and ends in the present and goes back to the recent and more remote past in the narratives in between. The focus of the initial episode is on the Haitian American Ka, a sculptor born in the United States who has never been to Haiti, and her parents, the barber Bienaimé and the beautician Anne, who fled to Brooklyn from Haiti some thirty-seven years earlier. Both parents avoid social contact and both are traumatized by their experiences under the Duvalier regime: Anne goes to church compulsively every day, and Bienaimé has frequent nightmares and is marked by a deep, long, “ropelike scar” in his face (5).⁴ His daughter idolizes him and chooses him as the “single subject” of her sculptures, which represent him “the way I had imagined him in prison” (4, 6)

As father and daughter are on their way from Brooklyn to Florida in a rental car to deliver Ka’s best statue to a Haitian-American actress, Bienaimé disappears and dumps the statue in a lake. Afterwards, he explains to his daughter his sense of unworthiness:

“Ka, I don’t deserve a statue,” he says again, this time much more slowly, “not a whole one, at least. You see, Ka, your father was the hunter, he was not the prey.” ... “Ka, I was never in prison,” he says... “I was working in the prison,” my father says. (20, 21)

His former position as a Tonton Macoute, a government agent, interrogator, and torturer is the secret he has hidden from her all his life. His nightmares are of torturing prisoners rather than of being tortured himself and his scar stems from the last prisoner he interrogated and killed rather than from someone working for the Duvalier regime. Therefore, as Rebecca Fuchs points out, the “‘man-made,’ ‘muddy and dark’ (DB 15) lake [into which Bienaimé dumps the statue] is a metaphorical space of artificial ‘un/memory’ where the dew breaker [ie, the torturer] hides his past and his repressed guilt” (Fuchs 2014, 143).

4 Melissa D. Birkhofer characterizes Bienaimé’s scar as “evidence,” as “a physical/visual signifier” of “a past of which he is ashamed ... [and] of which he does not want to be reminded” (Birkhofer 2008, 49, 48).

For Danticat, the line between perpetrator and victim is never distinct. Perpetrators, like Bienaimé, she suggests, are not necessarily born bad but they, too, have a history that explains their later decisions.⁵ We find out that Bienaimé's family also suffered greatly as a consequence of François Duvalier becoming president of Haiti: they "had lost all their land soon after the Sovereign One had come to power in 1957, when a few local army officials decided they wanted to build summer homes there. Consequently his father had gone mad and his mother had simply disappeared" (191). After joining the *Miliciens*, which were to become the *Tonton Macoutes*, the growing sense of power corrupts Bienaimé: he accepts free clothes from merchants, rooms free of charge from his landlord, and free meals at restaurants because "he enjoyed watching his body grow wider and meatier just as his sense of power did" (196). During the Duvalier terror regime Bienaimé rises in the state machinery of military and secret police to become a feared agent and interrogator, for whom torture is a habitual activity in which he excels. As a *Tonton Macoute* he is cold-blooded. Locally the members of this brigade were referred to as "dew breakers," a Creole expression for those who destroy the peacefulness of the morning dew on the grass (see also Bellamy 2012, 185). Hence the title of Danticat's book and of its concluding episode.

Bienaimé's secret is intertwined with that of his wife, Anne: it turns out that her stepbrother, a Baptist minister critical of the Duvalier regime, was Bienaimé's last prisoner, who fought back and gave Bienaimé the deep scar; he was the last person Bienaimé killed. Anne's decision to team up and stay with Bienaimé may represent her unconscious attempt to reach her dead stepbrother, to be close to him, even if the only way she could manage that was by marrying the man who murdered him. She may also see her resolve to forgive and reform Bienaimé as penance for having been unable in her childhood to save her little brother from drowning because an epileptic seizure had made her unable to help him. A life centered on devotions that block out memory and thought—mass every morning, prayers daily—limits her enjoyment of the America in which she has never, in her heart, really arrived. In this respect Anne resembles Beatrice, the title character of "The Bridal Seamstress," who compulsively stitches together wedding dresses, while the soles of her feet, which are "thin and sheer like an albino baby's skin," mark her as a torture victim (131).

5 Hannah Arendt's sense of the banality of evil—the ordinary man or woman divorcing themselves from empathy, or failing to think, or slipping effortlessly into depersonalizing their prey—hovers over these pages.

Ka's parents avoid talking about their terrible memories and guilt by isolating themselves, and by compulsively engaging in their daily activities. After she has asked her father to explain what he means by having been the "hunter, ... not the prey," Ka herself regrets the question and dreads the answer that may destroy her blissful ignorance:

Is he going to explain why he and my mother have no close friends, why they've never had anyone over to the house, why they never speak of any relatives in Haiti or anywhere else, or have never returned there or, even after I learned Creole from them, have never taught me anything else about the country beyond what I could find out on my own, on the television, in newspapers, in books? Is he about to tell me why Manman is so pious? Why she goes to daily Mass? I am not sure I want to know anything more than the little they've chosen to share with me all these years, but it is clear to me that he needs to tell me, has been trying to for a long time. (20-21)

Because of their post-traumatic stress disorder and their feeling of guilt Ka's parents had never been able to enjoy the freedom of the United States for fear of being found out, for fear of running into someone they had known in Haiti. They feel unworthy because they cannot bear to face their (Haitian) past, which renders them unable to live in the (U.S.) present. As William Faulkner wrote in *Requiem for a Nun* (1951): "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Similarly, Danticat told an interviewer: "The past is always with us. History is, after all, just another story" (Adisa 2009, 352). Therefore Ka's parents imprison themselves mentally and shut themselves off socially, living in their own closed worlds of religion and small business. In the episode "Night Talkers," Ka's father, working as a barber, is described as someone who "never made conversation" (106). He also does not want to be photographed: "I had hoped to take some pictures of him on this trip," recalls Ka in the opening narrative, "but he hadn't let me.... He didn't want any more pictures taken of him for the rest of his life, he said, he was feeling too ugly" (5). Unbeknownst to Ka, the reason behind her father's self-loathing is not primarily his prominent physical scar but his feeling of guilt about his violent past. His lingering trauma stands in the way of love and true liberation. While his name, "Bienaimé, meaning well-loved" points to the love that his wife and daughter feel for him, he can never love himself. The multiperspectivism of *The Dew Breaker* makes it possible for Danticat to present Bienaimé as a complex and ambivalent figure—ambivalent to himself, his wife and daughter, and the people around him (like Dany in "Night Talkers," who has the chance to avenge his parents by killing him [Bienaimé] but decides

not to). As Rebecca Fuchs states, “The dew breaker’s victims, his family members, as well as his own focalization depict him as both, loved and hated, guilty and repentant, violent and suffering. As a result, the story cycle is a dialogue between different voices that may contradict each other, which prevents the establishment of hierarchies and control” (Fuchs 2014, 162).

Trauma theory speaks of “acting out” and “working through” as reactions to post-traumatic stress disorder. While “acting out” prevents acknowledging painful memories by symbolically reenacting them, “working through” implies facing and communicating the traumatic experiences. An initial step in “working through” Bienaimé’s own violent past is his interest in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, an exhibit on burial rituals at the Brooklyn Museum, to which he takes his daughter every week. The artifacts offer him a chance to disclose a hint of his past to his daughter (see also Bellamy 2012, 184).⁶ Still, he feels fragmented and incomplete, telling his daughter: “Ka, I am like one of those statues” in the Egyptian exhibit that have pieces missing (19). Being liberated from the immediate terrors of violence in Haiti, he can subsequently “act out” in his drastic decision to dump his daughter’s idealizing statue of him in a lake. After acting out, he can continue to work through his lingering trauma. Revealing to his daughter his complicity in Haiti’s dictatorial regime, he begins to free himself, while burdening her with a truth she wants to reject, yet must in some way have sensed. As his wife tells their daughter, “What he told you, he want to tell you for long time [*sic*]” (240). There is a sense that such a revelation would not have been possible in Haiti with its omnipresent regime and the constant need to be on guard; only the geographical distance from the former location of terror and from the origin of his trauma as well as the freedom and leisure that the United States provide make it possible for Bienaimé to work through his guilt.

The liberation that Ka’s father achieves comes in stages. First he leaves the barracks/prison he has been working in after his mistake of killing the prisoner who had wounded him in the face and whom he had actually been ordered to set free. Then the prisoner’s stepsister runs into him and, seeing his deep wound, asks “What did they do to *you*?” (237). His reaction: “This was the most forgiving question he’d ever been asked. It suddenly opened a door, produced

6 As Maria Rice Bellamy remarks: “His study of the ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and burial rituals enables Bienaimé to ennoble death, appreciate its gravity, and mourn the lives he ended. This process offers him a small measure of peace regarding his violent past by enabling him to project his inner turmoil outward and externalize his contemplation of violence and death. These trips to the museum are Bienaimé’s first, tentative efforts to reveal aspects of himself to his daughter” (Bellamy 2012, 184).

a small path, which he could follow. 'I'm free,' he said, 'I finally escaped'” (237). This response turns out to be more true than he realizes. “In many ways it was true. He had escaped from his life. He could no longer return to it, no longer wanted to” (237). His fateful shooting of his last prisoner had disqualified him as a collaborator of the terror regime and had thus freed him from working as an interrogator and torturer. The question of his future wife frees him from the role of perpetrator and opens up the possibility of assumed victimhood, of an assumed identity free of the sins of his past. In the process, Anne is freed, too. When the two first collide with each other, we read that “she looked shell-shocked and insane” (236). All this changes as the United States, the land of the free, comes into the picture. We find out that Bienaimé used his stow-away money to get them two airline tickets to New York. But the change of location does not yet lead to an immediate release, merely to a “conspirational friendship” that eventually “became love” (240). Both husband and wife are rendered silent by trauma; they dare not address each other’s past for fear of having their suspicions confirmed. Rather than facing their history they try to repress it. The birth of “their Ka, their good angel” brings about slow change, as they need to talk about practicalities concerning the baby (241) and as they expect their daughter to act as a kind of savior. Still, the repressed memory and suspicion and the façades they have chosen to uphold keep both Bienaimé and Anne unfree: “He endorsed the public story, the one that the preacher had killed himself. And she accepted that he had only arrested him and turned him over to someone else. Neither believing the other nor themselves” (241). A lasting change does not occur until Bienaimé “acts out” by destroying the idealizing statue and then, in conversation with his daughter, works through his former implication with the Tonton Macoutes. Until that point, Ka’s parents had performed false selves, denying their past.

Nonetheless, Bienaimé continues to be plagued by his guilt and his fears of being recognized.⁷ Once he arrived at the house of the actress to whom they were supposed to deliver the statue, he still conceals his origins: “Mr. Fontenau asks my father where he is from in Haiti, and my father lies. In the past, I thought he always said he was from a different province each time

7 Aitor Ibarrola Armendariz focuses on the victims of the terror regime and Danitcat’s representation of their “individual and collective dysfunctions” (Ibarrola Armendariz 2010, 23). He rightly points out that Danitcat also engages with the dysfunctions of the former perpetrator, Bienaimé, and with the strain that his guilt exerts on his wife and daughter, arguing that “the perpetrators are by no means excluded from this collective trauma, since they are among the most deeply haunted by those phantoms and vacant spaces that they themselves contributed to conjuring up” (Ibarrola Armendariz 2010, 41).

because he'd really lived in all of those places, but I realize now that he says this to reduce the possibility of anyone identifying him, even though thirty-seven years and a thinning head of widow-peaked salt-and-pepper hair shield him from the threat of immediate recognition" (28). The liberation that life in the United States has granted him is only tenuous; it requires continuous caution and effort.

Avoidance strategies and attempts at silencing are even more pronounced with Ka's mother, Anne, who carries her own burden of guilt for crimes she never committed. Ka wonders: "Was she huntress or prey? A thirty-year plus disciple of my father's coercive persuasion? She'd kept to herself even more than he had, like someone who was nurturing a great pain that she could never speak about" (22). Only much later in the book, in the concluding episode entitled "The Dew Breaker" and subtitled "Circa 1967," will we find out that Bienaimé's last victim was the stepbrother of the woman who smashed into him that night as she was charging in the direction of the barracks/prison, the woman who nursed his wounds and who moved to the United States with him and became his wife.

Anne's liberation likewise occurs in stages and involves setbacks.⁸ We find out that she had been suffering from epileptic seizures since childhood, thought of as ghosts that possessed her. The last seizure, however, occurs the night that her stepbrother is taken away (242). But even after Anne arrives in the United States, the Haitian past still imprisons her: she finds solace in her daily routine and shuts herself off from society. "[A] hollow grief extended over all these years, a penance procession that has yet to end" (238)—a clear sign of lingering trauma and shame. In the episode "The Book of Miracles," Anne's regrets at her and her husband's secretiveness becomes apparent: attending Christmas Eve mass with her husband and daughter and seeing "people greeting one another around her..., [Anne began] to rethink the decision she and her husband had made not to get close to anyone who might ask too many questions about his past" (76). Spotting a WANTED poster for another former Tonton Macoute, she realizes her ongoing lack of liberation because of the "kinship of shame and guilt that she'd inherited by marrying her husband" (81). As "the wife of a man like her husband, [Anne felt that she] didn't have the same freedom to condemn as her daughter did" (81). Also, she would like to tell her daughter of "the simple miracle of her husband's transformation [from torturer to loving caregiver], but of course she

8 Ibarrola Armendariz has drawn attention to the wavering in Anne's development that is unlike Bienaimé's straightforward admission to this daughter. He speaks of Anne's "vertiginous oscillation between 'forgiveness and regret'" (Ibarrola Armendariz 2010, 47).

couldn't, at least not yet" (72–73). Only as time goes by does Anne realize the chances of re-making herself that the United States offers: "She was too busy concentrating on and revising who she was now, or who she wanted to become" (241). It is not until her husband tells their daughter that he was a Tonton Macoute that Anne can genuinely start to enjoy the liberation of her U.S. present.

But even once Bienaimé has confessed his secret to his daughter, the beginning liberation is not an automatic matter; it needs continuous work. As Anne realizes, she has to do "[a]nything to keep them both talking" (242). Liberation involves responsibility: "There was no way to escape this dread anymore, this pendulum between regret and forgiveness, this fright that the most important relationships of her life were always on the verge of being severed or lost, that the people closest to her were always disappearing" (242). Anne continues to suffer from "dread," "regret," and "fright," but there is also "forgiveness." Her "fright ... that the people closest to her were always disappearing" clearly stems from her experiences with Haiti's dictatorial rule, mainly the 'disappearance' of her stepbrother into a prison compound, never to be heard from again. But as Danticat explained in an interview, she is most interested in strategies of coming to terms with the painful past, primarily love. This is why she called *The Dew Breaker* "a story about love, love between a father and daughter, and love between a husband and a wife, who were not supposed to have ever met, who were never supposed to be together, star-crossed lovers of the highest degree. It is indeed a story about fate, fate that sometimes brings about the kind of love we never [expect],⁹ about connections that rise out of desperation and indeed need" (Adisa 2009, 350).

Like her parents, Ka is also in pain: her relationship to her parents' traumata is best understood as postmemory (Hirsch 2008);¹⁰ she is a second-generation victim of Haiti's dictatorship, who "suffers the trauma of being raised by traumatized parents" (Bellamy 2012, 178). Although postmemory's

9 The published interview reads "the kind of love we never accept," which is probably a transcription error.

10 Marianne Hirsch explains the term as follows: "Postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch 2008, 103). She coined this term to explain the experience of people like herself: those raised by Holocaust survivors whose lives have not been touched literally by that trauma but have nevertheless been dominated by it due to their intimate connection to parents who pass residual traumata on to their children verbally and through their actions.

relation to the traumatic past begins with gaps, silences, and repressions in her parents' personal histories, other sources (which Hirsch calls "structures of mediation")—including historical records, cultural artifacts, images, documents, and narratives—fill some of the empty spaces in the traumatic history and bring members of the postmemorial generation (like Ka) closer to understanding their inheritance (Hirsch 2008, 115). Their engagement with survivor memory and additional sources of information can result in postmemorial work—personal and often artistic re-creations of the traumatic past—that "strives to *reactivate* and *reembody* ... memorial structures" (Hirsch 2008, 111, emphasis in the original).

Members of the generation of postmemory turn to research and imagination to work through and rearticulate their traumata. In this process, they produce consciously constructed and improvised histories that cannot be considered complete or strictly true, yet those histories serve an important function in facilitating healing or at least in conveying a sense of mastery over the haunting effects of inherited traumatic memory (Bellamy 2012, 178–79). In Ka's case, choosing her father as the subject she wants to recreate imaginatively (as a tortured prisoner) in her art expresses her desire to understand him and his secrets and so to be close to him. Her art shows how much she is affected by her father's trauma and guilt, of which she is not aware. Bienaimé's "acting out" and "working through" explains the mysteries that she had not been able to figure out and it relativizes her idolizing of her father.

Thus the opening episode, "The Book of the Dead," also functions as an initiation narrative, in which Ka gains knowledge that changes her outlook on life. She gains distance as well as insight. At the beginning of the story, when Ka calls the police because her father has disappeared from their motel room without leaving any message, she still feels a need for a close connection to her parents. So when she is at the police station, she passes off her parents' birthplace as her own:

"Where are you and your daddy from, Ms. Bienaimé?" Officer Bo asks, doing the best he can with my last name. He does such a lousy job that, even though he and I and Salinas are the only people in Salinas' office, at first I think he's talking to someone else.

I was born and raised in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, and have never been to my parents' birthplace. Still, I answer "Haiti" because it is one more thing I've always longed to have in common with my parents. (3-4)

Ka's longing for (preserving) a close connection to her parents makes her accept their ways uncritically and colors her view of them. Therefore the statue she

made of her father represented him the way she “had imagined him in prison” (6). Unbeknownst to her, he is indeed in the prison of his repressed memories (see also Bellamy 2012, 185). After his confession she experiences a sense of loss and needs to revise the victimhood she had projected onto her father. As she realizes: “I don’t know that I will be able to work on anything for some time. I have lost my subject, the prisoner father I loved as well as pitied” (31). The conclusions about her father that she had drawn from imagining him in this way likewise need to be revised. What she may have interpreted as humility in her father may actually have been self-loathing and fear:

I had always thought that my father’s only ordeal was that he’d left his country and moved to a place where everything from the climate to the language was so unlike his own, a place where he never quite seemed to fit in, never appeared to belong. The only thing I can grasp now, as I drive way beyond the speed limit down yet another highway, is why the unfamiliar might have been so comforting, rather than distressing, to my father. And why he has never wanted the person he was, is, permanently documented in any way. (34)

What had appeared to her as puzzling behavior earlier on makes sense in view of the new information Ka has received about her father. In the fashion of the protagonist of an initiation story, she has gained knowledge that raises her level of understanding while taking away her innocence.

Each of the three family members has his or her own trauma to deal with, which makes the Bienaimé family, according to Bellamy, “a microcosm for the larger Haitian community seeking to work through its traumatic legacy” (Bellamy 2012, 180). In Kezia Page’s view, *The Dew Breaker* illustrates “the impossibility of a safe manoeuvring of emotional minefields planted in Haiti and transplanted in the United States” (Page 2011, 230). Similar to Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*, the individual is less to blame for the atrocities committed under a terror regime than the regime itself—slavery in the case of *Beloved* and a dictatorship in the case of *The Dew Breaker*.¹¹ In both cases, healing can only start once the terror regime has been overcome; and healing requires confession, communication and the acceptance by a community. In the case of Haiti, writes Édouard Glissant, centuries of atrocities, exploitation

11 Birgit Spengler offers a convincing reading of *The Dew Breaker* as an intervention in political and historical developments and thus as a work of “potentially life-saving engaged art” (Spengler 2014, 191).

and terror ever since Columbus landed on Hispaniola in December of 1492 have prevented a sense of a shared history and have instead resulted in what Glissant calls a “nonhistory” (Glissant 1997, 62; see also Ibarrola Armendariz 2010, 26). The resulting national fragmentation complicates dealing with the past.

