

FOUR

American Studies in Europe

more about America's history and literature. This would not be a simple task, given the chronic resistance of European academics to the inclusion of American subjects in their classrooms and textbooks. Nevertheless, after World War II, the U.S. government embarked on a major campaign to incorporate the study of the United States into the curricula of European universities and secondary schools, and to help create chairs and institutes in American history and literature. American Studies became an essential component of Washington's cultural diplomacy. Its importance enhanced by the recognition that this was one of the most effective ways to reach and influence a generation of students who would eventually acquire powerful positions in the government, the media, and the universities, passing on to the next generation their knowledge of and appreciation for the United States.

Over time, the American Studies movement in Europe accomplished many of the objectives visualized by its sponsors across the Atlantic. But it did not result in a transplantation of American values. Instead, European scholars used American Studies for their own purposes, reinterpreting American history and literature in terms that were relevant to European problems. In the end, American Studies became a lens through which Europeans could more clearly see and understand themselves, which was not what Washington originally intended when it set out to teach the Old World about the United States.

PREWAR ANTECEDENTS

In 1948, Harold Laski—the historian, political scientist, and leading theoretician of the British Labour Party—published *The American Democracy*, a mammoth work designed to make the United States “intelligible to Europeans.” Toward the end of the book, Laski reflected on Europe’s “absurd and willful ignorance of American institutions and culture” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “American literature was little read,” he observed, while “few people, the scholars included, knew much of American history. . . . There was [no] serious effort to teach American history in the universities, let alone the schools.”

Laski’s lament was echoed by others who remembered how little attention the United States received from European academics or intellectuals in the first decades of the twentieth century. “America played a very small role in the education of those [of us] who grew up in

When Charles Frankel criticized the government’s exchange programs for being too concerned with indoctrinating foreigners in the virtues of the American way, rather than with discovering what other societies might have to offer, he was questioning a central assumption behind America’s cultural diplomacy in the second half of the twentieth century. Most government officials believed that the more people knew about the United States, the more they would come to admire its political and economic values, and its foreign policy. Unilateral instruction was therefore necessary, especially in the years of the Cold War. Reciprocity and mutual understanding, however worthy as educational goals, would have to wait.

Almost all the government’s cultural efforts throughout the postwar era were aimed at introducing foreigners, and particularly Europeans, to a civilized and sophisticated America. Yet the America Houses and embassy libraries, the art exhibitions and jazz concerts, the touring ballet companies and symphony orchestras, could not erase the deeply ingrained notion, reinforced by Hollywood, that the United States was a land of enormous wealth, with modern appliances and efficient plumbing, but without an authentic culture or a respect for tradition.

To overcome these stereotypes, Europeans would need to learn

Germany between 1910 and 1930," one journalist recollected. "We were taught almost nothing about its history" or "about the role it was beginning to assume with World War I." Similarly, Sigmund Skard—one of the principal advocates in the 1940s and 1950s of American Studies in Europe—confessed in his autobiography that his knowledge of America's history and literature had once been nonexistent. At the University of Oslo, where he was a student in the 1920s, "America was still largely ignored." At best, American history was treated as a "peripheral field in world history." The situation was the same in literature. Skard could not recall "having read even Hemingway that early, nor his other contemporaries. . . . Nor did I read the modern American poets at the time." Indeed, "not a single American writer was among my models."²

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, professorial indifference to America was common throughout Europe. In Britain, conservative dons at Oxford and Cambridge usually spoke of the United States with condescension. In their view, American history was dull, American intellectual life was insignificant, and American literature was merely an inferior by-product of British literature. These dismissive opinions were shared by Dutch, Norwegian, and Danish academics, who looked to both Britain and Germany for cultural guidance. French professors, preoccupied with the glories of their own civilization, were equally inattentive to developments in the United States. Authoritarian educators and politicians in Germany, Austria, and Spain seemed either incurious about or hostile toward America's democratic institutions. Even in countries like Italy, Greece, Poland, Sweden, and Ireland, where immigration to the United States was of considerable importance, few scholars displayed any inclination to find out more about the land to which so many of their people had migrated.³

This disinterest was exacerbated by the absence in European libraries of American novels, political tracts, newspapers, magazines, and government documents, materials that might have facilitated scholarly research. Consequently, most of the information about America in the nineteenth century came from travel books, many of which were filled with sweeping and often supercilious generalizations about American politics and social life that served only to harden the prejudices of European readers. In Frances Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832) and Charles Dickens's *American Notes* (1842), the New World seemed a thoroughly unpleasant place, inhabited by people who were avaricious and uncouth, frantically pursuing (in Dick-

ens's famous words) the "almighty dollar." Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835) was a far more perceptive and sympathetic depiction of life in the United States. But Tocqueville wanted primarily to warn his fellow-Europeans about the perils of the democratic experiment which, he feared, would lead either to anarchy or mass conformity. In *The American Commonwealth* (1888), James Bryce tried to evaluate the United States on its own terms, rather than as a verification of Europe's superiority. Still, his book was a lonely exception to the critical portraits of America that usually told Europeans what they wanted to hear.⁴

Meanwhile, European academics were content to focus on topics closer to home. Literature, philosophy, music, the arts—these were the specialties of Britain, France, Germany, and Central Europe. History was what had happened in classical Greece and Rome; in the medieval world; or, at most, in the Renaissance. America was entirely too new and too modern to have a past worthy of investigation.⁵ And it was too distant, geographically and culturally, to be noticed or taken seriously.

There were sporadic signs in the early years of the twentieth century, and certainly after World War I, that the scholarly neglect of America might be coming to an end. The emergence of the United States as an economic and military power meant that Europe was no longer alone at the center of the universe. America's decisive intervention in the war, the presence of American troops in France, the way in which Woodrow Wilson and his entourage dominated the peace conference at Versailles, the impact of American products and movies in the 1920s, all these made it necessary for Europeans to know more about the United States.

Much of this attention took the form of a new interest in and respect for American literature. Despite their general disdain for American novelists and poets, European (and especially French) critics had long been fascinated with James Fenimore Cooper and Edgar Allan Poe. Now translations of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Edward Arlington Robinson, and Jack London appeared, while the works of expatriates like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and the young Ernest Hemingway raised the possibility that at least a few American writers were worthy of inclusion in the modernist pantheon. Two milestones indicated that, in the eyes of some Europeans, American poetry and fiction had come of age: the publication of D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* in 1923 and the awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1930 to Sinclair Lewis.

Significantly, Lawrence was not an academician. Nor was his passion for American writing shared by the professoriate. Inside the universities, the acceptance of America as a subject of scholarly inquiry was more halting and less cordial. Still, a number of prominent figures in the European academic world began to publish books and offer courses on the United States.

The great Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, normally absorbed with medieval and early modern Europe, paused briefly to comment on America's literature and civilization in two books. *Man and the Masses in America* (1918) had its origins in a course on American history Huizinga taught at the University of Leiden during World War I, while *Life and Thought in America: Stray Remarks* (1926) was a collection of notes and observations from his one visit to the United States. Huizinga's assessment, like Tocqueville's, was decidedly ambivalent. On the one hand, Huizinga was charmed by the exuberant optimism of the Americans and their childlike faith in the benefits that an industrial economy could infinitely bestow. On the other hand, he disliked America's glorification of efficiency, its hunger for instant results, its love affair with machines, and its satisfaction with the superficial and the mass-produced. Along with other European intellectuals in the 1920s, Huizinga saw America as the embodiment of modernity, which only made him treasure the quieter, less acquisitive ambience of his native Holland.⁶

For Huizinga, the United States was an object lesson on what could go wrong if Europeans followed the American example. Other scholars saw America not so much as a symbol but as a country whose history and development needed to be explained. At the University of Oslo, in the years before and after World War I, Halvdan Koht became the first Norwegian to write and teach extensively about America. His approach was more favorable than Huizinga's, emphasizing America's idealism, its commitment to social reform, and the broadening of its democratic heritage as a consequence of its remarkable economic growth. Koht's influence was considerable, particularly on Sigmund Skard who married Koht's daughter in 1933, thus laying the foundations for Skard's personal and intellectual involvement with the United States during and after World War II.⁷

Between the wars, French academics also became more active in scrutinizing the United States. Universities in Paris, Lyons, Lille, and Bordeaux established positions in American literature and history, beginning with a professorship at the Sorbonne, held from 1919 to 1941 by Charles Cestre, who was primarily responsible for launching

the study of the United States in France. André Siegfried and Bernard Fay, the first French scholar to earn a doctorate in American history, taught courses regularly on America at other Parisian universities during the 1920s and 1930s. At the same time, French libraries slowly enlarged their meager holdings in American source material, aided by American foundations like the Carnegie Endowment and the presence of the American Library in Paris, which opened in 1918.⁸

The Germans too devoted more attention to American subjects, which reflected both their expanding commercial ties to the United States at the dawn of the twentieth century and their defeat at the hands of the American army in 1918. As early as 1906, a bilateral exchange of scholars began, with German universities offering visiting posts to American academics, who were called Roosevelt Professors in honor of Theodore Roosevelt. One of these professors, John Burgess, a historian at Columbia, helped organize an American Institute in Berlin in 1910, complete with a library that housed one of the largest collections of Americana on the Continent. During the 1920s, interest in American culture intensified among German academics, artists, and intellectuals, though they were alternately captivated and repelled by what they heard and read about life in the United States. Even under the Nazis, teaching and research on the United States continued to flourish, at least for a while and in a heavily censored form. The number of courses on America steadily increased. In 1936, the University of Berlin established itself as the premier institution in Germany for American Studies by creating a professorship in American literature and cultural history. A year later, the government announced new regulations for examinations taken by secondary school teachers, requiring them to know as much about American as British literature. Nevertheless, the analyses and appraisals of American civilization had to conform to Nazi dogma, usually by pointing out the decadence of America's multiracial society.⁹

