

Introduction

The 1960s was a decade of pivotal importance that continues to fascinate historians and cultural critics. On the one hand, it was a period of sustained economic growth in the United States and most European countries; on the other, it presented fundamental challenges to the existing social and economic order. Students were often in the vanguard of protest movements against social injustice, and demonstrations against America's war with Vietnam turned into a global phenomenon both on the streets and in cultural terms more broadly. For example, European protests against the John Wayne-produced pro-war movie *The Green Berets* (1968), which Wayne hoped would "help our cause throughout the world," included a Stuttgart daily newspaper comparing the film to Nazi propaganda.¹ In the 1960s the African American civil rights movement reached the peak of its success, with its major goals translated into national legislation, and its rhetoric and strategies inspiring many other protest movements, such as civil rights campaigns by other "minority" groups, including women's and gay rights movements in the US and in Europe. While activists failed to achieve a fundamental restructuring of society, especially regarding class and income distribution, they paved the way for many social changes and for a new counterculture. Some social changes were deemed so radical that they sparked the backlash among conservatives that would lead to a hardening of conservative positions over the next ten years and to the rise of the necons in the decades that followed; other supposedly countercultural shifts stemmed from a longer tradition and of American individualism, including

1 J. Hoberman, *The Dream Life: Movies, Media, and the Mythology of the Sixties* (New York: The New Press, 2003), 208.

the hippie movement's de-emphasizing of government controls and central leadership models, and communal living echoing mid-nineteenth-century utopian experiments such as Brook Farm in Massachusetts. The end of the 1960s also saw the rise of identity politics and the beginning of the so-called culture wars, which have since become a serious source of cultural and political division in the United States and affected European countries in many different ways.

This collection pays attention to such crosscurrents. It is transnational and transatlantic in scope and character, taking a close look at the global flows between Europe to the United States and back again. It explores something of the "global unbinding of energies" that Fredric Jameson once identified as central to the sensibility of the sixties. It builds on scholarship that asserts and tests the validity—historiographical and ideological—of "a world sixties" as advocated in the special issue of *boundary 2* entitled "The Sixties and the World Event," edited by Christopher Connery and Hortense J. Spillers in 2009, with essays ranging from Latin American studies to literary criticism. Working in interdisciplinary ways helps to shake up national models and to conceptualize larger shifts in historical consciousness. A US-European dialectic reveals new models and trends, like those identified in civil rights historiography, for example, in Brian Dooley's *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America* (1998), in Martin Klimke's *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (2010), or in Stephen Tuck's work on Malcolm X's 1964 visit to Oxford University and its significance regarding race relations in the US and Britain (2013).² New essays in this volume also reveal the transatlantic scope of the African American freedom struggle and point to the ways in which racism, discrimination, and social protest may be understood as transnational phenomena in a global context.

The twenty-first century has seen a significant rise in academic interest in transatlantic literary studies and comparative studies of media and musical cultures, notably in edited collections including Günter H. Lenz and Peter J. Ling's *Transatlantic Encounters: Multiculturalism, National Identity*

2 Stephen Tuck, "Malcolm X's Visit to Oxford University: U.S. Civil Rights, Black Britain, and the Special Relationship on Race," *American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 76–103.

and the Uses of the Past (2000); Joseph Patrick Ward's *Britain and the American South: From Colonialism to Rock and Roll* (2003); Richard Gray and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz's *Transatlantic Exchanges: The South in Europe—Europe in the American South* (2007); *Globalizing American Studies* (2010), edited by Brian T. Edwards and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (2010); and *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*, edited by Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe (2011). Eve Tavor Bannet and Susan Manning's *Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660–1830* and Jill Terry and Neil A. Wynn's *Transatlantic Roots Music: Folk, Blues, and National Identities* were both published in 2012. Essays in this volume build on and extend this work.