The Dew Breaker reenacts this fragmentation in its narrative form, where it is at first difficult to identify the individual episodes as pieces in the bigger picture. Danticat herself remarked in *Create Dangerously* that she intended for *The Dew Breaker* “to be neither a novel nor a story collection, but something in between” (Danticat 2010, 62). As Maria Rice Bellamy writes, “[t]he fragmented form of the text mirrors the fragmented and scarred Haitian people, whose nation has been fraught with political instability and violence nearly since its founding in 1804” (Bellamy 2012, 177).¹² Context and causality need to be established by the reader. In the episode “Night Talkers,” for example, it is at first not evident that the man whom the protagonist Dany recognizes in Brooklyn is Bienaimé. But gradually we realize that Ka’s father probably killed Dany’s parents in Haiti by burning their house down and that he is responsible for Dany’s aunt having lost her eyesight (97). This aunt saved Dany as a child by sending him to live in the United States: “she’d insisted that he go so he would be as far away as possible from the people who’d murdered his parents” (115). Both aunt and nephew are traumatized by the atrocities committed against them and their loved ones, as is shown in their nightmares and their shared habit of talking in their sleep:

In the dark, listening to his aunt conduct entire conversations in her sleep, he realized that aside from blood, she and he shared nocturnal habits. They were both palannits, night talkers, people who wet their beds, not with urine but with words. He too spoke his dreams aloud in the night, to

12 As Birgit Spengler points out, the novel’s narrative form asks the reader to function as what she calls “an ersatz trauma worker”: “It is the reader’s task to piece together the broken narrative that constitutes *The Dew Breaker*—to turn the short story collection into a fragmented novel—and to fathom the depths of experiences that are related by proxy, that is, by using representatives of the violated bodies and psyches that reveal the characters’ suffering symbolically. In this attempt, the reading experience resembles a victim’s ways of coping with trauma, and a therapist’s attempt to make sense of its symptoms. As readers, we do not simply read about the characters’ encounters with violence and their individual attempts of coping, but are directly engaged in the attempt to make sense of terror and chaos, to ‘decipher’ the symptoms of trauma the text enacts” (Spengler 2014, 195–96).

the point of sometimes jolting himself awake with the sound of his own voice. Usually he could remember only the very last words he spoke, but remained with a lingering sensation that he had been talking, laughing, and at times crying all night long. (98-99)

While the aunt represses the memory of the regime that took away her eyesight as well as her brother and sister-in-law, Dany at first seeks revenge, unable and unwilling to let go of his traumatic memories. He rents a room in Bienaimé's basement—ostensibly in order to be able to kill him but subconsciously probably in order to be able to figure out why Bienaimé had wiped out his family. But in his case the atmosphere of liberation of the United States, the geographic and temporal distance from the traumatic events, and the desire not to reproduce the violence of the former terror regime make it possible to forego revenge. Having intruded into Bienaimé's bedroom with the intent to kill him, i.e., to “act out” his grief in a murder, looking at the sleeping man who is now at his mercy encourages Dany to “work through” his trauma and thus overcome the cycle of terror:

Looking down at the barber's face, which had shrunk so much over the years, he lost the desire to kill. It wasn't that he was afraid, for he was momentarily feeling bold, fearless. It wasn't pity, either. He was too angry to feel pity. It was something else, something less measurable. It was the dread of being wrong, of harming the wrong man, of making the wrong woman a widow and the wrong child an orphan. It was the realization that he would never know why—why one single person had been given the power to destroy his entire life. (107)

Dany realizes that while the past cannot be undone, avenging the atrocities of the past would only continue the cycle of violence and might repeat the tragic mistakes that the Haitian terror regime had been guilty of (Dany's aunt believes that her brother “was taken for someone else,” 109). Dany's decision not to kill Bienaimé is a sign of his beginning liberation from the family's and the nation's past.¹³ It also exemplifies Glissant's poetics of relation, according to which only relations and connection can help transform mentalities and

13 The story also presents a character who cannot handle the responsibility of liberation: Dany finds out that 19 year-old Claude, who had been living in New York with his father, got involved in drugs, shot his father over drugs when he was 14, and was deported back to Haiti. Unlike Dany and Ka, Claude remains caught in the destructive impulses of postmemory.

societies.¹⁴ Asked about the ability of some of her characters to forego revenge, Danticat answered: “The only way I feel I can explain something like this and the only way I approach an explanation in this book is that the murderer or torturer has a piece of that person’s loved one that the [person]¹⁵ knows that he or she no longer has. The murderer or torturer was the last to see that person alive. Forgiveness, an act of erasure of the last fatal act, is maybe a way of reclaiming that person again” (Adisa 2009, 351).

Coming to terms with the traumatic past does not happen automatically for any terror victim. For example, the concluding narrative in the collection mentions a Haitian woman in Florida who continues being dysfunctional thirty years after what she had to endure:

When one of the women who had been his prisoners at Casernes was interviewed three decades later for a documentary film in her tiny restaurant in Miami’s Little Haiti neighborhood, the gaunt, stoop-shouldered octogenarian, it was said, would stammer for an hour before finally managing to speak, pausing for a breath between each word. She couldn’t remember his name, nor could she even imagine what he might look like these days, yet she swore she could never get him out of her head. (198)

The torture to which she had been subjected by Bienaimé for not revealing her husband’s whereabouts continues to block her memory. Similarly, for the three exiled Haitian women in “The Funeral Singer” there are traumatic events that their memories cannot access: “Life is full of dead spots” (169). Nonetheless, by sharing their experiences with each other, the three women can cope better with their situations: “I [i.e., Freda] thought exposing a few details of my life would inspire them [i.e., the other two women, Mariselle and Rézia] to do the same and slowly we’d parcel out our sorrows, each walking out with fewer than we’d carried in” (170). In this way, they gradually slip into a talking cure. But other characters, like Nadine Osnac, the protagonist of “Water Child,” do not find such company and solace; they remain unable to communicate their

14 Jo Collins argues that in *The Dew Breaker* and in Danticat’s work in general relations define identity more than locations do, noting that with regard to the book’s diasporic community “Danticat seeks to unsettle notions of ‘origin’ and sees that ‘home’ can reside in multiple locales.” Accordingly, her depiction of a Haitian diasporic community “accentuates plurality and irresolution” and foregrounds “silence, isolation, and uncertainty” (Collins 2012, 136, 137).

15 The published interview reads “that the loved one knows that he or she no longer has,” which is probably a transcription error.

trauma.¹⁶ Putting painful, traumatic experiences into words and sharing those experiences with others, Danticat stated in an interview with reference to *The Farming of Bones*, leads the way to resilience: “the story,” she said, “the telling, is meant as a path towards healing. The pain goes into the telling of the story” (Adisa 2009, 350). In order to underline that there is indeed a “path towards healing” Danticat prefers to speak not of “victims” but of “survivors.”

The liberation of the U.S. present is contrasted to what may have been considered freedom in the Haitian past. As Anne’s stepbrother is led to the interrogator’s office, we read: “Some of the prisoners whispered, ‘Bonne chance.’ They also thought him lucky. He was going to be released or he was going to die. Either way, he was going to be free” (221). Such freedom from pain, the story implies, is a far cry from the potential liberation that the United States may offer. It merely means a halt of the process in which “[t]hey were being destroyed piece by piece, day by day, disappearing like the flesh from their bones” (225). While survival meant more pain for the terror victims in Haiti’s prisons (to the point that they prefer death), the chance of a new life in the United States involves pain of a different kind (like Dany’s nightmares in “Night Talkers,” the fear of being recognized that plagues those like Bienaimé who were complicit with the terror regime, or the guilt of those like Anne who did nothing to bring the perpetrators to justice).

Meeting in a liminal situation, bonding over their status as outcasts, boarding a plane to the United States, and starting a new life together constitute a kind of reinvention for Bienaimé and Anne. Similarly, Mary Antin writes in *The Promised Land* about her move to the United States: “I was born, I have lived, and I have been made over ... I am absolutely other than the person whose story I have to tell” (Antin 2001, 3). The potential for this make-over in the cases of Antin, Anne, and Bienaimé lies in the opportunities that the U.S.A. offers those fleeing from oppression, especially in the freedom from state terror. But for none of these three characters does the new life in the United States mean starting from scratch: the lingering memory of the pain that had preceded this life in the United States will continue to affect them and their descendants consciously and subconsciously.

By illustrating how the U.S. environment can help characters come to terms with their post-traumatic stress disorder and by opposing the violence of the Haitian past to the liberation of the U.S. present Edwidge Danticat upholds the notion propounded by Emma Lazarus of the U.S.A. as a refuge for those “yearning to breathe free,” for those whose places of origin become unlivable for them, the

16 Nonetheless, Nadine ends up finding comfort in assisting and consoling others.

“wretched refuse of your teeming shore.” But especially in the post-9/11 era this notion of a welcoming ‘land of the free’ cannot be taken for granted, as Danticat illustrates in her autobiographical account *Brother, I’m Dying*. In this book she tells the story of her 81 year-old uncle who had raised her for eight years in Haiti after her parents had departed for the United States. Having lost his voice to throat cancer, the uncle is unable to make himself understood as he is trying to join Danticat’s family in the U.S.A., asking for temporary asylum until he can return to tumultuous Haiti. Detained by U.S. Customs, interrogated by the Department of Homeland Security, whose medical examiner alleges that the old man is faking his vomiting and collapse, the uncle dies in custody. The national trauma of 9/11 as well as negligence and overprotectiveness, Danticat makes clear, are threatening the ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’ that had so long been upheld by the United States. Her writing faces that truth, while she continues to work for a brighter future. As Edwidge Danticat told an interviewer, “you can’t be human and not also hope, so we go on hoping” (Adisa 2009, 346).

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The Japanese American Relocation Center at Heart Mountain and the Construction of the Post-World War II Landscape

Eric J. Sandeen

Between 1942 and 1945 more than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them American citizens, were relocated from the West Coast of the United States to ten centers in the interior of the country. This essay focuses on Heart Mountain, Wyoming, one of the largest of these temporary settlements, the landscape surrounding the former camp, and the barracks that were both the make-shift dwellings of Japanese-American internees and the building blocks for post-World War II settlement. Taken together, these elements represent an important, complex site where American memory is still being negotiated. The ground on which this memory is constructed is a working landscape that obscures the wrongs committed in the nation's name. The mobility that created this site and transformed it over the past seventy years both reinforces and challenges deeply held beliefs about American settlement history. The structures that were the basis of the camp and the building blocks for post-war settlement draw together two different populations with different orientations and testimonies about experiences that are, this essay maintains, components of American memory.

The history of Japanese relocation has been thoroughly explored and it is not my intention here to rehearse details that the reader could find in works by historians such as Roger Daniels and Page Smith or the journalist Bill Hosokawa, a Heart Mountain internee, or the websites of former relocation centers at Manzanar, California or Heart Mountain, Wyoming.¹ My intention is to present the reader with the interpretive challenges and day-to-day realities of maintaining this relocation site as an active part of American memory even though it represents a shameful episode of national history that is easily overlooked because it is literally hard to see. Like other places in the American cultural landscape, the site of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center is what

1 See Daniels 1993, Smith 1995, Hosokawa 2002. The websites for Manzanar (www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm) and Heart Mountain (www.heartmountain.org) contain histories, photographs, and interpretive materials.

the geographer Kenneth Foote (1997) has called “shadowed ground,” where an event of violence or tragedy had taken place. Shadows of memory can turn to the darkness of forgetfulness in a culture that prefers to view its landscapes in cheery, triumphalist sunlight. Beyond recognition and redress, such a site demands continued engagement with the problematics of civic life in a multi-cultural democracy. In order to build this site, or lay out this landscape, I will extract important elements out of two histories that I invite the reader to explore further: the forced resettlement (1942) and the day-to-day experience of life in the camp (1942–1945). I will then examine in greater detail the lesser known history of Heart Mountain since the end of the war and will conclude the essay with a look at the structure that draws many strands of memory together—the Heart Mountain barrack.

I Japanese-American Relocation

The bitter reality that Japanese Americans felt from the outset was that nothing involving the relocation was illegal at the time. As good Americans, citizens of Japanese ancestry challenged government actions in court but were, at least for the first three years of the war, unsuccessful. Executive Order 9066 gave authority to the newly-created Western Military Command to perform these actions and the whole process was conducted in the public eye. Dorothea Lange, among others, documented through photographs sometimes heartbreaking but more often intensely patriotic scenes in which families who were being dispossessed of their homes and almost all of their possessions were demonstrating for onlookers and cameras alike their American patriotism (cf. Gordon and Okihiro 2006). A widely distributed film concocted by the War Relocation Administration, *Japanese Relocation* (1943), went into great detail about the legality and the necessity of this massive intervention, even as it asserted the willingness and, paradoxically, the Americanness of the people who were to be isolated from the rest of the population.

One can read closely this Executive Order and find no reference to people of Japanese ancestry or, for that matter, to any ethnic or racial group; “any or all persons may be excluded” from areas deemed sensitive. The next proclamation put the writing on the wall, or, more famously in this case, the lamp post by ordering “all persons of Japanese ancestry” to assemble for relocation (Executive Order). The logic that applied a general declaration to a specific population reveals the relocation as a profoundly racist act. German-American and Italian-American populations were not subjected to the same treatment.

Japanese Americans were conscious of the fact that they wore the face of the enemy and were being singled out for that reason (Cf. Daniels 1993).

This could not have been a surprise to the people who were to be dispossessed, since a variety of Asian exclusion acts had made immigration to the United States uniquely unavailable to potential Japanese immigrants (Cf. Takaki 1989). Indeed, those who had made it to American shores by the time of the Pearl Harbor attack had become reconciled to living on tenuous terrain. Issei, first-generation immigrants who were born outside the United States, were excluded from American citizenship and had already endured periodic calls for their expulsion. Broader rules of citizenship, however, included their Nisei children, who were u. s. citizens by birth.² Issei could not hold property or vote and did not have the legal standing that their children had. Resistance within the American system came from the Nisei generation who were also recognized by the government as citizens and heads of households.

II Life at Heart Mountain

The geography of relocation was placed on the larger template of Federal land ownership in the American West. The camps had to be designated, built, and populated in a hurry. For the most part, the government set aside space on land already under its influence or control so that it could deal from a position of strength with the considerable political problem of state resistance. The states of California, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, Utah, and Wyoming contained vast, unpopulated areas of federal land to choose from managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the case of Wyoming, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) could have picked from the 48% of land within the state that it owned or administered—more than 100,000 square kilometers. The WRA selected a portion of land in the northern part of the state that was controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation, an agency set up to provide water for irrigation and to prepare land for agricultural settlement. Thus, a unique situation was created because of expediency: Japanese Americans, a number of whom had superior agricultural skills developed through family farms in California and honed by expertise gained at that state's universities, became temporary residents on the last large allotment of land attached to an expanding irrigation system that had introduced

2 The Fourteenth Amendment to the u. s. constitution confers citizenship on babies born in the United States, regardless of the citizenship of their parents. The Nisei were, to use the terminology of the 2016 presidential race, anchor babies.

agriculture to large districts through regular releases of properties since the beginning of the century.

When fully populated by internees who arrived via the conveniently located rail line, the Heart Mountain Relocation Center contained over 10,000 residents, making it the third largest city in Wyoming (Figure 1). Indeed, because of its enforced compactness it was the only truly urban area in the state. This was certainly true compared to the two nearby towns—Cody, a cowboy-oriented tourist confection to the west and Powell, a farming community that sprang up because of the Bureau of Reclamation's irrigation scheme to the east—neither of which had a third of the camp's population. Many of the internees came from the urban environments of Los Angeles or San Jose so to them the density of inhabitation was the only aspect of this enforced relocation that might not have been alarming. The photographs of students at the Heart Mountain high school reveal styles of dress and behavior that came from the urban streets of California (Figure 2).

The structure of life at Heart Mountain was either shocking or offensive. The camp was surrounded by barbed wire and was patrolled by armed soldiers,



FIGURE 1 *The Relocation Center with ever-present Heart Mountain in the background.* WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY.



FIGURE 2 *Students at Heart Mountain High School, certainly more fashionable than the barracks in the background.* WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY.

positioned in guard towers. Internees inquired why, if this arrangement was designed to protect them, the weapons of the guards were pointed into the camp and not away from it. Internees had available some of the facilities associated with a city or town: a high school, a hospital, two movie theaters, social clubs, a newspaper, a full array of places of worship, boy and girl scout troops, and social events, such as big band concerts. They did not, however, have freedom of movement, the full rights of citizenship, or, for that matter, the availability of meaningful work. The sense of community that could have sprung from an urban environment like Japantown in Los Angeles was attenuated by privation, suspicion, and control.

The barracks in which the internees were located contributed to the otherworldliness of the initial experience of Heart Mountain. More than 450 barracks were hastily constructed in 1942 to house the thousands who were

arriving by train. Even using the generally unskilled labor available in this sparsely settled region and the lumber that could be requisitioned quickly, one barrack measuring 6 x 36.5 m (20 x 120 feet) could be assembled in 59 minutes. This extraordinary feat was replicated in many other locations of enforced mobility in army bases and temporary cities but, unlike these other settlements, those who arrived were expected to be confined there for the duration of the war. Thus, photos of the array of barracks under construction evoke both the temporariness of army camps and foreshadow the hurried, assembly line construction techniques of post-war suburbs like Levittown. Apartments within the barracks were allocated according to family size. The largest that a nuclear family could expect was 8 x 6 m (26 x 20 feet). With luck, an Issei grandmother could be located in a smaller, adjoining room (4.2 x 6 m). At the center of the 6-apartment barracks were two units that measured 6 x 6 m. In these breezy buildings, framed with wood that shrank as it dried, supplied with one single light bulb per apartment, and warmed by a coal-burning stove, internees were forced to negotiate what "home" might mean.

Definitions of family were tested, too. As the evocative drawings of Estelle Ishigo show, there was little privacy at Heart Mountain.³ Mess halls dispensed adequate amounts of food but in these circumstances families could not pass down cooking traditions or, more generally, foodways that originated in Japan. Potatoes replaced rice. Families struggled to eat together and could never command a single table. Without adequate supervision, packs of youths could roam the camp, looking for more than one meal. Traditional family structures were threatened once the family left its barracks room. Most disturbing to all were the communal toilets that lacked the decency of partitions. The humiliation that this produced, day after day, became a subject of internee reminiscences. Thus was the dignity of the Issei grandmother brought low, segregated in her own room, forced to use public toilets, and deprived of any role in passing down food traditions.

The terrain beyond the settled area of the camp offered some possibility of mastery, if not control. Heart Mountain internees completed digging a portion of a large irrigation canal so that they could apply water to land and perform the classic western transformation of sagebrush desert into productive cropland. Heart Mountain produced so well that it exported seeds to the other camps. Even though the growing season for that part of Wyoming was as short

3 Ishigo's account of life at Heart Mountain, *Lone Heart Mountain* is out of print but a selection of her drawings can be found at <http://www.janm.org/collections/estelle-ishigo-collection/>. An award-winning documentary of her life features the drawings as well as photos and reminiscences: Okazaki 1989.

as 100 days, the skilled agriculturalists of Heart Mountain harvested crops that were more common to sea level California than to a dry, austere climate at more than 1,400 meters (4,600 feet). Thus, through a small act of resistance, the internees could supply themselves with vegetables unknown to residents of Cody or Powell but familiar to any street vender in the Japantown neighborhood of Los Angeles. Internees also volunteered when suspicion yielded to necessity: they harvested crops, mostly sugar beets, for local farmers whose work force was depleted by wartime enlistments. Without much fanfare, Heart Mountain crews ranged as far afield as eastern Colorado, more than 600 kilometers distance from the camp, to harvest crops for little pay or recognition, but restrictive supervision. By working the land they left a legacy for others to follow.

Internees began moving out of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center even before the end of the war, thanks to a Federal court ruling that finally went their way. A December 18, 1944 unanimous ruling of the United States Supreme Court asserted that no Japanese American who had affirmed allegiance to the United States could be detained. The internees had been subjected to unjust actions of their own government but had prevailed by using that system. They lost cases at the beginning of the war and members of the Japanese-American community served time in Federal prison for standing by their rights, as they saw them, as American citizens. Thus, the names of Mitsui Endo, Fred Korematsu, and Frank Emi join a long list of citizens who have maintained the basic rights of the U. S. Constitution.⁴

The question whether American patriotism could be asserted through principled objection to military service, particularly by litigants who wore the face of the enemy, was hotly debated after the war and continues as a sensitive item of discussion today, but it is important to note that these very American dilemmas were already being faced by internees during the war. During the initial stages of the war, internees of fighting age were not subject to being drafted into the American armed forces and were, during 1942, classified as enemy aliens. Patriotism then led in two directions that split the camp along fault lines that are still perceptible today. Many internees volunteered for the army and many were placed in a segregated unit, the 442nd Infantry Regiment, which distinguished itself in the European theater of battle. A minority of draft-age youths, collectively known as the Fair Play Committee, refused to serve. The immediate cause of their resistance was a questionnaire distributed in late

4 The work of Eric Muller (2001, 2007), a legal scholar and Heart Mountain Foundation board member, offers particular insights into the legal struggle during World War II. See also Daniels 2013.

1943 that required the respondent to foreswear allegiance to the Emperor of Japan, a command founded on the suspicion of dual loyalties. Another question asked the respondent to affirm that he would serve in the armed forces if called. This Frank Emi and others refused to do, reasoning that such a request was founded on the full rights of citizenship—which they did not have—and that they should not be required to serve in the same army that was enforcing their own detention. Among the ten relocation centers, those who answered these two questions unsatisfactorily were dubbed “the no-no boys.”⁵ The Heart Mountain Relocation Center was split apart by these decisions about patriotism and duty. In 1945, the largest draft resistance trial of World War II was held in Cheyenne, Wyoming for 63 members of the Fair Play Committee, who were convicted and sent to Federal prison. Thus, the word “patriotism” has different meanings among the internees and between the former Relocation Camp inhabitants and the homesteaders, an overwhelming percentage of whom were veterans, who began arriving shortly after the Japanese Americans pulled out.

Before turning to the post-war years, let me offer one final note on mobility: The act of relocation, absent its manifest injustice, fits into a larger pattern of American mobility during the war years. For the first time, Americans traveled and settled, albeit temporarily, in other parts of the country. This accounts, for example, for the thriving zydeco scene in west coast port cities, the product of laborers from Louisiana moving to defense plants and port operations in Richmond, California, Vanport, Oregon, and the Seattle area. Even during the war, there was a surprising amount of mobility at Heart Mountain. College-age students could attend university, as long as they avoided the excluded zone on the west coast. Work opportunities could take internees away from the camp either temporarily or even permanently. Family members who had not been relocated, who lived in Denver or, in a few cases, in Wyoming, could visit the camp. At the end of the war, the internees faced the classic dilemma of American mobility: where to go? Many headed back west, to conditions that were often worse than they had experienced in Wyoming. A considerable number explored new territory by heading east. This is a significant diaspora of Americans of Japanese origin, lending diversity to new locations such as Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, or the massive agricultural operations in New Jersey, the Garden state.

5 The novel *No-No Boy* by John Okada (1977) portrays the turmoil and stigma that was the legacy of resistance.

III The Creation of the Post-War Heart Mountain Landscape

When the World War II internees moved out of Heart Mountain, the site became the surplus property of the United States government. At other camps, most notably Amache in Colorado and Minidoka in Idaho, many of the buildings were burned or salvaged for then-scarce building materials. All the buildings at Heart Mountain were surveyed and documented by the government and then released for use. There was a built-in market for these structures: the Bureau of Reclamation picked up development of its pre-war irrigation project and prepared for the release of thousands of hectares of land, including the site of the Relocation Center and the fields that the internees had made productive, to individuals and families willing to farm in this portion of the Big Horn Basin. Thus, the barracks of the Relocation Center became the essential building block for a classic homesteading scheme that had its roots in the 50 hectare (125 acre) offers that had settled vast portions of the American west during the years after the Civil War. The myth and vocabulary of settlement came easy to this project; the photographs documenting this inhabitation celebrate an iconography that springs from pioneering images of the preceding century.