It was in Britain, however, that the magnitude and the limits of Europe's investment in American Studies were best exemplified. The academic links between Britain and the United States had been forged at the beginning of the twentieth century with the inauguration of the Rhodes scholarships in 1902, enabling Americans to do post-graduate work at Oxford. In return, the Commonwealth Fund, set up by the Harkness family in the United States in 1918, permitted British university graduates to study in the United States, starting in 1925. The Rhodes and Commonwealth awards were meant mainly for students. The teaching of American history in Britain awaited the creation in

1922 of the Harmsworth Chair at Oxford, intended for visiting American scholars, the first of whom was Samuel Eliot Morison. A few years later, in 1930, the Harkness family endowed a Commonwealth Professorship in American history at the University of London, designated as a permanent appointment for a British Americanist.¹⁰ Both these positions were supposed to educate British students in the complexities of the American past, and make research on American topics more respectable in the British academic world.

During the 1930s, the development of American Studies in Britain depended largely on the largess of foundations in the United States. In addition to the Commonwealth Fund, which sent 361 British students to America between 1925 and 1939, the Carnegie Endowment paid for the trips of British historians to the annual conventions of the American Historical Association and gave small amounts of money to British universities for the purchase of books on the United States. The ability to travel to and around America was particularly important for Herbert Nicholas. Nicholas attended Yale from 1935 to 1937 as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow intending to become a historian of seventeenth-century England. But he found himself increasingly entranced by American literature and colonial history, as well as with the sheer size and diversity of America itself.¹¹ The experience prepared him for his eventual transformation into an Americanist after World War II.

Despite all of these efforts, American Studies remained weak in Britain throughout the interwar years. Universities were reluctant to make room in their curricula for courses on the United States, students' interest was negligible, materials for teaching and research were inadequate, and neither Oxford nor the University of London seemed willing to do much more than provide an institutional shelter for two otherwise marginal chairs in American history. Nor did the British and American governments see any reason why they should support educational initiatives to enlighten British students or the British public about the United States.¹²

The outbreak of World War II forced policymakers in London and Washington to revise their estimation of the importance of American Studies. Nearly everyone in Franklin Roosevelt's administration and Winston Churchill's War Cabinet recognized that a close relationship between the two countries was now more imperative than at any time in the past. From the British standpoint, a political and military alliance with the United States was essential, first for survival and then for victory. Hence, it was desirable to strengthen Britain's cultural ties

with America. For their part, American officials believed that the British people needed to gain a better understanding of the social and political traditions of the United States, not only to cement the wartime partnership, but to prepare the local population for the 3 million U.S. soldiers and civilians who would soon be swarming into Britain. Educating the British about America's history and literature could help illuminate the common democratic heritage and shared destiny of the Anglo-Americans.

The war was thus a catalyst for the growth of American Studies, encouraged by both the British and American governments. In 1941, the American ambassador to Britain, John Winant, and the British minister of information, Duff Cooper, urged teachers in elementary and secondary schools to devote more time in their classrooms to American topics. To assist the teachers, the British Board of Education asked Allan Nevins, then occupying the Harmsworth chair and one of the leading authorities on the Civil War and the Gilded Age, to write a forty-thousand-word survey of American history for use in secondary schools. The board also arranged for teachers to attend week-long training seminars in American history. Meanwhile, Cambridge, which had not joined Oxford and the University of London in creating a position in American Studies during the 1920s, hurried to catch up, demonstrating its appreciation for the variety of life in the United States by inviting Henry Steele Commager, one of America's most eminent academic historians, and J. Frank Dobie, a specialist in Texas humor and folklore, to lecture on American history. In 1944, Cambridge went further, establishing the Pitt Professorship in American History and Institutions, to be held by visiting American scholars. Throughout the war years, British libraries received grants from the Rockefeller Foundation to expand their American collections. In addition, the Office of War Information supplied British audiences, in and out of school, with books, newspapers, films, and lectures by American intellectuals like Alfred Kazin—still youthful but already well known for his panoramic interpretation of modern American literature in *On Native Grounds*, who undertook a speaking tour for the OWI and the British Council in 1945.¹³

Nevertheless, the British government's enthusiasm for American Studies was inspired by the wartime emergency, not by some deeply rooted determination to improve the quality of teaching and research on the United States. By 1945, as the war neared its end, with American troops having left England for Paris and Berlin, Whitehall's interest in American history and literature subsided.¹⁴ If professors in

Britain and Western Europe were going to devote more of their scholarly time to the United States in the future, the incentive for them to do so would have to come from Washington and from America's private foundations. They would also have to acknowledge, on their own and however reluctantly, that the history and culture of the world's newest superpower could no longer be belittled or ignored.

THE POSTWAR SETTING

Twenty years after the end of World War II, American Studies had developed into a growth industry in Europe. The reason for this was hardly mysterious to Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary* and a member in good standing of the New York Jewish intelligentsia at a time when the world beyond Manhattan still looked like a Saul Steinberg cartoon. "Does Finland have a great literature?" Podhoretz asked in his 1967 autobiography *Making It*. "Does Afghanistan? Does Ecuador? Who knows or cares? But give Finland enough power and enough wealth, and there would soon be a Finnish department in every university in the world—just as, in the 1950s, departments of American Studies were suddenly being established in colleges where, only a few years earlier, it had scarcely occurred to anyone that there was anything American to study."¹⁵

The situation had indeed changed, as many European academics were forced to concede. Harry Allen, a British historian who became an Americanist soon after 1945, recalled in the 1970s the connection, so clear to his own generation, between the American Studies movement and American power. "It was . . . no accident," he observed, "that the rapid rise of American studies in Europe coincided with [the] international ascendancy of the United States in the years after World War II." A younger British scholar, noting the postwar expansion of American subjects in British universities and secondary schools, and the emergence of a "more respectful attitude toward American history" among his peers, saw these trends as having originated at precisely the moment "when the U.S. was asserting its role in the world." The importance of America, Sigmund Skard pointed out, was "obvious to everybody" in the European academic community, so much so that the historic "discrepancy between the position of the United States in the world and its place in syllabuses and curricula" seemed increasingly "intolerable."¹⁶

Despite the general European awareness of America's postwar pre-

eminence, the motivations for studying the United States differed from country to country. For many officials in the British government, teaching students about American history and literature was one way of strengthening the Atlantic Alliance in the midst of the Cold War, and of solidifying Britain's "special relationship" with the United States. The French too were anxious to know more about the United States, if only to bolster their resistance to America's cultural influence. In smaller nations like the Netherlands, Denmark, and Greece, the impact of the Marshall Plan and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization made scholars and students less Eurocentric; a greater knowledge of American society and politics was now obligatory.¹⁷

No people seemed more eager to learn about the United States than the West Germans. Much of their curiosity was genuine, but it was also a matter of necessity, the Americans having arrived as conquerors and masters of West Germany's fate. The United States, as one German Americanist remarked, "was the overwhelming entity with which everyone had to be acquainted, if you were intellectually enterprising at all." The Germans may have wished to please the new authorities by displaying a scholarly interest in America, but they were equally keen to forget the war and get on with their lives. American Studies offered a path to the future for professors, teachers, and young intellectuals, as Alfred Kazin discovered when he taught a course on "American civilization" in Cologne in 1952. Half the city was still in ruins, but for Kazin's students "the war was over. The war was not to be mentioned. Not a word was said by my students about the war. They were busy getting ahead on the magic road of *Amerikanistik*."¹⁸

The popularity of American Studies in postwar Europe did not depend simply on the recognition that the United States was a mighty country whose culture and institutions ought to be better understood. After a century of skepticism, European academics might still not have accepted American history and literature as areas suitable for teaching and research without the active intervention of the American government and a massive infusion of American money.

