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Amst 50.1/2 *Amerikastudien / American Studies* at 50  
 (2005)

UDO J. HEBEL

"Preface"

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ALFRED HORNING

"From the *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien* to the Quarterly *Amerikastudien / American Studies* -- 1956-2005"

ABSTRACT: The history of the journal of the German Association for American Studies forms part of the postwar process of democratizing and liberalizing academic education in Germany. The evolution from the fledgling days of the *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien* in 1956 to the internationally accepted quarterly *Amerikastudien / American Studies* at the beginning of the twenty-first century describes the trajectory of three generations of American Studies scholars who projected, developed, and transformed the interdisciplinary concept of American Studies with respect to their different fields of language, literature, culture, politics, and history of the United States. This historical survey traces the seven stages of this development from the founding editor Walther Fischer and his editorial office in Marburg via the editorial offices in Tübingen (Hans-Joachim Lang), Berlin (Ursula Brumm), Frankfurt (Martin Christadler), Würzburg (Gerhard Hoffmann), and Mainz (Alfred Horning) to the present editor Udo Hebel in Regensburg. The survey also includes a brief history of the Association's series of American Studies monographs. The success of both publication organs is based on the energy and dedication of editors, contributors, and readers, the competent cooperation of publishers, and the financial support received from the German Research Foundation and, above all, from the American Embassy. Today the journal represents and promulgates the quality of German American Studies scholarship in a transnational dialogue with scholars in the United States and other parts of the world where the presence of America is felt.

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SABINE SIELKE

"Theorizing American Studies: German Interventions into an Ongoing Debate"

ABSTRACT: Partly due to the transdisciplinary agenda of the field, the development of American Studies has been accompanied by intensive debates about methods and theories. This essay relates a-necessarily reductive-narrative about how,

throughout its history, German American Studies has intervened into and contributed to these debates; and how, with the emergence of parameters and politics of difference, on the one hand, and poststructuralist thought and notions of *différance*, on the other, the early debate on methods of American Studies transformed into discussions of theories of American literature, culture, history etc. In the light of what I perceive as the current division within German American Studies—a division between work that refocuses the theoretical discussion on literary studies and questions of aesthetics and analyses that engage other cultural practices and media by way of explicit theoretical perspectives, yet not necessarily in the frame of an American Studies agenda—my argument suggests that we take a more dialectical approach to the plurality of theories American Studies engages. While such an approach can no longer aim at syntheses and needs to allow for incoherencies and contradictions, it seems indispensable if we aim at futures for American Studies.

REINHARD R. DOERRIES

### "The Unknown Republic: American History at German Universities"

ABSTRACT: Looking back over 50 years of the GAAS and the development of American History as an academic discipline at German universities, the essay shows an astonishing and continuous neglect by state and national authorities. It is suggested here that a better understanding of Anglo-Saxon democracy and political culture may have led to different world views of Germany's educated class and, in fact, prevented two world wars. In view of the present disarray of relations between Washington and the new Berlin, one may see a greater presence of American History in German university curricula as a way of informing both German leaders and public opinion about the American nation.

ANREAS FALKE

### "The End of German-American Relations ... 'as we know them'"

ABSTRACT: The fifty years that the *Amerikastudien / American Studies* has been in existence have coincided with an unusually deep and stable political relationship between the United States and Germany, buttressed by strong cultural and business ties. This essay argues that German-American relations are at a crossroads, a point that might as well denote the end of American relations as we know them. Two basic factors account for this development: 1) the disappearance of the Soviet threat, which despite frequent conflicts tied both countries together in a strategic relationship; 2) the Europeanization of external policies in Europe, which is making Brussels-based actors much more important than the protagonist that used to define the bilateral relationship between Washington-Bonn/Berlin. These two factors were already at work in the 1990s, when incremental policy

adjustment kept the relationship intact on the surface. The conflict over the American invasion of Iraq, where for the first time in 50 years a German government openly opposed a major strategic American policy objective, revealed the structural break with the past at the policy level. While it is possible to do superficial repairs, this essay argues that what is required is a new bargain that would consist of Germany becoming the chief advocate of transatlanticism and the United States acknowledging in word and deed that a strong and united Europe is in its own strategic interest. This in turn would require that Germany manages its severe economic and social problems that Americans perceive as signs of decline.