The system by which the land of the Heart Mountain division of the Shoshone Irrigation Project was released to prospective homesteaders reinforced the post-war optimism of good fortune and hard work that would be rewarded with the success of a new start. Prospective farmland was mapped out into individual, numbered parcels. Eager homesteaders were interviewed to determine their suitability for the task; preference was given to veterans and to applicants who had had some previous farming experience. Then through three widely publicized lotteries, applicants received a number which established the order of selection for a plot of land. Homesteader families were as aware of their allocation priority and allotment number as Japanese Americans were of their Heart Mountain block, barrack, and apartment address. These remembered and recited numbers reveal histories of settlement and act as a code for emotions ranging from hope to despair.

Each homesteader was entitled to purchase two Heart Mountain barracks for the cost of \$1 each. The Relocation Center quickly became a mother lode of ready-made buildings and construction materials, leaving behind its past as a site of mass incarceration. The logistics of adapting these structures transformed their value and reshaped their histories. The barrack was an unwieldy structure. Homesteaders sawed the barracks by hand (Figure 3) into transportable segments—30 meters or the limit of what a flatbed truck could carry (Figure 4). Each barrack segment cost \$150 to move to a local site, potentially making a \$2 purchase into a \$600 investment. Many of the characteristics of the

barracks went down the road with the structure to the homesteader's lot: the five-panel wooden doors, the sliding windows with the distinctive three-over-three arrangement of the individual lights, the chimneys for the stoves that had heated each individual apartment, and, for a nominal cost, the Warm Morning stove that had been the only heat source for the internees. Some barrack fragments have been traced to locations over 200 kilometers away from the Relocation Center but most landed within sight of Heart Mountain, as a part of the emerging agricultural landscape of the Big Horn Basin.

The source of the barracks—a virtual prison during World War II and a reservoir of opportunity thereafter—became a curiously hybrid community in the first years after the war. While Japanese Americans were moving out,



FIGURE 3 *Pete Milohov, Priority No. 1, sawing barracks.* SHOSHONE IRRIGATION DISTRICT.



FIGURE 4 A section of William A. Cannon's barrack, on the truck. SHOSHONE IRRIGATION DISTRICT.

prospective homesteaders were moving in, renting barrack apartments while constructing homes on their newly-acquired plots of land. These home sites had neither electricity nor access to drinking water for the first few years, so homesteaders returned to the camp regularly to load up drinking water. Some housewives simply kept their washing machines at the camp and attended to the family laundry in the same communal buildings that had been used by the World War II internees. Families would also take showers at camp, in lieu of heating water at home for a bath in front of the stove.

The act of homesteading set the template for the post-war Heart Mountain landscape in two significant ways, both documented through Bureau of Reclamation photographs: the application of water to the newly-cleared land and the adaptation of the barrack fragments to use in the new location. With the promise of irrigation water, farmers plowed fields, set up shelter belts of trees, and drilled down into the former sagebrush desert to plant fruit trees for apple orchards. This act of faith, as old as the rain-follows-the-plow mythology of the nineteenth century so well identified by Henry Nash Smith in *Virgin Land* (1950), laid claim to the future of this portion of Wyoming as an agricultural

region. Challenging this reading of the map of American cultural development that Smith had traced, Patricia Nelson Limerick—in “Disorientation and Reorientation” (Limerick 2000)—invites us to see settlement history with the Pacific Rim as the starting point. A confirmation of the westward assumptions of settlement also introduced a comparison with the enforced eastward pioneering of the Heart Mountain internees.

At the same time, homesteaders reassembled their barracks into homes. Most often this was accomplished by joining two segments into an “L” shape. The intersection of the two open ends provided the opportunity for a larger, central room, demarcated by arches that led to the two branches of the newly-assembled structure. Less frequently, the two segments were simply mated together, producing a long, linear structure, the width of which corresponded to the narrower dimension of the original barrack (6.5 meters or 20 feet). Outbuildings, such as barns, garages, tool sheds, or housing for hired hands or extended family, were also fashioned from these barracks, thus providing up to six useful structures. Each of these structures could change significantly over time: the house itself received improvements like a better heating system; garages were encrusted in tin siding; sheep barns accommodated the circulation of animals during lambing season. In all but the most extreme make-overs these buildings retained at least one identifying barrack characteristic—a door, a window, or the remains of a chimney (Figure 5).



FIGURE 5 *A lambing shed, formerly a barrack.* PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.

Life in the Basin during the first post-war years was hard: the homesteaders endured their own privations. Even major county roads were not paved until the 1950s. Telephones arrived in 1951. The treeless plain of the Basin was not broken by substantial shelter belts of trees for years, allowing massive winds to generate dust storms that could knock a poorly-secured barrack off its foundation. Dust blowing through the leaky windows was as much a complaint for the homesteaders as it had been for the internees. Housewives waged constant battles with mice and the occasional rattlesnake. These forms of privation—waking up with hair frozen by the fog of breath exhaled into a sub-zero room in the night; constant sweeping of kitchens to keep dirt out of the food; mice suddenly appearing, as if by magic, in a seemingly sealed room—have a long history in the settlement of the American west. Indeed, a few of the housewives who had come to the Big Horn Basin from Great Plains states such as Nebraska had grown up in sod houses, the pioneer construction of an earlier generation, which had a similar litany of situations that had to be overcome. Underlying homesteader stories of harrowing times lies a firmly-established, compensatory narrative of the rewards of hard work, self-sacrifice, and stability.

As Winifred Sawaya Wasden (1998) points out, Heart Mountain pioneer narratives can be differentiated by the dates of settlement. Recall that Heart Mountain land was offered to homesteaders in three releases, one each in 1947, 1948, and 1949. Settlers in the first release, like so many who had responded to the initial homesteading in the period after the Civil War, found that their allotments were too small to be profitable. Without electricity, easy communication with the outside world, water wells, or reliable roads, the 1947 homesteaders led a pioneer-like existence. Those who survived the first two winters were given the option of receiving an extra allocation of land at Heart Mountain or a chance to obtain a farm at another federally-controlled site. The winners of the second land release had the benefit of larger properties but were still hampered by a lack of knowledge of what to plant on land that was just coming under cultivation. By 1949 basic understandings had been sorted out and the rudiments of twentieth-century necessities were beginning to appear. According to Wasden, whose information came from interviews with many surviving pioneers in the late 1990s, the divisions among homesteader families were drawn according to the year of the release that dated each cohort. For the early settlers, the Relocation Center was both their first home and their source of clean water for drinking and bathing. For later arrivals, transplanted buildings from the Heart Mountain site served as clubhouses for neighborhood associations. Most settlers held in common an intimate

knowledge of the Heart Mountain barrack, a structure that both disciplined and adapted to their lives over the years as they transformed the landscape through their work.

A similar trajectory of memory can be found among the World War II internees and their descendants. Those who arrived as adults faced a tough life in this wind-swept basin. They were not prepared for the cold, not having been notified of their destination and allowed to take only what they could carry. They found barracks that lacked any insulation and, because of hasty construction, were alarmingly open to the elements. They had to manufacture something like a civil society without being able to control the most basic elements of a normal life—living conditions, work, and family cohesion constituting only a few of these. They had to furnish the barracks with their lives. This meant manufacturing rudimentary furnishings out of scrap lumber, acquiring newly-identified necessities through mail order houses using meager financial resources, and maintaining habits of life in unfamiliar and hostile circumstances. Those who arrived as children were protected from some of these privations and separated from a world of adult worry by their age. What was an opportunity for the children—the ability to roam in groups, eating multiple meals at the several mess halls or playing together beyond the sight of their families—was a problem for their parents. The school experience offered structure and, for the students at Heart Mountain High School, gave the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities such as the school newspaper or sports. During the war years the Heart Mountain high school won two state football championships. The template for adult memories was injustice, enforced mobility, and rootlessness—roughly the opposite of the post-war homesteader experience. The issue of patriotism was always front and center. Widely published photographs showed internees as willingly, even cheerfully, acquiescing to this confinement by fashioning the best lives they could. This finely crafted propaganda was undercut by less known moments of resistance, of which the actions of the Fair Play Committee were the most visible. For those who were not adults during World War II, the incarceration was experienced differently, through the structures of school and play. The five Boy Scout troops symbolized this difference. The organization kept Heart Mountain boys busy after school and the rituals of scouting allowed participants to salute the flag and show their allegiance to the country that had driven them together (Figure 6).

The wartime experience at Heart Mountain was fraught at every level, no matter what the age of the internee. However, the memory of the incarceration experience is increasingly presided over by survivors who were



FIGURE 6 *Boy Scouts conducting a morning flag raising ceremony.* WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY.

teenagers or very young children during the war years—those who, by the efforts of their parents and the dynamics of the growing up process, could have had a less scarring personal experience at Heart Mountain. As the remaining representatives of that experience, they must convey the tribulations of their parents during these years. They also bear witness to the post-war abilities of their families to reconstruct lives that had been dislocated by this forced movement. The post-war lives of some internees follow the same arc of endurance and eventual success after leaving Heart Mountain as portrayed in the homesteader stories of those who came to the Big Horn Basin as settlers after the war.

We can visualize this encrustation of memory, adaptation, and ideology through photographs taken by government agencies. The War Relocation Administration was eager to show internees adapting to their circumstances, demonstrating to skeptical viewers that they had enlisted in the patriotic

cause.⁶ Despite all the documentation of deprivation and austerity, it was possible to picture a housewife performing a familiar task in a kitchen area that, viewed from the right angle, didn't look too different from what an audience, crammed into apartments during an episode of wide-spread austerity, might experience at home. Photographers pursued some of those who had been released from Heart Mountain for opportunities farther east, as if to reassure viewers that a full and speedy recovery would erase whatever harmful legacies of incarceration remained. The work of Greg Robinson (2012), among others, shows the real situation at war's end: items stored in haste before relocation pillaged, property confiscated, and resettlement made difficult because of racial hostilities exacerbated by war experiences. Recognition and reparation for the wartime relocation took over forty years to arrive.

The Bureau of Reclamation followed homesteaders as they built their post-war lives in a photogenic domestic spectacle. This sequence of photographs (Figure 7) shows how the barracks were situated and sutured together through framing that created the characteristic L-shaped home structure. Photographs show barracks on the move and then documented how they were fixed in place. With the addition of new siding a proud husband and wife could pose outside a home that was not unlike the suburban, tract houses that were then appearing by the thousands in subdivisions, many of them formerly agricultural fields, in eastern states. Such structures, like many suburban homes of the same period, persist today as well-acclimated elements of a familiar landscape. The Homesteader Museum in Powell, Wyoming collects the records of the Heart Mountain families. The long-range museum plan is to acquire a former Heart Mountain barrack, complete with the carapace of decades of use in the Big Horn Basin.

The wartime experience of the internees is the subject of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, located on the site of the World War II compound. The Center eloquently expresses the wartime experience through the words and points of view of the internees, but is hampered by a transformed landscape that obscures these experiences. Only two buildings and a smoke-stack survive from the post-war dissolution of the camp and the landscape—once brown, treeless, and dominated by sage brush—is a more conventionally picturesque patchwork of agricultural fields and pasture, set against the austere Rattlesnake Hills. The Interpretive Center returns visitors to the world

6 The Online Archives of California has a good selection of War Relocation Authority photographs: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf596nb4h0/>. For scholarly studies that unpack the ideology of these photographs, see Alinder (2009) and Hirabayashi (2009).

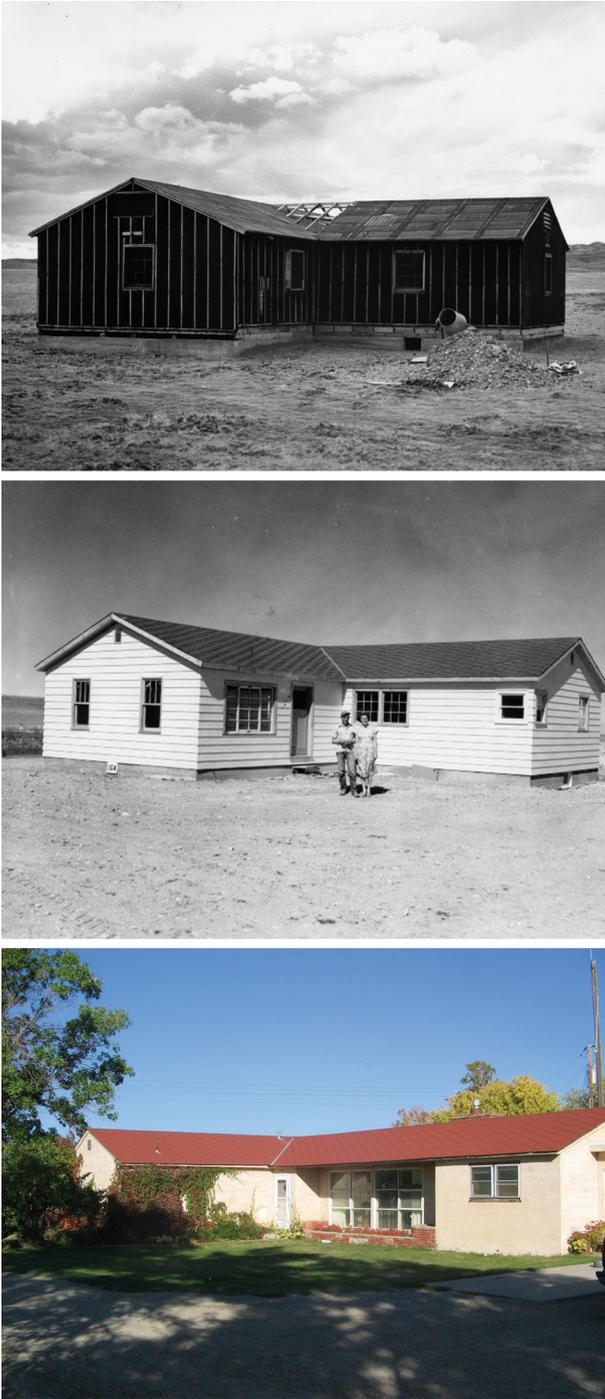


FIGURE 7 *The evolution from barrack to home. Black and white photos. SHOSHONE IRRIGATION DISTRICT COLOR PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.*

of the internees by involving all of the senses. Center buildings replicate the shape of barracks (Figure 8). Heart Mountain itself acts as a fixed marker for this altered landscape—the focus of attention, now as then, and visible from virtually every spot on the grounds of the former camp. Signage on a circular walking path gives visitors the opportunity to get the lay of the land through a 360-degree panorama of the former campsite and to experience the wind and blowing dust that were parts of daily life for the internees. Annual meetings, significantly called “pilgrimages,”⁷ encourage the remaining internees and their ever-increasing multi-generational families to return to the site in the summer to testify not only to wartime privation but to present-day accomplishments. The ceremonial raising of the flag by Boy Scouts at the beginning of the pilgrimage keys in memories of play and debates over patriotism. The interpretive exhibits inside offer both a means of passing experience on to family members but also the promise that the Heart Mountain story will be presented to school groups, tourists, and local residents year-round.



FIGURE 8 *The Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. The smokestack of the WWII hospital's laundry facility in the background.* HEART MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE CENTER.

7 This practice began at Manzanar, the relocation center most accessible to Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. For the development of the camps as sites of memory, including a discussion of the pilgrimages, see Gessner (2007).

Missing from this important portrayal of Japanese-American experience was the fundamental fact of life during the war years—the barrack. Finally, in August 2015 a barrack, intact and virtually pristine, was returned to Heart Mountain with much fanfare, just in time for the 2015 pilgrimage (Figure 9). It now sits where it once would have been located, a solitary representative of the other structures that would have surrounded it 70 years ago (Figure 10). This is a remarkable investment of value in this land, a remapping of memory, for the Japanese-American community. Over 20 years ago, another barrack was discovered and relocated, but in this case the structure was disassembled and sent to Los Angeles, where it continues to house the World War II exhibit on the second floor of the massive Japanese American National Museum. It was, in effect, rescued from Wyoming and brought into the epicenter of Japanese-American communal memory. An exhibit in the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center echoes the technique of evoking a barrack structure as a part of a museum display: a mock-up of a barrack interior offers a platform for explaining the facts of day-to-day living. With the return of the barrack to Heart Mountain in 2015 the memory of the incarceration experience has been repositioned to Wyoming and must inevitably be drawn into conversation with the settlements that have transformed the landscape over the past 70 years.



FIGURE 9 *Barrack segment being moved from Shell, Wyoming to the Heart Mountain site, 8.15. PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN LIESINGER, HEART MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE CENTER.*



FIGURE 10 *Reassembled barrack on the site of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, 8.15.*
PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN LIESINGER, HEART MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE CENTER.

In *Shadowed Ground*, Kenneth Foote speculates that problematic sites remain unmarked because they contradict “America’s myths of origin,” the narratives of optimism and conventional patriotism that are so often supported by a hierarchy of local, state, and national agencies. The World War II Japanese-American relocation centers are an exception, possibly the best example of how shadowed ground has been mapped out and, in effect, reclaimed through the efforts of seemingly conflicting communities; the construction of these sites of memory is a result of determined debate over meaning, an acknowledgment of the importance of the landscape in both the material circumstances of life in the World War II camp and the post-war homesteads (284–285). To use Foote’s terminology,⁸ first Heart Mountain was virtually obliterated; the site was then designated for its historic value. Through the attention of former internees, Heart Mountain has become a sanctified site in the Japanese-American community. Looking at the terrain differently from both east and west, attending to the cultural histories being written there, and accommodating different perspectives on this emblematic landscape—call this the revisioning of the Heart Mountain landscape—initiates the ongoing, hard work of recognition and rectification among all

8 See especially Chapter 1, “Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy.”

the communities connected to the site and the landscapes that document human experience in the Big Horn Basin over the last 75 years. We might hypothesize how the juxtaposition of two barracks, one at the Interpretive Center and the other at the Homesteader Museum, might contribute to this hard but necessary work.

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PART 4

Transnational Perspectives from the Archives



The Cornelius Ryan Collection of World War II Papers

Doug McCabe

My country can never again afford the luxury of another
Montgomery success.

BERNARD, The Prince of the Netherlands,
Interview with Cornelius Ryan for the book *A Bridge Too Far*

The quotation above is just one of thousands of golden nuggets contained in the collection of research files of reporter, journalist and author Cornelius Ryan (1920–1974). This native Irishman was one of the first writers on military subjects to go beyond using official records and the reminiscences of high-ranking commanders by contacting common soldiers and civilians in order to access their personal experiences of war. Along with his skill as a writer, the anecdotes they provided him with “humanized” his books, made them best sellers and turned two of them into films. And—to prove their longevity—*The Longest Day* (1959), *The Last Battle* (1966) and *A Bridge Too Far* (1974) are still in print while the films are still shown several times a year on American television.

The Ryan Collection, housed at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, is the most heavily used collection at the Mahn Center for Archives and Special Collections. Queries come in from students and faculty on campus, from researchers throughout the U.S. as well as from overseas, especially Europe. They range from relatives and descendants to casual and amateur historians to professional academicians. They ask for just a few pages from a questionnaire to dozens of pages of documents or photographs. What they all seem to want are the stories that get at the pathos of war and conflict.

This is because the Ryan Collection is one of a few archival collections related to the Second World War to house the memories of ordinary people caught up in unordinary times. Just consider these statistics:

The longest day

	American	British	Canadian	French	German	Total
People	748	212	121	20	43	1144
Questionnaires	677	134	108	0	0	969
Interviews	36	64	12	19	41	172
Accounts	12	5	1	0	0	18
Diaries	2	3	0	0	2	7
Plus 100 Photographs						

The last battle

	American	British	French	Ger. Civilian	Ger. Military	Russian	Total
People	280	75	11	158	131	35	690
Questionnaires	256	33	6	64	56	0	415
Interviews	83	34	8	143	91	28	387
Accounts	0	11	0	10	14	9	44
Diaries	2	4	2	12	6	0	26
Plus 838 Photographs							

A bridge too far

	American	British	Canadian	Dutch Civ.	Dutch Mil.	German	Polish	Total
People	452	426	1	271	14	66	12	1242
Questionn	417	422	1	250	14	52	11	1167
Interviews	69	142	0	130	7	40	8	396
Accounts	12	13	0	17	1	3	0	46
Diaries	2	17	0	24	1	4	0	48
Plus 981 Photographs								

As these figures show, for the three books Ryan had some kind of contact with over 3,000 people and he gathered just under 2,000 photographs. Plus, there are dozens of maps, copies of official documents, manuscripts, correspondence, screenplays, scrapbooks and articles. In addition, there are files containing materials from Ryan's entire career as a war correspondent,

reporter, journalist, editor, and book reviewer, and even memorabilia such as a piece of Hitler's urinal and Hideki Tojo's (Japanese general and Prime Minister) cigarette case.

The Ryan Collection is arranged as Ryan had the materials filed in his home office: first, the folders related to his three Second World War battle books; second, supplementary correspondence related to other works; and third, scrapbooks and memorabilia. The book folders are arranged in the following order: by general or overarching materials, by nationality, by military unit or civilian location, and by individuals. While in the files pertaining to *The Longest Day* military units are simply arranged by divisions or even broader categories, for *A Bridge Too Far* the military files on individuals are set at the regimental level and the civilian folders are arranged by city, town or village locations.

The "people" folders are the unique gold mine of the Collection: they may contain questionnaires, interview transcripts, accounts, diaries and, on occasion, photographs, drawings and maps. The questionnaires pose standard queries such as name, rank, military unit, current employment and residence. They then expand into questions about when the person learned of the operation, what his reaction was, what entering combat was like, what rumors were heard; other questions pertained to the loss of friends, the conversations with colleagues, the number of wounded, the experience of being captured and what that was like, or to any heroic, memorable, or stupid events, and contacts with others, be they military or civilian, or enemies.