Washington's willingness to support the American Studies movement in Europe was inspired by the onset of the Cold War. Later on, the idea that the United States promoted American Studies in order to advance its political agenda made some European Americanists uncomfortable, as if there may have been few indigenous or purely intellectual reasons for them to take up the field. Looking back on the early postwar years from the perspective of the 1980s, the British literary critic Denis Donoghue worried that the European participation

in the spread of American Studies sprang from a "network of sentiments and purposes partly our own ... but at least equally the concern of diplomats and officers of the State Department. An entirely reputable academic interest ~~has been furthered~~ sponsored, indeed—by other motives," particularly those of American foreign policy. Yet in the late 1940s, these impulses did not seem suspicious. On the contrary, a number of European academics and intellectuals were quite prepared to embrace American Studies as an instrument of American diplomacy. In 1948, Stephen Spender, describing the "battle for the mind of Europe" in the *New York Times Magazine*, urged the United States to help Europe's students "understand the best in American civilization, and the American conception of freedom." Similarly, Max Beloff, a lecturer in American history at Oxford, suggested in 1949 that, in view of the Communists' current efforts to denigrate the United States throughout Western Europe, materials on U.S. history and literature could be used "for the better projection of America abroad."¹⁹

American policymakers agreed. From 1945 until the early 1970s, they offered European scholars and students a variety of resources and inducements aimed at making it easier for them to become specialists in American history and literature. The State Department (working mostly through the Fulbright program) and the U.S. Information Agency, together with the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, supplied the Europeans with textbooks and course outlines, organized summer seminars for secondary school teachers, funded conferences on every aspect of American civilization, subsidized the publication of professional journals, sent American professors to lecture in European universities, provided travel allowances and fellowships for Europeans to study in the United States, endowed chairs and institutes, arranged for the translation of American novels and scholarly works, and paid for the upgrading and cataloguing of American holdings in European libraries.²⁰

For much of this time, American aid was indispensable since the majority of European academics could not afford to visit the United States on research trips, buy American books, improve their library collections, or underwrite American Studies programs on their own. But what the U.S. government and the foundations most wanted to do was make sure that American history and literature would be taught on a permanent basis in Europe. To accomplish this goal, they would have to recruit and train a cadre of Americanists in Britain and on the Continent. And in the view of their American patrons, the Europeans

would need not only books and travel grants, but mentors and intellectual role models—emissaries from the United States who could introduce them to the latest analyses and interpretations, recommend them for fellowships, and launch them on their new careers.

THE AMERICAN GUEST PROFESSORS

Whatever its roots in the early years of the twentieth century, the American Studies movement in Europe would not have blossomed in the postwar era without the assistance and the example of a powerful American Studies movement in the United States. After 1945, European scholars began to pay serious attention, often for the first time, to the ideas of their American counterparts. The influence of the Americans rested, in part, on the perception that they possessed some special understanding of a culture that had previously been disparaged as exotic and second rate, but was now an object of intense concern.

In the United States, the attraction to American Studies had arisen in the 1930s, mainly among a small group of faculty members in the English and History departments of the country's elite universities. The architects of the movement were young and ambitious. They were also dissatisfied with what seemed to them the excessively narrow approach to the American past fostered by the traditional academic "fields." They proposed instead to be "interdisciplinary," to cross departmental boundaries, to invent a new way of writing about America that would combine the insights and techniques of intellectual history, literary criticism, political theory, and sociology.

They were affected as well by the various forms of cultural nationalism that became increasingly prevalent in the United States during the late 1930s and the war years—the references in the popular press to the "American Dream," the rhetorical celebrations of the "American Way of Life," and the assertion of America's democratic superiority over a Europe infested with swaggering dictators. These notions were reinforced by the work of cultural anthropologists like Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, who argued that societies should be seen as more than a collection of institutions, that they could be best comprehended through their unifying myths, traditions, and patterns of conduct. Such concepts suggested that America was not just a conventional nation-state but a distinctive civilization, one with a "national character" that could be discovered and defined. It was therefore necessary to explain what was "American" about America, to embark on

a quest for what the historian Perry Miller and others called the "meaning of America."

There was always an evangelical tone to their enterprise, a sense that they were not merely scholars but also missionaries to the world beyond the borders of the United States. In his introduction to a collection of essays about colonial and early nineteenth-century America, Perry Miller recalled his youthful "epiphany" while watching an apparently inexhaustible supply of American oil drums being unloaded in Africa. At that moment, struck by the absolute "uniqueness of the American experience," Miller felt a "pressing necessity for expounding my America to the twentieth century."³¹

Miller's America, and the America of his colleagues, was never cohesive. On the contrary, the nation they portrayed was surprisingly diverse. Their methods were eclectic, weaving together a variety of texts and sources: Puritan sermons, the political rhetoric of the Jacksonians, the novels of the nineteenth century, the mythology and symbolism enclosed in hundreds of legends and folktales, the letters and reminiscences of immigrants, painting and architecture, clothing and furniture, hand tools and industrial machinery. Their books described a country made up of people who were persistently ambivalent about everything—the wilderness, cities, wealth, power, technology, religion, science, eastern refinements, and westward expansion.

Nevertheless, their ultimate purpose was to uncover the idiosyncratic features of the "American mind." They sought to identify the special political and cultural traditions that had so far shielded the nation from the cataclysms of the twentieth century. The titles of their books were illustrative of this search for the quintessential America: Perry Miller's two-volume *The New England Mind* (1939 and 1953), F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941), Richard Hofstadter's *The American Political Tradition* (1948), Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950), Daniel Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics* (1953), David Potter's *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (1954), Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), John William Ward's *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (1955), R. W. B. Lewis's *The American Adam* (1955), Richard Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957), Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960), Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1964).

The period from the end of the 1930s to the mid-1960s was the golden age of American Studies in the United States. During these years, a remarkable group of scholars wrote about the nation's social

and cultural history with an eloquence and a comprehensiveness that their successors never attained, and perhaps never craved. A later generation of academics, products of the social and cultural ruptures of the 1960s, would never talk in such holistic terms about the "American Experience" or the "national character," never think they could depict the "mind" of New England, much less the "mind" of America. They would instantly ask: Whose mind, whose experience, whose novels, whose tradition? The historians and literary critics of the 1940s and 1950s may have differed among themselves about what aspects of the past to emphasize, and they may have concentrated as much on the tensions as on the unifying themes in American culture. But they did assume that the nation had developed in ways that were "typically" American. By the 1970s and 1980s, it was no longer fashionable in academic circles to write about America as a community of shared beliefs and values. The new scholarship focused on fragments of the "American Experience," on local particularities, on "micro-history"—and, most of all, on the implacable repercussions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity.

Yet in the postwar years, it was precisely the willingness of historians and literary critics in the United States to generalize, to try to unravel the mystery and meaning of America, that impressed their European audiences. Moreover, European readers were accustomed to broad interpretations of America's literature and social life, having grown up on Tocqueville, Bryce, Huizinga, and Lawrence. Now the Americanists from across the ocean were providing the grand theories and sweeping metaphors. When they descended upon Europe in the 1940s and 1950s, they seemed to be bringing enlightenment to the Old World as once the Old World had enlightened the New.

One of the places where they had their greatest impact was at the Salzburg Seminar. As a mechanism for transmitting America's culture to postwar Europe, the seminar was unusual because the U.S. government played no role in its creation. Instead, the seminar was the brainchild of three Harvard students: Richard Campbell, an undergraduate; Scott Elledge, an instructor in the English Department; and Clemens Heller, a Ph.D. candidate in history who was also an Austrian refugee. In the course of raising money for food shipments to Europe during the winter of 1946, they began to worry not only about alleviating the Continent's physical distress but about how to restore its intellectual life after the years of Nazi domination. There should be some way, they felt, for European students to reestablish contact with one another and at the same time learn more about the United States—

the country that would most affect their lives for the foreseeable future. A seminar in American Studies, staffed by professors from the United States and attended by students from all over Europe, seemed the perfect device for achieving these objectives.

By February 1947, Campbell, Ellledge, and Heller had decided to organize such a seminar. They chose Austria as the locale, partly because of Heller's connections to the country, but also because it lay in the heart of Europe, accessible to students from both the West and the East. Within Austria, Salzburg appeared to have special advantages as the site for an American Studies seminar since it was the headquarters of the U.S. Army. Indeed, Salzburg was filled with so many "American signs and cars" that it looked to Alfred Kazin like "an American shopping center." Heller was able to persuade the widow of Max Reinhardt, the legendary German-Jewish theater director and Hollywood producer, to rent to the seminar the Schloss Leopoldskron, an eighteenth-century rococo country house on the outskirts of Salzburg that Reinhardt acquired in 1918 and had used for cultural events in the 1920s. Soon Campbell, Ellledge, and Heller obtained permission from the State and War Departments to hold the seminar in Salzburg, collected \$23,000 in private donations to underwrite its costs, put together a small library, recruited a faculty, and arranged with educational and university organizations in Europe to select a student body.²²

The first seminar met in July and August 1947. Ninety-eight students, teachers, artists, writers, journalists, labor leaders, and junior government officials from eighteen countries, including several in Eastern Europe, gathered at the Schloss. Most of their eleven instructors were celebrities in the American academic and intellectual world. Alfred Kazin and F. O. Matthiessen (whom Kazin called the "star" of the seminar) lectured on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature; Wassily Leontief and Walt Rostow gave courses on the American economy; Margaret Mead taught anthropology. Students at the second seminar in 1948 heard Randall Jarrell on recent American poetry, Henry Nash Smith on the American West, and Talcott Parsons on the structure of American society.²³

The eminence of the faculty at the Salzburg Seminar, and their status as authority figures, reflected the altered cultural relationship between the United States and Europe after World War II. In the past, Americans had gone to Europe to study, to learn as much as they could from the savants of the Old World. F. O. Matthiessen's predecessors, he recalled, had been either "passionate pilgrims" like Henry James or "innocents abroad" like Mark Twain. Matthiessen himself was once a

neophyte, first traveling to Europe as a Rhodes scholar in 1924. Now, as Alfred Kazin observed, the Americans came to Europe as "teachers," while the Europeans had become the "earnest students and dutiful inquirers." At the seminar, "the European students watched the American lecturers with awe. They were the audience, and we in Europe were the main event, absorbed in ourselves, in the rich, overwhelming runaway society whose every last detail we discussed with such hypnotized relevance to ourselves. In this still war-torn year of 1947, the Europeans could not help [but be] aware that they were simply out of it. We were the main event. We were America."²⁴