The transnational turn in American Studies is not new insofar as the examination of patterns of travel and exploration, slavery and colonialism, and migration and acculturation characterizes a substantial body of work initiated on both sides of the Atlantic. Similarly, a transatlantic perspective has been crucial to the study of modernity, modernism, and, most particularly, to explorations/investigations of American expatriates in Paris, in studies ranging from Malcolm Cowley's *Exile's Return* (1933) and Michel and Geneviève Fabre's groundbreaking work, including Michel Fabre's epic survey *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840–1980* (1992) to Daniel Katz's *American Modernism's Expatriate Scene* (2007) and Anita Patterson's *Race, American Literature and Transnational Modernisms* (2008). However, newer conceptualizations of globalization have shortened the distance between continents and nations further, extending the comparative and transnational turn in scholarship beyond the ways in which migrants and exiles “break barriers of thought and experience,” as Edward Said noted in “The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Thought and Exile” (1984). Attempts to forge a more “worlded” American Studies and to construe “the Sixties” as a worlded decade rather than as exceptional to cultural shifts in the US or Paris in May '68 have reinforced the need to understand local and regional inequalities, differences and commonalities, as well as the genealogies of the cultural forms that represent and express places and spaces. New media and digital cultures point the way to the “postnational” and to the de-localization and re-territorialization of communication, disturbing if not challenging notions of national distinctiveness.

The editors of this volume have been involved in constructing a transatlantic American Studies in various ways. For example, Clara Juncker and

Russell Duncan edited *Trading Cultures: Nationalism and Globalization in American Studies* in 2002 and *Transnational America: Contours of Modern U.S. Culture* in 2004. Sharon Monteith acts as an advisory editor of journals including *The Global South* and the *Irish Journal of American Studies*. She also examined transatlantic connections between the US South and Europe with her US co-editor Suzanne Jones in *South to a New Place: Region, Literature, Culture* (2002) and with another US co-editor in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Media* (2011). Together with Markus Hüнемörder and Meike Zwingenberger, Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson edited *Europe and America: Cultures in Translation* in 2006.

The essays in *The Transatlantic Sixties* explore the impact of the African American civil rights movement in Germany, paying attention to the influence of Black Power politics and to the reception of Angela Davis in East and West Germany; the lines of inspiration and influence between American and Scandinavian feminisms; and the truly global nature of the counterculture movement—no more vigorous in Haight Ashbury than in London’s Soho or in Copenhagen. Contributors delve into the vicissitudes of Europe’s status in American foreign policy relations; the impact of, and changes made to, the Vietnam War Memorial that reflect the ways in which the nation has commemorated other wars; and the role of avant-garde American and European documentary cinema in building opposition to the war in Vietnam. While the transatlantic trajectory of the Beatles is a key motif of the global phenomenon that was pop music in the 1960s, one essay considers how many European bands “re-packaged” American rock ‘n’ roll and exported it back to the US. Topics of other essays include the meaning of Robert Frost’s diplomatic visit to the Soviet Union, Polish fiction in the 1960s as driven by the same sense of political futility as John Barth’s “literature of exhaustion,” and the influence of cybernetics on the arts in the US and Italy. The closing essay examines how three nonviolent civil rights demonstrations in Paris, France; Aberystwyth, Wales; and Selma, Alabama, have been assiduously remembered or strategically forgotten since the 1960s.

The same political, social, economic, and technological changes that sparked a transnational or globalized American Studies drove this publication. It brings together the work of European American Studies scholars who participated as faculty in an Erasmus-sponsored intensive summer academy entitled “Coming Together or Coming Apart: Europe and the

United States in the 1960s” in 2011. The program, which took place at the John F. Kennedy Institute in Berlin, was organized by Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson and Michael Hoenisch under the joint auspices of the University of Munich and the Free University of Berlin, with colleagues from ten universities across Poland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France, and the UK. The volume thus brings together essays by contributors from the fields of history, politics, literature, culture, music, and the arts; their approach to this singular decade is also characterized by interdisciplinary expertise as well as by their individual national and cultural experiences.

The editors would like to thank the European Union, the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität of Munich, and the Free University of Berlin for sponsoring the Erasmus Intensive Program (IP), which was the bedrock of this volume. Special credit should be given to Claudia Agne for her hard work behind the scenes and to other colleagues whose contributions may not be in this volume but who were essential to the success of the IP. Finally, we are most grateful to the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, the Lasky Center for Transatlantic Studies at the University of Munich, and the University of Southern Denmark for their support of this publication. It is dedicated to the students who participated in the program.

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