Many of the stories Ryan collected from these people he could not use or the books would have been unwieldy. But regardless of whether these stories were only partially used or not used at all, these are the undiscovered nuggets current and future researchers can use—and have been using—to add luster to their own work. Here is just one example: First Lieutenant Robert Riekse wrote to Ryan that he was an aide to the U.S. 1st Infantry Division's Assistant Commanding General Willard Wyman when they landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Riekse filled out the questionnaire with the usual information. But it was the extra items he sent that turned out to be extraordinary. First were the four Message forms, all written on the beach the morning of June 6th. Two are most poignant: "Arrived on beach at H+110. Situation difficult. Information limited. Progress slow." And "Request wave H+215 be sent at once." These are typical clipped military statements, but they indicate how desperate events were that morning. Next in the file is a business envelope containing a strip of 35mm negatives. These turned out to be an amazing surprise. First, there are four photos of an extension ladder mounted to a DUKW topped with machineguns. These are possibly the only images that exist or

have survived of the four vehicles intended to be off Pointe du Hoc to provide suppression fire while the U.S. Rangers scaled the cliffs. Second (and these are perhaps the real coup) are two images, taken on Omaha that morning, that were unknown and unpublished for 50 years. Making these photos extra special is the story of the official photographer who landed on the same beach, Robert Capa. Of the 105 images he took only eight survived a darkroom disaster. Now there are ten. Those photos were first published in *D-Day: Then and Now* (London: After the Battle) in 1995. We will never know why Ryan did not use the materials in his book, *The Longest Day*. But, the discovery points out that new information and new interpretations can be found hidden away in archives.

To understand how the Ryan Collection came to assume its present shape and nature, it may be illuminating to revisit his life story and recall his experiences as a soldier and a journalist. Cornelius J. Ryan was born in Dublin, Ireland on June 5, 1920. He was educated at the Synge Street Christian Brothers School, just across the road from his house, and studied violin at the Irish Academy of Music. He worked for a brief period at an insurance agency in Dublin and was one of the first employees of Aer Lingus, doing almost everything but fly the plane. At the age of nineteen he moved to London and entered the employ of Garfield Weston, the grocery magnate and Member of Parliament, while taking a night job as an office boy with Reuters. During the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, Ryan helped Weston supply food to Londoners sheltering in the Underground. By the fall of 1941 he was helping feed nearly 30,000 people in the shelters. From that work he shifted briefly to the British Ministry of Information's film unit for a stint of writing scripts as well as producing and directing documentaries.

By late 1941 he joined the staff of the London *Daily Telegraph* and on his own slipped into neutral Ireland to get a scoop on that country's non-neutral collaboration with the Nazis. He was found out by the authorities, beaten and thrown out of the country for his troubles. He was then assigned to cover the U.S. 8th and 9th Air Forces with which he flew 14 bombing missions (being hit twice by shrapnel) in 1943 and 1944. By August of 1944 Ryan was assigned to cover General George Patton's Third Army, an assignment which enabled him to witness the ground war, the Allied breakout dash from St. Lo, the battles at the Mortain Gap, Coutance and Avranches, the German surrender of Le Mont St. Michel, and subsequently the liberation of Paris, the battles at Metz, Nancy, the Lorraine-Pallatine Campaign and the trial of the Battle of the Bulge (an anecdote of his experience there was noted in John Eisenhower's *The Bitter Woods: The Battle of the Bulge*), and the end of the European war in Czechoslovakia.

After the Nazi surrender in early May of 1945 and a month-long visit with his family in Ireland, he headed out to the Far East to cover the final phase of the Pacific war. Upon the occupation of Japan by American forces he opened a Tokyo bureau for the *Telegraph* and also served as a stringer for *Time*. While in Japan, he witnessed the fiasco of the arrest for war crimes and attempted suicide of General Tojo. He left Japan in 1946, but not before covering the atomic bomb test at Bikini Island and co-writing his first book, *Star-Spangled Mikado*.

His next stop was Palestine, still working for the *Telegraph* and *Time/Life*. In 1947, while bouncing between London, Paris and New York between assignments to study photography, Ryan was asked to take a position on the international staff of *Time/Life*. No fool, he took the job, moved to the U.S. and was immediately sent to the Dominican Republic where he wrote an exposé on dictator Trujillo called "Beautiful Murder." Disagreeing with Luce's editorial policies, he left *Time/Life* in late 1949 to join *Newsweek's* special projects department. Here he produced an innovative weekly news show in the early days of television. The program only lasted into the next year, but Ryan also used that time to become a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1950, marry Kathryn Morgan that same year, write a book on the life of Douglas MacArthur and write several items for *Collier's* magazine.

Those pieces quickly turned into a six-year stint with the magazine, during which he wrote around 50 articles and handled all the special projects. The latter included a series on space exploration featuring the ideas of Werner von Braun and predating the actual space program by ten years. Ryan also parlayed that series into two books, *Across the Space Frontier* and *Conquest of the Moon*. By 1956 he had made it to Senior Writer at *Collier's* and produced two award winning articles, "Five Desperate Hours in Cabin 56," about the sinking of the *Andrea Doria*, and "One Minute to Ditch," about the ditching of a Pan Am passenger plane in the Pacific Ocean, which graced the cover of the final issue of the magazine.

With the demise of *Collier's*, Ryan was left to do freelance work for television and magazines. Yet he had time and a special arrangement with the *Reader's Digest* magazine to get serious about a book he had had in mind since 1949—*The Longest Day*. Having witnessed the awe inspiring invasion from the air on a bombing mission and from the sea off OMAHA Beach on June 6th 1944, and having revisited and written on the scenes of Normandy five years after D-Day, Ryan was struck that no one had really explored the human side of the story.

He began as any researcher would by reviewing all he could of official documents, books and articles. Then, he did what was nearly unheard of in the late 1950s. He placed notices in magazines, newspapers, journals and

newsletters soliciting contacts with veterans of all nationalities who participated in D-Day. In the meantime he made a deal with *Reader's Digest*: they would provide Ryan with assistants and translators as well as office space in New York, Ottawa, London, Paris and Bonn, and in return they would publish a serialized version of the book prior to the release of the hardback by Simon and Schuster. (This arrangement worked so well it was used for Ryan's next two books.) *The Longest Day*, released in 1959, was an immediate best seller and went on to be released in numerous editions in over 30 languages, selling well over 30 million copies.

Belgian film producer Raoul Levy purchased the film rights to the book, but unable to come up with the financing, he sold the rights to producer and director Darryl F. Zanuck, self-exiled to France and looking for a comeback. Zanuck hired Ryan to write the screenplay. Ryan, however, held Zanuck off until after the 1960 election, while he finished up working for the John F. Kennedy residential campaign and witnessed the election night returns from the Kennedy family compound in Hyannis Port, MA. Finally, Ryan packed up the family and his research files and went to Paris to write the screenplay. The relationship between the two men was rocky or, as Zanuck's assistant Elmo Williams noted, "it was hate at first sight." The crux of the conflict was that Ryan wanted the film to reflect the facts of D-Day whereas Zanuck had no problem taking literary or "Hollywood" license. The bitterness between the two men was mostly kept out of the public eye, but privately Ryan referred to Zanuck as "... one of the last of the great vulgarians" (letter from Ryan to Maj. Gen. R K Belchem, dated June 18, 1969).

Ryan intended to follow up *The Longest Day* with books on several topics, but especially on Operation Market Garden. With the help of the new President Kennedy, however, he arranged for a research trip to Russia, where—with Soviet military expert John Ericson (formerly of M16)—they were the first post-war journalist and historian to have a crack at the Moscow archives and interviews with Russian veterans. It was on this trip that the Russians finally "officially" admitted they knew all along Hitler had committed suicide in his bunker in Berlin. (Ryan had a personal interview with Kennedy and was debriefed by the CIA regarding this trip.) Using this coup and his many interviews and questionnaires with veterans and civilians, Ryan produced his second book on the war, *The Last Battle*. This book broadly covered the last month of the war in northwest Europe while focusing particularly on the capture of Berlin by the Russians. Published in 1966, *The Last Battle* quickly hit the best-seller list. He was hired to write a screenplay for that book as well as Leon Uris' *Armageddon*. Unfortunately, the projects fell through.

Ryan returned to the Market Garden project and by the winter of 1970 had nearly all his research completed when he had a series of illnesses. In July of

1970, Ryan learned he had cancer and spent considerable time and research learning about the best treatments and doctors, postponing by nearly two and a half years work on his next book, *A Bridge Too Far*.

Shortly after his cancer news he began secretly taping the events in his life, the fight with the cancer, the work on the book and family matters, which he labeled "Cancer Tapes." At the same time his wife Kathryn began a diary chronicling the same events. Upon Cornelius' death she found the tapes and, combined with her diary she composed the book, *A Private Battle*, which was released in 1979 with the pair of them as authors. The book was made into a made-for-TV movie the following year.

By late 1972, with his cancer in remission but knowing it could return at any time, and with his need to cover his medical bills as well as provide for his family, Ryan concentrated on completing the manuscript of *A Bridge Too Far*. The book was released on the 30th anniversary of Operation Market Garden in September of 1974 and was an instant best seller. Ryan went on an extensive and exhausting book tour including a war correspondent reunion in The Netherlands. Unfortunately, his cancer returned with a vengeance and he succumbed to the disease in November. He was 54 years old.

By that time Joseph Levine had already fulfilled his promise to Ryan and went forward with the making of the film based upon the book. It, too, was a hit and is still shown on television in the U.S. and Europe.

After Ryan's death, fifteen repositories vied to house the Collection, but Ohio University won out in 1981. The Collection contains all the research files noted above as well as Ryan's personal library and memorabilia. There is a room dedicated to a permanent display of materials from the Collection detailing the process Ryan used to compose his books, films and articles. The attached Mahn Center reading room serves as a comfortable setting for researchers to work with the Collection. The Center's archivists are well versed in the Collection and can provide assistance to visitors and remote researchers alike. It is also important to note that the Collection is open to all comers, be they amateur or professional historians.¹

The Mahn Center has several other archival collections pertaining to the Second World War and other conflicts.² They include a written account by Lieutenant J.G. William Culver who was a leader of a U.S. Navy Combat

1 The Cornelius Ryan Collection can be accessed via this url: <https://www.library.ohiou.edu/about/collections/archives-special-collections/manuscript-collections/cornelius-ryan-collection-of-world-war-ii-papers/>

2 They can be seen at <https://www.library.ohiou.edu/about/collections/archives-special-collections/manuscript-collections/military/>

NIJMEGEN.

Bartels, Willem Frederik Henri. Short interview by telephone.

Willem Bartels, during the period under survey, was a student who did not work as his University, the Catholic University of Nijmegen, was closed by the Germans. In September, 1944, he was hiding. He was arrested by the SD (Sicherheitsdienst, Security Service) during the summer as being suspected to belong to an illegal movement called "Christofoor." He belonged, in fact, to the Nijmegen IO (Landelijke Organisatie, National Organization for the aid of people in hiding) which the Germans did not know. He spent some time in custody at the Arnhem SD-HQ and was released on August 28 or 29.

He returned to Nijmegen but thought it better not to stay with his family, who lived in a large house at van Schaeck Mathonsingel (singel = boulevard) that runs from the station to the Keizer Karelplein (plein = square) in the heart of the city. Bartels dived under in a house roughly opposite his parents', some 50 or 60 meters away.

His family consisted of his father Jacobus Franciscus Michiel, a medical doctor, his mother, Josepha Rosalia Marie Bartels nee Payens, and his brother Jaap Maria, then 15 years old and a high school student.

On Tuesday afternoon, September 20, at approximately 18.00 hours Bartels looked from his hiding place and saw some 150 German soldiers carefully moving toward Keizer Karelplein. Some went from tree to tree, others via the foxholes that were dug in the narrow park's green belt in the middle of the street.

Suddenly he saw two soldiers, grown-up men and therefore not Hitler Youths, who were carrying on their backs what would be described today as insecticide spraying apparatus. They went from house to house, ^{knocked} out a window and then what looked like "spraying something inside." When they were busy with the next house the one they had just dealt with already started to burn.

To Bartels' horror his house was "treated" also and the first flames became visible not long afterward.

He then ran across the street. The Germans in the meantime were retreating again toward the station, the two fire bugs disappeared in another direction. Somebody screamed something at him in German, but Bartels went on and saw his father, mother and brother emerge from the house, bewildered and frightened, but otherwise all right. They had remembered to take with them some vital things such as ration cards, jewelry and various documents.

All then went away reaching, via back street and gardens, a safe area.

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 In 1940 a new party was created in opposition to the N.S.B. It was called "Nederlandse Unie", i.e. Dutch Union. Party membership numbers in the 100,000's. In 1941 it was banned by the Germans. The leaders of the party started two underground newspapers: one for Protestants called "Je maintiendrai" (motto of the House of Orange);
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FIGURE 1 Ryan interview with a Willem Frederik Henri Bartels, a former student of the Catholic University Nijmegen. The interview with Bartels is undated, circa 1967.



FIGURE 2 *US paratroopers returning from the front lines march through the ruins of Nijmegen.*³



FIGURE 3 *Dutch folks waiting to replace ration cards at a public bath house in Nijmegen.*
RYAN COLLECTION, BOX 146, FOLDER 2.

3 None of the photos have locations or dates or photographer's name. They were taken by one or more United States Signal Corps photographers.

Demolition group sent in to OMAHA to clear beach obstacles. Interestingly, he noted on a page just inside the cover, "picked up this [blank] book 6-6-44 on beach of Normandy beside a body." Another item is a film called, "Combat Report 12," a U.S. newsreel on Operation Market Garden including footage shot by George Hebenstreit as he parachuted from an airplane on the morning of September 17, 1944.

All photos courtesy of the Cornelius Ryan Collection, Mahn Center, Alden Library, Ohio University, Athens OH USA.

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“Quality First!” American Aid to the Nijmegen University Library, 1945–1949

Léon Stapper

Introduction

This article is about the aid that was given to the Library of Nijmegen University from 1945 to 1949, more specifically about the help received from the “American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen” (ACA) under the inspiring leadership of its executive secretary P.J.M.H. Mommersteeg,¹ a Dutch priest who had been active in the United States of America since 1939. The other protagonists in this story are Dr. Ch.M.J.H.J. (Karel) Smits, the librarian of Nijmegen University, the jurist F.M.E. Haan, secretary to the Board of Governors, and Prof. Dr. W. M. (Willibald) Ploechl,² an Austrian professor of Canon Law in Washington and assistant to Mommersteeg. The ACA’s purpose went much further than just reconstructing and expanding the University Library: what it had in mind was a substantial aiding program for the University in its entirety, including preparations for a brand

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- 1 P.J.M.H. (Piet) Mommersteeg (1897–1966): in 1939, just before the war broke out, he had left for the USA to attend the Pax-Romana congress for Catholic students and graduates in Washington and New York. After the German invasion of Poland Mommersteeg decided to stay in America because of his pre-war connections with German clergymen in high places who were openly opposed to the Nazis. Mommersteeg was employed as rector of a hospital in Dubuque from August 1940 to March 1942. Until 1 January 1946 Mommersteeg was registered as ‘adviser on Catholic affairs to the Netherlands embassy in Washington’, which is to say as a government official, on the recommendation of the Dutch government in exile. He stayed in the USA until 1949. An interesting biographical detail is that in this pre-war period Mommersteeg had been the rector of Huize St. Anna on the Groesbeekseweg, the very same institution that for a short while had offered shelter to the University Library. Many of the biographical data are in Rijn (1994).
 - 2 Willibald M. Ploechl (1907–1984) had been an unsalaried University lecturer at the Catholic University for a very brief period at the beginning of the war. He had been appointed professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, the first University of that denomination, founded by the American episcopate in 1887. For further biographical details on Ploechl see Bautz, 1111–1116.

new Faculty of Medicine. This article aims to be a case study of post-war American aid to The Netherlands and therefore concentrates on a more or less tangible aspect of the ACA: the book aid to the library. In the end, as I will show, the outcome of this book aid was relatively meagre: only a small percentage of the total shipment of books ended up in the book depository, and one can have serious doubts about the quality and usefulness of the collection as a whole. Yet, a study of the book aid program offers important insights into the nature and extent of the activities of a relief committee, whose history has not yet been written, as far as I know. The short life of the ACA (1946–1949), it turns out, was characterised by the energetic and full commitment of a few people involved, notably Mommersteeg and Ploechl. Accordingly, a brief outline of the historical contours of this example of post-war American aid to a Dutch institution may be in order. There is a handful of publications about the University Library during and shortly after the war,³ but the following reconstruction of the history of the book aid by the ACA is mainly based on a new examination of the University archives.⁴

The Nijmegen University Library, 1943–1945

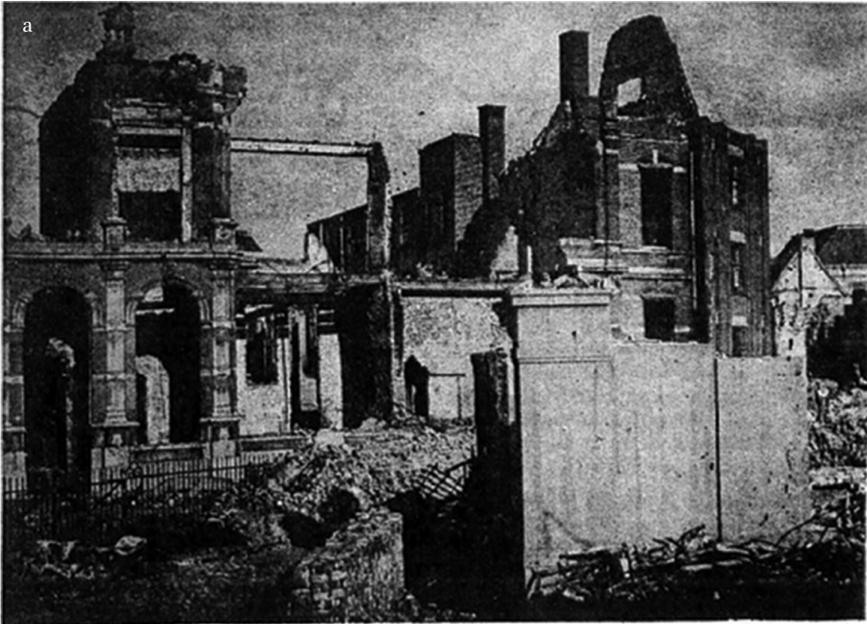
A survey of the situation in which the University Library found itself at the end of the war and in the immediate postwar years is required here. After the formal closure of the Catholic University⁵ in 1943, due to the board's refusal to sign a declaration of loyalty to the German invaders, the library remained open to students and staff, in spite of the difficulties in maintaining a decent level of service. The number of students had increased from 370 (1939–1940) to 639 (1942–1943) and the number of book loans had increased accordingly, reaching a record number of 16,455 volumes in

3 Arpots, *Capita Selecta*, 1995: especially the contributions of O.S. Lankhorst, A.H. Laeven and A.J.M. Dobbelaer; Jefcoate, "A difficult modernity" 104–122; Brabers, *Proeven van eigen cultuur*, 1, 292–297; relevant information can also be found in: Laeven, *Radboudstichting*, 44–45; and Rijn, "De huisvesting van de R.K. Universiteit," 144–149.

4 I would like to express my gratitude to Anton van Dorp and Marianne Waldekker (University Archive) and Ramses Peters, Anneke Nuy and Lennie van Orsouw (Archive of the Catholic Documentation Center, which also contains the archive of the University Library).

5 The Catholic University Nijmegen was the official name of Nijmegen University from its foundation in 1923 until September 2004, when the name was changed to Radboud University.

1942–1943 (Brabers, 453; *Jaarboek* 1942–1945, p. 297). The majority of books were stored in the main book depository, only a short walking distance away from the main building in the Snijderstraat: the rest of the book collection consisted of the reference collection in the University Library's reading room and the collections of the small-scaled institutional libraries of theology, philosophy, history and art history. Rare and precious books had been removed from the library in time and given into the custody of reliable individuals "in order to protect the books from undue German attention" (Smits 4–5). However, when the Allied forces were finally making progress in Belgium, it was decided to close the library. In September 1944 Nijmegen became front city and the main library building, which had been spared at the infamous bombardment of the city on 22 February 1944, was deliberately set on fire by the Germans (figure 1A). "A first assessment ... revealed the



Ancient Dutch library seeks aid

Carolus Magnus University at Nymegen, a point of fiercest resistance, painfully rebuilds its valuable collections

FIGURE 1A Photograph of the "Ancient Dutch Library" in Nijmegen.



FIGURE 1 B–D Three of the main characters: Karel Smits (left), Willibald Ploechl (middle) and Piet Mommersteeg (right).

entire reading room, containing more than 7000 volumes of general reference works, the periodicals room, all the staff rooms and catalogues had been completely burnt.” (Smits 5–6). The aforementioned institutional libraries were also lost. The institutes for classical and modern languages and literature were located elsewhere in Nijmegen and remained intact. The book depository was spared, although the book elevator was out of order and the main entrance blocked by debris.

The Board of Governors of the University wasted no time and as early as November 1944 they urged the librarian to resume the library services. The library re-opened in a temporary, rather cramped accommodation at Huize Sint Anna on the Groesbeekseweg, home to the Sint Anna Foundation and the police library. If you wanted to borrow a book, you had to go there and wait for an indefinite period, because the route to the book depository in the center of town was by no means safe. Chief Librarian Smits reported: “Library staff has to wait for days and hours which are relatively free of the danger of shelling, before they can find their way through the rubble to the preserved depository” (*Jaarboek* 1942–1945, 298). The library’s catalogue, which had been painstakingly compiled, and consisted, among other things, of a title catalogue, a systematic catalogue, a subject catalogue, and a printers’ catalogue, had been completely destroyed in the fire and had to be reconstructed from (partial) duplicate catalogues at the Jesuit cloister Berchmanianum and the office of Bishop Van Welie.