Kazin and his colleagues were also America's chief interpreters. One of the main goals of the Salzburg Seminar, as conceived by its founders, was the re-creation of a European-intellectual community. But from its inception, the seminar was an instrument both for educating an elite group of European students about America, and for introducing them to the ideas and research techniques of American Studies as it was practiced in the United States. After listening to lectures on American history, literature, politics, economics, and law, the students would presumably return home as newly minted experts on American institutions and policies. Given the political and economic ramifications of the Salzburg Seminar, it soon received funding from a variety of sources, not all of them interested solely in cultural exchange. The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations and the Commonwealth Fund supported the seminar over the next several decades. But so too did a number of major American and European corporations, as well as the U.S. government.²⁵

The Salzburg Seminar was just one of the vehicles for the export of American Studies to postwar Europe. The Fulbright program was equally committed to promoting American history and literature in European universities. Although Senator Fulbright had originally meant to subsidize only student exchanges, the State Department and the Board of Foreign Scholarships understood from the beginning the benefits of sending senior American scholars to teach and lecture abroad. In addition to making America comprehensible to foreigners, the guest professors could assist in the development of American Studies curricula and, by their very presence, heighten the prestige of their host institutions. These considerations were not lost on European educators who also preferred to have big names addressing large classes (at no cost to their own, frequently impoverished, universities), rather than graduate students squirreled away in libraries doing research on obscure topics for their doctoral dissertations.²⁶

Consequently, from the late 1940s through the mid-1960s, some of the best-known historians and literary critics in the United States poured to Europe, either on Fulbrights or as visiting chair-holders, to spread the word about America's culture and civilization. When the first Salzburg Seminar ended in August 1947, F. O. Matthiessen moved on to Charles University in Prague, where he taught American literature. Matthiessen was proud to be "the first American ever to be a regular visiting professor at a Czech university," though after the Communist coup in 1948 he would be the last American visitor for a very long time. David Potter occupied the Harmsworth chair at Oxford in 1948, as did C. Vann Woodward in 1954–55. Perry Miller was a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Leiden in 1949–50. Wassily Leonief lectured in Britain in 1951 and in West Germany in 1961 on a Fulbright grant. Daniel Boorstin was a Fulbright lecturer in Rome in 1950–51 and a visiting professor at the Sorbonne in 1962–63. Alfred Kazin, a visiting professor at the universities of Nice and Cologne and a Fulbright lecturer in Britain, Sweden, and Norway in 1951–52, remembered "lapping up the good life in Europe while paying for it with 'instruction' in Melville, James, Dickinson, and Emerson." Leslie Fiedler, originally trained as a medievalist, received a Fulbright grant for two years, from 1952 to 1954, to lecture in Italy. In Rome, he discovered that he was "expected as an American to talk only about American literature—no questions asked and no protests possible." By the time his fellowship ended, Fiedler had taught not only in Rome but in Bologna and Venice; some of his students later held the first chairs in American literature in Italy. Edmund Wilson was on the faculty of the Salzburg Seminar in 1954. Leo Marx lectured on a Fulbright in Britain in 1956 and in France in 1965. Henry Steele Commager was a Fulbright professor in France in 1957–58. Richard Hofstadter was the Pitt Professor at Cambridge for the 1958–59 academic year.²⁷

The long-term mission of all these American visitors was to train a new generation of European Americanists who might go on to establish American Studies programs in their own universities and secondary schools. Once the guest professors had departed, the job of teaching American history or literature would fall to the Europeans. At least this was the expectation. In some instances, however, university administrators in Europe used the existence of visiting chairs and Fulbright lectureships as an excuse not to create permanent positions in American Studies for their own nationals.²⁸ Notwithstanding the efforts of the American government, the private foundations, and the

Salzburg Seminar, the majority of European academics still seemed reluctant in the 1940s and 1950s to embrace American Studies. In the end, the struggle for its acceptance would have to be waged not by visitors from the United States, but by a small band of European converts, against the resistance of their colleagues, and against all the old snobberies that—despite America's political and economic preeminence—showed no signs of fading easily away.

THE EUROPEAN AMERICANISTS: THE FIRST GENERATION

They thought of themselves as pioneers. Their successors called them the "founding fathers." A few, like D. W. Brogan in England and Mario Praz in Italy, were already well known for their books and essays on American history and literature. But others—Sigmund Skard in Norway; Harry Allen, Herbert Nicholas, Frank Thistlethwaite, and Marcus Cunliffe in Britain; Arie N. J. den Hollander in the Netherlands; Roger Asselineau in France; Max Silberschmidt in Switzerland—were either just starting out or had not yet achieved recognition outside their own countries.

Most of them were at once iconoclastic and entrepreneurial; they saw American Studies both as a new and exciting field, and as a launching pad for their careers. To some extent, they were advocates for America. In their books and newspaper articles, in their public lectures, and in their classrooms, they tried to puncture the prevailing clichés about the United States. Their task, as they conceived it, was to offer an honest but sympathetic portrait of a country the majority of their fellow citizens had difficulty comprehending.

They benefited as well from America's stature in the postwar world. "As students of the United States," Harry Allen acknowledged, "we . . . acquire some reflected strength from the . . . stark fact of American power." At times, they seemed too closely allied with America, too ready to defend its policies and its culture. How objective could they be, their audiences might have wondered, when they were so dependent on American money to finance their fellowships, research trips, institutes, conferences, journals, and libraries? But they were not merely opportunistic, nor was it America alone that ultimately interested them. As Sigmund Skard pointed out, the United States had come to embody certain "general tendencies" in the twentieth century, trends that one could now observe in Western Europe. Thus, for Skard and the other

Americanists of his generation, the desire to study the United States was not "a sign of cultural submissiveness"; rather, it was "essential to the understanding of ourselves."²⁹

Skard was the patriarch and chief proponent of the American Studies movement, not only in Norway but throughout Western Europe. In many respects, his was a classic story of the European scholar who became—partly by accident, but mostly by taking advantage of the historical circumstances in which he found himself—a specialist on the United States. He was the prototype; in one way or another, everyone in the first generation shared his experiences, and his uncertainty about what it meant to be an Americanist in postwar Europe.

"Hitler made Americanists of us all," Harry Allen recalled. This was unquestionably true for Skard, who had devoted himself exclusively to European subjects before World War II. When the Germans invaded Norway in April 1940, Skard fled to Sweden. Because his father-in-law, Halvdan Koht, was working with the Norwegian government-in-exile in London, Skard could not return to occupied Norway. Hence, he and his family decided to head for America. They made their way through Siberia to Japan, crossed the Pacific Ocean and the Panama Canal, and reached New York on December 7, 1940, exactly a year before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. This was Skard's first encounter with the United States, and he had at the time no thought of becoming an expert in or a champion of American Studies.³⁰ Yet that is precisely what happened. Over the next several years, he ceased to be simply a refugee and became instead a student of America's culture and politics.

Aided by Koht's contacts in Washington and by the employment services of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, Skard got a temporary job at the Library of Congress. The appointment enabled him to travel and lecture throughout the country, and to meet American academics and foundation executives. In 1943, he joined the Office of War Information. Broadcasting over the Voice of America, he explained the United States—its political institutions, its social characteristics, its cultural life, and its war aims—to his homeland, acquiring skills that would be useful for a prospective Americanist. Along the way, Skard began to feel "personally attached to America," or at least to that part of America represented by Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. He immersed himself in American books and newspapers, listened to American radio programs, went to American movies, talked to Americans about public events, and "came to look at the world from an American angle."³¹

Skard realized that after the war Norway and all the other countries of Western Europe would be bound to the United States. Given his own prior ignorance about American history and literature, he understood how little the average Norwegian knew about the United States, how tenacious were the "old stereotypes," how necessary it was—in view of America's capacity to determine the fate of postwar Europe—to replace the myths with factual information. Thus, Skard urged that Norwegian students and scholars be brought to the United States once the war was over, and he arranged with the Rockefeller Foundation to have American books, unobtainable during the German occupation, donated to the library of the University of Oslo.³²

Most of all, Skard wanted to make sure that the University of Oslo would offer courses about the United States on a regular basis, which it had not done before the war. His wishes were granted when the Norwegian government, eager to strengthen its relationship with Washington, created a professorship in the "literary history" of America at the university in 1946, the first position in Scandinavia with a mandate to focus mainly on the United States. The post was designed for Skard himself. But Skard realized that a "serious" program in American Studies "could not get under way . . . without substantial financial support from American sources." He also reckoned that the U.S. government and the Rockefeller Foundation (with which he was in constant touch) would provide him with greater economic assistance if a separate American Institute, with its own research facilities, were established. In 1948, Skard became the director of just such an institute, giving American Studies a permanent home in the Norwegian academic world.³³

Meanwhile, Skard returned to the United States in 1946, on a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, to prepare himself for his new role as an Americanist. He studied America's literature more systematically and sought guidance from some of the leading practitioners of American Studies in the United States—especially Robert Spiller, Kenneth Murdock, F. O. Matthiessen, and Perry Miller. With the help again of the Rockefeller Foundation, he purchased books, magazines, maps, and phonograph records for his institute's library. Back in Oslo, Skard continued to profit from his ties to the United States. He became a "point of contact, more or less official, with individuals and institutions, private and governmental, on both sides of the ocean." He worked closely with the American embassy in Norway, entertained visiting American professors (with the bills paid by the Fulbright program), imported Murdock and Spiller in 1949 and 1950 to lecture and

help teach his seminars, and received a Fulbright professor of American literature at the institute every year from 1957 to 1969.³⁴