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CHRISTOPH RIBBAT

### "You Can't Hide Your Love Forever: Popular Culture and the German Americanist"

ABSTRACT: The essay presents a history of the explorations into U.S. popular culture by German Americanists since the 1950s, reading these developments in the context of larger transformations in the field of American Studies. In the last half-century German scholarly readings of Americana have changed profoundly, from a Frankfurt School approach highly critical of mass culture (discussed here with regard to Adorno's essay "The Stars Down to Earth") to diverse interpretations of the popular by contemporary scholars working in American Studies. Sketching the problems and the potential of such recent work, the essay analyzes approaches to popular culture by journalists and non-academic writers: discussions of the reception of the popular, especially with regard to contemporary political contexts in Germany. It also outlines similarly significant research on Americanization conducted by American Studies within the academy. In conclusion the essay calls for studies of American popular culture both abroad and 'at home' and for a combination of academic and non-academic perspectives on the popular.

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PETER FREESE

### "American Studies and EFL-Teaching in Germany: A Troubled Relationship"

ABSTRACT: A brief survey of the recent history and present problems of *Fremdsprachendidaktik* on the one hand and American Studies and *Amerikanistik* on the other shows that the tenuous relationship between university research and teaching in secondary schools is not the inevitable result of the difference between the academic quest for truth and the educational interest in meaning, but, as selected examples confirm, of a lack of interest and an unwillingness to cooperate. The relationship is then approached 'from the receiving end' and, after a sketch of the basic objectives of EFL-teaching and the resulting criteria for text selection, the historical sequence of critical approaches thought to be appropriate and the selection of American texts thought to be suitable for the EFL-classroom is traced with

references to personal experiences. It is shown how the reform of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* and the emergence of *Rezeptionsästhetik* fundamentally changed the relationship between *Literatur* and *Landeskunde* and gradually replaced the long dominant New Criticism, and how the abolition of the canon by an emancipatory *Deutschdidaktik* spilled over into EFL-teaching, where in theory it resulted in the concept of exemplarity and individual text selection, but in practice led to the establishment of a 'secret canon.' The few existing surveys of what is actually read in the EFLclassroom are adduced to demonstrate the inertia of the school system and to explain why the recent canon debate in the U.S. has hardly influenced the EFL-classroom. Narratological terminology is chosen to examine the controversial issue of how much *Literaturwissenschaft* should be transferred into *Literaturunterricht*, and it is argued that the hegemony of postmodern theories with their constructivist premises, their precedence of theory over text, and their specialized jargon has created a situation in which research and teaching have drifted further apart from each other than ever before. This situation is in need of correction, and since the contemporary state curricula offer room for new and innovative themes and techniques, Americanists are called upon to help educate their future students by providing the EFL-classroom with challenging materials and to test whether they can make their findings accessible to ordinary people and thus transcend the confines of their scholarly community and gain greater social relevance for their endeavors.

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NICOLE WALLER

"Refigurations of American Studies: On Transnationalizing the United States"

ABSTRACT: This essay is concerned with the project of transnationalizing the United States and with the important role of American Studies in this process. In the wake of our academic attempts at rethinking the nation, we have often tended to equate the transnational with processes of global Americanization but have been cautious in applying the lessons of national deconstruction to U.S. nationhood and to our discipline's own national foundations. The essay traces three trajectories of American Studies scholarship which have recently taken up this challenge: Atlantic studies (which provides a structure for rethinking national boundaries and processes of 'mapping'), interdisciplinary collaborations between the humanities and social sciences in the area of trauma research and ways of writing about collective violence, and research on Arab American literature and culture (a field which addresses contemporary gaps between political and academic notions of nation and culture and poses the question of re-thinking our role as scholars in relation to political praxis).

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KARSTEN FITZ and "Publications in American Studies from German

Amst 50.3 (2005)

Early American Visual Culture

**KARSTEN FITZ and KLAUS DIETER GROSS - Guest Editors**KARSTEN FITZ and  
KLAUS-DIETER GROSS

"Early American Visual Culture: Introduction"

KLAUS-DIETER GROSS

"New-York Historical Society's *Unidentified Gentleman with a Violin* (ca. 1720): A Re-Evaluation"

ABSTRACT: *Unidentified Gentleman with a Violin* seems to be the first appearance of a violin in an Anglo-American painting. This paper discusses selected visual and musical aspects to unearth the complex iconography of a seemingly simple portrait. J[ohn?] Cooper's picture is deeply imbedded in the cultural changes of the early eighteenth century both in Britain and its North American colonies, which are characterized by a growing independence of the colonies, an increasing social mobility, and a lessening of cultural restrictions, all of which also influence the histories of manners, portraiture, and music. The key features of the picture discussed here are the physical appearance of the sitter, his attire, and the function of the instrument. The findings suggest that the painting may be the self-portrait of an early immigrant cultural entrepreneur who united art and music in the newly popular profession of the colonial dancing master.