It took until April 1945 before the library could return to “what remained of the library’s main building” at the Snijderstraat (Smits 7). The pressure of work was high, partly due to the fact that many students tried to catch up, but mostly because the physical circumstances were abominable: the building was badly equipped for its tasks and a library can hardly be expected to function properly without a decent catalogue. In the summer of 1945 the University acquired the villa Stella Maris at the

Schaeck-Mathonsingel. In September of that same year the library moved to these new and far more suitable quarters: the official opening took place on 26 September 1945.

Almost immediately after the liberation of The Netherlands support and aid began to come from individuals and from academic and educational institutions and libraries. Even the University Library of Leuven, twice victim of German acts of war, was able to donate books. In his annual report for 1942–1945 the librarian stated: “In the meantime we have received quite a number of donations, even from abroad. This meant that by the end of 1945 we had as many as 2000 acquisitions” (*Jaarboek* 1942–1945, 298). And about Leuven: “An important exchange with Leuven was realised. This badly damaged sister University was among the first to offer help and donated several brand new books on philosophy” (*Jaarboek* 1942–1945, 299). In most cases the donating individual or institution sent a list of selected titles from which a choice could be made; “In this way one can avoid the donation of superfluous duplicates” (Smits 1946, 9). A careful selection in advance was indeed necessary: “The donations keep flowing in and have to be checked increasingly according to quality and usefulness” (*ibid.*). A few years later Smits emphatically stated in a letter to the ACA: “Quality first!”⁶

After moving the library to Stella Maris the previously mentioned institutes also found shelter in this relatively luxurious villa. In spite of Smits’ diplomatic remark that his assessment “did not stem from dissatisfaction with whatever has been achieved,” he pointed out that “much remained to be desired at the end of 1946. On the contrary, but good management requires looking ahead to the demands that will be made by academic education in the future and to respond to these adequately” (Smits 1946, 11). Smits also mentioned the necessity for the Catholic University to specialise: “[The library] will do so especially within the field of catholic studies, in accordance with the character and purposes of the University” (13). However, the plan to enhance this specialization did not come to much, if we consider the post-war donations from the United States: American Catholic institutions certainly contributed, but more in the sense of supplementing existing collections than in adding new titles. Mommersteeg and others would, at a later stage, urge the Americans to donate on a much broader basis (see below).

In the years following the war the University and its library were persistently hampered by the lack of space, the considerable geographical distance between University buildings and an urgent need to expand: for

6 Letter to Mae Rooney, 12 September 1948 (Archief UB, inv.nr. 224).

example, the book depository remained in the city centre, which meant that books, requested by students and staff, had to be transported by handcart to Stella Maris over a distance of more than one kilometer. New construction plans for University buildings and a University campus were made, including a design by the American architect Raphael Hume (see below), but the partial realization of these plans was brought about only much later.⁷ Hume's specific plans, which included a new library building, were never realised at all, mainly because they were never meant to be: they were designed as propaganda in support of the activities of the ACA. It would only be in 1968 that a new library took shape on the present Heyendaal campus site.

Post-War Aid to the University Library and Expansion of the Collection

The total number of books in the library before the destructive actions in 1944 had been 200,000 volumes, some 7,000 volumes of which made up the Reading Room collection. The rest was stored in the book depository or other institute collections in the Nijmegen city area or, in some cases, was placed in the care of individuals. Although the war damage had a profound effect on the library and University, librarian Smits could soon report: "Registered (new acquisitions) some 17,000 volumes. (...) The total number of books in possession of the damaged institutes is now again roundabout 3200. (...) The reading room contains some 300 volumes again" (*Jaarboek* 1942–1945, 298). In the annual report for 1945–1946 Smits was able to state (although he gave no further details): "The book donation in America has expanded enormously due to the energetic efforts of Reverend Mommersteeg and Dr Plöchl" (*Jaarboek* 1942–1945, 299). This American book donation ("boeken-actie") and its results is what we shall concentrate on here.

In his report for the years 1946–1947 Smits wrote: "The number of donations was 7,296 volumes, and at least 10,000 volumes that had been shipped from America, as a result of the activities of Rev. Mommersteeg. We have gradually been able to manage this outcome of his much appreciated efforts, in cooperation with Prof. Dr Poechl, both in respect to space and registration. The total number of 17,296 volumes may very well be higher, because we have not been able to process the complete shipment from America" (*Jaarboek*

7 For the building history of the new university, see Van Rijn (1994) and Wolf (1998).

1946–1947, 290). The annual report has an appendix containing 34 titles of important book gifts that same year, but none of these titles can be traced to the book donations from the United States.

In the academic year of 1946–1947 a new foundation came into being: “Friends of the Library of the Catholic University” (“Vrienden der Bibliotheek van de R.K. Universiteit”). Its purpose was “to have money raised by a group of Friends, that is to say those that share an uncommon interest in our University Library, (...) in order to enable the librarian to purchase special works or technical equipment which would otherwise be beyond his means.” (*Jaarboek* 1946–1947, 293). Lawyer C. Prinzen was secretary and treasurer of the foundation. His name appears regularly in the correspondence relating to the book donations, although the connections between the Friends and the ACA are but indirect.

Before June 1946 a number of relief actions had taken place, but these were individual and hardly coordinated actions, among them a “Book action,” which even had its own special stationary. In a memo of 11 October 1945 secretary Haan had mentioned this “book action” and described it as the initiative of “a circle of graduates and sympathizers under the supervision of Mr. C. Prinzen.” Among the foreign institutions that reached a helping hand Leuven and Brussels were mentioned, as well as Switzerland and the United States. In January 1946 Prinzen had received a letter in which Haan discussed starting a “Committee in the matter of aid”; chief librarian Smits was to be one of its members.⁸ One of the major concerns that led to this initiative was the fact that the relief actions from abroad were apparently largely directed at the western part of the Netherlands, actions that were mainly in the hands of institutions like the “Stichting Volksherstel”, the “Stichting Nederlandsche Studentenhulp”, the European Student Relief Fund in Geneva, the Royal Library in The Hague and the Dutch Red Cross. Even the Nijmegen newspaper *De Gelderlander* briefly collaborated in helping the University Library, as a letter from the chief editor on 31 January 1946 seems to corroborate. The newspaper apparently mediated in a book transport that had been initiated by the Dutch government: in the letter references are made to contacts within the Government Information Service (“Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst”): chief press officer D.J. Lambooy of that institute addresses the Nijmegen rector J.D.M. Cornelissen on the matter of a number of American activities to aid the library.⁹

8 WH, box 1, folder 1.

9 WH, box 1, folder 12.

Relief actions for the Netherlands were generally rather indiscriminate and took place on an international scale. As far as the United States were involved, support mostly consisted of occasional and individual actions, as is apparent from letters in the archives, directed to and from such diverse organizations as the Library of Congress, the World Peace Foundation in Boston, the American Library Association, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the United States International Book Association and the Rockefeller Foundation.¹⁰

In June 1946 the “American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen” was founded in Washington, under the supervision of father P.J.M.H. Mommersteeg. The committee aimed at realizing a large-scale American relief action for the University: the book donation to the University Library was originally only one part of a much larger project. Executive secretary Mommersteeg was assigned an assistant executive secretary, the Austrian Willibald M. Ploechl, and an energetic and very capable secretary, Eunice Lisowska, who was later replaced by Mae Rooney. For the most part, the communication with the Catholic University took place between the secretary of the Board, Mr. F.M.E. Haan, librarian Karel Smits, the Sint Radboudstichting and the Dutch episcopate, represented by the formidable figure of Cardinal De Jong. The episcopate had, after all, been the institution that had appointed Mommersteeg as the chief organizer of the large-scale relief action, after his eloquent recommendation and assessment that America offered excellent opportunities to raise money for war-ridden Europe. Mommersteeg could do so convincingly: just before the war broke out, in 1939, he had left for the United States and had decided to stay in America (see note 1).

The losses that the University and its library suffered were vividly depicted in a brochure, written for the express purpose of obtaining foreign aid. In later publications describing the war damage to the Catholic University these losses were painted in even brighter hues, using a text by Mommersteeg’s assistant Ploechl.¹¹ The brochure in question was titled “The Saga of Nijmegen”

10 ARCHIEF UB, inv.nr. 110.

11 An official letter of 23 January 1943 by the president of The Canon Law Society, Walter J. Furlong, to all contacts of that institution serves as a good example. He summons them to help rebuild the Nijmegen Institute for Canon Law: “Of this there is absolutely nothing left.” That was indeed the case, but the statement that the Germans had tracked down possessions that had been stored elsewhere and destroyed them, was at best an exaggeration that served the purpose of soliciting help all too well (Archief UB, inv.nr. 227).

and appeared in *America: A Catholic Review of the Week* of 23 February 1946 (552–553). After a concise description of the origins, foundation and goals of the University, the attention was directed towards the difficulties of the war period, in appropriately resounding words: “The price paid by the University of Nijmegen was enormous. (...) Only the spirit of the University survived.” The role of the Americans and Canadians in liberating Nijmegen was emphatically present in the text and a strong appeal was made to the (Catholic) American readers of the magazine: “the Catholics of Holland cannot be expected to restore their University to its full capacity without help from outside.”

A year later a second article by Ploechl appeared in the American magazine *Library Journal* (June 1947) under the dramatic, but somewhat misleading title “Ancient Dutch library seeks aid.” At the time of publication the ‘ancient’ library was exactly 24 years old. Ploechl sent three copies of the magazine to Smits, together with a letter from 1 July 1947 in which he apologized for the exaggerations in the text “or—better said—what became of it in the hands of the Editor. This is something which cannot be helped. Thus, if there is anything in it which does not report the story properly, please be forgiving, and do not hold it against me.”¹² The apology was appropriate, because Ploechl had based his text on a brochure written by Smits, *De Roomsche-Katholieke Universiteitsbibliotheek te Nijmegen. Aan allen die ons hielpen* (1946), which in turn had been printed to thank those who had been among the first to send support and aid.¹³ Thanks had been included to Mommersteeg as well, for contributing his “personal information,” and to another person who had been of the greatest importance in founding the Committee: major general James M. Gavin, whose 82nd Airborne Division had played an invaluable role in liberating Nijmegen in September 1944. His name is also prominently mentioned on the stationary of the ACA. It is remarkable that both articles carefully avoid any mention of the devastating bombardment of Nijmegen by the American forces on 22 February 1944.

The Foundation of the Committee

The first serious attempt to coordinate the aid to the University from the United States and the first time a committee was mentioned, can be found in a series of letters from secretary Haan and Prinzen in January 1946: Haan suggested to Prinzen that “a committee concerning an aid program” be established, with

¹² Archief UB, inv.nr. 224.

¹³ Archief UB, inv.nr. 534. See also UBN Br 26670.

the librarian as one of its members.¹⁴ As we have seen earlier on, this initiative partly sprang from the concern that the greater part of the books from abroad went to institutions in the west of the country.¹⁵

Haan had already been thinking along these lines since the days of a visit by J. Anton de Haas, professor of International Relationships at the Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard University and a resident of the United States for many years. Haan had accompanied De Haas on a trip to Cardinal De Jong on 6 October 1945, when they obtained permission to realize the plans for cooperation. In a letter dated 6 December 1945, Haan writes to De Haas about his proposal to combine the efforts of De Haas, Secretary Treasurer of the International University Foundation, and Mommersteeg and his (as yet unnamed) Committee, but every attempt by Haan to solicit a reaction from De Haas, who had returned to America, failed.

In a report by Haan to Cardinal De Jong “concerning the action for the Nijmegen University by the Dutch Delegation of the Carolina” the strategy to approach the American episcopate is made clear: Archbishop McNicholas had accepted the task to clarify the position of the Nijmegen University and had made personal visits to the bishops of Chicago, Detroit, New York, St. Paul, Dubuque, Columbus and Belleville, preceding an already planned Episcopal conference. This conference had not resulted in any real commitment, but at least gave rise to “optimistic expectations”, although the bishops voiced their concern that so many other Catholic universities were making an appeal to the American Catholics. Nijmegen certainly had made an impression (the bishops had cast a vote in favour of the afflicted city), but a decision on the distribution of the available funds still had to be made. The report of the conference contained a plea for founding an American “committee of recommendation for the aid to Nijmegen University.” Preparations for collecting books and money to relieve the plight of European Catholic universities were already well under way. To ensure that Nijmegen would receive the appropriate amount of help (no more than 4% of the total amount of books was to go to the Netherlands) it was essential for the University to close ranks and present a unified front.¹⁶

Another problem was pointed out by Mommersteeg: “Most Americans, including most American bishops, have very little understanding of European universities and their troubles.”¹⁷ Haan estimated that one million dollars were needed “for the reconstruction of the University” (in the following years the

14 Letter 14 January 1946, WH, box 1, folder 1.

15 Letter 16 January 1946, id.

16 [30 November 1945], WH, box 3, folder 1.

17 Report to Cardinal De Jong of 28 October 1945, WH, box 3, folder 1.

amount would be adjusted to two and even four million), a sum that, according to Mommersteeg, would compare unfavourably to the eight million dollars that were requested by Leuven; it would lead the American parties involved “inevitably to the conclusion that the University of Nijmegen was only an insignificant institution, as there are quite a few over here, calling themselves “University” at no cost at all,”¹⁸ as Mommersteeg wrote in his characteristically direct manner. Even as late as 16 March 1949 Mommersteeg once again urged Smits to have the professors of Nijmegen University create a catalogue of academic publications in order to counter-balance the American idea that they were dealing with a “second degree college.”¹⁹

In November 1945, the University received a visit from Dr. H.L.F. Deelen: this somewhat enigmatic person, a psychiatrist in Amsterdam and an acquaintance of Smits, was described in a report on his visit as “a half-time assistant to rector Mommersteeg.”²⁰ Deelen pointed out that the Dutch were quite popular in the United States and that Americans were eager to donate money. However, he also stressed the need to cooperate with well-known Americans (he, too, mentioned Gavin and his men from the 82nd Airborne Division), and the need to enlist the help of a professional fundraising organization. He also mentioned a new aspect, which was not to be realized until 1947: the presentation of a plan for a new campus for the University, based on American examples. As Deelen explained: “The objection has been made that American and Dutch universities are fundamentally different, especially when [the] strict [American] regime concerning lectures is compared to the liberties of a student’s life in the Netherlands (...), but the plan could be executed in wholly Dutch fashion.” It would be an excellent instrument of propaganda. Deelen’s idea was in fact put to paper at a later stage by the American architect Raphael Hume, as has already been mentioned. His design would play a minor role in the story to come. Mommersteeg and the American bishops were, incidentally, opposed to the employment of a professional organization, because they feared that it would “make use of the same [financial] sources (...) and [would] thus be harmful to their own action. Rector Mommersteeg is therefore much inclined to favour his own activities.” In that case, Deelen urged, proper funding and a proper organization would be of vital importance.

18 Report of 28 October 1945, WH, box 3, folder 2. Mommersteeg writes in detail about his dealings with the American episcopate and mentions, among other things, the dubious outcome of his meetings and conversations.

19 Archief UB, inv.nr. 224.

20 Undated report, probably December 1945, WH, box 3, folder 2.

From the second half of 1945 onwards, contact with Mommersteeg became “more and more lively” and the “work in progress on an American Sponsoring Committee” with the American bishop Francis J. Haas as president was mentioned.²¹ Two days earlier, another letter had disclosed much of Mommersteeg’s character: energetic, tenacious, enthusiastic, precise, direct and purposeful. He writes about his attendance at a seminar in Havana in the first half of January 1945, which in itself reveals enough of his ambition and of his willingness to travel great distances. The letter contains detailed proposals to include Canada and South-America and thus extend the aid to the Nijmegen University: institutions and their contacts are mentioned by name.²² On 5 April 1946, the indefatigable rector wrote from Chicago in a *Memorandum concerning the status of the University Action in the USA* that a “Committee to Promote the Rehabilitation of the Catholic University of Nijmegen” had been established under his secretarial supervision. The list of members of this committee contained an impressive number of names of (more often than not Catholic) institutions in the eastern parts of the United States. It was still no more than a provisional committee, awaiting the official approval of the American government. No mention was made of De Haas and his initiative. Elsewhere the memorandum urgently advised to seek assistance from “a professional person who is well informed about the needs of Nijmegen” and Mommersteeg is convinced he has found such a person in Willibald Ploechl, who has “more than six years of experience with America and has great ease in dealing with Americans.”²³ In a letter dated 8 June, Mommersteeg again emphasized the importance of Ploechl and his personal contacts (“a weighty matter over here”). Moreover, he wrote that Ploechl was in the possession of “very extensive lists of books which are missing in Nijmegen.”²⁴ Ploechl had already consented to cooperate, but only until September 1946, and had expressed his willingness to travel around, visiting libraries and other institutions, together with his wife. Financing this assistance would be entirely dependent on the American episcopate, but Mommersteeg was confident of success, which meant that Ploechl could be paid and would even have a car at his disposal, enabling him to travel extensively and with ease. Ploechl could avail himself of the lists mentioned above because he had already been in contact with Smits. In a letter to Haas dated 14 June 1946, Mommersteeg expressed relief that he could announce the execution of the foundation act

21 Letter from Mommersteeg to Haas, 30 January 1946, WH, box 1, folder 4.

22 WH, box 3, folder 2.

23 WH, box 1, folder 4.

24 WH, box 3, folder 2.

of the American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen, which marked the beginning of its official existence.²⁵

The articles of association contained the following text: "The objects and purposes for which this corporation is formed are to aid in the reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the war-damaged University of Nijmegen in Holland, a non-profit, religious and educational institution; by collecting funds and receiving and acquiring property in the United States of America for the purpose of hereinbefore described by way of gift, deed, bequest, devise or otherwise."²⁶ The Trustees of this new committee were: "The Most Reverend Francis J. Haas, Reverend Robert Gannon S.J., Reverend Raymond A. McGowan, Dr. George N. Shuster, Dr. Willibald M. Ploechl, Henry Mann." Mommersteeg's name was missing, but he reappeared on the letterhead of the impressive stationary of the ACA as "Executive Secretary." Only one of the trustees, Henry Mann, was to visit Nijmegen in person, in February 1948. Besides the official stationary, there was also an official form for donations, which served for gifts in books or money (figure 2). The stationary also contained a long list of members, including major general James M. Gavin. His involvement and that of other prominent Americans will be related in more detail below.

In a memo of 3 September 1946, Mommersteeg urgently wrote that the efforts from Nijmegen should be focussed on creating well-defined plans

AMERICAN COMMITTEE TO AID THE UNIVERSITY OF NYMEGEN INC.
5 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK 7, N. Y.
ROOM 810—CORTLANDT 7-2375

Dear Sirs,

We are willing to donate to you some duplicate volumes from our library and would therefore welcome the visit of your representative to consult with our librarian about their selection. The most convenient time will be _____

We enclose a check for \$_____ as a token of sympathy for the rebuilding of your University, made out to the AMERICAN COMMITTEE TO AID THE UNIVERSITY OF NYMEGEN, INC.

Signature: _____

Address: _____

FIGURE 2 *Donation form used by the American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen.*

²⁵ WH, box 3, folder 2.

²⁶ Dated 6 July 1946. WH, box 3, folder 2.

for the future, instead of a restoration of pre-war conditions. Tangible plans were what the Americans were looking for: only these would persuade them to donate money, and Mommersteeg added weight to his urgent request by mentioning, for the first time, the Rockefeller Foundation.²⁷ As a result of his memo, a number of professors became more involved in plans to expand the University by founding the Faculty of Medicine. Mommersteeg saw this future faculty as a logical development of the strong position of the Nijmegen chair in Missiology. The idea would lead to an extensive correspondence, concerning the foundation of an “Institute for Positive Human Studies” (“Instituut voor Positieve Menskunde”).

The Memoranda

On 5 November 1946, Mommersteeg sent the first of four official Memoranda,²⁸ which contained ample updates on the book action, based on the reports that had been written by Ploechl to Mommersteeg and Haan.²⁹ By the time Memorandum I was compiled a total of seven of these reports had been made: they show impressive progress in establishing contacts, securing commitments and encouraging book donations: Mommersteeg mentioned more than 10,000 volumes.³⁰ The haste can partly be explained by the fact that Ploechl knew he had to resume his duties at Washington University in September. The book lists of the donating institutions were sent to Ploechl, who then decided what was useful for Nijmegen: for example, in September 1946 he announced a large gift of 3600–4000 volumes, including the complete *Migne Scripturae* (the *Patres* were missing).³¹ In his Memorandum Mommersteeg also suggested that an exchange program be created between

27 WH, box 2, folder 22.

28 Memoranda II and III were to follow on 25 February 1947 and 12 September 1947; the fourth memorandum of August 1948 contained no remarks concerning the book action.

29 Of these crucial documents several copies are extant; WH, box 2, folder 24 contains all four of them together.

30 The first letters to Smits in which shipments of books from the USA are mentioned, date from 30 and 31 December 1946. A total amount of 35 of this type of letters have survived, containing reference to a total of 355 book crates. The numbers begin to decline from the beginning of 1948 onwards, with a few marked exceptions, such as the 22 crates on 15 May 1948. Archieff UB, inv.nr. 223.

31 As mentioned in a letter by Mommersteeg to Haan, Archieff UB, inv.nr. 227. In October 1946 an extensive list was announced of intended book donations by the Library of Congress, (id.).

the Nijmegen University Library and the library of Ann Arbor, which was in his opinion an excellent example of a fully developed professionalized library. Nijmegen would do well to look to Ann Arbor and become an equally professional library (Nijmegen hardly responded to the idea, as Mommersteeg did not neglect to note in his third memorandum). Four months later, in Memorandum II, it was reported that by late February some 20,000 volumes had been donated, but that shipment was unfortunately slow due to the insufficient storage capability by shipping agent United Services to Holland. Mommersteeg was rather satisfied about the public relations: there had been enough promotional material; those who had donated had received letters of thanks; there was a design for an official note of thanks (a 'diploma') by the librarian; and a sketch had been made by architect W.A. Maas for a University hospital. The effect all this had on the Americans was as expected.