Despite his dependence on the U.S. government and the Rockefeller Foundation, Skard remained ambivalent about America. One of the advantages, he later remarked, of all the travel grants and other forms of support given to European Americanists was that they could "go to America and see for themselves," basing their judgments not on books but on "personal observation." Skard did not always like what he saw. In his notes about his experiences in wartime and postwar America, and in his book *American Problems* (1949), Skard—sounding much like Johan Huizinga—contrasted the simple intimacies of Norwegian life with the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and mass culture in the United States. The defects of American life were all too obvious: "ruthless automatism," "social callousness and economic exploitation," "racial inequality," the rise of McCarthyism. Yet Skard still found America fascinating; it had (as Norway did not) a "vitality and vigor," an "openness of mind," a "lack of hampering tradition," and a "willingness to start afresh" that accounted for the general prosperity and "well-being" of its population. Skard's mixed feelings about America led him, for a time, to hope that Norway would not have to choose between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Cold War. But after the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948, he rejected neutralism and accepted instead the "absolute necessity of Norway's alignment with the United States within the framework of NATO." For all its faults, the United States had become in Skard's eyes "the most realistic hope for the future of my most cherished values."³⁵

Thereafter, Skard settled into his "frontier" role, opening up the "virgin field" of American Studies in Norway and throughout Western Europe. Like his mentors in the United States, he too wanted to explore the "Americanness" of his materials, and to convince his audiences that America had a "distinctive" civilization. But he was more of an organizer and promoter than an original thinker. Thus, his greatest contribution came in 1958, when he published his two-volume masterpiece, *American Studies in Europe*, a work partly funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and distributed by USIA. Skard's ostensible purpose in writing the book was to circulate information about the current state of American Studies among his colleagues in the rest of Europe.³⁶ Yet the book turned into a history of Europe's cultural engagement with America, from the eighteenth century to the postwar years. In this sense, it mirrored Skard's own professional and intellectual transformation. At the time of its publication, he had with

some difficulty suppressed his doubts about the United States, though they would surface again in the 1960s. For the moment, he was an enthusiastic spokesman not only for American Studies but for America itself.

Not everyone in the first-generation had to completely re-tool. Mario Praz, originally a specialist in British literature, began writing about American novelists and playwrights as early as the 1920s. His essays on Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Thornton Wilder, Eugene O'Neill, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway, almost all of them published before World War II, had a enormous impact on the Italian Americanists of the 1950s. Similarly, Arie den Hollander had traveled to the United States in the early 1930s, on a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, to conduct research for his dissertation on poor rural whites in the American South. He was therefore an obvious choice to fill a chair in "Americanistics," created in 1947 at the University of Amsterdam, and to become head of the university's new American Institute.³⁷

But Roger Asselineau's experience was more typical. Though he had fantasized before the war about going to America, mostly to perfect his English, Asselineau knew almost nothing about the country except what he had gleaned from Hollywood's movies. He finally arrived in 1945, courtesy of a fellowship from the American Field Service, and proceeded to Harvard where he "absorbed American literature by osmosis" from the triumvirate of Murdock, Miller, and Matthiessen. Like Skard, Asselineau also traveled, getting his first real exposure to America from the windows of a Greyhound bus. When he returned to France, even after he was appointed in 1960 to a chair in American Studies at the Sorbonne, Asselineau considered himself a "generalist rather than a true specialist," and one who had to "find his way all by himself" in an academic community still suspicious of American subjects.³⁸

Skard and den Hollander shared Asselineau's sense of isolation; in their own countries, they had students but no peers with whom they could jointly explore the field. The situation was different in Britain. A considerable number of young British academics were attracted to American Studies in the postwar years. Many felt "personally caught up" in America's "struggles and aspirations" either because they had been stationed in Washington or New York during the war (like Herbert Nicholas), or because they had "driven in American vehicles and fired American guns" while fighting in Normandy, Holland, and the

Ardennes in 1944 and 1945 (like Marcus Cunliffe). They were grateful for America's "vast and omnipresent" role in defeating the Germans, and they did not question its aims in the Cold War.³⁹ After 1945, they had other reasons to be appreciative. The American government was eager to recruit them, offering fellowships from the Commonwealth Fund or the Fulbright program so they could study in the United States, and giving money to British universities for the creation of positions in American Studies that they might fill when they returned.

The British Americanists enjoyed additional advantages unavailable elsewhere in Europe. They wrote, of course, in English, which made it easier for them to have their essays and books accepted by American journals and publishing houses, giving them a better chance to catch the attention of American scholars. Moreover, British libraries had a greater supply of research materials on the United States, especially in colonial and diplomatic history. So, British Americanists could write about Massachusetts or Virginia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or the American Revolution, or American foreign policy without having to finance an expedition to the archives in the United States. Above all, as Sigmund Skard noted with just a little envy, it was generally assumed that "the British should be able to understand the Americans better" than anyone else because they were more closely tied, historically and culturally, to the United States. Thus, the British might have some special insights about America not granted to their European colleagues. They could speak more authoritatively as "Atlanticists," emphasizing (in the case of Harry Allen, Herbert Nicholas, and Frank Thistlethwaite) the singular Anglo-American heritage, and the "special relationship" —present and past—between the United States and Britain.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the attitudes of the first generation of British Americanists were not all that dissimilar to those of their counterparts in Scandinavia or on the Continent. The British Americanists also regarded themselves as missionaries on behalf of American Studies, preaching to a congregation of traditionalist academics who did not always welcome the new religion. They too believed they were "breaking new ground," as Marcus Cunliffe put it, literally discovering or inventing a new discipline previously unknown or scorned in Britain.⁴¹

They tended as well to think of themselves as rebels, outsiders, people from the proverbial provinces, having only the most tenuous connections to the British economic and professorial establishment. They

were definitely not the offspring of the privileged or the powerful. Their roots were in Scotland (D. W. Brogan) or Wales (Herbert Nicholas) or the north of England (Marcus Cunliffe). A number of them were Jews (Harold Laski, Max Beloff, Lewis Namier). Their backgrounds were not disgraceful, just vaguely unfashionable. "I came from . . . that strange hinterland just above the working but not quite safely into the middle classes," Malcolm Bradbury, a member of the next generation, reported. Though he was not exactly an angry young man or the hero of *Room at the Top*, Bradbury described himself as a "Hoggartian first-generation scholarship boy at grammar school who then continued his class-ascent by becoming a first-generation, but red-brick, university student." Given their origins, it was not surprising that, while studying in America, they might have "felt liberated" (as Cunliffe did) "from the intricate discriminations of the mother country." America offered an escape from what Bradbury called the "constraining, class-oriented, provincial embrace" of Britain. It was equally natural that they should see American Studies as a means of further advancement, a way to break into the closed and conservative world of British academia.⁴²

Essentially, they viewed the United States as a land receptive to ethnic differences and social eccentricities, a land tolerant of people like themselves. This belief made them, if not fervently pro-American, at least evenhanded in their assessments of the country's weaknesses and strengths. Like Skard, they noticed America's shortcomings. But they had learned, said Harry Allen, "to approve of the society and very much to like the people."⁴³

Yet what the British Americanists had most in common with their partners both in Europe and in the United States was a propensity to generalize about America's uniqueness. In books like D. W. Brogan's *The American Character* (published in 1944 and revised in 1956), Geoffrey Gorer's *The American People* (1948), Harold Laski's *The American Democracy* (1948), and Marcus Cunliffe's *The Literature of the United States* (1954), they sought to distinguish America's culture, political system, and social values from those of Europe. Brogan, for example, wanted to know what ideas were "peculiarly American," how the United States had reshaped Europe's institutions and customs, and which elements in America's civilization could be transported back to Europe. This was not simply a matter of comparing the New World with the Old. As Cunliffe admitted, "we were predisposed to agree that the United States was different from, and in important respects better than Europe: exceptional, and exceptionally good."⁴⁴ During the

1940s and 1950s, few historians or literary critics in the United States would have dissented.

Brogan and Cunliffe, Skard and den Hollander, Allen and Asselineau—all the members of the first generation were right to consider themselves pioneers, even if they were following a trail already blazed by their American guides. The real difficulties came after the initial exploration, when the founding fathers and their children settled down to the prosaic task of consolidation, of converting American Studies from an adventure into an institution, with all the rituals and procedures of a conventional academic discipline. It was clear that American Studies, with the assistance of the United States, had been planted in Europe. Whether it could flourish and expand, no one yet knew.

AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE 1950S

From the mid-1940s until the early 1960s, the number of European scholars and students who were willing to pursue a career in American history or literature remained small. In the universities of many countries, American Studies was still regarded as a marginal field, or as a form of propaganda paid for by Washington. Those who did become Americanists had to struggle for respect, and for more chairs and institutes—which, in fact, they could not have attained without continuous help from the United States.

One way the European Americanists acquired some legitimacy in the eyes of their academic colleagues was to make American Studies less of a calling and more of a profession. Starting in the 1950s, often with the encouragement and financial support of USIA, the Fulbright program, and the local American embassies, the European Americanists set up national and continent-wide organizations to coordinate their activities, hold conferences, and publish journals.