PAUL NEUBAUER

"American Painting in the Federal Period: Charles Willson Peale between Popular Portraits and Political Portraiture"

ABSTRACT: American art and American painting are usually regarded as coming of age in the twentieth century only; the origins of American artistic and aesthetic independence, however, were already perceivable in the days of political independence. Most reviews of Federal artists concentrate on the most famous painter of that era, Benjamin West. He was the first American painter to receive the applause of both the British King and European collectors—and he taught dozens of artistic colleagues from the American colonies. Most of these, however, decided to return and in turn brought back European styles and techniques which they then had to reconcile with American experiences and republican taste. One artist in particular can be

regarded as the 'founding father' of an alternative tradition of American painting—Charles Willson Peale, the progenitor of a family of portrait painters. His artistic concepts and programmatic concerns shall be contextualized in the following pages.

KARSTEN FITZ

### "Commemorating Crispus Attucks: Visual Memory and the Representations of the Boston Massacre, 1770-1857"

**ABSTRACT:** This article examines visual representations of the 'Boston Massacre' in their historical contexts and their treatment of the African American patriot Crispus Attucks. As a case study of prominent images by Paul Revere, John Singleton Copley, William C. Nell, William Champney, and Alonzo Chappel, it tackles the erasure, the marginalization, and the re-emergence of the black presence in these illustrations. These images will be dealt with as history paintings that provide us with crucial interpretations of the event (which all, separately, reflect existing beliefs of their times). The fact that four differing versions of this event (excluding Copley's) were circulated at the same time suggests how prominent visual images of the Boston Massacre had become (for the construction of American national and cultural identities) by the mid-nineteenth century, how highly contested these images were, and how deeply America was split on the eve of the Civil War over the question of slavery.

CHRISTOPHER LUKASIK

### "'The Vanity of Physiognomy': Dissimulation and Discernment in Charles Brockden Brown's *Ormond*"

**ABSTRACT:** This article examines dissimulation, physiognomy, portraiture, and reading as they are depicted in Charles Brockden Brown's novel *Ormond* and in the conventional post-Revolutionary seduction novel. The essay reads *Ormond* as a critique of the seduction novel genre, its didacticism, and its models for reading books and people. Brown modifies the structure of the didactic seduction novel by disaligning the threat of dissimulation from the mechanics of genteel social distinction and, as a result, *Ormond* exposes how the genre sustains the latter by regulating the former. Moreover, *Ormond* interrogates the same visual forms and discourses that seduction novelists and, more generally, the period promoted as strategies for counteracting dissimulation: portraiture and physiognomy. In contrast to the static, instantaneous, and permanent notion of character obtained by the physiognomic scrutiny of a face or portrait, *Ormond* proposes a more fluid, sequential, and revisable notion of character accumulated from the flow of multiple persons, times, and sources. *Ormond* suggests that the type of reflection encouraged by reading seduction novels—which was what distinguished them from the dangerous effects of romances

and justified them in the eyes of its post-Revolutionary moral critics—should not be associated with the static visual arts (portraiture) and the kinds of discourses used to interpret them (physiognomy), but with the temporality and multiple perspectives of fiction.

KATHARINA ERHARD

### "Rape, Republicanism, and Representation: Founding the Nation in Early American Women's Drama and Selected Visual Representations"

ABSTRACT: Heeding W. J. T. Mitchell's call for a "pictorial turn," this article investigates how early American women playwrights dealt with the idea that the American Revolution was negotiated through the female body, particularly through images of rape, and refashioned images of femininity circulating in late eighteenth-century American culture. Written and visual representations cast the American Revolution as a sexualized narrative: a female-connoted, virtuous American liberty was encroached by an aggressive, male British power in order to stir nationalism. Women playwrights participate in the visual economy of republican aesthetics by investing the nation and its urge for liberty with a female body, but they are aware that while a symbolic focal point on the national stage, women were pushed to the distaff sides. The playwrights denounce the gendered constructions of patriotism and that women's contributions to the American Revolution are being excised from public memory. While representations of (dead) white heroes abounded, women—except for the female allegories, captive women, weeping matrons, and ravished virgins—disappeared from public memory. In their counter-memories of the American Revolution, Mercy Otis Warren, Susanna Haswell Rowson, and an unknown female playwright reinscribe women into public memory and their plays evince that the American Revolution was not just a fight against patriarchy on the political level.