Memorandum III of September 1947 showed Mommersteeg slightly irritated by the lack of cooperation and appreciation from Nijmegen. By now, no less than 30,000 volumes had been gathered which Mommersteeg assessed as follows: "The number of volumes that has been collected is not necessarily proof of success. Of more value is the fact that the books have been selected according to solid criteria and are in themselves an important contribution to a collection of mostly modern 'Americana,' unlikely to be found in any other library in the Netherlands." He continued: "We have doubts whether this aspect of the book action is properly appreciated in Nijmegen. People in the Netherlands tend to look down on America's academic achievements, but it is an undeniable fact that the United States play an increasingly important role on a global level. That is why it seems to me that a good selection of American history, American law, American literature and American science in various areas is a great asset for a modern library."³²

Mommersteeg's passionate appeal for appreciation of what the Americans were collecting and donating is more proof of his vexation at feeling undervalued and neglected by the professors of the Catholic University of Nijmegen: "We are not interested in receiving colourful letters of thanks, we want clear proof

32 In a letter by Mommersteeg to Smits of 16 April the rector had mentioned another category of 'Americana', but with far less enthusiasm: "There are a number of books that contain nothing but pure heresy, as I noticed in haste, but you will know what to do with them. The worst kind was sent to us only the other day, by The Beacon Press. However, for those who want to study modern spiritual life in contemporary America, they may not be without interest" (Archief UB, inv.nr. 227). This is a good indication regarding the diverse institutions which donated books: Beacon Press was of a distinct Unitarian and leftwing signature.

that both parties are working together to ensure success for this undertaking.” An exception is made for librarian Smits and his positive reactions (in spite of his negative decision about the exchange program suggested by Mommersteeg in his Memorandum 1) and professors Van Welie and Beaufort. Furthermore, the Americans had by now gotten “the impression that the way ‘Nijmegen’ deals with the matter, shows little or no consensus.” Mommersteeg, however, remained hopeful and suggested that the visit of Ploechl to Nijmegen should be used for “a serious discussion of this subject.” Both visit and discussion took place near the end of October 1947, including a dinner at the ‘Piusconvict’ on 26 October, as can be read in a letter of Van Rijn, the assistant secretary of the Board of Governors, to Mommersteeg on 31 October 1947.³³ Smits was not present, but Ploechl did meet him separately and they talked about the book donations.

Smits’s reaction to Mommersteeg’s third memorandum (30 September 1947, sent by Haan to the Board of Governors on 16 October) slightly modified the negative assessment of the academic attitude.³⁴ Smits explained the lack of response by the Nijmegen professors by pointing out that there was a considerable backlog in unpacking and processing the books that were sent: “The desiderata, including those of the staff, were all registered in our lists. However, as long as we do not have an overview of what volumes have arrived, it is rather hard to make new suggestions.” On the matter of ‘Americana’ he wrote: “In spite of the fact that I fully endorse the importance of a collection of modern Americana, we must look at it in the light of what we are reconstructing now and of the practical capacity of the University Library.” It is clear that Smits was trying to find his way between rebuilding the former library, with its financial and logistic restrictions, and dealing adequately with an increasingly overwhelming amount of books from and about America. Moreover, as we saw above, the library was still trying to piece together a reliable catalogue.³⁵ Smits described the difficulties he had to deal with at some length:

“Does Rector Mommersteeg realise that we began our work without catalogues, registers of magazines, serial works etcetera, and that on top of that there followed a deluge of book gifts, 20 to 30,000 from America and at least 27,000 from other countries? The number of some 50 to 60,000 donated volumes equals 1/3 of the total collection of the library. The maximum capacity to catalogue books is some 10 to 12,000 volumes per year, so you will understand that we have no man to spare. To send someone on an exchange program

33 WH, box 2, folder 23.

34 WH, box 3, folder 1.

35 On this aspect of the library’s history, see Arpots (1995), 71–87, in particular 73–78.

means that we have to train an unskilled person and impose a heavy burden on our future. We sincerely hope that Rector Mommersteeg will accept these motives for what they are: they stem from a frank appreciation and sincere will to cooperate. But please bear in mind that our organisation is completely disrupted and only slowly recovering as compared to an unscathed country like America.”³⁶

1948 represented a turning point in the short history of the ACA. From the beginning of that year onwards no large shipments of books were sent to Nijmegen and it became clear that the attempts to gain the support of high-ranking American officials, like ex-president Herbert Hoover and president Harry Truman, would come to nothing. The decline in success was partly due to the fact that the United States became increasingly critical of the Netherlands and its policy towards the struggle for independence of Indonesia. Moreover, the Americans became tired of being constantly on the giving side and asked for something tangible, however slight, in return. An article in *Time* of 12 January 1948 contained a warning: “U.S. citizens, complacent over their own generosity to ravaged Europe, got a dash of cold water last week. Writing in *Freedom & Union*, organ of Clarence Streit’s Federal Unionists, former Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts reminded them of an old adage: every time you lend, you lose a friend. Roberts was blunt. ‘Can the present European Recovery Plan do other than place us in the poisonous rich-uncle, poor-relationship situation that has severed so many family ties?’” The article was noticed and sent to Nijmegen in response to an exchange of letters, expressing the strong wish to obtain copies of the magazine.³⁷ As for getting something in return: a letter dated 9 January 1948, sent by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of Harvard University to Eunice Lisowska of the ACA, announced that the policy would be to exchange goods only, and that doubt had arisen whether Nijmegen was a good trading partner: “It does not appear, however, that before the war any large section of their teaching was devoted to Anthropology.”³⁸ Other rejections were based on the fact that donations had already been effected through other channels, for example the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Art and Sciences.

In January and February 1948 Dutch newspapers, such as *De Gelderlander*, *de Volkskrant* en *De Tijd*, published articles on the American support for the Nijmegen University, and included a brand new sketch for a University campus. The sketch, as noted above, was made by the American architect

36 [30 September 1947], WH, box 3, folder 1.

37 WH, box 2, folder 23; a copy of *Time* is in box 4.

38 Archief UB, inv.nr. 224.

Raphael Hume, but was in fact intended only as propaganda material to win the hearts of the American public and was never meant to be realised in the first place.³⁹ Another propagandist idea that was reported in the articles was the creation of a commemoration plaque: within the broad canvas of rebuilding the University the ACA had envisioned this as a proper tribute to Gavin and his 800 men from the 82d Airborne Division, according to a lavish prospectus they had published. Indeed, the ties between Mommersteeg and major general Gavin and his division were strong: on 5 July 1947 the rector had addressed the men in person.⁴⁰ Gavin was very willing to cooperate, and was pleased that the ‘Carolus Magnus University’ (a fictitious name that was used in propaganda, apparently to avoid the word “Catholic” that could lead to misunderstanding in America, as we have seen above) had promised him a “permanent memorial (...) to the European war dead of the U.S. 82d Airborne Division”. It is not unlikely that Gavin’s name had opened the door to the highest circles. Three photos have survived in which both Gavin and Mommersteeg are visible and these may serve as silent witnesses to this fact (figure 3). One of these pictures dates from 16 March 1948 and shows President Truman behind his desk, smilingly accepting the honorary membership of the U.S. 82d Airborne Division Association: Gavin and Mommersteeg are in the background, watching. Another picture shows the major general and the rector in the company of Hugh Gibson, former US ambassador in Belgium and Chairman of the ACA, together with former president Herbert Hoover. In January 1947, Hoover had been present at a press conference of the ACA, as Mommersteeg later recalled in a report



FIGURES 3 A–C Photographs of Mommersteeg with James Gavin, Herbert Hoover, and Harry Truman.

- 39 The piece was published and commented on in *Jaarboek Numaga* (1994), 148. See also Wolf (1998), 44, and Hakvoort (2005), 74–75. WH, box 4, contains a photocopy of a sketch that Hume made of the inner court of the campus, which suggests that he may have been inspired by drawings of the Grote Markt in Nijmegen.
- 40 A copy of the glowing speech can be found in WH, box 3, folder 1.

from September 1949: "On that occasion he had said to me that he probably might be of help in acquiring books for Nijmegen, which I acknowledged, of course, with gratitude."⁴¹ Mommersteeg had Smits prepare a new list of desiderata: in his view a previous list had been too modest: "A list of some thousand books, considered urgently needed, but also the most expensive, is what serves our purpose best. I do not need to explain to you how precious this help offered by Mr Hoover can be. There is the Hoover Library in California, but also the fact that the former president is increasingly popular again and has great influence in academic circles."⁴² Smits replied on 29 January 1948 that he had sent a list of "extremely important" desiderata and furthermore, with the rector's criticisms of Memorandum III in mind, tried to boost Mommersteeg's morale: "Several professors are by now selecting titles from the Americana section on a regular basis. You may be gratified to know that Psychology has accepted almost everything that was sent on this subject." However, in the end all further attempts to contact Hoover failed. In his report, Mommersteeg has not yet abandoned hope, but on 9 June 1948, a letter was received from Hoover's secretary, confirming a negative decision.⁴³ The commemoration plaque was postponed until some five years later, when a bronze plaque, designed by the famous Brom workshop, was installed in the—no longer extant—main building of the "Prekliniek" of the Faculty of Medicine, and was unveiled on 17 September 1953 by major general Gavin in the presence of the mayor of Nijmegen, Mr Hustinx.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Mommersteeg kept sending letters, informing Nijmegen of the latest news, based on the detailed reports by Miss Eunice Lisowska, who had succeeded Ploechl and continued his methodical and careful way of conveying what had been done at each and every institution.⁴⁵ On 13 May

41 WH, box 2, folder 24.

42 Letter from Mommersteeg to Smits d.d. 6 January 1948, Archief UB, inv.nr. 224.

43 Archief UB, inv.nr. 224.

44 The plaque was stored away when the building was demolished, but has only recently been reinstalled near the entrance of the Anatomical Museum at the Geert Groteplein.

45 The list of institutions that were contacted by letter or in person contains some 86 names, including 11 publishing houses (Ploechl seems to have visited primarily catholic institutions, but Lisowska and Rooney cast a wider net). A random selection: Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, NY; New York Public Library; Augustinian College Washington; American Anthropological Society; American Library Association; Rosary College, Ill.; New York County Lawyers Association; Catholic University Emmetsburg; U.S. Infantry Association; Nazareth College Library, NY; Duns Scotus College, Detroit; De Paul University, Chicago; Mount Mercy College, Pittsburgh; Loyola University. (Archief UB, inv.nr. 225)

1948, Mommersteeg confirmed that he would visit The Netherlands in July and August, but he bluntly refused to meet the Board of Governors: "What do I have to expect from these gentlemen, who show so little understanding for my work. I will tell you this: that so far, I have no respect at all for the way this board is conducting its business. If these gentlemen want to see me, they are welcome to come with a proposal." His letter ends with words that betray a certain bitterness: "I am beginning to get tired of it all."⁴⁶ The contrast between his contacts with prominent Americans, including a meeting with the American president himself, and the inertia from the ranks of the Nijmegen academia could not be greater, according to Mommersteeg, in spite of the encouraging words from Smits' reaction to the rector's third Memorandum (see above).

However, after Mommersteeg had returned to the United States after his visit to his home country, he was also disappointed with what had been done in his absence. Miss Mae Rooney, who had taken over Eunice Lisowska's task but was by no means as well connected or competent, had been able to gather a "nice collection of books," but that was "about all that had been done."⁴⁷ After this, only one more shipment of books would take place, as can be deduced from the fact that after this letter hardly any mention was made of donations, and even then they were slight, as witnesses a letter of 28 January 1949 from Van Rijn to Mommersteeg: a former member of the 82nd Airborne Division had sent 20 issues of the magazine *Arizona*, a nice, but rather futile gesture. The magazine cannot be found in the present-day collection of the University Library, and it is doubtful whether it was ever accepted: the backlog in processing the book shipments was, at that time, as huge as ever before, and the limited interest of the Nijmegen library to extend their collection with unique Americana, as described earlier in this article, will certainly have played a role. Nevertheless, a considerable portion of the book gifts that has been recovered within the library's collection can be filed under the term 'Americana,' such as the 13-volume *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, which are mentioned in a letter by Eunice Lisowska to Smits: Max McCullough, who donated this multivolume publication had "only a few sets of these valuable papers. We are proud to think that Nijmegen was one of the few institutions chosen for a similar gift."⁴⁸ In 1948, the number and quality of the books that had been shipped to Nijmegen from the United States induced the library staff to stage an exhibition, showing a selection of book gifts through the ACA. There is a handwritten, unsigned report, most probably written by Smits, in which a number of the more substantial reference works among the

46 WH, box 2, folder 23.

47 Letter to Haan and Van Rijn, 17 September 1948, WH, box 2, folder 23.

48 11 November 1947, Archief UB, inv.nr. 227.

exhibited books are recorded in some detail.⁴⁹ Virtually all titles continue to be part of the library's collection today.

The Final Stage

By the summer of 1949, time was running out for Mommersteeg and his staff: on 1 July 1949 the loan and insurance for the Committee's support expired. On 13 June 1949 Mommersteeg wrote to Van Rijn with considerable resignation: "There is nothing left but to admit that we have failed where the campaign is concerned."⁵⁰ Folder 226 of the library's archive for the largest part contains correspondence about book gifts from other sources than the ACA, mainly on medical topics, in preparation for the realisation of a brand new Faculty of Medicine in Nijmegen: book gifts came from several American hospitals, the American College of Surgeons, the American College of Physicians, the American Public Health Association, and many other institutions.

In September 1949, Mommersteeg sent his final report to the Dutch episcopate: "The once flourishing book action has to end, since we no longer have the money to pay our staff." Nevertheless, Mommersteeg was not entirely without hope: there still was his contact with former president Hoover (in spite of the formal refusal to help, as mentioned before) and the activities of CARE, a new relief organization. But in the end it all came to nothing. Towards the end of 1949 Mommersteeg left the United States and returned to the Netherlands.

The Collection

Until the end of his position as a librarian in 1958, Karel Smits remained unable to clear the considerable backlog in processing the book gifts. Lack of funds and lack of staff kept haunting the poor librarian, in spite of the fact that the Board of Governors had regularly granted financial supplements to the library budget.⁵¹ Smits's annual report for 1948–1949 does mention, however, a successful processing of "the most important Americana" (*Jaarboek* 1948–1949, 347), but it remains a mystery which titles he referred to and, more importantly, how many.

49 Archief UB, inv.nr. 224.

50 WH, box 2, folder 23. We must bear in mind that the intentions of the ACA were much broader than a book action only.

51 See for example several letters in the period of 1945–1947 from the Board to Smits, Archief UB, inv.nr. 246.

Meanwhile the gradual expansion of the University, in particular the foundation of the Faculty of Medicine in 1951, only increased the work pressure for the library. Smits was well aware of the positive effects of the American book donations for the new faculty: "Preparations were made for the creation of the library of medicine, and the book action by Rector Mommersteeg proved extremely useful" (*Jaarboek* 1950–1951, 14). But still, the reduction of the backlog must have been only by a fraction of the total shipment of 30,000 volumes; because even the successors of Smits, Dr A.P.M. Kievits and Mr G.G.A.M. Pijnenborg, were hard pressed to find a solution for the problem of processing the many, many books.

A thorough analysis of the intrinsic value of the book gifts is virtually impossible, because only a small percentage of the books that were shipped from America can be retrieved. One of the reasons for this is that the detailed shipment reports do not mention specific titles: the only thing we know is that some 30,000 volumes arrived in Nijmegen and that it took many years to cope with this immense bulk, notwithstanding the optimistic reports by Smits in the first post-war years. The motivation to deal with the backlog may have been negatively affected by the suspicion that the relevance or usefulness of the books for the existing collection was not necessarily particularly high. Besides, much of the book material may have become scattered all over the depository, or was moved or even removed. With considerable difficulty some 10 percent of the books donated by the ACA and other American institutions has been identified, the evidence for this origin being that the books contain a modified library stamp reading "Schenking [Gift] U.S.A." (figure 4) or bear the stamp of the original American owner, for example the Library of Congress. In other cases, vignettes (figure 5) or emblems of American booksellers were found and even handwritten dedications (for instance "Compliments of the Ohio Society of New York, 10/3/45" in James H. Kennedy's *History of the Ohio Society of New York, 1885–1905*). A substantial number of unmarked books were retrieved simply because they were standing shoulder to shoulder with the marked volumes, shelf after shelf. Nevertheless, no more than 3,000 volumes have been accounted for.

In my efforts to reconstruct what happened here I received help from a few (former) members of the library staff,⁵² who remembered that as late as 1973 (!) Mr. Jacques van Gent, then head of the cataloguing department, had put a small number of library staff to work on unpacking and processing the backlog of donated books. The ACA books were immediately identifiable by the fact that they were divided per dozen and strapped together with a piece of rope. They were dust-covered, but generally in mint condition. The book titles were compared to the titles in the alphabetical catalogue, and in the case of identical

52 The foremost of these are G. Schoonenberg and A.H. Laeven.

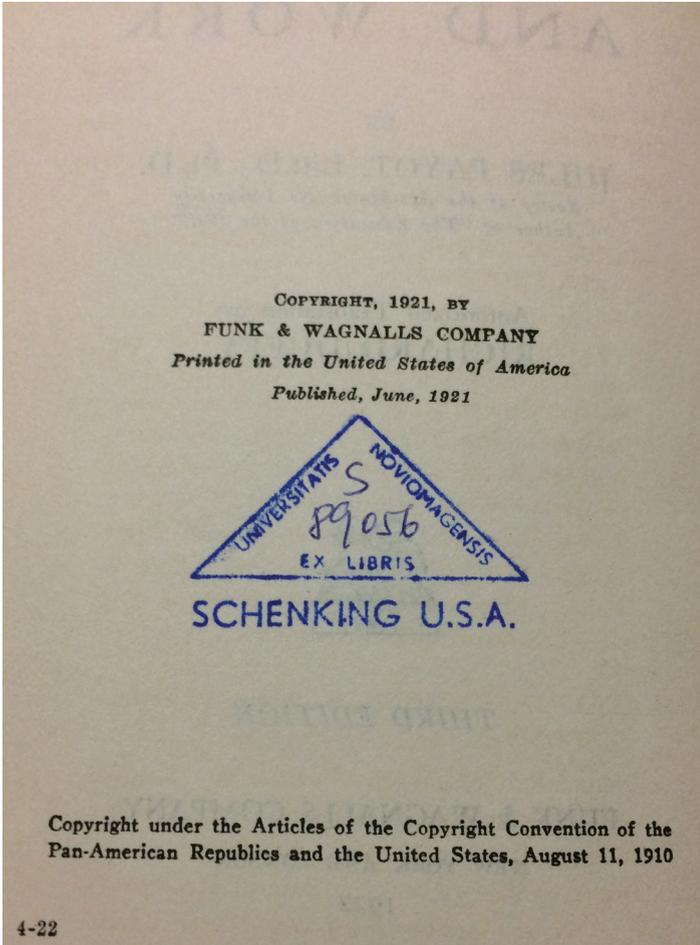


FIGURE 4 *Schenking [Gift] U.S.A.*

volumes the best copy (usually the American one) was kept. It is likely that over the years selections were made according to subject and that the more exotic or odd titles were discarded, but there is hardly any evidence for this hypothesis. The final result of van Gent's initiative has been that within four or five years the major part of the complete backlog (including the American donations, some 15%) had been eliminated, but the selection process had been fairly rigorous. The annual report for the library from 1974/1975 reads: "Of the 195,000 volumes [of book gifts—LS] that were there in January 1973 some 60% has been processed. 9% found their way to the depository, 22% of the titles were already present and 69% were deemed unsuitable." And the report for 1979 explains: "In December 1978 a milestone was reached in the treatment of donated books.

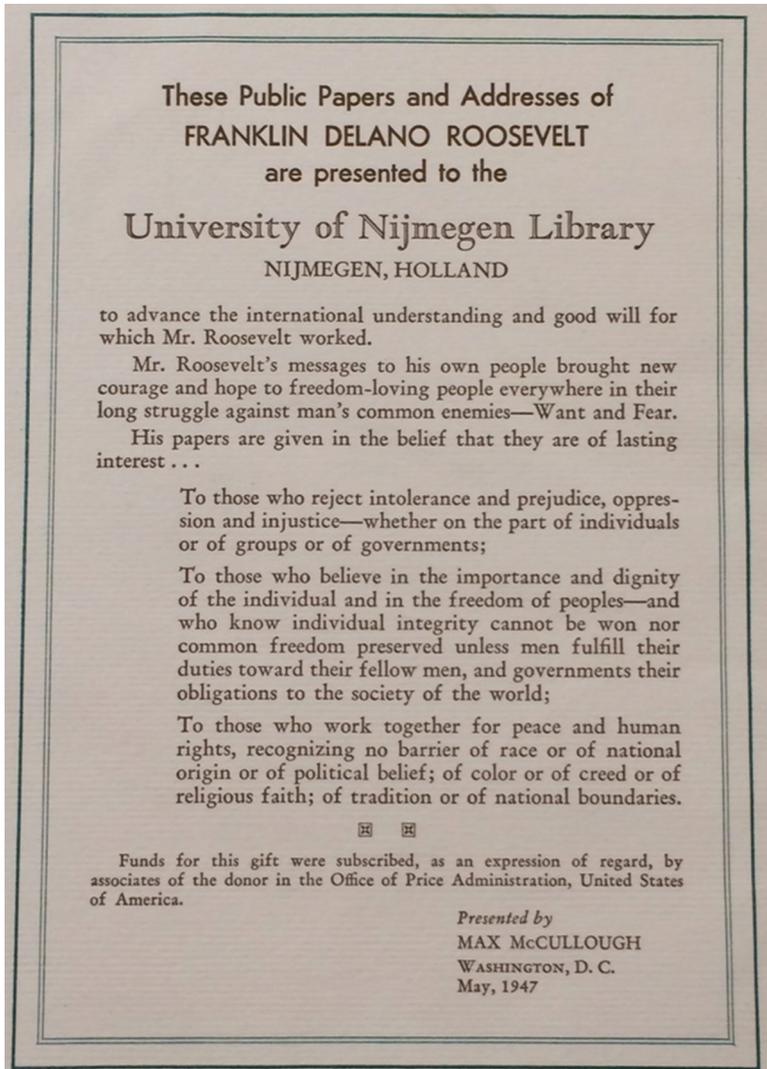


FIGURE 5 *Presentation vignette of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt's public papers and addresses, donated to the University of Nijmegen Library.*

Every monograph that has come into the possession of the library before 1968 has now been processed.⁵³ To be sure, these numbers apply to *all* book gifts, but can, with due caution, be applied to the 'Americana' collection as well. Furthermore, based on what it is possible to deduce from the reconstruction of the ACA book collection—a broad mixture of books on subjects as widely

53 Annual Report UB 1975, p. 89 and 1979, p. 61.

varied as European, American and global politics, agriculture, American history, local history, catholic education, literature, popular art and science—we must inevitably conclude, however speculative that the failure of Mommersteeg's attempts is visible in this respect as well. Mr G.G.A.M. Pijnenborg, one of Smits' successors, was more than once heard remarking: "If this amount of money had been spent at the New York antiquarian bookseller H.P. Kraus, the Nijmegen library would probably have become famous" (qtd. in Laeven and Winkeler 2005, 45). On this regrettable note we must end our history of the "American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen."