In 1952, the British Fulbright commission funded an American Studies conference at Cambridge, attended by the leading British Americanists as well as by Henry Steele Commager, Allan Nevins, Alfred Kazin, and Merle Curti from the United States. More conferences were arranged over the next three years, with subsidies from the Fulbright Board of Foreign Scholarships, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the U.S. embassy in London. At the last of these conferences, in 1955, a British Association for American Studies was created. In 1956, the BAAS began issuing a *Bulletin*, edited by Marcus Cunliffe, which evolved by 1967 into the *Journal of American Studies*, the best-known

periodical in Europe for essays and book reviews on American history and literature.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, in 1953, at the instigation of the American embassy in Bonn, a similar German association was formed. In 1954, the Salzburg Seminar provided the setting for the establishment of the European Association for American Studies, which brought together Americanists from throughout Western Europe. From the outset, USIA underwrote the association's biennial conferences. Over the next two decades, national and regional organizations proliferated. A Nordic association, embracing Americanists in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, was launched in 1959. A French association was founded with assistance from USIA in 1967; it began publishing a journal, the *Revue Française d'Etudes Américaines*, in 1976. In 1969, the Belgian-Luxembourg association was created, followed by American Studies associations in Italy in 1973, Austria in 1974, and the Netherlands in 1977.⁴⁶ The existence of these organizations, with their meetings, executive committees, and publications, helped to raise the morale and the status of the European Americanists, and gave them a sense of collective purpose.

As the American Studies movement became more businesslike, the self-image of its practitioners changed. Those who entered the field during these years did not appear to have the evangelical impulses of their predecessors. They thought of themselves as specialists rather than generalists, preferring to write well-researched monographs rather than impressionistic surveys of American history or literature aimed at the general public. Mainly, they were interested in addressing topics of professional concern to other academics.⁴⁷

The trend toward professionalization was evident in West Germany. The Germans who taught American history in the early postwar years were "amateurs" and "autodidacts," in the words of Willi Paul Adams, one of their successors. They had not been formally trained, nor could they afford to travel to the United States. Mostly, they "had to think about eating, keeping warm, finding books, and borrowing a typewriter."⁴⁸ For them, America was an exemplification of the good life, not a country with real problems and a complicated history.

Adams was a member of the second generation of German Americanists—a generation that grew up under more favorable circumstances, learned English, visited the United States, and took advantage of "the chance to really specialize in American history." Adams himself was a teenager during the West German "economic miracle" of

the 1950s and spent a year in the United States as a high school exchange student, where he first developed an interest in American history and literature. Thereafter, he studied in West Berlin, at the Free University's American Institute, concentrating on the constitutional history of the late colonial and early national eras.⁴⁹ Adams went on to become one of Germany's foremost historians of the United States, holding professorships first at the University of Frankfurt and then at the Free University. But he never claimed that he was a missionary, or that he wished to be considered anything other than a serious scholar.

Perhaps it was inevitable, with the passage of time, that the European Americanists should want to become professional academics, rather than participants in a crusade. The same tendencies could be observed by the 1970s and 1980s among those who supplanted the originators of the American Studies movement in the United States. On both continents, the impulse to specialize resulted in a generation of scholars who were obsessed with methodology, whose works had a narrower focus, and who showed little interest in writing for a non-academic audience.

Still, in most of Western Europe, the study of American history—as opposed to American literature—had not progressed very far. The situation in France was not unusual. Many French intellectuals were fascinated with American novels and films in the years after World War II, but few scholars displayed a comparable curiosity about American history. For those who followed the precepts of the journal *Annales*, the United States did not have a past lengthy enough to merit a study of its anthropology and ecology. One could not take a “long view” about a country with such a short history, a country that had not evolved over centuries but instead appeared suddenly, a country without a collective memory because its people had nothing to remember. Besides, whatever there was to say about America, Tocqueville had already said. In any case, France had plenty of history, the right kind of history, for anyone who wished to be a historian.⁵⁰

A more formidable obstacle to the development of American history in Europe was the dearth of materials on the United States in libraries outside Britain. To many European academics, the prospect of uprooting themselves and their families, and trying to raise the money for innumerable research trips to the United States were excellent reasons not to go into American history at all. Those Europeans who did take up American history tended, like the British Americanists, to work in areas in which primary sources were readily available

at home—analyzing the bilateral relations between their own countries and the United States, or specializing in intellectual history where most of the “documents” were books and essays that could be read without crossing the Atlantic.⁵¹

The indifference of Europe's academics to America's history suggested that the version of American Studies practiced in the United States could not be easily exported. In the United States, the effort to interpret the past from an interdisciplinary perspective was what distinguished American Studies programs from the work done in traditional history or English departments. In Europe, American Studies courses and curricula were rarely interdisciplinary during the 1950s. Only in Britain and at the University of Amsterdam's American Institute did scholars try to combine history, literature, politics, and sociology. Elsewhere, European academics—long accustomed to behaving like feudal lords—were fiercely protective of their own departmental prerogatives. They loathed any newfangled experiment, particularly one imported from America, that encroached on their domain or jeopardized their control over chairs and junior appointments. Moreover, their students—seeking credentials that were marketable—did not themselves have any interdisciplinary aspirations; no job in a university or secondary school required such exotic skills.⁵²

A knowledge of the English language, on the other hand, was exceedingly useful. From 1945 on, learning and teaching English became a priority in every country on the Continent. France conspicuously excepted. By the 1950s, English was rapidly replacing French and German as the favored foreign language of the educated classes, and of the young whatever their social origins. In West Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, English instruction was often compulsory in primary and secondary schools. But the accent and pronunciation of teachers and students alike were unmistakably British. Much of this preference for the Queen's English had to do with Britain's geographic proximity to continental Europe, the overseas broadcasts of the BBC, the language programs of the British Council, and the tendency of many Western Europeans (again excluding the French) to idolize British culture. To overcome this unfortunate predilection, the Fulbright program and USIA began to promote and subsidize the teaching of “American” English, which was also a means of spreading information about America's culture.⁵³

One of the most effective ways of familiarizing students in universities and secondary schools with the American vernacular was by having them read American writers. Those who could teach both language and

literature were therefore eminently employable. Indeed, a considerable number of Americanists in the 1950s started out as instructors of English before they moved into the field of American literature. As a result, American Studies in Europe meant, more often than not, the study of American fiction and poetry.

Specialists in literature were at an advantage everywhere on the Continent. In countries or at universities with no independent American institutes, American Studies programs and courses were usually sheltered in English departments, where students had some proficiency in the English language. Whenever university administrators created new positions in American Studies, they normally hired people with literary trainings, rather than historians or political scientists.

Given these incentives, it was understandable that the majority of the Americanists in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, West Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain should have concentrated on American literature. The leading Italian Americanists, for example, included Agostino Lombardo, who began editing *Studi Americani*, a largely literary magazine, in 1955; Glauco Cambon, who translated William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*; Sergio Perosa, an expert on F. Scott Fitzgerald; and Biancamaria Tedeschi Lalli, who wrote on Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. Some of the Western European Americanists were influenced by the "new criticism" of the 1950s, with its emphasis on a close textual analysis of novels and poems—a formalistic approach to literature that made it unnecessary for them to know a lot about American history or social life, or to do research in the United States.⁵⁴

This preference for literature was even stronger in Eastern Europe. After 1948, the Communist regimes tightly controlled what was taught in university classrooms. Yugoslavia was the lonely exception: There, translations of American novels were plentiful, students and teachers could attend the Salzburg Seminar, and USIA was able to function with relative freedom. Otherwise, the U.S. government had little access to scholars in Eastern Europe during the 1950s. The libraries of U.S. embassies were closed, educational exchanges were not allowed, and no American Studies movement of any sort existed. Nevertheless, the Communists did permit courses on American literature, as long as professors paid attention only to authors approved by the authorities. The esthetic criterion was exclusively Stalinist. The reading lists were dominated by social "realists"—Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, Howard Fast—writers whose works supposedly illustrated the

exploitation, injustice, inequality, and decadence that afflicted the American people under capitalism. Despite these biases, officials in Washington and Americanists in Eastern Europe seemed happy to confine themselves to projects involving literature, on the theory that it was less provocative to talk about novels than to discuss U.S. politics or the benefits of the free market.⁵⁵

During the Cold War, then, there were limits to how much Washington could accomplish in promoting American Studies in Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, on the other hand, the actions of the U.S. government could seem intrusive. At times, Americanists in the West had misgivings about their dependence on U.S. money and advice. It was more than a little embarrassing that the Fulbright program or USIA frequently organized their conferences, provided them with travel grants, supplied their libraries with books, subsidized their journals and professional associations, endowed their chairs, and arranged for American professors to visit their classes and institutes.

The problem was not that the European Americanists were in danger of becoming propagandists for the United States. Rather, as Marcus Cunliffe observed, "American Studies was as yet a frail plant, artificial to the degree that it required irrigation." If U.S. aid "dried up," American Studies programs "would not disappear," but their "development would ... be stunted and retarded." Cunliffe understated the importance of America's help; without it, there would have been no American Studies movement in Europe at all. Still, Americanists in Britain and elsewhere felt the same sort of ambivalence toward their benefactors as did other Western Europeans during the years of the Marshall Plan. There was, Sigmund Skard admitted, "a great need for American assistance," yet there was also "resentment at having to accept it."⁵⁶ The question for Western European Americanists, as for ordinary Europeans, was whether they could extricate themselves from the American orbit, and set out on their own independent course.

EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION: FROM THE 1960S TO THE 1980S

There was a certain coziness about the American Studies movement during the 1940s and 1950s, as if it were a small, intimate club, whose members all knew one another and had banded together for mutual encouragement and support. This sense of comradeship began to dissipate

in the 1960s and 1970s. European universities underwent a radical transformation, and so too did American Studies. These were the boom years for academics, whatever their field, and Americanists shared in the bounty. No longer feeling beleaguered, they grew in numbers and importance. Along the way, they altered the meaning and purposes of American Studies, so much so that by the 1980s it bore only the slightest resemblance to what its founders—both in Europe and the United States—envisioned in the 1940s.

The economic revival of Western Europe during the 1950s and early 1960s made it possible for governments to start investing in higher education, partly as a way of sustaining the postwar prosperity. In most countries, the sums spent on universities steadily increased throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This educational expansion had two conspicuous results: the creation of a substantial number of new universities, all of which needed faculty, and a major increase in the student population. By 1985, 60 percent of all the universities in Western Europe had been operating only since 1950, and most of these had opened for business between 1965 and 1975. Meanwhile, the percentage of college-age men and women attending universities doubled from a mere 7 percent in the 1960s to 15 percent in the 1980s; then soared to between 30 and 50 percent, depending on the country, by the mid-1990s.⁵⁷

For those who entered American Studies in this period, the construction of universities and the explosive enrollment figures translated into jobs. The European Association for American Studies estimated that at least two thousand Americanists were employed in Britain and on the Continent by the 1980s. Not all of these Americanists were Europeans; a number of Americans took permanent positions in European universities during the 1970s, a reflection of the depressed academic job market in the United States and the opportunities available in Europe. But the majority of the new posts were held by natives. "American Studies was well on the way toward becoming a truly European endeavor," declared Rob Kroes, the director of the American Institute at the University of Amsterdam since 1976. "A new crop of European scholars" like Kroes himself "stood ready to take over from the Americans" who had once been so ubiquitous as guest professors, swiftly filling the chairs in American literature and history that "sprang up all across Europe."⁵⁸

The vitality of American Studies was particularly noticeable in Britain. By the beginning of the 1980s, nearly every university in Britain had a historian of the United States on its faculty. The need for

British students to take courses on American history was no longer in dispute. Students who wished to become Americanists did not have to go to the United States on Fulbright or Commonwealth Fund fellowships to absorb the wisdom of the American masters, as earlier generations had done. They could stay home and be trained by British Americanists who were now confident of their ability to write about the United States with the same skill and archival sophistication as their American counterparts, and who thought of themselves not as outcasts or rebels but as academic insiders.⁵⁹

Although the proliferation of new positions in American Studies was most evident in Britain, similar trends existed elsewhere in Western Europe. In the Netherlands, from the mid-1960s until the early 1980s, chairs in American literature were established at the universities of Leiden, Utrecht, Groningen, and Nijmegen. In France and Italy, escalating enrollments and the demand for more courses in modern subjects meant that, for the first time, scholars could go into the field of American history in the expectation that they would easily find jobs. In Norway, Sigmund Skard retired from the University of Oslo in 1973, his mission accomplished. By then, as a result of the increase in students, America's literature and its history were taught regularly at all the Norwegian universities.⁶⁰

West German universities also grew rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, as did the number of chairs and lectureships in American Studies. But nowhere in Europe did American Studies prosper more than at the Free University of Berlin. Little attention had been paid to the university's American Institute until November 1963. At that point, it changed its name to the John F. Kennedy Institute in honor of the murdered president whose visit to West Berlin the previous June, when he declared himself a symbolic Berliner, was one of the most dramatic episodes in the city's recent history. Thereafter, with support from Washington and the Ford Foundation, the Kennedy Institute improved its facilities, added new faculty, and built up its library. No other institution tried to be as interdisciplinary, eventually creating professorships in eight different areas—American culture, literature, linguistics, history, political science, sociology, economics, and geography. And no other library amassed as large a collection of American books, magazines, newspapers, government documents, and research materials, nearly four hundred thousand volumes in all. By the 1980s, the Kennedy Institute had developed into the leading center for American Studies, not just in Germany, but on the European continent.⁶¹

Yet at the very moment when courses in American history and literature were finally winning acceptance in universities throughout Western Europe, a new generation of Americanists and their students became much more critical of the United States. American Studies programs were by no means immune to the political and cultural upheavals of the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the Kennedy Institute, for example, senior faculty members—most of them pro-American and anti-Communist—found themselves battling with Marxist-oriented students and teaching assistants over reading lists, the content of courses, and who should be appointed to all those chairs. U.S. officials could do little more than express their horror at the “radicalization” of an institute they had considered an American outpost behind the iron curtain. Similarly, students in France and Britain demanded that more attention be paid to the history and subculture of groups customarily excluded from the standard American Studies curriculum: women, blue-collar workers, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, leftists (old and new)—anyone whom their professors had not been thinking of when they generalized about the “American Experience” or the “national character” of the American people.⁶³

Much of this curiosity about and sympathy for the American underclass was stimulated by the emergence of a counterculture and the opposition to the Vietnam War, movements that captured the allegiance of students and young scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. Not everyone who became an academic in the 1970s occupied university buildings in the 1960s or marched in the streets of Berkeley or Boston, Paris or West Berlin. But Americanists in Europe, like their colleagues in the United States, were influenced by the intercontinental spirit of protest, and by a generational disaffection with existing institutions, conventional politics, and mainstream culture. They shared as well a dissatisfaction with traditional approaches to history and literary criticism, and they felt the same attraction to those theories and methodologies that promised to shift the focus away from “elite” intellectuals and decision makers to the everyday lives of the “inarticulate.” So it was predictable that European Americanists in the 1970s would replicate, at least to some extent, the work of the “new” social historians and postmodernist literary critics in the United States—many of whom were in turn disciples of such European gurus as Antonio Gramsci, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. These impulses resulted in an interpretation of America’s past and present that sounded less reverential and more cantankerous.

Nevertheless, the European Americanists of the 1970s were engaged in the same sort of exploration that had inspired the pioneers of the 1940s and 1950s. They were as eager as Sigmund Skard or Marcus Cunliffe to discover the “meaning of America,” only now they had a different notion of where to look. Those who specialized in American literature, whether in France, West Germany, Italy, Holland, or Greece, were no longer interested in the legendary writers of the nineteenth century. Why search for the essence of America in the novels of Herman Melville when one could employ Toni Morrison as a more perceptive guide? Who was better at illuminating the darker realms of the American psyche, Nathaniel Hawthorne or Sylvia Plath? Why have students read Ralph Waldo Emerson when they could be taught to decode Joyce Carol Oates, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Maxine Hong Kingston? The canon was obsolete, or rather the canon was contemporary, ethnic, and feminist.⁶⁴

Historians were equally revisionist. Earlier British scholars had worried and written about their country’s “special relationship” with America as a whole. Their successors in the 1970s and 1980s were less appreciative of the Anglo-American alliance, and concentrated instead on that portion of America represented by minority groups and the working class. In France, the post-1960s professoriate was similarly unimpressed with the idea of a harmonious America made up of people who had the same values and bourgeois fantasies. Marianne Debouzy was a literary critic who believed that “class, ideology, and politics were . . . central to the making of culture and literature.” After accepting a position in 1969 at the new and experimental University of Paris-VIII in Vincennes, she transformed herself into a social historian intent on challenging the “altogether false image,” prevalent among French and European intellectuals, that American workers had “no tradition of militancy.” Her perspective, shared by her radicalized colleagues in West Germany and Italy, was shaped by the work of U.S. social and labor historians like Herbert Gutman and David Montgomery, who were themselves influenced by the two most prominent neo-Marxist scholars in Britain: E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm.⁶⁴

In effect, the urge to reexamine the American past, and the fascination with the cultural and social experiences of workers, African Americans, Native Americans, and women was a transatlantic phenomenon. For historians in both Europe and the United States, the real America could now be found in union halls and working-class saloons, in the camps of migrant laborers, in the ghettos and barrios, on the

reservations, and among women who rebelled against the cult of domesticity.

Notwithstanding their empathy for those at the bottom or on the outside, academics in the 1960s and 1970s led a relatively privileged life. Endowments and government subsidies rose; grants and fellowships were easy to get; new positions appeared all the time. Then suddenly, the era of expansion and affluence vanished, first in the United States in the late 1970s and then in Western Europe in the 1980s. This too was a transatlantic phenomenon, and one that brought even more (though far less welcome) changes to the world of academe.

Most of the countries in Western Europe suffered through a recession at some point in the 1980s. Under such circumstances, the smorgasbord of social services provided by European governments since the end of World War II now seemed too extravagant, particularly when tax rates had reached their upper limits and national treasuries were depleted. Political leaders—social democrats as well as conservatives—began to call for a reduction in government spending; more privatization; and a reassessment, if not a gradual dismantling, of the welfare state.