Amst 50.4 (2005)

KATJA KANZLER

### "Texts, Commodities, and Genteel Factory Girls: The Textile Mill as a Feminine Space in Antebellum American Literature"

ABSTRACT: This essay proposes to intervene in ongoing debates about the productivity of the 'separate spheres'-paradigm for the study of antebellum culture by probing into the writing of a 'feminine' space that resists easy categorization as 'home': the textile mill of the 1820s-40s. Despite—or possibly because of—the marginality of the textile mill on the map of gendered spaces in antebellum America, its writings claim it to be highly

significant for literature, for women, and for the nation. I will focus my inquiry on the *Lowell Offering*, a literary magazine (1840-45) produced by female workers at the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, as an effort of Northeastern, rural women to claim their experience of the factory as a basis for both literary creativity and citizenship. In discussing some of the *Offering's* texts, and the discursive contexts out of which they evolved, I suggest that reading the factory sheds light on the central way in which mobility and metaphorization characterize antebellum discourses of 'home.' On a second note, it draws attention to the material dimension of antebellum gender discourses and to the ambivalent repercussions this materiality holds for women writing out of different social settings other than the bourgeois home.

MARIA A. SLOWINSKA

### "Consuming Illusion, Illusions of Consumability: American Movie Palaces of the 1920s"

**ABSTRACT:** This essay discusses the American Movie Palace of the 1920s as a historical, cultural, and aesthetic phenomenon. The Movie Palace is a particularly interesting subject for cultural analysis because it is a conspicuous marker of its specific sociohistorical context, while at the same time condensing developments that have come to define present-day culture. I will argue that the Movie Palace as a building type and as a practice of film consumption is an exceptionally illustrative expression of the fusion of the culture of consumption with the culture of performance as it occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century. In this fusion, we can find an instance and even a source of the distinct dynamic that set and still keeps in motion the development of present-day popular culture. I will conceptualize this fusion in the term 'performative consumption,' meaning a performative, corporeal, and highly elusive act and an influential early expression of the currently much discussed performativization of culture with its propensity toward immediacy, sensuality, corporeality. Thus, the Movie Palace illustrates an early stage of a core aspect of present-day popular culture.

DANIEL STEIN

### "Hearing, Seeing, and Writing Thelonious Monk: Toward a Theory of Changing Iconotexts"

**ABSTRACT:** This essay on the American jazz pianist Thelonious Monk situates the player and his music within a series of shifting written representations that inscribe music and performance with changing and conflicting cultural meanings. All forms of representing jazz are understood not merely as references to music in, or attempted translations into, another medium, but as acts that take part in 'sounding the music,' acts that allow Monk's music to emerge as a particular form of artistic expression. Any



serious musical analysis must account for the visual, textual, and contextual processes of signification through which jazz communicates, and is made to communicate, beyond its sonic surface. Approaching Monk's jazz as an intermedial phenomenon that combines sound and sight ("hearing and seeing Thelonious Monk"), the essay investigates journalistic responses to this phenomenon ("writing Thelonious Monk") and argues that discursive shifts in jazz criticism coproduce musical meaning through changing iconotexts, defined as the realm of signification where musical sound, the visual element of performance, and textual interpretation meet and compete for cultural influence.

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MATTHIAS S. FIFKA

### "The Presidential Election of 2004 in Financial Retrospective"

ABSTRACT: The 2004 presidential and congressional elections were once again the most expensive in history, despite major campaign finance reform enacted in 2002. Especially in the presidential election, "soft money" banned by the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act reappeared in spending by independent advocacy groups, the so-called "527s." They largely contributed to a rise of overall election costs compared to the 2000 race between Bush and Gore. However, a dramatic increase of "hard money" contributions to candidates and parties can also be recorded. The paper examines the different financial dimensions of the 2004 presidential election and analyzes changes and shifts between them with respect to the previous election. For that purpose, a close look at candidate campaign finance as well as financial involvement of parties and independent organizations is taken, before conclusions about further developments, including possible campaign finance reform, are drawn.

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Impressum

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