Abbreviations

WH	Werkarchief F. Haan (University Archives) (provisional numbering)
Archief UB	Archief 798: UB Nijmegen (Catholic Documentation Centre)
ACA	American Committee to Aid the University of Nijmegen
Jaarboek	Jaarboek der R.K. Universiteit (Annual Report of the Catholic University Nijmegen)

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The Marshall Plan: “A Short Time to Change the World”

Linda Christenson and Eric Christenson

Forty-five years after the European Recovery Program commenced, research began with interviews in the U.S. and Europe in order to provide historical context for the PBS documentary, *The Marshall Plan: Against the Odds* (1997). It was the first film to emphasize the crucial role of Europeans themselves in the ultimate success of the innovative American initiative. On its premiere, the *Washington Post* called it an “important hour-long film” which achieved “[the] impossible by making the Marshall Plan not only understandable but fascinating—as important and engaging a history lesson as you’re likely to get this year.” Professor Ernst van der Beugel, a key player during the period, remembered those four years: “It was a short time to change the world.”

In the early 1990s, with the assistance of embassies in Washington, DC—particularly the embassies of Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Norway—Project Director (and Researcher) Linda Christenson was able to find potential interviewees in Europe and the United States and to conduct preliminary telephone interviews for a proposed PBS documentary on the Marshall Plan. She looked for people who worked in some capacity for the Marshall Plan, people whose lives were directly or indirectly affected by the Marshall Plan, people who could provide expert and scholarly insights into the Marshall Plan experience, and ordinary people who could tell their personal stories when their world was rapidly changing—politically, culturally, and economically. The transcriptions of those telephone interviews formed the basis for follow-up questions during videotaped interviews by Linda and her husband, Eric, in the U.S. and Western Europe and—during the production phase—a two-week trip with the documentary’s producer and film crew to Austria, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Of the nine Dutch interviewees, two became essential to the finished documentary.

One of these two was economist Ernst van der Beugel, a representative of the Netherlands to the first meeting of the newly formed Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC) in Paris in July 1947. Established to produce—in just a few weeks—a joint request to the U.S. Congress for economic aid in response to the challenge posed by Secretary of State George C. Marshall the previous month, the CEEC provided a forum for the grueling but necessary

negotiations among representatives from all of the Western European countries except Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Spain. In his interview, van der Beugel describes some of the problems of governmental incompetence, cheating, and inflation of needs during negotiations, but also the inspiring solutions reached in the end. He was part of the group that came to the U.S. the following October to present the joint request to Congress.

After Congress finally passed enabling legislation for the European Recovery Program—*aka* the “Marshall Plan”—in April 1948, van der Beugel became an active participant in the subsequent Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), witnessing the continuing struggles of the Western European representatives to work together. In his interview, he candidly addresses his personal problem of loyalty—of being both a Dutch national and a European—and having to represent one or the other as the situation demanded. Ivo Blom, the other Dutch interviewee featured in the documentary, is not represented in this paper. But as a lifelong resident of Rotterdam, he sets up the drama for the program as he describes the terrible physical conditions in the Netherlands at war’s end and the desperate need for economic aid, especially for the city’s harbor, where he worked when he was interviewed.

Two other Dutchmen, the Honorable J.R.M. van den Brink and Gerrit Staarman, did not make the final cut for the documentary, but their insights and experiences greatly informed the documentary. For this paper their interviews are necessary for understanding the Marshall Plan experience and the cultural changes arising from it in Western Europe in general and in the Netherlands in particular. Van den Brink was Minister of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands, 1948–1952, and as such responsible for the entirety of the Marshall Plan. He talked of the difficulties of convincing a conservative postwar Dutch government of the value of taking advantage of the ERP and accepting its promotion of liberalized trade, productivity, and economic integration. Prescient and wise beyond his years, he led the Dutch economy in a brave and potentially dangerous direction against the conventional wisdom of others in the government. A young farmer during the period, Staarman came to the U.S. in 1950 for a nine-month stay under the auspices of the ECA, and continued to be a spokesman for the Marshall Plan at his farm on one of the new polders. His barns and fields eventually became known as a model farm and a tourist destination. And his story is emblematic of both the extent and the limits of American influence and allure during the period.

Taken together, these three interviews highlight Dutch-American connections, moments of cultural change, confrontation, and the function of the Marshall Plan. For the purposes of this paper, the quotations are taken out of

the context of their free-flowing and unrehearsed interviews; they are edited to make passages smoother and without unnecessary interruptions.¹

Emailed inquiries regarding specific interviewees and their roles and experiences during this most lively period of cultural interchanges and dialogue are welcome.² *The Marshall Plan From Those Who Made It Succeed*, a collection of "Personal Retrospectives of Marshall Plan Participants," may also be of interest to scholars.³ Generated primarily from events at the commemorative conference at George Washington University held 2 June 1997, it includes conference proceedings, papers, and narrative memoirs of participants in the Marshall Plan. Researchers and scholars may also be interested in the extensive collection of Marshall Plan photographs in the National Archives II on the campus of the University of Maryland. The copies of the photos printed here are only reference contact prints, all of which have suffered damage from the tape that secured them to old negative envelopes. (The undamaged negatives, from which prints may be ordered from Archives II, are now secured in cold storage.) Made by European photographers on contract to the ERP, the photos allow scholars to step into this exciting and dynamic period.

The photographs and transcribed interviews open a window onto the experiences of the men and women who lived through the Marshall Plan years and those who helped to shape it. In the Netherlands and other Marshall Plan-participant countries, new ideas and new machines, along with old-fashioned and disciplined hard work, transformed the world for government officials, factory workers, farmers, housewives—in fact, for just about everyone.

**Prof. Dr. Ernst van der Beugel, representative of the Netherlands
on the Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC)**

Ernst van der Beugel was secretary of the Dutch delegation at the July 1947 Western European conference on the Marshall Plan in Paris. The year before, he had joined the Dutch Ministry of Economic affairs. His 1966 Ph.D. dissertation was *From Marshall Plan to Atlantic Partnership*.

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- 1 Because of this editing, they should not be quoted or relied upon for scholarly research. The full and corrected transcriptions may be ordered for a nominal fee directly from the sole owners, Linda and Eric Christenson, Christenson Associates, 514 East New Jersey Avenue, #5116, Southern Pines, North Carolina 28387, USA.
 - 2 Interested researchers may request an annotated list of interviewees, both European and American, at elc@earthlink.net or by phone 1-703-362-5447 or 1-910-692-0468.
 - 3 It is available online at abebooks.com and amazon.com.

In the interview he recalled: “1947–48 was a very bad winter. So the feeling was... we were at the point where if there would not happen something from outside, we would have been obliged to cut imports and to go ‘down’ again. So that was an enormous political problem and economic problem—also a domestic political problem, because if I only mentioned the percentage of Communist votes in Italy and France—it was rather worrisome that if nothing would happen in the field of keeping up the recovery, politically it would have been a very delicate—to say the least—*delicate* situation. Belgium was liberated one *year* before Holland, and the last year in Holland was the worst year. Everything was destroyed, and there was *real, real* hunger in Holland.”

Van der Beugel recalls the drama of the Paris conference: “The program of the conference was to establish what the need of dollar imports was for the different participating countries. That was done by so-called ‘questionnaires’ which had to be filled in by the different governments, and then the questionnaires came back to Paris, and then there were groups who studied those questionnaires in order to establish what would be the total need of dollars in that part of Europe for the first four years.”

“The main problem was that practically for every country, the amount of dollars was *the* principal economic question in all those countries. And it is of course natural that everybody tried to inflate the figures. When the questionnaire asked, ‘How much is your need of coal for four years from now?’ who the hell is going to check that? So everybody *inflated* the figures. So there was a kind of examination: Every country had to appear before a group of four people from the conference [who] withdrew to one of the small places outside Paris in order to find the solution to bring the total to acceptable levels. They had to defend their figures, which was, as an exercise of international cooperation, of course, *completely* new!”

“I think it was one of the main elements of the Marshall Plan and one of the main successes of the Marshall Plan. The unique thing of the Marshall Plan is that it was not only unprecedented in scope and in idea and in concept, but it was unprecedented in its success. It was completely successful! It was the only great exercise in foreign policy that was crowned by complete success.”

“The main point was of *loyalty*. The primary loyalty of these people went to their own country and to their own dollars. But it is absolutely certain in my mind that this other element of the cooperative effort was also an element in the policy of most. They realized that the relation with the United States and the possibility that Marshall aid would be not for one year, but for four years, was closely linked by the efforts to work together.”

"[At the Conference] the pressure was time. The pressures on the division of aid were, of course, very, very, very great. It was a short time to change the world. And it was *tough* work. It was tough! It was a very, very hot summer! There was no air conditioning in the Petit Palais, where we met, and we started at 8 o'clock in the morning and went on to ten o'clock in the evening in a *terrible* heat. But it was inspiring!"

"There were many problems. In the first place, most—at least half—of the administrations of the government machines in many countries were not geared to make this kind of prognosis, so they didn't know how to handle it and therefore cheated even more than the people who had the machinery, who cheated also. And that was the main problem."

"One evening, we had dinner with the Greek minister—or representative—Mr. Verdellis—a very nice man—who had this suite in the most expensive hotel in Paris—in the Ritz. It's always the poorest countries who live in the nicest hotels. And when we entered his dining room, we walked through where there were literally *thousands* of questionnaires lying on the floor and tables and everywhere. And we said, 'But Verdellis, these questionnaires should have been sent to Athens six weeks ago!' And he said, 'Yes, I know, but listen: in Athens, nobody knows *anything*. So I know perhaps a little more than they know in Athens, so I sit after dinner every night and fill in the questionnaires.' So that was one of the signals that not everything was completely correct."

And on the Dutch side, "There was one conversation I remember. I think in the third year, Congress cut the total amount of Marshall aid [by] 10%. I remember I accompanied our Foreign Minister on a visit to Harriman in order to get the 10% back.... I would say that Harriman was very nice; he had explained to us that it was absolutely impossible.... When we drove to the Hotel Talleyrand, where Harriman had his head office, the Dutch Foreign Minister said to me, 'I am going to feel unwell. I will warn you, but when we are with Harriman, I'm going to feel unwell.' So we entered the room of Harriman. The Foreign Minister explained that it would be an absolute disaster if we missed this 10%. He couldn't say that we would go Communist—because we had no Communists—but it was a *dramatic* thing. And at a certain moment, he said, 'Ambassador, I don't feel very well. Would you mind that I lie down for a moment?' And he lies down on a couch. Harriman came with brandy and with eau de cologne and with everything else, and so he recovered, and five million dollars! And we had not left the building before the minister said to me, sitting in the car, he said, 'It worked! It worked!' So that was something I remember very well!"

"Now this cooperation part of the Plan was not completely successful because the British and a few other countries, mainly in Scandinavia, refused to link up their fate with the continent of Europe. That's an old problem. I always have

difficulty in knowing exactly what ‘feeling European’ means. I always answer the question that if ‘feeling European’ would mean something different from America, I always told people that my affinity with the average farmer in Kansas is greater than my affinity with the average farmer in Sicily. So in that respect, ‘feeling European’ is ... relative.”

When Van der Beugel went to Washington to meet with Congressional committees, he said that he was “purely European! There, without any doubt, the accent was *completely* on the European approach!”

“NATO would not have been possible if there would not have been a minimum of economic and financial stability and recovery, and that came from the Marshall Plan. So I think that also NATO is in some way a child of the Marshall



FIGURE 1 *“I’m absolutely certain that the European Common Market and the Coal and Steel Community are direct children of the Marshall Plan!”—Ernst van der Beugel.*
ALL PHOTOS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK, MD.



FIGURE 2 "EUROPE—ALL OUR COLOURS TO THE MAST," by Reijn Dirksen, the Netherlands. This was the First Prize winner of the 1950 Marshall Plan poster competition promoting the theme of "International cooperation for a better standard of living." More than 10,000 Western European artists submitted designs to the competition.

Plan. I'm *absolutely* certain that the European Common Market and the Coal and Steel Community are *direct* children of the Marshall Plan. That kind of cooperation would not have been possible without a major restoration of economic and social viability."



FIGURE 3 *An early 1950s window display featuring photos of a typical American family; scenes illustrating American culture draw attention from passers-by in The Hague.*

The Honorable J.R.M. van den Brink, Minister of Economic Affairs 1948–52

Born in 1915, Jan van den Brink was appointed Minister of Economic Affairs in January 1948 and immediately had to argue his position in the Dutch cabinet. “We had quite a row. I got into quite an argument with my colleague in finance, who said, ‘We can’t go on this way: We have to bring down investment levels. We have to bring down levels of consumption. And we have to continue [in the same way].’ Because we had at that time still a central, guided “scarcity” economy—as we had in the war—so the entrepreneurs could not really take initiatives. Everything was rationed and distributed, and we had central bureaus for everything—for leather and for textiles and for wood and metals, and so on. Everything was regulated. Every import had to be licensed and every export had to be granted, and so on. And so it was terrible red tape! We had, I think, two hundred and fifty thousand civil servants more at that time than before the war. And we had [fewer] people available for work in the business also at that time.”

“And in my opinion—I was then 32, and I am *still* the youngest cabinet minister we ever had in Holland—I was 32 only—and [I was] there to take certain risks! I defended another position. I said we have to go on the level we have now, because of that speech of Marshall. I think the Americans will be wise enough, also in their own interests, to make it so that we can go on to build up the country and be good clients in the future. And so my thesis was [that] this foreign aid, it will come, and we will get quite a part of it, or our economy will really fall down, and then recovery is a little bit later than it would have happened otherwise. And so I wanted to take the risk, and I succeeded in convincing my colleagues, and we continued and Marshall help came.”

“Marshall aid was surely not the most important thing in Holland. The most important [thing] at that time was, in fact, the consensus and the discipline of the population. I had very close relations with organizations of the entrepreneurs, but also of labor. And so we had, at a very early stage already, the constructive cooperation between the parties in business, and that was the real strength of Holland just after the war.”

“On the whole, I think it was handled in a very businesslike way and with also some idealism. It was four per cent of our national income at that time.



FIGURE 4 *The Hon. J.R.M. (Jan) van den Brink, Minister of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands, 1948–1952.*



FIGURE 5 AND 6 *A new Marshall Plan-funded factory in Uden.*

That would be today [April 20, 1995]—in prices of today—a national income of today—let me say, 80–100 billion. That’s a lot of money. It just made it possible to invest in a speed you needed to liberalize the economy and to restore the market in due time.”

“And the Marshall help was accompanied by, let me say, the incentive to construct an OEEC [The Organization for European Economic Co-operation]. And that was, for a country like the Netherlands, very important because this country is condemned to death if trade is not free enough. We have lived for centuries from trade. You have seen that at Rotterdam and Amsterdam. And we were very much in favor of this development in Europe also leading to European integration. So Marshall aid was fitting in a total atmosphere in Europe, and especially in this country, that we wanted to do things in a more rational, wiser, and better way, you know—and together!”

“The Marshall aid was, in my opinion, a more modern view on the problems in a rational way, without rancor, and without negative feelings as to the former enemy. You know, it was very different. And that feeling was rather more widespread since then, but I do not know if you have seen yesterday the football match in Amsterdam on television between the Netherlands and Germany; that’s very special for us, to fight—there in the stadium—the Germans. You see it. There is still something there very far back in their minds of that feeling from the wartime.”



FIGURE 7 *Indicators of cultural change and industrial growth are in evidence. Modern machinery such as these Singer sewing machines creates both new products and employment while reducing prices at this “ready-made” clothing factory in The Hague.*

The small Dutch farm town of Uden has assured itself of a stable economic future by industrializing. With a surplus labor force on its hands and no local opportunity for employment, the municipal council in 1948 decided to make Uden a small industrial center. This rural industrialization was achieved in a unique manner. Standardized workshops were built at municipal expense. They can be leased or bought on easy terms and already have attracted eight manufacturers employing 800 workers. All utilities are available, thanks to the town's initiative, and roads have been hard-surfaced and illuminated. The spirit of Uden was essential for the success of the Netherlands' five-year industrialization program, the goal of which was a balance in national spending and production along with full employment by 1953—security and prosperity without foreign assistance.

Gerrit Staarman, Farmer

Born in 1920 on a farm 15 kilometers from the German border, Gerrit Staarman said that his father "grew potatoes for export to France [and that] a lot of people worked on the farm. They had to do everything by hand, no tractors, no machinery, only horses. The horses did everything—plowing and cultivating and bringing the potatoes to the surface, with workers on their knees digging them out and throwing them in the baskets. So you can understand that was a lot of work."

"I was sent to elementary school. And then we had to work on the fields. But my father sent me to the high school for four years. I learned German, English, French, and geography. And then he sent me to the agriculture school three years. I learned all about cows, about horses, about potatoes, about grain, everything. And then came the War. And everything went in."

"In 1945, there was no food in the big cities, especially the western part of Holland. But in the part where we lived, there were no problems. We had food enough! In April 1945 we were liberated! No bombers, no fighters, no Germans. End of the war!"

"We had three horses in the war, and after the war we had three horses—the same—and no machines. And we still had a little tractor. We couldn't buy a new tractor or new machinery. After the War came advertising in the newspaper: New jeeps from the United States! My father said, 'We can buy a jeep!' We could drive everywhere in our neighborhood. There was nobody who had a car in our town. We could work with the jeep in the fields and see something of the world around us. We used the jeep for everything, on the roads, on the land, cultivating, plowing, mowing grass, and everything. After about 1950, I think, we got combines from the United States ... and then a lot of tractors came."

“In 1948, I’d like to go somewhere in the world! My father always talked about the United States. We saw in an agriculture newspaper something about the Marshall Plan, and I wrote a letter about our farm and family. So I was one of fifty young farmers who went to the United States! We knew a little bit of the Marshall Plan, but not much. There were two who went to the United States from this province. I was one. I am very proud of it.”

Gerrit Staarman sailed with other young Dutch farmers to America and landed in Halifax, where they unsuccessfully tried to buy postage stamps with their guilders. “When we went to the bank, we asked can we get dollars for the guilders? No. No! They don’t want Guilders. So we got some stamps for nothing from those friendly people. But the Dutch money, it bought nothing.” And then they were put on a train for Bangor, Maine, where they were to learn about farm machinery.

“We knew there was a lot of machinery. We didn’t have machinery. We had the war and we didn’t have machinery. We had just a little tractor but the most farmers had nothing—only horses and an old plow. And so we saw everything and everything was new! In the United States, the first things we saw were all the big cars! All those cars! Studebakers and Cadillacs and we never saw so many. The people were very friendly, different than in Holland. In Holland, you see somebody with money and he is very ‘high.’ The first day I came in the kitchen of the farmhouse, we saw electric machines everywhere! In the barn, there were other machines. In Holland it was all done by hand, but in the United States, with machines. I came in the farmhouse and sat in the chair and said, ‘What is this?’ ‘What is a washing machine?’ We never saw a washing machine before! The freezer was ... We didn’t know *what* it was! Refrigerator! And a separator for the milk! All those machines! We had nothing like that in Holland!”

Later, on a farm in Pennsylvania, Staarman discovered that even there a lot of the work was done by hand, and he was pleased to learn that “our soil is better in Holland than in the U.S., I think. See, in the United States you had a lot of stones, and we didn’t have that. So I like the soil in Holland.”

Back in Holland, he remembers: “Well, I had been in the States, I knew what a washing machine was. So we were married and I said to my wife, ‘We should buy a washing machine that is a good one.’ And I bought a washing machine. And I put it in the kitchen. And then the whole family—twenty, thirty people came looking at the washing machine like it was a television. ‘What is it doing now?’ ‘What is it doing now?’ They didn’t know what a refrigerator was. They knew nothing.”

“On the farm my father said, ‘We’ll go to the United States. We will sell the farm and we go to the United States!’ But we didn’t do it. We stayed in Holland.”

My father always said, ‘The best soil is in the new polder. We don’t go to the States, but then *you* start [being the farmer here]. We will go to the new polder!’ And we got one of the best farms on the new polder!”

“My father became rich. He had a jeep and a little tractor. And after 1950, every year there came more machinery like in the United States, and every year fewer people [were] working in the farm because of all of the machinery!”