All these developments affected higher education. Even though student enrollments continued to mount, universities in Western Europe faced the same financial restrictions, hiring freezes, and elimination of positions that American universities had been confronting since the 1970s. More students, less funding, and fewer teachers led to overcrowded classrooms, decaying buildings and facilities, and a spreading sense of gloom, made worse by the fact that graduates could no longer expect to find jobs in universities or secondary schools. Consequently, there was little reason for students to specialize in, or for administrators and government officials to keep on supporting, “nonessential” subjects like American Studies. It seemed wiser to invest in programs that were more European oriented and more vocational—an eminently practical policy in a period of economic retrenchment.

The tribulations of academic life were especially severe in Britain. The impact of the recession was bad enough. But in the view of many scholars, Margaret Thatcher’s efforts to reduce government funding for universities and her obvious disdain for the professorial class were principally responsible for the decline of British higher education in the 1980s. Whatever the cause, chairs and lectureships in American Studies evaporated, and new appointments for those just beginning their careers were virtually nonexistent. A number of senior faculty members retired early or departed for the United States (like Marcus

Cunliffe, who left Sussex in 1980 to accept a chair at George Washington University). Their positions often remained vacant for years or were simply abolished.⁶⁵

In other countries, the situation was not much better. With governments and ministries of education in the Netherlands, France, West Germany, and Italy cutting their budgets and requiring academics to be more efficient in the use of their diminished resources, grants for travel and research declined, jobs disappeared, and the prospects for young Americanists became exceedingly grim.⁶⁶

After the end of the Cold War, however, interest in American Studies steadily revived in Western Europe and rapidly expanded in Eastern Europe, in part because the United States was now the only superpower left in the world.⁶⁷ More important, despite the hard times of the 1980s, the leaders of the movement had begun to analyze America’s development from a distinctively European point of view. The question was whether Americanists in the United States, accustomed to lecturing rather than listening to their European colleagues, would now want to hear what the Europeans had to say.

THE EUROPEANIZATION OF AMERICAN STUDIES

After decades of treating the European Americanists as apprentices, in need of constant counseling and supervision, it was hard for government officials and scholars in the United States to acknowledge that the Europeans no longer required their services. The Americans continued to regard themselves as indispensable because the Europeans still relied on *USIA* to bankroll many of their conferences, and to provide guest speakers and visiting professors.

Meanwhile, American academics seemed barely aware of what the Europeans, apart from the British, had written about the United States. The European most often quoted by American scholars was Tocqueville. References to the works of modern European Americanists might occasionally turn up in footnotes, but not as a body of ideas or interpretations with which American authors felt they must deal. The notion persisted that the really significant books on American history and literature were produced exclusively in the United States.

The spread of English had a great deal to do with this perception of American superiority. American scholars, along with their counterparts in Britain, could expect their publications to be read by academics

throughout the world. Americanists in France, Germany, Italy, Holland, or Scandinavia could expect their books and articles to be read only by scholars in their own countries. If they wanted historians and literary critics in the United States to notice their work, they had two choices. They might try to write in English, a difficult task for those who could understand but not necessarily compose in what was, after all, a foreign language. Or they could arrange to have their work translated, usually with the help of a foundation, since American publishing houses were reluctant to put up their own money for translations of scholarly books whose sales would likely be minuscule.⁶⁸

For many Americanists on the Continent, neither option resolved the dilemma of who they should be writing for. Willi Paul Adams found himself addressing three different audiences simultaneously: "the German-reading general public, the German guild of professional historians, and American professional colleagues." The first two audiences demanded that he publish in German, but the Americans would have ignored his work unless it appeared in English. Which, then, was his primary constituency? Maurizio Vaudagna, an Italian Americanist, confronted the same question. Vaudagna discovered that publishing in English was "not always appreciated in Italian academic circles or prized in the distribution of financial or institutional resources." Hence, he could either seek the approval of Americanists in the United States, or write primarily for the "Italian scholarly community" and "the non-English-speaking" citizenry.⁶⁹ Most Americanists on the Continent tried to maintain a dual allegiance, honoring the language and culture of their native lands while attempting to participate as equals in a movement that was monolingual and American centered.

For the British Americanists, language was not a problem. What they worried about was a lack of originality. Repeatedly, the British complained that their own works, and those of their partners in the rest of Europe, were not "seminal" or "innovative." Where, Marcus Cunliffe asked in 1971, "are the modern Tocquevilles? Has the movement in Europe produced any interpretations of American civilization which reveal a . . . non-American freshness" of outlook? His answer, gloomily delivered, was no. "In practically every branch of American Studies," Cunliffe declared, "the organizing ideas, the bold interpretations, the controversy have been introduced by Americans. European contributions have tended to function within the context of received ideas." No matter what theories the European Americanists put forward, they were "likely to find that [their] transatlantic col-

leagues have been there first." Cunliffe concluded that the Europeans were "doomed to scholarly provincialism. . . . What Harvard or Chicago or Berkeley thinks today, in American Studies, is what Oxford or Berlin or Paris thinks tomorrow." Twenty years later, matters had not much improved. According to Tony Badger, a British historian of the United States, the European Americanists were still following too faithfully the "historiographical guidelines . . . laid down in the United States."⁷⁰

To Badger, it was ironic that in their desire to be considered professionals and to "achieve credibility" in the eyes of their American mentors, Americanists in Britain and Europe might have surrendered the chance to utilize their special insight as foreigners to reevaluate America's history and literature. Yet the need for what Cunliffe called a "non-American" version of American Studies had always been clear. As early as 1958, at the end of his survey of American Studies in Europe, Sigmund Skard urged the Europeans "to establish their . . . own methods and standards, learning from each other as much as from the Americans." In 1980, Malcolm Bradbury stressed "the importance of evolving a European approach to American Studies."⁷¹ But what would such an approach look like? And how much could it lead not only to a new understanding of the American past, but to a better understanding of the European present?

One way for Americanists in Europe to become more inventive was to examine American culture from a comparative perspective, a technique normally neglected by their colleagues in the United States who tended to be fairly parochial when they wrote about America. The United States was not the same country when seen from outside its borders.⁷² The Europeans were certainly outsiders. As such, their angle of vision, their concerns, the themes and issues they emphasized, all these might well be different, less derivative, and authentically new.

Indeed, as Maurizio Vaudagna discerned, what the Americanists "imported from the United States . . . ended up as something quite different in the course of [its] transfer to European soil." Writing and teaching about America, especially an America that had become such a "visible presence" abroad, was a way of responding to and coping with the "cultural and public needs" of contemporary Europe.⁷³ Thus, the Europeans could use their training as American Studies specialists to illuminate the complexities of social life in Britain and on the Continent. In this way, American Studies would mutate into a form of European Studies.

Many European Americanists recognized the pertinence of their

work to conditions in their own societies. Tiziano Bonazzi, an Italian historian of the United States, suggested that "the impulse to write American history came ... from inside Italian culture, from the hunger for a history that was relevant to the Italian political debate." Marianne Debouzy was similarly motivated. "American history often became an indirect route to tackling present French problems," she conceded. "Interest in Indians was a detour" to explore the issues of "colonialism and imperialism." Analyses of the American labor movement might shed light on the policies of French unions and the attitudes of French workers. Or if one was a British historian, as Michael Heale noted, one could analyze the "failure of labor to emerge as a powerful and radical political force in the U.S." in order to explain the growing conservatism of the British working class. Then there was the plight of the guest workers in every country in Europe. Willi Paul Adams "began to study the situation of German immigrants in American society" because Germany itself was now the destination for a multitude of immigrants, almost all of them unwelcome. Adams thought it would be "useful to remind Germans of their own experience as migrants."⁷⁴

The issue that attracted the greatest attention, however, was the impact of America on Europe. The United States should be treated as a "cultural phenomenon within Europe," Rob Kroes argued. This was precisely what many European Americanists began to do. And they understood what was at stake. "The interest moving [European] students and ... scholars as well to look at the United States," Maurizio Vaudagna observed, "has often to do with music, film, the media, consumerism. In summary, it has to do with the 'Americanization' of our countries."⁷⁵ American Studies specialists became increasingly preoccupied with how Europeans received, opposed, and reconfigured American culture to suit their own tastes, how they might be able to "Europeanize" what the United States exported.

Starting in 1979, Rob Kroes edited or inspired a series of volumes, under the general heading *European Contributions to American Studies*, in which the essayists focused as much on Europe's encounter with and reaction to America, as on America itself. The titles of many of the volumes made clear that the United States was being viewed through a European prism: "Image and Impact: American Influences in the Netherlands since 1945," "Anti-Americanism in Europe," "The American West: As Seen by Europeans and Americans," "Within the U.S. Orbit: Small National Cultures vis-à-vis the United States," "Cultural

Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe," "Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony."

Works like these revealed the Europeans' ambition to transform and domesticate a set of ideas and techniques that American scholars had originally used to gain a better understanding of the history and culture of the United States. The Europeans were not engaged just in an act of revisionism, nor was this merely a methodological squabble among professors. American Studies had always been more than an academic enterprise. It was from the outset an effort to identify the idiosyncratic and superior qualities of American life. It had also been utilized by the American government to win affection and support for the United States overseas. So from Washington's vantage point, the European Americanists seemed ungrateful, even insubordinate, when they converted American Studies into a movement that questioned, and thereby enabled people to resist, America's influence. But as with other facets of American culture, the United States could not in the end determine what American Studies should be, or how it might be used, after it crossed the ocean.