

**Karl-Heinz Füssel.** *Deutsch-amerikanischer Kulturaustausch im 20. Jahrhundert.* Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2004. 328 S. EUR 37.90 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-593-37499-4.



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Karl-Heinz Füssel is the author of a useful study of Allied, especially American and British, re-education programs after 1945, with emphasis on youth policy and schools.[1] He expands his purview here to present an overview of German-American cultural exchange focusing on education and the social sciences from the end of the nineteenth century until the 1960s. Despite its broad title, the book does not consider literature, film, the natural sciences, popular culture, or the arts (with one exception, to be discussed). The term “cultural exchange” thus seems misplaced, but might nonetheless be justified in a sense, if policy-makers at the time used it in the same narrow way. Unfortunately, Füssel does not tell us whether the exchange programs he discusses were in fact limited to the fields he emphasizes.

In his introduction, Füssel refreshingly challenges triumphalist accounts of German influence on American culture, arguing that such accounts ignore an opposition movement that set in before 1914, which needs to be explained. He then emphasizes, as have others, the divisive impact of the First World War, the role of the migrants from Nazism during the 1930s, the 1940s, and the postwar era, and the predominant role of the social sciences throughout.

Chapters 2 and 3 describe the encounter of German and American educational institutions and educationists

before and after World War I, drawing mainly from the extensive secondary literature on the subject. As he emphasizes, names like Fröbel and Kerchensteiner demonstrate that German influence was by no means limited to higher education, but he argues plausibly that the impact of German innovations was nonetheless limited, due in part to existing native traditions as well as competing models derived from the British public schools and colleges that were influential among the elites. Füssel pays due attention to the mutual ideological denunciations of the war years and to efforts to exclude German scientists, scholars and educationists from international organizations after 1919, but he argues that individuals like Abraham Flexner and John Dewey stand for successful efforts to revive exchange relationships and cooperation in the 1920s. Indeed, as he shows, exchanges (as well as Rockefeller Foundation support for selected research institutions) continued into the Nazi period.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe, as others have, the fundamental break caused by the Nazis’ expulsion of scientists, scholars, and other intellectuals for political reasons or because they were defined as being of “Jewish” descent. Especially extensive here is the account of migrants’ involvement in planning for the postwar period. The predominance of the social sciences in this discussion is well established, though it might be more appropriate to speak

of psychologized social sciences, given the widespread use of terminology from psychoanalysis in efforts to diagnose and find ways of curing sick German family patterns, educational institutions, and the like. Fssl emphasizes the impact of Margaret Mead and other cultural anthropologists in these discussions, but does not reflect on the changed concept of culture they brought to the table or ask where it came from. In chapter 5, one of the most original parts of the book, Fssl presents interesting case studies of Hans Albers's work in art education at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, and of the central role of migr scholar Walter Friedlnder, who became a professor at the University of California-Berkeley, in the effort to put social work on a (social) scientific footing.

In chapters 6 and 7, Fssl provides a panoramic overview of American re-education programs during the early postwar era, including the Salzburg Seminars, various programs sponsored by the High Commission for Occupied Germany (HICOG), and a little-studied group called the "Commission on Occupied Areas." Most interesting and informative in this context are Fssl's accounts of the social-scientific studies of these programs' impact that were conducted during or immediately after the programs themselves. One such impact study focuses primarily on social workers as exchange students or teachers in the United States. The answers to questions about participants' opinions of American culture appear surprisingly negative, but Fssl nonetheless argues, with some support in his material, that these views grew more positive over time, and that the exchange program participants in education and social or youth work were effective multipliers of American values and approaches, as they were intended to be.

Chapter 8 re-tells the well-known story of the official American exchange programs, especially the Fulbright program, efforts sponsored separately by the USIA, and others. The severe difficulties of the McCarthy era—the refusal of visas to certain German program participants, for example—are mentioned, but downplayed. As Fssl states, the American programs were eventually answered by corresponding institutions in the Federal Republic (such as the DAAD and the Humboldt Foundation). However, sometimes Fssl simply lists higher education and science policy institutions indiscriminately, whether or not their primary purpose in every case was educational exchange. He also fails to offer serious political analysis of or substantial contextual background for

the German side of the story. He does not note, for example, that two of his star examples of American impact, Ralf Dahrendorf and Hildegard Hamm-Brcher, were affiliated with the same small liberal party, the FDP, and presents little or no discussion of whether or why the CDU and the SPD supported these efforts.

More useful is Fssl's account of the impact of American experiences on the work of West German pedagogical reformers such as Heinrich Roth, Wilhelm Edelstein and especially Hartmut von Hentig. The linkage between pedagogical reform and American influence appears less clear in the case of Helmut Becker, co-founder with Edelstein of the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research in Berlin. Surprising and unfortunate is the absence of Dietrich Goldschmidt, another leading member of the Max Planck Institute, from the story. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that this is a success story, both in quantitative terms and in terms of the social and cultural impact on (West) German life. Nonetheless, Fssl's argument that the more open-minded, liberal, and tolerant attitudes evident in West German educational thought and practice since the 1960s are directly attributable to these cultural exchange programs, though it is often made and appears plausible on its face, seems hardly sufficient on deeper consideration. Other factors such as generational shifts and the subtle or not so subtle impact of American popular culture (not discussed here at all) surely ought to be added to the mix.[2]

Karl-Heinz Fssl has given us an informative summary of the aspects of this vast topic listed in the first paragraph of this review, but no more than that. Doing justice to the title of the volume would have required a broader and more carefully considered concept of culture than is in evidence here. Also needed would be greater awareness of the possibility that both of the cultures being considered underwent enormous changes in the twentieth century, many of which had little to do with their interactions with one another—deliberate or not.

#### Notes

[1]. Karl-Heinz Fssl, *Die Umerziehung der Deutschen. Jugend und Schule unter den Siegermchten des Zweiten Weltkriegs 1945-1955* (Paderborn: Schningh, 1995).

[2]. See, for example, Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

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