Staarman kept a diary of his American trip and included his impressions on an August [1950] afternoon: “At three o’clock I work a piece of land with a disc harrow. Afterwards I take a look at the tools in the barn. The equipment those Americans have! Lateral feeder rake, hay rake, hay baler, a mower driven by a tractor with a branch axle, combine harvester with auxiliary engine, corn planter,



FIGURE 8 *Some of the Dutch farmers on their return to the Netherlands from America, 1950, after spending several months working with American farmers and learning about agricultural mechanization. Gerrit Staarman is toward the back on the far left.*



FIGURE 9 *Willem Plasier of Zwijndrecht is shown by his American host, Edward W. Newlin of Grantville, PA, how to operate a self-propelled combine.*



FIGURE 10 *Newly arrived tractors from the U.S. sent to help speed up productivity and modernization in the Netherlands.*

corn harvester, fertilizer distributor, potato planter, potato harvester, huge potato sorting machine equipped with sorting table, potato sprayer, sprinkler, conveyor to get the bales up in the barn, grain mixer, grinder, cleaner, two big plows for the tractor, one disc harrow, one cultivator, two trailing cultivators, two John Deere tractors, one binder, electrical fuel pump, dung distributor, two milking machines, automated cooling installations for milk, water heater, automated drinking water supply for the cows and one truck. And all that on a 45-hectare farm!"

More than seven decades after the official end of the Marshall Plan, its name has entered the lexicon as a synonym for any necessary and clever cure for a troubled country, region, or people. It was, in fact, not a plan, but an evolving program during which the United States provided most of the financial support and Europeans provided the ideas for reconstructing, modernizing, and building what has become a family of nations in place of the warring states of their past. Much of the credit for the success of the program goes to the Americans who worked for it in Washington and Europe and to the Europeans who, like Ernst van der Beugel and Jan van den Brink, labored through the complex negotiations and who, like Gerrit Staarman, the Dutch farmer, worked to take advantage of the changing world. Its influence is still present and remains a subject worthy of study and historical research.

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The Liberation Route Europe: Challenges of Exhibiting Multinational Perspectives

Jory Brentjens and Wiel Lenders

In February 2014 the traveling exhibition *Routes of Liberation: European Legacies of the Second World War* was launched at the European Parliament in Brussels. The exhibition, which considered the origins, course and complex legacies of World War II was an initiative of the Liberation Route Europe Foundation (LREF) in collaboration with a consortium of leading World War II museums and other partners.¹ The opening of the exhibition marked the end of a period of six months of close collaboration between historians, project-managers and designers from five European countries: Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Poland. A collaboration that, due to the still sensitive subject matter of World War II, was challenging and knew quite a few problems.

We live in a time in which Europe is no longer a vague concept but a very concrete political entity, if one that is subject to ongoing challenges. However, it appears that there is still a lot of work to be done to come to a shared understanding of the legacies and meanings of World War II that takes into account the viewpoints from a variety of countries rather than just one's own. Especially by the general public in specific European countries, the history of World War II is often perceived as one singular story. The fact that there are several histories of World War II, with each country having a distinct way of looking at the war, is lost on the majority of Europeans and herein lies the main challenge for the Liberation Route Europe.

One of the unique features of *Routes of Liberation* is that it is the first exhibition on World War II to employ a multi-perspective approach: it is organized on a broad European scale, with input from five countries. The national narratives of Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Poland are brought together in one exhibition and made to challenge one another. The results are often interesting but also give rise to a unique set of problems. The inherent problem with a transnational European approach to the history of World War II and its aftermath is that each country is still very much bound

¹ www.routesofliberation.com/theexhibition. Accessed on September 8, 2015.

by its own national paradigm. This paradigm, though it has shifted in the post-war period, has developed in different directions in each country. The broader public, as well as the historians working on the *Routes of Liberation* project, are still influenced by these paradigms, which led to many discussions in the process of creating the exhibition. In this article, the national narratives that have developed in the participating countries will be discussed before going into the process of the creation of *Routes of Liberation* and the problems that occurred along the way. At the end of the article, we will analyze the transnational and multi-perspective approach in order to evaluate to what extent the *Routes of Liberation* exhibition has been able to shape a transnational European perspective on World War II.

National Narratives World War II

The moment World War II had ended, the writing of its history began. In the years immediately after 1945, the history of the war in Western Europe was interwoven with already existing national, political and religious discourses. In Eastern Europe, in the countries under Soviet dominion, the collective memory was heavily influenced by a nationalistic and communistic ideology laid down from above (Vree and Laarse 26). Despite these general trends, each country still wrote its history in accordance with its own national wartime experiences which led to several distinct histories. There were of course large similarities between these histories but to this day each country has tended to focus on the themes that were/are most relevant to it. It is only in the last few decades that a movement towards convergence of these separate histories can be observed in the narratives of World War II (Vree and Laarse 15).

Great Britain: Heroism on the Battlefield

Great Britain was one of the major Allied powers and played a key role in the final defeat of Nazi Germany. After years of appeasement Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939 after the Nazi invasion of Poland. After eight months of relative quiet, the Allied forces clashed with the German army in May 1940. The French army held out for several weeks but eventually had to capitulate to the superior German forces, leaving Britain alone in facing Nazi Germany. The British endured the Blitz and fought the Axis forces in Africa and Italy before landing in France in June 1944. After some of the heaviest fighting

of the war in Normandy, the Allied armies continued their advance towards Germany until the Nazis capitulated in May 1945.

One of the most distinguishing features of Great Britain's experience of WWII is that the country was never occupied by German forces (with the exception of the Channel Islands). This "lack" of occupation, which sets Great Britain apart from other European countries, made British historiography differ from that of the rest of Europe. Although the country was heavily bombed during the Blitz and its survival was uncertain when the German U-boats scored large successes, it never had to endure the repressive Nazi rule. The absence of occupation also meant the absence of a resistance movement. These two elements, oppression and resistance, would become central themes in the historiography of countries that were occupied, like France and the Netherlands, in the first decades after the war (Vree and Laarse 7 and 32–33). Since these themes were nonexistent in the British experience of the war, British historiographers mainly focused on other aspects of the war. One of the key themes that arose in Britain was that of heroism on the battlefield. As a consequence, the victorious campaigns in North Africa, Normandy and Northwest Europe took center stage in war history alongside stories of the individual bravery of the ordinary soldier. This approach has reduced the story of World War II to a series of British victories and has left little room for historical complexity. Slowly, however, this image has been shifting under the influence of more nuanced, multi-perspective and transnational approaches of academic historians (Liberation Route Europe Foundation 11).

France: Oppression and Resistance

France was invaded by the German army in May 1940 and capitulated after six weeks of heavy fighting. The country was to face four years of Nazi occupation during which the French population reacted in a variety of ways to German rule. In the South of France a collaborationist state was set up under Marshal Pétain that closely collaborated with the occupying authorities and assisted in the deportation of a large number of French Jews. On the other side of the spectrum, the French formed a large underground resistance movement, which saw its most active phase in 1944 when it helped to prepare for the Allied invasion (4). In the summer of 1944, France became the setting of some of the heaviest fighting seen on the Western Front as the German forces clung tenaciously to their positions in Normandy. At the end of the war, France was regarded as one of the victorious powers and gained a seat at the table in shaping the postwar future of Europe.

The French perception of World War II was marked by a very different approach than the one seen in Britain. The French could not look back on a war that was skillfully fought. The defeat of 1940 was a painful memory as was the large-scale collaboration of Vichy France. These historical events were quickly pushed out of the national collective memory in the first years after the war. Instead, French historians focused on the themes of oppression and resistance. This image of a country that defied a brutal occupation only began to shift from the late sixties onwards (Vree and Laarse 32–33). From this time on, more sensitive topics such as the fate of the French Jews, French collaboration with Nazi Germany, and the defeat of 1940 have gradually made their way into French collective memory offering a more differentiated view on history.

The Netherlands: History in Black and White

The Dutch collective memory of and historical perspective on the war show many similarities with the French. Like France, the Netherlands could not look back on a successful and professionally organized defense against the German invasion. The country capitulated on 15 May 1940 after only five days of fighting during which the Dutch army was completely overwhelmed. Instead of bravery in battle, oppression and resistance became the dominant themes in Dutch collective memory and history: the image of Queen Wilhelmina in London defying the Nazis and stories of an active large-scale resistance movement were juxtaposed with events such as the bombing of Rotterdam and the large-scale famine that took place in the winter of 1944–1945, known by the Dutch as the “Hongerwinter.” There was hardly any room for nuance and the fact that the majority of the Dutch had taken a stance of accommodation was forgotten (Somers 122).

Another key feature of Dutch historiography was the tendency to view society as being split into right and wrong. This polarized view was heavily influenced by the work of Loe de Jong, who became one of the most important Dutch chroniclers of World War II (see Heijden 16). A black and white history was created in which people had either been members of the resistance or collaborators (see Ginkel 730). For the large grey area that existed between these opposites there was hardly any attention. This idea persisted for a long time and until the late 1960s resistance fighters and soldiers would remain the focal point of the public’s attention (Ginkel 726). From the late 1960s and early 1970s, a more pluralistic image emerged as different groups started to emphasize their own history. The one “grand narrative” of the war

shifted from the theme of sacrifice to oppression (Ginkel 506–7). The focus now shifted to groups of people that had suffered during the war instead of lingering on resistance members or soldiers who sacrificed their lives. Other groups started to claim their own place in the history of the war and a hierarchy of victimhood was established (Ginkel 509). In this hierarchy the persecution of the Jews assumed a central place but also people that were not directly influenced by the war such as the children and grandchildren of the victims (Ginkel 509). It is also from this time on that the Holocaust gained its central place in the Dutch collective memory and other painful themes received more attention (487). From the 1990s onwards, the “grey” area that existed between the two extremes of right and wrong was given much more attention. This development changed the Dutch view on WWII history from one of black and white into a much more nuanced one that allows for more shades of grey.

Poland: Between Two Totalitarian Regimes

Poland is arguably one of the countries that suffered most during the war. In September 1939, the German and Soviet armies invaded the country. Both the Nazis and the Soviets established ruthless occupational regimes that were responsible for the murder of tens of thousands of Polish citizens as early as 1939–1940 (Liberation Route Europe Foundation 7). Furthermore, Poland was to become the primary scene of the Holocaust with some of the most infamous Nazi concentration- and extermination camps being located there. Polish forces fought on all fronts during the war, from Africa, Italy, France to the rest of Northwest Europe but also alongside the Red Army on the Eastern Front. Poland had one of the largest and most sophisticated resistance organizations of the war. The Polish underground had a parliament, schools and courts as well as a very large military branch in the form of the Home Army, which made an unsuccessful attempt to liberate the Polish capital in 1944. Despite all the fighting and suffering the Poles went through during the war, the outcome was very disappointing. Nominally, Poland was one of the victorious countries, but it lost its freedom and independence when it came under Soviet rule at the end of the war.

In the years after World War II, Polish public memory was substantially shaped by the Communist Party line. National and heroic memory was promoted and it became impossible to discuss the crimes committed by the Soviet Union. The communist government supported a history in which Nazi Germany was portrayed as the only enemy of Poland and which left

out the role that the Soviet-Union had played in the invasion of Poland in 1939.

Events such as the Warsaw uprising of 1944 that showed the desire of the Poles to free themselves and become an independent state once again did not find a place in Polish history books until the end of the 1980s (Vree and Laarse, 26). In Polish historiography of WWII the Jews were at first not regarded as a special group of victims. The persecution of the Jews was seen as just one element of the broader suffering that had befallen Poland. This image started to change from the mid 1950s onward during the period of de-Stalinization but still the Soviet narrative remained dominant. Only after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s did a Polish national narrative on World War II that was free from Soviet interference begin to take shape.

As a result of this, an emancipatory feeling has existed among Polish historians since the early 1990s. They—rightfully—feel that in the decades following the war the historiography of Poland was not free of Soviet interference and are determined to correct this. In the years immediately after the fall of the communist regime this even led to some ultranationalist views on history in which former Nazis were praised for fighting the Soviet Union (38). These nationalistic views were quickly abandoned in favor of a more nuanced approach as Poland sought to connect with the European Union (38).

Nevertheless, the Polish attitude towards World War II still differs from that of other European countries and continues to have immediate relevance to the contemporary political situation. It was not until 1989–1990 that they could fully face up to the real nature of the war. Here, we can find one of the challenges of the multi-perspectival approach. Perhaps as a consequence of this temporal lag, the Polish attitude towards the history of the war is more unforgiving than, for instance, the British or the Dutch. This attitude was reflected in discussions and had a direct influence on the exhibition as will be seen later on.

Germany: Facing the Facts

Nazi Germany was the country that started the war and was responsible for the Holocaust. It was also the country that lost the war as well as the only country in modern history to see a war to its absolute end, choosing not to capitulate when all hope for a positive outcome of the war was lost but instead to keep on fighting (See Bessel 385).

In the years directly following the war, most German citizens did not consider the arrival of the Allied armies as a liberation from the National Socialist regime, as Richard von Weizsäcker suggested they should in a speech in 1985, but rather saw it as a bitter defeat (Liberation Route Europe Foundation 9). The country lay in ruins and was divided between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. This division between East and West is reflected in the German historiography. In the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the collective memory was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union (like in Poland), while in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) the population began to see itself as an innocent victim of the Nazi regime (LREF 12).

When the Allied and Soviet forces took over Germany, they confronted the German population with the crimes that had been committed during the war, including the treatment of the Jews in the camps. Faced by these overwhelming charges the German population pushed the history of the Holocaust and other war crimes to the back of their minds and focused on themselves and the suffering they underwent during the war (Bessel 388). The German population was still not ready to face the facts and emerged from the World War II with what Richard Bessel called a strong sense of victimhood, focusing on the destruction wrought on German cities and the large number of German war casualties (Bessel 396). This view started to shift in the 1960s when a new generation of Germans began to ask penetrating questions about their past and protested against the fact that former National Socialists were still in positions of power in West Germany (Bessel 396). From the 1980s onwards, the collective memory in Germany became more pluralistic, concrete and individualistic and World War II became an important point of moral reference (Bessel 228–9).

Differences and Similarities

There are significant parallels as well as large differences between European countries in terms of how the history of World War II was written and collective memories were formed after the war. Although the historiography and collective memory have developed along similar lines in various countries, they are still mostly nationally confined. With the Liberation Route European Foundation and the *Routes of Liberation* exhibition we try, for the first time, to bring together these differing yet converging European national views into a multi-perspective whole and see what can be learned from the process.

Challenges of the Multi-Perspectival Approach

The varying national outlooks on history played an important role in the sometimes fierce discussions about the content of the *Routes of Liberation* exposition. Here, some of the most sensitive topics in the history of World War II were addressed, often with interesting results. To gain a better understanding of these results it is first important to know a bit more about the way the *Routes of Liberation* exposition is designed. The exhibition consists of three parts. The first part deals with the events leading up to World War II, such as the Versailles peace treaty, the Russian Revolution and the Munich agreements. It does so by using fictional headlines from contemporaneous newspapers for instance: *Bolsheviks seize power in Russian empire* or *War Erupts!* The second part, the core part of the exhibition, consists of twelve themes and sixteen biographies. The themes range from bombing to fighting, resistance, Holocaust, destruction, collaboration, and so on. Each theme is introduced by a short text that was agreed upon by all the historians involved and illustrated by five images that were supplied by the parties involved. The sixteen biographies are distributed over the five countries and provide information about a broad range of subjects and persons from all the countries involved. The third part of the exhibition focuses on postwar developments, such as the division between Eastern and Western Europe, the downfall of the Soviet Union, and the beginning of a strong European collaboration.

Discussions about the content of the exhibition were often quite intense. For the theme of “resistance,” for example, the German partners supplied an image of the aftermath of the failed assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler by German army officers on 20 July 1944. The image raised the question if this act could or should be classified as resistance. Another example concerned the image that the Polish partners supplied for the theme of “collaboration” which depicted Ukrainian volunteers of the Waffen-SS instead of Polish collaborators. For the theme of “terror and extermination” the Dutch put forward a photo of Dutch prisoners in a Japanese camp in the Dutch East Indies. The brutal campaign of the Netherlands to reconquer its former colony, however, could just as easily have been placed in this category. When it turned out that there was one biography too many for an equal distribution between all countries, the French courteously offered to drop one of their biographies: the one that told the story of a French collaborator. The other partners protested and a different biography was dropped. A final example concerned the biography of the German Field Marshall Walter Model, which contained a quote by Model labeling himself a hero of National Socialism. The Polish partners

protested that they would not take part in an exposition that depicted German generals as heroes. After prolonged discussion the quote was dropped. The examples above form a good illustration of how the various partners' wartime experiences and historiographies continue to influence their outlook on the past. The heated debates that the representation of war from varying national perspectives is likely to trigger continued in the letters that visitors of *Routes of Liberation* sent to criticize the choice of certain texts, images, themes and biographies.

Looking toward the future, we believe it would be good to deepen the current collaboration and add more countries to the list of participating partners. Italy would make an interesting addition since it would allow for a comparison between Germany and another Axis country, and provide an opportunity to critically consider the differences between two totalitarian states. The perspective from the Balkans and other Eastern European countries such as the Ukraine or the Baltic States would also from a good addition since at the moment the Eastern European perspective is only represented by Poland. Then there is the special case of Russia. An overview of the European history of World War II cannot be truly complete without taking into account the Russian perspective. Unfortunately, with political tensions between the East and the West currently on the rise, collaboration with Russia seems unlikely. Furthermore, the Russian culture of commemoration and the nation's collective memory differ greatly from that of the Western European countries and Poland, rendering potential future collaborations particularly challenging.

A European Perspective on War?

Behind all of these efforts lies the question: why should we work on a European perspective on war? Why is it so important for us to be critical of our national narratives, to look across borders, and to take the histories of other countries into account? Why does it not suffice to focus on those historical themes that are most relevant to our own wartime experiences? The answer to these questions is not a straightforward one. First of all, there is nothing inherently wrong with the investigation of national and regional histories. In fact, it would be strange to stop doing so. We focus on the history that is closest at hand and that has shaped our collective memory the most. Even apart from the question whether it is possible to look at history without the influence of our national paradigm, it would not be a good idea to abandon our national perspectives for a European one. The true value of the LREF and a project like the *Routes*

of Liberation Exhibition can be found in the way the foundation and exhibition serve as a platform for transnational discussion and debate. By bringing together the national histories of multiple European countries, a broader context is created in which one's own national history can be better understood. It also forces us to look at our own history from a different perspective, which can bring some painful but very valuable realizations to light that in the future might lead us to change our national narratives.

To illustrate how bringing the perspectives of five European countries together may lead to a better understanding of history, let us finally consider the example of the geographical map that is included at the end of the exhibition. This map shows the advance of the Allied and Soviet forces across Europe and is very revealing in its simplicity: in Western Europe the Western Allied forces and especially Britain and the United States are seen as the two major powers that brought down Nazi Germany. Since English-speaking soldiers were responsible for the liberation of this part of Europe, and since postwar relations between East and West left little room for appreciation of the Soviet forces, this is perhaps logical. However, the simple fact which the map also displays is that the war was largely won in the East. During several years of brutal fighting, the Red Army managed to survive the initial crippling blows of the Nazi invasion and gradually ground down the German army until it was finally and relentlessly pushed back. When the Allied armies advanced out of Normandy in August 1944, the Red Army stood at the gates of Warsaw just 600 kilometers from Berlin. These simple facts are often overlooked but have the power to dramatically alter the way we view the roles that the Allies and the Soviet Union played in defeating Nazi Germany. Here we see the value of having Poland as a partner country of the LREF: its participation opens the door to historical insights from Eastern Europe which are still not commonly taken note of among Western Europeans.

All in all, the *Routes of Liberation* exhibition brings together the histories of several nations in a comparative mode. The goal is not to determine which country suffered the most, had the highest number of victims, collaborated the most or had the most active resistance network. Instead, the goal is to gain a broader contextual understanding of our own histories. Selective memory of the war in individual nation states demands an international response. There is still much to be learned from each other and with the future plans of the Liberation Route Europe Foundation this hopefully will be achieved.²

² The LREF is currently involved in several projects. Italy and Luxembourg are scheduled to join the foundation in the near future.



FIGURE 1 *The Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte and president of the European parliament Martin Schulz open the Routes of Liberation exhibition in Brussels. © Stichting Liberation Route Europe.*

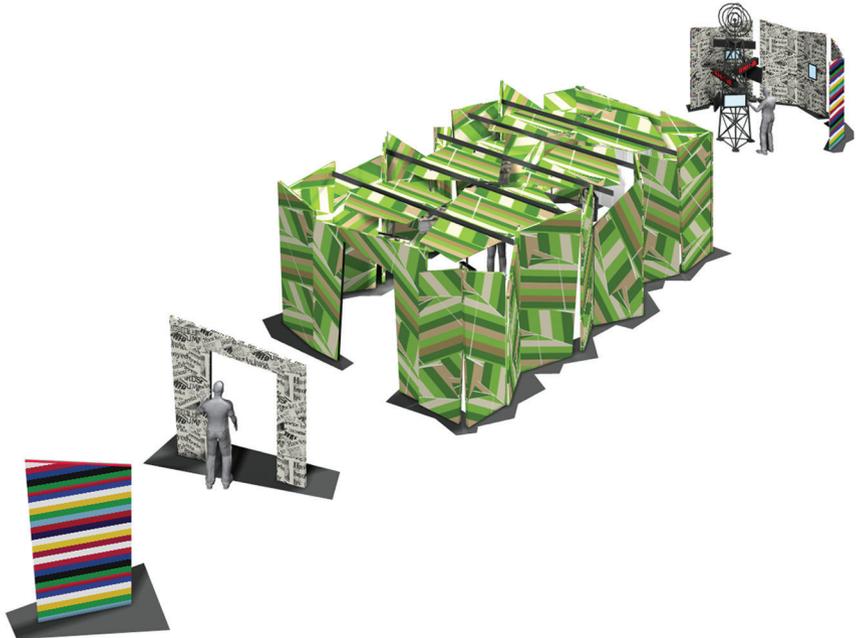


FIGURE 2 *Early design of the Routes of Liberation exhibition. © Stichting Liberation Route Europe.*



FIGURE 3 *The core of the exhibition with the themes to the sides and biographies in the middle.*
 © Stichting Liberation Route Europe.



FIGURE 4 *Visitors in the Routes of Liberation exhibition.* © Liberation Route Europe Foundation/
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